Perinatal Transitions

Jane Hesser, LICSW
Department of Women’s Behavioral Health
Women and Infants Hospital
Providence, RI
June 2016

Outline

• Identify major perinatal transitions
• Identify common challenges that often add complexity to perinatal transitions
• Introduce a general Interpersonal Therapy (IPT) framework for organizing work with mothers suffering from emotional complications in the perinatal period
• Describe several IPT tools that may help women negotiate perinatal transitions

Transition

Conversion
Metamorphosis
Passage

Change.
Change is change.
Major Transitions in Motherhood

- Deciding to become pregnant
- Trying to conceive
- Becoming pregnant
- Delivery and early postpartum period
- Postpartum
- Weaning (if nursing)

All involve complex change, in all situations, regardless of whether mental illness is involved.

It’s complicated

- Potential intrapsychic changes during these times?

Case examples: KC

You know you’re a mom when, your fantasies are about sleeping.
IPT: Looking for a paddle in the middle of a flood

• It really helps to know you where to look

Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT) Model

A brief treatment Model (4-20 sessions)
Theoretical basis: Attachment theory
Evidence based
Goals: To get attachment needs met
Strategies:
Improving communication or develop more realistic expectations around conflicts (supports, disputes), role transitions & grief and losses
Help person build or better utilize her support network

3 Focal Points of IPT

• Examples of:
• Role Transitions
• Relationships: Supports? Disputes?
• Grief / Loss
Biological regulation

- First things first

Interpersonal Inventory

- Helps assess supports / conflicts
- Helps begin to understand attachment style
  - "How would you describe your support system?"
  - "What happens when there is a conflict in the relationship?"
  - "Who has loved you well and how have they done that?"
  - "What types of support do you receive?"

Assessment: Interpersonal Inventory
Interpersonal inventory case examples

- Using this tool with mothers... examples:
  - FS

Life Event Timeline

- Elicits info
- Facilitates insight
- Brings coherence
- Facilitates meaning (cause and effect)
- Practice for describing narrative to others, who can respond to needs

Timeline
Timeline

- Helps pt see transition event from others’ perspectives
- Does the person understand others’ needs?
- Does the person understand own needs?
- Does the person believe own needs are meetable?
- Does the person believe others will respond?

Life event case example

- KC
  - Labor and delivery isn’t necessarily the event the mother may want / need to focus on

Role Transition

Old Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

New Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Developing a balanced and realistic view of loss and new role in transition
- Connecting and/or reconnecting with social supports
Case example

• FS

IPT for Perinatal Women

Reference List


• Jane_Hesser@Brown.edu