



Perinatal Mental Health Project

What causes Maternal Mental Health illness?

Simone Honikman and Estelle Venter

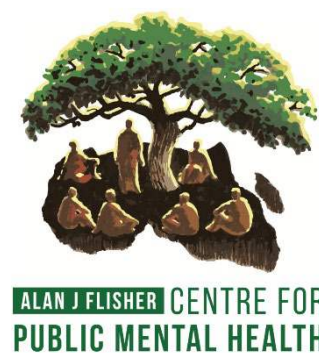


Photo: PMHP
with permission





Risk factors



Risk factors

- past history of mental health problems
- poverty and food insecurity
- difficult life events/trauma (e.g. bereavement and current/past abuse)
- being a teenager
- poor support ; poor relationships (esp. partner); hostile in-laws
- chronic disease (e.g. HIV); physical challenges (e.g. disability)
- intimate partner violence or domestic violence (incl. emotional abuse)
- alcohol or substance abuse
- being a refugee; asylum seeker; displaced person
- previous/current pregnancy loss; miscarriage; still birth/neonatal death
- preterm birth; birth defects; physical illness in neonate
- unwanted or unintended pregnancy
- Lower education

Barriers to help-seeking

- Not aware of signs and symptoms
- Clients / health providers may think that symptoms are caused by something else
- Expectation that this should be a 'happy' time
- Stigma
- Don't know where to go
- Previous negative experience with health services
- Lack of resources
- Lack of empowerment
- Competing commitments
- Social isolation

Barriers to help-seeking
from health system

What do perinatal women need?



Empathy – the ordinary magic

- Helps connection
- Different from sympathy – which drives disconnection
- Take the perspective of the other
- No judgement
- Recognises the emotion in others
- Communicates that emotion and that recognition

Brené Brown

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZBTYViDPIQ>

What do perinatal women need to know?

You are not alone

You are not to blame

You can get better

 Estelle.Venter@uct.ac.za

 www.pmhp.za.org

 The Perinatal Mental Health Project

 thepmhp



Perinatal
Mental Health
Project



Content in this presentation is licenced by Creative Commons CC BY-NC-ND. This license enables users to copy and distribute the material in any medium or format in unadapted form only, for noncommercial purposes only, and only so long as attribution is given to the creator. The Creative Commons License does not apply to material copyrighted by a third party.