

May is MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH!

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Organizations around the world are working to raise awareness each May about child bearers’ mental, physical, and emotional well-being during and after pregnancy. Studies show that nearly 20% of child bearers show signs of postpartum disorders and should be encouraged to seek support for their range of symptoms without the pressure of shame or judgement (nationaltoday.com).

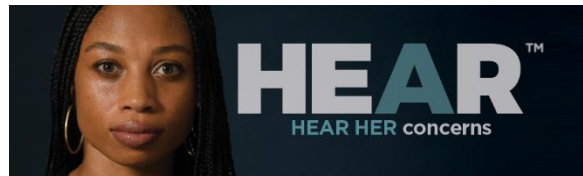
In 2016, the New Jersey Section of ACOG, alongside several other agencies proposed the establishment of a Maternal Health Awareness Day in New Jersey to raise the level of awareness of all New Jersey residents of maternal health issues. This effort came to legislative fruition in 2017, when New Jersey celebrated its first Maternal Health Awareness Day. (acog.org)

This Maternal Mental Health Month, let’s learn how we can best support both new and experienced parents and let them know they are not alone!

How you can help

It is common for pregnancy complications to occur up to one year after a person gives birth. If a pregnant or recently pregnant person is voicing concerns about any symptoms, take the time to listen. Listening attentively and acting quickly could help save their life. (cdc.gov)

1. **Learn** the urgent maternal warning signs.
2. **Listen** to her concerns.
3. **Encourage** them to seek medical help. If something doesn’t feel right, they should reach out to their provider. If they are experiencing an urgent maternal warning sign, they should get medical care right away. Be sure that they report pregnancy or was pregnant within the last year.
4. **Offer** to go with them to get medical care and help them ask questions. Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/hearher/pregnant-postpartum-women/index.html#talk>.
5. **Take notes** and help them talk to a healthcare provider to get the support they need.
6. **Support** them through follow-up care.



Additionally, new moms are encouraged to come up with a self-care plan as a tool to be mindful for your own health concerns and those of your baby.

1. Make time for pleasurable activities
2. Stay physically active
3. Ask for help- talk or spend time with those who can support you
4. Belly breathing and mindful breathing
5. Sleep hygiene

Find the complete self-care guide and other materials at the links below:

- <https://www.acog.org/-/media/project/acog/acogorg/files/forms/perinatal-mental-health-toolkit/self-care-plan.pdf?la=en&hash=0F8F054E2AB894E88BFDD E1D0A895A4F>
- <https://www.apa.org/pi/women/resources/reports/postpartum-depression-brochure-2007.pdf>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/hearher/docs/pdf/CDC-Hear-Her-Womens-urgent-warning-signs-h.pdf>

*If you or a loved one is experiencing a psychiatric emergency, please call Bridgeway Psychiatric
Emergency Screening Services at 908-526-4100, or dial 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline*

Resources: www.acog.org , www.apa.org , www.cdc.gov , www.nationaltoday.gov

**If you or a loved one is struggling with mental health, substance use or gambling challenges,
please call our ACCESS Center at 908-253-3165. If this is a psychiatric emergency call Bridgeway
PESS at 908-527-4100 OR**

CALL the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988 to talk to a counselor 24/7/365

