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Publishers

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## WORKSHEET 1

# PREGNANCY

*Practitioners can use this worksheet to ask parents about their overall feelings relating to their pregnancy.*

1. How do you feel about the pregnancy?

😊 ..... ☹

2. Do you know why you feel like this?

😊 ..... ☹

What about writing down your feelings ?

I feel .....

Exhausted

Elated

Nervous

Angry

Irritated

Excited

Can you understand why you feel like this?

😊 ..... ☹

If you have difficult feelings about the pregnancy, how do you cope?

For example:

- Talk?..... With partner/midwife/mother/father/friends/family
- Drink lots of coffee
- Consume more than your usual amount of alcohol
- Gamble ?..... Casino/online/on phone
- Nothing?
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

Do you feel you need greater support?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Do you know where you can seek help?

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.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## WORKSHEET 2

# SUPPORTING FATHERS IN THE ANTENATAL PERIOD

*Practitioners can use this worksheet to involve fathers from the start of the antenatal period. It is aimed at fathers who may find it difficult to ask the right questions and feel they need further information. Sometimes, fathers cannot make the antenatal clinic appointments, so this worksheet provides helpful hints on how to manage this*

### **Helpful hints for fathers**

If you are unable to attend antenatal appointments or appointments with doctors:

- Can you make an appointment to join via Zoom or video call?
- What about WhatsApp or FaceTime?

Many midwives now provide a list of questions and answers to inform the father about the progress of the pregnancy, but if this is not available then it is advisable to compose a checklist of questions that can be given to the midwife.

What will you be asking to make life easier for the mother?

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.....

.....

How can you help the mother during the pregnancy?

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.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

How can you be more prepared for parenthood?

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.....

Here are some examples of things you may want to find out about:

1. What foods should be avoided?
2. What is the advice about alcohol?
3. How much rest should the mother have?
4. What can I do at this stage to engage with my baby?
5. How can I engage with my baby?
6. What can I do to make life less stressful for the mother?
7. What responsibilities can I take on to help the mother during her pregnancy?

## THE PERINATAL PERIOD

*Practitioners might want to ask parents the following questions during the postnatal period.*

- How did you feel about the pregnancy?
- Did things go according to plan?
- In what way have things changed since the infant's birth?
- Are you aware that both parents can experience low mood after the baby is born?

If the father or partner is unable to attend the clinic and cannot join via Zoom, WhatsApp or FaceTime, then the following list of questions could be considered. The mother can give the list to her partner so they can tick off the questions they would like answers to.

### Questions

It is important to share any concerns you may have with a practitioner. There is no such thing as a stupid question:

- How much rest should my partner have?
- How can I reduce our stress?
- What can I do to engage with my infant?
- How can I contact you if I have any further concerns or questions?
- How many clinic appointments are there, and how many can I attend?
- If I feel I need to talk with someone, who should I contact?
- Are there any specialist perinatal mental health teams and will I be able to contact them?

## THINKING ABOUT OLDER CHILDREN

*Practitioners can use this worksheet to ask parents about their older children.*

- How are your other children doing?
- How are they getting on at school?
- How are their friendships with other children?
- How do they feel about you being unwell?
- Do you know if they are worried about anything?
- Has their behaviour changed and, if so, how?
- Is there anyone there to support them when you are feeling unwell?

## WORKSHEET 5

# LIFESTYLE CHOICES IN THE PERINATAL PERIOD

*Practitioners can use this worksheet to ask parents about their lifestyle choices and enquire about whether they have any anxieties.*

### **Questions for parents-to-be**

Please take a moment to consider your lifestyle.

Please fill in each question about how you feel on a scale 0–10 (0 is ‘not applicable’, 1 is ‘not good’, 10 is ‘very good’). Please explain your answer.

- How would you rate your diet?

.....  
.....

- What do you feel about your alcohol intake?

.....  
.....

- What do you feel about your sleep pattern?

.....  
.....

- How do you feel about any substances you take?

.....  
.....

- Have you or someone else been affected by gambling harms?  
.....  
.....

- How active are you?  
.....  
.....

Please take a moment to consider any stressors you may have.

- Can you list things that make you feel stressed?  
.....  
.....

- Can you list things that make you feel low?  
.....  
.....

Do you know how long these stressors have been a problem?

Are they manageable?

## **A reflective activity about support networks**

- Draw a large circle in the centre of a piece of paper and write your name inside it.
- On the outside, write down all the people that currently support you and put an arrow towards your name. The thicker the arrow the more support they offer you.
- Circle the names of the people who make you feel good.
- Examining the chart, how does it make you feel, and what changes would you like to make?

## WORKSHEET 6

# INTERACTIONS BETWEEN MOOD AND LIFESTYLE

*Practitioners can use this worksheet with parents to help them to understand how their mood affects their lifestyle and vice versa.*

### **Daily mood rating form**

Please rate your mood for each day over a two-week period using the ten-point scale shown. A low number means that you felt bad and a high number means that you felt good:

Very depressed..... Very happy  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Mood Score (starting date .....)

Day	Date	Mood Score
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		

What causes you the most stress?

For example:

- Mealtimes
- Getting ready to go to work
- Bedtime
- Changes in routine
- Shopping
- Working late
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

What are the early signs that you are becoming stressed?

For example:

- Shouting more than usual
- Clenching teeth
- Having palpitations
- Experiencing unexplained pains
- Feeling overwhelmed
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

List the kinds of activities which you find pleasant:

For example:

- Going for a walk
- Meeting up with friends
- Enjoying a long soak in the bath
- Listening to music
- Going out for a meal
- Having a haircut
- Paying a compliment
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

Please list your top ten favourite activities

1. .....
2. .....
3. .....
4. .....
5. .....
6. .....
7. .....
8. .....
9. .....
10. .....

Now consider which activities you manage to do on a regular basis and which activities you do not manage to do on a regular basis. How does that make you feel?

.....

.....

.....

.....

## MINDFULNESS

*Practitioners can use this worksheet to support parents to feel present in the moment. It can be carried out doing nothing or whilst doing a task.*

### **Exercise 1**

Ask the parent to sit quietly, preferably in an open space, and take a deep breath, then ask the following questions:

- What can you see? Look at the objects in the room or, if you are outside, look at the sky and the clouds. What are the shapes? What are the colours?
- What can you feel? What is the sensation you have sitting down? What does the ground beneath your feet feel like? Is there a breeze or a fan heater blowing against your face?
- What can you hear? Is there a buzz of machinery in the background? Are birds singing? Can you hear people chatting?
- What can you smell? The smell of newly cut grass, freshly made coffee, or someone's perfume perhaps?
- Focus on yourself: How does your body feel? Are you warm? Are you cold? Do you feel relaxed?
- Focus on your breathing.
- How did that make you feel?

## Exercise 2

*This is an exercise you can share with the parent so they can learn to feel present while doing a task. They can achieve a relaxing, meditative state by listening to their senses. A good example of a time to try this exercise is while brushing teeth: how often do we think about the movement of the brush, the taste of the toothpaste and which teeth are being brushed? Housework will be another familiar repetitive occupation for parents that is often done automatically while ruminating over other thoughts. The process of the actual job can be overlooked.*

For example, when washing dishes:

- What can you see? (e.g. What colour is the crockery? What is it made of? How many pieces can you count? What foodstuffs need to be washed off? What else can you see?)
- What can you feel? (e.g. What is the temperature of the water? Does the water feel hard or soft? What is the sensation while you are standing at the sink?)
- What can you hear? (e.g. Is the water running fast or slow? What can be heard in the distance?)
- What can you smell? (e.g. What does the washing-up liquid smell of? Are there any other scents in the room?)
- Focus on yourself: How does your body feel? Are you warm? Are you cold? Do you feel relaxed?
- Focus on your breathing.
- How did that make you feel?

For example, rocking your infant to sleep:

- What can you see? (e.g. What is your infant wearing? What colours are their clothes? What else is in the room?)
- What can you feel? (e.g. Can you feel the warmth of your infant? Is there a gentle breeze? Can you feel the infant's weight in your arms?)
- What can you hear? (e.g. Can you hear your infant's breathing? Can you hear your infant's sounds? What other sounds are around you?)
- What can you smell? (e.g. Can you smell the infant's body? Can you smell freshly laundered clothes? Are there other smells in the room?)
- Focus on yourself: How does your body feel? Are you warm? Are you cold? Do you feel relaxed?
- Focus on your breathing.
- How did that make you feel?

## THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

*Practitioners can use this worksheet with parents to help them understand the difference between their thoughts and feelings.*

Often, our thoughts and feelings are confused. We can think negatively which makes us feel negative and, therefore, behave negatively. Changing the way you think is not easy, particularly if you are anxious or feel depressed. However, trying to think positively will make you feel positive and behave positively.

A **thought** is the process of using the mind to think about an idea or something similar. For example: *I think I am a bad parent because my sister can settle my son without any trouble, and he cries even more when I try to settle him. I am not as good a parent as my sister.*

A **feeling** is an emotion, such as anger or happiness. For example: *I feel frustrated because my sister is better at settling my son but also hopeless because I am unable to do it.*

A **behaviour** is how you react. For example: *I will let my sister settle my baby as she is better at it than I am or I will ask my sister for advice.*

Try to think of positive examples, such as.

- I really am a pretty good mother.
- That makes me feel okay, I feel happy about myself.
- I smile and cuddle my baby, and she loves it!

Now think about the statements in the table below and write your answers in the next column – deciding what is a thought, what is a feeling and how that makes you behave.

Statements	What are your thoughts?	How does that make you feel? How do you think you behave when you feel this way?
EXAMPLE What does being a parent mean to you?	<i>I am glad I have the opportunity.</i>	<i>I feel happy and excited.</i> <i>I want to show off my son to everyone.</i>
	What does being a parent mean to you?	

## PARTNER SUPPORT

*A parent's mental health can improve significantly if they have consistent support from their partner. Here are some points that a practitioner might like to discuss with the partner to help them understand how to be supportive.*

- Partners can make a marked difference to wellbeing.
- Mental health conditions must be taken seriously.
- Denying your partner's depression can make the recovery process longer.
- The more that is expected of your partner, the longer the recovery process.

The partner may have worries about saying the wrong thing and may feel that:

- Any attempt to try to say the right thing may be met with contempt.
- If they say they love their partner, they may not be believed.
- If they tell their partner they are a good parent, they may feel they are being patronised.
- If they tell them not to worry, they will 'know' they do not have any idea about how they are feeling.
- If they tell them they should return to work early, they will feel guilty as they feel they should be working harder.

In fact, while anything that might be said will not be perfect, the important thing is that they care and are willing to offer support. Be aware and notice the kinds of things that can trigger anxiety and depression. Mind offers these tips to offer a way forward.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> © Mind. This information is published in full at [mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk)

Recommendations for offering emotional support:

- *Listen. Simply giving someone space to talk, and listening to how they're feeling, can be really helpful in itself. If they're finding it difficult, let them know that you're there when they are ready.*
- *Offer reassurance. Seeking help can feel lonely, and sometimes scary. You can reassure someone by letting them know that they are not alone, and that you will be there to help.*
- *Stay calm. Even though it might be upsetting to hear that someone you care about is distressed, try to stay calm. This will also help your friend or family member feel calmer and show them that they can talk to you openly without upsetting you.*
- *Be patient. You might want to know more details about their thoughts and feelings or want them to get help immediately. But it's important to let them set the pace for seeking support themselves.*
- *Try not to make assumptions. Your perspective might be useful to your friend or family member, but try not to assume that you already know what may have caused their feelings, or what will help.*

Mind also suggest that keeping social contact for the person who is having difficulty is important. This could mean making sure they are still involved in social events and making sure that things feel as normal as possible by still talking about other parts of their lives.

Practitioners should also advise on paths for emergency support for crisis situations.

## WORKSHEET 10

# A REFLECTIVE DIARY FOR PRACTITIONERS

*Try to fill this in each week.*

- How do you feel about your current lifestyle?
  - The positive things

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- The negative things

.....

.....

- What is your work–life balance like?
  - The positive things

.....

.....

- The negative things

.....

.....

- Family life
  - What do you feel is good about your family life?

.....

.....

- What is bad about your family life?  
.....  
.....

- Friends
  - Who are you able to talk to?  
.....  
.....

- How would they be able to help you?  
.....  
.....

#### TICK THE FEELINGS YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED OVER THE PAST WEEK

1	2	3	4	5	6
Happy	Relaxed	Able	Nervous	Unsure	Tearful
Inspired	Calm	Brave	Anxious	Confused	Angry
Hopeful	Content	Assertive	Cautious	Frustrated	Low
Pleased	Proud	Positive	Tired	Irritated	Unloved
Valued	Relieved	Confident	Troubled	Agitated	Cheerful

Make a list of people and organisations who can help you:  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....