

## Maternal Mental Health Innovation Award Application

### **A) Award category:** Innovative Programs in Care

### **B) Overview and objectives:**

Virginia MOMS (**M**aternal **O**utreach and **M**ental health **S**upport) is a comprehensive maternal mental health program that was established at the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in 2017, the only one of its kind in the state. The program integrates psychiatric care, social work and obstetrics care for expectant patients and new moms with complex mental health needs.

The program began as a collaboration among a maternal-fetal medicine specialist, a psychiatrist and a clinical social worker who saw a common thread of untreated mental health conditions among both expectant patients and postpartum moms. Care in the Peripartum Clinic can begin in the early stages of pregnancy. All expectant patients fill out a questionnaire that can identify possible mental health needs. If the results of the screening reveal that a patient might require additional support, the social worker coordinates mental health services tailored to the patient's needs. By embedding psychiatric care into the OB clinic, our patients can be treated and have the tools to maintain mental health during and after pregnancy. Mental health support in the Peripartum Clinic includes sessions with a psychiatrist, support group participation, closer-interval visits and mood surveillance. This unique clinic provides women with the support and tools they need to cope with the challenges of pregnancy and motherhood.

The establishment of this program at VCU allows for a rich clinical experience for our psychiatry and obstetric residents and provides direct access to patients with complex psychiatric issues. The residents and medical students get a collaborative experience across service lines which supports the university's mission of cross departmental collaboration to maximize system efforts. The program allows us to follow the updates guidelines for increased care in the post-partum population.

### **C) Program details:**

- 1) Patients are referred to high risk OB clinic for specialized care either from the community or VCU providers. Regardless of prior psychiatric history, pregnant women are screened with Edinburg postpartum depression scale (EPDS) at the first visit, at 28 weeks, at birth, 6 weeks post-partum and whenever clinically indicated. If women score 10 or above, they are referred to the social worker.
- 2) The social worker triages patients and refers them to the psychiatrist. Because the psychiatrist is embedded in the clinic, we have the capability of seeing them the same day.
- 3) Prior to this clinic, obstetrical patients seeking a new intake with a psychiatrist took 6 -7 months. This program enables us to see patients within 30 days or earlier if acuity necessitates.
- 4) Patients are typically followed during pregnancy and postpartum. After 1 year postpartum, they are either referred back to their psychiatrist in the community or primary care physician if they are stable. If they are not stable, the psychiatrist continues to follow them.
- 5) The OB, psychiatrist and social worker discuss patient care to facilitate appropriate referrals and treatment plan.
- 6) Patients are referred to the postpartum support group, "Getting Better Together", in the same hospital. The group meets biweekly and mothers can bring their newborns and other children .We provide childcare services, food. This is a free service for moms. We have had approximately 20 meetings since beginning in August 2018 and we are ready to start the first Hispanic group.

### **D) Key personnel:**

-Fidelma Rigby MD, Maternal Fetal Medicine

-Janet Abraham MSW, Social Work

-Bushra M.Shah MD; Psychiatrist

-Postpartum support group personnel: maternal fetal medicine, psychiatry and pediatric MD's, obstetrical nurses, prenatal, postpartum, obstetrical and pediatric social workers and nursing students.

**E) Timeline:**

**2013-2016:** Embedding of psychiatric fellows within high risk OB clinic

**2015:** Preliminary data collected to demonstrate need for postpartum psychiatric assistance. PMAD's (perinatal mood and anxiety disorder) literature developed.

**2015:** Received technical expertise from ACOG for the development of assessment screening guidelines

**2015:** Wider implementation of Edinburgh postpartum depression scale

**September 2016:** VCU Maternal Postpartum Depression task force developed

**September 2016:** Preliminary meetings between obstetrics and psychiatric departments regarding the establishment of the OB-psych clinic (Virginia MOMS)

**March 2016:** Joined the Postpartum Support Virginia board of directors

**May 2017:** Conducted a community outreach and education symposium at Lewis Ginter on postpartum depression

**Aug 2017:** OB-psych clinic started

**Jan 2018:** Coordinated a booth at the Women's Health Fair at the Richmond Convention Center for community outreach

**Jan 2018:** Community outreach via WTVR televised show, Virginia Morning

**March 15, 2018:** Program update, Ob/Gyn grand rounds on postpartum depression

**March 2018:** Development of postpartum support group taskforce

**August 2018:** First postpartum support group meets

**May 2019:** Schwartz Rounds -Dialogue with medical community regarding challenges in care for patients in the program

**May 2019:** Panelist at the legislative community forum on postpartum depression hosted by Delegate Robinson

**June 2019:** First Spanish postpartum support group

**June 2019:** Meeting with Delegate Delaney to plan for future collaborative initiative in Virginia

**June 2019:** Invited to attend the official bill signing by Virginia Governor Northam for legislation on perinatal anxiety awareness

**F)Source of initial and sustained funding/support:**

The departments of Obstetrics and Psychiatry collaborated to enable the embedding of a psychiatrist in the obstetric clinic. Funding for the post partum support groups was provided by VCU health.

**G)Length of time in operation:** Aug 2017 to present

**H)Sustainability plans:** We have done much community outreach to make patients and providers aware of the services available and have integrated this as the best practice for our standard of care. We continue to do outreach from the local to the legislative level to improve our funding sources.

**I) Summary results and evidence of impact:**

So far we have seen 111 patients in the ob-psych clinic. Typically new patient appointments with a psychiatrist are 6 -7 months out but using this program, we are able to schedule patients within 30 days. In addition, we have served approximately 100 women in our postpartum peer support groups. And we are about to launch the first Hispanic support group in the state within the next month.

**J) Discussion of scalability:**

As can be seen by our attachments, we are committed to making our resources available to the community at large. Attachments A, B, C give a detailed outline of the support materials we can provide for individuals who desire to implement postpartum support groups in the community. Attachment D is the booklet that we provide to anyone in the community listing the resources available in Richmond and the nation at large. Our final attachment E will take you to our website which will shed additional light on the work we do in this field.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bushra M.Shah M.D., Janet Abraham MSW, Fidelma Rigby M.D.

Attachment E (link)

<https://www.vcuhealth.org/our-services/pregnancy-and-birth/team-and-capabilities/peripartum-clinic>

## Postpartum Support Group for Moms

Do you know the No. 1 complication of pregnancy and childbirth?

It's Anxiety and Depression.

The most successful path to wellness is a combination of:

### Self-Care

**Sleep. Eat. Exercise. Time Off.**

**Sleep.** Getting 4-5 hours of uninterrupted sleep is the most effective, least expensive thing you can do to start feeling better. Make a plan with your partner, friends and family on how they can help you get more sleep. *Note: Sleeping too much or not being able to sleep when the baby sleeps may be signs of depression or anxiety.*

**Eat.** New moms should eat every time the baby eats. Water and a high-protein snack (yogurt, cheese, nuts) are good mini-meals. Family and friends can stock a feeding station for you and baby.

**Exercise.** Light exercise, such as a walk around the block, can have great benefits. The combination of a change of scenery, fresh air, Vitamin D from the sun and endorphins released in the body can positively impact your mood.

**Time off.** No other job is so demanding, requiring being on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. New moms need time off to recharge and rejuvenate, especially if you are feeling overwhelmed. The challenge is to identify and meet those needs, whether it's simply taking a shower, reading the newspaper, or catching up with a friend.

### Social Support

New moms often feel that they want to connect with other new mothers, especially if experiencing anxiety or depression. Peer support groups, such as ours, offer non-judgmental listening, support and encouragement from others experiencing similar feelings.

Social support can also be practical support: providing meals, babysitting, assisting with older siblings, running errands, doing laundry, tidying the house. This type of help can lessen the pressure you may feel.

### Talk Therapy

New moms may need to address topics such as their role as mother, changes in relationships, and communications with partner.

Talking with an objective third party, such as a social worker, psychologist or professional counselor, can help put things in perspective.

Postpartum Support Virginia has compiled a list of mental health professionals who specialize in treating new or expectant mothers experiencing anxiety or depression.

### Medication

Sometimes medication is needed to lessen anxiety or depression. There are several medications commonly used to treat anxiety or depression that are considered safe to use during pregnancy or while breastfeeding. These medications can be prescribed by primary care physicians, obstetricians / gynecologists or psychiatrists.

Postpartum Support Virginia has compiled a list of psychiatrists who specialize in treating new or expectant mothers experiencing anxiety or depression.

## Postpartum Support Group for Moms

**Anxiety and Depression is the No. 1 complication of pregnancy and childbirth.**

Anxiety and depression affect 1 in 7 women during pregnancy or in the first year postpartum. These illnesses are caused by changes in biology, psychology, hormones and environment.

### Predictors and Risk Factors:

#### Biological Factors

#### Mental Health History

- Personal history of mood/anxiety disorder
- Family history of mood/anxiety disorder

#### Reproductive History

- Miscarriage
- Fertility treatments
- Severe premenstrual syndrome
- Difficult pregnancy/labor/delivery
- Hormone changes in pregnancy / postpartum

#### General Health

- Thyroid changes
- Anemia
- Lack of sleep



#### Psychological Factors

#### Personality and Behavior

- Perfectionist tendencies
- Self-esteem issues
- Difficulty with transition

#### Unrealistic / Rigid Expectations

- Pregnancy / labor / delivery
- Motherhood
- Work

#### Relationship and Role Issues

- Partner
- Own mother

#### Breastfeeding

- Expectations, desires, ability
- Weaning

#### Social/Environmental Factors

#### Trauma

- History of childhood trauma
- Domestic violence
- Traumatic labor / delivery

#### Social Changes

- Life change: new home, new job, change in work status, marriage
- Loss or illness of loved one
- Isolation or lack of social support

#### Other Issues

- Baby: health issues, colic, reflux
- Financial stress
- Low income / immigrant status

## Postpartum Support Group for Moms

### Welcome!

**We are glad to have you in this support group.**

Our goal is for all moms to feel comfortable, safe, and supported at our meetings. The guidelines below are intended to help us achieve that goal.

**We are here to provide peer support for moms who are experiencing depression or anxiety during their transition to motherhood.**

We are volunteers from VCU Health and VCU and are here to facilitate the discussion.



**We work to give every mom the opportunity to share her story and ask her questions.**

Occasionally, we may need to interrupt or move the discussion along so that all moms have a chance to share. We will make every effort to return to moms who want more time to finish sharing.

**We hope that you will share your story, however, no one is required to speak.**

We do ask that moms at least share her name and her baby's age.

**We accept all moms and their choices as they are.**

We use positive language and encouragement, we avoid making judgments and criticism. We ask that all moms please do the same.

**We ask moms to keep information shared in this group confidential.**

Moms are welcome to share general information about issues discussed in the group with others, but any names or specific information from the meeting should not be shared.

**We do not share contact information for other moms.**

However, moms are welcome to share contact information with others in the group.

**Leaders occasionally make notes to track discussion issues and attendance.**

The information is confidential. Please let us know if you have more questions about how we maintain confidentiality and protect information.

**You are not alone. You are not to blame. With help, you will be well.**



## Support Group Registration Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Family situation: Partners, children, others in household

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Emergency contact: Name and phone number

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Doctor's information (if pertinent): OB/GYN, Psychiatrist, Therapist, Pediatrician

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Primary symptoms:

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Rate your level of distress at this time:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
None	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Very Severe	Worst					

How did you hear about this support group?

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Additional information you wish to share:

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### Disclaimers:

- PSVa's peer support groups provide emotional support, information, encouragement and resources to attendees.
- PSVa's peer support groups are not therapy groups and are not a substitute for professional medical help.
- PSVa's peer support group discussions are confidential. However, PSVa, its staff, facilitators and volunteers may contact healthcare providers, my emergency contact, and/or family if they are concerned about my safety or the safety of others.
- PSVa will not share contact information with any other organization, except as above.
- PSVa, its staff, facilitators and volunteers are not medical professionals and/or are not acting in the capacity of a medical professional, and do not give medical advice.

Please consult your health care provider for medical advice or if you have questions regarding your health and well-being.

I have read this registration form and agree to these disclaimers.

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Signature

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Date



# Beyond Baby Blues

## A Mother's Guide to Postpartum Depression



**VCU**Health™



# Beyond Baby Blues: A Mother's Guide to Postpartum Depression

There are many changes that can occur during your pregnancy and after delivery. Some women experience mild "baby blues," while others can develop depression, anxiety, low mood, obsessive-compulsive thoughts or psychosis. Although many moms-to-be don't think that they are at risk for these conditions, approximately 15 to 20 percent of all women experience some form of pregnancy-related depression or anxiety. If this happens to you, it is important to know that you are not alone, and that VCU Health is here to help.

Symptoms of postpartum depression might include:

- Feelings of extreme sadness, anger or irritability
- Lack of interest in your baby
- Loss of appetite
- Sleeping too much or not at all
- Fatigue or apathy
- Feelings of hopelessness, guilt and shame
- Poor concentration
- Persistent anxiety
- Serious thoughts of death or suicide

If you experience any of these symptoms, it is very important that you talk to your doctor, midwife or any member of your health care team immediately about what you are feeling.

## Resource Guide for Postpartum Depression (PPD)

There are many resources available to support you on your journey of becoming a parent. This list includes both local and national resources to help mothers and families who may be suffering from postpartum depression and need additional support.

This guide provides phone numbers and links to websites maintained by other entities. References to any entity, product, service or source of information that may be contained in this list should not be considered an endorsement.



## If You Are In Crisis

If you are thinking of harming yourself or your baby, please get help right away. The resources below will connect you immediately with someone who can help.

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

1-800-273-8255

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)  
(se habla Español)

### **Crisis Text Line**

Provides free consultations with trained crisis counselors.

Text: 741741

### **Emergency Police**

911

## **Local Community Service Boards:**

### **Richmond Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA)**

24-hour crisis line

(804) 819-4100 (se habla Español)

### **Chesterfield County Mental Health**

24-hour crisis line

(804) 748-6356

### **Henrico County Mental Health**

24-hour crisis line

(804) 727-8484 (se habla Español)

### **Hanover County Mental Health**

24-hour crisis line

(804) 365-4200

### **Powhatan County Mental Health**

24-hour crisis line

(804) 598-2697

### **Goochland County Mental Health**

24-hour crisis line

(804) 556-3716

## Postpartum Depression Resources

### **Postpartum Support Virginia**

Helps childbearing women in Virginia receive information about perinatal mood and anxiety disorders.

(703) 829-7152

[www.postpartumva.org](http://www.postpartumva.org)

### **Postpartum Support International (PSI)**

Connects moms, dads and families suffering from the effects of mom's PPD with local resources, including counselors, to start on the road to recovery.

1-800-944-4773 (se habla Español)

[www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net)

#### **“Chat With an Expert”**

PSI hosts free weekly live phone sessions, including Wednesday chats for moms. For chat times, find monthly schedules at the following link:

[www.postpartum.net/  
chat-with-an-expert](http://www.postpartum.net/chat-with-an-expert)

Chat Number: 1-800-944-8766

Participant Code: 73162

### **Partners to Parents**

Provides practical tips for new parents and parents-to-be, to help you support one another and reduce your chance of experiencing depression and anxiety.

[www.partnerstoparents.org](http://www.partnerstoparents.org)

### **The Online Postpartum Mood Disorder Support Group**

An online support group for women – as well as their families and friends – who are experiencing mood disorders after giving birth or adopting a baby.

[www.ppdsupportpage.com](http://www.ppdsupportpage.com)

### **The Period of PURPLE Crying®**

Helps parents understand, rather than become frustrated, that baby's crying is a temporary, normal part of every infant's development.

[www.purplecrying.info](http://www.purplecrying.info)

### **Mind Body Pregnancy**

Simplifies the scientific information available on topics of mental health in the important life milestone of pregnancy, the postpartum period and related events.

[www.mindbodypregnancy.com](http://www.mindbodypregnancy.com)

### **Solace for Mothers**

Provides support for women who have experienced childbirth as traumatic, including online forums where mothers can share their stories.

[www.solaceformothers.org](http://www.solaceformothers.org)

### **VCU Department of Psychiatry**

Provides mental health services for women suffering from postpartum depression and anxiety.

(804) 828-2000, press option 2 for outpatient appointments.

## Resources for Fathers / Male Partners

### **Postpartum Dads**

Offers information and resources to help fathers by providing firsthand guidance through the experience of PPD.

[www.postpartumdads.org](http://www.postpartumdads.org)

### **Postpartum Support International**

A free call-in forum for dads to get information and support on PPD.

[www.postpartum.net/get-help/resources-for-fathers](http://www.postpartum.net/get-help/resources-for-fathers)

#### **“Chat With an Expert”**

PSI hosts free weekly live phone sessions, including chats for dads, on the first Monday of each month. For chat times, find monthly schedules at the following link: [www.postpartum.net/chat-with-an-expert](http://www.postpartum.net/chat-with-an-expert)

Chat Number: 1-800-944-8766

Participant Code: 73162

## Help at Home

### **Healthy Families Virginia**

Connects families across the state with supportive home visits designed to work with overburdened families who may be experiencing mental health issues. Services may begin prenatally, or right after the birth of a baby, and are offered voluntarily, intensively and for up to 5 years after the birth of the baby. Accepts Medicaid.

[www.pcav.org/healthy-families](http://www.pcav.org/healthy-families)

### **Postpartum Doulas**

A postpartum doula provides evidence-based information on things such as infant feeding, emotional and physical recovery from birth, mother-baby bonding, infant soothing, and basic newborn care. A postpartum doula is there to help a new family in those first days and weeks after bringing baby home.

[www.doulamatch.net](http://www.doulamatch.net)

[www.richmonddoulas.org](http://www.richmonddoulas.org)

### **The Urban Baby Beginnings Program**

Provides home support, education, prenatal and postpartum resources to families in the underserved communities. Accepts Medicaid.

(833) 782-2229

[www.urbanbabybeginnings.org/](http://www.urbanbabybeginnings.org/)

### **Heart in Home Perinatal/Newborn Home Health Care**

Provides collaborative, convenient, patient-centered perinatal/newborn care within the comfort of the family home.

Accepts Medicaid.

(804) 621-4389

[www.myheartinhome.com](http://www.myheartinhome.com)

### **Pink Newborn Services**

A nationwide placement service of newborn care specialists, overnight newborn care/night nannies, postpartum doulas, certified lactation counselors, sleep specialists, maternity & child sleep consultants, certified eco-maternity/greenproof consultants, parenting educators, and nannies.

(877) 456-7465

[www.pinknewbornservices.com](http://www.pinknewbornservices.com)

## Grief and Loss

### **Full Circle Grief Center**

Provides comprehensive, professional grief support for children, adults, families and communities, integrating a variety of creative ways for them to express their grief, such as art, writing, play therapy, crafting, music and photography. Located in Richmond.  
[www.fullcirclegc.org](http://www.fullcirclegc.org)

### **MISS Foundation**

A volunteer-based organization providing counseling, advocacy, research and education services to families experiencing the death of a child. Offers a listing of grief counselors by city and state.  
[www.missfoundation.org](http://www.missfoundation.org)

### **Compassionate Friends**

Hosts local chapter meetings to provide grief support, in a group setting, for families that have experienced the death of a child.  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

### **StillBirthDay**

Includes resources to support pregnancy loss prior to, during and after birth in any trimester. Provides a listing of Still Birth Doulas by state.  
[www.stillbirthday.com](http://www.stillbirthday.com)

### **VCU Health Hispanic Perinatal Loss Support Group / VCU Health Grupo Hispano de Apoyo de Pérdida Perinatal**

Please call and leave a message for further information.  
(804) 628-1992

## Support for Military Families

### **Operation Special Delivery**

Provides birth doula services to military personnel and their families at a discounted rate.  
[www.operationsspecialdelivery.com](http://www.operationsspecialdelivery.com)

### **Give an Hour**

Provides free mental health care to military families.  
[www.giveanhour.org](http://www.giveanhour.org)

### **Vets4Warriors**

Provides 24/7 confidential, stigma-free peer support by veterans to active duty, National Guard and reserve service members, veterans, retirees and their families/ caregivers.  
(855) 838-8255  
[www.vets4warriors.com](http://www.vets4warriors.com)

### **Mental health support by branch of service:**

#### **Army**

(252) 917-4835

#### **Navy, Marines and Coast Guard**

(360) 682-2346

#### **Air Force**

(702) 588-3804

#### **Army Reserve**

(404) 246-4994

## Intensive Treatment Centers

These intensive, inpatient treatment centers support women suffering from severe psychiatric issues surrounding pregnancy and birth. The treatment centers provide teams of doctors, nurses, psychologists, social workers and other therapists who work together to create individualized treatment plans.

### **The Perinatal Mood Disorders Inpatient Unit at UNC Chapel Hill**

Chapel Hill, North Carolina  
(984) 974-3834

[www.med.unc.edu/psych/wmd/patient\\_care/perinatal-inpatient/](http://www.med.unc.edu/psych/wmd/patient_care/perinatal-inpatient/)

### **Pine Rest Mother-Baby Program**

Grand Rapids, Michigan

1-800-678-5500

[www.pinerest.org/services/mother-baby-program-postpartum-depression-treatment](http://www.pinerest.org/services/mother-baby-program-postpartum-depression-treatment)

### **Women and Infants Day Hospital, Center for Women's Behavioral Health**

Providence, Rhode Island

(401) 453-7955 (se habla Español)

[www.womenandinfants.org/services/behavioral-health/index.cfm](http://www.womenandinfants.org/services/behavioral-health/index.cfm)



## Videos: Real Moms Share Their Struggles with Postpartum Depression

### **Moms Talk About Their Postpartum Depression**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=V64PqXKs02g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V64PqXKs02g)

### **Let's Talk About Postpartum Depression - Lisa Abramson – Tedx SantaCatalina School**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=6glBDRZUAM0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6glBDRZUAM0)

## Books

### ***Post Partum Depression and Anxiety: A Self-Help Guide for Mothers***

by Pacific Post Partum Support Society

### ***Beyond the Blues: A Guide to Understanding and Treating Prenatal and Postpartum Depression***

by Shoshana S. Bennett, PhD and Pec Indman, EdD, MFT

### ***This Isn't What I Expected: Overcoming Postpartum Depression (2nd Edition)***

by Karen Kleiman, MSW, LCSW and Valerie Davis Raskin, MD

### ***The Ghost in the House: Motherhood, Raising Children, and Struggling with Depression***

by Tracy Thompson

### ***Postnatal Depression – The Essential Guide***

by Catherine Burrows

### ***Eyes Without Sparkle: A Journey Through Postnatal Illness***

by Elaine A. Hanzak

### ***Happy Endings, New Beginnings: Navigating Postpartum Disorders***

by Susan Benjamin Feingold, PsyD

### ***Down Came the Rain: My Journey Through Postpartum Depression***

by Brooke Shields

### ***When Baby Brings the Blues: Solutions for Postpartum Depression***

by Ariel Dalfen, MD

### ***The Mother-to-Mother Postpartum Depression Support Book: Real Stories from Women Who Lived Through It and Recovered***

by Sandra Poulin

### ***Mommy Deconstructed: A Postpartum Depression and Anxiety Recovery Guide***

by Christina L. Vanneste

### ***Dropping the Baby and Other Scary Thoughts: Breaking the Cycle of Unwanted Thoughts in Motherhood***

by Karen Kleiman and Amy Wenzel



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