



# POSTPARTUM PSYCHOSIS

## Information for antenatal educators



*It can literally take as little as 5 minutes to facilitate and should be built into the wider discussions around postnatal depression, partner mental health, birth trauma and signposting. I always included it in my antenatal sessions.*

**Midwife**



- A 3-5 minute conversation about postpartum psychosis (PP) with expectant parents could save a woman's life.
- Share balanced information, taking care to explain that PP is rare, help is available, and whilst it can be a frightening experience, women recover.
- Cover the basics: what PP is; how likely it is; what symptoms to look for; who is at risk; how to get help; that you will recover.

# POSTPARTUM PSYCHOSIS

## What information should you give...

Postpartum psychosis (PP) is a rare but serious postnatal mental illness, occurring after about 1-2 in 1000 births.

If you notice:

- Confusion or racing thoughts
- Feeling unusually elated, frightened or tearful
- Unable to or not needing to sleep
- Beliefs that are unusual or concerning to others
- Seeing, hearing or sensing things that others can't

It could be PP - a treatable medical emergency. Same day assessment (ideally within 4 hours) is required.

- Contact your GP, Mental Health Crisis Team, midwife or health visitor urgently, or call NHS 111. Say you are concerned you/your partner is developing postpartum psychosis. Call 999 if you believe anyone is in imminent danger.
- PP can happen to anyone - even people with no previous mental health problems. It affects women of all cultures and backgrounds equally. Women with bipolar disorder or previous PP are at increased risk.
- Women may not know they are unwell. Partners and family should explain what they have noticed, and if this is out of character.
- Symptoms normally begin in the two weeks after birth. They can get worse quickly, or escalate gradually, and can fluctuate in intensity.
- Treatment in a specialist Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) is recommended and may include medication, psychological support and peer support, as well as support caring for the baby.

**Find out more about early signs and symptoms:  
[www.app-network.org/early-symptoms](http://www.app-network.org/early-symptoms)**