Parental Depression and Its Impact on Child and Family Well-Being
Speakers

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Parental Depression

- Depression affects >16 million adults.
- Depression is as common during pregnancy as in the postpartum period.
  - 1 in 7 new mothers
- High rates in:
  - Child welfare (25% in NSCAW)
  - Home visiting (23-57%)
- Less is known about fathers than mothers.
  - 5-10% postpartum depression
  - Higher in low-income samples (18% in Early Head Start)
- Approximately 15.6 million children—1 in 5—live with a parent who is severely depressed.

(Ammerman et al., 2010; NSCAW, 2005; NIMH, 2017; Paulson & Bazemore, 2010; Wisner et al., 2013)
Untreated parental depression can undermine healthy parenting

Compared to their non-depressed peers, mothers who are depressed exhibit more:

- Hostility
- Negative affect
- Less warmth
- Withdrawn, disengaged
- Abusive and neglectful

(Conron et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2012; NSCAW, 2005; IOM & NRC, 2009)
Untreated parental depression can have harmful consequences for children

Compared to children of non-depressed parents, children of depressed parents experience more:

- Behavior problems
- Difficulties coping with stress
- Insecure attachments
- Problems forming healthy relationships
- Academic problems
- Mental health issues
- Physical health issues

There is also evidence of effects on fetal neurobehavioral development.

(Allister et al., 2001; Kinsella & Monk, 2009; DiPietro et al., 1996)
Treatment for parental depression should address impacts on parenting and children

- The focus of treatment often is on the parent’s well-being without attending to the quality of parent-child interactions or child well-being

- Two-generation approaches are optimal

(IOM & NRC, 2009)
Parental depression can impede intervention effectiveness

- Parental depression can negatively impact service delivery and intervention outcomes

- Important to provide service providers (e.g., pediatricians, home visitors, early care and education staff) adequate training on screening, referral, and follow-up, e.g.:
  - Moving Beyond Depression
  - Mamás y Bebés

(Aammerman et al., 2010; Easterbrooks et al., 2013; Muñoz et al., 2007; Stevens et al., 2002)
Thinking systemically about addressing parental depression

- Increase public awareness and decrease stigma

- Early identification through screening

- Training service providers to screen, refer, and follow up

- Two-generational strategies

- Incorporating programs into ongoing service provision

- Integrating and collaborating with mental health partners
Resources


- CDC Feature: Maternal Depression: [https://www.cdc.gov/features/maternal-depression/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/features/maternal-depression/index.html)

- Post-Partum Support International: [www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net)


Thank You and Next Steps

• Download the handouts to learn more. Click on the files in the “Handouts” box on your screen.

• Do you have innovative ideas, questions, or concerns about supporting vulnerable families? Tell us about your work. Send an e-mail to hello@CANTASD.org with “supporting vulnerable families” in the subject line.
Participant Feedback

Thank you for your participation!

How useful was this session?

Additional Comments: hello@CANTASD.org