THE MOTHERS AND BABIES COURSE

A Postpartum Depression Prevention Intervention for Home Visiting Programs
Conceptual Background

• Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
  – Pleasant activities
  – Thoughts
  – Contact with others

• Attachment Theory

• Psychoeducation
Session Format

• There is a standardized format for each of the 12 sessions in the curriculum

• Each session is intended to last 15-20 minutes

• Sessions should (ideally) be conducted every week or every other week

• Sessions should ideally be conducted in person but phone is acceptable
Session Format

• Each topic lists **KEY POINTS**, which are the main messages for the topic.

• Each topic has a **SCRIPT** to guide you when communicating the material for each topic. You do not have to use the script word for word—it is there for you as a roadmap.

• Most topics include **INTERACTIVE LEARNING** activities to help the client understand the concepts, and encourage her to identify examples and situations where she can use and practice the skills in her daily life.

• Each session ends with a **PERSONAL PROJECT**. Introduce the personal project and ask the client to do the activity before the next time you meet.
Introductory Module: Sessions 1 and 2
Introductory Module - Session 1

• Identify common life stressors in participants’ lives, including those following birth of their child.

• Discuss how specific stressors might affect the mother’s emotional health and physical well-being, the mother-baby relationship, and the baby.

• Indicate there are skills to manage stress and that the Mothers and Babies Course will discuss helpful ways to manage stress, specifically via a) pleasant activities, b) modifying thoughts, and c) increasing positive social support.
Introductory Module – Session 2

• Explain concepts of inner and outer reality and how both affect our mood.
  – Inner reality: Thoughts
  – Outer reality: Pleasant activities & contact with others

• Explain the Quick Mood Scale and the importance of monitoring our mood.
  – Participant should use the whole range, not just 1, 5, or 9.
  – Participant should fill out the Quick Mood Scale every day and not all at once at the end of the week.
  – It will feel more natural as she practices it. There will be days when it is hard to decide on an average for their mood.
  – Each person is different in how they complete the Quick Mood Scale.
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**Number of Pleasant Activities**

- Monday: 0
- Tuesday: 0
- Wednesday: 0
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## Quick Mood Scale

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Pleasant Activities Module:
Sessions 3-5
Pleasant Activities Module - Session 3

• Review the Quick Mood Scale and reinforce the purpose.

• Violet and Mary: “story” to help introduce the concept of pleasant activities

• When people do pleasant activities they often feel happier, are more likely to have positive thoughts about their lives, and are more likely to have positive contacts with other people.

• Pleasant activities tend to chain—doing one activity can start a chain so you are more likely to do other pleasant activities
Pleasant Activities Module – Session 4

• Help client identify activities she enjoys doing a) alone, b) with other people, and c) with her baby.

• Pleasant activities can be brief, low/no cost, and part of everyday routines.

• Mothers can do pleasant activities with their babies that can affect both their mood and their babies’ mood.

• Doing pleasant activities affects how you feel and it changes both your outer reality (what you are doing) and inner reality (how you feel).

• Help participants identify obstacles to doing pleasant activities and discuss ways they might overcome these obstacles.

• Discuss problem solving as one way to overcome a roadblock or problem.
Pleasant Activities Module – Session 5

• Discuss whether client completed the pleasant activity they scheduled.
  – Discuss ways they might overcome obstacles, if any existed.
  – Emphasize it is sometimes difficult to complete pleasant activities when they are scheduled, but it is important to not give up on scheduling and doing pleasant activities.

• Help participants identify activities that babies enjoy doing (alone, with mom and/or dad, and with other people/babies).

• Pleasant activities affect the mother-baby relationship by helping mothers have a better mood, improving the baby’s mood and strengthening the mother-baby relationship through shared positive activities.

• Discuss how babies learn by observing and imitating their parents and following what their parents teach them.
Thoughts Module:
Sessions 6-8
Thoughts Module - Session 6

- Violet and Mary: “story” to help introduce the concept of thoughts
- There is a relationship between our thoughts and our mood. Thoughts are part of our inner reality, and our inner reality is related to our mood/emotions.
- We have some control over thoughts, and can manage our inner reality.
- Thoughts are like self talk, like having a conversation with ourselves.
- Helpful thoughts help improve mood. Harmful thoughts worsen mood.
- Both helpful and harmful thoughts affect us emotionally and physically and affect our inner reality.
- Identifying harmful and helpful thoughts about your pregnancy and how they affect your mood is an important step toward improving your mood.
Thoughts Module – Session 7

- There are several harmful thought patterns that people have; four specific harmful thought patterns are: 1) all or nothing thinking, 2) overgeneralization, 3) blaming oneself, and 4) negative fortune telling.
- There are several strategies (or “antidotes”) for changing harmful thoughts.
- Four specific strategies are presented; not everybody will find each of them equally useful, but they all can be effective in changing harmful thoughts.

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<th>Harmful Thought Patterns</th>
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Thoughts Module – Session 8

• Children learn patterns of thinking from their parents.

• Mothers play an important role in shaping their babies’ thoughts and inner reality, which can have an impact on both the mother’s and the baby’s mood.

• Shaping your future by doing things that will lead to achieving your goals will help shape your future and also help to shape your child’s future.

• It is important to also envision the type of future you’d like for your child so you can plan for your baby’s ideal future.
Contact with Others Module: Sessions 9-11
Contact with Others Module - Session 9

• Violet and Mary: “story” to help introduce the concept of contact with others
• Contact with others is part of our outer reality.
• There is a reciprocal relationship between contact with others and one’s mood.
• Emphasize that we can break the cycle between negative mood and fewer positive contacts by either reducing negative or harmful contacts with others or increasing positive or helpful contacts with others
Contact with Others Module – Session 10

• Identify participant’s current support system, while introducing four categories of supportive individuals: 1) people closest to me, 2) close friends, 3) friends, and 4) acquaintances

• Examine how the current support system provides support in four different ways: 1) practical support, 2) advice/information, 3) companionships, and 4) emotional support

• Emphasize that people can make choices about who they spend time with (i.e., positive contacts vs. negative contacts)

• Emphasize the importance of expanding one’s support network

• Discuss how doing pleasant activities is one way of expanding one’s support network
Contact with Others Module – Session 11

• Communication style can affect mood as well as relationships with others.
• There are three main types of communication styles: aggressive, assertive, and passive; using an assertive style can increase the chance that one’s needs will be met.
• There are obstacles to using an assertive communication style that may limit a client’s willingness to use assertive communication
• Role changes such as having a new baby affect relationships you have with other people, and often these changes can be stressful
Course Review & Planning for the Future - Session 12

• Review main concepts: pleasant activities, thoughts, and contacts with others all can affect one’s mood.
• We can make choices to have a healthier reality (both inner and outer), which can lead to a healthier mood.
• Encourage client to keep Mothers and Babies workbook for future reference.
• Encourage client to continue using strategies that have been helpful and try out some of the skills she hasn’t tried yet.
• Emphasize that the Mothers and Babies skills are useful even as one’s baby gets older.
Implementation & Supervision

• Each home visitor that is trained will be asked to implement Mothers and Babies with about 4-5 clients
• Home visitors will receive supervision/technical assistance from the clinician/trainer to help address any questions related to MB content and MB implementation
• All materials are available for free download: www.mothersandbabiesprogram.org
Contact Information

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