

## **Mothers and Babies Course Development, Effectiveness Research, and Dissemination**

### **Mothers and Babies Course Development**

The Mothers and Babies Course<sup>1,2</sup> (MB Course) is a postpartum depression prevention intervention that promotes healthy mood management by teaching pregnant women and new mothers how to effectively respond to stress in their lives through increasing the frequency of thoughts and behaviors that lead to positive mood states. Based on principles of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), attachment theory, mindfulness practice, and psychoeducation, the MB Course can be implemented by clinic- or community-based providers from a variety of educational and professional backgrounds, and can be delivered as a group or one-on-one intervention in a variety of settings where pregnant women access services (e.g. home visiting programs, prenatal clinics, pediatric care, WIC programs, County Health Departments, etc.).

### **Mothers and Babies Course Effectiveness**

The MB Course is included in SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices. Four randomized controlled trials (RCTs) have provided evidence of the efficacy of the MB Course delivered in group format.<sup>3-10</sup> These RCTs have demonstrated that the MB Course, when led by a trained mental health professional (e.g., clinical social workers), leads to fewer new cases of clinical depression, reductions in depressive symptoms, decreased perceived stress, improved coping and mood management, as well as better quality of parent-child interactions. Adapted into an individual intervention by Tandon and colleagues, MB 1-on-1 presents the same content over a series of brief sessions that can be incorporated into other provider-client visits, such as home visitation, health education, or individual counseling.<sup>11</sup> A recent RCT examining the effectiveness of the MB Course delivered 1-on-1 in home visitation, by home visitors, found that women who received MB 1-on-1 in conjunction with home visits experienced significant reductions in depression and anxiety symptoms, as well as improved perceived social support, compared with women who received usual home visits without MB.<sup>12</sup> Current studies are underway examining innovations of a text messaging enhancement, and a companion curriculum to address paternal mental health and increase family support during this critical time. The US Preventive Services Task Force recently published a recommendation to provide counseling interventions for women at risk for perinatal depression, and highlighted Mothers & Babies as an exemplary evidence-based cognitive-behavioral intervention for this population.<sup>13</sup>

### **Mothers and Babies Course Dissemination**

Over the past five years the Mothers & Babies Research Team at Northwestern University's Institute for Public Health and Medicine, led by Dr. Darius Tandon, has developed the MB Expansion program to disseminate the Mothers & Babies intervention among health and human service organizations across the country, to maximize the public health impact of this effective preventive perinatal mental health intervention. Our training model includes in-person training followed by implementation support during the initial phase of intervention delivery, as well as implementation evaluation to inform ongoing sustainment of the MB intervention. The MB Expansion team at Northwestern University is the only provider of MB training and implementation support as a publicly available service, outside the context of specific research project partnerships and as such, are the sole source of MB intervention training and implementation consultation.

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