



# Postnatal Depression & Stigma

## What's the issue?



- 1 in 10 women will experience Post Natal Depression
- In a survey of 1500 women, 30% had never told a health professional how they were feeling. 18% of these were not completely truthful about how they were feeling.
- A Netmums survey of over 4,000 women, showed that 29% of women surveyed had not been asked about emotional or mental health by their GP at their 6–8-week antenatal review

### Case Study | What happened to me

I had my first daughter when I was 19, I felt sad in the first few days of having my daughter and was very weepy. I assumed that this was the 'Baby blues. Over weeks & months, this continued to be a problem for me. I thought about reaching out to my Health Visitor for help but on her second visit to my home, her advice to me was "you don't have to dress your daughter in pink just because she's a girl you know". She did not ask me anything about how I was feeling emotionally. Looking back now there were many incidents that stick out to me where professionals made me feel insecure, judged, and scared to ask for help. An example of this was when I was at my 6-week review, and as a young, insecure 19-year-old I was very nervous about attending.

I was brought into the room by a nurse, told to strip naked on the bottom half and then asked to wait while she left the room to speak to a colleague. She had not given me anything to cover over myself and I was left to sit there half naked. I did not reach out for help at this point, for years I felt depressed and suffered from anxiety. At 24 I went to see my GP, determined this time I would get help. I was told I had not booked the correct appointment to talk about this and was told to take a questionnaire and book an appropriate time. I didn't!

**“I was scared my baby would be taken away”**

## How did this make me feel?

I felt scared that if I spoke out and was honest about how I was feeling that my daughter would be taken away from me. I felt judged by society as well as health professionals. I felt alone and that there was nowhere I could go for support.

## Did I feel supported and how?

No, I did not feel supported by my partner, my family or professionals. The self-stigma I felt that I was not a good enough mom and was failing my daughter seemed to be reinforced by those around me. In the numerous visits I had with health professionals, nobody asked how I was feeling. It seemed to focus on the fact that I was a young mom.

**“If someone had of asked me, I would have reached out for help”**

## How could it have been different?

I honestly believe that if one health professional had taken the time to sit and ask me how I was feeling and seemed like they wanted to listen to me that I would have started to talk about how I was feeling emotionally.

## What do you think people can do to help?

- Listen. Be supportive. Ask how people are feeling.
- Don't judge people. Remember you should not put your own personal beliefs before your clients/patients/service users.
- Think about what you are saying, could what you are saying be taken offensively?
- Remember your nonverbal communication, 55% of communication is non-verbal.
- Encourage social activities, and help people find local groups which may be suitable/helpful for them

## Need to talk?



**Birmingham Mind 24/7 Helpline**  
**0121 262 3555**

Our Helpline provides advice and information to those experiencing a mental health crisis or anyone seeking wellbeing support



**NCT Helpline**  
**0300 330 0700**

9am – 5pm  
Monday – Friday



**Association for Post Natal Illness Helpline**  
**0207 386 0868**

10am – 2pm  
Monday to Friday  
email [info@apni.org](mailto:info@apni.org)



**Acacia Family Support**  
**0121 301 5990**

9am – 5pm  
Monday – Friday

Pre and postnatal depression support services



**The Birmingham Mind Associates group, Formally, Time to Change, has been a growing movement of people changing how we all think and act about mental health problems.**

**The Birmingham Time to Change Hub was set up in 2019 is an alliance group made up from people with lived experience, mental health professionals and the local community to end the stigma and discrimination that exists around mental health problems.**

**Its aims have been to:**

- Improve the public attitudes and behaviour towards people with mental health problems throughout Birmingham.**
- Reducing the discrimination that people with mental health problems report in their personal relationships, their social lives, and at work**
- Making sure even more people with mental health problems are empowered to take action to challenge stigma and discrimination in their communities, in workplaces, and online.**

**The hub is currently hosted by Birmingham Mind. It is led by people with lived experience and governed through a Project Management Committee made up of representatives from across the multiple stakeholders.**



**0121 262 3555**



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