

Mental Health and My Baby

How does my Mental Health affect my baby?

Pregnancy and the first few months after birth can be full of joy, excitement in creating that integral sense of connection. However, for a lot of new parents it can come with challenges and for many the start of a new journey.

When new parents are struggling with daily tasks and their own sense of wellbeing and trying to find the time for self-care it can affect a baby's growth and development. All parents and children deserve the support they need for their mental health and wellbeing. It's never too early to seek out services when you feel you or your child needs them.

Your baby's mental health begins at conception

Just as nutrition in pregnancy contributes to a baby's growth, your child is also affected by your experience to stress in pregnancy. Your baby responds to stress even while in utero, by a hormone called cortisol which passes through the placenta. This hormone can lead to a baby having a higher stress response as they grow. Therefore, it is never too early to access supports for your mental health and your baby. This can help both mom and baby as they grow together through the journey of life.

Making Connections

The experiences you share with your baby create the base for their brain development into adulthood. It may seem there is not a lot of brain development in a child that has not yet learned to walk or talk, but there is fast and important brain development taking place from the moment they take their first breath.

Here are some tips to think about while making connections with your baby:

Noticing when your child is in distress: This will make your baby feel safe and secure. It will also help your child learn appropriate behaviour and connecting relationships as they grow and develop.

Responding positively to your child: When your baby smiles and coos at you, coo and smile back at them. When your baby is expressing an emotion (crying, laughing, scared) respond in a positive way. Your baby counts on you to help in navigating the world of emotions.

Self-Care: Making sure caregivers are taking care of themselves is a huge factor. If you are having a hard time smiling it will be hard to smile and create connections with your baby.

Local Supports

CMHA Parry Sound
Doctor
Friends and Family
Midwives of Georgian Bay
Hands Family Help Network
Health Unit

Additional Supports

<https://www.imhpromotion.ca/About-Us>
<https://cmho.org/>
Mental Health helpline:
1-833-456-4566
Kid's helpline:
1-800-668-6868



Did you know?

From the moment your child is born he/she is capable of making over a million brain cell connections every second.

Self-Care Tips for New Moms

Take a nap
Go for a walk
Take a bath
Go to the gym
Read a book
Someone else cook

