



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**
Program Topic : **Maternal Mental Health (Extra Care)**

Guidelines to the presenter

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion rather than telling people what to do.
- Encourage people to seek further information
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.

Topic:

Maternal Mental Health

Objectives

- To build understanding and awareness of Maternal mental health issues
- To highlight methods of support for mothers and their mental health
- To underline how mental health issues can be recognized and appropriate steps taken

Introduction

On this show, we celebrate the fact that you are the most important person in your child' life. You have the power to give your child the best possible start in life and it doesn't have to cost you a cent.

Many mothers experience mental distress such as anxiety and depression around the time of their pregnancies. Mental distress and emotional stress is not the fault of the mother. It is very common around pregnancy. It is normal to feel worried, tearful, and

unhappy, especially when there are many problems you have to face. Today we talk about some of the issues that mothers face and how we can deal with them to ensure good maternal mental health, helping you to feel better and happier during a time when things don't seem to be working out.

Questions	Facts/Information
<p>1. <i>Pregnancy in the early months and after the child is born can be an emotional and stressful time for mothers and carers of children. Do many women struggle with emotional stress around pregnancy?</i></p>	<p>Maternal mental illnesses, particularly common mental disorders such as depression and anxiety, are widespread in low-income and informal settings South African levels of maternal mental illness are higher than developed countries and other developing states, so yes, many women do struggle.</p>
<p>2. <i>Why do women struggle with emotional stress?</i></p>	<p>Many hormones affect the mother. Worry and concern around their child. Poverty and stress about caring for the child, like providing for the child, all affect the mother. Remember emotional stress is very common around pregnancy. It is not the mother's fault. It is common to feel worried, tearful, and unhappy, especially when there are many problems you have to face. IMPORTANT TO STRESS IT is not the women's Fault!</p>
<p>3. <i>I am sure it is very difficult time for mothers and carers of new babies, but why is this a problem?</i></p>	<p>The emotional stress experienced during pregnancy, and in the early months of motherhood, can have a negative effect on some mothers and carers and can sometimes result in maternal depression. Depression is a mental illness</p>

<p>4. <i>What is a mental illness?</i></p>	<p>Mental illness is a general term used to refer to any psychological or emotional disorder, illness or condition which prevents a person from performing 'normally'. Mental illness can disrupt a person's thoughts, emotions or behaviour.</p>
<p>5. <i>What is the difference between mental illness and mental distress?</i></p>	<p>The term mental illness is used when a person has a diagnosable mental condition. The term mental disorder may also be used, when it is clear that a person is experiencing some sort of mental suffering, the more general term used is mental distress.</p> <p>For example, a mother may be mentally distressed about her baby being in hospital, but she does not necessarily have a mental illness.</p>
<p>6. <i>Is mental illness common in pregnancy?</i></p>	<p>Pregnancy and the postnatal period is a psychologically distressing time for many women, particularly those living in poverty, or with violence, abuse or HIV/AIDS. The burden of maternal mental illness (mental illness during and after pregnancy) in low and middle-income countries is high.</p> <p>In South Africa, nearly half of poor pregnant women experience depression, anxiety or other mental illnesses. This is three times higher than in developed countries. It is also significantly higher than the rate in other developing countries such as Nigeria or Uganda.</p>
<p>7. <i>What effect can this depression have on mothers and children?</i></p>	<p>Infants of mothers with depressive symptoms can experience stunting- those</p>

<p>8. <i>If so many women suffer from this, why don't they try and get help?</i></p> <p>Question to parent/caregiver/audience: Are you experiencing difficulty where you feel like you just cannot cope. Call us in the studio and let us know what you are feeling</p> <p>9. <i>What would you encourage pregnant women and mothers to do to look after themselves and ensure they stay happy and healthy?</i></p> <p>10. <i>Are there some things you should say to pregnant women and mothers to reassure them?</i></p>	<p>with mothers with depressive symptoms had a greater risk of being stunted than infants of mothers with few symptoms. Children of depressed mothers are more likely to be malnourished. Maternal mental illness has been found to have a detrimental impact on a woman's ability to care optimally for her child and thus affect brain development.</p> <p>Different cultures may have different beliefs about mental illness which could stop them from getting help. Shame and guilt may stem from the mental health problem itself or from society's responses. This stigma makes it difficult for mothers to make use of services effectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talking about your feelings and troubles to trusted health workers, family, friends, or community members can help you feel healthier. - Take time to rest and do an activity you enjoy. Your baby knows you very well and learns about the world through you - You are not alone, some mothers feel troubled and guilty for feeling unhappy during their pregnancy.
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<p><i>11. Should you talk to others about things that are worrying you?</i></p> <p><i>12. What can we do as friends or family to support mothers and to assist pregnant moms and new mothers?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mental distress is not the fault of the mother. - Remember emotional stress is very common around pregnancy. It is not your fault. <p>As many mothers feel emotional stress, you may be able to share your feelings with those you know and help each other.</p> <p>Provide a supportive ear to those who are pregnant or looking after young children. Ask how they are doing. Offer to help and support. Ensure that they get some help and a break from caring for their children if possible (offer to look after their child for a little while). With the correct social and emotional support, mothers can feel better. Healthy social and psychological support may include counselling, help from a social worker, or a family member, and can have a positive effect on reducing emotional stress</p>

<p>Conclusion</p>
<p>With the correct social and emotional support, mothers can feel better. Talking about your feelings and troubles to trusted health workers, family, friends, or community members can help you feel healthier. Remember your child is experiencing what you are experiencing.</p>
<p>Learning outcomes</p>
<p>After listening to this show the audience should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be aware of the potential maternal health issues and their risks - Understand the importance of support to pregnant moms and mothers/ carers

- Understand that mothers are not to blame for feeling stressed or depressed
- Know that simple things like talking to people such as your healthcare worker about your problems or taking some time to rest can help.