



## Depression Self-Care Action Plan

Patient \_\_\_\_\_

Physician/NP/PA \_\_\_\_\_

Clinic \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_



Depression is treatable!

**Choose one area and add other areas as you begin to feel better.**



### 1. Stay active.

- Make time every day to do some physical activity such as walking for 10 or 20 minutes or dancing to a favorite song.

Every day during the next week, I will spend at least \_\_\_\_\_ minutes doing \_\_\_\_\_



### 2. Do something that you think is fun each day.

- Even though you may need to work a little more at having fun, try doing something that has always been fun such as a hobby or listening to music or watching a favorite video or TV show.

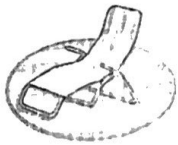
Every day during the next week, I will spend at least \_\_\_\_\_ minutes doing \_\_\_\_\_



### 3. Spend time with people who help or support you.

- When you are feeling down, it is easy to avoid people, but you should not be alone all the time. Choose people who you can talk to or who can do your activities with you. Talk to them about how you feel. If you can't talk about it, that's okay.

During the week I will make contact for at least \_\_\_\_\_ minutes with \_\_\_\_\_ (name), doing or talking about \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (name), doing or talking about \_\_\_\_\_



### 4. Relaxing

- For many people with depression, it is hard to stop feeling sad or having unhappy thoughts. Physical activity can help and so can learning to relax. Things like slow deep breathing, saying comforting quiet things to yourself, taking a warm bath, or sitting and concentrating on relaxing one leg and one arm at a time can help.

Every day during the next week, I will practice relaxing at least \_\_\_\_\_ times for at least \_\_\_\_\_ minutes each time.

### 5. Set simple goals.

- Do not expect too much too soon. Do simple things like reading only a few pages of a magazine, or make one bed or fix a cup of tea or cocoa. Delay big decisions until you are feeling better. Give yourself credit for each thing you do and break work into small steps.

What I want to do is \_\_\_\_\_

Step 1; \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_

How likely are you to do the above things during the next week?

Very likely

Maybe

Unsure

Not very likely

Adapted from Ted Amann, RN C..



# Action Plan for Depression and Anxiety Around Pregnancy

Having a baby brings a mix of emotions, including feeling sad and feeling overwhelmed. Many women experience deeper signs of depression and anxiety before and after birth. Be prepared. Watch for the signs.

## If you...

- Feel like you just aren't yourself
- Have trouble managing your emotions
- Feel overwhelmed but are still able to care for yourself and your baby

## You may be experiencing mood swings that happen to many pregnant women and new moms.

These feelings typically go away after a couple of weeks.

- Take special care of yourself. Get your partner to watch the baby, get a babysitter, or team up with another mom to share child care so that you can rest and exercise.
- Continue to watch for the signs of depression and anxiety in the yellow and red sections below. If things get worse, find someone to talk to. Talk to a health care provider if you feel unsure.

## If you...

- Have feelings of intense anxiety that hit with no warning
- Feel foggy and have difficulty completing tasks
- Feel "robotic," like you are just going through the motions
- Have little interest in things that you used to enjoy
- Feel very anxious around the baby and your other children
- Have scary, upsetting thoughts that don't go away
- Feel guilty and feel like you are failing at motherhood

## You may be experiencing postpartum depression and anxiety.

These feelings will not go away on their own.

- Get help. Contact your health care provider or visit a clinic.
- Call Postpartum Support International at 1-800-944-4PPD (4773) to speak to a volunteer who can provide support and resources in your area.
- Talk to your partner, family, and friends about these feelings so they can help you.

## If you...

- Feel hopeless and total despair
- Feel out of touch with reality (you may see or hear things that other people don't)
- Feel that you may hurt yourself or your baby

## Get help now!

- Call 9-1-1 for immediate help.
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for free and confidential emotional support—they talk about more than suicide.
- Call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357) for 24-hour free and confidential mental health information, treatment, and recovery services referral in English and Spanish.

## Depression and Anxiety Happen. Getting Help Matters.

To learn more, visit [nichd.nih.gov/MaternalMentalHealth](http://nichd.nih.gov/MaternalMentalHealth).  
To find a mental health provider in your area, call 1-800-662-HELP (4357).



Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute  
of Child Health and Human Development

