



# Mentoring Mothers

## MENTORING\*EDUCATION\*CONSULTATION\* SUPPORT\*RESOURCES

Below are suggestions for addressing perinatal emotional issues, which may provide ideas for self-help strategies or other treatment options. Please note that suggestions are not a substitute for treatment and some suggestions may require you to consult with a qualified professional.

### ➤ **Address physical factors:**

- Be under the care of a trusted medical professional
  - Conventional medical and integrative/alternative/complementary medical approaches have been effective.
  - Integrative/alternative/complementary medical approaches include: osteopathy; acupuncture; acupressure; herbal medicine; naturopaths; chiropractic; homeopathy; reflexology; applied kinesiology and more.
  - A medical practitioner who emphasizes functional medicine can be helpful in addressing medical issues that have not responded to conventional treatments.
- Address nutritional depletion:
  - Target deficiencies and get adequate nutritional support
  - Detoxify the body: cleansing programs.
  - Make dietary changes that help alleviate stress, support mood, and promote health.
  - Nutritional supplements (vitamins, fatty acids, amino acid therapy).
- Make changes to improve sleep (nutritional methods, environmental changes, stress reduction, mediation, sleep rituals, enlisting partner's assistance, night time doula)
- Address pain issues and get effective pain management.
- Psychiatric medications and/or hormones
- Exercise and core training programs
- Yoga
- Massage

### ➤ **Address the practical and sociocultural:**

- Cultivate supports that provide the assistance you need: practical, social, psychological, medical, spiritual. May require being mindful of opening yourself to asking for and using supports.
- Limit or avoid interactions with people and groups that are not supportive.
- Utilize professional supportive services: doula, housekeeping, personal assistance (errands, laundry, meals, shopping), babysitting, delivery and internet services.
- Develop a daily rhythm that works for you. It may be more flexible or more structured but works if it provides support, clarity, and reduces stress.
- Get organized. Note your daily stressors and how a more organized system can reduce its stress. Personal organizers can be helpful.
- Network and share information re: supports and services.
- Mother's groups; mother's clubs and other support groups.
- Share the burden: collaborate with parents (meals; babysitting; errands).
- Practice good time management.
- Delegate



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### ➤ **Address birth and infant factors:**

- Notice your feelings and reactions to your pregnancy and birth experience and note the intensity of your reactions. Reactions that persist tend to respond better to professional treatment.
- Concentrate on learning more about infant and child development rather than a particular parenting method or strategy and include your spouse/partner.
- Be discriminating about what you read and consider how attuned it is to you and your baby.
- Incorporate touch, infant massage, holding, gazing, and sensory contact to promote emotional regulation for you and your baby.
- Practice mindfulness (especially non-judgment) in interactions with your child as you learn about each other, and learn to relate to and adjust to each other's patterns.

### ➤ **Address psychological, emotional, and spiritual factors:**

- Get to know and stay in relationship with your inner and outer world. Cultivating more self-awareness and self-understanding encourages more conscious and effective life choices.
- Protect what is sacred in your life especially within your self and your primary relationships.
- Embrace a mindful attitude that is conscious of being; seeks and honors meaning; and attends to wholeness rather than perfection.
- Connect with healthy relationships. Support sources of connection within your self and others. May include social and solitary pursuits and connections with the “non-personal” world, including nature, animals, creative, and meaningful endeavors.
- Be particularly mindful of emotions and how you struggle with emotional material, including emotional triggers from the past, especially from traumatic issues or painful childhood issues so you can better address them within yourself, your partner, and child.
- Work with emotional issues by addressing them through a combination of the creative expressive arts and journal work. Expressing issues through the arts then putting it into words can be especially powerful. Including a trusted confidant can enhance healing.
- Develop your empathy: become invested in understanding; note what is expressed on a variety of levels—verbally, nonverbally, somatically, metaphorically; listen to content (what is said) and process (how it is said). Requires self examination especially critical and judgmental parts
- Develop symbolic thinking. Practice divergent thinking--ask, “what else might this be?” regularly.
- Stay in contact with positive, support figures and mentors from the past.
- Develop effective stress management and self-care practices.
- Connect with beauty.
- Honor your creative imagination and connect with creative outlets.
- Connect with spiritual supports and meaningful spiritual practices.
- Engage in rituals and develop traditions
- Altruistic activity (which is different from care giving)
- Meditation practices
- Breathing exercises. Visualization and imagery
- Dreams and dreamwork
- Body-work (Reiki; Healing Touch; Rolfing; etc.)
- Art therapy and expressive art approaches
- Psychotherapy: A range of effective modalities from brief, solution, and symptom focused approaches to intensive, long-term, depth-oriented psychotherapy or psychoanalysis.
- For more information: [www.helenmarlophd.com](http://www.helenmarlophd.com)
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