

# Perinatal Mental Health in Native American Women

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# Overview

Historical Context

Adjustment vs Condition

How do Mood Disorders  
Present?

Trauma

Grief

Treatment

Resources



# Historical Context

Colonization of Pregnancy and Birth

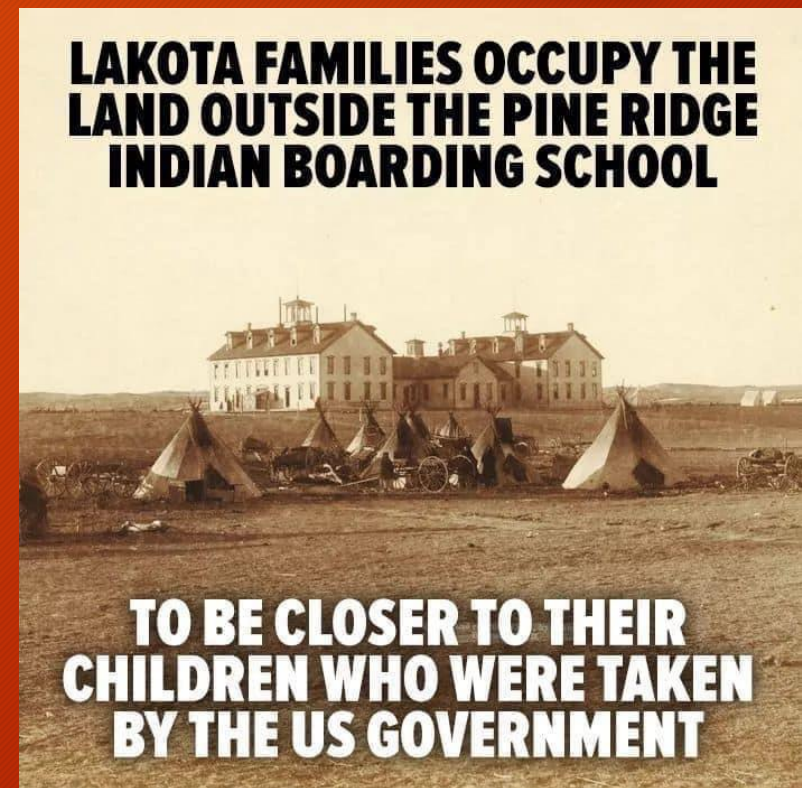
Moon Lodge

Village/clan

Tunwin

House outside of circle

Emotion is Sacred



**LAKOTA FAMILIES OCCUPY THE  
LAND OUTSIDE THE PINE RIDGE  
INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL**

**TO BE CLOSER TO THEIR  
CHILDREN WHO WERE TAKEN  
BY THE US GOVERNMENT**

# Adjustment vs Condition

## \* Jess as a diagnostician

- The *DSM-5* defines adjustment disorder as “the presence of emotional or behavioral symptoms in response to an identifiable stressor(s) occurring within 3 months of the onset of the stressor(s)” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)
- Public Health Perspective

“You look stressed”

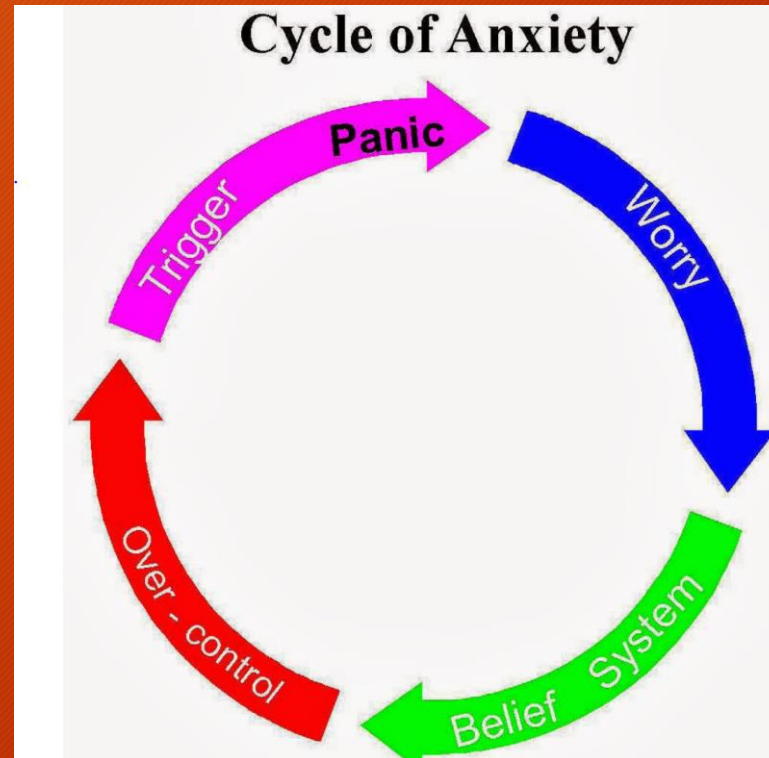
Me: “Thanks, it’s probably all the stress”



# How do mood disorders present - anxiety

Anxiety, Depression, OCD, PTSD,  
Psychosis - More than Two Weeks

- Anxiety
- Constant worry “worrier”, over responsible, never resting
- Feeling that something bad is going to happen
- Racing thoughts
- Disturbances of sleep and appetite
- Inability to sit still
- Physical symptoms like dizziness, hot flashes, and nausea
- Panic Attacks



# How Mood Disorders Present - Depression

Feelings of anger or irritability

Lack of interest in the baby

Social withdrawal

Pain

Appetite and sleep disturbance, no energy, tired

Crying and sadness

Feelings of guilt, shame or hopelessness

Loss of interest, joy or pleasure in things you used to enjoy

Possible thoughts of harming the baby or yourself

“Not Myself”

When somebody asks me how I'm doing, but I also don't want them to feel sorry for me



Up to 12% of women, 18% of NA women

## Predictors

- past history of depression
- history of physical or sexual abuse
- unplanned/unwanted pregnancy
- stressful life events
- lack of social and financial support
- intimate partner violence
- pregestational or gestational diabetes
- complications during pregnancy (e.g., hyperemesis, premature contractions)
- (AHRQ, 2019)

# Trauma

Circumstances of pregnancy or birth can be traumatic OR trigger previous trauma

Help starts with consent, respect, acknowledgement

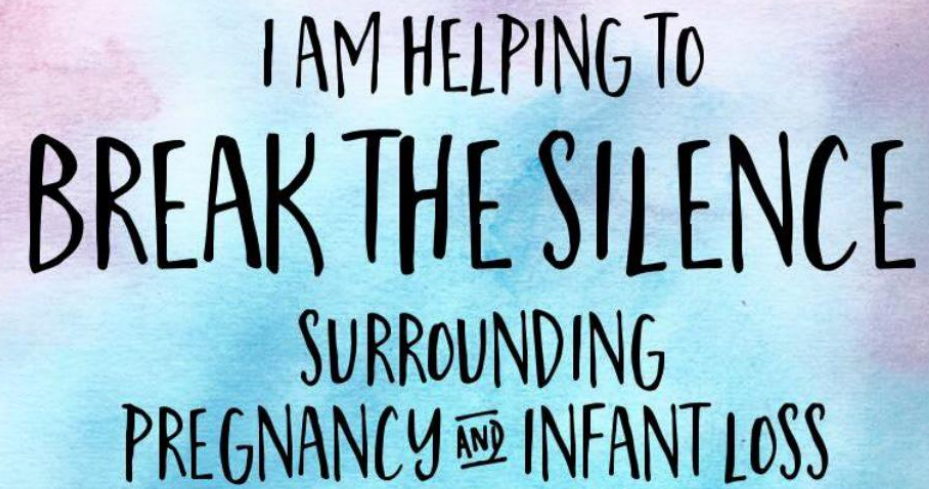


# Grief

Family grief

Loss of a baby

Historical Grief

A rectangular graphic with a watercolor background in shades of light blue, purple, and pink. The text is written in a black, hand-drawn, sans-serif font. The message is centered and reads: "I AM HELPING TO BREAK THE SILENCE SURROUNDING PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS".

I AM HELPING TO  
BREAK THE SILENCE  
SURROUNDING  
PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS



# Treatment

Social Support - Family, community, family of choice, support groups, Home visits

Channel the sacred- gardening, art, music, study, nature

Focus on health and wellness— exercise, nutrition, meditation (Calm app)

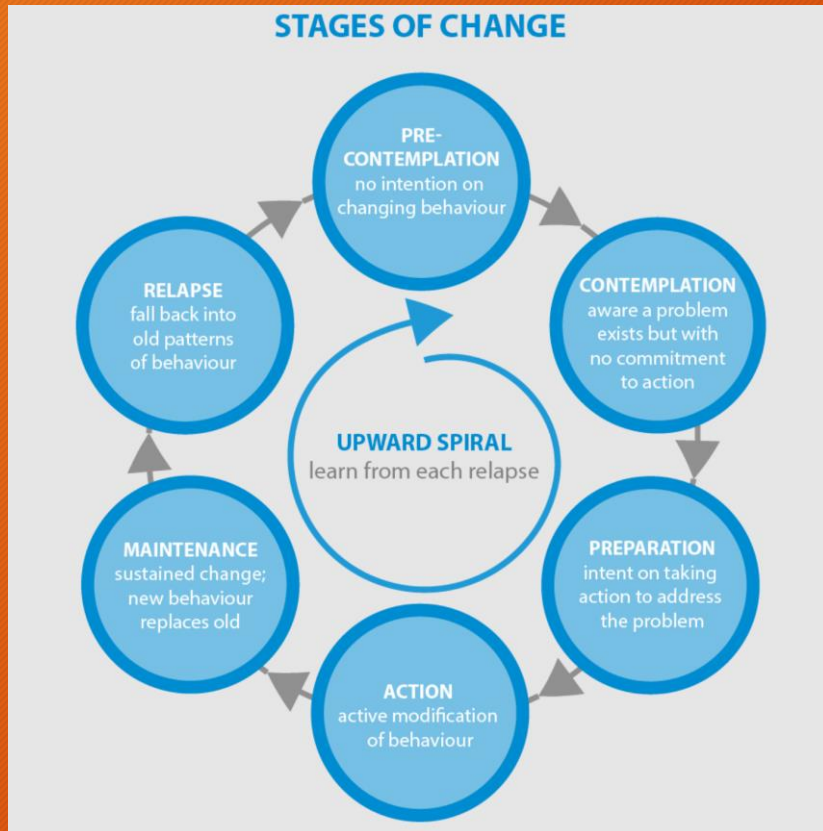
Spiritual support

Mental health counseling/Therapy (telehealth)

Medications with caution



# Motivational Interviewing



- Motivational interviewing is an empathic patient-centered counseling approach for increasing readiness by resolving ambivalence about behavior change (Miller and Rollnick 1991).
- [Motivational Interventions in Prenatal Clinics \(nih.gov\)](http://nih.gov)

# Resources

- [New Mom Mental Health Checklist.pdf](#)
- [POSTPARTUM PROGRESS | postpartum depression and postpartum anxiety help for moms](#)
- [Postpartum Support International - PSI](#)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mom's age: \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like to talk to you about the stress I've been having since I had my baby. Because I'm exhausted, overwhelmed & struggling, this is the best way for me to make sure you know what is going on with me, and that I might need your help. I think I might have (Mom, check any that may apply):

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Postpartum depression (PPD) | <input type="checkbox"/> Postpartum psychosis                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Bipolar disorder or mania                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Postpartum anxiety or OCD   | <input type="checkbox"/> Postpartum PTSD (post-traumatic stress) | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure; I just know something isn't right |

Here are some of the recognized symptoms of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders that I have been having (Mom, check any that apply to you):

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can't sleep, even when my baby is sleeping.   | <input type="checkbox"/> My thoughts are racing. I can't sit still.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have lost my appetite.  | <input type="checkbox"/> I feel like the only way to make myself feel better is by using alcohol, prescription drugs or other substances.                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel sad. I have been crying a lot for no reason.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes I wonder if my baby or my family would be better off without me.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am feeling worried or anxious most of the time.   | <input type="checkbox"/> I've been having physical symptoms that are not normal for me (for example: migraines, back aches, stomach aches, shortness of breath, panic attacks) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am having anger or rage that is not normal for me.  | <input type="checkbox"/> I have had serious thoughts of hurting myself.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel numb or disconnected from my life. I can't enjoy the things I used to.   | <input type="checkbox"/> I have had thoughts that I should (not that I might or what if, but that I <i>should or need to</i> ) hurt my baby or someone else.                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't feel like I'm bonding with my baby.   | <input type="checkbox"/> I am worried I'm seeing or hearing things that other people don't see or hear.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am having scary "what if" thoughts over & over about harm coming to me, my baby or others (also called intrusive thoughts, a sign of postpartum OCD). | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm afraid to be alone with my baby.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel a lot of guilt and shame.  | <input type="checkbox"/> I feel very concerned or paranoid that other people might hurt me.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm worried that I'm not a good mother.   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel overwhelmed with all of the things in my life.   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I can't concentrate or stay focused on things.  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel like I'm losing it.  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to be alone all or most of the time.   |  |

I have had these symptoms for more than \_\_\_\_\_ weeks. I am \_\_\_\_\_ weeks/months (circle one) postpartum.

Here are some recognized risk factors for maternal mental illness that may help you understand my situation (Mom, check any that apply to you):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have had depression, anxiety/OCD or PPD before   | <input type="checkbox"/> I have a lot of financial stress  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have a history of bipolar disorder or psychosis  | <input type="checkbox"/> I have had infertility treatment  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My family has a history of mental illness  | <input type="checkbox"/> My baby has colic, reflux or other health problems  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have a history of or am now going through trauma (for example: domestic violence, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, poverty, loss of a parent)       | <input type="checkbox"/> I have had a previous miscarriage or stillbirth   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have had a stressful event in the last year (for example: house move, job loss, divorce or relationship problems, or the death of a loved one) | <input type="checkbox"/> I have a history of diabetes, thyroid problems, or pre-menstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD)                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm a single mom   | <input type="checkbox"/> I delivered multiples   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't have much help or support at home from my partner or family members  | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm away from my home country or culture  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> I or my baby had problems in pregnancy or childbirth (for example: baby in NICU, unplanned C-section, bed rest) |

# References

- [Interventions to Prevent Perinatal Depression: Evidence Report and Systematic Review for the US Preventive Services Task Force | Depressive Disorders | JAMA | JAMA Network](#)
- [Interventions to Prevent Perinatal Depression: A Systematic Evidence Review for the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force - NCBI Bookshelf \(nih.gov\)](#)
- <https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh25-3/219-299.htm#:~:text=motivational%20interviewing%20are%20two%20approaches%20that%20can%20be,intervene%20to%20prevent%20drinking%20during%20pregnancy%20while%20minimizing>