Postnatal Mental Illness

**Maternity Blues**

Most prominent during the first week of childbirth, symptoms can include tearfulness, difficulty coping with the baby and brief mood swings. This usually lasts for 2-3 days and is in relation to a change of hormones as the supply of breast milk increases.

**Postnatal Depression-PND**

10-15% of new mums experience PND, a lot of mothers with PND feel they cannot connect with their baby or worry that something bad will happen to them, this can be very distressing when the outside world expects you to be glowing with happiness.

**PND symptoms can include-**

* Time passing you by- you can look at the clock and wonder where the last two hours went.
* Waking up each morning feeling exhausted, as if you haven’t had any sleep.
* Laughing and smiling less than before.
* Difficulty concentrating or organising simple tasks.
* Struggling to see the funny side of things.
* Feeling numb, as if feelings and experiences do not reach you.
* Simple tasks require enormous effort.
* Feeling tearful or crying for small things or no reason at all.
* Feeling that you can only be yourself with your partner and sometimes not even then**.**

**Counselling has proved an effective treatment.**

**Postnatal Psychosis**

* Presents similarly to bipolar disorder.
* Poor sleep, overactivity and fluctuating mood are prominent.
* Hallucinations and delusions can occur.
* Mothers appear perplexed, confused and may have suicidal or infanticidal thoughts.
* Begins within the first two weeks of childbirth, affecting 1-2 mothers in 1,000

**Requires similar treatment to other psychotic disorders, including mood tranquillisers, mood stabilisers and antidepressants**

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