

“High Risk Screening: Addressing Perinatal Depression & Intimate Partner Violence When Screening for Substance Use

Why Include Screening for Perinatal Depression and Intimate Partner Violence?

Pregnant women are at greater risk to experience depression and/or be victims of domestic violence than non-pregnant women.

Substance use, mental health problems and domestic violence often occur together. Routinely screening all women for these risks at the same time and in a health context is the most efficient and productive approach for medical and other service providers who work with women. Even if a woman remains silent regarding one risk area she may be open to discussing problems in another area. Screening offers an opportunity to begin the conversation.

Screening Tools for Mental Health and Intimate Partner Violence

Screening tools are also available to assess perinatal depression and intimate partner violence. Screening for all 3 risks - substance use, perinatal depression and intimate partner violence - is considered “Best Practice” (ACOG, SAMHSA) and can take as little as 10 minutes. The more practice you get, the more comfortable and efficient you’ll become screening for these “risks”. For additional tools and more information see [Screening Tools for Women of Childbearing Age](#).

Mental Health and Perinatal Depression Screening Tools

- [Edinburgh Postnatal Depression screener](#)
- [PHQ 2 screener for depression](#)
- [PHQ 9 screener for depression](#)

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Screening Tools

- [Women’s Experiences with Battery \(WEB\)](#)
- [Abuse Assessment Screen \(AAS\)](#)

Integrated “High Risk” Screen (substance abuse, mental health & IPV)

- [Virginia’s Behavioral Health Risk Screening Tool \(Background for tool\)](#)

Tips for Screening

Combining screenings into a “high risk” screening may be the easiest and most effective way to screen. Screening – whether for substance use, perinatal depression or intimate partner violence - involves similar principles and skills.

- Ask routinely
 - Integrate your questions with other routine inquiries
 - Use framing questions such as “because violence/substance use/depression is so common in so many people’s lives, I now ask all women I see....” Or “ I don’t know if this is a problem for you, but many of the patients I see are dealing with personal problems that they are afraid or uncomfortable to bring up, so I’ve started asking all my patients/clients about these issues”
 - Screen all women – this takes the stigma out of the question and ensures you don’t miss anyone who might have a problem

- Be non judgmental and validate their situation
- Ask periodically – things change
- Advise
 - Educate women regarding the risks and their options
- Assess
 - Whether the woman, her unborn infant or other children are at risk for immediate harm.
 - How motivated the woman is to make needed changes.
- Assist and Arrange
 - You do not need to FIX the problem. Your role is to learn about resources in your community and to refer women where they can get the help they need.
 - Document your findings and activities
 - Remain involved. Your continued interest and support will make a significant difference.

Additional Information and Resources

Perinatal Depression

- *Postpartum Support Virginia:* <http://postpartumva.org/index.html> .
- *Depression during and after Pregnancy: a Resource for Women, Their Families, and Friends:* <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/pregnancyandbeyond/depression>
- *MedEd Postpartum Depression website:* <http://www.mededppd.org>

Intimate Partner Violence

- *Virginia Department of Health's Project RADAR:*
<http://www.vahealth.org/injury/projectradarva/index.htm>
- *American College Obstetrics & Gynecology Domestic Violence*
http://www.acog.org/publications/patient_education/bp083.cfm

To Locate Substance Use, Mental Health and Domestic Violence Services

Substance Use and Mental Health Services

Virginia's 40 community services boards (CSBs) provide publicly funded treatment and services to all Virginia residents who have a mental health, substance use and/or intellectual disability. To locate the CSB in your community go to <http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/SVC-CSBs2009.asp> or <http://vacsb.org/csb-bha.html>

Private providers and local agencies may also provide services. To find additional services in your area dial 211.

Intimate Partner Violence Services

Virginia Family Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline 1- 800-838-8238
<http://www.vadv.org/secProjects/fvsahotline.html>

Reimbursement

Coverage for screening varies according amongst 3rd party providers. Virginia Medicaid, FAMIS and FAMIS MOMS programs cover substance use screenings but do not cover separate screenings for mental health or domestic violence.

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