

# Being a mother is hard work; most mothers can use some help

## module 3



### COMMON THINGS THAT CAN HOLD YOU BACK FROM GETTING THE SUPPORT YOU NEED (ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU ARE DEPRESSED)

- Expecting others to “know” what is needed and offer to do it without being asked. In many cases this can lead to misunderstandings or hurt feelings.
- Being reluctant to let others know that you are having some difficulty and that you could use some help. As new mothers, many women feel obligated to keep up the illusion that all is well and parenting comes naturally. The reality is that being a mother is hard work. Most mothers could use some help; mothers who are depressed will likely need additional help.
- Difficulty thinking about who could be a source of support. Checking local newspapers, bulletin boards, baby magazines, community centre guides and at your public health centre can provide you with ideas for sources of support. Your community health nurse will also likely know of different kinds of support that may be available locally for mothers. You can also look at the table on the previous page for a list of different people, groups and services that may serve as a source of support for you.
- Be direct and specific in asking for what you need. Rather than expecting others to spontaneously offer, try asking directly for what you need. For example ask:
  - To a friend: “Will you watch the baby between 1 and 3pm so that I can get to my appointment?”
  - To your partner: “I’d like to have some time tonight to just cuddle and talk.”
  - To a relative: “Would you pick up some milk and fruit to drop off on your way home from work?”
  - To your partner: “Could you arrange to be home from work a little earlier tonight so that I can get out for a short walk?”
- Persistence is important. If that person is not able to help, try asking someone else. You may be uncomfortable asking for help and support. It may help to remember that you are developing and strengthening your healthy relationships and that this can be a very powerful resource in helping you to feel better and stay well.

Another very useful source for information on support is:

• Creating Circles of Support for Pregnant Women and New Parents. Best Start Research Program part of Health Nexus (Ontario). Toronto, Ontario, 2010. Available on-line at [http://www.beststart.org/resources/ppmd/pdf/circles\\_of\\_support\\_manual\\_fnl.pdf](http://www.beststart.org/resources/ppmd/pdf/circles_of_support_manual_fnl.pdf)



- Get support in asking for support. You don't have to keep asking all on your own. A trusted health professional may also be able to help you reach out to others.
- Let your support person(s) know how your request fits into your overall plan for getting better. You may want to ask some of your close support people to read "What Your Loved One(s) Can Do For You".

Many women are surprised to find out that others are more willing to offer support than they expected. And many friends and family members are relieved to know that there is something specific that they can do to help you to work on managing your symptoms.

You can use the goal-setting steps in the section called "Making Positive Changes" to help you begin to build your social support. Remember a small change in one area leads to changes in other areas as well.