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Understanding the connections between different symptoms

Each of these symptoms of depression (thoughts, emotions, body responses, behaviours) are related to and influence the others.

So, for example, if you have upsetting thoughts such as 'I am a terrible mother', then it is likely it is that you will feel sad or hopeless and experience bodily symptoms of depression, such as low energy. The more bodily symptoms you have, the more likely it is that you will want to avoid doing things or going places that you think will take up too much energy or that you won't enjoy.

That is why the diagram above shows that all of the symptoms of depression are connected to each other. The connections between these aspects of your life can seem like bad news. You may feel overwhelmed as to where to start. In fact it is good news when you begin the work of overcoming your depression. This is because when you make even small changes in one area (for example, your thinking patterns or behaviour) you will begin to experience positive changes in the other areas as well.

One of the things we know about having depression and being a new mother is that it tends to interfere with doing some of the basic things that we all need to do to feel well and be able to accomplish important goals. The next section provides some basic information about taking care of yourself.