



Welcome to your Foster carer's learning log. Helping you to structure and record your self-directed learning.

Name:

Unit 7: Families affected by a parent with mental ill-health

Whether you are caring for a child on their own or a parent and child, if the family is affected by a parent having mental health problems, this unit is for you. Understanding how this may have affected the child, and the parent-child relationship, and how you can help, is an important part of your role.

Quick knowledge check

Some statistics to get you thinking. Which of the following statements do you think are true?

A woman who has had a previous episode of serious mental illness (even many years before) has a 1 in 2 chance of it recurring after childbirth

A woman who has had a previous episode of serious mental illness (even many years before) has a 1 in 5 chance of it recurring after childbirth

A woman who has had a previous episode of serious mental illness (even many years before) has a 1 in 10 chance of it recurring after childbirth

What percentage of teenagers are affected by postnatal depression?

20%

40%

60%

Suicide is the leading cause of direct maternal deaths occurring within a year after the end of pregnancy in the UK **T** / **F**

What do you already know?

Before you start researching, make a quick list of all the mental health conditions you can think of that could affect parents.

Your notes

Improving your knowledge and understanding

Resources if you are caring for children

[Childline website section for children in families affected by mental illness](#)

[Coram Children's Legal Centre, Lawstuff. Section on rights of young carers](#)

Depending on the age of the child, understanding more about their parent's illness can help them to realise they are not to blame. [MIND](#) has lots of information including an A to Z of mental illnesses.

Additional resources if you are caring for a parent-and-child

[Fostering Hope website section on caring for parents with mental ill-health](#)

[Specialist midwife Laura talking about how we can best support mothers with their mental health](#)

[Best Beginnings website section on perinatal mental health.](#)

[Perinatal and infant mental health: what is it and why it matters. Institute of Health Visiting](#)

[Useful list of questions to ask at a GP \(NICE guidelines\)](#)

[Action on postpartum psychosis](#)

[MIND. Postnatal depression and perinatal mental health](#)

[PANDA \(Pre and Postnatal Depression Advice and Support\)](#)

[Perinatal mental health toolkit](#)

[Tommy's website. Mental wellbeing](#)

[Birth Trauma Association](#)

[Association for postnatal illness. Advice for carers](#)



My key learning

What have been the most interesting things you have learned from your reading and research? Use this space to make some notes or a bullet-point list.

Your notes





Reflection

Think about some of the ways that parenthood, particularly motherhood, is portrayed in popular culture. How do you think stereotypes of motherhood, and stigma about mental health contribute to mental distress in the childbearing year?

Your notes

Have you cared for a child or parent-and-child where parental mental ill health was a feature? How did this affect the child and how did you as a foster carer support them? How could their experience be seen as an asset? Is there anything you would say or do differently now?

Your notes

Have you come across resources that would help a child, young person, or parent in your care?

Your notes

Discussion with peers or your supervising social worker

Discussion starters

- Things you have learnt
- How that might affect your practice as a foster carer
- A list of useful resources to go back to or pass on to other carers



Your notes

What can you, as practitioners or as an organisation, do to upskill yourselves further about parental mental health. Could you consider inviting a mental health specialist to a coffee morning for PAC carers in your area? Ensure that you know how to refer a parent to the Perinatal Parent-Infant Mental Health (PPIMHS) service.

Your notes

Answers to quick knowledge check

- A woman who has had a previous episode of serious mental illness (even many years before) has a 1 in 2 chance of it recurring after childbirth (Saving Mothers Lives 2011)
- 40% teenagers are affected by postnatal depression (DfES (2010) Teenage pregnancy: Accelerating the strategy to 2010. London.)
- Suicide is the leading cause of direct maternal deaths occurring within a year after the end of pregnancy in the UK. True

These resources have been developed by Lucy November (lucy@fosteringhope.co.uk), funded by the Sir Halley Stewart Trust. They are free to use, but please contact Lucy if you are using them in order to join our network and contribute to an evaluation. Copyright 2020 Tanya Farrugia Illustration (images).