

# How Support Delivered helps Vermont Families



Becoming a new parent can be an exciting and hopeful experience, but during the pandemic, uncertainty about the future and a sense of isolation can lead to increased stress. Prior to the pandemic, as many as one in five pregnant or postpartum Vermonters suffered from symptoms of depression and anxiety during the perinatal period. Early data suggests this number is significantly higher at 1 in 3 women experiencing symptoms, likely due to the pandemic.

## **Who is at Risk for Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (PMADs)?**

Some people are at higher risk for PMADs because of factors including their life experiences, genetics, and brain biochemistry. The stressors associated with low socio-economic status significantly increase a person's likelihood of developing symptoms.

Due to the American history of structural racism, members of the Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community are disproportionately impacted by perinatal mental health conditions, experiencing them at rates 2-3 times higher than white individuals.

## **What are Symptoms of PMADs?**

PMADs are common, treatable, and can occur at any time during pregnancy or in the first year after pregnancy. These conditions can present as:

- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities that were enjoyable
- Exhausted but can't sleep
- Overwhelmed or unable to cope
- Feeling guilty, irritable, or angry
- Having unwanted or scary thoughts

It is common to feel grief for the kind of pregnancy, delivery, or postpartum experience you hoped to have. Precautions related to COVID-19 can mean that new parents do not have the help that family, friends, and community members usually provide. If you would like information and support- speak with your medical provider and know that resources are available across Vermont. These are challenging times, but you are not alone. Help is available by phone, text, or online at [supportdeliveredvt.com](https://supportdeliveredvt.com).

## **Resources**

[Help Me Grow Vermont](#) connects expecting and new families to mental health clinicians with specialized expertise in treating PMADs and other community services.

[Postpartum Support International Vermont Chapter](#) has a warm line with local coordinators who provide support, information, and encouragement. Virtual support groups can be accessed at [postpartum.net](https://postpartum.net).

[Designated Mental Health Agencies](#) in each Vermont county have clinicians trained to provide perinatal mental health support to parents, children, and families. Many agencies have support groups for coping with pregnancy or adjusting to life with a new baby. There are also programs that address stress management, attachment, parenting, and grief & loss.

