



### Nurturing Your Well-Being: Feeling Good About You



#### Figuring It Out Together

When you feel healthy and happy, you are more likely to feel good about yourself and your life. You are likely to feel more confident and to build trusting, caring relationships with others. You are more likely to feel competent and engaged at home and at work, and you are positioned to cope better with the stresses of everyday life.

#### You Are Not Alone

Whatever you may be feeling – joyful, loving, sad, frustrated, angry - it’s important to remember you are not alone. Other parents share your feelings! It is important to be able to feel what you feel and still be able to see and respond in thoughtful ways to your child.

When you have someone to talk, laugh, cry, complain, share your joys and your doubts with, and to listen to, you know you are not alone. Someone sees you and understands what you are experiencing.

Have you created a *Circle of Support*? Do you have a list of people you can call and count on? Is the list on a piece of paper or in your phone? Is it hanging on your fridge or bathroom mirror? These are the people you can reach out to when parenting starts to feel like too much or when your child does something amazing that you have to share. You are not alone!

#### Baby Blues

If you have just given birth, you may be experiencing mood swings, or you may feel down, irritable, tired, sad, or impatient. You may even have trouble sleeping, despite the fact that you are exhausted. These postpartum blues, or baby blues, can make it hard to enjoy and respond to your baby.

Don’t be alarmed. These feelings are very common. Many new mothers (about 50-80%) experience the blues. Fathers also might notice the blues. The same is true for adoptive and foster parents.

Usually, baby blues tend to lessen in a week or two. The key is to recognize the signs and get as much rest as possible, accept the help of family and friends, and talk with other new parents. In the United States, newborns typically have several well-baby check-ups in their first few months. It is good to share about any baby blues you or your parenting partner may be feeling with these healthcare professionals. They can work with you, whether the blues lessen on their own or continue to affect and concern you.



**Always remember** - alcohol and recreational drugs can intensify mood swings and use of them should be avoided by those who care for young children.



### Postpartum Depression

If the baby blues don't go away after a few weeks, or become more intense, you may be experiencing postpartum depression. Postpartum depression most commonly affects mothers within the first 3 months after giving birth but can occur at any point during the first year. Approximately 10% of women are affected, and each woman experiences her own unique combination of symptoms.

It is not only mothers who can become depressed after welcoming a new child to the family, fathers and adoptive parents can experience it too. Your home visitor has resources for you including hotline numbers you can call.



**SAFETY ALERT:** If you feel you may hurt yourself or your baby, put your baby in her crib or another safe place and call 9-1-1, or one of the emergency hotline numbers listed below, right away. Explain what is happening, and ask someone to come be with you immediately (e.g., A family member or trusted neighbor).

Arrange to talk with a healthcare provider. There are treatments, including talk therapy and medications, that can help. The sooner you get support, the sooner you will feel like yourself again and be able to enjoy your baby.

#### **National Hopeline Network: 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)**

If your depression is leading to suicidal thoughts, call the National Hopeline to connect with a depression treatment center in your area. The Hopeline also offers a live chat feature for those who don't want to, or who are unable to, call and can dispatch emergency crews to your location if necessary.

#### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or 988**

This national hotline is another valuable resource for people whose depression has escalated to suicidal or other harmful thoughts. Their network of crisis centers provides emotional support and guidance to people in distress and are also available via a chat service and a special hotline number for the hearing impaired: 1-800-799-4889.

#### **National Youth Crisis Hotline: 1-800-448-4663**

This resource provides brief interventions for youth who are dealing with pregnancy, sexual abuse, child abuse, depression, and suicidal thoughts. They also provide referrals to local counseling, treatment centers, and shelters.

**Text 741741** when you are feeling depressed or suicidal, a crisis worker will text you back immediately and continue to text with you. Many people, especially younger people, don't like talking on the phone and would feel much more comfortable texting. This is a free service for anyone.



## **Appreciate Your Own Parenting Journey**

Every parent is on his or her own journey. Parents are finding their way with their very individual child. Appreciating who you are and your path as a parent is one of the most important ways to respect and care for yourself. This means not getting caught up in the comparison game. Comparing yourself to others can be a slippery slope because it is often easier to notice what another parent does well than to see your own strengths. Part of self-care is knowing there are parts of parenting you do well and other aspects you are working on - just like every other parent!

The reality is that there is no such thing as a perfect parent...or a perfect child...or a perfect anyone. To help you appreciate your journey, give yourself a break. Parenting is a juggling act. Usually there are so many balls in the air at once that some will inevitably fall. For example, the laundry may not get done, and you and your child go to child care in the same clothes as yesterday. Perhaps your flower patch in front of your home needs to be weeded, there may be toys all over the living room, or you may realize it has been 3 days since you've had a real shower. It happens. You can't do it all. No one can - and that is OK.

Just pause and realize and appreciate all you do well and those special moments that you and your child share.