

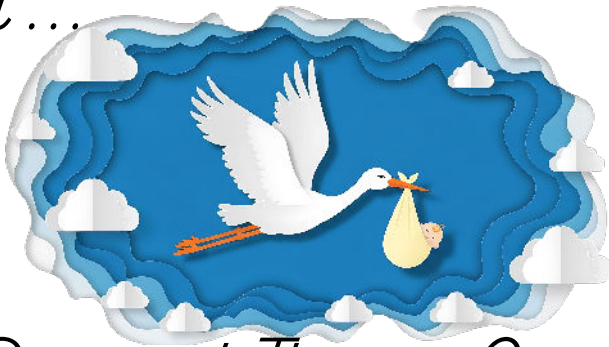
branches & blossoms

Where strength branches out and joy blooms

CCYSB YOUTH SUICIDE INTERVENTION & PREVENTION SERVICES

NOVEMBER 2025

/t's a ...



Perinatal Therapy Group!

Please welcome the newest addition to CCYSB's *Youth Suicide Intervention & Prevention Services* - PEARL!

The Carroll County Youth Service Bureau's *Youth Suicide Intervention & Prevention Services* is piloting a new group therapy initiative focused on maternal mental health during the perinatal period (from conception to the child's first birthday). Maternal mental health conditions are the most common complications of pregnancy and childbirth, affecting 1 in 5 women, especially those in vulnerable and underserved populations. Untreated perinatal mood and anxiety disorders have lifelong negative impacts on child development, individual well-being, and family functioning. PEARL, short for Perinatal Education for ACE Reduction & Loss Prevention, will provide assessment and ongoing screening throughout the perinatal period for participants who will receive weekly group therapy sessions. Participants can expect a strengths- and evidence-based approach to discuss symptom management, prevention strategies, and risk reduction through psychoeducation and a peer support component.

PEARL will explore other topics that influence maternal mental health & substance use such as Positive & Adverse Childhood Experiences (PACES), biology, environment, interpersonal relationships & attachment; as well as food, housing, employment, or financial insecurity. The Peer Support component provides support through similar lived experience to decrease isolation & stigma, provide validation, support and perspective.

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Health: Key Facts &
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Self-Care Facts

Scan to learn more about
Suicide Intervention &
Prevention @ CCYSB!



Inaugural Issue: A Beginning Rooted in Care

This inaugural issue of *Branches & Blossoms* celebrates the strength it takes to heal, the courage it takes to ask for help, and the beauty of growing through motherhood. This newsletter was created to nurture awareness, connection, and support for every person navigating the journey of pregnancy, birth, and beyond. Each branch of motherhood looks different – some are strong and steady, others are still growing new roots. Here, every branch has a place to bloom. Our goal is to honor every stage and story by offering education, self-care strategies, and community resources for maternal mental health and substance use recovery.

Why Maternal Mental Health Matters

Perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs) affect between 10 - 20 % of women, with even higher rates for low-income women. PMADs are one of the most common, yet underdiagnosed, complications of pregnancy and childbirth. They lead to increased costs of medical care, inappropriate medical care, child abuse and neglect, discontinuation of breastfeeding, family dysfunction, and adverse effects on early brain development. Birth outcomes can be negatively affected by PMADs in pregnancy and PMADs can have a long-term impact on child outcomes. PMADs are associated with attachment insecurity, difficult infant/childhood temperament, developmental delay, and impaired language development. Treatment of maternal depression until remission is associated with decreased psychiatric symptoms for the mother and improved functional outcomes among offspring. Despite the profound negative effects on mother and child, some of which improve with treatment, the vast majority of women with PMADs go untreated.

The impact of PMADs isn't exclusive to mothers, they can affect *all* caregivers. A non-birthing caregiver's mood can affect how they treat their child and family. About 10% of all fathers experience symptoms of depression or anxiety in the postpartum period. The presentation of PMADs amongst non-birthing caregivers can look different than they do in birthing people. Undiagnosed and untreated depression or anxiety in a caregiver can negatively affect how a child behaves, grows, and learns.

Key Facts & Scope

- Mental health conditions are among the most common complications of pregnancy and childbirth, affecting about 1 in 5 pregnant or postpartum individuals.

- Unfortunately, many remain undiagnosed or untreated; roughly 75 % do not get adequate care.

- Maternal mental health conditions include (but are not limited to):

- Perinatal depression
- Anxiety disorders
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Bipolar disorder
- Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) including birth trauma
- Psychosis / postpartum psychosis

Barriers & Disparities

- Untreated maternal mental health issues can affect mother/birthing person's well-being, partner/family relationships, bonding with the infant, child development, and family functioning long term.

- In the U.S., maternal mental health conditions can contribute to maternal mortality; suicide and overdose are leading causes of death in the first year postpartum.

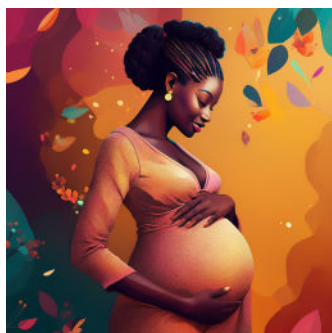
Why It Matters - The Impacts

- Stigma, fear of judgment, limited access to mental health providers, cost, insurance constraints, cultural and language barriers.

- Certain populations (e.g. BIPOC mothers, low-income mothers) face higher risk and lower access to care

- Suicide & Overdose are the leading cause of death in the first year postpartum, with 100% of these deaths deemed preventable.

Women At Increased Risk

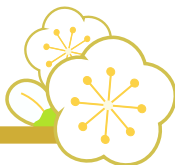


Women living in poverty and women of color are MORE likely to experience Maternal Mental Health conditions and LESS likely to get help due to :

- Lack of access to healthcare, including culturally appropriate mental health care
- Cultural and racial biases in the healthcare system
- More barriers to care, such as lack of transportation or childcare
- Fear that child protective services or immigration agencies will become involved

HEALTH *in her* HUE

Scan the QR code to learn about culturally responsive providers, as well as culturally tailored health content from Health in Her Hue



Continued from page 1 ...



PEARL will be a rolling admission group held at the Carroll County Youth Service Bureau every Wednesday 10 – 11 am. A licensed therapist will lead the group with the support of a peer support specialist. Medicaid and private insurance accepted. Referrals can be placed by contacting the Referral Coordinator at 410.848.2500, option 0. For more information on PEARL, please contact Bobby Jarrett, LCPC at 443.244.8657 or rjarrett@ccysb.org.

Understanding the Perinatal Period & Common Challenges

What is the "Perinatal Period"?

- The perinatal period spans from pregnancy through the first months to a year (or more) postpartum. Often people use it to refer to pregnancy + first 12 months after birth.
- Some also include the "fourth trimester," the early postpartum months, as a critical adjustment period.

Emotional & Psychological Challenges

- It is normal to have shifts of mood, irritability, fatigue, worry. But when symptoms intensify, persist, or interfere with functioning, it may signal a mental health condition.
- Hormonal changes, sleep disruption, identity shifts, changes in relationships, physical recovery, breastfeeding pressures, social isolation, financial stress, and past trauma can all contribute to vulnerability.
- Examples of what might feel concerning: inability to care for self or baby; intrusive negative thoughts; overwhelming anxiety or panic; feeling disconnected; thoughts of self-harm or harming baby.

When to Seek Help

- If symptoms last more than 2 weeks and worsen rather than fade
- If mood, anxiety, or intrusive thoughts interfere with daily life or ability to care for baby
- If there are thoughts of self-harm, death, or harm to baby
- If substance use increases or there is a sense of hopelessness
- Encourage screening in obstetric and pediatric settings — professional guidelines recommend screening for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders.

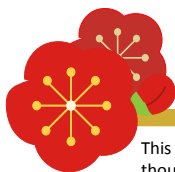


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Self-Care Spotlight: Pre & Postnatal Yoga

Pre/postnatal yoga prepares the body before, during, and after pregnancy by building strength as well as offering breathing techniques and relaxation for you; as you prepare to transition through the pregnancy stages. Before, during and after carrying a baby, this class will focus on pelvic floor engagement while also moving through yoga poses that are safely choreographed. Pre/post natal yoga not only reduces stress but also builds strength and confidence while surrounding you with community.

Pre/postnatal yoga with pelvic floor training includes a pelvic floor therapist. In addition to learning to harness the power of the breath, developing a stronger mind-body awareness, and experiencing deep relaxation to wash your worries away, you will now also receive further information and guidance on aligning and preparing your body for a smoother pregnancy and birth. Learn to create an optimal environment for baby and connect with your pelvic floor and core now for a faster recovery after birth. Gain important insights and join a guided practice from two professions to strengthen, relax, and empower your body and mind for the remainder of your motherhood journey.



Helplines & Crisis Resources

This newsletter is for educational and supportive purposes, not a substitute for mental health diagnosis or treatment. If you experience suicidal thoughts, thoughts of harming your baby, or severe symptoms, please contact emergency services, go to the nearest emergency department, or call 988 / crisis line immediately.

National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Call or Text

988

Chat: <https://988lifeline.org/chat>

National Maternal Mental Health Hotline

Call or Text

**1-833-TLCMAMA
(1-833-852-6262)**

Postpartum Support International (PSI)

www.postpartum.net

1-800-4PPD (4773)

Mindfulness & Self-Care Facts

Pregnancy and childbirth can elicit a range of emotions – excitement, stress, nervousness, isolation, and optimism to name a few. Mental well-being during pregnancy and throughout the post-pregnancy periods can have impacts on obstetric complications, low birth weight, premature delivery, and symptom severity. Mindfulness practices have been found to promote emotional positivity, tolerance, and stability. As you'll see, mindfulness and self-care have roles in multiple facets of our lives -

1. Physiological Regulation

Pregnancy and the postpartum period bring major hormonal, sleep, and physical changes. Mindfulness and self-care practices (such as deep breathing, gentle movement, or sensory grounding) help activate the parasympathetic nervous system, reducing cortisol and heart rate. This physiological calm improves emotional regulation and can lower risks of depression, anxiety, and trauma re-activation.

2. Interrupting the Stress Cycle

Chronic stress and “fight-or-flight” responses can impair sleep, digestion, and milk production. Mindfulness helps parents notice early stress cues (tight chest, racing thoughts) and intervene with small self-soothing actions before escalation, fostering a sense of agency and control.

3. Enhancing Bonding and Attunement

When a parent practices present-moment awareness, they're better able to tune in to their infant's cues—eye contact, vocal tone, feeding or comfort signals. Mindful attention supports secure attachment and co-regulation between caregiver and baby.

4. Protecting Against Perinatal Mood & Anxiety Disorders (PMADs)

Research links consistent mindfulness and self-compassion practice with lower depressive and anxious symptoms in the perinatal period. Programs such as Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and Mindfulness-Based Childbirth and Parenting (MBCP) have shown reductions in rumination, fear, and intrusive thoughts.

5. Rebuilding Identity & Self-Compassion

The transition to parenthood often challenges self-concept and can trigger guilt or perfectionism. Mindfulness invites non-judgmental awareness, helping parents accept “good-enough” caregiving and re-center on values rather than expectations.

6. Preventing Burnout & Supporting Recovery

Sleep deprivation, physical recovery, and role overload heighten vulnerability to burnout. Intentional self-care—hydration, rest, joyful micro-activities—helps sustain stamina and prevent compassion fatigue, especially in parents balancing multiple roles.

7. Modeling Emotional Regulation for Children

When caregivers model mindful coping and gentle self-talk, children observe and internalize those strategies, supporting intergenerational emotional resilience.

