



Mid-America (HHS Region 7)

**MHTTC**

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Treatment and Other Considerations in the Perinatal Period

**Elizabeth O'Brien, LPC, PMH-C**

**Marianela Rodriguez, PhD, PMH-C**



MUNROE-MEYER  
INSTITUTE



# DISCLOSURES

This presentation was prepared for the MHTTC Network under a cooperative agreement from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). All material appearing in this presentation, except that taken directly from copyrighted sources, is in the public domain and may be reproduced or copied without permission from SAMHSA or the authors. Citation of the source is appreciated. Do not reproduce or distribute this presentation for a fee without specific, written authorization from the MHTTC Network Coordinating Office. This presentation will be recorded and posted on our website.

At the time of this publication, Miriam Delphin-Rittmon served as Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use and Administrator of SAMHSA. The opinions expressed herein are the views of the speakers and do not reflect the official position of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), or SAMHSA. No official support or endorsement of DHHS, SAMHSA, for the opinions described in this presentation is intended or should be inferred. This work is supported by grants under Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) No. SM-18-015 from the DHHS, SAMHSA.

The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

STRENGTHS-BASED  
AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND  
ACCEPTING OF  
DIVERSE CULTURES,  
GENDERS,  
PERSPECTIVES,  
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED/  
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS  
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR  
OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND  
FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND  
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR  
AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH  
OUR ACTIONS,  
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS



# Mid-America Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC)

- Funded by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (Grant number: H79SM081769).
- Awarded to UNMC's Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska (BHECN).
- Serves to align mental health services across Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas with evidence-based practice.



# Treatment and other considerations in the Perinatal Period

Elizabeth O'Brien, LPC, PMH-C

Marianela Rodriguez, PhD, PMH-C



# Disclaimers, Language & Diversity/Inclusion

- We are independent contractors who do not represent any other organization
- We try to recognize our own biases, try to continue to learn to be open, and welcome feedback
- Terms: mother, birth person, parent, partner, father, primary caregiver and others...
- Please add your pronouns next to your name
- Most of research has been on heteronormative couples and we recognized all the data doesn't represent everyone, especially in the LGBTQ+ community + BIPOC communities
- Take care of yourself during trainings!

# Objectives

**1**

Discuss evidence based treatment options and other alternative treatments available when managing care for women experiencing perinatal mental health disorders

**2**

Explain perinatal loss and bereavement and how to communicate with families experiencing grief and trauma

**3**

Discuss relevant resources available to mothers and their families to help identify risks and other perinatal considerations for better coping and management strategies



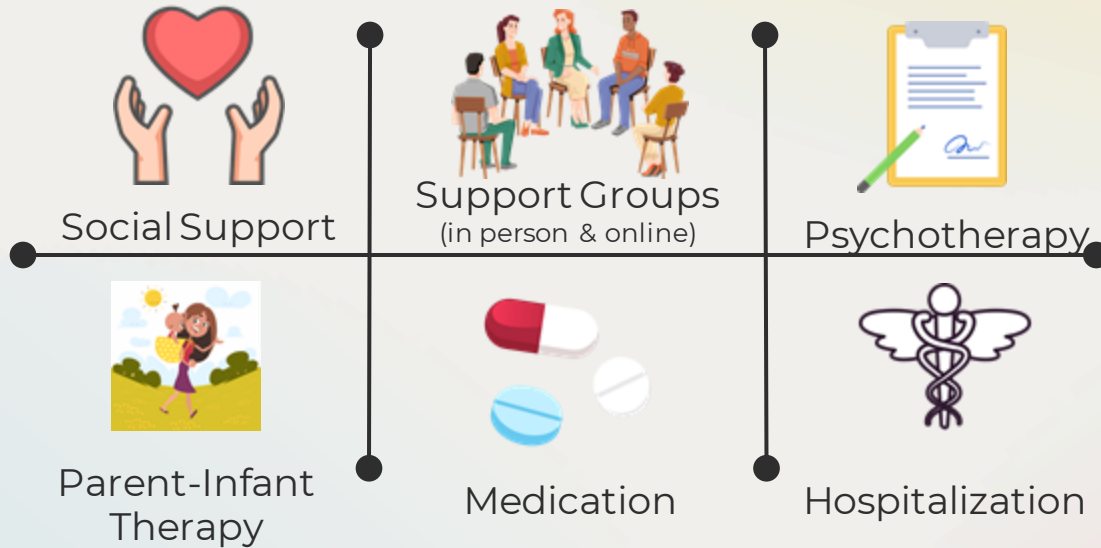


"Women in postpartum crisis come to therapy to reclaim a lost part of themselves. We can best promote healing by uniting with this struggle or self. This connection is the gateway to symptom relief".

---

**Karen Kleiman**

# Evidence Based Treatments



PMADs are **highly** treatable and can be managed with a variety of treatments

# Complementary and Alternative Interventions

- Acupuncture
- Placenta Encapsulation
- Nutrition
- Exercise
- Massage
- Hormone Replacement
- Supplements
- Biofeedback
- Lightbox Therapy
- Expressive Therapies
- EMDR
- Brainspotting



# Essentials for perinatal intervention

---

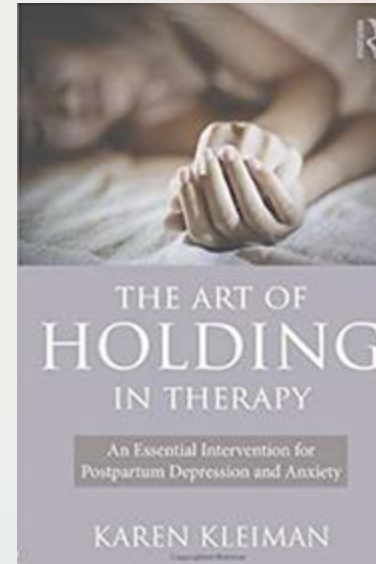
# The Perinatal Lens as Framework

The perinatal lens encourages us to **look beyond signs & symptoms** and to consider all the areas impacting a client during this season

- Sleep disruptions
- Identity shifts
- Impact on relationships
- Career changes
- Financial strains
- Body changes
- Cultural traditions/implications
- Reproductive history

# Highlights from Karen Kleiman's Holding Fundamentals

- Grounding
- Current State
- Expert
- Design
- Presence
- Safeguarding



## Holding sounds like:

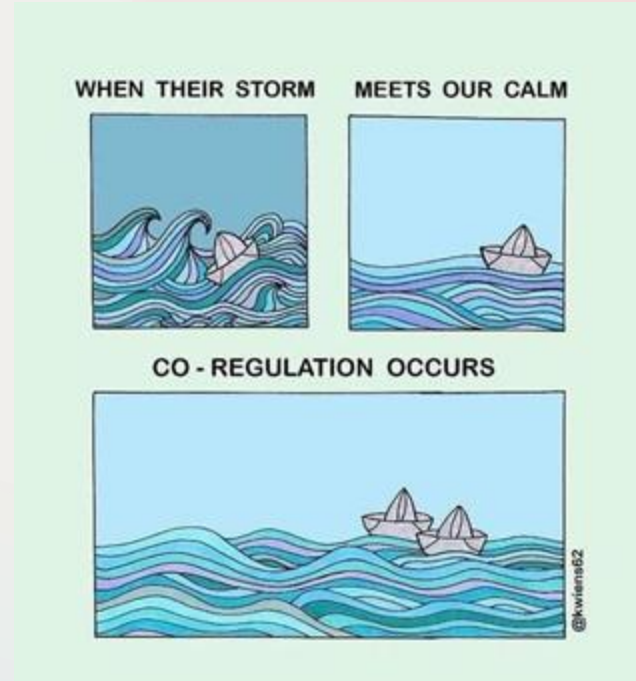
- “You will feel like yourself again. Until then, I am here.”
  - “I know. This is so hard.”
  - “You are doing this. You are ok.”
  - “I know it may feel like you will always feel this way. You will not always feel this way.”
- 

## Holding looks like:

- Sitting comfortably in silence with client’s difficult emotions
- Empathetic stance and posture (soft eyes, leaning in)
- Resisting urge to problem solve or “fix” anything
- Using our own calm nervous system to help regulate theirs

# Grounding Principal

- Co-regulation
- Generation of hope
- Therapist can be a source of energy





As a therapist - what are your methods of grounding yourself before during and after sessions?

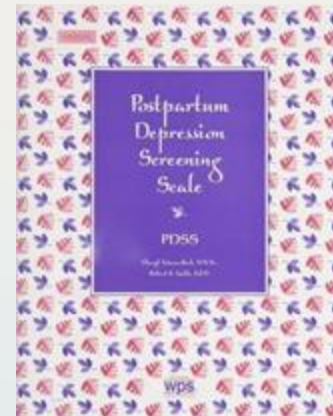
---

Trauma informed care promotes trust, safety,  
collaboration and choice

---

# Current State

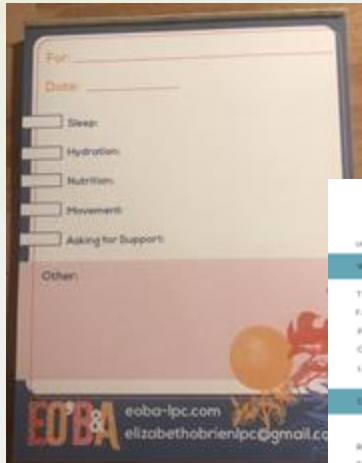
- Prioritize their physical safety
- Focus on symptom stability NOW
- Assess and determine level of distress
- Make a plan



# Expert in MMH

- All eyes on you - consider tone & body language
- Self confidence - “I know what I am doing”
- Think responding to a crisis intervention
- “We’ve got this” attitude
- Armed with valuable resources & referrals

# Design



*Postpartum Wellness Checklist*  
WEEK OF \_\_\_\_\_

Use this worksheet as a guide. Remember it's not about perfection, but a tool to help monitor progress.

**WEEKLY TASKS**

Time in nature (20-min)

Family activity

Partner time

Connect with a friend

1 hr quiet alone time (2x/week)

**DAILY TASKS**

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Restorative sleep (8+ hrs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fresh air/outdoor (30+ min)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6-8 glasses water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Multivitamin/Fish oil	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Body movement (10+ min)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eat 3 full meals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-care activity (read, hot shower, journal, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

NOTES & REFLECTIONS

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

© Elizabeth O'Brien, LLC 2020 | www.ElizabethO'Brien.com | info@elizabethobrienlpc.com | 410-270-8818

- Co-create your blueprint for symptom relief
- Develop practical plans
- Join client in managing expectations

# Presence and Safeguarding

- Teach specific techniques on tolerating distress & discomfort
- Predict and prevent relapse - highs and lows are expected in recovery
- Focus on resilience
- Familiarize yourself with early childhood development of baby



What is getting in our way?

Personal/Cultural Considerations?

---



# Cultural recommendations

- How to help when person does not want referral/does not trust system/ does not know what is happening
- Universal screening
- Cultural humility
- Be curious



**Causes, Stages, & Impacts of Perinatal Grief are  
individualized**

---

# Medical Terminology

- Perinatal loss is most often defined as the involuntary end of pregnancy from conception, during pregnancy, and up to 28 days of the newborn's life (AAP & ACOG, 2002).
- Miscarriage
- Intrauterine Fetal Demise (IUFD)
- **Spontaneous abortion/ miscarriage:**
  - < 20 weeks gestation.
  - 10-50% of pregnancies
- **Stillbirth:**
  - > 20 weeks gestation
  - 1 in 150 pregnancies
- **Neonatal Death:**
  - within the first 28 days of life
  - 6.8 per 1,000 live births

# Prevalence

- More than 1 million pregnancy losses annually
- 1 in 160 births (24,000 babies a year) are stillborn
- 25% of all conceptions end in loss
- 24.5 % (28 weeks until birth)
- 33.8% are neonatal deaths (> 28 days)
- 16.1 % occur from 28 days to 1 year of age



# Unique aspects of perinatal grief

- Paradoxes
- Death can happen before birth.
- Go through pregnancy and end up without a baby.
- No established rituals
- No actual body to grieve
- Changes in the body
- Prospective vs retrospective grief



Todd Hochberg

# Perinatal grief: A family's journey

Mother ● Father ● Partners ● Grandparents ● Siblings



# Interventions

- That have been shown to improve depression, sleep, and the grieving process:
- Psychoeducation
- Psychotherapy
- Physical activity
- Group sessions
- Educating women, spouses, and extended family about PD and grief
- Spiritual community support
- Establishing rituals
- Activism

# Goals of treatment \*remembering clients go only as far as the therapist can handle with their own grief

Validate loss

## **Facilitate mourning process**

- Creating a safe relationship in which to grieve

## **Catharsis**

- Connection and understanding
- Containment
- Clarification of experience
- **Facilitate acceptance**
- Reduce isolation
- **Normalize loss**
- Telling others, the story
- Development of new attachments



---

# Resources



## Organizations working with perinatal grief



# If you have a patient who is struggling...



Call the Free PSI HelpLine **1-800-944-4773(4PPD)** or text **503-894-9453**  
Someone will return message within 24 hours



Visit **<https://psidirectory.com>**  
Search free online directory of vetted providers and support groups



Prescribers can call PSI Perinatal Psychiatric Consultation Line **1-800-944-4773, ext 4**  
Medical prescribers (only) can consult with experts


Sign up here: <http://bit.ly/FindSupportGroup>



Postpartum Support International  
Get Help Learn More P

### Support for Pregnancy and Infant Loss & Fertility Challenges

- + Black Moms in Loss Support Group
- + Early Pregnancy Loss Support for Moms
- + Fertility Challenges
- + Parenting After Loss
- + Pregnancy after Loss Support
- + Pregnancy After Stillbirth and Early Infant Loss
- + Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support for Moms
- + Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support for Parents
- + Pregnancy and Parenting After Termination for Medical Reasons: Support for Parents
- + Stillbirth and Infant Loss Support for Parents



Postpartum Support International  
800-944-4773 | [postpartum.net](http://postpartum.net)

## Online Support Groups

- Free weekly online support groups on numerous topics
- Trained facilitators offer peer (not clinical) support
- "Come as you are" atmosphere - cameras optional
- 90-minutes in length, providing information and resources, with the majority of time spent on open discussion among peers.

#ilovepsi



[CHAPTERS PROGRAM](#) [FIND A CHAPTER](#) [GET HELP](#) [ABOUT PSI](#)

Postpartum Support International

# Kansas

PSI-KS

**KANSAS**

[About](#) [Give](#) [Get Involved](#) [Programs & Resources](#)

# Support



Postpartum Support International  
800-944-4773 | postpartum.net 

## social media groups

- *PSI Closed Facebook Group:* For support & peer educational purposes, not clinical help.
- *PSI Dads Closed Facebook Group:* For support & peer educational purposes specific for dads, not clinical help.
- *Smart Patients:* An online community outside of regular social media for patients and their families beyond the postpartum period. Survivors are welcome to share stories of recovery and hope. Users can be anonymous.

*#HealingStartsWithHelp*



MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

POSTPARTUM SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL | 800-944-4773 | POSTPARTUM.NET

*Help is just a call or text away*

POSTPARTUM SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL  
HELPLINE AT 800-944-4773

NATIONAL MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH  
HOTLINE AT 1-833-943-5746

NATIONAL SUICIDE & CRISIS  
LIFELINE AT 988

*#IHealendwithHelp*



# We are all affected by Perinatal Mental Health







*We are in this together. Thank you.*

## Thank you! ...and where to find us:



Elizabeth O'Brien, LPC, PMH-C

 /elizabeth-o-brien-  
 elizabethobrienlpc@gmail.com  
 eoba-lpc.com  
 /ElizabethOBrienLPC



Marianela Rodríguez, PhD, PMH-C

 /drmarianelarodriguez  
 mrodriguez.inter@gmail.com  
 <http://linktr.ee/marianelarodriguez>



# Connect With Us

## Join Our Mailing List



## Follow Us on Social Media



/MidAmericaMHTTC

C



@MidAmericaMHTTC



/company/MidAmericaMHTTC

**Email:** [midamerica@mhttcnetwork.org](mailto:midamerica@mhttcnetwork.org)

**Website:** [mhttcnetwork.org/midamerica](http://mhttcnetwork.org/midamerica)