

Perinatal Masterclass – Assessment and Signposting for Partners

Notes from small group discussion

1. What are the challenges in terms of assessing partners and how might you overcome these?

- Not one size fits all.
- Staffing and capacity to see partners. Who will do the assessments? Time? Potential for third sector to help?
- Where will this be documented? As 'carers' assessment?
- Full assessment or triage?
- When would we do this? What is best timing?
- Impact of Covid....partners not coming to video assessments.
- Helpful to send packs to partners. To include information about perinatal disorders and where to get information. Also information about how they can access support. Send a questionnaire to partner?
- Raised a lot of questions but where are the answers/ how you will overcome the challenges?
- Peer support - helpful for partners to hear from someone who has been through something similar.
- What about wider assessment for the family? Important to identify who key people are for each individual woman.
- Suggestion that Open Dialogue approach may be helpful.

2. What can you offer for all partners in your service to improve their experience?

- When you invite women, word letter to invite partner too?
- Text message to partner inviting them to an appointment with woman's permission
- Telemedicine might improve contact with partner - also important to clarify who is in the room when doing video consultations.
- Flexible working - evening slots for partners if possible
- Multi-cultural needs e.g. interpreters, family members interpreting, written information in different languages
- Lack of male practitioners in the teams
- Difficulties re organising support groups - ? better engagement if male staff
- Consider needs of same-sex partners
- Face to face meetings – understand the family's specific needs
- Questionnaires.....asking partner's to feedback re their journey
- Specifically have information sheet for partners in welcome packs - to include rates of mental health problems in partner sin perinatal period, include info re local support groups and other forms of support
- Offer brief assessment for all partners as is may be hard to identify those who are struggling.
- Offer couple therapy

3. How will you identify partners who may have mental health problems and/or need treatment/support?

- Invite partners early e.g. at booking, at initial assessment of woman
- Take a good partner history and relationship history at the woman's assessment
- One off session for all partners
- Recording information obtained from and about partner....? have a carer's record....with plan, risk assessment etc
- Triage or full assessment....start at booking with MW or /and with HV service

- Invite partners to pre-conception appointment, early pregnancy assessment and pre-birth planning meetings. See partners at different points in the pathway/journey – just like for women mental health problems may start at a later point in the perinatal period.

4. How will assessments be organised in your service?

- a. Same or different professional in the team who assesses the woman?**
- b. Role for peer supporters?**
- c. Triage or full psychiatric assessment?**

- Staffing and pressures
- In what role do we take them onas carers or for their own needs ?
- Who else sees the parents...can midwives/HVs offer routine screening? Partners may be more likely to attend a scan – can screening be done then?
- Need to consider who is most appropriate staff member in each individual case – sometimes might be helpful to have someone who already knows the woman and family well. Sometimes, e.g. if there are conflicts, it may be best for the partner to have someone else doing the assessment.
- Telemedicine - even outside covid may help to engage partners
- Peer support as an add on not an assessor
- Peer supporters may be able to do initial screening?
- Triage vs screening vs assessment vs full care and treatment
- Triangle of Care means we should already be considering carer's needs
- Anxiety about agreeing to something we can't fulfil
- Be clear about what we can and can't do
- Getting to know you session – focus on father/partner's needs and their experiences etc

5. Where will you signpost partners for further support and treatment?

- Depends on different needs of partner
- Roles of partner e.g. co-parent, employee, individual with mental health problems etc and consider what they might need
- Online materials e.g. APP, RCPsych etc
- Ethically – if partner unwell....what do you do if you know there is a long wait for assessment/treatment in another team e.g. IAPT/CMHT?
- What's available in your local community - third sector, charities, children's centre etc
- Cultural issues - family/churches, support groups etc

Other thoughts:

- CAMHS treat family not the individual
- Whooley questions, rating scales etc for father- need something valid and reliable etc What is standardised for fathers?
- Some fathers/partners wouldn't want a mental health record open for them
- Consider role of partner within specific cultural groups