



## **INFANT – MOTHER ATTACHMENT**

By: Alexandra Spitz, Parent Educator

### **Attachment Is...**

- The emotional connection between infant and caretaker.
- A pattern of emotional and behavioral interaction that develops over time.

### **It is Important Because...**

- It impacts:
  - Quality of babies' relationships in the future
  - Self-esteem
  - Personality
  - Intelligence
  - Academic performance
- A secure attachment teaches your baby to trust you, to communicate their feelings and needs to you and eventually to trust others.
- A secure attachment causes the parts of your baby's brain responsible for emotional and social development and communication to grow and mature in a positive way.

### **Secure Attachment Provides for your Child...**

- The ability to regulate their emotions, behavior and attention.

- A stable sense of self.
- Curiosity and exploration.
- Social Skills.
- Healthier relationships.
- The ability to manage stress.
- In the first year of life, a baby's primary task is to learn Trust vs. Mistrust (Erikson's 1st stage of psychosocial development). Babies learn that when their needs are met, the world is a safe place that they can trust.

### **How to build a secure, healthy bond**

- Talk, play, and interact with your baby.
- Provide a high level of responsiveness to their needs.
- Be calm and confident when interacting with your baby, they will sense your mood. Avoid being overly anxious or unresponsive.
- Talk through situations when you are unsure of what your baby needs.
- Feeding time can be bonding time.
- Have daily one-on-one time with your baby with just mom and just dad, as best you can. For 10 - 30 minutes, play, talk, and bond with your baby. Remember! Ideal is not always real. If you cannot have uninterrupted time every single day, do the best you can.
- Establish a rhythm to your day. This isn't by the clock, it is just a flow to your day.
- Establish a night-time routine early on (by approximately 6 months) but it is never too late! Babies respond best when they know what comes next in their routine before they understand our spoken language.
- Get to know your baby's cues.

### **Helping yourself help your baby:**

- Maternal self-care is VERY important. Mom's state of mind has a huge impact on baby. It is important to seek help for any depression or anxiety.
- Healthy maternal self-care will greatly affect your attachment bond with your baby.
- When you are well taken care of, you are best equipped to take the best care of your baby.
- The **quality** of your interactions is more important than the **quantity** of your interactions with your baby. Try and be present.

### **Recognizing Signs of Possible Postpartum Mental Health Issues:**

**If you are experiencing any of the following symptoms, please reach out to your OB/Gyn or one of the professionals listed below.**

- You feel overwhelmed MOST of the time. You feel hopeless, like you just can't handle being a mother and feel as though it will never get better. You feel like a failure.
- You don't feel a connection or bonded to your baby and feel guilty that you aren't handling being a mom in the way you imagined.
- You feel defeated by not being able to breastfeed your baby and cannot enjoy being a new mother and feel as though you have failed your baby.
- You feel resentment toward your baby, your partner, other people in your life who don't have babies.
- You are irritable, angry, are enraged or feel out of control often.
- You have little to no patience and you are easily annoyed.
- You feel as though you are just going through the motions but feel empty and numb.
- You are deeply saddened. You can't stop crying beyond the normal waves of brief emotions that cycle between happy and sad tears.
- You feel as though you cannot eat or you are eating constantly to make yourself feel better.

- You aren't capable of sleeping even when baby is sleeping or someone else is taking care of the baby OR you are sleeping constantly and can't seem to get out of bed to take care of baby or anything else.
- You feel isolated and alone and don't feel you have any support even if people are around.
- You might have scary thoughts of running away, driving off the road or finding a way to end the misery.
- You don't feel like yourself and know something might be wrong but don't know what it could be.
- You can't quite your mind, settle down or relax. You are constantly worried and nothing anyone says can make you feel better.
- You may be having disturbing thoughts that you know are irrational but they won't go away. Because of these thoughts, you are afraid to be with your baby alone.

If you are experiencing any of the above symptoms, you might be experiencing a postpartum illness. 20% of new mothers experience postpartum illnesses, **YOU ARE NOT ALONE**. They are typically **TEMPORARY AND TREATABLE!**

We are here to support you!

## **Resources for the Postpartum Period**

### **Breastfeeding Support**

The New Mom School Complimentary Breastfeeding Support Group

Please check website for current schedule [www.newmomschool.com](http://www.newmomschool.com)

Led By: Danielle Gauss, IBCLC

(714) 287-1697

Contact directly to schedule a one-on-one session in your home or in doctor's office

### **Postpartum Doula Support in the Home**

The Pump Station Postpartum Support Services

Donna Ford

(714) 747-5097

\*Discount offered to class members, please inquire!

### **Therapists Specializing in Postpartum Support**

Shira Kfir, LCSW

[www.shirakfir.com](http://www.shirakfir.com)

(949) 943-0445

Laura Navarro-Pickens, LCSW

[www.therapistlaura.com](http://www.therapistlaura.com)

(562) 882-7901

Sonya Rasminsky, MD (Psychiatrist)

[www.sonyarasminsky.com](http://www.sonyarasminsky.com)

(949) 734-4912

### **Sleep Support**

Joanna Martindale

[www.allthingsbehavior.org](http://www.allthingsbehavior.org)

(323) 363-4534