

Linking Mothers

University of Calgary



Bringing a new life into the world can be one of life's most rewarding, fulfilling experiences. But many new moms find themselves struggling with debilitating postpartum depression — a condition affecting up to 10 percent of new mothers, according to the Canadian Psychological Association.

“It’s not only problematic for the mother, it’s problematic for their children who end up with cognitive and language delays, problems with peer relationships and struggles in school,” says Nicole Letourneau, PhD, a professor at the University of Calgary’s Faculty of Nursing and member of the Alberta Children’s Hospital Research Institute.

Having studied the long-term effects of postpartum depression, Dr. Letourneau knew women suffering from the condition were likely to isolate instead of seeking help. To reach out to mothers struggling with post-partum depression, Dr. Letourneau developed a program while at the University of New Brunswick called MOMS Link™, adapting material created by Dr. Cindy-Lee Dennis, a professor at the University of Toronto and Canada Research Chair in Perinatal Community Health.

Nearly 9 out 10 mothers successfully overcame postpartum depression after completing the MOMS Link™ program.

“*Dr. Letourneau initially worked with the New Brunswick non-urgent healthcare call centre, which identified mothers in need. Mothers who rated high on measures for depression were then invited to participate in the program.*”

“We provided eligible mothers with a peer mentor who had overcome postpartum depression and would speak to the mom for one hour a week for 12 weeks,” said Dr. Letourneau. “At the end of the program, 89 percent of the mothers were no longer depressed.”

After the program’s successful launch in New Brunswick, MOMS Link™ is now positioned to deliver assistance to partner communities across Canada.

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