

Spotting *the blues.*

Talking about Perinatal and Postpartum Depression in Virginia.

Virginia Department of Health and Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services' "Beyond the Blues" campaign was built to help Virginians recognize emotional changes earlier, reduce stigma, and connect parents and families to support before challenges become a crisis.

Maternal mental health exists on a spectrum.

A parent can look "fine" and still need support. It can show up as sadness, anxiety, rage, numbness, fear, or simply feeling unlike yourself. Oftentimes early symptoms get dismissed and severe symptoms can feel shameful.

These struggles are common and treatable.

Perinatal and postpartum depression are a significant yet often invisible crisis across Virginia. Remind parents they don't have to be in crisis to deserve help. Asking for support is not weakness. It is a step toward healing.

Stigma keeps too many parents silent.

Fear of judgment, or of being seen as unfit, stops parents from speaking up. Support should feel safe, human, and free of judgment for every family.

Support is a community responsibility.

Partners, family, friends, faith leaders, healthcare providers, and neighbors all have a role. One conversation can make a difference.

Trusted voices and spaces matter.

Parents turn to people and places they already know. That's why VDHD and DBHDS are teaming up to create this campaign and provide resources where parents are.

75% of people
struggling with
maternal mental
health never get
help.

VDH VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH



Connect with your community.

For partners & community

You don't have to have the right words. Just showing up and asking matters more than you know.

The people closest to a parent are often the first line of support. You don't need to be an expert. You just need to show up. Check in even when someone says they're fine. Take early signs seriously. Offer something specific: a meal, a ride, an hour of childcare. One conversation can change everything.

For parents

You are not alone. You do not have to know what is wrong before asking for help. If something feels off, that matters.

Maternal mental health struggles can happen at any point before, during, or long after pregnancy. If something feels off, that feeling matters; even if you can't name it. You don't have to be in a crisis to need or deserve support. Caring for yourself is part of caring for your family. Help is available, and recovery is real.

For healthcare providers

You are a trusted touchpoint. How you ask is just as important as whether you ask.

Screening opens the door but how we ask, listen, and respond determines whether parents walk through it. Use plain language and normalize the conversation before asking sensitive questions. Recognize the barriers that affect disclosure: racism, trauma, and fear of consequences. Always offer a clear next step, not just a referral. Community partners, doulas, and health workers are force multipliers for trust and access.

Be mindful.

Do say: maternal mental health, postpartum depression, “common and treatable”, “support is available”, “you are not alone”, “you do not have to be in crisis to deserve support”, “support networks have a role to play”

Skip saying: “just baby blues”, hormonal, crazy, unfit, “bad mother”, “severe cases only”, “ask your doctor” as the only call to action, overly “medical” jargon like PMADS, anything that implies the parent is responsible for solving this alone

Share the *resource* of
vdh.virginia.gov/beyond-the-blues