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Peer support for mothers with antenatal depression

Fiona Cust

Staffordshire University, UK

As the number of mothers suffering from postnatal depression (PND) continues to rise at an alarming rate it was decided to explore methods of trying to support new mothers diagnosed as at risk of PND. Recent NICE guidelines (2015) have highlighted the need for the utilization of psychosocial support as opposed to the, often first hand, use of antidepressant medication. One of the main reasons for PND has been a distinct lack of social interaction and isolation. Could, therefore, disclosing to a fellow mother who has previously shared a similar journey may help to assist in the recovery from this debilitating illness? A small number of peer support workers (PSW's) were recruited to offer one to one home visits within the postnatal period to a mother considered to be at elevated risk of PND as diagnosed by the Edinburgh postnatal depression scale (EPDS). The PSW's visited the mother within their own homes from week six postnatally for a period of six weeks. Results were recorded both quantitatively and qualitatively by the recording of the EPDS scores, logbook entries and one to one interviews. These were transcribed, coded and categorized. Results collated display that the PSW's did indeed have a positive effect upon the mothers' mental health, outlook and indeed, their relationship with their baby.

Biography

Fiona Cust was a Senior Lecturer on the Specialist Practitioner Undergraduate and Master's Programme (Health Visiting) teaching both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. She is responsible for a personal tutor group, module development, module leading, teaching, and marking/assessing on a number of relevant field based modules in addition to marking on both adult and mental health modules. She teaches, assess and supervise both undergraduate and postgraduate students (Master's and Doctoral). She assists regularly with OSCE examinations and she is an Examiner for the undergraduate nurses (adult, child and mental health) within their practical examinations. She teaches regularly on both the children's, adult, and mental health degree programme in addition to guest lecturing on the Social Work Degree, Paramedic Degree, Midwifery Degree, Psychology Doctorate programme and Operational Departmental Practitioners Foundation Degree. She is also involved in a Postgraduate Research Awareness module and Inter Professional Education workshops.

Fiona.Cust@staffs.ac.uk

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