

Collaborative Family Therapy – Working Together – Winter 2011

Is it Baby Blues ... or Something Else? (resources) **By Bethany Anderson**

Peacock Family Center: <http://www.peacockfamilycenter.org/index.html>

Postpartum Support International: www.postpartum.net

MedEd Postpartum Depression: www.mededppd.org

Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale can be found at:

http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/postpartumdepression/screening_for_ppd.shtml

Simpkin, P., Whalley, J., & Keppler, A. (2001). *Pregnancy, childbirth, and the newborn: The complete guide*. Minnetonka, MN: Meadowbrook Press.

Sichel, D. & Driscoll, J.W. (2000). *Women's moods: What every woman must know about hormones, the brain, and emotional health*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

From Michelle ... (continuation of article)

And so what about the scope of practice and effectiveness for family therapists? In recent years there have been a considerable number of studies conducted to support the effectiveness of family based models of treatment with problems faced by children and adults. Here are just a few findings that are worth noting:

- The literature suggests the superiority of family over individual treatment with behavior problems and substance use in kids.
- Family based treatments are particularly indicated for major mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bi-polar disorder in adults and children.
- Couples therapy produces outcomes superior to individual therapy in the treatment of depression with women in distressed marriages.
- Family therapy has demonstrated effectiveness in adult substance use, dementia, marital difficulties, adult and adolescent obesity, hypertension, and chronic illness in children.
- Family therapy has demonstrated superior outcomes for young women with eating disorders.

These findings highlight that family therapists need to be skilled in working with people of all ages, and in their various groupings, and focused on the dynamics of relationships. How people relate together around the challenges of their lives is a central focus for the family therapist. We are required to be emotionally dexterous, and competent to deal with uncertainty and the unexpected outcomes that result when relationships are the focus of our work.

Dealing with the complexities of richly diverse families isn't always as easy as it is rewarding. If we could have one wish it would be to take away the vulnerability that some families feel when they first walk through our doors, fearful that they will be judged

deficient in how they have parented their kids or lived their lives. We feel we have succeeded when parents and kids relax into feeling that they are not evaluated negatively by us; sometimes the biggest surprises for people in therapy come when they arrive at their own unique solutions for difficult problems, and then realize their own limitless capacities. We tend to find what we look for and our relentless search for what is creative, positive and good in people creates possibilities for the most meaningful change.