Perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs) are common, treatable, and can occur at any time during pregnancy or in the first year after pregnancy (the perinatal period).

**What are the symptoms of PMADs?**
- PMADs are a spectrum of emotional distress that includes depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, bipolar affective disorder, PTSD, and rarely psychosis.
- Symptoms can include feelings of hopelessness, guilt, despair, feeling inadequate as a parent, anxiety, irritability, lack of interest in things once enjoyed, intrusive or unwanted thoughts such as obsessing over the baby’s safety, and feeling emotionally numb or disconnected from baby.

**What is the Impact of PMADs?**
- As many as one in five pregnant or postpartum Vermonters suffer from symptoms of depression and/or anxiety during the perinatal period. Early data suggests this number is now significantly higher at 1 in 3 women experiencing symptoms, most likely due to the pandemic.
- These disorders are one of the leading complications related to childbearing and can have profound and lasting impacts on the entire family.
- PMADs touch most Vermont families in some way. There is emerging evidence that fathers, partners, and non-gestational caregivers (foster or adoptive parents) are also at risk from the stress of having a baby.
- It can be hard to recognize or identify these disorders at a time when many people experience changes in mood, sleep patterns, and appetite which can lead to under-diagnosis and under-treatment of PMADs.
- A recent peer reviewed study estimated cost of untreated PMADs in the U.S. is $14.2 billion for all births in 2017 following the mother-child pair from pregnancy through 5 years postpartum.

**What are the risk factors for PMADs?**
- Some people are at higher risk due to factors including their life experiences, genetics, and brain biochemistry.
- Stressors associated with low socio-economic status significantly increase a person’s likelihood of developing symptoms.
- Due to the American history of structural racism, members of the Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community are disproportionately impacted by perinatal mental health conditions, experiencing them at rates 2-3 times higher than white individuals.

**Where can people get help?**
- Help Me Grow Vermont offers referrals for therapy and support. Dial 2-1-1 ext. 6
- Crisis Text Line text VT to 741741
- Designated Mental Health Agencies
- Postpartum Support International Vermont Chapter