

## Case Study #4. Negative EPDS screen

A 31-year-old patient and her 6-week-old son (her second child) have come in for their scheduled appointment. The woman reports some significant stress in her life since having her baby, including a recent change of households within the city, some ongoing tension with her mother, and significant fatigue. You ask her to complete the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) and her score is an 8, which is below the normal cut-off for depression. You then ask her two brief screening questions regarding her mood and interest or pleasure in her usual activities. She denies significant low mood or loss of interest. You provide contact information for a local postpartum support group to which you have successfully referred other patients

### Questions

1. Explain the follow-up process for this scenario. What recommendations can you make to help the woman manage her stress and reduce her risk for PPD?

**You will want to have the patient's permission to have your nurse contact her in a week or two. At that follow-up, the nurse should be prepared to briefly assess depression and any other concerns and to encourage the woman to seek help through a support group.**

2. How would you proceed if the woman voiced concerns about attending a support group?

**You should explore with your patient the source of her reluctance. She may believe that she shares nothing in common with the other women, worry about being stigmatized, or be concerned that she would not have childcare to permit her attendance. You can reassure her that adjustment problems in the postpartum period are very common and that, in your experience, the common bond of having had a baby almost always unites the group no matter the other differences that might exist among them. You may also want to point out that increased stress puts her at a higher risk for PPD. Ultimately, it is her decision whether or not to attend.**

3. What other services might the woman find beneficial?

**If the woman refuses to attend a support group, you might encourage her to do some reading on postpartum adjustment. There are a number of good books that she may find beneficial. You might also encourage her to take advantage of on-line resources, such as those provided through Postpartum Support International.**

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