



Welcome Back!

We hope you have been using the skills in Mothers and Babies since your group ended!

At the last group session, your group leader mentioned how important it is to keep practicing these skills. The next couple pages are reminders of some of the main topics you discussed while in your Mothers and Babies group.

Take a few minutes to review these important topics. Most women who have been part of Mothers and Babies in the past have said that these reminders are useful.

Also, now that you have delivered your baby there may be new things going on in your life—both positive and challenging—that make these Mothers and Babies skills even more useful.

If you can't find your Mothers and Babies workbook and you want to review some of the information that was part of the 6-week group, you can find it on our website:

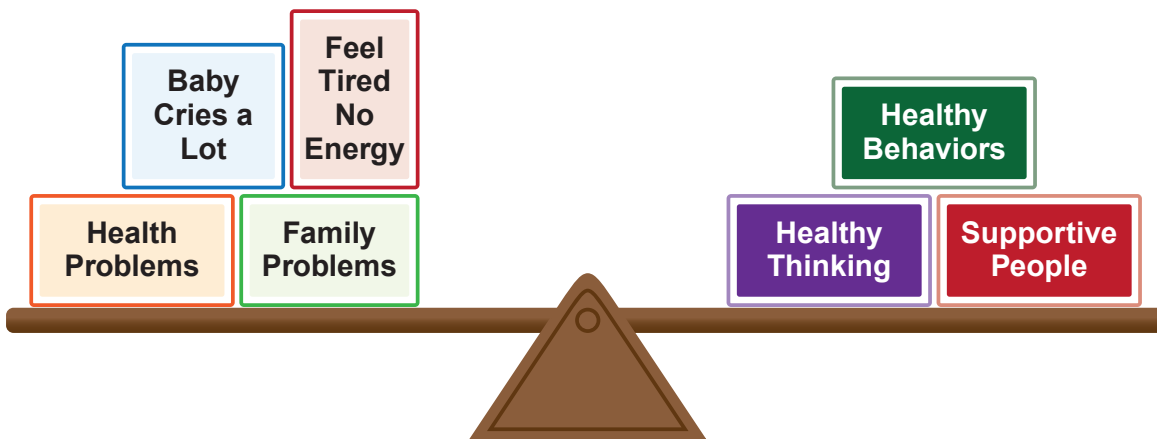
<http://www.mothersandbabiesprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/6-Week-Participant-Manual-2017.pdf>

You can also contact us directly at mbgroup@northwestern.edu and we can send you these materials.



Stress Can Bring Us Down, But Mothers and Babies Can Help Manage Your Stress

Remember how we talked about how everybody has stress in their lives?



The important thing to remember is that we can manage this stress by making changes in:

- The way we **behave**
- The way we **think**
- The **support** we receive from other people

Those are the things you see on the right side of the picture above. And those are the three main topics we talked about during Mothers and Babies.



Pleasant Activities

Pleasant Activities are things that you enjoy doing that can improve your mood and help you manage stress in your life.

We talked about how you can do Pleasant Activities by yourself, with other adults, or with your child(ren).

We also talked about how Pleasant Activities can be:

Brief. For example, listening to the radio for a few minutes.

Cost nothing or cost very little. For example, taking a hot shower.

Be part of our daily routine. For example, reading to your baby.

Take a second to think about this question:

Have you continued to do pleasant activities since Mothers and Babies ended?



If you haven't been doing pleasant activities, that's okay because it can be hard to make time to do them.

But, remember that they can be **quick** and **easy** to do. And, remember that now that your child is born there are lots of new pleasant activities you can do with your baby! Even a quick game of peek-a-boo or singing to your baby counts as a pleasant activity!



Thoughts

Thoughts are things we tell ourselves as if we are having a conversation in our head.

Thoughts can be **helpful** or **harmful**. Both helpful and harmful thoughts can affect our mood.

Because **harmful** thoughts can affect our mood in **negative** ways it is important to have strategies for stopping our harmful thoughts.

During Mothers and Babies we talked about a few of those strategies.

- **Thought Interruption** is telling your mind to stop having the harmful thought.
- **Worry Time** is giving yourself a specific time during the day to worry so you aren't stressed throughout the day.
- **Time Projection** reminds you to have hope for a future that will be better for you and your baby even if things are challenging right now.

Just like a minute ago, take a second to think about whether you have been using these skills.

Have these strategies been useful?



If yes, that is great and you should keep using them when you are having harmful thoughts.

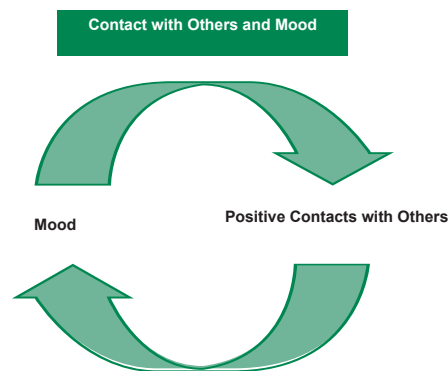
If you haven't used these strategies, there is no better time to start using them than now. They might take some getting used to, but it is important to keep your harmful thoughts from spreading!



Support From Other People

Contact with other people can also affect our mood.

Positive contacts can improve our mood, while negative contacts might make our mood worse.



We talked about how you can find support from different types of people, including a) people close to you, b) close friends, and c) acquaintances.

It is important to keep building your support network so you have people who can help you with different types of needs, especially now that your baby is born!

Can you think of any things that you now need more support for after your baby has been born?

Who is able to provide you that support? Do you need to reach out to other people to get the support you need?

Also, remember that one of the best ways to find people who can support you is by doing pleasant activities. Now that your baby is born, you might be able to meet people by going to the park or the library with your baby.

We also talked about how important it is to ask for things you need using an assertive communication style, which means asking for things in a clear and direct way.

Keep trying to build your support network in the coming weeks and months and remember that other members of your Mothers and Babies group can be part of that support network.



Quick Mood Scale

The last thing we want to remind you about is how important it is to pay attention to your mood.

The **Quick Mood Scale** can be helpful here.

Date:							
Best Mood	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Average	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Worst Mood	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

As you probably remember, 5 is an average mood. What we want is for you to have a mood that is above average, so greater than 5.

This is where doing Pleasant Activities, reducing Harmful Thoughts, and increasing your positive Contacts with Other People can help you!

If you notice that your mood is average or below average, think about how you can use Mothers and Babies skills to do more pleasant activities or change your harmful thoughts.

And if you notice your mood is above average, that is great! That means you probably are already doing a lot of the Mothers and Babies skills and you should keep doing them!