Postpartum Mindfulness Group

The Postpartum Mindfulness Group program is designed to help women who are struggling with anxiety, OCD and depression after the birth of their child. It combines the ideas of mindfulness, self-compassion and meditative practices.

The postpartum period is a particularly vulnerable time for both the development and relapse in mood and anxiety disorders. However, many women feel very alone with their struggles as they feel they should be “enjoying every minute of it”. This group will help build effective skills to manage this high-risk period. Additionally, participants often describe the participation in the group itself—learning that they are not alone in their struggles and building new supportive relationships with each other—to be the most helpful part of the group.

Participants will learn to:
1. Step out of unhelpful thinking patterns.
2. Recognize and be more aware of potential relapse-related mind-body processes.
3. Access new, more compassionate ways to relate to both depression/anxiety-related and other aspects of experience.
4. Turn towards, befriend and engage with both difficult and other aspects of experience.
5. Build the capacity to be present with and accepting of both one’s own and one’s child’s internal experiences

Group Format:
- 90min weekly sessions
- 6 sessions total; closed group format
- Regular attendance and completion of daily mindfulness home practice is essential
- Group size around 12 women
- Babes in arms and pre-crawling infants are welcome to join

WHEN: Fridays 10:00-11:30am Nov.3 – Dec.8, 2017

Facilitators
Dr. Joanna Cheek, MD, FRCPC, a psychiatrist and mother of two young children who has completed her formal training in MBCT through the University of San Diego Centre of Mindfulness with MBCT founder Dr. Zindel Segal and leads a variety of mindfulness and cognitive behavioural therapy groups in the community. She was a co-founder of British Columbia Association for Living Mindfully (BCALM) and the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Skills Groups through the Victoria Divisions of Family Practice.

Stephanie Curran, R.TCM.P, a practitioner of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine, is a long time practitioner of meditation. She has completed teacher training course work in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (with Jon Kabat-Zinn), Mindfulness-Based Childbirth and Parenting, Listening Mothers and Mindful Schools. As a parent, Stephanie is deeply moved and inspired to share the benefits of mindfulness with children, families and her community. She leads a variety of courses for parents and educators in Victoria and is a past board member with the BC Association for Living Mindfully (BCALM).
Referral for Postpartum Mindfulness Group

Inclusion Criteria:
- Postpartum with a child 18mo and under
- Have experienced past of present unipolar depression and/or anxiety
- Committed and motivated to undertake PMG program (able to attend six 90min sessions as well as find 15-20min for daily home practice)

Exclusion Criteria:
- Severe depression (PHQ > 19) (would be better suited with 1:1 management and psychotherapy such as CBT/supportive therapy to stabilize first)
- Cognitive disabilities that would impair capacity to participate in group
- Current substance use disorder
- Current or past psychosis
- Bipolar Disorder
- Antisocial Behaviour
- Significant Emotional Dysregulation (e.g. borderline personality disorder or PTSD with flashbacks or dissociation)
- Any disruptive behaviour or interpersonal style that may impair group functioning
- Current or persistent self-harm or suicidality

Date of Referral:

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<th>Client Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tr>
<th>Referring and Most Responsible Physician/Midwife</th>
<th>Therapist (if applicable)</th>
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<th>DOB:</th>
<th>Age:</th>
<th>PHN:</th>
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Due Date: (Note patients must be pregnant for duration of group)

Client history:

Psychiatric Diagnoses: (if available/appropriate)
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<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes (please qualify)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not committed to daily mindfulness home practice</td>
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<td>Not able to attend 6 sessions</td>
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<td>Psychosis (past of present) or bipolar disorder</td>
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<td>Dementia or impairing cognitive deficit</td>
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<td>Acute severe depression, suicidality, self-harm</td>
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<td>History of violent/aggressive behaviors</td>
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<td>Severe difficulties in regulating emotions (incl. anger, flashbacks/dissociation)</td>
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<td>Current substance use disorder</td>
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This group cannot provide emergency/additional sessions or support. We request that the referring physician or midwife be available to the patient for individual support if the need arises.

PLEASE FAX REFERRALS to DR. JOANNA CHEEK @ 250-592-4129

Further Inquiries to Stephanie Curran scurran@elementscentre.ca or Joanna Cheek joanna.cheek@viha.ca