



**Falmouth Postpartum Work Group  
Maternal Depression Task Force  
11/18/21 11:30am-12:30pm  
Virtual Meeting-Minutes**

- **In attendance:** Mary Wilson (Barnstable and D-Y CFCE, MDTF Coordinator), Patty Watson (Cape Cod Children's Place), Ann Macdonald (Cape Cod Hospital), Bethany Gay (Coalition for Children), Anna Blair (Center for Breastfeeding Healthy Children Project), Shannon Outchcunis (Cape Cod Baby-Doula Services/Bereavement Support), Krista Sullivan (Monumental Beginnings Doula Services), Dori Knope (Early Intervention)
- **Falmouth Human Services Grant Update**  
We received \$20,000 from Falmouth Human Services to provide programs and services in the Town of Falmouth for Falmouth Residents.

**-Postpartum Doula Home Visits-Krista**

Krista Sullivan described the PP Doula Home Visiting services where families would receive up to 3 visits from a Postpartum Doula for 3 hours per visit. Families must live in Falmouth and have given birth or have a child under 1 year old. Families would choose what in-home support they needed (baby care so the parent can do self-care, resources, non-medical additional needs, screening and referral).

**-New Mom Support Group-Mary**

Mary reported that Catherine Roy, the Lactation Consultant who is facilitating the New Mom Support Group, was not available to join the meeting, but reported that the group is small, but she is hoping to grow it and that those who attend are happy to have a place to come together. Bethany Gay reported that the group takes place in her office space, and she has noticed that the families are consistently coming, have developed friendships within the group, have lots of questions for Catherine, and stay longer than the allotted time engaged in conversation. She said she heard from a mom who was grateful and shared her story of being isolated and gratitude for this group. She said she was getting a lot of good feedback.

**-Professional Development Training-Mary**

Mary Wilson reported that there will be a professional development opportunity on a virtual platform and that Deborah Issokson would be facilitating it in the evening from 6-8pm. The date has not been confirmed yet, but the Task Force and Falmouth PPD Work Group will be notified of it and all members will be encouraged to share the opportunity within their networks. The training will be for multidisciplinary staff that interface with new families.

**-PPD Work Group-Mary**

Mary Wilson welcomed everyone to the PPD Work Group for Falmouth to its first meeting. She mentioned that this group will focus on existing services for Falmouth Families, identify gaps in

services/resources and develop a plan to sustain/serve Falmouth Families in order to prevent and treat Perinatal Mood Complications.

- **Discussion: Strengthening the System of Care in Falmouth**

Mary mentioned that this group is being formed to identify the strengths and gaps in services for families in Falmouth around the system of care for new families. A roundtable discussion took place with the participants. This is what was shared:

-**Krista Sullivan** shared that she lives in Falmouth and works with Falmouth families. She sees a lot of needs and confusion around prenatal care since Falmouth Hospital Maternity shut down. There are currently 2 hospitals providing maternity services: Cape Cod Hospital and BID Plymouth. There is a lot of confusion about what providers are available. Falmouth Women's Health OB/GYN practice will not be delivering babies at Cape Cod Hospital anymore after Mid-May of 2022. She sees off-Cape deliveries increasing. There are not many in-person Childbirth Education opportunities available and that it is not what families are looking for-they are all Zoomed out. Breastfeeding services are limited now that Falmouth Hospital stopped serving families. There is an out-of-pocket cost now and no in-person hospital follow up. She is also seeing hospital policies limiting support people because of the pandemic. When military families have a deployed family member, there is that increased isolation factor. There is a lot of confusion as to what still exists for resources since many resources were lost due to the pandemic. She suggested that advertising needs to increase for what still exists. There is also concern about OB offices not allowing babies into the postnatal visits with the moms because of precautions. Some OB offices do and some don't. She mentioned that her home visiting services can help with this minimum care.

- **Shannon Outchunis** shared that she was seeing the same thing that Krista was. She sees that families are lost and that they need a sense of community and that more in-person postpartum support would be helpful. She stated that home visits are very helpful in identifying additional perinatal mood complications.

-**Bethany Gay** shared that one of the strengths is that the network of the Task Force works for referrals and knows she can reach out for families in need. She stated that Falmouth has also of resources, but it is scattered. She suggested we put together what resources are available. We need more understanding about existing OB/GYN practices. Distribution of flyers and resources could be shared with Falmouth Human Services including the Maternal Depression Task Force and Coalition for Children resources. We should also reach out to the Falmouth Service Center. Mary Wilson mentioned that Catherine Roy knows some OB/GYN providers we can distribute information to and hopefully add to the resource list we develop.

-**Dori Knope** shared that she is seeing parents that are very isolated. Some are self-isolating out of fear-not just COVID-related but also of RSV and Hand, Foot & Mouth disease that is going around right now. She believes that families need reassurance for safe meeting opportunities. She thinks perhaps the support group timing is not good and suggested an evening group might be better. She stated that there are very few mental health counselors taking new patients. She thinks a resource list distribution would be helpful. She suggested that we try reaching out to Chiropractors and Gyms to inform them about resources. She also suggested public advertising.

-**Ann Macdonald** shared that Cape Cod Hospital is only offering virtual classes. She said she could do an in-person group class for 3 couples in her space, but the need is too great. She has tried offering a support group on Zoom but the attendance was dismal. Lactation Support can do small numbers in person. Cape Cod Hospital has many restrictions and rules because it is a healthcare facility. When asked if she has the ability to identify Falmouth residents in maternity, Ann said there is a mix of patients, and she can ask who their doctor is and potentially identify them that way. Cape Cod Hospital has seen an increase in births and are currently seeing 80-100 per month. There is a new Social Worker and Ann has given them the program flyers for Falmouth families to receive. CCH has Neonatologists (employed by Children's

Hospital) on staff that do the initial newborn examination at Cape Cod Hospital and then send the information to the chosen pediatrician.

-**Dori Knope** said that there used to be a group that focused on Substance Exposed Newborns. She used to go into Falmouth Hospital to connect with families whose babies were substance exposed. She felt it was good to have the connection with the Social Worker and then the personal connection with the family. Ann Macdonald said that the Social Worker at Cape Cod Hospital does work with substance-exposed families but is not sure who does at BID Plymouth. Dori suggested we invite some parents to this PPD Work Group and perhaps have Catherine Roy invite the moms in her group.

**Bethany Gay** said that Emerson House has closed, but she knows someone at Gosnold (Kevin) that is working with families.

- **Identify Action Plan**

1. Identify existing resources-all participants will identify what resources they can find in the community of Falmouth and those that serve Falmouth families. They will share what they find at the next meeting so that we can start to pull together a resource list for Falmouth families to distribute.
2. We will invite additional providers, community partners, and parents to the next meeting.
3. Updates on the grant activities including home visits, support groups, professional development and work group activities will be provided at the next meeting.

- **Date for next meeting: Thursday, January 13<sup>th</sup> 11:30am-12:30pm**

