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Centre of Perinatal Excellence

Applied Skills in Perinatal Mental Health Assessment and Care

LESSON NOTEBOOK

Module 1 | Lesson 6

Reflective Approaches
to Assessment



Module 1: Lesson 6
Reflective Approaches
to Assessment



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Theory of
Assessment

➔

Reflection and
Deeper Inquiry

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Lesson 6 Overview

1. Factors impacting assessment


2. Reflection on accurate assessment

3. Therapeutic alliance

4. Differential diagnosis

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Factors Impacting
Assessment




Best Practice
COPE
Guideline

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Psychosocial Assessment

- Assessment of circumstances – past and present
- Number and type of factors – affect care pathways and management plans

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National Guideline

Considerations for
Screening and
Psychosocial
Assessment

Mental Health Care in
the Perinatal Period
Australian Clinical
Practice Guideline
October 2017

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Key Considerations

- Systems for follow-up and support
- Who attending assessment
- Informed consent
- Confidentiality
- Follow-up to assessment
- Ongoing care and support

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Factors Impacting Assessment

Internal:

1. Own story, own attachment style
2. Countertransference
3. Preconceived judgement/bias
4. Limitations
5. Cultural competence

External:

1. Societal
2. Client
3. Family
4. Culture

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Internal Factors

The diagram consists of three overlapping circles arranged in a triangle. The top circle is labeled 'Mother' and contains a silhouette of a woman. The bottom-left circle is labeled 'Father/Partner' and contains a silhouette of two people. The bottom-right circle is labeled 'Infant' and contains a silhouette of a baby. These three circles are all contained within a larger circle that is labeled 'CLINICIAN' at the bottom.


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Factors Impacting Assessment

Internal:

1. Own story, own attachment style



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Providing a Secure Base

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Important for psychotherapy
to be effective

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Factors Impacting Assessment

Internal:

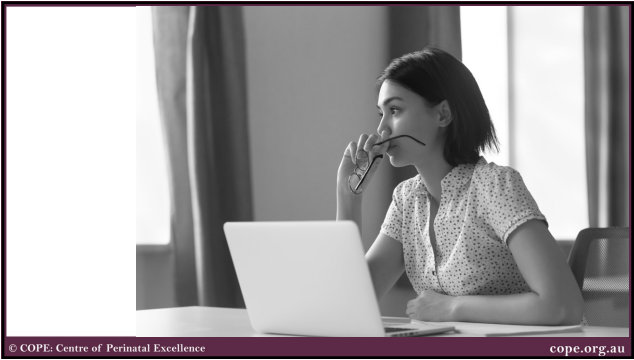
1. Own story, own attachment style

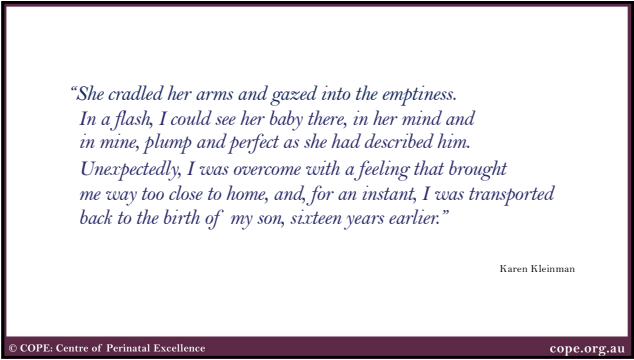
2. Countertransference



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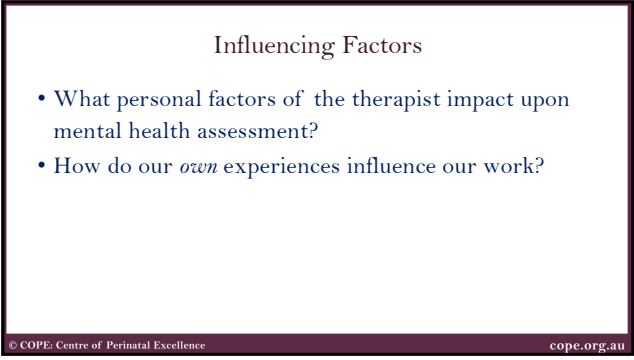
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*"She cradled her arms and gazed into the emptiness.
In a flash, I could see her baby there, in her mind and
in mine, plump and perfect as she had described him.
Unexpectedly, I was overcome with a feeling that brought
me way too close to home, and, for an instant, I was transported
back to the birth of my son, sixteen years earlier."*

Karen Kleinman



Influencing Factors

- What personal factors of the therapist impact upon mental health assessment?
- How do our *own* experiences influence our work?

Interview with
Perinatal Mental Health Clinician:

Frances Bilbao


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Factors Impacting Assessment

Internal:

1. Own story, own attachment style
2. Countertransference
3. Preconceived judgement/bias



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Challenges for Therapists

- When have similar experiences to client
- When do not identify with client's experiences
- Regardless - each experience and combination is unique.

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Factors Impacting Assessment

Internal:

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5. Cultural competence

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Cultural Competence

“Cultural competence is about our will and actions to build understanding between people, to be respectful and open to different cultural perspectives, strengthen cultural security and work towards equality in opportunity. Relationship building is fundamental to cultural competence and is based on the foundations of understanding each other’s expectations and attitudes, and subsequently building on the strength of each other’s knowledge, using a wide range of community members and resources to build on their understandings.”


Early Years Learning Framework, 2010

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External Factors

External:
1. Societal



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Societal Factors


- Domestic Violence
- Housing/living situation
- Transportation
- Poverty
- Religion and spirituality
- Disabilities
- Availability of services - rural and remote
- Advertising/media

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External Factors

External:
1. Societal
2. Client



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Client Factors

- Stigma and Shame
- Attachment style
- History of help seeking
- Under 20's
- Gender identity
- Partners
- Employment
- Substance misuse

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External Factors

External:

1. Societal
2. Client
3. Family



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Family Factors

- Psychiatric history
- Marital, partner satisfaction
- Level of support
- Pressure and expectations
- Negative family dynamics
- Intergenerational trauma
- Relationship with own mother, and/or mother-in-law
- Expectations of others

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External Factors


External:

1. Societal

2. Client

3. Family

4. Culture



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Cultural Factors and Safety

• Optimising communication

• Building sound relationships

• Acknowledging women’s cultural preferences

• Consideration of power relationships and history

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Socio-cultural Factors

• Race and ethnicity

• Cultural identity

• Cultural humility

• Language

• Immigrant status

• Migrants, asylum seekers or refugees

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

- Cultural disconnection
- Multiple stressors such as poverty, poor housing
- Child removal history
- Impact of trauma, abuse and loss

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

- Different models of engagement
- Greater understanding about the social determinants
- Recognition of unique factors
- Changes in the cultural competence

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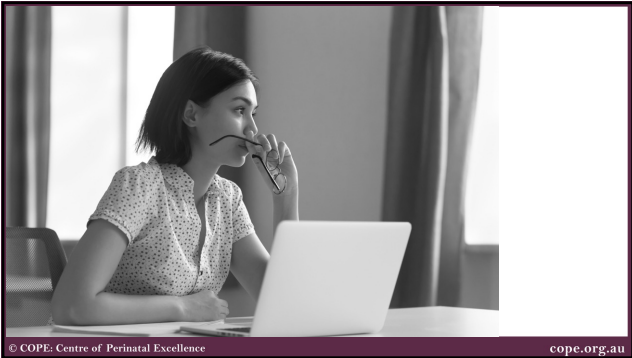
Reflection on
Accurate Assessment



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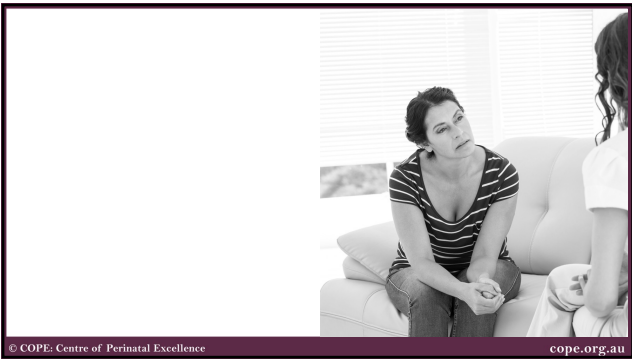
Reflection

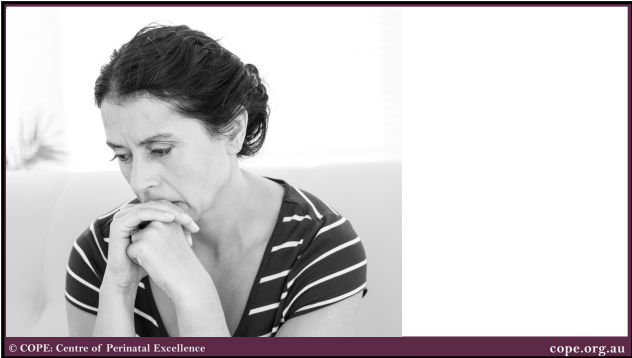
Reflective Practice:
Incorporating new understandings and continuous learning.

Critical Reflection:
Essential tool and skill for identifying emotional stress and cultivating self-awareness.

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The Reflection 'Dance'


Reflective Capacity: Provides opportunity for clinicians to explore own emotional responses that may be triggered.

Reflective Function: The capacity to reflect on one's own thinking and feelings, as well as on that of others.

Mentalising: Process of how we understand and make sense of behaviour in terms of mental states.

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Therapeutic Alliance



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Importance of Alliance

- Improve or facilitate the therapeutic relationship
- Important aspects include:
 - ✓ Trust
 - ✓ Confidence
 - ✓ Mutuality
 - ✓ Active listening
 - ✓ Empowerment

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Optimising Engagement

- Opportunity to develop trusting relationships
- Acknowledge and reinforce the woman’s role
- Non-judgmental and compassionate manner
- Foster hope and optimism about treatment

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Considerations

- Importance of trust
- Vulnerability of a new parent
- Shame and stigma



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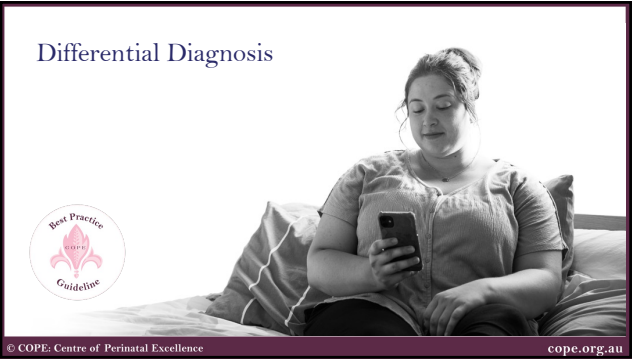
Therapeutic Relationship

- Understand normal range of emotions
- Allow time to assess the woman's situation
- Actively listen
- Ascertain and address misconceptions
- Build rapport, maintain a non-judgmental attitude
- Address any feelings of stigma

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Differential Diagnosis



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Differential Diagnosis

- Baby Blues
- Parental Burnout
- Adjustment disorder
- Grief and loss
- Traumatic stress disorders
- Acute, post acute
- Complex/chronic

- Bipolar disorder
- Perinatal psychosis
- Eating disorders
- BPD (and other personality disorders)
- ADHD
- Substance use issues/disorders

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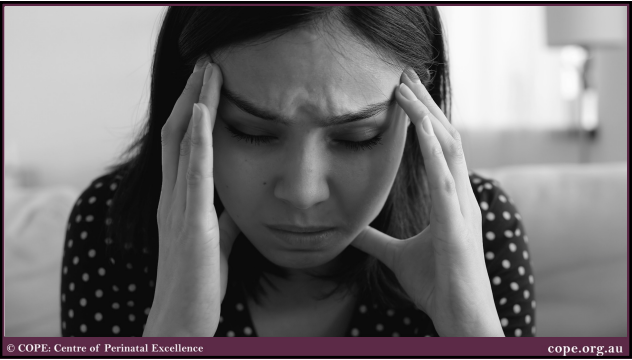
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Postnatal OCD vs Intrusive Thoughts

- May not be recognised/disclosed
- Intrusive thoughts
- No awareness or inquiry

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Intrusive Thoughts

- Accidentally harming their baby
- Shaking the baby
- Hitting the baby too hard during winding
- Throwing the baby to the ground or against a wall
- Drowning the baby in the bath
- Smothering the baby
- Releasing the baby in a pram

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Personality Disorders

Challenges

- Struggle with relationship with infant
- Can make caring difficult
- Managing distress of infant and own distress
- Maternal behaviour can impact infant development

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Borderline Personality Disorder

- Experienced maladaptive, abusive or neglectful parenting
- Risk of reenacting/replicating with infants

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Personality Disorder

- Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)
- Obsessive Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD)

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PTSD Symptoms

- Re-living the birth/traumatic event
- Being overly alert or wound up
- Avoiding reminders of the event
- Feeling emotionally numb

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Severe Perinatal Illness

- Bipolar Disorder
- Psychosis

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Signs of Postpartum Psychosis

- Finding it hard to sleep
- Feeling full of energy or restless and irritable
- Feeling invincible - strong, powerful and unbeatable
- Having strange and irrational beliefs such as that someone is trying to harm the baby

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Severe Perinatal Illness

- Bipolar Disorder
- Psychosis
- Schizophrenia

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Borderline personality disorder in pregnancy and the postnatal period
A guide for women and their families

How common is borderline personality disorder?

What causes borderline personality disorder?

What are the signs and symptoms?

How is borderline personality disorder treated?

Borderline personality disorder during pregnancy

How common is borderline personality disorder?

What causes borderline personality disorder?

What are the signs and symptoms?

How is borderline personality disorder treated?

Bipolar disorder in pregnancy
A guide for women and their families

How common is bipolar disorder?

What causes bipolar disorder?

What are the signs and symptoms?

How is bipolar disorder treated?

Schizophrenia in pregnancy
A guide for women and their families

How common is schizophrenia?

What causes schizophrenia?

What are the signs and symptoms?

How is schizophrenia treated?

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Health Professional Fact Sheets

Borderline personality disorder

Download Borderline Personality Disorder Fact Sheet B

Perinatal depression

Download Perinatal Depression Fact Sheet B

Psychosis in the perinatal period

Download Psychosis in the Perinatal Period Fact Sheet B

Postnatal depression

Download Postnatal Depression Fact Sheet B

Borderline personality disorder in pregnancy

Download Borderline Personality Disorder Fact Sheet B

Bipolar disorder in pregnancy

Download Bipolar Disorder Fact Sheet B

Schizophrenia in pregnancy

Download Schizophrenia Fact Sheet B

How to use the factsheets

Download the factsheets by topic

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Comorbidity



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Guideline

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Drug and Alcohol Assessment

- Drug and alcohol use
- Challenges in assessment
- Difficult to ascertain psychiatric diagnosis
- Impact on infant

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Hyperemesis Gravidarum

- Physical, mental and emotional impacts
- Highly debilitating
- Increased mental health risk
- Increased risk of suicide

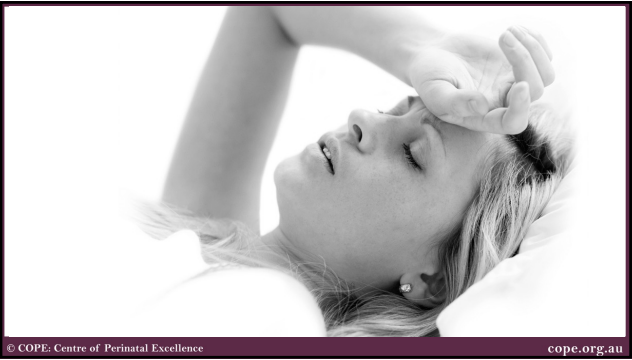
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Physical Issues

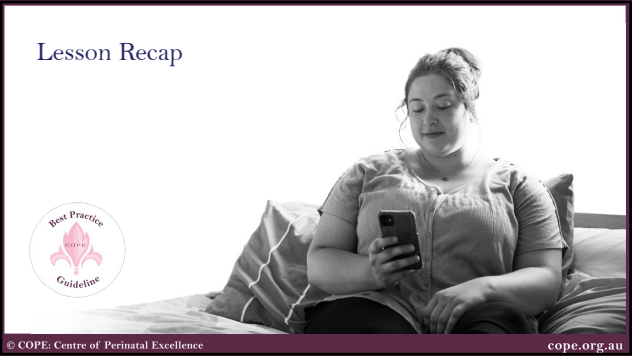
- Hyperemesis gravidarum
- Gestational diabetes
- Thyroid, Anemia, Vitamin D
- Substance use/abuse (including caffeine)
- Side effects of other medications
- ‘Baby Blues’ versus exhaustion

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Lesson Recap



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Lesson 6: Recap

1. Factors impacting assessment

2. Reflection on accurate assessment

3. Therapeutic alliance

4. Differential diagnosis

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