Exploring the Information Behaviors and Mental Health of New Parents in Public Libraries Communities

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This research poster defines new parents as adults who experience prenatal, postnatal, and early infancy parenthood stages. The peer review studies will cover information theories, behaviors, challenges, issues, needs, use of technology, information sources, community grounds, and support in a public library setting. In addition, data was collected from leading health organizations.

The study of new parents' information behaviors and mental health is essential because their information behaviors can impact their children's academic development, family/partner relations, and the continual demand for mental and social support. With help from libraries, new parents can improve their quality of life and the community's dynamic.



<u>Challenges in the research:</u>

- Minimal data and research that reflects the participation of first-time fathers and/or experienced
- Lack of diverse perspectives and demographic backgrounds from mothers & fathers and various forms of family dynamics

This information community has an additional need for research to understand the diverse perspectives of new parents, such as:



- Teen Parents/s
- LGBTQ parent/s
- Foster parent/s • Single Parent/s
- Adoption parent/s
- BIPOC parent/s
- Disabled/Able-ed body parent/s

Immigrant/Refugee

- Geograpichal locations of different parents and families
- Guardian caregivers
- and more



New parents' information must extend beyond their children's early literacy development. Prescott & Mackie (2017) researched the similarities in information needs of both mothers and fathers on employment, developmental stages/milestones, product reviews, health issues, medical issues, childcare, and more. In addition, Prescott & Mackie (2017) state a common practice of how new parents use online sources to verify the information they receive and the reliability of sources. New Parent's mental health face a dynamic challenges and changes as they adjust to their new reality. Which may lead to unintentional isolation and information overload. Therefore, new parents face challenges as they navigate the abundance of information regarding their children and their new role as parents. Information organizations, such as libraries, can provide supplemental resources and services based on the research of new parents. The research was conducted with analyzing research articles from peer-reviewed journals from the San Jose State University Library and Information Science source database, community- based resources and with a focus on Savolainen's Theory of ELIS. In addition, data was collected from mental health organizations. By combing the information behaviors and research in the New Parents mental health, libraries will be able to adjust programs and services to meet the common stressors of New Parents.



Data

According to Hamilton et al. (2016), research has stated that new mothers have a rate of receiving 20% postpartum depression, 50-80% form of distress, with fathers receiving 10% mental distress.

Experiences that new parents may face in the "Fourth

- Trimester" also known as the post-partum stage:
- Increase symptoms of previous diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health conditions
- Traumatic birth experience
- Lack of support system

Never Married

- Family history of perinatal mood issues
- Postpartum depression, anxiety, OCD, psychosis
- Baby Blues, which relates to unexplainable mood

Lack of support to new fathers may lead to adverse effects and negative experiences in parenthood:

- 75 million men in the US are fathers with a 60% rate of men being over age 15
- 2 million single fathers with 40% divorces, 38% never married, 15% separated, and 6% widowed
- Up to 16% of new fathers develop an anxiety disorder before and after birth

Common Stressors for New Parents:

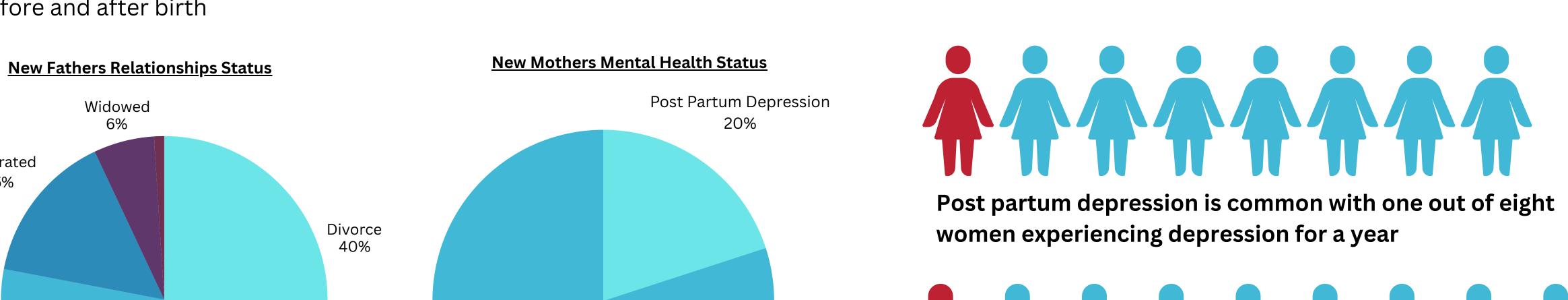
- Medical/Health Issues
- Childcare
- Guilt about bonding
- Relationship Changes Loneliness and Isolation
- Protector and Provider Expectations
- Parenting Anxiety
- Self-Care Financial and other resources
- Product Reviews
- Employment Developmental stages/milestones
- Information Overload
- Informational Gaps
- Lack of Research Literacy

The following are at risk for mental health challenges and adverse effects:

- Previous depression or mental health conditions
- Experienced abuse or adversity as a child
- Traumatic birth experience

Family history of mental health conditions

- Issues with previous pregnancy or birth
- Little or no support
- Experienced domestic violence
- Relationship, Financial and hard life struggles
- Parents Under the age of 20
- Bad breastfeeding experiences
- Unplanned pregnancies
- Having a baby that was born prematurely an/or
- has special health care needs
- Similar experiences





The Library's Role

Libraries can provide supplemental mental health resources and support for new parents, benefiting children, parents, and families. Hoeing (2020) stated that libraries could support new parents due to their behavior and increased information consumption. Libraries can provide various programs supporting information research literacy skills and social connectedness. In addition, the designs of these programs can focus on the topics regarding the information needs of parents, such as health issues, child development, economic practices, supplemental government resources, and more.

Opportunities for Libraries for New Parents:

- Libraries can develop online resources and blog forums as Shorey et al. (2018) and Shorey et al. (2019) had researched the evaluation of a mobile health app for postnatal participants in Canada and Singapore. These researches discuss the themes of mental health status during parenthood and the need for supplemental resources. With positive feedback and design, telemedicine can become a supportive informational resource for new parents.
- Da Costa et al. (2017) stated that libraries could strategize on the website development design by understanding the information behaviors and
- New fathers may prefer the 'berry picking' method of accessing information in a "one-stop shopping" service (Mniszak et al., 2020). Fathers may prefer this information behavior because of the limited time and resources to review information; therefore, they gather relevant information from where they can.
- Mothers have the information needs to seek information from websites as a secondary source to quench their anxieties and to gather secondary opinions (Prescott & Mackie, 2017)

Los Angeles Public Library -**Read Baby Read**

Kent District Library -Mama Bear & Baby Cub and Babytime

Stone Ridge Public **Library- New Parent**

Pike County Public Library PA - Expectant & New Parent Circle

St. Charles City-County

Library - Diaper Distribution

Los Angeles County Library -**New Parent Engagement**

Desmond- Fish Public Library - New Parents Support Group

Lindenhurst Memorial Library- Community Baby

Current Library Programs & Services

MI Grosse Pointe Library District - New Parent Outreach

> San Jose Public Library -**Resources for Parents &** Caregivers

Washington Centerville Public Library - family Workstation

Montana State University Billings Library - New Parent's Room

ALSC

Serving Expectant Parents & Families with **Newborns From Where We Are Today**

Leah Hoening

From Parent to Patron: Stressing Early **Literacy to New Parents**

Lisa Bruckman

Library Services for New Parents: Eleni Glykis of Red **Bank Library Offers Programming and Outreach Ideas**

California State Library

Stay & Play Kits



Call to Action

A few suggestions on how to start at your library:

- Check out the resources listed
- Weed outdated parenting books
- Develop a parenting collection that reflects different perspectives . Feel free to have it in its separate section.
- Contact other libraries to see what they are doing
- Develop a parenting kit that parents can check out
- Work with fellow co-workers, parents are not only a children librarian's purview but for adults and teens
- Get creative! Develop programs and workshops for parents
- Conduct a survey to learn more about the parents in your community.
- Check out other formats such as Young Adult, Graphic Novels, Film, Etc.
- Create Booklists

The Queer Parent

- Read parenting books from various perspectives, such as:
- Mom Rage: The Everyday Crisis of Modern Motherhood
- Screaming on the Inside: The Unsustainability of American Motherhood Pregnant While Black: Advancing Justice for Maternal Health in America
- We've Got This: Essays by Disabled Parents
- The PhD Parenthood Trap: Caught Between Work and Family in Academia

Conclusion

Librarians, libraries, and information professionals can become another informational resource that guides new parents and provide a new form of community support. Parents face an immense amount of societal expectations however are given minimal space to normalize their experiences. Information professionals are at the forefront of recognizing the impacts of new parents' actions and providing resources to support the child's development as a community. New programs and services can allow for these parents to feel seen and supported within their community. Small actions can be taken to address the needs of the information community of new parents. Recall the old saying, "It takes a village to raise a baby."

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