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## Care Pathways

### Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale

The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale has been developed to assist primary care health professionals to detect mothers suffering from postnatal depression; a distressing disorder more prolonged than the "blues" (which occur in the first week after delivery) but less severe than puerperal psychosis. Previous studies have shown that postnatal depression affects at least 10% of women and that many depressed mothers remain untreated. These mothers may cope with their baby and with household tasks, but their enjoyment of life is seriously affected and it is possible that there are long-term effects on the family. The EPDS was developed at health centers in Livingston and Edinburgh. It consists of ten short statements. The mother chooses which of the four possible responses is closest to how she has been feeling during the past week. Most mothers complete the scale without difficulty in less than 5 minutes. The validation study showed that mothers who scored above threshold 92.3% were likely to be suffering from a depressive illness of varying severity. Nevertheless, the EPDS score should not override clinical judgment. A careful clinical assessment should be carried out to confirm the diagnosis. The scale indicates how the mother has felt during the previous week and in doubtful cases, it may be usefully repeated after 2 weeks. The scale will not detect mothers with anxiety neuroses, phobias or personality disorder.

#### Instructions for users:

- 1 The mother is asked to choose the response that comes closest to how she has been feeling in the previous 7 days.
- 2 All ten items must be completed.
- 3 Care should be taken to avoid the possibility of the mother discussing her answers with others.
- 4 The mother should complete the scale herself, unless she has limited English or has difficulty with reading.
- 5 The EPDS may be used at 6-8 weeks to screen postnatal women. The child health clinic, postnatal check-up or a home visit may provide suitable opportunities for its completion.

#### Guidelines for Evaluation:

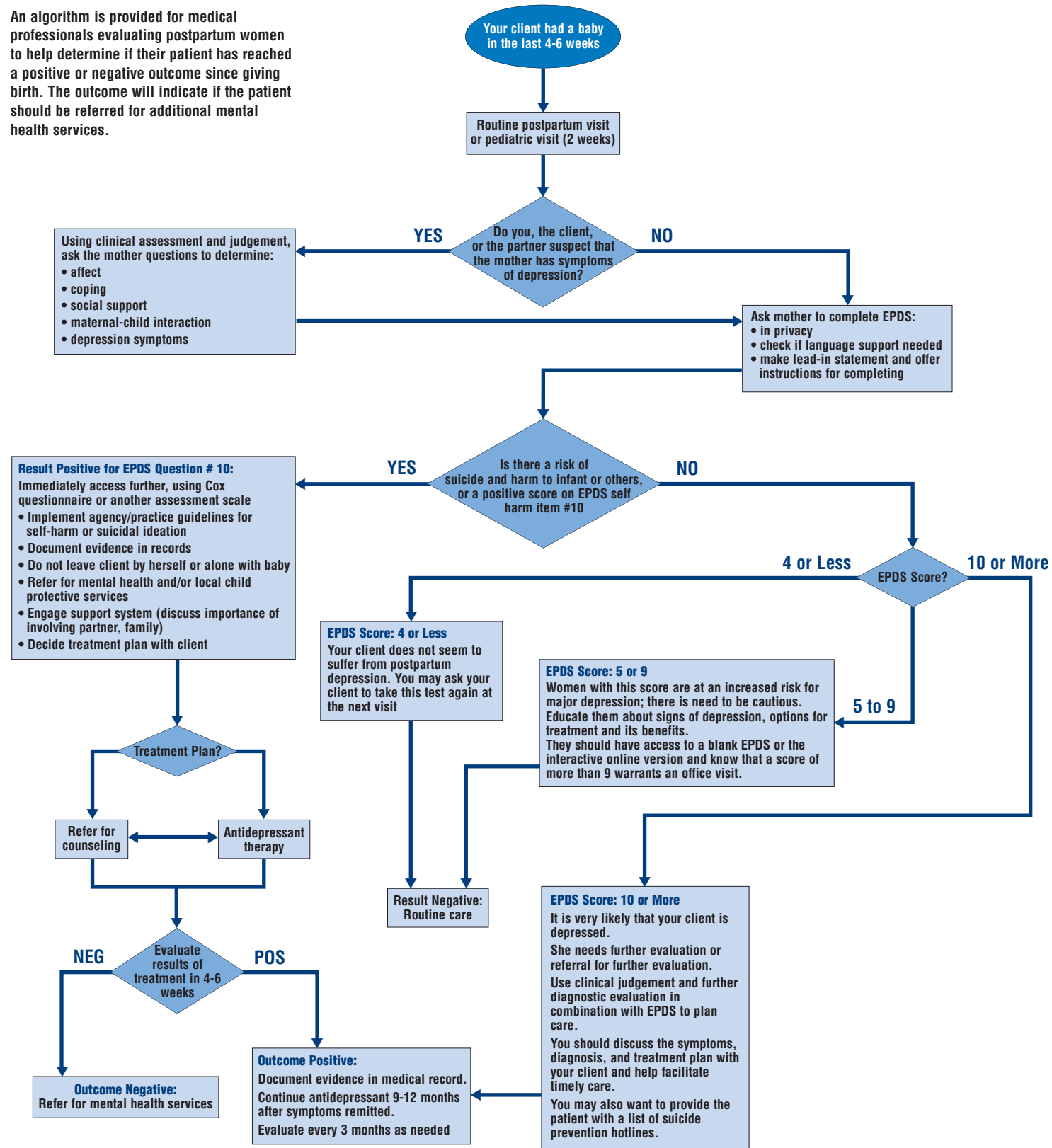
Response categories are scored 0, 1, 2, and 3 according to increased severity of the symptom. Questions 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 are reverse scored (ie, 3, 2, 1, 0)

Individual items are totaled to give an overall score. A score of 10+ indicates the likelihood of depression, but not its severity. If any number other than "0" is picked for question number 10, further assessment is required right away. The EPDS Score is designed to assist, not replace, clinical judgment. Women should be further assessed before deciding on treatment.

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An algorithm is provided for medical professionals evaluating postpartum women to help determine if their patient has reached a positive or negative outcome since giving birth. The outcome will indicate if the patient should be referred for additional mental health services.



**Disclaimer:**  
Information on this Web site is intended only to increase knowledge on perinatal mood disorders. We do not intend to offer medical advice or treatment of any kind. The tools we offer are intended as tools only, the results of which should be confirmed by a qualified healthcare professional. This information is not a replacement for diagnosis or treatment by a qualified healthcare professional. MedEdPPD cannot be responsible for actions taken without professional medical guidance.

Chart courtesy of MedEdPPD

Please UNDERLINE the answer that comes closest to how you have felt **IN THE PAST 7 DAYS**, not just how you feel today.

1. I have been able to laugh and see the funny side of things.  
As much as I always could  
Not quite so much now  
Definitely not so much now  
Not at all
2. I have looked forward with enjoyment to things.  
As much as I ever did  
Rather less than I used to  
Definitely less than I used to  
Hardly at all
3. I have blamed myself unnecessarily when things went wrong.  
Yes, most of the time  
Yes, some of the time  
Not very often  
No, never
4. I have been anxious or worried for no good reason.  
No, not at all  
Hardly ever  
Yes, sometimes  
Yes, very often
5. I have felt scared or panicky for no very good reason.  
Yes, quite a lot  
Yes, sometimes  
No, not much  
No, not at all
6. Things have been getting on top of me.  
Yes, most of the time I haven't been able to cope at all  
Yes, sometimes I haven't been coping as well as usual  
No, most of the time I have coped quite well  
No, I have been coping as well as ever
7. I have been so unhappy that I have had difficulty sleeping.  
Yes, most of the time  
Yes, sometimes  
Not very often  
No, not at all
8. I have felt sad or miserable.  
Yes, most of the time  
Yes, quite often  
Not very often  
No, not at all
9. I have been so unhappy that I have been crying.  
Yes, most of the time  
Yes, quite often  
Only occasionally  
No, never
10. The thought of harming myself has occurred to me.  
Yes, quite often  
Sometimes  
Hardly ever  
Never

Taken from the British Journal of Psychiatry June, 1987, Vol. 150 by J.L. Cox, J.M. Holden, R. Sagovsky