Postpartum Depression Screening

**Policy:** Postpartum depression is a mental health condition that affects the health, safety, and well-being of all members of a family. Arrowhead Head Start will screen enrolled pregnant mothers and mothers of enrolled children under the age of one year old and make referrals when appropriate.

**Procedure:**
1. Early Head Start Lead Educators will use the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) screening tool to help detect depression. The EPDS is not meant to diagnose postpartum mood disorders.
2. Each parent will receive information regarding postpartum depression when completing the first screening.
3. Other primary caregivers in the home will be offered the screening at the same time as the mother.
4. The following schedule will be adhered to:
   a. *For pregnant mothers enrolled in Arrowhead Early Head Start:* The enrolled pregnant mother will complete the EPDS once per trimester of her pregnancy, and at the newborn visit that is scheduled within two weeks of birth.
   b. *For parents of children under one year of age enrolled in Early Head Start:* Upon a child’s enrollment into the program, parents will be screened when the child is the following ages:
      - 2 months
      - 6 months
      - 12 months
5. If the Early Head Start child is in out-of-home placement, but the biological parent(s) has contact with the EHS Lead Educator, the parent will be offered the screening according to the schedule above.
6. The Health Educator or Health Manager will administer, score, and discuss the screening with parents during the newborn visit that is scheduled within two weeks of birth.
7. The EHS Lead Educators are responsible for administering, scoring, and discussing the screening with parents during the 2-month, 6-month, and 12-month home visits.
8. EHS Lead Educators will initiate and complete referrals as deemed appropriate by the following:
   a. If the score is between 0 and 9, the screening is considered to be within normal limits and no further action is required.
   b. If the score is 10 or higher, or if the score is greater than “0” on question #10, referrals will be made to the parent’s primary care provider for further evaluation.
      i. Parents who are currently receiving mental health services will be referred to this provider and their primary care provider for follow-up.
9. If the EHS Lead Educator feels the safety of the children and/or parent is in jeopardy, emergency medical attention will be sought immediately.
10. Parents will be asked to sign a *Consent for the Release of Confidential Information* to allow Early Head Start to share results of screenings with his/her primary care provider. If the family is involved with a public health nurse, social worker, or mental health worker, staff
will ask parents to add those service providers to the Consent for the Release of Confidential Information form. Results of screenings will then be shared with the listed professionals.

11. Copies of scored screenings will be kept in the enrollee’s electronic file.
12. EHS Lead Educators will complete and document all referrals and follow up.

This policy complies with Head Start Performance Standard 45 CFR 1302.80 (c) - (d) and 1302.81 (a).
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