



Respond to Mental Health Conditions to Improve Maternal Health

Mental health conditions are a leading cause of maternal mortality, yet often go unaddressed. This job aid presents high impact practices to respond to mental health conditions in the outpatient sexual and reproductive health setting, along with resources to support implementation.

★ Indicates a key practice

Readiness

HIGH IMPACT PRACTICE	RESOURCE
Train staff to address mental health conditions—including through prevention, detection, assessment, and care. Educate staff about the impact of mental health conditions on maternal health outcomes.	Addressing Pregnancy-Associated Deaths: Mental Health and Suicide
Educate clients about mental health conditions, including prevention, detection, assessment, and care.	National Institute of Mental Health Brochures and Fact Sheets National Maternal Mental Health Hotline Talking Postpartum Depression
Develop and maintain a set of referral resources, and foster communication with other health and social service providers to enhance support for clients with mental health conditions.	Local Resource List GirlTREK National Resource Toolkit: Support for Black Women's Mental Wellness

Recognition and Prevention

HIGH IMPACT PRACTICE	RESOURCE
★ Screen all clients for mental health conditions using validated screening tools, including tools validated for perinatal use when indicated.	Mental Health Screening Tools
★ Screen for health related social needs. Link clients to resources.	The Accountable Health Communities Health-Related Social Needs Screening Tool

Response

HIGH IMPACT PRACTICE	RESOURCE
★ Initiate a mental health response policy and protocol that is responsive to the client's values and needs.	Practice Guidelines: Core Elements in Responding to Mental Health Crises

Response *continued*

HIGH IMPACT PRACTICE	RESOURCE
Activate an immediate suicide risk assessment and response protocol for clients with identified suicidal ideation and/or who pose risk of harm to self/others.	SAFE-T Pocket Card: Suicide Assessment Five-Step Evaluation and Triage (SAFE-T) for Clinicians Maternal Suicide and Risk Assessment Toolkit
Offer reproductive life planning discussions and resources, including access to a full range of contraceptive options for which the client is medically eligible.	Determining Your Client's Need for Services and Discussing Reproductive Goals eLearning Client-Centered Reproductive Goals and Counseling Flow Chart

Reporting and Systems Learning

HIGH IMPACT PRACTICE	RESOURCE
Monitor outcomes and process data related to mental health conditions.	High Impact Practice Set (HIPS) for Outpatient Settings: Respond to Mental Health Conditions Measurement Tool
Convene partners and community stakeholders—including those with lived experience—to identify opportunities and share strategies for reducing barriers to care and improving outcomes.	Identifying and Analyzing Stakeholders and Their Interests Guide

Respectful, Supportive, Client-Centered Care

HIGH IMPACT PRACTICE	RESOURCE
Provide client-centered, trauma-informed communication and counseling to support the client in understanding recommendations and options.	ASA Cycles for Patient-Centered Communication Palm Card Trauma-Informed Care Toolkit for Title X Agencies

These practices were adapted from [Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health \(AIM\) Patient Safety Bundles](#) by the RHNTC in collaboration with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). [Perinatal Mental Health Conditions. \(2022\).](#)

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