Job Aid #7: Assessing the Needs of a Pregnant Mom

Directions

Use this job aid to help you evaluate the needs of expectant moms during your home visits. The job aid helps you assess these four things:

- **Completion of developmental stages/tasks:** Is mom successfully completing the developmental stages and tasks associated with pregnancy, and equipping herself with the knowledge she needs to have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby?
  - **Stage 1:** Acceptance of pregnancy by mom and those around her. Beginning to think about changes baby will make in her life and in her family's life.
  - **Stage 2:** Growing a healthy baby.
  - **Stage 3:** Preparing to separate from baby and care for it outside of her womb.

- **Environment:** Is mom’s environment healthy and safe for her and her baby?

- **Financial Resources:** Does the mom have the ability to financially support herself and her baby.

- **Social Resources:** Does mom have the social resources she needs for her emotional well-being and health?

**For each category, the job aid lists:**

- Observations for you to make.
- Comments for you to listen for during visits.
- Questions you can ask.

Based on what you see and hear, you can evaluate the type of information or help to provide to the mom.
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Completion of Stage 1 Developmental Stages/Tasks - Acceptance of the pregnancy by the woman, her partner and her family; beginning to think about the changes the new baby will make in her life.

**Observe:**
- Mom’s physical appearance for signs that she’s struggling with common discomforts seen in early pregnancy.
- Outward signs about the mom’s emotional state – does she look happy? Angry? Frustrated? Does she seem depressed?

**Listen for:**
- Mom’s comments about how she feels – both physically and emotionally.
- Mom’s acknowledgement of the pregnancy and how she feels about being pregnant.

**Ask:**
- Many moms experience nausea, vomiting, constipation, and fatigue during early pregnancy. What symptoms have you had and how are you dealing with them?
- How are you feeling?
- How are you adjusting to being pregnant?
- Who have you told about the pregnancy? What were their reactions?
- Have you thought about how this baby will change your life?
- Are you taking a prenatal vitamin every day?
- What have you heard about folic acid and its role in preventing birth defects?
- Are you aware of the danger signs that indicate a problem with the pregnancy such as cramping, bleeding from the vagina, and severe vomiting?
- Do you know how to call your health care provider if you have a question or a problem?

Completion of Stage 2 Developmental Stages/Tasks - Growing a healthy baby.

**Observe:**
- The contents of the refrigerator and cupboards – are healthy foods in evidence?
- Signs that mom is gathering information about pregnancy and her developing child – such as magazines or pamphlets on pregnancy from a healthcare provider.
- Behaviors that indicate she is aware of the needs of her developing child – avoiding harmful substances, choosing healthy foods, going for prenatal care.
- The mother’s physical appearance- does she look well groomed, well hydrated, well nourished?
- The mother’s mood- does she look relaxed, happy? Does she make eye contact? Is she agitated?
- Signs that mom or someone else in the home may be smoking (smoke smell, ash trays, cigarette packs laying on furniture).
- For signs of drug or alcohol use
  1. Physical signs in mom such as dilated pupils, agitation, needle tracks, nose bleeds.
  2. Drug paraphernalia such as bongs or pipes.
  3. Bottles or cans of beer, wine, or hard liquor.
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Listen for:

- Mom’s comments about prenatal visits/prenatal care.
- Mom’s comments about herself and her growing baby. Does she refer to the baby as a real baby? Does she make comments referring to herself as a mother or mother-to-be?
- Does she make comments about her partner and/or family and their acceptance of the pregnancy?
- Requests from the mom for information about such things as the baby’s growth and development, nutrition, exercise, or medical care during pregnancy.
- Comments or questions related to her bodily changes or the development of her baby.
- Requests for information about signs and symptoms of problems.

Ask:

- What do you know about the link between the foods you eat and the health of your baby?
- What changes have you noticed in your body?
- What questions do you have about your baby’s growth?
- What worries do you have about having a healthy baby?
- Are you taking a prenatal vitamin every day?
- What have you heard about folic acid and its role in preventing birth defects?
- Where are you receiving prenatal care? Have you had difficulty getting to your visits?
- Have you missed any prenatal visits?
- What questions do you have about the procedures or tests done during a prenatal visit?
- Are your questions answered and your concerns discussed by your health care provider?
- What plans have you made for taking care of the baby? How do you see the baby changing your life?
- Do you know about danger signs to watch for such as bleeding, a gush of fluid from the vagina, cramps, changes in the baby’s movement and severe headaches with blurred vision and swelling and do you know how to report these to your health care provider?
- What do you know about the risks of alcohol, cigarette smoke, or drugs during pregnancy?

Completion of Stage 3 Developmental Stages/Tasks - Separation of the baby from the mother (birth) and readiness to transition to caring for baby outside the womb.

Observe:

- Indicators that mom is gathering what she needs for baby’s homecoming – a car seat, a crib or bassinet for baby to sleep in, diapers, clothing, etc.
- Mom’s emotional state when she talks about the birth.

Listen for:

- Mom’s comments about what life will be like after the baby arrives.
- Mom’s concerns about the birth. Does she appear overly concerned about labor?
- Mom’s comments about who will be with her when she goes to the hospital.
- Comments from mom that indicate that she is getting ready to give birth and she’s anticipating having her baby.
# Completion of Stage 3 Developmental Stages/Tasks

Separation of the baby from the mother (birth) and readiness to transition to caring for baby outside the womb.

## Ask:

- Do you know if your baby is a boy or a girl?
- Have you picked out names for your baby?
- What kind of baby do you think your baby will be—easygoing, active, quiet?
- What supplies have you purchased for the baby?
- Have you thought about creating a birth plan?
- Who will help you after you bring your baby home?
- Who will accompany you to the hospital and support you during your labor?
- Do you know the signs that labor has begun?
- Do you know about danger signs to watch for such as bleeding, a gush of fluid from the vagina, cramps, changes in the baby’s movement and severe headaches with blurred vision and swelling and how to report these to your health care provider?

## Safety of Mom’s Environment

### Observe:

- Signs of filth—filthy bathrooms or kitchens, bad smells (i.e. from a clogged toilet or from animals).
- Signs of safety hazards. Is the home safe for an infant or small child? Do you see safety hazards?
- Signs that a cat is in the home—a litter box, in particular. Why a cat?
- Temperature in home—is it overly hot or cold?
- Signs that mom can provide a stimulating, appropriate environment for the baby—books, toys, bed in which to sleep, etc.
- Who has the major responsibility for home maintenance? Pregnant woman, partner, her mother?

### Listen for:

- Comments from Mom that indicate her recognition of the importance of a safe, stimulating environment for a child.
- Questions related to what type of environment is suitable for a baby.

### Ask:

- What things do you think are important to have for your baby?
- Are there other children in the home? How old are they? What is their relationship to baby?
- Where will the baby sleep?
- Doctors advise new parents to make sure their bathrooms and their kitchens stay clean. What do you know about germs and babies?
- Do you have a cat? Who cleans its litter box?
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Mom’s Financial Situation

Observe:

- Signs that mom is struggling financially – such as lack of a car, job, basic necessities.
- The kinds of expenses that seem to have a high priority for this family – such as clothing, furniture, food, rent, transportation, or medical care.

Listen for:

- Comments from Mom regarding her financial situation.
- Comments that indicate that Mom has a realistic idea about what added expenses the baby will bring to the family.

Ask:

- What concerns do you have about paying for your housing and living expenses?
- What resources do you have to help you pay for the cost of having your baby and supporting your baby?
- Is the father of the baby (FOB) helping to support you and your child or children?
- Do you know what kinds of help are available to you such as WIC or food stamps?

Mom’s Social Support

Observe:

- Presence of FOB, other family, friends.
- Whether family and friends seem to support dangerous behaviors by providing such things as alcohol and cigarettes.
- Who seems to make the major decisions for the Mom – the mom herself, the FOB, her mother, her grandmother.
- Look for signs that indicate she is either comfortable or uncomfortable with those around her. Signs of discomfort may include tension or reluctance to participate in conversations when others are around.

Listen for:

- Comments from Mom regarding her social support – FOB, relatives, friends, neighbors, church.
- Who does most of the talking and answers most of the questions.

Ask:

- How would you describe your relationship with the baby’s father? Is it a close, loving relationship or are you struggling?
- Who do you turn to when you need advice or guidance – such as advice about dealing with the discomforts of pregnancy?
- Who do you turn to when you want to go out and have fun? Do you have friends you can socialize with? Do they encourage you to do things that are bad for you and the baby such as smoking and drinking?
- Who can you ask to help you with childcare, meals, or transportation after your baby is born?
- Do you have someone you can turn to when you feel sad, scared, or really happy about something? In other words, who in your life is an emotional support for you?