Directions

Use this job aid to help you evaluate the needs of moms in 4 main categories during the first six weeks after giving birth:

• **Physical recovery**: Is the mom’s body recovering from giving birth?

• **Emotional well-being**: How is the mom adjusting to motherhood? Is she struggling with “baby blues” or postpartum depression?

• **Home environment and family life**: How has the mom’s home and family life changed now that the baby has arrived? Has the mom thought about family planning?

• **Infant care**: How is the baby’s health? How is the mom caring for the baby? How is baby adjusting to breastfeeding or bottle-feeding?

**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.
Postpartum Period

Physical Recovery

Observe:
- Mom’s physical appearance for signs that her body is recovering from giving birth.
- Indicators that mom is suffering from common physical discomforts associated with giving birth (i.e. difficulty sitting, lifting, going up/down stairs, fatigue).
- Signs that mom is either breastfeeding or bottle-feeding.
- Signs of drug or alcohol use
  - Physical signs in mom such as dilated pupils, agitation, needle tracks, nose bleeds.
  - Drug paraphernalia such as bongs or pipes.
  - Bottles or cans of beer, wine, or hard liquor.

Listen for:
- Comments about how mom feels physically.
- Requests from the mom for information about the postpartum check-up.
- Comments or questions about her bodily changes.

Ask:
- How are you feeling? When are you resting? Are you experiencing any pain/discomfort?
- Have you scheduled the postpartum check-up yet? Do you know what happens during the postpartum check-up?
- Are you experiencing any of the typical discomforts associated with recovering from birth and do you know how to treat them? (Hemorrhoids, bladder control, episiotomy/stitches, bleeding, etc.)
- Do you know the warning signs of complications related to your recovery?
- If breastfeeding:
  - Are you experiencing any pain with breastfeeding (i.e. engorgement, clogged ducts, sore nipples)? What things have you tried to alleviate the discomfort?
  - Did you know substances/foods (like caffeine, nicotine, narcotics) you digest are passed to your baby through breast milk?
- If bottle/formula feeding:
  - Are your breasts returning to normal? Are you experiencing any pain?
### Emotion Well-Being

**Observe:**
- Signs that mom is emotionally bonding with her new baby.
- Indicators that mom may have the “baby blues” or even postpartum depression:
  - Signs of exhaustion.
  - Bouts of unexplained crying.
  - Mood swings from anger to sadness to happiness.
  - Feelings of despair.
  - Forgetfulness.
  - Inability to concentrate.
  - Too much anxiety/worry about baby OR lack of concern/responsiveness to baby.
- Indicators that mom has family members or friends who provide comfort, support, and reassurance to her as she adjusts to motherhood.

**Listen for:**
- Mom’s comments about how she feels emotionally.
- Complaints or questions about the symptoms of “baby blues” or postpartum depression.
- Mom’s comments about how she is adjusting to motherhood.

**Ask:**
- Who is providing you with emotional support, love and reassurance as you adjust to the new baby and recover from the pregnancy?
- Do you have someone you can talk to about any feelings of anxiety or sadness?
- Who are you turning to for advice or guidance about being a mom or taking care of the baby?
- What worries do you have about your baby?
- How do you feel when the baby cries? Does it upset you when the baby won’t stop crying?
- What do you know about postpartum depression? Did you know there is treatment for postpartum depression, and that you can get help to feel better?
Home Environment/Family Life

**Observe:**
- Presence of family, friends and father of the baby (FOB) and signs they are engaging with the baby.
- Comments or questions related to birth control and family planning.
- Signs that mom or someone else in the home may be smoking or abusing other substances.

**Listen for:**
- Comments from mom about how prepared her home and family are for the arrival of the baby.
- Comments from mom about how her home and family lives have changed with the arrival of the baby.
- Questions related to what type of environment is suitable for a baby. (Where should baby sleep? Should we keep things quiet when baby is sleeping?)
- Questions related to returning to work (or seeking work) and selecting childcare for her newborn.

**Ask:**
- How are the other family members (including children) adjusting to the baby?
- How has your life changed with the arrival of the baby?
- How are you keeping your home clean? How do you find time to fix meals and take care of the house (& other children) and also care for your new baby? Who helps you?
- How involved is the FOB now that the baby is here? What are your expectations of him as a father?
- Does the baby’s crying bother the FOB or partner? What does he do when the baby cries?
- Who helps you with the baby so you can rest/recover?
- Who do you ask to help you with childcare, meals, or transportation when you need it?
- Have you and your partner discussed birth control/family planning?
- What questions do you have about birth control? Have you thought about preventing future pregnancies?
- (If breastfeeding) Did you know that breastfeeding is not an effective form of birth control?
Job Aid #10: Assessing Mom and Baby During Postpartum Period

Infant Care

**Observe:**

- Indicators that mom has what she needs to take care of the baby – a car seat, a crib or bassinet for baby to sleep in, diapers, clothing, formula, etc.
- The baby’s physical state: Does he seem alert? Jaundiced? Is he easily roused from sleep?
- The umbilical cord area. Is it healing correctly? Does it appear infected?
- Mom’s interaction with the baby. Does she appear confident in feeding and caring for the baby?
- If breastfeeding:
  - Books and/or pamphlets on breastfeeding, or even a breast pump.
  - Behaviors that indicate she is trying to stay healthy while breastfeeding—avoiding harmful substances, choosing healthy foods.
  - Comments or questions related to breastfeeding positions and baby latching on correctly.
  - Mom allowing enough time for the baby to breastfeed.
- If bottle/formula feeding:
  - Bottles and formula are present.
  - Mom holding the baby while bottle-feeding (not propping the bottle).
  - Comments or questions related to how to prepare a bottle of formula.

**Listen for:**

- Questions related to breastfeeding or formula/bottle feeding.
- Mom’s expectations related to caring for a newborn.
- Questions related to selecting childcare for her newborn.

**Ask:**

- How is the baby sleeping? What are his sleep patterns like? Do you have to wake the baby to eat?
- How are you caring for the area around the umbilical cord? Has the cord fallen off yet?
- If breastfeeding:
  - How is the baby latching on? How often are you breastfeeding? Does the baby appear satisfied after a feeding?
  - What challenges are you having with breastfeeding?
  - How long do you plan to breastfeed?
- If bottle/formula feeding:
  - What kind of formula are you using? Does your baby seem to tolerate the formula well – minimal spitting up? Normal stools? Minimal gassiness?
  - How do you prepare the bottles?
  - How often does the baby eat? Who else feeds the baby?
- Who will care for the baby when you return to work? Describe your ideal childcare environment. What information do you need to help you find safe, nurturing affordable childcare?
- Do you know what childcare resources are available? Have you started looking/evaluating?