



Dr Carrie Barber

Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Aotearoa (PADA)
Hamilton

Saturday, June 10, 2017

(Room 7)

8:30 - 9:25 WS #97: Perinatal Anxiety and Stress

9:35 - 10:30 WS #109: Perinatal Anxiety and Stress (Repeated)



PERINATAL ANXIETY AND STRESS

Practical tools and strategies for the office visit



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Mission:

- × **Supporting and linking the service providers who work with young families**
- × **Advocacy and awareness**
- × **Resources and professional development**
- × **Support and encouragement for new parents**

MY ANGLE ON THIS

- × Child and Adolescent Clinical Psychology
- × Research on services and systems
 - + Attachment theory
 - + Developmental neuroscience
 - + Life



Pregnancy and
early parenting

PREGNANCY AND STRESS

- × Pregnancy is *change*
 - × Changes in
 - * Body
 - * Relationships
 - * Roles and Identity
 - * Perspective on the world

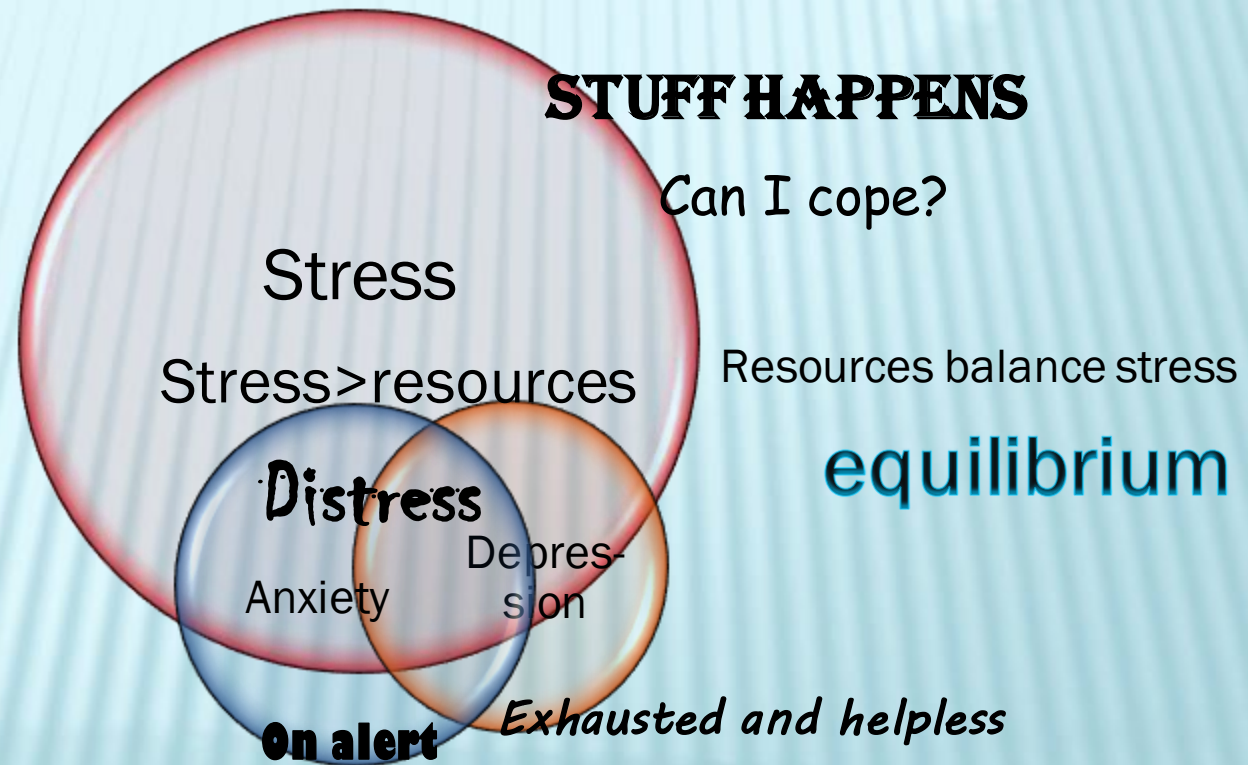


PREGNANCY AND STRESS

- × Change = stress
 - + Stress is disequilibrium
 - × Cannon (1926)—Stress: external factors that disrupt homeostasis
 - * Things that happen—bad and otherwise



STRESS AND DISTRESS: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?



WHY BOTHER?

- ✕ Everyone has stress, and we (mostly) all survive...
 - + Pregnant women may or may not be more anxious than non-pregnant women (mixed findings on that)
 - + Certainly many are very anxious
 - + About 13% severe or very severe anxiety,
 - ✕ Especially...
 - ✕ Those with medical problems
 - ✕ Those with history of pregnancy loss
 - ✕ Those with less social support
 - + 5-11% have clinical levels of depression
 - ✕ Especially...
 - ✕ Those with a history of depression
 - ✕ Those with extra high levels of stress
 - ✕ Those with less social support



WHY BOTHER?

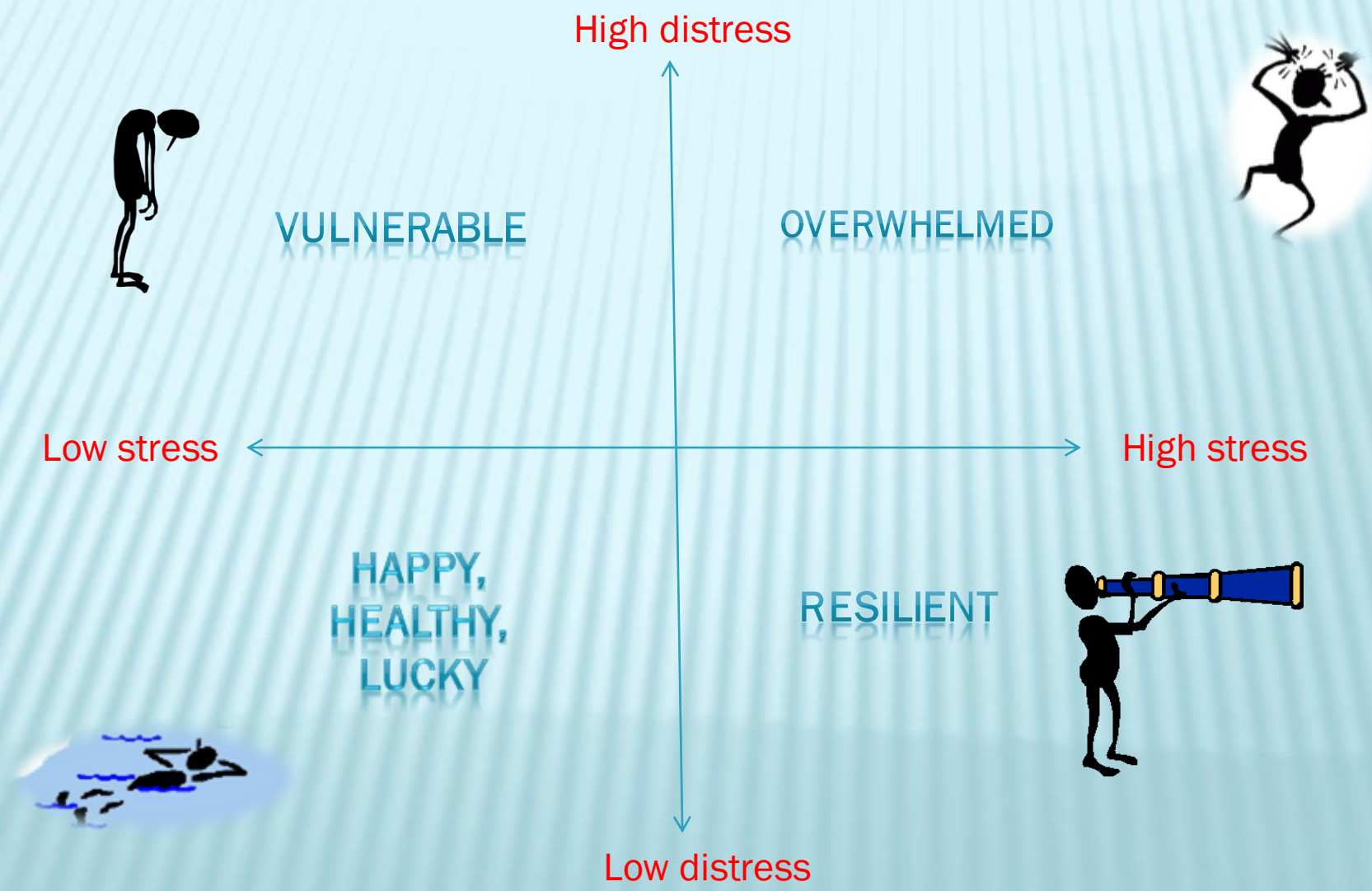
- ✗ When anxiety, stress and/or depression are high in pregnancy...
 - + Unhealthy coping/health behaviours
 - + Chronic physiological arousal
 - ✗ Risk of PTL and LBW
 - ✗ Risk of asthma and maybe ADHD in child
 - ✗ Differences in neonate behaviour
 - + Effects on relationships
 - ✗ Irritability
 - ✗ Isolation
 - + Effects on confidence in parenting
 - + Increased risk of postnatal depression



WHY BOTHER?

- ✖ Even if it's not 'clinical' distress, knowing some strategies may help
 - + Decrease anxiety
 - + Increase self-confidence
 - + Improve health and well-being
 - + Diversify coping skills
 - + Reduce risk of postnatal depression
- ✖ Distress is on a continuum





WHAT TIPS THE BALANCE?

- ✖ Resources, e.g.
 - + Social support
 - + Coping strategies
 - + Overall health
- ✖ Stress load
 - + Pile-up
 - + History of trauma
- ✖ Cognitive factors (perspective)
 - + Locus of control/sense of control
 - + Self-efficacy



WHAT TO DO?

- ✖ We can't avoid/prevent all stress
- ✖ Decrease the impact...



OPTIONS: HIGH DISTRESS, VULNERABLE

× Psychotherapy

- + Effective for antenatal and postnatal depression
- + Combination of supported reflection, problem-solving, social support and skill building
- + CBT most available in NZ
- + IPT and ACT also promising
- + Individual, couple, or group
 - × No matter what the research shows, it will only work if the patient is open to it
 - × And if it is accessible



OPTIONS: HIGH DISTRESS, VULNERABLE

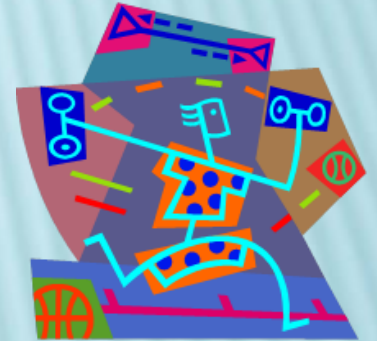
- × Medication (for moderate to severe depression)
 - + No RCT of medication for antenatal depression
 - + Effects of medication on foetus are not clear
 - × No firm evidence of negative effects
 - × But many methodological problems
 - + Effects of depression on the foetus and mother are well-documented
 - × A tricky decision
 - × Withdrawing antidepressants in pregnancy can trigger relapse



MORE OPTIONS: FOR ALL QUADRANTS

+ Strategies with evidence for improved mood in pregnancy

- × Massage (and training partner in massage)
- × Exercise (aqua exercise)
- × Yoga/Qi exercise
- × Music
- × Guided imagery/relaxation training
- × Mindfulness (Mindful Motherhood, MBSR, MCBT)
- × Bibliotherapy with support
- × Biofeedback-assisted mindfulness training



× Why would those things help?

MECHANISMS

- ✖ Decreasing arousal
- ✖ Increasing sense of control
- ✖ Increasing self-efficacy



CONTROL

- ✖ Feeling out of control magnifies effects of stress
- ✖ Many women feel out of control in pregnancy
 - + Especially with medical complications
- ✖ How can we help them regain a *realistic* sense of control?



OFFER CHOICES?

- ✖ 'There are lots of things you could do to help with your stress...here is a big list'
 - + More choice is better, right?
 - + Choice = control?



CONTROL IS COMPLICATED

- × Control is in the eye of the beholder

- + Locus of control

- × Internal
- × Powerful other (human)
- × Fate/divine/luck



CONTROL IS COMPLICATED

- × Are we in control?
- × What is healthy?
 - × The dark side of internal LOC
 - × Guilt and responsibility



CONTROL BELIEFS—WHY BOTHER?

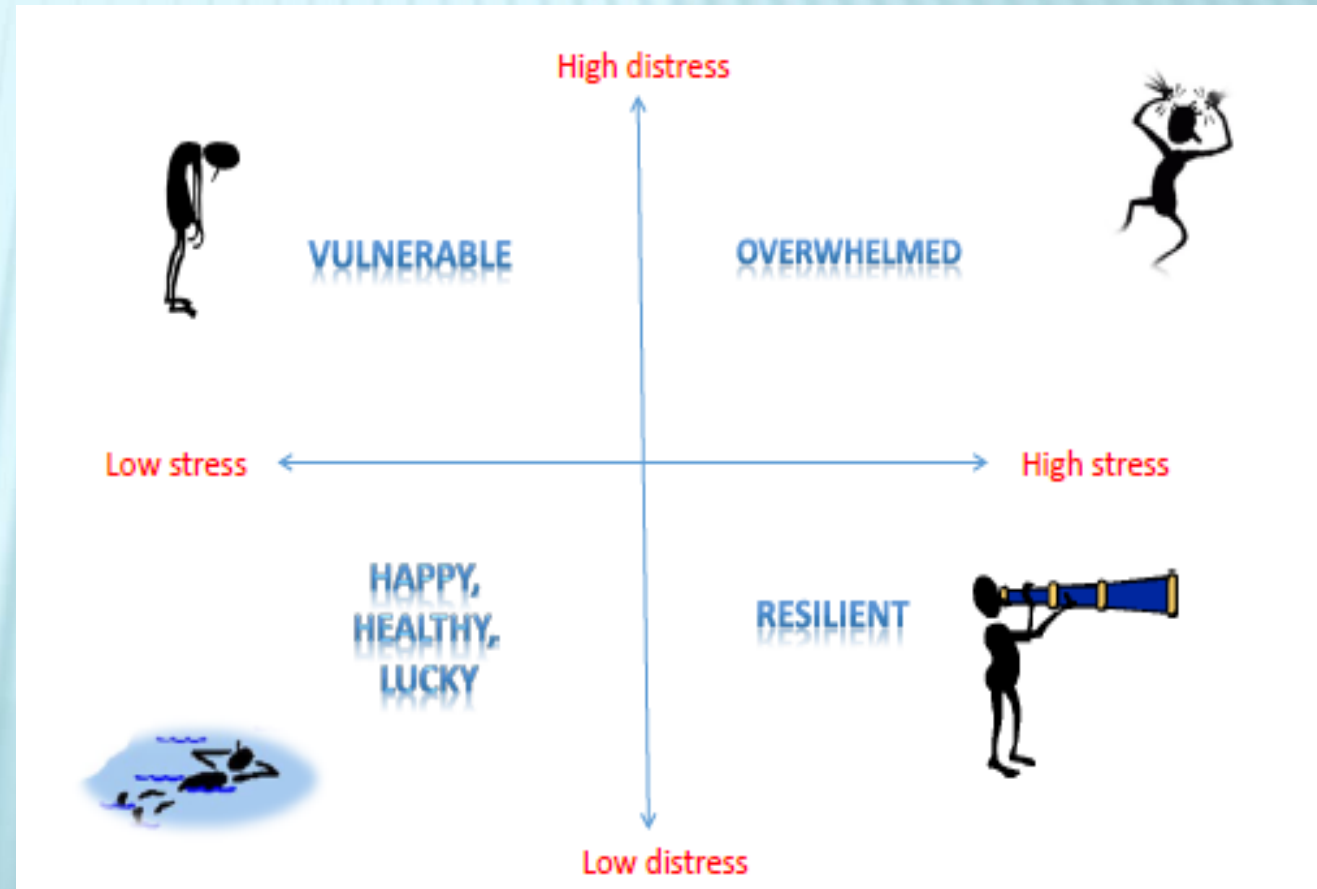
- ✖ It is hard to change behaviour, coping, and mood
- ✖ Even harder if it's someone else's behaviour...
- ✖ What *can* you control?



VIGNETTE



- ✖ Sarah, 26 yo, married, Pakeha, 30 weeks
 - + Working full time
 - + Has a 3 yo with asthma
 - + Moving house in two weeks
 - + Partner travels
 - + Increasing migraines
 - + Tearful and exhausted
- ✖ Which quadrant is she in?



SARAH'S COGNITIVE STYLE

× Ask:

- + What do you think is causing all this?

× If she says...(guess the LOC beliefs)

- + You're the doctor/you tell me

- + I think I just need to do X better

- + I don't know, I guess it's just how my life is...



Locus of control

- Internal
- Powerful other
- Fate/divine/luck

SARAH: ACKNOWLEDGING AND RESPONDING



- ✖ Reflect

- + *It sounds like you've got a lot going on right now*

- ✖ Normalize/making sense

- + *So much is changing—that can be really stressful. Having another child is a big change, and that can throw people off kilter*

SARAH: STYLES OF RESPONSE

× Internal

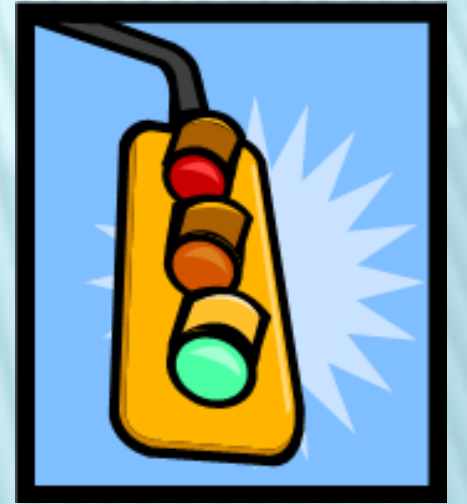
- + Offer choices, and reality testing
 - × Self-help

× Powerful other

- + Offer solutions, model decision-making
 - × Use social support

× Fate

- + Acknowledge what can't be changed, talk about what helps to deal with it
 - × Self-care



REMEMBER

- ✖ It's about what works for *them*
 - + It's easy to lean on your own style
- ✖ As long as it's safe, it's ok
- ✖ Empirically supported is a start...
 - + But what works for THEM is what matters
 - + If they won't do it, it won't work



RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES TO OFFER

× Self-help:

+ Apps

- × Mind the Bump (mindfulness for pregnancy)
- × Mindshift (tools to manage anxiety)
- × In pilot now: POSITIVELY PREGNANT APP

+ Books

- × e.g., The Pregnancy and Postpartum Anxiety Workbook (Wiegartz & Gyoerkoe, 2009)

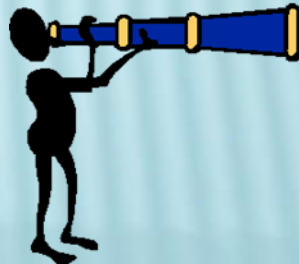
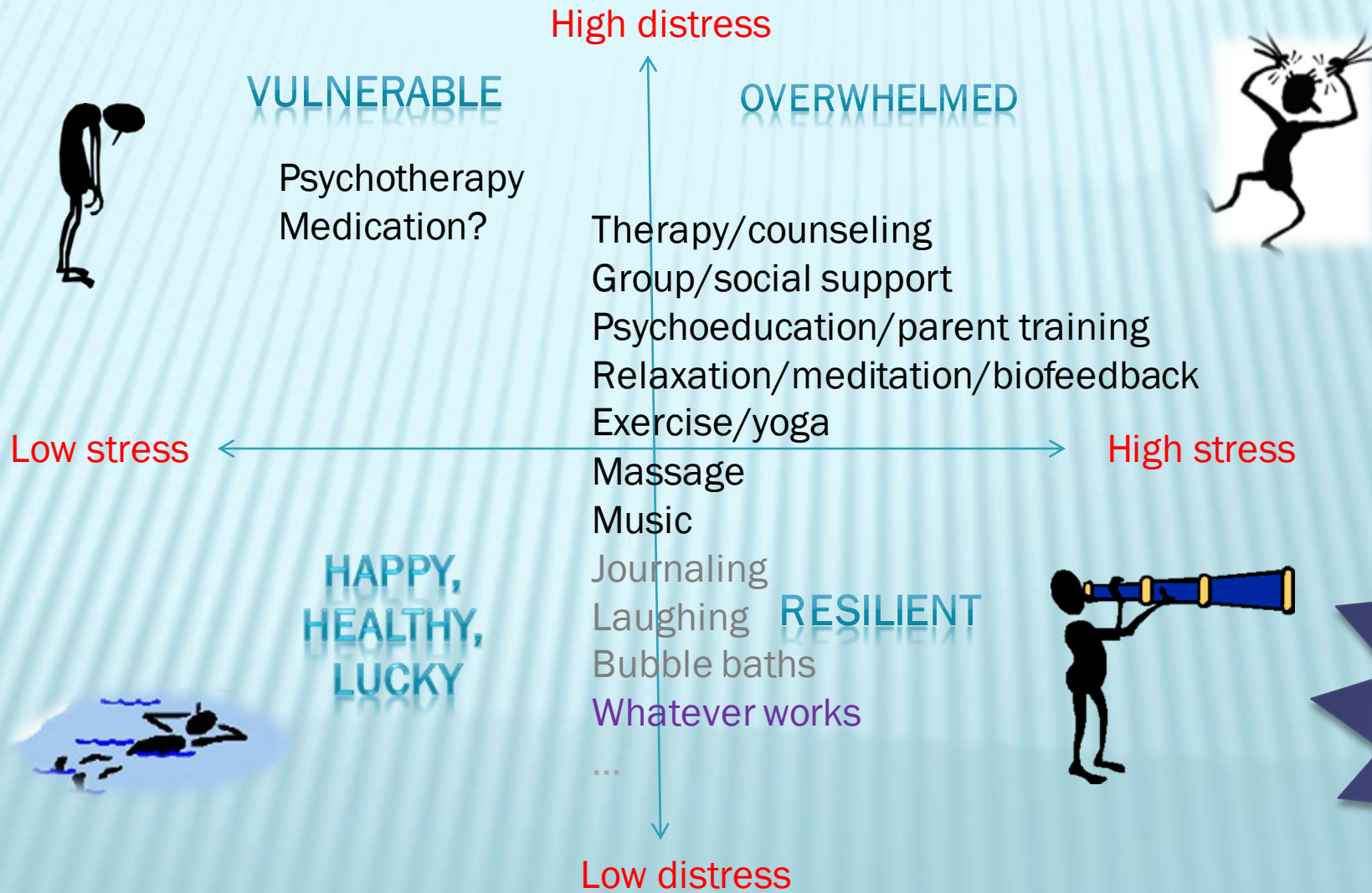
× Self-care:

- + Exercise, relaxation, sleep hygiene, meditation, prayer, bubble baths...

× Social support: find a group or a friend

- + Music, exercise, coffee, library





But not all
at once

RESPONDING TO DISTRESS

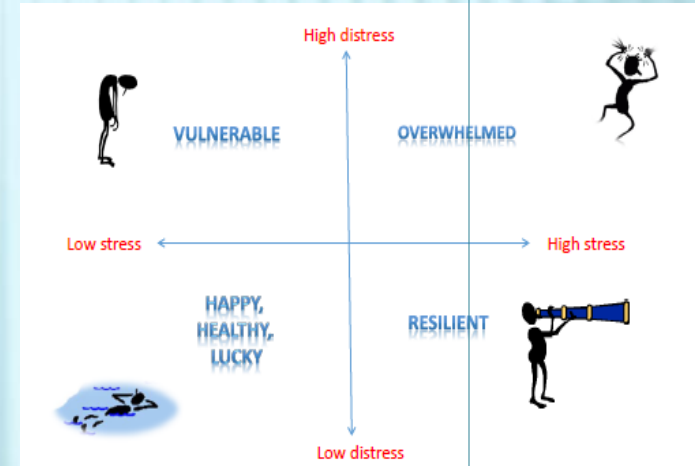
- × **Assess:**
 - + How much distress? How much stress?
 - × Vulnerable: refer for MH services if possible
 - × Overwhelmed: bolster coping resources
- × **Thinking style:**
 - + How does this person think? What do they need?
- × **Tailor your style to theirs**
- × **Acknowledge, validate, normalize**
- × **Coping**
 - + Self-help
 - + Self-care
 - + Social support
- × **Keep it simple**



ATTACK STRESS



- × Assess stress and distress
- × Think about cognitive style
- × Tailor your approach
- × Acknowledge their situation
- × Support healthy Coping
- × Keep it simple



Locus of control

- Internal
- Powerful other
- Fate/divine/luck

RECAP: TAKE-HOME POINTS



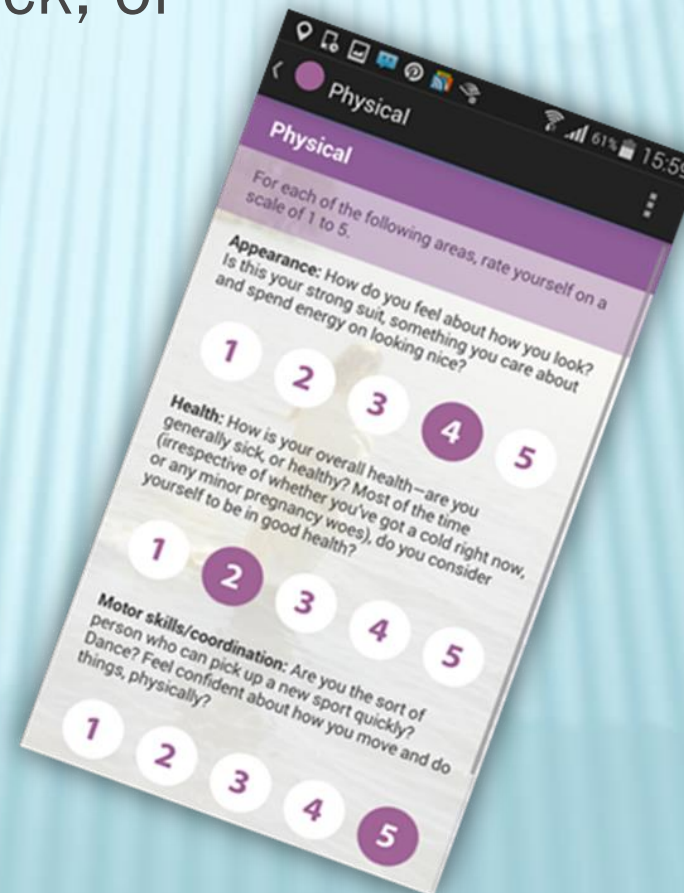
- ✖ Anxiety, stress and depression are important to address, particularly in pregnancy
- ✖ There are many options short of formal mental health services
- ✖ Assess and acknowledge stress and distress
- ✖ Understand your patient's thinking style
- ✖ Tailor your advice to the patient's style for self-help, self-care, and social support

POSITIVELY PREGNANT: AN APP FOR ALL THIS

× Know Yourself

+ Self-assessments, with feedback, of

- × Strengths and resources
- × Social support
- × Strategies
- × Stressors
- × Emotions
- × Style (LOC, DFC, choices)
- × Health behaviours

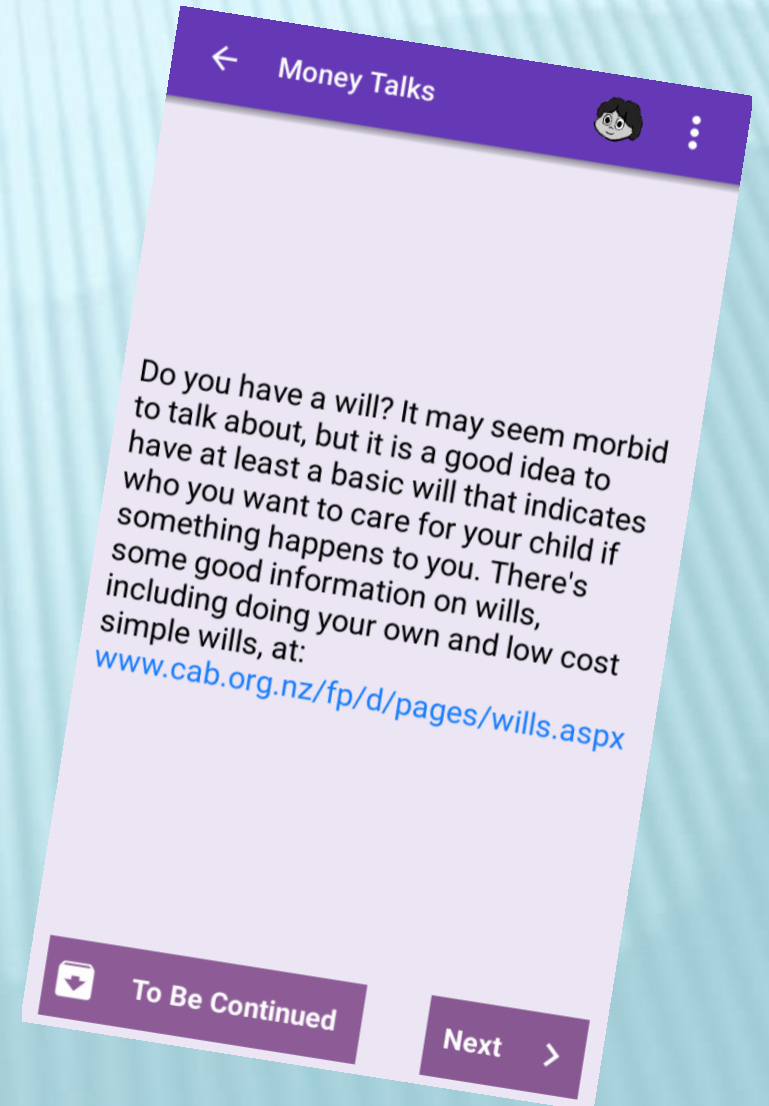


POSITIVELY PREGNANT

✕ Conversations

+ Guided discussions of

- ✕ Who does what?
- ✕ Weaving traditions
- ✕ Birth hopes and plans
- ✕ The Baby: Year one
- ✕ Daydreams
- ✕ Money Talks
- ✕ Values and priorities



POSITIVELY PREGNANT

- ✕ Do Something
 - + Strategies for wellbeing
 - ✕ Strength reminders
 - ✕ Guided imagery
 - ✕ Relaxation breathing
 - ✕ Body scan
 - ✕ Have a laugh
 - ✕ Gratitude
 - ✕ Notes to self
 - ✕ Notes to baby
 - ✕ 100 things
 - ✕ Health goals and plans

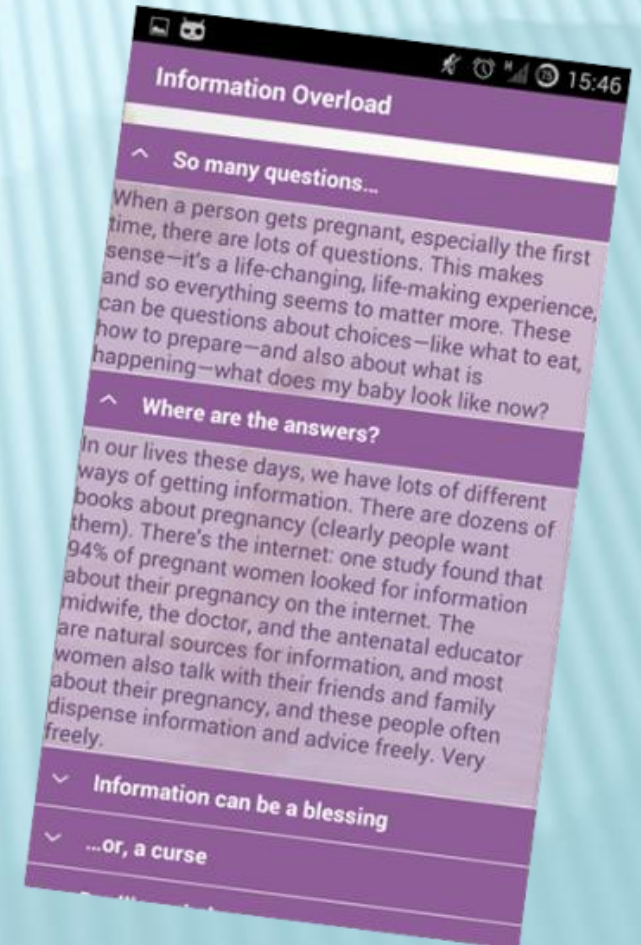


POSITIVELY PREGNANT

✕ Find Out

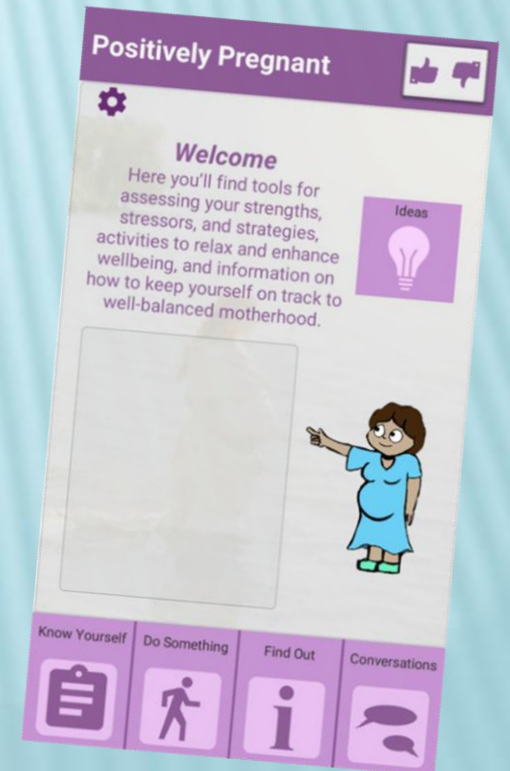
+ Aspects of transition to parenting, e.g.

- ✕ About stress
- ✕ Relationships in flux
- ✕ Control and responsibility
- ✕ Managing information overload
- ✕ Hello Baby: Attachment and Bonding
- ✕ Culture, tradition, and finding your way
- ✕ Birth plans and fears
- ✕ What if? Getting help



PILOT STUDY

- ✕ Recruiting now (June) in NZ for women to pilot and give feedback on the app
 - + <20 weeks gestation
 - + English-speaking
 - + 16 or older
 - + Smartphone user (iphone or Android)
 - + Take a card or five...

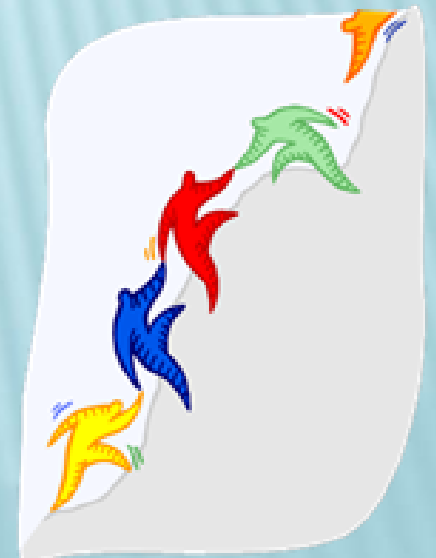


QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- × Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Aotearoa
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- × TalkingTech Foundation
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- × Maternal Journey and River Ridge East Birth Centre
 - + Simone DiGiorgio
- × Midwives
 - + Marissa Panettierre
 - + Lindsay Fergusson
 - + Clare Barnett



SELECTED REFERENCES

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