Bridging the Gap Between Stigma and Access to Maternal Mental Health Care Using GPS, Group Peer Support, at a Women's Health Program Serving Rural Guatemalan Mothers and Children

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Objectives

**Problem:** Prevalence of maternal depression in Latin America and its impact on generational trauma and health

**Problem:** Lack of mental health services in Guatemala

**Problem:** Stigma regarding maternal mental health needs

**Solution:** Community-based, peer-led support groups

**Program:** GPS Grupos de Apoyo program at women’s health program in rural Guatemala
Leading burden of disease or injury by region (WHO 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease or injury</th>
<th>DALYs (millions)</th>
<th>Per cent of total DALYs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region of the Americas</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Unipolar depressive disorders</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Violence</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Ischaemic heart disease</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Alcohol use disorders</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Road traffic accidents</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Diabetes mellitus</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Cerebrovascular disease</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Lower respiratory infections</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 COPD</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Congenital anomalies</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Global Burden of Disease, WHO, 2004
Social determinants of maternal depression in developing countries

Current or generational
- Poverty
- Isolation
- Gender oppression & cultural discrimination
- Interpersonal violence
- Family alcohol use
- Poor nutrition
- Difficulty in securing adequate food, water and basic necessities
- Lack of education
- Lack of access to adequate health care & perinatal health care
- Multiple births in close succession
- Maternal, infant and child mortality

TRAUMA
- Physical and sexual abuse
- Sex trafficking
- Crime
- Natural disasters
- War trauma
- Displacement

Shidhave, P, Giri P Maternal Depression: Hidden Burden in Developing Countries 2014
Impact of Maternal Depression

For mother:

• Robs years of a woman’s life especially in her childbearing years (14-40)
• Contributes to unhealthy health-related behaviors with consequences in poor health; poor nutrition, lack of self-care, poor health-seeking behaviors
• Establishes negative feedback loop between depression -> poor health -> depression -> poor health -> chronic disease -> early death (ACEs Study)

For children:

• Negative impact of mother’s diminished ability to parent children and maintain a household
• Being raised by a depressed mother has lifelong negative consequences in children’s cognitive, neurological, social and emotional development

THE CYCLE CONTINUES GENERATIONALLY

Mental Health services are virtually non-existent in developing countries

In Guatemala

28 percent of Guatemalans suffer from some mental health disorder during their lifetime.

Barriers to mental health care

- Lack of trained providers
  - (0.57 psychiatrists and 0.35 psychologists per 100,000 residents)
- Lack of economic resources
  - (0.9 percent of the nation’s health budget is dedicated to mental health, 90% of which funds on psychiatric hospital in Guatemala City)

#1 STIGMA

- No acceptance of mental health difficulties, especially for mothers
- No mild or moderate spectrum of mental health difficulties
- Either Strong or Loca

WHO Guatemala Report 2011
Implications of Social Support on Health/Mental Health

Social support is both protective & effective treatment

Health
- Diabetes
- Cancers
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Women’s health & reproductive concerns
- Nutrition

Mental Health
- Perinatal Mood Disorders – postpartum depression/anxiety
- Depression
- Trauma
- PTSD
- Addiction
- Bereavement

Social Support Groups Help Overcome Barriers to Care

Accessibility
• Community-based organizations and leaders understand unique needs of mothers and children
• In community language, culture, norms
• Trusted locations and leadership

Provider
• Peer-led by trained leaders with common lived experience
• Integrated into health education programs and curricula

Stigma
• Culturally acceptable
• Peer-led
• Strengths-based
GPS Group Peer Support ©

A trauma-informed and community-based group model that promotes *personal efficacy, self-esteem, and positive mental health* through increased social support, education and empowerment.

*Empowerment* - *The capacity and competence to be an agent of positive change in one’s life.*
GPS Group Peer Support at

MAYA HEALTH ALLIANCE
WU QU’ KAWO Q
Perinatal Home Visits
Nutrition classes
GPS Group Peer Support Training
Cultural Stigma

Breaking Stigma

- Empoderamiento
- De vida ser local
- Libertad
- Poder Liberal
- Abandonar
- Idéntificarse con otros
- Conocerse como seres humanos
- Hacer decisiones
- Saber decidir
- Autoestima
- Libertad económica
- Contar historia propia
- Estar en grupo
- Transmisión
Self-Care

Autocuidarse

“La salud de los hijos depende de la salud de la madre. Por eso es importante el autocuidarse.”

- Físico
- Social
- Emocional
- Espiritual

¿Qué estás haciendo ahora?
¿Qué más puedes hacer esta semana?
GPS Support Groups using Self-care curriculum in nutrition classes

Grupos de apoyo compartir sobre Autocuidarse en clases de nutrición
The Future
Please contact me

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