

Appendix A

Case Study of Health Visitor supporting mother with Post Natal Depression

(Case studies are from Health Visitor Case load. All names are fictitious)

Kyleigh had her baby 16 weeks ago and has therefore met me on a number of previous occasions. At the antenatal visit I visited to have a conversation with Kyleigh and her husband about all sorts of things, not necessarily what Kyleigh had been expecting. Things like Kyleigh and her husband's relationship, how they could help to develop their baby and connect with her for the future. We talked about the baby's brain development and the importance of close and responsive relationships. They had also spoken about their social support and how their families lived quite a way away and would not be getting a lot of support from parents. As Kyleigh's husband smokes we talked about minimising the risk of smoking to babies and in particular how to avoid sudden infant death and future diseases such as asthma. I made a referral to the stop smoking service and had contacted the couple again since the antenatal visit to see how it was going now that he had started meeting with the stop smoking counsellor.

Although the birth had gone OK Kyleigh had not expected to feel so tired and to find breastfeeding so challenging. Following the New Birth visit when the baby was 2 week one of community Nursery nurse had also visited the family at home to help with the feeding and although Kyleigh was still tired, feeding was going well now, the baby was gaining weight and she had been out once or twice for a walk.

Before Kyleigh had her baby she had been a civil servant and worked in London. The commute was hard work especially when pregnant and she had been very much looking forward to the time at home with her baby- being a family and not a couple had been her dream.

At the 6-8 week visit Kyleigh opened the door in tears. It was 12.00 but Kyleigh wasn't dressed yet, the baby was crying too. Kyleigh was agitated with the baby and was remarking that the baby only cried for her that she felt the baby didn't like her and that everyone else seemed to be able to calm the baby. After a long conversation and a formal assessment of Kyleigh's mood it was clear that she was depressed at that time. I talked about how they could work together to reduce her anxiety and improve her mood. Plans were put in place for me to discuss with the GP about using medication, and how that could be possible whilst breastfeeding. Goals were set to do short periods of relaxation and to take time out to be herself as well as a mum. We worked on parent baby interaction so as to carry on the good work Kyleigh had been doing to develop her baby. Techniques about how to manage the stress of a crying baby who doesn't sleep and how to look after herself and husband were also part of the work we did together over the next 6 weeks. There were a number of groups and clubs which Kyleigh could attend at the local children's centre which would help her interact with the baby and keep the

bond she had initially but she didn't want to go out and didn't have any local friends in her village. I arranged, with Kyleigh's permission for the children's centre to visit at home, introduce her to the children's centre and to take her to the club in the village which they ran so that she could meet other mums there.

Kyleigh is now a regular attender at the centre in her area, she is often dressed by 10.00 and has a plan for something every day even if that is just a walk. She attends the Pop in which is run by Health visitors and children centre staff to check that her baby is growing and to ask any questions. She got a prescription there from me this week for skin cream for her baby. She meets some of the friends she has made and feels like one of the club now. Her relationship with her husband is less fraught and much more supportive and happy 'as it used to be'. Every week brings a new challenge for a new mum like Kyleigh but she knows how to plan to manage challenges now and she knows where to go for information and support.

I visited again today to reassess her mood and to talk about how the baby will develop over the next months. There was a whole new lot of information to absorb about healthy food, sleep, books, speech and what to expect in the next months until the 9 month development review. Together we looked back to monitor what has happened over the last months of motherhood. It has been a huge change, lots of anxiety and worry to contend with but Kyleigh is happy and also proud that her baby is exclusively breastfed, Kyleigh is no longer feeling down and worthless, the parent child relationship is positive and securely attached, she has new friends and a new life she enjoys. Her husband is supportive and understands what was happening when she was depressed. I'm not visiting anymore but Kyleigh knows where to find me and the Children's centre and I will see them again routinely to assess development at 9 months.

Vikki October 2015