

Her Mind, Her Health: Women's Mental Health Across the Lifespan

May 20, 2026

Physician Presenters



Catherine M. Cunningham, MD, MBS
Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, Carrier Clinic



Stacy Doumas, MD, MBA
Chair, Department of Psychiatry,
Jersey Shore University Medical Center
Southern Region Chair of
Psychiatry, HMH
Chair & Associate Professor,
Department of Psychiatry,
Hackensack Meridian School of
Medicine



Yeraz Markarian, PhD
Director of Psychology,
Department of Psychiatry &
Behavioral Health,
Hackensack University
Medical Center
Assistant Professor,
Department of Psychiatry,
Hackensack Meridian School
of Medicine

Why Are We Here Today?

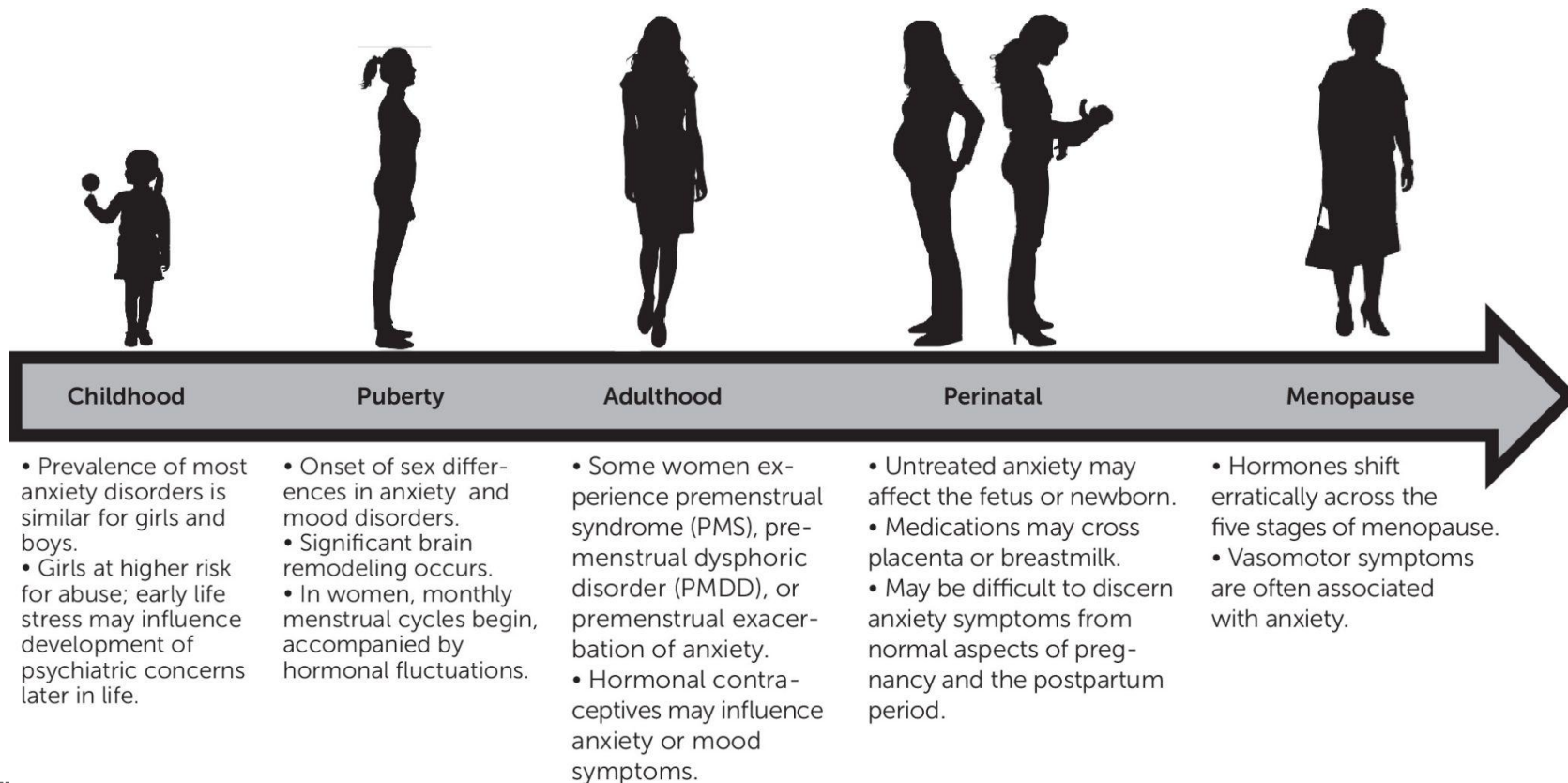
To help deepen your understanding of women's mental health across the lifespan and translate that knowledge into meaningful support and care.

- A women's mental health journey changes over time and so do her needs.
- Women face unique mental health considerations shaped by biological, hormonal and life-stage factors.
- From balancing careers and caregiving to navigating pregnancy, postpartum and menopause, we will offer guidance and expert insight to help women care for their emotional wellbeing through every stage.

Anna's Story



Women's Mental Health Across the Lifespan



Women's Mental Health Needs

- 1 in 4 women experience a mental health condition, but many don't receive treatment
- Mental health conditions are the leading cause of pregnancy-related death
- Untreated, Perinatal Mood & Anxiety Disorders have a lasting impact:
 - Longer NICU stay
 - Delayed return to work
 - Poor breastfeeding, impaired mother-infant bonding
 - Adverse cognitive, language, or motor development
 - Mood / Behavioral disorders
 - Trauma / Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)

Women's Mental Health Needs

- Women at Increased Risk:
 - History of Depression / Anxiety
 - Current or Past Abuse
 - Lack of Social Support
 - Women of color
 - First-time Mothers
 - Mothers younger than 25 years old
 - Women living in poverty
- Rethinking Maternal Mental Health! (not just depression, not just moms)
- Up to 20% of women are not asked about depression during their pregnancy



Maternal Mental Health

Not feeling like yourself after birth?

It's normal to feel overwhelmed, emotional or anxious after having a baby. Up to **80% of new moms** experience the **"baby blues"** in the first two weeks after giving birth.

But if these feelings last longer, or feel intense, it could be something more.

What are Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (PMADs)?

PMADs are a group of emotional health conditions that can happen during pregnancy or in the first year after giving birth. They include:

- Postpartum depression
- Postpartum anxiety
- Postpartum OCD
- Postpartum PTSD
- Postpartum psychosis (rare)

You Are Not Alone

1 in 5 women experience a PMAD. You didn't do anything wrong. You can and will feel better with support.

Baby Blues vs. PMADs

	Baby Blues	PMADs
When	First 2 weeks postpartum	Can start anytime during pregnancy or within a year postpartum
Symptoms	Mood swings, crying, irritability, fatigue	Intense sadness, fear, intrusive thoughts, disconnection
Duration	Temporary	Persistent
Help Needed?	Usually resolves on its own	Yes. Support and treatment can help you recover.

Perimenopause & Menopause: Understanding the Mental Health Connection

What Are Perimenopause & Menopause?

- Perimenopause: Transition phase with fluctuating hormones (can last years)
- Menopause: 12 months after the last period; hormones stabilize at lower levels

Why Do They Affect Mental Health?

- Changes in estrogen impact mood, sleep and brain chemistry
- Higher risk of anxiety, depression, irritability
- Sleep disruption and life stressors can intensify symptoms

It's Not Just Hot Flashes: Symptoms to Know

- Mood swings, anxiety, low mood
- Brain fog & memory challenges
- Fatigue & insomnia
- Low motivation or emotional overwhelm

Perimenopause & Menopause: Understanding the Mental Health Connection *continued*

Taking Control: What Helps

- Healthy routines: sleep, movement, nutrition
- Therapy & stress management tools
- Medical support: hormone therapy, antidepressants (when appropriate)
- Social support: don't navigate it alone

When To Seek Help

- Symptoms disrupt daily functioning or relationships
- Ongoing anxiety, depression or mood changes
- Sleep or cognitive issues affecting quality of life

Key Takeaways

- Both perimenopause and menopause impact mental health
- Symptoms are common, valid and treatable
- Early support leads to better outcomes

All Ages, All Stages, All In for Women's Mental Health

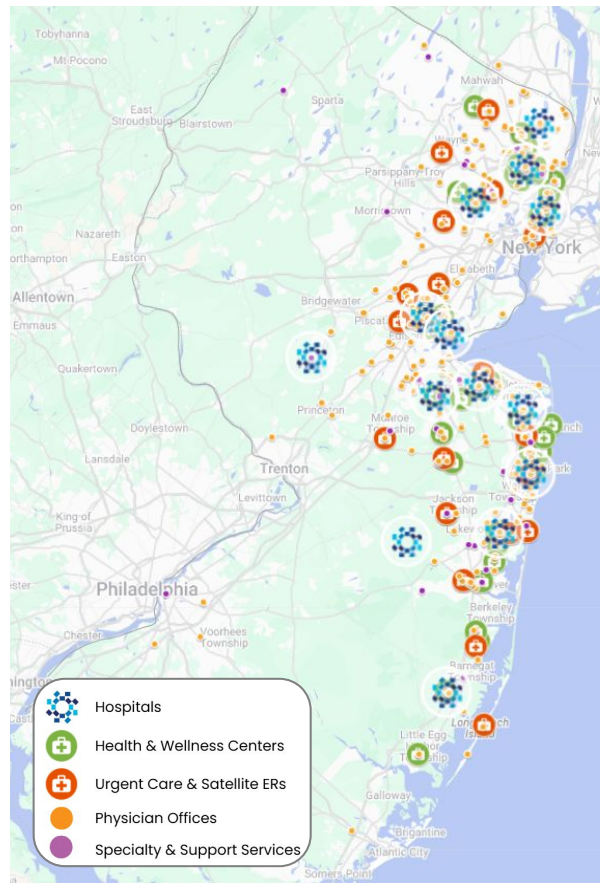
Hackensack Meridian *Health* provides expert evaluation and treatment for a wide range of psychiatric conditions affecting women during the childbearing years and beyond.

Populations we treat include:

- Individuals struggling with infertility and pregnancy loss
- Pregnant and postpartum individuals experiencing mood and anxiety disorders
- Women navigating the challenges of perimenopause and menopause

Current state of available care across Hackensack Meridian *Health*:

- Three active specialty clinical programs
- Hospital and ambulatory settings
- Perinatal Research Program is ongoing in the northern region
- Assessing barriers to treatment and patient engagement



Women's Mental Health - Northern Region

- 1 location (HUMC) launched in 2023
- 2 Psychiatrists, 2 Psychologists, 2 Social Workers
- Providers certified in perinatal mental health
- Interdisciplinary Task Force
- Offer medication, individual/group psychotherapy
 - Targeted group offerings:
 - Postpartum depression
 - Perinatal loss
 - Perimenopause/Menopause
- Research: Group-based treatment for NICU-moms as part of a grant-funded research study comparing two types of psychotherapy (PI: Markarian)



Women's Mental Health - Southern Region

- 2 southern locations
 - OUMC- main site
 - JSUMC- Hope Tower & Brandywine
- 3 psychiatrists with expertise – focus on psychiatric evaluations and medication management
- Psychologist for individual therapy
- Increased focus on women's mental health across the lifespan
- Plans for more sites and group therapy



New program at the Jane H. Booker Family Health Center in Neptune designed to help navigate parenthood and support emotional well-being in a welcoming, baby-friendly space.

Where Healing Takes Root

A Range of Services from Assessment to Therapy

- Preconception Treatment Planning
- Psychiatric Assessment and Medication Management
- Individual and Group Psychotherapy

In-Person and Telehealth Appointments

Hackensack University Medical Center
551-996-4450 ext. 2

Jersey Shore University Medical Center
Ocean University Medical Center
Riverview Medical Center
Southern Ocean Medical Center
732-295-6543 ext. 2

Or Scan the QR Code to Make an Appointment:



Women's Mental Health Intake Form

Women's Mental Health Intake Form

AAA



Please complete the survey below.

Thank you!

Hackensack Meridian Health - Women's Mental Health Intake Form

1610 Route 88

Brick, NJ 08724

732-295-6543 ext. 2

Demographic Information

Today's Date

* must provide value

  Today D-M-Y

Referred From

* must provide value

- ☐ Hospital
- ☐ Crisis/Emergency Room
- ☐ OBGYN office
- ☐ Primary care physician
- ☐ Insurance Company
- ☐ Self-referred

Women's Mental Health - Future State

Comprehensive continuum of behavioral healthcare integrated with OB/GYN and Primary Care

- Educational services (e.g. infant CPR, lactation consultants, nutritionist, mother-infant bonding)
- Holistic sessions (e.g. yoga, acupuncture, aromatherapy)
- On-site childcare during appointments

Ideal care team includes:

- Psychologist: Intake, individual and group psychotherapy
- Psychiatrist: Intake (medication management)
- APN Navigator: Ongoing med management, main contact point
- Social Work: Peer support groups
- Case Management: Liaison with OBGYN, Primary Care and Social Services

Anna's Story



Q & A

WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES:

In-Person and Telehealth Appointments

Northern Region

Hackensack University Medical Center
551-996-4450 ext. 2

Southern Region

Jersey Shore University Medical Center
Ocean University Medical Center
Riverview Medical Center
Southern Ocean Medical Center
732-295-6543 ext. 2

Or Scan the QR Code to Make an Appointment across HMH:



HMH Behavioral Health Resources:

Visit: HackensackMeridianHealth.org/HealthyMind

Call: 1-844-HMH-WELL



Thank you for joining us!

Tune in next Wednesday at 5:30 PM for our webinar session:

Mind & Performance: Sports Psychiatry for Athletes at Every Level