**Screening Protocol**

Posted on [May 2, 2012](http://postpartumstress.com/2012/05/02/screening-protocol/) by [Karen Kleiman](http://postpartumstress.com/author/karenkleiman/)

*Psychosis Screening*

As a follow-up to our post on postpartum depression and bipolar illness we are urging all clinicians to incorporate a screen for both symptoms of bipolar illness and psychosis when assessing all postpartum women. At the PPSC, we use the [**Mood Disorder Questionnaire**](http://www.dbsalliance.org/pdfs/MDQ.pdf)(MDQ) (don’t forget to cite the authors if you opt to copy it.) For psychosis, we use screening questions that are consistent with DSM-IV-TR criteria. You may want to develop your own list of questions, at the PPSC we have come up with the following:

Ask her, **and those who are with her,** the following questions:

* Does she or anyone in her family have a history of **bipolar** illness or previous psychosis?
* Is she talking or acting in a **strange manner** that is not characteristic for her?
* Is she unusually quiet and **withdrawn**, or **speaking rapidly** with little concentration?
* Does she claim to **hear things** or **see things** that others do not?
* Is she **suspicious** of others or expressing concern that others are out to get her or trying to harm her in some way?
* Does she have a **decreased need for sleep or food** and/or exhibit a high degree of confidence or an exaggerated sense of her capabilities or self-worth?
* Does she feel abnormally hyperactive with **racing thoughts** and/or behaviors?

You may want to make the Mood Questionnaire and psychosis screening questions a regular part of your assessment forms or you might decide you are more comfortable including these questions as a part of your first clinical session. Either way, these are difficult questions to ask, but important nonetheless.

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