

# Maternal mental health relating to Postnatal Depression among Samoan Women.

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# OUTLINE:

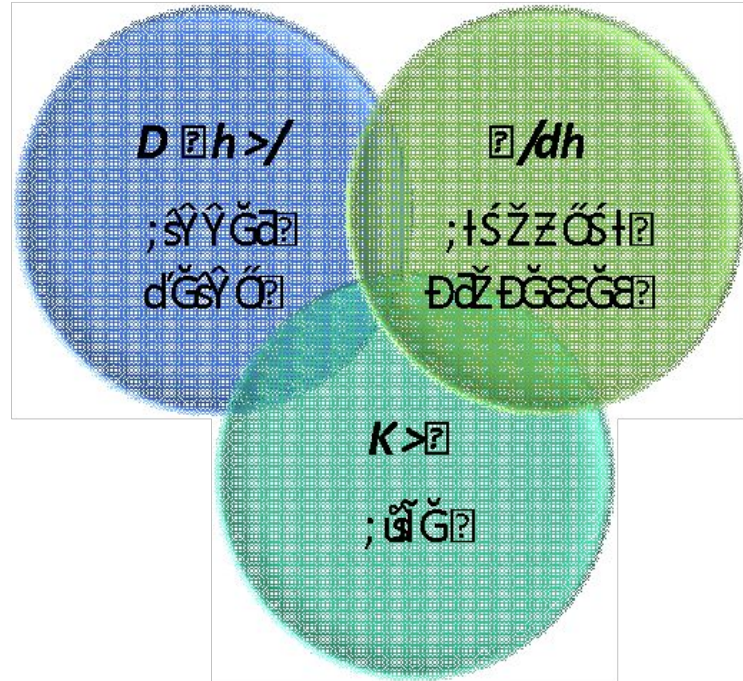
1. Introduction.
2. Relevance of Samoan Philosophy towards mental health preparations.
3. Mental Health Services Support and Culture.
4. Findings: PND relating to Maternal Mental Health.
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# 1. INTRODUCTION:

- **Depression**- mental illness or an emotional state where individuals experience negativity towards themselves and their surroundings (Walsh, 2009).
- **Postnatal Depression (PND)**- common condition that mothers experience after delivery (DSM IV). Some perceive postnatal depression as an illness while others view it as an abnormal behavior that is caused by social stressors (Aiken, 2000).
- **PND** as a mental disorder requires public acceptance and understanding of **mental issues**, so it can be viewed in the same way as other illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension.

# SAMOAN PHILOSOPHY- MENTAL HEALTH PREPARATIONS:

Figure 1: Samoan philosophy of mental health



Samoans believe that an individual has three parts: *Maui*, *Aitu*, and *Ola* (see, Figure 1).

1.3.1 *Maui* embodies one's inner being (*tagata lilo*); vision (*tofā manino*); insight (*tofā loloto*); dreams (*fa'alepō*); intuition (*loto fuatia ifo*);

spirit (*agaga*); and suspiciousness (*masalo*).

(Enoka, Petrini, & Turale, 2014).

# **Mental Health Services Support and Culture:**

- Services for PND is currently operated under the Samoa Mental Health Unit (SMHU) service located within the Ministry of Health.
- The Mental health ward is usually the last option for admission when a patient shows aggressive and abnormal behaviour.
- Samoa as a country pride itself as a Christian nation upholding Christian beliefs and values.
- There is a lack of understanding about PND from a Samoan lens.

# Findings: PND relating to Maternal Mental Health:

## 1. Women's experiences of PND

- Samoan women's lack of understanding of PND.
- PND is considered a silent disease in Samoan society.

## 2. Factors contributing to Samoan women's PND:

- Traumatic experiences affecting women's happiness.
  - Impact of unplanned pregnancy.
  - Impact of miscarriage.
  - Impact of losing a child.

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- Impact of unhealthy relationships with significant others.
  - Physical Abuse.
  - Feeling angry.
  - Relationships with health professionals.
- Impact of cultural obligations and family expectations on women.

# CONCLUSION:

- Telling these women's experiences hoped to help destigmatize and normalize this common but hidden condition in Samoan mothers, friends, sisters, wives and even ourselves.
- The biggest lesson is for the women to be open about it.
- They should not feel ashamed or blame themselves as bad moms, they should not feel like failures but to be open about it to promote awareness of postnatal depression.

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