

My name is Marissa Emery. I am a licensed massage therapist specializing in supporting pregnant and postpartum mothers, and also a staff member at Baby Blues Connection. Baby Blues Connection provides free peer-based support to parents who are struggling with their mental health after welcoming a child into their lives. As a small, community based organization, we operate on a shoe-string budget and do a lot with very little. We provide a vital service to new parents. I'd love to share a bit about what I do and the need I've seen for our services.

As a massage therapist specializing in supporting new mothers, I regularly witness the impacts of chronic stress, isolation, and lack of support on mothers, as individuals and as parents.

As Baby Blues' Resource Coordinator, I work to develop relationships with local perinatal service providers, to ease the often-overwhelming task of accessing local resources for new parents. When parents reach out to Baby Blues, it's because they're struggling with a variety of mental health challenges, but they also often need help finding providers who understand perinatal mental health and fit their needs. Baby Blues' peer support volunteers provide a bridge between new parents and the support services they need.

I share this information with you because you might not be familiar with the work we do. In fact, there are several organizations like ours throughout the state. While doulas and other community healthcare worker roles are vitally important to the health and wellbeing of families, Baby Blues Connection too provides vital, and sometimes lifesaving, services to the community. Birth workers, doulas, and peer support can be the difference between surviving and thriving for a new parent, and our collective support is critical in caring for the health of mothers and their families.

I urge you to consider appropriating funding to organizations like Baby Blues Connection, which provide these services. Healthy communities start with early intervention, and peer support for new parents is a proven model of effective

Thank you,

Marissa Emery  
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