Postpartum Counseling Checklist: Messages for New Mothers About Emotional Health

- Nutrition, caloric requirements. Baby blues” and anxiety are common in the first week postpartum.

- Postpartum mood changes are not the fault of the mother.

- Nutritional adjustment, sleep, and exercise may help in managing mood swings.

- Awareness of predisposing risk factors may help mothers identify symptoms earlier.

- Timeframe for postpartum mood disorders:
  - “Blues” peak approximately three to five days postpartum and disappear within a couple of weeks after the baby is born.
  - Postpartum depression usually develops within the first three months postpartum but may occur later (up to one year after childbirth).
  - Incidence of psychosis peaks within the first few weeks after childbirth.

- Effective strategies exist for preventing and managing postpartum mood disorders.

- Early identification of postpartum mood disorders is important.

- Reassurance of support and adequate resources and appropriate referral will mitigate risk.