

PMDD STARTER KIT

This PDF resource serves as a gentle yet informative introduction to PMDD, a practical symptom tracker, and support on the path toward diagnosis and self-understanding.


BY AMY SERGEANT



Introduction TO PMDD

What is PMDD?

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) is a severe, chronic medical condition related to hormonal changes in the menstrual cycle. PMDD is more intense than typical PMS (Premenstrual Syndrome) and impacts about 3-8% of women of reproductive age. It can lead to emotional, mental, and physical symptoms that significantly interfere with daily life. Unlike PMS, which tends to be milder, PMDD symptoms are more disabling and can cause serious disruptions in relationships, work, and overall well-being.



PMDD symptoms generally appear in the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle (the two weeks before your period starts) and subside within a few days of menstruation. These symptoms fall into two primary categories: emotional and physical.

THE 11 KEY SYMPTOMS OF PMDD

1. Mood Swings: Rapid changes in mood, sudden sadness, tearfulness, or increased sensitivity to rejection.
2. Irritability or Anger: Increased sensitivity or a sense of tension and irritability that may affect relationships.
3. Depressed Mood: Feelings of hopelessness, self-critical thoughts, or persistent sadness.
4. Anxiety or Tension: Excessive worry, feeling on edge, or increased anxiety.
5. Decreased Interest in Usual Activities: Loss of interest in work, school, hobbies, or social activities.
6. Difficulty Concentrating: Problems focusing, paying attention, or remembering things.
7. Fatigue or Low Energy: Persistent exhaustion or fatigue that is disproportionate to activity levels.
8. Changes in Appetite: Either overeating or craving specific foods more than usual.
9. Sleep Issues: Insomnia or excessive sleepiness, often fluctuating with energy levels.
10. Feeling Overwhelmed: An intense feeling of being overwhelmed or out of control.
11. Physical Symptoms: Breast tenderness, bloating, headaches, joint or muscle pain, and other physical discomforts



There is Hope



Learning to Track and Recognize PMDD Patterns

If you suspect you may have PMDD, the first step is to begin tracking your symptoms over at least two menstrual cycles. A tracking method will help you and your healthcare provider observe if the symptoms align with the premenstrual phase and alleviate once menstruation begins. This pattern is key to identifying PMDD.

PMDD Symptom Tracker

Using a symptom tracker will help you observe the timing, intensity, and duration of your symptoms and provide evidence when seeking a diagnosis. Below is a sample tracker you can use to monitor your symptoms.

How to Use the Tracker

1. **Daily Entries:** Record your symptoms each day, focusing on intensity (mild, moderate, or severe). Consistent tracking will show if symptoms intensify during the luteal phase.
2. **Patterns Over Time:** Look for trends over your cycle. Note when symptoms start, how severe they get, and when they begin to subside.

Additional Notes: Include anything noteworthy, such as stressful events, diet changes, or other factors that might influence your symptoms.

Using this tracker over several cycles will provide a clearer picture of whether your symptoms are cyclic and align with the PMDD criteria.

PMDD TRACKER

NAME _____

	MONTH 1	MONTH 2	MONTH 3	MONTH 4
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SYMPTOMS KEY

- ☐ Mood Swings
- ☐ Irritability/Anger
- ☐ Depressed Mood
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Lack of Interest in activities
- ☐ Concentration
- ☐ Energy Low
- ☐ Appetite Change
- ☐ Sleep
- ☐ Feeling Overwhelmed
- ☐ Physical Symptoms
- ☐ Other

NOTES

Step 2

TIPS ON GETTING A DIAGNOSIS

If your symptom tracker suggests a cyclical pattern that aligns with PMDD, consider these tips:

Document Thoroughly: Bring at least two months of tracking records to your appointment. This helps the healthcare provider see the pattern and timing of symptoms.

Describe Impact: Explain how these symptoms interfere with daily life, relationships, work, or activities.

Ask About PMDD: Not all healthcare providers are fully informed about PMDD. If you suspect it, ask if they have experience diagnosing PMDD.

Consider Support: Join my PMDD Support Group on Sundays at 3pm GMT to connect with other fellows with PMDD.

Be Persistent: PMDD is often misdiagnosed as depression, anxiety, or other mood disorders. Don't hesitate to seek a second opinion if needed.

Step 3

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT YOUR SYMPTOMS

1. Awareness is the First Step

The journey to supporting and alleviating PMDD symptoms begins with awareness. Take time to recognize your biggest challenges each month. Awareness helps you understand your patterns and create space for growth.

2. Practice Breathwork and Meditation

Incorporating breathwork and meditation into your daily routine can give you a moment of pause before emotions begin to overwhelm you. This doesn't have to mean sitting in silence; it can look like:

- Going for a run and focusing on your breath.
- Mindfully walking or cleaning.

The key is finding a daily practice where you can tune into your thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations. These practices will help you develop self-awareness and resilience.

3. Cultivate Self-Compassion

Self-compassion is a powerful tool for managing PMDD. Start by:

- Giving yourself a hug.
- Saying kind words to yourself.
- Welcoming and validating your emotions without judgment.

By practicing self-compassion daily, you can shift your mindset and reduce self-criticism.



4. Go Back to Basics

On challenging days, it's easy to judge yourself for not meeting expectations.

Instead, focus on basic self-care:

- Drink enough water.
- Eat nourishing food.
- Get some fresh air.
- Brush your teeth and hair.
- Take a shower.
- Go for a gentle walk.

These simple acts may seem small, but during the depths of PMDD, they are vital.

On my hardest days, I had to champion myself just to get out of bed and make a healthy breakfast. It sounds simple, but these basics are essential for healing and remembering how important you are.

5. Change the Narrative

The words we use shape our experience. Try shifting your language:

- Instead of “I am having a bad day,” say, “I am having a character-building day.”
- Instead of “Hell Week,” call it “Learning Week.”

Changing the narrative helps you reframe your perspective and focus on growth.

What other narratives could you change?

6. Find Supportive People

Surround yourself with people who focus on solutions rather than problems. Having a supportive community can make a significant difference in your journey toward healing and self-awareness.

Remember: You Are Important

PMDD can feel overwhelming, but every small step you take is part of the healing process. Be kind to yourself and remember—you matter.





Section 5

ACTION STEPS

What are the first steps you are going to take to support your PMDD.

1

2

3

About THE AUTHOR

Amy Sergeant is a fellow PMDDer, Health & Wellness Specialist, and adventurer who embarked on a holistic healing journey while traveling the world and now pulls together her experience and expertise to coach other women like herself to find new levels of freedom.

Amy is dedicated to helping women with PMDD gain knowledge and practical tools for emotional regulation. By fostering self-compassion, understanding the nervous system, and incorporating somatic healing practices, she empowers women to deeply understand their unique challenges. Through this journey, Amy inspires trust in oneself and cultivates a supportive community where women uplift and connect with one another.



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