



Alma is an evidence-based peer mentoring program created with and for new moms who are experiencing depression, anxiety, and stress. Developed by a collaborative team of researchers, mental health providers, community members, and moms, Alma gives new and expectant moms the support and skills they need to navigate this new chapter in their life.

Why we created Alma

Depression is one of the most common complications of pregnancy and the postpartum period, but moms face many barriers to receiving the support they need to thrive and be present with their families, friends, and work in the ways they most want. That's where Alma comes in.

How it works

The heart of the Alma program is our team of peer mentors: moms who have experienced depression themselves and receive training to support other moms facing similar challenges.

These peer mentors have had success in their own lives using the Alma skills, which are inspired by an approach called behavioral activation. The essence of these skills is that you can change how you feel by changing what you do.

Alma is not therapy or mental health treatment; it's about empowering moms to apply simple, science-backed skills to help each other stop the downward spiral of depression. Alma can also help to connect new and expectant moms with mental health treatment and other resources.

1 in 5 

pregnant and postpartum moms struggle with depression.¹

65% 

of pregnant & postpartum women experiencing depression do not get professional help.²

al·ma (/ 'ɑ:lme/ AHL-mə)

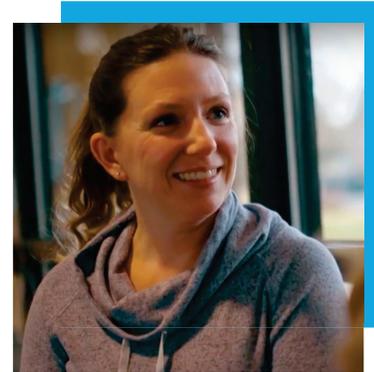
the Latin word for "nourishing" and "kind," and the Spanish word for "soul." This one little word captures what we hope moms will feel when they connect with us.

The research behind our approach

The Alma program is being studied with both English- and Spanish-speaking women and community partners, informed by extensive interviews, focus groups, surveys, and an iterative development process. It is based on over twenty years of research conducted all over the world.

- 1996** ○ The first study of behavioral activation (BA) as a standalone approach to helping people who are depressed is conducted.⁴
- 2017** ○ BA is found to be an acceptable and effective approach to helping women experiencing depression, anxiety, and stress.⁷
- 2006** ○ BA is found to be an effective intervention for helping people to recover from depression and stay well over time.⁵
- 2020** ○ The Alma program is established at the University of Colorado Boulder and in partnership with community programs in the Denver, Boulder and Roaring Fork Valley regions of Colorado.
- 2014** ○ A pilot study establishes the promise of training laypeople as counselors in the global mental health context.⁶

The stories that inspire us



“My depression was a very difficult time. I would’ve liked to have had support. That’s why I believe in the Alma program – because I am a mother who might help other mothers.”
– Gracia, Alma Mentor

“When you’re feeling alone and feel like you don’t have anybody there to understand you, all you need is one hand to help you up... and Alma is that hand.”
– Erin, Alma Mentor

Get Involved

Contact us at crown.institute@colorado.edu

You can also learn more about Alma through videos featuring our work with our partners at the [Aurora Mental Health Center and STRIDE](#), [Kaiser Permanente of Colorado](#), and [Valley Settlement](#).



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1: Howard, L. M., Molyneux, E., Dennis, C.-L., Rochat, T., Stein, A., & Milgrom, J. (2014). Non-psychotic mental disorders in the perinatal period. *The Lancet*, 384(9956), 1775-1788. 2: Flynn, H. A., O'Mahen, H. A., Massey, L., & Marcus, S. (2006). The impact of a brief obstetrics clinic-based intervention on treatment use for perinatal depression. *Journal of Women's Health*, 15(10), 1195-1204. 3: Henshaw, E., Sabourin, B., & Warning, M. (2013). Treatment-seeking behaviors and attitudes survey among women at risk for perinatal depression or anxiety. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, & Neonatal Nursing: Clinical Scholarship for the Care of Women, Childbearing Families, & Newborns*, 42(2), 168-177. 4: Jacobson, N. S. et al. (1996). A component analysis of cognitive-behavioral treatment for depression. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 64, 295-304. 5: Dimidjian, S. et al. (2006). Randomized trial of behavioral activation, cognitive therapy, and antidepressant medication in the acute treatment of adults with major depression. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 74(4), 658-670. 6: Chowdhary, N. et al. (2016). The Healthy Activity Program lay counsellor delivered treatment for severe depression in India: Systematic development and randomised evaluation. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 208(4), 381-388. 7: Dimidjian, S. et al. (2017). A pragmatic randomized clinical trial of behavioral activation for depressed pregnant women. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 85(1), 26-36.