How to Care for a Baby with NAS

Use the Right Words
I was exposed to substances in utero. I am not an addict. And my mother may or may not have a Substance Use Disorder (SUD).

Treat Us as a Dyad
Mothers and babies need each other. Help my mom and me bond. Whenever possible, provide my care alongside her and teach her how to meet my needs.

Support Rooming-In
Babies like me do best in a calm, quiet, dimly-lit room where we can be close to our caregivers.

Promote Kangaroo Care
Skin-to-skin care helps me stabilize and self-regulate. It helps relieve the autonomic symptoms associated with withdrawal and promotes bonding.

Try Non-Pharmacological Care
Help me self-soothe. Swaddle me snugly in a flexed position that reminds me of the womb. Offer me a pacifier to suck on. Protect my sleep by "clustering" my care.

Support Breastfeeding
Breast milk is important to my gastrointestinal health and breast feeding is recommended when moms are HIV-negative and receiving medically-supervised care. Help my mother reach her pumping and breastfeeding goals.

Treat My Symptoms
If I am experiencing withdrawal symptoms that make it hard for me to eat, sleep, and be soothed, create a care plan to help me wean comfortably.

Academy of Perinatal Harm Reduction

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