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Human Behavior II
Reflection #3

1-Describe relevant environmental effects on prenatal development.

A pregnant woman's environment plays a huge role in determining the risk's to both the pregnant woman and the baby. Some factors that are very important to acknowledge is the mother's psychological state. Depression and high anxiety can contribute to many risk factors for mother and baby. Poor mental health can even manifest itself in greater alcohol, drug, or cigarette use which can result in birth defects in the baby. Another environmental factor that presents risks to woman are little to no support, low SES, poor health such as diabetes, poor health care, little to no knowledge on the birthing process or stages, or not having the father involved in the child's life can present risks in mother's confidence and mental health. All of these factors must be made known to the social worker so he or she can support the mother and address these issues to lessen the risks associated with these factors.

**2-Evaluate the significance of the concept of a sensitive period for developing mother–
infant bonding.**

There is more research today regarding the sensitive period for developing mother-infant bonding. This period usually takes place within the first 24-48 hours after the child is born. There are many benefits in skin-to-skin contact between mother and baby during this period. The baby

needs to be warm and in a certain temperature environment to survive. The mother's body temperature just so happens to be that sweet spot, or that perfect temperature that baby needs to properly adjust to its new environment. Another benefit is comfort and familiarity. At this point, baby recognizes the scent of his/her mother. In most cases, there is no better place to be than to be on his mother. Another important benefit is that as baby and mother bond, the mother produces oxytocin, a hormone that aids in the production of milk, contractions to help mother heal more efficiently, and so much more. They also call this the "love hormone." This hormone is responsible for the leaking of milk when she hears her baby crying or when her body knows it's time for his feeding. This bonding experience also is good for the mother, as she often experiences less anxiety compared to when baby is away from her in the care of others without her.