

Recovery from Postpartum Depression

What helps and what hinders ©

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Objectives and Disclosure Slide

- Learning Objectives : By the end of this presentation all attendees should be able to:
 - Describe the categories of what hinders and helps recovery from postpartum depression
 - Describe how health care providers can effectively support mothers with postpartum depression
 - Describe how health care providers can unknowingly hinder recovery
- No sponsorship or commercial support was given to the author, Pamela R. Williams, and there are no conflicts of interest of any kind.

This is what used to kill mothers but we can fix these now

- Postpartum Hemorrhage
 - 27%
- Postpartum Infection
 - 11% (World Health Organization, 2014).

☀️ Perinatal Mood Disorders - About 15%
(MGH Center for Women's Mental Health, 2015).



Methodology

Guiding Question: What is the nature of recovery in women diagnosed with postpartum depression?

Primary Purpose: Describe and understand the experience of recovery in women who have recovered from postpartum depression (PPD).

Purpose of Interest: Describe the facilitators of, and barriers to, recovery from PPD as experienced by the participants.

Research Details

- IRB approved
- Naturalistic Inquiry
- Interviewed till saturation of data was reached
- Problems encountered – Few women want to talk about their experience with depression surrounding childbearing
- Each participant was medically dx with PPD but self determined to be recovered

Demographics of Participants

Participant	Age	Marital Status	Pregnancies	Years since PPD
Abby	37	Married	3	5
Bea	41	Married	1	8
Cindy	41	Married	1	13
Dee	41	Married	1	8
Erin	32	Widowed	3	<1
Fay	38	Married	4	24
Grace	28	Married	2	9
Hannah	29	Married	1	3
Irene	54	Married	3	16

Categories of what Helped and Hindered

Helped	Support from others
	Optimistic Attitudes
Hindered	Lack of support from others
	Negative Attitudes
	Physical Burdens

What Mothers say that Helped Support from Others

“The support of my husband, I mean he was amazing. He took extra time off from work, and was there for me, was there for the kids.”

“So my husband actually had to lay there with me while I fell, until I fell asleep, because I couldn't be alone.” ~ Abby



What Mothers say that Helped Support from Others

“He was just so really, really good with it, it was touching. I didn’t expect him to be so helpful and understanding. He put signs on the ceilings, so I would see them when I got up that said ‘you’re a great mother’ and ‘this will be over soon.’ Now that’s cool don’t you think?” ~ Bea



What Mothers say that Helped Support from Others

“I think because my husband was so supportive. He’s not only a great husband, he’s a great father. So that, I mean, in itself just made me so happy, you know, that if I screwed up with my son anywhere, at least my husband has that really good bond. I know that sounds really bizarre.”

~ Hannah



What Mothers say that Helped Support from Others

“So, a nurse came in and she was amazing, she was so sweet. She said if you breastfeed for a full two weeks you can give him a bottle. And I said I don’t think I can wait two weeks, I said I need to get sleep tonight and if they wake me up to nurse him I’m going to be sobbing and I’m going to be depressed and I’m so afraid for that to happen. And she’s like, ‘you know what. There’s no end-all be-all here. If that’s what works for you, give him a bottle.’ She said it’s fine.” ~ Erin



What Mothers say that Helped Positive Attitude

“Yes, once I had a little bit of gumption, once I had some peace between completely I’m never going to be normal, once I saw that I can be a little bit normal, those things helped me feel like, maybe they’re telling me the truth, maybe I will be me again. So, it gave me I guess strength to try to succeed.” ~ Bea



What Mothers say that Helped Positive Attitude

“I’ve always kinda had the attitude that, um, I have to fix this because I’m waking up every day and I want to be happy, um, and I kinda also believe, not kinda, I believe, that it’s up to me, you know. If I don’t reach out for help I’m not going to get it, it’s not going to come to me. So, I do feel that I definitely reached inside and pulled something out too.” ~ Dee



What Mothers say that Helped Positive Attitude

“Well, you know what’s hard, is that, what’s hard to maintain, is when people have this, um, opinion about you and you have to maintain that, that look, even when you don’t want to. And, and after Charley I mean it was so hard for me to do that, it was really hard. Absolutely then, finally admitting to people that I felt like I definitely had postpartum depression, absolutely.” ~ Cindy



What Mothers say that Helped Positive Attitude

“But that’s when it really turned was when my priorities changed. Um, it would be more just trying to make me happy. Um, just doing things that I liked, um.”

“But I make that time, so I’m not being selfish if I did. I do that. And I don’t feel bad about it. Before I think I was waiting for things to happen, like I said. Um, and I’m not waiting for things to happen anymore. I’m going to go do this, if you want, you could stay with my husband. I’m not going to sit back because you don’t want to go, I’m going. Things like that, doing what makes you happy.”

~ Dee

What Mothers say that Hindered Lack of Support from Others

“One thing that didn’t help was when my mom would just say, ‘Snap out of it. When you start feeling that anxiety do something, do the laundry, do something.’ If I could snap out of it, don’t you think I would have?”

~ Abby



What Mothers say that Hindered Lack of Support from Others

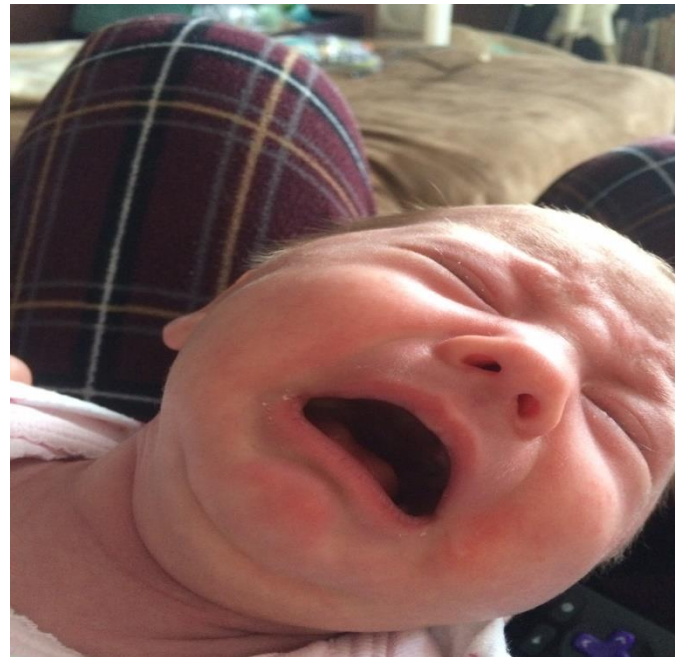
“As far as now, I realize I didn’t have the support I thought I would have. That was what I wished, but that was the reality, knowing now what I know. Um, I think just people um, taking me as like, all of a sudden taking me like a negative person and you’re not being a negative person.”

~ Dee



What Mothers say that Hindered Lack of Support from Others

“Oh, I don’t know, maybe just the feeling of isolation. I’m a stay at home mom and I was very isolated for a long time. I know I think that helped me get into the state I was in, I was alone all the time.” ~ Grace



What Mothers say that Hindered Lack of Support from Others

“He’s like, ‘you go get a job.’ And I wished I could go get a job but I can’t get my clothes on in the morning. And you wanted to because the last thing I really wanted was someone saying things like that to me.” ~ Dee



What Mothers say that Hindered Lack of Support from Others

“So I called the doctor’s office, my OB, and then I told them I lost all my weight in a week and I had no appetite, I know I’m depressed, I know that’s what it is. The response I got from the office was, take a hot shower, relax, try to take a nap, lay down and if you still feel that way tomorrow, give us a call. And that was, ok then, maybe I’m crazy then, you know, like, I thought somebody would want to, you know, help me at that, if I reached out like that.”

What Mothers say that Hindered Lack of Support from Others

“That whole practice, they were a big contributor, they never asked me, they never met my values, no one did. Actually only one of my friends from work ever cared to know why my baby wasn’t feeding well. No one ever came and said, ‘let me see you feed this baby’. And I called on a lot of people, believe me. And that first practice of pediatricians, while they might have been fine, they were not fine for me.”

~ Irene

What Mothers say that Hindered Negative Attitude

“I didn’t know ever, if I was left unchecked, God forbid I had to do this alone, would depression turn to psychosis?” When asked what barriers there were to her recovery, she took a long time to think and then said, “No, there was no barriers. Um, just my own thoughts were the thing that was crippling me.” ~ Bea



What Mothers say that Hindered Negative Attitude

“Denial, absolutely. Absolutely denial, and the fact that if I would have just said, you know what, this is something that happens to so many people why can't I admit to it, that I have something wrong. But like I said, is I felt I was a nurse, you know, try to act really stoic and this isn't going to happen to me. And I only have one child, it's not like I have four other children that would make me go crazy, so, absolutely denial.” ~ Cindy

What Mothers say that Hindered Negative Attitude

“I should be able to pick myself up out of this, I have a great life, I should be grateful. I so felt like a failure or like, you know, I had to depend, I don’t know. I just felt like I should be able to fix this. I should be able to pull myself out of this, and look at the good in my life, and be grateful and all those things.” ~ Erin



What Mothers say that Hindered Physical Burdens

“And I didn’t even want to go to sleep, I was afraid to go to sleep because once I went to sleep I was going to have to get up so what was the point of going to sleep. Now we’re going from this independent woman, my husband works 24 to 36 hour shifts, I’m alone taking care of two kids, being pregnant, doing everything to depending on everybody and everything and I couldn’t do anything for myself.” ~ Abby



What Mothers say that Hindered Physical Burdens

“Not only do I believe that certain chemical makeups are there before someone gets a postpartum depression but I think the thing that kicked it over the edge, the thing that made me different from the people who are like me but don’t get it, is the lack of sleep.” ~ Bea



What Mothers say that Hindered Physical Burdens

“I definitely knew something was wrong because I had lost all my pregnancy weight in a week. And I wasn’t eating and I thought that was normal to have no appetite, like I didn’t even ...think. You know, um, [started sniffling]. But it was the worst, the worst feeling that I could possibly describe, it just felt awful.” ~ Hannah



What Mothers say that Hindered Physical Burdens

“Having pneumonia during pregnancy and not recovered completely at delivery So that was a contributing factor, all the illness. So then I got this child and they send him home on a monitor you know, it was like one thing after another. And I kept thinking, how much more of this can I bear?” ~ Irene



Summary

- We have to listen to mothers
- We have to ask how they are doing, eating, sleeping, able to think, are they crying, are they functioning
- We have to look for what is missing, what are they not saying
- We have to ask how they are doing, over and over
- Spend time with new mothers
- If they are concerned, we have to be concerned



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