

Just for YOU Women Net vir JOU Vroue

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PERINATAL DEPRESSION (PND)

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Most women dream of having a baby and go to great lengths to become pregnant. For some, the journey is painstaking, arduous and fraught with the anxiety of holding their bundle of joy. One would imagine the expectant mum-to-be feeling of elation at the prospect of a new addition. However, this is not always so. Despite the online resources, social media and antenatal classes, nothing prepares a woman for PND. Most women suffer in isolation as she is not supposed to feel anything other than joy and contentment. After all, she may have waited a long time for baby to arrive.

WHAT IS PND?

According to SADAG (The South African Depression and Anxiety Group) perinatal depression or postpartum depression (PPD) is a complex mix of physical, emotional and behavioural changes that happen in a woman before or after giving birth. According to the DSM V, a manual used to diagnose mental disorders, PPD is a form of major depression that has its onset before and after delivery. The diagnosis of postpartum depression is based not only on the length of time between delivery and onset, but also on the severity of the depression.

A PERSONAL JOURNEY

I have been reluctant to recount my personal story of dealing with PND. My baby was born in the year 2000 – a millennium baby. I had tried to conceive for many, many years. Due to complications, my gynae warned of the ensuing battle to conceive. Little did I know just how difficult my journey would be. In January 1999, after too many failed attempts at fertility treatment, artificial insemination and keeping an eye on my ovulation, the moon and stars, I came to the realisation that I couldn't subject myself to another negative pregnancy test. The roller coaster ride ended, and it was time to descend and abandon this said ride. I was also of the opinion I kept the company who manufactures the preggie tests in business! I shared my thoughts and feelings with my hubby and it was decided that we would conquer the world as with the two of us. This felt like a Pinky and the Brain moment.

Fast forward to March 1999. We had just returned from a close family friend's funeral. Upon arriving at our home in the plush suburb of Edenglen in Johannesburg, we were hi-jacked. Following what seemed endless hours with guns pointed at our heads and my jewellery yanked from me, the gang sped off in our BMW. We were warned about the car we purchased. I guess we were just young and arrogant and thought it would never happen to us. It did. And it was traumatic. It took a few months to get over the shock of the ordeal, but as the saying goes, life goes on! On 8th May 1999 I learnt that I was pregnant. This was not expected. Perhaps the hi-jacking was not in vain. I decided to seek the positive and took two fundamental factors from the experience. The first being that the car was not safe and was now gone. The second factor, my attention was drawn elsewhere, and apparently ovulating eggs don't like to be watched.

I'm not going to bore you with the details of my pregnancy, suffice to say it was a text book perfect pregnancy and birth.

A day after the elation of giving birth, the nurse asked me to bath my baby so that she could assess my skills and ensure I had the gist of what I was doing. Bathing a real baby is very different to bathing a doll. Babies cry and new moms fumble. I just stood there and cried. I wept and felt a hollowness akin to the abyss of the ocean. Why wasn't I the smiley, happy mommy? Surely it was just a bout of the baby blues? Every woman gets the baby blues, doesn't she? I mean, it's normal as the hormones surge and change after the birth.

Eventually, I went home, and my world crumbled. Only I knew though. I wore a mask of deception and a mask of perfectionism. I wanted everyone to see that I could cope. I could maintain a household, still cook delicious meals, look glamor-

ous and maintain my sense of humour. If only people knew. This was an incredibly tough time and eventually I sought help from my doctor.

SEEKING HELP

My road to recovery was made possible by seeing my doctor, taking medication and acknowledging my feelings. It was by no means an easy process and getting back on my feet took me approximately three years. It is important to mention that new dads are going through just as much change as new moms are. It is very daunting for a new father to cope with the challenges of a new baby, let alone a new mom who is not coping. Talk to your partner about your feelings and encourage him to accompany you to see your health care professional. It will make him feel less isolated and give him a sense of purpose, whilst developing his understanding about the situation and how to assist you and be there for the baby.

It is important to note that PND does not only affect first-time moms. In some instances, PND is only experienced with a second or third baby. If you suspect you may be suffering from PND, please reach out and see your healthcare professional. Untreated postpartum depression can be dangerous for new moms and their children.

A new mom should seek professional help when:

- Symptoms persist beyond two weeks.
- She is unable to function normally.
- She can't cope with everyday situations.
- She has thoughts of harming herself or her baby.
- She is feeling extremely anxious, scared, and panicked most of the day.

South African journalist Lauren Shapiro has written a book titled Through the Window: How I beat PND recounting her journey. Be sure to browse Lauren's website for information and to purchase her book.

NGOs that offer professional help:

- Lifeline counselling services: share call number: 0861 322 322
- Mosaic Centre for Women & Children: 021 761 7585
- The Parent Centre: 021 762 0116
- FAMSA: 021 447 0170, 082 231 4470
- Cape Mental Health: 021 447 9040
- South African Depression and Anxiety Group: 0800 21 22 23
- Postnatal Depression Support Association info@pnDSA.org.za / www.pnd-sa.org.za
- Postnatal Depression National Helpline – 082 882 0072 – SMS help and your name and someone will call back
- The South African Depression & Anxiety Group
- Perinatal Mental Health Project



TAMBOTIE
Mall

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Tambotie Mall is Randfontein's premier shopping destination with over forty stores that cater to all of Randfontein's fashion and lifestyle needs.

Tambotie Mall is conveniently located amidst multiple schools and main roads, which makes them the customers first choice for a quick, easy and enjoyable shopping experience.

The mall boasts with a wide variety of clothing, lifestyle and grocery stores, restaurants, banks and much much more!!! Tambotie mall is also a Distribution Point for The West Rand Window.

