

The Genesis Therapy Center

SPRING, 2015

A Mother's Adaptation to her Newborn

Jennifer Harris, PsyD

Having a child is a time of many adaptations. Mothers, fathers, grandparents, siblings, aunts and uncles all experience new roles and responsibilities when a child is born. For mothers, this is often accompanied by fear and shame—fears of not being able to handle motherhood and shame for not being able to keep up with the demands of a new child. So much of a mother's time is spent focusing on her new child, they often overlook their own well-being. Between 11% and 20% of women who give birth in the U.S. suffer from Postpartum Depression Disorder.

Postpartum depression is an umbrella term for a variety of moderate-to-severe symptoms of depression and anxiety that occur after giving birth. Postpartum depression is diagnosed anytime between two weeks until one year after delivery. The symptoms can include insomnia, intense irritability, overwhelming fatigue, lack of joy, severe mood swings, difficulty bonding with one's child, withdrawal from family and friends, and thoughts of harming oneself or one's child. Many mothers overlook these symptoms, as they think their symptoms are simply part of the new mom role.

While the exact cause is unknown, it is believed that dramatic changes in hormone levels following birth contribute to the onset. If a woman has had a prior episode of postpartum depression, there is an increased risk (33%-50%) of postpartum depression in each subsequent pregnancy. If left untreated, 25% of cases typically develop into Major Depression. Untreated postpartum depression can also interfere with early mother-child bonding. Rare cases can develop into a postpartum psychosis (1 to 2 out of 1,000 women), which can include hallucinations, delusions, and paranoia. Unfortunately, these cases can conclude with completed suicides and/or infanticides.

The good news about postpartum depression is that treatment is highly effective, with a 90% rate of recovery.

We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails.

Treatment includes psychotherapy, support groups, partner and family involvement, and, at times, medication (typically antidepressants and/or hormone therapy). Therapists help mothers adapt to their new roles of motherhood by providing emotional support and helping mothers set realistic expectations. Therapy involves learning new coping skills and relaxation techniques. Therapists can also facilitate a mother's exploration of meaning in her experience of postpartum illness.

Bringing a new child into the world is the beginning of countless adaptations. For many women, the first adaptation might be asking for some help. If you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms of postpartum depression, check out these helpful websites: <http://postpartumprogress.org/>, <http://www.ppdsupportpage.com/>, <http://www.postpartum.net/>

The Genesis Therapy Center's

12th Annual

KidPower Benefit

Sunday October 25, 2015

2 to 6pm at Gaelic Park in

Oak Forest

Rebuilding Your Life Post Divorce

Cathy E. Fairfield D.Min., LCPC Executive Director

Having a marriage end is a pivotal event for most women. Women are socialized to value their relational selves—whether as wives or mothers. The ways in which those roles are played out change greatly after a divorce. Whether or not the individual woman is the one who wanted the divorce, there remains a major adjustment once the marriage is actually over. Most women experience some sense of failure, “I should have been able to make this work”, as well as a sense of loss over the dreams that will never be realized, at least with that partner. In addition, if there are children, the woman’s role in their lives does undergo some changes. If Dad has the children on a weekend, he is then in charge of what the children do, what they eat, when they go to bed. For some women, giving up this sort of control of the day to day activities is very difficult.

When working with clients who are experiencing a divorce, I attempt to help them focus on the areas of their lives that are under their control, as well as begin to look at this time as an opportunity for other areas of growth. When their children are with the other parent, it is a great time to visit with friends, take up a hobby, exercise or get caught up on activities that are difficult to do with children. This is also an excellent time to begin looking at yourself as someone with needs and desires of your own—not just someone who responds to the needs and desires of your children and other family members.

Counseling can be an important part of adjusting to the changes of divorce and provide an opportunity to articulate both the loss, sadness and guilt, as well as the excitement and happiness you may experience with new situations.

We offer ongoing support groups for parents and ongoing social skills groups for children.

Please call 708-535-7320 for more information, locations and times.

Squeezing into Two Worlds: Stressors and Tips for the Sandwich Generation

Mary Ann Andrade, MA, LPC

Families live in a complex world in which they not only try to meet the demands of daily living, but they also care for and support younger and older members of the family unit. Known as the “Sandwich Generation,” these are caregivers who find themselves squeezed between caring for young children and their elderly parents or loved ones (Bogolea, 2013). It is roughly estimated that American families provide 80-90% of all in home long-term caregiving for their aging parents, family members, and loved ones. They also try to manage many stressors, such as splitting time for young and elderly family members, high involvement in caregiving tasks, and finding time to relax and explore resources of the family. Most often, caregivers feel guilty for not having enough time to accomplish their demands, as well as the needs of the younger and elderly family members (Bogolea, 2013). Here are some tips to counter the stressors sandwich generation caregivers may experience:

- Hold family meetings and delegate tasks to be accomplished during the week.
- Have family members actively communicate with one another.
- Look for resources and professional support that can offset care-giving responsibilities and stressors.
- Identify stressors and recognize how you manage them.
- Find healthy ways to manage your stress - eat healthy, exercise, and reach out to friends and family when you are feeling overwhelmed.
- Take care of yourself! Do things that replenish and fulfill you. You deserve it!

Resources:

Bogolea, K. (2013). *The sandwich generation*. Retrieved from <https://www.caregiver.org/caregiving>

APA (2015). *Sandwich generation moms feeling the squeeze*. Retrieved from <https://www.caregiver.org/caregiving>

The Genesis Therapy Center

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We're on the Web!

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