

Pregnancy and Stress or Trauma

Why your history matters
(And what you can do about it)





Stress

“Stress” is a generic term that includes a number of different types of exposure. Many exposures, varying from mild to very severe, have been shown to affect outcomes for the child. They can include symptoms of maternal anxiety and depression, pregnancy specific anxiety, daily hassles, bereavement, life events, bad relationships and exposure to acute disasters.



Trauma

PTSD - An anxiety disorder after a terrifying event or ordeal in which grave physical harm occurred, was threatened, or was perceived. It is not appropriate to assess whether an experience was truly traumatic, because if it was **perceived** as a traumatic event, then it is considered one.

Approximately 9% of women experience postpartum PTSD following childbirth, most often caused by a real or perceived trauma during delivery or postpartum.



Stress-related risk factors for PMADs

Financial stress

Marital Stress

Interpersonal violence

Complications in pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding

Previous pregnancy loss or infertility

Traumatic birth experience

A major recent life event: (loss, house move, job loss)

Does it affect your baby?

Research has been finding that exposure to raised cortisol levels (cortisol is the stress hormone) in the amniotic fluid is associated with lower cognitive function in the child later on. It has also been discovered that the function of the placenta changes in association with maternal stress and anxiety. Essentially, research has noted a decrease in the enzyme that breaks down cortisol, potentially allowing more cortisol to pass through the placenta and affect the baby's development.

Long story short: exposures and early life experiences may modify development starting from when baby is in the womb to that critical first year and onward.



What Can You Do?

Working to understand your personal thinking pattern, triggers, and self perception are a great starting point to deal with stress-related trauma and its affects. Often times we have patterns of thinking that are not constructive and exacerbate issues.

The goal of working through these issues is to help process and discuss disappointment and fears, to help you reframe your thoughts, and to discover new ways to engage in life and find meaning, allowing you to reconnect with your loved ones while forming a bond with your baby.

WHAT TRIGGERED ME?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 01. I felt excluded. | 13. I felt like the bad guy. |
| 02. I felt powerless. | 14. I felt forgotten. |
| 03. I felt unheard. | 15. I felt unsafe. |
| 04. I felt scolded. | 16. I felt unloved. |
| 05. I felt judged. | 17. I felt like that was unfair. |
| 06. I felt blamed. | 18. I felt frustrated. |
| 07. I felt disrespected. | 19. I felt disconnected. |
| 08. I felt a lack of affection. | 20. I felt trapped. |
| 09. I felt uncared for. | 21. I felt a lack of passion. |
| 10. I felt lonely. | 22. I felt like I couldn't speak up. |
| 11. I felt ignored. | 23. I felt manipulated. |
| 12. I felt like I couldn't be honest. | 24. I felt controlled. |

The Gottman Institute

The Gottman Institute is a research based institution dedicated to supporting and strengthening marriages, families, and relationships. This is a common trigger list that many people can relate to.



ASK FOR HELP.

Finding a peer support group, mentor, counselor, or therapist can help you cope with stress, trauma, or general parent-related issues that can snowball into perinatal mood disorders if left un-addressed.

When to seek support? **As early as possible.**

Be a Mindful Momma



Questions? Check out link in bio and contact me for more information!

