

# Motherhood and mental health: How to cope with postpartum anxiety and depression

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Motherhood is often painted as a time of boundless joy, love, and fulfillment. From picture-perfect moments of cuddling a newborn to the sheer wonder of watching a baby grow, society has romanticized the early days of parenting. But for many women, the reality is far from this idealized version. The sleepless nights, the constant worry, the overwhelming responsibility—these emotions can sometimes spiral into something more serious: postpartum anxiety and depression.

Postpartum mental health challenges are more common than most people realize. While discussions about postpartum depression (PPD) have gained traction in recent years, postpartum anxiety (PPA) is often overlooked, despite being just as prevalent. Many new mothers struggle in silence, afraid to voice their feelings for fear of being judged or misunderstood. But acknowledging these struggles is the first step toward healing. Understanding that you are not alone, that help is available, and that recovery is possible can make all the difference.

Let's delve into what postpartum anxiety and depression look like, why they happen, and how new mothers can navigate this difficult phase while prioritizing their mental well-being.

Understanding Postpartum Anxiety and Depression

The arrival of a baby brings with it a flood of emotions—happiness, exhaustion, excitement, and fear. While it's normal to feel overwhelmed in the early days of motherhood, persistent feelings of anxiety or sadness that interfere with daily life may indicate a deeper issue.



## Postpartum Anxiety (PPA): When Worry Becomes Overwhelming

Postpartum anxiety is characterized by excessive worry, restlessness, and an inability to relax. Unlike general new-parent concerns, which are natural, postpartum anxiety creates a constant state of fear—often about the baby's health, feeding, sleep, or even irrational fears of something going wrong.

## Some common signs of postpartum anxiety include:

- Persistent, racing thoughts that won't

- go away
- Trouble sleeping, even when the baby is asleep
- A constant feeling of dread or panic
- Physical symptoms like rapid heartbeat, dizziness, or nausea
- An inability to sit still or relax
- Many mothers experiencing PPA describe it as feeling "on edge" all the time, as though something terrible is about to happen. Because anxiety doesn't always come with visible sadness, it often goes undiagnosed, leaving many women suffering in silence.

## Postpartum Depression

## WAYS TO RECOGNISE AND DEAL WITH POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

While postpartum anxiety and depression can feel consuming, they are treatable conditions. Seeking support and taking proactive steps can help new mothers regain control over their mental well-being.

### 1. Acknowledge Your Feelings Without Guilt

One of the hardest things for many mothers is admitting that they are struggling. Society's glorified image of motherhood makes it seem as though any negative emotions are unnatural. But feeling anxious or depressed does not make you a bad mother—it makes you human. Acknowledging your feelings without guilt is the first step toward healing.

### 2. Seek Professional Help Without Hesitation

Many women hesitate to seek professional help due to fear of judgment or lack of awareness. Therapy, counseling, and in some cases, medication can make a world of difference. Speaking with a mental health professional, such as a therapist specializing in postpartum issues, can provide clarity and support. If symptoms feel severe or persistent, consulting a doctor is essential. Postpartum depression and

anxiety are medical conditions, not personal failures, and they deserve professional attention.

### 3. Build a Support System

Motherhood can be isolating, but it doesn't have to be. Lean on your support system—whether it's your partner, parents, friends, or even online communities of mothers who have gone through similar experiences. Talking to others who understand can provide comfort and reassurance. Support groups for new mothers, both online and offline, can be incredibly helpful. Knowing you're not alone in your struggles can ease the burden significantly.

### 4. Prioritize Sleep and Self-Care

Sleep deprivation is a major contributor to postpartum mental health issues. While getting uninterrupted sleep may be impossible in the first few months, creating a system where a partner or family member helps with night feeds can make a huge difference.

Self-care doesn't have to be elaborate—it can be as simple as stepping outside for fresh air, taking a warm shower, journaling, or practicing deep breathing exercises. Small moments of self-nurturing can go a long way in restoring emotional balance.

### 5. Practice Mindfulness and Gentle Movement

Mindfulness practices such as meditation, guided breathing, or even listening to calming music can help ground emotions. Yoga, gentle stretching, or short walks can also help regulate the nervous system and improve mood. The goal is not rigorous exercise but small actions that promote relaxation and well-being.

### 6. Let Go of Unrealistic Expectations

Perfection in motherhood is an illusion. The pressure to be the "perfect mom" can exacerbate stress and anxiety. Accepting that some days will be messy, exhausting, or overwhelming is crucial. Instead of focusing on being the "best" mother, focus on being a present and healthy one.

## (PPD): More Than Just the 'Baby Blues'

Unlike postpartum anxiety, which is dominated by worry and restlessness, postpartum depression is marked by persistent sadness, emotional numbness, and detachment. It's different from the "baby blues," which are short-lived mood swings caused by hormonal changes in the first two weeks after childbirth. PPD lasts longer and has a deeper emotional impact.

## Signs of postpartum depression include:

- Persistent sadness or feelings of hopelessness
- Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed

• Extreme fatigue but difficulty sleeping

- Feeling disconnected from the baby or struggling to bond
- Feelings of guilt, shame, or worthlessness
- Thoughts of self-harm or harming the baby (in extreme cases)
- PPD can make even the simplest daily tasks feel impossible. Many women with postpartum depression feel trapped in their own emotions, unable to ask for help out of fear that they will be perceived as bad mothers.

## Breaking the Silence: Changing the Conversation Around Postpartum Mental Health

Postpartum anxiety and depression are real, and they deserve to be spoken about

openly. The more we normalize these conversations, the easier it becomes for struggling mothers to seek help without shame.

New mothers need to hear that it's okay to ask for help, that they are not alone, and that healing is possible. Postpartum mental health is not just about the mother—it affects the entire family. When a mother thrives, so does her baby, her relationships, and her overall well-being.

If you or someone you know is struggling with postpartum anxiety or depression, remember: help is available, recovery is possible, and you are not alone. The journey of motherhood is not meant to be walked alone—there is always a hand to hold, a voice to listen, and support to lean on.

## Why Do These Conditions Happen?

Postpartum anxiety and depression don't happen in a vacuum. They are caused by a combination of biological, emotional, and social factors.

**Hormonal Shifts:** After childbirth, there is a sudden drop in estrogen and progesterone levels, which can significantly impact mood and emotional stability.

**Sleep Deprivation:** The chronic exhaustion that comes with caring for a newborn can intensify feelings of anxiety and depression.

**Emotional Adjustment:** The transition to motherhood, with all its new responsibilities, can feel

overwhelming. Many women struggle with the loss of their former identity.

**Social and Family Pressure:** Societal expectations that a new mother should feel nothing but joy can create guilt and shame when reality doesn't match up.

**Lack of Support:** A weak support system—whether from a partner, family, or friends—can increase feelings of isolation and stress. These factors combined can make a new mother feel emotionally exhausted and mentally drained, increasing the risk of postpartum mental health challenges.



# Make 2025 count for feminism: What you can do right now

While governments have the primary responsibility to fulfill the commitments in the Platform, we all have roles in unlocking equal rights, power and opportunities. Let history remember 2025 as the year the world refused to give up on women's rights.

## What can governments do?

The United Nations is calling on governments everywhere to act boldly and decisively for all women and girls. Closing the gender gap globally by 2030 will take an investment of \$360 billion annually, but the cost of inaction is higher.

Here are six actions that can make a real difference, while placing the leadership of young women and adolescent girls in the centre of all efforts.

### 1. For All Women and Girls—A Digital Revolution

Closing the digital gender divide could save \$500

billion over the next five years. Technology must be a force for equality, not exclusion. Support the Global Digital Compact and enact policies that bridge the digital gender divide, ensuring equal access and leadership for all women and girls in technology

### 2. For All Women and Girls—Freedom from poverty

Nearly one in ten women live in extreme poverty. Public services and social protection expand economic opportunities and security for women. Women also do at least twice as much unpaid care work as men do. Care is the backbone of all societies, and yet is largely undervalued and unpaid. It doesn't have to be this way—closing care gaps could create 300 million jobs by 2035. Invest in national budgets to strengthen social protection, public services, particularly care services, to give women an equal chance to prosper and fight poverty.



### 3. For All Women and Girls—Zero Violence

One in three women experiences violence in her lifetime. Although globally we have many laws on the books, they are often poorly implemented

and investment in prevention strategies is lacking. Adopt, implement and fund national laws and policies that signal zero impunity towards violence against women and support local women's organizations.

### 4. For All Women and Girls—Full and Equal Decision-Making Power

Around the world, decisions affecting women's lives are still made overwhelmingly by men. This is not just unjust—it is inefficient. Implement laws and policies, apply temporary special measures to increase the number of women in decision-making positions in politics, business and institutions.

### 5. For All Women and Girls—Peace and Security

Over 600 million women and girls live near armed

conflict, with conflict-related sexual violence skyrocketing by 50 per cent last year alone. Women's organizations are the first responders to crises and champions of peace. Yet they remain underfunded and undervalued. Adopt fully financed national plans to increase women's meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security and fund women's organizations in crises and conflict settings.

### 6. For All Women and Girls—Climate Justice

As the climate crisis and biodiversity loss accelerate, women and girls—especially in rural and indigenous communities—bear the brunt of its devastating effects. They are also at the forefront of solutions. Prioritize women's and girls' rights and leadership in climate action by increasing investment in and their access to green jobs, like care, sustainable agriculture and renewable energy.

## Herald Gaming Console

**Dilbert**

MY RELATIONSHIP ADVICE VIDEOS ARE GOING VIRAL ON INSTAGRAM.

IS THERE ANY CHANCE YOUR ADVICE IS SO TOXIC IT WILL ROT THE FABRIC OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION AND PLUNGE THE WORLD INTO DARKNESS?

YES, BUT THAT HAS TO BE WEIGHED AGAINST THE NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS I GAINED.

**Garfield**

I REMEMBER WHEN I WAS A KITTEN...

MOM WOULD READ TO ME EVERY NIGHT

FAIRY TALES?

COOKBOOKS!

**Wizard of id**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

ARRRRRRGH!

DID YOU BUILD ME ON TOP OF YOUR SLEEPING PET DRAGON?

MAYBE...

**crossword 4784**

**ACROSS**

1- Evens the score; 5- Sailor; 8- Horned vipers; 12- Crates; 14- Change the decor; 15- \_\_\_ of; 16- Perspire; 17- Switch ending; 18- Cabinet dept.; 19- Deli meat; 21- Arm cover; 23- "Xanadu" grp.; 24- Consumed; 25- Sun. speech; 26- Declares; 30- Fencing blades; 32- Ready \_\_\_\_; 33- Depose; 37- Bank transaction; 38- Dens; 39- Leisure; 40- Tiny; 42- \_\_\_ blanché; 43- Omega's opposite; 44- Sway; 45- It's a moray; 48- Pothook shape; 49- \_\_\_ Moines; 50- Audition; 52- Humility; 57- Bear in the sky; 58- Cry from a hacker; 60- Spooky; 61- Entrance; 62- Tins; 63- Works hard; 64- Architectural annexes; 65- Beer barrel; 66- Trawler equipment;

**DOWN**

1- Recipe amt.; 2- Caucus state; 3- Former spouses; 4- Chair; 5- Garr or Hatcher; 6- Much \_\_\_ About Nothing; 7- Cocks; 8- On the sheltered side; 9- Trig functions; 10- Pet \_\_\_\_; 11- Less doubtful; 13- Thoroughfare; 14- San \_\_\_ Italy; 20- Capp and Capone; 22- Internet writing system that popularized "pwn3d" and "n00b"; 24- Mimicry; 26- Arias, usually; 27- Horse's gait; 28- Med. school class; 29- Skater

Harding; 30- "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" musical; 31- Clip wool; 33- Vows; 34- Seldom seen; 35- Bone; Prefix; 36- "Pure Guava" band; 38- Makeup item; 41- Cordon \_\_\_\_; 42- Coffin; 44- So-so grade; 45- Chopin composition; 46- Swashbuckler Flynn; 47- Disinfectant brand; 49- Reading rooms; 51- Galley propellers; 52- Chinese dynasty; 53- Inert gas; 54- Toledo's lake; 55- Delta deposit; 56- Cong. meeting; 59- Ginnie \_\_\_\_.

**solution 4783**

S	A	R	A	E	T	T	A	T	O	W	A
A	T	A	T	A	S	H	E	S	M	R	E
L	E	S	T	S	T	R	A	P	P	E	R
T	E	P	E	S	T	U	R	I	A	L	E
M	A	I	N	S	R	A	S				
C	A	M	P	U	S	E	N	T	R	E	
E	D	I	T	T	I	N	O	S	I	A	
N	H	L	S	E	E	R	S				
T	O	N	E	R	S	D	A	K	M	N	O
S	C	E	N	I	C						
S	A	L	E								
A	R	O	N								
B	O	R	A								
L	A	I	R								
E	D	G	E								

**sudoku 4784**

		4									
		9			6	3					
3			2		9				4		
6		4	1					9			
	8								7		
	3				8	5				6	
2			9		6						7
			3	5		8					
										2	

**Instructions for Sudoku**

9 x 9 letter: To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every number from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes

**solution 4783**

1	3	9	7	5	4	6	8	2
8	7	4	1	2	6	3	9	5
5	2	6	8	9	3	7	4	1
6	5	7	4	1	8	2	3	9
4	1	3	2	7	9	5	6	8
9	8	2	3	6	5	4	1	7
3	9	5	6	8	2	1	7	4
7	4	8	5	3	1	9	2	6
2	6	1	9	4	7	8	5	3