



THE POSTPARTUM STRESS CENTER

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PPD Impact Statement

Stressful events hold the possibility of change, both positive and negative.

Research has shown us that psychological resources such as optimism, individual sense of control, and a sense of meaning have been shown to be protective of mental health.¹ Moreover, it is believed that if we identify and cultivate some of those resources, it may be possible to help individuals return to a previous level of functioning following traumatic events.

When it comes to perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs), a significant key to recovery is one's ability to reinterpret the trauma of depression and anxiety in more constructive terms. An example of this is "Although my PPD felt incapacitating at times, I can now see that it led to the strengthening of my marriage. In a weird way, I am grateful." Other ways that things can actually get better in the face of life stressors are: priorities shift, insight deepens, attitudes adjust, self is perceived as strong or resilient.

If possible, we would like to help you find meaning and a sense of mastery from your experience.

We have found that a majority of women who suffered significant and enduring distress after the birth of their baby, later actively seek to restore balance in their lives. One of the best ways we have found to help women do this is with The PPD Impact Statement.

The PPD Impact Statement should be completed as a final step in your recovery work. The key to this Impact Statement is that it is for you. It is a way for you to reflect upon and find meaning to your experience. You can write short concise answers, or you can elaborate in detail. This is for you. You can share it with your partner. You can share it with your therapist. Or you can decide to keep it private. It is has been our experience that sharing it with those who have accompanied you on this journey improves the healing potential.

¹Taylor, S., Kemeny, M., Reed, G., Bower, J. & Gruenewald, T. (2000). Psychological Resources, Positive Illusions, and Health. *American Psychologist*, Vol. 55, No. 1. 99-109.



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1. Describe the ways PPD affected you.

2. What have you lost that you hope to regain?

3. Can you describe how you have changed the most?

4. What scared you the most?

5. What was the most difficult part?

6. What surprised you the most?



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7. What did you learn about your partner?

8. How did your experience change the way you view yourself?

9. How did your experience change the way you take care of yourself?

10. How did your experience change the way you express yourself?

11. What has changed for the better?

12. What are you looking forward to?



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The following characteristics have been shown, in clinical observation, to be associated with positive adaptation following perinatal distress. You will feel better if you can develop strategies that enhance your skills in the areas listed below. Indicate whether these are areas of strength for you, or whether you could benefit from grow these attributes, then provide an example of how you are good at it or why you need to develop this particular skill:

1. Positive reinterpretation and growth

The ability to regard a negative experience as a learning opportunity in which one can later thrive.

I am good at this I need to work on this

2. Active coping

The ability to strategize in order to advance after adversity.

I am good at this I need to work on this

3. Planning

The ability to prepare and structure activities in a meaningful manner.

I am good at this I need to work on this

4. Seeking social support

the ability to pursue and nurture meaningful relationships.

I am good at this I need to work on this

5. Humor

the ability to engage self and others with light-hearted references that produce laughter or joyfulness.

I am good at this I need to work on this



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6. Accept and trust current state

The ability to understand that the present state is an authentic part of the self and can be embraced.

- I am good at this I need to work on this

7. Rearranging priorities

The ability to shift thinking in order to let go of perfectionistic expectations.

- I am good at this I need to work on this

8. Insight

The capacity for intuitive understanding of self.

- I am good at this I need to work on this

9. Interest in intimacy

The capacity for meaningful, close and significant connections.

- I am good at this I need to work on this

10. Self-expression

The ability to articulate feelings.

- I am good at this I need to work on this

11. Spiritual search

The interest in and capacity for meaning on a human spirit or soulful level.

- I am good at this I need to work on this