

Dione Rousseau, RPC-C - Perinatal Mental Health

~ You've embarked on your sacred journey of matrescence ~



Congratulations!

Inside is evidence based info and tips that may be helpful
and self assuring!

Your mental health, your connection with baby and your brain

Your brain started making changes in pregnancy to meet and attune with your baby and it continues to make important changes postpartum that cause you to be highly sensitive to and tend to every single squeak, sound, movement and developmental stride your baby makes.

This can cause heightened anxiety and overwhelm on the daily! This is normal although a compassionate ear at this time is beneficial and crucial for every parent.

It's important for you to know that your deep maternal instinct is the number one *most important* guide you need in order to know what to do to help keep you and your baby well.



Follow your instincts and let it guide you to seek the information you want to learn more about, if you need it; whether it's about infant sleep, feeding, behaviour, parenting, etc. and be cautious when the direction you've been given doesn't sit well with you.

In the words of neuroscientist Dr. Greer Kirshenbaum, we live in a "low nurture" culture and this is reflected in mental health statistics. You are wired to be close to your baby and to respond to them empathetically. Doing so creates a strong and healthy foundation in your baby's brain development, increases your connection with your baby and benefits your mental health as well!





What The Psychology and Neuroscientific Research Says

You cannot tend to, hold, kiss or adore your baby "too much"

The verdict is out - you absolutely **cannot** spoil a baby! Your responsiveness and proximity to your baby the **best** thing you can do for their health, nervous system, brain development, sense of safety and attachment.

Awareness and regulation of your emotions is crucial to regulating your baby's

Babies are developmentally not able to regulate their own emotions and they are not able to "self soothe" despite what many believe. Giving them your calm has life long lasting developmental and mental health benefits.

This is not an easy task for everyone! Many parents struggle to regulate their own emotions, let alone regulate their baby's.

Things that can help are: counselling/therapy, meditation, deep breathing, building self awareness.

Always remember that perfection does not exist, we will not always show up how we want to, we will cause relational ruptures and we can always repair!

Zunini R. (2024). The Parental Brain Masterclass [workshop]
Kirshenbaum G. (2024, May 31). Know Your Baby's Brain To Grow Your Baby's Brain [workshop]

The sleep deprivation is REAL

The sleep deprivation that comes with postpartum is a shock to the system and can exacerbate any already existing anxiety, other mental health challenges as well as challenges and responsibilities outside of your mother-baby relationship.

Your baby has very high needs right now and it's very demanding on you, the mama, especially. There will be many times where you will have to dig deep within yourself to find the capacity within you to tend to your baby on top of life's responsibilities - and you do have what it takes!

How are YOU doing?

So much attention goes to the baby but I know that you've got your baby's needs covered - it's you who needs to be cared for during this time. How are you managing and feeling about it all?

Mental health statistics:

- 1 in 4 Canadian women experience postpartum depression or anxiety symptoms. Rates are higher for marginalized groups.
- Up to 1 in 9 mothers experience panic disorder during pregnancy and/or postpartum
- 1 in 9 women experience Perinatal OCD
- 1 in 3 women experience Birth Trauma

Hicks L. et al. (2022). Assessment of Canadian perinatal mental health services from the provider perspective: Where can we improve?

Science backed ways to support your mental health postpartum:



Create an oxytocin rich environment (Rocio Zunini, PhD)

Cuddles and closeness with your baby, play music, dance with your baby in your arms, speak to/be around people you trust, limit or eliminate time around people you do not trust or do not feel good with.

Go for a walk

Research shows that as little as a 15 minute walk a day improves postpartum depression symptoms.

Getting out into nature can help significantly relieve an upset baby, as well as, anxiety spirals!

Build social supports

Excellent places to find your people are the Peanut app, local mom and baby groups and classes, Facebook motherhood groups, activities and meetups

Consider a Postpartum Doula

If you have the means, postpartum doulas can help with breastfeeding, support with laundry, cleaning, meal prep, concerns with baby, be with baby while you get some sleep

Talk to a Perinatal Mental Health Counsellor

A safe outlet for you to tend to your mental health may be one significant way to feel more at ease and increase your self confidence. Some counsellors also offer a sliding scale rate to help financially (see last page for resources)

A group of people, including women and children, are standing in a field with large trees in the background. The scene is captured in a soft, slightly desaturated light. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is centered over the image, containing text in a warm, orange-brown color.

A message from mom
to mom:

The day will come when you start getting longer stretches of sleep, time to yourself and with your partner again. I know how hard it is and I know how easy it is for people to forget and not see the invisible load on you. It will only get easier from here.

Hang on mama, your hard work WILL pay off!!!



Did you have a difficult birth?

Tell someone.

Better yet, tell someone who has gone through it too. Even better - process your birth with a perinatal mental health counsellor! Pregnancy, labour and birth present us with huge opportunities for personal understanding, growth and healing.

Every time we tell our birth story we make more meaningful connections about what occurred and learn more about ourselves. It's beneficial for women/birthing people to tell their birth stories even decades after giving birth. Birthing your baby is a big deal!!

Want to join a community of moms that is deep, connecting, self honouring and healing?

Email your interest to dionerousseau.pmh@gmail.com and I'll get back to you with dates and details!

 @dionerousseau

Who am I?

I'm Dione, a registered counsellor specializing in perinatal mental health. I'm located in Orono, Ontario with my partner and 2.5 year old son.

The birth of my son supercharged my passion for the advocacy of mothers, birthing people and parents. I wanted to be a voice for the kind of support and advocacy that parents really need - which lacks in our society and this was confirmed by my own pregnancy, birth and postpartum experience.

It's an honour and a pleasure for me to work with mothers and birthing people therapeutically in the lens of Internal Family Systems Therapy since 2019.

If you're interested in getting therapeutic counselling support, I'd love to meet you. My email is dionerousseau.pmh@gmail.com or you can learn more about my services at my website www.dionerousseaucounselling.com



Blog posts

How People Pleasing Negatively Impacted My Pregnancy, Birth and Postpartum Experiences

A Method To Remain Confident In Yourself Despite Others Judgments

Postpartum Rage - The Most Shamed and Misconceived Emotional Experience

www.dionerousseaucounselling.com



Resources

INFANT SLEEP:

[@rociozunini_newbornparents](#)
[@nurture_neuroscience_parenting](#)
[@infantsleepscientist](#)

INFANT/CHILD MENTAL HEALTH

[@babiesandbrains](#)
[@attachmentnerd](#)

PREGNANCY AND BIRTH RESEARCH OF COMMON INTERVENTIONS (ARE/WERE THEY NECESSARY?):

[@drsarawickham](#)
[@dr.rachel.reed](#)
[@downtobirthshow](#)

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH (BIPOC, LGBTQ+)

www.postpartum.net/canada/

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH AND BIRTH TRAUMA

[@dionerousseau](#)
www.dionerousseaucounselling.com





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Thank you for reading!

Send me an email if you'd like to book
a free 30 minute consultation with me
dionerousseau.pmh@gmail.com

Or learn more about perinatal mental
health and my services at
www.dionerousseaucounselling.com

