

Postpartum Anger

Postpartum anger is a common and normal part of adapting to the changes that come along with becoming a parent. 35% of new moms experience anger that is moderate to severe. No matter how intense your anger is, it should be considered serious and can impact your wellness, health and relationships dramatically.

About Postpartum Anger

- New parents often experience postpartum anger as new, alarming, distressing, intense and disturbing.
- Postpartum anger has also been described as unusual irritability, frustration, ill temper, moodiness, resentment or full out rage.

Anger and Depression

- People who experience postpartum anger can be more susceptible to postpartum anxiety and depression.
- When anger is a part of depression there are often other strong emotions like shame, guilt, hopelessness, sadness and disappointment.
- There are many people who experience anger without depression. We do not do a good job at supporting these individuals, often focusing on depression and anxiety instead.

Powerlessness and Anger

- Powerlessness and helplessness contribute to anger.
- Three areas often trigger helplessness:
 - Financial stress.
 - Conflict in relationships, including abuse.
 - Feeling trapped in circumstances (for example, having a surprise pregnancy, gender disappointment or a sense of being unable to get a break from parenting).

Unmet Expectations can Prompt Anger

- Anger is related to the harsh reality of becoming a parent and how different it is compared to what was expected.
- Three areas frequently trigger this anger:
 - Feelings of failure to live up to standards of ideal parenthood.
 - Support from others (partner) not meeting expectations.
 - Loss of one's pre-parent self.

What to Do About Postpartum Anger

Learn about your Anger

Pay attention to what sets you off. What situations are you more likely to get angry in? Trying to suppress your anger can lead to worsening symptoms. Try expressing your anger in a different way (talk to friends, say "I'm angry about...", take a walk, write it down in a letter, etc.). Problem solve things triggering your anger.

Talk to Someone

If you're worried about how you feel or if you are having difficulty controlling your anger talk to your family doctor or another professional to get help that works for you. As a starting point, think about other strong emotions you have. If you find that you are experiencing anxiety, sadness, lack of pleasure, guilt or shame, consider this to be a red flag.

Find Your Power

Use anger to motivate you to make changes in your life. Focus your attention on the things that you are able to control. Problem solve stressors in your life and seek support. Set small, achievable goals and notice the power you have to make them happen. Focus on what you need instead of comparing to others.

Accept Your Reality

Take stock of the things that haven't gone the way you've wanted them to. Instead of fighting for the way you wish it were, accept the way it is. Consider how to get what you need in a different way. Give yourself permission to grieve the losses you have experienced and dreams that went unmet.

For a full list of references visit www.rootedsupport.ca/infographics.



www.rootedsupport.ca

The information on this handout has been researched and compiled by Registered Psychologist, Kristin Romanoski. If any part of this document is altered, the information can no longer be relied upon as information provided by a Registered Psychologist. If you're unsure, please feel free to contact Kristin directly. © 2020