

Postpartum Fatigue

One of the most common postpartum mental health struggles.

Postpartum Fatigue (PPF) is the awareness that there is a decreased capacity for physical and mental activity because of a lack of availability of resources needed to do the work. Women with PPF experience it as an overwhelmingly negative, distressing experience. PPF impacts 64% of mothers.

SYMPTOMS

- **Mental:** self criticism, irritable, cranky, slow mind, lack of focus, rambling thoughts, difficulty with attention.
- **Physical:** body soreness, body aches, pain.
- **Stress/Worry:** too much to do and can't get it done.
- **Frustration:** can't do what you want (ex. sleep) and take frustration out on people around you.

PPF IS MORE LIKELY IF YOU HAVE TO MANAGE:

- Frequent needs of baby overnight and inability to get a good chunk of sleep.
- Certain characteristics of baby: colic, fussy, difficulty feeding or frequent feeding, etc.
- With less experience with babies.
- With less help and support.
- With fewer ways of accessing information.
- The inability to let go of 'to do' list.
- A long healing process from pregnancy and delivery.

PARENTS TRY TO COPE BY:

- Managing symptoms with coffee.
- Trying to go to bed earlier.
- Conserving energy by withdrawing from family.
- Telling themselves that "I need to push through for the baby".

WHAT REALLY WORKS?

- Interventions that promote increasing resources:
 - Learning to shift priorities (to include yourself).
 - Asking for help.
 - Shifting unhelpful thinking.
 - Increasing support from others.



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