



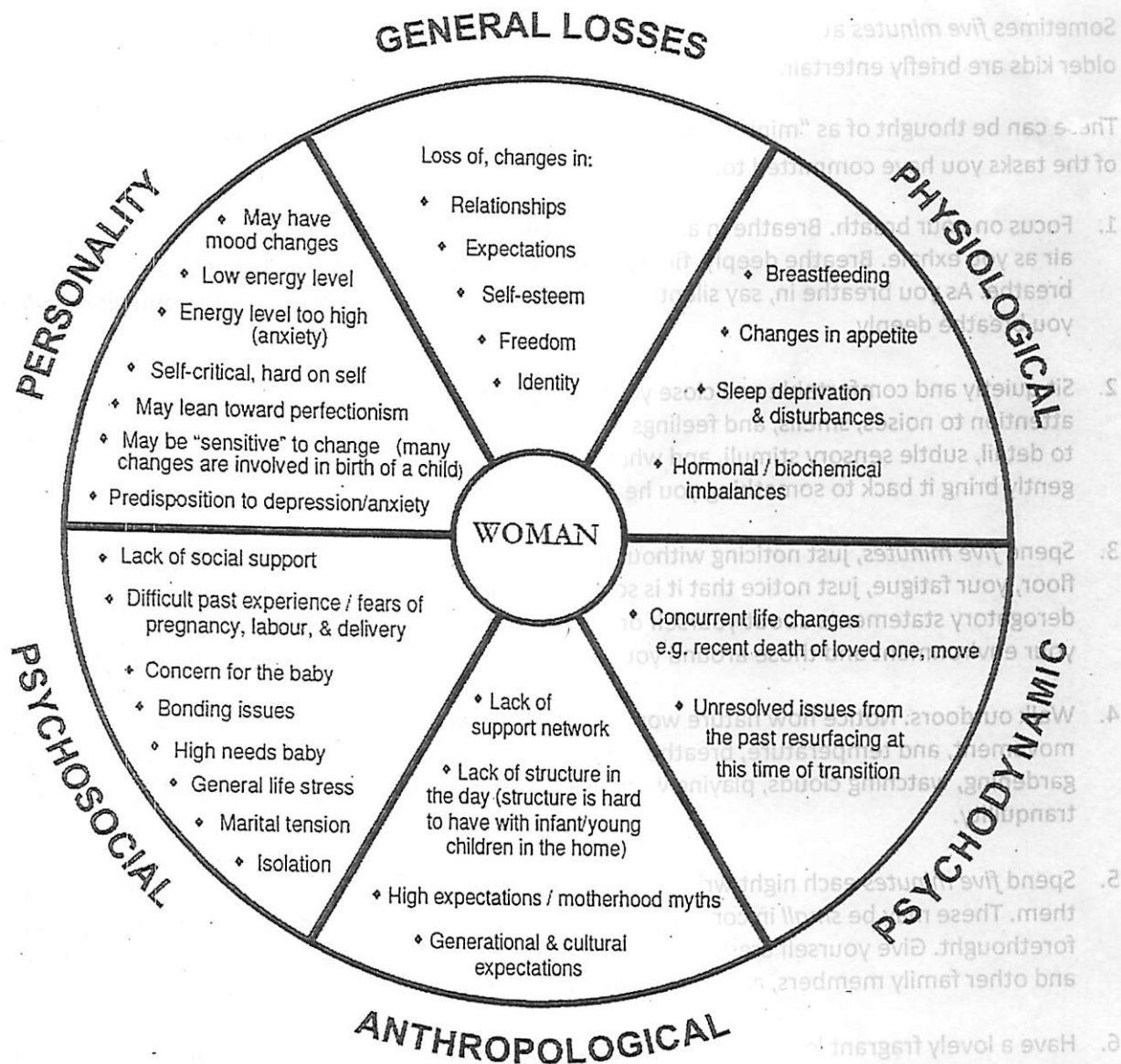
Pacific Post Partum Support Society

200 - 7342 Winston St, Burnaby, BC V5A 2H1 Canada

Telephone Support: 604-255-7999 www.postpartum.org

The Many Dimensions of Postpartum Depression*

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*For every woman, important contributing factors will vary.



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Seven 5-Minute Tips to Help New Mothers Relax and Rejuvenate

Sometimes *five minutes* at a time is all new mothers can find in their busy days, when the baby is sleepy or older kids are briefly entertained.

These can be thought of as “mini vacations” that you can return from more relaxed, and ready to take care of the tasks you have committed to:

1. Focus on your breath. Breathe in and feel how cool and dry the air is as compared to warmer, moister air as you exhale. Breathe deeply, filling your lungs from the bottom up. Let your abdomen move as you breathe. As you breathe in, say silently *re*, and as you exhale *lax*. Say silently to yourself *reee-laaax* as you breathe deeply.
2. Sit quietly and comfortable and close your eyes. After taking *five deep*, cleansing breaths, bring your attention to noises, smells, and feelings around you. What can you hear, smell, and feel? Pay attention to detail, subtle sensory stimuli, and what you might not usually notice, when your mind wanders, gently bring it back to something you hear, smell or feel.
3. Spend *five minutes*, just noticing without judgment, if you notice undone housework, clothes on the floor, your fatigue, just notice that it is so. Do not use *should*, *would*, *could*, *ought*, or any other derogatory statements about yourself or others. Detach yourself from the emotional judgment about your environment and those around you. Begin bringing this perspective into the rest of your day.
4. Walk outdoors. Notice how nature works effortlessly, without worry or anxiety. Notice the colours, movement, and temperature, breathe in the fresh air. Exhale completely. Be fully present. Watering, gardening, watching clouds, playing with pets or just watching leaves blow in the breeze creates tranquility.
5. Spend *five minutes* each night writing down things that you accomplished, giving yourself credit for them. These may be *small* in comparison to *life before the baby*, but now take effort, focus, and forethought. Give yourself credit for healthy food you have eaten, quality time you spent with your baby and other family members, and relaxation time you have taken during your day.
6. Have a lovely fragrant lotion, the more decadent the better, to give yourself a *five-minute* hand or foot massage. Feel the softness, smell the fragrance, bring your attention to the muscles relaxing as you massage the lotion into your skin.
7. When driving, listen to positive, self-confidence building tapes, or CD's. Feed yourself emotionally by what you listen to. Avoid angry and hostile talk shows or personal acquaintances. Notice if what you are listening to builds you up or tears you or someone else down. Surround yourself with genuine and positive-attitude people, who encourage you.

FROM: Dr. Lois Nightingale, author of *A Quiet Time for New Mothers, Ways to Relax and Rejuvenate*, 1999 ISBN # 1-889755-28-1, and *Overcoming Postpartum Depression, A Doctor's Own Story*, 1998 ISBN # 1-889755-25-7



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What Helps?

- Being gentle with yourself
- Nurturing yourself
- Getting breaks away from child/children
- Finding ways to take care of yourself while with children
- Developing a support system – safety net, friends, family, professionals, support group
- Accepting and talking about painful feelings ie: grieving losses, dealing with anger
- Journaling – writing about your feelings, tearing it up if you don't want anyone else to read it or keeping it to keep a record of your recovery process
- Getting support and help in order to cope with suicidal thoughts and feelings
- Taking note of the good feelings
- Acknowledging and validating what you are getting done as opposed to what is left to do
- Physical exercise
- Relaxation techniques i.e., breathing exercises, relaxation tapes, yoga
- Getting in touch with what your needs are as a new mom
- Asking for help
- Getting in touch with what you like to do
- Eating nutritiously
- Realistic expectations
- Sleep
- Talk to your doctor or ask for a referral to a psychiatrist; medication if necessary



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Self-Test: Do You Take Care of Yourself?

Answer “yes” or “no” to the following questions:

1. Do you take time to have a leisurely bath or shower?
2. Do you take time to brush your teeth?
3. Do you have three distinct meals a day?
4. Do you sit down during those meals?
5. Do you eat without a child or baby on your lap?
6. Do you rest or nap while your child/children nap?
7. When your partner or friend offers to help, do you accept?
8. Do you ask for help when you need it?
9. Do you have someone watch your child / children so you can go out and do something you really enjoy?
10. Do you allow yourself to sit without worrying about all the work that needs doing?
11. Do you talk to friends (not about their problems)?
12. Do you buy things for yourself, not just for the baby/children?
13. Do you read a magazine or book, *just* for pleasure?
14. Do you say yes or no to sex because that's what *you* want?

If you have a low number of “YES” answers, you may want to look at how you take care of yourself. This is not meant to be a “Should-Do List”, it is just food for thought.