



A Case Study: Depression among Stay at Home Career Oriented Mothers in Pakistan

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Abstract: This study presents a case of career-oriented full-time stay-at-home mothers who suffered from the transition from career to a housewife and then again from housewife to career. Verbatim of her case. Reasons and Impact on Psychological well being are presented. Coping strategies are highlighted.

Keywords: Depression, mothers, stay at home, Pakistan, career .

1. Introduction:

Depression (major depressive disorder) is a widespread and significant medical condition that has a negative impact on how you feel, think, and behave. It is also, thankfully, treatable. Depression produces unhappiness and/or a loss of interest in previously appreciated activities. It can cause a number of mental and physical issues, as well as a reduction in your capacity to operate at work and at home. Depression Symptoms can range from mild to severe and include the following: Having a melancholy mood or feeling sad, Loss of interest or pleasure in previously appreciated activities, Appetite changes — weight loss or increase that is unrelated to dieting, Inability to sleep or excessive sleeping, Excessive worry or a loss of energy, An increase in unintentional physical activity. (Ustun TN, 2000). For a diagnosis of depression, symptoms must endure at least two weeks and show a change in your previous level of functioning.

In any given year, depression affects about one in every 15 persons (6.7 percent). One out of every six persons (16.6%) will suffer from depression at some point in their lives. Depression can strike at any age, but it is most common in late adolescence and early adulthood. Women are more prone to suffer from depression than males. According to some research, one-third of women will have a significant depressive episode over their lives. When first-degree relatives (parents/children/siblings) suffer from depression, there is a high degree of heritability (about 40%). (Lancet, 2015)

Toddlers are children between the ages of one and three, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). According to some, once your child reaches the age of one, they are automatically promoted to toddlerhood. Activity level refers to the amount of physical motion your children have while doing activities. Some children seem to be born with a lot of energy. In fact, often in utero, they demonstrate high activity with lots of kicking and moving. Growing up, these children run, jump, and climb a lot.

Whereas stay at home mothers level of energy doesn't match with the toddlers because of a lot of responsibilities on a mother and a hectic schedule.

1.2 Case study:

I am 31 years old career oriented women. I went through a tough time there was time when I used to feel like that I don't love my kids. Actually I was and I am crazy about them. I gave birth by c section. I badly loves them but I used to get tired, I became exhausted, I felt like I am a failure. I always try to give my full time to my toddlers but there were times when I used to feel headache and depression because I couldn't take care of myself, I couldn't find time for myself, to change my dress, to do little makeup, to listen music calmly and to relax. I used to feel like my all friends are ahead and progressing but I am deteriorating and wasting my self. I wanted to work. I felt like I am a frustrated wife who all time shouts at kids or can become angry easily seemed like tears were all the time ready to come out of my eyes. In the past, even though I feel that I've trudged my way like a full time stay at home mother. There was always a depressive mode on no one could understand people used to think that I am pretending or being ungrateful. But only I knew the love for my kids in my heart only thing was I didn't wanted to waste myself like that.

I liked to dress up to look pretty to spend some quality time with myself like me time. To go to park to have lunch with friends I couldn't stand by staying all-time home and doing house chores and managing kids. I wanted a babysitter for only 1-2 hours so that I could take break and come back with more energies but unfortunately there was no one to understand.

I have struggled almost 4 years and I have juggled being a mother of two toddlers with a 2years of age gap between them But then I enrolled my kids to Montessori and I got a break I started my career. Every day I dress up, I take care of myself I go to work I am performing well and now I feel I become a good mother I don't get angry on my kids they are happy because they have a routine to follow and place to burn their energies in play and physical activities along with their age fellows and we spent quality time.

1.3. Causes of depression among stay at home mothers:

2.1 There is no break:

Stay at home mothers gets into depression because they don't get time for themselves coz they are busy in taking care of their family. Depression among stay at home mothers is real and is as critical like postpartum depression. It si accompanied by external factors Even for women who never suffered from depression, the transition to at-home parenting may be especially hard for mothers who had careers before having children. The loss of the identity and self-worth a woman's career provided to her is real, and loss is a trigger, says Susan Silver, a psychotherapist in Illinois. "When we think about loss, we usually think about death or divorce, but any major change can be a source of depression," she says.

2.2 The actual job is very demanding:

She has to look after home, family, house chores including laundry, ironing of dresses, cooking, taking care of each of family member and then again feeding everyone 3 times and other than if someone gets hungry she has to provide food. In this whole routine she don't find time for herself actually which makes her frustrated.

2.3 Choice is just an illusion:

Everyone around says she is a house wife by choice. She is wasting her degree her education.no one sees that she is raising her kids. If she gets any support she would love to peruse her career.

1.4 Coping strategies/Recommendations:

There are few things full time mother can do to ease her depression and boost her self-esteem:

1. **Make plans.** Schedule you whole day add an activity of a walk or a park so that where you can interact with other mothers and you can do catharsis, your kids will find playmates for themselves and you will get a positive change.
2. **Don't forget you passion:** What makes you happy think about that you're your dream chart imagine yourself where you want to be in future role. Start working for that slowly step by step keeping in mind slow and steady wins the race.
3. **Lower down social media usage.** The time you spend on phone by scrolling down that increases your anxiety and stress try to listen scholars and watch videos of your interest for learning purpose so that at the end of each video you should learn something every day.
4. **Make a journal:** develop habit of writing what else you feel stat journaling that in your personal journal express everything at the end of the talk your solution will come up in your mind and you will be surprised.in simple journal is your best friend.
5. **Meet up with friends:** contact to the friends whom company you enjoy and hang out with them for a lunch or for a walk ask your partner during that time he has to baby sit kids. At first it will be hard but gradually everyone will be use to of it.
6. **Meditate.** "Meditation is the most important key to relax your mind and release depressive thoughts and makes you feel fresh as much you are stressful as much you need to meditate.

Discussion:

Whereas when a mother is at home full time mom she has to do a lot of work at home including house chores cleaning dusting cooking washing grocery managing toddlers feeding them changing them cleaning them she is the one who has to manage all these things but toddlers wants full time attention because their energy level is very high as compared to mother toddlers have to play and pampered whereas mothers have couple of things and tasks to perform.

This is how when energy level of mother and child doesn't matches child throws tantrums because he is not getting sufficient amount of attention and already exhausted mother cannot meet the needs as child wants. If she manages to keep her energy levels high she gives quality time engages toddlers but still toddlers energy is high so she gets tired but a toddler will not here conflict among energy levels occurs and when mother cannot manages it leads her to stress and depression latterly. Putting a pressure on stay at home mothers for being ungrateful is the message they mostly get instead of there is a need to understand that depression among stay at home mothers with toddlers is very common and as much prominent as postpartum depression we need to understand this. There are few self-help strategies mentioned in 1.4 which can be used as a self-help techniques for a depressed mother.

Future research directions:

There is a strong need of a society to understand about the seriousness of stay at home mother's depression. There should be further researches and there is a need to work in this issue to spread awareness and about its importance

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