

Jennifer Mudd
Houghtaling



Postpartum
Depression
Foundation

The Hard Truth about Postpartum Depression

In 2001, Jennifer Mudd Houghtaling lost her battle with postpartum depression. In the weeks leading to her death, and the several years since, those who loved Jennifer have learned some hard truths.

First, Jennifer's fate was far from unique. One in ten mothers experiences postpartum depression. One in a thousand new mothers suffers from postpartum psychosis.

Second, while properly diagnosed postpartum depression can be treated, and most properly treated victims recover, proper diagnosis and treatment happens far too rarely. Why? Because many health care professionals have received no training in the diagnosis and treatment of postpartum depression. Because new mothers and their families haven't heard of postpartum depression and don't know the signs that distinguish this horrific disease from the "baby blues." Because hospitals, clinics and medical practices do not offer screening tests or establish and follow protocols to diagnose and treat the disease.

The Jennifer Mudd Houghtaling Postpartum Depression Foundation was established in 2004 to educate health care providers and the public about the symptoms, dangers and treatments for postpartum depression and creating and to promote effective screening and rapid response treatments for mental health complications associated with childbearing.

The Foundation's programs fall into three categories. Our work to educate the public focuses on using multiple resources to get clear and useful information about postpartum depression to pregnant women, new mothers and their families. Our programs to educate health care providers include promoting and supporting training and educational opportunities about postpartum depression for health care professionals working with pregnant women and new mothers. To encourage better care, the Foundation introduced treatment programs and helps health care providers institute effective programs within their institutions or practices.

Every new mother ought to be screened for postpartum depression. Every woman suffering from symptoms of postpartum depression should receive professional, effective treatment following established best practices protocols. The Jennifer Houghtaling Postpartum Depression Foundation is working hard to make sure women suffering from postpartum depression get the treatment they need.