

Transcript of Video: Mental Health and Pregnancy - After Childbirth: Your Fourth Trimester

Kara King, MD:

I always say only in labor and delivery is someone in the hospital expected to go through a huge procedure or surgery and actually have a baby and then expected to recover as well as take care of another human.

Cathy:

Now I realize that I really wasn't caring for myself for the first few months. I was just kind of in a survival mode with keeping my son alive and hoping that he just, you know, he feels loved.

Marnie:

We don't always know or think about the impact to birth.

I mean, it is it is one of the most intense experiences that a woman's body can go through. And, you know, for me, I don't think I gave myself enough time and space to heal from that.

Emma Reyes-Ramirez:

So the period after you have your baby, the first three months, we call it the fourth trimester, and that's a period of a lot of adjustment.

You're also healing physically from having had the baby. It's the adjustment for your body and your brain and having this new baby at home.

You're also quite sleep-deprived in those first three months. And that can really cause some affect to your mental health.

Kourtney:

The first few weeks after bringing the twins home, now I look back at it as comical, but it was sheer shock. My husband and I were looking at these two babies and really, as first time parents, we had no idea what we were doing. So taking all of the information you get from the hospital and even being a nurse, it was overwhelming.

You know, your body is changing almost daily at that point.

You're also really hungry. You're also, you know, tending to your children and you don't feel very attractive at all.

Marnie:

And I think the biggest thing playing out for me was this undercurrent of, is this how it's going to be now? Is this my life now? Because when you're in it, it feels like it's your new forever.

And for a lot of people, those early days and weeks and even months, it's a lot of work. It's not this joyful time. And so that felt a little unbearable for me.

Cathy:

Whatever you're feeling, just talk to someone. If you're down, you know, get the help that you need. Ask for help. It will get better.

Kara King, MD:

Not everyone has a support person living in the home with them. That's quite common. But the essential thing to do is to ask for help.

Simple things like helping with laundry, maybe dropping off or taking an older sibling to school, cooking for you, giving you a bit of time so that you can take a walk around the block and watch the baby for a little bit. Just little pieces of help can add up to great support during this tough time.

Cathy:

If something doesn't feel right, speak about it. You know, talk.

Kourtney:

And if you can hold on to the positive moments and the victories and the wins, even if they are infrequent, do that as much as you can, because when you look back, you're going to be proud of yourself for surviving a challenging time.

But, if nothing else, this too will pass.

And to always try to find a little bit of you, even when the journey and the season is hard.