



## About Pacific Post Partum Support Society

Our mission is to end the isolation and distress experienced by many women and their families with the profound life change that accompanies the birth or adoption of a child.

Our Society was born in 1971 when a group of women started meeting at the Vancouver Crisis Line offices to share postpartum experiences and offer peer support to one another. Our postpartum depression/anxiety support services include: free telephone support; support groups; interactive community talks; perinatal support worker training; couples sessions; and our website, publications, and other resources.

## About Postpartum Depression and Anxiety

An estimated 1 in 6 women experiences depression or anxiety with the birth or adoption of a child. Referred to as perinatal or postpartum depression or anxiety, this condition, if untreated, can compromise the vital mother-child bond and jeopardize both mother and child's future health and development.

### Robin's story

**Two weeks after her "really lovely birth", Robin's daughter was diagnosed with a serious heart condition. With her partner working long hours, and no family nearby, Robin was left mostly on her own with her toddler son, her newborn, and a constant stream of medical appointments...**

"I realized I couldn't even do daily things like getting up. And the slightest things were completely overwhelming. And I wasn't sleeping because I was afraid. I was continuously checking to make sure my daughter was ok, that she was breathing, that her heart wasn't racing. And so I just stopped functioning completely."

After four months spent in "survival mode", **Robin realized she needed help. As a birth worker familiar with PPPSS, she made an important call:**

It was almost like I'd reached a crisis point and that was when I called the Pacific Post Partum Society.

I'd had a day when I was just crying and nothing was working. I couldn't even get myself up. So I just picked up the phone and I made a call.

Talking about how I was feeling for the first time, things changed in that moment. I hadn't talked about it at all. None of it. I hadn't talked about being afraid of things that might happen to my children. I hadn't even talked about how isolated I'd felt. I had never spoken of the struggles that I was having. So the minute that I started talking about that, I feel like that was the beginning of it.

**Robin joined one of PPPSS's weekly support groups that included childcare.**

I definitely can say that all of my healing started with the Pacific Post Partum Society. All of it started with that, because it was sitting in a room with other women who told stories that were similar to mine. And then, with the support group, having time to myself with two hands, sitting with a cup of tea, was like a moment of self-care that I hadn't

had in months and months. And being able to hear other women tell their stories. And each story was different, but inside of each woman's story was a piece of my story. And so hearing those stories being told, I didn't even have to talk about those things. I

started feeling better in those moments.

No one specifically said, you know: you need to do this to get better. But it was: you can do things to get better. Within the group it was just the idea that I was responsible for me, and my own healing, and that I had the power within myself to do that; to take the steps that I needed to do. That I was strong enough, that I could do it.



*Robin now lives on Vancouver Island with her partner and her two children*

### We need funds to provide our core services

Pacific Post Partum Support Society is currently experiencing severe financial difficulties. We are very concerned that some of the critical core services we offer may be in jeopardy due to a partial funding withdrawal. Please consider making a donation to PPPSS today so we can reach our goal of \$45,000 for women throughout BC to continue to receive the excellent level of service we provide. Donations gratefully accepted on [CanadaHelps.org](http://CanadaHelps.org)

## Accomplishments

**Calls increased from 3,688 to 4,491!**

**162 new mothers overall (40 more than last year) joined eight facilitated support groups** in North Vancouver, Vancouver Westside, Port Coquitlam, Richmond, Vancouver Day (Eastside), Vancouver downtown, Burnaby, and Cloverdale. 111 children (30 more than last year) received childcare at these groups.

**Our two new facilitated postpartum support groups starting fall 2012** provided new mothers with a safe and convenient place to receive support and childcare, and develop self-help strategies. With our current funding situation, however, we have closed two of our eight area support groups.

**117 Mother & Baby talks** informed 1,423 new parents about postpartum depression and anxiety (almost 50 more parents than last year).

450 of our telephone calls helped those in remote areas – a threefold increase. We assisted many people in the Interior, Northern, and Vancouver Island Health Authority regions. We also supported people in Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia.

**Multicultural training and counselling** 33 participants – including midwives, doulas, therapists, public health nurses, family support workers, social workers, past clients, community volunteers, and mothers - completed the first stage of multicultural postpartum support training, and 15 of them did follow-up training to volunteer at PPPSS. Participants went back to their home agencies with a solid knowledge about perinatal distress and means of support, including possible resources and other agencies. Thanks to Vancouver Foundation and Richmond Public Health for support.

We are now able to provide front line support services to women and their families in EIGHT languages in addition to English: Cantonese, Mandarin, Hebrew, Japanese, Russian, Spanish, Farsi and Punjabi.

**100 participants from community agencies attended seven two-hour educational workshops offered in Lower Mainland locations.**

**128 participants attended three two-day postpartum support training sessions for BC communities.**

We conducted a two-day perinatal support training session in November for Conception Bay Family Resource Program Inc. in Newfoundland and Labrador. This is the first group in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador that is dedicated to the support of mothers in the postpartum period who may be struggling with depression or anxiety. This event took place with the financial assistance of Bell Let's Talk Mental Health Foundation.

We congratulate the 18 participants who completed the eight-week cognitive behavioural skills sessions by phone. One participant has stated, "I always thought I would be like this forever (depressed and anxious), that my personality was flawed. Now I have tools to help me cope with it so I can enjoy my life and my family." This initiative was funded by Canada Post Foundation for Mental Health, Vancouver Foundation, and Hamber Foundation. Special thanks to Dr. Nicole Dorfan for her contribution to our program.

24 women and their partners attended two couples sessions. Thank you to Dr. Michal Regev, registered psychologist and marriage and family therapist, who facilitated.

## Upcoming Events

**Maternity Fashion Show:** Save the date! Sunday, May 4th, 2014 1-4 pm. It's all about Moms at this fun and informative event in support of Pacific Post Partum Support Society. Fashion historian Ivan Sayers will take us on a tour of 20th century maternity fashion. As a bonus, the event will take place at Hycroft, the always charming home of the University Women's Club. More details will be available in the new year.

### **Integrated Primary and Community Care Project with Vancouver Coastal Health:**

We worked throughout 2013 to create new resources to support families experiencing a difficult adjustment to parenthood in this grant-funded project. From what we learned in focus groups, we are creating new culturally appropriate print brochures and web pages in Chinese, Farsi, Punjabi and Spanish. We are also creating new English-language website content, such as a section for men experiencing their own PPD/A, to add to our now mobile-device-friendly website. In Summer 2013 we filmed candid and moving interviews with some of our wonderful alumni moms and dads. We are now creating video segments of these interviews, which will be featured on our website as well as used in trainings, community talks, and as part of our daily work with struggling parents. These honest and hopeful videos are designed to reduce the stigma of perinatal mental health conditions by providing face-to-face time with real people who have emerged on the other side; thus encouraging parents to seek help by providing hope of recovery, as well as encouraging those around them to have compassion and provide support. Working with our community partners, we will provide this valuable information to the families who need it, and to the health care providers who serve them, starting early spring 2014.

## News

**Thank you to Board Director Heather Campbell for organizing our annual Celebration of Mothers Tea in May 2013.**

### **We welcome the following to PPPSS:**

Two volunteer trainee counsellors have joined us in the past year:

**Kelly Kuerbig** and **Anna Chambers.**

**Katya Sivak** and **Mary Chaisson** have joined our Board of Directors.



Thanks to Tracy Schjelderup, the Stella & Dot representative who arranged a trunk show/fundraising event at the Wired Monk in South Surrey, in November 2013.

Thanks to Kristy Hill for her Pampered Chef fundraiser for PPPSS this summer!

## Thanks & Acknowledgments

The board and staff members at Pacific Post Partum Support Society would like to thank our volunteers, members, and funders for their continued commitment to our mission and programs.

### We gratefully acknowledge financial support from:

The Province of British Columbia  
Vancouver Coastal Health  
Vancouver Coastal Health – Richmond  
Fraser Health Authority  
City of Vancouver  
City of Richmond  
City & District of North Vancouver  
Soroptomist International of the TriCities  
Shoppers Drug Mart Life Foundation  
Surrey Cares  
City of Surrey  
Vancouver Foundation  
Canada Post Foundation for Mental Health  
Green Shield Community Giving Program  
Bell Let's Talk Mental Health Foundation  
F.K. Morrow  
Bayer Inc.  
West Vancouver Community Foundation  
The Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation

Burnaby Family Life  
City of Burnaby Cuddle Program  
John Braithwaite Community Centre  
Cloverdale Public Health Unit  
Surrey Healthiest Babies Possible  
Tri-Cities East Neighbourhood House  
Richmond Garratt Wellness Centre  
Westside Family Place, Vancouver  
10th Avenue Alliance Church  
Robert Lee YMCA, Vancouver

[www.postpartum.org](http://www.postpartum.org)

PPPSS 2013-14 membership form



### Please consider becoming a monthly donor!

Monthly gifts allow us to plan ahead, knowing that we have a reliable and consistent source of revenue.

Your monthly gift will go a long way to ensure we can answer every support call.

Online donations and monthly gifts are managed by [CanadaHelps.org](http://CanadaHelps.org). We also gladly accept donations mailed to our office address.

**A gift of \$85 ensures one day of telephone and e-mail support**

**A gift of \$450 ensures one week of telephone and e-mail support**

We believe that when we nurture the mother, we nurture the whole family.

*"I always felt 100% better after our conversations. I feel very lucky to have had your support and guidance. I spoke to many of the [counsellors] there and I really felt the care and compassion they all had. Responding to my challenges in a non-judgemental, non-critical way was so foreign and really opened up my eyes. I will never forget what you have done for me and I thank you from the bottom of my heart."*

*"[The counsellor I spoke with] was so understanding and nurturing and it was such a relief to feel validated and to have her empathy. It was a true turning point and prompted the beginning of the recovery."*

*"The calls I received kept my family intact, safe and loved dearly. Even when I missed a call, hearing your messages made my day. Not in a million years could I convey in person or writing, the practical and emotional help you provided me. Having no supports, my family greatly benefited by me accessing your services."*

## Evaluations & Testimonials

We are always interested in hearing and sharing your stories of recovery, which make persuasive and compelling evidence of change. If you are a past client, please return your completed evaluation forms, and/or consider submitting a testimonial about your recovery from postpartum depression or anxiety. All letters or emails of support sent to PPPSS are kept anonymous. Please e-mail [admin@postpartum.org](mailto:admin@postpartum.org) if you need more information.

## Holiday wishes

**We warmly wish all our readers the very best of the holiday season and a healthy 2014! Please take some extra time for self-care during the weeks ahead.**

**Toll-free Support Line 1-855-255-7999**

Support Line in Lower Mainland 604-255-7999

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