

Prof Cheryl Beck's PTSD Study

"GIVING MOTHERS A VOICE" thus far on her research project with 23 mothers telling their stories and answering the question **"WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE EXPERIENCE OF PTSD AFTER CHILDBIRTH FOR MOTHERS?"**

10 months into the data collection: Once informed consent was obtained, each mother was asked to write, via the internet, her story of PTSD after childbirth: To describe in detail their (1) birth trauma, (2) experience of PTSD after childbirth, and (3) how it has affected their lives and those of their families. Phenomenology is a descriptive inductive research method that seeks to discover the meaning of human experiences through analysis of participants' descriptions of the phenomenon under study.

"PTSD is like a loaded freight train coming at you all day long and you are trying to keep it on track and not let it run you over" "It has ripped a hole in the core of my being. No matter how carefully I am healed, there will be a scar on my heart, a line of weakness in much the same way as the scar on my uterus is a weakness" "It has taken a couple of months to get my story out, but it's been a very therapeutic exercise doing so." "I feel by writing about it, my story is outside me and not inside filling me up with anxiety."

"Every little story helps to bring the issues and concerns of PTSD sufferers out into the open, my story can help make a difference in other women's lives." "Writing this feels much healthier – trying to work towards educating others about this experience and learning that I haven't gone crazy." "It is such a relief to know that I am not the only one that this has happened to."

Parts of the presentation..

Birth Trauma related to:

Infant Death, Emergency Cesarean delivery/fetal distress - Cardiac arrest, Incompetent medical care, Congenital Anomalies, Fear of epidural, Inadequate Pain Relief, Postpartum hemorrhage/manual removal of placenta, Forceps/vacuum extraction/skull fracture, Separation from infant in NICU, Toxemia/Premature birth, Degrading Experience.

Birth Trauma: The Battlefield

1. To Care for Me: Was That Too Much To Ask?
2. To Communicate with Me: Why Was This Neglected?
3. To Provide Competent Care: You Betrayed My Trust and I Felt Powerless.

Birth Trauma: The Aftermath

1. Going to the Movies: Please Don't Make Me Go!
2. Terrorized by Nightmares and Flashbacks: Can't Sleep, Can't Eat.
3. A Shadow of Myself: Too Numb to Try to Change.
4. Anger, Anxiety and Depression: Spiraling Downward.
5. Obsessed: Wanting to Know More and wanting to Talk, Talk, Talk.
6. Isolation from the World of Motherhood: Dreams Shattered.

For those wishing to link into this study, write direct to: Cheryl Tatano Beck, University of Connecticut, School of Nursing, 231 Glenbrook Rd, U-26, Storrs, CT 06269-2026 (860)486-0547 Or email: cbeck@uconnvm.uconn.edu or via Sue at TABS ptsdtabs@ihug.co.nz