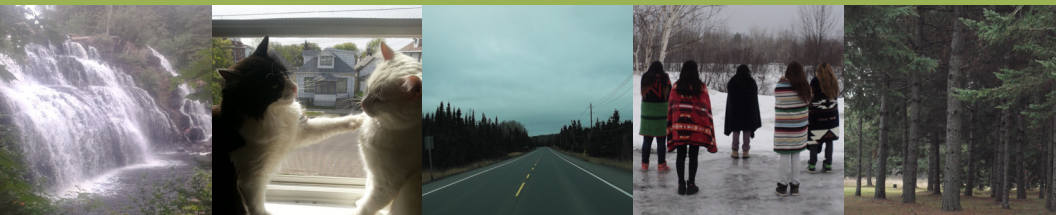




NORTHERN ONTARIO POSTPARTUM MOOD DISORDER PROJECT PHOTOVOICE



“ I think the biggest misconception that people have about PPMD is that you should just get over it, or that it is not even a real thing. I really want that message to change. I want mothers, and especially the supports that she has in her life, to know that their feelings are valid and that they are not alone. ”

Nicole - Photovoice participant

ABOUT PHOTOVOICE

5 women from across Northern Ontario, who had experienced Postpartum Mood Disorders, participated in this Photovoice Project. Each woman was provided a camera and asked to take pictures that represented their experience, to give voice to this issue, through their photographs. The women answered the questions:

- How did you know you were experiencing PPMD?
- What helped you?
- What did you need? and
- What would you like others to know?

They have shared their experiences so that we may have a better understanding of PPMD, the pain and the hope. Above all these women have bravely shared their wisdom in order to make a difference.



FAMILY TREE

“I was addicted to substances before, during, and after my pregnancy. Throughout that time, I distanced myself from my family. I felt ashamed of who I became. What I should have done was ask them for help. I needed my family. I needed to know that I was loved and cared about by the ones who were there for me my whole life. I am the trunk of this tree and am surrounded by a loving and caring family, the leaves.”

- Melissa

MY WORLD IS CRASHING

“What is supposed to be the best days of my life, having this child, became a world of loneliness for me. This waterfall represents the overwhelming feelings and emotions I was experiencing after I had my son.”

- Melissa





ROCKY LIFE, FOGGY MIND

“I self medicated throughout my symptoms of postpartum. The rocks in this picture represent the unstableness of my life. The fog depicts the unrealistic and unclear thoughts I had.”

- Melissa

HAVE HOPE

- Melissa



HOPE



WEIGHTED DOWN

“I am the fence and felt the weight of everything on me...
starting to weigh me down.”

- Kim

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

“So many women face the same challenges with PPMD.
Stand tall and strong...you are not alone!”

- *Kim*





LOOK AHEAD

“I feel like I am in the shadow
but have such hope to look forward to.”

- Kim

LONG ROAD

“Getting past the anxiety takes time.
Look forward to the blue sky at the end...there is hope.”

- Kim





EMPTY FOG

“Like the foggy coffee cup in the picture, I knew that things were not normal when I was just going through life in a fog. After my baby was born I did not feel the immense joy, or the immediate connection, that mothers were supposed to feel. I just felt empty, literally because he was no longer safe inside my womb, and symbolically because I felt no real emotions. I felt as though this new being had completely drained me of energy, emotions, and any real sense of being.”

- Nicole

SHUT OUT THE EXPECTATIONS

“As Mothers and a Women we have so many expectations imposed upon us. I tell myself that women have been having babies for thousands of years and that my instincts should therefore be enough to get me through motherhood, but I can’t shut out all the voices that are telling me different. I constantly look to others, books, and the internet, to tell me how to take care of my little one. I often get answers that I don’t want to hear and responses that just fuel my anxiety further. Constantly looking outward for approval for my mothering efforts only created more chaos and more stress in my life. If only I could have Shut Out Those Expectations, I know I could be a better mother to my son.”

- Nicole

WHAT TO EXPECT[®] ❖ THE FIRST YEAR MURKOFF

THE WOMANLY ART OF BREASTFEEDING
La Leche League[®] International



The BabyNames.com Guide
to Choosing the Best Name
for Your New Arrival

The One-in-a-Million
Baby Name Book

Jennifer Moss
and
BabyNames.com

From Pea to Pumpkin

MURRAY

the Most Popular Names and Creative Alternatives

OLD WIVES TIPS



STRAINED COMPASSION

“Relationships can be a battle while suffering with PPMD. PPMD is so hard to identify or explain. I knew that things were not right, but to explain it to someone else is not easy. Instead of explaining myself I would just explode my stress and anxiety on my husband or even my son. It became easier to just be angry and closed off to anything, rather than try and understand what I really needed. All my husband wanted to do was for me to tell him what I wanted him to do to help. He had so much compassion for me but I found it very hard to give that compassion back.”

- Nicole

SUN THROUGH THE CLOUDS

“So many people would tell me that things get better. But as I looked at them, exhausted from a baby who was very colicky and only slept an hour at a time, I could not see this. It is hard to acknowledge the “light” through the clouds when you are suffering with PPMD, but when those moments of light shine through you need to soak them up. It is those moments that keep me going.”

- Nicole





POSTPARTUM

“I found out that I had PPMD when my child was 4 months old. I’ve used my children’s toys to shape the number four. This plays into the postpartum realization that something wasn’t right.”

- *Michelle*

THE PEDESTAL

“My husband was the person I leaned on after having both kids, and going through this mood disorder. He was a great help to build my self-esteem back up again.”

- Michelle





CONNECTIONS

“Letting the people that are closest to you know what is happening, is the first step in reaching out. Connections with the right people can greatly impact your journey.”

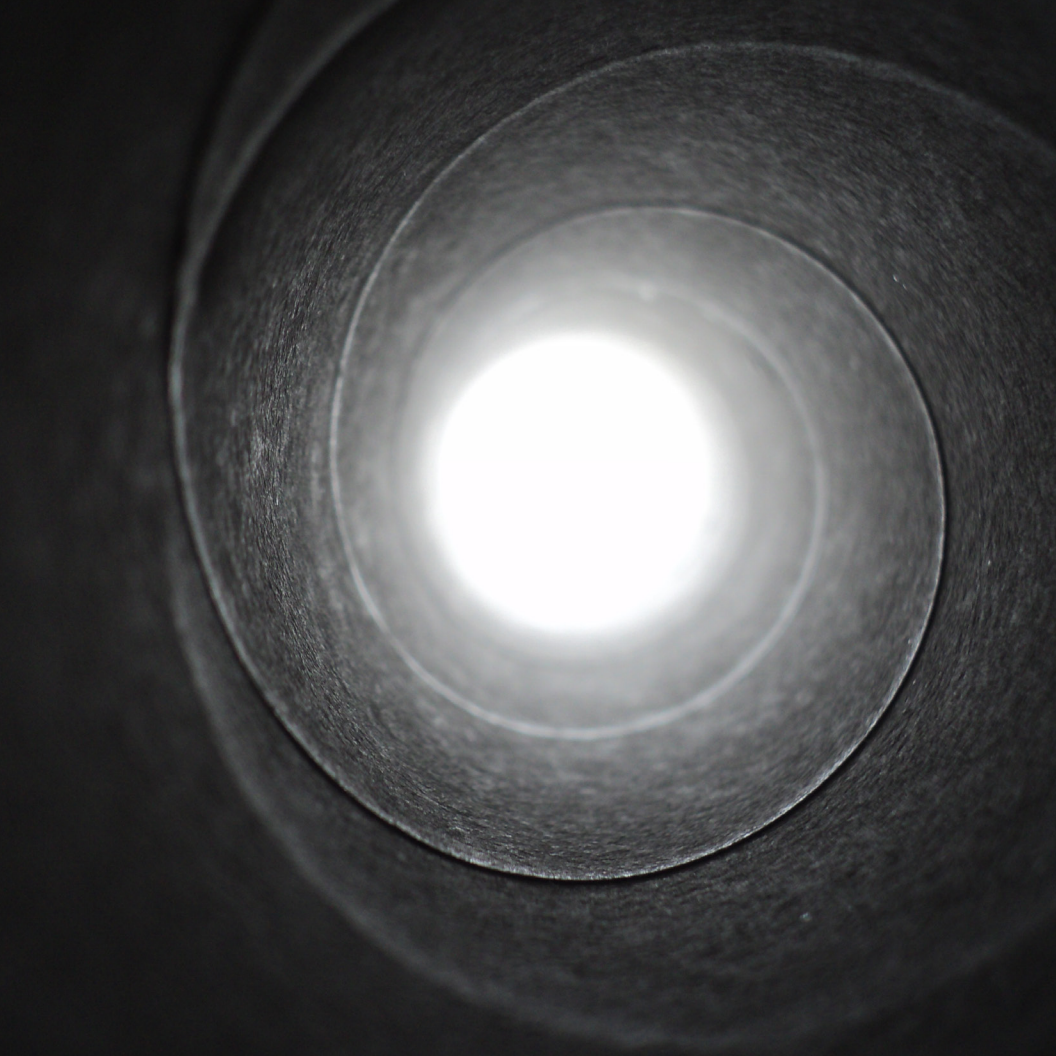
- Michelle

HOPE

“There is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Keeping your eye on your progress is key in being successful.”

- Michelle





BLANKETING MY EMOTIONS

“I knew there was something different because I was blanketing my emotions in all directions and feeling guilty about my darkest thoughts. I was afraid of those thoughts falling into action.

I was embarrassed by these thoughts because as Anishnabekwe we are life givers and protectors of life. Why would I feel this way or have these thoughts?”

- Niibaageezokwe

SAFETY NET

“More of a network would have improved my experience. I needed more of a safety net, more services, more transparent plans, overall more support.

The professional and medical service providers need to be more clear on safety plans, support services and referrals. They need to be more open to other options for care and support and provide appropriate follow up with the patient and their whole family.”

- Niibaageezokwe





IF THERE WERE MORE OF ME

“The thing that I would have found most helpful
is if there had been more of me.”

- Niibaageezokwe

EVERYONE HAS A HAND INVOLVED

“Everyone has a hand in the pregnancy. Everyone has a hand involved with bringing in a new life. Everyone is responsible.”

- Niibaageezokwe





NO VEHICLES
OR TRAILERS
ALLOWED
ON THIS BRIDGE
DURING
WINTER MONTHS
NOVEMBER 15
THROUGH
MARCH 15

NO VEHICLES
OR TRAILERS
ALLOWED
ON THIS BRIDGE
DURING
WINTER MONTHS
NOVEMBER 15
THROUGH
MARCH 15

BRIDGING THE GAP

“I would like others to know my experiences and my story.
I’d like to bridge the gap in knowledge.”

- Niibaageezokwe

WHAT HELPED?

“Having my traditional medicines and teachings was one of the things that I found most helpful.”

- Niibaageezokwe



PARTNERSHIPS

Through these partnerships we have worked together to engage and mobilize Northern Ontarians including First Nations, rural and urban populations, in the development of the Northern Ontario Postpartum Mood Disorders Strategy.

Community Counselling
Centre of Nipissing



Centre communautaire
de counselling du Nipissing



THUNDER BAY
COUNSELLING CENTRE
SOLUTIONS THAT CHANGE LIVES

RESOURCES

For more information on PPMD, visit:

www.ppmmd.ca

www.lifewithanewbaby.ca

For Mental Health support in Northern Ontario, visit:

www.talk4healing.com

www.mentalhealthhelpline.ca

If you or someone you know may be experiencing postpartum mood changes please contact your health care provider.

**For further information please contact
1-888-814-3327 or info@cccnip.com**

Support for the Postpartum Mood Disorder Project provided by:



An agency of the Government of Ontario.
Relève du gouvernement de l'Ontario.

www.ppmd.ca