

Profound

I was referred from a GP to the Mother to Mother support group at the same time I was diagnosed with PND. The group's facilitator contacted me within hours of my appointment with my GP. My diagnosis was taken seriously and I was so impressed by the speed in which the group facilitator offered support.

My world fell apart around me, I had been getting by and through without realising I was suffering from PND, almost a year after having given birth. It was a half-life with no joy; I no longer cared about anything. I just figured this is what it was like to be a parent and I had nothing to complain about. My own thought about PND was that it meant you had not bonded with your child. This was not my experience and so I dismissed PND as a possibility.

Within a week, I was at my first group, I had no expectations, and was open to see what the group was about. I was welcomed, I had a chance to listen to everyone's story and I was given the opportunity to share. I did, I felt in a safe environment immediately and I was surprised how emotional I became. It was a relief to be able to say anything and not be judged.

Over time, I bonded with the other women who in day-to-day life I may not have met. For me, it was a weekly group therapy session. It was wonderful that I could take my little chap with me and have volunteers that adored playing with all the children so us mums could have a cup of tea/coffee.

The group enabled me to fully understand PND and how it had affected me, how different it was for each woman and how mental health is real and so misunderstood by society.

Many women are suicidal while suffering with PND and I believe the weekly group helped many women make the decision to keep living. It has given us all HOPE that there is a way through this dreadful time in our lives. We had a future as did our children and it was worth hanging in there!

Some of the most frank, honest and painful discussions were had at this group; tears were normal as was laughter even in the darkest of moments.

My son is turning five in a few months' time. We have made a huge move by relocating and making a 'sea change' and we are happy. I am in the process of launching a new brand of certified organic skin care and I am proud to say I have created this business by myself from nothing. I found myself along with self-belief again, my new self that was now a parent.

I have good days and bad days too, but I have the knowledge to deal with mental health issues now and the ability to seek help if I need it. I have the wisdom to say it's ok to have a bad day, nothing is perfect and nothing is permanent.

I miss the group and the amazing women who each in their own way have helped me along on my own PND journey. Without knowing it at the time I truly feel we had a profound effect on each other's lives.

Without the group facilitator, I personally feel more women would have been lost to PND. For that reason alone, I am, and will be eternally grateful for my GP's referral to this group.