If I lose the baby weight, will I re-find myself?

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Why I do this work

“We can’t give it away unless we have it, but we can’t keep it unless we give it away.”

RecoveryMama.com

Overview

1. Similarities Between Recovery from an Eating Disorder and the Perinatal Period (Why it is a High Relapse time)

2. Markers of Eating Disorder Recovery that are Helpful to Solidify prior to Pregnancy

3. Media vs. Actual Experiences of a Mother’s Body (Guided meditation)

4. Postpartum Bellies as Doorways to Transformation
### 1. Similarities Between Early Recovery from an Eating Disorder and the Perinatal Period

#### Changes in Food

**Eating Disorder Recovery:**
- Increased food and/or “fear foods”
- New limits before during and after meals
- Medical issues such as Celiac/IBS/Diabetes

**Pregnancy/Postpartum:**
- Need for increased amounts of food
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Food cravings/foods to avoid
- Medical issues such as Gestational Diabet

Changes in weight are an inextricable part of the process of Eating Disorder Recovery as well as Pregnancy and Postpartum.
**Mood Disturbance**

**Eating Disorders:**
- 82% of eating disordered patients had a Mood Disorder in addition to their eating disorder.

**Pregnancy/Postpartum:**
- One in seven (or five) mothers has symptoms of PPD/PMAD’s.


**Changes in Hormones**

**Eating Disorders:**
- Hormones that stimulate ovulation can stop in anorexia.

**Pregnancy:**
- Menstruation is absent;
- Progesterone spikes from ten to a hundred times.

**Postpartum:**
- Estrogen and progesterone, drop precipitously.


**Sleep**

**Eating Disorders:**
- Difficulty falling asleep
- Getting to sleep without using ED
- Staying asleep/early morning wakening

**Postpartum:**
- Infant
- Hormonal factors that can affect a woman’s ability to sleep

The Importance of Support

PERFECTIONIST TEMPERAMENT

Danger of “SUPERMOM”

History of Abuse

Women recovering from eating disorders and women with a history of abuse have similar challenges during pregnancy and postpartum:
- Giving Birth
- Breast feeding
- Pregnancy and Postpartum Body Changes
- Shame sensitivity and danger of dissociation

Changes in Identity

Who am I without an Eating Disorder?

Who am I as a Mom?
(and who am I no longer?)
2. Markers of Eating Disorder Recovery that are Helpful to Solidify Prior to Pregnancy

If you are not an Eating Disorder Provider

- Consult with one
- Assume symptoms reported are worse
- For Ob Gyns: BLIND WEIGHT
- Use Screening tools (SCOFF, EDDS, EAT, EDI-3)

Markers of Eating Disorder Recovery (Physical)

- Weight is in “normal” range
- Abstinence from behaviors
- Medical stability

Hudson, J. et al. as reported in Eating Disorders Review: "BED: A chronic or temporary condition?" 2005, 166, 3
**Markers of Eating Disorder Recovery (Physical, continued):**

* Tolerance for natural shifts in weight/size/shape
* Separate physical from emotional hunger
* Moderate relationship with exercise
* Freedom from obsession

**Markers of Eating Disorder Recovery (Emotional):**

* Understand and resolve underlying issues
* Capacity to tolerate distress and regulate emotions
* Ability to reach out for, accept and sustain support

**Markers of Eating Disorder Recovery (Psychological):**

* Triggers can be identified.
* Recognize signs of relapse and seek appropriate help.
* Challenge Cognitive Distortions and Temperament risks
* Development of Identity not based on Eating Disorder
3. Media vs. actual experience of a mother’s body during pregnancy and postpartum

“The media is full of images of women’s bodies... but not these kinds of bodies.”

BBC World Service (Cordelia Hebblethwaite) *Are women's bodies still beautiful after pregnancy?* 15 July 2013

Looking good: Damned if you do; damned if you don’t.
The Desire for Control

Consumer culture readily supports the notion of postpartum body as an object in need of discipline...entire industries have emerged around the idea of remaking the postpartum body.

(Upton and Fux, 2003; Ogle, Tyner, Schofield-Tornachon, 2011.)

"Mothertucker"
"Mothertucker™is the ultimate compression tank!"

“Mommy-Makeovers”
(tummy tuck, breast enhancement, liposuction. Average Price: $12,325)

- tummy tucks up 85% since 2000;
- breast lifts, up 70% since 2000;
- breast augmentations, up 39% since 2000

(American Society of Plastic Surgeons, 2013)

Kids and Body Image

By age 6, girls start to express concerns about their weight/shape. 40-60% of girls aged 6-12 are concerned about “becoming too fat.”

(Smolak, 2011)
Be a mirror
Your child is watching. You are their mirror.

How to dress for your shape: Are you human-shaped? Play up your confidence and natural sex appeal by wearing whatever the fuck you want.

As the weather gets warmer: Continue to wear whatever the fuck you want. Flaunt everything or keep it cool undercover. Dress to make yourself feel good.

How to get a bikini body: Put a bikini on your body.

Body Image (Experiential meditation)

5. Postpartum bellies as doorways to transformation
Body image distress masks concern around new identity formation.

“Aesthetically problematic” vs. “Maternally Successful” fat

“I want my old self back.”

“My body just did something amazing!”

(Ogle, Tyner, Schefeld-T enam, 2011)

Most if not all women experience a sense of loss with respect to their pre-pregnancy bodies...
“Maternally successful”

“I’m incredibly impressed by what my body can do...I definitely am a little disappointed I don’t fit back into my jeans, and it definitely feels like a waterbed...I don’t look like a model, but I just gave birth, whatever.

(Ogle, Tyner, Schuffeldt-Krausha, 2011)

People Making a Difference

Jade Beall
"A Beautiful Body Project"

Taryn Brumfitt
“The Body Image Movement”

Ashlee Dean Wells and Laura Weetzie Wilson
4th Trimester Bodies Project

Angie Sonrode and family
Middrift Movement
Carrying babies, large, incredibly active babies...did a number on me...I stand in the mirror longing to adore what I see and trying to not end the sentence, “I am beautiful, but.....”.

This is where Mid Drift was born. The need to show mothers that you are not alone in your hormone addled struggles with your body. I want mothers to know that we see you and we love you. We stand side by jiggly side in solidarity.

Birth Markings (video clip)

Margaret Lazarus’ film “BirthMarkings” explores our post birth bodies—and how our self-image—changes after giving birth.

“The moment a child is born, the mother is also born. She never existed before. The woman existed, but the mother, never. A mother is something absolutely new.”

~Rajneesh Look