

#### IV. Blog Post from Personal Blog

A quick update: Okay here it is... Cooper is going to walk before he crawls. He's been trying to pull himself up on things recently, and he can stand while holding on to something. Up until yesterday, he was nowhere near crawling, but now he can hold himself on all fours and rock back and forth. I guess we'll have to wait and see which happens first. (*Fingers crossed for crawling...not sure if I'm prepared for running around just yet!*)

Cooper has crossed the half-a-year-old mark and will be in the single digits before I know it. He turned seven months yesterday. His baby babbles are sounding more like sentences, and he said his first word. It was 'Da-da'... (*Life's not fair sometimes.*) I can only imagine what his next word will be, but it better be a variation of 'mommy'!

Speaking of mommy, I want to touch on postpartum life. It's common knowledge that becoming a parent is not easy, and it can be especially difficult on the moms. Your body has just gone through an intense hormone and physical change, and your brain needs time to adjust as well. For me, my brain needs a little extra time.

I have gone through severe depression when I was a teenager, and it affected my life in many ways during the time. It's unfortunate that such an awful illness can follow you later into your life, even when you thought you were feeling much better! (*Depression can sometimes be hiding out and then poke its head whenever it's least convenient.*)

As an adult, depression has shown itself a few times here and there, but I've noticed it more since giving birth. Postpartum depression is extremely common in women, and even more

common for women who have experienced depression prior to having children. For me, the illness doesn't appear as a sad, bundled up, messy human living in their bed for days or weeks at a time. For me it looks more like a normal-functioning person, but with a brain weighed down with intimidating thoughts and a heavy heart. *(Add severe anxiety to the mix, and I really sound crazy.)*

I am able to function semi-normally. I am able to take care of my baby, to play with him, and keep him clean. I am able to work out, go to work, and partake in my hobbies. I am able to do everything I need to in order to live a balanced and healthy life. But my brain struggles with irrational thoughts and emotions.

As normal as it is for new moms, or any moms, to experience depression, it doesn't have to be looked over or downplayed. It is serious, no matter how common. You should find someone who you can talk to about how you're feeling, with no judgement. *(Funny enough, moms are good at that, too!)* If you can't afford a psychotherapist, try to talk with a close friend or family member. It sounds cliché because that's the most common advice you hear when struggling. But it's common because it works! And if you have absolutely no one, there are phone numbers you can text or call, and someone will always be available to listen.

I am blessed enough to have people in my life who listen without judgement. I also have my faith which helps me relieve stress. I do yoga every day which helps me clear my mind. There are ways you can help yourself when you are in a rut, and if nothing else, you can have a conversation with me!

I wanted to share part of my story because I'm hoping it will help another mom out there who may be feeling the same way. Not all mothers have dealt with depression and certainly not dealt with it in similar ways. It looks different for everyone. I have learned how to handle myself from struggling with it for so long, and that's a double-edged sword. I developed severe anxiety in 2012 after a major life-changing event in my life, and that is something I'm still working to control. No one is perfect. But our children need us in their lives. Don't ignore warning signs and you shouldn't feel embarrassed to talk about it.

I hope this post was inspiring for at least one person, and I always have an open ear to anyone who needs it! Here are some more open ears:

**Suicide prevention line:** 1-800-273-8255 / **Crisis text line:** Text HOME to 741741