



Canadian Anthology Chronicles Mental Health Struggles and Triumphs of Parents through Preconception, Pregnancy and the First Year

*New anthology, **You Are Not Alone**, aims to dispel stigma around prenatal and postnatal mental health and illness, providing hope and resources to expectant and new moms, and their families.*

January, 2022 - TORONTO, ON - Preparing for pregnancy and parenthood is something many people look forward to at a certain stage in their lives. But what happens when those plans and the preconceived notions we've grown up expecting of this special time in our lives don't play out like the rosy pink and blue storylines that our friends, family and media tell us it's going to be like? Especially when it's compounded by almost two years of isolation and fear?

'*You Are Not Alone*' is an anthology of perinatal mental health stories from conception to postpartum', chronicling dozens of true stories as told by 49 moms from across the 49th parallel. In it, parents recount the struggles and triumphs of motherhood and perinatal mental illness. It is the first anthology in Canada to feature real stories as well as chapters on the science of perinatal mental health from Canada's top leading doctors and researchers.

"This anthology is extremely timely," says editor and anthology creator, Patricia Tomasi. "Social isolation is a major contributing factor of postpartum depression and our hope is that these stories and this book will help moms know and feel that they are not alone, especially in light of the ongoing pandemic."

Whereas pre-pandemic, one in five women suffered from prenatal or postpartum anxiety and depression, [that number is now one in three](#).

Tomasi is the co-founder and executive director of the Canadian Perinatal Mental Health Collaborative (CPMHC) along with registered nurse and perinatal mood disorder coordinator, Jaime Charlebois.

"We received thousands of entries when the CPMHC first put out the call for stories in the Fall of 2021," says Charlebois. "That just speaks to the number of families struggling in Canada and their desire to be a lifeline for other moms."

The anthology also contains the stories of topics not often associated with perinatal mental illness including tokophobia (fear of childbirth), infertility, miscarriage, stillbirth, post-adoption depression, and paternal depression experienced by fathers and partners.

The book is divided into five parts: 1) Preconception, pregnancy and birth; 2) Postpartum depression and anxiety; 3) Postpartum anger; 4) Postpartum bipolar disorder and psychosis; and 5) The pandemic.

Suicide is a leading cause of maternal death and rates of perinatal mental illness are higher for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ people. In *'Sweet Baby Ada'*, Black mom, Candice Thomas of Barrie, Ontario shares her story of how she suffered from postpartum depression following the birth of her daughter during the pandemic:

'I've had days where I don't get out of bed. I cry for a few hours, and sometimes just putting my coat on to go outside for a walk seems like too much for me. I have to be strong for my daughters, but as the days go by, it's getting harder and harder.' - *Sweet Baby Ada* by Candice Thomas, pg. 279

In *'Worthy of Love'*, Indigenous mom, Stephanie George shares her story of postpartum anxiety and intergenerational trauma.

'We, as Indigenous women, are afraid to speak. Society, while making advances, still doesn't like hearing from us. Racism is rampant. We don't feel like we matter because we are told that. That also drives perinatal mental illness in our communities.' - *Worth of Love* by Stephanie George, pg. 126

You Are Not Alone can be purchased via [Amazon](#) or [Indigo](#).

For more information and resources to help and support expectant and new parents, please visit: <https://cpmhc.ca>

To speak with Patricia Tomasi, Jamie Charlebois or select contributors, or to obtain a media copy of the book, please contact:

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About CPMHC

The Canadian Perinatal Mental Health Collaborative is a non-profit organization working to improve perinatal mental health care in Canada. <https://cpmhc.ca>

About Patricia Tomasi

Patricia Tomasi is a mom of two who struggled to find help for perinatal mental illness. She is a former-journalist-turned-fierce-advocate who went from writing about the state of perinatal mental health in Canada as a reporter for HuffPost to lobbying the federal government for a national perinatal mental health strategy. She is the Co-founder, Executive Director, and Communications Director for the Canadian Perinatal Mental Health Collaborative and the founder of the cheeky Maternal Mental Health Matters Blog on motherhood, mental health, advocacy and her cat. Find her on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as she shares her day to day musings with over 16,000 followers. To help her and others find peer support while dealing with perinatal mental illness, Patricia started a private Facebook Postpartum Depression & Anxiety Support Group in 2017 where thousands of women from around the world support each other 24/7. Prior to her advocacy work, Patricia spent a decade providing communications and media relations expertise for the Ontario government and in addition to HuffPost, she also worked as a reporter for CTV and CBC news in Vancouver, Toronto, Timmins, and Thunder Bay.

