

Psycho-emotional Problems Of Young Mothers During The Pandemic

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Abstract: *Given the curtailment of social interactions and social bans due to the COVID 19 pandemic, this article highlights the needs that a young mother had during this time. Based on the results of my research during the pandemic, the consequences of social isolation and changes in the lives of new mothers can have serious psycho-emotional consequences, affecting their cognitive and socio-emotional development in the long term.*

Most of all, during this period, young mothers needed to be seen, listened to, understood, helped. They needed to feel that they are not going through this situation alone, that they are with parents, friends, other mothers like them, who face the same problems, who face the same fears, anxieties, worries, who have the same needs in this period. The research carried out by me between January and March 2022 consists of discussions with 75 young mothers whom I asked to tell me what they felt and what difficulties they felt during this period of the pandemic and her new status, that of mother. This revealed that their predominant moods were – fear, worry, sadness, Indifference from friends, loneliness and confidence.

Keywords: *COVID-19 pandemic, mental health, mothers.*

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1. Main text

The mothers I spoke with for this study are mothers who gave birth during the pandemic, when hospitals were subject to Covid-19 restrictions, a fact that influenced their emotional state as well as that of their families (Siliștraru et al., 2021). If until the establishment of the state of emergency, which led to the limitation of people's access to maternity hospitals, mothers made plans that they would be able to give birth hand in hand with their husbands/partners, walk through parks, welcome new grandparents and share the joy of birth with loved ones, now everything was different. Husbands/partners could lead their wives/partners to the entrance to the maternity ward where she was taken over by medical personnel and had to pass through a disinfection filter, then epidemiological triage, temperature measurement and Covid-19 testing which led to the increase mothers' anxiety state.

Between January and March 2022, I talked to 75 young mothers whom I asked to tell me what they felt and what difficulties they experienced during the pandemic.

Fear – 72%

Worry – 52%

Sadness – 35%

Indifference from friends – 42%

Loneliness – 54%

Trust – 5%

1.1. Structure

Observing the difficulties faced by mothers, I decided to help them by offering them the time, knowledge and all the resources I had at that time to intervene in support of these mothers through

- Individual therapy conducted online (one on one)
- Online therapy groups

1.2. Testimonies of mothers at the beginning of therapy sessions

"The biggest problem for me, as a new mother, during the pandemic, was the lack of socialization, indifference from friends. In addition to the fact that my life has changed 180 degrees (lack of work, driving much less often, independence to zero, neglect of physical appearance, hormonal changes felt emotionally and physically (acne, hair loss), which happens to most mothers), during the pandemic social life was

much more seriously affected. Fear of contacting the virus, especially of passing it on to the little one, mild anxiety states, great sadness (Izzat et al., 2021). These limitations make me extremely nervous, always unhappy, sometimes mildly depressed, sometimes feeling like I'm not a good mother to my baby."

"It will sound strange, but for me the pandemic was the best period and I'll tell you why. I stayed at home with my husband for 3 months, I was pregnant (last months of pregnancy), we had time to do cool things together, to cook a lot, we moved to our house in the meantime. We had a lot of time for ourselves and what we wanted to achieve. At the same time, there were feelings of insecurity, fear of catching the virus, uncertainty but also hope that everything will end well",

1.3. What I tried to do

To limit listening/viewing of all kinds of news related to the pandemic (We refuse psychological contamination, informing ourselves about the epidemic only from credible sources and avoiding exposing our minds to unreliable sources and/or pseudoscience)

To follow the requirements of the authorities (Not to expose ourselves to situations that could make us sick)

As much as possible to change rigid/absolutist/inflexible thinking to flexible thinking (the worst thing that could happen/this period was unfair to me/I started to be afraid of people - it's very bad that this happens, but not a catastrophe (non-catastrophic adaptive worry, To meditate/relax - in the morning/evening/when the psychological state demands it or when he has a little free time (breathe lightly and slowly through the nose for 3-4 seconds inhalation, 4 seconds exhalation - breathing calmly, at least 3-5 minutes, generates relaxation response)

Mindfulness meditation

1. I choose a comfortable position, a quiet context and close my eyes
2. I am aware of my body (inhale). I accept myself as I am (expires).
3. I become aware of negative thoughts (inspire). I accept the negative thoughts as they are (expire).
4. I accept the fact that they can produce a negative psychological state for me (inspire). But I know that suffering is tolerable (expire).
5. I also become aware of my positive thoughts (inspire). I accept them as they are (expiration).
6. I am aware of positive states (inspire). I accept them (expire).

7. Continue this exercise for 5-10 minutes.

8. At the end, I don't get up right away. I sit quietly for about a minute, gradually reestablishing the connection with the environment. Then I open my eyes and stay like that for another minute before getting up.

Physical activities (outdoor walks, sports, etc.)

Developing a new routine is not simple because the old routine is often activated involuntarily and thus difficult to control. That is why it is important to effectively plan the new routine, based on rigorous psychological principles.

The pandemic situation we went through/were going through, caused us a daily behavioral routine, forcing us to develop a new behavioral routine compared to what we had before the pandemic and especially with what we imagined would be the routine as young mothers (Luca et al., 2022).

1.4. What I got

"I feel in balance, I feel that I have the necessary resources to manage stressful or less pleasant situations, I feel stronger, confident and with a large dose of peace"

"I really liked the experience of online meetings with other mothers, I was happy to find out that I am not the only one with worries, worries, anxieties and that there are other mothers with the same troubles as mine and that from now on I have my group of moms I can talk to"

"Thank you for every moment spent together during the therapy sessions, even though I was skeptical at first, I learned things that were and are of great help to me, now I am better mentally and morally, I have more confidence in myself and I know I can face new challenges as a new mother."

In the current context, the war in Ukraine - in some mothers some states of fear, anxiety, panic, fear have been reactivated

To overcome these moments we need rational thinking, this will generate healthy negative emotions (worry, but not panic/anxiety; dissatisfaction, but not anger/aggression; sadness, not depression).

Rational thinking versus irrational thinking

Flexible thinking ("I prefer") versus rigid thinking ("I have to")

Let's not catastrophize ("it's bad") versus catastrophizing ("it's the worst, terrible")

Frustration tolerance ("I don't like it, but I can move on") versus low frustration tolerance ("I can't take it")

Nuanced evaluations of people (“you have stupid behavior”) versus global evaluations (“you are stupid”)

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