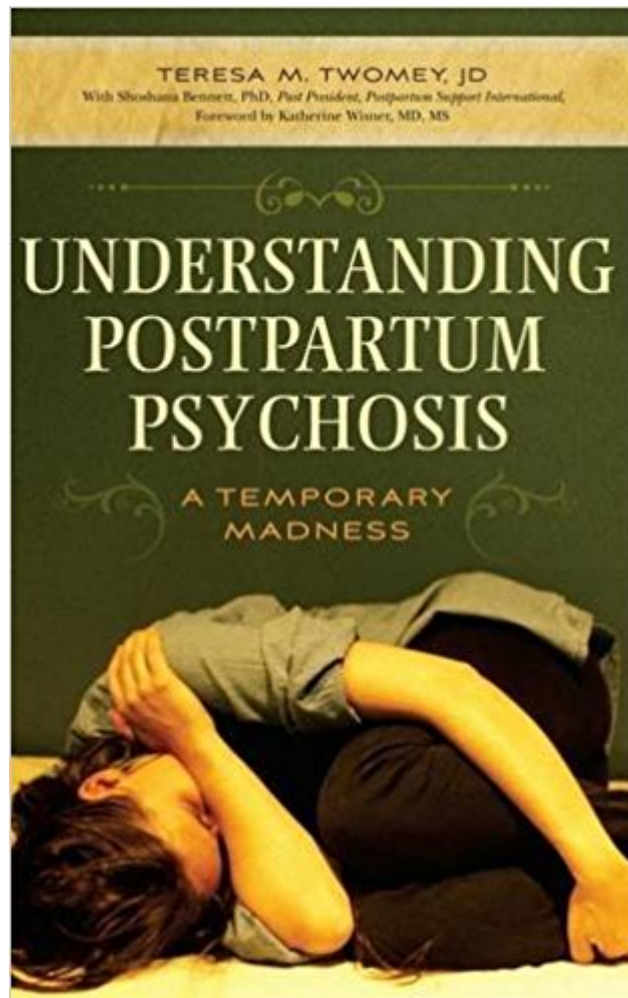




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# Understanding Postpartum Psychosis: A Temporary Madness



## Synopsis

Offering an understanding of postpartum psychosis, this riveting book explains what happens and why during this temporary and dangerous disorder that develops for some women rapidly after childbirth. Most of us are familiar with the baby blues, a passing sadness that strikes 50 to 75 percent of new mothers after delivery. And most of us understand postpartum depression, a sadness post-delivery that lingers for weeks or months for an estimated one in every 10 new mothers. But a more serious form of disorder that strikes up to one in every 500 is postpartum psychosis - triggering severe agitation, confusion, insomnia, hallucinations, delusions, mania, and possible thoughts of suicide or murder. Every year, women in the United States and around the world kill their babies, children, and themselves as a result of this mental illness. Here, author Twomey, an official with Postpartum Support International, gives us insight into the psychological, personal, medical, legal, and historical perspectives on this little-understood mental illness, which is both preventable and treatable. While most women who suffer postpartum psychosis eventually recover without harming anyone, they most often do so in silence. Paranoia is a common symptom, explains Twomey, and that moves women to hide their symptoms from everyone around them. The woman can hence appear normal, but be putting both herself and her baby at risk. We can prevent and treat this, but we need to recognize it by better screening of women postpartum, says Twomey.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Teresa Twomey has overcome the stigma and pain of postpartum psychosis to shine a spotlight on

what professionals and the public need to know to help childbearing families. Thank you, Teresa!"  
(Jane Honikman MSFounder, Postpartum Support International)

Teresa M. Twomey, JD is Co-Coordinator for Postpartum Support International in Connecticut. She served earlier as Coordinator for Postpartum Support International in Virginia, and as a Public Reviewer for the National Institute of Mental Health. Twomey, who has been a faculty member at Longwood University in Virginia, and a Paralegal Instructor of Master Technical Institute in New Jersey, practiced law and professional mediation before experiencing postpartum psychosis herself. After her recovery, she put her law career on hold to become an advocate for women with postpartum mood disorders. Shoshana S. Bennett, licensed psychologist, founded Postpartum Assistance for Mothers in 1987 after her second undiagnosed postpartum illness. Bennett is the Immediate Past President of Postpartum Support International and the past president of California's state organization Postpartum Health Alliance.

Teresa Twomey's book is an outstanding resource. As my colleague/author Sharon Gerdes wrote in her fantastic review of this book, "it's the definitive book on postpartum psychosis." Twomey's writing is clear, her research accurate, and her case studies thoughtfully chosen and presented to personalize this often-demonized disorder. Twomey's co-author Dr. Shoshana Bennett is greatly respected within the perinatal mental health community, and her contributions to the book are excellent. I also greatly appreciate the fact that Twomey writes about the perinatal mood and anxiety disorder (PMAD) that I've lived with since 2007: bipolar, peripartum onset (postpartum bipolar disorder). This condition is rarely written about knowledgeably, so I was pleased to see my postpartum mood disorder included in the book. Postpartum bipolar can often manifest with postpartum psychosis, but it also presents by itself as it did with me. My postpartum bipolar disorder, or bipolar, peripartum onset is rare but it definitely happens. As I mentioned before, while postpartum psychosis can be accompanied by bipolar, peripartum onset, that's not always the case. At age thirty-seven I had my second baby. I walked into the maternity ward in labor with no previous diagnosis of bipolar disorder. Within 24 hours of my daughter's birth I was hypomanic and hypergraphic (compulsive writing); no one recognized I was in trouble until six weeks later when I was acutely manic. It was then when I voluntarily admitted myself for hospitalization and received an official diagnosis of bipolar, peripartum onset with no psychotic features. That was in 2007, and I've finally achieved mood stability and a full, wonderful life. I was honored to have an article about my experience published on the Postpartum Progress website:

<http://www.postpartumprogress.com/story-postpartum-bipolar-disorder> For more information I suggest checking out the link at the Postpartum Support International website: <http://www.postpartum.net/learn-more/bipolar-mood-disorders/> Dyane Leshin-Harwood Founder, Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA), Santa Cruz County, CA Member, International Society of Bipolar Disorders, The Marce Society for Perinatal Mental Health, Postpartum Support International Author of "Birth of a New Brain - Healing from Postpartum Bipolar Disorder" with a foreword by Dr. Walker Karraato be published by Post Hill Press, Fall, 2017 @birthofnewbrain #NotJustPPD #EveryPMADCounts [www.proudlybipolar.wordpress.com](http://www.proudlybipolar.wordpress.com)

This is an excellent and up-to-date overview of postpartum psychosis. It's a must read, both for professionals in the field, and for women who experience postpartum psychosis and their families . This authoritative book covers the medical, psychological and legal issues surrounding postpartum psychosis. It also shares stories of recovery, and sadly stories of tragedy. The personal stories are shared with grace and insight. The book is written by an attorney who has actually lived through the experience and is attempting to forge change in treatment options. It's a huge step in overcoming the stigma of perinatal illness. Every OB/GYN practitioner in the country should read this book.

As a Postpartum Psychosis survivor, I am so thankful for this book! The medical information in the first couple of chapters is especially eye opening and the stories of women's experiences are so varied and honest. This book has been and will be extremely helpful to women and families who have dealt with (or are dealing with) this illness. I plan on getting the word out about this book in my local community of OB/GYNs and other health professionals. A must read.

"Understanding Postpartum Psychosis: A Temporary Madness" is probably not a book I would have casually picked up to read. In fact, not being a mother, postpartum illness has not been on my radar screen at all unless there's been a major news story like Andrea Yates or Susan Smith. However, that all changed when I started reading this book in order to prep for a radio interview with Teresa Twomey. I was amazed with the information shared - all of the research Teresa did spurred on by her own personal experience with Postpartum Psychosis. After finishing the book, I kept thinking about the countless women and their families and loved ones who haven't been educated on how to recognize symptoms, who might be at risk, and what help is available. And, not only have women not been educated...the medical and legal professions have not been educated either. After the interview, Teresa emailed me and told me she wrote this book to save lives. I believe it will. Thanks,

Teresa for bringing this issue to the forefront.

After going through PPP three years ago with the birth of my second child, I was terrified. I was in so much fear of what happened to me. I heard of PPD, but wasn't that familiar with the symptoms... Then to be diagnosed with PPP, I was really confused. I have been on medication for the past three years and still see my psychiatrist, but I am doing so, so well. But it took me a long time to actually want to read about others stories. But now I have been getting any book possible on postpartum mood disorders in order to see what others go through. It's such a relief to know that I am not alone and that it does end. Ms. Twomey has really done a wonderful thing by making this book. It allows others to see the truths of these disorders, especially the worst one of all (PPP). I thoroughly enjoyed the book and think it's a must read for so many different people.

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