

Title: Supporting the Mental Health Needs of High-Risk Pregnancies

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Abstract (200-500 words)

When it comes to maternal health, doctors, midwives, OBs and nurses do an excellent job measuring fetal movements, heartbeat, maternal blood pressure, weight, urine and more. But an area that is greatly missing is monitoring and supporting the mental health of pregnant women, particularly women with high-risk pregnancies. Having a high-risk pregnancy (with or without bed rest) is stressful, isolating and loaded with guilt and self-doubt. Women often have no one to talk to and are afraid to be honest about their struggles. And sadly, very rarely does anyone take the time to find out how the mother is truly doing during this difficult time.

Speaking from personal experience as a mom who has endured two high-risk pregnancies (with home and hospital based bed rests) as well as talking to women I've met and interviewed for my book Bed Rest Mom, this is an area of prenatal healthcare that is often overlooked.

My talk highlights the challenges facing these moms, shedding light on an area of maternal health that is rarely discussed. I offer practical and simple ways family, friends and healthcare professionals can support the emotional and mental health of these moms.

Each time I share these insights, even the most seasoned healthcare professional comes away learning something new. Providing women with the support they need can also prevent or minimize postpartum depression and speed up mom's recovery (physical and mental). Without the necessary support the feelings of isolation, guilt and stress can multiply once baby is born, especially if the baby ends up in the NICU or has any special needs.

Taking the time to support the mental health of moms with high-risk pregnancies will benefit everyone – mom, baby, family and the healthcare team.

I think it's important to hear from a mother and patient's perspective instead just hearing from medical professionals. I offer a unique insight of not just my experience, but other mothers I met and interviewed for my book.

Resarch work related image/table (If Applicable)



Recent Publications (3 to 5)

1. Cynthia Lockrey (2018), Bed Rest Mom, book.
2. See link for complete listing of articles written about the book https://bedrestmom.com/news/

Biography (100-200 words)

Cynthia Lockrey is a writer, communications professional, corporate trainer and patient advocate. She has spoken at conferences across Canada, taught as a communications instructor at the university and college level, and runs a communications consulting business. Cynthia is also passionate about advocating for the needs of women and children in the medical system, as a mom and patient advocate. She is the author of two patient advocacy books – Bed Rest Mom, Surviving Pregnancy-Related Bed Rest With Your Sanity and Dignity Intact and Your Child's Voice - A Caregiver's Guide to Advocating for Kids with Special Needs, Disabilities, or Others Who May Fall through the Cracks.

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Notes/Comments:

I live on Vancouver Island but am originally from Ontario. My bed rest experiences took place in Ontario and British Columbia. I have sat on the perinatal council as the patient advisor for London Health Sciences Centre for three years (2012-2015) and currently sit on as the patient advisor for the Children, Youth and Family Quality Operations Council for Island Health on Vancouver Island. I am familiar with both sides of the medical coin (the patient perspective and the healthcare professional's perspective).