

RESOURCE REVIEW:

Breaking the Silence: PPD and Families of Faith

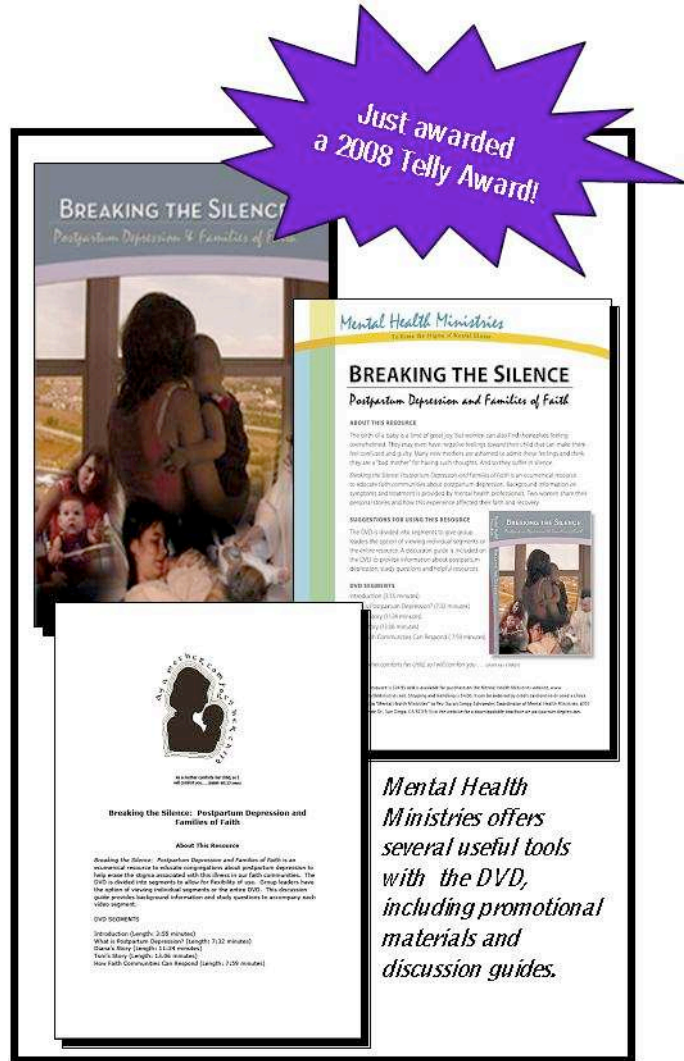
An Award-Winning DVD Resource for the Faithful

From *Crib Notes*, a monthly publication of the San Diego Postpartum Health Alliance, Sp 2008, Volume 8 Issue 2, p. 7.

PPD takes its toll on a woman in all areas of her life, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. For some moms, it can become a spiritual crisis as they struggle with an illness that precisely attacks the physical sources of hope, joy, and peace—the fruit of a healthy spiritual life.

Many faith communities have no idea how to address mental illness in their congregations, particularly illnesses like PPD that defy the typical methods of spiritual growth and healing. Pastoral staff and spiritual counselors are often at a loss under these conditions, giving their best yet somewhat ineffective advice of “pray more” or “read more Scripture” or “try harder.” Some even go so far as to accuse these women of impurity or guilty consciences as the underlying source of their suffering. A woman may feel pressured to hide her struggle from her faith community because she cannot explain her feelings of depression and hopelessness. In some cases, women with PPD will endlessly try to become “holy” enough or “spiritual” enough to alleviate their own suffering, often to no avail. These women may even leave their faith communities or the faith altogether as a result of their experience, blaming the spiritual organization (or even God) for an apparent lack of mercy, understanding, or interest in their pain. Some never return.

Breaking the Silence: Postpartum Depression and Families of Faith is a DVD resource designed to educate faith communities about postpartum depression and explain why increased spiritual discipline can appear ineffective in PPD sufferers. Background information on symptoms and treatment is provided by two mental health professionals who, incidentally, also serve on PHA’s Advisory Board. Two women (both local, one a member of PHA) share their personal stories and how their faith affected their PPD experience and recovery, and a San Diego pastor speaks about the experience of dealing with this type of issue in his faith community. Practical advice and resources are provided to support spiritual counselors and pastoral staff in giving appropriate, compassionate spiritual advice.



The DVD is divided into segments to give leaders and trainers the option of viewing individual segments or the entire resource. A guide is included with the DVD to provide information about PPD, discussion questions, and other helpful resources.

Mental Health Ministries is a non-profit, San Diego-based organization dedicated to eliminating the stigma of mental illness from faith communities. The information in this DVD and their website applies to all God-honoring faith organizations that struggle to stay relevant to the people they serve. The MHM website provides countless resources, Scripture references, and links to help faith leaders turn a spiritual crisis into an opportunity for spiritual victory. For more information or to purchase this program, click on their site at <http://www.mentalhealthministries.net>.