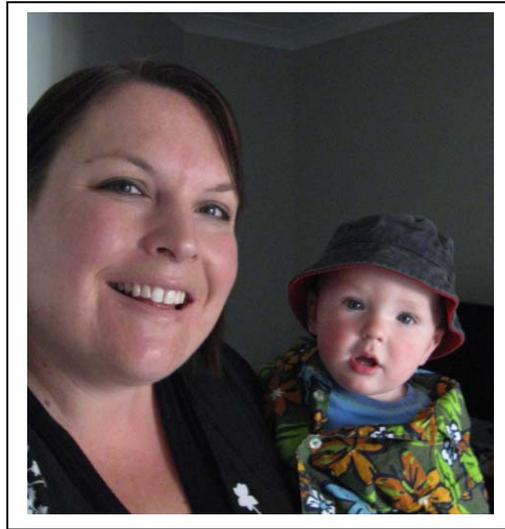


From Secrets Hidden in Shame to the Tranquillity of Transparency: A Mother's journey with depression

By Danielle Pauling BHSc(OT)



Abstract

In May 2009 a wee little embryo began to form in the hidden places of my body. Unbeknownst to me were the storms I would weather in the hours, days, months that would lie ahead. As my precious child developed in utero, the colour in my life rapidly drained from me, leaving a turbulent grey which I feared would dwell with me ever after. This dark secret of depression – the cloud which had oft visited since my teenage years came to stay. It constantly whispered that it would be with me forever. It told me that no one would understand. It threatened to destroy everything I held dear and raged that I did not deserve my children. My life was on a silver platter to all who viewed me, but I could not embrace it.

The professionals working with me during my depression and the amazing friends, who rallied around me, were my only remaining embodiment of hope. I could not run my life on my own. I desperately needed them to be my hope, to tell me that “this too shall come to pass”.

In my presentation I'd like to impart a snapshot of the struggles and successes of my journey with severe pre and post-natal depression, anxiety and panic attacks. Included will be my personal account of the impact of my illness upon my ability to engage in my usual daily occupations, especially those pertaining to my most adored roles, that of being a wife and mum. Included in the narrative will be my perceived changes in sensory processing and the ways that this impacted daily life.

It is my sincere hope that my dark days may enable some to share the secrets that haunt their own souls; to enlighten and encourage those supporting someone walking through depression; and also to encourage those working professionally with such people.