

Don't let motherhood stress you out

by [Bonsy Desai](#)

Photograph by Andres Rodriguez (123 Royalty Free Images)



Becoming a mother is a life-changing experience in more ways than one, but for Mumbai-based Dharmishtha Joshi the change was horrific. Fed-up of 'bad-mother' taunts from her husband Kalpesh, Dharmishtha battered her 3-month-old daughter Ahuti to death in early October 2012. This is a disturbing reminder of what lack of physical and emotional support can do to your life. We get experts to discuss how and why women, especially young mothers, must take care of their physical and emotional wellbeing to avoid such drastic reactions.

Do not plan a baby unless you are happy

"Every life on this planet matters, but people don't seem to understand that. I always advice my patients not to plan a baby if they have a dysfunctional family. The trauma you undergo as a to-be mother, begins affecting your child in the womb," explains clinical psychologist and author of *Beating the Blues* Seema Hingorrany. Dr Annona Guha, sociologist and counsellor with NGO Nityanjali agrees with Hingorrany. "Motherhood is a journey that a woman has to undertake with joy, because she will have to undergo immense physical strain through this process," Dr Guha explains, adding that when the mother herself is not mentally prepared for the baby and does not enjoy the process, the frustration is bound to come out on the child.

Remember that you exist

Both Dr Guha and Hingorrany advice that an expecting mother or new mother should look after her own well-being. “Having a strong support system is very important for a new mother. If she is married, her husband should be prepared to support her back to health and understand that the initial months when she is breastfeeding can get taxing and tiring. If a woman is single she should make sure she at least has adequate domestic help,” Dr Guha advises. Hingorrany adds that extreme reactions are often a result of bottled up emotions that women hold within themselves. “Talk to your family, your parents and siblings if something is worrying you. Turn to them for help,” she says. Dr Guha is also of the opinion that once her child is a couple of months old, a mother should also find time for herself and rejuvenate herself, both mentally and psychically.

Enjoy, don't aim to ace Motherhood

Though postpartum depression is a known occurrence, Dr Guha believes that these days it is another phenomenon that leads to anxiety in new mothers; the phenomenon of information overload. “Women read up on the internet, often without realizing that a lot of the information they are reading is country or culture specific and doesn't necessarily apply to them. Motherhood is not an exam where you have to know everything. Often applying common sense, reacting intuitively to your baby and loving unconditionally, is all you need to do,” Dr Guha explains, adding that women should consider turning to their own mothers and mothers-in-law for advice, as real life experiences always counts over haphazard information.