

## Q & A Mindline



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**Q We appreciate your advice on managing mood disturbance after delivery of a child. Our daughter seems to have suffered irritability and poor sleep immediately after the delivery of a healthy baby via caesarian section. Though she seems to be fine a week later, we fear her problems will return. Please advise.**

I think we may be dealing with 'Baby Blues' – a state experienced one-three days after delivery. You will be surprised, but between 40 to 85 per cent mothers experience this. Commonly reported experiences are emotional outbursts for no apparent reason, poor sleep (even when the baby lets you) and poor appetite. Some also feel anxious, guilty, and inadequate.

Being so common, it's regarded as normal. One reason may be that delivery is a time to rejoice and the focus in on the new baby. While specific causes for the 'baby blues' are not known, but experts have suggested that it could be due to changes in the hormone levels or is brought on, by the

experience of being in hospital.

Importantly, 'baby blues' resolve spontaneously, usually within three days and only requires psychological support and assurance. However, mothers with 'baby blues' should be screened for 'Post-natal depression' (PND). The symptoms or experiences are more intense, continuous and prolonged, compared to 'baby blues,' and is very similar to depressive illness at other times.

PND presents itself with continuous depressed mood with loss of interest, excessive tiredness, reduced sleep, early morning wakening (two hours earlier than normal), weight loss, poor concentration and negative thoughts including suicidal ideation in severe cases. These symptoms would be present for at least two continuous weeks.

It is important to recognize and treat PND as it can have negative effects on the mother-child bonding and emotional development of the child. It is ideally treated under specialist psychiatric supervision with supportive and other form of talking therapy, and with required safe prescribing of medicines (especially if the mother is breast feeding). PND recurs in nearly 50 per cent of subsequent deliveries. Therefore, a pregnant lady and her gynaecologist must be more vigilant and intervene early.

**Q We hear lots about work-life balance. I personally find it quite hard to juggle my professional and personal life and quite simply cannot say 'No' to my boss. Please help.**

Perhaps work-life balance is best defined as a sense of satisfaction and an optimal level of functioning both at work and home with minimal spill

over, in to either of these domains, and minimal role conflict.

In an urban fast-paced tech-dependent, ever connected and perhaps privacy-compromised life, many are unduly striving for appreciation, material acquisition, status, position and power beyond conscious imagination. There is a high degree of expectation from the self, much more than what others expect. Consequently, many are overworked, blurring the line between work and life.

In the name of modernisation, employers have ingeniously handed out devices such as Blackberry phones, tablets and laptops, expecting employees to use them for enhanced connectivity and access. Consequently, working hours are extended beyond contractual obligation without additional pay and employees are now responding to messages and email round-the-clock, taking calls from the so-called 'international client' and catering across time zones. It seems that these clients have 'outsourced work' and we may have 'insourced stress.'

Restoring work-life balance may be one of the most important solutions for managing stress in many domains of our life. The key is, to prioritize areas of our life professionally and personally by listing and attending to things in descending order. Be focused and dedicate time flexibly but distinctively. *Remember, our 24 hours of life daily, has three segments of eight hours each. A segment for work, the other for sleep and the last one for family, friends, self, health and wellness. It's that last segment that mustn't be compromised or ignored at any cost.* Importantly, draw a clear distinction between work and life, learn to say a polite 'No' to new work until pending work is sorted out and never carry work home!

Ask your queries at [bpositiveQA@apollolife.com](mailto:bpositiveQA@apollolife.com)