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# I'm ready to thrive not just survive: Lindsay Robinson's story

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By Lindsay Robinson, mum, campaigner and advocate for maternal mental health

*Lindsay is mum to Reuben and lives and works in Belfast, Northern Ireland. She is dedicated to raising awareness of perinatal mental health and helping to improve support for all who struggle. She works with the Maternal Mental Health Alliance.*

In September 2015 I was finally diagnosed with Postnatal Depression, two years after my son was born. I had experienced a long (undiagnosed) battle with the illness which made me severely ill – mentally, emotionally and physically. Having asked for help, twice, in the early months and not been treated, I then believed how I was feeling was my fault. I used to tell myself I'd "missed the mum gene".

When the illness was finally diagnosed, I started treatment – antidepressants, mental health team support, talking therapy and CBT. I found it hard some days to believe that I really could get better but I tried hard to hold onto hope. In processing my experience I have learned that I suffered with antenatal depression, which, untreated, led to postnatal depression and anxiety.

As I began to recover, I decided to blog about my experience with the illness. I hoped to reach a few friends on social media who might be struggling too. Things took off. My personal blog was suddenly being shared constantly and read thousands of times – almost 40,000 times in the first few months of writing! That helped me to realise that there were many others who also suffered but there was also a desire to understand more about the illness from those who knew little of it, due to the silence that can surround perinatal mental health.



So, I decided to design and create a website ([www.haveyouseenthatsgirl.com](http://www.haveyouseenthatsgirl.com)) with help from a wonderful friend, to offer support to other parents who are struggling. I wanted to continue to tell my story of PND recovery and life with the illness, to give others the opportunity to tell theirs and to campaign for better perinatal mental health services.

From this, I have been asked to share my story with health care professionals and medical students and at support groups, women's groups and mums and babies events. I'm delighted to have been campaigning, advocating and speaking at Stormont, the Northern Ireland Assembly and at Parliament in Westminster, London.

In October 2016, I gave a Ted Talk about postnatal depression: "What if motherhood isn't the time of your life?" which you can view [here](#).



I've been closely involved with the RQIA Review into Perinatal Mental Health in Northern Ireland and I am actively working to see their recommendations put in place. You probably know the statistic, thanks to the Maternal Mental Health Alliance, that 80% of Northern Ireland does not have access to the Specialist Perinatal Mental Health services we need. The 11 recommendations in the report push to see this changed. In short, we desperately need:

- A regional Mother & Baby Unit
- Access to Specialist Psychological Services, in all 5 of our health trust areas
- Much more resources for community based and voluntary group support
- Health Care Professionals given extra training, support and help to understand how perinatal mental health presents and how/where to offer help

You can view the whole report [here](#).

I'm also very excited to have developed "Bags of Hope", which are crowdfunded and have been



supported by local businesses. At the moment I have enough to make over one thousand bags. These are gifts which I intend to give to parents struggling with perinatal mental health issues.

They include:

- A leaflet on PND (my story, signs and symptoms of the illness and where to find support locally and nationally)
- A candle – a reminder of light and hope, even on the darkest of days
- A colouring book and pencils
- Sweet treats and chocolate
- Herbal tea bags
- A gift voucher for a special mums & babies fitness class.

Having got to this point in my own journey to be well enough to reach out to others, I am determined to play my part to help and support parents who are struggling. Recovery is possible, even though the road is long. I am so thankful that life is now to be enjoyed rather than endured, I'm ready to thrive not just survive.

To read more from Lindsay Robinson visit her website [www.haveyouseenthathatgirl.com](http://www.haveyouseenthathatgirl.com) and follow her on Twitter [@Robinson\\_Linds](https://twitter.com/Robinson_Linds)

Explore our MABIM tools for leaders working in perinatal mental health: [www.maternalmentalhealthalliance.org/mumsandbabiesinmind/mabim-tools](http://www.maternalmentalhealthalliance.org/mumsandbabiesinmind/mabim-tools)

*[Mums and Babies in Mind](#) supports local leaders in four areas of England to improve care and quality of life for mums with mental health problems during pregnancy and the first year of life, and their babies.*

*Read more from the [Mums and Babies in Mind](#) blog:*

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