



## ***#depressionhurts***

### ***My Story— Siobhan***

My Name is Siobhan and I am 37 year old Mum and Wife.

I have 2 wonderful kids that have kept me going through all that I am about to tell you. I am strong, very driven and never believed I could have thought about the things, I did think of when I was in my lowest place, all because of my depression.

My depression started after I had my daughter 7 years ago. I was so thrilled to be a Mum that I took it all on by myself and shut my husband out. I'd had a C-section so it affected my health physically and mentally.

I felt very overwhelmed with my new role, as a lot of new Mums are. What I didn't realise was that I was suffering from postnatal depression but I hid it well. My husband just didn't really know what to do so he distanced himself from me which didn't help. I was very much alone in my darkness.

My family lived the other side of the country and didn't really know what was going on. I carried on with life and muddled through the next year, shutting out any help, thinking I was great doing it all myself. Then I got pregnant again I just got on with it, until at 10 weeks I suffered an ectopic pregnancy with some very serious complications, which resulted in two very serious operations within 3 weeks. All the while my marriage was falling apart and we were just about hanging on. We'd been to see a marriage councillor after our daughter was born and found we had a lot of issues, stemming from very different backgrounds and ways of treating each other. After the ectopic pregnancy I felt very down and alone and I went to my doctor who prescribed antidepressants and more counselling for me, alone.

I wouldn't want anyone to go through what I went through in the following years. I remember one night just leaving my house driving to a nearby car park on the edge of a river. I just wanted the pain in my heart to stop. That night I was very close to just driving into that river but I didn't want to hurt my family.

My marriage was more turbulent and we became more distant. My husband just didn't know what to do or how to deal with me. I needed to be looked after and loved and he just didn't understand what I was going through.



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All this time my family had no idea what I was going through, how could I tell them when I didn't really know myself?. They just thought our marriage had a few problems and kept an eye from a distance.

Somehow, my husband and I muddled on through the upset and fights. He is a good man and just didn't know what to do. After a while I got pregnant with my son but just 12 weeks into my pregnancy, I suffered a threatened miscarriage. Despite this, I managed to carry him until 37 weeks. It was a very difficult pregnancy with a lot of problems and I felt very alone and unable to cope with both a high risk pregnancy and a toddler. I felt very lonely and unhappy.

My lovely son was born early, in a hurry and again by c section. I was very happy at his birth and I thought things would be different this time around but it was not to be.

Again I was left to deal with a lot of the day to day things alone and this was very difficult after having a c-section. My husband felt he had to work. He is very much an old fashioned man with strong values about the home but he has told me since, it was really because he didn't know how to be around me.

One night when my son was about 6 weeks old, my hubby and I were having another massive fight when suddenly I didn't feel well. My husband was just about to leave the house when I called out to him before collapsing on the bathroom floor. I thought I was having a stroke because though I could hear and feel everything, I couldn't wake or open my eyes.

My husband called out to my little 2 year old, in bed at the time, to come and get the phone for him, whilst he carried me down stairs and put me on the coach. He rang for help and family, a doctor and an ambulance came in response to his calls. I will never forget, my little daughter crying, nor my son of 6 weeks screaming and not being able to get up or say anything to comfort them.

In the hospital I woke but couldn't talk or get any words out. I had lots of tests and they just said it was stress, I couldn't understand this and they didn't really offer me any help. Getting home after all the tests, I had to accept that it was stress, which was really hard to understand.



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Back home, I would have several episodes a day or it could be a week.

I went to counselling to try and resolve things and also kept taking my antidepressants. For a while I was even afraid to be left alone with the kids. I was lucky in one way I could feel these episodes coming on, so I did have some notice and after a while they just stopped.

We went on with our lives. I didn't feel very equal in my marriage, I wanted to go back to work and so I did when my son was one. I felt better having more independence but my marriage still wasn't working the way I thought it should.

We were both unhappy going about our lives but not really connecting with each other. After a time, we decided it to live apart for a while to see if we might be better off as our children were starting to see the problems we had and I felt I'd had enough. I felt I would be happier alone so rented a house nearby and was getting ready to make the move. When it came to it, we didn't separate but decided to give it another go.

I took a step back, I realised I did still love my husband but things had to change, I took redundancy from work. We both knew we had to change and listen more to each other. For the last year I have seen a councillor every week and my life has really changed for the better.

My husband and I still have to work on our marriage but we know we are very lucky and have reconnected with each other, he understands my depression wasn't his fault and it wasn't something he could fix. I have learned through my counselling that my depression comes from my childhood and problems stemming back years. I'd never realised that my past affects my present and my future.

I know now when I have a bad day or week, that I can take time to feel the pain of my past but I have a better understanding of depression and so does my husband. He is there for me when I need him but also he allows me space to grieve when I need to. There are days that I am over whelmed and short tempered but I know how to deal with it and not let my depression push me to the brink, where I had been so many times. My fear is always how far I might be pushed.



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One thing I have learned is that depression can hurt in different ways and my depression affects me very physically. Stress can take many forms and we need to understand that.

I have decided to talk more about my depression and also talk more openly about my depression.

People I know would never have thought that I would be someone who suffered from depression. I looked so different from the outside to how I felt inside.

I always have a smile and a good word to say, like others with this illness, over the years, I got to be very good at pretending.

Today my life is different, I have started my own business and I am enjoying my life and my family.

Today I am happy and content with my life but I will always suffer from depression. I know I am not the only one. xx