



DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
70 WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AS

Mental Health Hero Awards

Thank you for taking the time to nominate someone as a Mental Health Hero in your area. We are looking for people who are changing lives through one or more of the following:

1. Helping to break the stigma around mental health
2. Inspiring others in addressing or overcoming mental health problems
3. Making it easier for people to access mental health support and advice
4. Supporting people experiencing mental health problems to stay in, or return to, work
5. Pioneering new or innovative ways of supporting people with mental health problems and/or their families

Based on the five criteria set out above, why do you think this person should win a mental health hero award (500 words max):

One of the most dreadfully stigmatised areas within mental health is that of severe episodes of psychosis triggered by childbirth. Postpartum Psychosis (PP) has a sudden onset in the days following childbirth; it often occurs 'out of the blue' to women without any previous mental health problems; its escalation is rapid. Most women make a full recovery, but in rare cases, outcomes are tragic. Experiencing PP as a new mother, full of expectation and hopeful planning, is devastating. Recovering from PP, with all its impacts upon partner relationship and family life, is a difficult process. This is made so much worse by popular press portrayals of women as 'unnatural' or 'unfit' mothers, or in some way responsible for what happened. Google and You Tube searches bring up sensationalised stories of personal tragedies, compounding the fears of women regarding their illness, recovery, views of friends and of the outside world. The recovery process for affected families can be a hard and lonely journey.

Andrea Lambert is my mental health hero, because she experienced PP herself and survived a gruelling recovery. She devotes her life to helping others manage the illness. She provides support, reassurance, acceptance and hope to women and their families in all stages of the illness and works to reduce the unnecessary shame and guilt felt by so many.

Most women who experience PP have never met anyone else who has experienced it. Through her tireless work with Action on Postpartum Psychosis, Andrea supports women and families and gives them the opportunity to talk to each other. Andrea has been instrumental in developing APP's: online PP community (www.app-network.org/pptalk); email peer support; social media presence; and in training other recovered women and partners to work as peer support volunteers. She helps to run events to facilitate face-to-face meetings. She helps others to get involved too in whatever ways they wish, to give women and families the opportunity to transform a devastating experience into something that can bring about good.

Women who find APP and talk to Andrea or use the services that Andrea helps to run, leave feeling that they are no longer alone. The number of women and families Andrea supports through to recovery rises on a weekly basis. Andrea's work, not only helps prevent the tragedies that can happen to new mothers and their babies when psychosis develops, but helps families to come through what is the most horrendous of experiences, less traumatised, more hopeful, more accepting, and less stigmatised, that they would otherwise have done.