



# LAKESHORE LINK

MAY 2018

## D.D.O. Resident was Trapped by Depression Until she found help at the Lakeshore General Hospital

**A**manda Ficocelli is the mother of Marcus, an amazing little boy, and is married to Jason, the love of her life. Several months after giving birth, Amanda developed postpartum depression, a mood disorder. She generously accepted to share her story to break the stigma and raise awareness about mental illness.

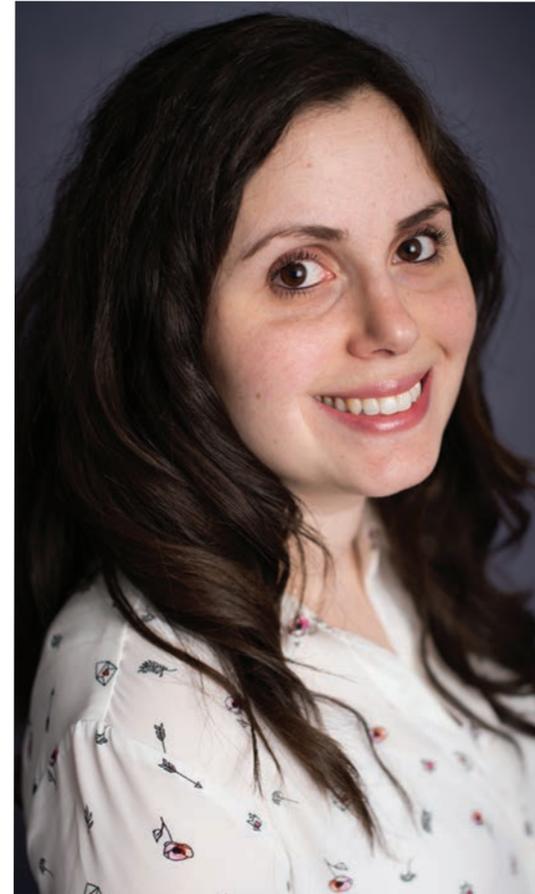
"No one tells you what to expect after you give birth. You just assume life goes back to normal, but you have to heal, and some people take longer to heal than others. I started feeling very "off" approximately six months after giving birth. I was going into slumps that I couldn't pull myself out of. I was always tired; I never wanted to go out; I cried constantly; I was irritable; I would snap over just about anything. All of this was very uncharacteristic of me.

It got so bad, I decided to call my obstetrician Dr. Jeannine Simon. She saw me the same day and I broke down in tears in her office. After my appointment, my husband went home with our young son and I went straight to the Lakeshore General Hospital. I saw Dr. Fiore Lalla, psychiatrist, and after a long and difficult day, he confirmed the diagnosis I had feared...postpartum depression.

Postpartum depression affected who I was at the core. I was always a very fun, happy, outgoing person. Why couldn't I be happy and overjoyed like other moms? Why was I so sad? After all, isn't having a baby the greatest blessing you could ask for?

I learned everything I was thinking and feeling was not only very normal, but very common among new parents — both moms and dads (an estimated 10-15% of new moms and 5% of new dads develop postpartum depression). The mood disorder made me think there was something wrong with me, that I was unfit to parent and I didn't deserve the life I was living because I felt so sad. But the hospital supported me with this struggle and helped me return to my old self again.

Today, I am feeling better than ever. I've actually come out of my shell even more. Depression is just like any other illness, it can affect anyone. To those still suffering I want you to know: you are worthy, you are good enough and you are exactly what your family needs. Don't hide your emotions, don't pretend to be ok when you're not. Get help. The road to recovery is not smooth, there are a lot of ups and downs, but you will get there.



Amanda Ficocelli

Luckily, Dr. Simon, Dr. Lalla, and my therapist Sabina Agostino helped me through the rough times. I was also blessed to have had the amazing support of my husband and family. I thought I was lost, but luckily I found my way back to myself, for this I will be forever grateful."

*Since sharing her story, Amanda gave birth at the Lakeshore General Hospital to a lovely baby girl named Sofia Isabel. The entire family is doing well. •*

