



# SJAF e-Magazine

**SJA FOUNDATION**

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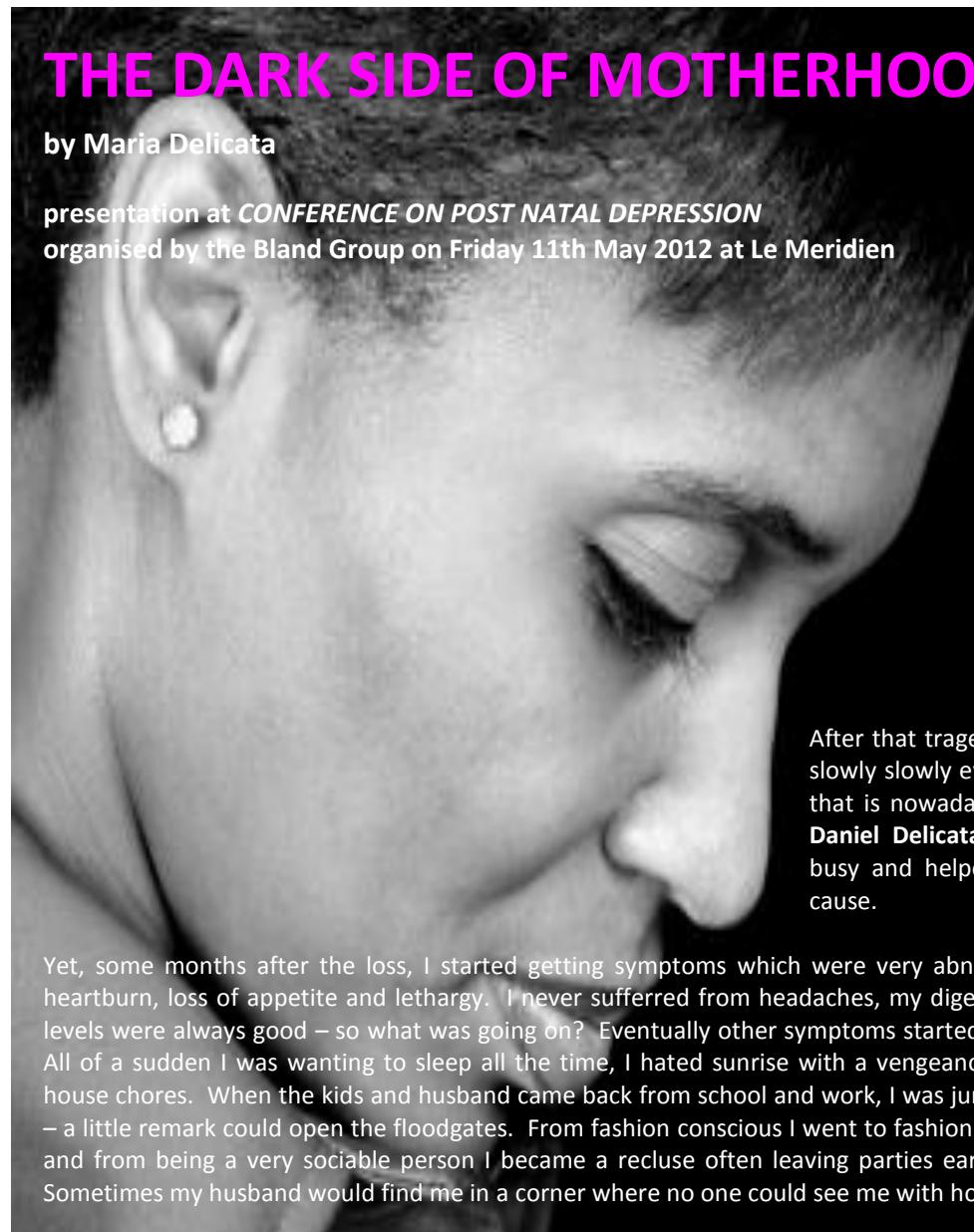
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## THE DARK SIDE OF MOTHERHOOD

by Maria Delicata

presentation at *CONFERENCE ON POST NATAL DEPRESSION*  
organised by the Bland Group on Friday 11th May 2012 at Le Meridien



I am the mother of three children, two girls, now young ladies of 17 and 18 years respectively and a little boy Daniel who was called to heaven two months short of his 5th birthday in September 2002.

After that tragedy, I embarked on my first dream which slowly evolved into a project and an organisation that is nowadays synonymous with sick children – **The Daniel Delicata Memorial Association**. This kept me busy and helped me channel my sorrow into a good cause.

Yet, some months after the loss, I started getting symptoms which were very abnormal to me such as severe headaches, heartburn, loss of appetite and lethargy. I never suffered from headaches, my digestive system was healthy and my energy levels were always good – so what was going on? Eventually other symptoms started emerging and these were more serious. All of a sudden I was wanting to sleep all the time, I hated sunrise with a vengeance and literally dragged myself to do the house chores. When the kids and husband came back from school and work, I was jumpy and sensitive to everything they said – a little remark could open the floodgates. From fashion conscious I went to fashion disaster not even bothering to look good and from being a very sociable person I became a recluse often leaving parties early, or trying to avoid them at all costs. Sometimes my husband would find me in a corner where no one could see me with hot tears streaming down my cheeks.

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**I realized that I had a serious psychological problem and after a few sessions of psychotherapy, my husband and I decided that unless I took medical treatment, I was not going to get any better.** I would have preferred to go for natural remedies, but the situation was so dire, with two young girls dependent on me and my mental state being that of considering on a daily basis, which was the best way to end my life, that we had to opt for the therapy that yielded the fastest results. I was prescribed anti-anxiety pills and eventually these were supplemented by anti-depressants. The journey was slow and arduous. Anti-depressants are not paracetamol and their effect takes months to start showing results. But life went on and I still had a family to take care of. I could not stop the clock until I got better. If that could be done, the world would be in a constant state of inertia because someone somewhere was feeling the same every moment of every day. This same realization and the love towards my two daughters, prevented me from putting my worst nightmare into a reality. The question burning in my mind was always: if I take the easy way out by leaving this physical and emotional pain, what message am I sending my two girls? They weren't worth the wait? When the going gets tough you give up? Somehow, although I did feel that there was no life left in me, the candle was about to blow out, by a miracle there was this love for my daughters that kept me hanging on.

**As the medications eventually started having a positive effect I started regaining what I lost – the confidence in myself, and the will to live.** I started building myself again and I had the motivation from

people I watched on Oprah Winfrey (bless her!) who had made something out of nothing. I decided and learned that the difference between victim and survivor is the way we look at our challenges. A hurdle has to be jumped, a bridge has to be crossed otherwise you will never get stronger and you will never get to see what's on the other side. And if you trip and fall in the process, get up, dust your knees, put your ego in check and start again or move on from that spot. You will soon realize that these experiences are making you stronger and that you are a miracle in the making. Your positive energy and your willpower will emanate and you will encourage others. It's the beautiful ripple effect of being positive.

Now, some of you may be saying: "But people must have sympathised with you because you lost your son, the worst thing that can happen to anyone! We went through what you have been through for a totally different reason – that of giving birth and life to our child! Few people will sympathise with us because ours should be a joyful experience and not a sad one." And I tell you, did you choose to be like this? The mind is the most amazing part of our body and the one that makes us function, yet few of us realize the importance of a healthy mind. Few of us realize that, in the same way we can develop a problem with our heart or our kidneys, so can we develop a problem with our mind. Why should we hide from this reality? Why should we try to justify what we are feeling? We are confused and we would like to get better.

**So my advice to you is to speak up and seek help.** Ignore the hurtful ignorant remarks of people who think they know better. Be

intelligent and acknowledge that you have a mental health problem and that you are the only person who holds the key to making yourself better. Empower yourselves by reading and learning not just about your condition, but also about people who fought against the odds and succeeded. This is your ammo. When eventually you get better, and you will get better, become a ray of hope for others. Share your experience to encourage them and to give them the strength that they need. It is amazing what a few encouraging words can do to a person who is feeling lost and alone.

I hope that my testimonial today will give you the courage that you need because I am a woman like you and not a superhero! That was my son!



***My advice  
to you is to  
speak up  
and seek  
help....***

## IT IS NOT THE MOTHER'S FAULT - POSTNATAL DEPRESSION

Giving birth to a baby is an amazing experience and, for a mother, nothing compares to the feeling of having that baby in one's arms. It should be the happiest time of one's life, but, for some, it can be a time of uncertainty, a time of confusion, perhaps even depression.

Over half of new mothers will experience the baby blues. Baby blues symptoms usually start 3 to 4 days after birth. Symptoms may include mood swings, easily bursting into tears and feelings of irritability and sometimes even anxiety. These feelings usually stop by the time the baby is about 10 days old. However, when these emotions and feelings persist for more than 2 weeks, it is vital to check whether one might be suffering from postnatal depression (PND).

Postnatal Depression is a depressive illness which affects between 10 to 15 in every 100 women having a baby. It often starts within one or two months of giving birth. The mother may struggle to look after herself and her baby and quite often she may find it difficult to manage simple tasks.

PND can happen to anyone and **it is not the mother's fault**. The mother may feel unhappy, overwhelmed, anxious and tearful for much of the time. Mothers suffering from PND might experience negative thoughts and start thinking that they are not good mothers; they feel guilty for feeling like this. Hence, it is essential that a lot of love, support and immediate treatment needs to be given so that the mother overcomes these symptoms of PND. It is important to seek help from a psychiatrist. For mild depression, the mother can benefit from talking therapies. However, those who suffer from severe depression are prescribed medication by a psychiatrist or a general practitioner. Antidepressants take at least 10 days to 3 weeks to start working and one will need to take them for around 6 months.



### PARTNERS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS CAN HELP THE MOTHER IN MANY WAYS. HERE ARE SOME POINTS:

- Do not be shocked or disappointed if your partner, friend or relative says she has postnatal depression. It is common and can be effectively treated.
- Learn more about postnatal depression so that you can be of help
- Listening and offering encouragement and support. It is essential to reassure the mother that she will get better by encouraging her to get the help and treatment she needs.
- If the mother expresses suicidal ideations, you need to take them very seriously.
- Help in daily chores such as feeding and changing the baby, shopping, cooking or housework.
- Be aware that fathers can also get depressed after the birth of a baby. This may be more likely if the mother also has postnatal depression.

Source: Royal College of Psychiatrists.(2012). *Postnatal Depression*. Retrieved June 12, 2012, from <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfoforall/problems/postnatalmentalhealth/postnataldepression.aspx>



Il-Kwiekeb  
fid-Dlam  
Jixegħlu

vjaġġi ta' tama mterrqa minn  
qraha ta' persuni b'mard mentali

edituri  
Connie Magro  
Nora Macelli

Jista jkun tiegħek b'donazzjoni  
ta' €5

<http://laikosorg.wordpress.com/2012/05/15/il-kwiekeb-fid-dlam-jixegħlu/#more-1694>

# Aħbarijiet mill-Fondazzjoni

## MEJU

Data	Attività
3	Session on Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) to School Psychological Services team, Department Student Services
7	- Meeting with Paola Parish Priest - Meeting with Kalkara Parish Priest
8	- Visit by Dr Marceline Naudi from the University Department Social Policy and Social Work for final practicum assessment of 2 social work students hosted by Foundation - Planning team – pressure and support group for victims of domestic violence
9	Presentation about Foundation to St Paul's Bay Lions Club
10	Presentation on Social Policy implications arising out of community social work practice to Social Policy Group at AŻAD
11	- Staff meeting on Volunteer Management - 2 staff attended Seminar organised by the Bland Group on Post-Natal Depression
12	4 Foundation personnel attended a one-day contemplative prayer retreat
14	- Service user visit to Arka Foundation in Gozo to explore tapping of services there - Advocacy meeting at Lands Department
15	One hour radio programme on Foundation as part of Mulier programme on Radju Marija presented by Simone Vella
17	- Professionals' meeting at Child Guidance Clinic - Talent show by students of Immaculate Conception School
21	Lecture on Volunteering to University students following Missiology Course
24	Governing Board meeting
25	Meeting with Paola Parish Priest
29	Familti Club (Żabbar Vinci Project) members visit Ċentru Antida
30	2 Volunteer Receptionists' meetings to evaluate service (group 1, morning; group 2, afternoon)
31	Staff in-house CPD on childhood trauma and attachment by therapist Daniel Mercieca

## ĠUNJU

Data	Attività
1	Attendance at public seminar on <i>Id f'Id - Soċjetà ġusta</i> organised by the Labour Party
4	- Meeting with Caritas representatives from Qormi Community Social Work project - Meeting of the domestic violence pressure and support group planning team
5	Training Seminar for SJAF and Parish Volunteers on Managing Negative Emotions
6	Social Work team meeting
8	Meeting with OT from Paola Mental Health Day Centre
12	Closing session of the Kalkara Nannakola Club run by Foundation Grandparent Education personnel
14	Meeting of the SJAF Governing Board
15	Closure of the Homework Support Service for the summer break
18	Meeting of the MCCF Social Work Service team
19	Interviews of service users who are carers of a child with behavioural problems. Research undertaken by DLG Consulting on behalf of KNPD.
20	Continuous Professional Development session for SJAF personnel on <i>Tools to identify underlying mental health problems</i> in service users delivered by Connie Magro, Psychiatric Nurse
21	2 staff participated in a multi-stakeholder consultation on <i>Kellimni.com- the service, its relation to existing services, for children and adolescents online.</i>
22	Social Workers quiet work day
26	Continuous Professional Development session for SJAF personnel on <i>Personality Disorders</i> delivered by Consultant Psychiatrist and Co-ordinator of Postgraduate Psychiatry Programme Dr John Mifsud

## JUM IL-LAJČI NSARA (9 ta' Marzu 2012)

IL-LAJKAT NISRANI U L-APPOSTOLAT TAL-LAJČI  
TEŻORI U ĠARAR TAL-FUHHAR

*Riflessjoni dwar ir-realtà u l-vokazzjoni tal-lajkat fil-Knisja minn  
Monsinjur Anton Gouder, Pro-Vigarju Ĝeneral.*



- \* Aħna m'aħniex waħedna imma aħna Knisja li fiha ħafna teżori u dgħufijiet. U aħna parti kemm mit-teżori u kif ukoll mid-dgħufijiet ...
- \* Bħala evanġelizzaturi rridu nibnu pontijiet ta' ħbiberija ma' dawk ta' madwarna biex Gesù jkun jista' jgħaddi minn fuqhom minn għandna għal għandhom. ...
- \* L-apostolat individwali u fl-għaqdiet huwa teżor għax il-pont li jibni huwa biex minn fuqu jgħas-siddi Ģesù ...
- \* Jekk ma nkunux għarkubtejna quddiem Ģesù biex nadurawh, lanqas nistgħu nkunu pont biex minn fuqu jgħaddi Hu ... Bla talb mhemma apostolat ... Nista' nagħmel xogħol imma mhux apostolat ...
- \* Il-Knisja hija komunjoni li trid tkun mibnija fuq l-ispiritwalitā ... fuq djalogu mas-soċjetà ... fejn il-formazzjoni hija valur ...
- \* Niproponi għar-riflessjoni u għall-kuraġġ tagħna, vers mill-Iskrittura, "Kunu dejjem lesti biex tagħtu tweġiba lil kull min jitlobkom il-ġħala tat-tama li għandkom." (1 Pietru 3:15)
- \* Il-vera telfa tal-Knisja mhux in-nuqqas fin-numru tal-attendenza tal-membri tagħha, imma fin-nuqqas ta' spiritwalitā u ta' rabta mar-rieda ta' Alla fuq livel personali u bħala Knisja lokali ... Dak li hu veru importanti hu l-ħajja nisranija fil-ġenwienitā tagħha ...
- \* Irid ikollna aktar il-Ministeru tas-smigħ u tad-djalogu speċjalment meta ħafna minna għaddejjin ħajja ta' ġenn bla brajkijiet u bla ebda' čans għal xejn ...
- \* Irid ikollna aktar il-ministeru tal-akkompanjament, mhux sempliciement laqgħat u attivitajiet, lil diversi kategoriji (tfal, żgħażaq u familji etc), fuq livel ta' parroċċi u għaqdiet; akkompanjament fil-mixja ta' fidi ...
- \* Irid ikollna il-ministeru tal-fraternità b'mod stabbli ...
- \* Irid ikollna aktar ħajja Ewkaristika u Sagħamento, mhux biss fil-quddiesa imma wkoll fil-ħajja tagħna ...
- \* Jekk l-għotja tagħna nfusna tkun aktar sħiħa u kkunsmata, allura nkunu iż-żejjed Knisja fejn il-fuħħar li fihem it-teżori tagħna mhux jinkiser iż-żda jippreserva biex b'hekk inkomplu niżviluppaw 'il quddiem.





### **NEHTIEĞU HANDYmen VOLUNTIERI**

Il-Fondazzjoni Santa Giovanna Antida tistiedien applikazzjonijiet minn persuni interessati jagħmlu xogħol volontarju bħala *Handyment*. Qed infittxu:

- Irġiel irtirati li għandhom il-ħila ta' manutenzjoni bażika fid-dar;
- Għandhom l-ghodod u trasport tagħhom;
- Lesti li jagħmlu xogħol volontarju 4 sigħat fil-ġimgħha fid-djar ta' familji foqra;
- Kapaċi jaħdmu f'tim ta' 2;
- Lesti li jgħaddulna ittri ta' riferenza u l-kondotta.

Il-Handyment Voluntieri jiffurmaw parti mill-**Proġett Daqqa t'Id** li hu parzialment iffinanzjat mill-VO Fund immexxi mill-Kunsill Malti għas-Settur Voluntarju (MCVS). Min jintgħażel jieħu sehem f'taħriġ qabel ma jibda dan il-volontarjat soċċali.

Ikkuntattjawna fuq 21809011 jew 27672367  
jew ibgħat email fuq [sjafngo@gmail.com](mailto:sjafngo@gmail.com)



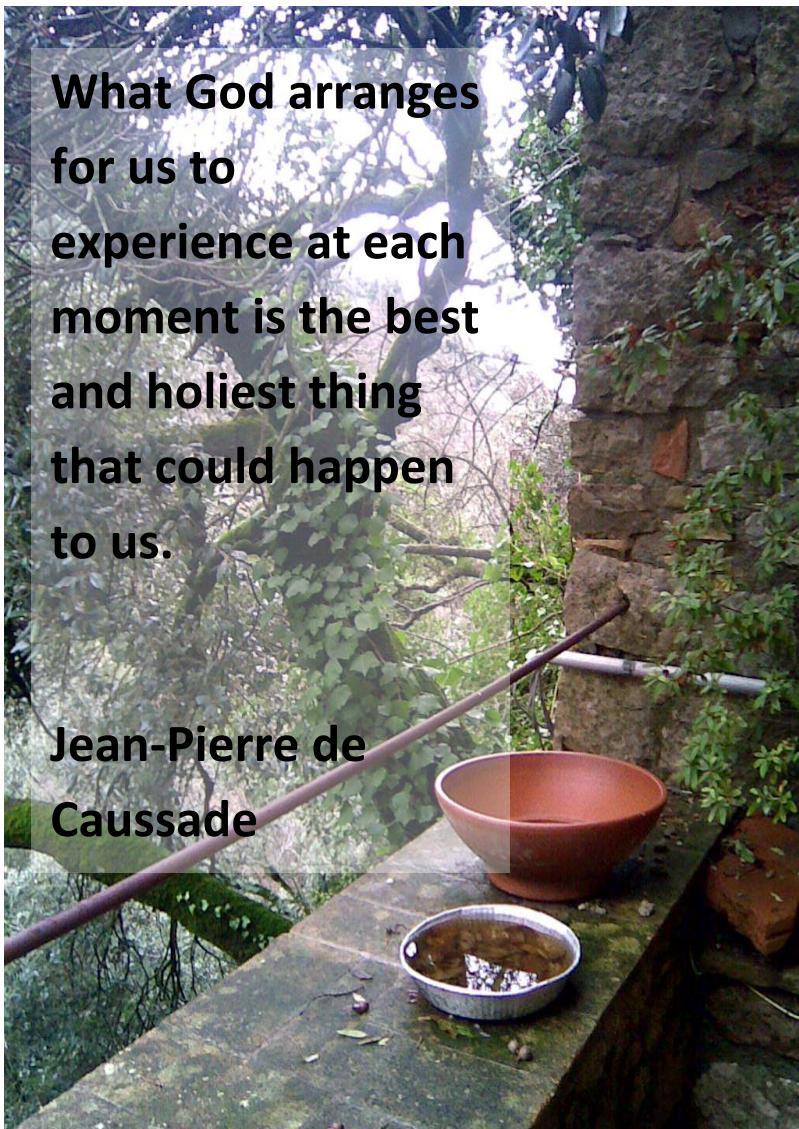
This project has been funded with support from the VO Fund managed by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS). This project/publication reflects the views only of the author, and the MCVS cannot be held responsible for the content or any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



### **NEW VOLUNTEERS**

**Phyllis Mangion**  
**Rose Galea**

**WELCOME**



# From Monday 2nd July to Monday 17th September 2012

## Centru Antida will be open from 7:30am to 1:30pm



### BAZAAR B'RISQ IL-FONDAZZJONI

Miftuħ kull nhar ta' Tnejn u nhar ta' Erbgħha mid-9:00 sal 12:00

*Qegħdin naċċettaw ogġetti biex jinbiegħu fil-bazaar (mhux ħwejjieg)*

### DONATIONS

Your donation is truly appreciated; it enables us to sustain our services to vulnerable individuals and families from surrounding parishes.

Donation to the St Jeanne Antide Foundation can be made as follows:

- Cheque issued to The St Jeanne Antide Foundation and posted to the Foundation: 51 Tarxien Road, Tarxien TXN 1092
- For local bank transfers: APS 2000 0681 886 HSBC 013175021001  
BOV 4002003379-0 BANIF 00210404101
- If you are a Go/Vodafone/Redtouch subscriber you can donate by sending a blank SMS (SMS tariffs applicable):  
€2.33 – 50617371 €4.66 - 50618095  
You will receive a text message of thanks and acknowledgement
- For bank transfers from overseas: APS Bank, 146/147, Antoine De Paul Square, Paola PLA1260  
Bank Code (Swift) APSBMTMT IBAN No: MT03 APSB 7708 0005 5047 2000 0681 886  
(last 11 digits are the account number)

**THANK YOU! WE PROMISE TO PRAY FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY**

### FOUNDATION SERVICES

**1. The Antide Centre:** a drop-in centre in Tarxien open from 7.30am to 5.30 pm daily in winter time (sometimes later as well).

**2. The Social Work & Counselling Service:** includes home-visits by a nurse to home-bound lonely elderly, family-focused community outreach work and youth work, and Handyman Service in support of vulnerable families.

**3. The Learning Support Programme:** includes (a) a Homework Support Service for children and young persons; (b) non-formal learning opportunities for vulnerable adults , (c) grandparent education.

**4. LWIEN - Caring for Family Carer-givers Service:** support for family care-givers of persons with mental health problems: family consultations, counselling, support groups.

### 5. Community Work Projects:

(a) **Vinci Project:** Community work in the parish of Haż-Żabbar undertaken in collaboration with the parish and partially funded by STRINA of the Malta Community Chest Fund. Services include social work in zones with a concentration of families in difficulty, counselling, groupwork.

(b) **Ġamra Project:** Community work in the parish of Fgura undertaken in collaboration with the parish and funded by The Voices Foundation.

**7. Overseas Development Projects:** SJAF assists the congregation of the Sisters of Charity in the development of projects in developing countries.