

As Postpartum Psychosis Draws National Attention, The Motherhood Center Offers Clinical Expertise to Help Newsrooms Cover It Responsibly

Dr. Catherine Birndorf, Co-Founder and Medical Director of the nation's leading perinatal mental health treatment center, is available to provide evidence-based information and context on postpartum psychosis and the full spectrum of Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (PMADs).

NEW YORK, N.Y. — Postpartum psychosis — an uncommon but severe and highly treatable psychiatric emergency — is drawing significant public attention as newsrooms across the country cover the topic. The Motherhood Center (TMC), the nation's leading perinatal mental health treatment center, is offering journalists and producers access to a clinical expert who can provide accurate, evidence-based information and context on the condition: what it is, how it's diagnosed, why expert and early intervention matters, and what treatment actually looks like.

Dr. Catherine Birndorf, Co-Founder, Medical Director, and Reproductive Psychiatrist at TMC, is available to speak to the clinical realities of postpartum psychosis and the broader spectrum of Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (PMADs). Cornell-trained with more than 25 years of experience treating mothers and birthing people through the full perinatal period, Dr. Birndorf has emerged as a leading public voice in recent national coverage of the topic, including coverage tied to the Lindsay Clancy trial.

Dr. Birndorf can speak to:

- What postpartum psychosis is, and isn't, clinically
- Why early screening and rapid access to expert treatment are critical
- The full spectrum of PMADs, and how they differ from “baby blues”
- What non-hospital-based, intensive perinatal treatment (like TMC's Day Program) looks like in practice and why this level of care is essential
- Systemic gaps in perinatal mental health care and screening in the U.S.

“To me it's ‘illness until proven otherwise.’ The fact that we consider it ‘criminal until proven otherwise’ is problematic.” — **Catherine Birndorf, MD, on postpartum psychosis and the legal system**

PMADs affect roughly one in five new and expecting mothers and can begin before delivery in about half of all cases, yet an estimated 80% of cases go undiagnosed or untreated. Left untreated, PMADs are the #1 complication of childbirth and the leading cause of maternal mortality in the United States. Postpartum psychosis, while uncommon, is a medical emergency marked by delusions, hallucinations, paranoia, disorganized thinking, and a decreased need for sleep; those experiencing these symptoms, or who know someone who may be, should call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room immediately.

“You can be deeply self-aware, well-supported, and emotionally prepared — and still struggle after having a baby,” Dr. Birndorf said. “That is not a failure. That is the reality of this transition and a failure of our system.”

About Dr. Catherine Birndorf

Catherine Birndorf, MD, is a reproductive psychiatrist and the Co-Founder, CEO, and Medical Director of The Motherhood Center of New York. She is the founding director of the Payne Whitney Women's Program at Weill Cornell Medicine – New York-Presbyterian Hospital and a Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Obstetrics & Gynecology. A graduate of Smith College, she attended Brown University Medical School and completed her psychiatry residency at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. A past board member of Postpartum Support International, she now serves on the organization's President's Advisory Council and on the board of Chamber of Mothers.

For ten years, Dr. Birndorf was a regular mental health columnist for *Self* magazine and has appeared on numerous television programs, including *The Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, CBS, and CNN. She recently appeared on CNN's *The Lead* with Jake Tapper, CBS Mornings with Norah O'Donnell, CBS Evening News with Tony Dokoupil, CBS's *Inside Edition*, FOX 5 New York, and the Chris Cuomo Podcast, and consulted for NBC's *Law & Order* to help ensure an accurate, compassionate portrayal of postpartum psychosis. She is co-author of the New York Times bestseller *The Nine Rooms of Happiness* and of *What No One Tells You: A Guide to Your Emotions from Pregnancy to Motherhood* (Simon & Schuster, 2019). Her work has appeared in *Scientific American*, *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, *The Cut*, and *Vogue*, among others.

About The Motherhood Center

The Motherhood Center (TMC) is the nation's leading perinatal mental health treatment center and home to the tri-state's only perinatal partial hospital program, known as the Day Program. Since opening in 2017, TMC has provided expert, evidence-based care for mothers and birthing people, babies, partners, and families navigating the full spectrum of Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders, from the trying-to-conceive stage through the postpartum period. The Day Program offers daily group therapy, individual therapy, reproductive psychiatry, dyadic therapy, and an on-site nursery. TMC also offers individual, couples, and dyadic therapy, medication management with reproductive psychiatrists, free virtual support groups, and continuing-education training for providers nationwide.

Dr. Birndorf is based in New York and available for phone, video, or in-person interviews.

Maddie Vaz

Director of Outreach, The Motherhood Center
mvaz@themothhoodcenter.com | 646-670-8455