



Redleaf Center for Family Healing

Patient Example #2

Sarah is a 32 year old white mother of 11 month old baby girl, Sasha, who she identifies as also white. Sarah is partnered with Sasha's father who she reports has Autism. Sarah reports that she has been experiencing "fits of rage" since Sasha was 1 month old where she feels like she cannot calm herself down for many hours. Sarah reports that her OB diagnosed her with postpartum depression and she has been taking an anti-depressant for the past three months but feels like she is getting worse. She reported that even though Sasha is sleeping through the night, she often cannot fall asleep for hours. She reports that she feels angry all the time especially with her partner or when she wants to get things done but gets interrupted by Sasha.

Sarah reports that as a child she spent periods of time with her mother and periods of time with her maternal grandparents. Her mother struggled with substance use and gambling and would unpredictably drop her at her grandparents for long periods of time. She reports that her grandparents were supportive but often seemed stressed and their relationship became more strained as she became a teenager and "got into more trouble".

Sarah's pregnancy with Sasha was unplanned but welcomed. Her partner was very supportive during her pregnancy but now she feels like he isn't helpful with Sasha and feels like when he isn't working he just lays on the couch. His parents live nearby but Sarah feels like they judge her and don't think she is a good mother.

Sasha is growing well and is crawling but not yet walking. Sarah reports that she is very picky about solid foods and meal times are very stressful. Sarah feels like she works so hard to try to give Sasha healthy foods but she never eats them. She feels like Sasha doesn't like her and is constantly fussy. She does worry about the impact of her "fits of rage" on Sasha and believes she has already damaged her. Sarah states that if she doesn't figure out how to control her fits of rage soon she will need to end her life so that Sasha can be better off.

Other than her partner's parents, Sarah has minimal supportive connections. She has tried to go to a church in the neighborhood but Sasha won't stay in the church childcare since she was 9 months old so she doesn't go anymore. Sarah feels like Sasha has taken away all the good things in her life, including her relationship with her partner which was fine before Sasha was born.

Sarah has many strengths including her desire for Sasha to have a different childhood than her own, her openness to help, and curiosity about her symptoms and impact of her life experiences on her present functioning. She also feels like postpartum depression diagnosis doesn't really fit with what she feels and so questions if she will ever get better.