

Gail's post-natal OCD

Gail has recently given birth to a baby. She wants to enjoy being a new mother. Instead she experiences constant intrusive thoughts that she will impulsively smother her baby or smash the child's head against a wall. She is highly distressed by these thoughts and monitors her behaviour and emotions toward her baby very closely in case there are any signs that she is becoming aggressive or dangerous. Gail has tried to suppress the thoughts of harming her child, but this has increased their frequency and intrusiveness.

Gail frequently seeks reassurance from both her husband and her own mother that she is safe to look after her child. As far as possible, she avoids being alone with her baby and depends heavily upon her mother and husband to be around her during the day. This causes considerable strain on her family. Gail spends a lot of time researching post-natal depression and OCD in an attempt to find reassurance that she will not act upon her thoughts. With all of her worry about being dangerous, she feels like she's lost a sense of self. She often feels sad and guilty.