



# SEEING RED

## Women's experiences of anger in the first two years after birth

### Intense Postpartum Anger

We interviewed a subset of 20 women who scored high on anger during the postpartum period from a larger survey study. They shared:

"We have this Incredible Hulk poster, and it says, The Monster Unleashed, and... then seeing myself as this monster being unleashed because **there's so much rage inside of me.**"

"I was taking care of his parents and their feelings, him, and his feelings, and the 2-year old and the 2 year old's feelings, and the new baby, and nobody was taking care of me."



#### Anger triggers:

- **Violated expectations about motherhood**
- **Unmet needs for sleep, support, time for self**
- **Feeling on edge with stress, fatigue, anxiety, despair, or resentment**

"[Partner] and I, will apologize for our behaviour because we know that we've crossed the line... Oftentimes we end up agreeing to disagree. There's not always a productive step forward."



#### Managing anger:

- **Protecting children from anger**
- **Expressing anger to communicate**
- **Hiding anger and internalizing**
- **Practicing self-compassion and care**

"My husband and I, with our son, we switch nights and he sleeps with him. We'll take turns depending on how bad he is. It allows us to have compassion and graciousness for the other one."



#### Support reduces anger:

- **Shared parenting with partner**
- **Help and emotional support from family and friends**
- **Community programs and resources**
- **Health care provider and mental health support**



For more information, visit:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/10497323221120173>