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Brooke Shields Recalls Suicidal Thoughts After Giving Birth

By Liz McNeil

Monday November 16, 2009 07:25 PM EST



Brooke Shields
Joe Kohen/WireImage

Brooke Shields has been open about her struggles with post-partum depression, but in revealing new comments she expresses the true depths of her suffering.

Shields, 44, spoke movingly about the stigma of depression and her experience battling the disease on Monday while receiving an advocacy award from the Hope for Depression Research Foundation in Manhattan.

"We think and we feel that we should just be able to handle it on our own," said the actress, who is mom to two girls, Rowan, 6, and Grier, 3. "I've always been strong enough to get through

every single difficult situation in my life. I grew up in an addictive household. My mother [Teri] had acute alcoholism. It's in my blood. I was never going to be the one to succumb to it."

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Baby Blues

After a miscarriage and seven IVF attempts, she gave birth to daughter Rowan in 2003 with her husband, TV writer Chris Henchy. "I finally had a healthy beautiful baby girl and I couldn't look at her," she said of the depression she felt. "I couldn't hold her and

I couldn't sing to her and I couldn't smile at her ... All I wanted to do was disappear and die."

In her deepest moments of despair she said, that the disease led her to believe, "I should not exist. The baby would be better off without me. Life was never going to get better – so I better just go."

Shields was prescribed medication, though she stopping taking it one point, thinking she didn't need them. "That was the week I almost did not resist driving my car straight into a wall on the side of the freeway," she told the crowd. "My baby was in the back seat and that even pissed me off because I thought she's even ruining this for me. I just wanted to drive into the wall and my friend stayed on the phone with me and made me safely get home."

She later called her doctor to ask for more help, and was eventually diagnosed with a chemical imbalance. "I learned what was going on inside my body and what was going on inside my brain," she said. "I learned I wasn't doing anything wrong to feel that way. That it was actually out of my control."

Looking back, she said, "If I had been diagnosed with any other disease, I would have run to get help. I would have worn it like a badge ... I didn't at first – but finally I did fight. I survived."

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