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November 20, 2009

Daily Dose: Hope for Depression

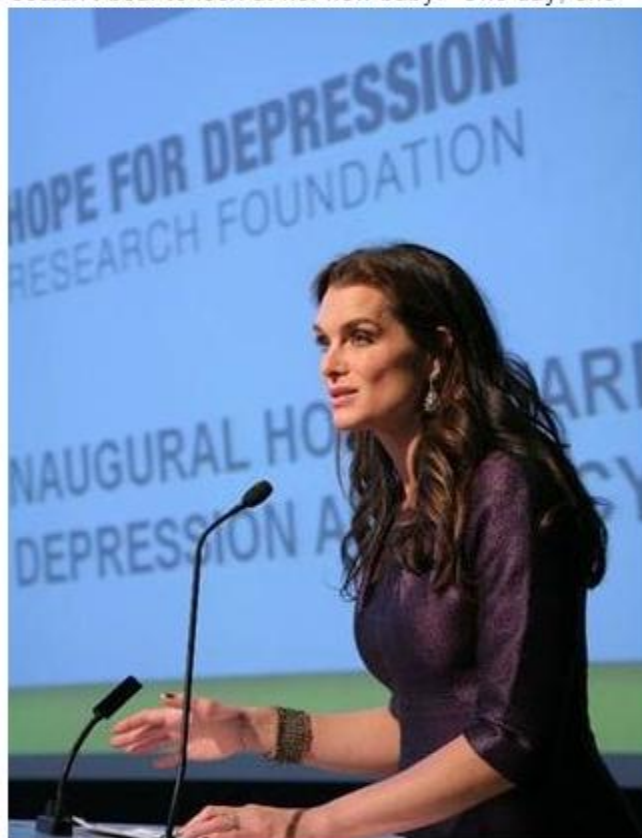


Amy Brightfield

Monday I was honored to attend the Hope for Depression annual seminar where Brooke Shields accepted the first "HOPE" Award for Depression Advocacy for her efforts to help lift the stigma that surrounds depression. She wrote a book, "Down Came The Rain," about her struggle with postpartum depression after the birth of her first child, Rowan, who's now 6 years old. (You might remember the little tiff she had with Tom Cruise when he suggested that there's no such thing as a 'chemical imbalance' and that you can just take vitamins and exercise to feel better!)

Brooke spoke emotionally and emphatically about her struggle, from how she had tried rounds and rounds of in-vitro fertilization to get pregnant, and then when Rowan was born, her body being "hijacked" by such terrible depression that she couldn't bear to look at her new baby. One day, she said, things got so bad that she barely resisted the urge to drive her car (with the baby in the back seat) off the freeway into a wall. "My friend stayed on the phone with me until I got home safely," she said.

Brooke admitted that she resisted the idea of taking medication at first. "I was a survivor and I felt like I just failed," she said. But it was medication and therapy that did finally help her get through the postpartum



depression.

"It wasn't about being strong enough to 'get over' the depression, but being strong enough to get help," she said.

I couldn't have said it better myself.

-Amy Brightfield, Health Director

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