**TO YOUR HEALTH**

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**Timely wake-up call on post-partum set for July 3**

Nicole Alper-Ramos has a baby, and even though this is her field, she didn’t know much about post- partum depression.

“It’s personal to me and interesting on a profes- sional level. It doesn’t really get discussed,” said Alper- Ramos, who will present a one-hour seminar July 3 at Faulk Center for Counsel- ing in West Boca. “People don’t want to talk about it because it’s supposed to be this wonderful part of your life, and it is. But if you’re sad and tearful, people think there’s something wrong with you.

m/westboca WBF

“More people know someone who has experi- enced it than not. This is very common.”

Credential wise, Alper-

Ramos is a master’s degree candidate at Florida Atlan- tic University completing a one-year internship in mental health counseling at Fa ulk. Holly Ka tz, Faulk’s clinical and train- ing director, oversees First Wednesdays, a free, mental health lecture series open to the public the first Wednesday of each month.

Q: Why are you doing a talk on post-partum?

A: A lot of new mothers are entering this exciting and life-changing part of their life without a lot of in- formation on the signs and symptoms and the likeli- hood they could develop post-partum depression.

Q: Is it that common?

A: I have a 15-month- old

son, and I was in the mid-



**ALPER-RAMOS**

dle of my master’s when I became pregnant, so I was studying and studying to b ecome a mom. I came across it. I did have a mild form of post-partum, and it was something I had to work through. What helped me were friends and family, who said, “Oh, I went through the same thing.”

Q: When does this usu- ally happen?

A: It comes on after you’ve given birth and can last up to a year, but it usu- ally will come on within the first four weeks of giving birth.

Q: What are the symp- toms?

A: Sadness, lack of en- joyment, sleep and eating disturbances, if you’re not able to sleep even when the baby is sleeping or not be- ing able to eat or overeat- ing. You can be low energy, fatigue. Those are things you generally will see in de- pression, but it’s hard to tease out when you have a newborn. You’re already tired, but it’s more difficult with post-partum.

Q: Most of these symp-

toms are typical for new mothers, so how can you tell?

A: More along the lines of how long it lasts and the severity. Am I getting upset and crying? Am I overly sensitive? Do I have feelings of worth- lessness and guilt and ex- periencing anxiety?

Q: Will you tell wom- en what to do at your talk?

A: Absolutel y. And there things they can do ahead of time. You can’t prevent it, but you can raise your awareness to realize what’s happening to you. With the different options you have, it’s something it can be worked through.

Q: What are the op-

tions?

A: Mine was pretty

mild, but someone who

has severe symptoms will

want to seek treatment,

usually with a psychother-

apist, a psychologist or a

psychiatrist if you need

medicine to get through

that point in time. I’ll talk

about the different types

and focus on levels and

treatments available and

ways to access them.

Fa ulk Center for

Counseling, 22455 Boca

Rio Road, Boca Raton,

561-483-5300, faulkcen-

terforcounseling.org. The

center’s Putting for Char-

ity fundraiser is 5 to 8

p.m. Aug. 14 at JM Lexus

in Margate as part of

Boca Festival Days. Ad-

mission is $20.