

My name is Sarah Six Killer Dumas, and I'm a member of the Cherokee Nation tribe, and I live in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

I have always wanted to be a mom. My first pregnancy was easy breezy. My second pregnancy was a little harder on my body.

My delivery was ideal. I thought, I've got this. You know, I've done this before.

He just wasn't getting enough milk. So I had a friend that had just had a baby a few months prior, and she said, You have to call a lactation consultant. She was so helpful and so kind and I just instantly felt comfortable with her. And I didn't think I would, you know, some stranger coming in my home telling me how to feed my baby when I felt like I should know how to do this, you know, I should be able to do this.

And that was the mentality I think that set me up to kind of go down that dark hole of postpartum depression. I would just feel like maybe my baby would be better off with another mom. Why can't I do this? This is what my body was made to do. So what's wrong with me? I must just not be good enough. It just felt like a really heavy weight on me. Everything was on me. And that was. It was unbearable at times.

When I first started to have the negative thoughts and feelings after giving birth, I think it was the polar opposite of not connecting with my little one or not feeling like I was bonding. It was such an over the moon, kind of such a bond and such an attachment that I felt like it was solely my duty to provide everything he needed. And so I just. You just lose sight of yourself and what you need.

I just wish that I had told someone. I almost lost myself in that. I can only describe it as the longer that I waited to talk to someone about it, the deeper I went into the hole. And I was afraid that I wasn't going to come back from that. And I just didn't. At that point, I didn't know who to tell because I felt like there was so much that had piled up over time that it just wouldn't be safe for me to let that out, because it seemed crazy. And why hadn't I told someone sooner?

Once you let it out and once you tell someone that person that you trust can help you find some help.

So Montika helped me to know that it was okay, that I wasn't okay in her genuine desire to help. Saw me and heard me and knew you need a little bit more than lactation help. And so I feel like her ability to hear me and genuinely interested in how I was doing and helping me formulate a plan of care was instrumental in me seeking out counseling and letting my family know that I wasn't okay, that I was putting on a facade.

Being a mom is so hard, but it gets easier. It's almost impossible to ask for help and not feel guilty because you're supposed to be able to do it all. But that's just not true. That's just what we tell ourselves.

I've always been the caregiver for everyone. I deserve the care that I deserve and I deserve to be heard. And I deserved for my health and my mental well-being to matter because that matters to everyone in my household, not just me. But I can't take care of everyone else if I'm not being taking care.

Sometimes we just need help and we need to call someone for help.

If you're having a baby or if you just had a baby, I really would just encourage you to find someone that you trust and just really be honest with them about the thoughts you're having, the feelings you're having.