

madness *and loss of motherhood*

Sexuality, Reproduction, and
Long-Term Mental Illness

Robert J. Apfel, M.D., M.P.H.

Myellen H. Handel, Ph.D.



图书馆

**MADNESS AND LOSS
OF MOTHERHOOD
SEXUALITY, REPRODUCTION,
AND LONG-TERM MENTAL
ILLNESS**

**Roberta J. Apfel, M.D., M.P.H.
Maryellen H. Handel, Ph.D.**



**Washington, DC
London, England**

Note: The authors have worked to ensure that all information in this book concerning drug dosages, schedules, and routes of administration is accurate as of the time of publication and consistent with standards set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the general medical community. As medical research and practice advance, however, therapeutic standards may change. For this reason and because human and mechanical errors sometimes occur, we recommend that readers follow the advice of a physician who is directly involved in their care or the care of a member of their family.

Books published by the American Psychiatric Press, Inc., represent the views and opinions of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the policies and opinions of the Press or the American Psychiatric Association.

Copyright © 1993 American Psychiatric Press, Inc.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Manufactured in the United States of America on acid-free paper

First Edition

96 95 94 93 4 3 2 1

American Psychiatric Press, Inc.

1400 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20005

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Madness and Loss of Motherhood: Sexuality, Reproduction, and Long-Term Mental Illness / by Roberta J. Apfel, Maryellen H. Handel.—1st ed.

p. cm. — (Clinical practice : no. 26)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN: 978-158562-445-4

1. Mentally ill—Care. 2. Mentally ill—Sexual behavior. 3. Chronically ill—Care. 4. Chronically ill—Sexual behavior. 5. Pregnancy in mentally ill women. I. Apfel, Roberta J., 1938–. II. Handel, Maryellen H., 1939–. III. Series.

[DNLM: 1. Long-Term Care. 2. Mental Disorders—in pregnancy. W1 CL767J no. 26 / WQ 240 S518]

RC455.4.S45S49 1992

616.89—dc20

DNLM/DLC

for Library of Congress

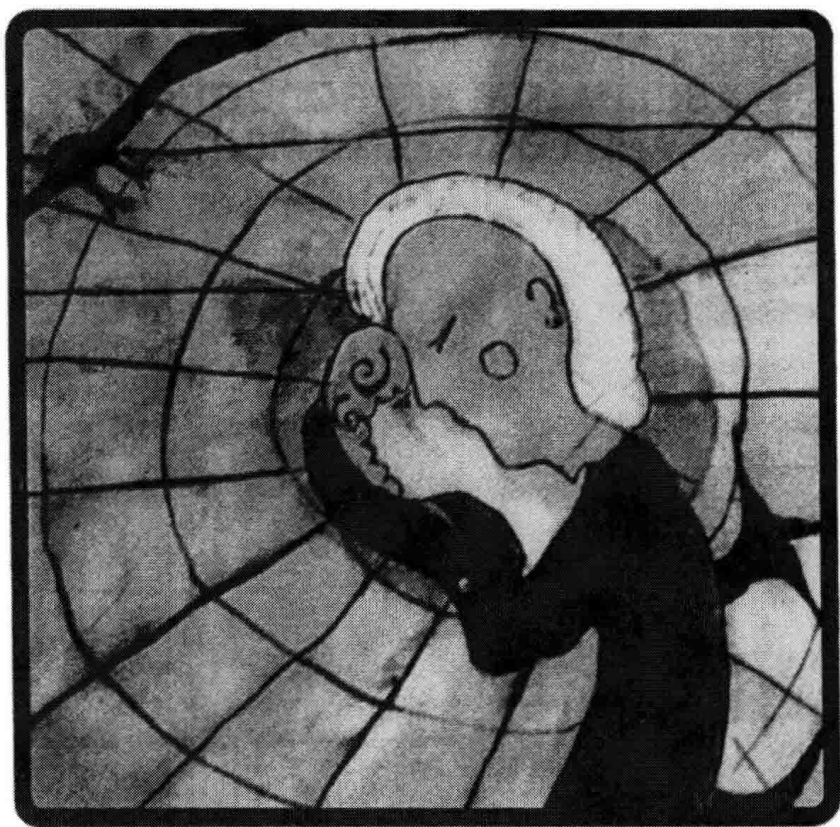
92-10958

CIP

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A CIP record is available from the British Library.

**MADNESS AND LOSS
OF MOTHERHOOD
SEXUALITY, REPRODUCTION,
AND LONG-TERM MENTAL
ILLNESS**



Ronit Rothman

**To our mothers,
Rena Sperling Hurwitz
and
Polly Gurian Apfel,
who were our first teachers about
motherhood**



Clinical Practice

Number 26

Judith H. Gold, M.D., F.R.C.P.C.

Series Editor

About the Authors

Dr. Apfel is Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, the Cambridge Hospital, and the former Metropolitan State Hospital in Waltham, Massachusetts. She is on the faculty of the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute and is in private practice in Newton, Massachusetts.

Dr. Handel is Director of Psychiatric Ambulatory Services, Newton-Wellesley Hospital, Newton, Massachusetts, and Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Tufts University School of Medicine. She is in private practice in Newton, Massachusetts.

Introduction

to the Clinical Practice Series

Over the years of its existence the series of monographs entitled *Clinical Insights* gradually became focused on providing current, factual, and theoretical material of interest to the clinician working outside of a hospital setting. To reflect this orientation, the name of the Series has been changed to *Clinical Practice*.

The Clinical Practice Series will provide books that give the mental health clinician a practical, clinical approach to a variety of psychiatric problems. These books will provide up-to-date literature reviews and emphasize the most recent treatment methods. Thus, the publications in the Series will interest clinicians working both in psychiatry and in the other mental health professions.

Each year a number of books will be published dealing with all aspects of clinical practice. In addition, from time to time when appropriate, the publications may be revised and updated. Thus, the Series will provide quick access to relevant and important areas of psychiatric practice. Some books in the Series will be authored by a person considered to be an expert in that particular area; others will be edited by such an expert, who will also draw together other knowledgeable authors to produce a comprehensive overview of that topic.

Some of the books in the Clinical Practice Series will have their foundation in presentations at an annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association. All will contain the most recently available information on the subjects discussed. Theoretical and scientific data will be applied to clinical situations, and case illustrations will be utilized in order to make the material even more relevant for the practitioner. Thus, the Clinical Practice Series should provide educational reading in a compact format especially designed for the mental health clinician-psychiatrist.

Judith H. Gold, M.D., F.R.C.P.C.

Series Editor

Clinical Practice Series

Clinical Practice Series Titles

Treating Chronically Mentally Ill Women (#1)

Edited by Leona L. Bachrach, Ph.D., and Carol C. Nadelson, M.D.

Divorce as a Developmental Process (#2)

Edited by Judith H. Gold, M.D., F.R.C.P.C.

Family Violence: Emerging Issues of a National Crisis (#3)

Edited by Leah J. Dickstein, M.D., and Carol C. Nadelson, M.D.

Anxiety and Depressive Disorders in the Medical Patient (#4)

By Leonard R. Derogatis, Ph.D., and Thomas N. Wise, M.D.

Anxiety: New Findings for the Clinician (#5)

Edited by Peter Roy-Byrne, M.D.

The Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome and Related Conditions (#6)

By Arthur Lazarus, M.D., Stephan C. Mann, M.D., and Stanley N. Caroff, M.D.

Juvenile Homicide (#7)

Edited by Elissa P. Benedek, M.D., and Dewey G. Cornell, Ph.D.

Measuring Mental Illness: Psychometric Assessment for Clinicians (#8)

Edited by Scott Wetzler, Ph.D.

Family Involvement in Treatment of the Frail Elderly (#9)

Edited by Marion Zucker Goldstein, M.D.

Psychiatric Care of Migrants: A Clinical Guide (#10)

By Joseph Westermeyer, M.D., M.P.H., Ph.D.

Office Treatment of Schizophrenia (#11)

Edited by Mary V. Seeman, M.D., F.R.C.P.C., and Stanley E. Greben, M.D., F.R.C.P.C.

The Psychosocial Impact of Job Loss (#12)

By Nick Kates, M.B.B.S., F.R.C.P.C., Barrie S. Greiff, M.D., and Duane Q. Hagen, M.D.

New Perspectives on Narcissism (#13)

Edited by Eric M. Plakun, M.D.

Clinical Management of Gender Identity Disorders in Children and Adults (#14)

Edited by Ray Blanchard, Ph.D., and Betty W. Steiner, M.B., F.R.C.P.C.

Family Approaches in Treatment of Eating Disorders (#15)

Edited by D. Blake Woodside, M.D., M.Sc., F.R.C.P.C., and
Lorie Shekter-Wolfson, M.S.W., C.S.W.

Adolescent Psychotherapy (#16)

Edited by Marcia Slomowitz, M.D.

Benzodiazepines in Clinical Practice: Risks and Benefits (#17)

Edited by Peter P. Roy-Byrne, M.D., and Deborah S. Cowley, M.D.

Current Treatments of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (#18)

Edited by Michele Tortora Pato, M.D., and Joseph Zohar, M.D.

Children and AIDS (#19)

Edited by Margaret L. Stuber, M.D.

Special Problems in Managing Eating Disorders (#20)

Edited by Joel Yager, M.D., Harry E. Gwirtsman, M.D., and
Carole K. Edelstein, M.D.

Suicide and Clinical Practice (#21)

Edited by Douglas Jacobs, M.D.

Anxiety Disorders in Children and Adolescents (#22)

By Syed Arshad Husain, M.D., F.R.C.P.C., F.R.C.Psych., and
Javad Kashani, M.D.

Psychopharmacological Treatment Complications in the Elderly (#23)

Edited by Charles A. Shamoian, M.D., Ph.D.

Responding to Disaster: A Guide for Mental Health Professionals (#24)

Edited by Linda S. Austin, M.D.

Psychiatric Aspects of Symptom Management in Cancer Patients (#25)

Edited by William Breitbart, M.D., and Jimmie C. Holland, M.D.

**Madness and Loss of Motherhood: Sexuality, Reproduction, and
Long-Term Mental Illness (#26)**

By Roberta J. Apfel, M.D., M.P.H., and Maryellen H. Handel, Ph.D.

Treatment of Adult Survivors of Incest (#27)

Edited by Patricia L. Paddison, M.D.

Foreword

The authors of this interesting, readable, and timely book share with us their experience and an extensive review of the literature on sex and reproductive issues in patients with long-term mental illness. From the burgeoning number of articles on sex in the past decade, and from a longer look over 50 years, Drs. Apfel and Handel demonstrate how the subject of sex and reproduction has moved from no mention and little understanding to being the focus of detailed studies on important and relevant issues. Particularly valuable to readers of this book are the guides to management of patients with long-term mental illness who are sexually active and of those who are pregnant. The many illustrative cases cited will be most helpful to clinicians.

When I began my residency in psychiatry, in 1931, at the Worcester State Hospital (WSH) in Massachusetts, my first assignment was to the Medical and Surgical Service. The WSH was the obstetrical center for women in all mental and correctional institutions in the state. With the help of an attending obstetrician, several nurses, and three psychiatrists, I gave prenatal care, delivered babies, and cared for them and their mothers afterward. Memory for details after 60 years is not reliable. I don't recall any major problems in either mothers or babies. It was a time before antipsychotic medication was available and before widespread substance abuse.

It was assumed that mothers who were confined in the criminal justice system and those institutionalized for psychosis or mental retardation were unable to care for their babies. All the infants were placed in some kind of foster care.

What amazes me is that it did not occur to us to seek the answers to such questions as

- What was the attitude of the mother toward her pregnancy?
- What was her attitude toward giving birth?
- Did becoming a mother exacerbate or ameliorate the mental illness?
- What was the mother's response to the child?
- Was bonding permitted?

- What was the mother's feeling toward loss through adoption? loss of contact with the infant?
- Why did we miss the opportunity to investigate how the criminal mothers differed from the psychotic ones?

Worcester State Hospital was a nationally known research center studying schizophrenia. Most clinicians, including myself, were engaged in research of some kind. We missed an unusual opportunity to increase understanding of reproduction in persons with mental illness.

Perhaps part of the reason for our failure was society's attitudes toward sex in those individuals segregated from the world outside. Because of society's disapproval, pregnancy and severe sexual behavior within this population were surrounded in secrecy. No thought was given to providing a time and place for conjugal relations. If it was proven that a member of the staff was responsible for the pregnancy, he or she was promptly dismissed.

Some 30 years later when I was the superintendent of the Boston State Hospital, I wrote that there was no evidence that sexual intercourse among patients was a greater problem in the mental hospital than in the community: an unwanted child caused distress to many people—spouse, parents, the administrators, and society in general. I noted the frequency of sexual manifestations and of homosexuality. My own attitude also showed 30 years ago when my commentary on patients' sexual fantasies and activities in my book appeared under the heading of "Sexual Misconduct."¹

Much has changed, particularly in the past decade or two, with regard to social attitudes toward sexuality. The authors of this book have traced these changes. They give us the state of current knowledge and its application in specific situations.

This is a good book on an important topic often ignored. The book should be read by clinicians both in the field of obstetrics and in the mental health professions if they are responsible for prenatal care, delivery, and postnatal care for patients with long-term mental illness.

All who care for mentally ill persons will profit from a greater understanding of sexual and reproductive issues and patients' feelings and attitudes. The authors have produced an excellent practical guide that

¹Barton WE: *Administration in Psychiatry*. Springfield, IL, Charles C. Thomas, 1962.

will aid in both the understanding and the management of sexual expression and pregnancy in people with mental illness.

Walter E. Barton, M.D.
Hartland, Vermont

Acknowledgments

This book began in Dublin at an interdisciplinary international women's conference in 1987. We were amazed by the intense response to our presentation of a clinical paper about women with long-term mental illness and their many losses of opportunities to mother. Our audience had no knowledge of psychiatry and yet was deeply moved and interested in the case studies we presented. We realized that we had touched on something important for our own field of psychiatry and decided to write about this subject for our colleagues. Over 4 years and numerous continents, we have talked with and learned from many people who have contributed significantly to this book. American Psychiatric Press Editor-in-Chief Carol Nadelson, colleague and friend, saw the need for this monograph and encouraged us then, as now. Judith Gold, our helpful series editor, Claire Reinburg, and Greg Kuny have seen the book to fruition.

Since Leona Bachrach indicated the need for public policy about motherhood in mentally ill persons in 1984, she has continued to inspire us personally and professionally. Some pioneering efforts have been launched by Anna Spielvogel and Joanne Wile, Laura Miller and Valerie Raskin, Lee Cohen and Deborah Sichel, Penelope Krener, Ann Massion, Mary Seeman, Sally Severino, Donna Stewart, Nada Stotland, and Katherine Wisner. Henry Grunebaum, Carole Hartmann, Richard Lannon, William Miller, Tamar Kron, Saralee Glasser, Joyce Maguire Pavao, Jeffrey Geller, and Alicia Lieberman had already been at work in related areas. Thus, we have had a growing group of colleagues with whom to share ideas and enthusiasm. All of them have participated in our project. As we explored, we discovered that significant work is being done by people in other fields: Anitra Pivnick and Brenda Schwab in medical anthropology; Gerald Grob, Judith Leavitt, and Ellen Dwyer in history; Loretta Finnegan in pediatrics; Vicki Heller and Molly Clark in obstetrics; and Robert Like in medicine.

Consumer interest and enthusiasm has been crucial: Nancy Bertchold in patient advocacy (Depression After Delivery) and Agnes Hatfield, Harriet Lefley, and Peggy Straw in family advocacy (Alliance

for the Mentally Ill) encouraged us along the way. Colleagues working with mothers with schizophrenia—Haven Miles and Fredericka Bettinger in Rhode Island and Peg Grandison in New Jersey—inspired us to realize that there are realistic options

There were colleagues who helped us to trace the unrecorded history of the treatment of psychotic pregnant women in the past. Alvin Becker directed us to the history of treatment of pregnancy in state hospitals in Massachusetts. Mona Bennett, then Deputy Commissioner of Mental Health, introduced us to Mary Remar, who gave us access to her informal repository of history for the Massachusetts mental health system. Walter Barton, who has been a central person on the frontlines of clinical care and administrative psychiatry, read an early draft of the manuscript and stimulated us with his recollections of the treatment of pregnant patients and insights about their care.

Throughout this journey, our interest has been spurred on by residents and staff colleagues at Metropolitan State Hospital and Cambridge Hospital and by the Aftercare staff at Newton-Wellesley Hospital.

We have had enormous support in our workplace: from office manager Louise Neiterman; from the Cambridge Hospital Department of Psychiatry, and especially its chairperson, Malkah Notman, who also read the manuscript; from Hadassah Hospital; from the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute; and from the Countway Library and its archivist, Richard Wolff. This project, most of all, was sustained and nurtured by the Department of Psychiatry at Newton-Wellesley Hospital, which has provided a base for our work. Above all, we thank our chairman and colleague Alvin Becker for making available departmental resources to facilitate our research. We are deeply grateful to Dace Skulte, who typed the manuscript with skill and care and continued to support us with her ongoing interest in the subject matter; and to Chris Bell in the library and her wonderful staff who did literature searches and provided ongoing technical support to help amass our extensive bibliographies.

Our extended families have believed in this project and cheered us along when our spirits flagged. David Apfel, Kalman Apfel, and Ira Hurwitz provided advice and counsel. Our husbands, Bennett Simon and Sidney Handel, read the manuscript thoroughly and provided in-depth editing and thought-provoking questions that helped shape the finished product. Our children—Amy, Ari, Celia, Jonathan, Michael, Molly, Shoshana, and Zev—make us realize the value of reproductive and productive activity in everyone's lives. Each has contributed in a unique way.

Finally, we want to thank our patients, who have taught us about their lives and touched us with their own human experiences. They reminded us that they are women and men, and not just mental patients. We have presented their stories in a way that protects confidentiality, but we have felt moved and personally encouraged in this endeavor by our patients and feel grateful to be able to give them a voice.