

# Raising Awareness About Perinatal Mental Health Through Film: Reflections from Drexel University NPASS's Documentary Screening Event

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## Background

### National Perinatal Association's Student Society (NPASS)

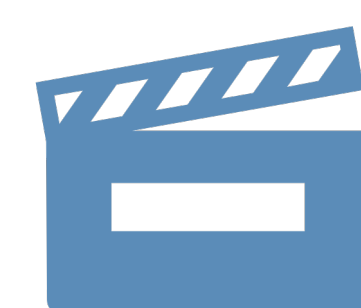
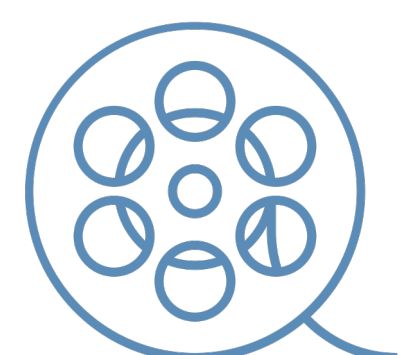
- Seeks to advance NPA's mission of improving perinatal care in the United States through student education, advocacy, service, and interdisciplinary collaboration

### Drexel University's NPASS chapter (established in 2021)

- First and only NPASS chapter based in a psychology department rather than a medical school
- Functions in collaboration with the Maternal and Child Health Student Organization (MCHSO) at Drexel's Dornsife School of Public Health, extending opportunities for interdisciplinary student collaboration
- Drexel NPASS members participate in the National Network of NICU Psychologists (NNNP) research activities

### May 2022: Drexel NPASS hosts a film screening event

- In May 2022, Drexel NPASS members successfully planned and executed a documentary film screening event
  - Documentary: *Year One*, by Erin Bagwell (2021)
  - Post-screening discussion moderated by Dr. Chavis Patterson (Director of Psychosocial Services, Division of Neonatology at CHOP; Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania)
- Films can: 1) raise awareness about important issues related to perinatal care 2) spark the dialogue that is necessary for generating practice, policy, and research ideas and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration



## Content

### Year One documentary screening event

- This 30-minute documentary addresses identity shifts during the perinatal period, the challenges of postpartum depression (PPD), and the importance of connection and community



Image source: <https://www.mother.ly/life/year-one-movie/>

### Event details:

- Advertising: Flyers, email listservs, and word of mouth
- Attendance: Undergraduate and graduate students participated in person and virtually (via Zoom)
- Costs: The event was free of cost for attendees. Planning and hosting were low-cost: funds from MCHSO were used to provide pizza and drinks for in-person attendees

### Post-screening moderated discussion

- Dr. Patterson moderated a lively discussion about the documentary, its implications, and important takeaways
- Further education was provided on the risk factors for and warning signs of PPD and ways to help those who are struggling
- Discussion topics: Postpartum experiences, PPD, perinatal mental health, representation, racial and socioeconomic disparities, public health implications, ideas for efforts and programming to support parents and families who are impacted by perinatal mood and anxiety disorders

## Reflections

Drexel NPASS's documentary screening event was well attended (30+ participants). The hybrid format and free cost boosted attendance. Participants were interested in the topic and the film and engaged in a dynamic, rich discussion.

This film screening event helped raise awareness about perinatal mental health and sparked the type of dialogue that is essential to generating practice, policy, and research ideas and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration.

## Practice Application

We hope to encourage and inspire other students and professionals to consider using film to:

1. Spread awareness about perinatal mental health, perinatal and neonatal care, and health equity
2. Foster interdisciplinary dialogue that can generate ideas for policy, practice, and research
3. Empower students to pursue careers dedicated to making a difference in the lives of perinatal individuals and their families

Suggestions for other documentaries relevant to perinatal care, perinatal mental health, and neonatal care:

- *Aftershock* (2022): Black maternal mortality crisis
- *When the Bough Breaks* (2017): Postpartum depression & psychosis
- *Trapped* (2016): Reproductive health care providers in the South struggling against controversial abortion regulations
- *Dark Side of the Full Moon* (2015): Perinatal mood and anxiety disorders
- *A Chance to Grow* (2000): NICU experience

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