

# Intervention for NICU moms reduces their trauma, anxiety

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(HealthDay)—An intervention aimed at reducing parental trauma and redefining the parental experience for those with very premature newborns is both feasible and cost-effective, according to a study published online Sept. 2 in *Pediatrics*.

Richard J. Shaw, M.D., from Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., and colleagues randomized 105 mothers of preterm infants (25 to 34 weeks' gestational age; >600 g) to receive a six-session intervention (62 participants) or to an active comparison group (43 participants). The intervention targeted parental trauma and facilitated infant redefinition (the process of changing the mother's [negative perceptions](#) of her infant and the parenting experience). The intervention involved psychoeducation, [cognitive restructuring](#), progressive muscle relaxation, and development of their trauma narrative.

The researchers found that, compared to the comparison group, mothers in the intervention group reported a significantly greater reduction in both [trauma symptoms](#) and depression. There were significant improvements in anxiety, with no differences between groups. Mothers with higher

ratings of baseline neonatal intensive care unit stress benefited more from the intervention compared with mothers who had lower ratings, according to moderator analysis ( $P = 0.036$ ).

"Given that improvements in mothers' distress may lead to improved infant outcomes, this intervention has the potential for a high public health impact," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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