Biography

Karin den Oudsten (1969) was born in The Hague and grew up in Maassluis, the Netherlands. After graduating in mathematics and business economics, she worked in the corporate sector for more than 22 years.

Following the birth of her children, she experienced mental health problems. These experiences motivated her to retrain professionally.

"I have dedicated my life to improving awareness of maternal mental health, with a special focus on postpartum psychosis and postpartum depression. After the birth of my first child, I developed postpartum depression. Following the birth of my second child, I experienced postpartum psychosis. Recovering from these illnesses made me realize how little people knew about maternal mental health—not only the general public, but often healthcare professionals as well. I decided that no mother or family should have to face these illnesses without understanding, recognition, and hope."

Among other qualifications, she completed higher professional education programs in hypnotherapy, regression therapy, and mental healthcare support. In 2020, she opened her own practice in a medical center, where she works as a therapist. In addition, she develops training programs on postpartum mental health issues for professionals and teaches on this subject.

"For nearly 15 years, I have educated healthcare professionals in the Netherlands, including nurses, midwives, therapists, and other mental health professionals. My teaching combines scientific knowledge with lived experience, helping professionals recognize perinatal mental illness earlier, communicate with compassion, and support recovery. As a therapist, I provide consultations for mothers recovering from postpartum mental illness and for their families. Recovery does not end when someone leaves the hospital. Mothers, partners, and loved ones often need support in understanding what happened and rebuilding their lives."

Karin has written books about her experiences and launched the website *Kraambedpsychose (www.kraambedpsychose.nl) and in English The Postpartum Psychosis Network (www.postpartumpsychosis.net)*. She also commissioned a documentary about the stigmatization of mothers with mental health challenges.

"I have written three books, including the English e-book called Postpartum Psychosis, it's a combination of lived experience with practical information for mothers, families, and healthcare professionals."

For founding Stichting Me Mam, a platform for mothers experiencing mental health problems related to pregnancy and childbirth, she received the Libelle Ster Award.

"I am the founder and chair of the Dutch foundation Me Mam, supporting mothers experiencing mental health problems during pregnancy and after childbirth. Through

education, writing, public speaking, and advocacy, we work to reduce stigma and improve awareness.”

Today, she is an author, educator, therapist, and lived-experience expert in maternal mental health.

“My mission is to bridge the gap between science and lived experience. I believe that every mother deserves to be heard, every family deserves support, and every healthcare professional deserves the knowledge to recognize and respond to maternal mental illness with confidence and compassion."