



Rye Brook psychotherapist Sherri Muroff Kalt is starting a therapeutic discussion group, *The Authentic Mom*, where women will explore their personal experiences of motherhood.

Talking about motherhood

By Masha Rumer

Motherhood can be stressful, but many women are afraid to acknowledge these negative feelings and end up compromising their quality of life.

"Getting your babies into the best enrichment programs, going to Harvard and working on Wall Street" are some of the stresses modern moms experience, said Rye Brook psychotherapist Sherri Muroff Kalt.

These negative feelings may also come from living in a hypercompetitive environment, from the media's messages about the proper way of parenting, and the woman's need to juggle the multiple roles of mother, wife, and professional.

Many feel society would stigmatize a mother with self-doubts, one who is not perfectly happy and selfless in the pressuring environment.

"It's causing women to feel so overwhelmed and to have such a profound sense of inadequacy, out of synch with their true needs and values," Muroff Kalt said.

But if the mother is afraid to admit she is having these feelings,

Please turn to page 8

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Continued from page 7

she may adversely impact her interaction with her children and her experience of motherhood.

Unfortunately, there are only a few outlets to express and deal with these negative feelings, Muroff Kalt said.

Not too long ago the media began to acknowledge these private struggles mothers experience but feel afraid to share.

A number of books recently hit bookstores, and Mary Jo Cody, former First Lady of New Jersey, spoke out about postpartum depression.

"I grew up in that kind of environment--extremely high-pressured, high-powered, super-competitive. I've lived through this personally when I had my daughter," said Muroff Kalt, who has worked as a staff psychotherapist at the Center for Preventive Psychiatry in Peekskill.

In her eight years at the Center, Muroff Kalt worked with a variety of patients, including ado-

lescents and mentally ill moms and their small children.

To address these issues, she has decided to create a safe space where mothers can openly discuss the cultural pressures of parenting, their own experiences and feelings--whether it's self-doubt, inadequacy, anxiety, or shame.

"It's really for me the logical extension of my personal experience and my professional background," Muroff Kalt said about her *The Authentic Mom* initiative.

The group will meet once a week, combining elements of a support group and classic group therapy, with Muroff Kalt as the group facilitator. They will meet at the Rye YMCA every Thursday from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Participants will pay \$30 per session. Those interested can reach Muroff Kalt at (914) 582-0801 or moms@TheAuthenticMom.com.