

TRANSCRIPTION: THE GOOD ENOUGH MUMS CLUB PODCAST - S1:E0

The Good Enough Mums Club is a toddle through the highs, lows & sleep deprivation of motherhood. Based on the musical of the same name the podcast is hosted by Founding Mothers creator/writer/producer Emily Beecher & co-producer/actress Jade Samuels. Every week Emily & Jade initiate a mum into the club to explore the complexities & realities of modern motherhood, where no days are the same & every mum does it differently. So whether you've finished the morning school run or it's just past bedtime, join us as we leave our judgy-pants behind & accept that sometimes being good enough is best.

S1: EPISODE 0 - with our hosts Emily Beecher and Jade Samuels

“We get it - it's tough. It's a tough gig.”

Being a mum is amazing, but it is HARD, and our hosts Emily Beecher and Jade Samuels know that all too well. This is your chance to get to know them better and hear about how this podcast came about, the musical that has inspired it as well as get some moral and emotional support on the realities of modern motherhood.

Emily Beecher: Hello, and welcome to episode zero of the Good Enough Mum's Club Podcast, where sometimes being good enough is best...

Jade Samuels: Just before we get started, this episode has got content warnings for postnatal psychosis, depression, and intrusive thoughts

Emily Beecher: Plus, we can get a little bit swears, just in case you're listening with the littles around.

Jade Samuels: Okay. So as this is the introduction episode, I think we should introduce ourselves.

Emily Beecher: Hi, I'm Emily . I am the writer, creator, producer and Founding Mother of The Good Enough Mums Club, which originally started as a musical But we do a lot of workshops as part of our work and as part of our development. And we love the workshops because we get to talk to a lot of moms and we just realized there are so many amazing stories.

Jade: Yeah. It was really important to us that the work just wasn't for the stage. So I'm Jade. I play Chantal, one of the characters in the show. I also produce the show. I'm a mom to Rae who's nine. She's absolutely off her tits crazy. I don't know if you can hear in my accent. I'm from Birmingham,

Emily: Missed that completely

Jade : (laughs) So subtle.

Emily : Join us. As we toddle through the highs, lows and sleep deprivation of motherhood from working on the show, we know that there are so many stories about what it's like to be a mom, and we wanted to share some of those stories with you.

Jade: So every week we're going to initiate a new mom into the club. We'll explore the complexities and realities of modern motherhood. So whether you finished the morning school run and, or you've just finished up bed time, join us as we leave our Judgy pants behind and accept that sometimes being good enough is best.

Emily: If you want to, to find out more about the musical or upcoming episodes of the podcast. Or if you want to join the club, you can follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram by searching Good Enough Mums Club. And don't forget to subscribe to the podcast rate and review wherever you listen.

Jade: Ok what we need to do with this episode was introduce ourselves and the good enough mum's club journey so far to you lovely lot

Emily: We caught up during lockdown and with Jade in Birmingham and me and London, we obviously jumped on Zoom to catch up

Jade: Emily's daughters with her dad, so she had a chance to relax and grab a cup of, whereas I trying to record this chat and oversee see Rae, my daughter learning in her times tables. Fun.

Um, I think we should start at the beginning, you know, how did the good enough mum's club come about?

Emily: So I had my daughter and I really struggled after I had her. Um, she's an amazing kid, but I. Just really thought that I was shit at everything. Everyone else seemed to be doing this amazing job. And it sort of was a struggle for me to sort of do anything. Laundry, go out of the house, you know, all of these things.

And it turned out that I had postnatal depression, but for me, mine started quite late. They think that it came at some point between three months. And five months postpartum. Um, and I wasn't diagnosed until 10 months. So sort of, I'd been living with Maisie, raising Maisie for those 10 months just thinking that I was awful and I eventually went to the doctor and they sort of figured it out and put me on some meds and it was great for like six weeks.

I felt like a different person and. Then at 13 months I had a psychotic break. I basically developed Postpartum Psychosis. I was having intrusive thoughts. I was having really horrible visions of myself, um, dying, um, and had visions of hurting myself. And it got really, really scary. Um, and so I ended up going to the GP sort of in tears.

Because I was so afraid that these sort of meetup things would cross over with my real life. And I wouldn't be able to tell the difference. And they literally gave me some meds called my husband to come home from work, put him on suicide watch and sent me to bed. And I slept almost nonstop for 72 hours.

And then they got me into an outpatient program, a postnatal depression, outpatient program. And I met this amazing psychiatrist. And so I was really cared for - a huge difference. Things like my meds. I was on 50 milligrams of sertraline and I ended up on 250 in two weeks. I was so significantly under medicated.

And I still was struggling with like, why am I not good at this? And my therapist said, why don't you just write some stuff down? Why don't you just write out some of the things that you were struggling with? So I always say, and you've heard this before, Jade, that I started writing on the notes app on my phone, because I could like, wee, breastfeed and type with my thumb. And so that's what I try to do. Moms are the ultimate multitaskers aren't we?

But the other thing that happened was I was so thrilled that there was actually something wrong with me that I wasn't just this totally crap mom and everyone else was doing great. And I sucked. That I wore it like a badge of pride. I went around telling everyone, Hey, there's something wrong with me. I don't suck. And what happened. What I discovered was I suddenly became the person that everybody else confessed their struggles too. And people started sharing story after story about me with like, Oh, well I've had this, or I've had that. And I've never told anyone, or I'm really struggling with this, or I cry constantly or all of these things.

And I was like, This is special. Like there's a reason women are sharing these stories and, and there's also a reason why they're ashamed yeah. Of these stories. So I just started collecting them. And then that combined with the writing, I knew I had to do something with it.

And my background was originally as an actress. And then as a producer, so. I was just thinking about it and that that's the beginnings of how the Good Enough Mum's Club was

Jade: When you first told me that story. I was just like, how brave genuinely I couldn't believe how brave you are. Firstly. And, um, Secondly, it made me weirdly, as you said, feel better because I also struggled as a mom. I really felt like I had the pressure on me to be perfect at parenting because I felt that the world was really in on me.

Emily: That leads really nicely into how we met. Jade and I met on Twitter. Basically, I don't even know how we found each other. Do you remember?

Jade: Well, you know, they said they do everything online these days innit, you get your shopping, you find your partners, you get your knickers.

Obviously I was, I was still at drama school and I'm always studying. I was in my third year at Rose Bruford. And it was about September. So I just gone into 3rd year. We were going into rehearsals for Top Girls and Emily and I were just messaging in the theater industry, both mums and she messaged me and she was like, we've got a space in the show that I think you'd be perfect for. Would you like to get involved? And I was like, I'm really sorry. I'm too early in my third year to leave at this point. But I did say to her, look, if anything else comes up, it's a project had lived to be involved with. So come the February, the space came available again. I could have done the show, for my final production at drama school and been graded off that production.

So I got my first job, which I thought would never, ever happen while I was still training at drama school, which was great and scary and really exciting all at the same time. So yeah, that's how that happened.

Emily: I think the most important thing, the most important part about this story is that. I mean, you were at drama school with a kid, which is almost unheard of, it's such a remarkable story of sort of triumph and fighting for what you want.

Jade: Thank you so much. Yeah. So what it was, September, 2009, my mum had ended up very, very poorly in hospital. Um, she was in there for like a month and I'd come away from drama school for a couple of weeks. I'd already completed my first year. I had taken two weeks out to try and organize my life. And they'd said to me, okay, why don't you defer for the next year?

Because it's really important that you feel comfortable and that you've not missed out. And your head's in the right space, obviously, because everyone knows drama schools so hard anyway. So my mum comes out of hospital and a few weeks later I find that out I'm pregnant, which everyone was like, what? And they just assumed all that's it then she's dropped out of drama school. Anyway, she's got herself pregnant. That's that? There's no way in hell Jade is going to continue with acting. And I says to everybody at the time, well, I will, I just carried on, had Rae. And then Rae was about six, seven months old and I started getting ready to move back to London, Rae and I. Went back to, to the south. I say London, its Sidcup so borderline. I had to go into a completely different year. I didn't know anybody, everybody that I went to drama school with had graduated at this point was very sleep deprived with a baby who was one. And I decided, no, I'm going to go, I'm going to do it. So we went down, basically. I studied everything that everybody else did with a child in toe.

Emily: With a child in toe and the sleep deprivation of like. Toddlerhood. I mean, it's insane.

Jade: Yeah. Um, I couldn't do it again. Yeah, not if you paid me all the money in the world, I'll tell you that for free, if I'd have thought about it too much. I don't think I'd have done it to be completely honest with [00:10:00] you, but I just put my head down and I got on with it and I graduated. I'm still working in the industry, but, um, you can definitely tell my child went to drama school because she is so jazz handy and peformative.

Emily: Yes, I get that totally Maisie is exactly the same from all the rehearsals. The two of them together are hilarious.

Jade: No seriously, all jokes aside, I don't know how I did it. People ask me regularly, how did you complete drama school with a child? And obviously all my family were in Birmingham and I knew very early on. I mean, God love him, Rae's dad and I didn't work out and I knew it wasn't going to work out for various reasons. So I made the decision that it was going to be Rae and I from, she was very, very young and, um, he's involved completely in her life. But he lives in the Midlands. So it was just Rae and I.

Emily: It's weird because we both had that experience didn't we? Because, you know, I came back to the UK. I was in, I grew up in Canada. I lived here for sort of 10 years. Went back to Canada, had my daughter. And then when my marriage fell apart, I came back here with Maisie who was just about two. And we sort of had two solid years where her dad was back in Canada, 90% of the time. And so what there is, and I think you can see it in both of our relationships with our daughters. There's a definite like Mini-Me, mommy and me kind of

thing. And I think, I think one of the things that I love about doing the show is that actually all three of the producers, we have another producer Sarah Shead, and she's based in Leeds

Jade: Shout out Sarah.

Emily: (laughs) And Jade's obviously, you know, in Birmingham, we're all single moms. So we're all doing it with our kids and our kids are all sort of within a year of age. So when we were starting to work on the show, that was something that was really important to us. I approached Jade because we wanted to, we were absolutely sure that every single actress in the show should be a mum.

And we were struggling to find young women who were in the industry that have kids. And it's changed a lot in the last sort of five, eight years. But at the time it was really, really tough

Jade: God, it was mad. I remember walking into the audition and I looked around at everybody and there were all at least seven, eight years older than me. They all had this great repertoire of a musical theater career that they'd all done.

Emily: You know, you may have felt that sitting in the room, but a huge number of those women had 10 year gaps on their CVs or were like, this is my first chance to do something, my kids are older now I've stepped out of the industry for 10 years.

You know, I remember people crying in the auditions because they'd never talked about their kids. And that was one of our first questions was like, Hey, tell us about your kids. Not like who's your agent and how many famous people do you know? It was always like, tell us about your family. And I, I remember people just being like, I have always pretended that I don't have kids.

And I just thought, God, that's awful that you have to kind of hide that, which is why now the show has, you know, our director is our mom. Our arranger is a mum, everyone involved in the creative team, us three as producers. It's mum, mum, mum, mum, mum. And we're always. That's something that we're super proud of and that we fight for

Jade: That pushes us through to the, the point of inclusivity. And it's something that you and I hugely believe in. It's massive for the whole of The Good Enough Mums Club.

Emily: I'm huge believer that the more diverse the room is the better it is for everyone. Um, but I think we last year did a rewrite of the script. And I rewrote it specifically to ensure that I embedded race and class, sexuality to some degree, into the script so that it couldn't, I guess I always say that it couldn't be taken by a middle aged white man and cast as a purely white middle class show.

Which it was never intended to be, and which we'd always had some level of some sort of diversity in the casting, but I wanted it to be so embedded in the script that it couldn't, it couldn't be erased accidentally. And I guess as we've sort of gone on, we've had so many conversations about that. And I think with this particular round of casting, with the work that we're doing now, the majority of the cast isn't white and it makes me so happy to be able to say that.

And that's obviously, you know, by design, but it's also, class-wise everyone in our organization is really, really different. And we made sure that we brought some working class voices on board. We're all about raising up voices that are different than our own. And if you are constantly going into the room with everyone that looks like you, or sounds like you, then that's never gonna happen.

Jade: I have to say as well, the whole inclusivity agenda that the whole world should take on and fight for. It makes it easier. Because you're a token. So often as, um, a person who is not white and as someone who's mixed race, my dad's family come from the Caribbean, Jamaica specifically, and my mom's family is of the white Irish, diaspora.

It definitely makes a difference when you walk in a room and. They call it a mask. It's called your mask. So when you walk into a room of white people, you put on your, your white people mask to have a conversation with them and you have to put the mask on and kind of hide certain elements of yourself to make everybody in that room feel comfortable.

And I don't have that mask in Good Enough Mums cCub at all. There's lots of women who have similar stories to myself, they're mothers, they're women, they're actresses. And now that they're, most of them are not from the white diaspora. It makes it so great that I can just go in that room and be like, Hey, this is me, it was a safe space and it's much safer the space and it needs to be like that, that, that space is a welcoming [00:16:00] for people from non-white, traditional, British middle class backgrounds, to be able to be who they are.

Emily: mean, I'm thrilled to hear you say that, that for me is absolutely brilliant. And I think it doesn't just have to be about the room. I think it also has to be with the people that we talk to. And I guess we've always done that. Haven't we? We've always gone into the community. So. Because for me, the show is literally a collection of other women's stories. I didn't make up the things that happen in the show. They are real things that happened to real people and I've put them together and interwoven them. Yeah.

Jade: And as a result because of that, we decided, okay, so if we're going to be doing that, we need to actively seek out those different spaces, have conversations with people from very different backgrounds so that the stories that we're collecting are not being altered to fit that world. They are off that world. Does that make sense? What I'm saying?

Emily: Yeah, for sure. Last year, do you want to talk a little bit about some of the amazing workshops we did last year before we did the rewrite?

Jade: Oh yeah. We were so blessed. People opened up their hearts and their spaces and their communities to us.

The one that always springs to mind is only went to the mosque. So I'm from inner-city Birmingham in area code Balsall Heath B12, shout out. And we went into a mosque in that area and the stories, ah, for one, can we just say that they fed us from the second we got in!

Emily: They were amazing.

Jade: It was a great experience, but their stories were so diverse. And so, um, Interesting.

Emily: They were so welcoming. I felt so welcomed and invited.

Jade: I'd say what was really interesting was the Grenfell group that we met with.

Emily: We met with a group of moms that sort of live in the shadow of Grenfell. Um, it was set up for us by the, uh, amazing ChickenShed Theatre.

So it's the kids, the mums of the kids who do ChickenShed. And that was a, that was a script changing workshop. I literally rewrote one of the characters based on one of the mums that we met there, but it was amazing because I did the workshop with Hannah, our director, and so we were the only white people in the room and it was a super great mix of people that were sort of first and second generation immigrants from different places.

People who'd had really different backgrounds and it was just really, really lovely to have sort of really honest conversations of what the challenges they face raising their children. And I always say, you know, we all have the same number one challenge is that we have to keep our kids alive. That's like our number one job above and beyond everything else. But different people have different struggles with just trying to do even that. Um, and that was such an incredible and inspiring group of women who spoke so openly with me and, you know, people don't have to do that when we go into a workshop, it's, it's available to them. It's hopefully a two way conversation.

That one was amazing just because of how honest they were. And this one, mum, in particular who shared a devastating story with us that ended up becoming a new storyline in the show.

Jade: I just felt really honored to be able to go into them spaces and hear those conversations off these amazing women.

Emily: I think that's how I feel about all the workshops. Like every time, or even when we do a show and someone comes up to you after the show, it's like, Oh, I've never told someone this, or I feel really awful about that, and I just, I get that you get that. You get it. I guess that's kind of, for me, one of the things that the show sort of hopefully says to people is A, you're not alone, B you don't have to be perfect, but also like we get it.

We get that. It's, that's one of your lines, isn't it? (laughs) I think it's actually, I'm quoting the show. I think it was one of your lines. Like we get it. It's tough. It's a tough gig.

Jade: So on topic actually. We've got a couple of questions that were meant to ask each other. Well, speaking of the hardest part of being a mother, what would you say you struggle most with most Em?

Emily: Oh God can all of it be my answer. Um, I think, you know what, it's the relentlessness. I think lockdown has made this 800 million times worse than it normally is. Is that, you know? Yes, you're usually on full time, but it's the relentlessness, it never stops and then in lockdown, you know. Yeah. Usually if she's at school, I only have to kind of make two meals a day, but in lockdown it's three meals a day and it's like, Oh, I've got to teach you!

Jade: Sometimes four or five depends on how much they are growing

Emily : A gazillion snacks.

Jade: Can we just say shout out Marcus Rashford for the free school meals campaign. It is hard feeding these little unemployed people in my house right about now, can I just say that?

Emily: Yeah, but you know, I think the hardest thing for me about motherhood is relentlessness. I just think it doesn't stop, lock down. That's worse, you know, it's like when you get touched out, when I had, Maisie's constantly tapping me on the shoulder and it like makes me want to explode, like turn into the Incredible Hulk. Like, or those toys, when you like to try and press the button and it explodes, that's me a lot of the time.

Like if you tap me one more time, I'm going to lose my ever loving mind.

Jade: And I mean, I love Tik-Tok, but if she, if my child does some sort of shuffling dance in front of me for the 19th time.. and now you have to smile along and, and you, you, I am interested. I love you so much. I really do. But I cannot watch you do that dance again. I'm really suffering.

Emily: So what is your hardest part?

Jade: Oh my God, constant guilt. I've never been made to feel so guilty by someone that I do so much for.

Emily: Yeah. Yeah.

Jade: Literally I could buy her everything. I could do everything. I could sit with her for four hours. I could do the Tik-Tok dances I can. You know, FaceTime group chats with their friends. This is just now generally speaking, and it's never enough. It's always like, so what are we doing next? I'm sitting down with a cup of tea bab'. What are you doing?

Emily : My favorite is 'you never do anything for me'. It's really, really, really just after I've cleaned the kitchen that you've made slime in and like, Oh, that one always gets me.

Jade : So the guilt and, um, I suppose that you, do you learn to be, you're like, yes, it does turn on. And yes, this maternal instinct kicks in, but there's the selflessness. Do you know what I mean? You never realize just how selfish you were as a human until you have to care about somebody else all the time, more before yourself. And I suppose that's been one of the good things that I've had to really learn to balance. I suppose the gym has been huge and that for me, um, I have to have me time.

I'm still a person. And I think that I'll be honest with you. That was one of the biggest reasons I went back to drama school, when people were asking me, why are you doing this? Why are you doing this? I can't not have Rae that wasn't an option. And I, can't not be an actor because if I have Rae and don't become an actor, I'll resent her for the rest of my life.

If I become an actor and don't have Rae, I resent the industry for the rest of my life. So I just have to make it work. I'm really stubborn. So yeah, I would say definitely learning to be selfish because. The selflessness will take over.

Emily: I think too like – I will put myself in timeout and she'll be like, what? Yeah. I'll be like, no, I just need 10 minutes.

But yeah, I just, sometimes you need to be like, Mommy needs a time out. Mommy needs a break and mommy needs to not see your face for a little while in the nicest possible way. And just kind of put myself in my room and just breathe.

So obviously we have the musical that we've created and we're in the process of sort of getting ready to do exciting things with that. But we've added the podcast because we want to be able to reach more people. And I just wonder what do you hope that mum's take away from both the show, but also from listening to the podcast?

Jade: Well, the podcast kind of feels like an extension of the workshops. Doesn't it? The workshops seem so important in themselves and it was such a shame that the show and the podcast, the show in the workshops couldn't co-exist, so we've kind of found a way to, to let that happen. So I just hope. Honestly that some of that guilt, some of that mum guilt, some of those feelings of am I allowed to feel like this get, get eased a little bit and people are a bit kinder to themselves. How about yourself? What would you like?

Emily: Look, I always want people to feel less alone. I think that that's really important for me. So I'm hoping that by bringing the guests on and hearing, you know, a series of different experiences, takes, thoughts on motherhood will show us how different yet connected we are. But I think the biggest thing for me is I think it can be really, really lonely as a mom, especially early motherhood. I think also, you know, teenagerhood when you're not connecting with other mums in the playground or play groups and those sorts of things. So I always just hope that people listen and connect with [00:25:43] something in every mums story that lets them know that they're not alone in how they feel or what they struggle with.

Last question, Jade, would you have any more children?

Jade: I mean, technically, but at this point at 34, I'd be classed as a geriatric mum. I know I've still got time, but yeah, a hundred percent, I loved been a mum at those early stages.

And I think I said this actually lockdown, really highlighted for me how much I did enjoy being a mum because being a working mom, doing a thousand jobs and going to the gym and trying to keep everyone happy and keep the plates juggling - I wasn't as hands-on, and cos as she was getting older, she wasn't needed anymore, but being more involved in getting right down to the nitty gritty and the basics and all those, those tiny details, me being responsible for it all again, when you go oh. This is why I did really love it. The world needs more of me. What can I say?

Emily : I agree with that one.

Jade : Are you okay with me asking you Emily? Would you like more children?

Emily: God, it's a tricky. Yes Is my sort of overwhelming answer. I'd never imagined only having one. I always wanted two, three years apart, hopefully a boy and a girl. Cause it's so stereotypical.

Jade: You've really got that picture in your head.

Emily: I have this picture in my head and then, I'm a single mom and I don't get that second child. Three years after Maisie I was literally living in London with a three year old, totally by myself, writing the show, you know, not knowing what was going to happen.

I have tried, I did have, um, fertility treatment two years ago. Um, and it didn't work. And so it was like, Ooh, I could, she kept going and kept going. But that felt like financially, I just wasn't in a position to do that. And now I've kind of hit 45. So if you're a geriatric mother at 34 Jade, I am like the octogenarian mother at 45.

And I know it's still, probably physically possible. You know, I remember when Maisie started school, there were mums in their fifties and it is still possible. I just don't know how I make it work, you know, on my own facing fertility treatment. You know, I still struggle with my mental health, you know, after the postnatal depression and the psychosis, that's, that's kind of been a knock on fact that I live with now.

And I do wonder. Is it safe for me to do that? Would I go, would I experience the same things again? And is it healthy for me to put myself through a process which could repeatedly fail? It's not like, you know, when you just are with someone and you're young and you're having sex and the more sex you have, the more chances you have, it's much more clinical for them.

Jade: That was exactly what happened to me by the way. Just for clarification. No jokes aside. I would never do this on my own again. I love Rae with all my heart and soul, and she's every, every, she's a part of me in a way words can't even describe. And every, every achievement I get doesn't come close to when she does something amazing or even completely mundane for the first time. I can say that hands down, every achievement I've ever got doesn't even come within the realm of Rae, like cos she's dyslexic and the first time she read the book, like properly on her own, nothing comes close to that for me. Do you know what I mean? And stuff like that, but I would never do this on my own again. And yeah. Shout out to all those people who decide after they've done it once on their own they're going to do it again because there's no way my mental health, I think I'd really struggle again.

Emily: Yeah. And that's kind of what I'm facing. And then I also look at Maisie and just think, okay, she's so gorgeous, you know, um, we've talked,

Jade: She looks like you. Of course, she's gorgeous Emily.

Emily: (laughs) but she's also, you know, like you said, about Rae's dyslexia, she's like a very anxious child. And when I see her do something that overcomes that, I just think, what would it be like to split that attention and what, you know, she's so wonderful. Maybe I should just be happy enough that I have this amazing, wonderful kid that I love to pieces. And maybe that's - that's enough.

(Music plays)

Jade: As we said earlier, don't forget you can join the club by following us on Twitter or Facebook or Instagram by searching: Good Enough Mum's club. And we'd also love it if you

can hit that subscribe button for the podcast, rate and review, wherever you listen. And if you know a mum who would like this, please tell her about it.

Emily: If the stories in this podcast connected to you or made you think, or even hopefully reassured you that you're doing okay as a mom or you're not alone. You'll absolutely love the episodes we have coming up for you.

Jade Samuels: Thank you so much for listening and we'll see you later

Emily Beecher: Bye!