

"Ali is a very intelligent girl!" says mom Leah (in January).

TEEN MOM 2'S LEAH

SPINNING OUT OF CONTROL!

CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN IMAGE: SCOTT GRIES; COURTESY OF LEAH CALVERT / TWITTER; COURTESY OF LEAH CALVERT/INSTAGRAM

As a mom of three daughters — one with special needs — **Calvert** couldn't handle her anxiety

It was 4 o'clock in the morning, and Leah Calvert had worked herself into a panic. For months, the star of MTV's *Teen Mom 2* (Wednesdays, 10 P.M.) had been stressing about 4-year-old daughter Aliannah's rare form of muscular dystrophy (she's the only child in the world who has been diagnosed). Now Leah had to find a way to buy the \$20,000 motorized wheelchair health insurance refused to cover. "I was thinking about what I could do to make things better. My mind would not shut down," explains the West Virginia native — also mom of Ali's twin, Aleeah, with ex Corey Simms, 23, and 18-month-old Adalynn with husband of two years Jeremy, 25. "Everything was spinning out of control." Her doctor prescribed antianxiety meds, but the pills "made things worse," says Leah, who was so drowsy she could barely hold a coherent conversation. "I felt like a druggie. It was overwhelming." But not insurmountable. The beauty-school student, 22, found drug-free ways to cope. She shares her "very scary" struggle with *Us*' Sarah Grossbart.

Take Us back to the day Ali was diagnosed.

It was very emotional. We had searched for so long,



Daddy-daughter day: Jeremy, Aleeah, Adalynn and Aliannah (clockwise from top).



Ali sat tall with her mom and sisters on a June excursion.

and so many people, including Corey, wanted me to give up and say it was just slow development. But, as her mom, I knew I couldn't settle for that. Still, it was hard to hear "muscular dystrophy," because I know it's progressive: It's going to get worse.

Do you think that was the start of your anxiety?

I was feeling very, very, very overwhelmed and scared for my daughter. I felt like, as a mommy, there was nothing I could do. And so many times I just felt alone. My parents are supportive, but they've never been through it, and Ali's dad was kind of in denial about the situation. I felt like I was the only one facing reality.

Was there a breaking point?

The wheelchair had a major impact. It's not like I could say, "Oh, let me write you a check for \$20,000." We have bills to pay, mouths to feed. And I was having a hard time with Corey

"I would get disappointed in myself. I felt like I needed to push harder. I caused a lot of anxiety for myself."

LEAH TELLS US

"All I've ever wanted is to show my girls a good example," Leah tells Us.



accepting that Ali even *needed* the wheelchair. Everything just hit me at once, and I couldn't control it.

So you went to the doctor.

I wasn't sleeping and I just thought, If I can't stay healthy, I can't take care of my daughters. He prescribed a low dose of medication and recommended that I see a therapist.

How did the meds make you feel?

Really, really drowsy. At first I thought my body just needed to adjust. But finally I was like, "Something's not right." I couldn't swing out of it. I was starting to panic, actually.

Where was Jeremy during this?

He was very supportive. He hugged me up and was like, "Honey, I know this isn't you." He was just as



The Original Cast Returns!

MTV is getting the group back together! *Teen Mom's* Amber Portwood, 24, and daughter Leah, 5; Catelynn Lowell, 22; and Maci Bookout, 23, and son Bentley, 5 (above, from right), will reunite for season 5. A source says the network axed erotic author Farrah Abraham, 23 (left),

"because she's a bad example." That leaves more 2015 airtime for Bookout's romance and Portwood's college life. Lowell tells *Us* she can't wait to show off her second pregnancy with fiancé Tyler Baltierra, 22 (they placed Carly, 5, for adoption): "Viewers get to see what it's like for us to parent."



worried as I was. He stayed home from work to take me to the doctor.

You two have had some intense on-camera fights. Did that add to your anxiety?

I think every wife has a little bit of anxiety because men give it to them! But I don't think that really played into it. Even now, we'll have a little argument here and there, but I love him just as much when we're arguing as I do when we're not.

What steps did the doctor take?

First, he lowered the dosage, but it still made me drowsy. So I just stopped taking it. My doctor explained that some people just can't take that type of medication, and I guess I'm that type of person. So I started seeing a therapist. Being able to talk to somebody was just what I

needed. There's also a girl who takes her daughter to the same physical therapist Ali goes to, and we kind of connected. She's someone I can reach out to when I'm having a hard time. She went through the same thing.

Do you still have moments when you feel anxious?

Of course I get stressed. But I'll stop, take a deep breath and call a friend or my therapist. I also love to exercise, so I'll go for a walk and listen to music — Pandora is my favorite.

And Ali has a loaner wheelchair!

She loves it! She will ride it until the battery is dead, and after we charge it, she'll ride it again. Seeing her feel so free and so happy just lights my world. And I let Aleeah ride it so she doesn't feel left out. Jeremy and I told her we're going to get her

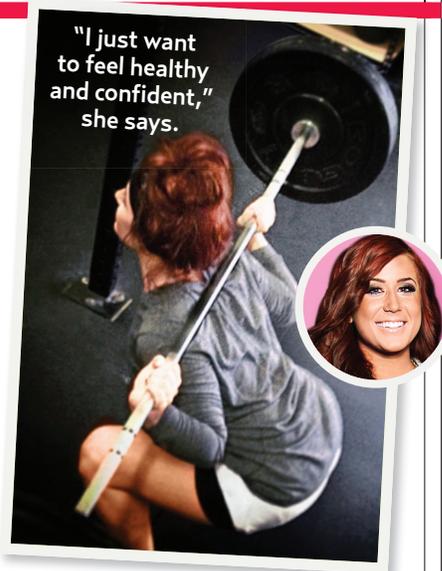
a four-wheeler or something so she can go fast too, with her sissy.

You sold your house on the show. Have you found a new one?

We're moving to a farm and getting Ali horses for therapy. The house is handicap-accessible — toilets, doorways, sinks, showers, everything.

Do you feel completely better?

Oh, my goodness, 10 times better! The struggles with Ali will always be there. I'm expecting ups and downs and things I don't want to hear. But I know in my heart I'm going to handle everything the best way I possibly can. I'm in a great, great place. **US**



"I just want to feel healthy and confident," she says.

CHELSEA'S HOT BODY!

Chelsea Houska has dropped more than her baby-daddy: Since committing to five-day-a-week CrossFit classes in June, the *Teen Mom 2* star, 22, has shed inches. "I was so happy with how fast I saw results," Houska — mom of Aubree, 4 — tells *Us* of the squat-filled sessions. (She has also adopted an organic diet.) Says the South Dakotan, "I'm noticing muscles I haven't seen since I played high school sports!"

CLOCKWISE FROM MAIN IMAGE: SCOTT GIBBS; COURTESY OF CHELSEA HOUSKA; MTV; COURTESY OF AMBER PORTWOOD; TWITTER; COURTESY OF CATELYNN LOWELL; INSTAGRAM; COURTESY OF MACI BOOKOUT; INSTAGRAM; ALL ACCESS PHOTO