

Group support during pregnancy

The Perinatal Mental Health Service provides group support to mothers and fathers who attend antenatal classes at Wollongong Hospital as well as other community groups. During these sessions we raise awareness and promote understanding about some of the difficulties that arise during this period of change. This support aims to normalise and validate some of the many common experiences parents have in response to bringing a new baby into the world. We also aim to provide parents with a new set of skills to help them cope with change.

Group support after birth

The Perinatal Mental Health Service runs an eight week post natal depression and anxiety group for mothers. This eight week group consists of eight, two hour sessions, in a family friendly environment. Free, fully accredited childcare is provided for your children.

We bring our values of connection, hope and compassion to the group program, and aim to help mothers feel that they are not alone in their struggles. Mothers have the opportunity to notice what leads to feelings such as anxiety and depression, to re-connect with what is important to them, and to make changes in their lives.

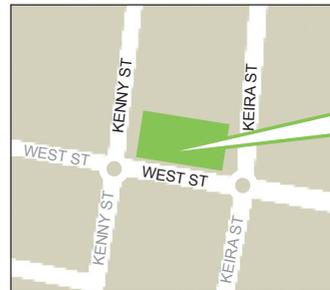
"Looking back now I realise how easy it would have been to just tell someone and I needn't have struggled through it alone"

Would you like to know more?

Please give us a call on 4220 7688.

Your GP, midwife or obstetrician can refer you to this program via secure fax (4226 6489) or secure messaging.

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM



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Perinatal Mental Health Program



Pregnancy and early parenthood

Pregnancy is a time of happiness and celebration. It is also a time of significant change that some parents may find difficult. Parenthood brings many physical, emotional and social changes. These changes can at times be overwhelming when you are getting to know and adjust to your new baby.

Anxiety and depression

It is more common than you think. 1 in 7 women will experience depression in the year following the birth of their child and 1 in 10 women experience depression during pregnancy. Seeking help early on in pregnancy is important. 40-50% of men whose partners are struggling are likely to also be experiencing depressive symptoms so seeking help for Dad is important too.

The perinatal period is the time from conception until 12 months after childbirth. If you are experiencing any of the symptoms below, the Perinatal Mental Health program may be able to help you and your partner effectively meet the emotional demands of pregnancy and parenting.

- Do you have trouble sleeping?
- Do you get irritable with everyone, or are you more irritable than usual?
- Do you find yourself getting anxious about the smallest things that concern your baby?
- Do you feel like your emotions are on a rollercoaster?
- Are you often confused, or feel you are forgetting things and can't concentrate?
- Do you sometimes feel like your baby would be better off without you?
- Do you feel like you can't be the kind of parent you want to be?

What does the Perinatal Mental Health Program do?

The Perinatal Mental Health program is staffed by therapists experienced in the area of perinatal mental health. The Perinatal Mental Health program supports mothers, fathers and families of those experiencing perinatal depression and anxiety, during the pregnancy period, or in the first year of the child's life. The Perinatal Mental Health program also supports mothers and fathers who are experiencing perinatal grief and loss.

What does this support look like?

The Perinatal Mental Health program provides **individual and group based support** for mothers and fathers who are experiencing perinatal mental health difficulties such as depression, anxiety, grief and loss.

What is the cost?

Our services are offered at no charge to you upon referral by an appropriate health provider. This program is funded under Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS).

Referral

For more information, please call 4220 7688.

Your GP, midwife or obstetrician can refer you to this program via secure fax (4226 6489) or secure messaging.

Cultural sensitivity

We are committed to being sensitive to culturally diverse communities. We encourage you to advise us of any specific needs you may have.