

Anxiety and Depression during Pregnancy and the Post-natal period

All parents and caregivers can experience feelings of anxiety and depression during their lives, including during pregnancy and after having a baby. It is helpful to know that you and your family are not alone and that there is a range of strategies and resources available to help manage your feelings during challenging times.

If you feel things have worsened, are no longer manageable or there are concerns about your safety, please seek help either through your GP, the Women's Health Unit staff, the Emergency Department or Peninsula Health Mental Health Telephone Triage 24 hour number **1300 792 977**.

Your support "team"

During this time, it is helpful to think of who is in your support 'team'. Your support 'team' may consist of your partner, family members, friends, neighbours, and/or professionals like your doctor, Maternal Child Health Nurse, or counsellor.

Resources

For When is a mental health linkage service, accessible via 1300 24 23 22

<https://forwhenhelpline.org.au/>

Mum Space <https://www.mumspace.com.au/> and **Dad Space** <https://www.dadspace.com.au/> provides support, free online treatment for depression and anxiety, and resources for the emotional health of new mums and dads at every step.

MumMoodBooster and **Mum2BMoodBooster** provide free online treatment for antenatal depression, post-natal depression and anxiety, accessible via Mum Space

<https://www.mumspace.com.au/>

DadBooster is a free online six-session program for Dads experiencing depression, accessible via Dad Space <https://www.dadspace.com.au/programs/dadbooster/>

Baby Steps is an online program providing information on caring for a newborn, how parents can look after themselves and how they can support each other. Accessed via

<https://babysteps.org.au/web/index>

Ready to Cope newsletter is a free service you can sign up for providing ideas and options to better feel prepared for the emotional realities of pregnancy or early parenthood. Sign up here:

<https://www.cope.org.au/readytocope/>

COPE – Centre of Perinatal Excellence <https://www.cope.org.au/> provides support for the emotional challenges of becoming a parent.

This Way Up provides free and low cost online courses to improve your well-being with a focus on anxiety and depression, accessible via <https://thiswayup.org.au/>

MindMum is a free app which support wellbeing available on your App store platform

What Were We Thinking! supports parents around managing behaviours, building a routine, using new ideas and ways of thinking to help you adjust to your new role.

PANDA – Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia <https://www.panda.org.au/> supports the mental health of expecting and new parents.

CARES 4me program is a free phone or internet based program that provides regular emotional support and assistance for a person's mental health and wellbeing. It is available through the Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria 1300 269 438 (M-F 10am-8:30pm) or <http://www.arcvic.org.au/>

Beyond Blue <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/> provides options and supports for your mental health.

Black Dog Institute <https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/about/> provides resources and supports for anxiety and depression.

Parentline is a telephone counselling and support service for parents and carers of 0-18 year old 13 22 89

Smiling Mind is a free app that has many mindfulness exercises and activities.

Daybreak if you, or someone you know, has a problem with alcohol this app can help change a person's relationship with alcohol.

Ways to look after yourself

Doing regular physical activity is a good way to help prevent or manage mild depression so be sure to add some regular exercise to your self-care activities. Many people find mindfulness, deep breathing and grounding techniques to be helpful.

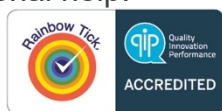
Mindfulness is paying full attention to what is going on in you and outside you, moment by moment, without judgment. You observe your thoughts, feelings, and the sensations of taste, touch, smell, sight and sound, you are fully aware of your surroundings. Mindfulness does not try to quiet your mind or control your experience — you just observe what is happening in the moment.

Deep breathing is a relaxation technique involving taking deep breaths. Start by getting in a comfortable seated position. Inhale for a count of 5. Exhale for a count of 5. Continue this breathing pattern for at least a few minutes.

Grounding helps to control flashbacks, anxiety or other uncomfortable feelings by helping you return to the present moment. *Physical* grounding techniques might involve touching, feeling, breathing, movement, listening, or the 5-4-3-2-1 method. *Mental* grounding techniques might include using maths and numbers, playing a memory game, thinking of an activity you enjoy doing, using an anchoring statement, or imagining leaving painful feelings behind or in a box. *Soothing* grounding techniques might include picturing the face of someone you love, repeating kind and self-compassionate phrases to yourself, sitting with your pet, visualising your favourite place, listening to music, or thinking about how to feels to touch something comforting.

There is more information online on these techniques but if symptoms become unmanageable please seek professional help.

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