

Perinatal (pregnancy) and Infants Mental Health Services- SAFE START

Navigators Guide



Being pregnant, having a newborn or a young child to care for can be both rewarding and challenging.

Emotions can range from being within normal limits to becoming overwhelmed, and anxious. Whilst this can be common, for some new or expecting parents it can also be very stressful.

So what happens when someone close to you receives the news that they are expecting a baby, and what if feelings about this news are mixed?

Questions that may be asked include

- ❖ How will I look after and provide for my baby?
- ❖ How will I look after myself particularly if I become unwell both during pregnancy and the weeks, months, years to follow?
- ❖ Who will be there to help me adjust to parenting - partner, family, support base?

It is important that your loved one is linked into services to regularly check the pregnancy's progress and to answer any questions that she and her partner/family may have.

Why is care during and after birth important?

- ❖ Up to 15% of women experience major depression during and after birth.
- ❖ 1-2 women/1000 births develop postpartum psychosis after birth which constitutes a psychiatric emergency as it heightens the risk of suicide and/or infanticide.

- ❖ Relapse rates for women who have a history of psychosis are as high as 70%.
- ❖ There is also a significant relapse rate for women experiencing depression, bipolar disorder and anxiety.
- ❖ Infants whose mother are depressed in the 0-2 year period have been found to be less positive, withdrawn as early as 3 months of age which can potentially lead to negative consequences particularly for the developing brain.

Within HNEAHS' women who are pregnant or have a baby or young child may be supported by clinicians from local services.

Your GP (doctor) is a good place to start in order to check the physical and emotional wellbeing of the mother and to monitor the baby's growth during and after pregnancy.

Your local hospital can direct you to information regarding antenatal care, delivery and follow-up after delivery.

Armidale Hospital

02 677 69500

Moree Hospital

02 67 570000

Tamworth Rural Referral Hospital

02 67 677700

Taree

02 65 929111

The Maitland Hospital

02 - 49 392000

John Hunter Hospital

02 49 213000

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Once the baby is delivered it is important that the parent/s with the baby make an appointment with their GP for follow-up care.

There are also a number of parenting services available to check the growing infant/child's development and nutritional needs. Details can be found in your local telephone directory see Hunter New England Health).

Other specialist parenting services include

Tresillian 24 hour Parenting Helpline – 1800 637 357.

Karitane 24 hour Parenting Helpline – 1800 677 961.

If your friend/loved one has a mental illness and is not seeing a mental health clinician then support services can be discussed with your GP or midwife and if necessary a referral into mental health services can be arranged.

The contacts below are available to help your loved one and may provide links into other mental health services such as YP-COPMI (Young People – Children of Parents with a Mental Illness) or Family Support Worker, Social Work or Psychology services.

Just remember that help is only a phone call away and that if you know someone who has a mental illness and they are experiencing feelings of sadness or being miserable, loss of interest or pleasure in most of their usual activities, then contact your GP or nearest emergency department located at your local hospital.

It is important to think about an action plan your loved one/friend can access in times of distress or feeling overwhelmed. This may include the numbers of local support people or services both personal and professional.

*Mater Mental Health Units
02 4033 5000*

*Psychiatric Emergency Centre
(24 hours)
1800655085*

*Banksia Mental Health Unit,
Tamworth
02 67 677 870
Central Intake
1300 669 757*

*Taree Hospital
02 65 929 111*

*The Maitland Hospital
02 49 392 000*

*Clarke Centre-Armidale Hospital
02 67 769 500*

*24 hour mental health hotline
1300 369 968*

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It is always reassuring for the new parent/s to know that they can rely on outside help particularly in the early days, weeks and months of having a new baby. Seeking out local services such as supported play groups or parenting groups can help make the transition into parenthood smoother. Again GP's or local Child and Family Health Services will be able to help with this information.

Other useful contacts include:

beyondblue.org.au.
beyondblue info line
1300224636

Parent line
132055

Lifeline
131114

Mensline
1300 789 978

Kids helpline
1800 551 800

Mothersafe (drugs & breast feeding)
1800 647 848

SANE – 1800 187263

PANDA (ante/post natal depression)
1300 726 306