

Perinatal Mental Health Week 2020

Creating awareness, breaking the stigma and showcasing services

- **Perinatal Mental Health Week (8-14 Nov) shines a light on the issue of mental health and wellbeing for expecting and new parents**
- **Perinatal depression and anxiety is extremely common in Australia, affecting 1 in 5 new mothers and 1 in 10 new fathers**
- **Perinatal Mental Health Week is an opportunity for key organisations to reach out to the community and remind expectant and new parents that “*we’re here, we’re listening*”**

Perinatal Mental Health Week (PMHW) is a timely opportunity for us to remind Australians to check in with their friends and families who are pregnant or have had a baby during a global pandemic. This has never been more important than during the challenges of 2020.

Kicking off on Sunday 8 November, Perinatal Mental Health Week runs until 14 November. In 2020 a number of organisations have collaborated with a united voice to amplify key messages to encourage people to have conversations and to reach out for help if they need it.

The participating organisations include:

- *Australasian Birth Trauma Association*
- *Bears of Hope*
- *Birthing Dads*
- *Centre for Perinatal Psychology*
- *COPE*
- *Gidget Foundation Australia*
- *Jean Hailes*
- *Karitane*
- *PANDA*
- *Peach Tree Perinatal Wellness*
- *Perinatal Wellbeing Centre*
- *Pink Elephants Support Network*
- *Parent-Infant Research Institute*
- *Radiance Network*
- *SMS4Dads*
- *St John of God Health Care*
- *Stillbirth Foundation Australia*
- *Tresillian*
- *Tweddle*

The campaign also has the support of the *ACT Health, NSW Government, Mental Health Australia, NSW Mental Health Commission* and the *Queensland Mental Health Commission*.

Perinatal depression and anxiety is extremely common in Australia, and currently there is significantly more stress and worry surrounding having a baby. In 2020 service providers are connecting with a greater volume of people feeling overwhelmed and anxious about bringing a baby into an uncertain world – their pregnancy and birth experience may not be as they expected or hoped.



The Perinatal Mental Health Week campaign will shine a light each day on key issues which impact mental wellbeing while having a baby, including COVID19, the stigma of depression and anxiety, challenges facing rural and remote families, birth trauma and grief and loss.

“The theme ‘we’re here, we’re listening’ is very apt for a year that has brought many challenges. We know how important it is to speak up early when it comes to changes in our mental health, so it’s really important to encourage help seeking behaviour,” said the Hon, Bronnie Taylor MLC, NSW Minister for Mental Health, Women and Regional Youth. *“When great teams work together, they really can change lives for the better,”* she added.

Collaboration is at the heart of this significant week, working with a number of perinatal service organisations to drive education and awareness of the importance of perinatal emotional wellbeing. People across Australia are encouraged to connect with the partnership organisations during Perinatal Mental Health Week through the dedicated website www.pmhweek.org.au or online via websites, social media, email, or by phone.

Ends.