

# MOTHERS IN MIND

Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Service



# Who we are

We are the specialist perinatal mental health team here at The Coombe.

Together with your Obstetrician, the midwives, your G.P. and everyone involved in your care, we want to ensure that you have the best possible experience of pregnancy and birth.

Our team is made up of the following specialists in perinatal mental health:

- Consultant Psychiatrists
- Psychiatry Registrars
- Clinical Nurse Specialists (including in CBT)
- Mental Health Midwife
- Senior Clinical Psychologist and
- Mental Health Social Worker

We will provide you with the specialist intervention you need (medication, psychological therapy, psycho-social support, information and advice) to support you and your baby in getting the best possible start on your journey together.

# Finding out that you're pregnant

Your personal journey to becoming pregnant is individual and varied. Your pregnancy may have been planned or unplanned. It may have happened quickly and easily or you may have encountered difficulties along the way.

Your feelings about learning that you're pregnant depend on this journey. You may feel happy, excited and full of joy. Or you may feel anxious, worried and concerned. You may still be feeling unsure and struggling to adjust to the news.

Whatever the journey, you have now reached an incredible milestone. You are preparing to become a Mum. This is happening in very unusual and extraordinary times due to the current Coronavirus pandemic. This may contribute to new and unexpected challenges.

Whatever the challenges, we are here to support you on this journey. This booklet aims to offer you guidance and help you to feel that you are not alone. It will give you an idea of what you can typically expect and when you may need to look for additional help.

# Transitions in pregnancy

Pregnancy is a time of great change.

Many Mums find that being pregnant re-awakens memories from their own childhood. This may bring up questions for you.

Pregnancy can also bring about changes in your relationship with your partner. If you are feeling threatened or unsafe, please speak with one of your maternity care providers.

Pregnancy also brings about a change in identity and in your sense of yourself in the world. Take some time to reflect on the kind of Mum you would like to be for your baby? What is most important to you? What are your hopes and wishes for this child?

This is also a lovely time to start connecting with your baby growing inside you. Try to imagine them and picture them in your mind as they grow. Sometimes it's helpful to gently close your eyes and rest your hands on your belly. As your baby gets bigger, your touch may even elicit a little 'hello' kick in return.



# The birth of your baby

You have now reached the culmination of your pregnancy journey. Your baby's birth may have been as you wished or it may have brought challenges and complications.

Right now you may be feeling joy, hope and a sense of relief. However you may also be feeling sad, worried, down and exhausted. However you're feeling is ok.

Having a baby is a time of huge change. It is normal to feel many different emotions.

You will likely be experiencing these feelings through a fog of exhaustion as well which can make them feel even more intense.

Many mothers feel a sudden sense of responsibility for caring for their baby. This can trigger worry, doubt and feelings of guilt for not living up to the idea of the 'ideal mother'.

# Becoming a Mum

Going home with your baby is a time to explore and adjust to being a Mum. This is a process and it takes time. Give yourself the time to do this.

You will get most things right but you will also get little things wrong. Allow that be ok.

*'There is no way to be the perfect mother and a million ways to be a good one' - Jill Churchill*

At the end of each day try to notice three things from that day which you enjoyed or achieved.

How did you show your love for your baby; by singing to them, stroking them or gently rocking them in your arms?

Did you manage to leave the house with your baby today to go for a walk?



# Getting to know your baby

Your baby is a unique individual with their own traits and personality characteristics.

Give yourself the time to get to know their rhythms and patterns.

Let go of what you cannot control. Some babies have an easy temperament. Others are more difficult to soothe. Some will quickly settle into a consistent sleep pattern. Others will be more wakeful.

However your baby will thrive when they feel safe and secure and loved.

To provide this for your baby, you need to protect time for caring for yourself.

Take up any offers of help and support. Reach out to family, friends and other new Mums for emotional and social support. Don't try to do it all alone!

# Your mental health in pregnancy & post birth

Up to 80% of new Mums will experience the 'baby blues' in the days after birth – feeling irritable, low, anxious and crying easily.

This usually ends when your baby is about 10 days old. However if these feelings continue for longer than 2 weeks, it's important to talk with your G.P., Midwife or Public Health Nurse to see if you need some additional support.

Up to 1 in 5 women will experience a mental health problem in pregnancy or in the first year after birth. If you have suffered from a mental health problem in the past, you may be more vulnerable to relapse at this time.

This is nothing to feel ashamed of. With the right help and support, you will get back on track and begin to grow in confidence as a Mum and enjoy being with your baby.



# Recommended resources

1. [HSE](#)
2. [My Child](#) - Guide to pregnancy, baby and toddler health
3. [Best beginnings](#)
4. [Cuidiu](#) - Caring support for parenthood
5. [Tusla](#) - Community based supports
6. [Aware](#)
7. [Relate](#)- Relationship support including couple and family counselling
8. [The Samaritans](#)
9. [Treoir](#)
10. [One-Family](#).
11. [Women's Aid](#)



# Notes

The image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal teal-colored lines. The word "Notes" is printed at the top left in a teal font. The rest of the page is filled with 22 evenly spaced horizontal lines, providing a template for writing.





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