

- Talk to a trusted family member or friend.
- Seek company when you're feeling low (even though this might be the last thing you want to do, being alone can make everything seem bigger and less manageable).
- Don't be afraid to ask for help and/or accept practical help from family and friends if they offer.
- Share your experience with other parents who have experienced or are experiencing anxiety or depression.
- If you've experienced mental health conditions in the past, discuss this with your health professional. This can help you identify and respond early if symptoms return.
- Join a supported playgroup or support group.
- Look after your own health by eating a well-balanced whole food diet.
- Stay hydrated. Keep a bottle of water nearby at all times.
- Get some exercise (walking is a great starting point!). Even 20 minutes per day is a great start. You can take your pram and walk outside getting both you and bub some fresh air and sunshine.
- Limit alcohol and other drugs that can work against your wellbeing.
- Be gentle with yourself. Recovery can take time. It is a journey that often involves taking a few steps forward and then a step back.
- Rest. Quick naps can improve your alertness and help in decision-making, creativity and sensory perception. Short naps, such as 20 minutes, are less likely to disrupt your sleep at night.
- Time out. Time out means different things to everyone. But in general, it is important that parents who are primary carers have a break from the caring role at times — even if it is taking ten minutes to listen to music or read. Some people find deep breathing, yoga and relaxation techniques helpful.
- You may receive a lot of advice from books or other people about how to care for your baby, be open to just working out what suits you, your baby and what is best for your family.

SUPPORT GROUPS:

- Call **PANDA** 1300 726 306 to talk about your thoughts and feelings and explore options for support.
- Talk to your **Maternal and Child Health Nurse** about support available in the community or ask family members or friends for practical support.
- **Beyond Blue**. For pregnancy and new parents support call 1300 22 46 36.
- **Lifeline** for 24 hour support for all Australians experiencing personal crisis. www.lifeline.org.au or phone 13 11 14 in Australia or 0800 543 35 in New Zealand.
- The **Australia Counselling Association** website provides an easy search tool to find counsellors and psychotherapists within Australia. www.theaca.net.au
- **The Black Dog Institute** has a list of support groups for depression and other mood disorders throughout Australia. www.blackdoginstitute.org.au
- **Centre of Perinatal Excellence** (COPE) is a not-for-profit organisation devoted to reducing the impacts of emotional and mental health problems in the pre and postnatal periods. www.cope.org.au
- **The Australasian Birth Trauma Association** is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting women and their families who have sustained physical and/or psychological birth trauma. Our aim is to increase awareness and help support healthcare professionals through education and connection. www.birthtrauma.org.au
- **Grow** provides peer support groups as well as courses, social activities etc for people with mental illnesses including depression. There are Grow groups throughout Australia & New Zealand. www.grow.org.au
- **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare** has links to information on support for people with mental illnesses, their carers and families. www.aihw.gov.au
- **Dads in Distress** support groups for dads throughout Australia. Phone 1300 853 437
- **Mensline** for men with family or relationship concerns. www.mensline.org.au or call on 1300 78 99 78.
- **Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand** for helplines and resources for postnatal support: www.mentalhealth.org.nz/get-help/a-z/resource/26/postnatal-depression
- **Men's Health** for links to men's support in New Zealand: menshealthnz.org.nz/support-for-men