

# Childbirth Chatter



## IN THIS ISSUE ...

- Why It's Normal To Feel Emotional After Birth • Passion For Perinatal Mental Health •

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# A Word From The Committee

Perinatal mental health week takes place from the 6th to the 12th of November 2022. This newsletter (the first in a while ) has been created with this special week in mind and will be distributed at a small event CEA will host in partnership with the ABA. We aim to raise awareness of perinatal mental health and provide an environment in which various stakeholder organisations/small businesses, new mums and others in our community can come together to network and share experiences/information.

It can be uncomfortable to recognise that so many of us will face challenges during the perinatal stage. Halfway through this newsletter I got a bit worried that it was too negative for first time mums. However, I rationalised that that's part of the problem - most of us will spend very little time with an infant and other new parents before we have a baby of our own - we are going in blind. Our society still places an expectation that a 'good' woman will have a baby and it will be like a fairy tale - full of joy and fulfillment. The truth is there are just so many changes both physical and mental, in terms of lifestyle and where we 'fit in' in the world after we have had a baby that are hidden away. Most people get taken by surprise at some point of the journey so it is easy to empathise with the increasing numbers of women (and now men) who get post natal depression.

Personally, I love the article about taking off the rose coloured glasses. I feel this one is vital reading for anyone who hasn't had their baby yet. I was completely naive and had every single one of those misconceptions. I imagined I was going to have a natural birth then come home, get creative and have a lovely time renovating our home while my baby mostly slept through our six months of maternity leave. I had no idea that newborns had to feed so often and that they needed so much help to be soothed and settled and that my son would be very vocal about not being held in my arms at all times. I was not prepared for the overwhelming love I felt for him and how putting him in childcare at six months was going to be impossible for me when it came to the crunch. There were so many tough choices to be made.

The theme for Perinatal Mental Health Week is beautiful - 'We are here, we get it'. CEA absolutely gets it - all of us who work and volunteer at CEA have their own unique understanding of what it is like to experience pregnancy, birth and early parenting in Darwin. All of us who work or volunteer our time are hoping that our efforts will make your birth and early parenting experience more positive.

Perinatal Mental Health Week is a time to raise awareness and collaborate to ensure that parents in need know that they are not alone. 1 in 5 new mums and 1 in 10 new dads experience perinatal depression and anxiety, which is around 100,000 Australian parents each year.

If you are one of the lucky ones who transitions through the journey to motherhood with ease please keep your eyes and ears open for others around who may benefit from your help and support.

We hope you enjoy the read :)

## 2022 Committee

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Thank you to  
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Cover Photo  
From Maiden to Mother  
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## Birth Preparation Courses

### November

Tuesdays 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th November  
6:00pm to 8:30pm/9pm on 29th November

### January

Tuesdays 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st January  
6:00pm to 8:30pm/9:00pm on 31st Jan

Private courses are also available if these don't suit your schedule.

## Early Parenting

### November

Tuesday 29th November 6:00pm to 9:00pm

### January

Tuesday 31st January 6:00pm to 9:00pm

All classes held at the Nightcliff Community Centre

## Birth Preparation Course Outline

### Session One: Pregnancy & Creating Your 'Mind-set' For Labour & Birth

#### Welcome

Pregnancy - nutrition, self care, building your support group for early parenting

Birth Planning - a useful birth plan is not your ideal birth written down on paper

#### Informed Choice

Thinking about Pregnancy & Birth - not an illness or 'risk' but a normal healthy life event  
Cultural Ideas Around Pregnancy & Birth - how this influences us

#### Fear Release Work

#### HypnoBirthing Explained

#### The Hormones of Labour

#### Rebozo for Pregnancy

#### Why Normal Birth is Important

#### The Importance of Your Due Date

#### Role of Your Birth Support Person

#### Roles of Care Providers - OB's, Midwives, Doulas

#### How/Why Does Labour Start? Physical/Emotional/Spiritual

#### Question Time

### Session Two: Labour

#### Recap of Week One

#### Relaxation Meditation Practice

#### Induction - your choices around this, why, when, where, what to expect

#### The Cascade of Intervention

#### Hormones & Induction

#### Why Your Birth Environment Is Important

#### Creating Your Ideal Birth Environment

#### How Contractions Work

#### First Stage of Labour

#### Using Natural Birth Tools To Manage Labour

#### Active Birth Positions/Movement

#### Medical Pain Relief Options

#### Water

#### TENS Machine

#### 'Birth Media' - every birth is unique

#### Question Time

### Session Three: Birth

#### Recap of Week Two

#### BRAIN Decision Making Tool

#### Instrumental Birth

#### Gentle C-Section

#### More Labour Tools - soft touch massage, rebozo at birth, breathing, supported holds, vocalisation

#### Eating & Drinking In Labour

### Second Stage of Labour (Birth)

#### Directed Pushing vs Instinctive

#### Avoiding Tears

#### Post Partum Haemorrhage

#### Third Stage (Birthing Your Placenta)

#### The Importance of The First Hour After Birth

### Session Four: Early Parenting

#### Workshop - The Fourth Trimester For Baby, Mother & Family (3 Hour Session)

#### What Babies Need -

#### Physical, Emotional & Developmental

#### Your Baby's Experience Of The Fourth Trimester

#### Baby-Wearing

#### Breastfeeding

#### Baby & Parent Sleep

#### Developmental Milestones

#### What New Mums Need

#### Understanding Hormones

#### Brain Changes

#### Traditional Postpartum Practices

#### Mum's Experience Of The Fourth Trimester

#### Physical Recovery from Birth

#### Partner's & Team Building

#### Maintaining Your Relationship

#### Question Time

Check our website for on-line booking forms... [www.ceadarwin.asn.au](http://www.ceadarwin.asn.au) or email the office ... [info@ceadarwin.asn.au](mailto:info@ceadarwin.asn.au)

Like our facebook page for dates of future events & courses along with regular posts about birth, parenting and

## Birth Education Classes

**Birth Preparation Courses** are held over four weeks and encompass body, mind and spirit. Includes breastfeeding information.

Cost: \$240 for two participants

### Private Birth Classes

You may prefer a more personalised course.

Incorporating specific elements of our other courses. One that fits with your and your birth partners schedules.

Cost: Dependent on time - approx. \$80/hour

### Early Parenting Workshops:

Designed to give parents-to-be knowledge and skills to enhance those first precious hours and weeks with your newborn. Topics include: normal infant behaviour, sleep and settling, breastfeeding, the infant microbiome, self care, team building for new parents and much more.

Cost: \$120 (includes partner or support person)

Please email the office for more details regarding any of these courses. [info@ceadarwin.asn.au](mailto:info@ceadarwin.asn.au)

## Pregnancy Yoga Classes

**Pregnancy Yoga:** An antenatal yoga class with asanas appropriate for pregnancy. relaxation techniques, visualisation, pelvic floor exercises & strength work are included. The library will be open after the class.

Classes are held Saturdays 11.30am - 12:45pm & Thursday evenings 5:30pm to 6:45pm

Cost: For either Yoga class \$15 or buy a 5 class pass for \$60.00

Classes held at the Nightcliff Community Centre Boab Meeting Room

## Nurturing Newborns Morning Teas

(Suitable for Babies from Newborn To Toddlers)

A chance to meet with other parents in a relaxed environment, have a cup of tea and share a delicious Petra's Raw Food Cake.

Topics for each session are posted to facebook Please see the schedule later in this Newsletter.

Last Tuesday of every month 10am to noon  
Nightcliff Community Centre  
Cost: Free

## CEA Library

Our library has an extensive collection of books, magazines, DVDs and CDs covering a wide range of subjects such as Pregnancy, Labour, Birth, Parenting, Vaccination, Exercise, Nutrition, VBAC, Waterbirth, Twins, Toddlers, Crying/Sleep, Special Needs Babies, Grief/Loss, Alternative Therapies, Fathers, Grandparents, Midwifery, Stories and more!



# Passion for Perinatal Mental Health

Hi I'm Kath I'm a mumma of a beautifully adventurous 3 year old, and have another bubba on the way.

My personal mental health experiences over the perinatal period (pregnancy, birth up until bub turned 1 years old) and working in a family and community space, has stirred up a huge passion in me to speak out, and help others during this super vulnerable period of life. So I'm here sharing my thoughts, local tips, and resources that I've found super valuable, in the hope something is of use to you

Top tips for pregnancy:

'Just keep swimming': I'm ridiculously slow and can barely do a length or two, but it would be so helpful to go for 20 minutes in my lunch break, to grab some quiet time, vitamin D, and do some exercises in the water. Exercises which I felt were too hard to do out of the pool.

Parap pool is heated which is a god send for the dry season, Casuarina pool is usually quiet in the day, Nightcliff has beautiful views of the ocean and I'd love to get a healthy juice from the Foreshore Cafe afterwards.

Free hypnobirthing videos aren't a waste of time or just for 'birth': There are several on YouTube I personally love 'hypnobirthing with Anja' her voice is so calming. There is so much natural anxiety that can come in pregnancy, so many hormonal changes and things we cannot control. We can be super sensitive to tv shows, other peoples energies, world problems etc it's so easy for intrusive thoughts to creep in. Affirmations and meditations are a brilliant way to protect our minds as much as possible. The more we do it the more it helps wire our brains to think and respond positively.

If thoughts get overwhelming PANDA are an amazing resource to connect with <https://panda.org.au/>. They will listen and validate your experiences.

See self care as a necessity. It's never selfish to stop and listen to your mind and body and do what you need to do to take care of it.

Unfortunately today's busy overstimulation oriented society, doesn't highly value self care. It really is up to us to take charge in this arena.

My self care activities vary from low to high energy tasks, sometimes I need a nap, massage, journal and music time and being alone in solitude. Other times I need a good chat, and to 'feel productive' cleaning, exercising and being creative.

If we practise great self care now we will be beautiful role models for our little ones, and that will have a HUGE impact on their lives, self worth etc!

Seek support before bub is here to optimise your breastfeeding experience. I was completely naive about the complexities of breastfeeding e.g latching, milk supply etc and the fact that although natural it really is a learnt art. Many of us will have medical interventions during birth which contributes to why so many mummas struggle!

Second time around I've signed up to the ABA (Australian Breastfeeding Association) for phone support and workshops. I am also seeing a Lactation Consultant to find tips on how to get my boobs prepared for bubs arrival.

CEA has many books about breastfeeding in their library and also teach you how to prepare for breastfeeding at their Early Parenting Workshop.

Top tips for when bub is here:

There will be conflicting advice and tips coming from all directions, it can be completely overwhelming, and if your a people pleaser like me, it can be a struggle to not feel judged/defensive/hopeless.

Protect your time, space, home, energy as much as possible. Seek support from one or two resources only, and only from people who

you look up to and want to be like as a parent.

Listen to your gut and instincts, they want to guide you. My absolute fave free YouTube videos during this time are... 'Postpartum meditation from muma and baby love' and 'why good enough parenting is great parenting' by PANDA.

Mum and bub exercise groups: particularly great if you have anxiety. I really struggled at coffee catch up groups with other parents so instead of pushing this, I opted for groups that I could work out at. It gave me a focus, I didn't have to chat if I didn't want to, and the endorphins really helped relax me. I felt great getting out the house for bub too. The local aqua booty and mum and bub yoga classes were amazing! Look up Emilyyogalady on facebook - Emily runs the CEA Pregnancy Yoga classes and you can then join her at Agoy Yoga in Darwin or Palmerston for mums and bubs classes once you have recovered from birth.

Rarely does the perinatal period go to plan. Whether it's struggles with conception, during pregnancy, birthing, after bub is here just about everyone struggles at some stage of the journey. As a result it can leave us with unresolved/unprocessed experiences and emotions.

We also have a newborn that takes up all of our time and energy so our own healing is pushed aside.

I've experienced this, and seen this time and time again with others. Seek out support, normalise it and use it regularly, share and validate your perinatal story in whatever way you feel comfortable.

Sending so much love and strength on the whirlwind that is the perinatal journey.

Kath xx

By Kath McKie  
Local Darwin Mum



For Mums & Bubs Yoga Classes Check Emilyyogalady on Facebook

# Normal Baby Blues Vs. Postnatal Depression

80% of new mothers report feeling very emotional in the weeks after birth. Why is this? If it's so normal to feel emotional after childbirth — when should we get help.

During pregnancy, a variety of hormones increase dramatically, peak during childbirth, and then crash back down to pre-pregnancy levels immediately after birth — estimated at a 1,000% change over the course of only five days. Since these hormones are linked to emotional states, someone who has just given birth typically experiences an emotional cataclysm. Some call this the “baby blues,” but we believe this diminishes the experience and its severity, and doesn't appropriately set expectations for what is typical and normal.

How common is it?

Very common. In fact, most people (about 80%) experience some degree of emotional upheaval after childbirth — ranging from mood swings and crying spells to a spike in anxiety and difficulty sleeping. You may feel overwhelmed at times, and at others, euphoric. Simply being aware that you may experience a rollercoaster of emotions right after giving birth will help normalize the intensity of what you may be feeling during those first few weeks. It's also vital that you (as well as family and friends) keep an eye on your symptoms as time goes on, so that you can see a professional if you begin to feel worse or do not improve.

How long does it last?

The postpartum emotional rollercoaster does not have a set timetable. People with postpartum depression (more on that below) will experience more serious symptoms that do not go away after the first few weeks, or begin to get worse after that time.

Why is this happening?

People who have just given birth have higher levels of an enzyme that breaks down neurotransmitters such as dopamine, norepinephrine and serotonin. These neurotransmitters — especially serotonin, which is known as the “happy

chemical” — regulate your mood, sleep cycle and appetite. And low levels of serotonin are linked with feelings of sadness, irritability and trouble sleeping.

An abrupt decrease in progesterone — which happens right after delivery — is associated with anxiety. Even your thyroid hormones can zig-zag during pregnancy and after childbirth, in part because of increases in the stress hormone cortisol. Cortisol surges may lead to postpartum thyroid issues, which can have symptoms including anxiety, irritability, fatigue, insomnia and heart palpitations.

All of these changes are happening against a backdrop of sleep deprivation, which is associated with a myriad physical and emotional issues. That's why taking care of your psychological health — and keeping close tabs on how you're feeling — is a critical aspect of birth and pregnancy recovery.

When should I be worried?

Some new parents (estimated around 7-20%) experience a more severe, long-lasting form of depression known as postpartum depression (PPD) — symptoms can include:

- Depressed mood or severe mood swings; excessive crying
- Difficulty bonding with your baby
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- A change in appetite loss of appetite or eating much more than usual
- Inability to sleep (insomnia) or sleeping too much
- Overwhelming fatigue or loss of energy
- Reduced interest and pleasure in activities you used to enjoy
- Intense irritability and anger; fear that you're not a good parent; hopelessness; feelings of worthlessness, shame, guilt or inadequacy
- Diminished ability to think clearly, concentrate or make decisions
- Restlessness
- Severe anxiety and panic attacks; thoughts of harming yourself or your baby, or recurrent thoughts of death or suicide.



Anyone can experience PPD, but some people are more vulnerable. If you've suffered from depression during or after a previous pregnancy, have struggled with depression at another time in life, or if you experienced a stressful or traumatic event during pregnancy or shortly after birth (including a difficult or traumatic birth), you may be more likely to have PPD. An online questionnaire can be a good first step in helping you or your friends and family determine whether or not you have PPD.

There are other serious disorders that can also occur during the postpartum period, including postpartum obsessive-compulsive disorder, postpartum anxiety and postpartum stress disorder. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, 3-5% of those who have just given birth will experience postpartum OCD, 10% will experience postpartum anxiety and about 9% will have postpartum PTSD.

Symptoms and signs of PPD should be taken very seriously. If your feelings are making it hard to care for your baby or complete everyday tasks, or if you are having thoughts of harming yourself or your baby, go to a hospital ER or see your doctor immediately.

Please note that sometimes physical ailments can be overlooked by friends and family as being part of the baby blues.

If you experience flu-like symptoms, headaches, sore breasts, fatigue and apathy you might have mastitis. Mastitis is an infection of your milk ducts that is common in the first three months of breastfeeding. It can be easily treated with antibiotics and self care. Make sure to speak with a Dr or your home care nurse about any symptoms you are experiencing in the early weeks with your new baby.

What can be done about PPD?

There are a variety of methods for treating postpartum mood disorders, including but not limited to:

Counseling/talk therapy

Medication

Have helpful information handy

Want to learn more about birth recovery?

If you have a history of depression, or if you have been depressed or anxious throughout your pregnancy, you should talk to your doctor about possibly starting treatment (or putting a plan of support into place) before giving birth.

#### Sources

<http://perinatology.com/calculators/Edinburgh%20Depression%20Scale.html><https://adaa.org/find-help-for/women/postpartum-disorders>  
<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>  
<https://womensmentalhealth.org/posts/estrogen-postpartum-depression/>  
[https://www.fruitoflifeca.com/uploads/4/3/3/5/43358595/hendrick\\_hormonal\\_changes.pdf](https://www.fruitoflifeca.com/uploads/4/3/3/5/43358595/hendrick_hormonal_changes.pdf)  
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<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9651210>



# Why We Need to Talk More About Male Postpartum Depression

You've heard plenty of stories about women experiencing postpartum depression. After all, the condition affects about one in nine new mothers. But you may not know about paternal postpartum depression (PPND)—the one your partner may experience after your little bundle of joy arrives. This is what experts understand about the causes, symptoms, and treatment of postpartum depression in men.

Is male postpartum depression real? According to experts and scientific research, it actually does exist. A report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that 10 percent of men worldwide showed signs of depression from the first trimester of their wife's pregnancy through six months after the child was born. The number spiked to a whopping 26 percent during the three-to six-month period after the baby's arrival.

"That's more than twice the rate of depression we usually see in men," explains James F. Paulson, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at Old Dominion University, in Norfolk, Virginia, and lead author of the survey, which assessed 43 studies of more than 28,000 fathers worldwide. "The fact that so many expecting and new dads go through it makes it a significant public-health concern—one that physicians and mental-health providers have largely overlooked."

Conventional wisdom holds that a mother's postpartum depression is triggered largely by hormonal fluctuations—and studies show that a man's hormones also shift during pregnancy and after birth, for reasons that are still unknown. Testosterone levels drop; estrogen, prolactin, and cortisol go up. Some men even develop symptoms such as nausea and weight gain. "Evolutionary biologists suspect that the hormone fluctuation is nature's way of making sure that fathers stick around and bond with their baby," explains Dr. Courtenay.

Those hormone fluctuations—paired with the neurochemical changes that occur in the brain as a result of sleep deprivation—can create the perfect storm for male postpartum depression, says Dr. Courtenay.

Other risk factors for paternal postpartum depression include a history of the disease, relationship instability, financial problems or stress, and a sick or premature baby. Men who've experienced the loss of loved ones—either in the adult years prior to becoming a parent or while growing up—are also at increased risk for depression. "Any parent facing the emotional and social upheavals that a baby ushers in is at risk for depression," says Sara Rosenquist, Ph.D., a therapist in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

The best predictor of a man's risk of depression is whether his partner is also depressed. "Half of all men whose partners have postpartum depression are depressed themselves," says Courtenay. "Depression in both parents can result in devastating consequences for their relationship and especially for their children."

Postpartum depression is different from the Daddy Blues, which many new dads can experience, says Dr. Courtenay. "With normal stress or the Daddy Blues, a guy's going to feel better when he gets a little extra sleep, goes to the gym, or has lunch with a friend. But with depression, these things won't make him feel better. The symptoms are more severe and last longer. If the 'blues' last more than two or three weeks, it's probably depression—and he should get help from a mental health professional who specializes in working with men. Untreated depression only worsens."

Do you think yourself or a loved one has male postpartum depression? The best course of action is getting help—for the sake of the dad's mental



health and the overall well-being of the family. Watch out for these symptoms and speak with a doctor if you're concerned.

Has he become uncharacteristically irritable or agitated?

Is he distancing himself from his partner and the baby?

Is he gambling, drinking, taking drugs, or engaging in other reckless behaviors?

Does he have a personal or family history of depression?

Is he sad, tearful, or uninterested in doing things that he used to enjoy?

Does he make comments that he feels worthless or shares suicidal thoughts?

Does he spend more time than usual at work?

Is Mum suffering from postpartum depression too?

Research shows that talk therapy is very effective in treating depression, and it can be combined with medication. But there are lots of treatments that range from traditional to alternative. The important thing is that a man get help, preferably from a licensed mental health professional and one who specializes in working with men, says Dr. Courtenay.

Also, seek out support groups and sites like Postpartummen.com. These resources provide facts about postpartum depression in men, and they also act as an online forum where men can share their feelings anonymously.

Our society subscribes to the cultural myth that men should be stoic and tough things out, notes Dr. Courtenay. "So when men start to feel anxious, empty, or out of control, they don't understand it and they certainly don't ask for help." Women, on the other hand, tend to have a larger social network and share stories and strategies during pregnancy and life as a mom. Their husbands

almost always assume they're alone in feeling sad or scared to be a dad.

Experts believe that paternal postpartum depression may be more prevalent now largely because this generation of fathers is feeling the same psychological, social, and economic stressors that some mothers have long experienced. The trend toward dads staying home with Baby while mom goes off to work is becoming more widespread. With more moms working, dads are shouldering child care and household tasks that traditionally fell to women. They have plenty of stress and little sleep, and this, along with hormonal changes, can lead to depression.

Yet despite all of that, male postpartum depression is still easily eclipsed by its maternal counterpart. Perhaps because many men would rather stifle their feelings than talk about them, which can make the situation at home much more heated and fraught. Parents hopes that increased knowledge about this common condition will open the doors for conversation.

"Men need to recognize that depression is a medical condition; it's not a weakness of character," says Dr. Courtenay. "For a man to admit he's depressed isn't unmanly or admitting defeat. It's taking charge of his life."

Story by Margery D Rosen  
<https://www.parents.com/parenting/dads/sad-dads/>

# Taking Off The Rose Tinted Glasses

Common misconceptions and managing expectations in pregnancy.

It is difficult to try and imagine what life might be like before you have become a parent and, whether you are aware of them or not, you are likely to have built up some ideas of what you see or expect the experience of becoming a parent will be like. Often, this image is reinforced by the information and images around us.

Often you will focus on reading material, advertising and other communications that will lead you to form impressions of life with a baby, but these may not always be realistic. This leads many parents to later ask the question “Why didn’t anyone tell me it would be like this?”

Below are some common expectations that many parents initially held but, through experience, have come to view quite differently.

## **1. The baby will fit into our lives – not the other way around**

Many parents think that their life with a child will not be much different to life before children. Many parents are unprepared for the fact that having a child impacts on all areas of life – priorities, activities, social life, finances, just to name a few. Many parents are unprepared for how ‘all consuming’ a new baby can be. It is important to try and get a realistic picture of what life with a child might, or an additional child will be like. Talking to others and gaining realistic information can help you to mentally and emotionally prepare yourself, and prevent yourself feeling in a state of shock.

## **2. All babies sleep most of the time**

Whilst it is true that babies to spend most of their time sleeping, some baby temperaments and/or health conditions (such as reflux) can greatly impact on their tendency or ability to soundly sleep. Rather such conditions can leave some babies very unsettled, crying, and

sleep is greatly impacted for both the parents and the baby. Many expectant parents are unaware and unprepared for the reality that this can bring to the early weeks and months of early parenthood, so being aware of this important.

## **3. The house will be clean and tidy – because there is plenty of time**

Many expectant parents might find it had to understand how life with a new baby could become chaotic. For some it can be straight forward, but for others an unsettled baby, recovering from birth, feeling sleep deprived and other factors can make life with a baby particularly hard to adjust to. Don’t set the bar so high before you know what may lie ahead, as this may make adjusting to parenthood more difficult.

## **4. The birth will be natural and pain-free . On the flip side some people will choose a medical birth because they believe it will be better for them**

Giving birth can be long, tiring, painful, and may result in the need for pain-relief and/or an unplanned caesarian section. Lots of things can happen that are beyond our control. No method of giving birth is without challenges and women are often surprised at the impact any kind of birth has on their mind and body. Health professionals will do their best to guide at the time, but generally they must follow the policies and procedures at the place of birth. There are many choices to be made during childbirth so it can be easy to have regrets later on.

## **5. Breastfeeding is going to be easy and natural**

Breastfeeding for some does come easily and naturally, however for many women this is not the case. Breastfeeding for some is painful, frustrating and can leave many women feeling vulnerable and inadequate. This is often made worse by images of motherhood

## **6. Parenthood is going to be filled with many special moments**

Whilst there are likely to be special moments, there will also be many trying times and often the proportion isn't quite what the television commercials, magazines and posts on Facebook might lead us to perceive. Talk to family members and friends about their real experiences. Sincere parents will be open and honest.

## **7. All parents immediately and automatically 'fall in love' with their baby**

Whilst this is the case for many, for many others bonding and attachment with your baby can take many months or beyond the first year. This is not a reflection of you as a parent...some relationships just take time to develop.

## **8. Having a baby will strengthen our relationship**

While becoming a parent can positively influence your relationship with your partner, having a baby can put relationships under strain – at least temporarily. Many parents are not prepared for this, rather they often are expecting the opposite. Having a child will add additional responsibilities, adjustments and for many this

means added stress generally which does also impact on relationships. Having a baby can bring out our best – and our worst, so in difficult times try to focus on the end goal.

## **9. My partner will play a major role in looking after the baby**

Quite often we may hold high expectations that our partners will be highly involved in taking care of the baby, but once the baby arrives this does not end up to be the case. In turn this can lead to feelings of disappointment and leave you feeling dissatisfied and unhappy, so it's important to discuss your expectations surrounding child rearing and try to ensure that your expectations are compatible with each other and realistic.

## **10. I will be able to continue working whilst my baby sleeps**

This assumes that you have a very settled baby, but for many reasons (child's personality, health reasons) this may not be the case. Your baby may not be the baby that you expected. Having too high expectations can lead to feelings of resentment towards your baby, so best to keep an open mind now about what may, or may not be possible.





### **11. I already know when I will return to work**

Until you have become a parent it is difficult to know how you will feel about going back to work part-time, full-time or at all. It is not uncommon for people to change their minds about returning to work once they have had their child. Your priorities may change, so try and keep your options open with your partner and employer. Whilst for some, motherhood is the ultimate fulfilment, for others it is one of many which makes you who you are.

### **12. My friendships will all continue**

Life is full of different stages, and people come into, and out of our lives at different stages. We connect with others because we have something in common – an interest or understanding and a desire to share. Having a baby isn't the same as getting a new job. As your identity and priorities will change, this can also impact on how much common ground you may continue to have with some of your friends. Remember, it's just a fact of life, it's not personal. Whilst some friendships are likely to fade, new ones will also grow with others who are at a similar stage. This is perhaps a good time to invest your time into friendships with others who are also expecting or have young children – as this can become part of your support network.

Coming to terms with the reality of becoming a parent can be challenging, but the higher your expectations, the harder it is likely to be for you to adjust to and accept, and the more likely you are to feel disappointed and disillusioned. Talk with your partner or down to earth people who have had children about how having a baby will or has impacted on their lives. This can help give you a realistic picture of the changes and challenges ahead.

### **13. The more equipment I have the more prepared I will be**

It's easy to be overwhelmed by the range of baby equipment that is out there, and it can be very expensive and often is unnecessary.

### **14. The difficult things I hear about birth and parenting do happen to other people but that will not happen to me/us**

Although we sincerely hope you have a happy and joyful experience most new parents agree they were unprepared for the reality of childbirth and early parenting.

Generally the hard stuff goes on behind closed doors and it is only the happy shiny moments that people share on social media. The mums with the 'tricky' babies stay at home so we see the sleepy/relaxed ones out at the shopping centre or cafes.

Society's expectation is that pregnancy, birth and early parenting are joyous happy times. When that is not a person's experience they may feel reluctant to share that story.

Please go onto YouTube and google The Mum Drum Seven mums talk about their hopes, expectations and experiences of becoming a mum. The Mum Drum features open and honest conversations, where the women discuss the unique challenges they each faced, their reflections and what advice they would give to other hopeful, expectant and new mums.

"Looking back, I had a completely different picture of motherhood in my mind. By watching others and reading all those books and magazines whilst pregnant, I thought I had a pretty good idea of what motherhood would be like. By the time my second child came along, my expectations were quite different. "

"The information given about what to expect in pregnancy and when caring for my baby was very rose-tinted and left me very unprepared. "

Article Taken From [www.cope.org.au](http://www.cope.org.au)

# Perinatal Mental Health Week



## How to ask

If you know a new or expectant parent there are many ways to offer support. It can be hard to know where to start. One idea is to simply ask "How they are going?" and then listen really well. The earlier the intervention the better the outcome for all.



### Asking your daughter or son

It can be tough to watch your daughter or son adjust to parenthood if you see them being unsettled. You could reflect on your own experience as a way to open up discussion with them or tell them about what they were like as a baby whilst always encouraging openness and honesty and offering them reassurance at the same time. Asking what they need might also be helpful and just being there in any way you can.



### Asking your friend

Getting your friend out for a walk or coffee and talking at the same time might be useful. Check in often, offer times to connect and give them space to respond. If you can ask them "How is it going being a parent?" or share a funny story of your own might encourage them to open up. Validate their feelings and listen well.



### Asking your partner

A weekly catch up where there are limited interruptions might be a good time to really ask how your partner is going. You could each do this as regular check in. Timing is important and making sure you can offer support, ideas, or just a good listening ear. Sometimes you just need someone to be there and ask the question. Phones away for this time to connect!



### Asking yourself

If you notice changes in yourself then take some quiet time, reflect on how you are feeling and be patient with yourself as you settle into this new parenting space. Recognise and label the emotions. If what you normally do is not helping you feel better, then reach out to a trusted friend or family member to get more support. Stay connected with others and make a plan.



The Darwin Homebirth Group is a collective of parents who share the philosophy that pregnancy, labor and birth are normal, natural family centered events.

Our members are passionate about women having real and informed choices in regards to where, with whom and how they birth. This way women can feel supported, safe, empowered and in control of their birth experience.

The fully funded Government Homebirth Service gives women the opportunity to have a known, qualified and experienced midwife care for them at home before and after the birth.

Darwin Homebirth Group is volunteer run and not-for-profit. We offer:

- Monthly morning or afternoon teas
- Access to our library with information on pregnancy, natural birth, water immersion, home birth, breast-feeding and gentle parenting
- Biannual newsletters rich with birth stories, birthing and parenting information
- Ongoing contact with homebirth midwives
- Access to birthing aides and equipment
- Meal provisions for new parents
- Advocating for improved birth choices and women centered care



Darwin Homebirth Group  
[dhbinfo@gmail.com](mailto:dhbinfo@gmail.com)  
 0438 888 755

[www.darwinhomebirthgroup.wordpress.com](http://www.darwinhomebirthgroup.wordpress.com)



darwin  
 homebirth  
 group

*birth choices matter*

Find us on







Childbirth Education Association

*knowledge • confidence • choice*

# Pregnancy Yoga

CEA's Pregnancy Yoga is designed to help women prepare for a positive, confident birth.

Postures include abdominals, strength work, pelvic floor, hip openers, positive visualisation and relaxation for birth.



**Cost Per Class** ..... \$15

**5 Class Pass** ..... \$60

**No need to book, please just come along.**

## Venue:

Meeting Room

Nightcliff Community Centre

Saturdays 11:30am – 12:45pm

Thursdays 5:30pm - 6:45pm

Childbirth Education Association

Nightcliff Community Centre

6/18 Bauhinia Street, Nightcliff

**Office hours:** Tues–Fri, 9am–12noon

**Tel:** 08 8948 3043

**[www.ceadarwin.asn.au](http://www.ceadarwin.asn.au)**

[info@ceadarwin.asn.au](mailto:info@ceadarwin.asn.au)

**Join us on Facebook:**

Childbirth Education  
Association Darwin

# Midwives in Darwin

*A new way to experience maternity care in Darwin*



## Meet Claire

Hi, I'm Claire, a traveler, a plant lover but most of all a fiercely passionate midwife. I believe birth is a profound rite of passage, best supported with a gentle, loving and peaceful approach of trusting mother and baby to grow, birth and bond together. I want every family to enter parenthood feeling powerful, capable and supported.

## Philosophy

We truly believe when women receive individualized and holistic care from a known midwife, a strong and empowered mother is born! MiD offers continuity of care to help families of the top end have positive and empowering pregnancies, births and parenting journeys.



## Services

Midwives in Darwin offers homebirth packages, antenatal and postnatal packages, breastfeeding support, antenatal education and more. Get in touch today if you would like to know how we can support you.

E: [midwivesindarwin@gmail.com](mailto:midwivesindarwin@gmail.com)

Ph: 0431095847

Facebook: Midwives in Darwin

# CEA Office & Yoga Shut Down Dates Festive Season 2022/2023

**Last Pregnancy Yoga Class For 2022 on Thursday 15th December**

**First Pregnancy Yoga Class For 2023 on Thursday 12th of January**

**CEA Office and Library will Close at 3pm on Thursday 15th December**

**CEA Office and Library will Open at 8am on Tuesday 10th January**

**All Committee and Staff of CEA wish you and your family a  
Happy & Safe Festive Season**



.....  
NEBULA  
.....

**MONIKA ZDYB**

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**WWW.NEBULA.NET.AU**



# Adapting To Change Through The Perinatal Journey

Becoming a parent can bring excitement and joy, but also unexpected challenges and a lot of stress.

Above all, we want to protect our babies.

When the world is experiencing pandemics, natural disasters and global unrest, it can be hard work looking after your own mental health and wellbeing.

If you're also expecting a baby or caring for a newborn, suddenly you're doing double duty trying to manage everything - the pressure can feel intense.

Using a combination of different coping skills can help you to manage stress and uncertainty in any situation.

Read on to learn more about:

Solution-focused coping  
Emotion-focused coping  
The 5 senses exercise

## SOLUTION-FOCUSED COPING

Solution-focused coping works well when you can affect future outcomes. Your own wellbeing is a great example - there are simple, everyday actions you can take to look after yourself. We've got some ideas to get you started below:

Issue: Feeling tired and drained, exhausted just thinking about the day or night ahead.

Solution: Do your best to get some rest, and try to eat regular snacks and meals to increase your energy levels.

Issue: Feeling stressed or lonely?

Solution: Try talking to someone. You could chat

to your partner, family and friends, a healthcare provider or PANDA counsellor.

Letting other people know how you're coping isn't just solution-focused coping. Reaching out for help is also an emotion-focused coping skill - seeking connection with others by sharing your thoughts and feelings.

Allowing others to support you, instead of trying to manage everything by yourself, may help to reduce feelings of distress, isolation, and uncertainty.

## EMOTION-FOCUSED COPING: THE 5 SENSES EXERCISE

If you don't have someone to talk to right now, you could try another emotion-focused coping skill called 'grounding'.

It may feel a bit strange or awkward at first, but this simple exercise called the 5 Senses can help you to get settled within yourself, and in your surrounds.

You'll learn how to safely sail through any storm of thoughts and feelings by dropping an anchor back into your body, your environment, and the present moment.

All it takes is 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

First, take a few deep, slow breaths.

Now, name 5 things you can see around you. Try to describe them to yourself in detail.

Next, name 4 things you can touch, and feel. Maybe your belly, your baby's face, a soft rug, or cool glass.

Now, name 3 things you can hear. It might be sounds outside, your children, your own breath.

Next, name 2 things you can smell. If nothing comes up, name two aromas you like. Can you recall the scents?

Finally, name one thing you can taste. Is it the last thing you ate or drank? If it's been a little while, you might like to eat a snack soon.

Finish this exercise by taking a few more deep, slow breaths.

You can use the 5 Senses exercise as often as you like. It may even be helpful to repeat the exercise a few times throughout the day if you're feeling stressed, or you'd like to set up a simple daily wellbeing routine for yourself.

You can also teach the 5 Senses exercise to your older children, to help them manage big feelings and get grounded in their bodies.

#### THERE'S NO RIGHT OR WRONG WAY

Lots of people say they're 'not good' at relaxation exercises like grounding or meditation. Some people feel they don't know how to go about it, or 'don't like it' when they've tried it.

Every day on the Helpline, we speak to people who tell us they've had a hard time with meditation or relaxation strategies. We often hear concerns like "I tried to meditate but I couldn't switch my mind off at all. It didn't feel relaxing, it just stressed me out more. I felt worse because I couldn't do it right."

There's no right or wrong way to use coping skills like meditation or grounding. Being present to whatever is happening also means paying attention to feelings of awkwardness, discomfort or stress – this is the definition of being present (even if it feels strange, if you're noticing what's happening then you're doing it right).

It's important to be kind to yourself if big emotions come up when you're trying to manage feelings of stress or uncertainty with different coping strategies. Treat yourself with compassion, like you would a friend who's trying something new and finding it hard.

Practice, patience, paying attention to whatever

comes up, and being gentle with yourself – it's difficult to do these things at times, but the rewards when you figure out which coping strategies work best for you are huge.

#### TAKE TIME EACH DAY TO CALM AND SOOTH YOURSELF

No matter what's happening in your world, it's important to take time each day to calm and sooth yourself – because looking after yourself is also being the best parent that you can be.

Try to build a community of support around you too. We all cope best when we feel less isolated, and connected to people who care about us.

Learning new coping skills takes practice, but you and your baby are worth the effort. You deserve to feel calm, safe and supported no matter where life takes you.

<https://panda.org.au/articles/managing-change>  
PANDA National Helpline (Monday to Saturday)  
1300 726 306



# Healing Birth Trauma

Having a baby should be one of the biggest joys in a woman's life but unfortunately for many it can be challenging, difficult, and leave long lasting negative affects.

Up to 1/3 of all women giving birth experience a traumatic birth. That's a huge number of women starting their parenting journey feeling uncertain, fearful and disconnected from themselves and sometimes their baby.

Birth trauma is real - I know because as a midwife of over 20 years I see and hear about it way too often.

Fortunately, women, the community and medical services are starting to become aware of what can only be described as an abuse of women's and children's rights. Which so often leads to traumatised women who then go on to experience postnatal depression.

Being a mother is challenging enough – we need to support women to make this journey easier rather than harder.

Nourishing support during pregnancy, birth and postpartum is vital for every woman but can be especially helpful for women who have experienced traumatic births.

There are many options for support out there and finding the right fit is important.

Healing from birth trauma is possible but it can take time and requires both mind and body therapies.

One way to start the journey is through sitting in circle with women.

Women have sat in sacred circles for thousands of years, shared stories and shared wisdom. It's a space where women can feel heard, respected and honoured.

If you are drawn to start or continue your healing journey, come to "Birth Circle" to be with women, to listen or share and start the healing journey

You are more than welcome to attend regularly - listening to other women's stories and sharing wisdom can deepen your understanding of your birth and grow your capacity to be able to support other women in their journey

Next Birth Circle will be held @ thewellnesshubdarwin with @nebulahealing on November 26th 1-4pm.

Or if you feel like a one-on-one session is more your style, please look at the options available on the Nebula website.

Get in touch and book at [www.nebula.net.au](http://www.nebula.net.au)

\$40 investment

*Come together to listen, share and heal*



*SATURDAY 26th NOVEMBER 1-4pm @ the wellness hub*

*Bookings essential via [www.nebula.net.au](http://www.nebula.net.au)*



# Books To Prepare You For Postpartum

