

Bromley,  
Lewisham  
& Greenwich



**Better mental health**  
for new dads  
partners & non-birthing parents



Having a baby can be a daunting prospect, bringing new responsibilities and a sense of the unknown. If you are feeling that coping is a concern, you are not alone.

This booklet and accompanying **Wellbeing skills** aim to help you navigate the early years as a new dad or co-parent, maintain good mental wellbeing for yourself and support your new family.

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# Pregnancy

## Coping when you don't feel involved

### “It doesn't feel real”

Many couples report that they don't feel like parents straight away, or even throughout the pregnancy. While partners can be as emotionally attached to their unborn as mothers are, their experience of pregnancy is by definition, third person.

If your partner's pregnancy has left you feeling distant from things, you are certainly not alone.

### What you can do?

**Take an interest:** Make a conscious decision to get to know your partner in her pregnancy - the growing bump and how she is feeling. The benefits to you and your family will be immense.

**Read about it:** Build your knowledge about what's going on physically and hormonally for both of you. There will be more information about the changes she's going through, but there are changes for you too.

See [Hormone Changes](#) (page 20).

**Talk about it:** If you think this could get awkward, see our Wellbeing Skills section.

**Join in:** Go to the ultra-sound scans. Seeing that there is a living, moving creature in your partner's tummy can help start your attachment with it.

### “The baby wasn't planned”

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by an unplanned pregnancy. There can be a blizzard of emotions, a sense of not being in control, even a sense of loss. Even if you are generally happy about the pregnancy, it is normal to feel tentative about things.

If your baby was not planned and you aren't feeling overly positive, don't lose hope; there are steps you can take to improve things.

### What you can do?

**Give yourself a little time:** You may be experiencing lots of emotions, often at the same time. Allow yourself the space to make sense of them.

**Find some neutral support:** You may benefit from someone impartial with whom you can share your thoughts and feelings and find some perspective. If you don't have family or friends you can confide in, there are lots of sources of support out there.

See [Signposting](#) (page 28).

**Talk to your partner:** Explain your feelings as best you can and really listen when she explains how she feels. Try to avoid judgmental comments and bringing up old arguments; if this is hard to do, see our Wellbeing Skills section.

## Coping when you are not in a relationship with the baby's mother

If you are expecting a baby and are not in a relationship with the child's mother, life can feel like a mass of complications. Questions such as whether you are ready or how you can manage the relationship may seem hard to answer positively.

Although things could potentially get difficult, there are steps you can take to help you approach things in a positive way.

### What you can do?

#### Take a few calming breaths:

When you are under high emotional stress it is harder for you to get perspective on your situation and make good decisions.

See Wellbeing Skills Booklet - How to Calm Yourself.

#### Accept what you can't control:

You may not always be involved in the decision-making process and there will be some situations that you may have to go along with. It is important to keep your child in mind and take a moment before you react.

**Try to get along:** It is a good idea to try to form a civil working relationship with the child's mum and agree on an approach for the future. The long-term benefits to your child and your mental health will make the short-term strain worthwhile.

See Wellbeing Skills Booklet - How to have Difficult Conversations.



## Coping with your 'New Parent' fears

For many new parents, the joy of realising you are expecting a baby is accompanied by a sense of nerves. Becoming a parent is a voyage of discovery; you cannot be told what sort of parent you'll be, you can only find out for yourself. It is entirely normal for doubt to creep in.

### Common fear #1

#### What if something goes wrong?

Try to keep things in perspective. Find out the facts about pregnancy and birth from trusted sources, such as the NHS website, midwives and other expert medical professionals. Remember that fear and doubt thrive in the gaps in our understanding. Tommy's offer a pregnancy symptom-checker for potential issues such as bleeding, or changes in baby's movements.

[www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/symptom-checker](http://www.tommys.org/pregnancy-information/symptom-checker)

If you're a smoker, quitting is hugely beneficial for your and your baby's health. NHS Stop Smoking Services offer specialist support for people with mental health conditions, pregnant women and their partners.

[www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/find-your-local-stop-smoking-service](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/find-your-local-stop-smoking-service)

### Common fear #2

#### Am I ready for this?

It is very difficult to be totally ready for something you've never done before and very few expectant parents would say they feel wholly prepared. Speak to supportive people who have been through it before, or seek help from support groups if you don't know anyone personally. See Signposting (page 28).

### Common fear #3

#### Can I afford it?

Having a baby can put a strain on your finances; however, you can tackle some of your worries by looking at what you

might need to budget for and being prepared for what's coming.

Babycentre UK have a baby costs calculator on their website to help you get started. Remember that, while babies need a fair few things, you are under no obligation to buy everything, and there will always be high quality second hand goods available.

[www.babycentre.co.uk/t25006419/baby-costs-calculator](http://www.babycentre.co.uk/t25006419/baby-costs-calculator)

### Common fear #4

#### Can I do this?

Of course you can! Sometimes we feel pressurised to know how to do things right from the start. You will make mistakes and that's ok; this is a job that you inevitably learn as you go along. There are also some great childcare resources out there specifically for dads and significant others to use. See Signposting (page 28).

## Coping with concerns about my partner

Pregnancy and birth increases women's risk of mental health issues with many experiencing them for the first time. It can promote a recurrence of issues for some and deterioration of mental health for others. If you think your partner may be struggling it is important to encourage her to talk.

Offer a listening ear (see Wellbeing Skills Booklet - How to Listen), practical support and signpost to professional services (see Signposting - page 28). It may seem obvious but words of praise and encouragement can have a huge impact.



# Birth

As the due-date approaches, your thoughts will inevitably turn to the birth and what it will be like. Life will be about antenatal classes, birth-plans and logistics: where best to park, which entrance to use after hours.

For a process that literally everyone has been through, childbirth is a unique and mysterious business. Other people's birth stories aren't necessarily helpful and don't always prepare you for the experience you're about to live through.



## Talk about birth with your partner

Among the practical steps to be taken, there is a strong need for you to prepare yourself emotionally. If you are the birth partner, your main role is to support. Make space to discuss your hopes and practical concerns together and ask your partner what she needs from you. Talking about it will help you both feel more prepared.

If you are feeling nervous, it may be better to seek support from trusted friends and family, or neutral sources.

See [Signposting \(page 28\)](#).

### Practical tips include

- Packing a hospital bag which includes a change of clothes, toiletries and snacks for you and your partner.
- Including your employer's HR number and midwifery team details on your phone in case of emergency.

## What to expect

### Expectation vs actual birth

Many partners say they would have liked to be more aware of what to expect at the birth. The version covered at antenatal classes can be quite a long way from the actual experience and the gap can be a risk factor for poor mental health.

### Pain

Childbirth is an extraordinarily diverse experience; every woman will cope with it differently but the universal truth is that it hurts. When a woman is in labour, her uterus tightens and expands (contractions) to enable the baby to pass through. These contractions can happen quickly or gradually over several hours or days.

### Unexpected behaviours

Your partner may shake, swear at you or even try to hit you. She may also make noises that you have never heard her (or anyone) make before. She may also empty her bowels, which is common - but quite unexpected! It is entirely understandable to feel uncomfortable and helpless. Allow yourself to acknowledge your discomfort and take a moment if you need to.



### Tearing

Around a third of women will experience a perineal tear during delivery, which is especially common during a first birth (source: NCT figures). Although this is commonplace for medical professionals, seeing it happen for yourself can rather catch you by surprise.



### Intervention

Psychological surveys show that partners can be more at risk of mental health issues if their child's birth requires intervention. For the purposes of this pack, intervention can include anything from episiotomy (a surgical cut to widen the birth canal) to an emergency caesarean (C-section).

Without going into too much detail, when difficulties come up during labour, they often happen quickly. Many dads and partners experience high stress in these situations, reporting feeling overtaken by events or out of control, in a room suddenly teeming with medical professionals. These feelings can hit harder for those who are unprepared.

Medical teams deal with these situations on a regular basis (roughly 1 in 4 births in the UK are C-sections, usually after a natural birth is attempted, according to the NHS). As the main focus will be the health of mother and child, partners can report feeling isolated.



### Dealing with a negative experience

Some birth experiences can leave partners feeling:

- A loss of control
- A degree of helplessness
- A sense of isolation / abandonment
- Anger / loss of emotional control
- A sense of loss (of expected experience)
- Detachment, as if on autopilot



If you have experienced some of these feelings during or after birth, it's important to talk.

There are organisations that specialise in advice and support, for example the Birth Trauma Association.

Remember that your partner may also be finding things difficult, so you may find it easier to confide in someone external and encourage her to seek support too.

[www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk](http://www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk)



# Newborn

## 0-3 Months



## Baby's here!"

During the first three months of your child's life there will be quite a lot going on. Much time, attention and resources will be focused on mum and baby. It's vitally important that you don't forget about yourself in all this. Any issues that your partner and new baby have at this time can affect your own mental wellbeing.

### How is my partner?

#### Still recovering from birth

If your partner suffered complications during birth or had a C-section, she will need longer to recover physically. This will place extra pressure on you, as you may be required to do more to look after mum and baby. If you haven't already, now's the time to ask for help from supportive people. Chances are, people want to help and are just waiting for you to tell them how.

#### Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is recommended by health professionals. Making it work, however, is not always straightforward and can take time. There are three main areas to be aware of:

- The time taken for milk to come through (up to 4 days)
- Latching on (getting good attachment of baby to breast)
- Soreness (poor positioning of baby, or constant feeding)

Although this can be a time of high stress for both of you, getting the right support quickly can make all the difference.

Health visitors can help with latching on and give advice on positioning to reduce soreness. There are also barrier creams, which are safe for baby.

Health visitors can check for issues such as 'tongue-tie' (where baby's tongue cannot move around freely) which may affect feeding.

Your role should be 'breastfeeding advocate', to check on your partner's wellbeing, give reassurance if things don't go to plan and talk to health professionals. Be aware that feeding issues can cause great distress for new mothers, so try to be patient and sensitive. It is important to keep in mind that above all else, "fed is best".

Local children's centres offer breastfeeding support groups. There are also specific breastfeeding peer support volunteers via the NCT [www.nct.org.uk](http://www.nct.org.uk) and La Leche League [www.laleche.org.uk](http://www.laleche.org.uk)

### Feeling low or anxious

After birth, your partner's hormone levels are high and she may feel anxious, tearful or generally low. It's normal, to a point. However, keep a look out for these signs; they may indicate something more serious (source: NHS website)

- Frequently crying for no obvious reason
- Unwilling to play with baby
- Withdrawing from contact with people
- Speaking negatively of themselves
- Losing sense of time
- Self-neglect (not washing, changing clothes etc)
- Losing sense of humour
- Constantly worrying
- Repetitive activities done in an attempt to control worries or unpleasant thoughts (checking, asking for reassurance over and over)

Symptoms should begin to reduce over a few weeks. However, if you think your partner may be experiencing serious depression or anxiety, or the issues are more long-term, it is important to signpost to professional services (see [Signposting - page 28](#)). Try to encourage them to talk and offer a listening ear (see [Wellbeing Skills Booklet - How to Listen](#)), give practical support and, it may seem obvious, but words of praise and encouragement can have a huge impact. (see [I'm worried about my partner - page 23](#)).

#### Further help

**PANDAS** (support and advice for parents experiencing perinatal mental illness)

[www.pandasfoundation.org.uk](http://www.pandasfoundation.org.uk)

### Behaving in a way that is concerning / out of character

Identifying the difference between the normal emotions many women experience after having a baby and something more serious is difficult. Postpartum Psychosis is a serious but treatable illness that normally begins in the first few days to weeks after childbirth (source: APP website).

#### You may notice a combination of symptoms including

- Extremes in mood (excited, elated or 'high' and depressed, anxious or confused)
- Delusions (strange beliefs that could not be true)
- Hallucinations (seeing and hearing things that aren't really there)
- Feeling paranoid or suspicious of people's motives.

Any of these symptoms can happen 'out of the blue' to women without previous experience of mental illness.

Symptoms can worsen very quickly and should always be treated as a medical emergency. If you think your partner may be experiencing post-partum psychosis, contact your GP, health professional or in an emergency dial 999.

#### Further help

**Action on Postpartum Psychosis** (national charity for women and families affected by Postpartum Psychosis)

[www.app-network.org](http://www.app-network.org)

## How is my child?

### Child is unwell

Having a sick baby is a stressful and unsettling experience. If your baby is unwell, especially if special care is needed, you are more likely to experience anxiety and depression (source: Bliss). Parents in this situation can experience feelings of sadness, helplessness, disappointment, frustration and anger. It's important that you can support each other emotionally at this time and seek outside support whenever possible.

#### Further support

**Rainbow Trust** (support for families with children who have life-threatening or terminal illness)

[www.rainbowtrust.org.uk](http://www.rainbowtrust.org.uk)

**Bliss** (support for babies born sick or premature)

[www.bliss.org.uk](http://www.bliss.org.uk)



### Crying a lot / unsettled

Babies cry; some more than others and people are really sensitive to the sound of babies crying. As important as this is to the survival of the human race, it can be quite wearing to the individual parent. So, while you're learning how to settle your child, don't forget to learn about how to calm yourself.

See [Wellbeing Skills Booklet - How to Calm Yourself](#)

#### Further help

Useful ideas and information on settling crying babies:

**NHS**

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/soothing-crying-baby](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/soothing-crying-baby)

**Cry-Sis charity**

[www.cry-sis.org.uk](http://www.cry-sis.org.uk)

**NCT helpline 0300 330 0700**

[www.nct.org.uk/baby-toddler/crying/how-cope-and-keep-calm-crying-baby](http://www.nct.org.uk/baby-toddler/crying/how-cope-and-keep-calm-crying-baby)

**ICON**

[www.iconcope.org/about-icon](http://www.iconcope.org/about-icon)



## How am I?

### I'm emotional all the time and very quick to anger

Becoming a parent can give rise to new heightened levels of stress and tiredness which means it's easy for negative emotions to build. The key thing is to recognise how you're feeling and address the negative thoughts before they spiral.

See Wellbeing Skills Booklet: How to Cope With Negative Thoughts.

### I'm overwhelmed

Every parent feels overwhelmed by the job sometimes. If you get the persistent feeling that everything is on top of you, you need to reach out. Don't be afraid to accept help from trusted family and friends, they usually really do want to help.

If you don't have friends or family on hand, your local children & family centre will be able to advise about local support services and groups.

There are also a number of charities that can help:

#### Home Start

Help for families in communities across the UK

[www.home-start.org.uk](http://www.home-start.org.uk)

#### Action for Children

Practical and caring support to children and families

[www.actionforchildren.org.uk/support-for-parents/support-near-you](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/support-for-parents/support-near-you)



If your feelings start to become stronger, for instance if you start to experience frequent anger, guilt and low mood, this can be a sign of postnatal depression (which fathers and partners can experience as well as mothers). It can be hard for men to admit their feelings but it is really important to acknowledge how you're feeling and talk to someone.

### NHS

The NHS says that up to one in ten new fathers become depressed and this can jump to one in four for those with babies aged three to six months.

See New baby (page 18).

See Wellbeing Skills Booklet:

- How to Calm Yourself.

- Coping with Negative Thoughts.





# New baby

3-12 Months

You have got through the novelty of the new arrival and are trying to settle into a normal routine. This nine-month period brings lots of adaptation and things to consider. It's important to be realistic about your expectations. Here we look at how things might be for you and your new family.

## How am I?

### Living with the new normal

Life with a baby feels like one of the biggest adjustments you will ever have to make in life. Everything from your sleep to your social circles will change in some way. When you think about all of these individual changes it can be quite overwhelming. Try to look at them as a series of smaller adjustments rather than one big one. If you feel disheartened, acknowledge your feelings but also consider the positive things you now have.

## Why aren't I better at this?

However much time you spend with your child, the chances are that you are doing a much better job than you think. All parents learn by a bit of trial and error; remember that as long as you keep trying, you're probably doing fine.

### I'm too tired for anything

It is entirely normal for new parents to feel tired much of the time. Your sleep is being regularly broken and babies can be unpredictable. Small adjustments to your lifestyle can maximize the rest you get. Some practical tips include:

- 'Shifts' for you and your partner to sleep and do night feeds. This gives you each a break and a decent period of sleep to look forward to.
- If you can, schedule opportunities to sleep during the day whilst your partner or another trusted person looks after the baby. This is a great opportunity for one person to take baby out in the fresh air and each parent to get some rest.



### **I'm feeling distant, not engaged, nervous and emotional**

In general, men are more prone to neglect their physical and mental health. With lots going on and often with less sleep, it is easy to put your own health to one side. However, this isn't good for you or the family in the long run.

If you start to feel persistently low, lacking in motivation or disconnected, this may be a sign of Postnatal Depression. Common and persistent symptoms to look out for are:

- Lack of motivation to do things you would usually
- Poor or patchy concentration
- Irritability/mood swings
- Eating/weight gain or loss
- Anger
- Reliance on mood enhancers such as alcohol/drugs.

### **Hormone changes**

A drop in testosterone levels can start in pregnancy or during the newborn period (0-3 months) and parents of toddlers can continue to have lower levels.

Low testosterone can contribute to men feeling low and, if not managed, can lead to periods of depression. Again, speak to your GP if you think this is affecting how you're coping.

### **Further help**

Support is available through your GP or local IAPT service. You may also find other online and local support services useful.

**See Signposting (page 28).**



## **Work-life-family balance**

### **I'm struggling with work and family demands**

With work demands combined with the needs of your baby, it is easy for you and your partner to feel overwhelmed. This process of adjustment needs to be managed and shared. Be aware that how you both felt before baby was born may not be the way you feel now.

### **Make time to think about:**

- What role do I have in the family and how does that work?
- What routines are essential to family survival?
- What do I need to plan for? Look ahead and think about what is coming.
- Is your partner returning to work? What will be the financial and social impact of that?

If you find yourself thinking "How do I fit everything in?", or "I never see my baby" it may be worth reviewing how you spend your time. Perhaps you can alter routines to give yourself more flexibility at a certain time of day e.g. earlier work start time, home for bedtime (see Wellbeing Skills Booklet - Building a Sustainable Routine).

### **My colleagues don't understand how hard things are for me**

Babies can be unpredictable and stuff can happen, usually just before something important is due at work! Make sure that people at work (and in particular your manager) have a sense of what is happening in your personal life. Try to manage deadlines and bottlenecks ahead of time to reduce

stress. Keep lines of communication open and remember you are entitled to ask for some flexibility as a new parent, either informally via a discussion with your manager, or via a 'Formal Flexible Working Request.' Useful information can be found via ACAS:

**ACAS (employment rights and advice) [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)**

### **I'm thinking about being a stay-at-home parent**

Now, more than ever, dads and partners are choosing to look after their child full-time, whether on a temporary basis through shared parental leave, or long term as the primary carer.

For some, it is a richly rewarding experience and a once-in-a-lifetime chance to bond with their child. For others it can be hard getting to grips with the emotional and psychological changes and challenges of the role. Some experience feelings of isolation and can find it hard to adjust.

It is important to talk things over with your partner and make the best decision for you and your family. If you do make the leap, getting out every day and building new social support networks is likely to be essential for your own and your child's wellbeing. Your children & family centre will be able to advise about local services and groups in your area.

## My partner doesn't understand how hard it is for me

With the best will in the world, the frantic, firefighting nature of life with a baby and other commitments can make it feel like you are living separate lives. Resentments can build up and it is easy to misjudge how daily life is for our partner. It is vitally important that you each make time to get a sense of how each other's days are and how you can work together to smooth out problems.

See Wellbeing Skill Booklet - Building a sustainable routine.

### 'Me-life' balance

As a new parent, you are discovering that life is a matter of continual balance and competing needs. It is easy to forget - just as you are 'not your job', nor are you only a spouse/partner/husband or parent. Building in scheduled time for yourself can be hugely beneficial to you and your family. It can release pressure and stop small problems becoming big ones.

#### Early signs that you might need more space for yourself:

- I feel like I'm on autopilot
- I get snappy / cross with everyone
- My (sex) drive is lower

#### More serious things to watch out for:

- I'm starting to resent my partner
- I feel disconnected from my family



If you have experienced some of these feelings, it's important to talk and seek support.

See I'm Feeling Distant, Not Engaged, Nervous and Emotional (page 20).

See Signposting (page 28).

### Will I ever have a social life again?

One of the things that new parents start to become aware of during this period are changes in their social connections. Your change of circumstances is big for you, but might be frustrating for friends who aren't parents. Plus, you will be tired and you may want to spend any spare time at evenings and weekends with the family.

It is worth planning with your partner to 'book in' when you want to go out with friends so that you can agree a fair system - who goes out when, who is in charge of childcare etc.

## How is my partner?

Many of the issues and questions that may have affected you may have also affected your partner, often in different ways.

### I'm worried about my partner

Many mums struggle to adjust to life with a new baby. Your partner is likely to be coping with lots of new demands and getting little sleep, so it is natural for her to feel emotional and overwhelmed. This feeling (often called the 'baby blues') is a brief period of low mood, feeling emotional and tearful around three to 10 days after birth.

If you sense that your partner's difficulties are going on for a long time, or start to develop over baby's first year, it is best to seek further help and support from professionals

See Newborn (page 14) for common symptoms.

Your partner may not be forthcoming with how she is feeling, as many women feel tremendous guilt and worry that they'll be judged for not coping. If you think your partner may be suffering it is really important to encourage them to talk, but approach them with care and sensitivity. Offer a listening ear and signpost to professional services.

See Wellbeing Skills Booklet:

- Having Difficult Conversations
- Conversation Starters.

### Our relationship has changed

Your partnership of two has now become a family of three (or more!). This will undoubtedly change your relationship with your partner.

It may be about the equality of the work - often one person does the lion's share domestically. After baby arrives, there is no room for domestic passengers, which can cause friction.

It may be about intimacy and fun - good relationships need both. Your circumstances may have changed but you are still in a relationship and it's important to build in time for each other.

It may be about sex - perhaps your partner doesn't feel like having sex anymore or you're wondering where your libido has gone. Tiredness is not to be underestimated here!

It is a tricky subject to talk about and can lead to confusing behaviour and potential misunderstandings. Although it may be difficult, it is important to 'brave the conversation' - share how you are feeling and ask your partner too.

See Wellbeing Skills Booklet - Working on your relationship with your partner.

### Their 'me' time

Having a baby changes a woman's relationship with herself and others. Although it may offer opportunities to make friends at play groups and children's activities, this does not happen for everyone and may not provide all the social support she needs. Opportunities for your partner to spend time with old friends and family - or importantly time alone - are essential for good mental health and is something practical you can help with.

See Wellbeing Skills Booklet - Building a Sustainable Routine.



# Older baby

1-2 Years



So you have a one-year-old and life is a little less pinball than it was. There's a routine to the days. You know, largely, what your little one needs and when. Family life has probably settled down.

There may be moments where you feel drained, though. Your settled family routine is still dictated by your small child's needs. You now have just enough headspace to remember concepts like 'leisure-time' and 'spontaneity', if only to think about how far out of reach such things still seem. And little one, having cemented their status as the apple of your eye, is becoming more challenging.

## Coping as they start to test their boundaries

With all due respect to the nappies and sleepless nights, you have now entered the stage where you really earn your parenting stripes. Your patience will be stretched again and again. And again.

## How do you cope with this?

### Practise patience

Love is the most important thing you give your child. Patience is also very important (it shows your loved one that you value them) and may require a lot more effort! The good news is, you can work on it.

See [Wellbeing Skills Booklet - Developing your Patience](#).

### Pick your battles

Rising to every challenge your toddler makes will not help them, or your mental wellbeing. It's OK to let small things slide (there will be A LOT of small things). Give yourself (and your child) some wiggle room.



## Out of the baby bubble

This stage of a child's life can bring true joy and wonder to a parent. For some, though, the thrill and novelty of being a parent can start to wear off around now. The needs of small children do not yield; work demands, a drifting sense of identity and lack of social life can all weigh heavily. It's important to have people you can talk to at these times.

### Talk to your partner

When we are struggling with issues such as these, we can bottle up our feelings, hide our emotions from our partners and try to carry on. This is a mistake. Speak to your partner about it.

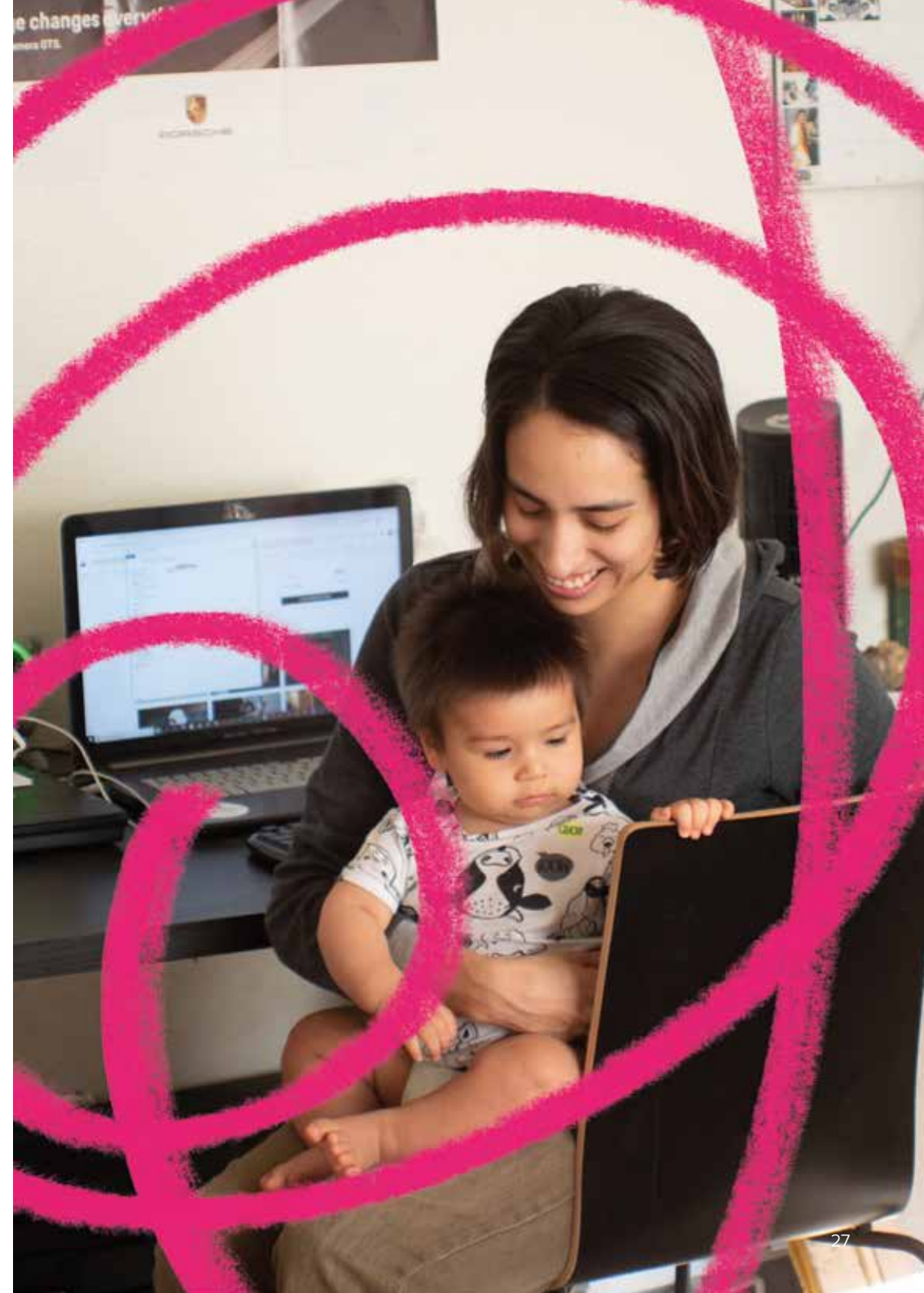
Chances are, your partner has already realised something is wrong but doesn't know what. Allowing yourself to be open and honest about these feelings is the first step to resolving them.



### Look after your social networks

When you start a family, your friendship circle can change. You can naturally gravitate to other parents whose lives may be more 'in sync' with your own. Friends who do not share that experience can drift away a little. This is normal.

What's important is that you and your partner maintain a network of people you can talk things over with. Work to maintain deeper friendships; there is something about how old friends know you well and you can truly be yourself which is less likely to be the case with newer friends.





We want this booklet to be as inclusive as possible whilst making sure it connects and is relevant. If you are LGBT+ or simply don't see **your** experience reflected, you may be able to find more help in this section.

# Signposting

## We're here to fight for mental health!

### Useful information

#### Mind information for mums

[www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/postnatal-depression-and-perinatal-mental-health/postnatal-and-antenatal-depression](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/postnatal-depression-and-perinatal-mental-health/postnatal-and-antenatal-depression)

#### Mind information for partners

[www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/postnatal-depression-and-perinatal-mental-health/partners](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/postnatal-depression-and-perinatal-mental-health/partners)

#### Action on Postpartum Psychosis

National charity for women and families affected by Postpartum Psychosis

[www.app-network.org](http://www.app-network.org)

**Maternal OCD** provides specific support for obsessive-compulsive behaviours during pregnancy and baby's first year

[www.maternalocd.org](http://www.maternalocd.org)

**The Birth Trauma Association** provides information and support for both parents following a difficult birth

[www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk](http://www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk)

#### Talking Support

Samaritans offer non-judgmental support 24 hours a day 116 123

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**IAPT offer talking therapies in every borough** (self-referral or via GP)

[www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Psychological-therapies-%28IAPT%29/LocationSearch/10008](http://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Psychological-therapies-%28IAPT%29/LocationSearch/10008)

#### CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)

Support for men who need to talk 0800 58 58 58

[www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net)

## Support groups & information

**Mind Infoline** provides an information and signposting service 0300 123 3393  
[www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines)

**Dads Matter UK** provides support for dads worried about or suffering from Depression, Anxiety and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)  
[www.dadsmatteruk.org](http://www.dadsmatteruk.org)

**PANDAS** offers information for parents experiencing postnatal depression  
[www.pandasfoundation.org.uk](http://www.pandasfoundation.org.uk)

**National Childbirth Trust** offers information, support and events to support new parents in their local area  
[www.nct.org.uk](http://www.nct.org.uk)

**The Fatherhood Institute** works on policy and research to support fathers  
[www.fatherhoodinstitute.org](http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org)

**Postpartum Men** offers support and information for fathers experiencing postnatal depression, including an online peer support forum  
[www.postpartummen.com](http://www.postpartummen.com)

**Families Need Fathers** offers support to maintain a child's relationship with both parents 0300 0300 363  
[www.fnf.org.uk](http://www.fnf.org.uk)

**NHS** information on mental health helplines  
[www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines)

**Home Start** offers support groups in local communities  
[www.home-start.org.uk](http://www.home-start.org.uk)

**Action for Children** offers local support groups  
[www.actionforchildren.org.uk/support-for-parents/support-near-you](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/support-for-parents/support-near-you)

**Future Men** offers courses for dads in London  
[www.futuremen.org](http://www.futuremen.org)

**Tommy's** offers pregnancy and baby loss information and support  
[www.tommys.org](http://www.tommys.org)

## LGBT+ parent families

**National Childbirth Trust** has information and support for LGBTQ+ parents  
[www.nct.org.uk/pregnancy/same-sex-parents/two-mum-families-sharing-experiences-and-support](http://www.nct.org.uk/pregnancy/same-sex-parents/two-mum-families-sharing-experiences-and-support)

[www.nct.org.uk/labour-birth/dads-and-partners/your-experiences-having-baby-through-surrogacy](http://www.nct.org.uk/labour-birth/dads-and-partners/your-experiences-having-baby-through-surrogacy)

**Pink Parents** offers support for gay and lesbian parents  
[www.pinkparents.org.uk/](http://www.pinkparents.org.uk/)

**Stonewall** has produced a Guide for Gay Dads  
[www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/A\\_Guide\\_for\\_Gay\\_Dads\\_\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/A_Guide_for_Gay_Dads__1_.pdf)

**The LGBT Mummies Tribe** provides resources, support groups and services for LGBT mums  
[www.thelgbtmummiestribe.com](http://www.thelgbtmummiestribe.com)

**La Leche League** information for trans and non-binary parents about breastfeeding or chestfeeding  
[www.Laleche.org.uk/support-transgender-non-binary-parents](http://www.Laleche.org.uk/support-transgender-non-binary-parents)

**Fflag** charity supporting LGBT+ families  
[www.fflag.org.uk/portfolio-item/lgbtplus-parenting](http://www.fflag.org.uk/portfolio-item/lgbtplus-parenting)

**New Family Social** charity led by LGBT+ adopters and foster carers  
[www.newfamilysocial.org.uk](http://www.newfamilysocial.org.uk)

## Practical childcare information

**NHS** practical information for partners  
[www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/dad-to-be-pregnant-partner](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/dad-to-be-pregnant-partner)

**Children & Family Centres** offer free and low-cost support classes for local parents  
[www.gov.uk/find-sure-start-childrens-centre](http://www.gov.uk/find-sure-start-childrens-centre)

**The Fatherhood Institute** information, advice and ideas related to fatherhood  
[www.fatherhoodinstitute.org](http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org)









Bromley,  
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& Greenwich



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