

## Support for Mums and their Partners

As a new or expectant parent, you and your partner may be experiencing additional stress or anxiety during COVID-19, made harder due to social distancing.

If you are feeling worried or stressed at this time, support is available. The tips are designed to help you consider how you and your partner are managing wellbeing and reduce the impact of COVID-19 related stressors on your physical and mental health.

### You and your partner

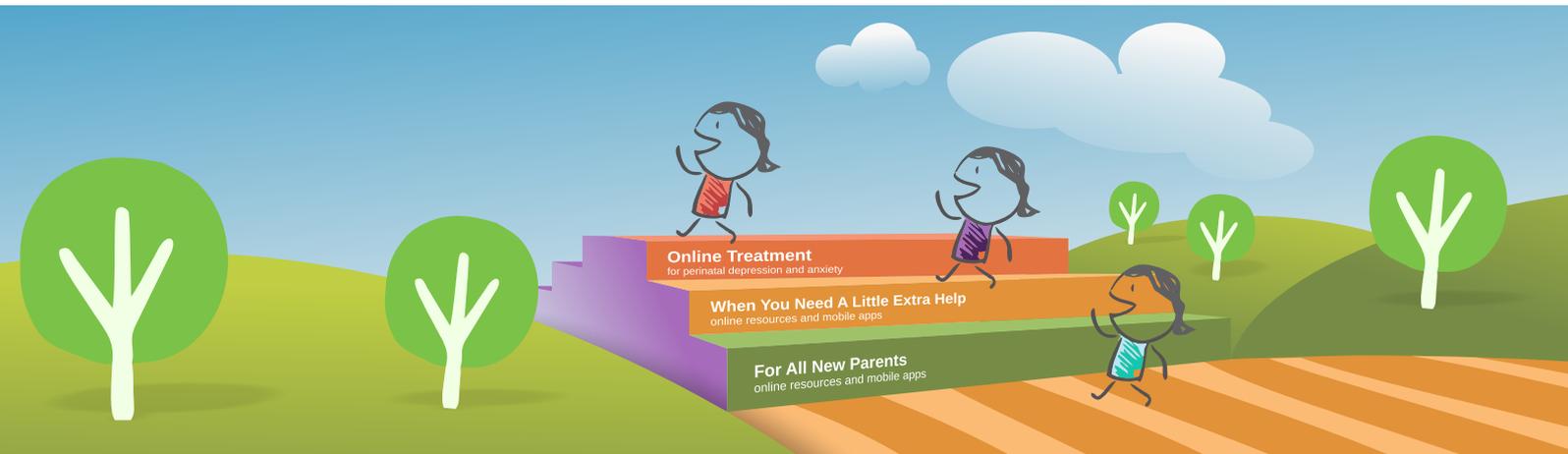
If you are both feeling stressed, you may both struggle to communicate your needs. Consider how you and your partner can support each other. It can be helpful to set aside some time to do something relaxing or enjoyable together. This may include recreating a special night in together such as ordering your favourite food from your local restaurant, or watching a movie when baby is asleep.

### Be kind to yourself

You are juggling a lot at the moment. Becoming a parent is one of life's biggest transitions and it takes time to adjust to this role and the associated challenges and joys of parenthood. Additional changes may have also occurred for you and your family at this time. Many of us have transitioned to working remotely, or have lost employment. These unforeseen circumstances can understandably lead to additional stress and fatigue. While this is not what you had envisioned as a new or expectant parent, you are responding the best you can. It is helpful to be realistic about the expectations placed on yourself at this time. Speak kindly to yourself, as you would a good friend. Together, we are all learning how to best navigate the way forward.

### Stay connected with others

While we may be physically isolated from many friends and family during this time, using digital technology and other means to stay socially connected with friends and family is important for our wellbeing. Arrange a time to talk with friends via phone or video, or organise a group chat with other parents you know. Online parent groups are also available for both mums and dads and are a great way to connect with people who understand the challenges and joys of being a new parent.



### Look after your physical health

Taking care of your physical health has many benefits for your mental wellbeing. Look for opportunities to stay physically active and try to incorporate regular exercise where possible. Consider what activities would fit best with your modified routine, which may also include your partner or baby. Healthy eating habits, drinking plenty of water and trying to keep a good sleep routine, where possible, will also help support your general health.

### Find the balance

Trying to maintain a daily routine can be a helpful way to manage at home during COVID-19. Review your day-to-day activities and build in opportunities to do the things you enjoy with your partner and baby, alongside the daily “have tos”. Speak to your partner to plan an opportunity where you can both set aside some alone time to relax and unwind, even if it is for 20 minutes to garden, or go for a bike ride.

### Talking to get help

When we feel overwhelmed, stressed or anxious, we may be tempted to ignore or avoid our feelings. This may feel helpful in the short-term but in the long term these feelings can build up. Having someone to confide in can lighten the load and support your mental health. Think about your trusted supports and people that you can reach out to. This may be a parent, partner, or friend.

If you are noticing a prolonged period of feeling anxious or down or concerned about your mental health, professional supports are available. Many psychologists and GP's are currently offering appointments via telehealth during COVID-19. Chat to your GP to book an appointment and develop a helpful support plan.

### Seek relevant information from trusted sources and limit media exposure

There is a lot of information about parenting on social media platforms. Keep informed by accessing reliable information from reputable organisations and consider finding one or two trusted resources that you can refer to.

#### More information

##### **MumMoodBooster**

Is a simple-to-use evidence-based online CBT treatment for postnatal depression and anxiety. Mum2BMoodBooster is the pregnancy version. Sessions are interactive, tailored to your problems and have been found to be highly effective by many women.

##### **MindMum**

MindMum is a mobile phone app to help you cope at times of stress and provides useful tips and ideas to support your emotional wellbeing during pregnancy and after having baby. This can be freely downloaded from MumSpace.

##### **What Were We Thinking!**

What Were We Thinking is an Australian website and mobile application that supports new mums and dads in learning? practical skills for settling babies and adjusting to changes in their relationship with each other.

##### **Baby Steps**

Baby Steps provides information to parents on caring for baby and themselves to enhance the wellbeing of new mums and dads.

For more information and support, head on over to MumSpace where we are with you, every step of the way.

[www.mumspace.com.au](http://www.mumspace.com.au)