



## Tips for Coping with Anxiety of COVID-19 during Pregnancy and Following Birth

In amidst these challenging and stressful times, there are also many stories of strength and hope being shared around the world. Taking the time to focus on these stories can be heart-warming and uplifting, and allow us to remain positively connected to others in our community.

### Focus on what you can control

It's natural that in times of crisis to experience some anxiety and for your mind to wander to what can't be controlled (e.g., what will happen to the country's economy, how will the Government deal with the crisis and how will our loved ones be affected).

Unfortunately we can't control the actions of others or the future but we can control our own behaviour. This includes what we DO right now to help us adjust to the situation, to improve our own mental health, our relationships with others and to be the person we want to be during this crisis. Below are more tips that might help you to achieve this.

### Stay connected and engaged

Find ways to stay socially connected to people and activities during physical isolation. Never has it been more important to plan to connect with others as the opportunity for incidental social interaction is reduced. You will need to be creative in how you plan to do this. It is so important to maintain well being. The way you modify connecting with family and friends may vary. For example, you might post a letter to your grandmother, sharing photos from your ultrasound. Other examples may include meeting your friends from mothers' group in an online group chat, or in a video call. Many mother-baby activities, such as story time and rhythm time are now currently being offered via online platforms. See what is available to you through your library network and on YouTube.

### Keep active

Your physical wellbeing is connected to your emotional wellbeing. Find some time to build 30 minutes of movement into your daily routine. Consider going for a walk with your baby or your partner, or participate in a free movement class on YouTube, such as movement classes for Mum and baby, or pregnancy yoga. Keeping motivated to be physical active is easier if you include someone else, a partner or friend who can also log into the same You Tube class while on facetime with you.



### Create some structure in your day

Keeping a healthy daily routine supports emotional and mental wellbeing. The COVID-19 physical distancing measures can create changes to regular routines as we are no longer able to participate in some of our usual day-to-day activities. Consider what activities are meaningful to you and your family and how you can modify these during COVID-19. Take some time to create structure in your daily routine – this will help you with planning and organisation, and also create predictability for you and your baby.

If you are working at home or doing home schooling an extra challenge is how to find ways to structure the day for everyone.

Identify your resources and people to support your well-being. Consider who is a member of your support team and what resources are available to you at this time – even at a distance.

### Focus on what matters

Stay in touch with your values, the things that matter most to you. Your personal values may include family, love, caring, honesty and more. Tune into your core values and how they may guide your daily actions. For example, spending time bathing your baby aligns with values of love, caring and family or phoning a family member to check in with them aligns with your values of family connection and caring. While many of your regular activities may have changed or have been modified, look for opportunities to continue value-based action each day.

### Take a moment

Take a moment to notice how you are feeling. Notice your breath and mindfully take a moment to slow your breathing. This will help calm your body and your mind. There are various helpful techniques to support feeling calm – MindMum has Calm Tracks that assist with calm breathing and support mindful engagement in activities with your baby. You can also search for other resources to help you to work on mindfulness and feeling calm and relaxed.

### Reflect on the positives

In amidst these challenging and stressful times, there are also many stories of strength and hope being shared around the world. Taking the time to focus on these stories can be heart-warming and uplifting, and allow us to remain positively connected to others in our community. One example of kindness in our community is the social movement of #thekindnesspandemic.

### More information

#### MumMoodBooster

Is a simple-to-use evidence-based online Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (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)