



Top 10 Tips for Perinatal Mental Health

- 1. Different is doable:** Babies are as individual as adults. They all have their own uniqueness, preferences and wants. Your baby might need lots of physical contact, more frequent feeding or may cry more than you envisaged. Seek medical advice for anything you are concerned about but do remember babies aren't all the same.
- 2. Be real, not perfect:** There is no such thing as a perfect parent, forget the yummy mummy myths and the Instagram perfect portrayals. You are on your own parenting journey, take your own steps in time with you and your babies' rhythm.
- 3. Be mindful of your mind:** Guilt is a very common feeling for all parents: Be aware of where the guilt is coming from and really think about if it is based on truth or perception. Be kind to yourself!
- 4. Find a nap between the nappies:** Babies and young children don't necessarily sleep when we 'expect' them to however it can be extremely challenging to go from sleeping a solid 8 hours a night to frequently disrupted sleep. Lack of sleep can leave us feeling lethargic, lacking in motivation and sometimes even quite tearful. Try to sleep through the day when your baby naps or seek support from a family member or friend to give you a few hours of restful sleep.
- 5. Slow and steady wins the race:** Bonding and attachment with baby isn't always immediate; give yourself time to readjust to being a parent to a new baby. If you are concerned share your feelings with someone you feel safe with or seek support from professionals or peers.
- 6. Self-care isn't selfish:** Self-care may sound like a cliché however it is extremely important to take some guilt free time for yourself as a parent. Allow yourself to say yes to offers of support, it's essential to have some space and time for yourself even if it just to take a shower in peace or go for a short walk.
- 7. Saying no isn't negative:** Create boundaries. It's very easy to allow frequent visitors to take over or immerse yourself in online versions of perfect parenting. If something or someone is making you feel negative about yourself take a break from it/them or discuss it.
- 8. A problem shared is a problem halved:** Connect for positive support; joining groups, online forums and following blogs can be a great source of support. The likelihood is if you are struggling at 2am someone else in the world is too, reach out, you are not alone.
- 9. Putting one foot in front of the other:** Exercise is great for both your body and mind. Take some time for gentle exercise such as a short walk locally. Be mindful of your surroundings taking notice of the warmth of the sun on your face, the birds singing, say hello to others; these small things can really brighten your day and give you a positive focus.
- 10. Sharing is caring:** Speak out. Be clear with others about how you are feeling; if you are struggling or have concerns reach out to others and really express what you are thinking and feeling. Access support from services when you need to, people are there to help support you and your baby on your journey together.