

My pregnancy & post-birth wellbeing plan

This plan is to help you prepare the support you might need to look after your mental wellbeing. While coping with the physical changes in pregnancy, birth and beyond, your emotional wellbeing is important too. Many women feel anxious, unhappy, mentally distressed, depressed or even more severely mentally unwell during this time, which can be unexpected.

This plan is to help you think about the support you might need. It is your decision whether to share it with anyone else.

You may have mixed emotions about your pregnancy and your baby. This is completely normal, especially if you have experienced a previous loss. Here are some common signs that you should talk through with your midwife or health visitor:

- Tearfulness
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Being irritable/arguing more often
- Lack of concentration
- Change in appetite
- Problems sleeping or extreme energy
- Racing thoughts
- Feeling more anxious
- Lack of interest in usual things
- Lack of feelings for their baby

Some women can also have:

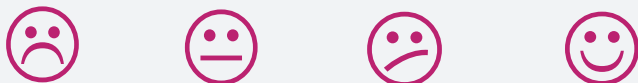
- Intrusive and distressing thoughts or images e.g. that you or your baby will be harmed or that you will harm yourself or your baby
- Suicidal thoughts
- Strict rituals and obsessions

'I couldn't afford nursery but my mum came over 3 mornings a week to take my toddler out. It meant I could sleep an extra bit with the baby, which really helped with everything. The extra sleep made me feel great!'

- Jo, mum of 2

How am I feeling?

Take a moment to write about how you feel now, your thoughts about the birth and how you feel about your baby. There are no right or wrong answers and how you feel can change over time. You may find it useful to keep a diary of how you are feeling.



Often your friends and family will spot that things aren't quite right before you do.

I will ask
and talk to them about things troubling me.*

Also, ask yourself...

Am I the sort of person who accepts that I'm unwell?



How might I start the conversation if I feel embarrassed?

Who else can I turn to if I don't feel listened to or supported?



Being prepared: help and support

Finding support can be tricky, especially if you are on your own. Starting to look at local activities and groups during your pregnancy can be a good way to meet new friends and mums in your area. Look in the local children's centre and on the Netmums website for antenatal classes, baby massage, antenatal and postnatal exercise groups, new mums groups and so on.

It is never too early to start meeting other pregnant women and new mums, or being active to support your mental health.

The following groups/classes are local to me:

Who could I ask if I need help with practicalities, such as shopping, tidying up and babysitting?

People I can call on are:

Ways to cope: what might appeal to me?

Talking to someone I trust about how I feel, such as a parent, sibling, partner or trusted friend

Talking to my midwife or health visitor about how I feel

Keeping active

Focusing on a healthy diet

Finding out about different ways to relax, such as yoga, meditation

Listening to podcasts

Using mindfulness apps

Asking for help with things at home, like chores and babysitting

Asking for support if I am worried about my baby

Finding out about how to change my thinking patterns

Discussing the possibility of counselling or medication with my GP

"Talk to other people – especially other new mums. I live far away from my family but made lots of new friends by going to baby groups and even just walking around the park. Those women have become my support network and their babies are my son's friends."

Lauren, mum

Record contact details here of a professional who should be able to help you or let you know of other support available if you are concerned about how you are feeling. They will not judge you and can help you access any support you need.

Midwife:

Health visitor:

GP:

Other:

- You can also fill this out online at www.tommys.org/wellbeing-plan
- For more info and a full list of support organisations, national and local, visit www.tommys.org/mh-support or ring the FREE Tommy's Line on **0800 1470 800**
- Find more information at www.tommys.org/mentalwellbeing