Innovation nation

Renae Gibson, Senior Health Promotion Officer, Women’s Health Clinical Support Programs

In pulling together this issue of the newsletter, I was struck by the volume of innovative initiatives in perinatal and infant mental health, both in WA and elsewhere in Australia. It really wasn’t hard to find interesting content!

On the pages that follow, you will see that there are two new support groups being offered – one in the Perth metropolitan area for expectant parents of multiples (page 3) and one for women in regional WA (page 5). I urge you to have a good read and get in touch with the contacts listed if you have possible referrals.

Also in this issue are several articles featuring information about dads. Page 2 features a media release from the Australian Institute of Family Studies about a new report into Fatherhood and Mental Illness. I must return to the AIFS website myself to look more thoroughly into their work as what I’ve found so far has been incredibly interesting – see page 3 regarding some online videos they’ve produced.

And if you’re interested in talking with others about fatherhood research, policy and practice, check out the article on page 4. The Australian Association for Infant Mental Health conference in Sydney later this year might be just what you’re looking for.

Happy reading!

Email: Renae.Gibson@health.wa.gov.au
Fathers get the baby-blues


It's not only women who experience postnatal depression but new fathers are also at an increased risk of experiencing psychological distress in the postnatal period, according to a discussion paper released by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS).

AIFS’ Deputy Director (Research) Dr Daryl Higgins said that around 10 per cent of Australian fathers reported symptoms of clinical depression during the postnatal period.

"The transition to parenthood appears to be a time of heightened risk of fathers developing depression, compared to the general adult male population," Dr Higgins said.

"While fathers are still far less likely than mothers to experience postnatal depression, we are beginning to realise that it is an important issue for men too. Men tend not to have as formally structured a transition to the birth of their child as that which guides women throughout pregnancy and as a result they can become anxious and uncertain about what lies ahead. Some men struggle to come to terms with the reality of the pregnancy, their changing relationships and the potential economic consequences of starting a family. They may find it hard to adjust to the news of a pregnancy and the need to support their partner throughout the childbirth process leading to stress among expectant fathers."

Researcher Rhys Price-Robertson said poor mental health among fathers had also been associated with negative impacts on their children’s development.

"The children of men with a mental illness are more likely than other children to experience emotional and behavioural problems, as well as to be diagnosed with a mental illness themselves," he said.

"Fathers with a mental illness are more likely than other fathers to show low levels of parental engagement, warmth and appropriate monitoring of their children. Mental illness can also impact on children by contributing to marital hostility or violence which can spill over into problematic parenting behaviours, poorer relationships with children and co-parenting relations. It's important for Australian policy makers, psychiatric and welfare services to continue to find ways to encourage fathers with mental health problems to seek and receive professional assistance."


Image courtesy of David Castillo Dominici at FreeDigitalPhotos.net
Antenatal group for those expecting twins, triplets or more

Krista Bingham, Committee Member, Perth and Districts Multiple Birth Association

Research shows that multiple birth parents are at a higher risk of perinatal mental health problems than parents of singleton babies. This is due to the increased emotional, physical and financial demands of caring for multiple infants, which commonly results in feelings of isolation. In addition, there is often stress associated with the higher risk of complications of a multiple birth, such as premature delivery, pre-eclampsia, gestation diabetes, twin to twin transfusion syndrome (TTTS), stillbirth/neonatal death and traumatic birth.

In light of this, the Perth and Districts Multiple Birth Association (P&DMBA) has partnered with St John of God Raphael Centre to deliver a specialised antenatal group program called ‘Preparing for Multiple Parenthood’.

This free program will bring together expectant parents of twins and triplets (both mums and dads) in a therapeutic group setting. The group sessions will be co-facilitated by a clinical psychologist experienced in perinatal mental health issues and a psychologist who is also a parent of multiples.

In the program, families will learn ways to manage their new role as multiple birth parents, link with support services and reduce their risk of developing stress, anxiety and depression in the perinatal period. The program will be evaluated and families will be followed up after their babies arrive. Participating families will be offered complimentary membership to P&DMBA (usually $45) as part of this program.

With the first group due to run in May, group facilitators are looking for families who are pregnant with twins or triplets and due after July to take part. Plans are also under way to develop a postnatal group which will be run later in the year.

If you would like more information about this exciting new – and free! – program, please contact co-ordinator Gretta Little.

Email: littlegretta@iinet.net.au
Phone: 0414 924 946

“Dads Talk”

Renae Gibson, Senior Health Promotion Officer, Women’s Health Clinical Support Programs

After finding the media release on the previous page, I took a look around the AIFS website and stumbled across “Dads Talk” on AIFStv (a YouTube channel for AIFS).

“Dads Talk” is a series of short videos – each about two and a half minutes – featuring a diverse range of Australian fathers and their partners talking about various aspects of fatherhood. Topics include “what makes a good father?”, “what are the most challenging aspects of fatherhood?” and “how has your relationship with your partner changed?” to name a few.

If you’ve been looking for some insight into modern fatherhood, or perhaps some quick content to share with the dads you see in your practice, do check these out. I suspect they would be excellent conversation starters.
This year’s Australian Association for Infant Mental Health (AAIMHI) conference, to be held in Sydney, is entitled “And father makes three”, giving delegates the chance to hear from expert national and international speakers who specialise in family-inclusive practice.

The call for submissions is currently out (closing 28 June 2015), seeking presentations from researchers, policy-makers and practitioners under the following conference themes:

**Family inclusive practice across single, same sex, blended, and traditional families**

How are male roles included within family-inclusive practice with single fathers, gay fathers, boyfriends, stepdads and biological fathers?

**Families in the 21st century**

How does practice reflect changing work roles and family roles for mothers and fathers? How do we incorporate fathering into the notion of family that underpins our work? What do mothers want from fathers?

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families**

How do we include fathers, uncles, pops and brothers in family care for infants in ATSI communities?

**Care for babies and toddlers**

How do clinicians support father-infant attachment and co-parenting? How can family-inclusive practice increase fathers’ support for mothers?

**Working with fathers**

What works to recruit fathers to perinatal services? How do we engage fathers alongside mothers? What are the barriers, facilitators and boundaries in working with fathers?

**Family violence**

How do we incorporate an understanding of the long term effects of family violence on infants into our work? How do we protect parent-infant relationships while healing families experiencing violence?

For more information and detail on the conference themes, visit [www.aaimhiconference.org](http://www.aaimhiconference.org).
Video conference support group for women of rural WA

Janet Pages-Oliver, PNMH Project Officer/Rural in Reach Health Consultant, Womens Health and Family Services

Beginning in late April, Womens Health and Family Services (WHFS) will be running a support group for women in rural and remote areas of WA who are experiencing, or are at risk of developing, postnatal depression or anxiety.

The psycho-educational group has been adapted from the existing WHFS metropolitan PND group model and is to be delivered using video conferencing technology. A manual has also been produced for members to utilise throughout the four week support group time frame, including information and worksheets about the four sessions and a list of community resources specific to the chosen locations. Targeted communities include the Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne, Midwest, Wheatbelt, Peel, South West, Goldfields/Esperance and Great Southern regions of WA.

Women will be able to attend via participating community resource centres with adequate internet connectivity to support video conferencing. The groups will be held on a Thursday morning and a Friday afternoon over a 4 week period, with morning and afternoon tea and child care provided. There is no charge for participation.

For enquiries or referrals, please contact Janet Pages-Oliver as soon as possible.

Email:   jpagesoliver@whfs.org.au
Phone:  6330 5472 (Thursday, Friday)
Web:    www.whfs.org.au

Image courtesy of David Castillo Dominici at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Keep an eye out!

This year, WHCSP will be returning to both the Every Woman Expo (19-21 June) and the Pregnancy Babies and Children’s Expo (31 July – 2 August) to raise awareness in the community of perinatal mental health.
### Training and events in 2015

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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8 – EPDS: Uses and Misuses (Subiaco)</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>6 – Perinatal Anxiety Disorders (Subiaco)</td>
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Also, if you want to discuss options for a free training session tailor-made for your workplace and conducted in your local area, please email: Lea.Davidson@health.wa.gov.au

### WA perinatal and infant mental health resources

All resources produced by the Women’s Health Clinical Support Programs are free within WA.

Phone (08) 9340 1795 or email whcsp@health.wa.gov.au to order:

- You Are Not Alone: Emotional Health for Mothers (Ethiopian and Sudanese DVDs)
- Boodjarri Business: Yarning about Feelings After Baby (DVD)
- Boodjarri Business: Working with Aboriginal Mums, Babies & Families (DVD)
- Using the EPDS Translated into languages other than English
- The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) (A4 2-sided sheet)
- Care for your baby by caring for yourself poster (A2 or A3)


- Finding help before and after birth (credit card sized fold-out pamphlet)

Please note that the Postnatal Anxiety and Depression brochure is currently out of stock. Until a reprint can be arranged, you may wish to email whcsp@health.wa.gov.au for a printable version or order beyondblue’s DL pamphlet (BL/0940; see page 8 of this newsletter for details).

If you have any queries about these or other resources on perinatal and infant mental health, please contact Women’s Health Clinical Support Programs on (08) 9340 1795.
**beyondblue resources for health professionals**

To order call 1300 22 4636 or visit [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au).

- **BL/0941 Booklet – Perinatal clinical practice guidelines – Executive summary**
  A guide for primary care health professionals

- **BL/0920 Wheel – Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) and Psychosocial Questionnaire scoring wheel for health professionals**

- **BL/0887 Fact Sheet – Puerperal (postpartum) psychosis**
  A guide for primary care health professionals

- **BL/0470 Fact Sheet – Perinatal Depression and Anxiety**
  Evidence Relating to Infant Cognitive and Emotional Development

- **BL/0968 Scoring Pad – Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)**

- **BL/0900 Fact Sheet – Bipolar disorder during pregnancy and early parenthood**
  A guide for primary care health professionals

- **BL/0967 Flyer – Overview of beyondblue**

- **BL/1019 Window Sticker – Proudly supporting beyondblue**

- **BL/0902 Postcard – PND guidelines and online training for health professionals**
beyondblue resources for communities

To order call 1300 22 4636 or visit www.beyondblue.org.au.

**BL/0775 - Booklet - Dad’s handbook: A guide to the first 12 months**

Hey Dad provides critical information to new dads during this important stage of their lives - the advice and practical tips are invaluable. Early brain development, changes in relationships, the importance of attachment, play, sleep and breastfeeding are all issues that fathers may not have explored before the birth and this booklet provides a ‘toolkit’ to help new families manage change.

**Range of posters - Just Speak Up PND Campaign (double-sided) A3 or A2**

**BL/0868 - Postcard - Just speak up PND Campaign**

**BL/0940 - Flyer - Understanding perinatal depression and anxiety**

This DL flyer provides women and their families with a brief overview of depression and anxiety in the perinatal period. This flyer has information on signs and symptoms, getting help, treatment options, tips for looking after yourself, and tips for partners, families and friends. It also includes the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS).

**BL/0943 - Booklet - The beyond babyblues guide to emotional health and during pregnancy and early parenthood**

The beyond babyblues guide to emotional health and wellbeing during pregnancy and early parenthood explains some of the common emotional challenges faced by new and expectant parents, and offers practical advice for mothers and partners on how to deal with these challenges.

**BL/0944 - Booklet - Managing mental health conditions during pregnancy and parenthood: A guide for women and their families**

Managing mental health conditions during pregnancy and early parenthood includes more detailed information about depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and puerperal (postpartum) psychosis. It aims to assist women, partners and families to seek help and find the right treatment.
Other resources

**Mentally Healthy WA**  [www.actbelongcommit.org.au](http://www.actbelongcommit.org.au)

Act-Belong-Commit is a health promotion campaign encouraging individuals to take action to protect and promote their mental wellbeing and encourages organisations to provide and promote participation in mentally healthy activities.

**What’s great about this resource?** The Guide for New Mums and Guide for New Dads (new in 2014!) provide Act-Belong-Commit messages tailored to accommodate the challenges of early parenthood, focusing on the positives and what parents can do to protect their mental health.

**PANDA**  [www.panda.org.au](http://www.panda.org.au)

PANDA is a peer support organisation, based in Victoria with a national phone helpline. PANDA has taken over distribution of From the Heart WA’s ‘Write from the Heart,’ an A5 booklet of women’s personal stories of overcoming perinatal depression and anxiety.

**What’s great about this resource?** Women and families who may be struggling to put words to their experience tend to strongly identify with these personal accounts written in everyday language.

**COPMI**  [www.copmi.net.au](http://www.copmi.net.au)

Not-for-profit organisation COPMI (Children of Parents with a Mental Illness) has a website featuring a range of resources for dads, mums, families, and health professionals, including some in languages other than English.

**What’s great about this resource?** The website alone contains plenty of fantastic information (particularly for dads), but you can also download and order print materials for your clients.

**Parenting WA**  [www.communities.wa.gov.au](http://www.communities.wa.gov.au) (look under the ‘Communities in Focus’ section)

Parenting WA offers an information, support and referral service to parents, carers, grandparents and families with children up to 18 years of age. Services are free and no referral is needed.

**What’s great about this resource?** Each school term, a comprehensive 300+ page document is produced, collating a range of services available for parents in Perth. In addition, “Support for Families When a Parent Works Away” is just one of many great information booklets available to order or download.

**DadSkills**  [www.DadSkills.com](http://www.DadSkills.com)

Run by two Doulas, DadSkills is an online and interactive resource for fathers. While some aspects of the website require a subscription fee, there is some really wonderful (and clearly marked) “Free Stuff” as well.

**What’s great about this resource?** It features free videos of real men talking about their experience of becoming fathers, plus a couple of fantastic tip sheets to help dad be an advocate for mum’s rest and time with baby.
About this newsletter

Who can contribute?
This newsletter was predominantly created to celebrate successes and share information among professionals working in the fields of perinatal and infant mental health in Western Australia.

In the interests of information-sharing, submission of articles and other relevant content are invited from external agencies, including those from the non-government sector and other Australian states. Please note, however, that Women’s Health Clinical Support Programs reserves the right to maintain editorial control, including the ability to decide the final content to be published and/or making editorial changes to content submitted.

If you would like more information about the submission process, please contact Women’s Health Clinical Support Programs as indicated below.

Contact information
This newsletter was produced by the Women’s Health Clinical Support Programs, Women and Newborn Health Service, Department of Health WA.

Please direct any queries via the following:

   Email:   whcsp@health.wa.gov.au  
   Phone:  (08) 9340 1795  

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