

Monday, 13 November 2017

Parenting program aims to outshine postnatal depression and anxiety

Perinatal Depression and Anxiety Awareness Week (12-18 Nov 2017)

A free mental health program currently being trialled in North Brisbane aims to reveal if a peer-led group model could deliver improved health outcomes for mums experiencing mild postnatal depression or anxiety.

The Peach Tree Sunshine Parenting Program runs for six weeks, including a 4-week parenting workshop that will help to build maternal resilience, and mothers can self-refer into the program.

Brisbane North PHN had contributed almost a quarter of a million dollars in Federal funding to this new program, according to its Chief Executive Abbe Anderson, who announced the local trial during Perinatal Depression and Anxiety Awareness Week (12-18 Nov 2017).

"I congratulate Peach Tree Perinatal Wellness for an innovative approach to maternal mental health and wellness," Ms Anderson said.

"Postnatal depression affects up to one in seven new mums and one in ten new dads in Australia. Postnatal anxiety is just as common and many parents experience both conditions at the same time," she said.

CEO and Founder of Peach Tree Perinatal Wellness Viv Kissane said the non-profit service provider aimed to support perinatal resilience and recovery with individuals and families through education, social action and by facilitating a caring and compassionate community.

"With the Peach Tree Sunshine Parenting Program, we are aiming to build the evidence base for interventions led by peer workers who have a lived experience of perinatal mental illness," Ms Kissane said.

"We hope to show that mums feel supported in a group workshop environment, led by other mums who have personally experienced mental illness linked to pregnancy or childbirth," she said.

"We also want to gather evidence about whether this model delivers improved health outcomes for the parents and their children.

"Each program participant gets to talk with a psychologist, before and after the workshops, and these psychologists will also provide clinical supervision of the peer workers.

"The program addresses the contributing factors that challenge the mental health and wellbeing of parents with a young baby.

"Parents are provided accurate information and strategies to improve on wellbeing, including self-care techniques, managing relationship changes, understanding changes in self-identity and building self-esteem, improving parenting skills and confidence and bonding with baby," Ms Kissane said.

Mothers in North Brisbane are eligible to participate in the Peach Tree Sunshine Parenting Program if they have infants aged between 0–12 months and are experiencing or at risk of experiencing mild postnatal depression and/or anxiety symptoms.

Mothers must also complete the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) with score of 11 or higher (score to be included in referral information).

Maternal mental health symptoms must have a low impact on day-to-day functioning and capacity to meet baby's physical and emotional needs.

To access the Peach Tree Sunshine Parenting Program, contact the program manager on 0410 648 239 or email sunshine@peachtree.org.au.

ENDS

Editor's note:

Interviews with spokespersons can be arranged on request. Talent includes a new mum from Brisbane who has a lived experience of antenatal depression and anxiety, and postnatal anxiety. Please contact Simon Brooks on 0481 009 021.

About Brisbane North PHN

Brisbane North PHN is one of 31 Primary Health Networks nationwide and supports clinicians and communities within North Brisbane, Moreton Bay and parts of the Somerset region. The PHN covers approximately 4,100 km² of urban, regional and rural areas, with a population of over 900,000.

The key objectives of the PHN are:

- increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes, and
- improving coordination of care to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time.