



Psychology in the Perinatal Mental Health Service

Welcome to Psychology in the Perinatal Mental Health Service! Perinatal services are for those who are pregnant or who have had a baby up to one year old.

Most of us expect to feel happy, excited and positive during pregnancy, and when our baby is born. But it doesn't always happen like this. You can feel many different emotions during pregnancy and after birth. These can range from love, pride and joy, to worry, sadness and frustration. It is natural to feel stressed or anxious at times during pregnancy - or when you have a new baby. These emotions are quite normal. Up to 1 in 5 women have mental health problems in pregnancy or after birth. Some of these are mild and some are more severe. It may be that you are already being challenged with mental health issues when you get pregnant, or worried because you have had such problems in the past. The aim of perinatal mental health services are to:

- Help you stay as well as possible during pregnancy and after your baby is born
- Make sure that you, your family and other professionals can recognise if you become unwell - as soon as possible
- Give the best possible care, treatment, help and support to you and your family
- Help you to enjoy having your baby, and to develop confidence in being a parent
- Make sure that you, your partner and family have the information you need - and can get advice - about mental health problems and treatments
- Work together with you, your partner and family and the professionals involved.

Clinical psychologists have an expert role within specialist perinatal mental health which addresses the distinctive psychological therapies needs for women in pregnancy and the postnatal period and which recognises the particular importance of the mother-infant relationship. Specialist perinatal psychologists have a direct clinical role in the development of psychological formulation, assessment for, and delivery of, complex psychological interventions, with the skills to utilise a number of psychological approaches in the context of maternal mental ill health

Psychology can be particularly helpful in these areas:

- Helping you to learn what is going on for you at this point in time
- Helping you with the adjustment to becoming a parent
- Delivering interventions which help you to cope with overwhelming emotions
- Connecting you with other parents who are experiencing difficult emotions through group based interventions
- Learning more about the problems that are coming up for you and linking it to early experiences
- Helping to find ways of identifying soothing and grounding strategies.
- Providing links to helpful resources

How can I find out more?

Referrals are received through GPs, Psychiatrists and staff on your Maternity unit.

Where else might you get support during pregnancy and afterwards?

You can also avail of the support and education offered by the Perinatal National Programme

- Take a look at this video series on Perinatal Mental Health [here](#),
- Find a range of supports available in [this Signposting Booklet](#).