



Wellbeing in Pregnancy



Attachment and bonding during pregnancy

Bonding with your bump during pregnancy is beneficial to both mum and baby. It helps to build the foundations of the baby feeling safe and secure. Responding to baby, giving them your care and attention is important in helping baby to manage their own feelings and relationships in the future- this starts during pregnancy.

Baby can hear you from approximately 16 weeks. They can most clearly hear their mother's voice but anyone can talk/sing/read to baby.

Baby will get to know the voices around them, helping them to feel safe and secure. It will also help them to build foundations for when they are ready to start talking.

Bringing baby to mind can be easy for some and more challenging for others. Thinking about your baby can be anxiety provoking or can be a lovely experience or both. How you feel about bringing your bay to mind can depend on how you are feeling that day, what else is going on in your life, your previous experiences (including previous pregnancy/baby loss, your upbringing as a child and other life experiences).

Taking some time to bring your baby to mind can help to feel more connected with your bump and facilitate bonding with baby.

If you have started to imagine your baby, what are you imagining about them?

Do you picture what your baby is like now? Do you picture what they might be like when then are born? As they grow up? _____

What are your hopes for your baby? _____

What are your fears for your baby? _____

What do you do to connect with baby day to day? (Talking, reading, singing, stroking your bump)

What can you do to include baby in your day to day life? _____

What experiences are impacting on your thoughts about your baby? (Friends, family who have had babies, previous pregnancies/babies, the loss of a baby, your own childhood, etc)

What is one thing you can do this next week to take some time to connect with your baby?

Keeping a balance during pregnancy

Having a baby bring lots of practical things that need to be done, decisions that need to be made. Being pregnant also causes lots of physiological changes that can impact on your usual abilities to complete tasks. It can be easy to prioritise the things that 'need' to get done and for the other things to fall to the side.

It is important to include activities that need to get done, things that you enjoy and rest too. Keep a balance across the week and make your plan achievable.

Things that need to be done	Things you enjoy	Rest
<i>Assembling nursery furniture</i>	<i>Going for a walk</i>	<i>Feet up, watching tv</i>

You may find that you need to ask for support with achieving the things on your list.

What would you like help with? _____

Who can you ask to help with this? _____

Who is in your close network?

Who is in your wider network?

Which professionals are in your support network? (GP, Midwife)?

Who gives you emotional support?

Who gives you practical support?

Who will help with problem solving?

Who makes you feel good?

Who has a baby and understands the challenges of being a parent that you feel you could go to for support?

Communication can be challenging when you are pregnant. There can be differences in people's beliefs and expectations about pregnancy, people may give you unwanted advice, have expectations of you which you don't feel able to fulfil, or people may have negative reactions to your pregnancy. It is important to find ways to communicate what you need. How easy do you normally find this?

- Do you find it easy to communicate what you want or do you end up giving in to other people?
- Is your body language open or do you feel uncomfortable or tend to look away?
- Do you find yourself becoming upset when the conversation is difficult

Communication Planner		
What do you want to achieve from the conversation?	<i>Help from my partner to do some of the household tasks</i>	
What is the other person's likely response?	<i>They would want to help me, may not have realised that I needed help</i>	
When can I have this conversation?	<i>At the weekend, not when we are both tired and just finishing work</i>	
Barriers to having this conversation	<i>Me being snappy, either or both of us being tired</i>	
How can I communicate what I want and achieve a good outcome?	<i>Calmly explain what I want help with and why I am struggle to a- do all of the things I would have previously, b- asking for help</i>	
How would I respond	<i>I would want to help. Perhaps would feel a little overwhelmed by the change and needing to reprioritise my time etc.</i>	

Focusing on your thoughts. How easy do you find it to ask for help? People can experience different thoughts about asking for help.

Guilt- Some people feel guilty about asking for help, that they are inconveniencing other people in some way, or that they 'should' be able to do, cope with whatever they are struggling with.

Dependent- some people seek help from the same person. This can be most common in relationships. Seeking all of the support that you need from one person can cause difficulties in that relationship. Asking a range of people in your network for help can help to keep a balance in your relationship.

Anxiety- Some people fear that other people may interfere, offer unwanted help or advice or take over in some way.

The thoughts we have about asking for help will impact on how we feel about a situation and how we respond in it as well.

Thought	Feeling	Behaviour
<i>They will be fed up of me asking for help</i>	<i>Anxious</i>	<i>Avoid asking for help and struggle on alone</i>
<i>Why can't he see that I need help with the house</i>	<i>Frustrated</i>	<i>Snap at him for not helping or seeing that I need help</i>
<i>I cannot move this on my own</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Ask for help from someone in my network</i>

Negative thoughts can affect us in other ways too.

- I can't cope
- I am failing
- Why do other people seem to have it together? Why can't I?
- I am going to be a terrible mum.

It can be easy to get stuck in the patterns of negative thinking and accept them as fact. Our negative thoughts then affect how we feel and what we do day to day, often reinforcing our negative thoughts.

Challenging negative thoughts. Asking yourself these questions can help to challenge these thoughts and think about a more realistic way of looking at the situation:

- Can I think of a time that this thought is not true?
- What would I say to a close friend thinking this?
- What would a close friend say to me, if I told them what I was thinking?
- Am I over estimating how bad things are?
- If I wasn't feeling like this, would I be thinking like this?
- Is there another way of thinking about this?
- Are there positive things about me or the situation that I haven't thought about?

What is a more balanced way of thinking about this? What is a more helpful way to think about this?

I am tired and not able to do the things around the house that I need to, it is ok to ask for help and accept that things may be done at a different time or in a different way than I would normally do them.

Worry

Worry is a really normal thing that all people do, particularly when pregnant or when baby arrives. Worry can be a helpful thing to do because it can motivate us and prompt us into action. However, worry can become excessive, particularly if we are worrying about things we have no control over. Worry can take up large chunks of time in our day and stop us from doing things that we need/want to do.

Practical Vs. Hypothetical Worries

- A practical worry is something that we have the power to change right here in the moment.
- A hypothetical worry is something we have no power to change or cannot change right now.

Worry Diary

Keeping a worry diary can be helpful to manage your worries. Practice identifying which worries might be practical and which might be hypothetical. Have a go at writing down some of your own.

Worry Diary	Practical or Hypothetical?
<i>"I am not ready for this baby. What if baby comes early? What if I am missing something?"</i>	
<i>"I need to start buying things for baby"</i>	
<i>"What are the best antenatal classes?"</i>	
<i>"What if we go into lockdown again"</i>	

What can I do with hypothetical worries?

Relaxation, breathing and re-focusing are all techniques to bring your mind back to the here and now and let go of hypothetical worries –

Relaxation

Progressive Muscle Relaxation – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nYEeHMYXjA>

Mindfulness Body Scan - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CyKhfUdOEgs>

Breathing

4-2-6 technique

Begin by slowly exhaling all of your air out.

Then, gently inhale through your nose to a slow count of 4.

Hold at the top of the breath for a count of 2.

Then gently exhale through your mouth for a count of 6

Breathing Bubble – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNXKjGFUIMs&t=90s>

Refocusing

One useful technique for this is the 5,4,3,2,1 technique:

- 5 things I can see
- 4 things I can touch/feel
- 3 things I can hear
- 2 things I can smell
- 1 thing I can taste



The STOPP technique

STOPP

TAKE A BREATH

OBSERVE: What am I thinking?
What am I reacting to?
What am I feeling in my body?

PULL BACK: Put in some perspective. See the bigger picture. Is this fact or opinion? How would someone else see this?

PRACTISE WHAT WORKS: What's the best thing to do for me, for others, for this situation?



What can I do about practical worries?

A practical worry is something you have the power to do something about. Have a go at trying to problem-solve a practical worry.

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Problem: *What's the practical worry?*

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Preferred Outcome: *What would you like to happen?*



Possible Solutions: *What might work to solve this?*

Thinking beyond parenthood?

pregnancy, what about

Whether this may be your first child or subsequent the transition into parenthood or being a parent of more than 1 child is challenging. It is understandable when you consider:

- The physical recovery from childbirth
- The hormonal changes following childbirth and in the weeks to come
- The emotional impact of having a baby
- The practical impact of having a baby
- Sleep deprivation
- Isolation

Some of the most common problems experienced after having a baby include: health, mood changes, isolation, finances, exhaustion, relationships, relationship with self (including identity and body image), and self-care

Whilst you are pregnant it can be helpful to think about problem solving some of these in advance. It isn't entirely possible to foresee the challenges you may face or how you may cope with them but beginning to think about how you might be able to problem solve them can help in the future.

What is the problem?	What are the things that I can do about it?	What are the advantages? Disadvantages?	What am I going to do now?
<i>Finding breastfeeding difficult</i>	<i>Peer support group</i> <i>Online support group</i>	<i>There is someone trained to help. I will need to get out of the house to get there.</i> <i>It can be helpful/normalising but they may not directly be able to help me in the moment</i>	<i>Find my local peer support groups</i> <i>Find and join some online support groups/ pages</i>
<i>Snapping at my partner</i>	<i>Better communicate how I am feeling</i> <i>Take some time for myself</i> <i>Share some of the household responsibilities</i> <i>Take some time as a couple- a nice eve meal once a week</i>	<i>We will both be sleep deprived</i> <i>They will have to go back to work after a couple of weeks and won't have the time to help me.</i> <i>Communication is good for us</i> <i>It is hard to commit the time to this when we are exhausted but we enjoy it when we do</i>	<i>Talk to my partner before the baby comes, how can they support me to get some sleep/ time for me.</i> <i>How can I support them to get some sleep?</i> <i>How can we manage the house in the first couple of weeks?- Let it go.</i> <i>Buy in some nice food to have as a treat night.</i>

Will I still be me? Motherhood is a life transition, nothing can fully prepare you for how things may change. It is important to keep a balance though, to attend to yourself as well as your baby.

If you use the tool we looked at about keeping a balance in pregnancy- doing the things that you need to do as well as the things that you enjoy, how are you going to maintain this once your baby is here?

What activities are important to you, that you need to make time for even when you are busy or exhausted?

What areas of your life may be different when your baby is here? _____

Friends? How are you going to maintain contact with your friends? _____

Health and exercise: what are you going to do to ensure you get enough sleep, are taking some exercise? _____

Close relationships: what can you do to maintain these? To communicate well? To support one another? _____

Having a baby can be one of the most rewarding things in life. Parenthood comes with its challenges but it also brings joy, happiness, relief, and pride. This webinar as tried to give you lots of tools to be able to keep a balance, look after your wellbeing during pregnancy and beyond. All of the tools that have been covered can be applied when your baby is here.

What are you looking forward to after the birth of your baby? What are you looking forward to in the months to come with your baby? _____

TALKWORKS - Who are we?

TALKWORKS is a free, confidential, NHS service for people aged 18+ across Devon and we offer a range of evidence based treatments.



We are flexible: working in the community, via phone and online.

We prioritise women in the perinatal period (during pregnancy and up to 2 years post-birth) and aim to offer an assessment within 2 weeks of initial contact with the service

Outside the perinatal period, we try to see people within 6 weeks of their initial contact but are often able to see them much quicker than this.

Collaborative care: we work with other NHS and support services (e.g. charities) to give you the best possible care.

What can we help with?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Depression• Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)• Panic Disorder• Social Anxiety• Specific phobias• Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)• Birth Trauma | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)• Stress• Low Self Esteem• Health Anxiety• Bulimia/Binge Eating Disorder• Agoraphobia |
|---|---|

What do we offer?

Initial Assessment:

This is a **45 minute appointment** either over the phone or video call.

It may lead to referring on or signposting to the most helpful service in the local community, or further work with us.

Therapy:

- One to one therapy over the **phone or video-call**.
- **Online** using our programme, SilverCloud.
- Attending one of our **educational courses** e.g. Talkworks for Parenthood workshop
- Our new Postnatal Wellbeing group, a 10 week programme with other mums
- Further, more intensive video-call support **if needed**.

How to refer?

You can refer yourself by visiting our website and completing a quick and easy webform –

<https://www.talkworks.dpt.nhs.uk/>

- Or -

Your GP/Midwife/Health Visitor or other healthcare professional can refer you