

## PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA



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### Perinatal Depression and Anxiety



**1 in 5 mothers and 1 in 10 fathers** will experience perinatal depression and anxiety



**50% of new parents** will experience adjustment disorders



**100,000 Australians** are affected by PNDA each year, with maternal suicide being a leading cause of death amongst expectant and new mothers

**PNDA** is treatable and temporary  
**PNDA** is when the number of bad days outnumber the good  
**Anxiety** can develop gradually and can be hard to detect

**Depression is a serious condition that affects physical and mental health and it's not just low mood**

**Postnatal psychosis** affects 1 or 2 new mums in every 1,000. This is marked by thought distortions and altered sense of reality

Women experience **baby blues** and this is not depression. It occurs between days 3-10 after birth and goes away by itself with supportive care. Women can experience mood swings, teariness, feeling overwhelmed and anxiety. It's a reaction to hormonal shifts<sup>3</sup> and adjustment to being a mum 🌸



#### Risk factors for developing PNDA<sup>1</sup>

- o **Psychological:** e.g. birth trauma, grief and loss
- o **Social:** e.g. isolation, lack of access to safe and culturally responsive support
- o **Biological:** e.g. mental health history, baby related factors, physical health issues 🌸

#### PROTECTIVE FACTORS<sup>2</sup>



**SUICIDE IS ONE OF THE LEADING CAUSES OF MATERNAL DEATH IN AUSTRALIA<sup>4</sup>**



**The first weeks after childbirth** are the most critical<sup>2</sup> and emphasise the need for early assessment and care. Early intervention reduces the impact and severity of PNDA on all involved<sup>5</sup>

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF PNDA:

#### Depression:

- o Feelings of hopelessness, inadequacy, failure, anger
- o Guilt or teariness
- o Loss of appetite and sleep issues not related to baby
- o Lack of motivation
- o Sad, persistent low mood
- o Thoughts of self-harm or suicide

#### Anxiety:

- o Panic attacks
- o Physical sensation e.g. tight chest, heart palpitations, tense muscle sensations
- o Intrusive, scary thoughts
- o Fear that stops you going out or checking baby constantly
- o Irritability
- o Finding it hard to relax
- o Agitation