

fact sheet

PARENTING IN A RURAL OR REMOTE LOCATION



Parenting rural 5.12.21

Expectant and new parents in rural and remote areas of Australia face some unique parenting challenges. In Australia, 1 in 5 new mums and 1 in 10 new dads will experience some form of perinatal depression and anxiety. Hence, it is more important than ever to spread awareness of what Gidget Foundation Australia can do to support expectant and new parents.

We are here to help!

Starting the parenthood journey at any time can be a daunting task. There are often fewer support services available in our rural communities. Access to perinatal specialists can be very limited and treatment can be delayed due to wait times or be cost prohibitive.

Experiencing PNDA can be a difficult topic to talk about due to the stigma associated with the condition, but those in rural areas might also have increased pressure to 'tough things out' and hide their vulnerabilities. They could also be concerned about lack of confidentiality or finding culturally sensitive support options. Self-care opportunities could also be limited.

There are also greater geographic distances between family and friends, so the village concept can be lost.

Therefore, service providers in those areas need to understand rural and remote community's needs and be able to be sensitive to those needs.

If you live in one of those communities and are not feeling yourself or you are concerned about someone close to you, it's important to seek help as soon as possible.

Below are some practical strategies, but if you do not feel better within a few weeks after trying some of these ideas then it's a good idea to reach out and get some professional support and start with a visit to your GP.

- Talk with trusted people
- Educate yourself via reputable sources
- Be kind to yourself as you face challenges and patient as you recover
- Develop a routine to your day with some

flexibility and add in at least one thing you enjoy

- Limit your time on social media – it's not always accurate or helpful
- Make some simple habitual changes to help lessen anxiety and lift mood e.g. eat well, try to get more rest, exercise daily, take time out, do a regular video call to a friend, or join a safe online parent group (such as the Gidget Virtual Village <https://www.facebook.com/groups/gidgetvirtualvillage>), sing out loud, listen to your favourite music, focus on what you can do and maybe even practice some gratitude
- You could organise your own group or community activity
- Develop a plan to help yourself when you are having a bad day e.g. Who can you call? What makes you feel better?, What can you focus on? Understand that all new parents have bad days and know that it will pass
- Connect to culture and country as a source of strength or your spiritual side
- Recognise when things are getting too much e.g. being a good monitor of yourself, take note of mood changes, behaviours that are out of character or thoughts that worry you
- Talk to your GP or midwife/child family health nurse
- If you have thoughts about suicide or harming yourself, call **Lifeline** immediately on **13 11 14**. 🌸

Other helpful resources:

PANDA 1300 726 306 www.panda.org.au

Beyond Blue www.beyondblue.org.au

Gidget Foundation Australia

www.gidgetfoundation.org.au

Rural Minds (developed by Rural Remote Mental Health LTD) to address the psychological wellbeing of those living in rural and remote communities www.rrmh.com.au



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 Gidget Foundation Australia

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Gidget Foundation Australia exists to support the emotional wellbeing of expectant and new parents to ensure they receive timely, appropriate and specialist care.