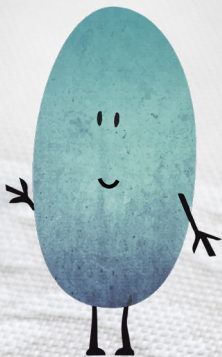


Perinatal Wellbeing Course by Think Wellbeing Wigan



If you have opted for the Perinatal Wellbeing Course...

The perinatal period refers to pregnancy up to twenty-four months after childbirth. We prioritise expectant parents and partners or main caregivers to an infant within this period. The time of becoming a parent can be a time of great upheaval. Everything in a person's life gets thrown up into the air and needs to resettle. How a person feels about themselves, their partner, their loved ones, and their baby needs negotiating and re-defining. These shifting dynamics can lead to changes in relationships with partners/family/friends creating conflict, which can add to the stress at this difficult time.

Stress, anxiety, and low mood often go hand in hand. We all experience moments of anxiety and low mood, but sometimes these periods can last for weeks or months. When experienced on a daily and extreme basis we can start to view ourselves, the world and others negatively. We can get trapped in a vicious cycle of doing less, social withdrawal and self-criticism.

Who is the course for?

This course has been designed for any parent or caregiver in the perinatal period who wants to better understand their thoughts and feelings and learn ways to manage daily stress, anxiety and periods of low mood.

What does psychological therapy look like in this service?

National guidance recommends that treatment for anxiety and depression should follow a "stepped care model." This means that you are always offered the least intensive and most appropriate form of therapy to meet your needs in the first instance. Our service offers Step 2 (low intensity) and Step 3 (high intensity) therapies; the level of intervention you receive is decided at your triage appointment. This may change once you start

therapy, but your therapist will always discuss things with you before any changes are made to your care.

How long does the course last?

The course consists of **6 weekly sessions**, each session lasting between **1.5 and 2 hours**. There will be two facilitators and each session will cover the following:

- Week 1 – Introduction to Anxiety and Low Mood
- Week 2 – Behavioural Activation, Bonding with Baby, and Setting Goals
- Week 3 – Anxiety Management, Sleep management and Relaxation
- Week 4 – Addressing Unhelpful Thoughts, Communication and Assertiveness
- Week 5 – Dealing with Worry and learning how to solve problems
- Week 6 – Looking after yourself in the future and next steps

Delivery of the Perinatal Wellbeing Course

Feedback from patients has told us that they benefit from therapy that is delivered via video call. This allows them to access therapy in a more flexible way. By delivering this in a group setting patients are able to benefit from shared experiences of perinatal difficulties.

Will I have to talk about myself or share personal experiences with others?

Put simply, no. The sessions are informal and relaxed, and you don't have to talk about your problems if you don't want to. However, you will be supported if you choose to share experiences appropriate to the content of the course.

What can I expect?

Parents who have completed this course have reported: feeling more confident about themselves; improvements in mood; more able to recognise and manage unhelpful thoughts; being able to manage anxiety better and improved relationships.

"I felt that this course taught me skills that I didn't previously realise I needed. I hadn't linked having my baby or maternity leave to my mental health difficulties."

"This course has helped normalise the difficult feelings I have encountered since becoming a parent and gave me the skills to manage them."

What will be expected of me?

Making a commitment to attend all the sessions is important. You will be taught practical skills and techniques to manage your emotions and improve your wellbeing. An important part of this course is about practicing these skills in-between sessions.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

A basic understanding of CBT is that situations themselves do not cause us to feel and behave in certain ways. It is how we think about the situation, therefore changing the way you think is central to CBT. Your

therapist will aim to create a shared understanding of your problem to help you identify unhelpful thinking patterns and behaviours, which will then become the focus for change. It is important to understand that Steps 2 and 3 therapies are not a form of counselling – they are focused on the here and now and aimed at helping you make meaningful changes and better understand how your thoughts, feelings and behaviours interact.

Preparing for Psychological Therapy Work

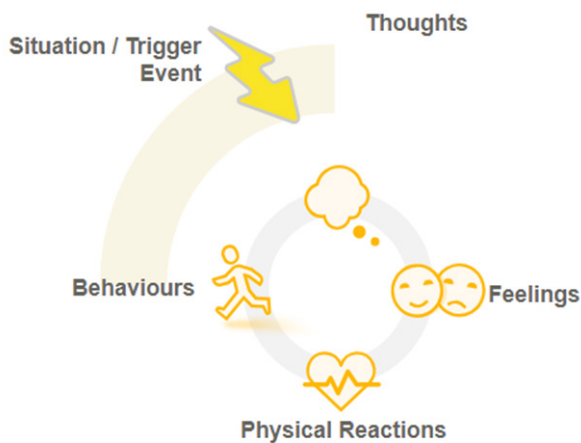
Try completing your own thoughts, feelings and behaviours cycle. Start by recording the situation you were in (where were you? Who were you with? When was it?), then try breaking down your experience into three categories:

Thoughts – what thoughts ran through your mind in that situation?

Feelings – how did you feel in response to what you were thinking? e.g., happy, sad, angry, scared

Behaviours – what action did you take in response to thinking and feeling in this way?

Take a moment to notice how each part of the cycle affects the other.



Goal Setting

Therapy is goal-oriented, and your therapist will support you in moving towards your goals. You should take this opportunity to start thinking about your therapeutic goals, what do you want to achieve, work towards or change in your life? Goals are very personal. To help you think about your goals, ask yourself the following question:

“If I am to commit to attending regular therapy appointments, what is it I want to achieve?”

To help clarify your goal further, here is a useful checklist to use. Make sure your goals are SMART

Specific – be as specific as you can. For instance, the goal, ‘I want to feel better’ is not specific, what does better mean? If you were better what would your life look like?

Measurable – you need to know when you have achieved your goal. What is your predicted outcome? Can your goal be measured?

Achievable – is your goal manageable?

Realistic – is your goal realistic given your personal circumstances? Take into account your physical health, and resources you have available to you

Time-limited – how long are you going to give yourself to dedicate to achieving this goal?

Use the space below to write down three therapeutic goals you want to work on in therapy.

1

2

3

How do I access the service?

It's simple! If you're registered with a Wigan GP and think we can help, call us today on **01942 764449** or self-refer online at **www.gmmh.nhs.uk/think-wellbeing**

Please note, we are a non-urgent service. If you need urgent help, please make an emergency appointment to see your GP or contact our 24/7 mental health crisis helpline for all ages on **0800 953 0285**.

For free confidential support via text message anytime of day or night text **BABYBUDDY 85258**.

This information can be provided in different languages, Braille, large print, interpretations, text only, and audio formats on request, please phone **0161 358 1644**.