

MEDIA RELEASE

Online program set to combat postnatal depression

- WONDERMUMS gives everyday mums postnatal support with anxiety, depression and lifestyle adjustments
- Australian mums feel pressure to live up to unrealistic 'perfect mum' expectations

Australian women facing the everyday challenges and adjustments associated with motherhood, can now access support through an Australian first, online platform. WONDERMUMS has been launched to offer accessible psychological support to help address common challenges faced in the postnatal period.

According to Australian data, over 1,800 Australian parents are diagnosed with postnatal depression each week^[i]. The prevalence of postnatal depression continues to have a major impact on the Australian economy, with over \$433 million being spent annually to cover healthcare costs and loss of productivity due to the condition^[ii]

There are many women who have undiagnosed postnatal depression and continue to struggle with the adjustments and emotional upheaval of motherhood. WONDERMUMS has been established to offer Australian mums the support they need so they no longer suffer postnatal challenges in silence.

WONDERMUMS is an online platform that gives women the chance to subscribe to a postnatal program designed to help navigate common challenges following childbirth. These might include such things as adjusting to the physical and emotional demands of motherhood, managing high and often unrealistic expectations, difficulty maintaining healthy lifestyle patterns that are conducive to good mental health, and navigating the relationship changes that occur with a growing family.

Founder and clinical psychologist, Kristy Ross, said there was a need to create an accessible program that provides Australian women with the guidance and support they would receive from a trained healthcare professional from the comfort of their own homes.

"From my experience in private practice and working with women who have perinatal mental health issues, it was clear that something needed to be done to ensure all women can access support. The reality is, there are many barriers for mums seeking face-to-face support from a healthcare professional, so we created an online program that gives women a structure to work through a broad range of issues that mums face," said Ms Ross.

According to Ms Ross, Australian women often feel pressure to live up to unrealistic expectations that society and us as mums place on ourselves.

"Carrying these expectations into motherhood sets us up to continually fall short, impacting our confidence and stopping us from sharing our challenges with other mums. The willingness to share our struggles with each other, not only increases the support we receive within our immediate social group but it also starts to normalise the challenges of motherhood and shift societal expectations and standards. Motherhood can be a wonderful experience but it is also OK to admit that there are many moments where it feels overwhelming," said Ms Ross.

“It’s incredible the impact that social media and other online outlets have on our expectations. Every day we have a constant stream of images placed in front of us that set unrealistic expectations. This leads to women feeling pressured to juggle motherhood with an active social life and to get their pre-baby bodies back.”

The WONDERMUMS postnatal program is self-paced and addresses topics such as establishing realistic expectations, developing healthy lifestyle patterns, creating helpful thinking strategies, body image acceptance and managing changes to partner relationships.

The program is designed to break down some of the barriers that may prevent women from seeking help. Women do not require a referral from a healthcare professional or to attend face-to-face session to participate.

There is a free trial period for the postnatal program, which includes screening participants using the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale. For those mums whose scores indicate that they may be experiencing symptoms of postnatal depression, WONDERMUMS also offers the ability to purchase an online clinical assessment with one of their perinatal specialist psychologists. There are measurement tools at the beginning and end of the program to help all participants measure their mood and see if improvements have been made after completing the program.

In addition to the Postnatal program, WONDERMUMS also provides Skype consultations with a perinatal specialist psychologist to offer additional support if needed.

Teira Jansen decided to sign up to the WONDERMUMS postnatal program to help her cope with the lifestyle changes associated with parenthood.

“The moment I became a mum for the first time was truly amazing. But I really wasn’t prepared for what was to come. I struggled with the lack of sleep, breastfeeding and did not enjoy the monotony of being at home when I was accustomed to social interaction and the mental stimulation I received from work. I joined WONDERMUMS postnatal program to access the support I felt I needed during this transitional time in my life. The program showed me that I wasn’t the only new mother feeling this way, and helped me shift my expectations and start to be more accepting towards myself,” said Belinda.

For more information and to sign up for your free trial, visit www.wondermums.com

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^[1] PANDA, Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia. Accessed via <http://www.panda.org.au/news/412-research-reveals-the-alarming-economic-cost-of-postnatal-depression>.

^[2] Deloitte Access Economics, The cost of perinatal depression in Australia Report. Accessed via http://www.panda.org.au/images/stories/PDFs/PANDA_Exec_Summ_Deloitte_Web.pdf