

WARREN'S VIEW



THEY SAID IT



If your household income goes above \$120,000 a year, Anthony Albanese will put a for sale sign on your lawn. You actually have to dispose of the asset and pay back the government.

PM Scott Morrison finds fault with Labor's house-buying scheme

This is a little bit of mischief from the Liberal Party.

Labor's Tanya Plibersek says she hasn't been benched during the election campaign

Parents need support

Bringing a baby into the world can be a daunting experience but there is plenty of help available

Nothing can prepare you for becoming a parent. Perinatal depression and anxiety affects thousands of Australians every year with expectant and new parents navigating the highs and lows of parenthood.

No matter how much research you do and how ready you think you are, there will be challenges throughout your journey that will surprise you, whether those challenges be personal or related to parenthood in general.

What may be the happiest time for some mums, dads or partners can be the lowest for others.

As a mother of two (twins might I add), I know first-hand how overwhelming pregnancy and new parenthood can be.

Every day is different and some days are better than others, with the triggers that cause a person to become overwhelmed varying from person to person and sometimes even day-to-day.

Parents may be exhausted from a lack of sleep, feel frustrated from having trouble with feeding or often feeling like they are not doing a good enough job.

Some may have experienced a traumatic birth that has taken its toll on their health both physically and emotionally.

There is no one size fits all and no feeling or concern should be discounted as insignificant. All feelings need to be listened to and taken seriously.

Whatever the case, we are stronger together and it's so important to have a community around you throughout your journey to provide support for what can be a really difficult time.



ARABELLA GIBSON

While loved ones, family and friends provide great assistance pre and post pregnancy, many parents can benefit by expanding their network to support groups, parent groups and play groups and even vetted virtual groups.

Offering connection through a shared experience, these groups can be a pillar of strength and grounding for new mums as everyone around you is having a similar experience and can relate to how you feel in the moment.

Community groups provide reassurance that you aren't alone during your struggles and that struggling does not mean you're a bad parent.

Community extends further than other mums and dads too. GPs, midwives and child and family health nurses can all provide specialised care for your physical health and mental wellbeing.

Perinatal depression and anxiety should not be something to be ashamed of and is very common in expectant and new parents — and it is treatable.

You may feel vulnerable or ashamed about not experiencing a connection with your baby or not being confident about your future with them but there is a wide variety of free and accessible support that can help with these thoughts and emotions.

As families grow, it can be difficult for parents to get the support they need for their emotional wellbeing. Particularly for those from culturally diverse backgrounds or non-heteronormative families.

As CEO of Gidget Foundation Australia and having been in the perinatal mental health space for some time now, I cannot stress enough how vital community support is for this phase in your life.



Perinatal depression and anxiety should not be something to be ashamed of and is very common in expectant and new parents — and it is treatable.

We've recently conducted new research that reveals only one in three Australians (35 per cent) have a strong network of family and friends supporting them through parenthood.

However, one in five (22 per cent) wish they had more support from those around them and one in six (15 per cent) don't have a community that they can call on to support them through parenthood at all.

There are many reasons why parents struggle with depression or anxiety. It does not discriminate. Pregnancy or baby loss may contribute largely to these feelings.

Financial struggles and other personal circumstances may also play a part in perinatal mental ill-health as well as a lack of support.

One thing to remember is that it's okay if there's no specific reason why

you may be feeling this way. For some people, their existing mental health issues may ease after falling pregnant, they may be fulfilled with a sense of happiness or purpose that they have been longing for. On the flipside, some people may have had no issues with mental health in the past and parenthood can bring on a period of perinatal depression and anxiety.

Pregnancy is a completely unpredictable stage of your life and its helpful to try to accept how it feels, be kind to yourself and do what you need to do, to get through.

Today is World Maternal Mental Health Day, and the international theme is 'Stronger Together' which serves as a timely reminder for all expectant and new mums to put their hands up and show there's a community here for support. For those who feel alone in their experience there is help available across the country. At Gidget Foundation Australia we offer free psychological counselling sessions to mums, dads and non-birthing partners to help them through the unique, joyful and often complex experience of being a parent or in the journey to become one.

We also run a Facebook community called Gidget Virtual Village where Australians can go to connect with others and build their own tribe of support. Gidget Foundation Australia is just one of many places to seek help if you're dealing with perinatal depression and anxiety.

Together, we as a community and a nation can help not only break the stigma of PNDA but also ensure parents across the country, no matter what their circumstances, feel supported and ready to embrace receiving support. We are stronger together.

Arabella Gibson is the CEO of Gidget Foundation Australia.