

Case Study:

County Durham IAPT Service Talking Changes – Perinatal Pathway

What is the offer?

Rolling group for new mums, running over 6 weeks, called 'Baby Steps'. 12 mums attend. Has moved to an online group due to Covid, and attendance has improved radically compared to the face-to-face sessions.

Mums can join the group at any stage, and the content covers: role transition and adjustment, low mood, interpersonal effectiveness and communication, worry, shame and guilt, compassion. The group also explored the baby's needs and how a parent can optimise their relationship with their child such as using 'serve and return' techniques.

The groups provide a network of social support and a safe space for mums to chat to each other without judgement.

Mums are given their own 'wellbeing pack' with some homework to complete after each session, such as a 'prescription for pleasure' or creating their own interpersonal inventory.

Developing the model

The model was developed on review of NICE guidance which cites social support being the first line intervention for those in the perinatal period. It was co-developed with service users and a number of common themes and topics were used as the basis for discussion within the group. Barriers to mums being able to access treatment was often childcare, therefore Talking Changes encouraged mums to bring along their under 1-year olds so as to not limit their opportunity to access meaningful care and support.

The IAPT team contacted their local Families Centres, focussing initially in areas of high demand, and began to have an IAPT therapist at the centre where parents could go to when the Health Visitor identified that there might be a need. This helped reduced drop-out rates from referral to assessment and also reduced stigma around accessing mental health services.

Midwives and Health Visitors have a shortened form for perinatal referrals, to reduce their paperwork when referring into the service.

Outcomes

The group has a consistent 50+% recovery rate for those who attend and complete. Those that don't recover are given the opportunity to access high intensity therapy

within the same service and are expedited for treatment with the service's perinatal 'champions'.

Good service user feedback received. The service planned to have a mum champion working alongside to co-facilitate the groups. A graduate of the Baby Steps group spoke at a regional conference about her experience of attending the group and the feedback for this was outstanding. The service hopes to record a mum talking about her experiences before, during and after the group to make available on the website.

Additional resources:

[Perinatal - County Durham Talking Changes Baby Steps Resource pack](#)

[Perinatal - County Durham Baby Steps leaflet updated March 2020 for professionals](#)