

FATHERHOOD

Is a new chapter in a man's life, signalling fresh responsibilities and challenges, as well as opportunities for personal growth and meaningful bonding with your child/children.

Fatherhood can be exciting and fulfilling but it can also be filled with uncertainty, anxiety and stress as you and your partner adjust to your newborn while balancing other commitments in life.

WOMEN'S EMOTIONAL HEALTH SERVICE
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YOUR PARTNER'S EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Pregnancy and post-delivery are significant periods of adjustment for your partner.

Preparing for and welcoming a newborn is a happy but also stressful phase in life, so it is common to have mixed feelings. Women may experience symptoms of depression and anxiety during this period. However, most cases can be managed and overcome with early intervention.

WHO WE ARE

The Women's Emotional Health Service (WEHS) offers multidisciplinary and holistic support services to women experiencing depression and/or other types of emotional distress during and after pregnancy.

At the WEHS, we also recognise the important role that fathers play in supporting their other half.



Dads

Your Support Matters

The information provided in this publication is meant purely for educational purposes and may not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. You should seek the advice of your doctor or a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical conditions.

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What you can do

Expecting a newborn and being new parents are significant transitions. Your practical and emotional support for your partner during this period will go a long way and provide far-reaching benefits.

What you can do for her emotionally:

Remember the acronym LAUF (sounds like “laugh” but spelt with an “f” instead!)

- **Listen** to her concerns
- **Ask** how she would like to be supported
- **Understand** her feelings
- **Focus** more on her emotions not just the problems

Don't forget to keep an open mind and sense of humour!

What you can do for her practically:

- Read up on pregnancy and parenting; your knowledge can reassure and comfort her
- Plan for after-delivery care arrangements
- Adjust your routines so that you can help her out with caring for the baby and with the household chores
- Manage the visits by your friends/family so that she can get more rest
- If you have older kids, ease her load by helping to bathe or feed your child
- Help out with some night feeds so that she can catch up on sleep

When you should be concerned about your partner

If you notice some of the following symptoms persisting beyond two weeks and affecting her daily functioning and/or relationships with others, please seek advice from a doctor or a healthcare professional.

Feelings:

- Anger
- Hopelessness
- Irritation
- Overwhelmed
- Prolonged sadness
- Worry/panic
- Worthlessness/guilt

Behaviours:

- Avoiding behaviour
- Excessively checking on the baby
- Inability to sleep
- Lack of motivation
- Loss of appetite
- Loss of interest
- Poor concentration

Thoughts:

- Disturbing/obsessional/intrusive thoughts
- Self-harm or harming others, including the baby

Ways to care for yourself

When you are supporting your partner, it is important not to neglect your own wellbeing.

Practising adequate self-care can prevent burnout and make you feel recharged so that you can better care for your partner and your baby.

Here are some tips:

- Reach out for support: family, friends and community
- Do the activities that you enjoy: watch TV, read a book, listen to music
- Take care of your health: prioritise sleep, eat healthily, exercise regularly
- Set aside couple time: date night, evening walks, short breaks

Useful Resources

Women's Emotional Health Service

Tel: 6772 2037

Email: wehs@nuhs.edu.sg

NUH Neuroscience Clinic

Tel: 6772 2002

Family Service Centres (FSC)

Website: www.msf.gov.sg

Samaritans of Singapore (SOS)

Tel: 1800 221 4444 (24-hr)

*Even setting aside
15 minutes for yourself
can go a long way!*

