

Psychoeducational intervention to prevent postnatal depression

— Health promotion for postpartum mental health —

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A comprehensive mental health system involves treatment and early intervention. However, promotion of mental health and prevention of mental health problems is also important. *What Were We Thinking (WWWT)* is an evidence-based psychoeducation program for parents of a first baby. *WWWT* targets two risks to mental health among women who have recently given birth: unsettled infant behaviour and difficulties in the partner relationship. The program provides sustainable sleep and settling skills to prevent unsettled infant behaviour, and for knowledge and skills for re-negotiating the unpaid workload of household work and infant care fairly.

WWWT is a *universal* program (offered to all families) for *primary prevention* (preventing problems before they develop). It complements *secondary prevention* (screening to identify women at risk or with current symptoms, and referral for treatment). *WWWT* is effective in preventing anxiety, depression and adjustment disorders when implemented by trained primary care nurses in local settings in a seminar with up to five mothers, fathers and their first baby. In order to reach more families, an interactive website, DVD, professionally-moderated blog, a smartphone app, and cultural adaptations have been developed.

The term 'postnatal depression' embraces other psychological states including anxiety, which is prevalent and problematic. *What Am I Worried About (WAWA)* is a psychoeducation program for early intervention (secondary prevention) for anxiety among women who have recently given birth. It is based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and Mindfulness and is designed for self-study and a weekly half-hour telephone consultation with a trained health professional. Pilot data suggests that *WAWA* is acceptable to women, feasible to implement, and salient to women's needs.

Psychoeducation resources tailored to the postnatal life stage have the potential to contribute to a comprehensive postnatal mental health system.