

Infant Mental Health Service

Resources to support families during the COVID-19 pandemic

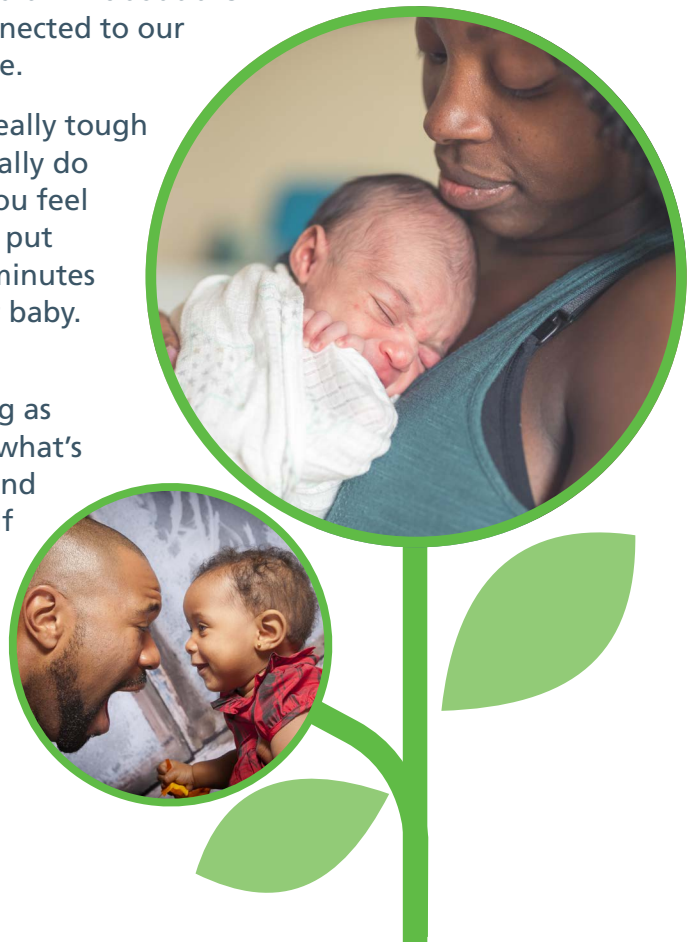


Over the past few weeks we have had to make huge changes to the way we live our lives, in order to protect ourselves and others. Many of us are understandably feeling anxious whilst trying our best to care for our family and loved ones in these stressful and uncertain times. We know babies and children are also experiencing lots of changes as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and need our help to manage this. It's important to remember that babies are likely to pick up on stress and tension, so finding ways to look after ourselves is a vital part of caring for babies and children.

Here are a few things to try and remember in the coming days and weeks:

- If you're feeling concerned that your baby is missing out on interacting with others during isolation, it's good to remember that for young babies, their parents and care givers are their world. Your baby will benefit most from the time you are able to be with them.
- Many of us are experiencing the loss of normal routines and activities; this can feel hard. However, it's good to hold in mind that having a slower pace of life can actually benefit babies. If we have more time to follow our babies lead and think about their needs and feelings, it can help us to feel more connected to our babies and help them to feel safer and more secure.
- We know caring for babies and children can feel really tough at times, especially when the things we would usually do to help may not be available to us. Remember if you feel very overwhelmed, stressed or angry it is better to put your baby down somewhere safe and take a few minutes to calm yourself before attempting to soothe your baby. Remember never shake a baby.
- AND finally please remember there is no such thing as a perfect parent. It's ok not to always get it right, what's important is that your baby knows you are there and are doing your best to soothe and reassure them. If you can stay calm, your baby is more likely to feel calm too and this will feel better for both of you.

If you are struggling you are not on your own. We hope the following links and contacts can offer some support at this time.



Parent and Child Resources

Playing and interacting with your infant and responding to their needs sensitively will help them feel safe and secure and promote healthy brain development, use the following websites to find out more:

To access our Understanding Your Baby films:

- <https://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/babybuddy>

To access the Understanding Your Baby booklet:

- <https://www.startingwell.org.uk/media/125033/understanding-your-baby.pdf>

For further information on supporting your infants emotional wellbeing:

- <https://aimh.org.uk/helpful-resources/>
- <https://tinyurl.com/ybcfh49p>

For support around parenting, play and development:

- <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3210-tips-for-families-coronavirus-parental>
- <https://ihv.org.uk/ParentingCOVID19>
- <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFCBC4068C817CE60>
- <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/>

Pregnancy Wellbeing

We understand that Covid-19 will inevitably result in an increased amount of anxiety in the general population, and this is likely to be even more so for pregnant women as pregnancy represents an additional period of uncertainty. During this time, it is important that if you have any concerns about yourself or your pregnancy at any time, you can contact your midwife or GP:

- Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/covid-19-virus-infection-and-pregnancy/>
- NHS - pregnancy and baby guide
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/>
- Start 4 Life
<https://www.nhs.uk/start4life/pregnancy/>
- Unicef
<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/antenatal-care-resources/>
https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2010/11/otbs_leaflet.pdf

Parental Mental Health and Wellbeing

Looking after your own emotional wellbeing and managing any increased anxiety or low mood as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic is important and will help you to feel ready to address your infant's needs with sensitivity and consistency. You may find the following resources helpful:

- Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust
<https://www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/lmws/>
- Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service Omnitherapy
<https://leeds.omnitherapy.org/>
- Mind
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>
- MindWell
<https://www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk/home/information-on-coronavirus>
- HelpGuide
<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety/coronavirus-anxiety.htm>
- Very Well Mind
<https://www.verywellmind.com/managing-coronavirus-anxiety-4798909>

Guidance set out by the government advising social distancing and staying at home is vital for our safety; however it can lead to increased feelings of loneliness and low mood which may lead to thoughts of self-harm or suicide. Use the following links if you need to speak to someone urgently or you feel in distress:

- Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
<https://www.leedsandyorkpft.nhs.uk/>
- Leeds Crisis Assessment Service
Tel: 0300 300 1485
- Samaritans
<https://www.samaritans.org>
Tel: 116 123
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline
<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>
Tel: 0800 2000 247

Resources for Young People

If you are a young person or have a young person in your household, these services can help you understand how you are feeling and help you get the right advice and support:

- Mindmate
<https://www.mindmate.org.uk/>
- The Market Place
<https://www.themarketplaceleeds.org.uk/services/useful-links/>
- Childline
<https://www.childline.org.uk>
Tel: 0800 1111
- NSPCC
<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk>

Bereavement and Loss

During the pandemic, more of us may experience sudden and unexpected grief and loss; the following organisations can help:

- Cruse Bereavement Care
<https://www.cruse.org.uk>
Tel: 0113 234 4150
- Winston's Wish
<https://www.winstonswish.org/>
- Grief Encounter
<https://www.griefencounter.org.uk>

Leeds Infant Mental Health Service promotes the emotional wellbeing of infants and the relationships that nurture them. If you are pregnant or have an infant under the age of 2 years and are experiencing increased difficulties in the attachment relationship between you and your baby, the service can support you. For further information contact your midwife or health visitor, telephone 0113 8430841 or visit

www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/imhs



Please remember you are not alone: reach out and talk to someone

