



Acacia Family Support: pre and postnatal depression and anxiety support service

Referral Criteria

Acacia provides peer support to improve emotional wellbeing for mild to moderate pre- and postnatal depression and anxiety, where the low mood or anxiety is primarily caused by pregnancy or giving birth within the preceding two years. Peer support provides a safe and confidential listening space to allow feelings and emotions to be expressed with empathy.

We will treat all people with respect, sensitivity and kindness to offer hope. We expect the same values to be shown to our staff and volunteers.

Main service:	Residents of Birmingham or registered to a Birmingham GP.
Dads'/Partners' Service:	Birmingham or Solihull resident or registered to a GP in area.
Young Persons Service:	Up to 25 years of age and Birmingham resident or registered to Birmingham GP.

Experiencing symptoms of mild to moderate pre and postnatal depression and anxiety:

- a persistent feeling of sadness and low mood
- loss of interest
- no longer enjoying things that used to give pleasure
- lack of energy and feeling tired all the time
- trouble sleeping at night
- feeling sleepy during the day
- feeling unable to look after your baby
- problems concentrating and making decisions
- loss of appetite or an increased appetite (comfort eating)
- feeling agitated, irritable or very apathetic ('can't be bothered')
- feelings of guilt, hopelessness and self-blame
- difficulty bonding with baby – feeling of indifference and no sense of enjoyment in their company
- frightening thoughts, about hurting baby or harm coming to baby or self
- thoughts of suicide and/or self-harm, without plan, action or intent

Wider circumstantial issues: while we understand that wider circumstantial issues have an impact on mood, our support will not cover wider circumstantial issues such as housing needs, relationship issues, or situations not related to the pregnancy or baby, that impact or cause the symptoms of low mood or anxiety. Pregnancy loss and stillbirth will be signposted to specialised services.

All referrals will be triaged to determine criteria are met. If the criteria are met, an assessment will be arranged to assist in planning support. Signposting to appropriate services will be offered to the referrer if the criteria is not met.

Eligibility Criteria

- Parental Status. The individual must be a parent (biological, adoptive, or foster) of a child aged 0 to 2 years.
- The individual is experiencing symptoms consistent with mild to moderate pre and postnatal depression or anxiety. Severe depression or anxiety where there is risk of harm to self or others will be signposted to higher intensity support.

Improving the lives of mothers and families affected by pre- and postnatal depression and anxiety

We are a registered charity : Number 11222832

T: 0121 301 5990

E: teamacacia@acacia.org.uk

W: acacia.org.uk

A: 5A Coleshill St, The Royal Town of Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, B72 1SD





Inclusion Criteria

- **Self-Identified Need and Consent:** Parent expresses an interest in receiving peer support and self-identifies as needing assistance with emotional well-being. Must consent to a referral being made on their behalf if referral is professional.
- **Willingness to Participate:** The parent must be open to engaging in peer support activities and sharing experiences in a safe, non-judgmental environment.
- **Ability to Communicate:** The parent must be able to communicate their needs, either verbally or in writing, to engage with the peer support worker effectively.
- **Agreement to our safeguarding policy and consent to share information with Responsible Medical Officers or safeguarding agencies where risk is identified.**

Acacia has a comprehensive inclusion policy and will not discriminate referrals on the basis of ethnicity, religion, sex, gender identity, or **disability other than as stated in the exclusion criteria below. We will treat all people with respect, sensitivity and kindness to offer hope.**

Exclusion Criteria

- **Severe Mental Health Conditions:** severe depression, anxiety, psychosis, or other significant pre-existing mental health conditions requiring more intensive psychiatric treatment will be signposted to specialised clinical services.
- **Substance Abuse:** Parents who are currently undergoing severe substance abuse or addiction issues that could interfere with engagement in the peer support service.
- **Cognitive Impairment:** Parents with significant cognitive impairment or developmental disabilities that limit their ability to effectively engage in the peer support process.

If in doubt, please do not hesitate to call our head office on **0121 301 5990** to discuss individual circumstances further. We will always endeavour to signpost effectively and acknowledge difficulties with empathy.

Referral Process

- Professional referrers including but not limited to: GPs, midwives, health visitors, mental health professionals, family support workers, social workers, and self-referrals are all welcomed.
- **Referral Form:** A completed referral form available on the website must be submitted by the referrer with consent, or by the person requiring support.
- **Assessment of Eligibility:** Following referral, an initial triage will be conducted to confirm eligibility based on the referral criteria.
- **Consent:** The parent must provide informed consent for participation in our service, which includes understanding the nature of the peer support service and its boundaries. Our service does not offer therapy or counselling.

Additional Considerations:

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** We are mindful of cultural differences when planning support. Our aim is to remove barriers so we can provide culturally appropriate services that understands and respects your experience.
- **Childcare:** We have creche facilities at our centres. The parent will be informed of any available support for childcare during peer support sessions if needed, to ensure participation.
- **Follow-up:** A follow-up process will be in place to ensure the ongoing suitability of the service and that parents are receiving the support they need to show recovery is continuing. In the event that symptoms remain the same or worsen, other areas of more formal support including therapy and counselling will be explored with the parent.
- Telephone or video support will be available to those who cannot attend a centre in person.

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