



Pregnancy, birth and early parenting can bring many changes. Alongside joy and hope, this time can also feel overwhelming. For families from culturally diverse backgrounds, this period may also include adjusting to a new language, culture or healthcare system. With the right support, it is possible to feel more confident, connected and understood.

### Common Experiences & Support Needs

Every family's experience is different; however, many people experience life challenges and can recover with the right assistance. Alongside the usual adjustments of pregnancy and early parenting, families from multicultural, migrant and refugee backgrounds may have extra support needs. Recognising these can help you find the best support as early as possible.

**Language Support Can Make A Difference.** If English is not your first language, it may help to ask for an interpreter or bilingual health professional so you can better understand information and express how you are feeling. You may also find it helpful to bring a trusted family member or friend to appointments for extra support.

#### Learning A New Health System Takes Time.

Appointments, referrals and services can feel unfamiliar at first, but a GP or trusted health professional can help guide you through the process.

**Connection Is Important.** Being away from loved ones or familiar traditions can feel lonely, so linking in with local community, faith or family support can help you feel more connected.

**Your Culture Matters.** Cultural values, traditions and parenting practices are an important part of your family's story and should be respected in your care.

**Extra Life Stresses Can Affect Your Wellbeing.** Settling in, work, money worries or past experiences may add pressure during this time, which is why early support can be helpful.

**Culturally Responsive & Safe Care Matters.** Feeling respected, included and understood can make it easier to ask questions, attend appointments and accept support.

### Signs You May Need Extra Support

It can help to check in with yourself during this time. If worries, low mood or stress are lasting for a while or making daily life harder, extra support may help. Some signs to look out for include:

- Feeling sad, worried or overwhelmed much of the time
- Feeling alone, disconnected or like things are harder to manage
- Trouble sleeping, even when you have the chance to rest
- Finding it hard to enjoy things or feel like yourself
- Ongoing lack of connection with your baby
- Physical symptoms such as sweaty hands, panic attacks, upset stomach
- Thoughts of not wanting to be here anymore
- Avoiding appointments or support because of fear, shame or language barriers

### Ways To Get Support

There are many ways to build support around you. You do not have to do everything at once. Starting with one small step can make a difference. Support can include:

- Speaking with your GP, midwife, child and family health nurse, or another trusted health professional
- Asking for information in clear, simple language and taking time to ask questions
- Requesting an interpreter or bilingual health professional if that would help you feel more comfortable
- Bringing a trusted support person to appointments if you would like extra support
- Connecting with multicultural community groups, local playgroups, faith-based communities or settlement services



### How Gidget Foundation Australia Can Support You

Gidget Foundation Australia provides free\* individual psychological therapy services with a perinatal mental health clinician for expectant, new and potential parents from all backgrounds.

Support is available for birthing and non-birthing parents from pre-conception to 12 months postpartum, including support for anxiety and/or stress relation conditions, such as perinatal depression and anxiety, birth trauma, pregnancy or infant loss and difficulties with conception.

Under Medicare, Gidget Foundation Australia provides up to 10 free\* individual psychological therapy appointments per calendar year. To access this free bulk-billed support, you will need a referral and Mental Health Treatment Plan from your GP.

If you don't have access to Medicare, please speak with the team at Gidget Foundation Australia to discuss financial aid options that may be available. You can also access Gidget Foundation Australia services without a Mental Health Treatment Plan on a private full fee-paying basis, if you prefer or require.

If you need support in another language, Gidget Foundation Australia can arrange a confidential interpreter for free through the Australian Government's Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National). To organise this, contact Gidget Foundation Australia's Client Experience Team before your appointment and let them know your language needs.

### It's Important To Get Support

You deserve support that feels right for you. Your culture, language and personal story matter. Feeling safe, respected and understood is an important part of care. With the right support, it is possible to feel more connected and confident as you move through pregnancy and early parenting. Help is available for you and your family.

### Additional Support Services

- Embrace Multicultural Mental Health: Provides multicultural communities with access to resources, links to services and translated information on mental health.

- Multicultural Australia: Advocacy and support for multicultural communities
- Transcultural Mental Health Centre (NSW): Supports positive mental health for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- Translation and Interpreting Service (TIS National): Free interpreting support for people who do not speak English
- Witness to War Multilingual Hotline: Free support for people in Australia affected by overseas conflict

\* Up to 10 individual sessions per calendar year. Access to services provided by Gidget Foundation Australia is subject to meeting relevant Medicare eligibility requirements. Further information about Medicare Better Access services, including eligibility, can be found via the Better Access Initiative Resource Collection. 🌸