

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Becoming parents

TIP SHEET

Relationships Australia WA's education team have developed a range of tips to help support you during the COVID-19 outbreak. As a free resource, we encourage you to share this with your community.

This is an unprecedented time for expecting partners, it is understandable you may have different feelings and emotions around becoming parents at this time.

For some this may still be a time of joy while others may be experiencing some apprehension around becoming a parent whilst dealing with the uncertainty of the current health and economic crisis.

Here are some suggestions to help you navigate the journey from partners to parents during this time:

- **Limit changes**

In addition to the current changes we are all experiencing from COVID-19 measures, becoming parents is one of the biggest transitions of your life. This is not a time to make further changes, so try to limit any further major life changes while you settle into your new roles as parents, unless it is absolutely necessary. You already have enough adjustments to make.

- **Spend time with your partner**

You may think you are already doing this if both partners are living and working under the same roof at the moment. But keeping your relationship healthy is important for mental health as a parent, so try to plan specific moments of connection each week. Deliberately plan to spend quality time with your partner where you do something enjoyable together or talk and listen without interruptions.

- **Show understanding for your partner**

You may both experience a tremendous amount of change adjusting to life with your new baby and the current crisis. Lack of sleep can make you irritable and more likely to react angrily to each other. Try to talk calmly and openly about your experiences and listen to your partners experience too. This will help you support each other.

- **Ask your partner "How can I help?"**

Try to think of ways you can share the household chores and care of the child or children (without one person always having to ask).

- **Stay in touch with family**

Sadly, this may be a difficult time to receive help from others because of social distancing measures. So it is even more important to stay in touch with your loved ones - a phone call, sharing photos or video-calling your loved ones will keep you connected and may lessen feelings of isolation.

- **All things end**

Remind yourself that things will become more manageable. Things will change as your baby grows and you will become more confident in your role as a parent. Also, the social distancing measures and economic impact of the current crisis will eventually end, so remember there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

- **Remember that each baby and parent is unique**

Get to know your baby's temperament and behaviour - adapting to their patterns will make life easier. You can learn about normal child development and develop realistic and age appropriate expectations of your child here: www.raisingchildren.net.au/

- **Seek professional help**

If either of you notice your partner is consistently depressed or anxious for several weeks after your child is born then seek professional help. Depression and anxiety can be resolved with appropriate treatment.

Contact the free Ngala Parenting Line here: www.ngala.com.au/service/ngala-parenting-line/ or PANDA National Helpline: www.panda.org.au/info-support/support/calling-panda-national-helpline

As we journey through these challenging times, please reach out for support and connection amongst your community or if you'd like further support from Relationships Australia WA you can call us on 1300 364 277.

Our Education team will continue to facilitate Relationship Australia WA's seminars, workshops and courses face-to-face once government guidelines allow. You might like to like us on Facebook to keep up to date with support information and details of services we can offer during this time.

If you'd like to register your interest in attending a course on **Partners to Parents** once available, or any of our other courses, please email education@relationshipsaustralia.org.au or call 6164 0200.