

Partners to parents

TIP SHEET

Relationships Australia WA's education team has developed a range of tips to help support you during difficult times. As a free resource, we encourage you to share this with your community.

Transitioning from partners to parents can be a challenging time. It is understandable you may have different thoughts, feelings and emotions than your partner. For some, this may be a time of joy, while others may experience apprehension or stress around becoming a parent.

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

1. Limit changes

Becoming parents may be one of the biggest transitions of your life. Making further significant life changes during this time can put unnecessary pressure on your relationship. Try to limit any other major life changes while you settle into your new roles as parents, unless it is absolutely necessary. There will be plenty of adjustments to make.

2. Spend time with your partner

You may think you are already doing this if both partners are living and working under the same roof. However, a new baby can easily consume what little time remains. Keeping your relationship healthy is important for mental health as a parent, so make time for one-on-one connection each week. Deliberately plan to spend quality time with your partner, where you do something enjoyable together or talk and listen to each other without any interruption or devices.

3. Stay calm and open towards your partner

You will both experience changes in your relationship while adjusting to life with your new baby. Lack of sleep can make you irritable and more likely to react unhelpfully towards each other. Try to talk calmly and openly about your experiences and listen to your partners experience too. This will help you support and understand each other.

4. 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. If in doubt ask "How can I help?"

5. Support from family or friends

For those partners who have family or friends close by, they can be your biggest support. However, for some people it can be difficult asking for help, and/or letting someone else look after their baby. Keep an open dialogue between each other around family or friend support and listen well to each other's point of view.

6. 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 childhood development and develop realistic and age-appropriate parenting for your child here: www.raisingchildren.net.au/

7. Seek professional help

If you need help with parenting advice or if you notice you or your partner is consistently depressed or anxious for several weeks, then seek professional help. It's ok to ask for help with parenting, and depression and anxiety can be resolved with appropriate treatment. Contact your GP, psychologist, counsellor or a free parenting support line:

Ngala Parenting Line: 08 9368 9368

8am – 8pm (AWST) 7 days a week

www.ngala.com.au/service/ngala-parenting-line/

PANDA National Helpline: 1300 726 306

9am – 7:30 pm (AEST) – Mon to Sat

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 are continuing to facilitate Relationship Australia WA's seminars, workshops and courses face-to-face and online.

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