



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

Information Pack



New Fulford Family Centre
237-239 Gate House Avenue
Bristol, BS13 9AQ

Perinatal Mental Health

Our Story



At Mothers for Mothers, we offer maternal mental health and wellbeing support, advice and information to women, birthing people and their families in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. As mothers who have lived experience of depression, anxiety and isolation during pregnancy or after the birth of one or more of our babies, we understand how hard early parenthood can feel and how difficult it can be to ask for help.

The story of Mothers for Mothers starts with brave forward-thinking women who had survived a perinatal mental illness. In 1981, before peer support was recognised as a useful tool, these brave women decided what would have helped them recover would have been the opportunity to talk to others who had suffered and recovered. These mothers in North Avon felt their emotional needs were not being met following childbirth. They were supported in setting up the self-help group by Bristol Maternity Hospital and started with a helpline. Much of the original operations took place in members' homes.

Over the years many women and their families have been supported and have helped on the support team, as trustees, volunteers and staff. There were times when our road was straight, times when it was winding, sometimes we navigated potholes and faced mountains. The twists and turns enriched our story and gave us new experiences which prepared us for the journey ahead. In 2018 we were the very proud winners of the Maternal Mental Health Alliance Perinatal Peer Support Award. In June 2021, our 40th anniversary year, we received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. This year we have recently received a Bristol Social Impact Award. These awards not only recognise the quality and impact of our current work, they also honoured those trail blazing women of lived experience who started this charity over 40 years ago.

We have stayed true to the vision of those brave women of 1981 as we continue to support families affected by maternal mental illness across Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. We offer support to women during pregnancy and until their youngest child attends school, from illness to wellness, through our support services delivered by women with lived experience of maternal mental illness.

“Talking to someone about your emotional wellbeing can help make sure you get the help and support you need.”

Our Story



We aim to achieve the following outcomes for the women and families we work with:

- Improved confidence, resilience and relationships with children and family, leading to faster recovery.
- Improving children’s emotional development by supporting mothers to be sensitive and responsive in their relationships with their children.
- Reduced social isolation and improved social and support networks.
- More awareness of Maternal Mental Illness and the support available.
- Improved care and services for maternal mental illness.

Our actions will help us to ensure that no one is left behind, that everyone’s story is heard, and our story continues to grow with renewed confidence in our aims, uniting us in the story of our past and our hopes for the story of our future. We always remember the love, compassion, hope, diligence and courage of the women and birthing people from 1981 as we embrace our future story moving forward.



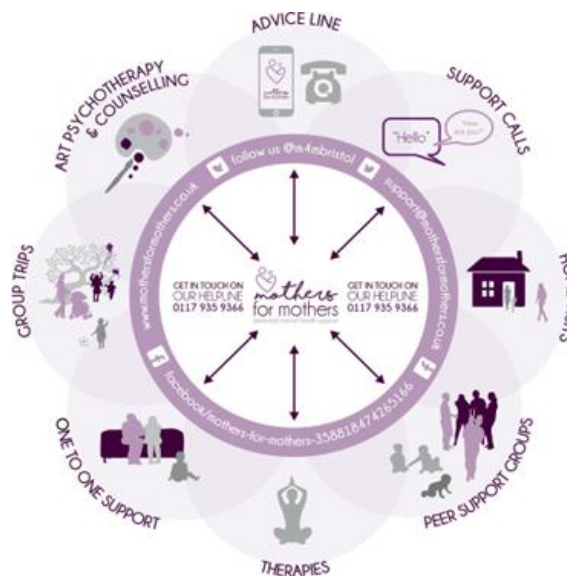
Our services



At Mothers for Mothers, we offer services to help you on your road to recovery. It can be a great comfort to have someone available to talk to, who understands what you are going through. If you are suffering from anxiety, depression, loneliness, fear or isolation during or after pregnancy, or if you are a partner, family member or friend we look forward to talking to you.

Please click on the link below to view our animation video that tells you all about Mothers for Mothers and our services.

<https://vimeo.com/641488117/49871967ac>



"Telling someone how you feel can help you get the support you need."



We offer support to women, birthing people, their partners, family members and friends. Our aim is to encourage women experiencing anxiety, depression, distress and / or isolation during pregnancy and / or after the birth of their baby to easily REACH out to us for immediate support. We have many different ways in which we can REACH them. Support is also available to fathers who themselves are depressed. Friends, family and health care professionals may also use our service to make referrals and obtain information.



5 DAY HELP LINE

The help line provides an opportunity to talk to someone who understands what you are going through. It can be a lifeline for those experiencing emotional wellbeing needs. It can help to 'normalise' the symptoms and their reassurance that 'you will get better' is validated by their own recovery. Our help line is often the first step for a mother in accessing other services provided by Mothers for Mothers or in their community. We can also sign post to other services when appropriate.

Our services

TELEPHONE AND TEXT SUPPORT

The support line offers women a regular weekly support call or text. This is a confidential listening and planning service. The calls also work to increase resilience to enable you to access the most appropriate services available to meet your current needs. Mothers for Mothers can facilitate where possible to identifying other services you may find helpful and we can help to establish contact. We can even accompany your family to the first activity.



ONLINE SUPPORT

Online support is provided via a zoom group, social media, direct messaging, email and moderated discussion on our closed Facebook group.



HOME VISITING

Our Home Visiting Service is aimed at women who are too unwell to attend a group or access counselling but feel the need for face-to-face support. Our Home Visitors can offer you listening and planning visits and work with you to decide what will be most helpful for your individual circumstances. This service can help increase emotional wellbeing, resilience, and have a positive effect for the whole family. We will help you to increase your confidence and progress to accessing other services such as our support groups or other activities in your own communities.

"Mental health problems can affect anyone. You can talk to us without feeling embarrassed."

SUPPORT GROUPS & ONE TO ONE SUPPORT

We have weekly support groups (Bedminster, St George, Hartcliffe, Staple Hill, Weston Super Mare and Patchway).

Our support groups provide a safe place for you to come and talk about how you feel with others who understand, gain support and make social connections.

Our groups provide much needed support to women and can improve the lives of the children who attend. The opportunity to attend a group where you feel welcome, safe, understood and able to connect with other women having similar experiences helps promote a more rapid recovery from illness. We have support workers who can talk on a one-to-one basis with you, offering support, information and advice.

There are also opportunities to access therapies or activities such as crafting. Our play worker engages children in activities such as arts and crafts and we have a wide variety of toys. Our groups offer you the opportunity to make supportive friendships and give your children the opportunity to socialise.

mothers for mothers
perinatal mental health support

Contact us at
groups@mothersformothers.co.uk

come along and join us
at one of our Peer Support Groups

- Staple Hill Every Monday - 10:00am to 12:00pm at Staple Hill Children's Centre, Page Road, Staple Hill BS16 4NL
- Clevedon Every Monday - 12:00pm to 1:30pm at Clevedon Children's Centre, The Barn, Great Western Road, Clevedon BS21 6HB
- St George Every Tuesday - 10:00am to 12:00pm at the Beehive Centre, 19a Stratford Road, Whitchoal, Bristol BS5 7AW
- Hartcliffe Every Wednesday - 10:00am to 12:00pm at Hartcliffe Children's Centre, Horecive Road, Bristol BS13 0JW
- Weston Super Mare Every Wednesday - 10:00am to 12:00pm at Old Mixon Family Centre, Monkton Ave, Weston Super Mare BS24 9DA
- Bedminster Every Thursday - 12:45pm to 2:45pm at St Francis Church, North Street Ashton Gate, Bedminster BS3 2AN
- Patchway Every Friday - 10:00am to 12:00pm at Patchway Children's Centre, Finney Close, Patchway, BS34 5TF

Or join our Zoom Group
Every Friday at 10:00am

perinatal mental health support



GROUP TRIPS

We have four group events a year: two trips to local family attractions and two parties. These events provide an opportunity to build your social circle outside the group you attend and give all the children a wonderful fun day. Being away from home with the safety of our support can help build confidence and increase self-esteem. The women attending the groups decide on the location, usually a local attraction. Transport is also provided.



ART PSYCHOTHERAPY

Art Psychotherapy is a talking therapy in which the art making is used as a key tool for expressing and making sense of feelings. It can help support clients to take ownership of their experiences and change in their view of current challenges they may face. The art psychotherapists offer clients non-judgmental and compassionate support through the process. Some clients can feel nervous about using the art materials, perhaps because they aren't familiar with them or fear that they are not good enough, however many find that they build in confidence and enjoyment using the materials and some continue using these new skills after the therapy has ended.

COUNSELLING

Counselling is a talking therapy that involves a counsellor listening to and supporting a client whilst helping them find ways to deal with personal issues. Clients are encouraged to talk about their thoughts and feelings with the counsellor, who will listen and support without judgement or criticism.

Talking to a counsellor can help you gain a better understanding of your feelings and thought processes and help you find solutions to your problems.



“Taking care of yourself is one of the hardest jobs, it is much easier to take care of others, treat yourself as you would treat a good friend.”

THERAPEUTIC SERVICES/THERAPIES

How we may be coping...

Having a baby, whether it's the first or the fifth, fundamentally changes our lives, our sense of identity, bodies, relationships and lifestyle. This process of change and finding a new normal, is full of wonderful and challenging moments. For some however, this conflict and change, alongside perhaps life stresses or distressing experiences can pose barriers to adjusting and tolerating difficult feelings such as anxiety, loss and isolation etc.

Why we may wish to think about accessing therapy...

If you feel that your mental health is impacting on your enjoyment of relationships, bonding with your baby/children, personality, and everyday activities or interests, you may wish to seek some support. Speaking with a psychotherapist or counsellor in a safe, non-judgmental environment can enable us to develop clearer understanding of and abilities to cope with difficult feelings. Many families have benefitted and made meaningful changes in their lives as a result of utilising the therapeutic services at Mothers for Mothers.

All of our therapies are :

Person-centred

We believe that the client's experiences & needs are individual to them. The therapy relationship is based on honesty, respect, compassion and equality.

One to one

The client and therapist can meet either face-to-face or via zoom.

Short-term

We offer a minimum of six sessions with the potential to extend.

Low-cost

Clients are asked to donate a weekly amount affordable for them.

Confidential

Clients feel safe and are comfortable knowing that what is discussed is always confidential.

ANTENATAL AND WELLBEING IN PREGNANCY SUPPORT GROUP

Antenatal and Wellbeing in pregnancy group



Are you currently pregnant and experiencing anxiety, depression, distress and/or isolation?



Come and join us in a safe and welcoming space to access:
Antenatal, birth & postnatal information with a strong focus on mental health and emotional wellbeing

- Ask questions and discuss topics without judgement
- Connect with other women with similar experiences

TO JOIN US, PLEASE CONTACT REBECCA RICE AT:
HOMEVISITING@MOTHERSFORMOTHERS.CO.UK



We run an online group created specifically for pregnant women and birthing people who are experiencing anxiety, depression, low mood and/or isolation. It is a welcoming and relaxed group where you can access antenatal, birth and postnatal information and meet other women and birthing people facing similar experiences. The sessions have a strong focus on mental health and emotional wellbeing, with themes and discussion topics informed by the issues the group consider to be important and useful. We look at the helpful coping strategies available to women and birthing people during pregnancy and discuss ways to positively improve our responses to the ongoing demands of the perinatal period.

Helpline: 0117 935 9366 Mon - Fri 10am -9pm
www.mothersformothers.co.uk
Instagram.com/mothers_for_mothers
@m4mbristol



SEND

Our SEND Peer Support service is aimed at women and birthing people who have children with additional needs (diagnosed or not) or themselves are Neurodivergent. Our SEND Peer Support worker can offer you a listening ear, practical advice, or emotional support because she's been on a similar journey and has navigated the SEND system personally and professionally.

By chatting to a parent who 'gets it' can decrease your 'mental load' by allowing you a safe space to express those feelings associated with being a parent of a SEND child.

By knowing you're not on your own and there's support which allows you to belong and be included because there are people who think and feel like you do, can increase your resilience when trying to access and fight for support. Through accessing SEND Peer support, your confidence and skills in parenting a child with additional needs can grow and develop and you can progress to accessing other SEND services such as local Autism support groups or other SEND friendly activities.

SEND - support in groups

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S ADDITIONAL NEEDS DIAGNOSED OR NOT?



DROP INTO ONE OF OUR GROUPS FOR AN INFORMAL SESSION WITH OUR IN HOUSE SEND WORKER FOR ADVICE AND INFORMATION.



SAPNA BODEN - SEND AND PEER SUPPORT WORKER
PEERSUPPORT@MOTHERSFORMOTHERS.CO.UK

Helpline: 0117 935 9366 Mon - Fri 10am -9pm
www.mothersformothers.co.uk
Instagram.com/mothers_for_mothers
@m4mbristol



Our Impact

Improved mental health

- ❖ 72% agreed or strongly agreed that their general mood has improved, and they have felt less depressed (up 5% from last year).



"I felt like my mental health was going downhill quickly but once I started attending the group sessions, it improved just as rapidly."

Reduced isolation



- ❖ 81% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt less isolated or lonely.

"It's the village you need to raise a baby and helps the isolation you face in motherhood."

Fighting stigma

- ❖ 95% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel more reassured about what they have been experiencing (up 5% from last year). For mothers attending an antenatal group, this increased to 100%.



"Without Mothers for Mothers' support I would've not known that my feelings were ok to have, that they didn't define who I was, or as being a mum."

Promoting self-care



- ❖ 72% of mothers agreed or strongly agreed that they give more importance and time to self-care. For mothers accessing art therapy in the community, this increased to 100%.

"I am now able to recognise moments when fear has crept in. I am able to give myself space when that happens, to recognise and deal with it in a more rational approach and be kind to myself if I can't."

Supporting bonding

- ❖ 65% agreed or strongly agreed that the relationship or bond with their child has improved. For mothers receiving home visits, this increased to 85%. For those accessing peer support on the MBU, it was 100%.



"I am able to accept myself and my past, the trauma of my child's birth, and to allow myself to connect with my baby more."

Building confidence



❖ 78% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel more confident in parenting their child. For mothers accessing peer support on the MBU, this increased to 90%. For those receiving home visits, it was 93%. For those attending an antenatal group, it was 100%.

“The sessions have helped me become more confident as a parent. It's helped me trust myself and capabilities more.”

Better relationships

❖ 84% of mothers accessing art therapy on the MBU said that they feel more able to explain the way they feel and why to family members. For those accessing art therapy in the community, this increased to 92%.



“All of my relationships are a lot more calm. I feel a lot more empathy with my mum. I feel a lot closer to my partner. I feel a lot more love for my children, especially my daughter. This service from Mothers for Mothers is extraordinary! It has actually changed my life.”

Our Strengths

Safe spaces



Mothers valued a sense of safety across all our services. They felt that vulnerable or painful feelings could be shared without judgement.

“Mothers for Mothers has been my safe place when I’m feeling vulnerable.”

The power of lived experience

We understand the value of speaking with someone who has ‘been there’. Shared lived experience helps mothers to feel understood, reduces stigma, and promotes hope.



“The lived experience aspect was very important because it felt as if I was speaking to someone who understood where I was at that point in time.”

Continuity of care



Consistent support from named individuals helps mothers using our services to build trusting therapeutic relationships.

“I met [the peer support worker] during my stay in the MBU. I feel like the continuity of meeting her during my stay and continuing to work with her on discharge to be the most beneficial in terms of my recovery.”

Flexible support

Our services are designed so that supporters can accommodate different mothers' needs and situations.



"The most helpful thing is how personal it is to me and how flexible the service is."

'Whole person' approach



Mothers valued being able to access more than one of our services at a time and felt that they were viewed as a whole person rather than just from a perspective of their mental health.

"I felt I could talk about anything, that nothing was off the table. Life is not neat, and there are all kinds of elements that contribute to a person's mental health – I was able to talk about anything with them. Nothing was too much trouble."

No mother left behind

We aim to make our support accessible to all mothers, whatever their background or experiences. There are no lengthy or complicated referral processes when accessing our services.



"Everything felt so out of reach, so to be able to talk to someone without a lengthy referral process or jumping through hoops was a welcome relief."

Distinctive



While we work with other services, we keep ourselves separate from them and from other support such as friends and family. This means that mothers can speak openly, and that we can prioritise their needs at all times.

"It's been nice to vent to someone you don't speak to usually. Having that has helped me feel much more positive and has helped my week going forward."

Skilled and caring

- ❖ 100% rated the support from their home visitor as 'excellent' or 'good.'
- ❖ 100% rated the support received from their art therapist as 'excellent' or 'good,' both on the MBU and in the community.
- ❖ 100% rated the antenatal groups as 'excellent' or 'good.'
- ❖ 100% accessing MBU peer support rated it as 'excellent' or 'good.'



"From the first person I spoke with over email, right through to therapy, I felt heard, validated, and held the whole time. It has been an extremely positive experience."



“Mothers for Mothers helped me recognise my attachment to my baby and build my confidence, it was literally a lifeline at times. This service should come on the NHS. It is absolutely fabulous-non-judgmental and safe and compassionate people, and spaces to just BE. Going to groups, the art therapy and the telephone calls helped me build back up to myself to better support myself, access other support services and just be a better mum.”





Opportunity to join our award winning team

We are excited to recruit two new posts as we develop our Senior Leadership Team.

These posts are restricted to women only as a genuine occupational requirement under Schedule 9 of the Equality Act 2010

How to apply

For an informal discussion please call Maria Viner
Chief Executive Officer on 07796402667

Please complete an application form, along with a covering letter stating why you wish to work for the organisation, how your skills would add value and any other relevant information.

Send to Maria Viner
Chief Executive Officer:
maria.viner@mothersformothers.co.uk

Closing Date: 15th May 2024

Interview Date: Operations Manager 20th May 2024 Business Manager 24th May 2024



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