

MAY 2019

For Immediate Release

THE FREE RESOURCE ALL NEW AND EXPECTING MUMS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT
COPE's innovative way of providing information throughout pregnancy and the first year of Motherhood



A woman is most at risk of experiencing emotional and mental health issues, including stress, anxiety and depression, while pregnant or during her first year of motherhood, more than at any other time in her life.

The Centre of Perinatal Excellence (COPE) is a not-for-profit organisation devoted to reducing the impact of emotional and mental health distress in the pre and postnatal periods.

COPE created '*Ready to COPE*', a free and confidential fortnightly email Guide that delivers valuable information to expectant and new mothers. *Ready to COPE* helps to prepare, comfort and support women through the many emotional challenges they may experience during pregnancy and the year following birth.

The information delivered is aligned with their baby's due date to ensure that each woman's journey is customised and timely. The Guide explores the realities surrounding pregnancy and early motherhood and tackles issues that are often not spoken about openly - including managing advice, preparing your relationships for change, emotionally preparing yourself for birth, and dealing with the disappointments and frustrations that can arise during early motherhood.

Ready to COPE also helps women identify the signs and symptoms of mental health issues, such as stress, anxiety and depression, and encourages them to seek professional help early. With support from the Federal Government, over 4,500 expectant and new mothers across Australia have already signed up to Ready to COPE since its release in 2018. A review of the uptake and feedback reveals the significant effect of the Guide.

Dr. Nicole Highet, Founder and Executive Director of COPE, says “The Guide is playing a critical role in empowering women with information about the range of challenges that can come with having a baby. Of those women who identified as needing support for anxiety and depression, around two thirds recognised that Ready to COPE played an important role in encouraging them to seek professional help early. We’re delighted to see that Ready to COPE is having such a supportive impact during this period in women’s lives.”

“We know that women have high expectations of pregnancy and parenthood and, when these expectations are not met, this can impact upon their confidence and self-esteem. Often these challenges and feelings are not spoken about openly, leaving many women feeling alone, and like they are the only ones who may be struggling to cope.”

Statistics surrounding pregnancy and ‘Ready to COPE’

- One in five women experience anxiety in pregnancy and in the first year following birth
- One in 10 pregnant women and one in seven new mothers experience depression
- Research carried out by COPE found that 74%, or three in four, new and expectant mums do not seek help until reaching crisis point
- An online survey with Ready to COPE users has revealed that more than 85% of women found the guide comforted and supported them, and/or made them feel less alone in dealing with the more difficult emotional and mental health challenges that they experienced during pregnancy and early motherhood.

In the lead-up to Mother’s Day on May 12th, COPE is encouraging expectant and new mothers to sign up and spread the word about Ready to COPE to ensure women continue to have the information, insights and support they need during this time.

readytocopeco.org.au

ENDS

For more information, or to interview Dr. Nicole Highet about ‘Ready to COPE’ or emotional and mental health in the perinatal period, please contact:

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