



Media Release

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Mental health checklist helps mums find PNDA support early

beyondblue urges new and expectant mums to check in on their mental health during Perinatal Depression and Anxiety Awareness Week (November 12-18).

It takes just minutes to complete *beyondblue*'s [Mental Health Checklist for Mums](#) – a set of 10 questions designed to give mothers, and their health professionals, an insight into how they're coping.

The checklist and its results can be accessed at home, in private, and is followed up with simple advice from *beyondblue* about what to do next and where to find support.

For mums feeling overwhelmed, the Checklist – the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale – is a simple first step towards getting the support they need.

Depression and anxiety can affect women at any time but the risk increases during pregnancy and in the 12 months following the birth of a baby.

Up to one in seven women experiences postnatal depression (after the birth of a baby) while one in 10 will experience depression during pregnancy.

Melbourne mum and blogger Laura Mazza had postnatal depression almost immediately after the birth of her son, and again when her daughter was born a year later.

Ms Mazza is expecting her third baby and has sought help early for the emotional months ahead.

"There is still a lot of stigma around postnatal depression; it's still a dirty word and a lot of people don't understand what it's like," Ms Mazza said.

"My son wasn't sleeping and I had trouble breastfeeding so I wasn't sleeping either. It was a really hard time and I couldn't understand why I didn't have those gushing feelings of love that you're supposed to have for your baby.

"I felt like I was a bad mother and I was scared that if I told someone and asked for help, they'd take my baby away.

"When I did ask for help, I felt this enormous sense of relief because I could be open about how I was feeling and I got the support I needed."

***beyondblue* CEO Georgie Harman** urged mums to complete the Mental Health Checklist so they could get the support they need as soon as possible.

"Having a baby is an exciting time for mums and dads, but it is a life-changing event and can be really stressful for many people," Ms Harman said.

"Depression and anxiety can affect us all but it's important to know that support is available. The earlier we seek support, the sooner we can get treatment and enjoy time with our families."

For more information visit healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au or call the PANDA National Helpline on 1300 726 306 (Monday to Friday, 9am-7.30pm AEST) / panda.org.au

Laura Mazza and Georgie Harman are available for media interviews and photographs.

Contact: *beyondblue*

**Cheryl Balfour – (03) 9818 9253 / 0434 356 775
cheryl.balfour@beyondblue.org.au**

beyondblue
PO Box 6100 Hawthorn West VIC 3122
beyondblue Support Service 1300 22 4636
www.beyondblue.org.au



Mental health tips for new mums:

- Being a parent means always considering the needs of your baby, but it's important to remember your own needs as well – looking after yourself is looking after your baby.
- You might receive a lot of advice about how to care for your baby. It's important to be open to working out what suits you and is best for your family.
- Ask for and accept help — even before you really need it. Planning to have additional support in the first few months can make the transition to parenthood less stressful.
- Think about what you can do day-to-day to make yourself feel good. It's different for everyone, so figure out what works for you.
- When possible, try not to make major life changes like moving to a new house or changing jobs late in pregnancy or in the first few months after you have your baby.
- If you've experienced mental health problems before, discuss this with your health professional. This can help you identify and respond early if symptoms return.

Mental health professionals are available 24/7 at the *beyondblue* Support Service – 1300 22 4636 or via beyondblue.org.au/get-support for online chat (3pm-12am ADST) or email responses (within 24 hours).