

increase feelings of anxiety, depression, and stress. So, comfort foods are perhaps not as comforting as they seem. By contrast, natural ingredients such as fruits and vegetables, wholegrains, dairy and protein foods all provide more beneficial nutrients. These wholefoods help our response to stress and anxiety by balancing our body's natural communication systems of hormones and neurotransmitters. Stocking the fridge with plenty of fresh produce is a great way to ensure you have a range of nutritious foods available for mealtimes and snacks. Including plenty of colourful foods also helps supply a good mix of nutrients such as vitamins A-C-E and minerals zinc, magnesium, iron, and potassium to help support our immune system as we head towards winter. Vitamin D, from exposure to sunlight, has also been shown to support immunity so combining a daily walk with good diet are two ways to help you stay balanced. Fresh air, exercise, and time spent in nature have all been shown to positively boost mood.

Whilst we all have a unique relationship with food, and may eat different things, it is clear that the nutrients in food effect our body's natural responses and wellbeing. Favouring fresh ingredients over processed foods, creating family mealtimes and shared occasions, and aiming to eat well, will all help support wellbeing and reduce anxiety.

Book Review - Five Hundred Miles from You

By Jenny Colgan

This book is ideal for a new mum. It is divided into very short chapters but well written. This is much better than 'chic lit' but is promoted in that genre.

The story follows a nurse practitioner Lissa who loves her job and works in London. After witnessing a traumatic accident at work she feels overwhelmed and very anxious and she agrees to do a job swap for three months with a nurse practitioner who lives in a quiet village in Scotland.

It is not necessary to read about the accident which is in Chapter 3 (pages 9-14 in the hardback version). You can still enjoy the book as it tells the story of the job swap and the people who Lissa and Cormac meets in their new roles.

We can really recommend this book; it is engaging and charming.



GDPR

In line with the new data protection laws please refer to our website for our privacy policy and how we protect your data. If you wish to have your details removed from our database, please email us at the office info@apni.org.

We have received some more lovely notes from past sufferers that we'd like to share with you ...

"Forever grateful to Emma from Wales who was a fantastic volunteer and helped me so much."

"Keep up the good work! My son is fourteen years old now and I remember vividly that first tearful phonecall and how much it helped."

"You are doing an amazing job – if I hadn't found you eighteen years ago, I don't know where I would be now."

"APNI's continued invaluable services are crucial in preventing the anguish of postnatal mental health conditions. Keep up the awesome work!"

"Glad you are there for all the families that need you. Your help to me thirty years ago is still wonderful today. A lifeline. Keep up the good work"

To end on a lighter note, this exchange on Instagram made us chuckle ...

Scientists Find 33 Creatures Living in A Cave That Was Sealed Off For 5 Million Years



Quick response:

Seal that cave back up and walk away!!!! This is NOT the year, man.

Keeping in Touch

If any of you have changed your contact details, please update us via email - info@apni.org.

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas.



The APNI Newsletter

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I think we can all agree that 2020 will go down as one of the most challenging years in recent history. Who could have believed at the beginning of this year that we would be in this situation? Whether it be caring for a new baby or older relatives, getting to grips with home schooling whilst working from home, worries about your own and your family's health, virtual meetings - the pressure on everybody has been enormous. Our thoughts are with you all and we pray that you and your loved ones have remained safe and have found a way to adjust to the present circumstances.

News from the Office

Covid-19 has presented immense emotional and practical challenges for all but especially for new and expectant families. Our office remains open to support anybody affected and to signpost them to services that are still up and running. Many services are still open and it's vital that families continue to seek help for their mental health if they need to.

This pandemic has left most parents with the realisation that as much as we love our children and our job, mixing them together is a totally different matter. Like most of you, the APNI staff have had to stay at home and work remotely in order to continue running our helpline. Here's a little overview of our work-from-home experience:

As everyone knows, working from home is not without its challenges. It can be difficult to find a quiet space to do work and keep the distraction from

our children (and pets) to a minimum. How many times can we tolerate the words "Mum, what's for lunch/dinner/where's my green pen/the wifi is not working!" Don't we just miss our protected work routines and important personal connections with colleagues. But nevertheless, we feel so much safer being able to just stay at home and not risk being exposed to Covid-19 on the train journey to the office. Spending more time with our immediate families has also opened up opportunities for some friendly debates around gender roles and responsibilities at home. We believe there's even more appreciation and awareness of mum's job both at home and in the office. We say that's a win-win situation amidst this pandemic!

In April Margie joined **Pachamama live zoom session with Liz Wise**. This was a supportive discussion alongside Liz, Homestart and mums sharing information and experience of postnatal depression as well as helpful self care tips such as the importance of healthy eating, exercise, relaxation/mindfulness, acupuncture and peer groups.

In August, Margie joined Best Beginnings **Facebook live 'Spotlight on: Babies in Lockdown'** hosted by Dr. Ranj with Agnes (Parent Engagement Lead, Best Beginnings), Peter Grigg (CEO, Homestart) and Sally Hogg (Parent Infant Foundation). It was a very interesting discussion highlighting how COVID has shone a further light on peri/postnatal inequalities across the UK and how it disproportionately affected BAME communities, lower socioeconomic families, fathers/partners and young parents. Keep up to date by following #babiesinlockdown.

Fundraising



APNI are very grateful to the organisers of the Private Equity Lawyers Forum Conference, particularly Ms Rachel Fenwick, for choosing APNI as the beneficiary of their fundraising for the day which raised over £3,000.

Our very own Chairman, Mr Wilson Clarke was invited to give a talk at the start of the conference held in London on the 31st of January 2020. This event's JustGiving page states: This year, the Organising Committee for the PELF Conference 2020 have determined that the official charity of the Conference will be the Association for Post-Natal Illness. Post-natal illness is a remarkably common illness, but the results can be devastating. Sadly, NHS care in this area is not always available to the extent required and many women (and men) are dependent on charities as a result. APNI provides a wonderful service to many sufferers, offering support and advice over the phone, by email and by post.

At the beginning of the year, we received £686 from **Nick and Lucie Malangone (nee Holland)** who raised the funds in celebration of Nick's 40th. Thank you so much, we hope Nick had a wonderful birthday

We are also very grateful to all the pupils, parents and staff of **Spring Grove School in Kent** for raising nearly £600 with their SuperHeroic Challenge fundraising drive in June, showing us that superheroes do indeed come in all shapes and sizes. And many thanks to **Sandra Laflin** who raised £370 by swimming the length of the channel, an impressive 33 kilometres.

We would also like to mention how grateful we are to our lovely **supporters** who have been generously donating every month for several years now. As we rely solely on private donations, these funds help us continue our work providing a free helpline to those affected by postnatal illness.

A New Edition of The Baby Blues and Post-natal Depression Leaflet

The Baby Blues is the most popular publication of the Association for Post-natal Illness by far. Every year we distribute thousands of copies with most of these being paid for by regional health authorities.

We realised that there had been no update since 2013 so we started work in September 2019, updating the language of the leaflet without losing its core

information. Huge thanks go to Milly Delpech who chose a new font and format and who produced endless proofs as we worked on the text.

The new leaflet was published in January 2020 and received good reviews from some of our regular users. They all agreed (we sent out a small survey to regular customers) that the new version was better than the old one.

The first print run carried a paragraph on the back page that read 'Remembering with admiration Professor Merton Sandler and Professor Channi Kumar who with Mrs Clare Delpech wrote the 1st edition of this publication in 1980'.

The second edition of the new leaflet was published just as we entered 'lockdown' so we gave new phone contact details on the back page.

We have now managed to sort out, thanks to Alice Hutton, a method by which our staff can answer the office phone remotely so we will feature the familiar contact details on future editions of the leaflet.

If you would like to see a copy please contact us and we shall be happy to send you one.

The Linda Page Unsung Hero Award



Every year we invite mums to nominate their volunteer to receive some flowers to say thank you for their invaluable support. This year we would like to pay tribute to Lorna Aher. Lorna, who used APNI's service many years ago, has not only gone on to support mums for APNI but has also gained a degree and now works for the Samaritans too.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our amazing volunteers who help make APNI the organisation that it is. If you would like to nominate your volunteer for next year's award, please do write to us.

PND Awareness



In May Maternal Mental Health Alliance member PMHP UK delivered another packed agenda for Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week 2020. Due to the current situation, PMPH UK had planned to postpone

the awareness week but it did go ahead with a revised Covid-19 focus – Supporting mums during difficult times. The daily themes focused on reassuring families and signposting them to vital resources and safe support which was much needed

at this time. Siobhan took part in a Facebook live session giving mums lots of valuable tips.

During this week the MMHA launched a plea to local and national decision makers to PLAN for perinatal mental health care during and beyond Covid-19:

Protect the perinatal mental health workforce and plans through and beyond this crisis.

Link-up the mental health care and support available for women and families during this time.

Acknowledge the impact of the crisis on perinatal mental health and its potential long-term consequences.

Navigate the crisis while prioritising the perinatal mental health needs of women and families and proactively encouraging them to seek help early.

During the pandemic Mother and Baby Units in England and Scotland have remained open to provide urgent and often life-saving care to new mums experiencing perinatal mental illness. However Northern Ireland and Wales are still without an MBU which is particularly alarming during this pandemic. There is some good news for women and families in Northern Ireland. Followed sustained efforts from the MMHA Everyone's Business Campaign, there are plans to develop specialist PMH community services in each of the five health trusts.

Post-natal depression in fathers



Post-natal depression does occur in new fathers, but often goes undiagnosed. Some studies have found that it occurs at a similar frequency in men as in women – between 8-10%. If a man's partner is suffering from PND, this frequency increases to 50%.

It has long been recognised that PND in women results from a wide range of factors, including the physical trauma of giving birth, the associated physical and hormonal changes, changes in sleep patterns, the size of the life event and so on.

As men do not suffer the physical trauma of the birth of their child, it is often assumed that they cannot be at risk of post-natal depression. Yet studies have shown that there are physiological changes in the bodies of new fathers, such as a reduction in the level of the hormone testosterone. Strangely the better the relationship a father has with his partner, the greater the fall in this hormone.

Perhaps it is not so surprising that, with the lifestyle changes, and the increased responsibility involved in becoming a parent, a father can become clinically depressed. The Edinburgh Depression Scale that is often used by health professionals to help diagnose PND in women, does not work so well in detecting PND in men

The symptoms of PND in a father include such things as: feeling unworthy as a father and partner, excessive anxiety, poor concentration, a prolonged lowering of mood and feeling irritable. Unlike PND in a mother, a father with PND may respond to these feelings by becoming aggressive and unfriendly to his partner and feeling angry. Unfortunately, a father with PND may be prone to avoiding his parenting role, becoming isolated, possibly overworking, or he may take to excessive drinking or substance abuse.

If you feel that a new father, who you know, is exhibiting some of these changes in their personality, be aware they may be suffering a dose of PND.

There is a leaflet on male PND on our website. Other helpful male depression organisations include: www.bluebellcare.org; www.dadsmatteruk.org; www.thedadsnet.com

How lockdown affects mental health. what can you do/eat to stay positive and support your immune system

By Claire Sambolino, Communications Manager for the British Association of Nutrition and Lifestyle Medicine (BANT) and practising Nutritional Therapist

During moments like this it is human nature to reach for familiar comfort foods and drinks. However, be mindful as they might not necessarily be the most helpful or healthful foods to support anxiety. In fact, many foods and drinks can make us more anxious, especially if processed or full of added sugars. Too much sugar, caffeine, alcohol, and ultra-processed foods over-excites our nervous system and may