

Why book PANDA for your MCH team training?

PANDA has been funded since 2015 by the Victorian government to offer specialist perinatal mental health training to MCH professionals.

Research indicates that despite policies supporting universal mental health screening for new mothers, up to three quarters of those experiencing perinatal mental illness or distress will not be identified as such by their care providers.¹ Of callers to National PANDA Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Helpline, only one in seven had disclosed their distress to their MCH nurse or midwife (antenatally) in the last reporting period.

The reasons for this are complex. However, one reason is the lack of confidence and knowledge many health professionals feel about how best to create an environment that supports disclosure, in the often limited time they have with clients. PANDA training aims to address these obstacles.

We currently offer four options, tailored as needed, and are funded to deliver several presentations each year at no cost. To book or find out more please contact Sarah Marlowe on 9926 9032 or sarah.marlowe@panda.org.au.

1. How to Open Pandora's Box: Having difficult conversation to explore and address emotional wellbeing, mental health and associated risks 3.5 to 4 hours with break

A half day workshop to strengthen competence and confidence in having difficult conversations with clients experiencing perinatal mental illness and associated risks: (mental health decline, family violence, risk to child, use of alcohol and other drugs, and suicidality).

Incorporates an interactive lecture, lived experience story, role play videos addressing risk areas, observation and discussion. Final section on maintaining good practice, including accessing support as a health professional.

FEEDBACK (Stonnington MCHS)

"Great presenters and role-play videos, very good for learning."

"Enjoyed discussing the role plays and real life examples. I learned a lot about how to unpack layers of client responses."

"Gave me new counselling skills and confidence around the content of difficult discussions with the client."

2. Perfectionism, shame and a sense of "maternal failure" | 2 hours

Many MCH professionals recognise perfectionism as a contributing factor to struggles in the perinatal period, and it's a common theme on the PANDA Helpline, often associated with significant risk of suicidality. We explore the origins of perfectionism, how it presents perinatally, and how perfectionism, shame and a "sense of maternal failure" are often linked with breastfeeding/settling issues.

We discuss implications for MCH practice, using a lived experience story and case studies to explore practices that facilitate disclosure and risk assessment.

FEEDBACK (Casey MCHS)

"Great to explore some of the issues for families experiencing anxiety and depression, and to hear more about your service."

"Enjoyed the case studies and lived experience story. It opened my eyes to how clients minimise and internalise their feelings."

"Very informative around recognising perfectionism and helpful strategies to use. Clear, concise, relevant and practical."

3. Emotional wellbeing education: resources, skills and ideas | 3 hours

PANDA has delivered emotional wellbeing education in new parent groups for many years, through structured one-hour sessions comprising information-sharing, facilitating open discussion of the challenges of new parenthood, and sharing of personal recovery stories.

We share our approach; discuss and practice skills including facilitation and protective containment; and give out resources including activity plans, tools and handouts. We also discuss our peer education program, in which we train and support local volunteers to share their story in group sessions.

FEEDBACK (Surf Coast MCHS)

"I loved it all, very relevant to my role."

"I learned language to use, how to facilitate sessions and new activities and resources to use with parents."

"Very approachable and informed PANDA staff and lived experience volunteers. Powerful stories."

4. PANDA services/Our shared clients | 90 mins

A refresher on PANDA services: the Helpline and Intensive Program (case coordination and advocacy for high needs/complex clients), community education and resources. Includes case vignettes and discussion of how the Helpline can support your work with vulnerable families.

FEEDBACK (Yarra Ranges MCHS)

"Great for connection and collaboration."

"Relaxed talk with skilled counsellors."

"Gave us lots of new resources we can offer parents."

1. Coates et al, 2004; Spitzer et al, 2000 and Yelland and Brown, 2014

