

COVID-19: OUR STORY

PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH

THE BACKGROUND

Our weekly face-to-face Stay and Play sessions are for mums who have been referred to the perinatal mental health team who would benefit from frequent advice from a Nursery Nurse about the development of their baby; advice from an Occupational Therapist (OT) about daily functioning and mental health recovery; as well as peer support from other mums with perinatal mental health difficulties. During normal times, these groups are very well attended but once social distancing measures were in place, this was the first group that we had to postpone. When contacting the mums individually by phone they continued to tell us how much they missed each others company and were frequently asking after each other and their children.

“THE ONLINE SESSIONS HAVE BEEN SUCH A GOOD ALTERNATIVE, I LOOK FORWARD TO THEM EVERY TUESDAY. BEING ABLE TO SPEAK TO THE TEAM AND THE OTHER MUMS IS WHAT I NEEDED.”



ADAPTING TO COVID-19

Occupational Therapists, Madeline and Alex, and Nursery Nurses, Rikhael and Kristina, who facilitate the groups across the county met via Microsoft Teams and we all agreed that we should focus on trying to meet the needs of the mums to still remain connected during the COVID-19 restrictions. We spoke to our mums over the first two weeks of lockdown, had tutorials and test runs between each other and test sessions with mums 1:1 and in pairs. From their feedback of being part of other online groups they felt they needed to be part of a smaller group to be able to see each other constantly so we decided to split into smaller groups of four mums and run several shorter sessions.

In the first week we started 30 minute online sessions for up to four mums at a time and ran two sessions. The next week we ran five sessions and will increase to six to accommodate existing mums and new mums joining the group during the COVID-19 restriction period.

During the session we use the technology of Microsoft Teams to share a screen so the babies can watch songs or stories together, we have a question and answer session for mums to speak with health professionals and each other about their mental health and their baby and we share craft and play ideas about how to use their time at home and encourage them to set a goal for themselves and their baby for the following week.



COVID-19: OUR STORY

FEEDBACK

We've had some great feedback from the mums involved:

"The online sessions have been such a good alternative to the stay and play and I look forward to it every Tuesday. Being able to speak to the team and other mums is what I needed and I am really thankful to the team for all their hard work of setting this up."

"They've been good, its nice to see other people and talk about different things. The technology usually works fine, and sharing videos (like the hungry caterpillar story) is a really good idea."

WHAT'S NEXT?

We've taken our experiences and learnings from this and are also starting up virtual joint obstetric clinics between obstetrics, perinatal and maternity so that mums-to-be can still have the opportunity to form a multi-disciplinary pre-birth care plan.

We've also shared with other teams across the Trust in dedicated sessions also on Microsoft Teams, to give them the confidence in the technology to support their own group sessions.

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH COVID-19

CHECK THE STAFF ROOM REGULARLY

The COVID-19 Staff Room page is regularly updated with information including stay at home advice, guidance for management of possible cases, up-to-date posters, and HR information.

ASK A QUESTION

There is a form on the Staff Room home page for you to submit your COVID-19 questions. These will be answered regularly in update emails and in our Director video messages.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

Have you had suspected or confirmed COVID-19? Are you working differently to help us support the NHFT response? Email commsteam@nhft.nhs.uk to share, or use the #NHFTcommunity and #WeAreNHFT hashtags on Twitter.



nhft.nhs.uk



**MAKING A
DIFFERENCE
FOR YOU,
WITH YOU**