

Postnatal depression & anxiety: new ways of understanding & responding effectively to risks. A webcast for professionals working with new parents 19th October 2016

Parent Story #1, Petra, Chris and Amy

Petra is 34 years old and attends a GP appointment with her partner Chris and her 3 children, aged 4 years, 2 years and infant Amy, 3 months. All the couple's children were delivered by elective caesarean section.

Her partner Chris is a bank manager and he does most of the talking initially. He explains that Petra is exhausted, irritable and angry and spends a lot of time crying. He is generally supportive although he acknowledges that he does work long hours and "sometimes wonders what she does all day."



The baby is exclusively breast fed, will only settle for short periods during the day with feeding, and wakes 3-4 times per night. Prior to having children, Petra had worked as a senior accounts manager at a large accounting firm. The couple had moved interstate for Chris's work between baby number 2 and 3. Her family were all still in her home town 2 hours flight away.

In her teens, Petra had experienced occasional episodes of anxiety which had gone untreated and she had experienced postnatal depression after her second child for which she had antidepressants for six months.

Parent Story #2, Kate, Lee and Molly

Molly was born unexpectedly 5 weeks early weighing only 2.4kg. Kate was still working and was not very prepared for the upcoming parenting experience. She remained in the Special Care Nursery for 3 weeks to gain weight and to commence breastfeeding.



Molly is now 7 weeks old. Kate initially experienced some difficulties establishing breastfeeding and Molly required top-ups of expressed breast milk or formula.

Kate reports that Molly had started to have regular feeding and sleeping patterns, however, this changed a week ago when she began to want more regular feeding during the day and overnight. She now only sleeps for short periods during the day and night and is difficult to resettle.

Kate and Lee enjoy parenting. Lee takes an active parenting role when he can, however, he works long days and frequently travels interstate, often for a couple days at a time.

Lee's parents live in a neighbouring suburb. Kate's mother died five years ago and her dad and his new partner live a couple of hours drive away.

Kate is feeling exhausted and has low energy levels. Lee is a member of the local football team and trains several times a week. Kate is feeling lonely and finds herself crying sometimes for no apparent reason. She and Lee are arguing about little things and this makes her feel guilty as he is the sole income earner now and she feels she should be managing things better.