



Supporting a Parent with Perinatal OCD

A brief guide for healthcare professionals

For GPs, Midwives, Maternal & Child Health Nurses, Psychologists and other Health Professionals

Helpful Responses

- Stay calm and non-judgemental.
- Recognise intrusive thoughts as a potential OCD symptom.
- Assess whether thoughts are unwanted and distressing.
- Ask about compulsions (checking, avoidance, reassurance seeking).
- Refer to an OCD-trained psychologist.
- Consider ERP as first-line psychological treatment.

Avoid

- Repeated reassurance.
- Assuming intrusive thoughts indicate intent.
- Avoidance recommendations that reinforce OCD unless immediate safety concerns exist.

Suggested Assessment Questions

- *Are the thoughts wanted or unwanted?*
- *How distressed do they make you feel?*
- *What do you do to feel certain your baby is safe?*
- *Are you avoiding caring tasks because of the thoughts?*
- *Do you worry these thoughts mean something about you?*

Further Information

- OCD Online: www.ocdonline.com.au/perinatal-ocd
- International OCD Foundation: www.iocdf.org/perinatal-ocd
- Perinatal Depression & Anxiety Australia: www.panda.com.au
- Centre of Perinatal Excellence: www.cope.org.au
- Gidget Foundation Australia: www.gidgetfoundation.org.au

