

## New data reveals more than half of new parents don't know how to spot the signs of perinatal depression and anxiety

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- Encouragingly, one in three parents say they feel validated when they hear stories from other parents
- In response, Gidget Foundation Australia is launching an eight-episode podcast series in partnership with LiSTNR to raise awareness of perinatal depression and anxiety in line with World Maternal Mental Health Day (3 May)

**EMBARGO – 3rd May 2023** – In Australia, perinatal depression and anxiety impacts around 100,000 parents each year which equates to one in five mothers and one in ten fathers. Suicide is also one of the leading causes of death amongst expectant and new mothers. This is in addition to the estimated \$877 million annual cost of PNDA to the health system, economy and wellbeing of those impacted by the condition<sup>1</sup>.

New data from Gidget Foundation Australia (GFA) reveals one in five (20%) new parents think PNDA is an expected part of parenting while more than half (55%) don't know how to spot the signs. Additionally, one in three (38%) parents say they feel validated when they hear stories of lived experience from other parents that they can relate to.

This year, Gidget Foundation Australia joins an international campaign calling on the World Health Assembly and the UN World Health Organisation to officially recognise and commemorate World Maternal Mental Health Day on 3 May in their calendar permanently, to acknowledge the importance of maternal mental wellbeing and make services available to all parents in need.

**Gidget Foundation Australia CEO Arabella Gibson** says, "The theme for World Maternal Mental Health Day this year is 'Stronger Together' and this is something we wholeheartedly support. However, in order to do this, parents and their communities need to be better supported on spotting the signs of mental ill health in expectant and new parents. It's concerning to learn from our new data that over half of parents don't know how to identify if they – or someone they know – are experiencing perinatal depression or anxiety."

"By globally recognising World Maternal Mental Health Day as a permanent date, we are acknowledging that the mental wellbeing of all parents is a serious issue and something that deserves focus and action."

To raise awareness and reduce stigma around perinatal mental health issues, Gidget Foundation Australia has launched an eight-episode podcast series in partnership with LiSTNR. The podcast – called **1 in 5 mothers, 1 in 10 fathers**, hosted by 9 News Presenter, Davina Smith - is being released ahead of World Maternal Mental Health Day on 3 May 2023.

The podcast aims to raise awareness about perinatal depression and anxiety and share firsthand stories of parents with lived experience to illustrate the varied impacts of PNDA and to help others feel less alone.

**Ambassador for Gidget Foundation Australia and podcast host, Davina Smith** says, "Having personally suffered from perinatal depression, this project is one that is very close to my heart. To hear such raw and honest accounts firsthand from both mothers and fathers is a step in the right direction to reducing the stigma associated with PNDA. I'm honoured to work alongside GFA in this series to explore the realities of parenthood, break down misconceptions and give parents expert tools on how and when to seek support."

"To encourage more people to seek support and help them spot the signs of PNDA, we wanted to provide an accessible community to help parents feel validated, where they can hear stories from others going through the same thing," adds Ms Gibson.

The eight-episode podcast will be released weekly on Thursdays, with a second season to follow. Each episode will delve into a personal story of the one in five mothers and one in ten fathers living with PNDA in Australia and provide expert insights from one of the Gidget Foundation's various perinatal mental health clinical specialists.

Gidget Foundation Australia is hoping the podcast will change the way people see PNDA and is encouraging expectant and new parents to 'start talking' to lessen feelings of isolation and feel supported. To learn more or to listen to the podcast, head to the [LiSTNR](#) website or [Gidget Foundation Australia](#).

### **About Gidget Foundation Australia**

Gidget is the nickname of a vibrant young mother from Sydney's Northern Beaches who took her own life while suffering from unrecognised postnatal depression. She hid her suffering even from her loving family and friends. They created the Gidget Foundation, determined that what happened to Gidget would not happen to others.

Today, Gidget Foundation Australia is a leading not-for-profit organisation that assists thousands of expectant parents and their families each year, providing free psychological services [to parents in need](#) through its [Gidget House](#) face-to-face services (at an expanding number of locations), [Start Talking](#) telehealth program and Emotional Wellbeing antenatal screening programs conducted through participating hospitals.

Gidget Foundation Australia will be expanding following Commonwealth Government funding in the October 2022 budget with \$15.85 million commitment allocated to support the establishment and operation of 12 new centres expanding on the existing 22 Gidget Houses currently operating across the country.

Gidget House face to face services are located across Australia in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

### **References**

1. <https://www.gidgetfoundation.org.au/health-professionals/the-cost-of-pnda>

\*The data by Gidget Foundation Australia was carried out in April 2023 on a national representative sample of 508 expectant parents and parents with children under 5 years of age. Methodology: The data sample was weighted against ABS data for age, gender and location using an online survey that is independently conducted and verified by PureProfile.