



Who Holds Our Mothers?

The truth about maternal suicide and perinatal depression.



This short film has been created to highlight the inconvenient truth about maternal suicide and perinatal depression in New Zealand.

Mothers Matter is demanding policy change that provides appropriate perinatal support. Our mothers, their babies, whānau and future generations are depending on it.

Raise the **Red Flag**.
Make the Government listen.



Help us stop maternal suicide and perinatal depression.



MOTHERS
MATTER

Mothers Matter is a collaboration of individuals, health professionals and parents who are united in a common goal to have a nationwide discussion about the importance of excellent perinatal care.

CHLOE WRIGHT, ONZM

Founder

Chloe Wright is the founder and architect of Mothers Matter, which seeks to achieve for women what is rightfully theirs: excellent perinatal care, at least 48 hours of postnatal care and the ongoing support they need to thrive after giving birth.

Chloe is also CEO and Co-founder of the Wright Family Foundation. The Foundation assists organisations across the country to enable people to reach their full potential through education and health initiatives.

“The 48 hours after birth are a precious window of opportunity for mothers, their babies and whānau. It is a time of critical bonding and can determine future wellbeing. It is with energy that we need to unite to solve the escalating crisis relating to maternity and postnatal care for mothers and babies across the country.

We must put the mother back at the centre of care. Our current maternal suicide rate is seven times that of the UK per capita and Māori women are overrepresented. If we look after mothers, their babies and families also thrive, paying dividends for future generations.”

DAME LESLEY MAX

Co-Founder Great Potentials Foundation

“To develop great children who can reach their full potential we need to have confident parents. The first 48 hours following the delivery of a baby can be particularly hard, when it should be the most exciting time as the journey into parenthood begins. The specialist care, support and parenting tools that are provided in supportive environments during this postnatal period encourage mothers and fathers to become parents who can confidently nurture their baby.”

NATHAN WALLIS

Neuroscience Educator

“The first 48 hours of a child’s life are of supreme importance – this is the time that we as parents set the foundations for their emotional wellbeing. The love we give, the interaction we have, the unique attachment we form and the stability we provide our children in the postnatal period play a critical role in defining later outcomes for our children and for our future.”

DR ANIL SHARMA

Specialist Obstetrician and Gynaecologist

“Regardless of the type of birth, all women have the right to receive the clinically and psychologically appropriate amount of time in postnatal care at the primary maternity facility of their choice.

The postnatal period, especially the first 48 hours, is critical to the health and wellbeing of not only the mother, but also her baby and family.

Monitoring the health of a new mum and her baby and responding to any changes, needs or complications that may arise, is also vitally important.

All New Zealand women are entitled to 48 hours of funded in-patient care.”

TRACY O’SULLIVAN

Founder iMoko

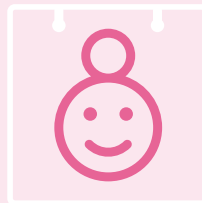
“Our children are our future, and parents as first teachers are critical in ensuring our children are given the best start in life. The first 48 hours after the birth of the baby, the postnatal period, is a time to inspire, support and offer manaaki whānau to the tamariki and mātua who need it most. Those 48 hours are precious and we need to make sure parents understand why they are so valuable and what level of care they are entitled to, regardless of where they live in New Zealand.”

We believe successive governments have failed to support at-risk mothers.

We rank 35th

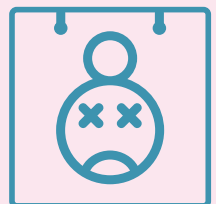
Of the 41 developed countries surveyed in the latest Innocenti Report Card, New Zealand ranks 35th overall for our child wellbeing outcomes.* Source: UNICEF. *Statistic not directly linked to postnatal depression.

Every five weeks



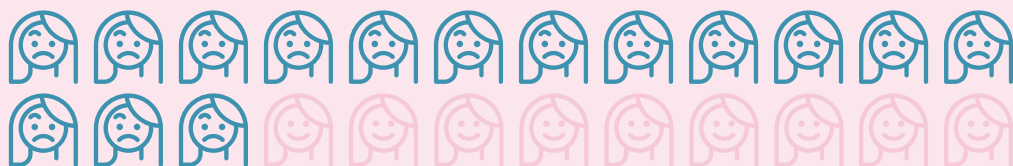
On average a child dies every five weeks as a result of violence in New Zealand.*

Source: UNICEF



*Statistic not directly linked to postnatal depression. Children under 12 months old make up the majority.

Help is available at Lifeline Aotearoa 0800 543 354



NZ

1 in 7

Postnatal depression affects up to 15 percent of mothers after they have given birth, with lack of support recorded as a factor. Source: depression.org.nz



Five times higher

Maternal suicide in New Zealand is five times higher per capita than that of the UK, with Māori women overrepresented.

Source: PMMRC Thirteenth Annual Report 2019



MOTHERS
MATTER

What we are calling for:

Equitable perinatal care across New Zealand via a targeted ring-fenced fund that is determined by the mother's choice about the care she needs and receives. This should include the necessary wraparound services to meet her medical and wellbeing needs.

The background

Perinatal care funding should follow the mother's needs and choice of care.

This means funding obstetrician-gynaecological health checks, pre-birth and post-birth, with wraparound services to meet her needs and those of her whānau. High obstetric risk women should be directed to appropriate facilities.

If we're serious about making intergenerational change in maternity care in our country, we must start at the beginning and look after our mothers. The scientific research into the first 1000 days of a child's life and its impact on the rest of their life is irrefutable.

This means we must restore equitable maternity and postnatal care to all women, but particularly those at-risk, where Māori are overrepresented. Poor maternal mental health doesn't discriminate – it crosses socio-economic, cultural and ethnic boundaries.

Equitable maternity and postnatal care will lead to parents having a better capability to raise secure, resilient, and adaptable children.

This must be achieved by Government legislation that establishes a ring-fenced fund which gives a mother choice about where she receives her care. This should include the necessary wraparound services to meet her medical and wellbeing needs.

Equity of maternity and postnatal care across New

Zealand is critical to curbing the country's stark and shameful statistics: a maternal suicide rate that is five times higher per capita than the UK (PMMRC Annual Report 2019), and one of the worst postnatal depression, family abuse and child homicide records in the world.

Mothers already have a legal right to at least 48 hours of postnatal care but are often not receiving it because of overloaded maternity units. They are often leaving hospital exhausted, without having recovered or receiving the necessary support for their health needs. Science shows it's the most vulnerable time for mother and baby.

This time known as the 'window of opportunity' after birth allows bonds to form between mothers, babies and whānau that is critical to their lifelong health – mental and physical.

Supporting mothers today is foundational to our nation's social and economic success and will pay dividends in the future of our society.

Well mother – well child – healthy nation.

Here are some of the comments and feedback we have received on the @mothersmatternz Facebook.

Solvej Poulsen

Respite for mother with PND would be amazing. Some child care funding. Not everyone has someone to help in the home.

Ivy Chester

Mums need to take any help offered in first few days after birth, your body needs to recover from the stress it's been through giving birth. Mums look after yourself so that you are able to look after your baby.

Joanne Rama

6 week check for mum and baby should still happen. Mums are entitled to 7 post natal visits and more if needed. But sadly some don't know this and our most vulnerable only get 3 to 4.

Halona Dayton

Most definitely we need more birthing centres!!!! It all boils to M-O-N-E-Y! Mothers need that REST period, I feel that too many mothers are literally pushed out the door far too early!!!! And yes they need that XTRA, time for bonding and acquiring confidence,

Amber Jones

It would be good if partners could stay too you would think that would be a given seeing as its both your child

Jo Rosacker

Were there mums though that felt they couldn't admit they had feelings of post natal depression because it's very hard to admit you feel depressed ,and being a mum with babies,there are expectations making it hard to divulge one has these difficulties

Erica Petrie

We desperately need a birthing centre like Nga Hau in Taranaki. Our maternity ward is not welcoming and always understaffed. Most people go home pretty quickly after giving birth

Halie Mclean

The day I had my baby he vomited green. The nurses and midwives just said "oh,that's not normal " sent home the same day.. 8 days later after many doctors visits found out he had malrotation surgery fixed it and 3 weeks in hospital. If they were actually clued up,it would have been solved sooner. I feel angry and let down,even now...1 year on

Elaine Bloomfield

This should be a right to have better birthing centers. They also need to be able to stay longer after birth. Especially first time mums.

Sue Edlin

With my first baby he had difficulty latching on to breast feed.They wanted to discharge me but I put my foot down and insisted I wasn't ready, they let me stay an extra day, not sure what would have happened if I hadn't insisted.. they are still discharging first time mothers too early I believe.

Kerry Schlaepfer

I had depression that wasn't picked up, while coping with my baby in NICU and other big things

going on, lack of support at home... I'm amazed I made it through that time.

Recovering from C-section I was allergic to the laundry powder in the sheets and got terrible itchy and painful dermatitis on my bum.

I can hardly remember the first 24 hours.. I think I saw my baby girl twice

Shannon Creighton

I had a 4dt. Before I had bub I was a competitive salsa dancer. Did last competition at 28 weeks, taught last class 4 days before I gave birth. After I had bub it was 8 weeks before anyone followed up about whether I needed physio etc. When they called they asked me a couple of questions (literally do you have faecal incontinence more than once a day, and do you have urinary incontinence more than once a day). Because I replied no they wanted me to agree to be discharged. I fought and said no way as I knew I had a long fight ahead to get back to even close to where I was. They didn't even want to give me an appointment initially. So glad I did. The physio confirmed I was in bad shape. I did 8 months of therapy, even then I've had some problems, but I wouldn't be back dancing again if it weren't for fighting

Charlotte Veacock

I felt so down after my son i went from being very social and a lot of friends to practically nothing . . Just wasn't sure how to be as was only one with a baby and felt excluded and left out so stopped trying as thought something was wrong with me

Joy Stoodley

I didn't like the lady next room over had her partner stay night we had a share bathroom I was scared he was going come in. Got no sleep. That was in pn hospital.

Laura Moller

I had to beg for my husband to be able to stay with

Trish Martin

I'm horrified at the stories I hear from new mums. Being sent home at 3am, a mum driving herself to birthcare and horror stories of treatment of mums feeling like they are being told off. It's not just the lack of help but the lack of empathy for a lot of our new mums that saddens me.

me after the birth for the 3 days. I birthed shortly after 1am and they classed that as the first night after so he was asked to go home at 7pm later that day. I had to beg and beg the nurses for him to be able to stay even though I had a single room. He ended up being able to stay because I explained that due to medication I'd need a nurse to be with me the entire night and they weren't so keen on that

Amber Kate Hollis

Unfortunately a lot of the nurses we encountered were very negative with my partner, it was so weird. Partners need to be supported more.

Faye Goggin

There has to be more postnatal staffing levels to accommodate the needs outlined... Where I work women are piled up in Delivery Suite because there are no post natal beds... Of course the birthing women take precedence!

Yvonne Walsh

Mothers need to include the children's father in the needs of the moment, so they feel part of parenthood. And it takes some of the pressure off the mother. Fathers can often calm a baby when the mother is stressed.

I have a 4 weeks old son, I had a c section and I lost 1 Lt of blood during operation and my blood pressure dropped dramatically. Despite all the complications above, auckland hospital released me after 1 night from the hospital due to not having enough staff and being crowded. I wasn't ready to be released, they didn't do the right thing. I didn't feel supported at all.

Jeanette Cardwell

We were allowed to stay in hospital for 14 days when 3 of mine were born, and late 1980s I think it had been reduced to 7-10 days. I know I stayed in for 5 days as knew what it would be like when I

go home. Now the Mothers are in for a few hrs and then home. They have no skills and wonder why there are troubled babies.

Wendy Harrison

Considering most women do this only 2 or 3 times in their whole lives (that's just my own guess), the medical profession might see birthing as run of the mill, but to the Mums it is HUGE!! Definitely need longer than one night (if you're lucky) in hospital and certainly you need that 6 week check up! I had severe post natal depression which was picked up at that 6wk check years ago (2nd child, now 34yrs old) - if I hadn't had that 6wk check who knows what my outcome would've been!

Maggie Kennedy

This country was once a great place in which to raise children, but not any more! The standard of maternity care and post-maternity care in NZ has dropped like a stone over the past 25-30 years. The current general attitude towards the raising of children in NZ is abysmal, in spite of hollow claims to the contrary.

Joy Allison

As a mother who suffered severe post natal depression leading to suicide attempts, I know now that help is available but I felt too ashamed to admit that I was struggling. Mothers have to ask for help and be open about their struggle. Unless they do, nothing will change.

Shanna Grace

There are hundreds if not thousands of women who ask health professionals for mental health assistance and are turned away

Lynne Lang

Mine were born in 1977 and 1980. In hospital for about 12 days, because of mastitis, the first time and 7 days the second one. Plunket nurse from the day after getting home and she came every week

for 6 weeks and then visits each month for 12 mths and twice yearly until they were 5. My first had Pyloric Stenosis and required an op at 3 weeks. Our wonderful, wise Plunket nurse visited everyday for 10 days after we got home from the op and she'd pop in whenever she could up until he was 6 wks old plus the regular weekly visit to weigh him. My mum lived miles away, I lived in a holiday area with no transport and Mary Smith was a fantastic support to me.

Myra Jackson Stone

My children were born in the 70s, they kept you in for 10 days, making sure you could care for baby and you got your health back, we also had Plunket that came to your house for 6 weeks to see you were managing. Now your out in an hour or so. Some young woman have no one to help them and they don't even know how to look after a baby.

Margaret Aitken

My children were born in the 60s
Looking back we had superb care.

My grand children and great grand children were not born with their mothers receiving much care at all.

Isabelle Isaako

And mine, born in the 70's only made it because we all were kept in the maternity ward for 10 to 14 days; during which time the babies recieved the full assessment and observation that saved their lives.

Heather L Soppet

I agree, these young mother's go home and flounder, its really not fair. They need all the help they can get in those first few days. Bring back the 6 week post natal check, where some of the problems can be picked up.

Georgina Adams

When I had my children I was able to stay in hospital for 10 days afterwards. That was a beautiful luxury for if you were having trouble feeding your child there was always help available immediately.

Patricia Essidon

Then they say on Facebook how much they care it's just a scene

Brendon Smith

According to the research, Dads are the first line of defense preventing mums from PND, so we should inform, encourage and if needed, engage dads as they are they part of the whanau, ...

Brendon Smith

Maternal Mental Health Services in Far North make it a point to meet with whole family which definitely works better

Karyn Williams

I've been saying this for years with the advent of computers a national data bank which could link all organisations associated with the at risk whanau tracing their movements from birth to adults

Brenda Te Koeti

We used to have world class maternity care. Once Plunket nurses and Drs were out of the picture, it seemed to dive. Plunket isnt anywhere near as good as they once were, with home visits weekly for 3 mths.

Tina Cross

Support wasn't free when I reached out for it



Raise the **Red Flag**.
Make the Government listen.

Help us stop maternal suicide
and perinatal depression.



mothersmatter.nz

Help is available at Lifeline Aotearoa 0800 543 354



mothersmatter.nz