

# Every year, over 60,000 Australian women experience postnatal depression (PND), with suicide being a leading cause of maternal death.



Every day, many mothers face the challenges of motherhood, including isolation, loneliness, and guilt. Shockingly, one in five experiences Postnatal Depression (PND) within the first two years following birth.

Unfortunately, too many mothers struggle in silence, finding themselves trapped in a web of shame and anxiety. For some, obtaining the help they so desperately need can be challenging due to reasons such as limited time, extended waiting periods, fear of judgment from healthcare professionals, or the worry that disclosing their true feelings may lead to their children being taken away.

This is a concerning issue, and we must explore alternative ways to support these mothers. Research shows that leaving PND untreated can have devastating consequences, affecting not only the mothers but also their children and families.

## Baby Blues

that lasts for **more than 2 weeks is NOT** baby blues and you need to pay attention

Suicide is a

## Leading Cause

of **maternal death** in the perinatal period

## 60,000+

women giving birth every year in Australia **experience PND** within the first two years after birth

## 21%

of **maternal suicide** due to severe depression

How can we help?

## Research confirms that **peer support** can help prevent and treat PND.

Peer support is an alternative approach for helping mothers during the postpartum period. Evidence indicates that mothers with lived experience and adequate training can offer emotional and psychological support to other mothers, assisting in the prevention and treatment of PND. A peer support program or group facilitates problem-solving by connecting individuals with shared experiences. Additionally, it fosters the development of social skills and self-confidence, creating a sense of safety and comfort for women. Perceived as non-judgemental, Peer Support offers a range of benefits to mothers as described below:



### Emotional Wellbeing & Resilience

Peer support provides emotional validation, reduces isolation, and fosters a sense of belonging, leading to improved mental health for mothers. It helps them cope with the challenges of motherhood and reduces stress and anxiety.



### Community & Social Connections

Peer support groups create a supportive community where mothers can form lasting friendships, share experiences, and build a strong network of like-minded women. This sense of community enhances their overall wellbeing and parenting journey.



### Empowerment & Confidence

Mothers benefit from practical advice, parenting tips, and collective wisdom, increasing their parenting knowledge and self-confidence. They learn effective strategies for parenting, problem-solving, and decision-making.

### References

PANDA, 2023 | *The Conversation*, 2019 | *Centre of Perinatal Excellence*, 2023 | *Postpartum Support International*, 2023 | *Motherhood Center of New York City*, 2023 | *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare*, 2023

# Villagehood Australia: a registered charity offering peer and professional support for the wellbeing of mothers and children during the early years.



Villagehood Australia was founded in 2020 with a mission to provide essential support to mothers with young children. Our founder, Dinah Thomasset, drew inspiration from her personal journey through motherhood, recognising the need for comprehensive support systems for mothers in Australia.

Our charity primarily operates in Adelaide, focusing on peer support to enhance the physical, emotional, and social wellbeing of mothers with young children. We provide a safe and nurturing environment where meaningful connections are formed, helping mothers build a strong support network.

Our programs are grounded in evidence and cater to mothers throughout their motherhood journey, spanning from birth to the child's fifth year. Through our programs, we equip mothers with essential parenting skills and knowledge, boosting their confidence in raising their children. We also focus on helping mothers understand their children's emotional needs and nurturing a secure and loving relationship with them. Finally, through music and shared experiences, we assist mothers in discovering joy with their children to nurture their bond.

## Programs & Testimonials

Our programs are designed to enhance the wellbeing of mothers and positively influence early childhood development.



You can learn more about these programs on our website under 'mums programs' using the QR code below.

*"I can't express enough how much the Singing Hearts program has meant to me. The music, the activities, and the community have all been incredible, but what I value most is the way it has helped me to better connect with my son and support his growth and development."*

*"I enjoyed my time chatting with other mums and learning some very useful tips from experts. I now feel much more confident and less anxious about everything."*

## Support Available

If you are feeling triggered or are worried about someone, you may get in touch with your GP, obstetrician, midwife, child health nurse or use the following contacts:

**Panda National Helpline**  
(Mon-Fri, 9AM - 7:30PM)

1300 726 306

**Lifeline** (available 24/7)  
13 11 14

**Pregnancy Birth and Baby**  
(7AM - Midnight)

1800 882 436

**Beyond Blue** (available 24/7)  
1300 22 4636

**Suicide Call Back Service**  
(available 24/7)

1300 659 467

**1800Respect** (available 24/7)  
1800 737 732



**Supporting  
your health  
& wellbeing**

*Villagehood Australia acknowledges the Kurna people past, present, and future, the culture and that they are the traditional custodians of the land we live and work on. We also acknowledge all First Nations people across Australia.*