



Community education session

Terms and conditions

About the program

PANDA is funded in Victoria to provide perinatal anxiety and depression education sessions to expecting and new parents and other community members.

These sessions aim to raise awareness of emotional wellbeing and mental health during pregnancy and in the first year of life, reduce stigma associated with perinatal anxiety and depression and encourage early help-seeking.

Sessions are delivered by PANDA staff or peer educators – volunteers trained and supported to share their own story of perinatal anxiety, depression and recovery to benefit others.

A standard session is 60 minutes, and usually includes a personal story, information-sharing and a learning activity to get participants talking. Sessions can be tailored to the needs of your group.

Requesting a session

Health professionals or volunteers working with expecting or new parents can request a session for their group, class or event. No equipment is required, however a large whiteboard is helpful.

To request a session complete the [online form](#) or contact our *Community Education and Training Coordinator* Sarah Marlowe on (03) 9926 9032. Requests need to be received at least four weeks in advance. Most sessions are delivered in working hours; contact us to discuss other requests.

Our ability to deliver a requested session is determined by volunteer availability. Most sessions are delivered in metropolitan Melbourne, although we are building our capacity to deliver in regional and rural areas. Please get in touch to discuss the availability or recruitment of PANDA education volunteers in your community.

Receipt of your request will be acknowledged; your session is then booked once availability of the presenter is confirmed.

The Community Education and Training Coordinator will contact you again one week prior to the session, to discuss more specific needs of the group.

Your participation during the session

Sessions aim to encourage participants to seek support, if needed, from the health professional present and/or their GP, MCH Nurse, or from the *PANDA National Anxiety & Depression Helpline*.

A condition of PANDA's community education sessions is that the hosting health professional or volunteer must be present throughout the session. As host, you are invited to participate and add information, including about local support options.

PANDA sessions offer hosts an opportunity to hear how group members are dealing with the challenges of impending/new parenthood. Often participants disclose difficulties during sessions – sometimes for the first time. This can lead to that person accessing additional support, and to greater openness, supportiveness and help-seeking in the group.

Distress and disclosures of risk

All health professional hosts are responsible for following up on any distress or risk disclosures made during or following the session.

PANDA protocols for disclosures of distress or risk include an immediate supportive response in the group, follow up with the person disclosing and the host, and contacting senior PANDA staff. PANDA provides all session participants with printed information on support services including contacts for *PANDA National Helpline*, Lifeline, 1800 Respect and emergency services.

Presence of older children

Sessions are primarily delivered to new parents. Some sessions are delivered in playgroups or other settings where older children might be present.

PANDA's policy is that children over 12 months should not be present in the session, due to the risk of exposure to some session content. Hosts usually arrange care of older children by another worker or volunteer in a separate space. We understand that children might come and go from the space where a session is being delivered. Our presenter might suggest a short break or negotiate with you as host about how the session will run, so parents can meet their children's needs.