

Pregnancy after a difficult birth

Maternity and Neonatal
Psychological Interventions
Service (MNPI)



Coping in pregnancy when you've had a difficult birth

When you become pregnant you will have hopes and ideas about your pregnancy, birth and what meeting your baby will be like. If you have had a previous birthing experience which was difficult or didn't go the way you had expected, then becoming pregnant again, can sometimes bring up distressing thoughts and feelings.

You might find yourself worrying about how this pregnancy and birth will go or find it upsetting to be back in a maternity setting. These feelings are understandable and often settle as your pregnancy progresses.

It is important that you discuss any worries or fears you may have with your maternity team.

Some things you might experience in pregnancy after a difficult birth

- Replaying your previous birth in your mind, e.g. unwanted images or flashbacks, nightmares
- Avoiding things to do with the pregnancy e.g. talking about it, thinking about it or not wanting to go to appointments
- Feeling sad, irritable, worried or numb
- Struggling to bond with your bump
- Feeling tense and on edge
- Poor sleep
- Negative thoughts about yourself, your previous birth or the birth of this baby
- Worrying a lot about bad things happening to yourself or your loved ones

What can help?

- Speak to your partner, friends, family or someone you trust about it and how you feel
- Find out as much as you can about what happened during your previous birth by speaking with your maternity team
- Take time to look after yourself when you can and make use of supports available
- Remember that although your previous birth was difficult, it does not mean that the same thing will happen again
- Your maternity team are there to support you during this pregnancy and will work with you to plan and prepare for your baby's birth
- Be kind to yourself. Being pregnant is a life changing event. It takes time to get used to, even if everything is going well

Who can help?

You can talk to your Maternity Team, GP or Health Visitor. They can help support you and may also refer you to other services for further help.

When to seek further help

- If thoughts and feelings about your pregnancy or birth are causing distress or having a big impact on your life, e.g. stopping you attending maternity appointments
- If you are worried it is impacting on your bond with your baby or babies
- If these symptoms get worse even with support from your friends, family, maternity team and Health Visitor or GP

Your Maternity Team, GP or Health Visitor may refer you to the MNPI Service or another helpful service.

Helpful resources

You may find it helpful to visit these websites. They have lots of information and tips for how to support your wellbeing.

Wellbeing Services

 www.wellbeing-glasgow.org.uk
(self-help section)

Inspiring Scotland

 <https://inspiringscotland.org.uk/perinatal-mental-health-services/>