

Title: Perinatal mental health - Lived experience informed access and support

Oral presentation: 2024 TheMHS Conference

Authors: Rowena Jonas (Wellways Australia), Daisy Gleeson, Athena Field (Wellways Australia), Anita Conlon.

Background: Studies into women's experiences of specialist perinatal mental health services suggest more research is needed to address barriers and challenges to appropriate support. Women with lived experience of using perinatal mental health services are a rich knowledge base fundamental to meet the desire of clinical practice to improve services.

Methods: This is a reflective piece with the five authors to document their experiences of using perinatal mental health services from 2010 to now. We used a semi-structured interviews plus co-reflection to track and explore the challenges, opportunities and learnings from our journey. The findings were themed and analysed by the team.

Results: Initial findings suggest disparity exists between women's perinatal experiences and current clinical best practice. We identified the top enablers for quality specialist perinatal support as "privilege" and access to physical and emotional healthcare.

Conclusion: All mothers should be able to access quality perinatal support that is informed by lived experience.

Learning Objective: Delegates will gain an understanding of how women's lived experience of perinatal supports can inform and improve service access and support.