

# PIRI

PARENT-INFANT  
RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE &  
INFANT CLINIC



## NEW PIRI RESEARCH

Following a highly encouraging pilot study using our **Beating the Blues Before Birth (BBB)** antenatal depression treatment program, PIRI has been funded by the **NHMRC** for a more substantial study over the next 5 years.

Outcomes of the pilot showed substantial benefits to women with a reduction in maternal depression and anxiety, improvements maintained at 9 months post birth and world first, positive effects on early child developmental outcomes.

PIRI is currently **recruiting 230 depressed pregnant women** who will be randomised to the free BBB CBT treatment or encouraged to go back to their GP who will be provided with a full mental health assessment for the treatment as usual condition. Women will be followed up until their baby is 24 months old.

**Beating the Blues Before Birth** is an evidence based CBT program targeting both behavioural and cognitive strategies shown to improve depression and anxiety. It includes 8 face to face sessions for the woman and 1 couple session. For a brochure or for women to register their interest go to <http://www.piri.org.au/current-treatment-trials-now-open-for-recruitment/>

We are also **recruiting psychologists** who would like to be part of our network to deliver this treatment from their own rooms. If you would like more information please contact [yafit.hirshler@austin.org.au](mailto:yafit.hirshler@austin.org.au) or [charlene.holt@austin.org.au](mailto:charlene.holt@austin.org.au) or telephone (03) 9496 4496.

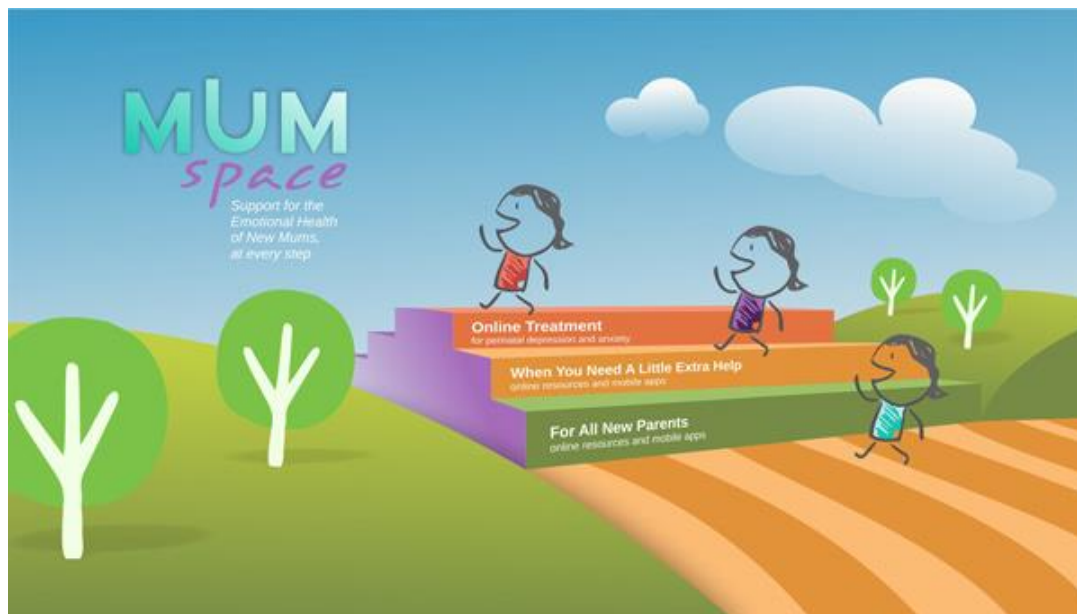
Reference: Milgrom et al., 2015 A&NZ Journal Psychiatry 49(3): 236-245



The Parent-Infant Research Institute (PIRI) is a vigorous & innovative Australian research institute focusing on understanding, developing and applying treatments to improve parent and infant well-being. PIRI believes that early intervention is the key to better outcomes for families.

While PIRI has a strong research focus, it also has a clinical trial support centre (Infant Clinic) and works closely with Austin's Perinatal Mental Health Service (PMHS). The Infant Clinic and PMHS provide clinical services to assist with the difficulties experienced by parents & infants in the first years of life.

T: 9496 4496 F: 9496 4148 [www.piri.org.au](http://www.piri.org.au)



Led by the Parent-Infant Research Institute (PIRI), a national translational effort by the Perinatal Depression e-Consortium (PDeC) has sought to deliver online supports, a preventive smartphone app and evidence-based online treatments for women at risk of, or suffering from, perinatal depression and anxiety.

## Support for the emotional health of new mums at every step

[www.mumspace.com.au](http://www.mumspace.com.au)

A website that brings together trusted online **programs** and resources for the prevention and treatment of perinatal depression and anxiety, funded by the Department of Health.

**MumSpace connects mums quickly with the level of support they need. It enables women to decide which supports they want and need to access and to step up or down a level as their needs change.**

**Download free MumSpace** on both Android and Apple.

The MumSpace website is a useful recommendation for all new mothers. It is suitable for mums-to-be, new mums and their partners. It can be used as a resource by healthcare professionals to refer their clients to as an adjunct to their treatment.



The MumSpace postcards are now available for health professionals to order online (up to 100 at any time) so you can display and hand them out to all new parents. Order from:

<https://jeanhailes.org.au/health-professionals/resources-order>

<https://jeanhailes.org.au/workplaces/resources-order>

### What is MumMoodBooster?

MumSpace provides access to MumMoodBooster, a new proven effective online cognitive-behavioural therapy treatment program.

Available 24/7 and suitable for pregnant and new mums, it is the only e-treatment program of its kind in Australia.

Research studies have shown that women who participate show rapid reductions in symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress.

The program includes six online treatment sessions complemented by SMS support and can be accessed from home or mobile. Coaching available for mothers with EPDS>15.

### MindMum App – New version just released!

This new mobile app provides helpful problem-solving exercises, motivational tips and stress management tools to support mums in the perinatal period. MindMum offers a convenient and easy tool to help new mums access strategies to feel better and ideas about what to do for themselves and their baby as well as monitor and improve their own mood. Free download in Android and Apple.



### Helpful Resources

MumSpace also provides access to a range of evidence-based mental health support tools, apps, helplines and resources. These currently include **What Were We Thinking!** and **Baby Steps**, two prominent preventative psychoeducational supports, and links to other Australian perinatal mental health resources.

# PIRI Training calendar

## Travelling the Yellow Brick Road (\$330)

30<sup>th</sup> January, 6<sup>th</sup> February and 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2019

9.30-4:30 pm

By Carmel Ferretti (Clinical Psychologist)

1 day workshop for professionals helping parents with their children making the transition to kinder or school

Download the registration form for 30<sup>th</sup> January or 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019 from the PIRI website

Download the registration form for 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019 from the PIRI website:

<http://www.piri.org.au/health-professional-information/training/>

## Facilitating Creative Play for Stressed Mothers and Infants (\$165)

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2019

9.30-1.30 pm

By Elizabeth Loughlin  
(Dance Therapist and Social Worker)

4 hour workshop is for professionals who work with mothers who have experienced mental health or social stress and who have less energy to play with their baby. The creative play approach is experienced and suggestions on how to organize a play space, choose music and support play are included.

Download the registration form from the PIRI website: <http://www.piri.org.au/health-professional-information/training/>

## Getting Ahead of Postnatal Depression (GAPND) (\$660)

Wednesday & Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2019

9.15–4.30 pm

By Ms Rachel Watts and Ms Jennifer Ericksen

2 day workshop for professionals wanting to learn how to use cognitive behavioural therapy with women and their partners experiencing postnatal depression and anxiety. The program can be used in group therapy or individually. Includes working with the mother and baby relationship and partners.

Download the registration form from the PIRI website: <http://www.piri.org.au/health-professional-information/training/>

## Using music in mother baby groups (\$165)

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2019

9.30-1.30 pm

By Elizabeth Loughlin  
(Dance Therapist and Social Worker)

4 hour workshop is for professionals who work with mother baby groups helping with connections.

The registration form will soon be available.

<http://www.piri.org.au/health-professional-information/training/>



**For more information or to discuss training tailored specifically to your needs/work force contact:**

**PIRI website:** <http://www.piri.org.au>

**Phone**

Jennie Ericksen (03) 9496 4496 (Wed and Thur)

**Email:** [piri@austin.org.au](mailto:piri@austin.org.au) or

[Jennifer.ericksen@Austin.org.au](mailto:Jennifer.ericksen@Austin.org.au)

# NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...

## New Publication!

### A THERAPEUTIC PLAYGROUP FOR DEPRESSED MOTHERS AND THEIR INFANTS: FEASIBILITY STUDY AND PILOT RANDOMIZED TRIAL OF COMMUNITY HUGS

Ericksen, J. et al  
**Infant Mental Health Journal**,  
Vol. 39(4), 1–12 (2018)

Feasibility (n=74) and pilot RCT (n=31) studies of a 10 session therapeutic playgroup (CHUGS) for mothers experiencing postnatal mental health difficulties and their babies under 12 months, showed that our CHUGS program was well-received by mums and produced **significant benefits for mothers' mental health** (depression, anxiety and stress) and the **mother-infant relationship**.

## New Group!

Our current group is just winding up for this year and we expect to run another next year. CHUGS has also been successfully run this year by the EMCHN at the City of Whittlesea.

**Next group at PIRI** starting on the **20<sup>th</sup> March 2019**. If you have any referrals please send them through the Perinatal Mental Health Clinic. A referral can be made on the PIRI website.

This treatment program is funded through the Department of Social Services Families and Children Program.

## Welcome new PIRI staff

### Andre Rodrigues

Andre is nearing completion of a PhD with Monash University in Health Behaviour Change. He has worked at the Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute and Monash IVF Group and is interested in chronic disease prevention, health behaviour change and maternal-fetal health. Andre joined the PIRI team in November working across various projects.

### Yafit Hirshler

Dr Yafit Hirshler graduated with a Bachelor of Life Sciences at Bar-Ilan University, Israel in 2002. She completed her Doctor of Neuroscience degree at Bar-Ilan University, Israel in April 2010. Dr Hirshler joined the PIRI team in October 2018 and is responsible for coordinating the Beating the Blues Before Birth study.

### Sarah Maher

Sarah has BSc (Behavioural Science), Grad Dip (Clinical Research) 10 years' experience working in research at St Vincent's Hospital, Department of Anaesthesia, where she coordinated projects investigating post-operative delirium and cognitive changes in elderly patients. She has 2 young children of her own.



## The International Marce Congress 2018

26-28<sup>th</sup> September  
Bangalore, India

500 delegates from 31 countries participated in the 3 day congress which offered an opportunity to share the emerging knowledge in the field of perinatal mental health with colleagues from around the world and to network and form collaborations for future projects.

Prof. Jeannette Milgrom, PIRI's Executive Director, chaired several sessions and presented 3 papers on PIRI's work

- Internet CBT for postnatal depression: Translation from Research to practice
- Mumspace: Increasing reach via online perinatal mental health tools
- Maternal antenatal mood and child development: an exploratory study of treatment effects on child outcomes up to 5 years

The next International Marce Congress will be at the University of Iowa USA  
October 5<sup>th</sup> 2020  
[www.marcesociety.com](http://www.marcesociety.com)

**The Australasian Chapter of the Marcé Society for Perinatal Mental Health will hold its biennial conference in Perth, Western Australia 10-12 October 2019.**  
[www.marcesociety.com.au](http://www.marcesociety.com.au)

## PIRI & Infant Clinic Team

Prof Jeannette Milgrom  
Executive Director

Ms Barbara Frazer  
Personal Assistant

Ms Christina Brennan  
Admin Assistant

Ms Fiona Brent  
Accountant

Dr Alan Gemmill  
Dep. Director Research

Dr Charlene Holt  
Research Fellow  
Psychologist

Dr Carmel Ferretti  
Research Psychologist

Dr Helen Skouteris  
Researcher (Honorary)

Dr Andre Rodrigues  
Research Officer

Dr Yafit Hirshler  
Research Officer

Sarah Maher  
Research Assistant

Ms Jennifer Ericksen  
Program Manager,  
Psychologist

Dr Holly Andrewes  
Psychologist

Ms Elizabeth Loughlin  
Dance Therapist