



Supporting Families, Advancing Research

Investing in the earliest years to build a brighter future



ResearchFest 2026

ResearchFest 2026 brought together researchers, clinicians, consumer partners, and staff from across Austin Health to share ideas, foster collaboration, and explore emerging areas for innovation centred on the theme The Future of Research.

PIRI's poster "Online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Paternal Postnatal Depression: DadBooster Development and Evaluation", was awarded the Allied Health Poster Prize! The poster looked at our recent DadBooster randomised controlled trial. DadBooster is the first online treatment program designed specifically for fathers with postnatal depression.

Participants receiving DadBooster showed significantly greater improvements in depression, stress, parenting self-efficacy, and negative automatic thoughts compared with a waitlist control group. Depression symptoms reduced by 72% and average scores dropped to the normal range, while program engagement and retention were high. These findings provide strong evidence for DadBooster's effectiveness and highlight the demand for accessible digital mental health support. The program is now nationally available through [DadSpace](#).

[Download the DadBooster research poster](#)



Why specialised perinatal mental health support matters

Perinatal mental health care is more than applying evidence-based therapies during pregnancy and the early parenting years. Effective support requires an understanding of the unique challenges that require care designed around the realities of becoming a parent.

This [article](#) explores what distinguishes perinatal mental health care from general mental health support. It highlights how the value of specialised care is not simply the use of CBT, but the combination of evidence-based treatment with perinatal expertise, parent-specific content, and an understanding of the transition to parenthood.

It also explains how specialised care can be delivered through different pathways, including face-to-face services, digital programs, or a combination of both, and how these approaches can work together to improve access and continuity of care for mothers, fathers and families.



Online CBT Programs in Perinatal Care: A Guide for Health Professionals

Digital CBT programs can provide flexible, evidence-based treatment options for families during pregnancy and early parenthood.

This [guide](#) explains how health professionals can incorporate PIRI's online treatment programs into existing care pathways and support continuity of care.

Join Our International Perinatal Mental Health Peer-Led Group



Connect with a growing **international community** of early- and mid-career researchers and clinicians passionate about **perinatal mental health**.



The **STePPS CRE** International Peer-Led Group brings together PhD students, early- and mid-career researchers, and clinicians in a supportive and collaborative environment designed to foster learning, networking, and professional growth.



*Learn. Share. Grow.
Make an Impact.* ♡

As part of the group, you will have the opportunity to:



Present and
receive feedback
on your work



Engage in
meaningful
peer discussions



Share ideas and
experiences across
disciplines and
countries



Receive mentoring
and guidance from
an experienced
supervisor



Build valuable
professional
connections in
perinatal mental
health



Our next meeting will be held on
23 September at 9:00pm AEST.



Register for
the next meeting



Express interest in
future meetings



Join the STePPS CRE International Peer-Led Group

You are invited to join the **STePPS CRE International Peer-Led Group**, a growing international community bringing together PhD students, early- and mid-career researchers, and clinicians working in perinatal mental health.

Participants from across disciplines and countries are welcome to connect, share ideas, discuss research and support each other's professional growth through meetings held every two months.

Our next meeting is on 23 September at 9:00 pm AEST.

[Register for the next meeting here.](#)



New Online Program to Support Mother-Infant Relationships Following Postnatal Depression.

Referrals now open for eHUGS study.

We are delighted to launch [eHUGS](#), the latest addition to PIRI's suite of online programs supporting families during the perinatal period.

Although many mothers recover from postnatal depression with treatment, difficulties in the early mother-infant relationship do not always improve without targeted intervention.

eHUGS is a targeted online intervention designed to strengthen the mother-infant relationship and support positive interactions during the first year of life. Through fun, simple activities, it helps mothers and babies connect and build positive patterns of interaction. eHUGS is an adaptation of PIRI's [effective, evidence-based](#) face-to-face HUGS group program, expanding access to support for families who may be unable to attend in person.

We are currently recruiting mothers to participate in a trial evaluating eHUGS and encourage you to refer eligible clients.

Participants will receive eHUGS either immediately or after a 16-week wait period. Mothers in the waitlist group will be provided with links to online parenting resources while they wait.

Eligible participants are:

- Mothers (aged ≥ 18) with a baby under 12 months of age
- Currently receiving, or have previously received, treatment or support for postnatal depression or low mood
- No significant mental health concerns that would require a higher level of care

Why refer?

- Access to a specialised program designed to strengthen the mother-infant relationship following postnatal depression
- No cost to participate
- Flexible online access from home
- An opportunity to contribute to research that may improve support for families

How to refer

Direct clients to e-hugs.com.au to learn more and register.

Things You Do Model (Big 5) of Mental Health



The CATALYST Study

PIRI is excited to announce that recruitment is now open for the CATALYST study, led by STePPS CRE investigator [Professor Nick Titov](#).

A broad range of Australians are welcome to participate, including new and expectant mums and dads.

What is involved?

Participants can choose one of two options:

- A one-off survey, which takes approximately 20 minutes; or
- The survey plus brief monthly check-ins for up to two years, taking approximately 10 minutes each month.

Who can take part?

Anyone who is an Australian resident, aged 16 years or over, and able to read English.

How to participate

You can [begin the survey here](#).

You can also scan the QR code or [learn more here](#).



MAN WITH A PRAM

REGISTER TO WALK



TO SHINE A LIGHT ON PERINATAL
MENTAL HEALTH ON FATHER'S DAY

Man With A Pram this Father's Day

PIRI is proud to support Man With A Pram this Father's Day (6 September) as it celebrates its 10 year anniversary.

You can get behind the campaign by joining a walk near you or hosting your own to help shine a light on perinatal mental health.

Visit manwithapram.com to find a walk in your area or register your own.

Connect with the PIRI Team

Get in touch at piri@austin.org.au to discuss how PIRI's programs and expertise can support you, your organisation, or the families you work with.



Thank you for your support

PIRI is a not-for-profit research institute and registered charity. Your tax-deductible donation helps us deliver evidence-based programs and support more families. Every contribution counts and helps give infants the best start in life.

Donate now.

With gratitude, The Parent-Infant Research Institute Team

This email was sent to {{ contact.EMAIL }} because you are part of the PIRI community.

Contact Us

Parent-Infant Research Institute Inc. | Austin Health, Heidelberg 3084, Victoria

Phone: (03) 9496 4496 | piri@austin.org.au | www.piri.org.au



[Privacy Policy](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)