

Start Talking Telehealth Program - Information for Clients

In April 2018, the Gidget Foundation launched its Start Talking telehealth program, in recognition of the need to support parents in regional, rural and remote locations of Australia.

Start Talking provides up to ten (10) free telehealth psychological counselling services for expectant and new parents suffering from perinatal depression and anxiety who are currently unable to attend face-to-face sessions. The services are conducted via a video call platform.

Start Talking offers the same quality of care available through the Gidget Foundation's face-to-face psychology services at Gidget House, affording those with limited access, quality clinical psychological treatment.

Who does Start Talking support?

Start Talking provides up to ten (10) free telehealth psychological counselling services per calendar year for expectant and new parents who have a diagnosis of, or are at risk of developing, a perinatal mood or anxiety disorder and who:

- are pregnant; or
- have a baby up to 12 months old.

Support is also provided to people who have experienced a stillbirth, miscarriage or termination within the last 12 months. Partners are able to access these specialised services as well.

What is a telehealth psychological counselling service?

A telehealth psychological counselling service refers to a videoconference consultation between you and your Gidget Foundation therapist (or another clinician you may be referred to) that uses both a video and audio connection. It is similar to video calls that you may make using programs such as FaceTime or Skype.

How much will the counselling services cost?

Up to ten (10) telehealth psychological counselling services per calendar year will be provided to clients **free of charge**. (The cost of these 10 sessions is fully funded by Gidget Foundation Australia in collaboration with Medicare Australia's Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioner's initiative).

However, as the services are conducted using a video call platform, you will be required to cover the cost of any internet / mobile data usage to enable the call.

Am I eligible to access the Start Talking program?

To be able to access the Start Talking program you will need:

- A referral and a mental health care plan from your GP;
- A stable internet connection / mobile internet access from the location that you will be at when you participate in the video call; and
- Your own mobile device, laptop or desktop computer with a camera, microphone and speakers (a fully charged computer is preferable but not essential).

It is preferable that you participate in the video call from a quiet, private space.

If you do not have a stable internet connection or a device that is able to receive video calls, contact your GP or local community centre, who may be able to help. Alternatively contact us on starttalking@gidgetfoundation.org.au or 1300 851 758 for information on support services in your area.

How many counselling services can I access?

You will be able to access up to 10 free telehealth psychological counselling services within a 12 month period.

How soon will my first appointment be?

We will book your appointment with a Gidget Foundation therapist for as soon as possible. The timing will depend on your availability and the availability of your therapist.

What can I expect from the counselling sessions?

The first appointment with your therapist will comprise an initial assessment, where you will have the opportunity to explore your needs, concerns and solutions. Thereafter you will receive one-to-one therapies or counselling for perinatal mental health issues.

Where necessary, you may be referred to another appropriate clinician or service, such as a psychiatrist or social worker.

Our therapists are specially-trained in perinatal mental health and provide compassionate holistic care for clients and their families. All mothers and fathers are respected and the needs of each unique family are seen as paramount.

How should I prepare for my counselling sessions?

Even though your consultation will be conducted via video rather than face-to-face, you should treat it like any other clinical consultation. Try to prepare yourself beforehand by finding a quiet, private place to receive the call, if you can. Set up your laptop / tablet / mobile (or whichever device you will be using to receive the video call) at least 5 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment time.

The following may be useful to have nearby during your consultation:

- Glass of water;
- Tissues;
- Headphones, if you have some, in case of any audio problems during the call; and
- Paper and pen to write down any notes or tasks that you may agree with your psychologist.

If you have any questions outside of your consultation time, please contact the Gidget Foundation on 1300 851 758.

What type of computer or mobile will I need?

Start Talking uses a video call program called BlueJeans. BlueJeans can be used on almost any desktop, laptop or mobile device.

In most cases you will not need to download any specific software to use the program, however, some devices may ask your permission to launch a BlueJeans app to enable you to join the video call.

How do I join the video call?

Once an appointment between you and a Gidget Foundation therapist has been booked, you will receive an email containing a weblink and a Meeting ID. To join the video call, simply click on the weblink at your agreed appointment time.

You can also join the video call by clicking the “Join Meeting” tab on the [BlueJeans website](#). You will be asked to enter the Meeting ID provided in the email and your name, and you will then be accepted into the video call.

Detailed information on how to join the video call will be emailed to you with the meeting invitation confirming your first video appointment.

Whilst your therapist will always try their best to keep to time, there may be instances when consultations run over time. If this happens to the appointment prior to yours and your therapist does not join the video call at the agreed time, please remain on the call until your therapist joins. If you have any concerns, please call the Gidget Foundation on 1300 851 758.

Is the video call platform secure and will my privacy be protected?

Yes! The BlueJeans video call platform has been selected because it is a secure and stable system that can be used on almost any device. BlueJeans uses the latest technology to ensure that all calls are secure.

Your therapist is required to adhere to the same privacy and confidentiality regulations for a telehealth consultation as for a face-to-face service, and will be able to discuss the details of these requirements with you during your first consultation.

How do I register for the Start Talking program?

To register for the program, call our supportive Start Talking program staff on 1300 851 758 or email starttalking@gidgethouse.org.au

You will need to complete a client registration form and submit it to us to complete the registration process.

What happens once I've registered with Start Talking?

Once you have registered for the Start Talking program and submitted your completed client registration form, the Start Talking staff will assign you to one of our specially-trained Gidget Foundation therapists. An appointment will be booked between you and the therapist at a mutually convenient time.

Once the appointment has been booked, you will receive an email containing a weblink and a Meeting ID. At the time of the appointment, click on the link within the email (or login through the "Join Meeting" tab on the [BlueJeans website](#) using the Meeting ID) and you will join the video call with your therapist.

What is a mental health care plan and what does that mean?

A mental health care plan is a plan for people with a mental health disorder, including a perinatal mood or anxiety disorder. The plan identifies what type of health care you need and spells out what you and your doctor have agreed that you are aiming to achieve. It also may refer you to local mental health services; in this case the referral would be specifically to Gidget Foundation Australia's Start Talking program. More information about a mental health care plan can be found on the [Health Direct](#) and [Australian Government Department of Health](#) websites.

You should be aware that by developing a mental health care plan with your GP, a mental health diagnosis will be recorded in your GP's medical file and lodged with Medicare.

If you prefer not to develop a mental health care plan with your GP, you are able to access the program privately on a fee paying basis, as outlined below.

Can I pay for my counselling sessions privately?

Yes! If you would like to access the Start Talking program without a GP referral or mental health plan, the following fees will apply:

Initial consultation (50 minutes) \$220

Subsequent consultations (50 minutes) \$180

To book a private appointment, please contact us on starttalking@gidgetfoundation.org.au or 1300 851 758. You will need to download and complete our client registration form.

Who do I contact for more information or to book an appointment?

For more information or to book an appointment, call our supportive Start Talking program staff on 1300 851 758 or email starttalking@gidgethouse.org.au

Who do I contact if I need immediate or urgent help?

The Start Talking program is unable to provide crisis support.

If you need urgent help, please contact the [PANDA](#) National Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Helpline on **1300 726 306**. The Panda Helpline is open Mondays to Fridays between 9am and 7.30pm AEST.

Alternatively, please call your local hospital or [Lifeline](#) on **13 11 14**.

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Gidget Foundation Australia exists to promote the importance of emotional wellbeing among expectant and new parents, their health providers and the wider community to ensure that those in need receive timely, appropriate and supportive care.