



Due to COVID-19, Gidget Foundation Australia has moved all Gidget House face-to-face appointments to telehealth appointments. This measure became effective on Monday 16 March 2020 and will continue indefinitely whilst COVID-19 containment measures are in place.

This decision was made in the best interests of ensuring the health and safety of our clients, clinicians and staff and seeks to contribute to social distancing. Rest assured that the specialist, supportive care that you receive from our Gidget Foundation clinicians will remain of the highest quality, however, this support will be delivered through a video or telephone call rather than a face to face consultation.

WHO DOES GIDGET FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA SUPPORT?

Gidget Foundation Australia 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:

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

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

WHAT IS TELEHEALTH?

Telehealth refers to a video conference consultation between you and your Gidget Foundation clinician (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.

If, for some reason, the quality of the video connection between you and your clinician is not strong enough or is affecting the quality of the consultation, your clinician may revert to using audio (i.e. telephone) only.

HOW MUCH WILL THE COUNSELLING SERVICES COST?

Under the Australian Government's COVID-19 containment measures, up to ten (10) telehealth psychological counselling services per calendar year will be provided to clients free of charge for as long as the containment measures are in place. (These consultations will be bulk billed).

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 GIDGET FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA SERVICES?

To be able to access the Gidget Foundation Australia services, you will need:

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

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

HOW MANY COUNSELLING SERVICES CAN I ACCESS?

You will be able to access up to 10 free telehealth psychological counselling services within a calendar year for as long as the Australian Government's COVID-19 containment measures remain in place.

IS TELEHEALTH AS EFFECTIVE AS FACE TO FACE CONSULTATIONS?

Yes! Telehealth is a highly effective means of





delivering psychological treatment. A recent independent evaluation of Gidget Foundation Australia's telehealth service demonstrated that the service is equally as effective at treating perinatal depression and anxiety as face to face consultations.

HOW SOON WILL MY FIRST APPOINTMENT BE?

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

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM THE COUNSELLING SESSIONS?

The first appointment with your clinician 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.

Our clinicians 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:

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

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?

Gidget Foundation Australia uses a video call program that can be used on almost any desktop, laptop or mobile device. You will not need to download any specific software to use the program.

HOW DO I JOIN THE VIDEO CALL?

Once an appointment between you and a Gidget Foundation clinician has been booked, you will receive an email with detailed information on how to join the video call.

Whilst your clinician 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 clinician does not join the video call at the agreed time, please remain on the call until your clinician 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 video call platform has been selected because it is a secure and stable system that can be used on almost any device. Your clinician 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.





WHAT HAPPENS ONCE I'VE REGISTERED WITH GIDGET FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA?

Once you have registered with Gidget Foundation Australia and completed your new client registration form, the Gidget Foundation reception staff will assign you to one of our specially-trained clinicians. An appointment will be booked between you and the clinician at a mutually convenient time.

Once the appointment has been booked, you will receive an email containing a link. At the time of the appointment, click on the link within the email and you will join the video call with your clinician.

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. 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 Gidget Foundation Australia services without a mental health plan, a fee of \$220 per consultation (50 minutes) will apply.

To book a private appointment, please contact us on contact@gidgethouse.org.au or **1300 851 758**.

WHO DO I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BOOK AN APPOINTMENT?

For more information or to book an appointment, call our supportive Gidget Foundation Australia staff on **1300 851 758** or email contact@gidgethouse.org.au

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I NEED IMMEDIATE OR URGENT HELP?

Gidget Foundation Australia 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 🌸

