

mother-baby nurture : holding space

A 10-week group supporting mothers & babies through the first few months

The naked newborn enters the world exposed; subject to a sudden sensory feast of milk, medical procedures and expectations. Simultaneously a new mother is birthed; a role with big responsibilities, wherein new hopes, fears and longings are stirred.

Sharon Cooke & Sue Coleson

The group is slow and spacious. It provides silent observation followed by reflection, where the mother is supported to wonder about her baby, considering the mind of her infant as distinct from her own. Each baby is a welcome and active participant. Two facilitators work together, modelling a positive 'parental couple' relationship.



Model: MBN is a unique experiential non-didactic group model that has drawn from the modalities of psychoanalytic parent-infant psychotherapy and mentalization-based treatment.

Each Mother-Baby Nurture group is hosted by two facilitators. A senior facilitator specialised in perinatal and infant mental health, and the other a peer facilitator who offers her unique story of lived experience and recovery.

Service Tier: MBN is a targeted service delivering brief intervention

Size: each group has fourteen members; six infant-mother dyads and two facilitators

Focus: Infant-caregiver relationship

Aim: To awaken, or restore and strengthen the mother's reflective capacity, and in doing so to enhance the mother's sensitivity to her infant's cues, enabling her to meet her infant's relational needs for connection and comfort.

For more information on
the MBN model & training
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Participants: Infants and mothers that are struggling to connect with one another during their first few months of life together. The infant may have difficulty being soothed and regulating its state, and may be reported to have crying, feeding or sleeping concerns. The mother may present feeling overwhelmed or emotionally detached, she may express concerns about her baby and adequacy in her role as mother, and may have symptoms of anxiety and/or depression.

Results: Pre and post tests show statistically significant reduction in self-reported depression (EPDS), anxiety (PASS), confidence (Karitane), and attachment (MPAS).

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