



# Parent mental health

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## Statement of the standard

Targeted screening of parental mental health is undertaken six months after discharge and at two years, during regular follow-up visits for the child.

## Benefits

- Prepares parents for their potential emotional reactions after birth
- Early identification and prompt treatment of parent mental health problems
- Improved mental health support for at-risk families
- Improved parenting confidence
- Facilitates parents capacity to support their child's development
- Optimised neurodevelopmental outcomes



## For parents and family

- Parents are informed by healthcare professionals about potential emotional reactions to very preterm birth and the importance of assessment during regular follow-up visits in the first six months after discharge.
- Parents are supported by early intervention programmes if they are at risk for mental health problems.



## For healthcare professionals

- A guideline on follow-up including parental mental health assessment is adhered to by all healthcare professionals.
- Before each regular follow-up visit for the child at six months and at two years after discharge parents are screened for mental health problems, using locally available standardised screening tools such as Edinburg Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), or Distress Thermometer for Parents (DT-P).
- Training on recognition of the clinical signs that are associated with mental health difficulties is attended by all responsible healthcare professionals.
- Parents with identified mental health problems after discharge are referred for locally available specialised mental health support.



## For neonatal unit, hospital, and follow-up team

- A guideline on follow-up including parental mental health assessment is available and regularly updated.
- Training on recognition of the clinical signs that are associated with mental health difficulties is ensured.
- A follow-up team (nurse or pediatrician) is available and trained in addressing mental health issues in parents.



## For health service

- A national guideline on follow-up including parental mental health assessment is available and regularly updated.

