

Our Program

As part of an admission to MaFU we will work with you to improve your emotional wellbeing through individual therapy, group therapy, sleep hygiene, mindfulness and encouragement of supportive peer relationships. The team at MaFU can support your parenting skills through helping you identify your baby's cues and developing a routine that supports you and your family's emotional, physical and social needs.

We are here to foster your wellbeing through building your knowledge of mental health, healthy lifestyle options and attachment based parenting skills. We will guide you through identifying services in the community that can continue to support the family goals and the diverse needs of the family that occur during the perinatal period of parenting.

What happens on discharge?

The length of stay varies on an individual basis. Upon your discharge from MaFU, it may be appropriate for you to continue to work with Ballarat Mental Health Services, or you may be referred to other services in the community such as your GP, counselling or community mental health services. We can assist you in sourcing the best options for you and your family.

How do I get help?

Contact MaFU directly on (03) 5320 8712 during business hours.

Please be prepared to leave a confidential message as staff may be working with current parents.

Alternatively, discuss MaFU with a health professional you are already working with. This might be your GP, Maternal and Child Health Nurse or a Mental Health Worker.

They can make a referral for you by calling (03) 5320 8712.

Once a referral has been made, you will be contacted by a staff member from MaFU for further discussion.

Please be aware that there may be a wait list prior to your stay. We suggest you contact us as soon as you feel you are having difficulties—we are happy to have a no-obligation chat about our service and help you decide if it's right for you.

MaFU is a non-crisis service.

If you require immediate help, contact Ballarat Mental Health Services triage on **1300 661 323** (24hrs) or attend your nearest Emergency Department.

Ballarat Health Service
Mother and Family Unit
28-34 Pleasant St South,
Newington, Ballarat, VIC, 3350
T. (03) 5320 8712 F. (03) 5320 8718



Mother and Family Unit



Specialist emotional and psychological support and treatment for families during pregnancy and early parenthood.



BallaratHealthServices
Putting your health first

Who is the Mother & Family Unit for?

The Mother and Family Unit (MaFU) provides specialist emotional and psychological support and treatment for families experiencing difficulties, including anxiety and depression, during the perinatal period.

MaFU works with families and their babies from conception through to 12 months of age.

What happens during a stay at MaFU?

Up to five parents and their babies can stay at MaFU at any one time.

The parent/s and their baby stay at MaFU from Monday to Friday and return home on the weekend.

The length of stay varies depending on individual circumstances and client treatment needs.

During the stay you will work with a range of infant and child professionals including: Paediatricians, Psychiatrists and Specialised Nurses and Midwives.

Each day there will be a variety of individual and/or group sessions to attend.

During your stay you will be responsible for independently caring of your baby, however, staff are available for help, support and advice 24 hours a day.

MaFU is a free service and available to all eligible residents within the Grampians and Warrnambool region.

You are not alone.

You don't have to go through this alone.

Partners, children and families

Partners and families are a vital support through the journey of new parenthood and are strongly encouraged to be involved in the MaFU program.

There is the option of having a support person stay overnight for the duration of your admission, however this will be dependent on room availability and the needs of other parents staying at that time. If you would like to utilise this option during your admission, please mention this before you arrive.

Partners, family members and children are welcome to visit during your stay. Visiting hours of the unit are from;

12:30pm until 2:30pm
and 5:30pm until 7:30pm

Children/siblings over 12 months old are not able to stay overnight however are welcome to visit during the day.



Becoming a parent

Becoming a parent is an exciting and challenging time. Many parents feel overwhelmed by the new responsibilities, lack of sleep and physical and emotional changes that a new baby brings.

Added to this can be feelings of anxiety and depression for both mothers and fathers which is very common. Around one in seven women and one in ten men will develop anxiety or depression during pregnancy or after they have their baby.

Many parents can feel alone in their struggle and suffer in silence, but help and support is available.

Getting the right help early leads to faster recovery.

At the Mother and Family Unit we give a voice to women experiencing perinatal mental illness.

We provide a safe haven for families that empowers them to improve their emotional health and wellbeing, and foster stronger connections with their baby.

The greatest joy of our work is to see families leave our unit with a renewed sense of hope for the future, humbled by the knowledge that we were able to make a difference for them and our community.