

For Immediate Release
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NEW FINDINGS HIGHLIGHT THE NEED FOR ORGANISATIONS TO SUPPORT THE HIDDEN AND ONGOING SEASONS OF WORKING PARENTHOOD

Centre of Perinatal Excellence (COPE) and Transitioning Well release four key resources through PWWP, a program helping new and expectant parents

The teams at Centre of Perinatal Excellence (COPE) and Transitioning Well are proud to announce the launch of four key resources, filled with findings, strategies, and information designed to build organisational capability required to support working parents. The resources can be found on the newly launched Perinatal Workplace Wellbeing Program (PWWP) website.

Supported by WorkSafe's WorkWell Mental Health Improvement Fund, the pilot program is designed to support and make a difference to the mental health and wellbeing of expectant and new parents (*perinatal period) in Victorian workplaces.

Through the PWWP focus groups and initial time one surveys, COPE and Transitioning Well have seen several key themes arising; the need for organisations to support the ongoing seasons of parenthood, the need for greater understanding and acknowledgment of the hidden journeys to parenthood, and the incredible value to be gained by staying connected during Parental Leave and setting up working parent networks.

The first four free resource sheets to be released address identified pain points and will include topics such as, 'How to Set up a Working Parent Network', 'Staying Connected During Parental Leave', 'Supporting the Ongoing Seasons of Working Parenthood' and 'Supporting the Hidden Journeys to Parenthood'.

Through their work, the teams at COPE and Transitioning Well have found that currently, most family-friendly programs focus on supporting expectant/new parents, and often miss the ongoing transition points as children grow from babies and toddlers to school-aged children and adolescents.

Dr Sarah Cotton, co-founder of Transitioning Well says, "There seems to be this myth that working parenthood gets easier when your kids go to school... in reality this is far from the truth! It is critical that workplaces step up to the plate and understand the importance of not just supporting the early months and years but also the ongoing and ever-changing seasons of working parenthood."

Another transitional period that is often unspoken about is the journey to parenthood. It's one that is not always straightforward and can remain hidden, especially in the workplace. When employees or their partners are having difficulty getting or staying pregnant, are worried about conceiving, or preparing to travel a different path to have children, they may not feel comfortable reaching out for support.

Similarly, when a baby unexpectedly arrives long before their due date, parents and workplaces may be unprepared for the stressful and often unpredictable journey they face. Given that these experiences can result in additional physical, psychological and financial costs, it's important that workplaces understand how to best support the hidden journeys to parenthood.

Dr Nicole Highet, founder of COPE says, when considering the range of challenges that can occur for individuals and couples at this life stage, we can begin to understand why this is the time when emotional distress and mental health issues are most likely to occur in women, and will also arise for men – often for the first time in their lifetime. Being aware, informed and having access to timely information and support is key, and organisations can step up to play a role here".

PWWP is working with key industry partners (i.e., Bunnings, Officeworks, Target, Multiplex and Probuild) to highlight the importance of supporting individuals through these transitional stages by addressing work-related factors and creating organisational change.

**Perinatal Period - prior to birth, through pregnancy and the first year of a child's life.*

-ENDS-

www.pwwp.org.au

For further information, or to organise and interview with the teams at COPE or Transitioning Well, please get in touch.

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About Perinatal Workplace Wellbeing Program

The aim of the program is to support individuals by creating organisational change through working with key industries.

This change will be achieved via a comprehensive workplace training, assessment and support package to build knowledge, awareness and skills in supporting workers, and leadership through this period. Results will show an increase in wellbeing both at individual and organisational levels, and promote cultural change across industries.

For more information visit, www.pwwwp.org.au

About COPE

Centre of Perinatal Excellence (COPE) is a not-for-profit organisation devoted to reducing the impacts of emotional and mental health problems in the pre and postnatal periods.

COPE provides a national, dedicated focus to perinatal mental health to address the identified issues that we know are currently preventing people from accessing timely and effective information and care, and equipping health professionals with the Guidelines, skills and resources to support best practice.

For more information visit, www.cope.org.au

About Transitioning Well

Founded by Dr. Sarah Cotton and Justine Alter in 2011, Transitioning Well specialises in navigating life transitions in the workplace. Our team of national psychologists develop and promote best practice strategies and tailored solutions across the employment life cycle.

For more information visit, www.transitioningwell.com.au