



mother
nurture

Nurturing confidence and wellbeing in new mums

www.releaseforwomen.org.uk



Impact Report 2023

“This course should be available
to every new mum.

There is nothing like it.”

release

counselling and therapy for women

About us

Release Counselling and Therapy for Women is a UK registered charity (No. 1192772), working to improve the **mental health** of women in Sussex, **reduce isolation**, and **empower women** to bring about changes in their lives.

One of our key services is a **10-week postnatal group** called Mother Nurture, which supports women's wellbeing in the postnatal period. Launched in Brighton in 2015 by Release's CEO Ellen Baldwin, the course is written by professional counsellors, and helps new mums **navigate the emotional transition** to becoming a mum.

Meeting weekly, we provide **psycho-education**, discussions around the changes women feel from body image to wellbeing and to **normalise feelings**.

Each week we **discuss a different topic**, such as birth stories, changes in identity, relationships, expectations, body changes, support networks and more. The group also aims to facilitate peer-to-peer support, and many of the groups continue to meet and have contact after the group ends.

Aims & Outcomes

- ➔ Increase Confidence
- ➔ Reduce Stress
- ➔ Strengthen emotional connection to your baby
- ➔ Provide a supportive environment in the early transition to motherhood.



Mother Nurture was written by qualified counsellors, and launched in Brighton in 2015.

We ask participants to pledge an affordable monthly amount to cover or contribute to the cost of their place. Those who are in need can apply for a bursary spot. With the addition of voluntary donations, we are able to ensure that all women who are in need of support can access our services.



“I was in a really fragile state when I started.

I had only recently admitted to myself that I was struggling with my mental health since having my daughter. This course has given me a safe space to acknowledge those feelings, to understand that other mothers may be feeling the same despite outwards appearances. It’s given me the confidence to speak out and ask for additional help, that there is no shame in it, and reminded me that I still matter. It has been such a valuable experience I only wish I had heard of it sooner. I would recommend it in a heartbeat.”

182

MUMS WHO COMPLETED
OUR COURSES IN 2022/23
GAVE FEEDBACK...

98%

SAID THE COURSE
FULFILLED THEIR
EXPECTATIONS

98%

WOULD RECOMMEND
THE COURSE TO THEIR
FRIENDS

96%

BENEFITTED FROM
TAKING PART IN A
MOTHER
NURTURE/SECOND
NATURE COURSE.

97%

FOUND THE FACILITATORS
TO BE EXCELLENT OR
GOOD.



Since our launch, we have supported **over 600** new mums and babies in Brighton & Hove and the surrounding areas.

91%

SAID THEIR EMOTIONAL STABILITY HAD IMPROVED

89%

FELT LESS LONELY AND MORE CONNECTED (2023)

93%

SAID THEIR CONFIDENCE HAD IMPROVED

93%

FELT THAT MOTHER NURTURE/SECOND NATURE HAD HELPED THEM TO ADJUST TO THEIR NEW CIRCUMSTANCES & FEEL LESS OVERWHELMED

“Being a mum for the first time is a total shock so thank you for helping me realise all those feelings were normal and helping me navigate those first few months.”



“It has been a great nurturing start to motherhood and I feel wiser and more confident as a result.”

“I don’t think I would be the mum I am now without this group. It almost saved me in those early days.”

CASE STUDY

"It sounds a bit melodramatic, but attending Mother Nurture was a **life changing experience** for me. As a doctor, I've signposted plenty of patients to support groups without fully understanding the immense value they can have.

I suffered from **postnatal anxiety** after my son was born, which was not severe enough to require support from mental health services, but significant enough to leave me **feeling isolated and struggling**.

Over the ten week course I had the privilege of hearing from and **sharing the experiences** of an incredible group of women. Each session **provided a space** for me to be **open and honest**, and carve out some **emotional nurturing for myself** that just wasn't possible in the rest of the week.

It was **so reassuring** to hear that **I wasn't alone** in my far-from-perfect experience of motherhood, and it **gave me the confidence** to start **processing and articulating** how I was feeling to those around me.

I feel incredibly fortunate to have had the opportunity to do Mother Nurture. Having **professional experience of perinatal mental health services**, and personal experience of the support available, I truly feel that the **groups offer a unique and essential space** for women who would otherwise **fall through the cracks** of the formal support available.

Thank you so much for working so hard to provide this, and I really hope you can continue to offer as many groups as possible as all women with babies deserve to have this experience!"



*"When having my son, just over 2 years ago... I found myself in a place where I was... lost and **life felt dark** - I didn't have the tools to understand the way I was feeling. I am not being dramatic when I say **this group changed my life**, it **saved me**, at a time when my world had been flipped upside down."*



NON-JUDGEMENTAL
HONEST
SHARED EXPERIENCES & MEETING
OTHER MUMS & BABIES

KNOWING I AM
NOT ALONE
VULNERABLE

"I wish it was something available as standard across the UK as I know lots of friends that would have hugely benefitted from this course."

FINAL THOUGHTS

In 2022, *Release Counselling and Therapy for Women* undertook a review of the name of their flagship course 'Mummyshock,' and renamed it Mother Nurture to better reflect the experiences related to motherhood. We are always improving our service through the voices of our service users, which we intend to keep doing.

One example of this, is that following feedback, in 2022 developed a new therapeutic support group for second & third time mums. This course is now being successfully run, and receives excellent feedback from participants.

In addition, we have worked with a number of partners this year to provide specialist support for mums/parents with atypical parenting experiences, such as those with babies who began their life in NICU, and sessions for the LGBTQ+ community.