

Ideas for coping with changes to birthing during Covid

Radical Acceptance

If it is not going to be the birth you imagined, there is no point trying to make it that way. Your best option is to find your available choices and work towards that. Acceptance does not have to mean that you like the situation or that you are okay with it, it simply means you accept your reality and therefore you can get on with the business of coping with it.

Go Online for Birth Education

There are some great online birth education classes. You could try Nourish Perinatal Wellness, this is the only online antenatal class provider who is an Australian Council of Healthcare Services (ACHS) EQuIP6 accredited organisation. Or find another class that appeals to you.

Stay Connected

Plan in advance how you will stay connected with those people who are important to you and your baby. Is there someone you would like to record support messages to listen to during your labour? Do you want to have periodic video chats after your baby arrives? Can you set up a family/friend group sharing app?

Be your own Support

Pause for a moment and imagine it was your best friend about to give birth, what might you say to them as support and advice?

Get Creative

Come up with some creative ways to document your birth journey. This will be helpful for you and the family and friends who can't be with you. Think about videos, diaries, photos, YouTube, blogs, journals, voice recordings and so on.

Reframe your Story

The changes you are being asked to make are to ensure the safety of yourself, your baby and all of your loved ones. Think of these changes as safety rather than restrictive. It is far more comforting and calming to feel safety than restriction or disappointment. The way you think about your situation will improve your ability to cope.

Tailor your Social Media now

Start following positive, supportive and reputable information sources. Unfollow pages that you might find yourself comparing with or with negative content.

Get Counselling Support Early

If you are feeling anxious, worried, sad or stressed out don't wait until you are not coping. Most mothers with postnatal depression wait until they are not coping before seeking help. You can access free online perinatal counselling now through the Gidget House Start Talking program or talk to your GP or nurse about a local referral. Bulk billed telehealth sessions are also available through Connect to Well-Being and Medicare with some local psychologists.

Check your Expectations

This is a unique situation, things are not going to be how you expected. Bring awareness to the expectations you have of yourself, your support person and the health professionals around you. More realistic expectations will help you to cope. Give yourself and everyone around you plenty of flexibility.

Not Everything is Cancelled

- Sunshine
- Love
- Relationships
- Nature
- Reading
- Music
- Kindness
- Imagination
- Conversations
- Dancing

Grieve

It is okay to grieve for the birth you wanted. You don't have to pretend to others that you are okay with it if you are not. Offer yourself lots of kind words, warmth and compassion. Women are being asked to give birth in conditions they never anticipated. It's okay to feel sad, worried, angry, confused or whatever feelings you might have. Allowing yourself to feel these will ease the feelings over time and help you to cope.