

QUEENSLAND PERINATAL & INFANT MENTAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM

2025

HEALING TOGETHER:

Perinatal & Infant Wellness for Every Family

10 - 11 November, 2025
(Mon & Tues)

Southport Sharks Events Centre,
Gold Coast

Day 1 - Invited Speakers for Plenary Sessions



CLAUDIA GOLD

Listening In:

A model for making every contact
with babies and caregivers count



DINAH THOMASETT

**"Everyone Wants to Hold the Baby
but Who is Holding the Mum?
Peer Support as a Preventative
and Cost-Effective Solution to
Postnatal Depression"**



SIMON SANTOSHA

**Supporting Father's
Mental Health in the
Perinatal Period: A guide
for practitioners**



CHELSEA LUKER

**"Beyond Exhaustion: Autistic
Burnout, Anxiety, and Depression
in the Perinatal Period"**

For Autistic parents and birthing
people, the perinatal period can be
a time of profound transition - and
profound risk.

Day 2 - Workshop Option



CHRIS YELLAND

**Mother Infant – Dialectical
Behaviour Therapy (MI-DBT):
Everything You Need To Know
About Running A MI-DBT Program**



AMY DAWES & FIONA REID

**ThinkNatal eLearning Modules
Module 1) Birth-related trauma, common
trauma triggers, psychological and physical
trauma Module 2) Postnatal Support**



Register and Learn More:

Scan or go to

<https://qpimhs.com/>



The Symposium

This Queensland Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Symposium brings together the best local and national speakers to upskill those interested in perinatal and infant mental health. This year's theme we are focusing on the diverse challenges families face beyond anxiety and depression, including trauma, neurodiversity, and other complexities.

This two-day professional development event offers a unique perspective on perinatal and infant mental health care across government and non-government agencies, all around Queensland, and throughout the different stages of recovery. The first day includes plenary sessions with renowned speakers including our first ever international speaker, and the second day consists of three different full day in-person workshops.



Format: In-person and online plenary sessions (Monday); and In-person only workshops (Tuesday)

Catering for In-Person Attendance: Morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea is provided.

Suitable for: All those working with families in the perinatal period, including consumers, carers, peer workers and students are also welcome. Breastfeeding is permitted.

Special access requests and for further information:

Please contact QLD_PIMH@health.qld.gov.au or 07 5687 7064

Website:

For more information, scan the QR code or click here: <https://qpimhs.com/>



Early Bird Registration Fee

Day	Type	Format	Ticket Rate
Monday	Plenary Sessions 8am - 4pm	In-Person	\$200
Monday		Online*	\$180
Monday	Welcome Function 4pm - 6pm	In-Person	Free
Tuesday	Full Day Workshop 8am - 4pm	In-Person	\$200

**Recordings available after Symposium*

GCHHS WNCS Staff & Student Discount: Email for Discount Code

\$100 for each day for 1-day ticket.

\$75 for each day for 2-day ticket.

Venue and Parking

The Symposium will be held at Southport Sharks Events Centre, Corner Olsen and Musgrave Ave, Southport, 4215.

Free parking on site.

Alternatively, closest tram is Gold Coast University Hospital G:Link Station.

Recommended Accommodation

Mantra at Southport Sharks
www.southportsharks.com.au/hotel

☎ 07 5603 3200

✉ sharks.res@mantra.com.au

Promo code for discount: SSQPIMHS25

Registration closes Sunday, 2nd November 2025
[Click to Register or Scan QR Code](#)



Queensland
Government



Queensland
Mental Health
Commission

phn
GOLD COAST

An Australian Government Initiative

+mater
Catherine's House



GOLD COAST
HOSPITAL
FOUNDATION



benevolent
SOCIETY

DAY 1

SESSION TIMETABLE

Monday, 10 November

**Please note Subject to change*

07.30am – 08.00am	TRADE STALLS AND REGISTRATION
08.00am – 08.20am	WELCOME TO COUNTRY & DANCE PERFORMANCE Luther Cora and Yugambah Aboriginal Dance Group
08.20am – 08.35am	LIVED EXPERIENCE JOURNEY Sophie Duffy
08.35am – 08.50am	IVAN FRKOVIC Queensland Mental Health Commission
08.50am – 09:00am	MATER CATHERINE'S HOUSE Dr Kannan Kallapiran Platinum Sponsor
09.00am – 10.00am	KEYNOTE – DR CLAUDIA GOLD Listening In: A model for making every contact with babies and caregivers count
10:00am – 10.30am	MORNING TEA
10:30am – 11:30am	DINAH THOMASETT “Everyone Wants to Hold the Baby but Who is Holding the Mum? Peer Support as a Preventative and Cost-Effective Solution to Postnatal Depression”
11:30am – 12:30pm	SIMON SANTOSHA Supporting Father's Mental Health in the Perinatal Period: A guide for practitioners
12:30pm – 1:15pm	LUNCH

1:15pm – 2:45pm

SHORT PRESENTATIONS

Concurrent session for the below presentations:

DEMPSEY ROOM

Live stream

1:15 pm - 1:35 pm

Carla Anderson - Integrating psychological skills into perinatal healthcare for Midwives and Child Health Nurses

1:35 pm - 1:55 pm

Maddie Power, Tess Willis, Dr Constanze Shulz, Sara Gill and Dr Grace Branjerdporn - Rebuilding After Birth: A multidisciplinary, multipronged response to birth-related trauma

1:55 pm - 2:45 pm

Dr Natalie Duffy - How does an infant's experience of neonatal intensive care impact the connection and relationships they can form with significant others?

2:15 pm - 2:45 pm

Dr Susan Wilson - We're all in this together – optimising the social and emotional wellbeing of infants and families in hospital.

ASHCROFT ROOM

1:15 pm - 1:35 pm (Pre-recorded video presentation)

Dr Kiran Sharma - Beyond Words: A case-based presentation about a culturally and linguistically diverse woman with psychosis and epilepsy

1:35 pm - 1:55 pm

Candel Nadruku - Place-Based Maternity Care: An overview of community-based midwifery group practice providing wraparound care

1:55 pm - 2:45 pm

Sarah Edwards - What about Autistic and ADHD Dads in the perinatal period? Learning to acknowledge and scaffold a fathers Autistic and/or ADHD neurotype.

2:15 pm - 2:45 pm

Dr Rachel Bushing - Where is our Spotlight? Enhancing all-of-family outcomes when the parent presents to therapy

2.45pm – 3.15pm

AFTERNOON TEA

3.15pm – 4:15pm

CHELSEA LUKER

Beyond Exhaustion: Autistic Burnout, Anxiety, and Depression in the Perinatal Period

4:15pm – 6:00pm

WELCOME FUNCTION

Appetisers and drink on arrival

FEEDBACK
FORM



VOTE
POSTER
PRESENTATION



DAY 2

WORKSHOPS

Tuesday, 11 November

**Please note: subject to change*

Dempsey Room

Mother Infant – Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (MI-DBT): Everything You Need To Know About Running A MI-DBT Program

- Chris Yelland

Ashcroft Room

Trauma-Informed Postnatal Care:
ThinkNatal e:Learning Modules

- Amy Dawes & Fiona Reid

7.15am – 8.00am

REGISTRATION

8:00am – 9:30am

SESSION 1

9:30am – 10:00am

MORNING TEA

10:00am – 11:30am

SESSION 2

11:30am – 12:30pm

LUNCH

12:30pm – 2:00pm

SESSION 3

2:00pm – 2:30pm

AFTERNOON TEA

2:30pm – 4:00pm

SESSION 4

**FEEDBACK
FORM**



GUEST SPEAKER

Monday, 10 November



IVAN FRKOVIC

Queensland Mental Health Commissioner

Ivan Frkovic is the Queensland Mental Health Commissioner and brings substantial policy, academic and patient-centred experience to the role, having worked in the Queensland mental health system for over 30 years. With a focus on strengthening partnerships and collaboration, he oversees delivery and implementation of the State's strategic plan for mental health, alcohol and drugs and suicide prevention - Shifting minds. Ivan's experience across government and non-government organisations provides valuable insight to help bring all sectors together to focus on delivering better mental health outcomes for Queenslanders. He has made a significant contribution to community mental health through published papers and articles.

Queensland Mental Health Commission

The Queensland Mental Health Commission is responsible for driving reform of the mental health, alcohol and other drug and suicide prevention systems.

Our job is to encourage and facilitate change to improve the mental health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders, with a focus on promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, and preventing and reducing the impact of mental ill-health, alcohol and other drug-related harms and suicide.

It takes collective action at all levels and across many sectors to achieve reform and we work with government and non-government agencies, people with lived-experience, families, carers and supporters throughout Queensland to engage, inform and inspire reform.

Find out more: qmhc.qld.gov.au.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Monday, 10 November



CLAUDIA GOLD, MD

**Paediatrician, Author,
Infant-Parent Mental Health Specialist**

Claudia M. Gold, MD is a paediatrician and writer who practiced paediatrics for 20 years and now specializes in early relational health. She has over three decades of clinical experience in a wide variety of communities and currently works in a volunteer clinic for uninsured families and as a consultant to a program for pregnant and parenting women struggling with substance use. She was on the faculty of the UMass fellowship in Early Relational Health for ten years.

Dr. Gold has extensive experience with families hard hit by the opioid crisis in her community in rural Western Massachusetts, and currently works as a clinician with Volunteers in Medicine, Berkshires serving a primarily immigrant population.

Dr. Gold's most recent book is *Getting to Know You: Lessons in Early Relational Health from Infants and Caregivers* (Teachers College Press Spring 2025) She co-authored *The Power of Discord: Why the Ups and downs of Relationships are the Secret to Building Intimacy, Resilience and Trust* with infant researcher and psychologist Ed Tronick (Little, Brown Spark 2020) Her other books include *The Developmental Science of Early Childhood* (2017), *The Silenced Child* (2016), and *Keeping Your Child in Mind* (2011) Dr. Gold speaks frequently to a broad variety of audiences including both parents and professionals in the United States and around the world. She received her BA from the University of Chicago and MD from U of C Pritzker School of Medicine.

KEYNOTE

Monday, 10 November

Tuesday, 11 November

Listening In: A model for making every contact with babies and caregiver's count

Cultural humility and early relational health share a core common principle: the significance of the not-knowing stance. When human infant and caregiver meet, they get to know each other in a messy, moment-by-moment developmental process over time. In parallel, when clinicians meet and get to know families, a stance of not-knowing — with a willingness to make mistakes— guides the process of building a relationship of trust.

This presentation and workshop offer a unifying model of “listening in” listening with an intentional suspension of expectations and a willingness to be surprised. This model is rooted in core concepts from contemporary developmental science and applicable to broad variety of clinical encounters and situations in work with infants and families.

Drawing on my most recent books *Getting to Know You: Lessons in Early Relational Health from Infants and Caregivers*, we will address core early relational health principles that inform the model of Listening In including the repair theory of human development, parental reflective functioning, the healing power of safety, and the ways that relationships change the brain and body. Participants are invited to bring their own experience for in-depth discussion of the application of these principles to clinical work with infants and caregivers.



Lessons from stories of actual infant-caregiver relationships, will reveal the power of playing in the uncertainty. Reframing a deficit as an asset, the presentations will demonstrate how moments where we don't know what's going on, uncomfortable as they may be, are the ones that offer the most opportunity for connection, growth, and healing. When we can remain open to not-knowing we can better find our way into another person's experience, in turn building a sense of connection and belonging.

INVITED SPEAKERS

Monday, 10 November



DINAH THOMASSET

**Villagehood Australia Founder & CEO
Maternal Mental Health Advocate &
Speaker**

Dinah Thomasset is a passionate advocate and expert in maternal mental health, peer support, and early childhood development, with a career spanning over two decades across Australia, France, and the UK. Her extensive experience in the not-for-profit, government, and corporate sectors has equipped her with a unique ability to navigate and influence diverse environments.

Dinah's journey into community development and advocacy is deeply personal. As a migrant mother who faced postnatal depression and suicidal feelings, she transformed her hardships into a powerful force for good. This personal experience led her to establish Villagehood Australia, a grassroots charity dedicated to supporting mothers and their children during the critical early years.

Through Villagehood Australia, Dinah has facilitated workshops, developed essential resources, and built strategic partnerships to address the mental health and wellbeing of mothers from diverse backgrounds. Her lived experiences fuel her passion for advocating systemic change and amplifying the voices of marginalised communities. Over the years, Dinah has demonstrated her dedication to empowering communities and supporting families with culturally sensitive and innovative solutions to enhance their participation, connection, and overall wellbeing.

Dinah's speaking engagements are marked by a compelling blend of personal anecdotes, evidence-based insights, and practical strategies. Her presentations resonate with audiences through her passionate and empathetic delivery, inspiring others to drive meaningful outcomes in maternal and family health.

INVITED SPEAKERS

Monday, 10 November

Everyone Wants to Hold the Baby but Who is Holding the Mum? Peer Support as a Preventative and Cost-Effective Solution to Postnatal Depression

This presentation by Dinah Thomasset, Founder of Villagehood Australia, explores the critical role of peer support in preventing and addressing postnatal depression, with a particular focus on the experiences of migrant mothers. As a migrant mother herself, Dinah understands firsthand the heightened challenges of motherhood in a new country—social isolation, cultural adjustment, and the absence of a traditional support network—all of which increase the risk of postnatal depression.

Drawing on her own lived experience and the journeys of mothers within Villagehood Australia, Dinah highlights the transformative impact of peer support as an accessible, culturally sensitive, and cost-effective solution. Villagehood Australia, South Australia's only mother-centric peer support charity, has demonstrated significant improvements in maternal mental health through programs like Mummy Chat Group Coaching and Singing Hearts, with up to a 50% increase in mental health scores and parenting confidence.



With 1 in 5 women in Australia experiencing postnatal depression within the first two years after birth, and migrant mothers at even higher risk, peer support provides a vital safety net that complements traditional healthcare services. This presentation will showcase how investing in mother-centric peer support leads to better outcomes for mothers, children, and the broader community—creating a society where no mother feels alone in her journey.

INVITED SPEAKERS

Monday, 10 November



SIMON SANTOSHA

Managing Director of Men & Family Counselling and Consultancy

Simon Santosha is the Managing Director of Men & Family Counselling and Consultancy on the Gold Coast. An Accredited Mental Health Social Worker with more than 20 years of clinical experience, he specialises in supporting men and families through mental health challenges, trauma, relationship conflict, separation/divorce, co-parenting and fathering. Simon has extensive training in attachment, trauma and relational neuroscience, which he integrates into his counselling and training programs for practitioners, educators and organisations. His work has been pivotal in developing best-practice strategies for engaging men and fathers within organisations and services across Australia.

A sought-after presenter and facilitator, Simon delivers professional development workshops and conferences nationwide for government and non-government organisations, schools, community agencies and the private sector. Drawing on his broad experiences working with individuals, communities, and organisations, Simon's passion for improving men and fathers' mental health and family relationships makes him a dynamic and engaging speaker and facilitator.



INVITED SPEAKERS

Monday, 10 November

Supporting Father's Mental Health in the Perinatal Period: A guide for practitioners

The rapid growth of fatherhood research validates the vital role that fathers play in their children's development and social and emotional wellbeing. Engaging fathers in the perinatal period has been shown to be essential because their mental health and involvement directly impact family dynamics, maternal well-being, and child development. Fathers who feel supported are more likely to form strong bonds with their children, contribute positively to their partner's mental health, and be actively involved in caregiving, which benefits the entire family. Addressing fathers' mental health needs also helps prevent stress-related issues, promotes healthy coping mechanisms, and encourages a balanced partnership in parenting.



By engaging in, and normalising mental health support for fathers, practitioners can reduce stigma, foster early intervention, and encourage men to play a confident and engaged role in family life, ultimately improving outcomes for both parents and children. This presentation will provide an overview of the challenges fathers face and offer practical tools to better engage and work with them. Participants will gain knowledge of the latest research on father-child attachment, a greater understanding of the potential barriers to father involvement as well as practical strategies proven to be effective in engaging fathers.

INVITED SPEAKERS

Monday, 10 November



CHELSEA LUKER

**Registered Psychologist
Connect Us Psychology**

Chelsea Luker (she/her) is an Autistic ADHDer psychologist, author, and advocate based on Bundjalung Country. She is the founder of Connect Us Psychology and is passionate about working with Neurodivergent individuals across the lifespan, with a particular interest in identity, burnout, and perinatal mental health. Chelsea brings a unique blend of clinical expertise and lived experience to her work and is passionate about building systems that affirm rather than pathologise neurodivergence. She is the author of *Square Me, Round World* and the creator of the 'Building Your Neurodivergent Identity' program. Chelsea is also a parent to two Neurodivergent children and draws from both personal and professional experience when speaking about the complexity of early parenthood.



INVITED SPEAKERS

Monday, 10 November

Beyond Exhaustion: Autistic Burnout, Anxiety, and Depression in the Perinatal Period

For Autistic parents and birthing people, the perinatal period can be a time of profound transition - and profound risk. Despite increasing awareness of perinatal mental health, the specific experiences of Autistic individuals remain under-recognised, often misunderstood, or entirely overlooked.

In this session, we will explore the unique interplay between Autistic burnout, anxiety, depression, and the demands of pregnancy, birth, and early parenting. We'll unpack how sensory overload, interoceptive confusion, communication challenges, masking, unmet support needs, and system-level misunderstandings contribute to mental health decline during the perinatal period - and why these patterns are so often missed by traditional assessments.

The presentation will combine emerging research, clinical insight, and personal narratives to help attendees identify signs of burnout, understand the overlap between mental health presentations and neurodivergent traits, and reflect on culturally safe, neurodiversity-affirming care.



This is not just a conversation about risk - it's also about hope, adaptation, and systemic change. Attendees will leave with practical strategies to support Autistic birthing people across the perinatal continuum, alongside frameworks to support co-regulation, rest, and recovery.

WORKSHOP PRESENTERS

Tuesday, 11 November



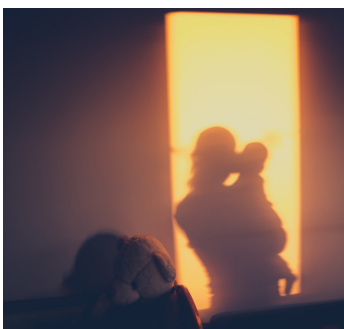
CHRIS YELLAND

**Senior Clinical Psychologist
Helen Mayo House**

Chris Yelland is a Senior Clinical Psychologist who has worked with the South Australian Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for 28 years. For the past 18 years she has been a clinician at Helen Mayo House, supporting women in the perinatal period experiencing a range of mental health disorders including Borderline Personality Disorder. Chris has been involved in the development and facilitation of the Mother-Infant Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (MI-DBT) Program since its commencement. She continues to be a group facilitator, as well as providing support and supervision to other staff and services involved in delivering the program across South Australia.

Mother Infant – Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (MI-DBT): Everything You Need To Know About Running A MI-DBT Program

MI-DBT is an adaptation of traditional DBT for mothers with Borderline Personality Disorder and their infants. As well as teaching skills to manage the emotional and relational demands of parenting babies and toddlers, the program also encourages parents to interact and respond to their infants in ways that support the development of the infant's own emotion regulation abilities and interpersonal/relational skills.



This full day workshop will provide an overview of the MI-DBT program including the traditional DBT skills taught, specific examples of how these skills can be applied to the infant-parent relationship, and additional content that specifically focuses on supporting the infant's own emotional and relational development. Practical considerations of running a MI-DBT program will also be discussed.

WORKSHOP PRESENTERS

Tuesday, 11 November



AMY DAWES

OAM, Founder, CEO & Director Birth Trauma Australia

Amy is an effective advocate for bringing consumers, clinicians and researchers together to support women and families affected by birth-related trauma. In 2016, Amy established Birth Trauma Australia (BTA), a national, peer-led charity dedicated to preventing and treating birth-related trauma. We achieve this through advocacy, education, research, and peer support, aiming to create safer births and better healing for families across Australia. Our mission is to amplify the voices of those affected, drive systemic change in maternity care, and ensure that no one feels alone in their recovery journey.

FIONA REID

Birth Trauma Australia

Fiona has practised midwifery for over 30 years. She has worked in rural, regional, and metropolitan centres. She has worked in several midwifery roles, including private midwifery practice, birth centres, MGP and overseas in Papua New Guinea and India. She has worked as a Midwifery Clinical Specialist in a Level 6 Maternity Hospital and as a Clinical Midwifery Consultant in a Level 5 Maternity Hospital.



In 2018, Fiona initiated and developed a Formal Birth Debriefing Service using Trauma Informed Care principles at a regional hospital, and in that capacity, she has debriefed more than 500 women, families, and practising midwives. She now understands the urgent need for deep, compassion-driven care in maternity services for everyone involved in both receiving care and for those providing care if we are to modify trauma by protecting the 'humanness' of expert clinical practice. Fiona has been a member and clinical consultant for BTA since 2019.

WORKSHOP PRESENTERS

Tuesday, 11 November

Trauma-Informed Postnatal Care

This comprehensive workshop offers a grounded and compassionate approach to understanding and recognising trauma in the perinatal context.

Designed for healthcare professionals, and anyone supporting birthing individuals during the perinatal period, the session explores the complex intersection of trauma in both the body and mind. We will unpack how trauma manifests physiologically and psychologically, and how these responses can impact the birthing experience and recovery.

Participants will gain practical tools for managing trauma in the moment, learning how to recognise signs of dysregulation and apply immediate strategies to support safety and grounding, both for your clients and yourselves.

The workshop also covers trauma symptoms, assessment, and support pathways, equipping attendees with knowledge to identify trauma responses and confidently signpost to appropriate care.

A special focus is given to planning a subsequent birth after trauma, acknowledging the layered emotions and fears that may arise. Through evidence-informed guidance, we will explore how to prepare for a new birth experience that is informed, supported, and empowering. Finally, the workshop addresses the often-overlooked topic of vicarious trauma.

Professionals working closely with trauma survivors are at risk of emotional fatigue and burnout. We will identify signs of secondary trauma, discuss strategies for resilience, and highlight the importance of reflective practice and peer support.

With a blend of neuroscience, real-world experience, and trauma-informed principles, this workshop provides a safe space to build confidence, deepen understanding, and foster healing.



Terms and Conditions

When purchasing a ticket you are agreeing to the following:

1. Registration cancellations must be sent in writing by email to QLD_PIMH@health.qld.gov.au (These changes will not be accepted over the phone.)
2. Registration cancellations received up to 30 days prior to the event will receive a full refund, less a \$20.00 handling fee.
3. Registration cancellations received less than 30 days and up to 14 days prior to the event will receive a 50% refund.
4. No refunds will be given for registration ticket cancellations received within 13 days of the event; however, a substitute delegate may be nominated within 7 days.
5. Participants agree to be photographed and filmed by attending the event. For those do not desire to be photographed or filmed, please refrain from being in front of the camera.



Sponsorship Packages

Tier	Inclusions (Monday 10th Nov)	Cost (excl GST)
Platinum	• Your logo on flyer • Showcased on PowerPoint throughout conference. • 5 min speaking slot. • Exhibitor stand / trade stall before conference, during morning tea, during lunch and during afternoon tea	\$2,500
Gold	• Your logo on flyer • Showcased on PowerPoint throughout conference. • Verbally thanked during introduction for sponsorship • Exhibitor stand / trade stall before conference, during morning tea, during lunch and during afternoon tea	\$1,500
Silver	• Exhibitor stand / trade stall before conference, during morning tea, during lunch and during afternoon tea • Verbally thanked during introduction for sponsorship	\$550
Bronze	• Exhibitor stand / trade stall before conference, during morning tea, during lunch and during afternoon tea	\$250

Further Details

- Set-up for the trade stall can commence by 7am
- Likely for 150 face-to-face attendees
- 1 x trestle table and 1 x chair to be provided by Symposium.
- Contact QLD_PIMHSYM@health.qld.gov.au to pay via invoice.

