

Emerging Minds.

National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health

RACGP/Emerging Minds webinar two

Responding to the mental health needs of infants and toddlers

7pm, AET 07 March, 2019

Case study: Haley & Crystal – Part Three

Access video: <https://youtu.be/5ZnefvEz5Q>

Crystal is a three-year-old child who lives with her parents, Lewis and Haley. Crystal's parents are both trying hard to be good parents to her, but there are many obstacles in their way, including poverty, Lewis's drug addiction and Haley's experiences of depression.

In this video, Haley talks to her GP about the changes she is noticing in Crystal. At first, Haley describes these changes as the effects of tummy pain, but the GP thinks there is more to it.

Eventually, Haley describes changes in Crystal's mood and explains that she has been unusually withdrawn. Haley and Crystal have been arguing a lot lately and Crystal witnesses this regularly. A couple of weeks ago, Lewis pushed Haley when she tried to wake him for work. In a future session, the GP invites Haley to bring Crystal to a consult.

An Australian study investigating a wide range of risk factors for adult mental health difficulties found that 16.1% of infants had four or more risk factors (Guy, Furber, Leach, & Segal, 2016).

Yet a significant number of infants and toddlers in Australia are not recognised as having mental health vulnerabilities or difficulties and are not receiving supports or accessing services. The question of infant and toddler mental health presentations is one that continues to challenge GPs, particularly those working with families experiencing adversity.

This webinar examines presentations of mental health difficulties in infants and toddlers from newborns to three years of age. It explores GPs interactions with infants and toddlers and parents in ways that effectively support co-ordinated service responses. It will examine Haley and Crystal's case study, to show how GPs might respond to infant and toddler mental health presentations, while providing practical examples of positive engagement with parents.

The presenters will discuss how they would approach a session with Haley and Crystal. What will they be looking for? What kind of questions would they ask Haley and Crystal? What information about infant mental health would they provide?

An Emerging Minds' child and family partner will also describe their experience of General Practice, and what was useful in responding to the mental health needs of their infants and toddlers.

By attending this webinar participants will be able to:

- Recognise the signs of mental health difficulties in infants and children and intervene proactively and sensitively in ways that enhance the chance of effective treatment and mitigate immediate risks. – patient safety learning outcome
- Identify signs of mental health difficulties in infants and toddlers by the use of helpful conversations with parents.
- Use a preventative framework to develop a shared understanding of the child's mental health with parents and make informed decisions around what support is most appropriate for both infants and toddlers and their family.

Delivery partners:



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