

Values and Guiding Principles



Peach Tree

PERINATAL WELLNESS

Who are we?

Peach Tree Perinatal Wellness (Peach Tree) is a perinatal mental health organisation that offers trauma-informed support for people during the perinatal and early parenthood period.

The perinatal and early parenthood period (the time from pre-conception of a baby to up to five years post-birth) is full of change. Trying for a baby, having a baby, caring for an infant and raising a child are major life experiences that are often dichotic in nature; that is, they can be both joyful, loving and rewarding—as well as stressful, challenging and overwhelming. It can be a very vulnerable time of life, particularly for people who may have already had tough life experiences (such as childhood or adulthood trauma). Having feelings and emotions that are challenging in nature is a very normal experience in this phase of life.

Unfortunately, issues such as stigma (societal or self), fear (perceived or real) and fractured health and social systems create barriers for people and families to get the help and support they need to thrive. As a result, the presence of mental health challenges in this time of life are very prevalent.

Peach Tree believes that **all** parents, expecting parents and children deserve meaningful support, help and attention during the transition and adjustment into parenthood.

We believe that **all** infants and children deserve the best start to life as possible.

We believe that **all** families deserve thriving communities to actively participate in, so that individual emotional, social, physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing can be optimised.

We are a community-based service, that uses the lived experiences of our staff and our community to shape, influence and guide everything we do. Lived experience is at the heart and soul of Peach Tree.

OUR PURPOSE IS TO SERVE OUR COMMUNITY. OUR COMMITMENT IS TO OUR COMMUNITY.

To do so, we must clearly identify and hold strong to our values and guiding principles. Values and principles are interrelated, and both are essential for a purposeful organisation.

Our values provide the foundation for our beliefs and behaviour. Our guiding principles provide a framework for decision-making that is aligned with our values. Together, they capture how we act, work, make decisions, set priorities and conduct ourselves.

Our Approach

With between 52 and 70 per cent of Australia's population identifying as having exposure to traumatic experiences, it is more important than ever that Peach Tree is resourced and equipped to respond appropriately within a trauma-informed approach. Ensuring we have a trauma-informed culture, systems and practices are paramount.

We have adopted the Scottish Recovery Network (SRN) Values Framework. SRN's recognition as "Experts by Experience" and the concept of "Peer Working" resonates strongly with our current lived experience origins and approaches.

We have further adapted these values to provide clarifying context to our perinatal and early parenthood mental health environment, to ensure the framework is 'fit for purpose' for our organisation.

Our Values:

- H - hope
- E - experiences
- A - authenticity
- R - responsibility
- M - mutuality
- E - empowerment



Our Guiding Principles:

Safety, Trustworthiness, Collaboration, Choice, Empowerment, Transformation.

HEAR ME

HOPE EXPERIENCES AUTHENTICITY RESPONSIBILITY MUTUALITY EMPOWERMENT

Our Values

What we believe about Hope:

- We all have hopes, dreams and aspirations for ourselves and our families—including what we thought parenthood would look and feel like.
- Even when mental health challenges exist, it is possible to learn and grow. “Two steps forward, one step back” is still progress.
- We ‘hold hope’ for the parents we support as role models who represent the possibility of personal healing.
- The peer relationship offers a unique healing environment and is a powerful way to champion hope, optimism and resilience.

What we believe about Experiences:

- Early life experiences matter, the first 2000 days is a critical time of life.
- It’s not what happens to us, it’s our experience of what happens to us that is important.
- Lived-experience workers connect, build rapport and trust quickly through purposefully sharing their lived experiences.
- Empathy, non-judgement and compassion are at the cornerstone of peer relationships.
- Sharing stories in safe spaces can be a very powerful tool to normalise and de-stigmatise our experiences, and can be a catalyst for personal change and growth.

What we believe about Authenticity:

- There is bravery and courage in being authentic with ourselves and others.
- “Being with” is powerful. We make the most of our relationship by offering those around us our genuine presence.
- Authenticity builds connection and trust.
- Being vulnerable and honest is at the heart of lived-experience work.

Our Values

What we believe about Responsibility:

- Every person needs to own responsibility and accountability for their mental health and wellbeing.
- We have a shared responsibility to act with integrity and apply ethical decision making.
- We protect the dignity, confidentiality and privacy of people, being accountable to dignity of risk and duty-of-care standards.
- We are self-aware and accountable to how our behaviour and attitude impacts those around us.
- We honour the responsibility and opportunity we have to make a positive impact on community.

What we believe about Mutuality:

- Mutuality means that we are aware power imbalances exist. We treat people as equals, respect their view of the world and how they have come to make sense of their life experiences.
- Mutuality grows when we create space for curiosity, honesty, bravery, vulnerability, while holding a deep respect for each other.
- Mutuality is developed through respectfully sharing ideas, learnings and experiences.
- Relationships are mutual. Everyone involved in the relationship has a responsibility to making it work.

What we believe about Empowerment:

- We believe people are the experts of their own recovery. People hold the skills, knowledge and intuition within themselves to overcome challenges.
- At Peach Tree we reflect, validate and witness people's strengths. We create environments which foster confidence and self-determination.
- Healing is the job of an individual; we are in ultimate control of our own lives.

Our Guiding Principles

Our guiding principles centre us in our purpose. They are the overarching statements that guide our decision making. Our guiding principles are: Trustworthiness, Safety, Choice, Collaboration, Empowerment, Transformation.

SAFETY

We believe all people need to feel safe. This not only includes the people we support, but also our workplace and visitors to our parent wellbeing centres.

People are diverse. We practice radical acceptance of people and their different backgrounds, experiences, opinions and choices. We are inclusive and progressive in radical acceptance regardless of gender, sexuality, race, ability and language. We support a 'togetherness' culture.

We strive to create safe environments for people.

We train, develop and support our workforce to apply trauma-informed practice to support safety within our workplace and for our community.

We are flexible and accommodating of people's needs, balancing dignity of risk and duty of care.

We approach our relationships with kindness, compassion and warmth.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

We believe building trust, rapport and strong connection to our community is paramount.

We care deeply for our community. Respectful relationships support the building of safety and trust.

We strive towards accountable, transparent and consultative decision making.

We are pioneering and innovative in the perinatal mental health support space and dedicated to continuous quality improvement.

We hold high professional standards, dedicated to competency and skill building of our highly skilled workforce.



Our Guiding Principles

COLLABORATION

We understand people are individuals, and a part of a relational ecosystem. We work collaboratively within family, kinship and community frameworks, always keeping baby in mind.

To better serve our community's needs, we engage with cross sector expertise and build strong collaborative relationships.

When advocating, we use our lived and living experiences to collaborate with our community to ensure we accurately reflect and amplify voices.

CHOICE

We believe every individual deserves healing. We help people to access tools and support they need to find meaning, purpose and hope in their life.

We offer accurate (evidence-based), accessible (free) information, so people are well positioned to make informed and self-determined choices.

We believe there is no one right way to parent.

We embrace a person-led approach and encourage self-authorship of experiences.

EMPOWERMENT

We believe people are the experts in their life, and best placed to make the choices they believe are best for them.

We give resourcing and support, to facilitate the possibility of healing.

TRANSFORMATION

The way people receive help and support during times of escalated life vulnerabilities, is critical.

Systemic change is needed to ensure help and support is kind, compassionate and does no further harm. Altering "the way things have always been done" is not easy. We acknowledge that true, transformational change takes time, resources, patience and determination.

We adopt well considered, trauma-informed approaches to balance best outcomes and pathways to healing, whilst fulfilling our duty of care.

We will always be open to new thinking, remain agile and be responsive to our community and their changing needs.



HUMAN RIGHTS

- Human rights are universal and protect dignity and choice for all.
- Peach Tree is obliged to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.
- Trauma-informed care and responsiveness is the lens that is an overarching framework informing how we work with our communities.
- By caring for parents, we are caring for children.
- We recognise the particular needs and rights of a child in the first years of life, as outlined in the *World Association of Infant Mental Health (WAIMH) Position Paper on the Rights of Infants (2016)*.
- Infants have unique ways of expressing themselves and need caring, nurturing relationships that offer love, physical and emotional safety, adequate nutrition and sleep.
- We are strengths-based, recovery-oriented and person-led.

Peach Tree acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work, learn and gather. We pay our respect to the Elders past and present, recognising their ongoing connection to land, sea and community. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We are committed to our values and guiding principles. If you would like to further discuss our values and guiding principles, please contact us at ceo@peachtree.org.au.



Peach Tree
PERINATAL WELLNESS