

Diagram of key themes by type of participant

Women

- Many women say interpersonal conflict contributed to or exacerbated their perinatal distress.
- Believe their partners & families are marginalised, disregarded; want them to be helped to support them better, and offered support themselves.
- Women more likely than partners/other family members to mention wanting couple/family therapy.
- However, they also harbour anxiety about potential of family involvement/support to disrupt relationships further, marginalise their own needs, reduce their autonomy etc. Some women want privacy from their families.

Partners and wider families

- Partners and wider families struggle themselves with adjustment to having a new baby; with impact of woman's struggles.
- Feel overlooked, marginalised by services.
- Want to be better informed about how to support women, and want their own needs to be acknowledged – someone to think about them, ask them how they are doing.
- But also they fear greater involvement might be unmanageable – they won't have the time or energy.

Partners

- Anxious also about possible destabilising effect of greater focus on them, possibility they might be required to change
- Feel they should 'be strong', not need help, norms of masculinity make it harder for men to accept support
- Say they prefer 'informal or 'incidental' support

Wider family

- Face difficulties relating to their unique role not being recognised. For example, grandparents being treated by professionals as a 'substitute partner' where mother is single
- Feel as 'carer' they should 'be strong', not need help, not take attention away from woman