

motherdom[®]

The NEW mental wellbeing platform for parents of little ones

PITCHING GUIDELINES

MAY 2021

WHY DOES MOTHERDOM EXIST?

Journalist Anna Ceesay went through low mood and anxiety during her second pregnancy. Alarmed by the lack of a mainstream media platform dedicated to maternal mental health and wellbeing, she launched *Motherdom* magazine in March 2019. Anna is the Founding Editor and Executive Director of the company.

WHY IS IT NEEDED?

MIND says that 1 in 5 women will experience a perinatal mental health issue, and from *Motherdom's* own research, we know that the problems don't stop when baby is 12 months old. We spoke to 1000 mums with kids under 5 in March 2019 and found that over half have felt anxious since having a child, 45% have felt low, and over a third (35%) depressed. The level of care across the UK for perinatal mental health is variable, and a report from Healthwatch England (Sep 2019) found that 47% of women who needed mental health services found it 'difficult' or 'very difficult' to get support.

Of course, *Motherdom* can never hope to fill the NHS' shoes – Anna was lucky enough to get Cognitive Behavioural Therapy through the NHS – which was life changing for her. *Motherdom* is absolutely not a mental health service, but a media platform. We aim to reach as many mums as possible and give them hope, inspiration and motivation from other women's stories.

WHO, WHAT, WHERE?

Motherdom is a new mental wellbeing media platform aimed at 'mums with little ones', meaning children under 5.

Issues 1-4 of the print magazine were published in 2019, and were stocked in selected WHSmith stores. The print mag is currently on hold but we recently secured funding to be able to launch a new website in March 2021 and a podcast in autumn 2021. The website is now our primary content hub for articles.

WHAT KINDS OF FEATURE ARTICLES ARE IN MOTHERDOM?

REAL-LIFE STUFF

First person accounts of a mum going through a difficult time in her life (with regards to maternal mental health or wellbeing), and how she overcame, or managed to work through, that period. These stories are not scaremongering but rather hopeful and inspiring. These can be emotional to read so we sometimes include a trigger warning at the beginning to prepare more vulnerable readers. We also welcome articles from partners, step-parents, co-parents, foster parents and acting parents which fall into this category.

EXPERT STUFF/PRACTICAL STUFF

Experts in maternal mental health or wellbeing on their area of expertise, often giving practical tips to the reader, things they can try at home. Please be aware that, while we are open to holistic forms of treatment for mental health we do promote evidence-based approaches. We would be grateful if you could consider this when writing for us. We cannot promote treatments that are not evidence-based. In addition, we cannot give medical advice.

DADS STUFF

We include articles from dads. The platform may be called *Motherdom* but of course we need to involve dads in the conversation! These may be similar to the real-life/ expert pieces in their format.

FOOD STUFF

We feature foodies and include one or two of their recipes that are healthy, realistic, and family-friendly. The connection between physical health and mental health is clear, and if we're well nourished then we're better equipped to deal with what life (or a toddler) might throw at us. We ask authors to ensure that all the ingredients listed are safe to eat in pregnancy.

KIDS STUFF

These are articles on kids' mental health and wellbeing. Previous pieces have included book recommendations for their mental health, advice on starting school, how to encourage kids to see the 'magic' in their mistakes, and troubleshooting challenging behaviour.

FUNNY STUFF

Quirky and funny articles about a lighter aspect of maternal wellbeing.

THE NUTS AND BOLTS

If you'd like to write something for *Motherdom*, there are some practical things you should know:

- Firstly, as we're a small social enterprise, we're currently unable to offer remuneration for articles. However, we're very happy to include authors' social handles as well as websites.
- We currently only accept pitches from adults aged over 18.
- Not all story ideas that are pitched make it into *Motherdom*. This is absolutely no reflection on the person who is pitching, but rather Anna's passion to make every single story the best fit for our readership.
- We publish pieces about mild-moderate experiences of maternal mental health (as well as maternal wellbeing more generally). We don't have the capacity or expertise to publish pieces that are focused on the more severe or complex areas of maternal mental health issues.
- If you are interested in writing a 'real-life' piece and have your own lived experience of maternal mental health issues, we'll ask you whether you have access to professional support, during and immediately after the writing process. *Motherdom* is passionate about ensuring its contributors are being looked after. *Motherdom* reserves the right not to commission or publish any pieces where we deem that the contributor is too vulnerable or doesn't have access to appropriate professional support. For more information on this point, please read our **Vulnerable Adults and Children Policy**.
- If you're a health professional, we'll ask you to confirm that you hold professional indemnity and public liability insurance before we're able to commission your article. If you're not a health professional, you don't need to have this if you're only sharing your own story.
- At least one member of *Motherdom's* Editorial Board reads every original feature before publication, so they may have some feedback, which Anna passes onto contributors. This is totally normal and nothing to worry about. Their job is to make sure that the content is as helpful, accurate and supportive as possible. There is so much stuff out there (especially on social media) about maternal mental health and wellbeing that's not checked over by an expert and therefore runs the risk of being triggering, misleading and unhelpful for its audience. This is the opposite of what we're trying to do!

- *Motherdom's* editorial process is quite long. It's 'slow journalism' which places quality above everything else. As mentioned previously, an Editorial Board member reviews every original feature article and Anna also edits the pieces, so this takes some time.
- In rare cases, pieces may be pulled entirely if either Anna or the Editorial Board have concerns about the article that can't be remedied. These are never easy decisions to make, but are always made in the interests of the readership. The choice to commission a pitch or publish a contributed article remains at all times, Anna's decision.

TIPS FOR PREPARING YOUR PITCH (ADAPTED FROM GENPROGRESS.ORG)

- Introduce your story idea and define your angle in no more than 100 words. (By "angle" I mean how are you approaching the subject - i.e. *"I'd like to write about my own personal story of maternal OCD"*, or, *"I'd like to write about the latest research linking gestational diabetes with maternal mental health issues"*)
- Explain why your idea is timely, unique, important, and/or of interest to *Motherdom's* readers.

Please use **this form** to send in your pitch.

FINALLY...

If you have any questions about any of this, please do get in touch with Anna – she's on anna@motherdom.co.uk – thanks so much for your time and interest xxx