**peep antenatal programme session plan**

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| Remember to refer to the downloadable *Antenatal Key Ideas* & your*Peep Antenatal Programme Manual*. |

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| **session focus** |  |  **session** |
| **How babies communicate - baby states and crying** |  | Antenatal session ~ 5 |
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|  aims |
| * To raise awareness of baby sleeping and waking states and responses
* *Overall:* To develop and support healthy parent-baby attachment relationships, by enhancing parents’ ability to think about their baby, tune in to their baby’s feelings and respond sensitively (reflective functioning).
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| orim in action*you can help parents and carers by:* |
| * providing **opportunities** for parents-to-be to think about how babies communicate at different times, and how parents’ responses can reflect this.
* identifying how they can **recognise** and value their baby’s development inside the womb.
* encouraging them to **interact** with their unborn baby e.g. through talking and singing.
* highlighting how parents are **modelling** ways of wondering about their baby and their baby’s feelings and responding sensitively (reflective functioning).
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| talk time |
| **gather **parent feedback** from previous session if appropriate (and record on *review and reflection form)*****consider: - what did they think about their baby’s characteristics, likes, dislikes? - what did they try or notice?** |
| Ideas for questions:? How do babies let you know how they are feeling? Spread out photos of the six baby ‘states’ with  pictures of babies’ different states or expressions (e.g. see Peep antenatal toolbox or use *All*  *about baby cues* - Social baby book with photos.)**Baby states:** these are a helpful way to think about the different levels of alertness or moods that babies commonly experience. Being aware of baby states can help parents/carers recognise and interpret the actions and responses of their babies (‘cues’). This will help them to understand their feelings and respond to their needs appropriately. Babies can move very quickly from one state to another – and not always in a particular order. There are six widely-recognised baby states - three sleep states and three awake states. Talk through the descriptions below, and ask parents if they can find a photo that fits the description.* + **Deep sleep**: babies’ breathing is regular and steady and they lie very still. They are hard to wake when they are in a deep sleep.
	+ **Light sleep**: babies may have fluttering eyelids or rapid eye movements – they may also make facial expressions and little noises. Babies often move into a light sleep from a deep sleep.
	+ **Drowsy sleep**: babies may have glazed eyes with ‘heavy’ lids and may be startled by sudden noises. Babies tend to be drowsy just before falling asleep or waking up.
	+ **Quiet alert**: babies have still bodies, their eyes are wide and they appear interested in what is going on around them.
	+ **Unsettled**: babies show they are unsettled by whining, wiggling, fussing or arching their backs. They are more sensitive to noise, light or hunger.
	+ **Crying**: babies show that they are distressed and need help by crying forcefully, thrashing about and making facial grimaces.

These are summarised on the ‘Baby states’ handout, which you might want to share with parents. There are also 1 – 2 minute video clips of each state on the AIMH-UK website, which you might find useful. Encourage parents to watch and learn – the more parents watch and talk to their baby, the more they will understand them. Parents can help babies begin to understand their feelings by acting as a mirror to notice and reflect how the baby is feeling, then change or ‘mark’ this with a reassuring expression *(‘marked mirroring’*). This lets the baby know that they have been understood and that feelings can be moderated – through this they begin to understand and to regulate their own feelings (‘*self‑regulation’*). Parents can help their baby to feel safe and relaxed when they acknowledge their baby’s feelings by reacting calmly but responsively (‘*containment’*).Model talking to your baby doll as if you’re a parent, giving an indication (for the benefit of delegates!) which state the baby is in. You can also link this to talking to their baby-bump when the baby seems still and relaxed, and when it’s moving around and kicking. ‘Ooh, you’re feeling lively, aren’t you?’Facilitate a discussion to share thoughts. Explain that developing an awareness of their baby’s states and cues will help parents to understand and respond appropriately to their baby’s needs and feelings. Also highlight how these responses will help their baby begin to understand their own needs and learn about their own feelings, too.* Include a brief discussion about **crying** - what to do when babies cry, what do if you feel you’re struggling to cope etc. It can be challenging, especially when the parent/s are very tired and the baby is crying a lot. Mention safeguarding - putting the baby down, chatting to health visitor or someone if things getting too much. Share any local support info/ contact details.
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| songs and rhymes 🎜 |  | sharing books/stories 🕮 |
| * *Hello* *song* (and *Goodbye* *song* at the end)

Try Round and round the garden – share importance of baby hearing parents’ voices – he or she already knows you! |  | 🕮 Share *What shall we do with a Boo hoo baby* by Cressida Cowell. Maybe also read a few funny extracts from *Commando Dads* by Neil Sinclair |
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| things to try at home |
| Encourage parents to chat and sing to their unborn baby during the week and to spend time thinking about what their baby might be like. |
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| **resources** *(remember to look in the online toolbox for further information, resources, ideas and examples to support your delivery)* |
| * 6 photos of baby states (see toolbox)
* Parent handout: Peep tip - Baby states
* Video clip – baby states
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