Stress, uncertainty & lone births: New research uncovers the anxieties felt by mums-to-be

"I felt totally and utterly alone during my pregnancy"

Peanut app has launched Bump Buddies, a new feature which connects women with shared due dates, and already 800k interactions have taken place

Thursday 22nd October 2020: 7 in 10 pregnant women reveal they are suffering from extreme loneliness as a result of COVID-19, and over half (55%) admit to be struggling with their mental wellness, reveals new research[1] from Peanut.

Shedding light on the vulnerabilities facing expectant mothers during the pandemic, Peanut, an app which connects women through all stages of motherhood, has found that 8 in 10 (81%) struggled with navigating pregnancy and preparing for birth as a result of in-person meet-ups, such as NCT, being cancelled.

What's more, over a third (35%) admit to not coping well with feelings of isolation, driven by the fear of going through parts of labour alone and not being able to see family. 1 in 5 expectant mums have only seen their family once or twice since March if at all, and the majority (55%) less than five times. 7 in 10 (70%) have only socialised with friends a couple of times in six months.

This comes as half of NHS trusts are reportedly considering placing fresh restrictions on partners attending antenatal and postnatal appointments, as well as labour, with pregnant women classified as 'vulnerable.' In a bid to help combat this, **Peanut** has launched a new app feature called **Bump Buddies**, which is enabling mums-to-be to connect and build friendships with women who have the same due date, as well as share advice. Within just 48 hours of going live, 800k interactions have been exchanged across 60k women in Bump Buddy groups.

LONELY IN THE LABOUR ROOM

Almost two thirds (61%) of those surveyed stated that they worry the pandemic will continue to affect their mental health after they give birth as isolation continues. Two new first-time mums in Peanut's community have shared their lonely lockdown pregnancy and labour stories:

Kate, 25-years-old from Coventry, said: *"Being pregnant and having a baby during the middle of the pandemic was so hard, lonely and scary. I had no support network and no idea what to expect as a first-time mum. I laboured by myself for 9 hours surrounded by doctors PPE'd up to the nines, and was only allowed my partner when they broke my waters. I've felt lonely a lot since the labour as my partner has had to go back to work. Peanut has helped me connect with other mums in similar situations, which has been so valuable."*

Emma, 29-years-old from Essex, commented: *"I went in for a routine stretch and sweep and had to leave my partner in the car as he wasn't allowed onto the maternity ward. After my sweep I started bleeding and an hour later I was being induced. I was in slow labour for three days and stuck in a room by myself with no partner, change of clothes, and my young daughter waiting for me at home. My partner was with me for the*

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end of labour, had a quick cuddle and then had to leave. I experienced such anxiety throughout the whole process."

Vruti, 33-years-old from London, said: *"I'm currently pregnant at 23 weeks with my first little one and have felt lonely during these COVID times as I haven't had a chance to share my experiences with other mums or meet anyone really. All the classes are cancelled and all the appointments have to be done alone. It's tough and isolating. I'm craving interactions with mums in a similar boat. Being on Peanut has helped me relax as I can chat with mums and learn new things to prepare for birth. It's nice knowing we're all in it together."*

COVID-19 is dominating women's pregnancy concerns, topping normally popular topics like breastfeeding, birth plans and what items buy as follows:

1. Partners being able to attend scans and labour
2. Family being unable to meet their new baby immediately
3. The impact the pandemic is having on their mental wellness
4. Not having as much access to a midwife or professional support
5. Being underprepared due to not attending prenatal groups

PANDEMIC PREGNANCY PALS

Since March, Peanut's community has swelled to over 2 million women, with 37% of new users being pregnant, as women turn to the app to seek advice, create friendships and chat in a time of social distancing and tightening lockdown. The birth of Bump Buddies comes after Peanut witnessed women setting up their own due date groups on the app.

Users are automatically added to a Bump Buddy group, such as 'December 2020', after updating their profile and stating how far along they are into pregnancy.

Michelle Kennedy, founder and CEO of Peanut commented: *"As we've seen with the increasing support for the #butnotmaternity hashtag, at a moment in time where pregnant women are experiencing such a monumental life change, the pandemic has created more isolation and uncertainty than ever before. Do women have to go for a scan alone, will they labour alone, and outside of the pandemic, are their emotions, physical symptoms, experiences, normal. Pregnant women need more support.*

Even the joys of pregnancy, the excitement, first kicks, buying that first baby item, can feel muted. Being able to connect women has never, ever been more critical to the wellbeing of pregnant women, and indeed our unborn future generations. We continue to build tools to make women's lives better, and we're particularly proud of this one - so too are our users given the engagement we've seen."

Every day on Peanut like-minded women connect to seek and share advice on topics ranging from fertility and miscarriage to motherhood and sex. Positive stories of women having each other's backs during the pandemic include one user providing last-minute childcare when another was giving birth.

Alongside Bump Buddies, women can also match with each other on Peanut by interests, personality types, neighborhoods, and more, as well as take part in community discussions and schedule virtual meet-ups.

To download and sign-up to the Peanut app for free visit: www.peanut-app.io/.

ENDS

Download photography assets via Peanut's Digital Newsroom:
https://digitalnewsroom.media/peanut/bump-buddies-uk/

For more information, to set-up an interview with Michelle Kennedy or request case studies from the Peanut community, please contact Peanut's Press Office via: peanut@manifest.group.

About Peanut

Peanut is the first social network to connect women throughout all stages of motherhood. Their mission is to provide a safe space for mothers, expectant mothers and those trying to conceive to build friendships, ask questions and find support. Introducing you to women nearby who are at a similar stage in life, the app provides access to a community of women who are there to listen, share information and offer valuable advice. Whether it's understanding IVF, adoption, pregnancy, first years or nursery and beyond, Peanut is a place to ask questions and join groups relating to your stage in life. With over 20m posts, the app has become a coveted destination for women looking to connect.

About Michelle Kennedy, founder and CEO of Peanut

Michelle Kennedy is founder and CEO of Peanut, one of the fastest-growing apps for women. Having started her career as an M&A lawyer at leading international law firm Mishcon de Reya, she later joined dating app, Badoo, where she rose to Deputy CEO at the multi-billion dollar behemoth. During her tenure at Badoo she was integral to and inaugural board member of Bumble. Having worked in social discovery for ten years, Michelle has unprecedented experience and understanding of the safety and growth components of building a social network for women and continues to execute on her mission to make Peanut the leading network to connect women when they need each other most.