



Mother's Day

CONNECT

One hour, every mother.

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#MothersDayConnect

TEAM LEADER TOOLKIT

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A LETTER FROM EMBRACE

We are thrilled that you've stepped up to the challenge of leading an MDC team this year. Whether it is your first time leading, or your fourth, we have no doubt that you'll meet incredible, like-minded, inspiring women who will grow your sisterhood in meaningful ways.

It is hard to believe that a simple idea to honour one mother in 2016 has grown into a national celebration for new mothers everywhere.

The growth of this idea from one mother visiting another, to thousands of women is driven by women like you – women passionate about supporting and championing new motherhood and motivated by an opportunity to weave a common thread between us.

The sisterhood of mothers and mother-supporters is powerful. Over the years we have seen friendships formed, organisations strengthened, kindness spread, empathy and lots of deep listening, belly-shaking laughter and some very raw tears.

We're anticipating many meaningful moments in 2019 and we're truly grateful to have you with us along this journey.

This Toolkit for leaders is for you to use, as you see fit, in preparation for our national celebration. We hope you find it useful and encouraging – it was put together with lots of love, based on some helpful lessons we've learnt along the way.

As always, we're always here to listen and help, so pick up the phone or drop us an email if you have any questions, or just feel like chatting.

Sisters, we've got this. Here's to the best Mother's Day yet!

Love,

Julie Mentor

Embrace Movement Leader



Embrace | The Movement for Mothers

INSPIRE | CONNECT | MOBILISE

Embrace is a national movement for connected, supported and celebrated motherhood. We want to see every new mother embraced and flourishing from the start of her motherhood journey, understanding that an empowered and embraced mother raises a thriving child.

Inspiration

We seek to inspire South Africa with the vision of embraced motherhood and to join the village of supporters who believe in the power of motherhood. Embrace acknowledges the magnitude of the transition to motherhood and aims to inspire mothers with a message of solidarity in the struggles, the joys and the mundane aspects of this new experience. Through a growing body of stories and intimate spaces of sharing, we hope to inspire new mothers to strengthen their personal sense of confidence and support women's well-being in a vulnerable stage of their lives.

Mobilisation

Embrace creates platforms and spaces where mothers and supporters are empowered to rally around the vision of making South Africa a great place to be a mother. This is a movement that celebrates communities of people finding creative ways to support and embrace mothers across the country. An example of this is Mother's Day Connect.

Connection

Motherhood is not meant to be travelled alone. That's why this movement of mothers and supporters believes in the power of simple supportive connections. Embrace finds creative ways to build connection during a time when women are often home-bound and socially isolated.



WHAT IS MOTHER'S DAY CONNECT?

Mother's Day Connect is a national celebration of new motherhood started by Embrace, South Africa's movement for mothers. The campaign brings together women from across the country on Mother's Day to acknowledge and celebrate the bond of motherhood.

It is a simple but powerful concept. Women form small teams and visit birthing facilities in their local communities for one hour on Mother's Day to build connections and celebrate South Africa's newest moms. This isn't about grand gestures or education. There are no super-heroes. This is about acknowledgement and connection. "I see you. I see your baby. Happy Mother's Day."

*"I see you. I see your baby.
Happy Mother's Day."*



Connections can be lasting and compelling. Through the Mother's Day Connect experience unlikely friendships are born and participants find new allies and sisters. In fact, for many women it is the sense of community and camaraderie that brings them back each year. This is the spirit of Mother's Day Connect – women celebrating women and working together.

Mother's Day Connect takes place across South Africa each year. In 2018, we visited 49 facilities in 17 cities across 8 provinces (see map above). This year we're aiming to expand our reach and make sure women in all 9 provinces experience the unique joy of Mother's Day Connect.

We need women across the country who are willing to help lead this initiative in their own communities.

WHAT IS A TEAM LEADER?

Team leaders are the engine of this event. Team leaders create a space for team members to plan their Mother's Day Connect visit and act as the chief liaison with the hospital and Embrace hub team.

The Embrace hub team provides team leaders with all the necessary tools, materials and support you need to lead a team. And in many cities team leaders form their own group and work together and combine resources and skills to benefit all of their teams.

There are a few different roles a leader plays in organising a team. In some instances, especially for large size hospitals, there may be more than one team leader. Below explains some of the different functions team leaders fulfill:

"Team Leaders are the engines for this event."

Administration

Team leaders play an important role in managing lists of participants and supporting the registration process. This requires some work on a computer and/or smart phone as our registration process happens online. If this is challenge for you, don't be discouraged we can always offer support if access to a computer is unavailable to you.

Team & Hospital Communications

The team leader is the chief liaison to the birthing facility staff, the team of volunteers and the Embrace hub team. We communicate with team leaders via calls, WhatsApp, email and social media. We ask team leaders to choose how best to communicate with their teams, many choose to form WhatsApp groups. Different birthing facilities use a variety of different communication channels, some operate best in person, some over the phone and others over email.

Sponsorship Recruitment

Team leaders, with the help of their volunteers, play a vital role in securing sponsorships and -

donations to help make the mothers and staff at your birthing facility feel special on the day of your visit. We'll share more about gifts later in this guide but if fundraising is new to you don't be overwhelmed, gifts are a minor part of this event and getting donations is not a requirement.

What inspired others to be team leaders...

"I saw the post on Facebook from another friend staying in KZN and I liked the page. I followed the post and started to understand the idea. I'm generally very passionate about helping others and I love children. My son was a few months then and I knew how stressful the journey can be. I feel it's very important to encourage positive experience especially for first time mothers so they can build healthy relationships with their young ones.

-Baitebetse Ramong, Job Shimanka Tamane Hospital, Rustenburg

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

We understand that stepping up to lead a team may seem intimidating or scary. So, we've put together a step-by-step guide to assist you the entire way. You'll find the information separated in 3 sections.



PRE-EVENT



In this section, we'll explain all you need to know to identify and gain access to a birthing facility, register your event with the Embrace team, how to recruit a team and prepare for your visit.

EVENT DAY



This section explains how to manage your team on the day, create a comfortable and engaging environment for the mother's you're visiting and share your experiences with the Embrace network.

POST-EVENT



Here we provide advice on how to maintain your team's connection and carry the spirit of Mother's Day Connect forward.

RESOURCES



Check out the appendix to find some useful tools.

TIMELINES



The timelines provided are merely a guide - these are the ideal projections for planning the event. Some steps may take longer than anticipated. If you're learning about this opportunity at the last-minute, it is still possible to plan your event with a limited amount of time so don't be discouraged by the timelines provided.





PRE-EVENT

GETTING STARTED

Here we outline step-by-step how to start planning your Mother's Day Connect event.

STEP 1:

Identify and get permission from a local birthing facility (3 months before Mother's Day)

The first step to planning a Mother's Day Connect event is identifying and gaining access to a birthing facility in your community. Mother's Day Connect can be hosted at any birth facility around the country. To date, we have primarily hosted the event at public care facilities but are interested in bringing this experience to private care facilities as well. Consider the facilities in your community and check our website for a list of facilities we've visited in the past.

Once you've identified a facility, you'll need to contact the appropriate staff to gain permission for your visit.

- Google the facility to find the contact details for general enquiries
- Call the facility. If your facility is a Midwife and Obstetrics Unit (MOU) ask to speak to the -

facility manager. If it is a hospital ask to speak to the Operations Manager for the Maternity Unit.

- Tell the person about Mother's Day Connect (see script in the resources section if you need some help).
- Offer to email through the official hospital letter, if they need some more information.
- Send a follow up email with details of the event and ask the contact to reply confirming permissions and provide you with the following details (see the resources section for a sample letter and consider attaching it to your email):
 - **Preferred time for a visit** we suggest asking for a slot outside of visiting hours. MoUs discharge patients in the morning, so you may be requested to do an early morning visit.
 - **Number of post-natal beds**
 - **Number of nursing / medical staff likely to be on duty**
 - **Contact person on the day** this must be someone who will be at the facility and is able to meet you – request a direct contact number if you can.
 - **Maximum number of volunteers allowed for the visit.**

- **Any special instructions or facility information**
- **Primary languages spoken by patients**

Important tips!



It isn't mandatory to get confirmed permission in writing/email but is always helpful. You can collect all the information you need over the phone if the staff aren't responsive to emails.

Don't be discouraged if the facility doesn't grant permissions immediately. There are often necessary steps and approvals that need to happen before they can confirm permission for you.

You may need to contact and follow up with the staff repeatedly – these are busy units and they often have limited time. Be persistent and respectful.

Be flexible with the staff. Due to their own policies, they may request you to change the size of your team or time of the visit – we always try to accommodate these needs in order to comply with the facilities' requirements and ensure the visit isn't disruptive.

Remember you're representing your team and Embrace and we want this to be a celebratory event please respect dignity and kindness



PRE-EVENT

STEP 2:

Register your event with the Embrace hub team to be listed on the website (2 months before Mother's Day)

Once your birthing facility has confirmed and given you permission for the visit, you need to submit all the necessary details to the Embrace team via the website.

- **Birthing facility name**
 - **Location** – Please google the address and ensure the address on google is accurate as this is how team members will receive specific directions.
 - **Scheduled time of visit**
 - **Number of post-natal beds**
 - **Number of nursing / medical staff likely to be on duty**
 - **Contact details of staff person on the day**
 - **Day-time delivery address** for you so that we can send you your team leader pack.
- All these details can be submitted through a form on the Embrace website.
- **Maximum number of volunteers allowed for the visit.**

- **Primary language spoken by patients.**

STEP 3:

Recruit a team of women to join you

Once you've provided all the details of your event to the Embrace Hub Team, we will post the event to our website so that other women can start signing up to join you.

TEAM SIZE

Typically, we recommend recruiting 1 woman for every 2-3 beds in the maternity ward. In some instances, this ratio won't work. For example, in a large hospital with 400 beds it may not be possible to bring in 200 volunteers. In these cases, you need to work out a ratio that is manageable for you and the facility. You need to determine the maximum number of volunteers allowed by the facility with the facility staff. **We will use the maximum number to determine how many tickets should be made available when your event is posted on the website.** If the facility asks you to limit your team size remember that you want enough women with you to be able to have a meaningful conversation with the mothers in the ward and not feel that they have to rush from bed to bed.

FINDING VOLUNTEERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Leaders in the past have found that the most successful way to recruit a team is to use their own networks. Consider all of the women in your world – your own mom, siblings, friends, colleagues, child caregivers, faith based community and social groups – invite them to share this experience with you.

Social media can be a very effective way of spreading the news about this event to your extended community. Embrace will provide you with some templates you can easily share to promote your event. As soon as the event is posted, start sharing the details with your network and encourage women to join you.

Embrace does have a robust public relations plan for Mother's Day Connect but can't reach every outlet in every community. We encourage you to approach your local radio stations and/or print publications to see if they will interview you or share details of the event. See our guidelines and tips for how to engage with media in the Resources section.



PRE-EVENT

STEP 4:

Build your team (1-2 months) before the event

MANAGE TEAM SIGN UPS

While your event is posted on the website, women can sign up to join your team at any time. Each day you will need to check for new sign ups and ensure those women are contacted within 48 hours. It is important to be responsive to new team members and make them feel welcomed into the team.

TEAM COMMUNICATIONS

We recommend creating a WhatsApp chat group and adding all of your team members to the group as they sign up. This seems to be the most popular way teams communicate. You could also use email groups – however you should know that not all team members will have access to email.

We recommend that you try to keep the conversation going on the chat and try to facilitate connections between team members leading up to the big day.

Suggestions of how to spark conversation and connection in your team:

- Follow the Embrace social media accounts (Facebook/Instagram/Twitter) and share the memes and messages there with your team on your group chat
- Ask team members to introduce themselves by answering a few questions and to share a photo
- Send a weekly update and inspiration message with things to think about and prepare women for the visit

STEP 5:



Plan for your visit (2 months before Mother's Day)

Through your group chat or email group, you'll need to start preparing for the visit. While we can't emphasize enough that the intention of this day is truly about building connections and celebration, we do know that offering small gifts can help make the new mothers and staff feel valued.

PREPARING GIFTS

As a team leader, you'll need to help your team stay focused on the intention of the day and work together to decide on the types of gifts you'll bring.

Some teams choose to rally their communities for sponsorships and donations while others choose to allow each volunteer to contribute what they feel comfortable providing. Both options work. *It is critical to remember, participating in Mother's Day Connect does not cost anything and no one should be required to donate money to be involved in a team.*

Embrace will send each team leader a team leader pack before the day. In this pack you'll receive some items that you'll be able to share with new mothers and facility staff:

- Embrace Mother's Day Cards in multiple languages
- Embrace exchange cards for volunteers and new mothers to share their contact details if they wish to stay in touch
- Items to leave behind with the nursing staff
- A token of appreciation for you the team leader





PRIOR TO MOTHER'S DAY

1 month



OUR PHILOSOPHY ON GIFTS

1. Avoid second hand items

Some participants in the past have asked why we don't encourage teams to gather second hand items. While second hand items are useful and appreciated, we don't believe bringing them as gifts keeps within the spirit of this day. Firstly, we want the focus to remain on the mother, consider small items that can make her feel special and acknowledged. Secondly, we're attempting to detach this event from a charity mindset and show new moms they're valued and worthy and we don't believe second-hand items are the best way to demonstrate this. However, we do understand that many of us have useful baby items that we'd love to see put to good use and pass on to a new mother. We do encourage you to gather these baby items and donate them to a local organisation that works with children or young mothers.

2. Keep it simple

Baked goods along with our Mother's Day Cards are a great gift! We strongly encourage you not to let the gift preparing and sharing overcomplicate your team's visit. Focus on the mom, is this something that will make her feel special?

3. Expect to visit bereaved mothers and have something to share with them

It is sometimes surprising to team members, but mothers who've lost their babies are generally in the same post-natal ward as moms with their new babies. This is obviously sensitive and difficult. It is a good idea to come prepared with a few gifts for these mothers with items just for them that doesn't include any baby items.

4. Don't forget to include the staff

Whatever you decide to bring, please do remember to include the nursing staff in your allocation of gifts. A baked cake or treat they can share is a great suggestion. Many of the staff are mothers themselves and devote all of their Mother's Day to caring for new mothers. We want to be sure they know their contribution and service is appreciated.

5. Be flexible

Numbers may change or items may need to be reassigned. Be prepared to adapt as needed.

FOR MOTHERS:

Cupcakes or other individually portioned baked goods

Pamper items for her (hand cream, nail polish, toiletries)

Post-Natal care items (sanitary pads, disposable underwear, breast pads, hand sanitizer, face wipes, nipple cream)

Magazines/Flowers



Baby bag/backpack

FOR NURSING STAFF:

Baked goods to share in the tea room (Milk Tart is always a win!)

Flowers



Hand cream

FOR BABY:

Nappies (cloth and/or disposable) & wipes

Baby toiletries

Vests, baby grows, hats and socks

Swaddling blankets

Soft toys

Small books





PRE-EVENT

SPONSORSHIPS AND DONATIONS

If your group decides to gather sponsorships and donations, we have shared some tips and suggestions from previous team members below. You'll find a sample sponsorship letter in the appendix and Embrace can provide the organisation with a Section 18 A certificate so that they can claim a tax deduction for their donation.

We have had many groups gather hand-made items from knitting groups, churches or other groups in their communities. This is a fantastic way to involve more members of your community and offer some special items to the mothers you visit. Some suggested items include; baby booties, mittens, blankets, scarves for mothers etc.

If you do manage to gather donations or monetary support it is so important to acknowledge those businesses, individuals and organisations. One way to do this is via the Embrace Facebook page. We'll host a 'Thank you Tag-A-Thon' as we approach Mother's Day. Follow this post on the Facebook page and comment and tag the person(s) or organisation(s) who contributed to your team's gift packages. We believe this is -

a powerful way of demonstrating our gratitude to our entire community and illustrates the incredible collective generosity that is generated by this event.

Christie Mae Roberts shares her best tips for securing donations:

- Try to utilise connections and networks from within the group e.g. women in the group who work with corporates can approach their departments
- One team leader put together a proposition which she circulated at her sister's workplace - to donate a certain amount to go towards a specific number of baby carriers at her hospital
- Appeal to family, friends and those with a similar heart.

Sharon van Wyk shares her advice on sponsorships:

"Get other bloggers and influencers involved. We had massive amounts of goodies sponsored for our last two events and all of these were done through using the influence of bloggers and their PR and Media contacts."

Information, shared experiences from previous MDC days and images from the previous MDC

days went a long way in tugging on the heart strings of potential sponsors. We also put together a professional and uniformed brief for all to send to potential sponsors and we ensured we gave all sponsors a lot of airtime on social media by tagging and thanking them publicly across everyone's social media platforms."

STEP 6:

Prepare for the day (1 week before the event)

PACK YOUR BAGS

Consider inviting team members to get together for a "Packing Party." Bring your team together to hand write messages in the Embrace Mother's Day cards, bake goods, or pack bags with - your collected gifts for the mothers and staff.

CHECK-IN WITH BIRTHING FACILITY STAFF

During the week before Mother's Day, we highly recommend you contact the facility staff to reconfirm the details of your visit, ensure they're expecting you and the check that the staff on duty have been prepared.



PRE-EVENT

ENSURE TEAM MEMBERS HAVE ALL THE DETAILS

Be sure to recommunicate the meeting time and plan with team members. We suggest meeting as a team at least 15 minutes before your visiting hour starts to organise yourselves and connect before you go into the facility. We also highly encourage carpooling. Often team members are travelling to unfamiliar areas and navigating the route together is easier and much more fun!

HOW THEY DID IT?

SOME SUGGESTIONS AND ADVICE FROM PREVIOUS LEADERS:

"My experience with the public relations team at Bara is that a face-to-face with them achieves a lot more in a morning than many, many emails."

- Taryn-Zoe Gurr, Team Leader, Baragwanath Hospital, JHB



"For many people the best thing was to physically GO to the hospital to request meetings with the relevant people after having sent an email. Often e-mails went unread or ignored until people went to the site. Having an email already sent meant that the team leader could show the documents had been sent and try to get things signed and sealed at this meet up"

- Christie Mae Roberts, City Coordinator in Durban

"I first telephonically communicated with the Nursing Manager who requested I speak to the hospital CEO. I sent an email but still followed with his PA seeing I was already pressed for time. If she said I'll speak to him this morning, I'd follow up in the afternoon again.

Another thing is it's important to be clear on the purpose of the visit as we know there are a lot of problems in our public facilities, just to make it clear that we are not coming to criticize or take pictures to the media. The letter from Embrace was really helpful."

- Baitebetse Ramong, Job Shimanka Tamane Hospital, Rustenburg





PRIOR TO MOTHER'S DAY

1 -2 weeks



PRE-EVENT

Pre-Event Checklist



STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR HOSPITAL (3 MONTHS BEFORE MOTHER'S DAY)



- ☐ Identify a birthing facility in your community
- ☐ Contact the facility staff and ask for permission
- ☐ Confirm that permission has been granted
- ☐ Collect important event information
 - ☒ Birthing facility name
 - ☒ Location – confirm accurate GPS coordinates on google maps
 - ☒ Scheduled time of visit
 - ☒ Number of post-natal beds
 - ☒ Number of nursing / medical staff likely to be on duty
 - ☒ Contact details of staff person on the day
 - ☒ Maximum number of volunteers allowed for the visit.
 - ☒ Primary language spoken by patients

STEP 2: REGISTER YOUR EVENT WITH EMBRACE (2 MONTHS BEFORE MOTHER'S DAY)



- ☐ Submit event details via Embrace website
- ☐ Submit your daytime mailing address to receive your team leader pack from Embrace
- ☐ Check that the event is listed on the Mother's Day Connect page on Embrace's website and confirm the details are correct

STEP 3: RECRUIT YOUR TEAM (2 MONTHS BEFORE MOTHER'S DAY)



- ☐ Share event details with your friends and family
- ☐ Use Embrace shareable materials to promote the event via your social media accounts
- ☐ Follow the conversation on the Embrace Instagram and Facebook pages

STEP 4: BUILD YOUR TEAM (1 MONTH BEFORE MOTHER'S DAY)



- ☐ Create a WhatsApp or email group for your team
- ☐ Check for new sign up's daily and welcome new members to the chat

- ☐ Share Embrace's photos, messages or inspiration with the team to keep the conversation going

STEP 5: PLAN YOUR VISIT (1 MONTH BEFORE MOTHER'S DAY)



- ☐ With your team, decide on your plan for providing small gifts for the moms and staff
- ☐ Contact local businesses, organisations and collectives to donate items or monetary support
- ☐ Receive your team leader pack and ensure you received adequate supplies for your visit

STEP 6: PREPARE FOR THE DAY (1 WEEK BEFORE MOTHER'S DAY)



- ☐ Check in with your birthing facility staff to ensure they are prepared to receive your team
- ☐ Host a "packing party" and prepare your cards and gift
- ☐ Send a final reminder to your team with the time and location and ensure everyone has the correct details



PRIOR TO MOTHER'S DAY

3 months



PRE-EVENT

NOTES

Birth Facility Name:

Birth Facility Address & GPS Coordinates:

Birth Facility Contact Person Name & Number:

Embrace Hub Team Contact Number:

I am most looking forward to...

I need my team to help me with...

USE THIS SPACE TO SKETCH OUT A MAP OF THE MATERNITY WARD AND CREATE A PLAN FOR YOUR TEAM TO VISIT ALL THE DIFFERENT AREAS ON THE DAY:



EVENT DAY

MOTHER'S DAY IS FINALLY HERE!

STEP 1:

Gather your team and touch base with birthing facility staff

ENGAGING FACILITY STAFF

When you arrive be sure to go into the facility 30 minutes before your team and ask to speak with the Head Matron on duty or the individual you've been told to report to on the day. Ask them to show you the areas where you and your team are welcome to visit and let them know how many people are in your team. Also, ask if there are any bereaved mothers in the unit and whether or not they would like visitors.

ORGANISING YOUR TEAM

Welcome your team and try to ensure everyone has arrived before you start the visit. Introduce yourself and give everyone a chance to introduce themselves to each other.

Pass out the gifts so that everyone has items to share with mothers or staff. Make sure your team understands the layout of the facility/ward and where your team can visit. This is especially important depending on the size of -

your facility. Some of the smaller MOU's are small enough that everything is located within one room, however some of the larger hospitals may have a single ward spread across multiple floors. So, it is important that you have a plan for the visit and clearly explain how your team will work together to ensure that all the mothers who want a visit are visited without disrupting the normal activities of the facility. If you have a large team and facility we suggest splitting your team up into smaller teams to make it less confusing for everyone.

SETTING THE TONE

Consider giving a short introduction reminding everyone of the intention of the day – connection and encouragement. Remind them about the facility's photos policy. (Read more about -

this below). And be sure to share any other special requests or instructions the facility staff have asked us to relay.

STEP 2:

Enjoy your visit

BUILDING CONNECTIONS & CONVERSATION

It can be awkward when you initially enter the facility to start engaging new moms. But as the team leader you can set the example for your team and offer some support. You and your team members should be prepared to meet mothers at all stages of child birth; in labour, post-labour, and sadly some bereaved mothers as well.

We recommend starting by introducing yourself and wishing the mom a Happy Mother's Day.





EVENT DAY

If the mom is with her new baby some here are questions to help to start a conversation:

- How are you feeling?
- What is your baby's name?
- Does the name have any special meaning?
- Can I get you some water?

If the mom is in labour, gauge whether or not she wants some support and encouragement. We all respond differently and should be sure to respect the mother's needs and desires in that moment. Often, women do appreciate the encouragement as it can be a scary and unknown experience. Our team members have supported a number of women as they birth their new babies through Mother's Day Connect – a rare and beautiful experience.

Here are some ways you can support a mom in labour:

- Listen to her, offer to hold her hand or rub her back through the pain
- See if she'd like to walk and needs support walking around
- Give her reassurance and a smile
- Offer her some water or small bites of food for extra energy

It is very possible that your team will meet women who have had the tragic experience of losing their babies. This is obviously a sensitive and challenging time. We know it can be difficult to know how to respond. Reassure your team members that is okay to be at a loss for words and they shouldn't feel compelled to say more than necessary. Conversely, some women feel drawn to these situations and want to offer their condolences. You should help gauge the mother's openness and reception to this support before your team members approach.

Below are some suggestions of how to offer condolences, support and encouragement to these women in their time of need:

- Offer her your sincere condolences and ask if she wants to talk
- Listen and allow her to share how she is feeling

CONNECTION CARDS

Some women have an immediate connection with the women they meet and wish to keep in touch. In your team leader packs, Embrace will send some connection cards to distribute to your team members. Team members can write down their contact details on these cards to -

leave with the women they meet. This isn't compulsory and shouldn't feel forced but offers an easy way to carry the relationships and connection forward.

LANGUAGE BARRIERS

One of Embrace's goals is to have every team led by local leaders from the community where the birthing facility is located. This definitely helps with issues of language which can be a mitigating factor in creating connection. However, you may find there are still some language barriers between team members and the women being visited.

At Embrace we know that motherhood doesn't need language in order to build connections. Kindness and respect can be communicated through tone and body language – help your team members remember this as they engage with mothers and staff.

A great way to prepare your team is to encourage everyone to learn how to greet in the primary language spoken at your birth facility. Ask your team if anyone speaks the language and can give a brief lesson to others on how to greet in that language. If you meet someone -



EVENT DAY

whom you don't share a language with and want to visit, see if anyone else can help translate, a staff member, another mother or team member.

Offer the mother the gift with a Mother's Day Card in her native language if you have it.

What other women said about their visit:



Walking into the maternity ward I felt...

"Anxiety.....very quickly turned to feeling very humbled and privileged to have experienced this." – Sonia Moore Rieker

"Meeting moms so different to me and continuing my journey of realising that the motherhood journey looks so different for each of us, but each lived experience is still valid and valuable." – Kate Posthumus

"[I] spent time with a mom who had gone through a horrific ordeal losing her baby. She needed somebody to chat to and we exchanged number's and by [that] night we were communicating by sms. I do intend to go and visit her before she is discharged." – Kim Price

RESPECT & PRIVACY

It is vital that everyone participating in Mother's Day Connect respect and understand the sensitivities around visiting a birthing facility. Child birth is a tender and precious time and we want to be sure that this is preserved for all of the women visited.

OUR PHILOSOPHY ON PHOTOS

We know this day can be a transformative experience for some and there is a strong desire to document it to share with others. However, taking photographs of new moms and their babies can be highly insensitive at this important moment without their expressed consent. Also, we encourage everyone to take this opportunity to put down their phone/camera and use the time to have real conversations with the mothers, staff and fellow team members.

Many hospitals have very strict photo policies and will not allow you to take photographs inside. You should have an explicit conversation about this with nursing staff and relay the policy to your team members.

Everyone who participates is agreeing to follow the rules of the hospital.

If the facility is relaxed with this rule, **please do not take any photographs of a mother or her baby without her expressed permission**. We want to encourage volunteers to be very sensitive to the mood of the room and to the mood of the mothers. Many mothers would prefer not to have their photograph taken on the day they have given birth. Please help ensure your team respects this.

HOW THEY DID IT? SUGGESTIONS AND ADVICE FROM PREVIOUS LEADERS ON THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE

Taryn-Zoe team leader of Baragwanath Hospital offers some great advice on managing your team during your visit:

- Pair team members up and encourage them to stay together in case they get lost.
- Remind everyone to take your cell number down so that if anything happens to them they have a contact. Keep your phone easily accessible so that people can actually reach you.
- Make sure your team wears comfortable, closed shoes.
- Be firm but kind to the people who don't follow instructions by staff.



EVENT DAY

Below are the principles Embrace asks everyone to follow when taking pictures and sharing them on social media:

**Adapted from Radi-Aid*

- 1 Promote dignity – Consider how you are depicting the mother, baby, staff or team member and ensure what you're capturing respects the dignity and value of each individual.
- 2 Gain expressed consent – Always ask explicitly if the mother is happy for you to take her photo or wait for her to ask you for a photo. If you don't speak the same language please ask someone to help you translate the question and get permission before you take the photo.
- 3 Question your intention – Before snapping the shot or posting it on the web, pause to ask yourself, "does this express the intention of this day and event?" "why do I want to share this?"
- 4 Bring down stereotypes – Photos don't always capture the full story. Consider whether your depictions will reinforce existing stereotypes or challenge them.
- 5 Focus on the mom and building connections – We all agree newborn babies are adorable. But taking photos of babies is highly sensitive and this event is about connection between moms -

so keep your focus on the moms and women in your team.

SHARING PHOTOS WITH EMBRACE

Embrace would love you to take a team photograph outside of the facility to share with us. And please take team pictures of your team's efforts preparing for the day to share on social media. We will ask you to share photos from the day with us as we use them to illustrate what happened to our entire community. We don't need photos of moms and babies inside facilities - our first priority is that you follow the principles above and the rules of the hospital.

One of the best moments to capture photos and videos is immediately following your visit outside the facility.

STEP 3:

Debrief & Share

As your team wraps up the visit and prepares to go, you may want to quickly gather to briefly share with each other and bring closure to the event. Generally, the group's energy level is high and people may be eager to hear about each other's connections and conversations. However, it is also a busy day and we want to be-

respectful of people's time, so read the mood of the team and respond accordingly.

If you do gather, this is a great moment to take short videos interviewing team members and asking them to reflect on the visit.

Often the group will want to talk about how to carry the day forward. Take a few moments to consider what actions your group could commit to continuing for those interested. This could include continuing to visit the birthing facility on a more regular basis or just keeping your group chat going and sharing inspiration and ideas throughout the year. You can also have this conversation over WhatsApp following the event.





EVENT DAY

Event Day Checklist



STEP 1: GATHER YOUR TEAM & CHECK IN WITH FACILITY STAFF



- ☐ Identify the appropriate staff member at the facility and introduce yourself
- ☐ Ask the staff member if there are any bereaved mothers in the unit
- ☐ Review any special instructions, rules or policies you need to share with your team
- ☐ Gather with your team at the facility entrance and make introductions
- ☐ Distribute, gifts, connection cards and Mother's Day Cards to your team members
- ☐ Give a brief introduction and explanation of how the visit will go – make sure everyone knows where to go and where NOT to go
- ☐ Take a team photo

STEP 2: ENJOY YOUR VISIT



- ☐ Set the example and start greeting and connecting with moms

- ☐ Monitor your team to ensure everyone is following the photo policy and rules of the facility
- ☐ Ensure the staff are included and acknowledged
- ☐ Check-in with team members to see how they're feeling
- ☐ Be available for questions and concerns from your team

STEP 3: DEBRIEF & SHARE



- ☐ Gather your team and ask if anyone wants to share anything from their visit
- ☐ Video interview a few team members and capture their feelings and thoughts after their visit
- ☐ Discuss ways your team could continue working together in your community for mothers
- ☐ Take another team photo





EVENT DAY

NOTES

Number of women in the ward today:

Number of staff on duty:

Number of bereaved mothers in the unit today:

Special Instructions:

My intention for today is...

General Notes:

.





POST EVENT

WHAT'S NEXT?

STEP 1:

Submit photos & feedback to Embrace

As soon as you can, we ask you to send your photos and post directly to Embrace's Facebook page sharing your team's experience. We will share a dropbox folder link with you where you can upload all the photos you collect from the day.

While your thoughts are fresh, we also ask you to send us feedback on the event. On the day, Embrace will share a brief survey seeking your input and feedback on the event. It is so important for you to send your feedback and suggestions based on your team's experience as this is the only way we're able to grow and improve the initiative.

STEP 2:

Follow Up with facility

In the week following Mother's Day, we recommend you contact the staff at the birthing facility to express your thanks for allowing your team to visit on Mother's Day. This is a great way to seek

feedback from facility staff and keep your relationship warm.

STEP 3:

Keep in touch with your team

Based on the feedback you heard from your team at the event, decide how to keep your team's communications going for those that wish to stay engaged.

Post-Event Checklist



STEP 1: SEND PHOTOS & FEEDBACK TO EMBRACE

- ☐ Upload your team photos to the dropbox folder provided by Embrace
- ☐ Share a post/video/photo to the Embrace Facebook page
- ☐ Submit your Mother's Day Connect Team Leader Survey
- ☐ Encourage your team to submit the Mother's Day Connect Participant Survey

STEP 2: FOLLOW UP WITH THE FACILITY

- ☐ Call or send a follow-up thank you note to your facility staff

STEP 3: KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR TEAM

- ☐ Keep your group chat open and allow those that wish to stay engaged to stay connected

What participants have said:

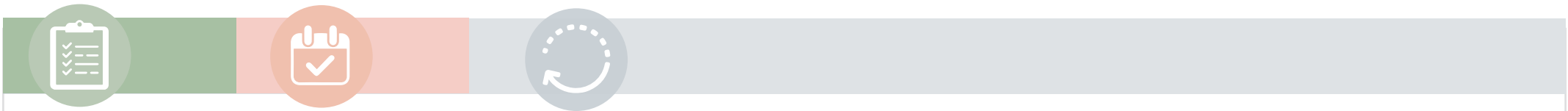
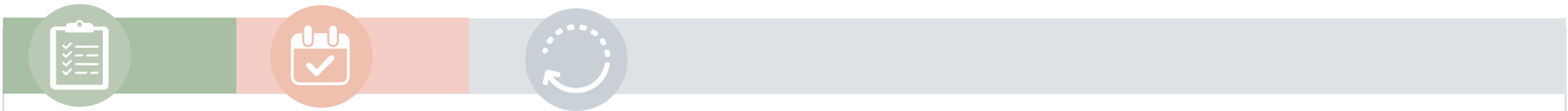
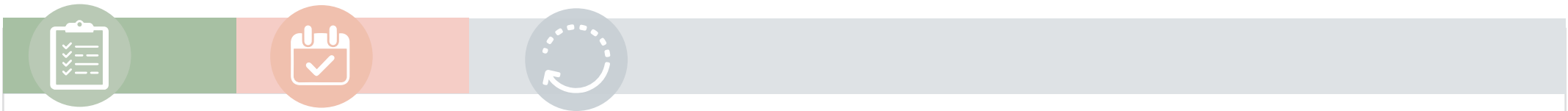


"Got more than expected and did more than we thought. Thank you Embrace for such a fulfilling moment."

- Nwabisa Msuthukazi Mzamo, Khayelitsha District Hospital, Cape Town

"I met a tribe....my tribe. A group of women with the same goals and ideals as I have. there was lots of love and tears of joys. I do believe a lifelong sisterhood was formed."

- Quanitaa Carelse, Mitchell's Plain MOU, Cape Town



POST EVENT

NOTES

I was most surprised by...

[illegible]

I was most inspired by...

[illegible]

I hope to carry the spirit and celebration of this day forward by...

[illegible]



RESOURCES

PRE-EVENT

1. Hospital Script
2. Hospital Letter
3. Gift Guides
4. Sample Flyer
5. Sample Sponsorship Letter
6. Guidelines on how to engage with local media

EVENT

1. Local Resources Template

GENERAL

1. Embrace Manifesto



INFORMATION YOU NEED TO GET FROM THE MATERNITY UNIT:

- Preferred time for a visit
- Number of post-natal wards you would like us to visit
- Total number of beds so we can prepare adequate goodie bags
- Expected number of nursing staff so we can make them feel special too
- A contact person who we could meet on the day
- Maximum number of volunteers allowed for the the visit.
- Primary language spoken by patients

Hospital Script

If you're unsure of what to say when you speak to the maternity unit manager, use this script as a guide.

Hi...

My name is

I'm calling to request permission to visit your maternity unit with a few friends on Mother's Day.

"I'm participating in a movement called Mother's Day Connect. Mother's Day Connect was started by Embrace in 2016, with groups of women visiting 14 birth units in Cape Town. Embrace is incubated within the well-known NPO and PBO, The Douglas Murray Trust."

The goal was to make Mother's Day meaningful by ensuring that new moms were made to feel special and appreciated on Mother's Day. Since that first year, Mother's Day Connect has grown to reach women across the country - last year teams of women visited 49 facilities across 8 provinces.

"This year, the idea is to try reaching as many maternity units as possible, to ensure that all new moms are made to feel special and appreciated"

We would love to visit the moms in your post-natal ward on Mother's Day, which will be Sunday, the 12th of May. We would like to bring each of them a small gift and spend some time talking with them and encouraging them. We would also love to include the nursing staff, as I'm sure many of them are also mothers who have to work on Mother's Day.

If you agree to our visit, we would need to choose an hour that would be most convenient to visit the moms. I will be coordinating the women who volunteer and I'm happy to follow your direction to ensure that we respect all hospital rules set out for visitors.

MAKE SURE YOU GET THE FULL NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS OF THE PERSON YOU HAVE SPOKEN TO SO THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO CONTACT THEM AGAIN TO CONFIRM YOUR VISIT.



To Whom It May Concern

Re: Official letter to birth facilities - request to visit your post-natal wards on Mother's Day, 12 May 2019.

You are receiving this letter because your facility has been selected to join Mother's Day Connect 2019.

Mother's Day Connect was started by Cape Town Embrace, a project incubated in the well-known NPO and PBO, The Douglas Murray Trust. Launched in 2016 in Cape Town, Mother's Day Connect is a movement to reclaim Mother's Day as a day of honouring and celebrating ALL mothers. We acknowledge that the complexities of life mean that many mothers are not celebrated or even acknowledged on Mother's Day. We believe that this day has the potential to highlight the different experiences of Motherhood and call for ordinary women to champion the celebration of fellow mothers.

We know that childbirth is a beautiful and vulnerable time. It is a time when women require support and kindness. We are encouraging women to share one hour of their Mother's Day by visiting post-natal and KMC units with treats and some time spent celebrating the new moms. We have also asked our volunteers to remember that many of the hospital staff are mothers too, and to include them in the Mother's Day festivities, where possible.

Last year, we reached 49 government hospital post natal wards and MOUs to visit over 3000 new mothers and their babies. These visits extended across 17 cities in 8 different provinces. We would love to see this movement grow to include more facilities this year.

Please would you grant access for this visit to a small group of women, who will be co-ordinated by the person sharing this letter with you?

All participants agree to respect and abide by the rules and regulations of your facility, as they apply to visitors. We encourage you to share these rules with the team leader ahead of the visit. You and the team leader determine the time of the visit (1 hour). It does not have to coincide with visiting hours.

Should have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We look forward to including you in our movement to reclaim Mother's Day for all mothers.

Yours Sincerely,
Julie Mentor
Movement Leader



1st floor, Douglas Murray House, 1 Wodin Road, Claremont, 7700

Phone: 021 670 9840 • Email: julie@embrace.org.za

www.embrace.org.za

GIFT GUIDE 2019



FOR MOTHERS:

- Cupcakes, baked goods in individual portions
- Sealed snacks
- Pamper items (hand cream, toiletries, nail polish etc.)
- Post-natal care items (sanitary towels, breast pads, disposable underwear, hand sanitizer, face wipes)
- Baby bags/ tote bags/ back packs
- Magazines
- Flowers



FOR THEIR BABIES:

- Nappies (cloth and disposables) and wet wipes
- Baby toiletries
- Vests, baby grows, hats and socks
- Swaddling blankets
- Soft toys
- A special book

* please note, unless otherwise stated, all government hospitals are mother-baby friendly units, which means that dummies and bottles are not allowed to be brought into the wards.



FOR THE NURSING STAFF:

- Cake/ cupcakes to share in the tea room
- Flowers
- Hand cream



Mother's Day

CONNECT

One hour, every mother.

2019

Sunday, 12 May

Help us put the sisterhood back into Mother's Day!

Gather your mothers, grandmothers, sisters and friends and spend one hour at your local maternity home celebrating new mothers.

Join the movement on Facebook to find out how to get started.



/ EmbraceZA

#MothersDayConnect

Make sure you join the official Facebook event for all the updated information you will need.

www.embrace.org.za



embrace

The Movement for Mothers



Dear Sponsor

RE: Requesting support for Mother's Day Connect 2019

Thank you for considering supporting new moms as a part of the Mother's Day Connect movement.

Mother's Day Connect was started by Embrace, a project incubated in the well-known NPO and PBO, The Douglas Murray Trust. Launched in 2016 in Cape Town, Mother's Day Connect is a national celebration of Mother's Day honouring and celebrating ALL mothers. We acknowledge that the complexities of life mean that many mothers are not celebrated or even acknowledged on Mother's Day. We believe that this day has the potential to highlight the different experiences of Motherhood and call for ordinary women to champion the celebration of fellow mothers.

Teams of women will be sharing one hour of their Mother's Day with new mothers at maternity wards in hospitals and birthing facilities around the country. The visit is meant to be encouraging, supportive and a celebration of what it means to be a mother. Last year, teams visited over 3000 new mothers in 17 cities around the country. This year, we'd love to grow those numbers to include more mothers.

Each team is tasked with deciding how to make their visit special. Many teams wish to bring gifts for the mothers that will help them and their babies. We have also encouraged the teams to include the nursing staff in their planning, as many of them are mothers too.

Please would you consider supporting this team with appropriate items that will make the mothers and nurses feel appreciated and celebrated this Mother's Day?

Should you require a Section 18 A receipt to claim a tax deduction for your donation, please provide us your contact details and we will happily issue you one.

If you have any questions, you are welcome to contact me directly.

Kind regards,
Julie Mentor
Movement Leader, Embrace



GUIDELINES ON HOW TO ENGAGE WITH LOCAL MEDIA

1. Identify and contact your local media outlets:

- Write down a list of your local newspapers, radio and television stations i.e. ones specific to your area.
- Research contact details for these media outlets. The best way to do this is to either search online or to call the station/media house directly.
- Try to identify the producer of a specific show rather than the overall station manager or emailing an 'info' address.
- With newspapers try and find the editor of the community section or someone who focuses on human/women's rights.
- If you can't find details online, call the media outlet just ask reception for the email address/-phone number for the producer of the specific show you're interested in.

TIP for identifying outlets and contacts:

The best time slots for radio are ones where people are in their cars - either the morning show or the drivetime/late afternoon shows. All coverage is good, but these slots are your first prize!

2. Pitch the event

Once you've obtained the contact details you'll need to pitch your event. Below are samples of how to pitch this event over the phone or via email. As Mother's Day approaches, Embrace will provide all team leaders with a standard press release and images you can share in these pitches.

Example of phone pitch:

Hi there. My name is XX and I am part of a movement called Mother's Day Connect. I wanted to get in touch as we are going to be visiting new moms in local hospitals on Mother's Day to show them love and support. I thought this would be something your listeners/readers would like to be a part of. It's a great way to spend your Mother's Day. We will be visiting the (name of hospital) on Sunday 12 May etc...

Example of email pitch:

Good morning XX,

I am contacting you regarding Mother's Day Connect, national celebration of new motherhood

started by Embrace, South Africa's movement for mothers. The campaign brings together women from across the country on Mother's Day to acknowledge and celebrate the bond of motherhood.

It is a simple but powerful concept. Women form small teams and visit birthing facilities in their local communities for one hour on Mother's Day to build connections and celebrate South Africa's newest moms.

In its fourth year running, Embrace is again calling on women across the country to join us for this event and we would love for your listeners/readers to join us.

Please see attached the press release and some images from last year. If you would be interested in doing an interview, I am the leader for (insert hospital name) and would be happy to answer any questions or provide more information if needed.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards,

XX



GUIDELINES ON HOW TO ENGAGE WITH LOCAL MEDIA

Tips for getting coverage:

- The goal is to get an interview or a mention on air. We also recommend asking the outlet to share the Facebook event on their social media pages.
- Newspapers may want to interview you, but often they will use the press release information as content. They may request more images than the ones supplied in the standard Embrace press release. If so, please contact the hub team for help.
- Our first prize is coverage before the event. We won't turn down offers to run the story after the event but to make the most of the coverage we like to have the story run before Mother's Day.
- If a TV outlet expresses interest, please remember that **they are not allowed to film or interview anyone at the hospital**. It is vital we protect the privacy of these women and to keep the integrity of Mother's Day Connect. If TV are interested, then you can recommend an on-air interview using images rather than live coverage of the event.

- Persistence is key. We recommended that you follow up consistently. Try calling a few times with a gap of a day or two in between or send follow ups to your email every couple of days. That being said, media don't like to be bombarded and if they haven't replied to you after a few attempts you are unlikely to get coverage.

3. Complete your interview

Now that you've found the contact, successfully pitched the event now it's time to give an interview. Preparation is key! For the most part they will ask you very standard questions. In fact, producers are often keen for you to send through some questions to help them direct the conversation. Below are the questions you should be prepared to answer – be sure to rehearse some answers before your interview.

1. What is Mother's Day Connect?
2. Why did you get involved and why should other women get involved?
3. Who can be a part of Mother's Day Connect? (Remember that only women are allowed to be involved due to the private nature of visiting maternity wards.)

4. Which hospital are you visiting and which hospitals are available to be visited in this area?
5. How can our listeners get involved?

Tips for giving interviews:

- Remember to give these contact details clearly and slowly. Explain that listeners can go to the Mother's Day Connect page on the Embrace website www.embrace.org.za and sign up to join or they can become a leader and visit a birth facility in their community. Mention that there are step-by-step guides as well and all necessary information on the website.
- If the conversation becomes more in-depth then just keep in mind the ethos of Mother's Day Connect. Alternatively, if you are asked a question and you simply don't know the answer – that's ok – just say you aren't sure and then make another point about what a great initiative it is. You can also just remind people to visit the website or Facebook page for more information.
- It's easy to get a bit flustered when talking to the media but try to just keep calm. Most presenters are lovely and just want to have a relaxed chat.



GUIDELINES ON HOW TO ENGAGE WITH LOCAL MEDIA

Please keep in mind the below:

- *Remember we are not saviours. We are there to celebrate, support and to just be there for them however we can on the day.*
- *Mother's Day Connect isn't a charity. This event is about bringing solidarity not charity.*
- *We are not judging any woman's life or birth choices*





We need our village. We need affirmation, gentle guidance and brave ambitions – for ourselves and for our children. We need friendship and solidarity and the ability to put our dreams for a better future into motion.

We all want the best for our precious children, but the pressures of life often leave us feeling depleted and alone and unsure of how to access the support need to begin our motherhood journey well.

Below is a list of people or organisations who can assist you in different ways on this beautiful journey of motherhood.

NATIONAL RESOURCES

General Emergencies:

Ambulance

Dial: 10177

Non-Medical Emergency

Dial: 112

Poison Centre 24 Hour Helpline

Dial: 0861-555-777

Emotional and Social Support Services:

Suicide Crisis Line

0800 567 567

South African Depression and Anxiety Group Mental Health Line

011 234 4837

LifeLine 24 Hour Crisis Line

0861 322 322

Childline 24 Hour Assistance

0800 55 555

Stop Gender Violence Helpline

0800 150 150

LOCAL RESOURCES

Use the space below to provide details of local service providers that may be useful and relevant to the mothers you'll be visiting. Some examples include breastfeeding support groups/organisations, counselling and crisis support, parenting guidance groups/providers, early childhood development providers or activities. Be sure to provide a current website, email address or phone number for the organisation.

Organisation Name:

Brief Description:

Contact Details:

Organisation Name:

Brief Description:

Contact Details:

Organisation Name:

Brief Description:

Contact Details:

Organisation Name:

Brief Description:

Contact Details:

Organisation Name:

Brief Description:

Contact Details:



We are stronger together. This is our village.



The Motherhood Manifesto

we **listen** first
then **speak**

What Every mother can
divides **US** **gain**
needs from and
to be **contribute**
diminished to the movement

friendship
— and —
community
are critical for our mental health
and wellbeing

our **voices**
and **stories**
are **powerful**

There are many **good**
practices of motherhood,
BUT **no single way**
to mother our children.

Every

mother

is the **expert** on **HER** child

how we do things
is as **important** as
what we do

We have the right to **celebrate** our children
and honour our role as mothers of the next generation

We acknowledge and value the role of
culture and beliefs
in the way they shape our motherhood journey

Every mother is worthy of
care and
support

We **encourage**
and **support**
rather than judge and criticize

We, as
mothers
believe...
we are
diverse
but united
by our
common
experiences
of motherhood