

## Raising Mums Network: DIY online parenting community

This is a transcript of the Raising Children Network video available at [http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/raising\\_mums\\_network\\_video.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/raising_mums_network_video.html). In this video about the Raising Mums Network, new mums tell us how they used Facebook to connect with other parents in their area and organise their own parents group. They say it was easy to do and has been a great way to get support and meet new friends. Some say it has made them feel more connected to their community.

**Shannan:** The Raising Mum network started in early 2012. It was started by three really, really passionate women. It's a Facebook page in which mothers within our local community can come together, ask questions, get advice and give one another support. Generally just share the rocky road of motherhood together.

**Jo:** It's really like a safe haven where you can talk about anything that you want to do with parenting, or ask any questions that you want to ask, or find out recommendations for services in the area.

**Jaclyn:** It's an outlet. It's vital information. It's a group of friends that you probably never thought you'd have. It's a lifeline.

**Jodie:** It's my sanity at the moment and it's just support. That's the biggest one. It's just support.

**Jo:** Having the support of another mum at three o'clock in the morning is really important because sometimes only mums can understand another mum.

**Jodie:** Yeah I came across it when I was pregnant with my twins, and I would have been about four months at the time, and one of the girls that I work with mentioned it to me. 'Did you know that there's this page and it's great' because she had got a lot out of it, and I joined and it's the best thing I've ever done.

**Tanya** So it's mums of all different ages from younger mums. I know there are a few teen mums on there, right up to older mums. There are mums of triplets, twins, three kids, four kids, one child, first time mums. There are even people, who have just fallen pregnant, and they want to find out a bit of information about it and they're starting to form bonds with other people in the area who are pregnant. I think the main part that sets it apart from other online forums is the Raising Mums network is local.

**Jodie:** There's other support pages out there but knowing that there's mums in the area and you can go and catch up with one of them for coffee, it just makes it that much more...

**Jaclyn:** Real.

**Jodie:** Yeah.

**Jo:** For example down the shops, you can run into someone and you might not know who they are but then if they say, 'Oh yeah I'm such and such' then you go 'Oh you're the person that asked blah, blah, blah'.

**Shannan:** It's helped me in quite a broad spectrum of ways really. There have been plenty of questions about my pregnancy; both pregnancies that I've experienced were such different pregnancies that I've had different questions. Then in also going through a false labour; then going through a caesarean; then going through the recovery. You've got these mums that you can log on to at any stage and say, 'I'm really scared right now'. Other mums can share their stories or just give you the buck up that you need.

**Jacyln** Moving from the country I had a limited group of friends here already. So it has helped me be able to expand my group of friends but also specifically to my children. So I now have been able to get a group of friends that my 4½ year old can interact with, but I also have a group of friends that my newie can interact with as well.

**Jo:** It's helped me with my confidence in being a first time mother as well.

**Jaclyn:** Especially with twins.

**Jo:** Yeah especially having the twins. It's helped me network with other twin mums as well, in this area, and for lots of questions that might be a little bit apprehensive to ask, face to face, someone face to face. You just get on and just ask this question and then all of a sudden ten other people will turn around and say, 'I'm so glad you asked that. I'm going through the same thing', and before you know it it's this long conversation with everyone's opinions, and you just take bits and pieces out of it that work for you.

**Tanya** The biggest way that I've benefited from Raising Mums would have to be advice, just general advice on little tiny things. You can quickly jump on line then and there and put your question up, or search and see if anyone else has asked the same question.

**Jo:** A lot of the time mums will post questions that a lot of us won't know the answers to. So we do go off and find information. One of the main resources we would use would be the Raising Children's network because it is such a trusted source. So we'd go over. Have a search. Find out the links and then post them back in the comments field to the mum that had asked on the Raising Mum network. I found the Raising Children's network site really easy to navigate. It's got a search box and each of the subjects are divided up by age which means that you're not really sifting through a lot of stuff that isn't applicable to where you're at.

**Shannan:** It was two o'clock in the morning. I was in tears breastfeeding in the morning and I just thought, well if I can't join a mother's group I'm going to make one. I just logged on to the Raising Mum's network. Asked other mothers out there, who was in the same boat, who felt the same and who was interested, and just put it out there that I was willing to host a mother's group for first time, second time, third, fourth time mums at my house two days later.

Overnight the response was phenomenal. I realised just how many mothers there were, feeling isolated out there and alone and that needed that kind of mother's group support. We were all relative strangers. I only knew one of those twenty women and we all finished up that meeting two hours later, as if we'd been friends for months, years. It was fantastic. It was one of the most empowering experiences that I have ever had.

Four, five months down the track these mothers have become some of the greatest friends that I've got. We're all very, very different women but loving, caring and very respectful women.

The kind of support that I've had from the DIY mums group is something that I wished that every mother was able to receive and have access to. It's just been such an important thing for me in my journey.

The biggest thing that I've learnt is how easy it is to do. There are so many women out there that are in need of the same kind of support, and we tend to hide behind our own fears or wait and see if somebody else will do it and, to be the one to actually take the initiative and do it is really just at the click of a few buttons. It's that easy.

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