

## **Collaborative Care and Mental Health of People from Migrant Backgrounds**

Rishika is 26 years old and immigrated to Australia from India with her husband, Ishan twelve months ago, shortly after their arranged wedding. Ishan is studying Commerce and working part time as a taxi driver and as a result they do not often see each other. Rishika has found it very difficult to settle in Australia and misses her family and friends. She has tried to find work but has struggled to even secure an interview. She continues to respond to as many job advertisements as she can, but her applications are met with either polite rejection or no response at all. Prior to coming to Australia she worked in business management, and whilst she understands that she may not be able to find work at this level, she is frustrated that she cannot even secure an interview in the range of business roles she is applying for. Ishan seems equally irritated by Rishika's lack of success in her search for work. Ishan is on a student visa and Rishika was granted a visa as his spouse. The couple live in shared accommodation, in a multi-cultural area of Western Sydney.

Rishika gave birth to her first child, a girl, Anisha three months ago. Rishika takes full responsibility for Anisha's care, as well as ensuring that Ishan arrives home to a cooked meal at the end of his taxi shift or his university classes. Rishika takes Anisha for her regular check-ups at a nearby maternal and child health clinic, but at times has told Ishan that she is confused by the advice offered at the clinic. Attending the drop-in sessions at the maternal and child health clinic, rather than making an appointment is easier as it seems to work better for Anisha's somewhat erratic sleeping pattern. This means that Rishika can see a different nurse each time she visits. One nurse suggests that she attend one of the local mothers' groups to make friends with some other new mothers. Rishika is reluctant, saying that Ishan doesn't like her socialising without him.

Ishan and Rishika practice Hinduism and visit their nearest temple during religious festivals and for specific events. Rishika would love to visit the temple more regularly, but relies on Ishan to drive her. Ishan has said on a number of occasions that the temple is in an area that he does not consider safe and he does not want Rishika going there alone.

When Rishika tells Ishan that Anisha is growing but is a little small for her age, Ishan seems quite disinterested. He is very preoccupied with his study when he is home and has very little time to hear about Anisha's development or about Rishika and her struggles. Rishika finds Ishan's attitude difficult to bear at times and wonders if she will ever feel at home in Australia.

This is a de-identified vignette.

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## **MHPN WEBINAR CASE STUDY**

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Neither Rishika's nor Ishan's parents are able to come to Australia to help but Ishan's parents have suggested that they could send the baby home to India for them to look after, so that Rishika can concentrate on finding work. Rishika is resistant to this idea and whilst she would love help caring for Anisha she doesn't want to be separated from her. "She's all I have..."

Ishan drives Rishika to an appointment at a local GP clinic as Anisha has a fever and is not sleeping well. On entering the consulting room, you notice that Rishika has a bruise on her neck but when she sees you looking she quickly moves her scarf to cover the area. Ishan has come into the room with Rishika. When you ask Rishika how you can help her today, Ishan answers, saying that Rishika cries a lot and Anisha "has a temperature and seems to cry off and on most nights, making it difficult to prepare for his University exams."

Rishika had only been to see you on one other occasion to confirm her pregnancy and whilst she had not said much, she seemed pleased about the pregnancy. Subsequent obstetric appointments were undertaken at a community-based centre under a shared-care model. Today, while Ishan talks, Rishika looks helplessly at you, but does not say anything. She has dark circles under her eyes and what looks like bruising on her lower arms.

You explain to Ishan that you would like a follow up appointment with Rishika, perhaps on her own. Ishan is very reluctant to agree to such an appointment unless he is also able to attend. At this point Rishika pulls Anisha closer to her and looks intently at the floor.

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Case study Rishika: Collaborative Care and Mental Health of People from  
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