



Dealing with intrusive in-laws

One example:

“I had no idea what a celebrity I would become when we had our baby. All of a sudden all these family members were around – especially my husband’s parents. We didn’t prepare for it when I was pregnant – we just had no idea – so when it was happening neither one of us said anything to each other. My husband’s parents lived 90 mins away so when they came they would stay all day and I would hardly get to hold my son. It took me ages to realise what was happening I was so sleep deprived, my husband and I were fighting, and we both felt horribly depressed. My mother-in-law was taking over our lives. I realised that we hadn’t had any time to ourselves to discover/establish the new family we had become. It took us 2 counselling sessions – and once we realised this we knew what we had to do – but there was a stage there when I thought we can’t go on like this, maybe we should separate”

As in the above example, having a baby can bring changes to your family relationships, for example, your relationship with your own parents or that of your partner’s parents – the new grandparents. This transition can bring families closer; however it is also common for difficulties to arise in these relationships during this time. Some grandparents aren’t helpful, some visit but don’t offer support in the ways you would like. Cultural differences can also lead to conflict at this time.

It is important to discuss these changes and how you are feeling with your partner. Stand united so that you can work out what to do if your extended family become too much to handle. Don’t give up what makes you happy for the sake of your extended family, you may have to get used to them being upset with you for a while. A compromise can work, or after a few months your partner can take the baby to see them every Saturday afternoon and you can enjoy a nap or coffee with friends. Be flexible and solution focused and you will get there.