



COMMUNITY
INTEREST
COMPANY

What to expect...

About

Welcome! It can feel a bit full on turning up to a group for the first time, so hopefully this'll tell you what to expect from our Singing Mamas community.

Rachel set up her company Holistic Harmonies in 2018 after living in London for 16 years. Holistic Harmonies' mission is to use music to connect communities through choirs, family socials, cross-generational groups and music & movement sessions to enhance the health and wellbeing of all.

Singing Mamas is a national non-profit which was set up by a nurse and supports women across the UK to build song sharing communities that improve wellbeing. That means that as well as the group being a lovely thing for you and your little one(s) if you have them, the profits we make (after costs have been covered) are donated to a great cause.

Rachel trained as a Singing Mamas Leader in 2018 and thought it would work well as an offering of Holistic Harmonies, reaching women and supporting their mental health through song. It takes a village to raise a child, and so women of all ages are welcome to come and support the new Mamas in our community. Rachel is now a Director on the national board of Singing Mamas as well as the lead in the Singing Mamas On Prescription Programme.

When you join Singing Mamas you are not only joining the national network of singing groups, but the local Holistic Harmonies Community too where there will be family social events throughout the year and a supportive group to belong to.

Payment

Each person pays £20 per month which works out around £6.30 per session over 36 weeks of the year (sessions are run during term time only). This gives you a saved spot on a regular day of your choice and access to any extra cancellation spots throughout the week. We also have a limited number of bursary places for women who are struggling financially.

In order to keep the group financially viable people are asked to make the monthly payment for their place even if they have to miss a session or two. You do have the option of attending a different day if needed, or gifting your place to a friend.

Monthly payments should be set up with Go Cardless and will come out of your account on the 10th of the month.

Your payment covers the cost of venue hire and refreshments and the leaders time to plan, coordinate and lead the session.

Where and when we meet

Group options are:

Singing Mamas
Thursday 10.30am - 12pm
Ullet Road Unitarian Church

Singing Mamas
Friday 1.15pm - 2.45pm
Blundellsands United Reformed Church

Both venues are accessible for prams and wheelchairs and parking is free in the streets surrounding the churches.

What we do

We sing for 1 hour and then have tea and a snack for 30 minutes. The sessions involve a combination of mindfulness, a check in and singing.

Mindfulness: Our mindfulness practice is a kind of meditation that we do with our eyes open or closed. There will be babies crying and toddlers playing as we do this, and that is ok. Actually, it's part of the practice. As parents, we very rarely have the option of 'switching off' completely as we're constantly alert to the needs of our little-one(s). In this exercise we will practice splitting our attention between ourselves and the little-one(s) in the room and tuning into our own needs, whilst keeping them safe.

Check-in: This is a chance to speak about what you noticed during the mindfulness practice and what feels present for you. It might be one word (distracted and exhausted come up a lot!), a rant about your home life, or you might choose not to speak at all. Whatever comes up in the moment is welcome. Witnessing each other's ups and downs and hearing your own experiences echoed by other women can be really helpful. So even if you don't speak, listening can also offer insights.

Singing: We sing in order to lift our spirits and connect with one another, and there is no expectation that we should sound a certain way. No-one will ever be asked to sing on their own, we will always sing together so our voices blend and no-one feels uncomfortable. We learn our songs by ear, which means there's no sheet music or even words written down. If you're not musical or think you will sing out of tune that's ok. It's just about enjoying it.

Covid Safety

Our support spaces have run through two lockdowns and we have never had a transmission through our group. We're continuing to be cautious despite restrictions having lifted so everyone who attends can feel safe and reassured.

We have a detailed risk assessment in place which include the following Covid safety measures which everyone at the group should follow:

- You should not attend if you or anyone in your household has symptoms of corona virus or has received a positive test result within the last 10 days
- You should sanitize your hands on entering and exiting the group
- Windows/doors will be open and the space will be ventilated
- Please wear a face covering if that feels better for you when entering and exiting and moving around the space. You're welcome to remove your mask whenever you're seated
- You should allocate yourself a mat or chair on arrival at the group and avoid moving around the space where possible
- All mats and toys used communally will be cleaned regularly

Other Safety Guidelines

As well as the Covid safety measures group members should also follow these guidelines:

- You should not physically handle anyone else's child without the prior permission of their parent (*unless it is an emergency situation where you perceive a child to be at immediate risk)
- You will not share photo's of other people's children on social media without their parents consent
- No toys with small parts that present choking hazards should be brought to the group
- You must tell Rachel if there are any allergies that the group need to be made aware of
- You should not attend if your or your child has had sickness or diarrhoea in the last 24hrs. We know that people will pick up colds and like at a nursery, its ok bring along a snotty baby (as frankly, if it wasn't the group would be empty the whole of winter!).

Managing Children

With regards to covid awareness, the pre-school children that come to the groups will not understand social distancing and be able to maintain a 2-metre distance from one another, or other adults. We don't try to keep crawling babies and toddlers seated or discourage them from interacting as we recognise this could create fear and confusion around normal social contact. Instead, we allow them to move around the space freely and interact, just as they would in a nursery setting.

Extra info for parents . . .

Whilst you're at the group your baby might cry and your toddler might shout or scream, and that is fine. Everyone understands. It's also likely that older children will take toys from one another, and that's fine too. We tend to let them work out this for themselves wherever we can, and only intervene if they get physical with pushing, pulling, hitting one another. Learning to manage relationships and disappointment is great for their development, and not having to referee every 5 minutes is great for our energy levels!

Often the toddlers are intrigued by the small babies and will approach the mat where they are lying with their mum. Sometimes it feels lovely to see your baby meeting an older child, and other times it becomes too stressful to have a bigger child near your baby. Because the adults can't move around the space as freely as they usually would, we ask that mums of small babies simply alert the mum of the toddler if they would like them to be moved away. This stops mums getting up and moving around un-necessarily.

Your Data

You'll be asked to complete a membership form when you sign up and the information from this form will be held securely by the group leader. The information you give on the form will be used to share important updates about the group you attend and won't be passed on anywhere for marketing purposes. The data you give us will be securely disposed of when you leave the group in line with our GDPR policy.

You will also have the option on the form of signing up to the Singing Mamas Choir Newsletter where you'll receive inspiration, songs and invitations to our national events (like the family festival).

Don't worry about remembering all of this, Rachel will be there to remind you of the safety stuff and answer any questions you have. In the meantime, if there's anything else you'd like to know, then just ping Rachel a message on 07747446048. See you soon!