

# The Importance of Fathers Mental Health.

Mark Williams



# My Story



# Fathers Reaching Out

Birth Trauma (PTSD)

Antenatal Depression

Postnatal Depression

Paternal OCD

Drink/Drugs Abuse

Anger and Violence

Relationship Breakdown

Fathers undiagnosed

Overworking/ Self harm

Closed to suicide

Couldn't Bond with their babies

Antenatal Anxiety

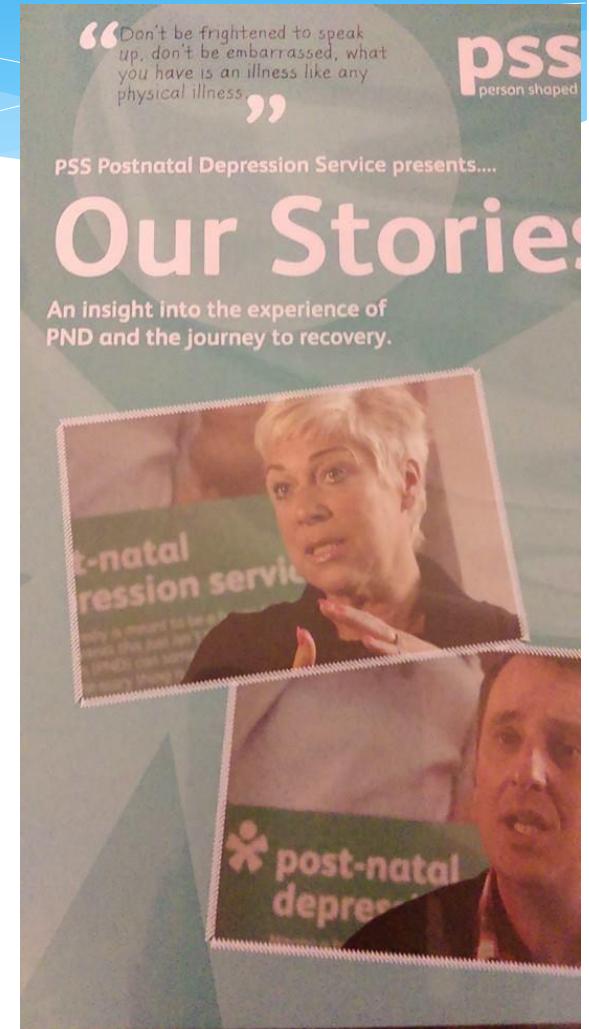
Antenatal Depression

Didn't know?

# Awareness



# Education



# Campaigning for all parents

## #Howareyoudad



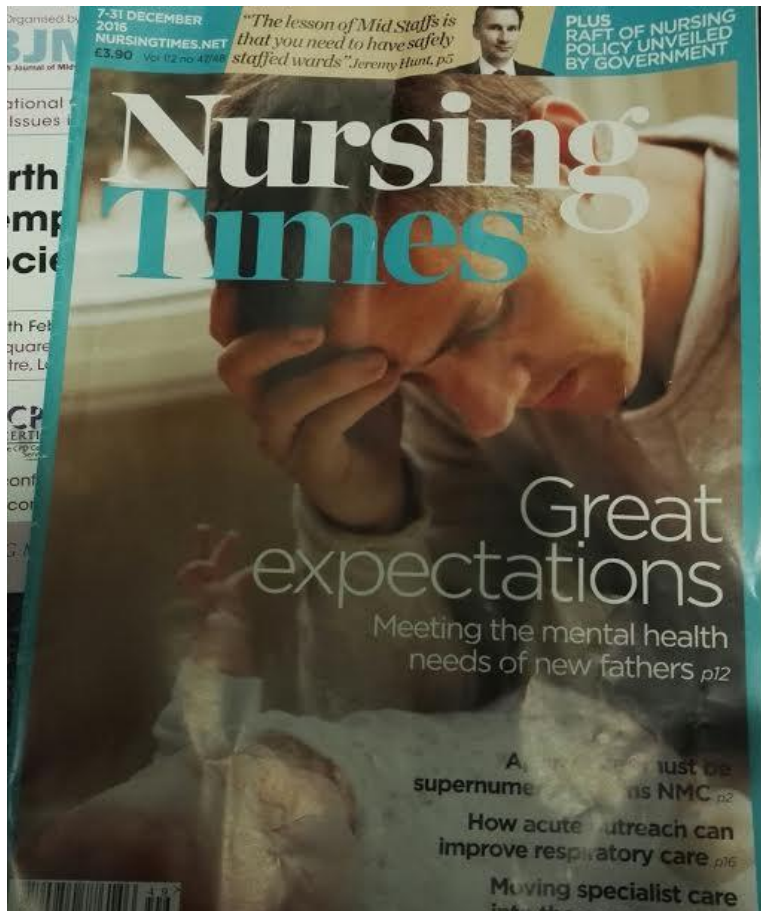
# International Fathers Mental Health Day



INTERNATIONAL FATHERS  
MENTAL HEALTH DAY



# Publications



Journal of  
**Health Visiting**



# All parents suffer antenatal and postnatal anxiety/depression

- \* Mothers and Fathers have a history of traumas, anxiety and depression.
- \* Many fathers tend not to talk about their feelings during this time.
- \* Fathers worry about their partners mental health and feel they need to “Man up” and struggle on until crisis point catches up on them sometimes years later only diagnosed with depression not PND/PTSD

# 2018

There is No mention of the word “Fathers” in the GC192 NICE Guidelines.

WHO (World Health Organisation doesn't acknowledge that fathers should be screened like mothers



# Since 1991

- \* First time fathers may be particularly prone to depression (Cowan et al, 1991)
- \* Ramchandani et al (2008) found half of the men who were depressed before the birth also depressed eight weeks afterwards, suggesting 'chronicity' in a substantial percentage of cases

# Research

- \* The fear of losing their partner possibly dying during the childbirth ( Chalmers & Meyer, 1996; Elster & Panzarine, 1983; Eriksson et al, 2006; Greenhalgh et al 2000; Vehvilainen – Julkunen & Liukkonen, 1998; White 2007.



# PTSD Post-traumatic stress disorder

- \* Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder caused by very stressful, frightening or distressing events
- \* Experiencing or Witnessing
- \* Flashbacks
- \* Nightmares
- \* Repetitive and distressing images or sensations
- \* Physical sensations – such as pain, sweating, nausea or trembling

# Hormones Changes happens to dad too.

You will know that your partner's hormones change during pregnancy and after the baby is born but, believe it or not, Dads do too! During the period of time after birth men's hormones (such as testosterone and cortisol) increase in the body which can leave more vulnerable to becoming depressed.

# Fathers struggle to bond with their children too

- \* The parent-child bond strengthens over time through caregiving.
- \* But dads also feel guilty like mums and often avoid situations that may cause anxiety and even depression.
- \* Fathers feel they're not good enough and in some situations disconnect with their children due to lack of education, support and awareness.

# A Fathers Story

When my partner had an emergency c- section, I was told to go out of the room and I didn't know if they were both alive. I wished that someone had explained to me what was going on, for me to get my head around it. I was a totally different person months later and feel what I know now caused our relationship to end.

John 29, ( Fathers Reaching Out)



# Research

- \* Anxiety may be more common than depression in new fathers (O'Brien et al 2016)
- \* A systematic review of 43 papers reported that the prevalence rate for any anxiety disorder in men ranged from 4.1%-6% during their partners pregnancy and from 2.4%–8% during the postnatal period (Leach et al 2016).

# Signs and Symptoms

- \* Feeling very low, or despondent, that life is a long, grey tunnel, and that there is no hope. Feeling tired and very lethargic, or even quite numb. Not wanting to do anything or take an interest in the outside world.
- \* Feeling a sense of inadequacy or unable to cope.
- \* Feeling guilty about not coping, or about not loving their baby enough.
- \* Being unusually irritable, which makes the guilt worse.
- \* Wanting to cry/crying a lot or even constantly.
- \* Having obsessive and irrational thoughts which can be very scary.
- \* Loss of appetite, which may go with feeling hungry all the time, but being unable to eat.
- \* Comfort eating.
- \* Having difficulty sleeping: either not getting to sleep, waking early, or having vivid nightmares.
- \* Being hostile or indifferent to their partner and/or baby.
- \* Having panic attacks, which strike at any time, causing a rapid heartbeat, sweaty palms and feelings of sickness or faintness.
- \* Having an overpowering anxiety, often about things that wouldn't normally bother them, such as being alone in the house.
- \* Having difficulty in concentrating or making decisions.
- \* Experiencing physical symptoms, such as headaches.
- \* Having obsessive fears about baby's health or wellbeing, or about themselves and other members of the family.
- \* Having disturbing thoughts about harming themselves or their baby.
- \* Having thoughts about death.

# Changes in your thoughts

- \* Losing confidence in yourself
- \* Expecting the worst and having negative or gloomy thoughts
- \* Thinking that everything seems hopeless
- \* Thoughts of suicide
- \* Thinking you hate yourself
- \* Worrying about not feeling love towards your baby

# Changes in your body

Poor memory or concentration

Restlessness

Poor sleep (which is not due to your baby waking in the Night but possibly anxiety/depression)

Feeling worse at a particular time of day (usually morning)

Changes in appetite

Tearfulness

# Changes in your behaviour

- \* Finding it difficult to do even the simplest of things
- \* Having difficulty bonding with your baby
- \* Not doing your normal activities because of how you are feeling
- \* Cutting yourself off from other people
- \* Being inactive; just sitting doing nothing for long periods of time
- \* Finding it difficult to see the funny side of things
- \* You may find that you become quite obsessive about certain routines (such as cleaning)

# A Fathers Story

I hated the whole time and wanted the birth to come quick. I had a bad experience after my ex-partner suffered with postnatal depression. I never told my current partner about how things changed after the baby was born. It was the reason, I feel now, that we broke up. I am afraid it will happen again.

Timothy 35, (Fathers Reaching Out, 2014)

# Research

Estimates of paternal depression very widely ranging from 1.2% - 25% (Goodman, 2004)

A meta-analysis of 43 studies reported an average of 10.4% of fathers to be depressed both pre-and postnatally.

(Paulson & Bazemare 2010)

# A Dad in need of help.

It was only after speaking to you that I understood why I was drinking too much. I was depressed after feeling out of place and I kept thinking that I was going to be a rubbish father. My father wasn't there for me and I felt pressured to do more hours at work and didn't want to be around the baby like other fathers. It wasn't planned, the baby.

Mike 23, First time dad. (Fathers Reaching Out 2014)



# Paternal OCD

Version 1 Jan2011



Are you a  
Dad with  
OCD?

INTERESTED IN TAKING  
PART IN RESEARCH?

## ASPECTS OF PARENTING & ANXIETY

We are conducting a research study at the Institute of Psychiatry in London looking at aspects of parenting and OCD. We are interested in recruiting dads with children aged 7-12 who live with their children. If you are interested in taking part or would like more information please contact Dr Rebecca Chilvers:

E- mail: [Rebecca.chilvers@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:Rebecca.chilvers@kcl.ac.uk) Research Mobile: 07842 047339

**Institute of  
Psychiatry**

**KING'S  
College  
LONDON**

# A Fathers Story

I thought I would smash my baby's head in the bath. I have had OCD for years but that was managed as best I could until I was to become a father. I know the best thing to do was to avoid the situation of bathing my boy. I didn't tell anyone including my wife and now people think I am a bad father.

David 34 ( Fathers Reaching Out )

# Why we need to support both parents.

And an integrated review of 20 research studies found 24-50% of new fathers with depressed partners affected by depression themselves (Goodman, 2004).



# A Fathers Story

Mark I found out that my partner got pregnant coming off the pill without telling me. I was ready to go travelling and university but have been depressed and suicidal since the baby was born. I feel trapped and cant show love towards the baby. I have had enough but I need to be strong for them.

Jim 21, (Fathers Reaching Out )

# The impact of fathers' depression on infants and children

A substantial, UK/US study, which controlled for mothers' depression and for fathers' education levels, found severe postnatal depression in fathers associated with high levels of emotional and behavioural problems in their children (particularly boys) at age 3.5 years (Ramchandani et al, 2005) and at age 7 (Ramchandani & Stein, 2008).

Some of the worst effects were found when the fathers were depressed both pre- and post-natally. Pre-natal depression, when it existed on its own, had a lesser effect than post-natal depression (Ramchandani et al, 2008).

# Dads Still Face Experiment

<https://binged.it/2Mc2yw5>

The famous "Still Face" experiment developed by Dr. Ed Tronick, director of UMass Boston's Infant-Parent Mental Health Program, clearly shows how profoundly babies read and react to their social surroundings. Prolonged lack of attention can move a baby from good socialization to bad

# Relationships and Childs Development at Risk.

Fathers' depression puts at risk the quality of the relationship between the parents (Phares, 1997); and better couple relationship quality has been linked to lower infant fussiness scores (Dave et al, 2005). It is known that marital conflict and parental depression are causally related and connected with elevated adjustment problems in children, but relatively little is known about fathers' depressive symptomology, marital conflict, and child development (Cummings et al, 2010)

# Fatherhood has changed



## Stay-at-Home Dad Reflects on Criticism, 'Low Expectations'

Like 436 Tweet 14 +1 2





# Same Sex Couples



# Social Media



# Young Dads/Older Fathers



# Landmark case in 2011

Daily Mail, Wednesday, May 25, 2011

## Father with post-natal depression cleared of killing baby

By Rebecca Evans

A DEPRESSED father who trawled the internet for ways to kill babies before his daughter was found dead in her cot spoke of his 'long ordeal' as he walked free from court yesterday.

Architect Mark Bruton-Young posed smiling with his wife, who has stood by him throughout, after being found not guilty of murdering their baby Harriet.

During his two-week trial, the prosecutor claimed he had smothered six-month-old Harriet with a pillow after struggling with male post-natal depression.

The 37-year-old had searched the internet for ways to kill a baby, including death by asphyxiation, being buried alive, punched stomach, poisoned by anti-freeze

Tragedy: Harriet was just six months when she died. Relief: Mark Bruton-Young and his wife Clare yesterday

# Educating the Media and breaking the stigma.



**Myth:** Mental health problems are very rare.

**Fact:** Mental health problems affect 1 in 4 people.



**Eliza Bennett** ✓  
@ElizaBennett

Nope. Suicide is biggest killer of men under 45 in UK. We should encourage men to talk about their feelings. You might save someones life.

**Piers Morgan** ✓ @piersmorgan

I'm not convinced by this new trend of male public soul-bearing. Time for our gender to get a grip, methinks. Life's tough- man up. [twitter.com/jonathanheaf/s...](https://twitter.com/jonathanheaf/s...)

# How many are fathers?



# National Childbirth Trust

## “ Dads in Distress “

38% of dads are concerned about their own mental health.

73% of dads are concerned about their partners mental health.

Increased pressures of fatherhood, financial responsibilities, changes in relationships and lifestyle, combined with a lack of sleep and increased workload at home can affect their mental health.

# Accredited Training/Workshops

Basic Awareness Perinatal Mental Health (3hrs)

Basic Fathers mental Health Course (3hrs)

Men's Mental Health Workshop (1.5 hrs )



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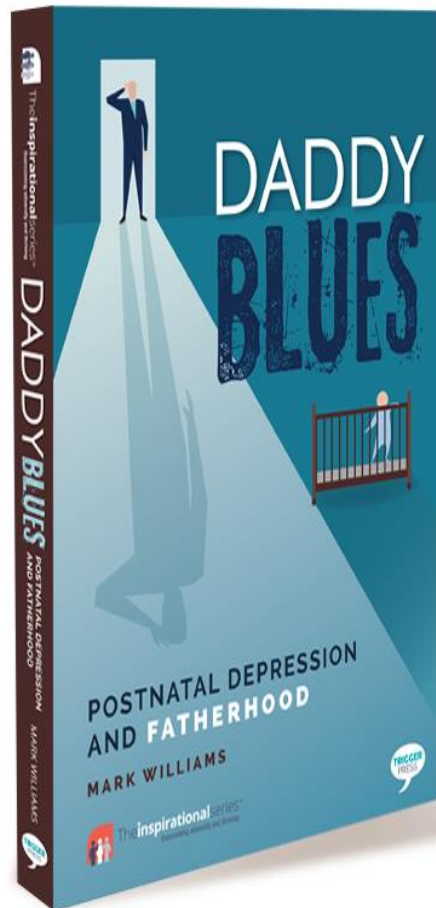
north america's largest mental health bookstore

TRIGGERPRESS

Giving mental health a voice

Indigo

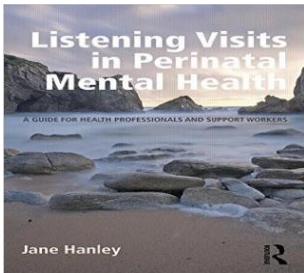
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# Mark Williams



\* Working with Dr Jane Hanley.

PMH Training

@MarkWilliamsFMH

[www.reachingoutpmh.co.uk](http://www.reachingoutpmh.co.uk)

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