



Pennine Care
NHS Foundation Trust



Our Bury Early
Attachment Service...
guide for dads

We all have mental health and looking after it and staying well is important not just for you but for your whole family. Your child is seeking the very best of you and you are going to have a huge impact on their life and this starts now.

Why staying mentally well matters

Newborn babies come into the world ready to connect with both their parents. The way that a parent and baby relate to one another supports that baby's emotional wellbeing into adulthood.

Becoming a parent is one of the biggest events in your life and can lead to additional worries and intense emotions. Hormonal changes can occur which increase your risk of developing mental health difficulties - just as it does with the birth parent and, if your partner is struggling with their own mental health, it can make it more likely that you will too.

Postnatal Depression affects around 10% of Dad's and it is at its peak between 3 and 6 months after the birth. When our mental health is poor it can impact on how we relate to our baby and on their ability to manage feelings and relate to others.

You can feel intense shame and feel there is something wrong with you for not coping but there is no shame in seeking help. You are getting help not just for you, but also for your partner and your new baby.

Good Mental Health

Good mental health allows you to fulfil the key functions and activities of daily life with ease; it allows you to learn, to feel, express and manage a range of emotions both positive and negative. You can build and maintain positive relationships with



others; as well as cope and manage change. These skills allow you to connect and learn with your baby, meet their needs and make them feel safe and secure and help them develop their own mental and physical health.

Your own mental health started to develop when you were a baby with the people who cared for you. Through these and later life experiences you develop expectations and feelings about being a parent and about what a baby needs. These experiences and the feelings can be positive and help you connect to your baby but they can also be negative or traumatic. For example, if you have experienced loss or feel traumatised by this or previous births, it is normal to have many different and often competing feelings about your new baby and becoming a parent. Having an opportunity to think about and share these feelings can help give you a different perspective and prevent these feelings continuing to impact on you and your family.

The most common mental health concerns for dads at this early stage include; stress, anxiety and depression.



Signs to look out for:

Feeling:

- Irritable
- Sad
- Tired
- Restless or nervous
- Hopeless
- Panicky (shortness of breath, feeling light-headed or dizzy, pounding or racing heartbeat, sweating or hot flushes, shaking, tingling, churning stomach, feeling faint)

What else you might notice:

- You cannot concentrate
- You cannot make decisions
- You cannot fall or stay asleep
- Intrusive / unwelcome thoughts
- Getting less enjoyment from things you usually enjoy and having less energy.

What others might see:

- Drinking more alcohol
 - Staying at work longer
 - Avoiding friends and family
 - Weight / appetite change
 - Increased anger and conflict
 - Gambling
 - An increase in taking risks / doing risky activities.
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How to get support

You're not alone and support is available. It is hard to take this first step but getting support will help you, your partner and importantly your new baby. The sooner you get support, the more effective it will be. You can get support by speaking to your GP, Midwife or Health Visitor.

There is also an NHS Screening tool available:

www.nhs.uk/Tools/Pages/depression.aspx and a range of support groups both online and in the community, where you can connect with other dads who understand and have experience of parenting and mental health.

If the crying gets to you and no one else can take over, it's okay if you need to put your baby somewhere safe and walk away and calm yourself down. This is better than becoming overwhelmed or angry with your baby or yourself. You will then find it easier to think and return afresh to check on your baby. You can find more information at:

www.iconcope.org.uk

Coping with my babies

All babies cry to communicate what they need and a baby's cry is designed so you cannot ignore it and you have to act. It is hard to imagine before you experience it but your baby's cry will press all your buttons, particularly if you are already tired and stressed.

Babies cry more frequently from around 2 weeks and crying reaches a peak at around 2 months. **The message is, it will get better and there are methods you can use to soothe your baby and soothe yourself.**



If you have tried to feed, change and wind your baby then next try talking to them, sing to them and stroke them gently, let them know you are there and trying to help them. Hold them gently against your skin. You can try using music or motion to help them calm and if they like it, try bathing them. Sucking might also help as it helps a baby to self soothe. Offer a clean finger dummy or help them find their own hand.

Useful resources and sources of support

Andy's Man Club:

Are talking groups for men - you've either been through a storm, are currently going through a storm or have a storm brewing in your life national online group for those outside of our catchment areas.

www.andysmanclub.co.uk

Bury and Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale Adult A&E Liaison Mental Health Service

We can support you if you attend accident and emergency in mental health crisis and require an assessment of your mental health. If your condition is not life threatening, please phone 111 so they can assess the urgency of your needs and, if appropriate, make a referral to the urgent access team. If you're not in crisis, your GP can make a referral to your local mental health access team.

Bury Early Attachment Service

We can support any parent who is concerned about how their relationship with their unborn or young child is developing.

www.penninecare.nhs.uk/buryeas

Facebook - @buryeas

Telephone: 0161 716 1100 / 0161 716 1137

Fathers Reaching Out

Personal experience fathers reaching out lobby group
Fathers Reaching Out – Fatherhood and Mental Health

www.reachingoutpmh.co.uk

Hub of Hope

Mental health support network provided by Chasing the Stigma - find your local services through their website

www.hubofhope.co.uk

Dads Matter

Dads Matter UK provides support for dads worried about or suffering from depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

www.dadsmatteruk.org

Facebook: @DadMattersUK

DadPad

Essential guide for new dads, developed with the NHS. DadPad can help by giving you the knowledge and practical skills that you need. The resource will support you and your partner to give your baby the best possible start in life.

www.thedadpad.co.uk/ask-dadpad/mental-health-new-dads



Dads Net

Parenting resources, entertainment, support signposting for local services including forums, podcasts

www.thedadsnet.com

Rammy Men

Support for men in the local area to help strengthen our community and reduce the impact of mental health on an individual.

www.rammymen.org

Facebook: @RammyMenCIC

Samaritans

Whatever you're going through, a Samaritan will face it with you - available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Tel: 116 123

www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan





Patient advice and liaison service

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) acts on behalf of service users, families and carers to negotiate prompt solutions and help bring about changes in the way that services are developed. As well as providing a confidential advice and support service, PALS will help guide you through the different services available from the NHS.

Tel: 0161 716 3178

Comments and complaints

We want to learn from comments and complaints about our services. If you have any, please speak with a member of staff. Every effort will be made to resolve any concerns and complaining will not cause any difficulties in your care with us. You can also contact our Complaints Department via post at Trust Headquarters, 225 Old Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 7SR.

Tel: 0161 716 3083

Email: complaints.penninecare@nhs.net

Become a member of our Trust

You can be the voice of your community by electing or becoming a governor, find out more about your local mental health and community services, and receive updates, comment on our plans and get invitations to health events.

Tel: 0161 716 3960

Email: ftmembership.penninecare@nhs.net

Alternative formats

If you need help to understand this information, require it in another format such as large print, spoken (on CD) or Braille, or require it in a different language – Please speak to a member of staff.

Bury Early Attachment Service

CAMHS
Fairfield Hospital
Rochdale Old Road
Bury
BL9 7TD

Phone: 0161 716 1137 / 1100

E-mail: pcn-tr.buryearlyattachmentservice@nhs.net

Website: www.penninecare.nhs.uk/buryeas

This leaflet was written in partnership with :



Maximising potential

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