

## Men's Health Information and Resource Centre



## Engaging Dads in Health Services

A report from the forum "What Works To Engage Dads?", in partnership with NSW Health, the Men's Health Information and Resource Centre at the University of Western Sydney and Relationships Australia.

Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney, 14 September 2011



“Those moments when you can just be yourself, we are all different, when I look back at my old man ... someone honest, a shoulder to lean on”

“Services are important because they provide time to fathers to give them the confidence to be a great dad”

## Contents

- (i) Guest Speakers
- (ii) Forum Description
- (iii) Welcome To Country
- (iv) Acknowledgements

1. Introduction
2. Guest Speakers
3. Feedback From The Day
4. References & List of Useful Contacts

## Guest Speakers

Richard Fletcher  
Adrienne Burgess  
David Hughes  
Peter Slattery  
Andrew King  
Duncan Berry  
Garry Sillett  
John Gilbert

Adrienne Burgess and Andrew King were unfortunately unable to attend on the day; however, facilitator Peter Slattery showcased their presentations.

## Forum Description

This cabaret-style forum was hosted by Anthony Brown, Project Officer, Men's Health Information and Resource Centre (MHIRC), University of Western Sydney and facilitated by the ever-entertaining Peter Slattery, who is a therapist, trainer and educator. Permission was sought in advance for David Thompson (MHIRC) to take photos of the day. Photos and videos are available on the website <http://menshealth.uws.edu.au/forum>

## Acknowledgments

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Men's Health Information and Resource Centre at the University of Western Sydney, for taking time out to read this report. I hope that you will gain some insightful ideas to help assist you in your work and wish you every success in your future work with engaging fathers in health and community services.

A special thanks to the Mary MacKillop Centre for hosting for the forum.

## Welcome To Country

We acknowledged the Eora people, the traditional owners of the lands on which the forum was held. We also acknowledged elders past and present.

MHIRC has a strong commitment to learning "with and from" Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, and while recognizing the very significant challenges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and fathers face, there is much in traditional Aboriginal men's and fathers' responsibilities to younger people that can benefit the whole community.



Peter Slattery, forum facilitator, addresses the delegates





# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Father's engagement with health services poses a specific challenge to health care professionals. Evidence suggests that when fathers are engaged and involved with their families, the health outcomes of their children are improved as are those of the men and the mothers as well.

However, researchers in the area of men's health and fatherhood conclude that gender disparities exist in relation to engaging fathers in health services. Current methods utilized by health care professionals tend to adopt a more 'mother-centric' approach to intervention. This approach may hinder father's engagement because it can imply that men are not necessary or, indeed welcomed, at health services.

This draws attention to the significance of this research and the need to develop interventions that account for gendered differences, in order to effectively engage fathers in health services. This is a key recommendation as outlined in the Men's Health Plan (MHP; NSW, 2009). The overarching aim of the NSW – MHP is to:

“..guide the NSW health system in providing health care, health promotion and information which appropriately addresses the health needs of men and improves their health outcomes”.

One of the key strategic priorities for action underpinning this aim is to:

“..increase the participation of men in programs and activities designed to prepare them for being a father and to encourage them to take an active and positive role in parenting”.

As mentioned, this report highlights the key themes, findings and suggestions that emerged from the forum held on the 14 September 2011 at Mary Mackillop Place in North Sydney. This report identifies successful strategies for engaging with fathers derived from an evaluation of the day. Participant evaluations were also used in the identification of the key themes.

The aims of this report are two-fold:

- » It is intended to assist health care professionals working with dads, in both primary and secondary care settings in the NSW area.
- » It will be used by the MHIRC – UWS, as the basis of ongoing work and resource with fathers and health services.

In addition, to the overall aims, the underlying objectives of this report are to provide:

- » Evidence on what supports fathers; practitioner skills, management and service models.
- » Ways to recognize and provide for the differing needs of fathers and mothers
- » Ways to develop new skills and adapt existing skills to engage fathers and deliver services that fathers want and need.
- » Strategies to help overcome the reticence some fathers may bring as a result of past experience with services.

# SECTION 2: GUEST SPEAKERS

## Dr Richard Fletcher

Richard is the Leader of the Fathers and Families Research Program at the Family Action Centre, Faculty of Health at the University of Newcastle.

### Why is there a need to target fathers?

There is a strong and recognized correlation between becoming and being a father, and being a healthy man.

There are several direct connections between fathering and health:

- » Men need to be healthy to be a good dad and role model
- » Higher rates of male mortality mean that a lot of men don't become dads
- » Becoming a father is often the first time many men need to interact with the health system, so it presents an ongoing opportunity to reach men on health
- » Being a father is a great motivator to stay healthy for themselves and their children's sake.

Richard spoke about the connection between men's health and the people who work with fathers on the ground. Men in general, have poorer health status and can appear to be less concerned about issues pertaining to their health when compared to women. Statistical evidence was provided to highlight these gendered differences. Richard concluded that dads are more 'at risk' in terms of their health and this 'hinders' their ability to be a father.

Richard suggested that service providers and health care professionals – those who directly work with men – have a crucial role in informing men about father-child bonding (attachment) and engaging dads in health services. Thus, it is imperative for service providers to understand father-child attachment and 'what works' to engage fathers. Some simple steps to take are:

- » Use "father-inclusive" language – it is better to use 'mother' when you mean the mother and 'father' when you mean the male parent. The term 'father or other caregiver' is inclusive of fathers and same-sex parents.
- » Address correspondence to 'Dear mum and dad' rather than 'Dear parents' – trials in the UK indicated a marked increase in attendance of fathers at these advertised appointments by changing the salutation.
- » Take down the father's name, even if he is not present when registering for child and family health services. At least capture the details of who the male caregiver or father is.



- » Directly engage fathers – ask to meet both parents, run events that dads enjoy like bbq's and sports days, and have dads contribute to programs for kids like building gardens or 'talk about dad's job' sessions.
- » Use positive images of fathers, men and male figures so that fathers understand they are welcomed and expected.

Richard described a series of events that service providers can adopt in their work with dads.

- » State the reasons as to why dads involvement is important and explain how it will make a difference to the child's life.
- » Self reflection – figure it out by talking through what didn't work for you. i.e. were you hesitant? Unsure what to ask?

A full checklist of ideas for engaging dads in early childhood services is available from <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-centre/fac/research/fathers/involving-fathers/tools-to-use.html>.

Watch the video in action here: <http://bit.ly/EngagingDads> (scenario starts at 33 minutes)

He created a scenario where an immunization nurse from community health wanted to establish contact with the family about the upcoming appointment. Specifically, she wanted to actively engage with the father and was ready to persist.

In the role-play scenario, the nurse countered the man's initial attempts to 'put mum on the phone' or 'that's Alison's job' and tried to directly engage the father and get him on board.

### What are you going to do when dads are not getting involved?

- » Clarify that you have been receiving reminders at this address
- » Clarify that it is the father that you want to talk to.
- » "Today I'd really like to speak to you."
- » Humour and rapport are essential qualities of service providers.
- » State that you want fathers involved.

### Men's Health and Fathers?

Richard further spoke of the changes in father's expectations and expressed desires in relation to children

Richard described how the role of fathering is changing and that dads want to have that 'connection' with their children (which traditionally appeared to be absent). Thus, becoming a father may be regarded as a key transitional period in a man's life and an area where intervention should be targeted. Additionally, societal changes are also changing the role of fathering with increased expectation of engagement and involvement with their children and the services children need. This has flow-on effects even as far as needing men to be in touch with their health.

## Adrienne Burgess

Adrienne is Head of Research at the Fatherhood Institute, United Kingdom. The Fatherhood Institute has a vision of a society that gives all children a strong and positive relationship with their father and any father-figures; supports both mothers and fathers as earners and carers; and prepares boys and girls for a future shared role in caring for children.

Due to personal commitments, Adrienne presented a pre-recorded video covering two key areas: **What Makes a Great Dad?** and **What Can Services Do to Help?**

In Adrienne's absence, Peter talked through Adrienne's questions and comments on handouts then individual groups were asked to discuss questions amongst themselves and feedback answers to the whole group. Groups were allocated approximately 7 minutes then invited back into larger group to discuss their answers. This scenario generated discussion amongst participants and the feedback drawn from the group is summarized below.



**Q.1. What do I consider to be the three things/ingredients/ elements that men need to help them to be good dads?**

Adrienne offered the following:

- 1. Knowledge and understanding of child development:** 'what to expect when' so that responses to children can be age-appropriate and suited to the child's temperament
- 2. Willingness and ability to pay attention:** spending time with children and listening to them
- 3. Skills and self-confidence:** looking after children a lot (and where possible alone) to get lots of practice.

The groups appeared to agree that knowledge and understanding of child development are key entities of being a great dad:

"Hey Dad" program – biggest light bulb moment for the dads that I see in my work is understanding of what their kids are capable of at a specific developmental age"

'Building a relationship/ maintaining a connection':

"Sometimes it's hard for dads to build a relationship/maintain a connection given that the mum has already an established connection with a child due to child birth etc. It is important to get the connection going but it takes a lot longer to do this than it does for women"

The group also acknowledged the role of experiential learning and how this is central to building and maintaining a father-child relationship:

"The three things are inter-related, you can't learn everything, you get confidence from learning through experience of what works for you. This may not have anything to do with what you read in a book"

Thus, from the service providers' view, it is evident that understanding and knowledge, opportunities for dads to interact with their children and experiential learning combined are key elements to help men to become great dads.

**Q.2. What do I consider to be the three-things/ingredients/elements that services can offer men to help them to be good dads?**

Adrienne offered:

- 4. Be absolutely INTOLERANT of low father-involvement:** Fathers need to be specifically invited and the importance of their participation underlined – and they should be followed up if they don't show.
- 5. Find the fathers:** Every time a child is registered IDENTIFY THE FATHER, record his details, and follow him up as if he were a mother.
- 6. Create fathers' groups or other separate services for men/fathers ONLY AS A LAST RESORT.** Separate services for fathers are largely unsustainable and the money would be better spent on training/supporting the whole staff team to be father-inclusive in their work.

It appeared, from the service provider's view, that services in general can do more to help men become good dads.

**Services need to be more inclusive/male friendly:**

"Engaging fathers – you don't tell them it's counseling/support as this is a hindrance to them attending. Provide an opportunity for them, they will provide strength if it is more inclusive"

"Men tend to like safety in numbers"

However attention was also drawn to economic, systematic and commercial issues:

"There are a number of systematic issues in services i.e. our computer program only works from mother's name and the father's name is not linked. Work hours 9-5, economic reasons and standard practice they cannot provide opportunities for dads to come along on Saturday or after work etc."

"We tried having Saturday morning sessions but hardly anyone came. There's just too much on with sport and shopping and everything else".

"This is all ideal-world stuff. I've got a family [client] at the moment where mum comes in and dad goes out – the kids never see mum and dad together. If you're living in Sydney, you've got a huge mortgage and this would all be wonderful if we could all work twenty-four hours a day"

**Attention has to be drawn to the fact that some mothers just don't want the men (in their kids' lives) involved**

"There are times when mothers didn't want fathers involved, due to violence, they didn't want to identify the father"

## David Hughes

David Hughes is a male nurse in the Mid North Coast Local Health District with extensive experience in raising the profile of fathers in health and family life.

### **Presentation Title: Fathering our Children – it's the core of Men's Health**

David provided us with a powerful interactive presentation, with music and pictures, about fatherhood and being a dad.

### **Tips to make your practice more father-friendly.**

- » Ask Mum – “When can I see you and your partner for next appointment?”
- » Teleconferencing – dads are not inaccessible – contact them during work or lunchtime via technology
- » Send dad a summary of the consultation. Don't expect mum to tell dad everything that happens, their relationship is not a therapeutic one. Don't set up parents for an argument by missing details lost in translation. Making mum the source of information reinforces the idea that only mum is responsible.
- » Organize workplace visits to include dads; they are comfortable in their own environment. May help to get other dads thinking that maybe they should be getting more involved. Think outside the box.
- » After hours Clinics: Planned with appointments for working families. Saturday mornings are generally not a good day.
- » Develop formal strategies within your workplace to engage fathers.
- » Access grants
- » Make workplace more father-friendly e.g. pictures of fathers, father-inclusive language, new dads' groups.
- » Appeal to fathers to get involved with their children via school newsletters, newspapers. Despite resistance currently in existence in relation to fathers' engagement it is nevertheless important to get the deep-seated.
- » Discuss the importance of dad's involvement
- » Collect data on fathers – numbers that attend, where they heard about the service, feedback, ideas.



Watch to David's videos at:  
<http://bit.ly/EngagingDads>

### **Presentation Title 2: Building Better Dads – a course for expectant fathers.**

David described the process of teaching dads about how to be good at their job of parenting. Quite simply David highlighted that a 'dad's job is to be a dad'. Dads are not secondary caregivers they are primary, David believes that dads are the 'better' parents as they have single-track minds; they like to do one thing at a time.

The problem, in his opinion, is that men are too scared to stay at home and mind the kids as they feel isolated, stressed and alone. Service providers need to be aware of these things and provide support for men.



## Peter Slattery

### How does this fit culturally?

Peter provided the audience with a Vox-Pops session entitled: "Top Tips for Being A Great Dad... and something for fathers..."

This vox-pops showcased ordinary men and women and each were asked to describe "What makes a great dad?". Below is a summary of the statements:

- » Laugh a lot and cuddle
- » My shed is my studio
- » Time and attention
- » Seminars on how to be a good dad
- » Meet with other parents in a pub
- » Something new everyday
- » Helping fathers to spend more time
- » Relationship between fathers and daughters
- » Great dad someone who helps at night time
- » The mother is always right so I agree to it
- » Talking and man gathering.. that's all male isn't it, getting together
- » Just been awesome
- » Being excited when you see them, treat them like their special
- » Show affection, give them a kiss.
- » Those moments when you can just be yourself, we are all different, when I look back at my old man someone honest, a shoulder to lean on
- » Men don't talk about those issues, so to answer that I would need to go to a special place so share that bond with other men
- » Men don't like things too formal or too structured, a very informal setting
- » Looking after the family
- » A room to chat, food important to celebrate a new beginning, somewhere kids are welcome, decision making made as a family
- » Being there! Picking kids up from school, if you have some free time just get in there.



(L-R) Peter Slattery, Dr Richard Fletcher and Anthony Brown at the forum

## Andrew King

Andrew King is a consultant trainer and program developer in group work, working with men and strengths based practice. He is based in NSW and facilitates groups and training workshops throughout Australia. He offers mentoring, group leadership, strengths-based strategic planning, team building, Parent Wise Workshops, program development and supervision.

Andrew presented via pre-recorded video on four aspects of being a father in today's world:

### Evolution – going from being a boy to a father:

- » Relationships and a purpose in life are fundamental male drivers and a sense of achievement is important for men to feel like good fathers
- » Men and boys learn through consequences and choices are critical
- » Fits with deeper purpose, outward, impact on life – work, sport, mates, and family, community are new definitions that make up men's lives. I call this 'generativity' – a holistic approach to men and their health

### Journey – what do fathers need to bring out the best?

- » Significant turnabout in numbers of dads been present at child birth, traditionally fathers felt that their role kicked in when the child was older and more competent
- » Voicing of your own story of what it means to be a father, it's generally kept quiet, may share with partner depending on family dynamics. It's not often until we express these fond emotions that they become present and we act on them
- » Knowing how to have that influence and impact and doing in their own way. Early on the mother has this impact, important for fathers to have this time and for the buck to stop with him. Experiential learning, you do have an impact.



### What Services Should do to Help Engage Men

- » Actively involve fathers, need to use gendered language.
- » Make choices and directly involve the man, i.e. if doing home visits and the man is not present, you should encourage a phone call or text to the man, and say sometime like: 'I've been around to your family, you have great kids, I would love to have a chat with you sometime.'
- » It is important for professionals to initiate contact with men.
- » Create relevance, most men do not know what community development services are, it is important to create relevance to what service providers provide for their [the man's] family – to avoid been seen as a threat to them.
- » Important to value the strengths that men bring – need to balance relevance with being a faith builder, to being honest and direct with men to help engage them in services, it helps put men at ease because they are not afraid of what you aren't saying.



### Group Discussion

#### What are the key messages in terms of engaging men in health services?

"Time – value the significance of time, look at stats i.e. men spend 7 mins p/week in contact with their kids without their mum being present"

"Value the play – Rough and Tumble play really does make a significant difference in kid's perceptions of life"

"Mother respect is central, in part, post-separation. Men are not going to be respected as fathers unless they respect the "mother as been a mother."

"Teamwork parenting, know that parenting involves a whole team. In addition, knowing the consequences of not being involved"

"To know that childhood is an 18-year investment"

# Duncan Berry

## Working with Aboriginal Men

**Culture and Identity:** Try to get Aboriginal men involved culturally into services. Getting Aboriginal men connected with their grassroots, connect with where they come from and then can make informed choices. Duncan stressed the importance for children and men to know their identity and to remain in contact with their grassroots.

**Disabilities:** Learn about disabilities and improve their quality of life through development.

**Femininity:** Duncan believes that Aboriginal men can benefit from being in touch with their 'feminine' or 'maternal' side.

This means being open to the emotional and caring aspects of being a father for their children, as well as playing the traditional, more 'masculine' roles.

**'Circle Sentencing':** To reduce the incredibly high rate of incarceration of Aboriginal people, the concept of Circle Sentencing came about.

Instead of being tried through the formal Courts system which tends towards gaol sentences, circle sentencing involves an Aboriginal person being tried by their own people and Elders.

The sentences handed out are then directed towards non-gaol punishments such as home detention.

To be effective as fathers and parents, Aboriginal men need to be able to be available for their children and this includes not being in gaol.

If we can find ways that prevent this continued cycle of gaol time, then we are also going to improve the ability of Aboriginal men to be effective fathers and this will also pay other health benefits.

**Responsibility:** Duncan expressed the need of getting responsibility back in the hands of Aboriginal men, "it will make them or break them but they are already broken, they have to do it themselves". For Aboriginal families, all grandparents, as well as, brothers and sisters are seen as mums and dads.

**Logistics:** Aboriginals cannot make judgments for another man on his land. For a more detailed understanding of Aboriginal culture (see: *Bringing them Home Report*)

## What can people do to engage Aboriginal men?

Support Aboriginal health workers, and increase the availability of funding that support aboriginal health projects. As highlighted by Duncan Berry, Aboriginal health workers are the most valuable assets in their community, without them, Duncan believes, death rates will rocket.

"Aboriginal health workers are the cornerstone to keeping us alive"

## Tips for Community development workers working with Aboriginals.

It is important to network with other health organizations and to know what it is going on in your community in terms of Aboriginal health.

Relationship building is imperative when working with Aboriginal people.

# Gary Sillett

## Pillars of Strength – Providing respite and support to men facing significant family trauma

Gary Sillett is a dad who shared his personal experience of loss of his two-day old son Isaac in December 2010. What he found was that there were very few services for men coping with loss or having a sick child in hospital for prolonged periods. In response to this, Gary founded Pillars Of Strength, a program that provides short term respite opportunities which allow dads the opportunity to participate or attend sporting and fitness activities with mates, family or a father who's been there himself.

His program encourages friends of bereaved men and men with a sick child to take the man away for a short period of time to a sporting event or a game of golf so that they get some time out. The program acknowledges the importance of support and friendship during times of trauma as most men will not ask for help or access a counselling service or support group (either through not knowing about it or not believing it is suitable for them).

It is important for men to stay fit and healthy both physically and mentally (look after their own wellbeing) so that they are at their optimum to help their families.

<http://www.pillarsofstrength.com.au/>

Prior to setting up the program Gary facilitated a survey and early results indicate that 91.8% think that a man's mental health was affected when dealing with a family trauma.

Only 9% of respondees knew of a service for men who are going through significant family trauma, with 97% of respondees believe there is a need for an organisation that provides respite and support for dads going through significant family trauma.

"Fathers are expected to move on as they have to look after the wife, she needs more support as she carried the baby."

### Service uptake/success

Pillars Of Strength has commenced a pilot project with Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney and launched officially in November 2011.

They are also looking outside the hospital environment, looking to set up a regional pilot and a complementary program pilot (through Sids and Kids or a similar organisation) in early 2012. They are not professing to be the be all and end all, but are looking to provide short-term respite to help dads overcome their trauma.

Success has been seen with the number of mums that have taken up passes for the activities and given them to the dads as a direct encouragement to go and take the time out. (there is no guilt associated to the man taking time out then)

Approximately 30 people have gone through the service thus far since its launch.

### Tips for service providers working to engage men in health services

- » It is important to use terms that don't dissuade men from using the service. Men will run a mile when they hear 'counselling'. They feel emasculated, men are supposed to be strong and fearless .
- » Services need to be made simpler to help engage dads, and there needs better ways to provide that conduit for dads to access information.
- » Wives and partners need to be engaged to assist getting dads to access services for them.

- » Need a holistic approach, need to complement the existing services, programs that are out there. A service for men should be made to feel Fun, simple and social. It must be FUN and benefit the man. They must be comfortable in their surrounds.

Found the guilt factor huge, if your wife/partner, guilt factor is there, dads feel that they should not take time out. Sometimes you need time out to "not talk about what has happened"; head space.

"Need to bring back a sense of normality to the dad, escape from the trauma to re-energize."

"There is also a long term need to support husbands of wives who experienced trauma i.e. terminal illnesses, breast cancer."

"Men are fixers, but in this type of situation you can't fix things so don't try it" – in many cases of grief and loss, the men feels powerless that he cannot fix the situation but reverts to trying as best he can. This can cause conflict with the partner who resents his attempts to smooth things over. It is better to give the man help to help themselves and their partner without trying to find a quick solution. Often this is a change in language rather than practice.

- » If all else fails, take them to the pub!
- » Ensure that you communicate with the mother at this time to ensure she does not feel abandoned or burdened.

## Top 5 Key issues facing men during this time

Responses from Dads	Knowing someone affected	All respondees
<b>Guilt at not being able to do anything</b>	<b>Guilt at not being able to do anything</b>	<b>Guilt at not being able to do anything</b>
Pressure to get back to work	Lack of support for men going through these situations	Pressure to get back to work
Taking care of daily chores/other children	Pressure to get back to work	Lack of support for men going through these situations
Lack of support for men going through these situations	Taking care of daily chores/other children	Depression
Having to be the communication channel to family	Depression	Taking care of daily chores/other children
Having to attend to the clerical/admin duties (eg hospital paperwork, death certificates etc)		

"Father are expected to move on as they have look after the wife, she needs more support as she carried the baby etc."



## John Gilbert – Baby Shed

John Gilbert runs a program in eastern Sydney for new dads with new babies under four months old. The workshop covers the practicalities of feeding, settling, sleeping, infant communication, baby massage, and infant play as well as gaining basic understanding of infant development.

It was developed through Sydney's Children Hospital as a way of engaging dads – a lot of dads are not getting the kinds of information they needed as new parents.

It is a three-week program of two hours every Saturday morning with a male baby health nurse. Its role is to empower dads to be comfortable with being alone with their kids and provide practical knowledge i.e. feeding, nappy changing.

The dads have generally been told to go through their wife or partner. In the first week they ask the wives/partners to attend – this is to find out if there are any issues/practical problems that need to be resolved.

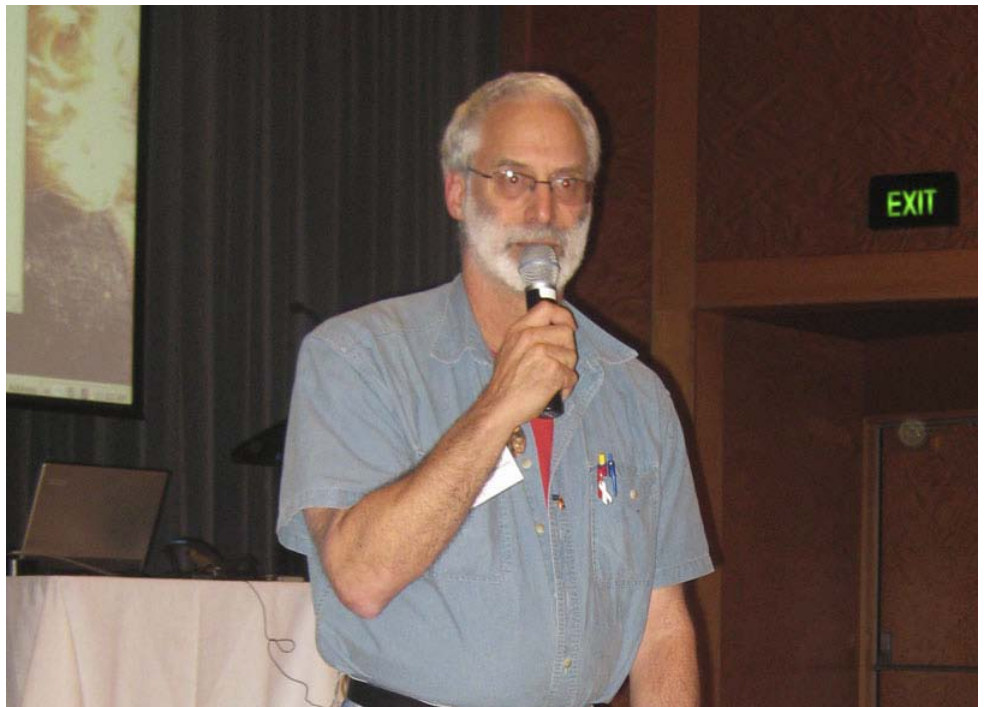
### Services For New Fathers

Services for new dads are important because they provide time to dads to give them the confidence to be a great dad.

There is a need to be aware of key transitional periods that occur within the context of people's lives. A lot of marital breakdown happens due to the birth of the child. There is a need to understand what it means to be a parent and ideally this should happen well before the child is born.

### Tips for Effectively Engaging Dads in Health Services

These guidelines are derived from a summary of the key themes, findings and suggestions that emerged from the UWS Forum on Engaging Dads in Health Services Forum. These guidelines are intended to assist health care professionals working with dads.



### Men are generally less aware of issues pertaining to their health and less likely to avail of health services.

- » Your role in engaging dads is crucial.
- » Dr Richard Fletcher's phone conversation scenario that actively sought to engage and bring in the dad is an effective example.

### Trust, humor, rapport and a non-judgmental approach are key to effectively engaging with men.

- » These characteristics are necessary to help build trust and instil confidence with men.
- » Men may be frightened off very quickly if they feel their role will be judged or criticized.

### Increase lines of communication/ collaboration with dads.

- » Men like to feel that they are doing a good job and that their role within the family setting is valued and respected. This may be as simple as telling a man what a good dad he really is.

### It's shared-investment – Encourage dads to just spend time with their children

- » A list of excellent initiatives, programs and contacts are provided in the Appendix section.

### Encourage dads to bring their friends along

- » Healthy Dads Healthy Kids – program for Aboriginal kids – they are telling participants that they are to bring three friends along. It's a way to reaching out to those who are hard to reach.

“Just like many mums, dads may be scared to stay at home and mind the kids as they feel isolated, stressed and alone.”

# SECTION 3: FEEDBACK FROM THE FORUM

## Feedback from delegates at the What Works To Engage Dads? Forum

Participant feedback indicated that the forum was a huge success and participants welcomed the fact that the forum showcased 'real people' with 'real experiences'. They felt this helped them connect with individual speakers which in turn will assist them in their own work engaging with fathers.

Engaging dads I think it's timely, I think people are ready for this. My team members will look into furthering better engagement.

All sessions were helpful and informative. I felt it will be helpful and beneficial for my practice

The information provided today was fantastic and broad around engaging fathers. Very helpful to incorporate ideas into projects

I need to remember to tell my son-in-law what a good dad he is.

The link between men's health and well-being and fathering ability.

It's a cruel myth that women are born to be mothers

Use 'ordinary' men to promote program/ help welcome in.

Thank you for today. The venue was great. Food great. Presenters were varied and interesting. Peter is the perfect MC – kept it moving but allowed speakers to get message across. Good use of technology – when it worked.

Was a very interesting day due to the varied presentations – would have like more information re dads engagement with older children and services that may be involved.

Great presentations and discussions. Passionate about dad's engagement.

Thought provoking. Speakers appropriate, reassuring, enlightening, great venue, good food.



Awesome day – personal stories are so powerful and insightful. Not highly research heavy very practical and 'do-able'. Thanks so much.

Thank you for an interesting day with some valuable insights about what men need to become practitioners in parenting. (As a woman, its good to have more perspective). And plenty of useful tips to draw dads into the processes in a way, which they may be more, inclined to accept.

Well done got some great ideas to take back as an individual and as a service provider. Thanks to you for our indigenous focus too.

In terms of family health, I think it's hard to come to the realization that the oppressed are now oppressing. There is much hope for the father-inclusive practice. Thank you for inspiring.

Realization of how important it is to just spend time with your children. Very informative and inspiring speakers

Today was very informative. I appreciate that I was given the opportunity to attend. The stories are what really made the day.

Great day – many practical tips but I though sharing personal stories took too much time as they were very specific

I applaud the efforts to engage dads, but please be careful of encouraging

mothers to express too much as it can cause problems with feeding.

Thanks for the day. The order worked out perfectly to balance presentations.

Great day especially Dave Hughes and Gary Sillett.

Absolutely fantastic day. Excellent presentations. Great to hear about the different services and service providers. Good opportunity to network. Great venue and food supplied.

Fantastic would love the slideshows emailed out. Really appreciate the presentations. Thank you

Gave us some good ideas to engage dads. We will be more active in contacting them. Very interesting day. Well done.

Thank you, great day. Perhaps some more ideas about engaging dads of older children/adolescents. “

Using speakers who could provide real understandings of being a father – its value/importance was exceptional. Appreciated the opportunity to learn from experienced professionals.

Time with kids so important.

Enjoyed all. Great day. Great food, great company. Great speakers, thank you so much for all your efforts for a great day.

# SECTION 4: REFERENCES & LIST OF USEFUL CONTACTS

## Reference List

### Policies:

- » NSW Health Men's Health Action Plan  
[http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2009/PD2009\\_077.html](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2009/PD2009_077.html)
- » National Male Health Policy  
<http://www.health.gov.au/malehealthpolicy>

### Reports:

- » **Bringing Them Home Report** – Best Practice in working with Aboriginal people and families  
[http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social\\_justice/bth\\_report](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/bth_report)

### Organisations:

- » University of Western Sydney – Men's Health Information and Resource Centre  
<http://menshealth.uws.edu.au>
- » University of Newcastle – Fathers and Families Action Centre
- » Peter Slattery – Therapist, Trainer and Educator
- » Adrienne Burgess – The Fatherhood Institute
- » David Hughes – Mid North Coast Local Health Network
- » Andrew King – Groupwork Solutions
- » John Gilbert – The Baby Shed

### Father-Inclusive Practice References:

- » Why Father Inclusive Practice?  
<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-centre/fac/research/fathers/fip/>
- » FaCHSIA Father-Inclusive Practice Guide:  
[http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/pubs/Pages/Father-inclusive\\_practice\\_guide.aspx](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/pubs/Pages/Father-inclusive_practice_guide.aspx)
- » Fatherhood Institute's Top Ten Idea for Including Fathers:  
<http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/2007/ten-top-tips-for-father-inclusive-practice/>
- » Dads Included Campaign <http://www.dadsincluded.org>

### Resources For Health Services:

- » Andrew King's Father-Inclusive Logos:  
[http://groupworksolutions.com.au/FatherInclusivePractice\\_logo](http://groupworksolutions.com.au/FatherInclusivePractice_logo)
- » Life Story Cards For Men and Families:  
<http://groupworksolutions.com.au/AnnouncementRetrieve.aspx?ID=18017>
- » Fathering Resources Available To Order:  
<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-centre/fac/research/fathers/resources.html>

**More resources  
in men's health:**

## **MENGAGE**

The Men's Health Clearinghouse  
<http://mengage.uws.edu.au>

<http://bit.ly/EngagingDads>



Scan this code with your camera-enabled smart-phone to visit the UWS Men's Health website.





"Unto You A Child Is Born" – Window inside the Mary Mackillop Church