

# Mellow Dads-to-be

An antenatal attachment-based parenting programme for expectant fathers.

## What?

Mellow Dads-to-be is a 6 week antenatal programme for men about to become a parent. Like the other Mellow Programmes it is based on attachment theory and seeks to increase parents' responsiveness to their child by being better attuned to the child's needs. By exploring the impact of maternal stress during pregnancy and providing the dads-to-be with a platform to explore what it means to be a dad, the programme aims to help preparation for fatherhood.

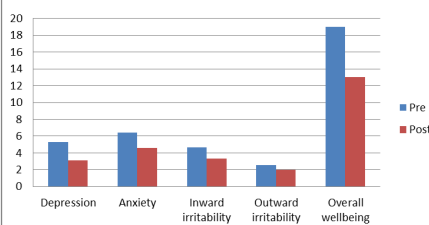


## Why?

The likelihood of a man developing depression doubles as he makes the journey towards fatherhood (Paulson & Blazemore, 2010). This is also a time when men may see a decrease in the size of their social networks and their available support (Fletcher et al., 2004). Expectant fathers often feel there are barriers stopping their involvement. Mums and dads-to-be both want their healthcare to take a whole family approach (Widarsson et al., 2015). A gap was also identified by expectant mums in our Mellow Bumps programme who felt there could be more antenatal support for their partners.



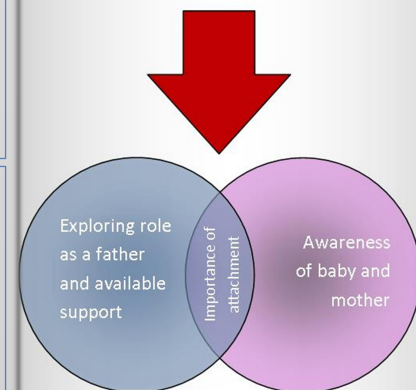
Pre & Post AWS Scores



Initial outcomes from the groups appear positive but a larger sample size is required before statements of significance can be made.

## Outcomes

Preliminary outcomes have been positive with pilot studies reaching 11 dads-to-be in Scotland. Participants showed positive changes in overall mental wellbeing as measured by the Adult Wellbeing Scale (AWS). The subscales of the AWS also show positive changes in levels of depression, anxiety, inwardly directed irritability and outwardly directed irritability.



## How?

Mellow Dads-to-be programme is adapted directly from our antenatal programme for expectant mothers (Mellow Bumps). The programme aims to increase the fathers wellbeing and awareness of available support, increase involvement and engagement, improve attachment with the baby before and then after birth resulting in improved outcomes for the child.



## Feedback

- One dad-to-be said the programme taught him **"wee, tiny things that I didn't know... the way you put them into a bath, how you hold them, wee things like that"**. Now **"when she cries I know straight away what's wrong with her"**.
- When talking about the bells and torches activity one of the participants said **"I thought that was fabulous, see when I went home, man honestly I couldn't stop doing it..."**. He has been encouraged to interact more with the bump **"I've been getting down and chatting away 'n' that, just getting that natural bond from before the baby's here"**
  - For another it was important to start thinking about support networks, **"I got you thinking about, like, who you'd like to support you as a family... Wee activities and things like that make you feel differently towards her and the baby... I did benefit from it"**.
- **"I thought it met more than expected, although it was only a short space of time, know what I mean, it basically covered everything that I needed to know"**.



## References

- Fletcher, R., Silberberg, S., & Galloway, D. (2004) New fathers' postbirth views of antenatal classes: satisfaction, benefits and knowledge of family services. *Journal of Perinatal Education*, 13 (3), pp. 18–26.
- Paulson, J.F. & Blazemore, S.D. (2010). Prenatal and postpartum depression in fathers and its association with maternal depression. *J. Am. Med. Assoc.*, 303 (19), pp. 1961–1969.
- Widarsson, M., Engström, G., Tydén, T., Lundberg, P., & Hammar, L. M. (2015). 'Paddling upstream': Fathers' involvement during pregnancy as described by expectant fathers and mothers. *J Clin Nurs Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 24(7-8), 1059-1068.

