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Conversations that Count: Factoring in the Fathers in Perinatal Mental Health

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Our Bios



Jane – PSI Founder and Co-Founder of Postpartum Action Institute, author, new parent support enthusiast

Danny – PSI Board member, men’s psychologist, early fatherhood researcher

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Learning Objectives


- Describe the historical and contemporary roles of men in the field of perinatal mental health.
- Increase awareness about meeting the emotional needs of men as they enter fatherhood.
- Describe barriers and opportunities in providing new fathers with mental health care.
- Cite resources and practices regarding inclusiveness in the delivery of perinatal mental health care.

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The Point of This Talk


- To foster a gender-equitable, whole-family approach to parental health!
- To increase awareness about best practices
- To increase parity



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Belief	Emphasis	Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief: Fathers often overlooked • Emphasis: Feminist gender-inclusive approach • Approach: Diversity/intersectionality Focus on gender 		



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The Historical Context of Gender in Parental Mental Health



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Through a Feminist Lens

- A time of change
- Shame, guilt, embarrassment and denial
- Not a woman's issue
- Balance work and family



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Parenthood in 1972: Jane and Terry's Point of View

- Equally invested
- Equally ignorant
- No job skills
- Different gender
- Equal opportunity
- Shared roles



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Meeting the Needs of Parents in Santa Barbara Since 1977

- Warmline
- Discussion Groups



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Shared Parental Emotions – No Gender Differences

Overwhelmed	Resentment/Jealousy
Loving/Thankful	Sexual Frustration
Panic	Inadequate
Irritation	Insecure
Excited/Satisfaction	Trapped/Lonely
Tired	Depressed/Weepy

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1984 Marcé Society Conference

- **PEP : A System of Action**
- **The Couvade Syndrome and Psychotic Disorders of Fatherhood**




The Marcé Society for Perinatal Mental Health

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The Founding of Postpartum Support International

1987 James Hamilton & PSI



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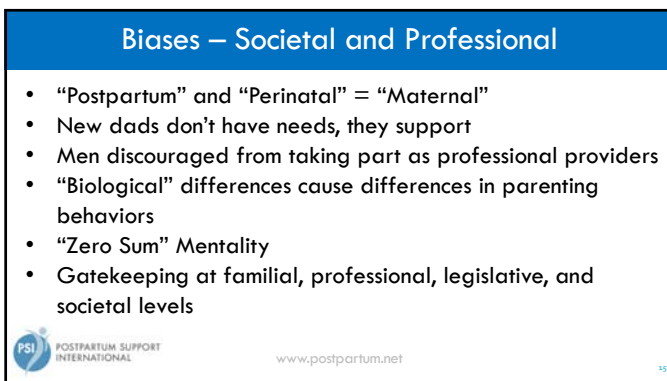
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Traditional Restrictive Masculinity (David & Brannon, 1976)

1. Antifemininity
2. Status and Achievement
3. Inexpressiveness and Independence
4. Adventurousness and Aggressiveness



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Barriers to Men Working in Counseling

- Men as a minority group
- Lack of males in counseling and psychology training
- Gender role strain
- Applied mental health associated with feminine “caring”
- Psychology less “scientific” than STEM fields
- Masculinities rarely addressed in clinical training

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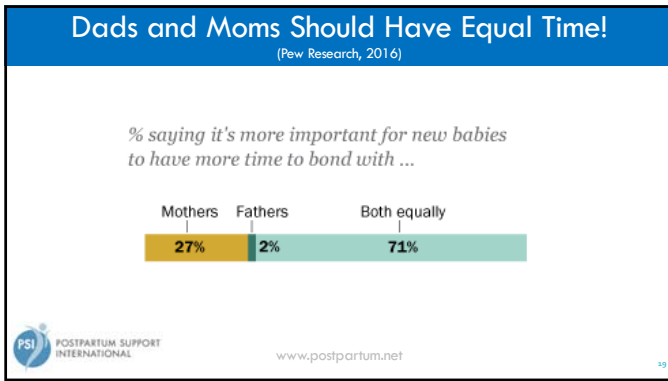
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Men’s Help-Seeking

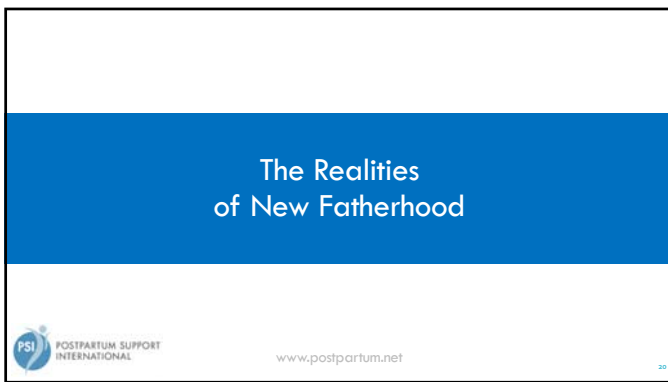
- Office hours
- Peripheral factors of the field – images, language, representation
- Moms’ AND Dads’ stereotypes - female therapists
- Men under-report issues
- 2007 APA guidelines for treatment of girls and women
- 2018 APA guidelines for treatment boys and men
- Australia and Ireland’s governments - male gender as a “protected characteristic”

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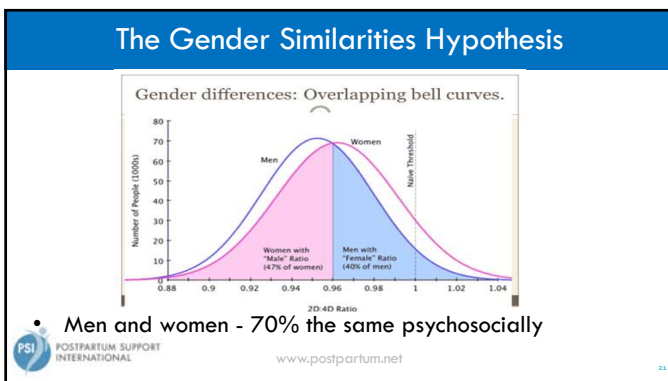
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Paternal Perinatal Hormonal Shifts

- Decrease in testosterone
- Increase in cortisol
- Increase in estrogen (estradiol)
- Increase in prolactin / oxytocin


Decreased testosterone in new dads predicts depression at 2 and 9 months postpartum (Saxbe et al., 2017)


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Paternal Mental Health

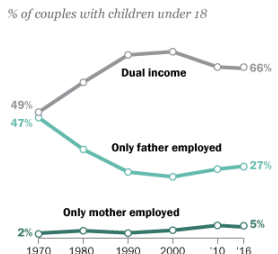
- 10-20% of dads in the perinatal period
- 1 in 10 dads gets depressed
- Maternal PPD strongest predictor of paternal PPD
- Anxiety in the prenatal period ranges from 4.1% - 16.0%
- Postpartum anxiety ranges from 2.4% - 18.0%
- **Relationship with his partner is central**


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Parenting and Work (Pew, 2016)

% of couples with children under 18



Year	Dual Income	Only father employed	Only mother employed
1970	49%	47%	2%
1980	55%	40%	2%
1990	60%	35%	2%
2000	65%	30%	2%
2010	66%	27%	5%
2016	66%	27%	5%


Moms

1965	10	32	9
2016	14	18	25

Dads

1965	2.5	4	46
2016	8	10	43

Child care (yellow), Housework (teal), Paid work (dark green)


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Parental Leave Statistics

- Average maternal leave – 11 weeks
- Average paternal leave – 1 week
- 49% say employers put more pressure on fathers to return to work quickly vs. 18% for mothers
- 1/3 say it is equal for both parents

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The “New” New Dads

- Moms’ “Mental Load” and The Second Shift
- “Dads are reconstructing the fathering role into a new parenting paradigm that is more psychologically gratifying in the context of contemporary societal expectations.” (Silverstein, Auerbach, & Levant, 2002)
- Dads’ role includes an emotionally intimate relationship between fathers and children – the same importance as the maternal-child one
- Moms and dads become basically interchangeable

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Feminism 2.0: Intersectionality

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Definitions

Intersectionality – Different dimensions of diversity through a systemic lens.

Feminism - Critical examination of gender within the intersection of social statuses.

Masculinities – Socially constructed set of attributes, behaviors, and roles associated with boys and men



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Putting Into Practice

Examine how **YOU** see power and gender

How would you work to engage and empower men in these areas?

- **Parent education**
- **Peer support**
- **Provider training**
- **Continuing education**
- **Direct Services**

We need a gender-equitable, whole-family approach to parental health!



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Practice and Training Implications (Eddy et al., 2019)

Dads with PPD AND clinicians experience concerns:

- Needing education
- Address gender expectations
- Repressing feelings
- Being overwhelmed
- Resentment
- Experience of neglect



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Resources for Dads

- Padre Cadre – www.padrecadre.com
- Basic Training for New Dads – www.menexcel.com
- Postpartum Support International – www.postpartum.net **Dads Chat**
- Daddit - <http://www.reddit.com/r/daddit>
- Life of Dad – www.lifeofdad.com
- FB Brand New Father Group - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bnfsupport/>
- The Good Men Project - <http://goodmenproject.com/category/families/>
- Dad Labs - <http://www.dadlabs.com/>
- National Fatherhood Initiative – www.fatherhood.org

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Q&A



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THANKS SO MUCH!



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