

ISNT IT TIME WE ASKED THE QUESTION, “HOW ARE YOU DAD?”

Mental Health is everyone's business and when talking about mental health during pregnancy it should be everyone's priority to ask the question "how are you". Mum needs to be asked and this is part of the booking in process and more, but it seems somewhere along the line Dad gets lost and can be just expected to cope with all that pregnancy and birth can bring. So let's take 5 minutes to ask Dad "how are you". Dads need to be able to talk and share their worries, fears and any mental health issues that may arise, and we need to make sure they have the chance and space to do so, no more 'Man Up' or 'It takes two to tango' so just get on with it. Families need Dads and they deserve the right to be asked "how are you Dad". #howareyoudad is a campaign and UK Government petition, we want all professionals and family workers to spend 5 minutes having a conversation with dad either face to face, phone call or a leaflet.

The Biggest Killer In Men Under 50 Is Suicide in the UK... How many are fathers?



Mark Williams is an International Campaigner, Speaker and Author who raises awareness around the world about the importance of father's mental health. He is a passionate speaker who has spoken out numerous times on both Television and Radio, while also working with Dr Jane Hanley on many publications.

Mark founded International Fathers Mental Health Day in 2016 and spoken in Parliament and now started a campaign for the Government to have early prevention and screening fathers as well as mothers as "Both Parents Matter"

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Mark believes that due to there currently being no early prevention services or screening fathers are going into other services or being missed all together, and with the single biggest killer in men under fifty being suicide in the UK feels many take their lives years later.

Like mothers, fathers have a history of mental illness before parenthood and after speaking to over two thousand fathers and a personal experience in 2005 believes their behaviour can change after having a baby which could result in relationships ending and men then using negative coping skills, this often leads to feelings of anger.



Helen Birch is from Hertfordshire and has a background in Administrative roles, she is a Mum to three children who inspire her daily, in October 2015 the partner of Helen and father to their then 11-month-old and 8-week baby bump left their home, walked to a secluded area close by and ended his life. The reasons behind why he took his life will never truly be known but with a degree of certainty if the taboo of asking for help and just 'man up' by many generations wasn't so ingrained this life could have been saved along with countless others. Helen's life in that split second went from good to a living nightmare and if it wasn't for the constant support of her family, friends and outstanding Perinatal Mental Health Specialist needs Midwifery Team the outcome could

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of been a very different one, although the pregnancy was full of complication including premature rupture of membrane at 18 weeks a healthy baby was born and Helen didn't develop any major mental health crisis. Helen and her families journey is an ongoing one that will last a life time, but she is 100% focused and driven to make sure that mental health and talking is not seen as a weakness and that no one ever feels that alone and scared, man, woman or child no boundaries.

In the time since Helen lost her partner she has worked really hard to keep herself well and bring up her children. Helen has become a passionate advocate, setting up a closed Facebook group We Can Do This for anyone experiencing any type of trauma peri or post-natal, shared her story at several conferences, appeared on her local BBC radio twice, written an article for Babies on Board magazine and won the Heart FM Hertfordshire Hero's Bravery Award. Adding to that list she is currently writing a book on her experience and the care that made it possible to get to where she is today.

Helen said, “I am so so excited to be working alongside Mark, raising awareness and making sure that all future generations know that talking and asking for help is a really good thing, no one should have to experience the pain of losing a loved one to suicide as nor should anyone feel like that is their only option”

“I want every person to know that no matter what you are going through that there are people who can care for you, can help you keep your head above water, to enable you to get through the pregnancy and beyond”

“So please, if you need help you must ask. Always be honest about how you feel, however scary and accept the help that is offered to you, it won't be a quick fix, but you will be put on the right path and you are not alone”