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Welcome to the 2023 Men and Parenting Pathways (MAPP) Newsletter. It has been an exciting year for MAPP and for progressing evidence about the lives of men and fathers. Read below for a snapshot of some of what our team has been investigating and a sneak peak at what is in store for 2024 and beyond.

1 IN 10 MEN PROJECT TO LAUNCH IN 2024

Did you know that 1 in 10 fathers experience mental health concerns during the early years of parenting? Also, that there are few effective, evidence-based, father focused supports?

1 in 10 Men, a new project led by MAPP's Associate Professor Jacqui Macdonald, will launch in 2024 to fill this critical gap. Funded by the Australian Government's Medical Research Future Fund and in partnership with Member and Healthy Male, [1 in 10 Men](#) will bring together the latest global research to reduce rates and severity of mental health problems of fathers.



HELPING HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TALK TO DADS



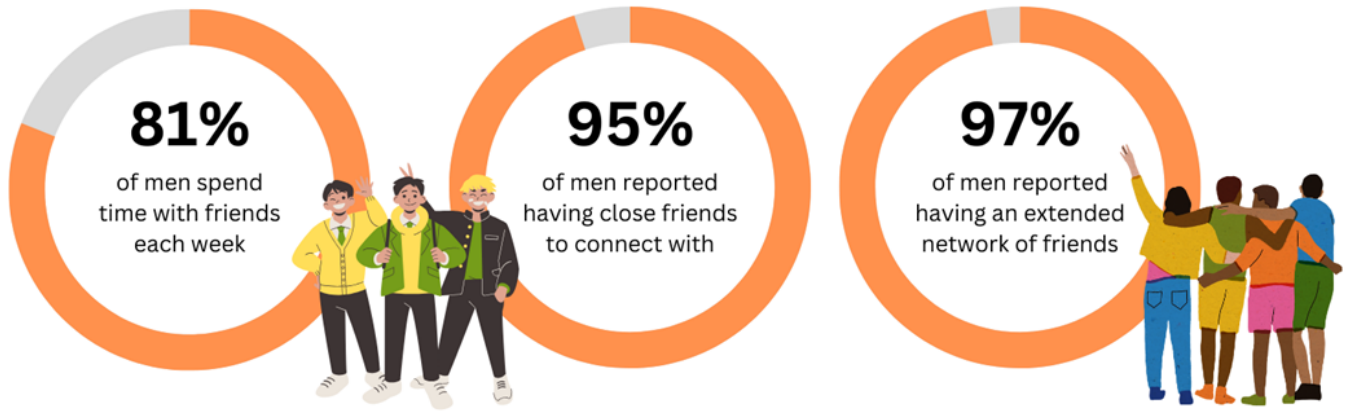
The MAPP team recently worked with the Healthy Male Paternal Plus Network to dive into the research on what may make fathers feel more engaged with health services.

We know that how healthcare workers communicate with fathers plays a significant part in whether dads recognise that their role is important and whether they feel they are supported in the early parenting years.

[MAPP collaborated with Plus Paternal and advised on the development of a guide called 'Talking to dads'](#) which provides practical examples of how health services and professionals can communicate and engage with fathers in an inclusive way. We all want dads to know how important they are to family life and this guide is a valuable resource to help achieve that goal.

MEN'S SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

In 2023, the MAPP team has investigated why spending time with friends is important for men. [Researcher Kayla Mansour discovered that men who had a larger circle of friends and spent more time with those friends experienced fewer symptoms of depression.](#) She also identified that sharing a meal was one of the most beneficial ways to spend time with friends, linked to lower stress and reduced symptoms of depression.



But that's not all friends can do!

[Researcher Khya Marabel-Whitburn analysed MAPP data to uncover a connection between a man's friendship circle and his relationship with his partner.](#)

For a better-quality romantic relationship, men benefit from hanging out with friends each week but need to be careful that it is not too much time. There may be a risk when attention is focused away from the partner, as more than 15 hours a week with friends was linked to a poorer relationship quality.

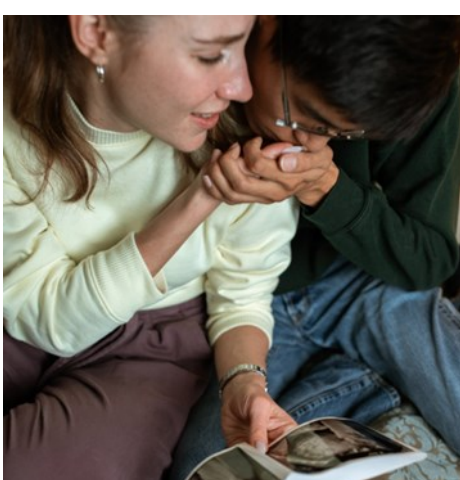
BARRIERS FOR MEN IN THE HEALTH SYSTEM

One of the key recommendations from the Australian Government's *National Men's Health Strategy 2020-2030* was to review and identify access issues and barriers for men and boys in connecting with health services and programs.

Led by MAPP's Associate Professor Jacqui Macdonald, a team of researchers looked at hundreds of studies from Australia and around the world to find out what is getting in the way of men having better access to supports for their health. [You can read the findings by downloading the literature review from the Department of Health and Aged Care website.](#)



SURPRISE PREGNANCIES & FATHERS



For some men, finding out that they are going to become a dad can be a big surprise! Provisional Psychologist, Imogene Smith, has been analysing MAPP data, as well as prior studies and men's online discussions to learn about the impact of unintended pregnancies on men's mental health.

A key finding is that fathers with unintended children have [double the risk experiencing postnatal depression](#) and other mental health difficulties. Many fathers learn to adjust to the surprise in their life but others experience considerable distress. You can read more about this research by or you can [watch Imogene on the 'Forgetting Fatherhood' episode of the SBS TV show 'Insight'.](#)

DOES MEN'S ANGER AFFECT THEIR PARENTING?

It is common to feel angry now and then but for some men anger is a more constant emotion. [Project Manager, Lauren Francis, has analysed MAPP data and found that men with higher levels of 'trait anger' tend to have less patience with their babies.](#)

Her investigations suggest that anger can interfere with men's capacity to understand their own emotions and that it is also linked to difficulty psychologists call 'mentalising'. [Mental health practitioners may be able to support new fathers to build their mentalising skills, which may in turn strengthen bonds between fathers and their babies.](#)



MAPP PARTICIPANTS: UPDATE YOUR DETAILS

Your involvement in the MAPP study is unique and irreplaceable!

Please keep us up to date with your best contact details.



To update your details, [fill in our online form:](http://mappresearch.org/participants)

Or contact the research team:
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