



Mum and Dad Wellbeing

Parenting can be one of the best and also one of the most challenging experiences of your life. Some challenges are common to both parents, but some can be felt differently depending on whether you are mum or dad. Harmony in the home and the quality of your relationship with your child and partner is important to the health and wellbeing of the whole family.

Mum Challenges

- The expectation to be the perfect mum/super mum.
- It is normal to feel a loss of who you 'used' to be. Being 'mum' can feel different to your identity, which could have been attached to your career or independence.
- Taking leave from your career when you have a child is a big decision. It is common to feel conflicted about this.
- While things are changing, it is still largely women who are at home looking after the child and it can feel like there is an expectation to be doing it all.
- Around 1 in 5 mums experience anxiety and/or depression.

Dad Challenges

- Many dads struggle with how to be a role model when they themselves may not have a role model to follow. Times have changed and so has the role of dads. This is a good thing, but it is uncharted territory for many.
- Some dads think their partners are better at child duties, but largely this is because they have more opportunity to practise these skills.
- Struggling to get the balance between career and family is common.
- Sometimes it feels like your relationship is coming last and caring for your child takes over everything.
- Around 1 in 10 dads experience anxiety and/or depression.

Tips for Mum

- Adjusting to parenting takes time, even for mums. It is normal not to know exactly what your child needs all of the time.
- Being a perfect mum is an unrealistic expectation. Don't believe everything you see on social media. Every mum and every family faces challenges.
- Identify what was important to you before you had children and find a way to include that in your life.
- Looking after yourself is important. When you care for yourself you are better able to care for others.
- Discuss your plans for returning to work with your partner and employer. It's OK if you want to return to work, but it's also OK if you change your mind. Plans can change.
- Accept help from others, especially your partner. Accept they might do things a bit differently and that's OK.
- Be specific about what you need from your partner. Respectful communication is important.
- Seeking help early is important and forms part of managing problems successfully.

Tips for Dad

- Learning any new skill takes time. You don't have to be perfect, just give it a go.
- Get involved with your child's routine. Be a team with your partner and embrace that each of you will handle your child differently.
- Times are changing, so choose parental leave that is right for your family. More dads are taking extended leave to be the dad they want to be. Be brave, even if you are the first in your workplace.
- Take time to connect every day and spend time with your child. Never underestimate the power of a smile and a cuddle.
- Check in with your partner. Be specific and ask questions about what is going to be helpful.
- Quality time as a couple is important to stay connected. Discuss what quality time means to both of you. Don't assume a romantic dinner is the magic fix.
- Looking after yourself is important. When you're happier you're better able to support your partner and your child. Look out for Dads' Groups in your area.

Safety

- Getting support that you or a family member needs is a sign of great strength. Support networks exist as a way to promote the health and wellbeing of the entire family.

If you have a parenting question, call Karitane Careline: 1300 227 464