



# Tapping into Fathers

AS A RESOURCE FOR MOTHERS & INFANTS

*Associate Prof. Richard Fletcher, SMS4dads Founder*  
*Craig Hammond, SMS4dads Indigenous Leader*

IN COLLABORATION WITH

*Community Child Youth & Family Health Service*



**Australian Government**  
Department of Health

**Our  
Shared  
Values**



COMPASSION



ACCOUNTABILITY



RESPECT



INTEGRITY

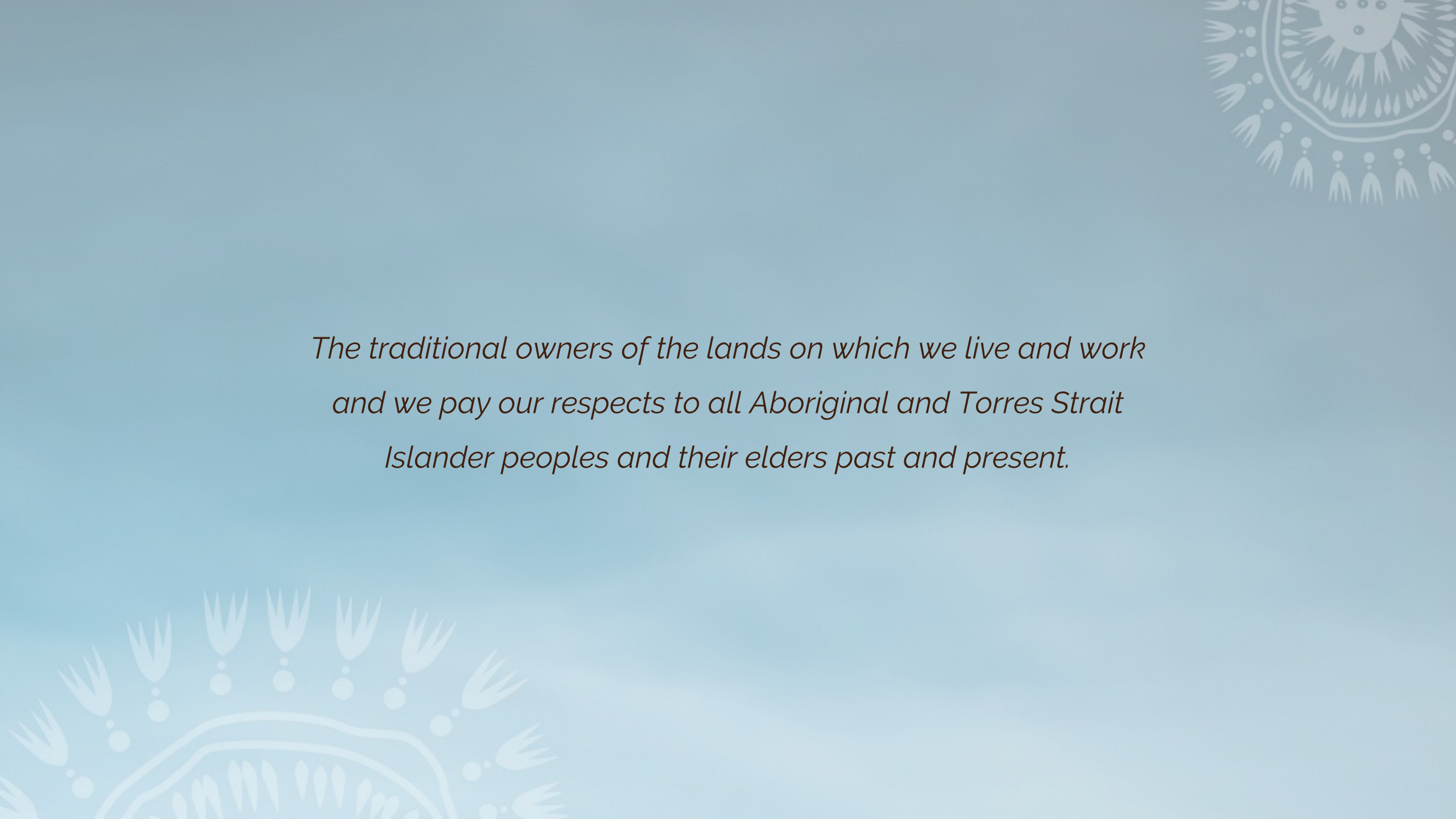


**Queensland  
Government**

**Cairns and Hinterland**  
Hospital & Health Service



We acknowledge...



*The traditional owners of the lands on which we live and work  
and we pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander peoples and their elders past and present.*



Thankyou

To the QLD Clinicians  
*who have generously contributed*

*Dr Ernest Hunter, Dr Mick Adams, Dr Mark Wenitong, Catherine  
Rawlinson, Dr Elisabeth Hoehn, Andrea Baldwin, Alex De Young, Dr Paul  
Lanning, Helen Funk, Dr Alka Kathari, Debbie Spink, Janette Garvey,  
Jennifer Watterson, Natasha Bartlett, Jack Bulman, Joyce van der Ham*

OUR TEAM **SMS4dads** 

*Dr Chris May, Uncle (Dr) Mick Adams, Craig Hammond, Alicia Rennie,  
Maureen Beckett, Louie Hahn, Ash May, Dave Edwards, Scott White,  
Dr Rebecca Liackman, Dr Jennifer StGeorge, Casey Regan*



TEAM



ABORIGINAL LEAD

**UNCLE MICK ADAMS**

*Yadhaigana/Wuthathi (father side)*

*Gurindji (mother's side)*



INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

**CRAIG HAMMOND (BOURKIE)**

*Kamilaroi*



INDIGENOUS RESOURCE

DEVELOPMENT

**DAVE EDWARDS**

*Worimi*

A close-up photograph of a pregnant woman's belly, which is the central focus. She is wearing a teal-colored top. Her hands are resting on her belly, and they are being supported from underneath by a man's hands. The man is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white. The overall mood is supportive and caring.

# FATHER SUPPORT MATTERS

*For birthing outcomes  
For baby health  
& partners well-being*





*What we want*

Fathers connecting  
to their baby

*What we want*



Fathers & Mothers  
as a team

*What we want*

Fathers connecting  
with each other





**FATHER SUPPORT MATTERS**

*for Preterm Birth*



## **FATHER SUPPORT MATTERS**

*for depressed mums*



**FATHER SUPPORT MATTERS**

*for infants too*



What does  
support look like?



*What does  
support look like?*





*What does  
support look like?*



*What does  
support look like?*



*What does  
support look like?*

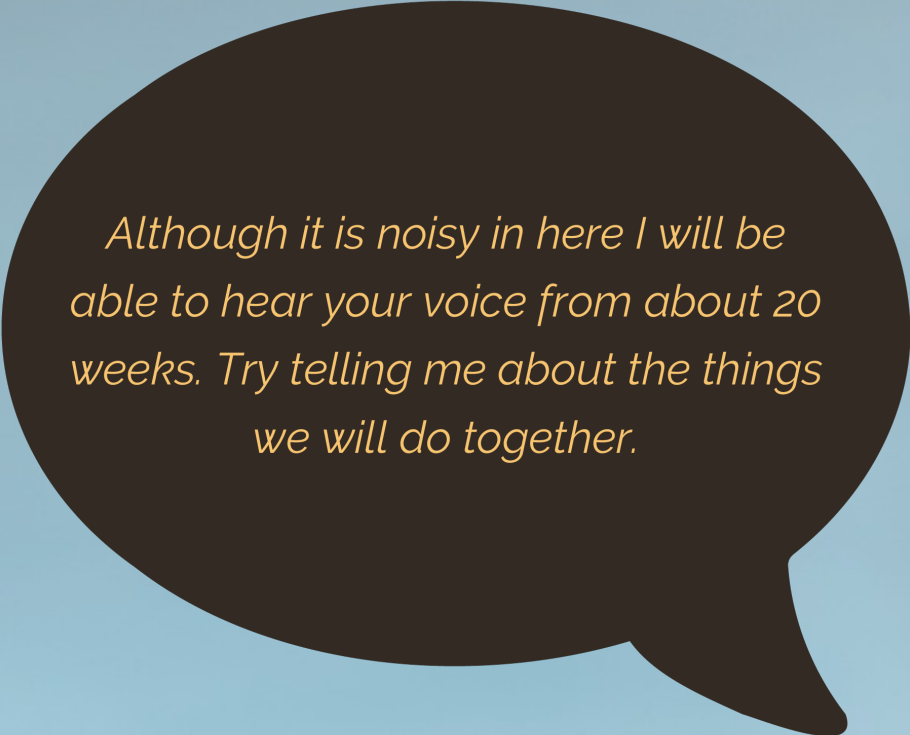


SM4DADS VIDEO <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5LWuyqreEU>

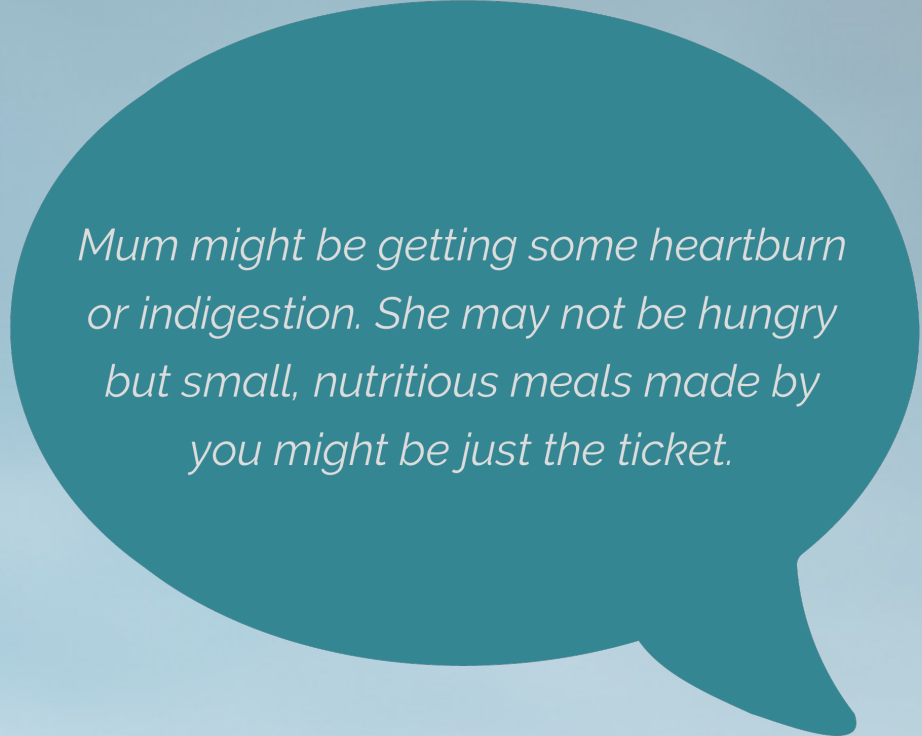


What are the  
messages like?






*Although it is noisy in here I will be able to hear your voice from about 20 weeks. Try telling me about the things we will do together.*



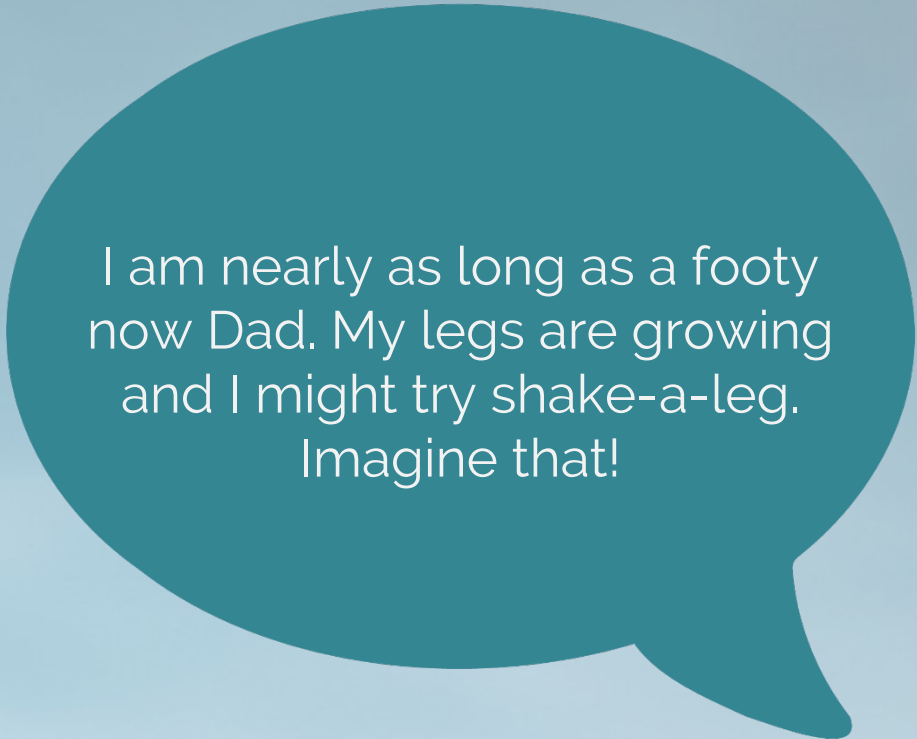
*Mum might be getting some heartburn or indigestion. She may not be hungry but small, nutritious meals made by you might be just the ticket.*



I'm looking forward to having a go at breastfeeding Dad. Mum and I might need some help though. You on the team? Watch this short video of dads yarning about breastfeeding.

Dads Know Breast is Best

PRE-NATAL MESSAGE SENT AT  
17 WEEKS OF PREGNANCY



I am nearly as long as a footy now Dad. My legs are growing and I might try shake-a-leg. Imagine that!

PRE-NATAL MESSAGE SENT AT  
19 WEEKS OF PREGNANCY

## WHAT IS SMS4Dads?

A national project funded by Department of Health

**SMS4DeadlyDads** is version of SMS4dads that is Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island specific

**SMS4dads provides text-based information** & support for new dads



## WHO RUNS IT?

**Newcastle University** in collaboration with Red Nose & PANDA

Funded by The Department of Health

Along with Australian Rural Health Alliance, Indigenous Health *Infonet* & Telethon Kids Institute

## HOW ARE MOBS INVOLVED?

First Nations SMS4dads **Advisory Group** – provides project governance

**Partnerships** with Men's Outreach Service Broome, Miyay Birray & Mibbinbah

**Counselling support** currently provided by PANDA and *13YARN*





**WHO IS IT FOR?**

## **SOON TO BE & NEW DADS**

From 12 weeks gestation to 1 year post-birth

### **Enrolment is online**

Includes participant consent, providing some basic personal info  
and a K6/K5 assessment



WHY JOIN UP?

## FATHERS OFTEN DON'T KNOW...

How **attachment** works

Where to get **information** and help

How to be part of the **parenting team**

How **important** they are





SM4Deadly Dads Video [https://youtu.be/dwBc4wx\\_Zn8](https://youtu.be/dwBc4wx_Zn8)



MESSAGE  
SAMPLE #1


## FATHER-INFANT ATTACHMENT

 **4Dad:** Walking together as a family is good for our health and keeps us mob feeling connected (*pre-natal*)

 **4Dad:** I will try to communicate with you from a very early age with my face, my voice and my hands. Learn to understand my signals (*post-natal*)


MESSAGE  
SAMPLE #2

## CO-PARENTING

 **4Dad:** If you've been at work all day you might be able to support mum by taking me out for a walk dad. This will also give us more bonding time.

MESSAGE  
SAMPLE #3

## FATHER SELF CARE

 **4Dad:** I am going to triple my weight in the first year of life.  
Don't let this happen to you too. [LINK TO ONLINE RESOURCE](#)



## MOOD CHECKER MESSAGES

**'Mood checker' SMS** are sent every 3-4 weeks

**These are interactive SMSs** with a 'check in' question relevant to the age and stage of bub

MOOD CHECKER MESSAGES HAVE THREE AIMS

- **Normalise difficulties** new fathers may face
- **Raise fathers' awareness** of their physical & emotional state
- **Link fathers in need** to PANDA counselling or (13YARN)



## SMS MOOD CHECKER

*Most people feel stressed if their new baby cries a lot.*

*How have you coped this week with settling your baby? [WEEK +6]*





*What dads say*

# What dads say

*There was one about my wife having almost half as much blood in her body and that was another reason why she felt heavy. So, I actually told her about it and that was sort of reassuring for her.*

*It helped to key in that you are going to be connected with this little person, and that you are going to be having a relationship with them very soon.*

*It was a reminder to, you know, touch them, talk to them [partner]. That sort of thing, I guess, that really helps avoid conflict.*



*What mums say*

# What mums say

*"SMS4dads was a great way for him to be involved when I was being pregnant and he was just watching. It has made him so much more involved with our baby." Mum at 30 weeks*

*"He's come home from work and he's gone, I'm gonna take the boys out for a walk. He'll ask a question, like how are you feeling today, are you feeling tired? And I think that might come from the messages." Mum of a 9 week old*

*"He gets these texts. He won't show me. The other day he got one, I don't know what it said but he went in and cleaned up the kitchen – he's never done that in his life!"*

Mother of a 2 month old with severe Mental illness

# Joining up is easy

1. Go to website [SMS4dads.com](https://SMS4dads.com)
2. Click on **JOIN UP** and enter your postcode
3. Answer these questions:
  - Has your baby been born yet?
  - Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?
  - Enter your name, mobile number & date of birth
  - What is the highest level of education you have completed?
  - Stress test: K6 or K5

You need to look at the Info Statement & Consent Form  
& that's it – your messages will start!



And that's not all

NEW MESSAGE SETS ABOUT TO LAUNCH

**NICU MESSAGES**

For dads whose baby arrives early or has medical issues

**GRIEF MESSAGES**

For fathers who experience the loss of a baby through miscarriage, stillbirth or other medical complications

**MENTAL HEALTH MESSAGES**

For fathers whose partners experience perinatal depression and/or anxiety



Thankyou

SMS4DADS.COM

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