



DRUMMING IT UP for dads

SMS4dads



NEW MESSAGE SETS

Supporting dads & dads-to-be...when things don't go to plan



The Hon Emma McBride MP



Professor Chris Dayas



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WHAT A LAUNCH... *thankyou!*

The Hon Emma McBride MP, Assistant Minister for Mental Health & Suicide Prevention and Rural & Regional Health, officially launched SMS4dads new message sets to a packed function at Melbourne Zoo on 4 May 2023

SMS4dads is a **WORLD FIRST**

We celebrated the launch in Melbourne to the tunes of Woodlock, performing songs written for their babies. We also heard from dads when things didn't go to plan during pregnancy or after birth – a truly moving experience.

We would like to thank everyone who attended the event and acknowledge all those who have collaborated, contributed and supported SMS4dads thus far.

SMS4dads text messages are especially designed for new and soon-to-be dads. They have been developed by the SMS4dads team based at the University of Newcastle (UON) with funding from the Department of Health and in partnership with Red Nose, PANDA (Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia), Tresillian, Miracle Babies and Life's Little Treasures Foundation.





TEXTS BASED ON LIVED EXPERIENCE

The new message sets were created based on advice from parents with lived experiences and critically appraised by clinicians and parents

RELEVANT & EFFECTIVE

Messages are brief (≤160 characters) with a reading age of grade 9 or less. Some include web-links with additional information

FREE & AVAILABLE AUSTRALIA WIDE

The service is free, and dads can sign up from 12 weeks' gestation. General messages continue until the baby is one



WHAT ARE THE MESSAGES ABOUT?

The new messages complement the existing SMS4dads message set. They provide support and advice for dads when things don't go to plan.

MENTAL HEALTH MESSAGES

For dads whose partner has perinatal mental health issues

EXAMPLE *If mum gets very unwell you may need to do all care for your baby at short notice. Plan for this possibility. Who could support you?*

NICU MESSAGES

For dads who have a baby or babies in the NICU

EXAMPLE *Focusing on things you can control can help you cope with the NICU. Such as being physically active, eating well and looking for the positives*

GRIEF & LOSS MESSAGES

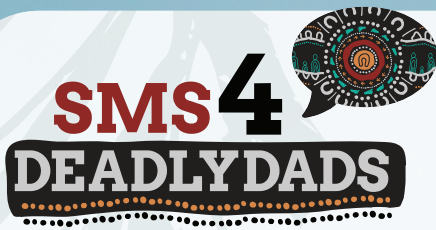
For dads who experience miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death

EXAMPLE *Parents sometimes feel guilty that they couldn't protect their baby. Guilt is a normal part of grief. If it's overwhelming call Red Nose on 1300 308 307*

SMS4dads.com [JOIN UP](#)

Over 12,000 dads have received texts from SMS4dads with a retention rate of over 80%





We are delighted with how positively SMS4DeadlyDads has been received – by mainstream & First Nations organisations along with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dads who have joined up.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people often live in rural and remote areas, where access to appropriate services may be limited by lack of availability in addition to other factors such as cultural inappropriateness, lack of trust and stigma associated with seeking support. SMS4DeadlyDads provides a non-intrusive yet personalised service direct to dads and dads-to-be.

SMS4DeadlyDads was co-designed by the SMS4dads First Nations team – Uncle Mick Adams, Craig Hammond and Dave Edwards in consultation with an Advisory Group of senior First Nations men representing Aboriginal Controlled Health organisations.

The adapted version of the original message set was written by health professionals alongside First Nations dads. They are brief, to the point, contain cultural content and have been designed especially for dads who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

SMS4DeadlyDads helped me navigate the change in lifestyle with Bub and mum

When bub is upset, sometimes I need to take some space to walk away. I check my phone & look back at some of the reminders & cues that SMS4dads sent

Having those texts on a weekly basis... they were what I needed, to go 'Oh, yep, check in on mum to see how she's going.' They reminded me to slow down & focus on what's important



We are also continuing to see increasing numbers of dads enrolling in SMS4dads and SMS4DeadlyDads from all over Australia and health services and providers are now contacting SMS4dads daily to request dad-friendly and dad-specific resources. This goes to show the growth in understanding the importance of dads in the perinatal phase and the changing landscape of how we talk with and work with dads.

Whilst services such as SMS4dads and SMS4DeadlyDads are gaining recognition and momentum – we still have a way to go to ensure dads feel more comfortable, included, confident and better supported in their role as they transition into fatherhood.

DADS AS ALLIES

SMS4dads has a range of FREE posters and flyers available to order from SMS4dads.com. The materials showcase positive images of men and offer dad-specific information. Along with the current range of printed materials SMS4dads is developing a suite of new digital resources with tips and guides to work with dads, engage them in services, and ensure father-inclusive practice continues to grow and is embedded in perinatal health service delivery.

STAY TUNED

SMS4dads will be in touch when our new resources currently in development are available. In the meantime – all the best with your wonderful work – and thank you once again for joining us as we “Drummed it up for Dads”



Thankyou!

TO OUR FUNDERS, PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS



Australian Government
Department of Health



FULL SET OF PROFESSIONAL PHOTOS OF LAUNCH AVAILABLE

<https://tinyurl.com/2mpt3ehv>



With enormous thanks to our funders, partners & collaborators. We could not have done this without you!