

# THE FAMILY CORNER NEWSLETTER



## Newsletter Highlights

- June is a month to celebrate fathers
- Embracing Fatherhood
- The evolution of fatherhood over time
- The challenges of balancing work and family life as a father
- The role of fathers in child development

## JUNE IS A MONTH TO CELEBRATE FATHERS

Fathers and father-figures are indispensable. They are likely the first people we ever know when we enter the world, and they love and care for us as we grow up. It's important for us to shower them with love and appreciation.

Fathers play an important role in the family unit, contributing to household income and helping to care for children and other family members. They also provide a sense of stability and security for the family.

The Centre set aside the month of June to celebrate and acknowledge all fathers and father figures out there for the hard work they do to care for their families and contribute to their communities.

Celebrating fathers is a way to recognize and appreciate their important contributions to our lives.

### The unique challenges faced by single fathers

### Mental health in men

### Abuse and domestic violence against men

### Health checks every man should do

### Narcissism against men

### Upcoming programmes

# EMBRACING FATHERHOOD

## The journey of Love, Growth and Joy

Let's dive into the wonderful world of fatherhood and explore the significance of embracing this transformative role. Fatherhood is a journey filled with love, growth and joy and it deserves recognition and celebration.

Becoming a father marks a turning point in a man's life - one that opens new doors of self-discovery and personal development. It's a profound shift that challenges preconceived notions, breaks down stereotypes, and highlights the immense importance of paternal involvement in a child's life.

One of the fundamental aspects of embracing fatherhood is the unique bond that develops between a father and their child. Gone are the days when fathers were so distant and solely seen as providers or disciplinarians.

Now, fathers actively participate in nurturing, caregiving, and emotional support, contributing significantly to a child's overall well-being.

Nowadays fathers have understood the importance of being present and involved in their child's growth and development. But we still have to advocate more fathers to join this movement of embracing fatherhood. Embracing fatherhood creates an opportunity for personal growth and self-reflection.

Fatherhood challenges men to step outside their comfort zone, re-evaluate their priorities and learn new skills. It's a chance to grow emotionally, mentally and spiritually as they navigate the unique challenges and joys of parenting.

Fatherhood also allows men to become positive role models, imparting values and shaping the character of future generations. By embracing this role, fathers teach their children kindness, empathy, respect, and resilience. These invaluable life lessons contribute to building a thriving and compassionate society.

Let's not forget that this does not only apply to biological fathers, embracing fatherhood also applies to father figures in communities - stepfathers, adoptive fathers, guardians and mentors.

Let encourage men to embrace fatherhood!



Rose Zunga



# THE EVOLUTION OF FATHERHOOD OVER TIME

The role of fathers and the concept of fatherhood have changed significantly over time. In many societies throughout history, fatherhood was primarily seen as a role of providing financial support for the family. Fathers were often distant figures, with little involvement in the day-to-day care of their children.

With the rise of industrialization in the 19th century, fathers began to spend more time away from the home, working long hours in factories or other jobs. This shift meant that fathers were even less involved in the care of their children than before.

In the mid-20th century, there was a shift towards a more involved form of fatherhood. This was in part due to the changing nature of work, as more men began to work the 9-5 which allowed for greater flexibility and work-life balance.

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on the importance of involved fatherhood. Fathers are increasingly taking on caregiving responsibilities and playing a more active role in the lives of their children.

This shift is in part due to changing social norms and the recognition of the importance of fathers in child development.

To date the evolution of fatherhood has been attributed to:

## **A growing emphasis on the importance of paternity leave and flexible work arrangements for fathers.**

Many countries have implemented policies that allow fathers to take time off work to care for their newborn children, and there is growing recognition of the importance of work-life balance for fathers.

## **Fluid and flexible gender roles**

There has been a blurring of traditional gender roles related to caregiving and parenting which has led to a greater emphasis on the importance of caregiving and parenting as essential human activities, regardless of gender.

## **The rise of single-parent families**

In some parts of the world, there has been an increased focus on single fathers as they often face the unique challenges related to caregiving, financial support, and social isolation.

Overall, the role of fathers and the concept of fatherhood have evolved significantly over time. From distant figures in historical times to more involved caregivers in the modern era, fathers have played a critical role in the family unit and in society as a whole.

As we continue to evolve as a society, it is likely that the role of fathers and the concept of fatherhood will continue to change and adapt to meet the needs of families and communities.





## THE CHALLENGES OF BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY LIFE AS A FATHER

It's normal and expected for women to talk about their work-life balance because they are typically perceived to be the primary caregivers. The media rarely talks about dads who may experience the same guilt and pressure when trying to balance careers and fatherhood.

Balancing work and family life can be a challenge for anyone, but as a father, there may be additional challenges to consider. Here are some common challenges that fathers may face when trying to balance work and family life:

**Time management:** Fathers may struggle to find enough time to devote to both their work and their family responsibilities. This can be particularly difficult if they have a demanding job or work long hours.

**Guilt:** Fathers may feel guilty about not spending enough time with their children or not being able to attend important events due to work commitments.

**Financial pressure:** Fathers may feel pressure to work long hours or take on additional work in order to provide for their family financially.

**Stereotypes:** Society often expects fathers to be the primary breadwinners and may not value their role as caregivers as much as they do mothers.

**Lack of support:** Fathers may not have access to the same level of support as mothers, such as flexible work arrangements or affordable childcare options.

To address these challenges, fathers can take the following steps:

**Set boundaries:** It's important for fathers to set boundaries between work and family time. This can mean not checking emails or taking work calls during family time, or setting specific work hours that allow for a consistent routine.

**Prioritize self-care:** Taking care of oneself is essential for managing stress and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Fathers should make time for exercise, hobbies, and other activities that help them relax and recharge.

**Foster open communication:** It's important for fathers to communicate openly with their partner and children about their work schedule and commitments. This can help everyone in the family to understand and respect each other's needs and priorities.

**Be flexible:** Sometimes unexpected events or emergencies may require fathers to shift their priorities or reschedule work commitments. Being flexible and adaptable can help fathers navigate these situations without sacrificing their family responsibilities.

**Seek professional support:** If fathers are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, they may benefit from seeking professional support such as therapy or counseling.

Ultimately, the key to balancing work and family life as a father is to find a routine and approach that works best for one's individual circumstances. By prioritizing family time, setting boundaries, and communicating openly, fathers can create a healthy and fulfilling work-life balance.

# THE ROLE OF FATHERS IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Fathers, like mothers, are pillars in the development of a child's emotional well-being. Children look to their fathers to lay down the rules and enforce them.

They also look to their fathers to provide a feeling of security, both physical and emotional. Children want to make their fathers proud, and an involved father promotes inner growth and strength.

Studies have shown that when fathers are affectionate and supportive, it greatly affects a child's cognitive and social development. It also instills an overall sense of well-being and self confidence.

## Fathers set the bar for relationships with others

Fathers not only influence who we are inside, but how we have relationships with people as we grow. The way a father treats his child will influence what he or she looks for in other people. The patterns a father sets in the relationships with his children will dictate how his children relate with other people.

## Fathers and Their Daughters

Young girls depend on their fathers for security and emotional support. A father shows his daughter what a good relationship with a man is like. If a father is loving and gentle, his daughter will look for those qualities in men when she's old enough to begin dating. If a father is strong and valiant, she will relate closely to men of the same character.

## Fathers and Their Sons

Boys model themselves after their father's character. Boys will seek approval from their fathers from a very young age. As human beings, we grow up by imitating the behavior of those around us; that's how we learn to function in the world.

If a father is caring and treats people with respect, the young boy will grow up much the same. When a father is absent, young boys look to other male figures to set the "rules" for how to behave and survive in the world.



## Language and cognitive

**development:** Fathers who engage in conversation, play, and reading with their children can help them develop language and cognitive skills. Fathers who provide challenging and stimulating environments can also help their children develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

## Gender identity and role

**modeling:** Fathers can serve as role models for their children, particularly in terms of gender identity and expectations. A positive and involved father can help children develop a healthy sense of masculinity and a positive self-image.

## Discipline and behavior

**management:** Fathers who provide consistent and appropriate discipline can help their children develop self-control and emotional regulation. Fathers who are involved in their children's lives can also help them make positive choices and avoid risky behaviors.

Overall, fathers who are involved, supportive, and engaged in their children's lives can have a significant impact on their children's development and well-being. By providing love, guidance, and support, fathers can help their children grow into confident, capable, and well-adjusted adults.



# THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES FACED BY SINGLE FATHERS



There are several circumstances in which men find themselves fathering solo; from divorce, to being widowed, a mother not playing an active role in the child's life temporarily or permanently, or even those that might be married to a 'fly-in-fly-out' worker. Parenting can be a challenging experience, but for a single dad those challenges can be amplified.

Single fathers often have their own unique issues but they generally need the same sort of support single mothers need. The main thing most single dads need is people around them who are very supportive,

Unfortunately, there's a stereotype expectation around men and fathering, that they need people to be encouraging and welcoming. It doesn't seem very fair but some people look at a single dad and think there's something wrong with them.

In many ways, single parents struggle against an inherent stigma that identifies them as somehow flawed, no matter what the reason. For single fathers, it's a prejudice rooted deep within the conviction that women make better parents and that, somehow, there's something wrong with men raising children on their own.

Single fathers face the challenge of staying engaged in their children's lives while meeting professional and financial obligations. Unfortunately, some men either have trouble relating to their kids as they grow up or become disconnected because they have to spend so much time at work. Whatever the reason, it places additional strain on single dads, who are already hard-pressed to make it work.

Children of single-father homes are often teased about being motherless, and other parents may hesitate to let their kids attend sleep overs in a house where no woman is present. Dads may find themselves having to explain such behavior to their kids, even though they may not understand it either.

A study released in The Lancet revealed that single fathers have a higher risk of mortality compared to partnered men and single mothers. They face the same stress factors as women, often in situations where a low income or job loss has complicated an already difficult situation. Yet single dads are less likely than single mothers to seek treatment or counseling, fearing it would be an admission of parental incompetence. The stigma that a patriarchal society places on such things can have negative effects on a single father's long-term health, and that's bad news for your kids.

The important thing is that dads should reach out for help and support instead of trying to be 'brave' and battle through tough times on their own."



# MENTAL HEALTH IN MEN

Surveys from around the world show that men everywhere find it difficult to open up about mental health, though they are significantly more at risk of attempting suicide than women.

Society's expectations and traditional gender roles play a role in why men are less likely to discuss or seek help for their mental health problems. It's important to understand that men can also be damaged by stereotypes and societal expectations. Men are often expected to be the breadwinners and to be strong, dominant and in control. While these aren't inherently bad things, they can make it harder for men to reach out for help and open up.

**We're ignoring the stigma surrounding mental health that stops many men from seeking help when they need it most — and it's literally killing them.**



Men are more likely to use potentially harmful coping methods such as drugs or alcohol and less likely to talk to family or friends about their emotional struggles, such as feeling sad, worthless, or hopeless.

Instead, male mental health conditions often manifest in symptoms such as:

- Aggression and violence
- High-risk activities
- Substance abuse
- Physical issues, such as chronic headaches or stomachaches
- Feelings of restlessness and difficulty focusing
- Appetite and weight changes
- Fatigue
- Obsessive thinking.

In summary, men are struggling, and they are not getting the care they need. That leaves men with common mental health disorders feeling isolated and alone—and ultimately puts them at high risk of suicide attempts.

We need to create safe environments that encourage men to uncover their true selves, address childhood trauma underlying depression and anxiety, and to build authentic and trusting relationships with peers and family.

This will help men to better understand themselves and use healthy coping strategies when dealing with stress and emotional pain. The ultimate goal is for men to learn how to navigate the inevitable challenges of life while staying honest, open, and connected with themselves and the people they love.

# ABUSE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN

If you're a man in an abusive relationship, it's important to know that you're not alone. Abuse of men happens far more often than you might expect. It happens to men from all cultures and all walks of life, regardless of age or occupation.

Figures suggest that as many as one in three victims of domestic violence are male. However, men are often reluctant to report abuse because they feel embarrassed, fear they won't be believed, or are scared that their partner will take revenge.

An abusive partner may hit, kick, bite, punch, spit, throw things, or destroy your possessions. To make up for any difference in strength, they may attack you while you're asleep or otherwise catch you by surprise. They may also use a weapon, such as a gun or knife, or strike you with an object, abuse or threaten your children, or harm your pets. Domestic abuse is not limited to violence. Emotional and verbal abuse can be just as damaging. You might be experiencing domestic violence if your partner:

- Calls you names, insults you or puts you down
- Prevents you from going to work or school
- Stops you from seeing family members or friends
- Tries to control how you spend money, where you go or what you wear
- Acts jealous or possessive or constantly accuses you of being unfaithful

Gets angry when drinking alcohol or using drugs

- Tries to control whether you can see a health care provider
- Forces you to have sex or engage in sexual acts against your will
- Blames you for his or her violent behavior or tells you that you deserve it

Domestic violence can leave you depressed and anxious, and can increase your risk of having a drug or alcohol problem.

Because men are traditionally thought to be physically stronger than women, you might be less likely to report domestic violence in your relationship due to embarrassment.

Admitting the problem and seeking help doesn't mean you have failed as a man or as a husband.

You are not to blame, and you are not weak.

As well as offering a sense of relief and providing some much-needed support, sharing details of your abuse can also be the first step in building a case against your abuser.







## HEALTH CHECKS EVERY MAN SHOULD DO

There are several health checks that every man should consider doing on a regular basis to stay healthy and detect any potential health issues early. Here are some of the most important health checks for men:

- **Blood pressure check:** High blood pressure can lead to several health problems, including heart disease. High blood pressure can be caused by a variety of factors, including a poor diet, lack of exercise, stress, and genetics. Men can help manage their blood pressure by eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, reducing stress, and taking medication if prescribed by a healthcare provider. Men should get their blood pressure checked at least once a year.
- **Cholesterol check:** High cholesterol levels can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. Cholesterol levels can be influenced by diet, exercise, genetics, and other factors. Men can help manage their cholesterol levels by eating a healthy diet that is low in saturated and trans fats, exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy weight, and taking medication if prescribed by a healthcare provider. Men should have their cholesterol levels checked at least once every five years.
- **Prostate cancer screening:** Men over the age of 50 should consider getting a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test to screen for prostate cancer. Men with a family history of prostate cancer or African American men should consider starting screenings earlier.
- **Colorectal cancer screening:** Men over the age of 50 should consider getting a colonoscopy to screen for colorectal cancer. Men with a family history of colorectal cancer or other risk factors may need to start screenings earlier.
- **Diabetes screening:** Men with a family history of diabetes or who are overweight or obese should consider getting screened for diabetes. Diabetes can often be managed through lifestyle changes, such as eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and maintaining a healthy weight. If medication is needed, there are several options available that can help control blood sugar levels.
- **Skin cancer screening:** Men should have their skin checked by a dermatologist at least once a year to screen for skin cancer. Men who spend a lot of time outdoors or have a history of sunburns or tanning bed use are at higher risk of developing skin cancer. In addition to seeing a dermatologist for regular skin exams, men can protect their skin by wearing protective clothing and sunscreen with a high SPF.
- **Testicular cancer self-exam:** Men should perform a self-exam of their testicles once a month to check for any lumps or abnormalities.

It's important to discuss any concerns or questions with a healthcare provider to determine the appropriate screening schedule and tests for each individual.



## NARCISSISM

There are many depictions in media of the narcissistic man. Whether it's the billionaire CEO who pushes everyone below him down to prevent success or the violent boyfriend that stalks and kills his girlfriend, narcissism tends to be an attribute more commonly synonymous with men. In reality, this is not the case. While Narcissistic Personality Disorder affects men more than women, women are just as likely as men to develop narcissistic traits.

Narcissists tend to be more manipulative socially and can be very vindictive. They tend to play the victim, be overly jealous and competitive, superficial, and overbearing. It's important to note that the following traits are common in both male and female narcissists, but are not exclusive to narcissism.

- People with Narcissistic Personality Disorder can often be very charming and charismatic. They often like to surround themselves with people who feed into their ego. They build relationships to reinforce their ideas about themselves, even if these relationships are superficial.
- They also believe that they are superior to others and deserve special treatment. They believe that others should be obedient to their wishes and that the rules don't apply to them.

- Another common trait of narcissism is manipulative or controlling behavior. Their own needs will always come first and they may even exploit others to gain something for themselves.
- Most narcissists are unwilling or unable to empathize with the needs, wants, or feelings of other people. This also makes it difficult for them to take responsibility for their own behavior.
- People with narcissistic behavior already see themselves as superior to others, so they may become rude or abusive when they don't receive the treatment they think they deserve. While they hold themselves superior, they may speak or act rudely toward those that they deem are inferior.
- As parents, narcissism can potentially be emotionally damaging to their child/children. Narcissistic parents often select one of their children to be "the golden child," or a child they place on an unfair and unattainable pedestal that other children will seemingly never reach. While there is a child they boost up, there inevitably will be a child they push down, usually by comparing them to the golden child, telling them they aren't good enough, which can be particularly emotionally damaging to the child.



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# FAMILY REUNION SERIES

July 2023



Establish a sense of unity and collective identity that  
develops, reinforces and preserves the unique cultural  
fabric of a family

This series will be done in the Family Corner.  
Click [here](#) for more info





## Thank you for attending our Father's Day Braai Event.

Your cooperation and input has given birth to the **'Empowerment Hub - Real Men Real Talk,'** a platform for men to help each other thrive.

Follow us on all our social media platforms so that you won't miss out on future events.

