



ENGAGING FATHERS

REACHING PATERNAL PARENTS WHERE THEY ARE



● LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge that many of us are on the ancestral lands of the Duwamish People and other Coast Salish Nations, who continue to be stewards of this land. We honor and pay respects to their Elder's past and present.



Photo from <https://www.duwamishtribe.org/>

TRAINING FACILITATOR

Jessup Coffin



A LITTLE BACKGROUND ON FATHERHOOD



Back in the day

Remember in the 1960's and 1970's where men smoked cigars in "Stork clubs" or peered at their children through the nursery window? At least in Caucasian history.

In the 80's and 90's they started to become regular participants in labor. In the early 2000's it became an expectation. **Today Fathers are often an integral part of the birthing process.**



FAPPS SCORE

Modern Research

Nearly **10% increase in lactation success** with father's involvement.

Infants of highly involved fathers are more cognitively competent at 6 months and score higher on the Bayley Scales of Infant development

"First-Time Fathers' Experience of Support from Midwives in Maternity Clinics: An Interview Study: L. Huusko"

"Fathers as Supporters for Improved Exclusive Breastfeeding in Viet Nam: Tran Huu Bich"

"The Effects of Father Involvement: A Summary of the Research Evidence: Sarah Allen"

Item	Meaning of item	Answering lower	Answering higher	Range
Sensitive - Not at all sensitive	Midwives ability to be sensitive toward fathers' needs. Fathers mean they are partly responsible for less sensitivity since they themselves focus on the women.	Midwives do not listen and do not take the ideas of the couple seriously	Midwives take time to answer questions of importance for the couple	4-7
Understanding - not at all understanding	Midwives understanding depend on fathers initiative or if they express feelings such as worry	The fathers themselves did not initiate dialogue and therefore the midwives did not offer any understanding.	The fathers got understanding from the midwives if they were worried.	4-7
Supportive - not at all supportive	Being supportive was having eye contact or pose questions to both parents and when midwives were supportive of the woman.	If the relationship with the midwives didn't work or if the midwives personal values were revealed during visits it was experienced as less supportive.	Fathers experienced midwives as supportive when they supported the women. Parental education was experienced as supportive.	4-7
Had plenty of time - had very little time	Fathers could ask the midwives about anything they needed to ask.	Not relevant	There were no time pressure and the midwives were calm.	5-7
Information about breastfeeding - Gave not enough information about breastfeeding	Breastfeeding was the mothers' role and responsibility. General information and advice when or if breastfeeding does not work was needed.	No information about breastfeeding directly toward fathers.	There was no need for information about breastfeeding, the fathers knew what they needed to know.	3-7
Were calm - were stressed	Overall midwives were described as calm.	Not relevant	The environment was calm	5-7
Gave good preparation for the parenting role - gave no preparation for the parenting role	Fathers saw their role mainly to facilitate for the mother and baby. Fathers had gained information about their parenting role from family, friends and from the internet.	Pregnancy in focus and not their parenting role.	Enough information from midwives since it was not possible to prepare before the baby was born.	3-7
Gave good information about the needs of the baby - gave no information about the needs of the baby	Common sense was basic and the fathers would learn in time.	Some information about the baby's needs from midwives	Information from midwives was sufficient.	3-7

What Makes a Father

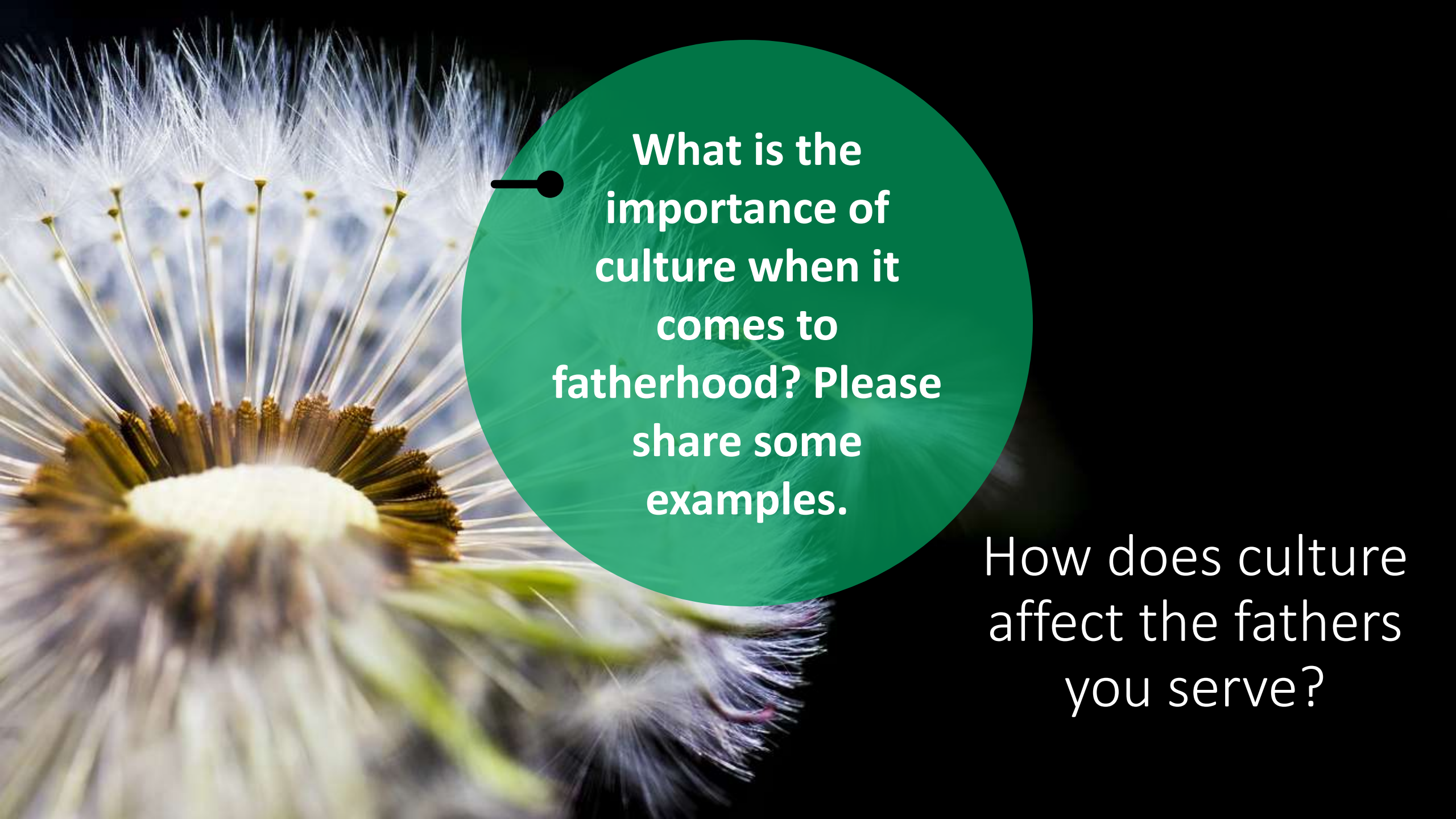
Paternalty is recognized in different ways across cultures. The man who is socially recognized as “father” (*pater*) by a child may not be the physiological or genetic father (*genitor*). Sometimes the two are indivisible; but in many instances, the making of a father is *least of all* biological. Most often, the two are tangled together with social and cultural responsibilities supporting, reinforcing, or effacing genetic ties.



FACTS ABOUT FATHER ENGAGEMENT

- Fathers and infants can be equally as attached as mothers and infants
- Fathers occupy a critical role in child development. Father absence hinders development from early infancy throughout childhood and into adulthood. The psychological harm of father absence experienced during childhood persists throughout the life course.
- The quality of the father-child relationship matters more than the specific number of hours spent together. Non-resident fathers can have positive effects on children's social and emotional well-being, as well as academic achievement and behavioral adjustment.
- Father engagement reduces the frequency of behavioral problems in boys while also decreasing delinquency and economic disadvantage in low-income families.
- Father engagement reduces psychological problems and rates of depression in young women.





What is the importance of culture when it comes to fatherhood? Please share some examples.

How does culture affect the fathers you serve?

5 MINUTE BREAK: DANCE LIKE NO ONE IS WATCHING...



What type of parenting support are fathers looking for?

Accessible information from credible sources

Provide father-focused resources

- Meet them where they are at
- Peer examples and stories

Information about development

- How to engage with young children to promote healthy development
- Age expectations and behavior management

Guidance about how to be a supportive partner to an expectant / new parent

- Tangible task examples
- Tools to be directly involved

Build confidence, not fear

- Ways to access services that are non-stigmatizing and don't make fathers feel they're using resources intended for mothers
- Normalize the frustrations of parenting



“That is the thankless position of the father in the family—the provider for all, and the enemy of all.” —J. August Strindberg

“When you’re a dad, there’s no one above you. If I don’t do something that has to be done, who is going to do it?” —Jonathan Safran Foer, *Here I Am*

“Fathers, like mothers, are not born. Men grow into fathers and fathering is a very important stage in their development.” —David Gottesman

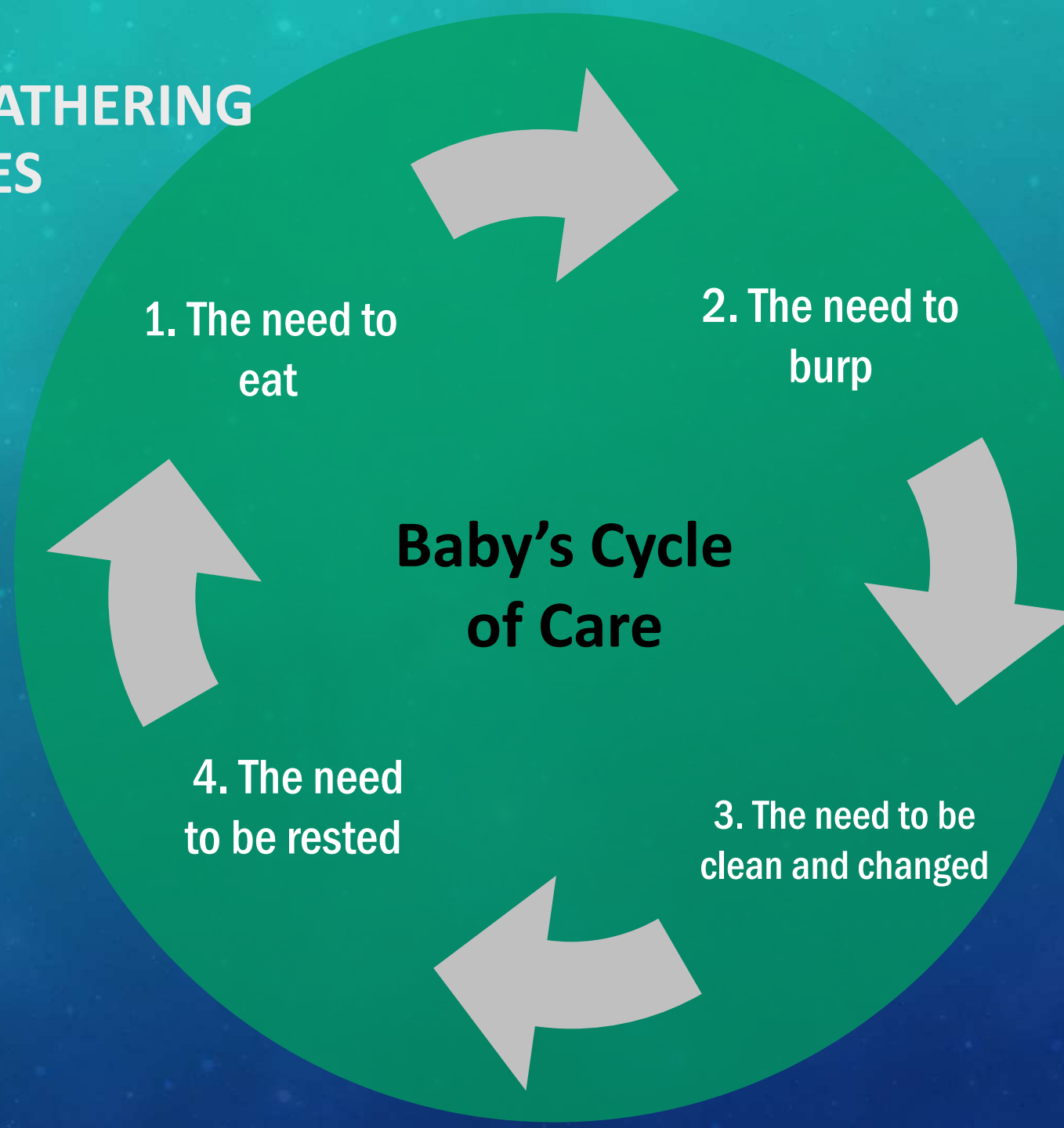
“A good father is one of the most unsung, unpraised, unnoticed, and yet one of the most valuable assets in our society.” —Billy Graham

“The lone father is not a strong father. Fathering is a difficult and perilous journey and is done well with the help of other men.” —John L. Hart

CONSCIOUS FATHERING CATCHPHRASES

5 Basic Needs

Feed
Burp/Fart
Change
Sleep
Cry



C.P.R.
Consistent
Predictable
Reliable

B.R.A.I.N.
Benefits
Risks
Alternatives
Intuition
Nothing



STRATEGIES FOR INVOLVING AND ENGAGING FATHERS

- Representative staff and father to father strategies
- Programming where fathers are not outnumbered
- Learn what fathers want ...& offer it!
- Learn about and respond to fathers' individual circumstances
- Offer resources to achieve parenting & related goals
- Collaborate with other providers
- Moments of opportunity

● Shaken Baby Syndrome



What can we do?

Find coping methods

Noise canceling headphones
Distractions like a movie

Create space

Put the infant down
Call a friend

Get away

Switch out with a safe word
Step outside

Perinatal Mood Disorders

How common is it?

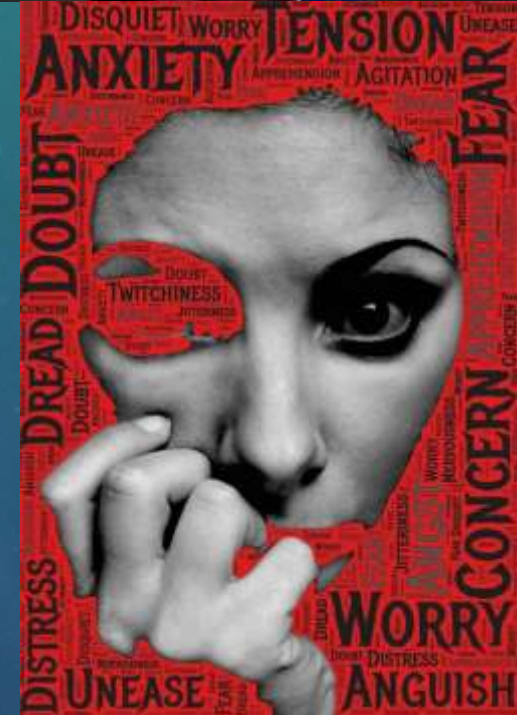
1 in 4 pregnant people will deal with a perinatal mood disorder.

That number goes up by 60% with a history of depression or anxiety

Partners have a 1 in 5 chance of anxiety disorder on our own

There is a 66% chance that if someone in the house has a perinatal mood disorder, someone else in the house will get the same one.

What will be the effects of COVID?





WHAT DOES
PERINATAL
DEPRESSION LOOK
LIKE IN FATHERS?



WHAT DOES A FATHER SUFFERING FROM PERINATAL ANXIETY DISORDER LOOK LIKE?



HOW CAN WE HELP?

FATHER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Keeping culture and history in mind

- Talk to them
- Make eye contact
- Leave things for them
- Communicate through birthing parent
- Specifically, explicitly invite them
- Tell them they are needed/important
- Referrals (jobs etc.)
- Using hands-on activities
- Use technology
- Being there/consistent/building trust
- Giving them information
- Providing opportunities to interact with other dads
- Explaining benefits of their involvement
- Using “other” activities: holiday parties, family events, etc.
- Respect/acknowledge their expertise
- Consider schedules

THANKS FOR COMING!

