

Father's Experiences of NICU

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Father's Days: the animated memoir of a first-time dad



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- 1 in 7 babies are admitted to NICU
- Potentially traumatic experience regardless of duration or severity
- Risk of adversely impacting:
 - infant development
 - P-I Relationship
 - Parental MH
 - Parental relationship
 - Family functioning

NICU parents have
increased risk of MH
problems

NICU fa higher stress &
PTSD symptoms at
discharge & in
following weeks

Lack of emotional
support & less likely
to access in NICU
and post discharge





PARENTAL CHALLENGES OF NICU

- Psychologically, emotionally & physically unprepared
- Separation from infant
- Lack of involvement in care
- Inability to comfort infant
- Helpless Observer
- Witnessing traumatic procedures & events
- Lack of parental identity
- Guilt
- Disrupted P-I relationship

PATERNAL SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

- Often first to visit baby, alone
- Torn between partner and baby
- Witnessing birth & partners distress
- Main emotional support for partner
- Go-between with other family members
- Sense that dad's should cope
- Prioritising needs of partner & baby
- Having to return to work
- Managing multiple competing roles
- Fear of mo rejecting baby
- "Psychologist as a threat" (BME study)



- Lack of research
- Fa visit less frequently & for shorter periods
- ↑ Visiting results in ↑ care giving
- Less involved in caregiving tasks than mo & other fas in hospital & post discharge
- Reluctant to touch/hold their child
- ↑ Physical contact & interaction →
↑ involvement & paternal identity





ITS NOT ALL BAD

Greater opportunities to bond
Work as mode of coping/control
Learn more about how to care for their baby
Experience joy watching partner care for baby
Relationship strengthened by experience

NICU Parental involvement positively impacts

- Bonding & family functioning
- Parental MH
- Weight gain
- Breastfeeding
- Earlier discharge
- Readmission rates
- Infection rates

NICU Fathers involvement positively impacts

- Future father-infant interactions
- Infant health
- Cognitive outcomes
- Maternal coping, MH & bonding
- Paternal MH & parental identity



An Open Letter to NICU Dads: Carl's Story

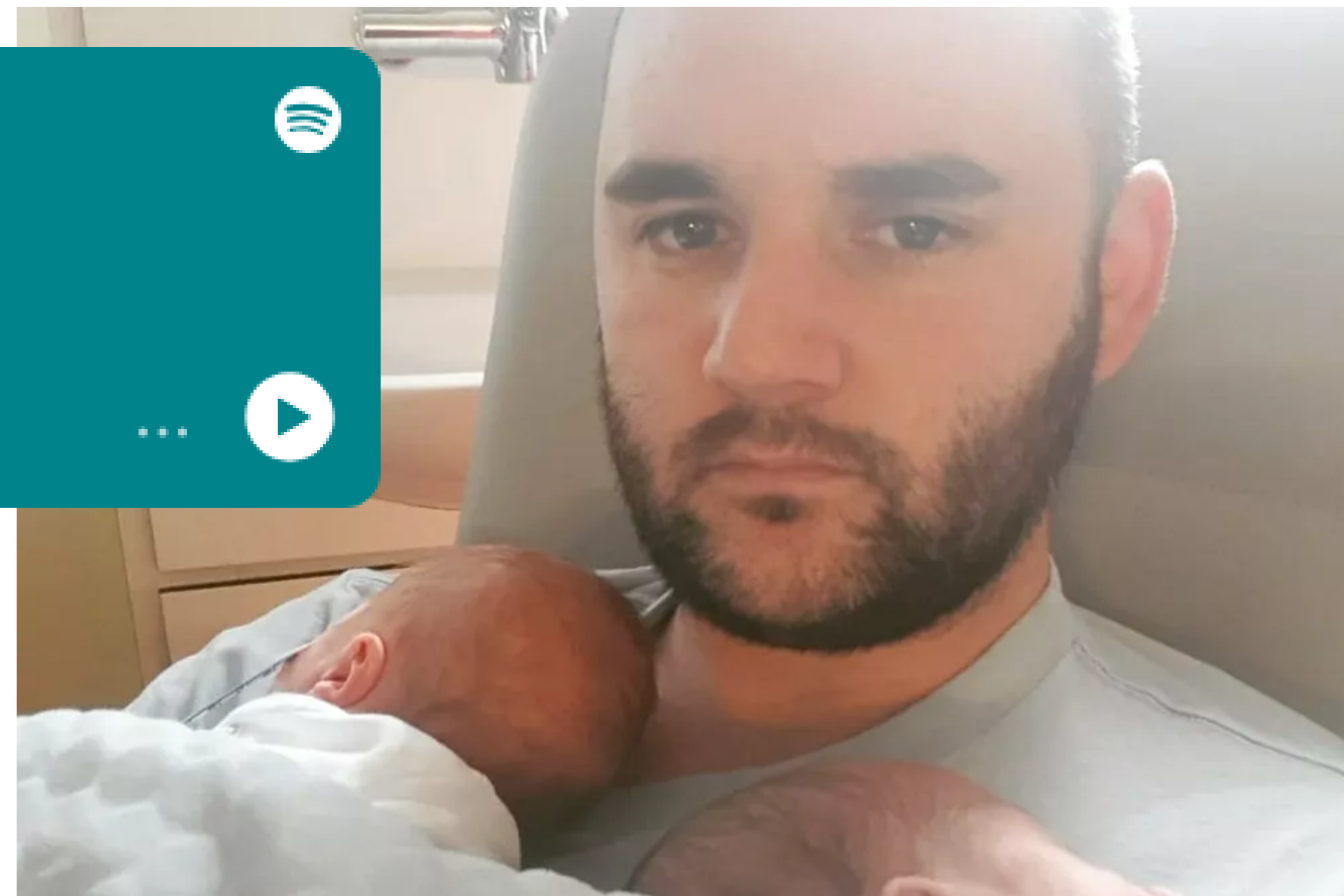


An Open Letter to NICU Dads: Carl's story

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+ Save on Spotify

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<https://www.bliss.org.uk>

SUPPORT FOR DADS IN NICU

New Parental Leave Bill

Encourage uptake of practical support

FiCare

Equality in treatment of parents

Clear, consistent communication & encouragement

Normalise emotional responses

Find accessible & acceptable ways of providing support

Actively promote father-baby bonding

Be aware of father specific factors

Inform fathers directly not just via mother

Facilitate peer-to-peer communication

Sufficient resource to provide appropriate service

Link with organisations with expertise



Premature baby raises a hand to dad's worship song



ABC7



WHAT WE CAN DO AFTER DISCHARGE

Increase understanding of NICU parents
experience

Recognise potential vulnerability

Recognise expertise

Include fathers wherever possible

Support father infant bonding

Ask dads about their experiences

Normalise emotional difficulties

Encourage coping strategies and balance

Provide signposting

Support team/co-parenting



MORE RESOURCES:

Tommy's

Tommy's Pregnancy Charity provide information and support both for fathers/partners taking care of a premature baby. Provides information for Dads on topics such as how to support your partner, caring for your baby in the neonatal unit etc. Along with where to access support.



Hand to Hold - NICU Dad Discussions

A podcast exclusively for NICU dads, by NICU dads. Offers real conversations with real NICU and bereaved dads on topics like anxiety, depression and PTSD; how the NICU affects relationships with partners; and how to connect with other NICU dads for community and support.



Neonatal Dads - Spoons Charity - Neonatal Family Support

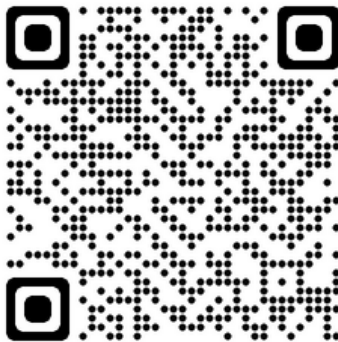
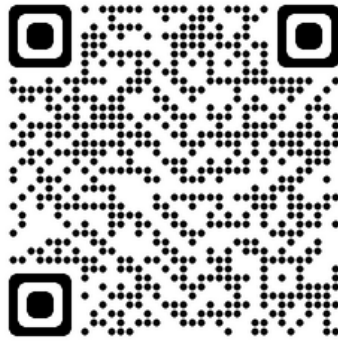
Neonatal dads can struggle with mental health on the unit or post discharge. We aim to support dads throughout the...

 Spoons Charity /

Spoons Neonatal Family Support Charity provides information about being a Neonatal Dad. Also provides general parent stories for both Mothers and Fathers to draw comfort in the fact that they are not alone in their experience.

Bliss
for babies born
premature or sick

General resource for parents with baby's in NICU. Provides information and support across a wide range of topics such as emotional support, going home from neonatal unit, coping with loss and parent stories.



Blog

I'd never heard about World Prematurity Day... until I had premature babies. This is why the day is so important.

 PremDad

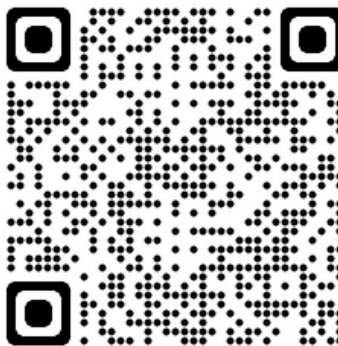
Ebook and blog for NICU Dad's to read, relate to & learn tips and tricks along with practical information - all from a Dad who had twins in the NICU

DadPad Neonatal | Neonatal Guide for New Dads

Developed with consultant neonatologist Prof Minesh Khashu, the DadPad Neonatal provides support, guidance and resources for dads with a neonatal baby.

 DadPad

Contains practical information and advice on matters including: how dads can best help themselves & their partners as they each deal with their feelings and emotions; where to go to seek further support and information; and practical guidance.



The NICU Dad

A special place for NICU Dads

 The NICU Dad

Contains resources such as podcasts and blogs for Dad's with children in NICU to learn practical information, share and read stories, seeing they are not alone.

FURTHER TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS

Psychologically-Informed Neonatal Care

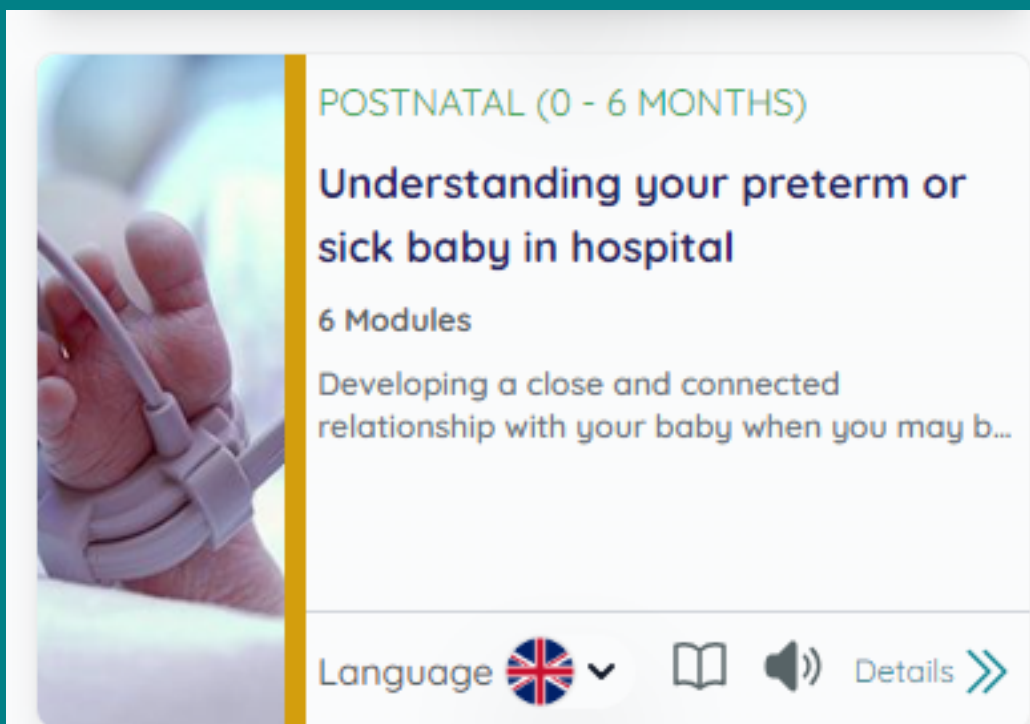
Supporting all staff working with neonatal babies and families to develop their understanding of...

 elearning for healthcare /

FREE PARENTING COURSES FOR NICU PARENTS

<https://inourplace.heiapply.com/online-learning/course/98>

<https://inourplace.heiapply.com/online-learning/course/125>






POSTNATAL (0 - 6 MONTHS)

Understanding your preterm or sick baby in hospital

6 Modules

Developing a close and connected relationship with your baby when you may b...

Language  ▾   Details >>



POSTNATAL (0 - 6 MONTHS)

Understanding your preterm or sick baby now you're home

13 Modules

Developing a close, connected relationship with your baby now you're home.

Language  ▾  Details >>

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