



For as many as 67% of new parents, the transition to parenthood is accompanied by sharp declines in relationship quality, significant increases in relationship conflict, increased depression and psychopathology, and decreased quality of the parent-infant interaction. There has been no known psycho-educational intervention that has successfully taught couples the skills that they will need to preserve intimacy in their relationship, keep fathers involved with the baby, and help parents understand and appreciate infant development.

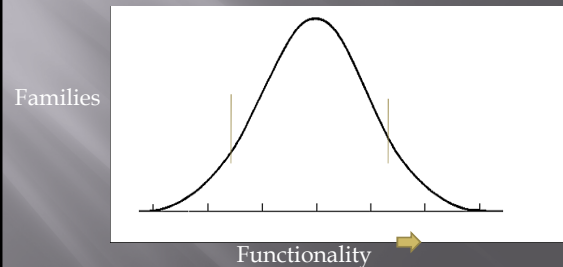
-Gottman & Shapiro 2005

### Bringing Baby Home

- a research based and research tested two-day psycho-educational workshop designed to teach couples these skills while experiencing the transition to parenthood. The "Bringing Baby Home" workshop is focused on helping expectant and new parents make a smooth, positive transition to becoming a family. The workshop focuses on three goals:

- (1) Strengthening the couple's relationship.
- (2) Facilitating and encouraging father as well as mother involvement in this parenthood transition
- (3) Giving expectant and new parents basic information about infant psychological development accompanied with relevant parenting tips.

'How it is - young mums & dads parenting together' has a target audience of young mums and dads who share a relationship whether living together or apart.



### Key Issues

•Services are not inclusive of the needs of young fathers when caring for mothers but that the inclusion of fathers is desired by young mothers.

•Quality of the relationship with the child's mother was a more powerful predictor of young fathers' remaining in contact or losing contact than was the background disadvantage.

- Quinton et al 2002

### Children of highly involved dads

tend to have:

- Better friendships (and with better adjusted children)
- Fewer behavioural problems
- Better educational outcomes
- Greater capacity for empathy
- Non-traditional attitudes to earning/childcare
- Higher self-esteem and life-satisfaction
- Lower criminality and substance abuse
- More satisfying adult sexual partnerships."

Invisible Fathers: Working with young dads  
Fatherhood institute 2010 p12

“Forming a **secure attachment** between the child and his/her parents is the most important developmental task of the first year of life.” (Silburn & Walker (2008) p13). “There is now good evidence that the establishment of a secure attachment is aided by **parents being responsive to their children’s needs**. A secure baby is confident that their needs- comfort, contact, hunger, thirst and pain – will be met and their expectations of other are likely to be benign. In contrast a baby that is left wet, cold or lying in a dirty nappy, left hungry or screaming for long periods is likely to be more panicky and angry and wary in their relationships with others.” (Manne 2008; cited by Silburn & Walker 2008, p13-14) and see also Shore (2009).

Traumatic experiences in childhood and adolescence appear to predispose to the development of severe character pathologies in adulthood; these effects are distinct from the effects of trauma experienced later in life.

(Bierer, Yehuda, et al., 2003; Golier, Yehuda, et al., 2003; Goodman, New, and Siever, 2004, cited by O’Connell et al 2009, p130)

It is important for parents to maintain a non-hostile relationship for the sake of the children and the ability for parents to do this is an important ingredient of “quality parenting”.



Therefore it is necessary to target parents’ wellbeing, parenting, and co-parental relationships (including conditions that have negative impact on these matters), when implementing strategies related to ‘children’s best interests’.

- Baxter, Qu & Weston, 2009

- People want **relationships** to last for life but all relationships are demanding and **require work**;
  - **Having a baby**, a miscarriage, juggling the demands of work and childcare, ill health and money worries can put extreme pressure on relationships;
  - Over half of those who had separated believed they could have **spotted problems earlier** and dealt with them better;
  - Most people thought that learning about and preparing for relationships should **start as early as possible** – in primary schools – and continue throughout life.
- Green Paper presented to UK Parliament, January 2010

A clinical study of **forgiveness therapy** that “found that clients with substance dependencies, when compared to controls, recorded significant improvements in self-esteem, depression, anger, anxiety and vulnerability to drug use. The improvements were attributed to the **exploration and examination of past resentments and emotions as part of the process** (Lin, Mack, Enright, Krahn, & Baskin, 2004, cited in Freedman, Enright, & Knutson, 2005). Most benefits were sustained over a four-month follow-up period, and initial low levels of forgiveness rose to and stayed above the published adult norms.” (p 9)

- Parker & Pattenden (2009; published by the Australian Institute of Family Studies)



### HOW THIS PROJECT EMERGED...

In 2008 the Salvation Army Ingle Farm in partnership with The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs, Relationships Australia and Centacare released and launched "HOW IT IS: young mums, the truth revealed" booklet and DVD.

This first project emerged from a growing desire to support and educate young mums, young mums to be and young adults considering pregnancy. There was an increasing awareness of the lack of resources that were suitably targeted at these groups.



### What it looked like...

- A booklet containing answers to commonly asked questions
- A booklet that appeals to youth culture with its graphics and simplified text
- A DVD containing detailed stories of young mums who tell it "how it is" as well as information on support groups and parenting groups
- A DVD which enables easy access to a variety of topics, addressing many dilemmas young mums face



### DVD AND BOOKLET...

This DVD is in circulation around many states in Australia and has been used in many settings including senior school curriculums, by school counsellors and chaplains, community centres, C&FHS, maternity wards and by professionals who work with young mums and dads.



In 2009, in partnership with Families and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, as well as Parenting SA, Centacare, Lutheran Community Care and the Salvation Army Ingle Farm, it was agreed to produce a sequel which was inclusive of young mums and dads.

This project commenced in Oct 2009

### WHAT'S INSIDE

#### Starting out

- Being prepared
- What children need in the first years
- How your baby develops

#### Travelling together

- Setting boundaries for your children
- Issues for single parents
- Parenting as a team
- Relating with your partner

#### Walking the line

- Where to start
- Attitude check
- Anger management
- Anxiety & fear

#### Talking together

- Tips for healthy relationships
- Resolving conflict through negotiation

#### Where to find support

- Some websites to look at
- Useful phone numbers



Further info  
[www.salisburyc4c.org.au](http://www.salisburyc4c.org.au)