



# LOOKING AFTER YOUR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

For dads with kids in mind ...



## 4 Dads

- Balancing work and life
- Managing your emotions
- Staying connected

*“I'd like Dad to take his time getting better and not feel like the rest of us will fall apart.”*

Kids Talk

*“Looking after yourself is crucial because if you don't, you're not going to be there for the family.”*

Dads Talk

*“Men can take better care of themselves by having adequate contact with others — social interaction is very important.”*

Health Workers Talk

When your physical, emotional and mental health is at it's best, you set good examples for your child to develop positive life skills.

### Balancing work and life

Having time for work, family and yourself can often seem out of the question. But if you think about priorities, you can plan time effectively. When you feel you have the balance right, it will reduce stress and anxiety and give you more time to do things you enjoy with your family and by yourself. This will improve or maintain your health and relationships, and help you manage your responsibilities without burning out.

It's important to have hobbies and interests outside of work and home so you don't feel 'boxed in'.

#### What you can do

Create an activity log to see how you spend your time (example overleaf).

- Track your time over a few days and review how you spent it.
- Decide if you're spending enough time on the things you value most.
- After this assessment draw up a schedule to use your time more effectively.
- Make enough time for your interests or find a new one like gardening, woodwork or fishing.

When introducing changes, consider the time you spend with your children, how you are involved in their everyday routines and your contribution to the household.

You might combine your own needs while spending time with you children, eg. going for a bike ride or doing family chores together or preparing the family meal. Every family is

unique, so work out what's important to you and meets your circumstances. This is essential for a balanced life.

### Managing emotions

Being aware of your feelings and thoughts, and how they affect your behaviour is important for positive relationships. Having a positive feeling about yourself (healthy self-esteem) and managing conflict such as anger and stress effectively can be learnt or developed. These valuable skills will have a positive impact on your children, partner and community. If they're lacking, they'll impact negatively.

If you need help to manage your emotions, find someone to confide in—a friend, professional or family member—for emotional support. Being isolated from friends and social support is associated with higher levels of depression, and higher levels of diseases. You need to stay connected with friends and loved ones for your own wellbeing.

#### What you can do

- Share regular meals and outings with family or friends or stay in touch by calling often.
- Create a 'third place' other than work or home, like a social club or group.
- Attend a 'Mens Shed' to work on projects of your own or with other men without pressure; or have a yarn and a cuppa. Find your local shed on 1300 550 009 or visit [www.mensshed.org](http://www.mensshed.org)
- Join online social networks [mensline.org.au](http://mensline.org.au) (discussion forum) or [theshedonline.org](http://theshedonline.org)
- Start a journal and write about your thoughts, feelings and activities.



**ACTIVITY LOG** Track your time and plan it more effectively.

Activity	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
<b>Home</b>							
Gardening							
Cooking							
Cleaning							
Repairs							
<b>Work</b>							
<b>Health</b>							
Exercise							
<b>Sleep</b>							
<b>Hobbies</b>							
<b>Social engagements</b>							
<b>Visiting friends/relatives</b>							
<b>DAILY TOTAL</b>							

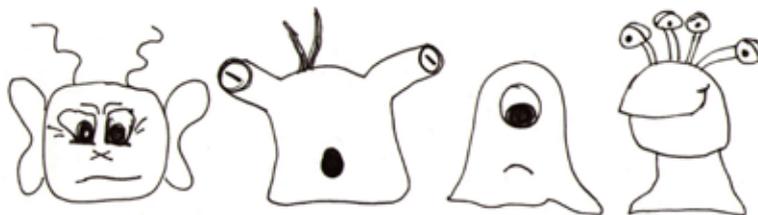
### TRY THIS WITH YOUR CHILD

Draw pictures of fictional space creatures with your child looking angry, scared, sad, happy, excited. Make a game of this exercise but use it to explain it's okay to express your feelings ... space creatures do.

Choose one of the creatures and talk about a time when you felt like that. Ask your child to pick one and talk about it.

You can both draw one that looks like how you are feeling right now and talk about why.

Plot how many hours or minutes you spend each day at work, with the family and yourself. Do this for a few days, to look for patterns and assess whether you are spending a healthy balance between work, family and self to relax and recharge. If not, use the log again to schedule your time so it's more balanced.



Visit [www.copmi.net.au/dads](http://www.copmi.net.au/dads) to view video and links to more information



**Talk to someone | Get more info**

**Mensline** | 1300 78 99 78 | [www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)

**Beyond blue** | 1300 22 4636 | [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

**SANE Australia** | 1800 18 SANE (7263) | [www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org)