

**Webinar 16**

# **Engaging fathers and their children**

7:15 pm to 8:30 pm AEDT  
Thursday, 28 October 2020

---

**Emerging  
Minds.**

**National Workforce  
Centre for Child  
Mental Health**



Emerging Minds and MHPN wishes to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands across Australia upon which our webinar presenters and participants are located.

We wish to pay respect to the Elders past, present and future for the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Indigenous Australia.

# Welcome to series three

This is the second webinar in the third series on child and infant mental health, presented by Emerging Minds and the Mental Health Professionals' Network.

## Upcoming webinars:

- Practice skills of working with children who have experienced trauma (19 November)
- Working with parents who have had their children removed
- Overcoming communication challenges to engage children
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children






Subscribe to receive your invitation:

[www.emergingminds.com.au/Subscribe](http://www.emergingminds.com.au/Subscribe)



# How to use the platform

To access the interactive features and resources, hover over the colourful icons to the top right of your screen:

-  open the chat box
-  ask the panel a question
-  access resources including the case study, panel biographies and supporting resources
-  open the survey
-  reload the page/webinar room

# Learning outcomes

At the webinar's completion, participants will be able to:

- Identify ways of working with fathers to improve access and engagement with a service.
- Describe ways of talking to fathers about their hopes and concerns for children.
- Identify ways of supporting fathers when they are engaging in behaviours that have negative influences on their child's mental health.

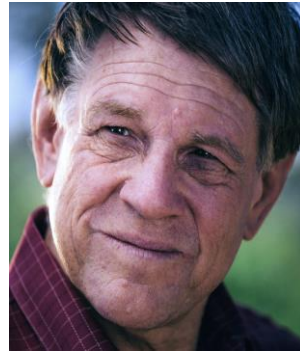
# Tonight's panel



**Dom Alford**  
Social Worker, Vic



**John Clark**  
EM Child and Family Partner,  
Tas



**Dr Bruce Robinson AM**  
Physician, WA



**Dr Daniel Moss**  
EM Workforce Development Manager, SA

# Social Worker's perspective



Dom Alford

- Employment and fatherhood identity
- Strong links between being a breadwinner and being a dad
- Exploring different types of fatherhood

# Social Worker's perspective

- Bonding with kids
- Being apart from kids



Dom Alford



# Social Worker's perspective

- Accessing and engaging services
- Barriers to engagement – dads and services
- Working from home



Dom Alford

# Child and Family Partner's Perspective



John Clark

## Partners

- Greatest asset in Men's Health?
- Under sufferance

# Child and Family Partner's Perspective



John Clark

## Rapport

- Common ground
- Mutual respect based on strengths
- Use lived experience

# Child and Family Partner's Perspective



John Clark

## Feelings

- Discomfort due to incompetency
- Male normative alexithymia
- 0-10 scale for men who aren't good at expressing emotion
- Guess
- Normalise feelings
- Offer Hope

# Child and Family Partner's Perspective



John Clark

## Masculinity

- Help seeking is poor
- Use empowering language.
- Problem Solving
- DIY. Use metaphors.

# Child and Family Partner's Perspective



John Clark

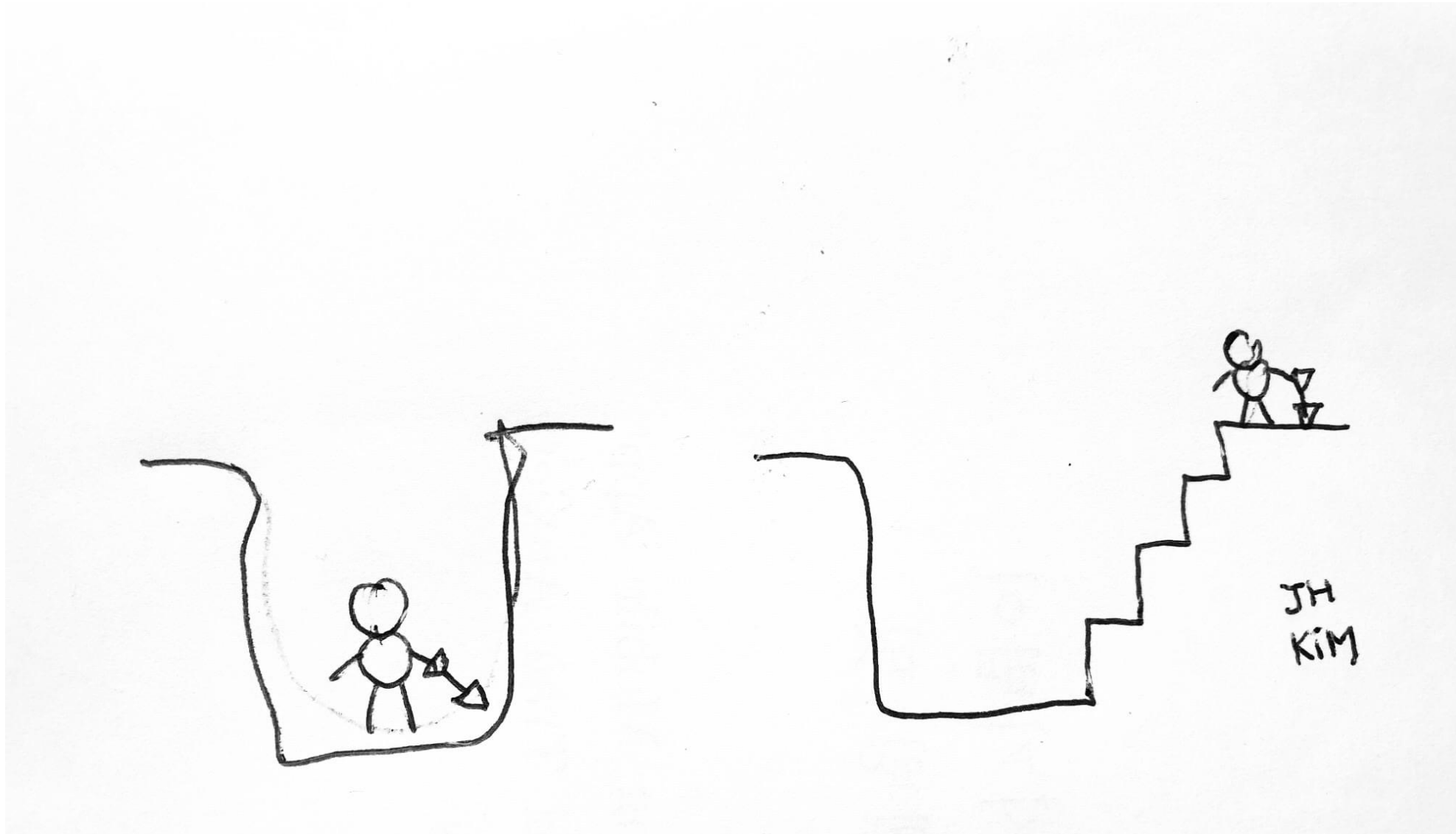
## The Plan

- Scratch where it itches
- Start with values – the kids
- Be super practical
- Action plan
- Draw it and write it

# Child and Family Partner's Perspective

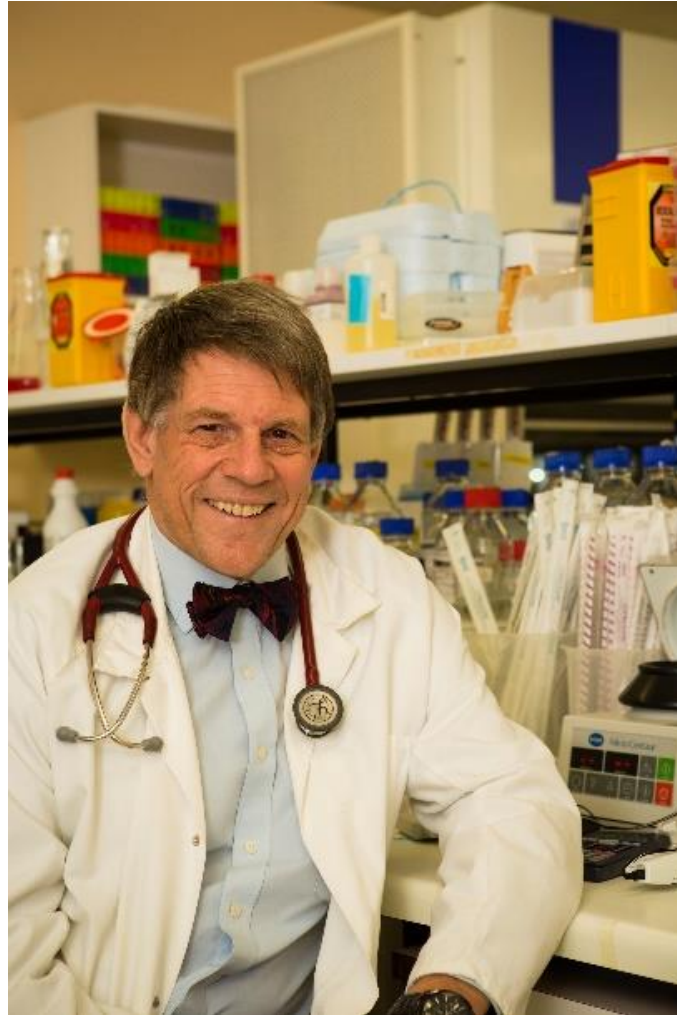


John Clark



# Physician's perspective

As a physician



Dr Bruce Robinson,  
AM





# Physician's perspective



Dr Bruce Robinson,  
AM

## Four things about Gary:

- He is right – he is losing his family
- He feels/is lonely
- He feels 'helpless'
- Professional help+

# Physician's perspective



Dr Bruce Robinson,  
AM



Physician



Football clubs



The Fathering Project

# Physician's perspective



Dr Bruce Robinson,  
AM



Physician



Football clubs



The Fathering Project



Rambo?



Or Platoon?

# Physician's perspective



Dr Bruce Robinson,  
AM



Physician



Football clubs



The Fathering Project



Rambo?



Or Platoon?

# Physician's perspective



Dr Bruce Robinson,  
AM

Filling Gary's 'friendship gap'

A community of men – The Fathering Project



What is it and how can Gary engage?



# Physician's perspective



Helping dads do better  
[thefatheringproject.org](http://thefatheringproject.org)

- **UWA-based = research & best practice**
- **Secular = laser focus on fathers/father figures**
- **In every state = schools, workplaces, community**
- **Won many awards**
- **Won federal funding to establishing Dads Groups in all primary schools**
- **School 'Dads Groups' = >11,000 men F2F & >250,000 online etc**
- **75-94% >engaged with child/school etc**



Dr Bruce Robinson,  
AM



# Physician's perspective



Dr Bruce Robinson,  
AM



Helping dads do better  
[thefatheringproject.org](http://thefatheringproject.org)



This would be a great start for Gary



# Physician's perspective

Some of the many topics discussed:

- Bullying
- Education
- Daughters
- Separation
- Father figures
- What kids really need from dads



Dr Bruce Robinson,  
AM



Imagine Gary sitting at one of those tables realising he is not alone



# Physician's perspective

Regaining a relationship with his kids

Men like Gary typically then ask:

“give me your one best dad strategy so I have just one thing I can try in the next week”

*(a good idea. A list would swamp him and he wouldn't do anything)*



Dr Bruce Robinson,  
AM



‘BUS’ Strategy

B = Being there

U = Unconditional love

S = Special



# Physician's perspective

Regaining a relationship with his kids

Men like Gary typically then ask:

“give me your one best dad strategy so I have just one thing I can try in the next week”

*(a good idea. A list would swamp him and he wouldn't do anything)*



Dr Bruce Robinson,  
AM



‘BUS’ Strategy

B = Being there

U = Unconditional love

S = Special



# Physician's perspective



Dr Bruce Robinson,  
AM



One great way to make kids feel special is Dad Dates (1-on-1)



# Physician's perspective

## Gary

In addition to professional help, he needs a platoon of other men:

- Friends who care and listen
- A community of men who care about being good dads



Dr Bruce Robinson,  
AM



Helping dads do better  
[thefatheringproject.org](http://thefatheringproject.org)



# Q&A Session



**Dom Alford**  
Social Worker, Vic



**John Clark**  
EM Child and Family Partner,  
Tas




**Dr Bruce Robinson AM**  
Physician, WA



**Dr Daniel Moss**  
EM Workforce Development Manager, SA

# Resources and further reading

Other supporting resources associated with this webinar can be found by clicking on the light blue supporting resources icon. 

For more information about Emerging Minds, visit [www.emergingminds.com.au](http://www.emergingminds.com.au)

## Upcoming webinars:

- Practice skills of working with children who have experienced trauma (19 Nov)
- Working with parents who have had their children removed
- Overcoming communication challenges to engage children
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

# Thank you for participating



Please ensure you complete the **feedback survey** before you log out.

click the yellow speech bubble icon in the top right hand corner of your screen to open the survey.

- Statements of Attendance for this webinar will be issued within four - six weeks.
- Each participant will be sent a link to the recording of this webinar and associated online resources within four – six weeks.

This webinar was co-produced by MHPN and Emerging Minds for the Emerging Minds: National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health (NWCCMH) project.

The NWCCMH is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health under the National Support for Child and Youth Mental Health Program.



Would you like to continue the 'Engaging fathers' discussion with local practitioners?

Or perhaps start discussing issues of local relevance? MHPN Project Officers are available to help you establish and /or join interdisciplinary mental health networks across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote Australia.

We have 373 networks around the country.

Visit our online map to find out which networks are close to you at [mhpn.org.au](http://mhpn.org.au) or contact Jacqui O'Loughlin at [networks@mhpn.org.au](mailto:networks@mhpn.org.au).

# Thank You

---

**Emerging  
Minds.**

**National Workforce  
Centre for Child  
Mental Health**

