

Media Release



23 June 2018

News Editor

Caregiving Extends to Dads Too - Increase in fathers-at-risk facing post-partum depression

- **Up to 10% of new father experience paternal post-partum depression**
- **Caregiving @ South West raises awareness of unsung heroes, i.e. fathers who are the stronghold in the family.**

Strong, stoic and self-sacrificing – are typically virtues expected by society of fathers in general. As a result, heightened societal expectations of men can lead to new fathers feeling inadequate when they feel that they are unable to live up to such traits. Such stigmatisation has thus led to the reticence of some men in expressing the difficulties they face as a father – especially when they are thought to be the stronghold of support of the family. This June, in conjunction with Fathers’ Day Celebrations and International Father’s Mental Health Day, Caregiving @ South West will be celebrating the greatest – and often overlooked caregivers in our lives – Fathers.

2 Recent research from various mental health organisations around the globe has shed light on a burgeoning phenomenon that was unheard of previously – paternal post-partum depression. In a longitudinal research¹ done in the UK, 38% of new fathers are concerned about their mental health as they come face-to-face with a sudden increase in workload, parenting pressures, relationship changes and

¹ National Childbirth Trust. (2015). *Dads in distress: Many new fathers are worried about their mental health.*

mounting financial responsibilities. In studies published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, it was highlighted that depression amongst new dads increased by 68 percent² during the first five years of baby's life. Meta-analysis on postpartum depression in fathers have also shown that 10 percent of men worldwide showed signs of depression from the first trimester of their wife's pregnancy, with numbers spiking up to 26 percent three to six months post-delivery³ (Paulson *et al.*, 2006, 2010).

3 Fathers of newborns or husbands of pregnant women are caregivers too. Hence, creating awareness of this hidden phenomenon is a job for the community – one that Caregiving @ South West hopes to undertake. Launched in early 2018, the initiative aims to tackle the multi-faceted aspects of Caregiving via a three-pronged approach which will span across three (3) years, to Celebrate Caregivers and Caregiving, Support Caregivers and Empower Caregiving.

4 As the importance of mental wellness takes centre stage, the CDC rallies experts from Institute of Mental Health Singapore (IMH) to provide advisory, such as on-site consultation at the Caregiving @ South West roadshow held at Depot Heights. Specially curated Caregivers Support Guide with tips to identify signs of depression such as sadness, agitation, feelings of worthlessness and physical manifestations such as breathlessness and anxiety attacks, and tips on managing caregiving stress are also available from IMH. These were also given out at the roadshows, ensuring that residents will always have bite-size information on hand for reference. Other resources to support families with caregiving needs include a network of service providers like Caregivers Asia who provide respite and care services.

5 37 year-old Mr Eugene Tan is a resident of the South West District who knows the stress of being a caregiver too well. An engineer by trade, the father of a 1-year-old girl shares, "It is certainly not easy being the primary caregiver to my ageing parents and my new born child at the same time, on top of having to juggle a

² Paulson, J.F., Dauber, S., & Leiferman, J. A. (2006). Individual and combined effects of postpartum depression in mothers and fathers on parenting behaviour. *Pediatrics*, 118(2), 659-668.

³ Paulson, J.F., & Bazemore, S. D. (2010) Prenatal and postpartum depression in fathers and its association with maternal depression a meta-analysis. *Jama*, 303(19), 1961 – 1969.

full-time job. However, the feelings of pain, suffering and sacrifice are washed away whenever we see our little bundle of life growing step-by-step. As a young family, we are still learning the ropes along the way and it is good to know that the community have put in place initiatives like Caregiving @ South West to provide support and care for all families.”

Media Liaison Officer

Ms Joscelin Tay
Manager (Corporate Management & Communications)
South West Community Development Council
HP: 9848 2711
DID: 6551 9278
Email: Joscelin_tay@pa.gov.sg

Ms Amy Ko
Manager (Project Management & Development)
South West Community Development Council
HP: 9030 1061
DID: 6551 9287
Email: Amy_Ko@pa.gov.sg

About the South West Community Development Council (CDC)

The South West Community Development Council (CDC) was formed on 24 November 2001, with the mission to Assist the Needy, Bond the People and Connect the Community.

Through local help programmes, the South West CDC provides assistance to help the less fortunate in our community. The South West CDC also organises projects and programmes to promote community bonding and social cohesion. The South West CDC adopts the "Many Helping Hands" approach to encourage community ownership among residents, community partners and corporations to realise its vision of "Owning Your Community" which came into effect on 1 March 2004.