Betty Tenn-Stewart and Alex Lamb

Communicating Effectively with Patients and Families
THE PROBLEM FOR PARENTS

• Often short notice, chaotic circumstances immediately prior to admission.

• Parents are asked to absorb large amounts of information about the Unit whilst coming to terms with their situation.

• Frequently we are unable to have discussions about their changed expectations and what the next stage in their child’s care will be.
THE PROBLEM FOR PARENTS

Expectation

Reality
THE PROBLEMS FOR DAD

• Priority is baby’s need for stabilisation in the first 24 hours, resulting in dads feeling their concerns are insignificant.

• Dads feel a lack purpose making it difficult to cope/bond with their families, leading to mental health issues, safe-guarding concerns and poor unit experience.

• Support is often directed towards mum.

• Additional worries over partners health.
INTERVENTION OVERVIEW

• Change staff outlook to encourage Dads’ engagement.

• Empowering Dads to embrace their role in the family and partner in the baby’s care.

• Provide platform of inclusion, self-expression and identification with others.

• Communication amongst Dads.
S.H.E.D LAUNCH

20th October 2018 – UK’s first NNU Dads support group
INTERVENTION SPECIFICS

• Integrating Dads into the care of the baby at the earliest stage, encouraging Dads to accompany babies into the ward from birth.

• Staff observing Dads; identifying early signs of emotional distress and detachment, taking the initiative to introduce Dads to each other and encourage engagement.

• Encouraging a welcoming atmosphere within the ward to add a community feel.
Facebook (381 followers) Twitter (71 followers) accounts and Whatsapp groups (78 users) created communication forums.
INTERVENTION SPECIFICS

• Publishing literature and videos written by dads for dads
INTERVENTION SPECIFICS

• Funding practical initiatives to promote bonding such as providing dads with specially designed shirts allowing skin on skin contact.
INTERVENTION SPECIFICS

• Dads as unit volunteers
INTERVENTION SPECIFICITIES

- Social Events – organised by dads for dads
OUTCOMES

• Dads tell us they felt “less angry and frustrated” as they are now feeling supported.

• Survey data shows approximately 37% of Dads felt that they had the opportunity to bond with their new-borns within the first 24 hours.

• Reduced safeguarding issues and doctors’ appointments
OUTCOMES

• Internal award winning, raising NNU profile.
• National interest raising SWNN profile.
OUTCOMES

• Coverage raising neonatal awareness

Hospital trust sets up new neonatal support group for fathers

Christmas Card from MP Richard Graham
NEXT STEPS

• Finding the manpower and funding to expand the project.

• Providing support to other units who are setting up similar groups.

• Train further unit volunteers.