

Relationships Australia

NEW SOUTH WALES

Media release
Father's Day 2010

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Father's Day Hits a Century **~ Time to Celebrate the New Breed Dad ~**

With Father's Day this Sunday it's the 100th time we have celebrated this special day just for dads. However the role of fathers has changed a lot over this century.

Anne Hollonds, Psychologist and Relationships Australia NSW CEO said: "The fact is that fathers today are able to be more involved than their own fathers were in the day to day lives of children. Significantly more dads are changing nappies, getting off work early to go to a child's soccer training, dropping off or picking up from day-care and generally helping out in the care of their children. The previous generation of fathers did not have the same opportunities to be involved in hands-on parenting.

"Father's Day is a great opportunity to stop and acknowledge how much has changed for dads as a result of sweeping changes to social attitudes, especially in the last 40 years," Ms Hollonds said.

Father's Day celebrations can be traced back to the early 20th-century in Washington State, USA. Inspired by a Mother's Day sermon she heard at church in 1909, Sonora Smart-Dodd a resident of Washington State and one of six children being raised by a single dad, Sonora also wanted to honour her father. She encouraged local churches to institute the first Father's Day observance the following year, and the idea caught on. (National Geographic News, June 20 2010)

These days there are more fathers, with or without partners, involved in hands-on parenting. But with more societal encouragement for dads to get involved comes the challenge to juggle the conflicting demands of both workplace and family.

"Many young dads report feeling stressed from the pressure of being the main breadwinner, as well as the expectation to share responsibilities at home. Especially during the GFC, financial concerns placed a lot stress on families, and managing the challenges of conflicting demands can cause tension at home, Ms Hollonds said.

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Individual, Couple & Family Counselling, Relationships & Parenting Courses, Post Separation Services, Children's Contact Services, Family Relationship Centres, Adolescent Services, Family & Workplace Mediation
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“Modern fathers need to be able to negotiate with their partners how best to share family responsibilities, and where they have access to flexible working conditions, they also need to be able to negotiate with their boss. And we need employers to recognise the need to allow dads the flexibility to spend more time with their children,” Ms Hollonds said.

Tips for modern dads include:

- Spend time with each of your children, including both chores around the home and doing fun things together. The “relationship” part of parent/ child relationship takes time to develop;
- You can’t outsource parenting to your partner – you need to put in the time yourself;
- Building a strong, co-operative partnership with the child’s mother is important to your child’s wellbeing, even if you are parenting from separate homes;
- You need support for yourself to manage the many conflicting demands, and it’s OK to ask for help.

Relationships Australia is a national organisation offering courses and programs especially for dads. We also offer counselling for individuals couples and families (face-to-face, telephone and online); parenting and relationship education; support for families going through separation; specialist services for young people leaving out of home care and older people who have already left out of home care, refugee families and Aboriginal communities; workplace counselling and training; employee assistance programs and consultancy for companies; and training for family support professionals.

To find out more contact Relationships Australia on 1300 364 277 or visit www.nsw.relationships.com.au.

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