

So this is 30: Study maps how men deal with the challenges that come with turning 30

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Becoming a dad is among the many challenges men face when turning 30

Crossing the threshold into the thirties is often marked with life changing moments, with starting a family up there as the most momentous for women and men alike.

With little known about how men tackle this transformative period of their lives, Deakin University researchers are conducting a landmark study into how men navigate the life changes that occur as they head into their thirties, and are calling on 1300 men to join them.

"Crossing the threshold into the thirties often comes with an enormous amount of change. Romantic relationships, friendship groups, work expectations and family life all loom large for men during this time. And there is possibly nothing larger than becoming a dad, with 33 the average age when Australian men start to have children," explained Dr Jacqui Macdonald, a lecturer with Deakin's School of Psychology.

"With change, even good change, comes stress and while many men have the personal resources to manage this stress in a healthy way, most are learning as they go and some feel overwhelmed and distressed.

"We are calling on men aged 28 to 32 years from across the country to join us in this Australian-first study that will track their experiences, with or without children, as they move from their late 20s into their early thirties.

"The ultimate aim of the study is to use the insights the participants provide to develop a psychological and behavioural toolkit men can draw on to prepare for life's challenges at this important stage in their lives."

Through the Men and Parent Pathways (MAPP) study, the researchers will fill a gap in what is known about how men navigate this particular

time in their lives.

"There is much we still don't know about men's experiences and the factors that contribute to their psychological wellbeing, as most research to date has focussed on women as they enter motherhood," Dr Macdonald said.

"While it is essential to understand and support women as they becomes mums, it is also important to be aware of what men are going through and provide them with the resources and support to be the best dads they can be."

Dr Macdonald said that what is known about men who do not cope well with the changes and added responsibilities that come with parenthood paints a worrying picture.

"What we do know is that around one in ten men will experience psychological distress in the 12 months post-partum and around a third of these men will have persistent mental health issues beyond this period," she said.

"Their relationship with their partner has changed and they may face new financial responsibilities, as well as coping with disrupted social lives, lack of sleep and the demands of young children, yet men are less likely to seek support than women, even though changes are needed in many areas of their lives.

"While for the most part fatherhood is a positive experience, some men lack the tools to cope with their new experiences, and this can lead to internalised feelings of anger, anxiety, stress, irritability, confusion about role identity and loss of connection to family and friends.

"We are looking to map the patterns of behaviour that show which men

are at particular risk and identify the strategies used by those men who are doing well. This information is critical in developing programs to educate, support and potentially treat men and families, particularly those who are vulnerable to depression and anxiety and, tragically in some cases, suicide."

All Australian [men](#) aged 28 to 32 years, with or without children, are called on to take part in the study. Their participation will involve completion of a short online questionnaire, once a year for five years. For further information, or to sign up to take part in the study, go to [www.deakin.edu.au/psychology/p ... -research/mapp-study](http://www.deakin.edu.au/psychology/p...-research/mapp-study)

Provided by Deakin University

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