Parental Insight Into the Management of Crying Infants

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Background

- Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) is preventable but can cause severe injury or death.
- Studies have shown that fathers/ male primary care givers are at least 2x more likely involved in SBS
- The ICON campaign ("Infants Cry, You Can Cope") teaches parents coping strategies

Aims

- To raise awareness of the ICON campaign among parents, specifically fathers, promoting positive coping strategies, and reduce the risk of SBS

Methods

- Target audience: Parents for babies < 1 yr of age
- Activities:
    - Educational discussions during clinics or neonatal visits
    - Distribution of ICON materials
    - Use of **appreciative inquiry** and **positive feedback** to reinforce existing parenting strengths
- Integration: aligned with workplace wellbeing initiatives to highlight transferable stress management skills
- Feedback: Participant questionnaires to assess engagement and understanding

Key Messages

- Infant crying is normal – parents are not failing
- Safe coping strategies:
    - Pause and breathe
    - Safely hand over the baby if stressed
    - Seek support from family, friends or professionals
- Positive reinforcement builds confidence and reduces stress

Outcomes

- Parents reported increased understanding of ICON and reassurance about normal infant crying
- Appreciative inquiry approach encouraged openness and reduced stigma
- Linking ICON to work-place wellbeing made messaging more relatable

Conclusions

- Father-inclusive awareness initiatives enhance the reach and effectiveness of ICON
- Positive feedback and strengths-based approaches promote behaviour change
- Integrating infant safety education with broader wellbeing initiatives supports both parental confidence and workplace resilience

https://iconcope.org/advice-for/parents/infant-crying-is-normal/
https://www.cambspborochildrenshealth.nhs.uk/behaviour-emotions-and-mental-health/caring-for-your-crying-baby-icon/
https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23735871/