

# Male Postpartum Abandonment Syndrome (MPAS) Self-Assessment

## Ending the Epidemic of Disappearing Dads

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*For new parents—or answer while remembering how you felt when you were a new parent.*

Depending on how true each statement is, score yourself with 0, 1 or 2, where 2=most true, and add the total

### Men:

- feeling excluded, disconnected, or out of sorts
- decreased intimacy—physical, emotional, etc.
- frustration with differing sexual responsiveness of partner since the birth
- bothered by unpleasant childhood memories
- increased sexual interest in others
- increased use of addictive substances: alcohol, drugs (prescription or otherwise), gaming, TV, etc
- increased irritability
- increased levels of depression, anxiety or agitation
- feeling inadequate
- increased number of disagreements with partner
- increased amount of time away from home/family (work, sports, bar or pub, etc.)
- Total

### Women:

- decreased intimacy—physical, emotional, etc.
- feeling overwhelmed by needs of baby, household, and partner
- frustration from sexual pressure from partner since the birth
- decreased interest in sex/intimacy
- increased number of disagreements with partner
- feeling disconnected, out of sorts
- feelings of inadequacy
- feeling less attractive, sexy
- bothered by unpleasant childhood memories
- increased irritability
- increased levels of depression, anxiety or agitation
- Total

*Note: please answer the above questions before reading below:*

### Male Postpartum Abandonment Syndrome (MPAS) in a Nutshell<sup>1</sup>

Since the 1940s, modern childbirth/childrearing practices may have created the most disconnected generations of human beings ever seen on the planet. As a result, America has been called the world's largest experiment in loneliness.

High-tech prenatal care and birth interventions; artificial baby milk instead of 2+ years at the breast; sleeping alone, being carried in plastic containers (rather than held in arms); and for many boys, circumcision, are the major factors in this alienation.

*Named normative abuse/neglect<sup>2</sup> these conventional parenting practices prevent secure bonding and attachment, later leading to Male Postpartum Abandonment Syndrome (MPAS)—the cause of the **hidden epidemic of disappearing dads**.*

Industrialized cultures, having destroyed the village, have wreaked havoc on the primal period of human development. Approximately 3.87 adults are required to meet the needs of each infant. Simple math indicates that the nuclear family, where the baby takes center stage, is untenable as a social structure. A baby needs far more time and energy than a couple can provide, needing to be *in* the center of a village's attention rather than *be* the center of attention of a nuclear family.

The resulting generations of disconnected boys grow up looking for the mommy they never really had. If they're fortunate, they "find" her, marry her, and think everything's OK—until the first baby comes along—requiring mother's full attention.

The resulting emotional absence of his overwhelmed partner plunges many men into a re-stimulation of their own early, unresolved birth and childhood trauma—usually unconscious. It can be especially triggered when they see their child suckling at a breast they never knew.

Feeling the pain of abandonment once again, they often self-medicate with drugs, alcohol, work, gaming, porn, affairs, etc, until the pain becomes too great and they physically leave. Within the first years about 30% abandon their family physically and upwards of 90% leave emotionally.<sup>3</sup>

*Recognizing and healing MPAS is critically important to prevent the perpetuation of normative abuse/neglect and end the epidemic of disappearing dads. **This is the goal of Project FatherMore.***

For more information see: *Why Dads Leave: Insights and Resources for When Partners Become Parents*, Meryn Callander, Akasha Publications, 2012. Project FatherMore: **FatherMore.NET** See resource links from book at: **WhyDadsLeave.com**

<sup>1</sup> Term coined by John W. Travis, MD, in 2006, described in *Why Dads Leave* (2012) by Meryn G. Callander.

<sup>2</sup> Normative abuse, named by Karen Walant in *Creating the Capacity for Attachment* (1999) is generally not recognized as abusive because almost everyone experienced it—just as slavery wasn't seen as abuse until modern times. In most cases, *normative neglect* is actually a more accurate description of what occurs.

<sup>3</sup> Often it's the mother who experiences the disconnection more acutely, and after trying to reconnect (or not), she often withdraws herself, compounding the situation. Since the mother usually stays with the child, it appears that the father is the one who leaves, but it's usually a mutual disconnection/separation, whether physical or emotional—there are myriad forms that MPAS can take).