



Young Dads Pilot Program Project



Evaluation & Learning Insights

Brave Foundation
2026



B R A V E

Contents

Contents	2
Billy's Story	4
Project Background	6
Evaluation Methodology	7
Design and Development Evaluation	9
Exploration of KEQs	11
KEQ1	11
KEQ2	13
Pilot Evaluation	20
Exploration of KEQs	22
KEQ 3	22
KEQ 4	26
KEQ 5	29
Reflections and Recommendations	33
Key Recommendations	35
James' Story	38
Acknowledgements	40
References	41

The following summary report provides an overview of the Young Dads Pilot Project, building on and evaluating the discovery, co-design, and pilot delivery of the program. The report summarises lessons learned and recommendations to further develop and strengthen the Young Dads Program through future co-design and implementation.

The main findings are highlighted in this report through the Key Evaluation Questions (KEQ) and project recommendations.



Citation

Killmer, G., Short, T., Deane, K., Wilson, S., & Cooper, C. (2026). The Young Dads Pilot Program Project: Evaluation & Learning Insights. Brave Foundation

If you would like to learn more about the Young Dads Program, please call 0448 088 380 or email info@bravefoundation.org.au

© 2026 Brave Foundation

Cultural Acknowledgment

Brave Foundation acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation as the traditional custodians of the lands on which our organisation works. We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Brave's work also brings us into contact with people from diverse communities. Brave is committed to respecting the sexuality, gender, culture and heritage of each person we encounter, inside and outside our organisation.

Billy's Story

Billy is a devoted father of two—a 10-month-old son and a 22-month-old daughter. He first learned about the Brave program shortly after his son's birth. The pregnancy was unplanned and there were ongoing tensions within the couple relationship. The community service organisation who made the referral noted that Nathan had a secure attachment with both children, however had no family/friendship network and was very isolated from any support.

While adjusting to life as a father of two, Billy supported his partner through her post-birth recovery. During this period, he faced significant challenges: balancing his partner's recovery needs, caring full-time for his children, and managing the daily demands of running a household.

As responsibilities grew, Billy found himself stretched thin, impacting his mental wellbeing. The need to divide his attention across multiple roles ultimately made it impossible for him to continue working outside the home. Billy reflected on his journey.



...since my ex-wife was recovering from the birth, I had to take care of both kids at the same time. I couldn't work so I had to take them everywhere, like to the shops or to daycare. It was just hard.

After being referred to Brave by another organisation, Billy was quite apprehensive to engage at first due to the fear of judgement. Billy finds himself to be somewhat of a closed-off person and has difficulty opening up to others.



At first, I was a bit skeptical because it's very hard for me to open up... I try to keep myself protected... because I don't know how they'll act, how they judge.

Upon joining Brave, Billy initially felt some anxiety and admitted that it took quite some time to talk openly with his mentor. Billy's mentor was able to give reassurance and a sense of trust. Billy and his mentor were able to begin meeting two to three times a week working around Billy's work schedule, getting to know each other and building a strong foundation for a meaningful connection. After the first few months, Billy felt comfortable opening up to his mentor about what was going on in his life.



"He [mentor] used to check in quite a lot, and quite a lot so it'll be like two to three times a week... he gave me a good vibe... Like, he didn't have to explain, but he gave me some reassurance as well. Like he gave me that bit of trust as well."

At a difficult time for his family, following the involvement of child protection, Billy's son was removed and placed into alternate care. Billy describes this time as a down point in his life but was grateful to have his mentor provide support to him through this difficult transition, always being there and encouraging Billy to maintain connection throughout this time.

Billy's Story

“He [mentor] was very supportive. He'd always check-in on me, almost every day for that while, because I told him my son was just taken like I don't know how to cope with it... I'd try to distance myself but obviously, [Mentor], he always knows how to get me talking (laughs)... I'm glad that he did. Uh, that I'm very thankful for.

In order to secure work and be closer to his family of origin, Billy moved interstate. While this meant he could only see his children virtually, he was able to secure full time employment in a supportive workplace. After working hard through complicated legal and government systems alongside his mentor for many months Billy was advised by child protection services that his son may be able to re-enter his care in the future, and Billy expresses his thankfulness to his mentor for being there to support him through this process.

“Like, without him, I don't think I'd be where I am. He's given me the motivation to pretty much get up... and just get on with my life and do everything I can just to get my son back in my hands.

Billy is continuing his time in the program with Brave, focusing on building his interpersonal skills and healthy co-parenting with his ex-wife, and continuing to advocate for a full-time relationship with his son. Billy has been able to achieve multiple goals whilst in Brave's program, including connecting with legal services to resolve child safety and family court matters, gaining stable employment, building his financial literacy, and connecting with vital mental health support. Billy is hopeful about a future where he spends more time with his children and can focus on them and provide for their care needs.

*Names changed for privacy



Project Background

Brave Foundation (Brave) is driven by a vision of the future where every young parent and their child thrive and belong and its purpose is to unlock the boundless potential of young parents. Brave does this by walking alongside young parents in the early stages of their parenting journeys, championing their inherent capabilities and strengths, and connecting them to resources, supports and opportunities that enable their own and their families' wellbeing. To do this effectively, Brave maintains a commitment to centring the lived experience voices of young parents in organisational decision-making and systemic advocacy efforts. Accordingly, this project report begins and ends with stories of two young fathers Brave has been privileged to support.

Brave was founded and is led by individuals with lived experience of parenthood at a young age. Its flagship mentoring program, Supporting Expecting and Parenting Teens (SEPT), was co-designed with young parents and launched in 2018 under the Commonwealth Department of Social Services' Try, Test and Learn Fund. SEPT is a national program providing support for expectant and young parents under the age of 25 years.

The research that exists on early entry into young fatherhood underscores the significant and unique needs of young fathers. However, few engage with available programs and services as these offerings fail to meet those needs (Kiselica & Kiselica, 2014; McGirr et al., 2020). Evidence also demonstrates that while many young dads are motivated to be great fathers and desire support, they tend to be labelled as absent and irresponsible and are consequently overlooked or excluded from service provision (Clayton, 2016; Deslauriers & Kiselica, 2022). In recognition of a major gap in gender-specific service provision for young fathers and fathers-to-be, Brave sought to co-produce a model of support that could better meet young fathers' needs by basing the model's design on young fathers lived experiences, preferences and needs. In doing this, Brave's aim was to enhance young fathers' engagement in supports to improve their own and their families' wellbeing.

With support from the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation, The Shine On Foundation and the Ross Trust Foundation, the Young Dads Pilot Project was launched in two sites (the greater Newcastle and Victoria's Greater Melbourne regions) in February 2023 and continued until mid-2025. With the approval of Shine On, Brave was able to expand the reach of the Victorian pilot program and offer a limited number of spaces to young fathers residing in other states through a virtual mode of the program. Funding from RW Ansett has secured continued delivery of the Young Dads Program in Victoria for a further three-years following the intended completion of this project. This funding will allow Brave to finalise prototyping the novel program features and continued support for a dedicated Young Dads program.



Components & Activities

Figure 1 provides a visual overview of the first three phases of the project components with activity streams mapped against the pilot project timeline. The figure includes discovery phase activities, interspaced co-design workshops, period of pilot delivery, and key evaluation activities. The synthesis of the full pilot project findings produced through the project continued until December 2025. Details of the approach, methods and participants for each project component are provided in the sections that follow.

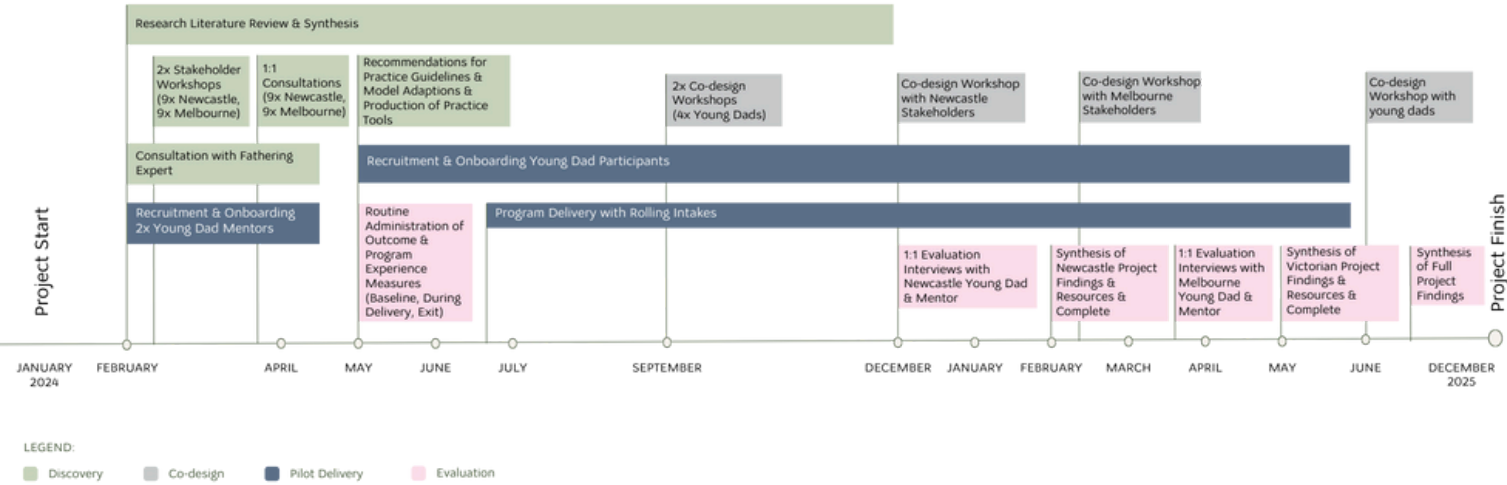


Figure 1. Overview of Young Dads Pilot Project



Evaluation Methodology

As the current project followed the development of a program, a formative evaluation approach was decided to be appropriate to explore the fit of Brave's flagship SEPT model with a young dad population.

Given the varied activities of the project and in correspondence with Brave's Measurement Evaluation & Learning Framework (MEL), the current evaluation design was undertaken in two phases. The first phase focused on the exploration of the Young Dads Program, looking at the information collected within the discovery and co-design streams of the project. The second phase evaluates the pilot delivery of the program with a young dad cohort, focusing on the participant and mentor experiences during the pilot delivery. Each phase has corresponding KEQs which have been designed to best suit the evaluation type and the goals of the encompassing phases.

Accordingly, the key evaluation question (KEQs) for the first phase of this project were:

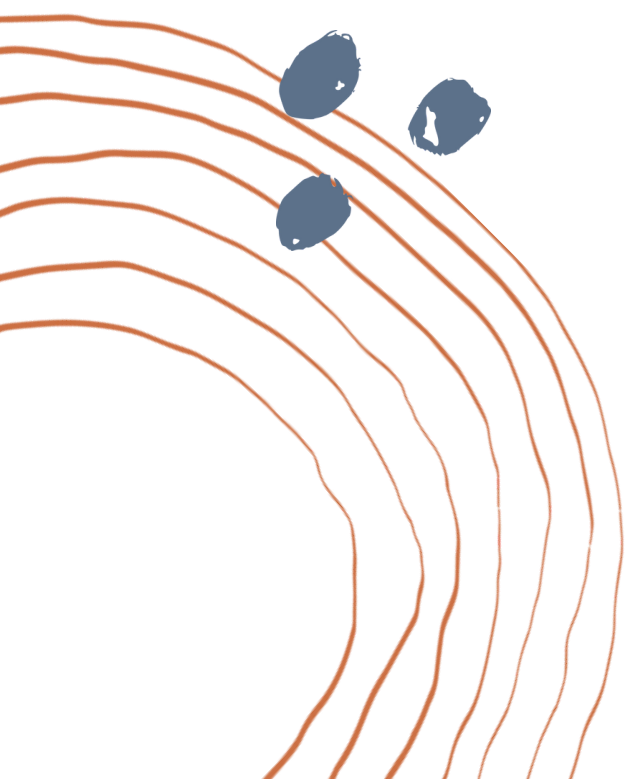
- KEQ 1: How have we ensured that all forms of evidence have informed the discovery and design?
- KEQ 2: What has been learnt from the collected evidence?

The second set of the KEQs focused on the implementation of the pilot, and asked:

- KEQ 3: How well did the pilot program engage with young fathers?
- KEQ 4: To what extent did the pilot program address the needs and wants of young fathers?
- KEQ 5: How was the pilot program experienced by those directly involved? What went well and what could be improved for future deliveries of the program?

Design & Development Evaluation

The design and development phase of the project sought to better understand young dads and explore what program elements are valuable to include in a Young Dads program. The discovery phase aimed to explore young fathers' goals and aspirations for their lives, their support needs, the barriers they encounter to getting support, and program features that would increase their interest, engagement and retention in the Young Dads Program. The co-design phase aimed to build off the insights gleaned from the discovery. This included the exploration of how Brave's current Model of Mentoring may be further tailored for a young dad cohort, as well as novel solutions required to address identified barriers to program access, engagement, and isolation from peers.



Exploration occurred through the following processes

- One-to-one discovery consultations with young fathers, exploring their aspirations, goals, and interest in a program for young fathers
 - Two young fathers in Victoria
 - Seven young fathers in Newcastle
- Discovery workshop with community organisation stakeholders to discuss barriers and facilitators to young fathers engaging with supports and services
 - Nine representatives in Victorian workshop
 - Nine representatives in Newcastle workshop
- Recommendations from consulting fathering practice expert who shared insights from extensive practice experience working with young fathers
 - Environmental scan of existing supports for young fathers
 - Review SEPT Theory of Change for young dad specific population
 - Development of potential practice principles and strategies for program
 - Creation of three toolboxes to support mentors in engaging with young fathers
- Literature review of 28 research documents on young fatherhood from Australia and comparable nations overseas
 - Summary of existing literature relating to early fatherhood and service engagement

- Co-design ideation workshops with young fathers to explore what might be valuable to include in programming
 - Two young fathers in Victorian workshop
 - Five young fathers in Newcastle workshop
- Co-design ideation workshops with community organisation stakeholders to expand on the ideas provided by young fathers
 - Nine representatives in Newcastle workshop
- Co-design prototyping workshop with young fathers to generate ideas about programming implementation and evaluation
 - Six young fathers from various locations



Exploration of KEQs

KEQ 1: HOW HAVE WE ENSURED THAT ALL FORMS OF EVIDENCE HAVE INFORMED THE DISCOVERY AND DESIGN?

The discovery and co-design activities explored insights from a range of evidence sources and stakeholder perspectives. Central to this process was the inclusion of young fathers' voices, beginning in the discovery phase and continuing through co-design. These activities were guided by Brave's model of lived experience, which privileges the perspectives of young parents and promotes organisational flexibility to create environments where their voices are actively sought, listened to, and acted upon.

Alongside the direct input of young fathers, the project also engaged stakeholders who work closely with this group, providing valuable insights into the systemic and organisational contexts shaping young fathers' experiences. These perspectives helped to refine understanding of program requirements and conditions needed to support the effective delivery of a young fathers' program.

The design and synthesis of this report were informed by collaborative analysis across a diverse Brave team, including the Senior Researcher, Lived Experience Co-Researcher, Brave Mentors, and Program Quality and Service delivery staff. This collective approach ensured that engagement with both young fathers and stakeholders was meaningful and effective, and that triangulation of findings increased confidence in the accuracy, depth, and relevance of the synthesis.

The project placed strong emphasis on embedding lived experience voices and diverse forms of evidence from the earliest stages, ensuring that analysis and design were grounded in the real experiences of young fathers and those who support them.

Engaging a young father from the inception of the pilot program could have yielded further critical insights that informed its design, ensuring alignment with the lived experiences and priorities of fathers. Early involvement may have facilitated the development of research approaches that were both inclusive and contextually relevant, while also enriching data interpretation through a lens that highlights the unique challenges and opportunities for young fathers, perspectives that may otherwise have been overlooked by the research team. Although the voices of young fathers were incorporated once relationships had been established, this reflection underscores the methodological importance of initiating relationship-building at the earliest stages of project development and investing in lived-experienced staff within the organisation.

Contributors and Evidence Sources

Consultations with young fathers occurred at multiple stages throughout the project. Participants represented diverse locations, backgrounds, parenting contexts, and levels of engagement with Brave's services. Guided by a youth-oriented and trauma-informed framework, the workshops were interactive, flexible, and relationship-based, prioritising the comfort, safety, and positive experience of participants. This approach not only supported ethical engagement, but also encouraged richer, more authentic insights. Data captured from these workshops included both direct input (idea generation, written and verbal responses) and observational data from facilitators and researchers, allowing for qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Complementing these insights, consultations with stakeholders working with young fathers provided valuable system-level perspectives. These workshops, held across both project sites, explored existing service offerings, engagement patterns, and gaps within the current landscape.

Extending beyond the two sites of the project, further evidence was drawn from a literature review and input from a fathering practice expert. The literature review contextualised the social and policy environment shaping young fathers' experiences, drawing on Australian and international research. The expert consultation translated professional knowledge into practical recommendations, contributing to the development of proposed tools, an environmental scan, and a review of Brave's current offerings for young parents through a young fathers' lens.

Finally, invaluable contributions were provided by the Young Dad mentors, one of whom had lived experience as a young father. They gave insights that contributed to the building of evidence in the discovery and design phases, supporting other research staff as consultation agendas were developed and facilitating engagement with young fathers through professional and trusting relationships.



Integration and Synthesis

Together, these evidence sources provided a comprehensive and balanced foundation for the discovery and design phases. By intentionally drawing on lived experience, practitioner expertise, academic literature, and program data, the project ensured that findings were grounded, credible, and multifaceted. The synthesis and analysis were undertaken collaboratively by a multidisciplinary Brave team, combining research expertise, lived experience, and practice knowledge. This diversity of perspectives strengthened the interpretation of data and supported a broad, socio-ecological understanding of young fatherhood.

KEQ 2: WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNT FROM THE COLLECTED EVIDENCE?

Powerful Aspirations and High Expectations

The discovery and design phases highlighted the strong aspirations of young fathers, deeply tied to providing security and stability for their families. Aligning with existing research (Clayton, 2016; Deslauriers & Kiselica, 2022), young fathers demonstrated the desire to spend quality time with their children, build nurturing home environments, and ensure their families are well provided for through stable housing and finances. For some, this is related to a desire to provide a better parenting experience than what they received, defining positive fatherhood around their own emotional presence and reliability. Their sense of identity and success as fathers was seen to be strongly connected to being seen as capable providers. As such, young fathers' preferred supports that act as tools in helping them become better, more confident, and more stable fathers. These include guidance in managing finances and employment, opportunities to learn about child development and parenting skills, and support for emotional wellbeing, stress management, and relationships.

While being a 'good father' is often equated with being a good provider, service providers and research highlight that this expectation can create heavy pressure and internal conflict (Deslauriers et al., 2012; Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2015; Faulkner et al., 2018). Holding the belief that they must have everything figured out on their own can prevent young fathers from seeking support, even when facing significant structural barriers. This can result in an apprehension in help-seeking and shame when engaging with support services that must be acknowledged and addressed by service providers in order to connect with young fathers.



Navigating Barriers

Young fathers face multiple and compounding barriers that challenge their ability to achieve their goals. These include systemic and social barriers such as age-based discrimination, precarious or unstable employment, and difficulty accessing private housing. Personal factors like mental health, neurodiversity, and trauma further intersect to limit opportunities. In addition, research demonstrates that societal expectations around masculinity and fatherhood can make it difficult to express uncertainty or seek support (Deslauriers et al., 2012; Diverse Dads Collaborative, 2021).

The exploration phases of the project demonstrated that barriers to program participation are often situational rather than attitudinal. Common factors include competing work commitments, child-care or health needs, and other practical constraints. Additionally, mainstream parenting services often overlook fathers, resulting in their exclusion from programs that could support them. These barriers increase stress and feelings of isolation but are not indicative of a lack of motivation or capability, but rather a lack of tailored opportunity and inclusion. These are not fixed obstacles, but realities that programs must adapt to by offering flexible and understanding engagement options.

Of particular note, young fathers frequently encounter accessibility challenges when engaging with parenting and family support services. A significant contributing factor is that these services are often promoted primarily to women, which can inadvertently create a perception that fathers are not the intended audience. This lack of targeted communication may result in fathers feeling excluded or reluctant to seek assistance, ultimately limiting their access to essential resources and support. Addressing these barriers requires a more inclusive approach to service design and promotion to ensure equitable engagement for all parents.



Changing Identity and Important Relationships

Research shows that becoming a father at a young age can bring a complex identity shift (Deslauriers & Kiselica, 2022; Florsheim et al., 2020). As financial and work pressures often take precedence in the lead up to birth, little time might be left to emotionally prepare or engage with services that could ease the transition. For many young fathers, there is a tension between wanting to maintain a lifestyle similar to their peers and embracing new responsibilities, compounded with finding themselves isolated from other young dads or peers who understand their experiences. They value the opportunity to meet others in similar situations, recognising that shared experience can be a powerful source of motivation, learning, and emotional support. Social connection is seen as essential to mental health and overall wellbeing.



Strengthening existing relationships and communication skills is critical for young fathers, as their ability to maintain access and involvement with their children often depends on the quality of their relationship with the child's mother and extended family members. These relationships can serve as gateways to continued engagement and support, yet they are also vulnerable to strain. For many young fathers, relationship breakdowns have resulted in a complete loss of contact with their children. The consequences of such disconnection can be profound and lifelong, impacting not only the father's wellbeing but also the child's development and sense of identity. This underscores the importance of targeted interventions that promote healthy communication, conflict resolution, and co-parenting strategies to safeguard these vital connections.



Program Design Implications

Overall, the insights from each component of the discovery and design phase showed strong convergence, and collectively supported the use of Brave's current Model of Mentoring in terms of its broad components and process, while also indicating a need to explore possible solutions for the unique challenges faced by young fathers.

An effective young fathers' program must respond to the broader socio-ecological context shaping young men's lives. The collected evidence demonstrates that young fathers' experiences and support needs do not occur in isolation; they are shaped by a complex web of personal, relational, and structural influences. This is reflected in the way young fathers themselves describe the interconnected nature of their wellbeing, their relationships, and the social expectations, service systems, and economic pressures they navigate. Programs that focus only on individual change risk overlooking the broader conditions that enable or constrain young fathers' capacity to thrive. By considering the ecological context, a program can respond more holistically, recognising how social expectations, relationships, community attitudes, and access to resources all interact to shape fathers' wellbeing and engagement (See example Figure 2)

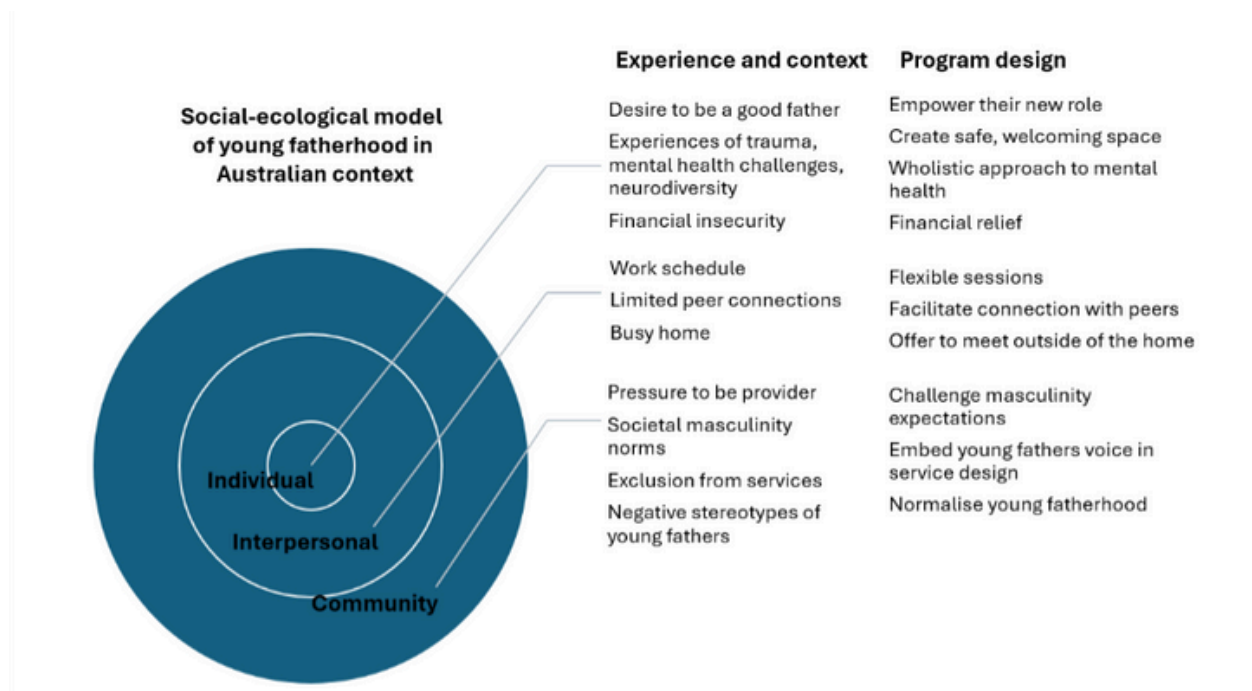


Figure 2. Program design in response to Young Father context

In response to the context outlined by firsthand experiences, research, and consultation with stakeholders, the discover and design phases suggested the integration of the following elements would be beneficial and meaningful in the delivery of a mentoring program for young fathers:

Flexibility	Flexible service delivery offered through different modes, outside of traditional business hours and in locations nominated by young fathers is critical to engagement (Lechowicz et al., 2019; Neale & Davies, 2015). Programs must be adaptable to young fathers' schedules and circumstances. This includes offering sessions outside standard business hours (evenings or weekends), varied session lengths, and multiple participation options (in-person, phone, text, or online). Such flexibility enables greater participation while accommodating work, study, and parenting responsibilities.
One-to-One Support	Male socialisation and perceptions of masculinity can limit help-seeking and engagement with services despite high need for support (Deslauriers et al., 2012). Young fathers are more likely to engage when they feel seen and understood, without the fear of being judged that may accompany group settings. As such, a one-to-one format is preferred, as it allows mentoring to be tailored to individual goals, fosters trust, and supports more open and authentic conversations.
Meeting Close to Home	Research encourages service providers to meet in places where young fathers often frequent and feel comfortable (Deslauriers & Kiselica, 2022). Providing opportunities to meet in familiar public settings, such as parks, cafés, sports clubs, or community spaces, can enhance comfort and safety if homelife is disruptive or chaotic. These locations offer neutrality and privacy and may be easier to integrate into fathers' existing routines or other service appointments.
Building Peer Connection	Peer support opportunities can enable young fathers to share information, provide space for reflection, and build new social supports as their focus and friendships change (Deslauriers & Kiselica, 2022; Faulkner et al, 2018). Facilitating opportunities for young fathers to connect with each other is critical. Shared experiences can normalise their challenges, strengthen mental health, and create a sense of belonging. Social gatherings like "Dad's Days" or family events can also serve as entry points for engagement and visibility for those not yet ready to commit to a structured program.
Offering Material Support	Without a strong support network and material resources, young fathers often feel ill-equipped to manage the new responsibilities of fatherhood (SmithBattle et al. 2019). Practical support is both motivating and enabling. Providing access to material aid, skill-building workshops, transport, financial coaching, and reimbursements for lost work time demonstrates respect for their time and effort. Such supports can directly remove barriers to participation and reinforce the program's commitment to tangible outcomes.

Building Trust	Negative prior experiences with professionals, who are affected by biased beliefs, also serve alienate young fathers and contribute to their reluctance to re-engage with services (Deslauriers & Kiselica, 2022). Trust in the organisation and program grows through transparency, demonstrated success, and relational consistency. Sharing stories of real impact helps young fathers feel hopeful, valued, and confident in the support being offered.
Harnessing Intrinsic Motivation	Strengths-based approaches recognise young father's strengths and draw on their motivation to be good parents enhance engagement and retention (Deslauriers & Kiselica, 2022; Lechowicz et al., 2019). Programs can leverage this intrinsic motivation by affirming their strengths, highlighting progress, and linking support directly to their personal and family goals.
Engagement Through Familiar Channels	Research suggests word-of-mouth and referrals via trusted others are the most effective approaches to recruiting fathers (Lechowicz et al., 2019). Reaching young fathers through social media and peer networks increases accessibility and visibility. Using platforms they already engage with helps normalise participation and makes entry into the program feel informal and approachable.
Safe, Informal, & Positive Atmosphere	An informal, relaxed, inclusive atmosphere can enhance the appeal of a service for young fathers (Buston, 2018). Programs should prioritise welcoming, non-judgmental spaces that reflect understanding of young fathers' realities. Allowing participants to bring a friend, embedding cultural and trauma-informed approaches, and fostering trusted relationships all help young fathers feel safe and respected.
Activity-Based Engagement	Including activities is recommended to enhance the appeal of support services for young fathers (Deslauriers & Kiselica, 2022). Expanding on sessions with a focus on talking, incorporating hands-on, interactive, and multisensory activities can support young fathers in their engagement. Activities like shared projects, fitness, or creative exercises can make sessions more enjoyable and build skills in a way that feels relevant and confidence-building.
Addressing Cultural Beliefs & Masculinity	Cultural norms and beliefs about masculinity are a social determinant of health for young men, and harmful conceptualisations of masculinity should be addressed in male-focused service design (Gwyther et al., 2019). Programs should openly explore cultural and generational expectations around masculinity and fatherhood, using lived-experience mentors to model vulnerability and growth. Addressing fear of judgment is crucial for engagement and retention.

Co-Design & Ongoing Input	When young fathers feel heard and respected, they are much more likely to engage (Florsheim et al., 2020; Lechowicz et al., 2019; McGirr et al., 2020). Young fathers should have a continuing role in shaping and refining the program, ensuring it remains relevant, respectful, and empowering. Their insights can guide content, delivery, and communication approaches.
Financial Literacy	Young fathers often experience increased financial pressures, while having limited financial resources, experience, or security (Clayton, 2016; Deslauriers & Kiselica, 2022; Enderstein & Boonzaier, 2015). Supporting financial confidence not only relieves stress, but enables young fathers to spend more quality time with family and re-engage with activities that support wellbeing. This might be implemented through budgeting help, employment guidance, and service navigation.
Holistic Mental Health Approach	Young fathers are often at risk of poor psychological wellbeing, which can in turn make it hard for them to reach out for support (Bamishigbin et al., 2019; Buston, 2018; Diverse Dads Collaborative, 2021). Mental health support should be integrated, relational, and strengths-based. Young fathers benefit from speaking with trusted mentors, building peer connections, managing stress, and being genuinely heard. Confidentiality and understanding of their unique experiences are essential for creating psychological safety and trust.
Address Historic Exclusion of Young Fathers from Service Provision	Addressing systemic barriers that limit fathers' roles in their children's lives requires a multifaceted approach. Young fathers are often stigmatised as absentee and uninvolved, resulting in real or perceived experiences of exclusion or bias by mainstream services (McGirr et al. 2020). Services must be designed and promoted inclusively, using gender-neutral language and imagery to ensure fathers feel equally recognised. Policy reforms should embed father-inclusive practices and protect fathers' rights to maintain meaningful relationships with their children, even after separation. Targeted programs that build parenting skills, emotional wellbeing, and co-parenting strategies are essential, alongside flexible service delivery options such as after-hours sessions and digital platforms. Service providers need training to challenge gendered assumptions and engage fathers effectively, while community-based initiatives, including peer networks and mentoring programs, can reduce isolation and normalize active fatherhood. Collectively, these measures create a more equitable system that supports fathers' involvement and strengthens family outcomes.

Pilot Evaluation

The discovery and co-design phases of the project indicated that being an individualised and flexible mentoring program, Brave's SEPT program provides beneficial support to young fathers. Additional features and modifications to the program emerged from these phases, however at the time of the pilot phase, they required further time and resources to be further developed and implemented. As such, the pilot phase of the project sought to explore the suitability of Brave's mainstream program with young father participants, paying particular attention to further tailoring that may enhance the program for this population.



Figure 3. Overview of mentoring process based on Brave's Model of Mentoring.

Brave's mainstream SEPT program involves linking young parents with professional mentors who provide support, typically over a 12-month period, in line with the parents' self-identified goals. Participant goals can address a range of priorities and aspirations related to parenting, health and wellbeing, finances and housing, family relationships, education and/or employment, and mentors leverage community connections and resources to equip young parent participants with the knowledge, skills, resources and opportunities to make their aspirations a reality. See Figure 3 for an overview of the mentoring process.





A male Young Dads Mentor was appointed for the Newcastle site in February, and a male Young Dads Mentor was appointed for the Victoria site in March 2024. Both were involved with the discovery phase activities, alongside receiving general organisational onboarding support and training in the Model of Mentoring. Brave began to receive referrals for the Young Dads Pilot Program in April 2024, and the first participant began the program later that month. In addition, two Victorian male participants of the SEPT program were transitioned into the Young Dad pilot program in April 2024. The pilot program was delivered at the Newcastle site from April 2024 till February 2025, and at the Victorian site from April 2024 till July 2025. The evaluative data for the current report was collected during the delivery of the pilot program as outlined above. While many young father participants continued their engagement with Brave following the completion of the pilot, data collected after the conclusion of the pilot is not included here.

Brave's Measurement, Evaluation and Learning approach draws on quantitative and qualitative data obtained from a combination of administrative case file data, standardised measurement instruments administered at the beginning, middle and end of a program, a program exit survey focused on participant perceptions of the support they received and its impact, and semi-structured interviews with a sub-sample of participants. The standardised measurement instruments include Brave's evidence informed in-house Parenting Confidence and Personal Agency Scale and Triangle Consulting's Outcome Stars tools, which are also used to guide goal-focused conversations during mentoring sessions. All mentors receive training and ongoing support in the administration of these tools.



In light of the findings from the discovery phase, the project team determined that the Parenting Confidence and Personal Agency Scale items and the Pathway Star Tool from Triangle Consulting's Outcomes Star options contained appropriate indicators to reflect the nature of support and the expected outcomes for the Young Dads Program. In addition, the team agreed that semi-structured interviews with the Young Dad Mentors and participants would offer deeper insights about their experiences in and the impact of the program.

As such, assessment of the pilot delivery was explored through the following:

- Participant Data
 - Demographic information
 - Conversation rates of program referrals
- Program Data
 - Types of goals set by participants (Pathway Plan Tool)
 - Progress made towards goals
 - Changes in developmental domains (Pathway Star Tool)
 - Therapeutic alliance between participant and mentor (Session Rating Scale)
- Qualitative interviews with program participants exploring their experiences in the pilot program
 - Five young fathers from the Victorian site
 - Three young fathers from the Newcastle site
- Qualitative interviews with Young Dad Pilot Program mentors reflecting on their delivery of the pilot program
 - Mentor from the Victorian site
 - Mentor from the Newcastle site

Exploration of KEQs

The following KEQs were explored through the findings presented above and the context of what was learnt about young fathers in the discovery and design phases of the project, supported by participant and mentor quotes. This process was supported by consultation with the Victorian Young Dads mentor and other Brave mentors who had worked with young fathers in the mainstream program.

KEQ 3: HOW WELL DID THE PILOT PROGRAM ENGAGE WITH YOUNG FATHERS?

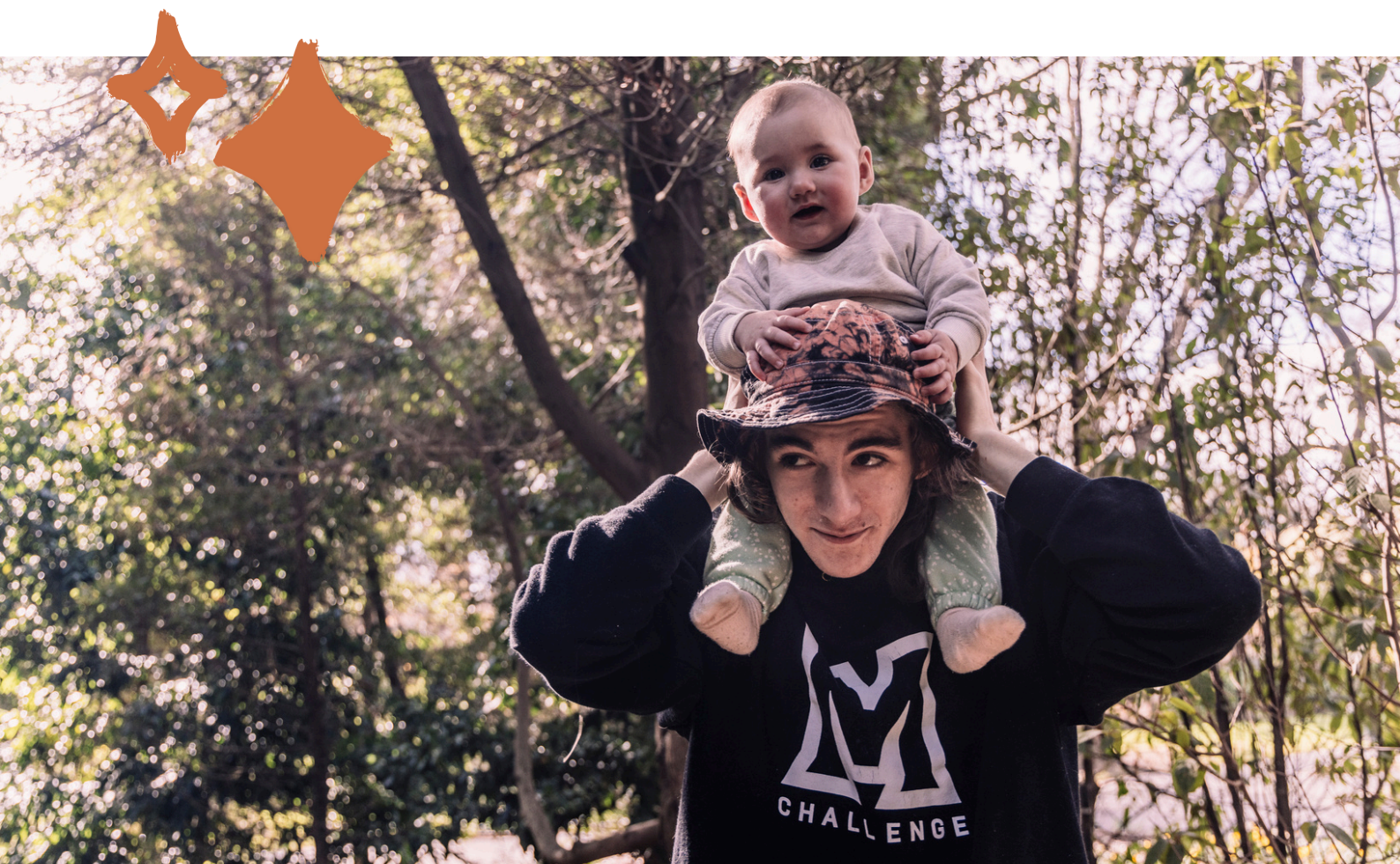
Overall, the pilot demonstrated promising engagement with young fathers, despite the early stage of implementation and a relatively small sample. The evaluation found that many young fathers entered the program through a trusted contact, most commonly partners, friends, or health professionals. This highlights the value of relational referral pathways and may also indicate barriers to program access for young fathers without these supports. However, limited knowledge about the broader demographic profile of young fathers in the region makes it difficult to determine whether particular groups are underrepresented or excluded. When interviewed, the young fathers shared that having testimonials from program participants and clearly explaining the role of the program may help to engage young fathers who do not have a relational connection to Brave.

“I reckon share the stories of the people that are involved. Make it a safe environment.”

YOUNG DAD

“Maybe some reassurance, I guess... pretty much explain what you do, what the company is or, what they call it, a franchise. Explain in ways what you can help and what things you can't do, if that makes sense. So, give them a better idea of what they're getting into.”

YOUNG DAD



Demand far exceeded capacity at the Victorian site, although this may have been influenced by a larger catchment area and the transfer of pre-existing participants. Quantitatively, the program achieved a 70% conversion rate from referral to enrolment, which is strong given program is still in pilot stage, and the rate matched broader Brave benchmarks. Engagement among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young fathers was comparable to the mainstream program, suggesting early indications of cultural accessibility that could be further explored through qualitative inquiry. The participant group had relatively small representation of culturally and linguistically diverse young fathers and LGBTIQ+ participants, however it is unclear whether this is due to engagement strategies, under reporting, or smaller representation of these groups within the young father's community.

Session Rating Scale (SRS) data suggests that participants developed strong therapeutic alliances with their mentors within the first few months, with relationships strengthening over time. Completion of the SRS, however, was low, indicating a need for alternative strategies to capture participant feedback in ways that feel comfortable and accessible for young dads.



“It's been pretty fantastic.
Like, without him,
I don't think I'd be where I
am. He's given me the
motivation to pretty much
get up of my ass & just get
on with my life & do
everything I can just to get
my son back in my hands.”

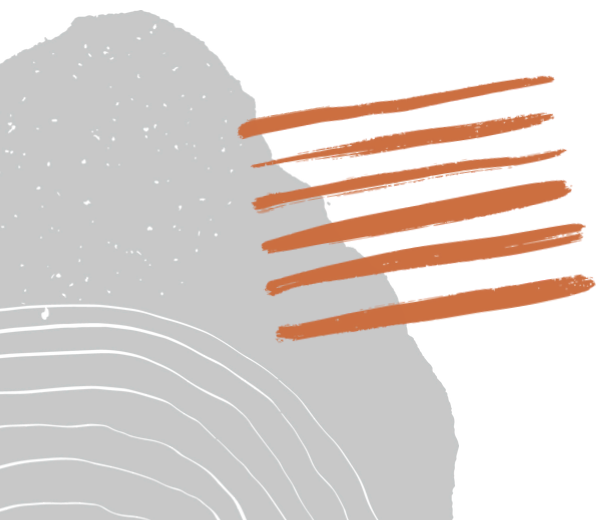
YOUNG DAD



Engagement patterns suggested a common trajectory for many young fathers, who were initially hesitant or unsure about joining but became more engaged over the first few months as trust was established with their mentor. Mentors played a critical role in this process, with participants describing the relationship as a key factor in their continued involvement. Engagement was often strongest during periods of crisis, when young fathers actively sought support to stabilise challenging life circumstances. From interviews and mentor reflections, participants tended to join the program at a challenging time in life, and engagement spiked during periods of acute stress. This suggests the program plays a stabilising role during transitions or crises and may need to explicitly plan for episodic engagement patterns. It also highlights the importance of ensuring that the program is readily available and responsive at the point of referral.

“ I think the dads will sometimes, like disengage when everything is sort of better... like they have that a roof over their head & more access to the child & like a bit of work, you know it kind of be like I'm sweet. But the time when they seem to engage the most is when they're going through the court & system & then it's like that's kind of when things are at the pointy end. I think that that's when they sort of need, someone like us more.”

VICTORIAN YOUNG DADS MENTOR



Across data sources, "staying in touch" emerged as a central mechanism of engagement. Whether through brief check-ins, after-hours availability, or offering multiple modes of communication, participants valued the mentor's consistent presence, responsiveness, and flexibility. This regular, relational contact was seen to enable mentors in providing timely support as young fathers navigated transitions in parenting, work, and relationships, and helped sustain engagement even when life became busy or unpredictable.

“He was very flexible & he was like, ‘where can I meet you?’ Like wherever I was, he could, you know, come to me. It's very, flexible... he met me at Macca's whilst me & my family were having a meal.”

YOUNG DAD

KEQ 4: TO WHAT EXTENT DID THE PILOT PROGRAM ADDRESS THE NEEDS AND WANTS OF YOUNG FATHERS?

The current evaluation demonstrates the pilot to be effective in supporting young fathers to identify, pursue and, in many cases, achieve their self-defined goals. As described by the participants, the flexible, relationship-based mentoring model allowed them to direct the focus of their engagement, aligning well with the program's strengths-based and participant-led intent. The mentors facilitated conversations that helped young men articulate what was most important to them, which was often centred on financial stability, skill development, parenting confidence, and general wellbeing. Both qualitative accounts and program data suggest that this approach enabled meaningful progress towards these goals, providing early yet compelling evidence of the program's effectiveness, even at the pilot stage.

“He was actually wanting to get to know me & how he wanted to help me. He asked what was I looking for in the program? What to get out of it? Um, he wanted to work on the stuff that I wanted to learn about.”

YOUNG DAD

Across the participant data and interviews, a unifying theme was young fathers' desire to provide security, stability, and safety for their families. As such, a strength of the current program was demonstrated through the improvements across several Pathway Star domains, particularly stability at home, money, and family and relationships. These shifts aligned closely with the qualitative narratives of participants, who frequently described the importance of securing stable housing, improving their financial position, and strengthening their connection with their children. Many young fathers described the program as supporting their transition into fatherhood, helping them develop parenting skills, build insight into their child's development, and reflect on the type of father they aspired to be. Participants also highlighted improved communication and emotional awareness, with positive flow-on effects for their children's wellbeing.

“[My children] find it really exciting the way that I've changed & especially my daughter as well... they're really happy the way that I sort of come & how far I've come. And they say that they're proud of me all the time.”

Y O U N G D A D

While the program successfully addressed many core needs, the Pathway Star domain with the least improvement related to the participants' friends and other connections. Within their interviews, participants voiced a strong desire to meet other young fathers and connect with peers who understand their experiences. Though not a core feature of the pilot, this finding indicates an opportunity for further development of the program to better meet an important desire of young fathers to build social relationships with their peers. This might look like optional, informal peer connection opportunities, such as place-based meetups, social events, or small group sessions with a shared mentor. The desire for peer connection was not universal but consistent enough to warrant future exploration, and may provide an additional layer of support for young fathers.



“But talking to people that are, you know, literally doing it, like actively being a young dad... knowing that there's people out there that are going through the same stuff as you, you can just really connect with them.”

YOUNG DAD



“Just like a support sort of thing for anything I might need you down the line. Everything. And like, just have someone to talk with, you know that either have gone through it before or... has spoken to people with the experience of it.”

YOUNG DAD

KEQ 5: HOW WAS THE PILOT PROGRAM EXPERIENCED BY THOSE DIRECTLY INVOLVED? WHAT WENT WELL AND WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED?

Participant Experience

Overall, young fathers reported highly positive experiences of the pilot, with many describing the program as accessible, respectful, and genuinely supportive of their needs. The participant-led design was consistently highlighted as one of the most valued aspects of the model. Young dads appreciated having autonomy over the pace and focus of their engagement, which helped reduce anxiety, counter past experiences of judgment from services, and build a sense of confidence and control. This approach also enabled participants to engage in ways that felt manageable and meaningful, particularly during periods of stress or instability.

“He seemed chill. He seemed relaxed. He seemed like someone that just was like willing to go with what, you know what I needed & everything like that. He wasn't too pushy towards anything.”

YOUNG DAD



A central factor shaping participant experience was the trust they developed with their mentor. Mentors were described as calm, reliable, and non-judgmental, helping young fathers feel safe enough to discuss challenges openly and explore what kind of father they wanted to be. For many, the mentor functioned not only as a source of emotional support but as a positive male role model. This trusting relationship also created flow-on benefits, including improved emotional regulation, increased confidence, and strengthened relationships with partners, family, and children.



“ [My mentor helped in] literally every single way, because at the time I felt like very trapped & lonely, you know? So just having someone that I could just talk to about what I want is, it was just so helpful.”

Y O U N G D A D

Flexibility and responsiveness were also critical to the program's success. Participants valued being able to reschedule, meet in varied formats, and maintain contact through quick check-ins, making the program workable alongside parenting, employment, and complex life demands. This responsiveness helped young fathers feel respected and supported on their own terms.

“ It's pretty much, um, whenever I can so he works around me. So, like if I say I can do this day, he'll do it.”

Y O U N G D A D



While overall experiences were positive, the evaluation also highlighted key complexities. Some participants found it difficult to ask for help or articulate their needs, even when struggling. Others preferred practical, hands-on support rather than talking alone. These dynamics emphasise the importance of relational sensitivity, with mentors needing to balance autonomy with gentle, proactive engagement. The use of structured tools also required careful timing: when introduced too early, tools risked disrupting rapport, but when used well, they supported reflection and helped track progress.

“It's really easy to come onto an agreement & it's not so more, oh, ‘maybe you could do this, it'll probably benefit you’, or like ‘don't do this’. It's more of a, if I can take my own leap & if I don't like it in the end we can always change it, which is really good because I can come on agreement really good with it.”

Y O U N G D A D

Taken together, the participant experience points to a model that young fathers find empowering, respectful, and relevant to their lives while also identifying areas for ongoing refinement to support deeper engagement and stronger outcomes.



Mentor Experience

Overall, mentors saw the meaningful impact of the pilot program, while also identifying a clear need for refinement of supportive systems and resources as the program matures. Mentors reflected that delivering and developing the program simultaneously presented challenges, requiring them to balance direct service, relationship-building, administrative needs, and ongoing program refinement. Despite this, mentors found it helpful to conduct their own research, connect with community organisations, and draw on broader contextual knowledge to better support participants. They also highlighted the need for more tools and resources specifically designed for work with young fathers, calling for tools that are developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive, and aligned with relational practice.



I think that it's definitely a good framework in terms of supporting young parents. But if you go through it, you definitely notice that it lacks a relevance specific to young dads. Definitely, you know, I would be wanting to see more about challenges that the young dads face, their strengths & aspirations, to make sure that we're also addressing specific gaps in, in support that are relevant to young dads... For example, the stigma, limited access to father-specific resources, mental health struggles is a big one."

NEWCASTLE YOUNG DADS MENTOR

Mentors also emphasised the importance of pacing tools thoughtfully. They expressed that using structured assessments too early could jeopardise rapport, while integrating them later once trust was established supported reflection and helped articulate progress in meaningful ways. Together, this indicates an opportunity to reflect on the tools used within the program, tailor them more to a young father audience, and work with mentors regarding appropriate delivery methods and timing. This may also include the further development of the fathering practice experts' toolboxes to be considered as inclusions within an adapted SEPT program and within the Model of Mentoring.

Reflections & Recommendations

Summary of Evaluation

The current evaluation has demonstrated the Young Dads Pilot Program to have strong promise in supporting young fathers to define, pursue, and achieve self-identified goals across parenting, wellbeing, and life skills domains. The evaluation highlights that the program's strengths-based, participant-led, and flexible mentoring model resonates strongly with young fathers, fostering trust, engagement, and sustained participation. Participants consistently valued the autonomy to set the pace and focus of their engagement, which helped counter past experiences of judgement and supported confidence, agency, and motivation.

Mentor relationships emerged as central to positive outcomes. Young fathers described mentors as calm, reliable, and non-judgmental, creating a safe space to discuss challenges, explore fathering identity, and reflect on their goals. These relationships not only facilitated personal growth in areas like parenting confidence, emotional regulation, and communication skills, but also generated broader benefits for family relationships, including strengthened bonds with children, partners and extended family members. The pilot also highlighted the importance of tangible, practical supports alongside relational mentoring, including guidance with finances, housing, and skill development, which directly enable fathers to achieve their goals and increase their sense of security.



The evaluation underscores the critical role of flexibility and responsiveness within a program for young fathers. The participants were often navigating complex schedules shaped by parenting, work, education, and personal challenges. The ability to meet outside of the home, adjust session timing, and maintain consistent contact, even if only via brief check-ins or text, was pivotal for engagement and trust. Similarly, mentors emphasised the need to balance relational practice with structured program tools, noting that introducing tools too early can impede rapport. The thoughtful integration of existing tools by the mentors supported a standardised and reflective practice with the young fathers, while maintaining the relational, participant-led nature of the program.

A socio-ecological lens reinforces why these features matter. Young fathers operate within a context shaped by interpersonal, community, and systemic factors, ranging from societal expectations of fatherhood and masculinity to limited father-focused service provision. Existing parenting support services are typically targeted towards mothers, resulting in the implicit exclusion of fathers from participating. As such, the programs' responsiveness to these domains will result in programming that is sensitive to this broader context, and result in a more effective program. Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fathers, comparable to the mainstream cohort, also suggests early indications of cultural accessibility, though exploration may support better understanding and promotion of the cultural safety of the program.



Key Recommendations

EMBED YOUNG FATHER VOICE IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY

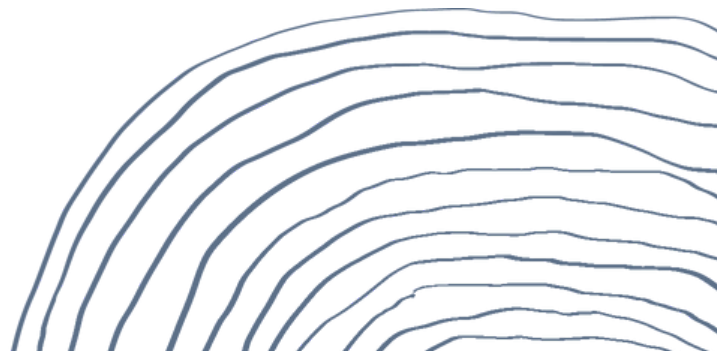
Future iterations of the program's development and delivery should continue to actively involve young fathers in shaping its design, delivery, and ongoing refinement. This includes establishing advisory groups, conducting co-design workshops, and maintaining regular consultation to ensure their perspectives inform key decisions. Importantly, the program should integrate the specific elements that young fathers identify as most important in the current evaluation, such as flexible delivery formats, opportunities for peer connection, practical support to achieve personal and parenting goals, and skill-building activities. In addition, participant testimonials and lived experience insights should also be leveraged to demonstrate the program's value, support recruitment, and encourage broader engagement, ensuring that future programs are responsive, relevant, and truly grounded in the experiences of young fathers.

REVIEW SEPT THEORY OF CHANGE FOR YOUNG DADS COHORT

Insights from the pilot evaluation suggest that while the overarching goal of supporting young fathers to achieve their personal and parenting goals remains relevant, the mechanisms of change differ from the mainstream program. Building from the notes provided by the fathering practice expert and in co-design with young fathers, updating the current SEPT Theory of Change to reflect the lived experiences of young fathers will guide mentors, inform program structures, and ensure resources are targeted toward the processes that actually support meaningful change.

BUILD FLEXIBILITY & RESPONSIVENESS INTO PROGRAM DELIVERY

Young fathers have diverse schedules and competing responsibilities, including work, education, and parenting. As such, the program should aim to maintain flexible session times, locations outside the home, and options for remote engagement via phone, text, or online platforms. If possible, the program should incorporate mentor availability to include regular evenings or weekend days, allowing working fathers an opportunity to easily engage. Additionally, ongoing access to light-touch support beyond the formal program period may help fathers remain motivated and continue to benefit as they transition out of the program.



REVIEW & ADAPT PROGRAM TOOLS

Structured tools and assessments provide mechanisms for monitoring progress and ensuring program fidelity, but for young fathers, their stringent use may undermine relationship-building early in the program. Allowing mentors flexibility in the timing of these tools is expected to allow room for building trust and for the use of tools at more optimal times. The program could be further enhanced through co-designing tools with mentors and young fathers to help ensure they are relevant, flexible, and integrated into relationship-based practice, supporting reflective engagement.

FOSTER PEER CONNECTION & SOCIAL SUPPORT AMONG YOUNG FATHERS

The evaluation has indicated that opportunities for informal peer interaction, such as optional meet-ups or social events, may reduce isolation, normalise young fatherhood, and enhance wellbeing for participants. While these interactions were not core to the pilot, structured opportunities to meet other fathers with shared experiences within future iterations of the program may complement the mentoring model and strengthen overall program impact.



ENSURE CONSISTENT, POSITIVE FRAMING OF FATHERHOOD

Across mentoring approaches, tools, and communication, the program should reinforce fatherhood as caring, engaged, and capable. Clear, consistent messaging helps counter deficit-based stereotypes, supports fathers' agency, and fosters confidence in their parenting role. While this is embodied by the mentors in their interactions with participants, the adaptations of mainstream tools for fathers are somewhat ambiguous in their relation to parenting and could be improved with standardised questions that centre the participants fathering role. These changes would be further embedded as Brave articulates a clear, inclusive vision of fatherhood, one that affirms the value of care, connection, and emotional presence, even when physical proximity is limited.

ADVOCATE TO REDUCE STIGMA & INCREASE RECOGNITION OF YOUNG FATHERS

Brave has a role in challenging societal and service-based stigma, amplifying positive narratives about young fatherhood, and promoting fathers' inclusion in traditionally mother-focused services. In addition to Brave's work with young mothers, advocacy efforts should extend beyond the program to broader policy and service systems, supporting systemic change that specifically acknowledges and values the critical role of young fathers in their children's development.



James' Story

James* was 16 when he became a parent and joined Brave shortly before the birth of his child. James and his then-partner, Sarah*, were excited when they fell pregnant, but became increasingly nervous as the birth approached, and they lost important social support. When Sarah was seven months pregnant, they moved to a new suburb away from friends and Sarah's family. James was unsure how he was going to step into this new role but was committed to doing his best.

 I think I was just feeling nervous that she wasn't really around her family. Um. But we were her family at that point, and I think I was feeling nervous about the fact that I wasn't ready for a baby at this point of my life, and I still I still am not, but I've gotta do my best.

James was referred to Brave through an ante-natal clinic when they were attending appointments for Sarah. Upon hearing about Brave, James was eager to make contact right away. He was drawn to the program initially due to the nature of the mentor-participant relationship and wanting to have someone pass down their knowledge and experience to him. James was hoping to have a mentor that understood what it was like to be a young dad and could help when he felt stuck or lost.

 ...I just said yeah, please put me in contact with them straight away because I've always wanted some sort of like a mentor, um because I just love experience being passed down to me. It's just something that I love.

James began the Young Dads Pilot Program shortly before his baby was born. He was able to make a meaningful connection with his mentor early in the relationship. During that time James felt very trapped by his circumstances. He was also feeling isolated in a new suburb and had a limited social network. James' mentor was able to give him some advice on how to feel less trapped in the home and start getting to know each other. During his first visit, James and his mentor were able to enjoy some time together in James' home and talk about how he was feeling, starting a meaningful relationship.

 ...he came to my house. We had a chat. I I was just telling him how I was feeling very trapped. But then we ended up playing a game of pool... it felt very warming because. Um. Like obviously at the time I had felt like very trapped and stuff... very isolated suburb, no new friends.

Over his past seven months in the program, James has experienced ups and downs in his employment and relationships. He is no longer living with Sarah and their child and is navigating new challenges of co-parenting. James has been able to rely on and confide in his mentor, receiving one-on-one support he hasn't been able to access through other services. Speaking to a trusted person about what is going on in his life provides James with clarity and catharsis.

*Name & image changed for privacy

James' Story

“ It just helps me get some things off my chest and it helps me clear my mind up a little bit... it's just peace of mind that I can, I know that I can just talk to him about anything and he can help me out with a lot of things when I need him to. So yeah, it's pretty good. It's helped out a lot.

James continues to meet with his mentor once a fortnight, often at the lake or creek where they enjoy fishing together. The current arrangement works well for James, and he is aware that he can reach out to speak more often when needed, and his mentor is able to accommodate that.

“ Meeting right now, every fortnight, yeah... Recently we've been meeting over at the lake or down at the creek and we just go fishing... Just sitting there fishing and just chatting about everything it's absolutely amazing... You know, it definitely does work for me and I know that if I want to meet more often, I can speak to [Mentor] about that.

James continues to have a positive relationship with his mentor throughout his time in the program, often turning to him in times of need and when he is seeking advice. While James often finds himself feeling dread before speaking to his mentor, he feels at ease after the session due to the understanding nature of his mentor.

“ ...It's just like, just every time I meet up with [Mentor] like, I think I dread it a little bit, but after every time I meet up with him, I'm left smiling, it's just, it's just always helps so much just having someone to chat to really. That's what I that's kind of what I use him for. I just use him to chat to.

James believes that having a male mentor has helped him be more open and relate more with his mentor. He also emphasises the benefit of meeting other young dads, whether mentors or peers, as it makes him feel understood and less alone in his experience. For James, it was especially valuable to have a mentor with lived experience of being a young dad.

“ Talking to people that are, you know, literally doing it, like actively being a young dad, you know, it's, yeah. And it just makes you feel less, knowing that there's people out there that are going through the same stuff as you, you can just really connect with them.

James is currently completing the final months of his program with Brave, and his mentor continues to support James as he reaches new milestones with his child and navigates co-parenting with his child's mother. James remains an ambitious, future-focused person despite the challenges he has faced, running small businesses ventures and wanting to help other young dads by connecting them with Brave. James is excited to watch his child continue to grow, spend more quality time together, and eventually pass down his own experiences and knowledge.

Acknowledgements

Brave gratefully acknowledges:

- The young fathers, community stakeholders and Young Dad mentors who have participated in various phases of this pilot project
- Andrew King and Relationships Australia New South Wales for generously sharing their fathering practice expertise
- Shine On Foundation, Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation, the Ross Trust Foundation and RM Ansett Trust. (managed by Equity Trustees) for funding which made this project possible.



References

- Bamishigbin Jr., O. N., Schetter, C. D., & Stanton, A. (2019). The antecedents and consequences of adolescent fatherhood: A systematic review. *Social Science & Medicine*, 232, 106-119.
- Buston, K. (2018) Recruiting, Retaining and Engaging Men in Social Interventions: Lessons for Implementation Focusing on a Prison-based Parenting Intervention for Young Incarcerated Fathers, *Child Care in Practice*, 24:2, 164-180.
- Clayton, C. L. (2016). The lives of young fathers: a review of selected evidence. *Social Policy and Society*, 15(1), 129-140.
- Deslauriers, J., Devault, A., Groulx, A., & Sévigny, R. (2012). Rethinking services for young fathers. *Fathering*, 10(1), 66-90.
- Deslauriers, J. M., Kiselica, M. S. (2022). An Ecological Approach to Understanding the Paternal Commitments of Young Fathers: From the Pregnancy Test to the Child's First Birthday. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 41. 249-268.
- Diverse Dads Collaborative (2021) Researching inclusive support for (young) fathers: A community led study, Project Report, University of Lincoln/North East Young Dads and Lads Project.
- Enderstein, A. M. & Boonzaier, F. (2015) Narratives of young South African fathers: redefining masculinity through fatherhood, *Journal of Gender Studies*, 24:5, 512-527.
- Faulkner, D., Hammond, C., Nisbet, L., & Fletcher, R. (2018). How do young Aboriginal fathers in Australia 'stay on track'? = perspectives on the support networks of Aboriginal fathers. *Journal of Family Studies*, 27(1), 146-159.
- Florsheim, P., Moore, D., Burrows-Sanchez, J. (2020). Helping young fathers across the transition to parenthood. A rock or a rolling stone? *Zero to Three*, 12- 19.
- Gwyther, K., Swann, R., Casey, K., Purcell, R., & Rice, S. M. (2019). Developing young men's wellbeing through community and school-based programs: A systematic review. *PloS one*, 14(5), e0216955.
- Kiselica, M. S., & Kiselica, A. M. (2014). The complicated worlds of adolescent fathers: Implications for clinical practice, public policy, and research. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 15(3), 260-274.
- Lechowicz, M. E., Jiang, Y., Tully, L. A., Burn, M. T., Collins, D. A. J., Hawes, D. J., ... Dadds, M. R. (2019). Enhancing Father Engagement in Parenting Programs: Translating Research into Practice Recommendations. *Australian Psychologist*, 54(2), 83-89.
- McGirr, S., Torres, J., Heany, J., Brandon, H., Tarry, C. & Robinson, C. (2020). Lessons learned on recruiting and retaining young fathers in a parenting and repeat pregnancy prevention program. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 24 (Suppl 2) S183-S190.
- Neale, B. & Davies, L. (2015). Hard to Reach? Re-thinking support for young fathers. University of Leeds.
- SmithBattle, L., Phengnum, W., Shagavah, A., & Okawa, S. (2019). Fathering on tenuous ground. A qualitative meta-synthesis on teen fathering. *The American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing*, 44(4), 186-194.



B R A V E

Brave Foundation
PO Box 990
Ringwood VIC 3134
0448 088 380
info@bravefoundation.org.au

bravefoundation.org.au