



Caring Dads

Helping Fathers Value their Children



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Caring Dads Global Enterprise Manager &
Accredited Trainer

AGENDA

- ✓ What is Caring Dads
- ✓ Theory
- ✓ CD program exercises
- ✓ Research & Global work
- ✓ Working with fathers
- ✓ Q&A at the end

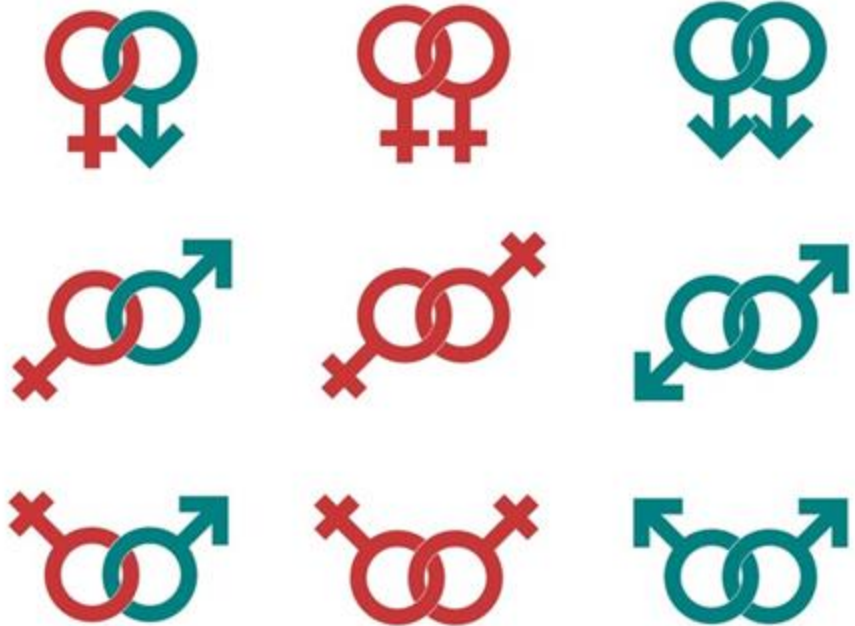


Language for training

- Some of the language used in the presentation switches between several commonly use terms. We want to identify that the presentation doesn't give preferential treatment of any term over any other.
- Examples:
 - Domestic Violence, Intimate Partner Violence, Gender Based Violence, Violence Against Women
 - Victim, survivor, adult & child survivor (children co-survivor), "children's mother"
 - Men who cause harm, offender, perpetrator, "dads"
 - Gender preference language, we acknowledge that violence and abuse can take many different form and occurs in many different configurations of relationships, for this presentation we will be using primarily CIS gender language and heterosexual relationships
- There may be more terms that have not been identified, please feel free to share the terms you prefer and we will try to incorporate them in the presentation.

Gender is a factor

- 79% of victims of domestic violence are women
- 77% of victims of domestic homicide in 2018 were women (Stats Canada 2018)



We need to understand gender differences to address and prevent violence more effectively

CD & the Intersection with PAR (BIP, DVP, MBC)

Overlapping:

- Attention to the effects of DV exposure on children
- Goals around respectful, non-abusive co-parenting
- Attention to monitoring and addressing risk to partner (and children)
- Linked within a broader system of accountability
- Works well in tandem with PAR, not meant to replace but another option – useful to have more than one door

Non-overlapping - unique to CD:

- Risk reduction/change goals are focused on the risk to children; children are the center
- Focus on linking with systems/referral sources that have child safety and well-being as a mandate; criminal justice is a less important referrer
- Attention to other forms of violence dads perpetrate against children
- Focus on child trauma and its implications for father-child relationships and for challenges in parenting

What is the #1 aim of the Caring Dads program?



Child safety



Caring Dads – “The Intervention”

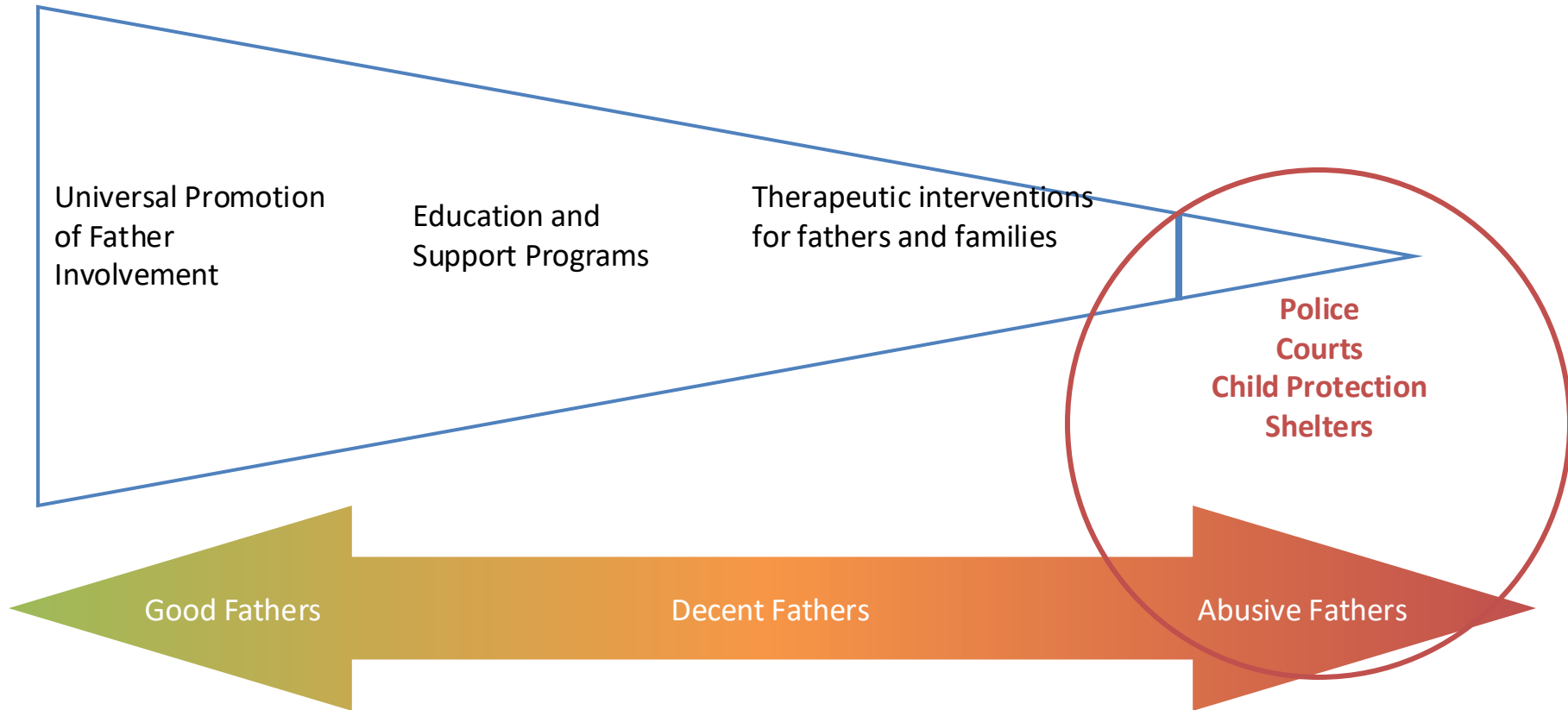
- **Fathers’ Group**

- 17 week program – 2 hour group and individual sessions
- Groups consist of 8 to 12 fathers
- Referrals primarily through Children’s Aid (child protective services) and probation, though also from child and family mental health, addictions, etc.
- Closed group – both mandated and voluntary

- **Mother Contact (guides and informs the work)**

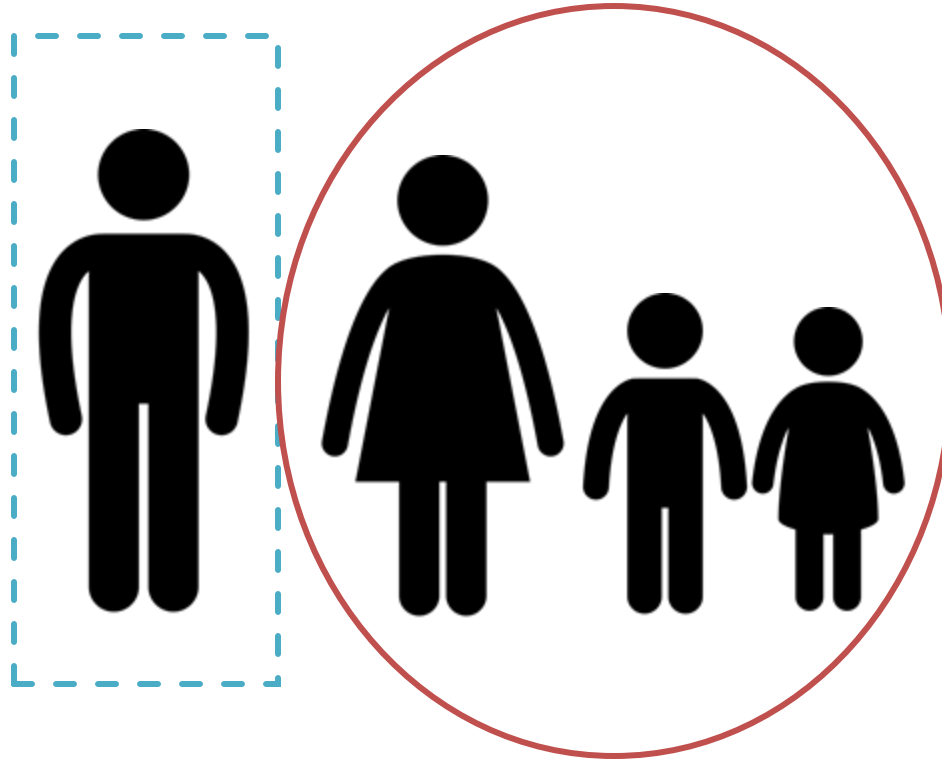
- **Coordinated Case Management (safety safety safety)**

Locating Caring Dads on a Continuum of Service



Current Practice in Many Systems

- Isolate or punish perpetrator
- Anger/Drug Treatment
- Risk Assessment



- Children Protected by Mom
- Safety Planning
- Risk Assessment
- Monitoring of her contact
- Shelter Referral
- Protection Orders

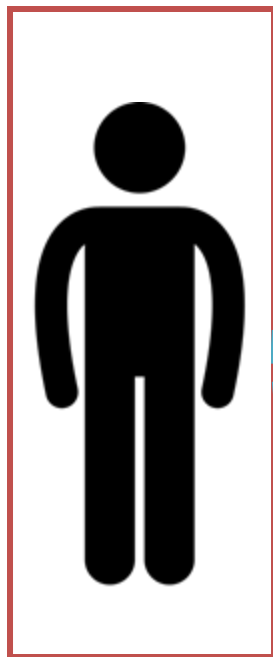
What is the problem with this...

- If we fail to engage these fathers:
 - No one will assess and monitor their risk
 - No one will change their risk
 - They will continue to be involved with their children and/or they will go onto other families (step children increased risk)
- Increases his risk – dad's isolation, depression and seeking revenge... think of the children

“If the child has to deal with him,
then we have to deal with him”

Towards Safer Practice = DV informed practice

- Father held accountable for keeping family safe
- Probation monitors and assesses risk
- Ongoing safety planning for him
- Collaboration and information sharing between systems



- Intervention for trauma and violence
- Support in keeping herself and her children safe
- Support for housing and other practical needs

Perpetrator programs, Child protection, Women's Advocates,
Probation services, Addiction services, Mental health services
and **Caring Dads**

Do you see this in your work?

Benefits to working with fathers who cause harm

- **Support to Children's Mothers** – takes pressure of her – we focus on dad who is the problem – aim to reduce risk
- **Fight to ending Violence Against Women** – shifting practice and holding men accountable – one of the steps...
- **Accountability contributes to child healing** – helps children heal if father takes responsibility
- **Improving emotional attachment between children and fathers** – improves child outcomes

Benefits to working with fathers continued...

- **Supporting strong and healthy father/child relationship** – minimizes abuse and improves child outcomes
- **Fathers who leave one family seldom end their involvement with children in general** – also move on to new families/children – this is where we come in “step-children”
- **Provides potential to monitor high risk fathers during follow-up from the child protection, justice systems** – children are safer
- **Support fathers in deciding to, or in being ordered to limit their contact with their children** – children are safer – family court

Program Principles – Bottom Line.

Guiding Principle #1: Priority must be given to the safety and well-being of children – what happens if dads don't change??

Guiding Principle #2: Children's safety and well-being is intrinsically connected to that of their mothers

Guiding Principle #3: Intervention must be prepared to address clients whose motivation for change may be low *this helped in my child protection work*

Guiding Principle #4: Focus needs to be on promotion of child-centered fathering rather than building on child-management skills

Guiding Principle #5: "Child's voice at centre of work"

Pause



Caring Dads: 4 Main Goals to achieve with Dads

1

Engaging Men

2

Child Centered Parenting

3

Recognizing and challenging abuse /
neglect

4

Rebuilding trust & planning for the
future

***child's mother**

Key Exercises: What is a Dad?

Great Dad

- Listens
- Plays together
- Nurturing
- Loving of children's
- Supports child's Mother

Just a Dad

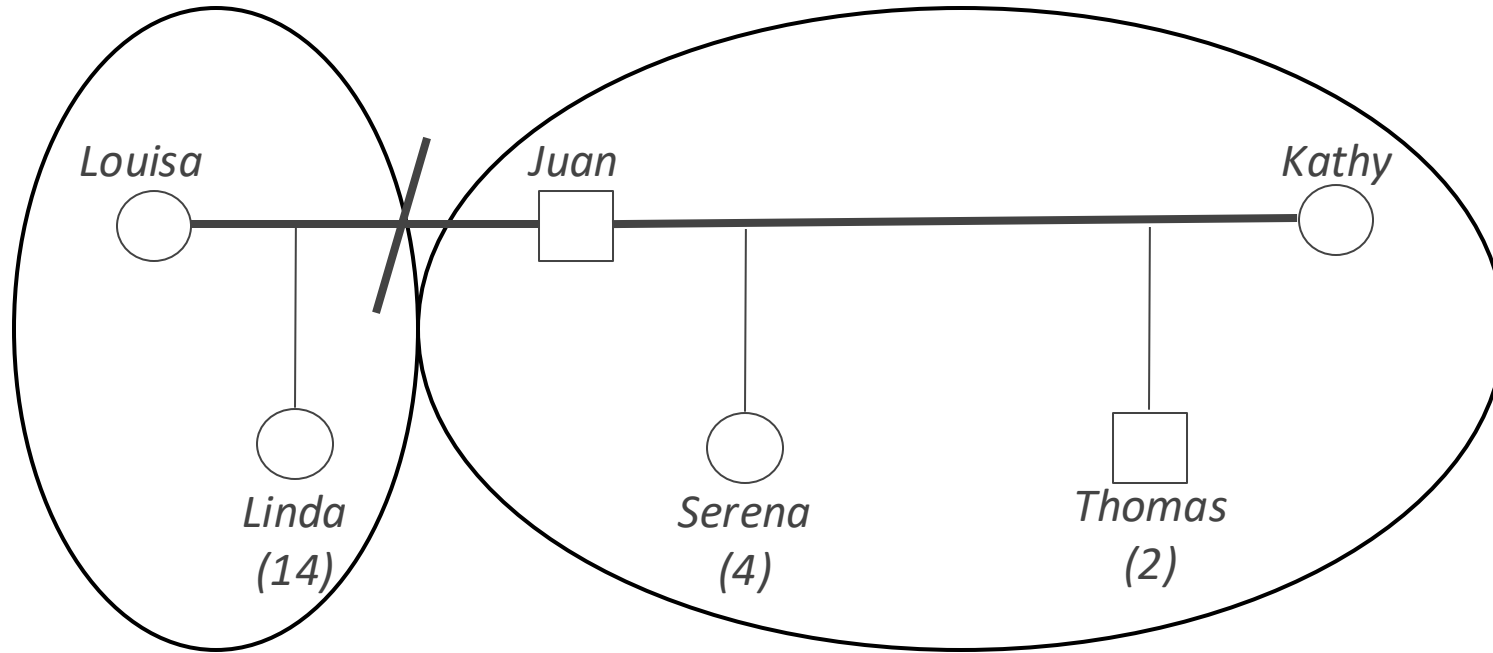
- There most of the time
- Is interested in his children
- Leaves a good deal up to mom

Deal Breakers

- Physical attack
- Often missing very important events
- Abandoning
- Hurting children's mother

Genograms – Understanding Themes

Example: Juan and Kathy have two children, Serena (age 4) and Thomas (age 2). In addition, Juan was married before (to Louisa) and there is one child from that relationship (Linda, age 14). Juan, Kathy, and their two children reside together.



impact

The Parenting Continuum



Framework with Dads as well as systems to keep focus on child safety

Week 9: Challenging Abusive, Neglectful & Controlling Fathering



Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy

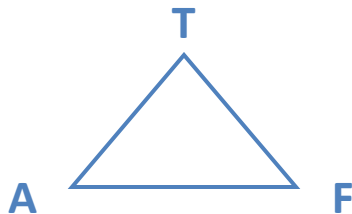
CBT is supported and recommended for use in addressing criminal behaviour



Most recent innovations in parenting interventions are exploring the advantages of adding CBT to traditional parenting interventions, particularly for parents at high-risk for abuse

Problem Solving for Parents - Steps

- What is the situation?
- What was your intention - child-centered or parent-centred?
- Is intention about child needs or parent needs?
- Thoughts, feelings, and actions:
- Effects on child?
- Alternatives? (Tim's example)



*Remember - we have already
done all of these pieces!*



What does CHANGE look like?

- Respectful coparenting
- Reduced hostility, anger, reactivity
- Positive regard as a father
- Accountability of past abuse
- Appreciates need to let child lead in healing
- Respects for process with you, and other systems
- Engages in self-help: Seeks necessary services
- ❖ Ask him: What are you doing differently??



- Brief summaries of men's progress towards each of the goals of the Caring Dads program:
 - Engagement/willingness to examine his fathering
 - Child-centered parenting
 - Addressing abuse and neglect
 - Planning for the future/recommendations

***making decisions on behaviour change NOT a certificate on completion**

Program Evaluations

NSPCC – UK

Program Eval – Melbourne, Kids First

Quotes from Children

“Like he doesn’t shout when he tells us off, he doesn’t raise his voice. He just, like, tells you.”

“He’s kinder, nicer. He’s more interested. Yeah, he was interested before but, like, he actually listens to everything you say.”

Caring Dads, Safer Children- Evaluation Report (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, United Kingdom, 2016)

Quote from Child's Mother

“[He] talks to me now, rather than grunts at me. Offers to do things for me... spoken more to me now that he's done in our relationship. He's much more understanding.”

Caring Dads, Safer Children- Evaluation Report (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, United Kingdom, 2016)

Quote from Child's Mother

“If he had not attended CD [things] would not be where they are now. He can see [child] whenever he wants. He thinks about his behaviour and actions more. [We] no longer argue over silly things. [He] is aware of what triggers his anger. Caring Dads made him realise the relationship he could have with his child.”

Caring Dads, Safer Children- Evaluation Report (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, United Kingdom, 2016)

Quotes from Dads

*“Um, a better father than I was prior to the CD program, I think more of an insight into the understanding what children’s needs are. I think that’s more, yeah that’d be more – like, **a better understanding of what they need from me rather than what I need from them.**” (CD participant 73)*

“One of the main things was to change our way of thinking about our children's mother. That really worked for me. That made me realise some of the habits that I'd formed. I realised that the habits that I'd formed were very, very negative and I've seen it in my children, the way they're treating their mother . . .” (ID 9, father, living with partner and children)

Caring Dads, Safer Children- Evaluation Report (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, United Kingdom, 2016)

Research – where to find it

www.caringdads.org

*CD summary of
evidence*

Dr. Katreena Scott,
Western University,
London, ON

<https://www.educ.uwo.ca/about/faculty-profiles/katreena-scott/index.html>

Program Evaluation Completed by Melbourne University & Kids First AUSTRALIA



Languages, Adaptations and Partnerships

Adapted for Islamic Cultural Diaspora
(London Muslim Resource Centre)



Military Adaptation – Military Dads
(Canadian Armed Forces)



Program for Indigenous Fathers

Partnership with Nogdawindamin Family & Community
Services, Sault Ste. Marie



NOGDAWINDAMIN
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

*All program materials and trainings available in Spanish, French, Arabic, German (and many more informally translated)

Caring Dads Providers around the world

Canada USA

EnglandAustralia

Ireland

Estonia

Latvia

Slovenia

Germany

Sweden

***running for
over 20 years!**

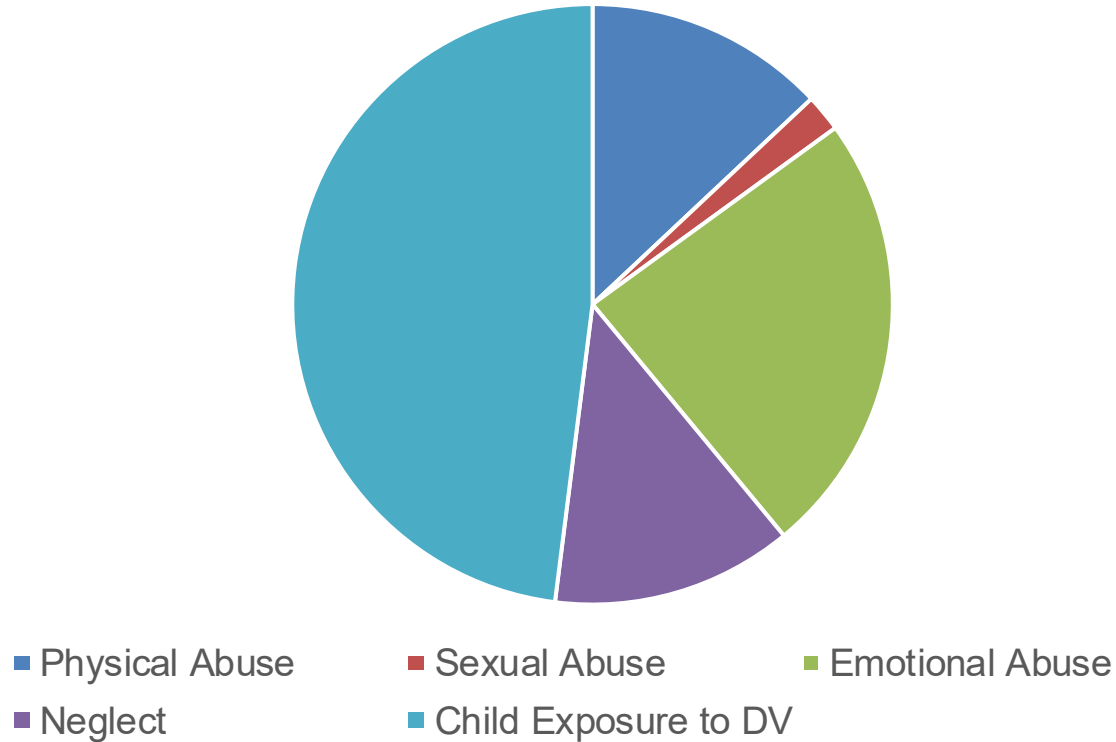


Caring Dads & Child Protection



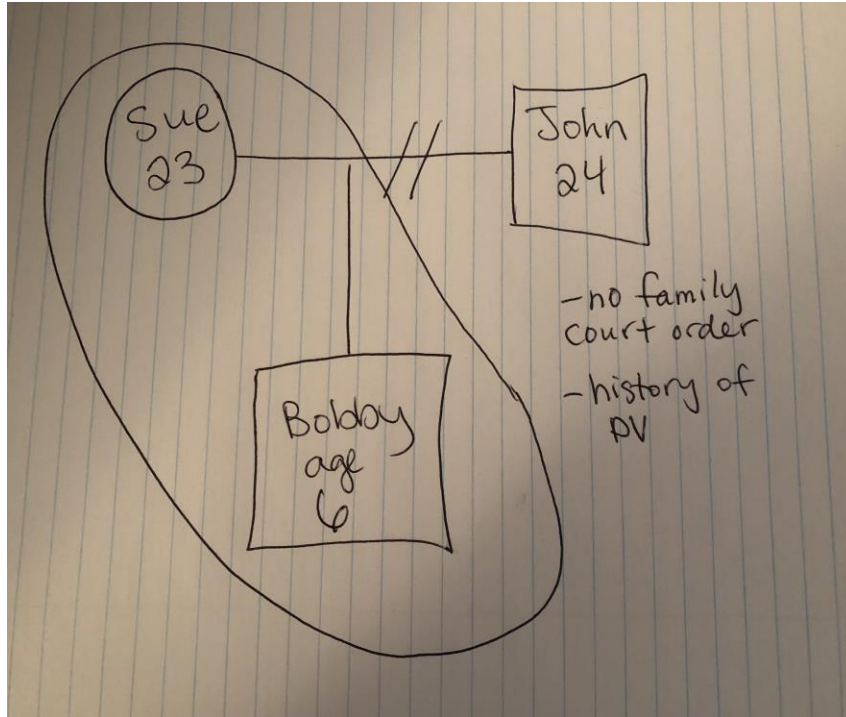
Ontario Incidence Study (2013)

Primary Maltreatment Category



Family example – what we see in files - CPS

Genogram:



- CPS investigated mom/child
- Didn't meet dad – left VM he didn't return call
- Closed the file
- No information on safety, location or dynamics of access between an abusive father and his child
- Leaves mom to continue to monitor his level of contact with the kids Doesn't provide an opportunity for change
- Could be living with new kids

(mom verified depressed and child has speech delays – mom blamed for this in summary)

Caring Dads embedded with child protection

- Often during CD intake meetings with dads they didn't know who their worker was (referred to worker as their partner's worker and didn't view themselves as part of case)
- Including the worker in CD process we saw that workers who referred fathers to CD had more contacts with dads and engaged more with fathers
- CD also helped fathers follow case plans and address safety issues identified by workers and moms

Let's talk about working with fathers – outside of Caring Dads

Remember the why...



***“you can’t be a good father
and a disrespectful and abusive
partner”***

Anger and Blame is Part of the Problem

About one third of men who have perpetrated domestic violence (and other forms of abuse) show up in services openly hostile to identifying their abusive actions and engaging in intervention.

Expect Resistance.

We needed to be OK with anger, blame, hostility, denial and just accept that this was part of the issue

Don't expect everyone to want to see us

Be ready and willing to engage people who didn't want to be engaged

And, the thing is, that there is lots of evidence now that we can absolutely do something about this.

We need to engage fathers.

Engage
for Accountability
& Safety

Engage to prevent drop out

	Completed
Motivation Enhancement (<i>n</i> = 39)	82.1%***
Standard Group (<i>n</i> = 99)	47.5%

Controlling for other predictors of dropout, resistant clients in the ME group still 3.5 times as likely to complete than those in the standard program

Scott, K., King, C., McGinn, H., & Hosseini, N. (2011). Effects of motivational enhancement on immediate outcomes of batterer intervention. *Journal of Family Violence*, 26, 139-149.

Engagement to enhance motivation

15 studies reviewed. Findings are that using motivational interviewing techniques:

- increases attendance rates,
- treatment adherence,
- motivation for change, and
- behavioral and attitudinal outcomes



*Most effective for participants with low readiness to change. This systematic review corroborates the importance of incorporating MIT in PIPs to improve intervention efficacy.

Pinto e Silva, T., Cunha, O., & Caridade, S. (2022). Motivational interview techniques and the effectiveness of intervention programs with perpetrators of intimate partner violence: A systematic review. Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 15248380221111472

ROLLING WITH RESISTANCE (without colluding)



Reflection

Think of a time you made a mistake, maybe even a mistake you've kept secret...

Then think about needing to talk to a professional about this.

What would you need from that professional to truly open up and share your story?

MOTIVATION for dads

Think about feeling motivated

Leads to more genuine change

Using children as motivation



Why dads avoid us and don't want to talk to us – need to try and understand this.

Helpful things to consider – (where he's at – early mtgs.)

- Fathers may have a sense of unfairness that his entitlement to 'manage' his family is being challenged
- Fathers may feel like he is being asked to take responsibility for doing harm to someone when he has been harmed in his life and no one has ever taken responsibility for that
- Steer the discussion away from getting an admission on whether he was violent with his partner; and more on his parenting, his relationship with his child, and the impact on his child.
- Do not debate – Arguing about details of abuse will not lead to him to take responsibility and can get in the way of future engagement opportunities
- Common for fathers to have past trauma, explore this, understand how this is connected to current abuse/risk
- SHAME – anger.
- When referring to partners use, "your child's mother" and encourage fathers to their child's mother's first name rather than "her" or other devaluing names

****We need to engage first to truly engage father in behavior change.*

Questions to ask during 1st contact

- Tell me about your relationship with your child/children, what do you enjoy most about it? What are you most proud of?
- Tell me about your relationship with the mother of your child/children? What are some positive things about this relationship?
- What is it like meeting with me today? (think he may be feeling like he's been treated unfairly)
- What are people misunderstanding about you? What do you want me to understand?
- Tell me about your experience with the police? – Validate level of stress/pressure
- How have you been managing your stress? (basic needs being met?) *Crisis*
- How do you deal with disagreement in your relationship?
- Who do you view in your life as supports? Are you accessing support for yourself during this stressful time?
- Is there anything you would like to change about your relationship with your child/children?

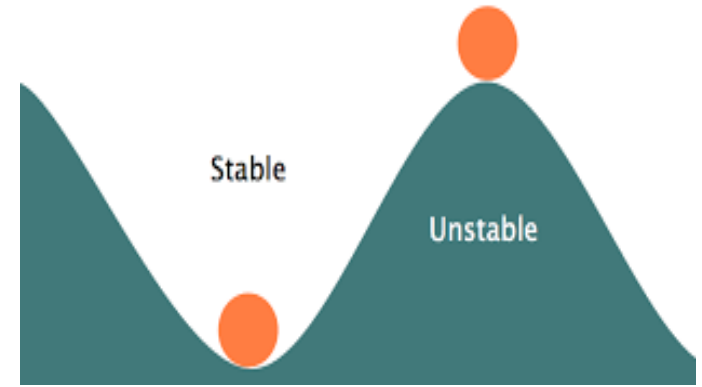
Pause.

How do you recognize crisis?

What do you do?

Stabilize - Individualize

- A place to stay
- Access to food
- Ability to maintain employment
- Access to medication



“as [men are] starting to feel more comfortable and more positive, some momentum’s going, [they’re] in a better place to start to really challenge [their] thoughts.”

We need to.... Challenge ourselves

*think about that client VM that makes your heart pound, want to avoid – what is that telling you??

LEAN IN

(our mindset matters in this approach)



Slow the work down – meet with him, eyes on him, get to know him (*learn more about him when no one else has*)

Mapping out the work with dads

Strategies to manage risk, such as:

- De-escalation of violent thoughts or threats
- Encouraged compliance with court orders
- Reducing isolation, addressing hopelessness and desperation
- Problem-solving around mental health and additions issues
- Problem-solving around housing and other crises



Many dads said no one has ever helped them like this

We need to pay attention to: RISK FACTORS

FACTORS WE CAN CHANGE

- Spinning (rumination, revenge seeking...)
- Sexism (disrespectful talk, rigid views)
- Noncompliance to authority (this CPS)
- Denial, minimization, blaming
- Lack of attention to child's experience
- Isolation

FACTORS WE CAN HELP MANAGE

- Recent stress (job loss, immigration)
- Recent or impending change in relationships – letting go
- Mental Health concerns (i.e., impulsivity, extreme anger, depression, suicidality)
- Substance use – especially if escalating

It's a balancing act

Engagement for Accountability
Engagement for Safety



Keeping the Balance

Listening to his experiences.....

Reflect on and ask about what that was like for survivor(s), hear the risk

“Name it” and express concern...

Use his words, ask other questions, express risk concerns

Join with him on safety/risk management goals...

Goals for him are subsumed

Encouraging/pushing involvement....

This is part of what you need to do

Getting him resources...

***Connect with survivor safety* – constant theme**

When Resistance Persists

- 20% increase in risk for re-assault associated with dropout

“When action was taken against the men who repeatedly reassaulted, they were less likely than the one-time reassaulters to be sanctioned or contained. Police did not arrest them, courts did not jail them, and social services did not refer them. In short, these men continued to get away with being violent.” Hekert and Gondolf, 2002

Resistance is Information

Level of resistance is a "red flag". In a study of almost 500 men who had perpetrated DV, highly resistant perpetrators were more likely to have:

- A past criminal offence
- A current restraining order in force
- A current dispute with their partners over custody and access

Partners of resistant clients:

- Reported more previous physical victimization
- Were more likely to be concerned for their safety (38% vs 27%)

What to do if he doesn't engage

- Recognize lack of engagement, non-compliance, and lack of success in starting to change as indicators of ongoing risk to children
- Communicate and document ongoing and escalating signs of risk associated with engagement (e.g., failure to show up for appointments), compliance (e.g., failure to follow directives around contact) and ongoing abuse of children and their mothers
- Respond to risk that doesn't change or escalates with continued or increased child protection (when possible)

Summary Working with Dads

- Fathers' involvement in intervention should have the potential to benefit children, *regardless of men's progress, or lack of progress, in making change.*

Recognize ongoing risks

Communicate and document

Respond to unchanged or escalating risk with sustained or increased efforts to ensure child safety and well-being

Always ask...

Who's meeting with him?

Wrapping up with a bit more on...



How to get Caring Dads in your area

Step one: Think Collaboration

- Engage with your community – partner with your local coalitions, speak with key stakeholders (ex. Rhode Island Family Court work)
- Reach out to me - can do a presentation to your new Caring Dads working group committee
- Then...

Caring Dads Facilitator Training

Become a Caring Dads Facilitator

We have Virtual & In Person
Caring Dads Facilitator Training events
*we can also come to you.

*Email me: sarah@caringdads.org



NEW: Caring Dads Conversations Series

For professionals working with fathers (who cause harm) and want to learn skills to have effective conversations to create safety for children.

4 short courses.

Skills focused.

www.caringdads.org

To learn more about the authors of the program and our team please see
“About our Team” page

Thank you!!

Thank you