



Fatherhood Support Project

Evaluation Report

November 2003

A collaborative effort focused on 'Capacity Building', involving:

- Raema Mahony
- Steve Sheehy
- Marg Tatyzo
- Helen Suridge
- Helen Kidner

And facilitated by Helen J. Sinclair, International Personnel.

Wednesday 19th November 2003

Fatherhood Support Project Evaluation

The Fatherhood Support Project was funded for 2 years until April 2004, under the Commonwealth Family & Community Services "Stronger Families & Communities Strategy".

The project is based at, and managed by Parenting Network, and provides a service to fathers in the North West Metropolitan area of Adelaide. The project is one of the programs of the North West Children & Families Integration Service, which is a community based service of the Adelaide Women's & Children's Hospital.

In September 2003 Helen Sinclair, International Personnel, was employed to facilitate an evaluation of the Fatherhood Support Project using a 'capacity building approach'. This approach enabled the participation of staff from the Fatherhood Support Project, Parenting Network, North West Children and Families Integration Service, local stakeholders and fathers, to participate in the evaluation.

The results of this exercise are very positive:-

- Individuals have had the opportunity to participate in a new type of activity
- The team members have each developed new skills
- Fathers have willingly participated in evaluating the workshops
- The unit as a whole, has worked together to access the work of the Fatherhood Support Project
- There is an increased level of confidence

Already, the team members are applying their learning to their personal areas of responsibility and taking steps to ensure that evaluation planning is incorporated in their annual plans for 2004.

The process has enabled us to identify lessons learnt which will be incorporated into the next six months planning, and by using this evaluation framework, we will be able to monitor progress and identify new outcomes during the last six months of the current project funding.

Raema Mahony
Program Co-ordinator
Parenting Network

Steve Sheehy
Fatherhood Support Worker
Fatherhood Support Project

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- ❖ 'D' Regular community activities will be coordinated for Fathers and their children
- ❖ 'E' Promotional material & products for Fathers
- ❖ 'F' Train professionals in working positively with Fathers
- ❖ 'G' Develop communication strategies for providing information to fathers on a range of issues

Monitoring Framework

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Contents cont.....

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 - Attachment: statistics on regular community events

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- ❖ Appendix G: Communication Strategies for provision of information to Fathers

Fatherhood Support Project

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ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	Description
ACCHS	Adelaide Central Community Health Service
AGM	Annual General Meeting
CAMHS	Child Adolescent Mental Health Service
CCC	Child Care Centre
CHEC	Community Health Education & Care
CYH	Child & Youth Health
DV	Domestic violence
FAYS	Family and Youth Service
FROP	Family Reach Out Program
FSP	Fatherhood Support Project
KCC	Kilburn Community Centre
KNY	Kids 'n' You
LGCCC	Lady Gowrie Child Care Centre
LMHS	Lyell McEwin Health Service
NACYS	Northern Area Community Youth Service
NAPCAN	National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect
NWCFIS	North West Children & Families Integration Service
PNP	Parenting Network
PWAC	Para West Adult Campus
SAHT	SA Housing trust
TAFE	Technology & Further Education
TQEH	The Queen Elizabeth Hospital
WCH	Women's & Children's Hospital
WWW	World Wide Web

Fatherhood Support Project

Evaluation

undertaken October 2003

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why the Fatherhood Support Project?

Parenting Network recognised a lack of resources and support in the community for fathers in their role as parents

- Parenting Programs, including antenatal programs, focus predominantly on the woman which result in men stating they felt excluded from parenting and not feeling accepted to attend courses.
- Consultation with metropolitan community workers, particularly male staff, about resources and programs for fathers confirmed the above.
- Funding submission for Fatherhood Support Project by Commonwealth Family and Community Services approved for a 2 year period, commencing February 2002 with employment of male worker.

Principles underpinning the Fatherhood Support Project.

1. *Recognition that Fathers play a valuable role in the lives of their children*
2. *Acknowledgment that fathers have an impact on children's lives*
3. *Support and education for fathers will occur in community settings*
4. *Becoming a father is a significant time for men and a time when men are receptive to support.*

IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

Throughout the 'implementation' and through 'specific exercises' designed to assess the impact of the 'Fatherhood Support Project' (FSP) we were able to confirm that this project has had a very real effect on participants.

Participants of project

- Reinforced or validated skills fathers already have
- Respond better in family situations
- Normalised their experience and they have a sense of belonging
- Less stressed
- Increase in confidence
- Found a safe place to be
- Increased thinking about roles
- Partner noticed change
- Understanding the impact one has on others as 'fathers'
- Development of new insights and new skills into ways of parenting
- Participants able to bounce new ideas off each other
- Clients able to identify other service options offered by Parenting Network
- Identification of additional support opportunities
- Increased access to resources on fatherhood issues
- More information available

Service Agency Teams

- Team's perspective/understanding of fatherhood issues broadened
- Bought the focus around to fathers and fatherhood issues
- Networking and building up social capital
- Peer support
- Skills increased, less labour intensive
- New resource for workers
- Opportunity for in-service for staff
- Share resources amongst workers
- Impact on curriculum and service provision
- Use of new language and descriptors in the work place
- Easier access to target group

Organisations

- Having to stretch the already stretched resources
- Collaboration, at all levels, within a different focus area
- New opportunities for staff (sometimes fathers) to take a co-facilitation role
- Commitment to facilitate/organise workshops, easier now
- Increased level of debate around fathering and fatherhood issues
- Increase learning about client groups
- Impetus to create other activities
- Structural change — how to use male workers

LESSONS LEARNT

- Evaluation framework needed to be set up when project started
- Need to include project activities on data base of Parenting Network rather than a separate stand alone project, enables easier collection.
- Future groups and activities held to include a process of gaining feedback from partners
- Need more planning, resource allocation to respond to new areas of work identified, such as work within industry.
- The importance of incorporating Fatherhood issues / activities in the overall parenting program as distinct from keeping it separate.

KEY ISSUES

The FSP has raised the awareness of fathering and issues for fathers in the North West region of Adelaide. The next six months can build on the groups, activities and partnerships developed through the project; however this evaluation has highlighted that that more time is required to further consolidate the change in attitude and service delivery which has commenced.

The evaluation has highlighted that services specific to fathers -- groups and activities in various settings in the region--would not have been established without the project officer's position being funded. Although co facilitation, collaboration and training has occurred, it is not at a stage where it can be maintained within mainstream services. Funding needs to be sourced to build on the developments in the community.

Ground breaking work has been commenced with the three public hospitals in North/West, working in partnership to include fathers in antenatal education. More time is needed to build on this work, and train more male workers in the community, who could support the hospitals and work with the organisations to make some sustainable changes to service delivery.

The value for men and their partners has been identified throughout the evaluation process.

- Fathers have been able to articulate the personal change they have experienced in thinking and action with their children and families since attending the group.
- Fathers have been clear about the value of the project and activities within the project to be conducted by men.

This will require further training of male workers and /or peer training of men to enable activities to be sustained within the community.

The FSP has commenced working within the area of corrections, however this requires considerable time to work successfully in partnership with other services and the true potential of this work has not been realised in the short life of the current project.

Innovative work has occurred in five Child Care Centres in the western suburbs, where different models of engaging fathers on parenting issues and communicating with their child, have been tested. The learnings from these centres could be further expanded into the North if the project was to be re funded. As the project has only six months until completion, the work within child care centres will continue to focus in the western region.

The FSP has identified the lack of promotional material available for agencies to encourage the father/child interaction. The project has developed some promotional material but it requires more ongoing consistent support from mainstream services to ensure there becomes an increase in resources for fathers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Discussion with training institutions to include fatherhood /issues related to being a father in relevant courses - midwifery course, TAFE courses
2. Draft generic policy on fatherhood that can be utilised by services when they are examining how they respond to gender.
3. Develop an issues paper around fatherhood to increase the awareness within the community about issues and support required for fathers.
4. Publicise Fatherhood activities in places where men interact - local doctor/obstetricians, pubs, sporting venues, work places
5. Provide an additional session for Fatherhood groups which includes partners.
6. Provide a re unification session, where fathers who attended groups can re connect to other fathers and receive additional input on parenting.
7. Explore the development of peer training for interested fathers to assist with co facilitating and supporting groups and activities for fathers.
8. Consolidate work within west with early learning environments - promote, share and publish this work within early learning publications.
9. Continue to develop resources in partnership with others.
10. Distribute and train workers with published Fatherhood Groupwork Manual.
11. Follow up with inclusion of Fatherhood project on Institute of Family Studies and Women's and Children's Hospital website, and make available Fatherhood Groupwork Manual as a PDF.
12. Lobby for the continuation of project in North / West and seek to expand to South / East.

Designing an “Evaluation Framework”

In September 2003 the services of Helen Sinclair, International Personnel, was employed to work with the Fatherhood Support Project and management teams to design an evaluation framework for the project.

A Monitoring Framework and evaluation process was designed and administered during October 2003. The framework was based on the seven areas of outputs stated in the project brief and on the project team’s agreed outcomes. The framework also incorporated learnings the project team had gained from undertaking progress reports for the funding body. Two of the output areas (C and D) were changed from the project brief as a result of consultation with community services and fathers. Rather than providing playgroups for fathers and children, it was decided that the project should focus in settings where fathers are found. The most practical settings are child care and kindergarten facilities where fathers interact with their children. The project recognised that coordinating regular activities was not practical in the short life of the project. Instead trialling a range of community events would assist community services to assess the benefits for fathers and children and be able to replicate the group or event in their own community facility.

The process of the team being involved with the evaluator in the design of the framework has resulted in increased team skills, and the new skills learnt being transferred into service delivery of Parenting Network and the NWCFIS.

Taking a “Greenfield” snapshot

In order to measure the change that has occurred as a result of the implementation of the Fatherhood Support Project it was important to have a clear picture of what was available before the FSP commenced.

An exercise was undertaken to review what was being offered in 2001, prior to the commencement of the project. This is the “Greenfield” snapshot which looks at:

- the resources for fathers in the community
- how the role of fathers was perceived by service delivery agencies, and the community, and
- how fathers were being included by services.

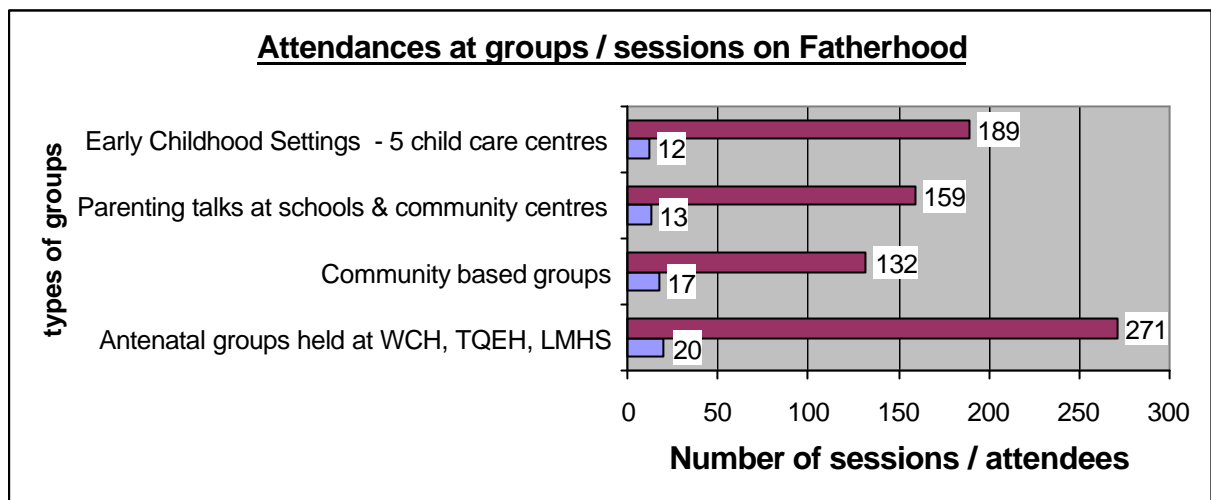
The “Greenfield” utilised the same monitoring framework and assessment scales of the 2003 evaluation. The project officer, coordinator and Parenting Network team member undertook the “Greenfield” exercise, as these staff members were involved in service in the north/west in 2001 prior to the commencement of the project. The assessment was endorsed by the larger evaluation team.

The “Greenfield” showed in 2001:-

- Limited opportunity for fathers to have peer support during their partner’s pregnancy
- Limited information available for fathers; information describes the role as a “support” to partner
- Short term employment contracts result in no male workers employed to deliver a service to fathers
- Support to fathers in community limited to western group
- Northern suburbs had no service focusing on fathering
- No activities occurring regularly which encourages father-child interaction
- Minimal promotional material available with a focus on an active, positive role between father and child

Comparing the two monitoring frameworks, the “Greenfield” and the October 2003 Evaluation, there can be seen growth and achievement by the Fatherhood Support Project.

STATISTICS OF FATHERHOOD SUPPORT PROJECT



** Community based groups:

- ❖ 81 self referrals, 51 agency referrals
- ❖ used 4 different venues

PROCESS OF EVALUATION AND EFFICACY OF PROCESS

The Parenting Network chose a 'capacity building' approach to develop an Evaluation and Monitoring framework as a tool to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the 'Fatherhood Support Project'.

A working group was established to follow the whole process through:

- to be involved in determining the nature of the Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes used as measures in the framework
- assessing the capacity of implementation of the criteria
- establishing the objectives of the workshops to be facilitated to validate outcome, and
- to be involved in identifying lessons learnt that will help with the reshaping of how issues and activities will be presented in the future.

The framework (process based) was not intended as the final evaluation tool, but rather to facilitate the monitoring of progress as it occurred at the different stages across the project. It was intended that the tool would:

- help to identify and acknowledge achievements as they occurred (support motivation)
- identify risks that could impact on the project
- enable remedies to be implemented in a timely fashion to address the risks, and
- allow the project team to articulate the 'lessons learnt' that will inform the final evaluation of the project's outcomes.

The process involved a five step process and involved a project working team from the Parenting Network. It was intended that involvement would enhance team members' skills and provide the opportunity for the team to take the learning from this process back into their work areas.

PROJECT WORKING GROUP

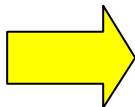
Helen Suridge
Margaret Tatyzo
Stephen Sheehy
Raema Mahony

Senior Administrative Assistant
Parent Support Worker
Fatherhood Project Officer
Parenting Network, Coordinator, Western Program

Helen Sinclair

Facilitator

STEP ONE

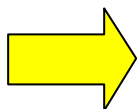


ESTABLISHING A MONITORING FRAMEWORK

Design of the actual 'tool' to be used to monitor the effectiveness of the 'Fatherhood Support Project'-- working towards sustainable outcomes.

The existence of a framework would then enable the project team to depict the "Greenfield Status" (what existed on the landscape, at the beginning of the project—a snapshot in time) as well as use the framework to make a final assessment as project funding retires.

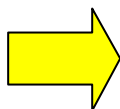
STEP TWO



PLANNING FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Assessing progress on the Evaluation Framework
Designing Workshops for Key Personnel
Planning for monitoring
Developing Evaluation tools
Identifying a process for incorporating lessons learnt
Evaluate the effectiveness of project strategies.

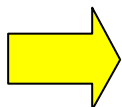
STEP THREE



WORKSHOPS

1. Key Stakeholders Workshop
2. Workshop for fathers
3. Workshop for partners
4. Workshop for the overall project team

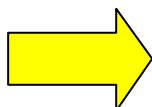
STEP FOUR



RESOURCES

- Establishing the resources to support evaluation
- Appendices
- Involve all team members

STEP FIVE



REVIEW AND MONITORING OF EVALUATION PROCESS

Preparing the final report
Assembling the supporting information
Evaluating the process

This process worked well and the team were committed to learning, understanding and achieving results. It allowed time for reinforcement of new skills but required an additional commitment of time for practice and completion of the framework.

Once the framework was established the group worked together to make realistic assessments of what had been achieved so far.

THE WORKSHOPS

Aim: To facilitate an open forum for key stakeholders to explore the overall impact of the Fatherhood Support Project (FSP)

Outputs: from the workshops will be fully documented and are intended to reflect opinions and experience of workers and will be used to support the 'Assessment' of activities in the overall framework.

Feedback to participants: All participants will get a copy of the workshop report as well as a copy of the detailed program. Participants are also free to obtain a copy of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

Participants: The Project Working Group attended all workshops and were encouraged to participate from their own experience in a particular area of responsibility.

WORKSHOPS

Initially, there were four workshops planned. Unfortunately, it was just not possible to facilitate a workshop for partners—no previous contact with partners, limited time frame, etc. etc.. However, the project decided to send a questionnaire to the father and ask him to pass it on to the mother. Mothers could choose to respond, or phone the project directly and talk about the effectiveness of the fatherhood groups.

WORKSHOP FOR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Participants: Stakeholders are agencies who have resourced the FSP for its clients and workers.

Six people participated; thirty five invitations were extended; twelve apologies were received with seven offers from Stakeholders to make a contribution in writing.

It was anticipated that the participants would be able to assess the **IMPACT** the FSP Workshops had on their clients, their team and their organisation. They could identify **FLOW-ON-CHANGES** that had occurred and articulate **STRATEGIES** that would need to be implemented for sustained outcomes.

The group reinforced:

- how well the Fatherhood Support Project had been received and how important it was to find a way to continue to support this project
- the importance of the FSP groups, workshops and events to the specific client group
- how the FSP groups responded to a real thirst out in the community
- the importance of using inclusive language in parenting courses and avoiding stereotypes
- the need for more resources to increase the number of programs that can be delivered and the nature of activities that can be entered into
- that 'smart' partnerships would enable more activities to be facilitated

Changes did occur at all levels. For participants, for teams and organisations! However, there will be a greater demand on resources and administrative changes will be required for greater implementation.

The participants were unanimous in their recommendations and would like to see the work of the program extended and hopefully be implemented state wide.

WORKSHOP FOR THE PROJECT TEAM OF THE INTEGRATED SERVICE

(Definition: Members of the Integration Service who have worked with and managed the Project)

OBJECTIVES:

- To explore the relevance and impact of the Fatherhood Support Project within the Integrated Service
- To explore the relevance & impact of the FSP state-wide
- To explore the key issues for each program
- To establish learnings
- To establish any capacity building within project team
- To explore the impact on relationships within the Integration Service.

PARTICIPANTS

Debbie Martin

Co-ordinator Northern Programs/Acting Intergration Manager

Darian Shepherd-Bayly

ANGLICARE/ Leader Fatherhood groups

Deb

Family Support Student, TAFE

Four invitations were extended, two apologies were received

Program Working Group:

The program for this workshop involved canvassing the participants to describe the extent of the impact on the client group, team members and their organisations. They were asked to describe the key issues and discuss the capacity building impact on their agency.

The participants were well able to describe the impact participation in the Fatherhood groups had. Initially, I felt that with so few participants this would be difficult; however both Deb and Darian were quite clear about what this project had been able to contribute to their agency.

One of the key issues related to how agencies could manage to facilitate groups for fathers when there were so few male workers. People could understand how in the very first instance it was important to engage fathers through male workers, how do they move on when there is not the number of key stakeholders to refer people to.

Another issue that needs to be resolved is how the two parts of the integration service work together. The timing in the beginning meant that as soon as the funds were transferred the Parenting Network moved into implementation rather than consultation mode. The Integration Service was trying to find it's feet at the same time. However, a lesson has been learnt and there is good intent to identify effective mechanisms for great sharing.

LESSONS LEARNT

- The learning was about the FSP taking a leadership role on fathering and fatherhood issues. To be proactive in engaging Stakeholders to become involved. Have draft policies available, offer to facilitate programs and involve their team members in a capacity building approach.
- There was learning about how important this program has become to agencies and clients.
- Through the workshop process we learnt that we could validate the assessments made in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.
- The importance of a good communication strategy was noted and should be developed for Stage Two of the Project if it is to be refunded.
- In relation to organising workshops we learnt how important planning and timing are. People need a good deal of notice for them to be able to be involved. It is important to have some sort of relationship with people being invited to participate in workshops. Where there is not direct relationship, preparatory work needs to be done.
- We learnt that survey forms don't always deliver the quality of information required for assessment.

DECLARATION

I, Helen J. Sinclair, independent facilitator do believe:

- that the process of evaluation was good—firstly establishing a framework and then the implementation of the assessment review
- participation in establishing the framework excellent, and that
- the results have been fairly assessed and supported by the participants involved in the two workshops at which I was present.

A third workshop for fathers is to be facilitated on the 29th October, 2003. The Program working group will make the assessments about this particular workshop