

Father's Evaluation Workshop

Held Wednesday 29th October, 2003
at Kilburn Community Centre, Gladstone Road, KILBURN

PARTICIPANTS

Robert Battye
Hayden Baker – Cocks
Luke Keon
Noel Fraser
Tim Colgan
Steven Makai
Ron Foyle
Lachlan Bowden
David Wood

PROJECT TEAM

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Margaret Tatyzo | Parent Support Worker, Parenting Network |
| Stephen Sheehy | Fatherhood Support Project Officer |
| Raema Mahony | Program Co-ordinator, Parenting Network |

THE WORKSHOP

AIM: To facilitate an open forum for Fathers to explore the overall impact of the Fatherhood Support Project

(Definition: Fathers who have participated in the Fatherhood Groups – a representation from all groups conducted North & West. Fathers who participated in evaluation represented a range of socio- economic circumstances and parenting experiences.

OBJECTIVES:

- To establish the impact the groups have had on fathers as they define their approach to fathering
- to assess the fathers' perception of their role
- to understand how fathers communicate this new perception to their children
- to understand how fathers establish their new relationship/role
- to understand how fathers establish their new relationship/role with their partners
- to understand how the men establish their new relationship/role with their own fathers
- to explore whether fathers have been accessing new and other services
- to explore what has been the emotional impact of the new perception of the role
- to assess whether running of a group specifically for fathers has been meaningful.

WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

Participation in small groups, pairs, feedback sessions and final review in a large group. All material presented and discussed.

1. How Father's saw their role, before they participated in the Fatherhood workshops?

- Dad is the:
 - Breadwinner
 - Role model - setting examples, passing it down
 - Fixer of problems
 - All responsibility without any training
 - teacher
- Didn't know where my role was – separated early
- Didn't fit into traditional role
- Searching for some meaning
- 'Take it on the chin'
- didn't take as active a role as now
- passive acceptance
- hard to know what to do with kids
- unrealistic expectations
- my behaviour affected my kids behaviour
- I didn't know enough about being a role model
- Mother was primary. I was secondary
- Before I was active with kids & tried to support partner in her role
- Support to wife in her role, basically primary carer
- My goal was for kids to be better person than I was (than my parents did for me)
- Had some practice, so more prepared than my wife
- To be a good dad (after could be a better dad)
- Less ability to think things through before and less knowledge
- Not comfortable in the role of father & what was expected
- Lack of practice (or exposure) leads to lack of confidence in parenting
- No opportunity before to talk & think about what 'Fathering' is.

2. Father's Role – a Job Description (since attending a group).

What skills do we need?

ESSENTIAL:

- Educator
- Adaptable
- Good listener
- Give & take
- Share responsibility
- Patience
- Leadership
- Role model
- Spend quality time
- Set aside specific quality time
- Love your kids & show them that love
- SAY you love them
- show affection
- give respect and you get it back

DESIRABLE:

- patience
- attentive
- participating in their activity
- responding & praising
- paying attention to their achievements
- play with your kids
- respond in their time frame
- be accountable
- be honest
- have an ability to say sorry & it teaches the child to say sorry

What Training do we need?

- Appropriate & timely training
- Course which are delivered to you in a way which encourages discussion with other Dads.
- Training which connects us with other guys
- Encouragement comes from the course – you don't get it out of a book
- Courses aimed at specific ages of children
- Groups which:
 - Provide a place to talk
 - Makes you more adaptable in thinking & parenting
 - Encourages you try other things
 - Male focused
- Ongoing training to provide support & information
- Some follow up sessions down the track
- Course for expectant fathers, so we can learn from experiences
- Start early, so we don't get too set in our ways
- 1000 year plan
- eventually no need for so much training because we will be better at it
- better understanding from training, will mean we will parent better / different than our own parents.

3. What changes have happened at home, or when you are with your children?

What did you talk about? PARTNER - FRIENDS - CHILDREN

- Feel more comfortable being at home with toddler
- Partner more comfortable with me at home with toddler
- Discussion with partner reinforced what I was doing
- Talked about the experiences of other group members
- Talked about handouts.
- Friends have noticed some change in the way I talk about parenting – more positive
- Friends open to doing course because of feedback that I have given them
- It's okay to talk to friends about being a Dad
- I have called my child 'son' for the first time. Son said 'what has come over you, spending more time with me'. Son now wants to spend more time with me.
- I talk more to my mates about parenting.
- For myself – ok to be a father
- Just as capable as a mother, to find out what children need
- Now talk more about being a father to friends / work mates
- More aware of rights of father
- No longer worried – more able to be adaptable in relating to child. More energy
- Prior to group, I was having difficulties in relationship so partner suggested I attend.
- Wife always wanted to know. She read handouts
- We discussed each time after the group & I started to put it into place
- Started to approach him differently – more proactive, less blaming. Learnt to ask questions (what, when, how) – conversing, not telling
- Was young, so it formed how I interacted with my daughter as she developed.

What did you do?

- Re-focussed. Realisation that I wasn't doing the things I knew I should be doing often enough. Spending quality time. Parenthood = sacrifice for your kids
- A small sacrifice can make a big difference in your child's life
- Balancing time for self, with time spent with your children.
- Tried to get to more sporting events
- Tried to get time off from work
- Focusing on needs of older children, as was focusing on younger children due to need
- More active with kids
- Kids not afraid to do things with me
- Do not talk down to kids – now talk more at kids level – eg: teenager
- Sharing more with kids about what I did as a kid
- More adventurous – willing to take risks
- More prepared to explore the relationship with the kids
- Took on board, the positives and to approach it in a positive way
- Overall approach is positive
- Shared with a friend what I'd learnt – honest to say I'd need improvement, so friend attended
- Did subsequent course to build on what was learnt.
- Domino effect to other friends who are Dads and to other families
- Some things too difficult to just pick up in a book
- Follow the child's curiosity and communication. Ask open questions – child responded and now so does niece

Barriers to change?

- Blocking out outside influences
- Too busy, don't find time
- Lack of open communication with partner (going to group can help overcome this)
- Personality: 'I am right'. Enforce opinion on others
- Financial problems
- Drugs & alcohol etc
- Unwillingness to change
- Stereotyped – own personal view point
- Worries get in the way – stress effects the way you react
- Expectation of 'buck stops at me' – to take charge
- Hard to network. Networking not visible
- Fathers not honest with themselves
- Position in job often effects how honest men are about personal life
- Own parenting experience
- Distant parenting of own parents
- Failure to engage media will restrict the influence – schooling – videos
- Isolation of fathers in parenting
- Non acceptance of change
- Interaction essential
- Guys NOT talking to each other about it

4a. What personal change does Dad now see in himself in his THINKING, since the group?

- Take time to listen
- Can change to suit the situation
- Not so selfish
- I now think out side the lines
- I'm less likely to judge people and their relationships with their children, as I am now able to view things differently.
- I now have changed my friendships with people and now associate with people with similar situations as me eg: they are involved with their own children
- Have thought seriously about a career relating to the training & mentoring of fathers
- Have put on a radio presentation on fathering
- Talk about fathering a lot more
- Went to the family court mediation service and 'accepted' their view that the access arrangement was fair '...very good access for a father' to realising (after the course) that I am equally capable.
- Positive, proactive as a father
- Positive interactions with my child
- Think more positively and less negatively
- Thinking in different view towards my family is big plus
- Look forward to being with them more
- Enjoy my role as a father more
- I am able
- Stress has been limited
- The need for absolute control over self has lessened
- I may indulge in whims, instincts and hunches unlike before
- Have learned to listen
- Learnt to ask open questions
- Now a better father
- Have confidence in myself
- Have a better understanding of child expectations
- Happy to be a Dad
- Want to be the best Dad I can be
- More positive about my role as father in general
- More structure / framework
- Somewhere to start from, when thinking about fatherhood
- Acceptance of change
- Taking a part in change
- That I am a good Dad
- Worry was a big part
- That I am a good person
- Frustration is lessened
- Realised my role as a father was important, not that I didn't think so before, but that society & how it view / treats fathers is not up to that level of importance.
- It should not be 'fathers' versus 'mothers' but the roles complimenting each other.
- More interested in how my actions (leadership) passes on skills to children
- Tend to be less 'docile' in having my role devalued.
- Understanding small sacrificing can bring about a huge difference for others
- Pushed the reset button. Thinking changed back to focus on my son before myself.
- Reinforced or validated belief that what I was doing was to a large extent a good job.
- I was thinking of my baby as an individual with complex needs
- Fatherhood group helped me relax into the T.L.C., warmth contact needs of my baby son.

4b. What personal change Dad now experiences in his FEELINGS since the group?

- Probably a lot calmer than before
- Changed my attitude
- More caring
- Able to let more people closer
- Look less stressed
- Partner understands me a bit more – we can relate more easily
- Have been so stressed out that I haven't noticed any comments or occurrences
- Family court is in progress & I notice stress more.
- That I am able to find out what is troubling the children
- Noticed that I am more affectionate with the children
- That the children have much better awareness of boundaries when with Dad
- Feel less stressed
- Less likely to get in tense / angry mood
- My wife has noticed the changes in me with dealing with the kids & compliments me for changing
- The only person to change in our house was me, and the change has affected everyone positively in the house
- Can relate with nieces & nephews better
- My partner said she noticed a change in myself and also in my son, in that there is a stronger bond between us both

4c. What do others see in personal change of Dad since attending group?

- Am happy with myself now
- See a future that is bright
- Anger (suppressed) is not a big player
- I am working through my feelings
- Excited
- Happy
- No longer think the kids are being naughty to get at me
- Approachable
- Loveable
- Can be my kids best mate
- Respected
- After I completed the course, I feel that I have as much support as I need and that no matter what happens, there are people there to help
- Feel more positive about my role as a father
- Feel more valued as a father
- Feel more confident with my child – able to deal with problems and not worried.
- More confident in my role
- Happier that my contribution is well focussed
- Much happier as a Dad
- More willing to share experiences
- Not as angry as before
- Don't get so stressed or anxious as before
- More positive and adventurous in relationship with children
- Enthusiastic about fathering
- Impatient / angry about stereotyping
- Curious to find out more; to seek more knowledge
- Feel more able to attack difficult issues that children may have
- More open with children about my feelings
- Feel more relaxed in the role
- Feel less stressed
- Able to show more emotion & affection

5a. Would you recommend to your friends, to attend groups? Why?

- Unanimous 'Yes'
- Living proof, as friend came
- Getting a lot out of course and told a friend to come along
- Friend at work rang and asked about course near where he lived
- I believe it helped me so would tell someone else as they may get something out of it too
- If I tell family / friends, then likely to listen
- Better if it comes from another man. Likely, more willing to listen.

5b. Would you come to the Fatherhood groups if they were run by women?

Less likely to - less likely to initially

- Feel safer in one gender environment than mixed gender environment
- A woman running the group could learn a lot more about fathering
- Gives guys who not prepared to open up, chance to open up in a group with a male.
- Male leader telling of experiences, helps participants to open up.
- More secure with a male
- Makes more sense coming from guy / father
- More impact from another father
- Gender has its own biases - Do not intentionally come across coming from a woman, devalues the role of fatherhood
- going through courses with a female, some of the things that are said from the female, comes across as criticism
- potential to improve parenting overall, if focus on how fathers parent – potential to impact on fathers and effects on the children. A low amount of money spent on group for fathers, has potential for a lot of change in parenting.

5c. What have you said to others about the groups?

- told my parents doing it & they asked what I was learning & positive signs observed from doing the course
- 6 weeks is too short & by the time work out what questions to ask, course is finished
- sometimes can't commit after 6 weeks

5d. What else would you like included in the groups?

- partners included in an additional session on the last night of group
- groups to go longer
- course run by fathers – expectant fathers to run course
- personal development
 - parenting, relationships
 - education – broadening out parenting & person
 - Uni, other growth options
- don't need to seek changes for changes sake, groups good as they are
- it was working – get more funding – get more men
- need to keep numbers up in attendance as others stimulate thoughts.

5e. Have you accessed other supports since attending Fatherhood group?

- Don't need additional support as:
 - Working as a team with wife
 - Family meetings now happening in the house
- Going to fatherhood group meant, felt okay going to general group – Positive parenting 2-5 years
- Men and anger group & Violence Intervention Program – attended these after group.
- Wanting to get regular group run in North
 - Interested to be involved in a new project for Dads
- Things to do with dads / kids eg: build a kite
- Idea of peer support

Recommendations:

- Need to sell the group to fathers. Make more visible.
- Need to publicise groups in places where men are – pubs / work places.
- Put pamphlet in kit given at hospital
- How do we make it more accessible and appealing to other fathers
- Advertising, marketing, obstetricians, word of mouth
- Need professional market researcher
- Come into pre-natal classes & have Dads come in.

Stakeholders Evaluation Workshop

Held Wednesday 8th October, 2003
at Parenting Network, The Parks Community Centre, Angle Park

PARTICIPANTS

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Rosalind Jamieson | CHEC Project |
| Madeline Ashdawn | TQEH, Antenatal Educator |
| Roxanne Adams | SHINE SA |
| Cyndi Mc Donald | Northern Parent Resource Program |
| Theresa Brown | Family Links, City of Playford |
| Trevor Cresswell | Reconnect, City of Port Adelaide, Enfield |

PROJECT WORKING GROUP

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Helen Suridge | Senior Administrative Support Officer |
| Margaret Tatyzo | |
| Stephen Sheehy | Fatherhood Project Officer |
| Raema Mahony | Parenting Network, Program Coordinator |

Thirty five invitations extended, twelve apologies with seven offers for Stakeholders to make a contribution in writing

THE WORKSHOP

AIM: To facilitate an open forum for key stakeholders to explore the overall impact of the Fatherhood Support Project

(Definition: Stakeholders are agencies who have resourced the Fatherhood Support Project for its clients and workers.)

OBJECTIVES:

- To establish the importance of fatherhood issues on their agency's service delivery
- To explore the impact on their consumers
- To explore the impact on their resources
- To establish whether there had been an increase in demand for services
- To establish whether the agency had been able to assess the impact on its consumers
- To explore the 'flow-on' effects on: program; resource allocation; policies and procedures; planning for the future and sustainability
- To explore Stakeholders recommendations for future workshops.

WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

Participation in small groups, pairs, feedback sessions and final review in a large group. All material presented and discussed.

IMPACT

What has been the impact of the fatherhood support project workshops, on your client group, your team and the organisation as a whole?

Impact on Client group

The workshops have:

- Reinforced or validated skills fathers already have
- Enthusiastic flow of ideas between participants reflecting experience
- 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
- Interaction/access to male workers
- Increase in confidence
- More information available
- For participants focused around Child Care Centres:
 - Focus on drop off fathers
 - Fatherhood issues on the agenda
 - Awareness raising
 - Link fatherhood issues to other child care issue
- Increased thinking about roles
- Access to new resources, addressing stereotypes
- Incorporated into general 'male' issues work
- Awareness/anger — different aspects
- Impact one has on others as 'fathers'
- Past limited access — creating a market
- Knowledge about what resources are available—gives hope, inspiration

Impact on Agency Team

- Stretches already scarce resources: time, money and access for families and schools
- 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
- Broadened the team's knowledge about fatherhood issues and linked this into program activities: language, concepts etc.
- New resource for workers
- Opportunity for in-service for staff
- Access to a referral services
- Support for education programs — fatherhood issues not occurring in isolation
- Share resources amongst workers
- Initiated debate
- Impact on curriculum and service provision
- Use of new language and descriptors in the work place
- Personal change — team review own approach
- For Family Link Team
 - Spread information to other regions (Victor Harbor)
 - Agenda Item at team meetings: rural and regional
 - Reach Out — increased requests

Impact on the Organisation

- 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
- Increase learning about client groups
- Impetus to create other activities
- New focus on the importance of fatherhood issues
- Councils—Issues raised, incorporated into strategic planning, influenced project development
- Structural change—focus on fatherhood issues
- Need to politicise now organisations aware of lack of services in this area.

FLOW ON CHANGES

What were the subsequent changes that occurred within the organisation/agency?

- Realised that to enable fathers to access this support 'out of hours' fatherhood support programs needed to be offered
- Agencies need to work at identifying the sort of 'blockages' that prevented fathers participating and maximising this opportunity
- Flow on effect for agencies is to realise the need for greater flexibility with staff hours
- Workshops highlighted the importance of networks for men working in the fields
- Increased awareness of the need to facilitate opportunities to build networks for male workers
- Greater opportunity for men to engage in activities at all levels across the community and organisation
- Increased confidence that men can and will come to programs and be involved
- A new dimension to parent and family networks — a new synergy
- On-going discussions about creative ways to address this change (focusing on fatherhood issues)
- Providing a better service to clients
- Has prompted conceptual change — people think about things differently
- Focusing on 'fathering and fatherhood issues' has led to organisations being involved in different debates, being challenged to think differently and having to learn new things
- Increased information available out there
- In antenatal classes there has been a change in format and language used
- Need for organisations to make strategic decisions
- Explore the impact on planning
- Look for role models within organisations, look at policy
- Increase in the number of parents requesting services
- Collaborative activities happening at all levels

STRATEGIES REQUIRED FOR SUSTAINABILITY

What strategies are organisations going to have to implement to support the flow on changes and ensure sustainability?

- ❖ **Parenting Network**
 - Need for Fatherhood Support Project to be on-going
 - Two years only enough time to get the momentum going and improve awareness of
 - the issues
 - Need for additional funds for another worker
 - Need for more resources as key Fatherhood Project Worker stretched to max
- ❖ Special funding required to enable Fatherhood Support Workshops to be made available across the whole State
- ❖ Need to rewrite training packages to include messages about fathers and fatherhood issues
- ❖ In-service training for staff in relation to fatherhood issues
- ❖ Need flexibility to provide a service at night:
- ❖ Need to re write HR policy within organisations
- ❖ Need to re write job descriptions for workers to work with fathers
- ❖ Need to establish night crèches
- ❖ Need to employ crèche workers for evening sessions
- ❖ Enter into creative partnerships with organisations (sporting, corporate, community based)—to provide co-workers, co-facilitators, cost sharing and venues
- ❖ Provide training on how to go about setting up groups at night—resources, crèches, insurances. Link organisations and volunteers to maximise/share resources. Promote discussion on safety issues around evening courses.
- ❖ Re-write work plans and include strategies about involving men/fathers in programs
- ❖ Organisational planning days to include discussion about how to include/engage men
- ❖ Develop effective lobbying tools at local and regional levels
- ❖ Keep the awareness/momentum flowing: media eg. hospital magazines, networking
- ❖ Keep the profile high at the decision making level: eg presentations to boards, guest speakers, presentation folders, etc.
- ❖ Build strategic alliances to develop capacity to keep change going
- ❖ Explore own organisations policies! Are they relevant? What do they reflect? What is the vision? How are programs going to be developed and implemented?
- ❖ Raise and maintain a high profile for fathering and fatherhood issues across the state, eg Men's Health Information Day. (May need a specific worker to do this)
- ❖ Maintain involvement with 'Correctional Services'
- ❖ Continue to be involve with networking/collaborative work. Learning by osmosis
- ❖ Individual organisations should apply for funding for specific activities relating to fathering and raising fatherhood issues. Promote fatherhood issues on all agendas
- ❖ Personal development strategies for staff: explore own responses to fatherhood issues, look at language used, stereotypes and practices in the home.
- ❖ Promote discussion with partners about roles and responsibilities
- ❖ Need to Communication Strategies focused on fathering and fatherhood issues. Increasing awareness and developing ways of supporting activities.
- ❖ Need to highlight awareness of language and stereotypes/norms promoted in the community.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES REQUIRED TO PROMOTE FATHERHOOD ISSUES

It was generally acknowledged that to support the suggested strategies additional resources would be required at many levels.

- Budget allocations
- New staff
- New HR policies and procedures
- Development of new and additional resources
- Development of draft policies
- Information papers

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of the workshop participants were asked what they could suggest be included, to enrich the current program.

| RECOMMENDATION | OUTCOME |
|---|--|
| Development of a demographic profile on fathers. (Explore possibility of this becoming a student project) | Base data for decision making and planning |
| At the beginning of each set of new workshops, a brainstorming session with key stakeholders to explore ways of including 'disconnected' fathers. | Increased understanding of the nature of disconnected fathers in |
| | Identifying specific areas, and ways of targeting their involvement. |
| Strong support for addition male worker/workers | Increased activity/support |
| Development of an Issues Paper around fatherhood issues— <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issues for fathers• Services available• Need for awareness at an organisational level• Policy outlines• Children's needs | Better awareness within community – issues and support required |

Partner's Evaluation

An evaluation workshop for partners was designed by the evaluation team, however on further discussion it was realised it was not possible to contact these partners, as permission and direct contact had not been organised at the time of the Father's attendance of groups.

A questionnaire was designed and posted to the Fathers, requesting they forward this to their partner. The questionnaire included a booklet of discounted cinema tickets and a return stamp addressed envelope.

A total of 55 questionnaires were sent to Fathers who attended groups and 10 were returned, resulting in a 18% response rate.

The results of the questionnaire were:-

The partners:-

1. all noted a positive change in the way the Fathers were now relating to their children
2. commented on improvement in the home by the father making an effort to spend time with the child/ren
3. were overwhelmingly positive about the Father attending the course
4. would recommend the course to others
5. observed the Father to be more accepting, relaxed and having increased confidence in parenting
6. observed fathers to be showing an interest in learning and discussing new parenting skills
7. felt fathers benefited from the support of other Fathers

Partners recommended following additions to group content::

1. follow up sessions be offered after group completion, so Dads can reconnect and chat
2. include specific ideas on dealing with siblings hitting, and temper tantrums
3. discuss the fathers role with daughters. Fathers are a role model for daughters - respecting women reflects on how a daughter will respect herself
4. discuss role of Mother - what life is like for Mums at home



Fatherhood Support Project

Partner's Evaluation

Dear Partner / Mum,

We have been running Fatherhood Groups, as part of the Fatherhood Support Project which has been running for the past 18 months.

Thank you for supporting your partner to come to these weekly groups. Some of the Fathers tell us that they learnt heaps. Some even tell us that they are great Dads now. We would like to know what **you** think, because we would like to make the groups better.

The form is a questionnaire to gain your thoughts on the impact the Fatherhood group has had on your partner and his parenting. You don't have to put your name on this form, and if you don't want to fill in the form, you can ring us. You don't even have to tell us your name if you ring – Phone: Raema (who manages the project) on 8243 5544 between 9 & 5, Monday to Friday.

We understand how busy you are, but we are trying to finalise an evaluation on this project by the end of October, so we can go to the Government for further funding by the first week in November. We would love it if you could return the questionnaire in the stamped addressed envelope provided by Tuesday 28th October.

We hope you find the enclosed discount movie pass useful.

Thank you

Raema Mahony
Program Manager

Steve Sheehy
Fatherhood Support Worker
Fatherhood Support Project



Fatherhood Support Project

Partner's Evaluation

Dear Dad,

This is the questionnaire we told you about in our letter a few days ago.

Attached is an envelope containing the partner's questionnaire, that we would like your partner to complete. We have also attached a copy of the questionnaire, so you can see the type of questions being asked.

If you are happy and your partner wishes to be involved, could you please pass the envelope onto her. It contains a letter, questionnaire and stamped self addressed envelope for her to return the questionnaire in.

We understand how busy you both are, but we are trying to finalise an evaluation on this project by the end of October, so we can go to the Government for further funding by the first week in November. The responses will be anonymous. If your partner could return the questionnaire in the stamped addressed envelope provided by Tuesday 28th October, we would really appreciate it.

Thank you again.

Raema Mahony
Program Manager

Steve Sheehy
Fatherhood Support Worker
Fatherhood Support Project

Fatherhood Support Project

Partner's Evaluation Results

1. How is Dad getting on with the kids these days

Happy 3 3 1 2 1 Sad

- Forming new relationship with teenage step son-setting boundaries for youngest
- Getting along with children
- Saw how important role of dad plays in their life
- Tries his best to do as much as he can with kids
- Course gave confidence
- Closer to son

2. What things have changed at home?

Happy 1 2 3 3 1 Sad

- making more of an effort to spend time with kids
- Other ways of dealing with problems are now found, instead of yelling, smacking and put downs
- Less power struggles
- Dad participates more with kids, physically and verbally
- Does more—plays games and tells stories
- listening
- Dad has now stopped drinking and using drugs, and wants to attend another course

3. What were the best things about your partner attending the course?

- Came home with some good ideas on handling situations
- Made him aware of his influence on child
- He knows where to go
- Changes in the way he deals with children
- Confidence in his parenting skills
- Information about other relevant courses eg. anger and men
- Showing an interest in the concept of parenting
- Gave us an opportunity to discuss material, discuss ideas and new strategies for parenting
- Knowing that my partner was hearing/reading parenting information
- Interaction with other fathers

Fatherhood Support Project

Partner's Evaluation Results

4. If you could add bits to the course as a Mum, what would those bits be?

Eg: having fun with the kids.

- Importance of fathers role for daughters – respecting women, reflects on how a daughter will respect herself
- Emphasis on consistency and team work – not dismiss the mother's role
- More specific ideas on dealing with specific behaviour e.g. siblings hitting each other, temper tantrums
- Ideas on what's within the norm, at what age to help with unrealistic expectations
- Trying to understand what life is like for Mums at home
- More follow ups so Dads have chats/info nights

5. What things make it hard to be good parents today?

- No control, no respect, no discipline, no time, long hours at work
- Financial stress
- Dividing up time to children
- Busy lifestyle
- Lack of support to families in first year
- Kids informed of their rights but not responsibilities

6. What sort of things do Dads and kids need in the community?

- encouragement to do traditional female activities
- Go on camps
- Local facilities
- Support for Dads to have 'time out' from work to attend child's events
- More change facilities in men's toilets and cleaner men's toilets (2)
- More family toilets and parent rooms in shopping centres, public events
- Inexpensive family based activities (3)

7. Would you tell your family / friends or friend's partners about this course?

- Yes (9)
- Possibly, will see after attends repeat group

Project Team Evaluation Workshop

Held Tuesday 14th October, 2003
at Parenting Network, The Parks Community Centre, Angle Park.

PARTICIPANTS

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Debbie Martin | Co-ordinator Northern Programs/Acting Integration Manager |
| Darian Shepherd-Bayly | ANGLICARE |
| Deb | Family Support Student, TAFE (Anglicare) |

PROJECT WORKING GROUP

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Helen Suridge | Senior Administrative Assistant, Parenting Network |
| Margaret Tatyzo | Parent Support Worker, Parenting Network |
| Stephen Sheehy | Fatherhood Project Officer |
| Raema Mahony | Parenting Network, Co-ordinator Western Program |

Four invitations were extended, two apologies were received

THE WORKSHOP

AIM: To facilitate an open forum for key stakeholders to explore the overall impact of the Fatherhood Support Project

(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.

WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

Participation in small groups, pairs, feedback sessions and final review in a large group. All material presented and discussed.

IMPACT

What has been the impact of the fatherhood support project workshops, on your client group, your team and the organisation as a whole?

Impact on Client group

The workshops have:

- affirmed the father's role
- validated their feelings and experience
- increased participant's confidence
- created the opportunity for men to work in a group
- increased knowledge and understanding of parenting issues
- one participant interested in co-facilitating a group
- experienced the opportunity to share -- they have the ability and the willingness
- normalised their experience and they have a sense of belonging
- they found a safe place to be
- could be involved in organic type discussions
- self realisation process, changed their behaviour
- they respond better in family situations
- partner notice change
- repeated their involvement—learnt new things each time—on-going change—a limit to what people can take in, in one go
- skills development
- they felt important in the group
- were listened to
- support in defining the relationship of this group together...setting the group culture

Impact on Team/Workers

- Opportunity for people to be seen as role models
- Leaders valuing fathering/fatherhood
- Bought together a new team across agencies....common interest
- Opportunities to be involved in group work....co-facilitation
- Confidence to facilitate on their own...can use materials in other situations
- Increased opportunities
- Skills increased, less labour intensive
- Easier to access target group
- Connection with another male worker
- Workers more aware, now ask are we including fathers
- Noticing language and concepts
- How inclusive of fathers are we
- Shift in expertise....usually one-on-one, now group work
- The changes involved in taking a community development approach

Impact on the Organisation

- Commitment to facilitate/organise workshops, easier now
- Facing new challenges
- Focused in Central district, then north and now south
- Needing to identify new workers and networks
- Working together and working at defining the new team
- Increased level of debate around fathering and fatherhood issues
- Informing women in safe spaces for women about project...inviting fatherhood worker in
- Progressive change
- Need to look at planning, commitment
- Making referrals across agencies
- Forming new partnerships
- Running workshops for all staff about the FSP package
- Value from others

KEY ISSUES

What have been the key issues for your project?

- A feeling of relief.....it is really important to have a male worker to work with and to refer to. The male worker becomes a 'key' person
- Men can then work on men's issues
- Difficult as the organisation wants to commit/wants to be involved/but only one male worker
 - Not sure if they recruited more workers if they could recruit a male when so many other groups have specific needs as well
 - The facilitators of the Fatherhood support program would be delivering the material in a positive environment
 - Question whether a trained female worker could facilitate?
 - How to solve the dilemma?
 - Use of peer educator
 - Query whether fathers who had already participated in a workshop could facilitate/co-facilitate
 - How to maintain quality control
 - 75% of workers in Human Services are women
 - Explore options around student placements
 - Very limited resources
 - How to achieve sustainability without receiving extra funding?
 - Maybe need to take a stepped approach
 - Initial contact with male facilitators/co-facilitators
 - Increases awareness, becoming more comfortable
 - More open, then able to work with women facilitators
 - Need for quality control — co-leaders need to have participated in the fatherhood workshops
 - Need to target specific male workers and see if you can bring them into the fatherhood support project.

LESSONS LEARNT

| <u>LESSONS LEARNT</u> | <u>PROBABLE OUTCOME</u> |
|---|---|
| The Fatherhood Support Project can have a very positive effect on families | Reducing impact More control, less instances of DV Increased understanding of roles |
| Need to sell the Whole of Project perspective to go beyond the Fatherhood Support Groups. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Greater consultation and brainstorming with agencies before project commences ○ Need to focus on how to engage all partners ○ Development of Communication Strategy across all partner agencies | Introduction at formal meetings FSP issues on Agendas & Co-ordinator's meeting Be part of Northern Children & Family Forum Be part of Northern Parent Forum Fatherhood Worker invited to be guest speaker |

| LESSONS LEARNT | PROBABLE OUTCOME |
|---|---|
| <p>Communication Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote co-operative problem solving ○ Sharing information as widely as possible ○ Share information with agencies ○ Network with Key Agencies | <p>Enhance the networks with FAYS & CAMHS Focus on Northern Metropolitan area</p> |
| <p>Think outside the square</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explore a range of options ○ Creative problem solving | |
| <p>Fatherhood Support Project needs to take the leadership on increasing awareness of fathering and fatherhood issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Link into Parenting Network contacts ○ Use fatherhood groups as a springboard ○ Worker has credibility: need to maintain continuity of service by offering stability ○ Worker has enthusiasm and energy for these issues ○ FSP very well support by PNP structure — vital for the success and sold as part of a package | <p>Services linked to worker at the moment Need to find ways to sustain engagement beyond the worker</p> |
| <p>Fatherhood Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Broad focus of Fatherhood groups ○ Fathers from a whole range of backgrounds and circumstances involved ○ Father participants responsive to referrals ○ Normalising environment ○ Fathers listened to ○ Free to express ideas ○ Non judgemental environment ○ Appreciation of PNP as an agency with a male focus | <p>Hopefully other agencies will provide services to men Agencies can seek support/access services Referrals available</p> |
| <p>The FSP has been able to confirm that there aren't many resources available in this area at the moment</p> | <p>Need for more resources to be developed</p> |
| <p>Women clients appreciative of the fact that there are projects available with a male perspective</p> | <p>Pleased to have options available for partners Would like to see partners participate in projects Feel more comfortable about engaging with project activities</p> |
| <p>How important it is for people to focus on the needs of the child rather than the conflict</p> | <p>Defuses blame Enables participants to explore their role</p> |
| <p>Positive focus encourages men to take responsibility for the problem and their actions</p> | |

HOW HAS THE CAPACITY OF YOUR ORGANISATION CHANGED?

Can you identify skills enhancement, or training gains through your involvement with the Fatherhood Support Project?

For Participants or Workers

- ❖ Increased passion about the issues
- ❖ Rewards for working in this area
- ❖ Can look out beyond one-on-one case work and become involved with group work
- ❖ Need to explore own 'personal' philosophy and explore ways of making change or undertaking personal growth
- ❖ Has changed the way you view things and problem solve within the family
- ❖ Become more aware of wanting to learn more
- ❖ Inspired and motivated to do things differently

For the Project Team

- ❖ Fathering and fatherhood issues has promoted team building
- ❖ The team now taking ownership of the issues
- ❖ Extended skills
- ❖ Broader definition of the team and who can belong to the team
- ❖ Has been given permission now to work in a community development — more holistic model
- ❖ Information is more accessible
- ❖ Has moved into an enabling mode: creating and enabling environment
- ❖ Need to take leadership on these issues

For the Organisation

- ❖ Proud to be involved
- ❖ Ownership: incorporating issues into approach
- ❖ Extending networks/partnerships — share resources, maximising opportunities, promote discussion
- ❖ Stimulating thinking
- ❖ Become aware of the potential to develop other/new aspects of own programs
- ❖ Word of mouth — news spreading about the project and opportunities for Dads
- ❖ Exposed to new knowledge, slowly filtering into the culture, time to change

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of the workshop participants were asked what they could suggest be included, to enrich the current program.

| RECOMMENDATION | OUTCOME |
|---|--|
| Increase the number of male workers who are skilled and trained | More training places available at institutions Trying to get supply to meet demand Increased funding for placements Giving men 'permission' to undertake certain training Clearly stating the community values the role of fathers |
| Need for on-going and possible increased funding | Need to share success of project Highlight the achievements |
| Sustained focus brings fathering /fatherhood issues into the mainstream | |
| Explore the role of peer educators—involve past participants | Increase the number of male workers Sessional work available Men living in the local area able to relate to neighbours—other men who live in the north |
| Fatherhood workshops encourages fathers to be accountable and take responsibility for their actions | Curriculum/course content needs to address accountability Positive outcomes for participant /family |
| Use opportunity of the last session to introduce other 'male' focused services. (DV, Quit, Anger management etc.) | Increase the understanding of what can flow on afterwards |
| Extend the Fatherhood workshops to seven weeks. | |