



Resources Related to Questions Raised NRCPPFC Teleconference/Webinar: Engaging Fathers in Child Welfare

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During this NRCPPFC teleconference, participants raised questions related to whether, when, and how to engage fathers when issues of domestic violence or sexual abuse may be involved. Additionally, a participant asked about research and evidence on the impact of father involvement. This document lists resources that relate to these questions. Additional resources on Engaging Fathers in Child Welfare are available on the NRCPPFC Fatherhood Hot Topic webpage at:

http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcp/info_services/fatherhood.html

Engaging Fathers: Issues of Domestic Violence

- **The Impact of Power: Exploring Issues of Domestic Violence in FGDM (American Humane Training)**

Why this training? Research shows that Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) can be a safe and effective process when issues of domestic violence are present. However, sometimes communities struggle with FGDM processes in these difficult cases. This two-day training explores issues of power in domestic violence; prepares coordinators to create safety measures for all participants before, during and after the family meeting; and readies community stakeholders to advance FGDM as a way to end family violence. You will learn how to:

- Apply FGDM when domestic violence is present
- Integrate knowledge of domestic violence dynamics into FGDM practice
- Improve your assessment of the safety and needs of all participants, especially the victims and offenders
- Address issues of domestic violence and proceed safely with FGDM
- Become more aware of how domestic violence creates power imbalances in families
- Recognize the impact of domestic violence on child witnesses and victims

<http://www.americanhumane.org/children/professional-resources/training-professional-development/fgdm-trainings/the-impact-of-power.html>

- **Public Child Welfare Training Academy**

One of the E-Learning Classes offered is "Working with Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence eLearning."

<http://theacademy.sdsu.edu/programs/PCWTA/curriculum.html>

- **Engaging Fathers in the Child Protection Process: The Judicial Role**

By Judge Leonard Edwards

Fathers are important to the child and to the legal process. The juvenile court judge can play a critical role in engaging fathers in the child protection process. This article covers a number of aspects of father engagement, focusing on the role of judges. It addresses safety considerations for the mother and child as the father is brought into the child protection process should he present dangers to one or both.

<http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/conferences/1B-9/Fathers%20Final.pdf>

- **The Greenbook Initiative**

The "Greenbook" helps child welfare workers, domestic violence advocates and family court judges in communities across the country change their approach to family violence to better help battered women and their children achieve safety. The "Greenbook" has spawned activities in states and localities across the country, as well as this federal initiative spearheaded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Justice.

<http://www.thegreenbook.info/index.htm>

The Tools and Resources page of this website links to documents and tools to assist communities with the overlap of domestic violence and child maltreatment. A few examples of resources available on the website include:

- Reasonable Efforts Guidelines in Co-Occurring Cases of Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment, St. Louis County, Missouri, 2007
http://www.thegreenbook.info/documents/RE_Guidelines.pdf
- Accountability and Connection with Abusive Men
<http://www.thegreenbook.info/documents/Accountability.pdf>
- Domestic Violence Training Day Two: Accountability and Connection with Abusive Men, Grafton County, New Hampshire (2007)
http://www.thegreenbook.info/documents/engaging_men_curriculum.pdf
Handouts:
http://www.thegreenbook.info/documents/engaging_with_men_handouts.pdf
- Cross-System Dialogue: An Effective Strategy to Promote Communication between the Domestic Violence Community, Child Welfare System, and the Courts, by Lowry, S.M.; Trujillo, O. (2008)
<http://www.thegreenbook.info/documents/crosssystemdialogue.pdf>

- **Fathering After Violence: Working with Abusive Fathers in Supervised Visitation**

By Areán, J.C. Contributions by Mederos, F. Family Violence Prevention Fund. (2007) This guide is intended to assist the grantees of the Safe Havens: Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program that want to enhance the safety and well-being of women and children by working more deliberately with abusive fathers who use the centers to visit their children. It provides an introduction and background information on the project, and also covers the following topics: Accountability and Connection with Fathers; Making the Connection to Safety for Women and Children; Organizational Readiness; Cultural Context; Assessment; Communication with Mothers; Community Partnerships; and, Continuum of Practices in Engaging Abusive Men.

http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/Children_and_Families/FAV-final.pdf

Visit the Futures without Violence website to access further information on the Fathering After Violence initiative and to download additional resources, including Fathering After Violence posters.

<http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/content/features/detail/803/>

- **Integrating Domestic Violence & Child Protection Through Differential Response**

PowerPoint Presentation by Sawyer, R. and Lohrbach, S. American Humane Conference on Differential Response. (November 2008)

<http://www.americanhumane.org/assets/pdfs/children/differential-response/integrating-domestic-violence.pdf>

- **Letting them Get Away with it: Fathers, Domestic Violence and Child Welfare**
Featherstone, B. *Critical Social Policy*, Vol 27(2), May, 2007. Pp. 181-202.
Recent developments at policy, legislative and practice levels have led to the mainstreaming of domestic violence as a child welfare issue. However, research evidence would suggest that familiar and well established tensions in service provision to women and children continue to be recycled. Moreover, there remains a central dichotomy in relation to men. Constructed as perpetrators or offenders, their identities as fathers remain invisible with serious consequences for the development of policies and practices which engage with them as 'domestically violent fathers'. The discursive removal of violent men from the category of father or indeed parent needs addressing in order to support women and children, but also to offer possibilities for men to develop non-violent parenting and partnering relationship patterns.
- **The Challenge of Engaging Fathers in the Child Protection Process**
Scourfield, J., Critical Social Policy, May 2006, vol. 26, no. 2
This article provides an overview of the well-known difficulties of engaging fathers in the child protection process and makes some suggestions about constructive responses from services. There is a brief discussion of the historical context of the problem, current child welfare policy, the culture of front-line practice amongst child protection staff and the behavior of fathers who come to the attention of child protection staff. Ideas for changes in policy and practice include embracing more sophisticated theory, avoiding the dualistic responses of seeing men as either risk or resource, institutionalizing the engagement of men as core business and building on interventions that have been found by research to be effective. A range of effective interventions may be relevant, including cognitive-behavioural work with abusive men and strengths-based family work such as the family group conference.
- **Fatherhood and Domestic Violence: Exploring the Role of Abusive Men in the Lives of their Children**
Williams, O.J.; Boggess, J.; Carter, J. From: Protecting Children from Domestic Violence: Strategies for Community Intervention. Jaffe, P.G. (Ed.); Baker, L.L. (Ed.); Cunningham, A.J. (Ed.); pp. 120-137. New York: Guilford Press, 2004.
Chapter Abstract: Notes that advocates in the field of domestic violence are concerned about the continuous pattern of abusive behavior by men who abuse. These men abuse women and expose children to physical and emotional abuse during the course of an intimate relationship, as well as in its aftermath. In contrast, there are also advocates who are concerned about the rights of fathers. These advocates primarily want to provide emotional support to fathers and assist them in taking responsibility for their offspring. They encourage men to spend time with their children and address their financial and emotional needs. The primary goal of this chapter is to increase the reader's understanding of the concerns and challenges of the two fields. A second goal is to point out the research questions that must be addressed to be responsive to the issues faced by abused women and children exposed to violence by men who abuse who are also fathers.

For additional resources, please visit the NRCPPFC Hot Topic Webpage: Domestic Violence & Child Welfare at:

http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcp/inf_services/domestic-violence-and-child-welfare.html

Engaging Fathers: Issues of Sexual Abuse

- **Child Sexual Abuse: Intervention and Treatment Issues**
This resource, available on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website, addresses the following topics: Working in the Field of Child Sexual Abuse; Definitions, Scope, and Effects of Child Sexual Abuse; Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse; Investigation of Child Sexual Abuse; Techniques for the Child Interview and a Methodology for Substantiating Sexual Abuse; and, Treatment of Child Sexual Abuse. <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/sexabuse/index.cfm>
- **Public Child Welfare Training Academy**
One of the Interventions, Services & Resources offered is "Working with Sexual Offenders."
<http://theacademy.sdsu.edu/programs/PCWTA/curriculum.html>
- **Consider the Source: A Commentary on Incest and Parental Contact**
Boat, B.W.; Forman, S.B. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 2008, Vol. 17, Issue 1, p. 13-16.
This article looks at the contact between parents and children they have sexually molested. The work of Richard Gardner, psychiatrist and author, is discussed. Gardner has proposed the concept of parental alienation syndrome, in which a mother will keep children from their father, prompting the children to profess false sexual abuse instances. The relationship between fathers and their children following either true or falsified allegations of sexual exploitation is discussed. The author mentions the legal ramifications of such accounts, including custody and visitation issues.
- **Chapter 4: Intrafamilial Child and Adolescent Sexual Abuse**
Gannon, T.A.; Gilchrist, E.; Wade, K.A. Handbook of Social Work in Child & Adolescent Sexual Abuse; 2008, p. 71-101.
Chapter 4 of the book "Handbook of Social Work in Child & Adolescent Sexual Abuse" is presented. It explores the prevalence of intrafamilial offender or the abuse of children and adolescents who are under the age of 16. It focuses on biological fathers and stepfathers who abuse their daughters, with the presumption that child sexual abuse within the family should be differentiated from other forms of sexual abuse. It also explains some family psychiatry approaches to child sexual abuse.
- **Ambiguous Position of the Child in Supervised Meetings**
Forsberg, H.; Pös, T. *Child & Family Social Work*; Feb 2008, Vo. 13, Issue 1, p. 52-60.
The paper addresses the ambiguous nature of supervised meetings between children and their non-residential parent(s) which, according to the current legal idea, should serve the best interest of the child. In Finland the meetings between the children and the non-residential parent can be ordered supervised if there are justified grounds for assuming that they constitute a risk for the child's safety. In many parts of Europe the need for such kinds of meetings controlled by outsiders has increased. The aim of the paper is to consider the child's position and the closely related issue of the child's interest in supervised meetings, based on the daily experiences of the supervisors. Data are gathered by focus group interviews and analysed qualitatively in terms of categorization analysis. As a result, the child's position is an ambiguous phenomenon with multiple interests. Obviously the child's interests will be met in some cases, although paradoxically it is mostly the interests of the parents and most often the fathers, which seem to demand more attention. Thus adult-centredness,

meanings of gender, time together with both the positive and possible detrimental outcomes for the child need further reflection.

- **When do Social Workers and Family Members Try Family Group Decision Making? A Process Evaluation.**

Crampton, D. (2006) *International Journal of Child & Family Welfare*, 9(3), 131-144. This article examines what factors or case characteristics may influence child welfare professionals and families to try family group decision making (FGDM). An exploratory analysis of 593 referrals (from 1996 to 2000) to Kent County, Michigan's Family and Community Compact program aimed to address the following questions: *What were the differences between cases deemed appropriate for the program (and thus for FGDM) and those considered inappropriate? *Of the referrals deemed appropriate, what were the differences in cases where families chose to participate in FGDM and those where families chose not to participate? *Of the families who participated in FGDM, what were the differences between those who developed a plan for their children to live with extended kin and those who did not? Overall, this study found that both child welfare professionals and families were more likely to try FGDM in cases characterized by parental substance abuse, improper supervision, children with special needs (including behavioral needs) and/or identified kinship care providers. In addition, referrals that involved identified kin were more likely to result in a plan that included extended family members as care providers. The author notes that these findings are not surprising, as extended kin participants tend to increase the success of FGDM processes. In contrast, in cases where parental rights had been terminated, referrals were less likely to be approved for FGDM. The author reasons that both professionals and families may be more likely to try FGDM in situations where the case has more ambiguity or lacks "a straightforward course of action." Moreover, the author suggests that this study's findings indicate that there are few case characteristics that professionals and family members consider to be inappropriate for FGDM. Finally, the author concludes by highlighting the debate over whether FGDM is an appropriate approach in cases of severe child abuse (i.e., sexual abuse), and suggests that FGDM could be most beneficial in such circumstances when used on a case by case basis.

Impact of Father Involvement

- **National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System**

The National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System (QIC NRF) is a collaborative effort between the American Humane Association, the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, and National Fatherhood Initiative and funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. The purpose of this project is to determine, through a research design, the impact of non-resident father involvement on child welfare outcomes. Child welfare outcomes include child safety, permanence, and well-being. Included in this design is the examination of the relationship between children, non-resident fathers, and/or paternal relatives. The website offers information on the project, as well as numerous tools, resources, and guides. The website includes a section on Research Gaps & Findings. Additionally, it provides information on four model intervention/evaluation projects funded to enhance father engagement in the child welfare system.

<http://www.fatherhoodqic.org/>

- **The Supporting Father Involvement Project**

The Supporting Father Involvement Project is a clinical and research intervention by the team of Dr. Phillip A. Cowan, Dr. Carolyn Pape Cowan, Dr. Marsha Kline Pruett, and Kyle D. Pruett, MD. A statewide dissemination effort of SFI in California is being conducted with the support of Strategies, and an international replication is underway in Alberta, Canada.

<http://supportingfatherinvolvement.org/index.html>

On the "Research and Publications" page, you can read about their evidence-based practice and the outcomes of these interventions, and access resources.

<http://supportingfatherinvolvement.org/research.html>

- **National Fatherhood Initiative**

The National Fatherhood Initiative website has a statistics page with sections on "The Facts on Father Absence" and "Research Studies".

<http://www.fatherhood.org/Page.aspx?pid=403>