

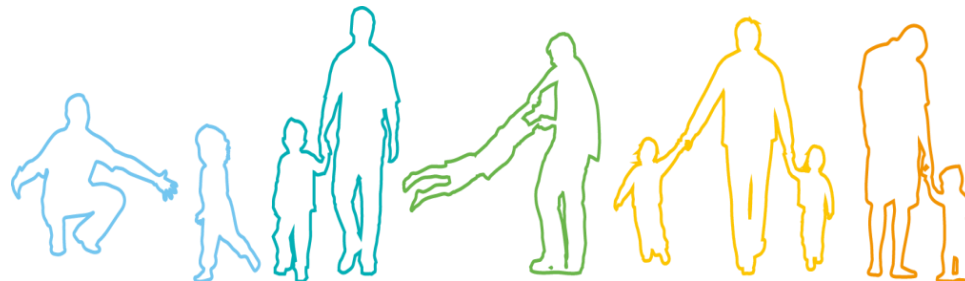
#DADUP

Understanding Dad

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The Family around the Child

- Child and Family Services across Scotland takes its approach using the national Practice Model (Getting it Right for Every Child).
- This makes it clear that our practice must be focused primarily on the health and well being needs of a child, **supporting the family around the child.**
- This ecological model doesn't place any more importance on the gender of a parent.
- Where one parent is not fully engaged, then positive outcomes for a child can be limited

Dads and Father Figures...

- Where Dads aren't around, we can refer to family friends, uncles, brothers, etc...

...What can a 'father figure' add to the family context...

- A father figure can be many things – including female (e.g. same sex partnerships)

Engaging Dads and Father Figures

- Why do we want to engage dads?
- How do we know how to engage dads?
- Is engagement meaningful, responding to needs, strengths and abilities?
- Do we understand and value the difference in men?
- What do we mean by family, parenthood and fatherhood?
- What is MY influence, responsibility and role in ensuring a more father inclusive approach?

The National Context

**Growing Up in Scotland: Father-Child
Relationships and Socio-Emotional
Wellbeing**

(Scottish Government 2017)

We know that:

- Decreased involvement by young fathers increases young mothers' parenting stress
- Having an absent father can contribute to a child's difficulties with peer relationships including bullying
- In separated families, high levels of non-resident father involvement in the early years protects against mental health problems in later life

We Know That:

- **A mothers mental health is strongly associated with the quality of her relationship with her partner.**
- **Supportive father-child relationships are equally important for boys and girls**
- **Father and mother-child relationships matter equally for children's wellbeing**

Growing Up in Scotland

- **Supportive father-child relationships are associated with:**
 - improved educational attainment;
 - reduction in exclusion and bullying;
 - reduced behavioural difficulties;
 - better mental health outcomes;
 - Improved social mobility

Parental Engagement

“In terms of hours and minutes, children are at school exactly $\frac{1}{9}$ of the year.

For 85% of the year they are not in school.”

We Know That...

- High rates of teen parenthood in Scotland; gaps in knowledge/provision, with policy focus on young mothers
- Challenges for Young fathers include:
 - Very real deprivations
 - 16+ destinations/trajectories
 - Housing insecurity
 - Constructed as a 'risk'
 - Rapid shift from childhood to adulthood
 - Low levels of welfare support
- Professional Support:
 - 'hard to reach' or 'easy to ignore'....because we don't know much about them
 - Fathers tend to perceive that support services are targeted towards mums, and perceive 'parent' on advertising literature as meaning 'mother'
- ...Professionals can help break this cycle with small, meaningful interventions

We Know That...

- 55, 000 women in Scotland give birth each year...
- 5000 – 8000 suffer from perinatal anxiety and depression
- 10-15 % of men suffer from perinatal depression
- 35-40% of men suffer from perinatal anxiety and stress

What can we see in Men

- fear, confusion, helplessness and uncertainty about the future
- withdrawal from family life, work and social situations
- indecisiveness
- frustration, irritability, cynicism and anger
- marital conflict
- infidelity
- partner violence
- negative parenting behaviours
- alcohol and drug use
- Insomnia.....sleep deprivation
- physical symptoms like indigestion, changes in appetite and weight, diarrhoea, constipation, headaches, toothaches and nausea.

Changing Attitudes...

“I realised that while we never intentionally excluded dads, we didn’t actively include dads either” ...

Group Chat

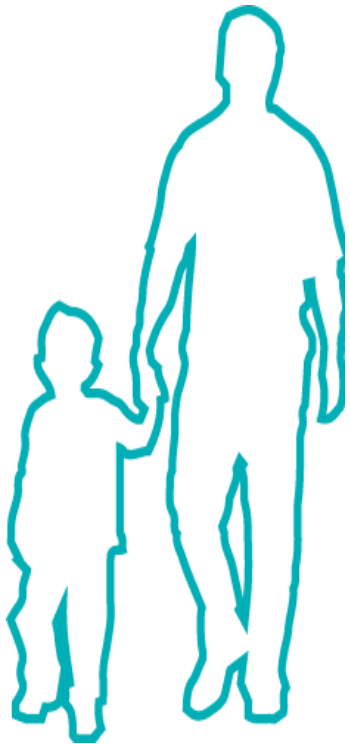
- What are the challenges with engaging dads?
- What are the benefits?
- How father friendly is our practice?

- Feedback

CHANGING THE MESSAGE

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.....TO INCLUDE FATHERS?



...think

- **SYSTEMS;**
- **ENVIRONMENT;**
- **ATITUDE**
- **POLICIES;**
- **ACTIVITY;**



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FATHERS
NETWORK
SCOTLAND

Small Changes, Big Impact

HOW CAN WE CHANGE THE MESSAGE TO INCLUDE FATHERS?

....think in groups

SYSTEMS; PROCESSES; ENVIRONMENT; POLICIES; ACTIVITY

- **“Ensure we have an equal view of mums and dads and it is reflected in our conversation, photos, groups etc”**
- **“Invite/let dads know that they are welcome at parent classes”**
- **“When Dad answers, don’t ask for Mum”**
- **“Referral form...say : Mother; Father; Carer**
- **"Ensure I always invite dads to meetings and give them the opportunity to have their say“**
- **“Explore/challenge "where's dad?" and not just accept "he's not here“**
- **"Refresh the parents area - is it too "feminine"?"**
- **"If dads are not present due to working etc - make the effort to try to meet dad and discuss his children with him";**
- **"Consider provision at nights and weekends“**
- **“If dad can’t be there – think about who the father figure might be”**

Our 'Call to Action'

- Recognise how involving both parents improves children's wellbeing
- Understand what's stopping paternal engagement: from working hours to mum-focused marketing
- Tackling father's confidence in the parenting, cultural and societal expectations of their role
- Recognise the importance of staff attitudes in boosting engagement
- Overcoming additional disadvantage such as separated or young parents
- How we can mainstream 'dad-inclusive' practice
- Promote the role of mothers in encouraging father's involvement

Recommendations

- Actively: Invite, enrol, engage and INCLUDE dads
- Deliver child focused, family centred services
- ‘Father proof’ staff training
- ‘Father proof’ information for parents
- Ask, “Where’s Dad?”

Understanding

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Dad

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