Advancing the FDC Movement

Helping Dads Recover – Effective Strategies to Engage Fathers in Family Drug Courts

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Learning Objectives

• Why is engaging fathers in Family Drug Courts important?
• Why is there a need for gender responsive – speaking directly to men’s unique experiences and needs - approaches to supporting men and providing services?
• What are some strategies for engaging fathers?
“Fathers want to be involved in their children’s lives, but because of past experiences with law enforcement, absenteeism, the requirements of programs and services offered to/for the mother and the children, fathers have somehow gotten the message that the children would be better off without them being involved in the children’s lives.”

- Father, Focus Group, Minnesota, 2005
A Grievous Wound

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Why is Engaging Fathers Important?
The Costs of Father Absence

Children of father-absent homes are:

- Five times more likely to live in poverty
- Three times more likely to fail in school
- Two times more likely to develop emotional or behavioral problems
- Two times more likely to abuse drugs
- Two times more likely to be abused and neglected
- Two times more likely to become involved in crime
- Three times more likely to commit suicide

Substance Abuse Impact on Fatherhood

• Biological effects – physical health, personal well-being
• Low-quality relationships – increases marital stress, spousal abuse, child maltreatment, or neglect
• Negative father-infant interactions – lower levels of sensitivity, positive expression, verbalization
• Failure to fulfill major role obligations at work and home
• Legal problems – arrests, incarceration
• Reduced employability – drug criminal record; poor work performance

Source: Fathers and Substance Use, Father’s and Alcohol Abuse – Responsible Fatherhood Spotlight. US Department of Health and Human Services, 2008
The Benefits of Father Involvement

Children with involved fathers display:

- Better cognitive outcomes, even as infants
- Higher self-esteem and less depression as teenagers
- Higher grades, test scores, and overall academic achievement
- Lower levels of drug and alcohol use
- Higher levels of empathy and other pro-social behavior

Benefits for CWS Social Workers

• Broadens circle of family and informal supports and resources

• Engages paternal relatives as possible permanency options

• Positive well-being outcomes for child

• Promotes family and cultural connection

• Supports required reasonable efforts
Engaging Fathers Through Mothers

• Father involvement closely connected to relationship with mother
• One-sided advocacy for fathers’ rights increases polarization and tension
• “Team Parenting Model” with selected services and supports can minimize conflict and promote children’s best interest
• Family-Centered Treatment
• Early screening and assessment of family violence
Benefits for Mothers

• Overall positive outcomes for children’s well-being
• Additional support from father and paternal family
• Increase in mother’s patience, flexibility and emotional responsiveness toward child
• Successful co-parenting conveys important messages to child; commitment to family modeled for children
Strategies for Engaging Fathers
Engagement Defined

Engagement: The participation necessary to obtain optimal benefits from an intervention*

• An ongoing process, beginning at intake and continuing through aftercare

• Responsive to changing needs and situations of fathers

• Enhance father motivation

• Joint-responsibility and collaborative effort

• About long-term involvement and recovery

Higher involvement by fathers has been associated with:

- More reunifications and less adoptions
- Substantially lower likelihood of later maltreatment allegations
- Children exit foster care more quickly

Absent Father Myths

**MYTH**
- A threat, a liability, potentially violent
- Abusive towards children
- Uncooperative
- Unable to take responsibility
- Uncommitted to family life

**STRATEGY**
- Assume a desire to be involved
- Restore the father in the child's life
- Individualize each case
- Suspend judgments
- Make room for expressions of anger
Engagement as a Collaborative Effort

Child Welfare

Court

Treatment

• Each system shares the responsibility

• Each system has a unique role
### Examples: Roles & Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CWS</th>
<th>AOD</th>
<th>COURT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identify and locate fathers as early as possible</td>
<td>• Ensure treatment is gender-responsive, which means creating an environment through:</td>
<td>• Make father engagement a priority</td>
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<td>• Identify and engage paternal family</td>
<td>- site selection</td>
<td>• Identify fathers and determine priority</td>
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<td>• Facilitate quality father-child visits</td>
<td>- staff selection</td>
<td>• Monitor agency actions and practice</td>
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<td>• Provide comprehensive services (including job training, housing, public benefits)</td>
<td>- program development</td>
<td>• Ensure quality father-child visits</td>
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<td>• Recognize interpersonal barriers related to trust, power</td>
<td>- content and material</td>
<td>• Ensure fathers receive quality and responsive services</td>
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- Encourage interagency collaboration
Common Barriers to Engagement of Fathers

Organizational
- Accessibility, quality of services
- Practice and policies
- Agency culture
- Search, paternity establishment, notification efforts
- Multiple and conflicting requirements; work hours

Interpersonal
- Gender bias
- Culture, values
- Family relationships (ie. mother, children, social father)
- Attitude of staff, workers
- Family of origin issues

Environmental
- Housing
- Employment
- Child Support
- Health
- Legal issues
- Incarceration
- Transportation/Distance
- Community Support

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Non-Compliance or Ineffective Approach?

• Caseworkers reported offering services to fathers in over half of the cases (59%)
• Reported only 23% of fathers complied with services offered
• Other research has suggested that caseworkers’ communication may impede effective relationships with fathers
• Father may fail to adequately understand consequences of failure to comply
• Services being provided are not meeting needs

Judicial Role in Engagement of Fathers

• Make father engagement a priority
• Identify fathers and determine paternity
• Monitor agency actions and practice
• Encourage interagency collaboration
• Ensure quality father-child visits
• Ensure fathers receive gender-responsive services
Child Welfare’s Role in Engagement of Fathers

- Identify and locate fathers as early as possible
- Identify and engage paternal family
- Use strengths of traditional masculinity while addressing self-defeating beliefs about getting help
- Facilitate quality father-child visits
- Provide services that are responsive to needs (including job training, housing assistance, public benefits)
Recognize and acknowledge previous experience with child welfare

Transparency regarding agency’s involvement and father’s role in case process

Acknowledge power in SW position along with empowering the father
Drug Treatment’s Role in Engagement of Fathers

Ensure that treatment is gender-responsive, which means

• Creating an environment through:
  • site selection
  • staff selection
  • program development
  • content and material

• Reflecting an understanding of realities of women/men and girls/boys

• Addressing and responding to their strengths and challenges

Cross-Systems Responsibility

• Recruitment and training
• Intake process
• Input
• Accommodation
• Responsive programming


Promising Practices

• Family conferencing
• Family finding tools
• Focus groups for fathers
• Recovery support specialist
• Gender-responsive drug treatment
Recovery Specialist Function

Engaging men into entering treatment and supporting them through treatment completion

WHY?

Without treatment most parents with genuine substance abuse issues will most likely fail leading to increased time away from home, foster care etc.
Reduce costs of out-of-home placements and/or reduce time of children in foster care

Remove barriers and improve linkages between CWS and treatment to better serve clients

Improve the capacity of CWS to serve parents with substance use disorders

Increase collaboration between agencies

Ensure reasonable efforts
Three Standard Court Orders

- Treatment
- Drug and Alcohol Testing
- Recovery Support Groups

Specialists Contacts
Tips and Techniques: Treatment Engagement

- Primary purpose is to facilitate entry into treatment
- Upon assessment, help parent make phone call to treatment for initial appt
- Provide treatment documents such as brochure or program rules
- If known, provide parent with treatment days and times – written (pocket calendar is best)
- If needed, provide number, documentation etc. of public transportation
- Supply a map to treatment facility (best practice - take them to facility the first time)
Tips and Techniques: Substance Abuse Specialist Contacts

These serve as the foundation for the relationship between parent and specialist.

Should begin with intensity and frequency and taper down as case progresses.

Meetings should attend to parent needs – treatment, home, work, etc.

Utilize these contacts to collect paperwork and needed info.

Allow specialist discretion for flexibility.
Helping Men Recover

Gender Responsive Treatment
# Evolving Treatment Approaches

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<tr>
<th>Generic Treatment</th>
<th>Gender Differences</th>
<th>Gender Specific</th>
<th>Gender Responsive</th>
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<tr>
<td>Male as client</td>
<td>Biological</td>
<td>Separate facilities</td>
<td>Trauma informed</td>
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<td>Psychosocial</td>
<td>Child-care or child live-in</td>
<td>Strengths-based</td>
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Emerging Paradigm: Values-Based Services

Values-based services

- Gender-responsive
- Trauma-informed
- Culturally competent
- Recovery-oriented
Men’s Integrated Treatment

- Male psychological development
- Addiction
- Trauma
Men’s Integrated Treatment

- Male psychological development
- Addiction
- Trauma
Relational-Cultural Theory

Connection and development

Disconnection

Socio-cultural disconnect

Privilege and domination
Societal Factors – Manhood & Fatherhood

• Discouraging the expression of emotions
  - “Real men don’t cry”
• Anger is an acceptable male emotion
• Dominant, disconnected and dangerous
• Being physically strong
• Ambition and competition
• Good occupational functioning
• Athletic ability
• Economic success
• Sexual conquests
Barriers to Men Seeking Help

• Admitting to a problem
• Difficulty in asking for help and depending on others
• Being perceived as “weak”
• Fear of intimacy and vulnerability
• Sexualization of females and homophobia
• Scarcity of treatment approaches for men
Gender and Abuse

• For some boys, the process of becoming a man is inherently abusive and may result in trauma

• Violence is not only tolerated, but expected, and even glorified

• The culture of masculinity is embedded in abuse and violence – from home, school, media, and peer groups
Men’s Integrated Treatment

- Male psychological development
- Addiction
- Trauma
Men, Violence, and Trauma

- 75% of student suspensions, expulsions, grade failures, special education referrals, school violence casualties, and all other assaults are boys.
- 70% of suicides are boys/men.
- 75% of teenage suicides are boys.
- 80% of the homeless are boys/men.
- 80% of homicide victims are men.
- 93% of prison inmates are men.
- 99% of executed prisoners are men (in the last decade, 700 men and 10 women).
- Men are 2 to 5 times more likely to develop a substance use disorder.

* Source: Lyme et al, 2008
**Process of Trauma**

**TRAUMATIC EVENT**
Overwhelms the Physical & Psychological Systems
Intense Fear, Helplessness or Horror

**RESPONSE TO TRAUMA**
Fight or Flight, Freeze, Altered State of Consciousness, Body Sensations, Numbing, Hyper-vigilance, Hyper-arousal

**SENSITIZED NERVOUS SYSTEM**
CHANGES IN BRAIN

**CURRENT STRESS**
Reminders of Trauma, Life Events, Lifestyle

**PAINFUL EMOTIONAL STATE**

**RETREAT**

**SELF-DESTRUCTIVE ACTION**
Addictive Disorders
Eating Disorder
Deliberate
Self-Harm
Suicidal Actions

**DESTRUCTIVE ACTION**
Aggression
Violence
Rages

* Source: Stephanie Covington
Trauma & Masculinity

• The path to manhood is paved by emotional trauma

• For most men – ignoring/denying pain is to be a man

• There is no way to see men as “victims” and still as men
How Men Respond to Trauma

- Men suffer abuse
- Suffer alone with the abuse
- Many become abusers

Male abuse victims tend to identify with the abuser as a means of reclaiming personal power and attempting to secure safety.
Trauma-Informed Services:

- Take the trauma into account
- Avoid triggering trauma reactions and/or traumatizing the individual
- Adjust behavior of counselors, other staff and organization to support individual’s coping capacity
- Allow survivors to manage their trauma symptoms successfully so that they are able to access, retain and benefit from the services

Source: Fallot, Roger, PhD & Maxine Harris, PhD. Trauma-Informed Services: A Self-Assessment and Planning Protocol, March 2006
Core Principles of Trauma-Informed Care

- **Safety**: Ensuring physical and emotional safety
- **Trustworthiness**: Maximizing trustworthiness, making tasks clear, and maintaining appropriate boundaries
- **Choice**: Prioritizing consumer choice and control
- **Collaboration**: Maximizing collaboration and sharing of power with consumers
- **Empowerment**: Prioritizing consumer empowerment and skill-building

*Source: Fallot & Harris, 2006*
Men’s Integrated Treatment

- Male psychological development
- Addiction
- Trauma
Addiction: What We Have Learned

- Brain chemistry
- Stages of change
- Motivational interviewing vs. confrontation
- Client-centered
- Strength-based
- Solution-oriented
- Relapse prevention
- Managing a chronic disease
Men in Treatment

- We rarely acknowledge to men that the therapeutic process may be incompatible with how they were raised.
- It can be remarkably healing to place their addiction and recovery within the context of their socialization as men.
Men in Treatment

While all men have relationships, and these get some attention in treatment, we do not typically focus on men’s relationships - helping them develop the skills necessary to have healthy relationships.
Men in Treatment

Sexuality is rarely addressed directly in addiction treatment, despite being a fundamental aspect of male and female behavior.
Men in Treatment

• Spirituality traditionally a core element in was most addiction treatment programs
• But has been marginalized since CBT became the predominant therapeutic approach
Helping Men Recover

• Inspired by Dr. Covington’s groundbreaking *Helping Women Recover* (released in January 2011 from Jossey-Bass)
• Authors: Dr. Stephanie Covington, Dan Griffin, and Rick Dauer
• Community and Criminal Justice versions
• Four Modules
  • Self
  • Relationships
  • Sexuality
  • Spirituality
“Recovery is more than sobriety. Read this book if you are a man who wants to experience the promise and possibility of healthy recovery.”

William Cope Moyers, Author of *Broken*
Are You Father-Friendly?

• Father & Male Involvement: Service Delivery Assessment (2003)
  

• “The Father Friendly Check-Up” for Child Welfare and Organizations (National Fatherhood Initiative) – available at:
  
Focus Groups for Fathers

1. During your involvement in the Family Drug Court, do you agree that your use of alcohol and other drugs affected your family, and impaired your ability to parent your child(ren)? If yes, how so?

2. What services and supports during FDC participation that worked well for you in dealing with your recovery?

3. What would have been helpful to you in your recovery that was not provided during your participation in the FDC?

4. How can the FDC program, CWS, court system and drug treatment services improve on engaging families better?
Resources

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

www.fatherhoodqic.org

National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

www.fatherhood.gov

National Responsible Fatherhood Capacity Building Initiative

www.fatherhood.org/grant

Fathers and Families Coalition of America

www.azffc.org
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