

**BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS
AND PROGRAMS WORKING TO END MEN’S VIOLENCE:
AN INTERVIEW WITH JACQUELYN BOGGESS, JERRY TELLO,
AND OLIVER WILLIAMS**

INTRODUCTION

A fundamental goal of the Building Partnerships to End Men’s Violence Initiative is to include more men in efforts to reduce sexual and domestic violence—to engage all types of men in ways that have meaning for them and their relationships. Clearly, violence prevention efforts such as this have much to learn from intervention and direct service programs about how to work with men. These programs have rich experience working with different types of men in different environments. Collectively, fatherhood programs offer vast experience working with men on family relationships and providing forums for men to talk about their issues. There is no reason for violence prevention efforts to reinvent the wheel when they can learn from this experience with fathers. Fatherhood is a special entryway into the world of men. A defining feature of many fatherhood programs is a focus on how men function in relationships. Through thoughtful exploration of the problems and potential of fatherhood, issues of family violence may arise.

Violence prevention efforts and fatherhood programs share some common goals, including active and engaged communities; stronger, more nurturing relationships; more flexibility in gender norms and behaviors; greater equality overall; and more holistic responses to violence. However, there are also a number of possible points of tension between fatherhood programs and violence prevention and intervention efforts. These challenges include funding restrictions, limited capacity of projects to address multiple problems simultaneously, and inadequate assessment processes to help service providers identify immediate needs and deeper “wounds” within families. The simple reality is that many children have ongoing contact with their fathers after domestic violence has occurred. With the right interventions, men who have been violent can heal and develop more responsible relationships with their children.

This paper is comprised of an interview with three experienced practitioners who have been working to successfully bring violence prevention work into the fatherhood context. Following the interview are five case studies that also make this link: 1) Dads and Daughters, a national organization that undertakes education and advocacy for fathers and daughters; 2) the Restorative Parenting Program, which helps restore the relationship between fathers and their children after episodes of violence in the home; 3) the Center on Fathers, Families, and Public Policy, which collaborates on social welfare policy with advocates for battered women and for low-income fathers; 4) the Fathering after Violence Project, which is developing tools for batterer intervention programs to use to help fathers who have been violent to have responsible relationships with their children; and 5) Men on the Move, which empowers men to be better fathers, sons, husbands, lovers and friends.

The interviewees distinguish among the different types of fatherhood groups: responsible fatherhood, father involvement, and fathers' rights groups. Through a review of the history of the different types of fatherhood programs, they discuss the subsequent tensions and motivations of the three groups—and thus how they are positioned to begin to take on violence prevention work. For example, quite separate from the fathers' rights groups, grassroots father involvement groups grew more organically within communities as a response to the specific needs of men in that community. Yet when the grassroots groups receive outside funding to undertake responsible fatherhood activities such as child support, inherent contradictions are created for these programs. And these contradictions may steer these groups away from community problems like violence.

Much of the interview also centers on the notion that the issues faced by fathers are not discrete from the issues facing families and communities. Men may have some distinct service needs as fathers. However, the connections between fathers' issues and family/community issues become clear once one begins to identify some of the underlying causes of the problems these men are facing—for example, joblessness or poverty. Thus, it is important not to pigeon-hole men into specific boxes as clients with singular problems. Men need to be understood in the context of their environment, community culture, social positions and history. In connecting fatherhood work with violence prevention efforts, men's relationships become the focus—relationships to their partners and families, and also their relationship to violence.

There are fewer stigmas for men to participate in fatherhood programs than if they are mandated to attend a batterer intervention program. Fatherhood programs help men see the good in themselves and value them even if they have done something wrong. These programs focus on helping men improve their lives and relationships. This focus creates the ideal opportunity to raise awareness of domestic violence and its harms. These programs can get men to hold other men accountable for their behavior and to take a stand against men being violent. Fatherhood programs that take a holistic approach will have greater latitude to include domestic violence in their work than will those programs funded to address a distinct need.

There seems to be general agreement that violence prevention must be part of fatherhood work and that a focus on healthy relationships and healthy fathering should be part of violence intervention programs. However many conversations need to take place to determine how best this should happen. We need to be careful what we ask fatherhood programs to do and be aware of their capacities and limitations. We need to recognize the challenges funding requirements can pose and engage funders to think more holistically about the issues men, families, and communities face. We hope this online discussion serves as a forum to begin these conversations.

THE INTERVIEW

Dean Peacock, a consultant for the Family Violence Prevention Fund's Building Partnerships to End Men's Violence Initiative, conducted an interview in early 2003 with three practitioners in the fatherhood field. The interviewees are: Jacquelyn Boggess of

the Center for Fathers, Families and Public Policy; Jerry Tello of the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute; and Oliver Williams of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community.

Dean: Let's talk a bit about the fatherhood field. I have heard both Jacquelyn and Oliver talk about three distinct groupings of fatherhood organizations.

Jacquelyn: I think for a lot of people the immediate response to fatherhood groups is fathers' rights organizations, but that is not the kind of organization that we are talking about collaborating with. Those in fathers' rights organizations tend to be men that have access to the courts. They tend to be men that have more money. They tend to be men who are going to work their situations out in a courtroom and, frankly, do not attend the kind of fatherhood groups that we are talking about. That is the fathers' rights group.

The other kind of fatherhood organization I would call "father involvement." They are the kind that we are looking for; they are natural organizations that spring up in groups of men who want to help other men in the community and have that "community feel." They are a place for men to go to talk about what they have been going through, in their work and in their relationships.

Father involvement groups sprang up a long time ago, without much money. I think they existed on a shoestring with volunteers, people just wanting to be helpful and to change their communities. I believe that is how they were created.

There is a third category of fatherhood groups—responsible fatherhood organizations. Some of the federal legislation in the late 1990s sought to create and economically support this type of fatherhood program. These organizations address financial matters like child support and joblessness. Violence prevention programs are also collaborating with this type of fatherhood organization.

So there are three types: the ones that sprang up in order to provide a service, the ones that have been created in order to provide jobs and child support help, and the fathers' rights groups.

Dean: Responsible fatherhood programs are typically newer and often funded by the government. You have talked before about some of the dilemmas that those programs face, some of the contradictions in their work. Can you say a little bit about that?

Jacquelyn: I think the dilemmas have to do with goals and objectives. Sometimes it is difficult to meet the goals of community support. Sometimes it is difficult to support men and their families, and to gain the trust of men who come through the door. That is the most important thing; organizations survive because the men in the community trust the men who run the organizations. Some of the responsible fatherhood grant money that has come down for some of these programs is asking for things that sometimes contradict

that trust. That is. “We will get you a job, but then we are going to take all the money from your job in order to pay your child support.”

Fatherhood organizations that were created in order to help people in the community have an inclination to help the men with their serious problems, which include violence—not just domestic violence, but other types as well. I think that program staff know it is happening in the community and they want to respond to it. They know someone has to say, “That violence is not right, and needs to be stopped.” Sometimes people who run these fatherhood organizations and have received an infusion of money have objectives that they must meet in the areas of paternity establishment and child support, in order to satisfy their grant requirements. That kind of work is pulling them away from dealing with some of these violence-related issues. In fact, it is never written in a grant that program staff are supposed to help the men with these issues or go over to his house and sit there for six hours while to help with what's going on in his family. Those are never the goals and objectives stated in the grant, so some of that work is not getting done. But then this pool of the money is important because so many of these programs are poor. Open doors with some internal contradictions in services are better than not being able to serve the community at all, without the money.

Dean: And so the grant sometimes pushes programs to become much more involved in monitoring whether the guy is going to work and whether the money is going back to the program and so on. And that is where people have made this distinction sometimes between “deadbeat dads” and “dead broke dads.” I know you have been part of this broader national discussion about the importance of building alliances among people who are working with fathers and people who are working to end men's violence. Can you each talk a little bit about what you feel is important about bringing these two fields closer together?

Jacquelyn: Fathers have to be a part of this because if we are working with families to make them healthier, then we have to work with fathers—because fathers are part of the family.

Oliver: I think that sometimes we have had these narrow compartments that have shaped how we have thought about and done violence work. We have had this perspective that what we do is to help battered women leave the person who has been abusive to them. Once we have managed to find a place for her to be safe, then our job is done. But sometimes battered women return to their partners, or maintain relationships with the fathers of their children. So sometimes you have an ongoing, co-parenting relationship. For us not to attend to what that means in terms of safety and accountability means that we leave something out that is a reality for some battered women. A number of battered women do need to get away from their partners. But many maintain co-parenting relationships, and some women want their children to maintain a relationship with the children's father. They want their ex-partner to take responsibility for and contribute to the well being of their children.

Jerry: Well, it is not the best perspective to begin with whether or not we should build partnerships across programs. Community members do not separate themselves based on the programs that they go to. The community bases its connections on its needs. Fathers and brothers and uncles and mothers and daughters and grandmothers are all connected, and they all have issues, and they all have wounds, and they all have strengths. What happens sometimes is that we, in our limited insight as practitioners, begin to separate the community based on our needs. Based on our funding and based on our perception. And sometimes what that ends up doing is contributing to the trauma, and contributing to the isolation, and inhibiting the healing and the strengthening that could be going on.

I think it really behooves us to pay more attention to the community. Additionally, when we are talking about family violence, even if it is in the best interests of the woman to separate from the man, she still has sons that need to be raised. These sons are going to have to deal with their relationship with their father. We see so many single mothers that come in with emotional wounds that have not healed and they have boys to raise. So, unless we work collectively to deal with violence as an issue, a community issue, whether the scope is fatherhood or domestic violence or child abuse, we are contributing to the inability of the community to heal and strengthen and move on.

Dean: And so how do we develop strategies that better respond to the needs of the community? What would a community-based approach look like that attempts to assist fathers to be both good partners and good parents?

Jerry: I think that looking at the whole does not mean there are not parts of the whole that function sometimes separately and sometimes interdependently. But, regardless of what part of the circle you operate from, it's important that you always have the perspective of the total circle. In the programs that we do and train people to do, regardless of whether we are calling it fatherhood, anger management, domestic violence services or rites of passage, there are issues and themes that are very much the same across the board.

But it depends on what part of the circle you enter and what type of baggage you carry. Some men come in who are young fathers, and they have certain issues that they are dealing with. Then we get court-ordered men and, if you look at their history, they have generations of baggage. And so they come in from a different part of the circle. But wherever they come from, whether it is little boys or young fathers or men who have been violent, everything is looked at from the center of the circle, which is maintaining sacred relationships.

We should all have the same focus. We may deliver different programs based on the needs of the community. Some men come in because they need a job. But even in that, they've got to go home. So part of their job preparation has to also include work on their family relationships, because if things do not go well there, they are not going to have a job for very long. We need to have a similar focus of purpose, regardless of what type of program we are doing.

Many women, especially women who have experienced violence by men, do not necessarily trust that fatherhood programs have the perspective of understanding the wounds, understanding the severity of the issues and of the violence. That is where sometimes the whole circle cannot come together. That is where we have to do more work, in terms of sensitivity, understanding, and accountability across the board.

Dean: In describing the work that you are doing currently, it sounds like men can come in to address a range of different needs that they might have, whether it is a job, issues related to being a young father, or violence.

Jerry: We get the whole range of things. Even with a young boy we are talking about sacred relationships, the significance of how they relate to their mothers, how they relate to their sisters, how they relate to each other. We get young men referred because of violence. We get fathers who come in because they are getting ready to get married. Then we get fathers that are court-ordered because of child abuse. And in all cases we are dealing with pretty much the same stuff, each with a little different emphasis. We get mothers who bring us their young sons because they are out of control. And we are still dealing with the same stuff.

We get men who come in because they have legal issues. They need some paternity counseling. We do court-ordered supervised visits because the men really cannot be alone with their children. But at the same time, in preparing them for the visit and afterwards, we talk to them about what gets triggered when they interact with their children. We are dealing with men entering at every point of the circle, but all filtered through the same set of principles that we feel are needed to develop good relationships and heal. These are the things that we feel you need to understand and integrate in your life.

Dean: That is a significantly different approach than most batterer intervention programs take, where the man comes in typically because he has been referred by the criminal justice system. I'm wondering whether you think that is a difference between the two fields—the fatherhood programs often provide a wider range of services that make it easier for men to come in through the doors because there is less stigma.

Oliver: Yes, I do think that that is true. What happens is that there is an assessment that takes place to figure out what the man's needs are. When program staff do an assessment, they figure out that there is a range of things that this person needs, and then they try to respond to that range of needs. Some of the really deep, good programs will do cross-training and will include domestic violence even when they are focusing primarily on substance abuse or unemployment. So it is cross-training, doing an assessment of needs and issues that come up for the person, and then responding to them.

If a person gets wrap-around services, in each module they will get some information about a range of issues. For example, if they are looking for employment, they will also

get information about substance abuse and domestic violence. On the other hand, domestic violence programs often do not expand the range of issues because they are there to talk about the violence, primarily. Sometimes programs may talk about parenting—not fatherhood, specifically, but parenting.

In the fatherhood programs that I have seen, they are trying to deal with the person and with healing and restoration. I think domestic violence issues need to be part of that process. More and more fatherhood programs are including information about domestic violence. I do not know if the reverse is true, if batterers' intervention programs are including fatherhood information, even though participants may include the same kind of person who would be a good candidate for a fatherhood program.

Jacquelyn: I would agree with everything that Oliver and Jerry just said. In my experience, Jerry's program provides more services than many. Some programs were started before this fatherhood boom began. They are community programs that happened naturally, with people wanting to help each other. Those kinds of programs are providing services for men where they assess men to see what they need to ensure that they are good, productive members of that community. We have a lot of programs, a lot of fatherhood programs even, that started with one or two men who wanted to help the fathers in the community.

That is the kind of program that most of the new fatherhood programs and batterers' intervention programs can learn from. Some fatherhood programs might have been created in this “boom time,” and have to go backward and learn some of that original community seed sowing that the earlier programs have done. As Oliver was saying, there are some fatherhood programs that not only do not address domestic violence, but also do not address some of the men's other urgent needs.

They certainly do not go as deep as what I have heard Jerry describe in his program—dealing with places where these men have been wounded. It is not just that batterers' intervention programs can learn from fatherhood programs. The way I would put it is that new programs can learn from programs that sprung up from a desire by some community members to help each other.

Jerry: Again, it is about understanding the total circle. Some programs that specifically look at fatherhood involvement, education, and all of that, may not have a total sensitivity and understanding to the devastating effect that violence can have on relationships, and the steps needed to ensure safety and accountability.

In some fatherhood programs, the premise is that with education and with motivation men can be better fathers. But when wounds are very deep, lifelong violent wounds that have come from fathers and grandfathers and great grandfathers, generations deep, those wounds do not heal so quickly. Those wounds do not heal just from motivation and education. Sometimes it takes a deeper type of intervention and processing for more accountable, healthy relationships to develop. I'm very concerned about getting generic

fatherhood programs that do motivation and education to also try to heal men who have very significant wounds.

I think an assessment process is very important. But it is really acknowledging where the man has traveled in his life and what he carries, both in terms of strengths and in terms of baggage as well. This is very significant because I would hate to move to just saying, "OK, every program can do everything now." We have men who are referred by the court specifically for batterers' intervention; in these cases, the assessment process has real legal significance. But even in these cases, the assessment should look at all of the relationships those men have—as fathers, as partners, as friends.

Dean: Ideally, if we think about responsible fatherhood programs being more sensitive to and more proactive about the issue of domestic violence, and batterer intervention programs being more thoughtful about fatherhood, what would we want to see first? Let me ask about fatherhood programs. What would we want to see fatherhood programs doing to address men's violence?

Oliver: Whenever you get fatherhood programs or any program in the community to pay attention to issues around violence, it is a prevention effort. With batterer intervention programs you have mostly mandatory participation, so they include only the cases that society manages to catch versus all the cases that exist.

It is important to examine the baggage that men carry around, but also to recognize that there is a standard that healthy men live up to. This is something that we need to address and include in definitions of manhood. One important element of fathering is having a full definition of healthy manhood. This definition has to include your relationships and how you treat people in those relationships, how you treat your partner, and how you treat your children, etc. One of my struggles in the field is that this definition is not included in enough batterers' treatment programs. There is a fear of collusion and a fear that what men do together in batterers' programs, or even in fatherhood programs, is to bash women. As a matter of fact, I'm clear that a lot of men do act this way because they carry a lot of baggage. Some men are trying to confront these men and get them to examine these behaviors. When men hold each other accountable, good things can happen.

Dean: I want to come back to this question of the fear of collusion that you mentioned just a moment ago. But I want to stay for a second with what it is we'd like fatherhood programs to be doing to address violence against women. You mentioned prevention, Oliver, and then you switched to talking a little bit about the ways in which responsible fatherhood programs can work with men who have not yet been caught in the criminal justice system.

So a man shows up at a fatherhood program, and he has a history of domestic violence that is either current or recent. What would you want them to do? Is it a question of referring people out? How might those referral systems work?

Oliver: I think it is both working within the fatherhood program and referring out for other services. I have heard people say that they are not equipped to handle domestic violence issues within their fathering program. I have also heard people say that they are afraid that if they bring domestic violence up in the fatherhood context, the man might not return to the program. But my experience has been that in any program in which you are working with men, if you can confront them about substance abuse and unemployment and appropriate interaction with children, there is also room for honesty about domestic violence. I think that sometimes these men respect the honesty, feel they are being nurtured, and recognize that you can help them be more responsible.

Jacquelyn: This is really an important question for me. We have to be very careful about what we say that fatherhood programs can or should or will do. I also agree with Oliver that when a guy comes in and has a recent history of domestic violence, something has to be done.

It is so important for us to slow down. I have had conversations with focus groups, with fatherhood programs, and many of them want something to happen around a particular issue. They see it as part of their daily existence and they want to do something about it. But, again, let me take this opportunity to ask people to slow down. We are not yet in a place of collaboration. I think you described where we are, Oliver, when you said that everybody agrees that the collaboration has to be done. I would really caution us not to come up with concrete standards or plans yet. I think there is so much talk that has to happen first.

Practitioners in fatherhood programs keep telling me with regard to domestic violence, “I’m afraid. I’m afraid to do anything because I do not want to make things worse. I do not want to mess up.” That is not where we want to be—the place where they are too scared to do anything at all. In some cases maybe that is where we want to be, because we could mess up if we start too soon. I think the place we unquestionably are right now is a wonderful place, where we are just starting to talk about it. I know people want to move this, want action and want steps they can take. They want plans and they want best practices. But I would really caution that we slow down and talk about this over and over and over again.

Dean: And maybe I’m asking you to say something that you are saying we are not ready to say yet, but what do you think the substance of that conversation needs to include?

Jacquelyn: The conversation needs to address whether fatherhood programs should refer out for domestic violence services, for example. Is that the way we should do it most often? If we are not going to refer out, does that mean we need to have a certified person who works in the fatherhood program? Does referring out work? Oliver and I were in a meeting where people said if you refer someone out for services, you lose them. If you are going to do provide services in-house, what does that mean? Does it mean, given what we’ve said about community and holistic approach, that we should not have a thing

called a fatherhood program? Do we need to have community programs where you get your fatherhood help here and you get your batterer intervention services there? Maybe that means we need to call it batterers' intervention and keep it separate from fatherhood programs. I do not know. Those are not the answers. They are the questions.

Jerry: I think there are some things we can agree on—that violence in relationships is not acceptable, and that we all need to do something about it. So that can be a resounding common voice, regardless of where we are in the circle. Whether we are doing an intake or working with somebody to get them a job, or working in a teen fatherhood program or a batterers' program, we can all agree on that.

We should realize that it is all about relationships, too. Part of our connection with the community is to check out their relationships. And if in that process we find that violence is a part of those relationships, then we need to do something. The “something” may vary, but each of us is better prepared to do that something if we are connected with people at every part of the circle. If you are in the fatherhood field, then you need to have somebody connected to child welfare and to batterers' intervention and to the rest of the parts of the circle. But you still need to do something.

That is why a lot of what we do is what we call community education, community healing. We go out and talk to fathers about the significance of their relationship with their kids. We are asking them to have positive, non-violent relationships. Even when we are just talking to fathers about reading to their children, we talk about how they can make that relationship with their children the best possible.

We need to recognize that everyone in the community needs to take some responsibility, and then be connected to those people who are better equipped to do what you cannot. As a man, I must be responsible for the relationships that I come in contact with. If I see something that is harmful to any relationship, I must step in. A primary responsibility is to help people to have harmonious relationships.

Dean: Oliver, I want to come back to Jacquelyn's point raised a moment ago, about where we are in that conversation about collaboration.

Oliver: I think that we do need to talk more about capacity building. It is important to recognize that there are some things that we can all agree on. So if there is a man who talks about being violent or inappropriate, then other men need to stand up and say something about that.

The issue of domestic violence needs to be part of the repertoire of the people who are working in fatherhood programs and there has got to be an assessment about capacity in this area. I do think about capacity and the fact that there may be different capacities of people to do more intensive things. Different people and programs have differing capacity to handle the intensity of domestic violence work. This needs to be acknowledged and discussed. And different skills are required depending on where the

men are in the process of taking responsibility for their behavior. Some men have a really hard time taking responsibility for their own violence, and some have a hard time speaking up about other people's violence.

So I think that domestic violence must be part of fatherhood work, and fatherhood work must be part of batterers' programs. In fatherhood programs someone needs to say, "No, this is not appropriate. This is what healthy men do in relationships." Someone needs to get men to examine their choices regarding their relationships. Sometimes men talk about a relationship that they know is not healthy, but they stay in it anyway.

Dean: Given our goal here of promoting partnership, promoting collaboration in a way that allows fathers, wherever they are, to be better fathers and better partners, what do you think are the kind of key issues that you'd want to make sure we cover before we close this out?

Jerry: One goal is to promote better, more sacred relationships in families. Another is for programs to do our own self-assessment of what we bring to these issues. We may be more adept in one area than another—because of funding, training, an organizational mandate, or how we started in the field. We have focused on the fatherhood programs and some of the things that they do well, but also recognize that maybe they are not so well equipped to deal with certain domestic violence issues.

I would also want to mention that there is a growing number of batterers' intervention practitioners that only specialize in those services. They come in as contract employees and run the classes. My concern is that men do not heal under those circumstances. Accountability and the development of good relationships do not happen in a two-hour setting. I think that sometimes when we are focusing on the violence and stopping the violence, we only pay attention to that part of the man.

Oliver: To expand on what you are saying, in some programs the focus might be on facilitating transformation, or on bringing good health to a person who is not healthy. In fathering programs, they value the men. There is a focus, despite the baggage a man brings, on the value of the person. Even when men have done egregious things, there is still a focus on what is valuable about that person.

In batterers' treatment, I do not think that we value the person because I think it is more about accountability. The fact is that people do have to be held accountable for the bad things that they've done to someone else. It is important to be able to hold people accountable and to confront them. But one of the things you have to do is value the person. Fatherhood programs do this in a way that batterer intervention programs have not.

Dean: One of the things we have not talked about much are the safety concerns that come up quite frequently when we talk about men who have been violent staying connected to the women through the children. So we want the man to be a good father to

the kids, but he has a history of violence. What systems do we put in place to keep the survivors safe?

Oliver: We must recognize that there are questions around safety. In a fathering program, just like a batterers' program, if a person is going to be harmful to themselves or to someone else, you have got to report the case. In visitation centers and other places, we have to think about the potential harm that somebody could do. We have to put this on the table. In criminal court, or dependency or family court, we have to look at what a person has done to really change their behavior. We have to ask the question, "What is the evidence of change?" And I'm not so sure that we ask this question often enough.

Dean: This reminds me of a comment David Adams made in a meeting in Boston, where he said a lot of the men who are in the batterer intervention programs and groups that he runs talk about their commitment to their children, talk about their involvement in their children's lives, and yet, when asked, do not really know very much about their children's lives.

Jacquelyn: I presented at a workshop, and the participants were all people who worked in domestic violence and related fields. I was presenting with a fatherhood program. One of the things that struck me during that presentation was that the participants were open and willing to learn and listen about fatherhood programs, and wanted to sign up to do the collaborations. But then as we talked more about the specifics, I noticed questions were being asked as if this fatherhood program was a batterer intervention program.

I think it is important to note that fatherhood programs are filled with men who have battered yesterday, men who battered ten years ago, men who have never hurt anyone, and men who potentially might hurt someone down the road. We have that whole array of people. Yet the way that this was being discussed was as if it were a batterer intervention program, full of men who had recently been violent. We are missing an opportunity if we do not recognize that fatherhood programs do not just talk to men who actively batter or are abusive. They work with men across a spectrum, and that allows for a wider conversation. It is about relationships. It is about prevention, too. And I think people often respond as if it is only about intervention with violent men.

Dean: That is a very useful distinction. It seems like part of what you are saying is. "Let's not confuse fatherhood programs with post-crisis, criminal justice system-mandated intervention programs. That is not what they are." So what messages do men in fatherhood programs get about their relationships with their kids and safety for battered women?

Jerry: I think it is about redefining what the expectations of honorable relationships are. That definition needs to very clearly specify that violence is not included. But it must go beyond that to nurturance. I think that is something that many batterer intervention programs do not do. They talk about prevention of violence and go through exercises to

move men away from the violence, but these steps do not necessarily take men to the nurturing part. We need to do that work.

We need to be accountable, all of us across the board, to helping men and women and families maintain that sense of balance and harmony. Where healing and intervention are necessary, then we need to do that. And accountability is really important. Oliver also mentioned something about reporting. What we talk about is report and support. In the best of fatherhood programs, you only see somebody for several hours. But the community sees them the rest of the time. When you have a community that begins to take care of its members and keeps people accountable, then I think we have a better chance of men staying away from violence and moving more toward sacred and harmonious relationships.

We want children to see men doing this, so the children can also aspire to have those kinds of relationships. We need to have dialogue across programs to recognize that people come in from different doors, and whatever door they come in from, we all need to be talking to them about similar things.

Dean: What gets conveyed is what a man's role might be in the home, how he provides support to his partner and his kids. But are there concrete activities that men might work through to gain a better understanding of what gender equity might look like in the home and what responsible fatherhood might look like with his kids?

Jerry: What we tell men is. "You've got to show up. Be present." That is very hard for some men, especially some men of color, who get questioned and checked all day long and have historically. Just to show up, to be present with your total spirit, is a major thing. We talk about being present in the life of your relationship.

After you show up, you have got to be able to pay attention. Pay attention to what your partner needs. Pay attention to what your role should be. Pay attention to when you need to speak up, when you need to be quiet, when you need to be attentive, when you can be nurturing and when you need to back off a little bit and give some space. Then you have got to give your heart. You have got to give your love. Do it with love. Do not do it with hate. Do not do it with anger. You have got to do it with love. And love sometimes means shutting up. Sometimes it means you follow. Sometimes it means being patient. Sometimes it means speaking up, and sometimes it means taking the lead or taking a risk. Finally, we tell men to give it up. Giving it up means spiritually looking to a greater source, or recognizing that you are not in control. Forget about control. It is about walking with others, putting out your hand, and being a partner that is across from another partner, being a partner to your child, a partner to your relationship, a partner in your community.

Oliver: That is an interesting thing, Jerry, because it is the idea of balance. That notion appears in conversations about what manhood means for African American men. To

keep your vitality, you must have balance. You cannot let one emotion or facet of your being constantly overtake you.

Dean: Any last comments you feel like you want to close out with?

Jerry: People from different roots have their own rhythm and their own song, and I think we need to honor that because the violence or the pain that we bring to relationships comes through a certain history. Therefore, when we are attempting to reconnect people or heal people, we need to respect their culture and their roots, their ethnicity, traditions and customs.

Oliver: We are dealing with people who carry different baggage, who change at different paces, and who heal at different paces. I do not know how to deal with this because there is no language for this in batterers' treatment. But I think in fathering programs, because they serve such a wide spectrum of men, there is.

Sometimes when we talk about batterers' treatment, we say, "Once a batterer, always a batterer." That has influenced the way that we approach the work. We have to find a range of ways to reach this population, and I do not believe that we have developed all the ways that we can reach them. We have to find different and better ways to identify and engage men who may be violent and help prevent the problem. And maybe this is a thing that I get from fathering programs. I think that there is hope.

1. MEN ON THE MOVE

HISTORY

Men on the Move (MOM), a spirit-based organization in Hyattsville, Maryland, is designed to empower men to be better fathers, sons, husbands, lovers and friends. MOM serves the diverse needs of men as they address issues of developing relationships with themselves and others, and builds support groups to facilitate their healing and growth. The major focus of MOM is to provide support for men who are engaged in the challenges that are part of the Journey of Manhood—a journey men often engage in alone because masculinity dictates that they face their challenges single-handedly. Men are the lone hunters, providers, and at all costs must keep their hurt and pain to themselves. Adeyemi Bandele, Executive Director of MOM, admits, "The pain and anger that so many men experience has not been unfamiliar to me. My father left home when I was about 13. I completely shut him out of my life until I was an adult. My current wife shared a spiritual principle with me, which was that the work the Creator gives you to do usually has to do with your own "stuff." I am the father of seven children—six boys and one girl. So I have had to walk the talk with my children." MOM recognizes the value and importance of an intergenerational mix when working with males, allowing for a recycling of ideas and for young men to experience older men in a setting without the masks of ego and fear. The targeted population is, therefore, males from the ages of 14 to the elderly.

This case study details the various services Men on the Move offers to fulfill its goals, examines strategies for resolving the conflicts inherent in both challenging and supporting men in their healing and growth, and offers anecdotes from one of the services, A Gathering of Men, as evidence of the value of such work.

SERVICES OFFERED

Men on the Move offers an array of services designed to support fathers and families in their growth and development.

- A Gathering of Men creates a climate where men gather to develop the practice of meeting to share challenges, as well as successes.
- Similar to A Gathering of Men, A Gathering of the Family examines the impact of relationships on parents and their children when they are involved.
- In the Teen Dads Workshop, young fathers learn the developmental stages of a child, how to relate to the baby's mother, financial and emotional support, rights regarding visitation, and caring for the baby.
- Fathers and Sons: A Celebration and Healing offers fathers and sons the opportunity to share in celebrating healthy, wholesome father/son relationships and assists in the healing process for challenged relationships.

BALANCING CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT

If an organization is trying to achieve change within a body of people, how does it realize the balance necessary between challenging those people and supporting them? How do the services listed above both challenge men to be better fathers, sons, husbands, lovers and friends, while at the same time supporting and addressing their needs? Adeyemi Bandele describes some of the ways his organization challenges men: "Relationships, parenting, and habits are the issues the men find most challenging. Now, we view that men becoming primary caretakers has been seen as a non-traditional role for men. However, here we see this as a new paradigm for men. We particularly encourage men to be very active in the lives of the boys when they reach the age of 12. We do not permit men to express "she made me do it" remarks. Responsibility and choices are key issues that we encourage men to face. I suspect that some of this may be challenging traditional understandings these men have."

Bandele is very clear, though, that none of the challenges to men are effective unless they feel accepted and supported. MOM achieves this balance by allowing men first to be clear about where they are. "You must first be clear about where you are before you can go anywhere else," Bandele claims. "Reading a compass requires knowing where you are. Where am I, and which way is north? Once the man is clear about where he is, we support him in determining where he wants to go." MOM does this by then having the group of participants identify other men who will support him during those times when he feels like giving up and returning to the old behavior. The group does not challenge the man. The group instead listens non-judgmentally and encourages him to challenge himself. Bandele observes that, "We all have our own baggage, so we don't need to point fingers. We empower men by providing them with the space to identify their own issues. If they request assistance, then and only then, do we contribute."

A GATHERING OF MEN AS CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT

The "Gathering of Men" is an intergenerational gathering designed to support participants in the challenges and joys they experience on the journey of manhood and is an example of the context in which MOM both challenges and supports men. The group forms a circle and responds to the theme of the gathering—"What you are most afraid of," for example—and the "talking stick," allowing a participant to speak, is passed from person to person. The format is spirit-based, meaning that participants call upon the Creator for guidance and direction, which allows the men to share from their hearts as opposed to their minds. Participants are asked about how things feel rather than about the drama of an incident/experience. When a participant does share an experience, the group supports the act of sharing. If someone wants to respond, he must first ask permission.

Many times the act of sharing is vitally important. Bandele recounts a memorable experience in Atlanta where a participant shared an experience and then informed the group that he had not been able to tell it to anyone in over 25 years. Again, the space was created for the sharing. One of the most challenging experiences, Bandele suggests, was the death of one of the Gathering members to prostate cancer, which encouraged members to focus more attention on the issue of men's health and how they can support each other in being more loving to themselves through taking care of their health.

Often, the most intense sharings come from the young people. According to Bandele, "The young people take very seriously their sharing, and for me it is profound. The most recent incident occurred when a young 10-year-old shared that he was 'challenged' by not hearing from his dad. His dad and mom had been arguing. Whenever this occurred, his dad would not call him. He missed hearing from his dad and could not understand why when they argued his dad would not call him. (The dad lives in Alabama). His sharing wiped everyone out." In turn, this was an excellent opportunity for the older men who had children and had carried on the same way to hear from someone who was experiencing what it felt like. A brief survey of the group indicated that other young men had similar experiences, and several of the older men had acted in similar ways toward their children.

On occasion, Gatherings will combine with some of the other services offered by MOM, like the Fathers and Sons process, which specifically aids in healing challenges in relationships between fathers and sons. According to Bandele, the father need not be present or alive. One incident involved a young man who had refused to respond to his father's request to come and visit him in the hospital before he died. The son refused to go. He carried the guilt of the experience with him for many years. He brought this up in a Gathering, and participants encouraged him to write about his feelings and to share with his family. He reported back that his opening up and sharing had brought his family closer together.

The above young man was seated next to another young man who had refused to speak to his dad at the Gathering with him. The father and son got in the middle of the circle, and the son was encouraged to share from his heart, and the father was encouraged to just listen and to honor what was said. He need not agree. The important thing was the sharing. This occurred for both of them. Dad was seen to be defensive and acknowledged this. The two of them began a discussion with the support of the group that could lead to a healing in their relationship.

FOSTERING HEALING AND GROWTH

There is a growing and diverse fatherhood movement in the USA that differs in emphasis and approach. Some organizations focus on developing job skills, while others commit their resources to bolstering the institution of marriage. Men on the Move's spirit-based approach, grounded in fostering the healing and growth of men in their relationships with each other and their families and friends, offers unique services that attend to supporting the emotional development of men—a process that Bandele describes as "filling up the tank." He claims that, "For me, I tend to get more out of the experience than most, simply because the act of sharing and being responsible for a healing process has a healing property for me." This healing benefits men, women, and children.

2. ENCOURAGING COLLABORATION AMONG FATHER INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS AND BATTERED WOMEN'S ADVOCATES

THE CENTER ON FATHERS, FAMILIES, AND PUBLIC POLICY

The Center on Fathers, Families, and Public Policy (CFFPP) is located in Madison, Wisconsin. CFFPP is a policy organization that focuses on the impact of national and state welfare, fatherhood, and child support policy on never-married, low-income parents and their children. The center was created, in part, to provide public education and information as to the concerns of very poor individuals and families who are attempting to negotiate social welfare systems. Because of the inadequacy of advocacy or policy analysis of these issues from the perspective of very low-income and unemployed fathers, we have concentrated on that perspective. The concerns of these fathers and their children make a national discussion about fatherhood especially urgent. This case study details the effort to encourage collaborative work among advocates for battered women and for low-income fathers.

Programs for low-income fathers were originally designed to provide neighborhood mentors and peer support, and to assist them in finding work and accessing education and training. The peer support provides these men with opportunities to talk about their children and interaction with the children's mother, and to raise concerns about how to provide for themselves and their children while dealing with poverty and racial discrimination. It is important to note that the fatherhood programs described above developed spontaneously in community-based organizations that were already serving women and children. Relatively more economically stable men in the neighborhood and community-based organizations realized the necessity of reaching out and providing services to poor men who were struggling with potentially destructive problems.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

From the beginning, CFFPP began to reach out to women's organizations and to advocates for battered women. The intent was to openly discuss the potential impact on women (particularly battered women) and children of increased father involvement. CFFPP entered this discussion in order to provide education and information about the need for social services, such as those provided by fatherhood organizations, for men, and to provide the bridge between fatherhood groups and women's advocates. In the years since we began this work, we have developed relationships with both battered women's advocates and fatherhood program staff who understood the need for this kind of collaboration, and were eager for the opportunity to brainstorm possible solutions to the challenges raised by father involvement work in the domestic violence setting. The collaboration has progressed slowly but surely. There are three ways we have been able to work together towards the objective of safe father involvement: 1) discussion groups and forums that allow advocates for low-income men and women to provide each other with basic information and explanations about their work; (2) working groups and conferences in which battered women's advocates and fatherhood program staff brainstorm ideas and program structures for safe family interaction; and (3) collaborative presentations, consultation on projects, and co-authorship of papers.

CHALLENGES

One of the challenges to the success of these types of collaboration is the perception that each group has of the other. Many battered women's advocates' perception of fatherhood groups is negatively associated with fathers' rights groups or government-sponsored responsible fatherhood programs. Our work at CFFPP has been to explain to battered women's advocates the need for men to be able to access vital social services. We have also, in our technical assistance work with fatherhood programs, tried to emphasize and encourage the provision of these services. CFFPP has also worked within individual fatherhood programs to facilitate discussions about domestic violence. CFFPP has also provided information to fatherhood programs regarding the high incidence of domestic violence and the gravity of its impact on women and children.

Another challenge has been that some fatherhood programs interpret the discussion of the need for safety as implying that battered women's advocates think all men are violent, and specifically that all poor men of color are violent. And there are the practical issues, such as the question of how fatherhood programs can (or should) respond to—or anticipate—domestic violence. Should that response include intervention, or prevention, or both? In what ways should fatherhood programs be like or unlike batterer intervention programs? Will community-based organizations continue to get participants if they highlight the issue of domestic violence?

The people who have run these community-based fatherhood programs for years say that recruitment is one of their most urgent issues. Many poor men are reluctant to come to service organizations. Given that reality, it is important to recognize that any kind of screening or assessment for domestic violence could further reduce the number of men who come for services. These are clearly complex issues. The crafting and execution of this discussion and collaboration will require delicacy and forthrightness from all stakeholders.

LESSONS LEARNED

Though we are still faced with many challenges, in our discussions we have been able to identify important information and insights necessary to structure the future collaborative programs and proposals. Advocates of these two important fields, the domestic violence movement and the fatherhood movement, have been willing and able to work together toward a common goal of supporting and helping to create healthy, safe, nurturing and secure family environments for children and parents. Everyone involved can benefit from some of the lessons learned even at this early point in this crucial work:

- It is incumbent upon father involvement programs to incorporate responses to occurrences of domestic violence. However, one of the next steps is to work collaboratively to figure out exactly what the nature of that response should be.
- Fatherhood programs, legislation, and policy initiatives benefit from the input of mothers and other women. Their perspective on cooperative parenting issues is essential to the success of programs designed to re-involve fathers.

- The collaboration between these two groups does not necessarily mean being directly involved in each other's work. Battered women's advocates should not be called upon to encourage father involvement. And fatherhood program staff should not be called to do the counseling and restorative work of batterer intervention programs. Most important to the success of the collaborative work is that each group become informed of the work of the other, and become a voice of support for that work.
- Father involvement programs or philosophies that encourage men to take control over their children and the children's mother will not be well received by many women or by women's advocacy organizations.
- Battered women's advocates should not ignore or dismiss the cultural or personal significance to a woman of the man with whom she has had a child. This significance may not be diminished even in instances where the woman decides that it is best for her and her child that they discontinue any further contact him.
- Most fatherhood programs are eager to understand the issues involved in domestic violence and are interested in providing services that help promote the safety and well being of women and children.
- Many advocates for low-income mothers understand that poor fathers need the same social welfare services that poor mothers need (e.g., employment and training, housing assistance, emergency cash assistance), and that these are some of the most important services fatherhood programs provide. Many poor women prefer that their children's father be allowed to get social services so that he will be able to help support their children.

3. RESTORATIVE PARENTING: A STRATEGY FOR WORKING WITH MEN WHO BATTER AND ARE FATHERS

DAVID MATHEWS, PSY.D., LCSW
DOMESTIC ABUSE PROJECT, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

The Restorative Parenting program leads men who have been violent and are fathers through a process to safely restore their relationships with their children. Through a group counseling experience, the program helps these fathers build empathy toward their children, and take responsibility for their abusive behavior and the impact it has had on other family members. The Restorative Parenting curriculum is being used as a stand-alone program or as part of batterer intervention programs and parenting classes.

HISTORY

Restorative Parenting is part of the Restorative Community and Family Frameworks Project created in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota in 1999. The program has its roots in the experiences of batterer intervention program staff who found that: 1) men in the batterers' groups seemed genuinely interested in talking about their children and how their children may have been affected by violence in the home; 2) the men wanted practical strategies for improving their parenting skills and rebuilding the relationships with their children; and 3) none of these men seemed to have an understanding of where to begin this process of rebuilding. Despite these findings by staff, very little time was spent on these issues in the existing programs.

New activities to address these issues began to emerge in the mid-1990s as a result of work with men's parenting groups and applying restorative justice principles in therapeutic settings. These activities and the materials developed for them were tested for several years, and in 1999 a curriculum was drafted. This curriculum includes the guiding principles for the program, underlying assumptions of the work, and a description of activities to use with batterers' groups. Restorative Parenting continues to be refined through the newly developed men's parenting program at the Domestic Abuse Project (DAP) in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Restorative Parenting framework has also been implemented in several Minnesota counties, as well as in some other states.

OVERVIEW

The Restorative Parenting framework is based on several psychology theories, including attachment, cognitive behavior, and empowerment, as well as the principles of restorative justice. It is a developmental approach that emphasizes identifying strengths and increasing the capacity of the fathers to build, when safe, a respectful relationship with their children. There are two priorities for this work: 1) to maintain safety for all family members, and 2) to increase accountability for the fathers' abusive behavior.

It is important for the men in the program to understand that the violence in the home has redefined how the children see them as fathers. Restorative Parenting helps these men

better understand their children's perspectives, increase empathy for their children, and improve the quality of their connection with their children.

One of the basic premises of the Restorative Parenting program is that when a major trauma, violent event, or threat to one's safety occurs in a family, it causes the unwritten relationship contract between the parent and child to be broken. It is the responsibility of the parent to initiate and lead the process for restoration of the relationship. It is important for the fathers to understand that it is not developmentally appropriate to expect the children to make first steps toward reconciliation. When these men can accept this and the impact their violence has had on their children, healing and restoration can begin.

There are six essential components of the program, which distinguish it from other parenting or batterer intervention programs:

1. Principles of restorative parenting—that parents are responsible to the family; that parents must take care of themselves as well as their children; that children determine the pace of the restoration process; that individuals have choices and are responsible for their own behaviors.
2. Practitioner assumptions—that all parents have strengths; that all parents have the capacity to change their unhealthy behaviors; that parents want what is best for their children; that domestic violence negatively affects how children view their parents; that parents and children should not forget the actions of the past.
3. The contract—is a binding agreement from the parent to the child; has 30 separate commitments to the child, including, “I will keep you safe from all harm,” and “I will respect your decisions and opinions.”
4. Building empathy—men must understand how their violence affects their children.
5. Creating a plan for relationship restoration—structured exercises that fathers complete; plan includes communication, self-awareness, listening, action, debriefing, evaluating, and integrating learning into future behaviors.
6. Self-care—manage self when feelings of violence are escalating or when a situation may lead to violent feelings; develop healthy alternatives so difficult situations do not result in violence; better understand the decisions that led to past violence.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Restorative Parenting is increasingly viewed as one way to help batterers stop their violence. It is one point on a continuum of care for men who have been violent, and it offers promise as a way to prevent future violence. However, it also raises some areas of concern. For example, the term “restorative” leads some people to believe that the program is trying to restore the relationship between the batterer and his partner. In

addition, some people believe that it is too dangerous to have batterers work on restoring their relationships with their children, and feel that the focus on fathering is a distraction from holding the men accountable for their violence. Others do not believe that these men can actually change their behaviors.

The principles of the program make clear that the ongoing focus is on the men taking responsibility for their own behaviors and exercising self-control. As men look at how their behaviors have affected their children, they are better able to acknowledge the harms they have caused and to hold themselves accountable. This work on their relationships to their children may also help them better acknowledge the harm their violence has caused their partners. This program assists men in being realistic about what they can expect from their children, and to realize that their past actions will not be forgotten. The relationship will not be “fixed” by participation in this program, but the men can prepare themselves for the possibility of responsible interaction with their children in the future.

It is a challenge to educate the more “traditional” programs about the value of the Restorative Parenting approach. To be successful, program facilitators must create an environment of trust in which the men can begin to develop empathy for their children, acknowledge the limits of past parenting styles, and be open to learning new skills. Many of the men want to have good relationships with their children, but do not know how to go about it. These men may, at first, try to blame their partners for any problem behaviors they see in their children. Instead, they must focus on ending the violence, whether or not it is the sole cause of these problems. The group exercises and activities help them do that.

LESSONS LEARNED

Flexibility is a key ingredient of success for these programs. Facilitators must be willing to adjust the materials and exercises to the needs of each group. It is critical to understand what stands in these men’s way, what negative views of parenting they may have, or inappropriate expectations of their children. It is also important to understand how the men view themselves as fathers, what they think are their strengths and weaknesses as fathers, and where they have resources and support. Men can explore their own stories about being fathers and men. Facilitators take these new understandings and help the men apply them to the process of restoring their relationships with their children.

This approach is a key intervention point on the continuum of care for men who have been violent. And it is also a domestic violence prevention strategy. It is a way for men to develop deeper commitments to being accountable for their behaviors and ending their violence. It is a way to help them have responsible relationships with their children, so that these children do not also grow up to be violent or adult victims of violence.

4. DADS AND DAUGHTERS

www.dadsanddaughters.org

“No man is at a more teachable moment about gender justice than when he has a daughter,” relates Joe Kelly, co-founder and director of Dads and Daughters (DADs). Creating a space for reflection about men, their behaviors, and relationships with their daughters is a fundamental starting point for the educational, advocacy, and policy work undertaken by DADs. Dads and Daughters’ mission is education and advocacy for fathers and daughters. Specifically, DADs helps strengthen father-daughter relationships and galvanize fathers (and others) to take social action that benefits girls. In other words, we help men be better fathers at home while also helping them recognize the vital links between their home life and what society does to girls and women (objectification, discrimination, etc.). Once a father sees that link, we believe he is much more motivated to be an activist and advocate on behalf of his daughter and every girl.

These linkages are also important for work in the gender violence prevention arena. Kelly further explains, “There is a story I’ve heard in a number of variations from countless men in different cultural contexts. I refer to it as the ‘shot gun story,’ but it is more than a story; I think of it as a parable.” It goes, more or less, like this. A father says, “If I let my daughter go out on a date before she is 35, I will be sitting on the front porch cleaning my shot gun when the date comes to pick her up.” The implicit lessons for the father, daughter, and young man reveal much about how men see women and other men. The young man is not to be trusted by the father because of the assumption that men mistreat (or use violence towards) women. And yet the father faces this situation by threatening to use violence. The young man is being told that he does not have the capacity for a nurturing relationship, but is instead a sexual predator. The expectation portrayed is that men confront other men with the threat of violence.

DADs makes the connection between our gender norms and behaviors, and how these create a culture that perpetuates different types of violence against women and girls. However, DADs’ entry point into this conversation with men—their daughters—gives them a compelling advantage to reaching men on a very personal level, as fathers.

A BRIEF HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

The inspiration for Dads and Daughters came in 1999, after California businessman Michael Kieschnick’s nine-year-old daughter asked: “Daddy, do you think I look fat?” Michael recalls, “I knew the answer wasn’t as important as the question. It led me to realize that the influences around my daughter—telling her that she had to look and act in a certain way—were more powerful than her mother and I were.” But Michael also realized that fathers have the power to change the way their daughters see themselves, and the way society sees them. Together with Joe Kelly, he created Dads and Daughters, the national nonprofit that puts fathers to work in the family, the community, and the culture.

Since 2000, Dads and Daughters has galvanized fathers to take social actions that benefit girls through monthly DADs action campaigns directed primarily at corporate marketing harmful to girls, and occasionally at public policy makers to support girls' health and well-being. The premise for taking such action is this: most corporate CEOs and policy makers continue to be men who are also likely to be fathers. DADs actions are designed to send messages father-to-father, asking in effect, "Will you please put YOUR daughter's face into the picture of what your organization is doing? If you would not do this to your daughter (or allow someone else to do it to her), then please stop doing it to our daughters."

DADs has been among the progressive voices of fathering—a role taken seriously because the roots of the highest profile fatherhood groups are often found in very conservative soil. DADs is a member of the Stop Commercial Exploitation of Children Coalition; the Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action; and the National Coalition for Woman and Girls in Education.

DADs' action has achieved some successes, including:

- Convinced Macy's to drop out of teen magazine ads for Bongo clothing; the ads depicted scantily-clothed young woman in highly sexualized, pornographic-like poses.
- Persuaded Campbell's Soup to stop airing a TV commercial marketing soup to pre-teen girls as a diet tool.
- Convinced the maker of "Sun-In" to drop a *Teen People* ad reading "4 out of the 5 girls you hate ask for it by name. Stop hating them; start being them with Sun-In."
- Got Jewelry.com to remove mainstream magazine ads suggesting that sexual acts should be bought and sold, as long as the price is high enough. The ad showed a man performing foreplay with a woman and read, "Trust us, a food processor won't get you there."
- Helped persuade Scholastic, Inc. (Harry Potter's publisher) to cancel sponsorship of the Golden Marble Awards, which reward commercial exploitation of children.
- Gave awards to Chevy Trucks for positive portrayal of a father-daughter relationship in ads and to Omni Hotels for sacrificing millions of dollars by pulling pay-per-view porn from their guest rooms.
- Got ASKO, Inc. to drop kitchen appliance ads that mocked eating disorders.
- Sparked a national outcry over Simon & Schuster's video game "Panty Raider."

- In 2001, purchased and began publishing the national newsletter *Daughters: For Parents of Girls*, (www.daughters.com), which helps **mothers and fathers** improve communication with their pre-adolescent and adolescent daughters.
- In 2002, released Joe Kelly's book, *Dads and Daughters: How to Inspire, Understand, and Support Your Daughter When She's Growing Up So Fast* (Broadway/Random House).
- Developed the *Dads and Daughters: Growing Together* program for 10-14 year-old girls and their fathers and stepfathers.

SOME CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS

As Kelly explains, "Some of our biggest constraints are the cultural concepts of what is to be a man." DADS has been able to reach and motivate men by talking to them in person through workshops and trainings, but not as effectively through direct mailing and other outreach methods. To help transform the culture, they want to reach policy makers and appeal to them as men and fathers. Currently, DADS is focused on the Title IX debate in the United States, and fighting attempts to water down legislation that mandates equitable access to and resources for sports programs for girls and boys. As DADS sees it, sports are a major opportunity for relationship building between dads and daughters—something strengthened by Title IX. The hope is that men who are legislators and fathers will see it this way too.

Thus, DADS is evolving from primarily an educational organization to one that also is beginning to inform national policy. In 2003, DADS' board of directors committed to new efforts to:

- Rate corporations on advertising and marketing to girls.
- Create a research agenda and regular national polling on father/daughter relationships.
- Build coalitions to achieve public policy changes that help girls.
- Join with other organizations to raise awareness of father/daughter issues.

Dads and Daughters (34 E Superior St., #200 (Duluth MN 55802 (218.722.3942 (FAX 218.728.0314 (www.dadsanddaughters.org

5. THE FATHERING AFTER VIOLENCE PROJECT: DEALING WITH A COMPLEX AND UNAVOIDABLE ISSUE

“I want him to support his daughter, no matter what.”

“(I want him to) spend quality time with my son.”

“It takes love to raise a man. You don’t necessarily need a father.”

These are actual comments from mothers of color, survivors of domestic violence, about their abusive partners or ex-partners. They were made during a series of focus groups conducted by the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF) in November 2002 in Boston and San Francisco.ⁱ Among the many valuable and courageous things that these women had to say was a strong message about their desire for fathers to be involved with their children, even if they had used violence in the past. On the other hand, they clearly articulated that men have to change and take responsibility for their abuse and that a man cannot be a good father if he is abusive or disrespectful to his partner or ex-partner.

The research was undertaken as part of the development of the FVPPF’s national violence prevention campaign and has been central to informing organizational initiatives such as the Fathering After Violence Project (FAVP), launched in 2002 with generous support of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.ⁱⁱ

OVERVIEW OF THE FATHERING AFTER VIOLENCE PROJECT

The goal of the FAVP is to help men who have renounced their violence become better fathers and co-parents. In partnership with a consortium of Boston based providers, we are developing strategies and interventions to help fathers start repairing and healing the relationships with their children when possible and appropriate.

Our partners are the Dorchester Community Roundtable, the Child Witness to Violence Project at Boston Medical Center, and three batterers' intervention programs (BIPs)—Common Purpose, EMERGE, and Roxbury Comprehensive Community Health Services. We are working with BIPs, because their services target men who have used violence, and with a child witness to violence program, because its primary clients are the children who have been hurt by that violence. Our intention is to support and complement other innovative work happening around the country in the fatherhood, child abuse, and domestic violence fields.

As with any intervention involving abusive men, their partners and children, we are aware that there are risks in implementing this project. Since the onset of the project, we have repeatedly invited individuals to communicate their safety concerns. Predictably, the number one consideration has involved safeguarding the physical and emotional integrity of the mother and the children. Other concerns have included the risks of encouraging men to have more contact with their children or seek custody when it is not appropriate, and pushing fathers to make promises they cannot fulfill.

The FVPPF's top priority will always be the safety of victims of family violence. We recognize that mothers must be the gatekeepers for abusive men to have any access to their children. Courts and DV experts need to responsibly assess if contact is appropriate and under which circumstances. We also know that many men who use violence continue to live with their families and have uninterrupted contact with their children. We are committed to finding new ways to keep men accountable and invite them to change and repair the damage they have done.

The first stage of this project has consisted of gathering information from focus groups and interviews with mothers who have experienced IPV, fathers who have been abusive, and domestic violence experts and service providers. Based on this information, we have developed a model for understanding the complex process of reparation between fathers and their children. This has led to the creation of a series of exercises and policy and practice recommendations for BIPs. The exercises and programmatic changes will be tested and evaluated in the spring of 2003 by our partner programs in Boston. If the evaluation yields positive results, these will be made available to BIPs across the country in the fall of 2003, both in English and Spanish.

FVPPF is also partnering with the Child Witness to Violence Project to develop guidelines and test the implementation of new practices for working with fathers of children affected by family violence.

This case study will concentrate on the foundation and development stages of our work with batterers intervention programs.

FOCUS GROUPS FINDINGS

In addition to the focus groups with mothers of color mentioned above, FVPPF organized two focus groups with men of color currently attending a BIP in Boston. We also conducted more than 20 individual and group interviews with staff from BIPs, fathering programs, a child witness to violence program, a visitation center, and with a district judge. Critical information came from six fathers who had stopped their violence and had embarked on the process of repairing and healing their relationships with their children.ⁱⁱⁱ

Program participants were asked questions about their personal experiences, including the usefulness of batterers' intervention and fathering programs, their process of change and, if applicable, the process of reparation with their children. Providers were asked for their professional opinions about the objectives of the project, the reparation process and any safety concerns.

After analyzing the data, the following information emerged clearly: if men want to start healing their relationships with their children, they must stop their violence by practicing self-care and self-awareness, examining their own past and learning the effects of violence on children. They need to start modeling good behaviors and employing

consistent and non-abusive discipline. They must understand the reparation process and follow its steps with commitment and patience.

In November 2002, the FVVPF convened a National Advisory Committee, comprised of recognized experts in the fields of family violence, batterers' intervention, child witnessing violence and program evaluation. The committee provided invaluable insight to guide the development of practice and policy and also helped to articulate important safety and cultural considerations

PROCESS OF REPARATION

After conducting this research, we came to the realization that fathers who are committed to ending their violence and establishing a healthy relationship with their children and their co-parents often feel lost, confused, and isolated on their journey. This might also be the case with their co-parents and children. It became obvious that understanding the process of reparation was an essential step in the project's development as well as a key support that we could provide to the fathers.

We understand that this a very complex and painful process for everyone involved and that, in most cases, it cannot be completed during a whole cycle at a BIP, no matter how long the program is. Every single one of the interviewees who had embarked on the process of reparation had sought additional support after completing a BIP. In some cases, they engaged in individual therapy and, in others, in follow-up groups run by a batterers program. One father pursued mediation with his adult daughter. This information gives more urgency to the idea that all BIPs should be considering offering ongoing, after-care interventions for their participants or, at the very least, build a solid referral base for referrals.

Since we were not able to find a roadmap for the process of reparation in the standard literature, we had to develop our own. This is a working model that is continually evolving. Based on the research described above, we came up with the following stages for change and healing:

1. **CHANGING ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR** – Fathers must stop all kinds of abuse immediately. This is one of the fundamental goals of BIPs and, of course, a prerequisite to starting any reparation. This change, however, will not automatically rebuild trust and caring in the family. Men need to understand that this is a slow and difficult process. Some programs have found that explaining the effects of violence on children can be a powerful motivator for men to start changing.
2. **MODELING CONSTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR** – It is well known that children learn by example. Fathers need to know that as they stop modeling destructive behaviors, they have to make a concerted effort to model positive ones. A key teaching concept in this project is that a father cannot be a good model for their children if he is abusive, disrespectful or hateful to their mother.

3. **STOPPING DENIAL, BLAMING AND JUSTIFICATION** – Most BIPs work towards having men take full responsibility for their abusive behavior. In the context of this process, programs need to teach fathers about the negative effects that denial, blaming and justification can have on children. Men have to take the additional step of acknowledging to their children that the abuse happened, that it was wrong and that they are fully responsible for it.
4. **BEING FULLY ACCOUNTABLE** – IPV activists often think of accountability primarily from the criminal justice system perspective. Fathers involved in a reparation process need to understand that facing the consequences of their behavior may also include accepting rejection and the loss of trust, love and even contact with their children.
5. **ACKNOWLEDGING DAMAGE** – Fathers must realize the amount of damage they have inflicted and let their children know that they understand specifically how they have hurt them.
6. **NOT FORCING THE PROCESS** – Except for the steps that involve personal change work, every stage in this process has to take place on the children's own terms and timing. Fathers have to learn how to be patient and not try to push healing or contact with their children.
7. **NOT TRYING TO TURN THE PAGE** – Fathers must be open to talking about the past as many times as the children need to do it.
8. **LISTENING AND VALIDATING** – Fathers need to prepare and be willing to receive anger, hurt, sadness, fear and rejection from their children. They must understand that this is part of the healing process and not a way for the children to manipulate the situation

POLICY AND PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

The FVPPF is presently researching and developing a series of exercises for BIPs. These lessons will help programs to educate participants about the reparation process and the necessary conditions to embark on it. We are also working on policy and practice recommendations for BIPs designed to help programs think more systematically about children. These will include considerations around safety, cultural competence and supplemental services and planning.^{iv}

CONCLUSION

Many men who are or have been abusive have regular contact with their children. Some care deeply about their relationships with their sons and daughters. BIPs can and should use this bond as a motivator for stopping violence. Once the abuse has stopped, programs can help fathers start healing their relationships with their children by educating them about and preparing them for the reparation process. Even though some men might be able to take the initial steps of this process during their participation at a BIP, most

will need continued support to go through this long and difficult journey in the pursuit of healing and wholeness.

NOTES

ⁱG. Atchison, A. Autry, L. Davis, and K Mitchell-Clark, Conversations With Women of Color Who Have Experienced Domestic Violence Regarding Working With Men To End Violence (San Francisco, CA: Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2002).

ⁱⁱFor more information on these and other initiatives, please visit the FVPF website: www.endabuse.org

ⁱⁱⁱFathering After Violence Project: Summary of Focus Group Findings and Program Policy/Practice Considerations (San Francisco, CA: Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2002).

^{iv} For more information about these tools and recommendations, please contact the FVPF after November 2003.