Enhancing Father Engagement in Triple P

Louise Keown, Ph.D
Tenille Frank
Parenting Research Group
The University of Auckland
Question

- What is your experience in engaging fathers in parenting programmes?
  - What worked well?
  - What were the challenges?
- What would you like to learn from this workshop?
Overview

- Challenges to engaging fathers
- Using consumer input to identify programme preferences and barriers to engagement
- Tailor content or process to engage fathers in behavioural family interventions
- Engaging different father groups
Background

- Importance of fathers to children’s development
- Benefits of parenting programmes to parents and children
- Potential impact is diminished because of low father participation
- Accruing evidence of positive child outcomes when fathers are involved in BFI
Problem recognition (Phares et al., 2010)
Relevance and appeal of programme content and delivery mode (Lee & Hunsley, 2006; Fabiano, 2007)
Beliefs about the utility of parenting programmes (Phares et al., 2010)
Practical issues (scheduling, child care)
# Father preferences re delivery mode

*Frank, Keown, Dittman & Sanders (under review)*

Using father preference data to increase father engagement in Behavioural Family Interventions

Online Survey ($N=147$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred delivery modalities</th>
<th>% responding ‘very useful’ or ‘extremely useful’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father only group programme</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One time parenting seminar</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV programme</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual programme</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couples or group programme</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home visit</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend intensive</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace access</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What type of programme features would influence fathers to participate?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>% responding ‘influential’ or ‘very influential’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme has been demonstrated to be effective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme is held in a convenient location</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained practitioners conduct the programme</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme addresses personally relevant issues</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme is free or low cost</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources professionally produced and presented</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Which three topics would fathers want included in a parenting programme?

- How to manage problem behaviour
- Techniques for raising girls
- How to build a positive relationship with your child
- How to increase your child’s confidence
- How to teach your child financial skills
- Increasing your child’s social skills
- Teaching your child’s practical skills
- How to help your child do well in school
- How to encourage your child to be independent
- How fathers positively influence children’s development
- How to increase child’s participation and enjoyment of physical activities
- Techniques for raising boys
What topics would fathers prefer to have in a programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>% responding ‘important’ or ‘very important’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fathers’ positive influence on child development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to increase your child’s confidence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to increase your child’s social skills and promote positive peer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to build a positive relationship with your child</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to help your child do well at school</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do fathers and mothers have similar child rearing concerns?

- Interviews with parents of 43 boys with ADHD symptoms
  - 16 topics reported
- 44% reported no challenges in common
  - Highlights potential differences in problem recognition or tolerance
- More fathers mentioned aspirational concerns
  - Encouragement of positive child behaviours
- 21% shared concerns about oppositional behaviour
  - Implications for agreement between parents about child management

Keown & Palmer (in prep) Parenting challenges and support preferences of fathers and mothers of boys with ADHD symptoms
How do we engage different father groups?

- Different father groups present unique challenges for recruitment, retention, programme content and delivery
  - Fathers in different family structures – step-fathers, grandfathers, gay fathers, sole parent fathers
  - Fathers living separately from their children
    - Incarceration
    - Employment in the armed forces, long distance employment
    - Family breakdown
  - Fathers from different cultural backgrounds
  - Fathers of children with special needs
  - Young fathers
  - Fathers with mental health difficulties
Questions

- How to increase awareness?
  - How should Triple P be framed to attract fathers?
  - What strategies are needed to attract specific father groups?
Tailor content or process to engage fathers

| Programme promotion | • Invitations  
|                     | • Advertisements |
| Programme content   | • Relevance  
|                     | • Maximise engagement |
| Delivery preferences | • Father focus  
|                      | • Brief seminar  
|                     | • Online |
Fathers and Mothers, We Want You

Do you want to enhance your child’s social development?

Do you want to experience the benefits of having a positive relationship with your child?

Do you have concerns about your child’s behaviour?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumer Input</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Programme Modification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85% fathers rated fathers’ positive influence on child development as a very important topic to include</td>
<td>Impressive evidence that fathers and mothers may have different effects on child development (Lamb &amp; Lewis, 2010)</td>
<td>Inclusion of content that highlights how both parents can positively influence children’s development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81% fathers said it was very important to include a topic on how to increase your child’s social skills and promote positive relationships with peers</td>
<td>Fathers and mothers have distinct influences on the development of peer relationships (Parke et al., 2004)</td>
<td>Inclusion of additional parenting strategies to increase child social skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Programme delivery and focus
An RCT of Group Triple P for Fathers and Mothers (Frank, Keown & Sanders, in progress)

- Group delivery
- Couple focus
  - Both parents set goals, homework tasks, joint phone consultations
- Delivery times and location that suit family needs
Exemplars meet interests and needs of both parents

- Enhancing child’s social competence
- Work/life balance
- Showing affection
- Ideas for spending quality time
Brief discussion groups

Palmer, Keown, Sanders, Henderson (work in progress) Brief group parenting interventions: How many group sessions are sufficient for behaviour change?

Improvements in Fathers’ Parenting Style

Fathers of children at risk for conduct problems ($N = 28$)
Online versus workbook delivery

Both parents invited to participate
  - 190 mothers, 145 fathers of children with elevated levels of disruptive behaviour problems

Post intervention improvements maintained at 6-month follow-up in:
  - Paternal parenting style and confidence, parent-child relationship, parental adjustment, and child behaviour

Online parenting programmes may be an effective way to engage and retain some fathers in BFIs

Sanders, Dittman, Farruggia, Keown (2013) A comparison of online versus workbook delivery of a self-help positive parenting program
Implications

- Actively invite father participation
  - Emphasise benefits – programme effective, trained practitioners
- Acknowledge and cater for concerns and interests of both fathers and mothers
- Include positive focus on what fathers can do for their children
- Include father sensitive exemplars
Implications

- A range of delivery options are necessary to cater for different father preferences and needs
- Emerging evidence for effectiveness of online and brief parenting interventions for some fathers
- One or both parents? Check shared concerns
- Informal support – invite father participation via mothers
- Pay attention to practical issues – location, timing, cost
Concluding thoughts

- “I play more with my children after completing the course and this has helped with our relationship and has improved my children’s behaviour and mine”

- “Originally I went along to support my wife, but I have found that I learnt a lot and I am pleased that I went because I am part of the situation too”

- “I was a bit reluctant to take my kids out on my own but now I am feeling a lot more confident”