

Working with Men

NYSCP Virtual Conference
9.30 – 13.00

Please add your name and role in to the chat.

Please mute your mics and turn off your cameras.



Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction (Danielle Johnson)
- Reflections and Research 'Working with Men' (Brid Featherstone)
- Working with Men (Owen Thomas)

- Break

- The Myth of invisible Men (James Parkes)
- North Yorkshire Dads (Sara Atkins)
- Discussions / Reflections
- Closing Reflections (Sam Clayton)



Welcome and Introduction

Danielle Johnson

Senior Head Safeguarding and Partnership
North Yorkshire County Council



Working with men

Reflections and research



Some personal
reflections





Research

Research on men

Role of fathers over
time

Role of fathers in
Children's Social
Care

Domestic abuse: a
case-study in the
perils and
possibilities



Men and masculinities

Naming men as men has been an important endeavour

Example of 'The Dictionary of Lost Words'

Thinking about differences between men

Class, ethnicity, sexuality ...

Masculinities



The importance of fathers

Michael Lamb, one of the foremost researchers in this area, has noted a shift since the 1970s in the perceived importance of the role of fathers.

Before then, fathers were seen primarily as breadwinners and 'play-mates'. They were seen as psychologically peripheral to their children while mothers were considered the primary attachment figures.

When parents divorced, the idea of a 'clean break' from the birth father was influential and it was thought a stepfather could take the place of a birth father without problems.



Culture and context

Fathers play many roles in their children's lives and influence their children in ways that vary from family to family, depending on the expectations and aspirations of individual parents, their culture and communities.

Family context is often at least as important as individual relationships within the family. Positive paternal influences are more likely to occur not only when there are supportive father child relationships, but when a father's relationships with partner, ex-partner and other children are also positive

Importance of couple relationship (whether living together or not)



Fathers and Children's Social Care

There is very limited up-to-date research that explores the composition and demography of families involved with social care and looks specifically at the nature of fatherhood and the role of men.

Roskill et al (2008) noted from an exploration of case-files that there was evidence of complexity in family composition and that many families included high numbers of non-resident fathers, families containing children with different fathers, and the involvement of father figures of varying duration and intensity. Case-files are a very unreliable guide though.

It is important to note that recent research on mothers and fathers who become involved in 'recurrent' care proceedings found there may be more stability and continuity in couple relationships than has perhaps hitherto been assumed (Philp et al, 2020).



Key issues


Poverty

Unemployment

Mental health issues


Childhood Trauma

'Looked after' histories



Working with men and domestic abuse

- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/may/09/i-had-to-be-broken-to-be-fixed-the-courses-trying-to-change-abusive-men?msclkid=d74a84c6d06911ecbb0314bf806ae0d8>



Working with men and domestic abuse


A range of programmes developed over the years but chronic problem of scarcity

'Power and control' linked to wider understandings of gendered power relationships

Some awareness of importance of exploring differences between men (e.g., 'race' and ethnicity)

Fatherhood as a motivator for change – Caring Dads

Mental Health issues (e.g., the [Drive Programme](#)).



Recent research with fathers in recurrent care proceedings

- Qualitative research with the fathers highlighted their desire for couples work and the problems caused by insistence on separation in cases of domestic abuse
- This research advocates the development of restorative and generative approaches
- What do generative approaches mean?
- Informed by the developmental theories of Erik Erikson, sees the work fathers do for their children in terms of caring for and contributing to the life of the next generation
- <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/project/birth-fathers-recurrent-appearance-in-care-proceedings>



Listening to social workers

- [What I've learnt from working with perpetrators of domestic violence \(communitycare.co.uk\)](https://communitycare.co.uk)
- Growing Futures programme in Doncaster
- The use of Motivational Interviewing is of interest here

FUTURE men

Working with Men

FUTURE men

Owen Thomas

Head of Programmes

(Fathers)



Our Vision

A better future for every boy, every man and everyone.

Our Mission

To inspire boys and men to become dynamic future men by giving them the confidence to discover what it means to be a man.

Our Seven Characteristics



RESILIENCE

Able to recover
when things go
wrong



INCLUSIVENESS

Open to include
all different
people



REFLECTIVENESS

Learning from
things that
happen to you



RESOURCEFULNESS

Able to make the
best of what you
have



CURIOSITY

Interested in the
world around you



COMPASSION/EMPATHY

Caring for others



NON-VIOLENCE

Can solve
problems without
hurting others

When you hear the word Father, what thoughts immediately come to mind?

(add to comments or consider the question)

FUTURE men

What we do...

What we do...

- We work with fathers particularly those from marginalised groups (Young, Poor, LAC, YOS, CSC etc.) who have **multiple points of overlapping poorer outcomes** and lower engagement with services. – *Key to reducing intergenerational and other cultural and gender, racial inequalities.*
- Many of the fathers have been in care; many have experienced violence or sexual abuse at home; and few have had consistent models of good fathering – *We want to break that cycle.*

What we at Future Men do...

- Prepare and support young men for and through fatherhood by developing parenting skills and techniques, through one-to-one contacts and case work (trauma informed, person and child centered)
- In group settings including varied models of parenting courses (Future Dads, SFSC, PPP, Incredible Years)
- Intensive Outreach and Engagement
- Promote positive images of Fathers

What we at Future Men do...

- Promote awareness of attachment and Child development; explore its relevance to fathers. (particularly important for non-resident fathers)
- Deliver Caring Dads Pilot in S/London borough – Key pilot initiative, planning alongside multi-agency team of Statutory and non statutory orgs to agree protocols for referrals, initial engagement, on-going support for participants, risk asses and plan considering impact on partners and ex-partners.



Working with
Fathers.

Why?

Why we do what we do...

- ***Children with positively involved fathers tend to have***
 - Friendships with better-adjusted children
 - Fewer behavioural problems
 - Lower criminality and substance abuse
 - Higher educational achievement
 - Greater capacity for empathy
 - Better self-control
 - Non-traditional attitudes to earning and childcare
 - More satisfying adult intimate relationships
 - Higher self-esteem and life-satisfaction
- *Flouri 2004*

Why we do what we do...

- For many men it may be difficult to identify key avenues for support amongst families, friends and existing service provision in regard to raising children.
- Some men are unprepared for parenthood having never been taught basic childcare skills (e.g., nappy changing, bathing, feeding, bonding and attachment etc.)
- We want to reduce parental conflict and address Domestic abuse – promote healthy relationships.
- Some men may have difficulty gaining access to their children due to conflict with ex-partners and they may be confused about how to support their child after a relationship breakdown.

If unaddressed issues above can lead to poorer outcomes for the Fathers themselves their children and families and costs LA's and wider society financially.

FUTURE **men**

What we do...

Use research & capture data

Research



We found that, fathers that engaged in our services showed a significant shift in parenting style during this time from permissive to authoritative which is initial evidence that working with fathers has positive longer term impact on not just the father but also the child in question. Additionally, children under two years of age of fathers who are more engaged in parenting services were measurably more advanced developmentally than those that had not engaged.

*Dr V. Bourne
- Royal Holloway University

Practice Tools - Examples of positive approaches.

Practice Tools - Examples of positive approaches..

- **Be empathetic.** Listen to the father's perspective. Recognise that many fathers are vulnerable and will either withdraw or be threatening as a form of defence.
- **Be aware.** Consider how power, gender relations and personal experience (of your own father or partner, or of being a father) may be shaping your perspective and influencing your practice.
- **Be aware** of shame and its role in shaping interactions between fathers and workers

Practice Tools - Examples of positive approaches..

- **Be knowledgeable.** Know the law in relation to fathers and parental responsibility.
- **Be safe.** Work with your supervisor and your team to develop safety plans, strategies and approaches when engaging violent or abusive men. Do not minimise domestic violence.
- **Be consistent- avoid double standards** in what you say and how you treat fathers. Above all, be consistent in what you say *to* fathers and what you say *about* them in written reports. And if fathers are expected to be on time for meetings, so should you be.

Practice Tools - Examples of positive approaches...

- **Be reliable.** Do what you say you will do. Respond to messages in reasonable time. Keep fathers up to date on what's happening.
- **Be available.** Men's experience is that social workers can be difficult to contact and 'hard to reach'. This makes it hard to develop trust or build a relationship.
- **Be honest** with both parents about the father's involvement in practice activities. Be honest about concerns *and* willing to work with the positives.

Practice Tools - Examples of positive approaches...

- Research In Practice guidance

Publications which will be updated in Summer 2022

[Working effectively with men in families – including fathers in children's social care: Frontline Briefing \(2017\)](#)

[Working effectively with men in families – practice pointers for including fathers in children's social care: Frontline Tool \(2017\)](#)

Practice Tools - Examples of positive approaches...

- Caring Dads: Safer Children is a programme developed in Canada by Scott and Crooks (2004) – focused on improving fathers' relationships with their children
- Used in many countries
- A summary of the evidence base below
- [About Caring Dads — Caring Dads™](#)

Practice Tools - Examples of positive resources.

- MFF – Music Football Fatherhood [Music Football Fatherhood | For dads who want more open conversations around fatherhood - Music.Football.Fatherhood - open conversations around fatherhood](#)
- DigiDads link [Our Videos – DigiDAD](#)
- New pathways for Y/F's - Our illustrated workbook is now published and can be found here: [New-Pathways-for-Young-Fathers-Young-Fathers-Voices.pdf \(daddilife.com\)](#)

Action Planning

- Don't try to do too much
- Accountability
- Service user voice
- What is the offer to Fathers – *“Why should I get involved?”*

FUTURE men

Any questions?

Thanks for listening.

www.futuremen.org



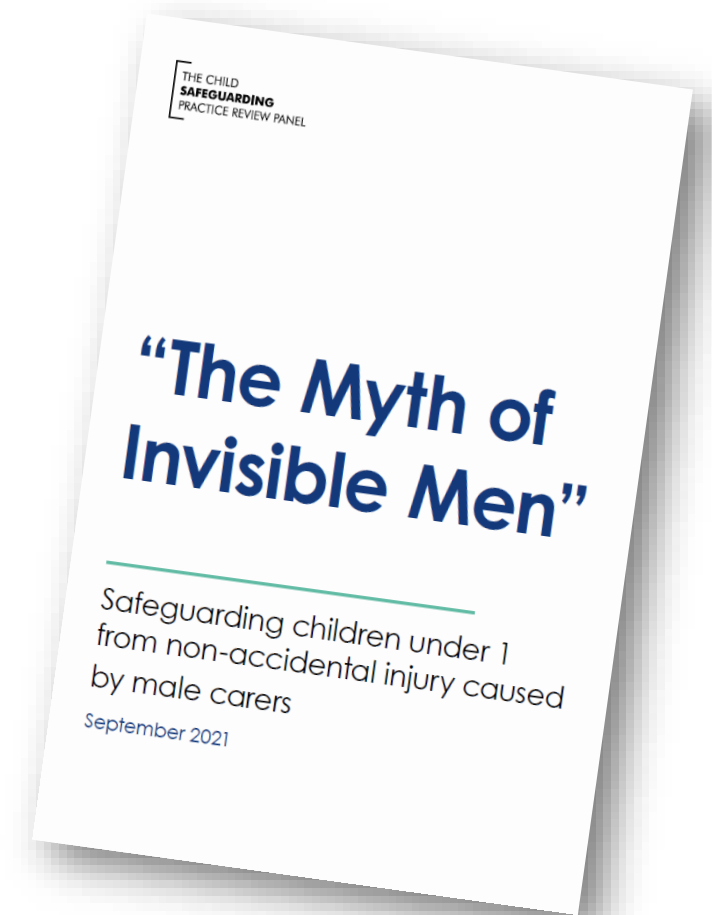
Time for a brew!

‘The Myth of Invisible Men’ Summary

**Safeguarding children under 1 from non-accidental injury caused by
male carers**

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

James Parkes, NYSCP Partnership Manager



The Review

‘...there is a need to seek greater and more nuanced understanding about their lives and behaviours, including about factors that may have precipitated the abuse. Secondly, we must take stock of how effectively safeguarding and other services engage with these men. What emerges is a hazy and incomplete picture, in part because we do not ‘see’ them or understand them well enough or in sufficient detail’.

Key Findings

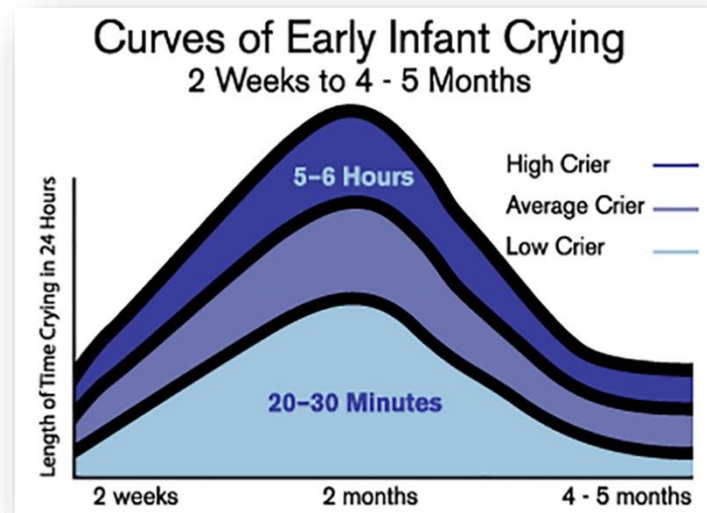
Indicators of risk:

- Experiences of adversity in childhood
- Substance abuse, especially the use of drugs
- Mental ill-health, not always diagnosed but histories of ADHD, anger management issues, anxiety and depression
- The co-existence of domestic abuse

Contextual Factors:

- Living with the pressures of poverty, mounting debts, deprivation, worklessness, racism
- Being a young parent and/or care leaver. Nearly 40% of cases in the fieldwork cohort involved very young parents

Key Findings cont...



The findings are supported by other research:

- Fathers are invited to Child Protection Conferences 50% of the time
- Known violent fathers are not contacted by social workers prior to meetings 38% of the time
- Only 68% of completed assessments included fathers

Recommendations

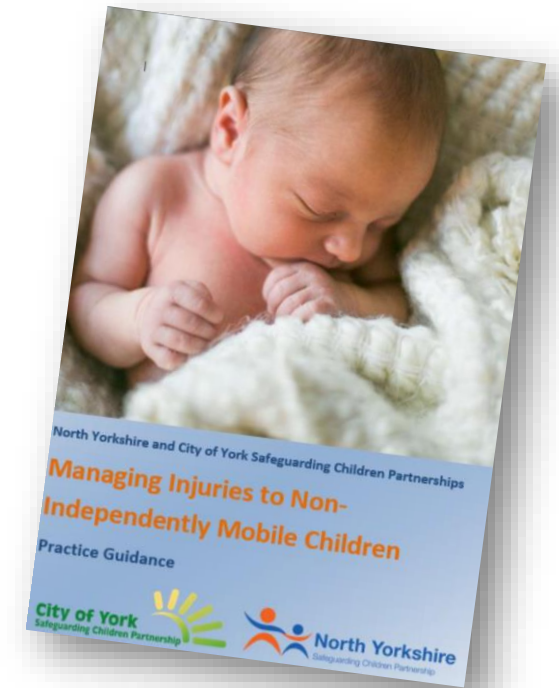
1. Research into male perpetrators of abuse against babies
2. Provision within children's social care
3. Investments in local pilots

Suggested improvements seen from:

- Best Start for Life: A vision for the first critical 1001 days (The Leadson Review)
- Development of Family Hubs
- Supporting Families 2021-22 and Beyond Programme
- Better Births – Modernisation of the midwifery services
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Challenges to us as local safeguarding partners

Some of the work being done to address this topic



Questions:

- Do you involve men in assessments, visits, parents evening, meetings?
- Do letters go to both parents?
- Do you seek feedback from both parents?
- Do you use inclusive language?

North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership



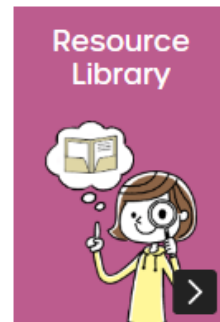
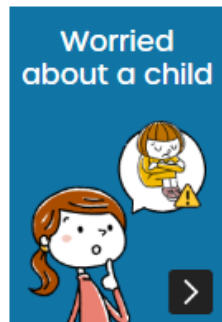
Worried about a child
or need some help?

CLICK HERE >

Home About Us Training Professionals Children & Young People Parents & Carers Resource Library Search

Welcome to North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Search for the help or information you need...

A row of silhouettes of children in various active poses, including running, jumping, and playing with a ball, set against a light background.

Keep up to date with the latest NYSCP news and developments, visit:

- The NYSCP Website: www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk
- NYSCP on Twitter: www.twitter.com/nyscp1
- NYSCP on Facebook: www.facebook.com/nyscp1
- NYSCP on Instagram: www.instagram.com/nyscp
- Podcast <https://anchor.fm/north-yorkshire-safeguarding-children-partnership>

Sign up for the NYSCP Bulletin at:

- <https://mailchi.mp/9a88b9818a6d/nyscpe-bulletin>

Training

- <https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/training-north-yorkshire/training-courses/>

THE STAYING CONNECTED PROGRAMME

And working with dads



A Restorative Approach to Improving Relationships

Facilitators:

Sara Atkins & Simon Saxton

Aims of the Staying Connected Programme

To support individuals who demonstrate high conflict/ low risk domestic abuse within their relationship to recognise this as a problem and to explore resolutions and to work through the issues.

To reduce the risk of children's exposure to frequent, intense harmful conflict/domestic abuse and to enable the individual to have a better relationship with their children.

To support individuals who use high conflict/ low risk abuse against their partners to change their behaviour, engage in healthier relationships and help them to stay together, or if separated or divorced stay connected with their ex partner

To support individuals who demonstrate high conflict/low risk domestic abuse to break the cycle, improve communication, emotional management and develop coping skills and strategies for their anger which will help to prevent escalation.

To work with individuals to understand the damaging and negative impact their behaviour has on their partner and their children

Sessions

- **Session 1**

- *Understanding our own connections, family patterns and golden threads.*

- **Session 2**

- *Relationships Matter – Why relationships are so important to us!*

- **Session 3**

- *All you need is love – but what does this really mean?*

- **Session 4**

- *The impact of conflict on ourselves, loved ones and our children – Taking a whole family approach!*

- **Session 5**

- *The Cycle of conflict and the cycle of anger links between our thoughts feelings and behaviours. The breakdown in communication*

- **Session 6**

- *Let's think twice – Conflict Resolution and Alternative Strategies.*

It has given me the tools to be able to resolve arguments in a calm and sensible manner, respecting the other person while still maintaining my integrity.

I didn't know I was being controlling, I thought I was helping by telling her what to do

Allowed me to accept and remember, that despite my issues, I am a good, normal person who has strengths and who is capable of making changes

Being on the course has allowed me to start addressing some of these issues because, honestly before I just didn't know how to

It's helped myself control my own behaviour, reactions and attitude towards things

Yes it has definitely been worth attending the course and it has made me look at myself and my anger issues and frustration in my relationship with my son.

I now understand more about healthy relationships, how to maintain them and it is good for my daughter who is most important in all this

Working with dads - What's worked well

- Referrals and discussions with Practitioners
- A telephone call to introduce myself and to explain the programme
- Curiosity to find out as much information about dad's needs and challenges that he is facing
- Providing the space for dads to tell us their story (without collusion)
- It's an evening programme
- It's a Strengths Based Programme
- We give them the opportunity to focus on "self"
- We encourage them to keep the child at the centre of their thinking
- We make it clear that we are impartial
- We think about each dad's learning styles and adapt the programme

Working with dads - What's worked well

- Create a secure base from which they can explore what is happening to them
- Combination of Restorative, Motivational Interviewing and CBT approaches
- deliver services where the structure, content, format and language are appropriate to fathers as participants
- Family-relationship perspective
- We think about inclusivity
- We start each session with an easy ice breaker and recap some of the main points from the previous session.
- We add humour into the conversations, but we also gently challenge.

Discussion groups

- What are you doing in practice?
- What do we need to do next in NY regarding working with men?
- What are your takeaways?

Closing remarks

Sam Clayton,
North Yorkshire County Council, Head of
Effective Practice