

# Caring Dads Video Group Adaptation

Intake and goal 1

# Introduction

- We are in extraordinary times globally with Covid-19 and disruption in our normal way of offering counselling session. We at Caring Dads have responded to requests to provide support and direction in offering a version of Caring Dads using video conferencing.
- We have a couple of recommendations for moving forward in offering online programming for Caring Dads referrals. Our hope is that these suggested modification will provide the service user with the best possible outcome under these circumstances
- We want to begin with the recognition that Caring Dads is best offered in a in person group setting for the best outcome for the children associated with the fathers you are working with. We would recommend that returning to face to face group gatherings would be the preferred environment and a return to in person group practice would be advised when it is safe to do so.
- This guide and the following sessions being scheduled is based on our better practice recommendation for offering video group Caring Dads session. We want to acknowledge the limitation of using video conferencing when offering counselling for fathers who are assessed as a risk to their children or their children's mothers
- No matter how we looked at making adaptation to the program, it will in all likelihood be more time consuming and ultimately cost more. In this presentation, we are looking at offering Caring Dads facilitators our best thinking on how to adapt your practice in this time. As we move forward in making changes to program delivery, we encourage you all to share your experiences with us and each other so we can all learn in these unprecedented times.

# Recommended considerations for fathers suitability for online groups

## Exclusion:

- Fathers should not participate in online group sessions if they have not engaged in consistent and responsive individual contact with the program.
  - Highly resistant offenders should be engaged individually in readiness sessions until their level of motivation increases.
- Fathers facing highly precarious circumstances due to pandemic-related impacts
  - especially if associated with significant emotional volatility and/or stress in relation to meeting basic daily needs, should be served individually rather than in online groups.
- Fathers should not participate in online group-work sessions if they are struggling with *substantial* substance misuse or mental health issues.

## Additional considerations for fathers eligibility who are living with adult and/or child victim-survivors who have met the following conditions

- the mother contact worker has a strong and stable connection with the fathers partner or other vulnerable person, *and*
- the father's partner / other vulnerable person expresses a desire for the father to participate in video-conference group-work sessions and believes that it is safe (for the family) for him to do so, *and*
- mother contact workers has made it clear that, if they consent for online intervention to occur, they can withdraw that consent at any time if they no longer feel comfortable or safe with the father's participating in online sessions in the family home and that program providers will have a means to withdraw a man from online sessions in a way that does not alert him to the real reason for needing to do so, *and*
- the father has a private space in which he can participate in the sessions in a part of the house separate from where his partner and any children will be at that time, *and*
- the father has his own laptop or computer to use for the video-conference sessions without needing to use hers, and uses headphones so to minimise the likelihood of his family or other persons being exposed to group discussions, *and*
- the father does not fall into any other exclusion categories.

## Father's who may be suitable for online group include:

- Express readiness to change and interest in engaging with others online
- Have access to appropriate technology so that they can join groups with sound and video
- Have a private space from which they are able to appropriately participate in groups
- Have completed a minimum of three phone-based intake/assessment/readiness sessions prior to the beginning of group (or for existing clients, have completed at least 5 group sessions)
- Are aware and accepting of risks to confidentiality (i.e., although Caring Dads programs will use secure, password protected services, they cannot guarantee that group material will not be recorded by another group member)
- Are able to participate in the language of the group (i.e., without the aid of an interpreter)
- Are either not living with their partners /vulnerable persons or meets conditions outlined above

# It is further recommended that

- Groups be limited to eight participants. Size limitation is necessary for facilitators to appropriately monitor and manage father's level of engagement and emotional arousal.
- Groups run for a duration of one hour.
- That programs plan for a minimum of three individual phone contacts with each group participant (1 per month) over the course of service to check in on his potentially changing circumstances and gauge his continued suitability for online group work.

# Caring Dads Video Group: suggested adaptations

- 17 week program; consisting of 5 individual sessions, 9 group video sessions, a group orientation, and 3 video conferences with the father and worker.
- digital workbook with audio-recorded instructions.
- mother contact worker

# Weekly breakdown

- Intake meeting
- Session 1– Group orientation
- Session 2-3 – individual video/phone sessions
- Session 4-9 –Video group sessions
- Session 10 – mid-point video chat with worker and father
- Session 11-13 – individual video/phone sessions
- Session 14-17 – Video group sessions
- Final meeting – worker and father.



# Intake meeting: getting ready

- Video conference with worker and father.
  - This intake session is similar to the intakes you are doing with your more traditional Caring Dads intakes. The differences are:
    - You will need to have established ahead of time the video platform you are using and ensure the father has consistent access to the required technology.
    - In addition, if following Caring Dads recommended inclusion/exclusion guide, you will need to conduct a pre-assessment to insure the father meets the safety guidelines discussed above
  - Once you have determined that a father is eligible for inclusion in a video group you will need to set up an intake session.
    - We recommend you include where possible the person who has made the referral in this session.

# Joint intake with father and referral worker

- Using motivationally enhanced counselling strategies, your goal, as the facilitator, is to use this opportunity to bring the referral person and the father together to discuss the reasons for the referral.
  - This session should follow your current practice for gathering relevant information
    - the reasons for the referral
    - conditions for participation
    - setting joint goals with the referral and the father
    - establish how the goals will be measured by the referral person in working with the father
    - overview of program
    - how the program will be delivered over video medium
    - group rules, including challenges related to video group settings
    - confirm contact information, including address
    - discuss privacy and requirements i.e.. must be in private locations, no one can overhear, options for facilitating this.

# Session 1 –Group orientation

- Program overview: much of this will have already been covered in the intake interview session
- We are recommending the first session can be offered individually or in video format.
  - The upside of video session is that you get a chance to introduce the group members to the technology and each other and address any “glitches” in the process
  - You can use the session to do a brief, reminder overview of the program
  - You can brainstorm with the father the guidelines for being part of a video Caring Dads group
  - You can also remind everyone of the requirements of maintaining confidentiality in the program
- You can also show this video from Caring Dads Australia as a introduction to the fathers <https://youtu.be/h03Nptlcs1A>

# Session 2 – individual

- Session 2 is recommended as an individual session with each of the father's.
  - Check-in, this will allow for an opportunity to review any concerns from the previous weeks group session.
  - Identify and address any concerns as well as review program content
  - You can also review with the father goals identified by the referral worker and relate these to the goals of Caring Dads content.
- You will also be discussing Session 2 material content with the father.
  - Genogram: you will want to spend some time with the father on developing his family chart. As posting the genograms will not be possible in the online group, you will want to have them available for your reference throughout the duration of the group.
- Assign homework – Goals, you will be asking the father to be consider his own personal goals for being part of the group. Remind him of the goals addressed in the meeting with referral worker so he can incorporate these into is own goals

# Session 3 – group

- -Check in, offer a directed check in this week with the fathers.
  - I could be as simple as expressing how they feel about using video format for this group.
  - You will want to remind the father the guidelines for confidentiality and the responsibility for everyone on the call to protect privacy.
- Video group exercises:
  - What is a Dad exercise: using the share screen option, have the father discuss the three parts of this exercise. You should try to complete this task in 15 minutes.
  - How I was fathered: the next exercise for session is the discrepancy building exercise examining how the fathers experience their childhoods. Again, using the screen share option, have the fathers “brainstorm” the three question in the exercise.
  - Follow up with the second exercise related to how his mother was treated.
- Goals: as a check out assignment, have the father share their identified goals that they will be working on in the program.

