



CARING DADS

Virtual Caring Dads Group- Adaptation in the Works!

Summary and Key Points



By
Dr Katreena Scott
Tim Kelly

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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 few recommendations for moving forward in offering online programming for Caring Dads referrals. Our hope is that these suggested modifications will provide the service user with the best possible outcome under these circumstances.

We want to begin with the recognition that Caring Dads is optimally offered in an in-person group setting. Our understanding of change processes and our research on the program has all been done on Caring Dads programs that are run in person. We don't know yet how well Caring Dads will work when run in using video conferencing. As we continue to learn about this form of practice, we recommend that programs return to in person group practice when it is safe to do so.

This guide is based on our best 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. It is 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.

One final note. No matter how we looked at making adaptation to the program, it will in all likelihood be more time consuming and ultimately cost more. It is a time of heightened risk for domestic violence and our adaptations recognize this with increased levels of contact.

Recommended considerations for father's suitability for online groups

When offering groups in online environments, there are new considerations needed for whether or not men are suitable participants. We recommend that serious consideration should be taken around suitability for fathers in the following circumstances:

- Fathers who are not engaged in consistent and responsive individual contact with group leaders should not participate in online group sessions.
- Highly resistant offenders should be engaged individually in readiness sessions until their level of motivation increases. This is important before they begin the group, as our priority is to keep children and mothers safe and having volatile fathers can pose a potential risk. These fathers should not be permitted into group until their motivation for change increases
- Fathers facing highly precarious circumstances due to pandemic-related impacts may need some basic support to gain access to housing, food and health services. Fathers who are struggling to have their basic needs met are not in a position to focus on change in their relationships with their children and families. Caring Dads facilitators can help do some immediate planning, if needed, around child access and should then help with gaining access to services that can address men's basic needs.
- Fathers with significant emotional volatility and/or stress in relation to meeting basic

daily needs should be served individually rather than in online groups.

- As is the case in Caring Dads groups normally, caution should be used in accepting fathers into group-work sessions if they are struggling with *substantial* substance misuse or mental health issues.

There are also some additional considerations for father's eligibility, specifically for those who are living with adult and/or child victim-survivors of domestic violence. More in depth consideration of eligibility is needed due to the heightened risk of doing this work online and in the context of COVID. All of the following criteria should be met in these circumstances:

- The mother contact worker has a strong and stable connection with the father's 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 minimize 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
- 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 maximum of 60 to 90 minutes.
- That programs requires that father be available for both check-in and individual sessions over the course of service.

SUGGESTED ADAPTATIONS

Intake Meeting:

Start with schedule and facilitating a video conference with the worker and the 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 ensure the father meets the safety guidelines discussed above
- As is the case for Caring Dads groups in general, we recommend you include, when possible and appropriate, the person who has made the referral for the father in the first part of the intake session.

In addition, a safety plan is needed

- Create a safety plan for fathers. If they disconnect from video, where do you contact them? If they get upset and leave session, who is their emergency contact? What measures need to be put into place to insure mother, child, and father safety?

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
- How the program will be delivered over video medium
- Discuss privacy and requirements i.e., must be in private locations, no one can overhear, options for facilitating this.

Schedule of Sessions

| Session # | In group or individual? | Exercise(s) | Reference in manual |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | GROUP <u>OR</u> INDIVIDUAL | 1. Group Rules 2. Video introduction of Caring Dads | 1. pg. 40 2. pg. 40 |
| 2 | INDIVIDUAL | 1. Genograms *remember to ask dad about relationships even outside child’s mother (ie. current partners, child mother’s current partner, living situations, etc.) 2. Goals Assign homework to father and ask him to consider his own personal goals for being part of the group. Also remind fathers of goals addressed from meeting with referral worker so he can incorporate these goals into his own. | 2. pg. 44 |
| 3 | GROUP | 1. Short Check-in Remind fathers guidelines for confidentiality and the responsibility for everyone to protect privacy. 2. What is a Dad exercise Using the share screen option, have fathers discuss the three parts of this exercise. 15 mins. 3. How I was Fathered exercise How fathers experienced their childhoods. Using the screen share option, have fathers “brainstorm” the three questions in the exercise. Follow up with the second exercise to how his mother was treated. | 2. pg. 40 3. pg. 46 |
| | Check-in connection | Check-in (15 min) Talk to dad about pros and cons of behavior change and how the decision to change lies within them. Discuss with fathers about setting self-monitoring expectations relating to goals to measure their own progress. Check with the father to make sure he possesses the skills to make the change identified and related this to challenging changes he has already made in his life. | |
| 4 | GROUP | 1. Parenting Continuum 2. Developmental Stages Ask fathers if they notice any changes in their children as a result of COVID-19. Main focus on child-centered parenting, particularly when children are experiencing extraordinary times like these. | 1. pg. 63 2. pg. 65 |
| 5 | GROUP | 1. How well do you know your children? (facilitators are encouraged to modify the questions accordingly as they see fit) What does your child like to play with, has this changed with Covid-19? What does your child want to be when he/she grows up? What does your child want for his/her birthday? What does your child like to do with you, does your child express concerns or frustrations with being home? Does your child talk about current events related to isolation or masking? What does your child like to do with his/her mother? How do you know if your child is upset, does this look different now? Does your child express missing school or other activities at this time? What is your child afraid of, do they share fears about Covid-19? 2. Relationship building exercise Practicing/role-playing having age and developmentally appropriate conversations with their children about the current world circumstances. | 1. pg. 167 |

| | | | |
|------|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| | Check-in connection | <p style="text-align: center;">Check-in (15 min)</p> <p>Review child centered parenting, developmental stages, and how well do I know my child exercise.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Prepare fathers for group work related to listening, playing, and praise.</p> | |
| 6 | GROUP | <p style="text-align: center;">1. Listening, praising, and playing with children</p> <p>Present these concepts in light of the current COVID-19 related changes in everyday life. Brainstorm specific circumstances at this time. Focus on unique challenges all of the concepts have when fathers are facing stressors, and encourage them to take the time needed with their children. Focus on child-centered parenting.</p> | 1. pg. 74 |
| 7 | GROUP | <p style="text-align: center;">1. Fathers as part of Families</p> <p>Check-in around fathers managing stress and unusual circumstances for their children. Focus on relationship with children's mother (managing access and visitation, direct physical contact concerns, etc.) What are fathers seeing in their children? are there changes around this time? How about with child's mother?</p> | 1. pg. 81 |
| | Check-in connection | <p style="text-align: center;">Check-in (15 min)</p> <p>Focus check-in on previous week and how they were able to work towards being a good example for their children and ways that men supported their child(ren)s mother.</p> | |
| 8 | Group | <p style="text-align: center;">1.Thoughts/Feelings/Actions Triangle</p> <p>Introduce this concept to help men understand the connection between their T/F/A's when things go wrong as a father. Chose a father who appears engaged and comfortable in the group to share an example from his parenting</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2.Introduce the Not Valuing Children Wheel</p> <p>Share the Not Valuing Children Wheel (men also have in homework books). Read through each segment on the wheel and have a discussion about behaviors that are abusive as well as ask men to brain storm the impact these behaviours have on children</p> | 1. pg. 87 2. pg. 184 |
| 9/10 | INDIVIDUAL | <p style="text-align: center;">Individual Session</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1. Review</p> <p>Focus on what you have noticed in dad in terms of change, and what dad has gotten out of group so far.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2. Not Valuing Children Wheel</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3. Assign an agreed upon goal to work towards</p> <p>What does dad want to do better? What change will that require of him? How will he (and you) know when things are different?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4. Problem Solving for Parents Sheet</p> <p>Assign a change activity: what do you want to see him practice doing differently?</p> | 2. pg. 98, pg. 184 4. pg. 109 |
| 11 | INDIVIDUAL | <p style="text-align: center;">Individual Session</p> <p>How has dads change progressed? Take up assigned homework. If unsuccessful: does dad need new strategies? Does he need to practice easier situations? role-play?</p> <p>If successful: what has dad done well? What is he doing to sustain the change? Assign more change to dad; role play and/or talk it though/ couch dad during the meeting and use the problem solving for parents' sheet to record.</p> | |

| | | | |
|----|----------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 12 | GROUP | <p style="text-align: center;">1. Extended Group Check-in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What is dad working on changing? What has gone well? What has been challenging? What have been the implications for his children, children’s mother, and for him?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2. The Importance of Parent-Child boundaries</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussing the importance of maintaining appropriate boundaries between children and parents, with a focus on how to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic with children OR choose another one of the possible exercises listed for group</p> | 2. pg. 118 |
| 13 | INDIVIDUAL | <p style="text-align: center;">Individual Session</p> <p style="text-align: center;">How has dads change progressed? Take up assigned homework. If unsuccessful: does dad need new strategies? Does he need to practice easier situations? role-play?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If successful: what has dad done well? What is he doing to sustain the change? Assign more change to dad; role play and/or talk it though/ couch dad during the meeting and use the problem solving for parents sheet to record.</p> | |
| 14 | GROUP | <p style="text-align: center;">1. Extended Check-in</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What is dad working on changing? What has gone well? What has been challenging? What have been the implications for his children, children’s mother, and for him?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2. Impact of denial and minimization on children</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ask men to apply this thinking in their own situations and their own children using a problem-solving example for parents example.</p> | 2. pg. 127 |
| 15 | INDIVIDUAL | <p style="text-align: center;">Individual Session: Focus on Sustainability</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Review how change efforts have gone for dad, then focus on how dad will sustain change. What still needs to change and what does he have planned to support change? What have been the impacts on his child(ren), Child(ren)’s mother, and himself? Provide clear feedback to fathers about sense of progress and ongoing needs.</p> | |
| 16 | GROUP | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rebuilding Trust 2. Summary of Alternatives to Abusive and Parent-Centered Fathering 3. Review worksheet from session 12 on ways to maintain respectful and non-abusive attitudes towards children’s mothers 4. Assign session 16 homework | 1. pg. 136 2. pg. 141 |
| 17 | INDIVIDUAL <u>OR</u> GROUP | <p style="text-align: center;">*Run as group if fathers are cohesive and work well together to promote each other’s change.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group: Review main concepts 2. Group: Getting support from others after group <p style="text-align: center;"><u>OR</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Individual: review what is going to be included in men’s final report from the program (referral person can be included)</p> | |

***On the pro-portal under “COVID-19 resources” there are recordings of the past facilitator check-in webinars where these recommendations are discussed as well as copies of the slideshows are posted for reference.**

Goal 1:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhLKY0v5EHw&feature=emb_logo&ab_channel=CaringDads

Goal 2:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l76Gb9-K5xo&feature=emb_logo&ab_channel=CaringDads

Goal 3 & 4:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cL1xRcUTkoM&feature=emb_logo&ab_channel=CaringDads

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHECK-INS AND INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS

We recommend doing both individual sessions and individual check-ins. Check-ins are recommended during the following weeks.

- between 3 and 4 to review where fathers are at and get them prepared for session 4
- between 5 and 6
- between 7 and 8

These check-ins generally last around 15 min

These check-ins are not for new content but to review materials that they have already talked about in group. Our recommendation is that you schedule these at a consistent time, one other day of the week

Individual sessions, on the other hand, are times when facilitators are working towards change. Individual sessions are scheduled for:

- Session 2
- Session 9/10
- Session 11
- Session 13

In addition, the introductory session (session 1) and final session (session 17) may be run as individual sessions if it so more practical for the agency to do so.

Session 2

This session is an opportunity for facilitators to use skills of motivational interviewing to help men set goals for change. Men should leave this session with enhanced motivation to change.

Sessions 9/10, 11 and 13

This is the part of Caring Dads where men need to be engaging in change. It is assumed that, by the time men reach this session, men are at a point where they recognize that

- Where he is now is not the “man he wants to be” and
- He is ready to put time and effort into making change (because change is hard)
- There are ongoing impacts of his abuse that he needs to take responsibility for
- There is ongoing harm or risk of harm to his children and children’s mothers in some of the ways that he is currently behaving
- There are changes he is responsible for making and that he needs to make if he wants things to improve

During these individual sessions, facilitators should use successive rounds of the problem solving for parents steps to help men achieve change through the following processes:

1. Recognizing and removing justifications. Once he develops insight into what “he tells himself” that entitles him to behave in abusive ways, he will no longer be able to use this justification.
2. Change happens when he actually changes. You need to work with him to be in situations where he would have been abusive and then support him in behaving in a different way. Role play is important. Detailed analysis of situations is important. You want to use the sessions to “be in the situation” to the greatest extent possible so that sessions are about practicing change (i.e., more doing, less talking about change).
3. Emotional skill development is often part of the work. The kind of skills men often need are those to support his own emotional regulation, counter hostile thinking, halt sexist and controlling expectations, and avoid angry, vengeful, and blaming rumination

A note on Scheduling

The online version of Caring Dads can be scheduled the way a typical group is run, with one session, regardless of whether it is a group or individual session, run once a week. The combined format also offers opportunity to compress the time it takes to complete the program by having some individual sessions run the same week as group sessions. Below is an outline of dates for a Caring Dads virtual group that has men connecting with the program twice a week most weeks, on Tuesdays for group sessions and on Thursdays for check-ins or, at times, for individual sessions. This calendar is only a sample of what a full group could look like if planned over 4 months. It is not a requirement and each organization should plan to complete their group over the time period they see to best fit their needs and their client’s needs.

| FIRST MONTH | | | | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------|---|--------|------------------------|
| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
| 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 Labour Day | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 Week 1 group | 16 | 17 Week 2 - 30 min individual, all men | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 Week 3 -group | 23 | 24 Individual check-ins for all men | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 Week 4 group | 30 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Notes: | | | | | | © www.calendarlabs.com |

SECOND MONTH

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------|-----------|-------------------------------------|--------|-----------------|
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 1 night to catch up | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 Week 5 group | 6 | 7 | 8 Individual check-ins all men | 9 | 10 |
| 11 Thanksgiving Day | 12 Week 6 group | 13 | 14 | 15 Individual check-ins all men | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 Week 7 group | 20 | 21 | 22 Start consults with referrers | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 Week 8 group | 27 | 28 | 29 Individual check-ins all men | 30 | 31 Halloween |

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On the 29th, this should say continued consults with referrers and on the 22nd, it should say check-in

THIRD MONTH

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 Week 9/10 individual, 4 men | 4 | 5 Week 9/10 individual, 4 men | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 Week 11 individual, 4 men | 10 Remembrance Day (Many regions) | 11 Week 11 individual, 4 men | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 Week 12 group | 17 | 18 | 19 Week 13 individual, 4 men | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 Week 14 group | 24 | 25 | 26 Week 13 individual, 4 men | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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FOURTH MONTH

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--------|--------|--|-----------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 29 | 30 | 1 Week 15 - 4 individual | 2 | 3 Week 15 - 4 individual | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 Week 16 group | 9 | 10 final reports | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 Week 17 group (or individual, Tu/Th) | 16 | 17 final reports | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 Christmas Day | 26 Boxing Day (Many regions) |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 New Year's Day | 1 | 2 |

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Technical TIPS for facilitators:

- Use a powerpoint presentation to help guide the sessions
- Can save chat room comments for case notes or your own reference
- Can turn off private chats between dads
- Be aware that dads are often on their phones which means they don't see everyone in group only person talking
- Use multiply ways to engage dads through using chat room, showing videos, powerpoint, whiteboard, drawing on screen, polls
- Over-exaggerate body language to show you are listening, lean into screen, turn head, nodding, using your arms...
- Make cursor bigger and when you share screen use your cursor as a pointer
- Prepare your screen ahead of time so you have your documents ready to share (example, developmental charts open, move between tabs)
- Can plug a tablet or ipad into computer to draw genograms with screen share on
- Hang a sheet of chart paper behind you and draw on it (being sure this shows up on screen)
- Have Dads use "raise your hand" feature if they want to speak so to avoid the delays and talking over each other

DIGITAL HOMEWORK BOOKS

We now have a word doc version of the homework book where fathers can type in their answers on their devices - a good way to share this with fathers is to create a shared google drive folder.

In your google drive you will need to create a separate folder for each father and then include this document and then share with the father. *There is also an option that the father can dictate his responses using his phone, using a voice to text app. Please see below:

Google Docs Voice to text works with the Chrome Browser when using google docs or google slides. It is available in lots of languages. Voice command can edit, select, format, add tables, move around the document. It is free.

Windows 10 voice to text: Types what you say at the location of the cursor. It works with documents, social media. Type punctuations, numbers, symbols and letters. It is free but only available in English.

Apple dictation: Built into Mac. Adapts to the accent and it is free.

Dragon Professional Individual: It does translation and transcription. It adapts to the sound environment. It works with windows and versions are available with Mac. It's not free.

Speech notes: Online notepad that takes dictation. Also reads and writes for you. Works for Google chrome and has premium extensions available. Works on punctuation, formatting and autosave the work. It works with 10 different languages and is free.

Other free options are **Dictation and Speech texter** that work with Chrome.