



Virtual Groups for Dads: Goals 3 & 4



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Individual check-ins versus Individual sessions

- We recommend doing individual check-ins though the group
- - between 3 and 4 to review where they 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

On Individual Sessions

Assumptions Going In

Motivation

Much of the work that we do, at least in the early parts of Caring Dads, is to help move men from a place of “I can’t believe that I am being forced to do this” and “you should see what she is like” and “the unfair and stupid system landed me here” and even “My best bet is to just shut my mouth and get through this”

- Use group sessions to get well beyond this and to a place where he recognizes
- He shares a problem with others in the group, they are not so different than him
 - He has caused significant harm to those he is in relationship with
 - Where he is now is not the “man he wants to be”
 - He is ready to put time and effort into making change (because change is hard)

Assumptions Going In

Some Level of Recognition

Something else that we do, though perhaps less consciously, is give men “permission” and “possibility” of change. We do this, in part, by educating men about abuse. We also do this by consistently separating him *as a person* from his *abusive actions*. Recall that men are usually most concerned about being judged as a terrible person (since they feel that way, at some level, about themselves) and reflect on how feeling understood by their group facilitators is very helpful.

At the beginning of group sessions, you want to be at the point that he can identify and recognize:

- 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
- And, if he has moved even farther, he has some sense of why and how he justifies his past and ongoing abusive behaviour

One Final Assumption - Why is change going to happen?

1. Recognizing and removing justifications is a critical part of the work. 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.

Thoughts on Other Theories of Change

Caring Dads has always used CBT as a base – which means that we try to help men articulate (and then challenge) the justifications that he uses for his abusive behaviors (Point 1 from the previous slide)

There are many other possible theories of why change happens. All are likely right and useful to some extent. Other theories of change may suggest that change happens when...

- men *gain insight into why* they repeat certain patterns of behavior
- therapist work collaboratively with men to *make space between their problem (abuse) and their values* as a way to prompt and support men to become a better version of themselves
- men *learn about abuse* and how it works in society and in their relationships. This new learning prompts men to make change
- men are supported to be *more aware of* and better able to *tolerate strong emotion*. With this new awareness, they have more space and time to accept their affect, be non-reactive to their feelings and to choose different ways of being

It needs to come down to DOING

Session 9 & 10 combined – Individual Agreement on what needs to change

- Do a quick review of what you have noticed for him in terms of change and challenge and of his reflections on what he has gotten out of group so far
- Introduce and talk him through the Not Valuing Children Wheel

Then agree upon a goal to work towards

- What does he want to be better?
- What change is the going to require of him?
- How will he (and you) know that things are different?

Assign a change activity – what do you want him to practice doing differently? (use the problem solving for parents sheets to record)

Sessions 11 – Individual

Review of how change is progressing

Take up his assigned homework – how did his change efforts go?

Problem-solve if change efforts have been unsuccessful

- Does he need new strategies?
- Does he need to practice in easier situations?

Review and consolidate if change efforts have been more successful

- What has gone well?
- What is he doing to sustain change?

Assign more change – role play and/or talk it through/coach it during your meeting (again, you can use the problem solving for parents sheets to record)

Sessions 12 – Group Check in on Accountability

Run most of this session like an extended check in

Have each father report on:

- What he is working on changing
- What has gone well and/or what has been challenging
- What have been the implications for his children, children's mothers and for him?

Do one of the 20 minute exercise options from session 12 on men's relationship with their children's mothers

Sessions 13 – Individual Review of how change is progressing

Take up his assigned homework – how did his change efforts go? What has been the impact on his children and children's mother?

Problem-solve if change efforts have been unsuccessful

- Does he need new strategies?
- Does he need to practice in easier situations?

Review and consolidate if change efforts have been more successful

- What has gone well?
- What is he doing to sustain change?

Assign more change – role play and/or talk it through/coach it during your meeting (again, you can use the problem solving for parents sheets to record)

Session 14 – Group Decreasing Denial and Minimization

Run half of this session like an extended check in where each father reports on:

- What he is working on changing
- What has gone well and/or what has been challenging
- What have been the implications for his children, children's mothers and for him?

Use the other half of the session to run Exercise 2 from Session 14 – Impact of denial and minimization on children

Ask men to apply this thinking to their own situations and their own children using a problem solving for parents example

Sessions 15 – Individual Last individual session to prompt change

Take up his assigned homework – how did his change efforts go?

Review and consolidate progress and steps still needed

- What has gone well?
- What is he doing to sustain change?
- What still needs to change and what does he have planned to support this change?
- What have been the impacts for his children, children's mothers and for himself?

Provide some clear feedback to fathers about your sense of his progress and ongoing needs

Session 16 – Group Last Group Session

- Begin with Session 15, exercise 2 – Rebuilding trust
- As a set of alternatives to abuse for relationships with children
 - Run Session 16, exercise 1 – Summary of Alternatives to Abusive and Parent-Centered fathering
- As a set of alternatives to abuse for relationships with children’s mothers
 - Go over the homework sheet from Session 12 on how children are affected by parental conflict
 - Have men summarize a list of ways to maintain respectful and non-abusive behavior towards children’s mothers. What do they practice thinking, saying, doing?
- Assign session 16 homework

Session 17 - Individual or Group

- Run session 17 pretty much as written in either individual or group format
- If in individual format, this can also be a time to review what is going to be included in men's final report from the program and can even be run with the referring person in attendance

Session	For 8 men	Counsellor hours
Intake	Individual + referrer	
Goal 1		
1	Group	120
2	Individual check in (30 min)	30*8 = 270
3	Group	120
Goal 2		
4	Individual check in Group	30 *8 = 270 120
5	Group	120
6	Individual check in Group	30 *8 = 270 120
7	Individual check in Group	30 *8 = 270 120
8	Group	120

Session		Counsellor hours
Goal 3		
9 & 10	Individual	60*8 = 480
11	Individual	60*8 = 480
12	Group	120
13	Individual	60*8 = 480
14	Group	120
Goal 4		
15	Individual	60*8 = 480
16	Group	120
17	Group OR Individual	120