

# PAPA SCHOOLS MANUAL



This programme is funded  
by the European Union



**TOGETHER AGAINST  
GENDER STEREOTYPES AND  
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**  
#eu4genderequality



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November 2020



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## ACRONYMS

<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>EECA</b>	Eastern Europe and Central Asia
<b>EECARO</b>	Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office
<b>EPDS</b>	Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>IUD</b>	Intrauterine device
<b>STI</b>	Sexually transmitted infection
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women







# INTRODUCTION

The benefits of engaged fatherhood are clear - when fathers are more involved in the lives of their sons and daughters, their children are more likely to experience positive outcomes, such as better physical and mental health, higher academic achievement, better cognitive and social skills, higher self-esteem, fewer behavioral problems and increased stress tolerance.<sup>1</sup> Children who are raised by engaged fathers are 39% more likely to earn good grades in school<sup>2</sup>, 45% less likely to repeat a grade<sup>3</sup>, 60% less likely to be suspended or expelled from school<sup>4</sup>, twice as likely to pursue university education and find stable employment after high school<sup>5</sup>, and 75% less likely to become pregnant before the age of 18<sup>6</sup>. Adolescents who have involved fathers are more likely to have better mental health and less likely to report substance abuse, and exhibit safer sexual behavior.<sup>7</sup>

By expanding the definition of fatherhood for men beyond being sole financial provider and protector for the family, space is created for men to connect with others in relationships of

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1 Allen, S. and Daly, K. (2007). *The Effects of Father Involvement: An Updated Research Summary of the Evidence*. Guelph, Canada: Centre for Families, Work & Well-Being, University of Guelph. and Barker, G. (Ed.). (2003). *Men's Participation as Fathers in the Latin American and Caribbean Region: A Critical Literature Review with Policy Considerations*. Washington, DC: The World Bank. and Nock, S. and Einolf, C.j. (2008). *The One Hundred Billion Dollar Man: The Annual Costs of father absence*. National Fatherhood Initiative.

2 Nord, C. & West, J. (2001) *Fathers' and Mothers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools by Family Type and Resident Status*. (NCES 2001-032). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Furstenberg, F.F. & Harris, K.M. (1993). When and why fathers matter: Impacts of father involvement on the children of adolescent mothers. Pp. 117-38 in *Young Unwed Fathers: Changing Roles and Emerging Policies*. Edited by R.I. Lerman and T.J. Ooms. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

greater emotional honesty and empathy<sup>8</sup>. Research shows that men who report close, non-violent connections with their children live longer, have fewer mental and physical problems, are less likely to abuse drugs, are more productive at work and report being happier than fathers who do not report this kind of connection with their children.<sup>9</sup> Men themselves change in diverse ways, biologically and psychologically, when they take on caregiving roles. In short, fathers influence their children's development and children influence their fathers' development. Fathers who are more involved also have female partners who report greater relationship satisfaction and stronger feelings of support.

And yet, research shows that while most men want to be good fathers, deeply embedded gender norms of 'what it means to be a man/woman' and a lack of recognition by governments and health systems of the key roles men play in the lives of their partners and children make it challenging to do so.

The following manual exists to help create safe spaces for men to explore and challenge restrictive gender norms and practice skills and actions that will help them become more engaged fathers and supportive partners, and contribute to gender transformation and the prevention of violence against women and children.

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8 Barker, G., Greene, M.E., Nascimento, M., Segundo, M., Ricardo, C., Taylor, A., Aguayo, F., Sadler, M., Das, A., Singh, S., Figueroa, J.G., Franzoni, J., Flores, N., Jewkes, R., Morrell, R., Kato, J. *Men Who Care: A Multi-Country Qualitative Study of Men in Non-Traditional Caregiving Roles*. Washington, D.C., International Center for Research on Women (ICRW); Rio de Janeiro, Promundo, 2012.

9 DeGarmo, D.S., et al. "Patterns and Predictors of Growth in Divorced Fathers' Health Status and Substance Use". *American Journal of Men's Health*. 2010; 4(1): pp. 60-70. and Schindler, H.S. "The Importance of Parenting Contributions in Promoting Fathers' Psychological Health". *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 2010; 72(2): pp. 318-332. and Eisenberg, M.L., et al. "Fatherhood and the Risk of Cardiovascular Mortality in the NIH-AARP Diet and Health Study". *Human Reproduction*. 2011; 26(12): pp. 3479-85.



## BACKGROUND

This manual has been designed in the framework of the “EU 4 Gender Equality: Together against gender stereotypes and gender-based violence” programme, funded by the European Union, implemented jointly by UN Women and UNFPA in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. The program works towards:

- Shifting societal perceptions around gender stereotypes and patriarchal norms which limit women’s rights
- Increasing men’s involvement in the care taking of their children and participation in fathers’ programmes
- Increasing the knowledge and tools of social workers (mediators) and CSOs on how to conduct evidence-based violence prevention programmes targeting perpetrators of domestic violence.

In partnership with the programme, Promundo contextualized and adapted the principles and methodologies of its Program P (where P stands for “pai”, that is “father” in Portuguese) to ensure that it incorporated European best practices and built on lessons learned through Promundo’s twenty-three years of experience designing, developing and evaluating programming to transform masculinities around the world.





## PROGRAM P APPROACH

Inspired by the Brazilian sociologist Paulo Freire, the approach used in this Manual guides fathers through a process of “conscientization,” encouraging them to reflect critically on the cultural conditions supporting and framing experiences of gender inequality in a way that helps promote their personal growth. The approach aims to create the conditions for fathers to challenge and change the restrictive gender role prescriptions that make it difficult for them to take on engaged fatherhood roles.

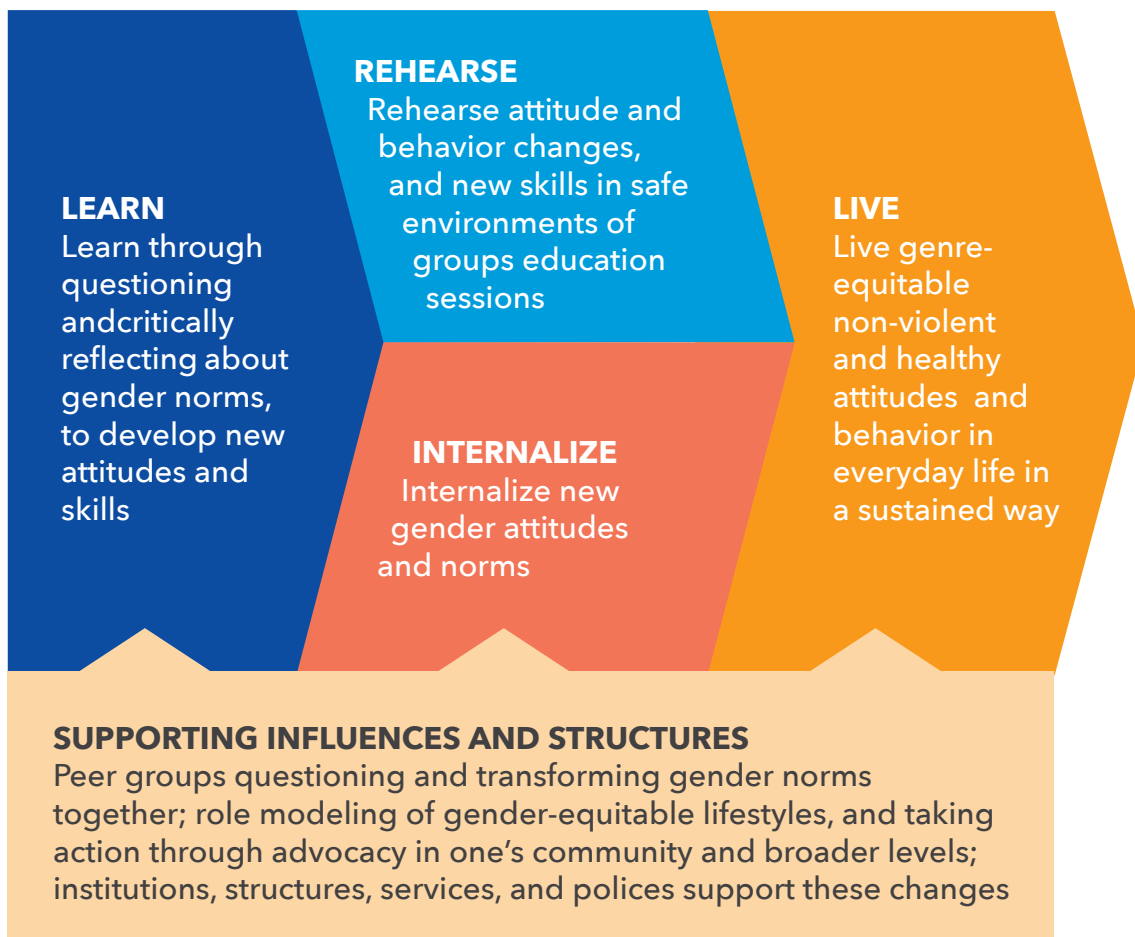
The approach follows a socioecological model that aims to affect a broad array of influences on fathers - including individual perceptions and attitudes; relationships with partners, children, employers and healthcare providers; media; and local, regional and national policies - to promote a sustained change in individual attitudes and behaviors, as well as in deeply entrenched societal norms and power structures. Not only does evidence suggest that taking a multilevel approach is integral to transforming gender norms and achieving gender equality, but it also helps organizations institutionalize the change they wish to bring about in a sustainable way - changing the ways in which relevant institutions (such as the health sector) think about and act to promote gender equality.

# THEORY OF CHANGE

According to the Program P model, men:

- Learn through questioning and critical reflection about gender norms
- Rehearse equitable and non-violent attitudes and behaviors in a comfortable space
- Internalize these new gender attitudes and norms, applying them in their own relationships and lives.

Supporting institutions and structures, when accompanying this integral group education process, allow individuals and organizations involved to have the tools to become agents of change for gender justice and social justice. Ultimately, this process contributes to achieving gender equity and attitude and behavior change.



## PROGRAM P OBJECTIVES

- Promote gender equality within the couple relationship, defined by the equitable division of caregiving and domestic work
- Improve men's self-confidence and efficacy in caregiving for the child to develop and thrive
- Promote positive parenting and healthy relationships with children through the rejection of corporal punishment of children and other forms of violence against children
- Prevent violence against women and promote healthy and happy relationships
- Encourage couples to teach the values of gender equality to their children and to model such equality in their relationships

## PROGRAM P PRINCIPLES

The program promotes fathers and male caregivers that:

- Are active caregivers and nurturers: when planning to have a child, during pregnancy, during labor and delivery, and after the child is born
- Assume equal and joint responsibility of domestic chores and in the development of a happy, healthy, and caring relationship with their partner
- Come in many forms. They are heterosexual, gay, bisexual or transgendered; they live with their partner or separately, or with their parents; they have adopted children; they have custody of children; they are single fathers
- Support gender equality and value the rights of women and children
- Oppose any form of violence against women and children

## WHO IS THIS MANUAL FOR?

This manual was created for use by facilitators working to implement Papa Schools to engage men in active fatherhood and caregiving, gender equity, and violence prevention. The Papa Schools manual includes a series of sessions to enable men to reflect and build collective support for making positive, healthy changes in their lives.







## REGIONAL CONTEXT: SHARING CARE DUTIES

Across the region, divisions of labor around caregiving and household work are deeply gendered, with women taking on the majority of daily care for children as well as performing three more hours of household chores per day than their male partners<sup>10</sup>. Where men are engaged in childcare, they are primarily involved in their children's education - helping with homework and talking to their children. Men see themselves as providers, despite the fact that the role is unfulfilling when simply monetary, and many wish they could spend less time at work and more time with their children. There are indications that the image of fatherhood is changing across the region, with younger generations starting to engage in prenatal care activities and a more nurturing role, although for most couples, unequal divisions of labor remain a daily reality.

In **Armenia**, a recent study<sup>11</sup> of masculinities found that ideas of fatherhood have changed in recent years towards a more engaged form of parenting, with fathers increasingly involved in childcare and education as "father-nurturer". A majority of men (55%) feel that their jobs keep them from spending enough time with their children and 51% would work less for that reason if they could. However, in daily life, 85% of men acknowledge that they play a secondary role in childcare. Women take on the majority of labor in daily care of children, taking children to and from daycare, changing diapers, giving children baths, helping with homework, and punishing - both verbal and physical. Men share responsibility with their partners for playing

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10 UNFPA and Promundo. "Engaging Men in Unpaid Care Work: an Advocacy Brief for Eastern Europe and Central Asia"

11 Osipov, V., & Sargizova, J. (2016). Men and Gender Equality in Armenia. *Report on Sociological Survey Findings Yerevan, Armenia.*

with their children (43%), providing verbal discipline (34%), and talking to their child (34%). A similar gendered division of labor exists for household chores, with women spending five times more time on household labor than men. Men primarily see themselves as responsible for making home repairs (68%).

A similar study<sup>12</sup> of masculinities in **Azerbaijan** found that men are primarily engaged in the education (21%) and verbal discipline (13%) of their children and say that they often talk with their child about personal matters (14%). As in Armenia, women are primarily responsible for the physical discipline (spanking or beating) of children (76%), in addition to daily care (62%) and caring for sick children (85%). Both men and women feel that they jointly change diapers (82%) and give baths (84%), as well as play with (56%) and talk to their children (52%). The majority of men see their role as “provider”, but many report feeling unfulfilled in a purely economic role. If they could work less, 29% would do so in order to spend more time with their children. As “providers”, men see their responsibilities at home as making home repairs (64%) and paying bills (60%). Women are responsible for all other home maintenance chores, including cleaning (96%), cooking (94%), and doing laundry (98%).

In **Belarus**, the division of labor for both childcare and household chores is broadly gendered, as reported in a recent study<sup>13</sup>. Women are responsible for the majority of household tasks, while men see themselves as responsible for minor home repairs and outdoor work. Women spend on average twice as much time as men on household chores, including cooking (90% vs. 44%), washing dishes (83% vs. 31%), and cleaning (82% vs. 44%). In households with children under 10 years old, women are primarily responsible for the daily care of children, at a rate of 78% vs. 59% for men. While the Labour Code in Belarus provides for paternity leave, only 1% of men take advantage of this benefit. When asked about the unequal division of labor in their households, both men and women seem generally satisfied with the situation, indicating internalized norms.

A recent survey<sup>14</sup> in **Georgia** found similar traditional and patriarchal norms around division of labor in the household were found. Men were said to be mostly involved in fixing household items (90%) and paying utility bills (84%), while women took on responsibility for cleaning, doing laundry, maintaining family hygiene, cooking, and looking after children. Raising children is seen as a woman’s “natural” responsibility, and so women are primarily cooking, changing diapers, bathing children, and taking children to school. When men are involved, they are playing with and talking to their child and reading books to them. As in Belarus, a majority of both women (72%) and men (86%) reported being satisfied with this unequal distribution of responsibilities.

In **Moldova**, as in other countries in the region, the percentage of men providing daily care for their children is small – according to men, women provide daily childcare (57%), stay home when their child is sick (66%), and take their child to and from school (33%). Men more frequently play with their children at home (61%) and help their children do homework (35%)

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12 UNFPA (2018) Gender Equality and Gender Relations in Azerbaijan: Current Trends and Opportunities. Findings from the Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES). Baku, Azerbaijan.

13 UN Women (2019) Belarus Country Gender Equality Brief. Istanbul, Turkey.

14 UNFPA (2014) Men and Gender Relations in Georgia. Tbilisi, Georgia.

on a weekly basis. Men see their primary role as providing support and financial stability, but 59% would work less if it meant they could spend more time with their children. Patriarchal norms also guide the division of household labor, with men primarily responsible for minor home repairs and women responsible for cleaning, cooking, and washing clothes.

In **Ukraine**, nearly 57% of women in a recent survey<sup>15</sup> reported that their male partners spend less than five hours to none at all per week to care for family members such as children, elders, or persons with disabilities. The ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine has reinforced gender stereotypes that promote an image of men as protectors and heroes and women as caring supporters<sup>16</sup>. The lack of access to childcare services has also further entrenched women's role as caregivers within the household.

Despite the daily realities that keep men from engaging as full and equal partners and fathers, there are promising opportunities to promote gender equality both at home and in the workplace. Women want men to participate more in childcare and domestic chores and many men would be more involved if they could. In most countries in EECA where data is available<sup>17</sup>, at least one in every three fathers reported being engaged in at least one activity to support the learning of their young child. Such findings may highlight positive entry points to promote early fatherhood and male involvement more broadly in the care of children, whether it be through early child development centers, pre-schools or parent-teacher associations.

## SHARING DUTIES DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS<sup>18</sup>

UN Women conducted a rapid gender assessment in April and May 2020 on the impact of COVID-19 on gender relations in 16 countries and territories across Europe and Central Asia. The COVID-19 outbreak has impacted gendered divisions of household and care labor across the region. Some key takeaways from that analysis, supplemented by stand-alone analyses for Armenia, Belarus, and Ukraine<sup>19</sup>, are below:

**More women than men reported doing more household chores since the spread of COVID-19.** On average, 70% of women spent more time on at least one unpaid domestic work (UDW) activity<sup>20</sup>, which is significantly higher than for men (59%). Across the region the

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15 UNFPA and Promundo. "Engaging Men in Unpaid Care Work: an Advocacy Brief for Eastern Europe and Central Asia"

16 UN Women. "Ukraine". Available at: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/ukraine>

17 UNFPA and Promundo. "Engaging Men in Unpaid Care Work: an Advocacy Brief for Eastern Europe and Central Asia". UNFPA and Promundo, Istanbul and Washington, D.C., 2018.

18 Modified slightly from UN Women (2020) The Impact of COVID-19 on Women's and Men's Lives and Livelihoods in Europe and Central Asia: Preliminary Results from a Rapid Gender Assessment. To note, this section is based on data covering 16 countries and territories across the region: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey.

19 UN Women (2020) Rapid gender assessment of the situation and needs of women in the context of COVID-19 in Ukraine. and UNFPA (2020) How COVID-19 pandemic changed lives in Belarus. and UNFPA (forthcoming) Rapid Gender Assessment - COVID-19 Impact Assessment for Armenia.

20 Defined as cooking, cleaning, household management, shopping, collecting water or firewood, and caring for domestic animals.

situation is similar, but in some parts, the outbreak has placed an immense burden on women. Moldova and Ukraine, for instance, have seen the highest increases in time devoted to unpaid domestic work, with around four in five women in Moldova and one in two women in Ukraine experiencing an increase in at least one household chore. In Azerbaijan approximately 46% and in Georgia 45% of women are spending more time on at least one unpaid domestic chore, compared with 35% of men in both countries. In Armenia, women are spending more time cooking and cleaning at rates of 31% and 44% vs. men at 7% and 16%. While in Belarus, the gap between men and women is smaller, with 11% men and 17% of women doing more cooking and 23% men and 29% women doing more cleaning.

**Women have taken up more care activities while men have become more involved in playing with and instructing children.** In Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova, women have been disproportionately spending increased time caring for children (61% women vs. 46% men in Azerbaijan; 62% women vs. 43% men in Georgia; and 56% women vs. 45% men in Moldova), although in Azerbaijan and Georgia, both women and men have almost equally increased their time spent on instructing and teaching children, at around 60% and 63% respectively. In Moldova, women have disproportionately taken on teaching and instruction burdens at 56% vs. 45% for men. In Armenia, Belarus, and Ukraine, women have also disproportionately increased their time spent on child education and care, with a 6 to 13 percentage point gap between women and men across the three countries.

**Women help their husbands/partners much more often with repetitive daily activities than men help their wives/partners.** Women from across the region reported higher involvement in assisting their partners with household chores and/or caring for family members than men. One of the highest gaps between women and men was found in Azerbaijan, where more than 80% of men said their female partners had increased their help vs. around 50% of women who said the same of their male partners. In Georgia, Moldova, and Armenia the gaps were smaller, around 10% with women continuing to provide more help comparatively to their male partners in Georgia and Moldova and 8% in Armenia. In Belarus, 36% of both women and men felt their partner was helping more with daily chores and childcare. And in Ukraine, 74% women reported that were providing childcare mainly on their own. These findings speak to the entrenched gender stereotypes and expectations that women have the primary responsibility for unpaid domestic and care work in the household.

Sixty-six percent of women reported that other household members, such as parents and in-laws, also helped them with domestic and care work. Usually, such help in care work is given by sisters, mothers and mothers-in-law. All considered, the COVID-19 global crisis has made starkly visible the fact that the world's formal economies and the maintenance of our daily lives are built on the invisible and unpaid labor of women and girls.



# IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

## FATHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION<sup>21</sup>

Many programs report challenges in recruiting and retaining male participants. In some communities, gender norms around fatherhood allow men to feel they already live up to the expectations of “good fathers,” and as a result do not need to participate in programming that promotes involved fatherhood - where fathers play a major, intimate, constant role in the care and upbringing of their children. In other communities, fatherhood classes may appear to explicitly benefit female partners and children and not widely advertise the benefits to men. Economic constraints can sometimes affect fathers’ ability to attend, as can constraints around the time and location of the sessions. The following recommendations represent lessons learned by Promundo staff recruiting and retaining participants for Fathers Clubs around the world.

**Consider expectant and new fatherhood as an entry point.** Expectant and new fatherhood is an especially effective entry point to engaging men in gender equality more broadly, as this is usually an important transformative moment in parents’ and fathers’ lives - one where guidance, knowledge, and skills on navigating the changing circumstances may be welcome.

Since the sessions address topics from pregnancy until early childhood, it is ideal that the program begin with a group of fathers and/or couples who are pregnant, so that some sessions may be conducted before birth and some conducted after. However, the order and the composition of the sessions are up to the facilitator. Some groups may be open, meaning that fathers can join at any point in the session cycle. In this case, the group will have some

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21 Modified slightly from Promundo-US and Plan International Canada. (2020). Recruitment and Retention of Male Participants in Gender-Transformative Programs. Washington, DC: Promundo.

participants who are expecting a child and others whose children may have just been born. If this is the case, take advantage of men who already have children: ask them for examples of how they resolve issues and give them the space to speak about their experiences.

**Consider recruiting other male caregivers where fathers may be absent.** In communities where many households have absent fathers, for example due to ongoing conflict, consider engaging uncles, grandfathers, and other important male caregivers. Supportive family relationships are essential and can lead to better adjustment for children of all ages. A recent study found that time with a grandparent for teenagers led to better social skills and fewer behavioral issues, especially for those in single-parent households<sup>22</sup>.

**Appeal to men's aspirations as fathers and partners.** Understanding what men's ambitions are for themselves and for their involvement with their children and partners can help frame the message to appeal to their self interest. To be effective in recruitment, programs that target men must frame the work to appeal to their aspirations.

**Meet men where they are.** It is crucial to ensure that the physical venues for group sessions are not difficult for participants to get to. Also, consider the timing and seasonality of work. Holding sessions in the evenings or on weekends tends to work better to accommodate men's and couples' schedules. Even men who are not currently employed may not want to attend sessions during usual work hours.

**Recruit using communication methods and venues that are familiar and easy for fathers to access.** Depending on the target audience, the ideal channels of recruitment differ greatly: for example, leaflets and posters at a birthing center or clinic; partnerships with private companies offering fathers' clubs as a health benefit; or perhaps through churches or mosques. Communication might be easiest by phone, via platforms like WhatsApp, or by word of mouth through community members or leaders.

**Understand learner profiles early on.** What kinds of profiles are you targeting? Migrant fathers? Fathers who have been involved in war or conflict? Single fathers? Gay couples? Fathers of adopted children? Male family members helping to raise a child? Identifying participant profiles and adapting the content to their circumstances and particular experiences can help reduce dropouts.

**Use a strength-based approach.** Build on what men and fathers already know. A focus on practical, active lessons that accommodate a diversity of men and learning styles works better to encourage men to continue participating in the program.

**Introduce power and gender gradually.** Starting with talking about relationships and about men and women's lives generally before moving on to more difficult and contentious topics like power and gender can help prevent disengagement and dropouts. Issues of power and gender inequality are complex and can ignite debate or make men feel defensive. Introducing topics that male participants can relate to in their own lives in non-judgmental ways can be more effective.

**Plan for "family days."** Many men and women appreciate the opportunity to participate

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22 Attar-Schwartz, S., Tan, J., Buchanan, A., Griggs, J., & Flouri, E. (2009). Grandparenting and adolescent adjustment in two-parent biological, lone-parent, and step-families. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 23(1), 67-75.

in programs as couples or families. Creating spaces for togetherness in the program and scheduling sessions for the family where household members can practice positive behaviors, envision an equitable future together, or plan and make a budget could be a powerful way to engage the entire family and help link the program messages to participants' own lives.

## FACILITATOR SELECTION AND TRAINING<sup>23</sup>

Skilled facilitators are essential to the success of gender-transformative programs. In addition to participants learning new skills and practicing equitable behaviors, the most effective gender-transformative programs start a process of critical reflection and build solidarity among group members to mobilize change. Skilled facilitators can ignite and support this process of developing critical consciousness. The following recommendations represent lessons learned by Promundo staff working with facilitators to implement Fathers Clubs around the world.

**Seek out facilitators with experience in participatory methods.** Consider the background of the facilitators selected to implement your program. For instance, facilitators who have been previously trained as teachers can find it difficult to adopt a participatory style. Some facilitators may be skilled and highly trusted in the community, but due to their formal teaching background might revert to the traditional lecture style of leading sessions, which is not conducive to developing critical consciousness.

**Use role play in screening interviews for facilitators.** Successful strategies for recruitment may include casting a wide net and screening. Advertise widely in the community and highlight strong interpersonal skills as a key requirement for the facilitator position. Screening interviews that incorporate role-plays can be an efficient way to check for the necessary "soft skills" required of a facilitator.

**Advertise for specific skills and traits.** The following is an indicative list of the interpersonal skills and qualities that suitable facilitators possess:

- Authentic and sincere
- Humble
- Possesses emotional maturity
- Able to think on one's feet
- Open to other people and new ideas
- Listens actively
- Makes others feel safe
- Guides discussions
- Invites feedback
- Responds to criticism constructively

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<sup>23</sup> Modified slightly from Promundo-US and Plan International Canada. (2020). Role of Facilitation in Gender-Transformative Programs That Engage Men and Boys. Washington, DC: Promundo.

**Seek out feminist and progressive social justice organizations as a good starting point for identifying strong facilitators.** Community organizations with progressive agendas and feminist non-governmental organizations typically already have deep experience in the communities and can help identify candidates. They are also likely to already epitomize the values of gender-transformative programs, such as using a participatory approach, minimizing harm, centering experiences of women, children, and vulnerable and marginalized groups, among others.

**Consider your program objectives to identify facilitator demographics, as these demographics may yield different power dynamics in the group.** The ideal age range of the facilitator will depend on the objectives of the program. Depending on the region, cultural norms around interactions between different age groups may affect the program. In some contexts, married participants may find it difficult to receive information on SRHR and gender equality from unmarried adult male facilitators. Similar effects on group dynamics may also result from hierarchical relations between community members: If a respected local leader is selected as facilitator, participants may not feel comfortable opening up or sharing contrasting opinions.

**Sufficient time and intensity of training for facilitators are critical** – but there are differing opinions on what is ideal. One study<sup>24</sup> suggests that ten days of training is inadequate and that depending on newly recruited facilitators’ skills and experience, 25 days (including booster trainings) might be more suitable. Promundo’s facilitator trainings usually last five days (or ten days if the program is implemented over many months). “Cascade models” of training are not recommended; it is preferable that the facilitators who will lead the group sessions be directly trained as much as possible. Programs should include mechanisms for ongoing and refresher training and support, such as group observations, periodic refresher trainings, and troubleshooting.

**Discussing the theoretical underpinnings of facilitation can help clarify objectives.** Facilitators may revert to lecture-style modes of teaching if they do not fully appreciate the motivation for choosing a participatory approach. Sharing the motivation and theoretical basis for this choice can help prevent this.

**Necessary elements of trainings include:**

- Content that includes gender as a social construct, power, and violence against women
- Adequate time to practice facilitation skills
- Learning to respond to disclosures of violence and trauma
- Building cohesion in the group
- Strategies to mobilize for social change
- Identifying and addressing facilitators’ own biases

**Clarify long-term goals together at the beginning.** Program goals like questioning

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24 Bartel, D. (2018). Training and mentoring community facilitators to lead critical reflection groups for preventing violence against women. The Prevention Collaborative.



traditional gender norms, learning skills, and building networks to organize and enact activism need to be made explicit and agreed upon with all facilitators and partners. Failing to do so can risk losing or changing focus in practice.

**Involve facilitators in curriculum design.** Having facilitators participate in the curriculum development stage of the program can help build facilitators' buy-in and demonstrate the importance of the participatory approach. A useful strategy, in circumstances where it is impossible to include facilitators in the design stage, may be to develop a core curriculum that is then shared with local partners and facilitators for further adaptation and inputs.

## CREATING A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT<sup>25</sup>

Gender-transformative programs tackle complex and nuanced topics. Facilitators may find it difficult to translate complicated concepts into simpler terms for participants or may feel uncomfortable talking about certain topics. Some facilitators might want to show progress and unintentionally push participants towards "correct" answers rather than focus on critical reflection and dialogue. Facilitators may also find it difficult to lead discussions and manage group dynamics for various reasons, such as the presence of challenging participants who dominate the group and act as "gatekeepers" by stifling discussion or the presence of participants who are reticent to share personal experiences. The following guidance is intended to help facilitators navigate the complexities of gender transformative programming, understanding that norms change is a slow process, requiring patience and flexibility.

### TAKE ON THE ROLE OF A FACILITATOR, NOT A TEACHER<sup>26</sup>

Traditionally, a teacher is an expert expected to have all the answers. A facilitator need not have all the answers and instead creates an open and safe space to facilitate dialogue and critical reflection among participants. Ask questions to better understand where participants are coming from, and guide them in group reflections to critically look at harmful norms around masculinity and caregiving. You do not have to be a gender equality or parenting expert and do not need to have all the answers. Rather, the role of the facilitator is to create an open and respectful environment in which men can feel comfortable sharing and learning from each other in a safe space.

The role of the facilitator is to promote reflection and participatory learning, present information neutrally, and create a horizontal learning experience where men can learn from each other and from active participation in the activities. Other information to keep in mind includes being aware of your position of power; accordingly, avoid judgmental and authoritarian attitudes. Never impose your feelings or opinions on the group. Always be conscious of the language you use and messages you present

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25 Modified slightly from Promundo-US and University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (2018). *Manhood 2.0: A Curriculum Promoting a Gender-Equitable Future of Manhood*. Washington, DC and Pittsburgh: Promundo and University of Pittsburgh. and Promundo, CulturaSalud, and REDMAS (2013). *Program P - A Manual for Engaging Men in Father- hood, Caregiving, Maternal and Child Health*. Promundo: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Washington, D.C. USA.

26 From Promundo-US and University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (2018). *Manhood 2.0: A Curriculum Promoting a Gender-Equitable Future of Manhood*. Washington, DC and Pittsburgh: Promundo and University of Pittsburgh.

- Review your own views, assumptions, and prejudices, and avoid bringing them to the group. Be aware if men from particular social, cultural, or religious backgrounds trigger certain emotions in you, be they positive or negative, that may affect your own work in the group.
- Include physical movement so that participants remain active, alert, and interested.
- Be friendly and create rapport with your participants.

### ASK QUESTIONS THAT PROMOTE DIALOGUE

See your group as a process. Ask “process questions” - question that cause participants to reflect more, that cannot be answered with a “yes” or “no”, and that are unbiased.

- Ask “When?” “Where?” “What?” “How?” “Who?” “Why?” For example: “What were you thinking when that happened? Why do you think that is?”
- Exclude your own feelings and values from the questions and instead guide participants in identifying problems and solutions.

### REMEMBER THE GROUP AGREEMENT

Ask participants to decide on a set of agreements and remind them of those agreements throughout the sessions. Important group agreements relate to listening to and showing respect for others (e.g., not talking when others are speaking, not making rude comments, or not talking on the phone), confidentiality, and participation.

### DO NOT JUDGE

Remember, you are here to facilitate discussion and reflection. Your role is not to teach or punish anyone. Be friendly and create rapport with your participants. Be aware of your own position of power - avoid judgmental and authoritarian attitudes. Never impose your feelings or opinions on the group.

### PROMOTE INCLUSION

Ensure that all participants have the opportunity to speak. Be careful not to let one person dominate the conversation or make other people feel that they cannot share their opinions. Encourage people to share their experiences, and learn to identify when people want to speak but may be too shy to say something unless called on. If a participant begins to take over a group by spending too much time with a story, find an opening and kindly say, “It sounds like you have a lot of valuable experiences to share with the group. That’s great! Do others have similar or different stories they would also like to share?”

### VALUE DIVERSITY IN MALE CAREGIVING

This program is relevant and informative for couples with and without biological children. Uncles, brothers, teachers, coaches, and stepfathers can have profoundly positive relationships with children. Fatherhood is more than simple biology; it manifests itself through the quality and depth of the caregiving connection men have with children.

## ADDRESS PARTICIPANTS' CONCERNS

The group meetings can serve as an important opportunity for participants to receive help and advice. As a facilitator, it is important that you validate people's concerns, but you can also engage the larger group in helping to propose solutions. Ask the group, "How do you think this problem could be solved?" or, "Has anyone faced a similar situation? What did you do?"

## KNOW AND USE REFERRAL SERVICES

Some problems that participants face may require outside support. In addition, some participants may prefer to discuss a particular topic, obtain information, or seek support outside of a group setting, or they may need attention from a specialized service provider. As a facilitator, you should be knowledgeable on places where you can refer participants if needed, such as when a participant discloses or shares information that she or he is experiencing intimate partner violence or mental health problems such as depression or intense anxiety. You should contact your team supervisor if you are unsure of how to handle a particular problem and always offer the option to the participant to connect her/him with specialized gender based violence health providers (health, psychological, legal advice support or child protection services) or mental health specialists if available. Identify contact information of specialized GBV and mental health providers in your area and offer this information in non-imposing way so as to avoid putting the person in danger (eg. You can hand the participant that expresses interest in referral information the name and contact information of the service provider).

## MANAGE CONFLICTS RESPECTFULLY

If a conflict arises among the group, or if a participant shares a discriminatory view, remind the participants of the group agreement. Encourage other members to help mediate the situation. Ask the group what they think about the question raised or how they would suggest handling the problem. When necessary, you can offer brief responses to questions and clarify misinformation.

## APPRECIATE HONESTY AND OPENNESS

Encourage participants to be honest and open. They should not be afraid to discuss sensitive issues for fear of ridicule from their peers. Thank the group members for sharing their personal stories. Never force anyone to participate in the activities. Instead, try to create an environment in which the participants feel comfortable.

## PROMOTE MOVEMENT AND INTERACTION

Include as much physical movement as possible so that participants remain active, alert, and interested. You are encouraged to use short energizer activities in between activities in order to keep the participants engaged in the topics you are discussing. You can find some examples of energizers at the end of the curriculum.

## ASK FOR FEEDBACK

Use a "check-out" to receive regular feedback from participants. What do they like and dislike about the activities? What is working or not working? Use their input to improve the sessions. Do not divert from the planned activities, but use feedback to improve the running of the sessions (for example, by including more energizers).

## **BE RESPECTFUL IN YOUR PRESENCE AND APPEARANCE**

Try to be as respectful as possible in your appearance and nonverbal and verbal presentation. This includes the way you dress (avoiding clothes that distract) and address participants (work on remembering their names - a simple name game can help with that).

## **EMPHASIZE CONFIDENTIALITY**

If someone shares some personal information, it needs to remain in the group unless a safety issue is reported and follow up may be necessary. Before beginning facilitation, make sure that you understand and can explain confidentiality and what the exceptions to it will be. It is critical that facilitators have clearly determined a plan with the Papa Schools supervisor for responding to disclosures of violence that may occur during the intervention.

## **SHARING IS A CHOICE**

Participants do not have to share a difficult or personal situation if they choose not to. Although all discussions are confidential, not all experiences need to be shared, especially if it causes the men or their partners difficulty.

## **BE CAREFUL OF TOPICS THAT MAY CAUSE RE-TRAUMATIZATION**

Given some of these issues' sensitivity, it is possible that participants will bring up personal experiences of sexual trauma or abuse. It is important that at the beginning of each session, you remind participants that they are welcome to leave the room if they feel uncomfortable. They are not required to share any sensitive information. This should be repeated at the beginning of particularly sensitive activities as well. It is also helpful to go over the ground rules (group agreements) about respecting confidentiality in the group setting, and the participants should also be reminded not to share any personal information that they do not want revealed outside of the group.

## **PREPARE IN ADVANCE FOR DISCUSSIONS ABOUT SENSITIVE AND DIFFICULT ISSUES**

It is important that you feel comfortable talking about sensitive and personal issues. For this reason it is recommended that you participate in self-reflection exercises prior to each activity to ensure that you are prepared and comfortable to discuss key topics. Aside from causing discomfort, some activities can have a serious emotional impact on participants and facilitators because violent experiences or other traumatic life events, such as abandonment may be recollected. Therefore, it is important to give the participants emotional support during this process. Generally, this can be achieved by respectfully listening to the participants, without judging or pressuring them. For those who share traumatic or difficult experiences, acknowledge the fact that they were able to press on and continue with their lives despite facing such adversity.

If a participant begins to break down and cry in front of the group, normalize the experience by giving them room to express that emotion. Consider saying, "Thank you for being brave and trusting us with that story. I'm sure many of the people in this room have had similar experiences like yours." Others in the group may also feel the need to support this person, and encourage them to do so if it feels appropriate. Often, these moments are what binds a group together. Additionally, explain that you are available and willing to have a separate

conversation in private with any participant who requests it, and offer more personalized support by referring those who may need it to professional counseling or therapy. Recommend to all that they take care of themselves (especially immediately following the session), take time to rest, take a shower and drink enough water. The confidentiality commitment established in Activity 1 should also be reiterated to remind participants not to comment or repeat what was shared during the session with others outside the group.

## MAINTAIN NON-NEGOTIABLE GROUP VALUES

Though there will be plenty of topics that group participants will disagree on, many of which will have no right or wrong answer, there are some issues that are “non-negotiable” and not up for debate. They are the following:

- Men must be active caregivers and nurturers at all times: when planning to have a child, during pregnancy, during labor and delivery and after the child is born.
- Men should assume equal and joint responsibility of domestic chores.
- Men come in many forms. They are heterosexual, gay or lesbian, bisexual or transgendered; they live with their partner or separately, or with their parents; they have adopted children; they have custody of children, and so on.
- Men support gender equality and value the rights of women and children.
- Men oppose any form of violence against women and children.

## PROGRAM LOGISTICS

### SAME GENDER VS. DIFFERENT-GENDER FACILITATORS

Is it advisable to use male facilitators when working with groups of men? In some contexts, men prefer to interact with a male facilitator who will listen and, at the same time, serve as a model. However, other evidence suggests that the quality of the facilitator – the ability to mobilize the group, listen and motivate them – is a more important factor than sex. One recommended possibility is to have both male and female facilitators working as a team to show that it is possible to work together, and to model equality and respect. Nevertheless, it is not always possible to have more than one facilitator, or to form a collaborative pairing, so it is advisable to train and utilize as many qualified persons as possible in advance who are willing, available, and motivated to lead a group process.

### DURATION OF PAPA SCHOOL SESSIONS

The duration of a group education program can range from a single discussion group to ongoing weekly sessions. The practice of conducting several sessions, with a brief rest period of a few days to a week between each session, seems to be the most effective; it allows participants time to reflect on and apply the topics discussed in real life scenarios, and then return to the group and continue the dialogue.

One study<sup>27</sup> has shown that group education sessions lasting two or two-and-a-half hours per week, for a period of 10 to 16 weeks, is the most effective “dose” with respect to sustained attitude and behavior change. Other studies have shown an impact in terms of changing attitudes in just 2-6 sessions. A greater number of sessions allows for more effective acceptance of the issues, and provides more time during the week and between sessions to reflect on the issues and discuss them with partners - all of which increases the likelihood of producing favorable results.

## IDEAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

Groups of 5 to 15 participants are recommended. If classes are inclusive of couples, a minimum of 4 couples and a maximum of 10 should be invited to participate. The creation of the groups will depend on the context in which the activities are implemented and on the particular characteristics of the participants. Working with large groups is not recommended, because the size can make it very difficult to conduct the sessions and achieve learning objectives in a confidential, intimate and mutually supportive atmosphere.

## ALL-MALE VS. MIXED-SEX GROUPS

Although the language of this manual is primarily directed at working with groups of men, this participation model can be flexible and adapted for mixed groups. Men and women live and work together; some are couples while others exist in families with different structures and arrangements. As educators, teachers and professionals who work with men, it is important to encourage interactions that promote respect and equality, either in groups of only men or only women, or in mixed groups.

Mixed groups allow women and men to hear the perspectives of the other sex. They can also serve as a bridge to fill the communication gap between men and women, and provide the opportunity for both to collaboratively explore and understand their relationships and gender attitudes.

Although mixed groups provide a unique set of advantages, in some cases it is best to work with separate groups of men or women. Some men feel more comfortable or safer discussing topics such as sexuality and violence, or expressing their emotions, without the presence of women. On the other hand, there are also some young men who may be more engaged in discussing certain topics if women are also around.

In summary, experience has shown that mixed groups as well as those constituted only by men or women can have a positive impact. Therefore, the model should be chosen in response to the needs of the specific context in which it will be implemented.

## CLASSROOM PREPARATION

Activities should take place in a spacious and pleasant environment with few distractions, where participants can move about freely but also have privacy. For groups taking place in the health clinic, ensure that you pick a space that has little to no foot traffic. To make spaces

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27 Barker, G., Ricardo, C. and Nascimento, M. (2007). Engaging Men and Boys in Changing Gender-based Inequity in Health: Evidence from Programme Interventions. Geneva: World Health Organization.

more inclusive and warm, hang posters on the walls that contain images of men caring for children. There are many posters available to download on MenCare's website: [www.mencare.org](http://www.mencare.org). It is recommended that, during the sessions, participants are offered some type of refreshment and engage in physical activity and motion. Beverages and food tend to be highly valued by participants, and help them stay in the group process.

## TIPS FOR RUNNING EACH SESSION

Listed here is an outline of basic tips on how a facilitator should run each session. Before beginning each session, re-read this section to remember the key points.

- **Start Punctually.** Parents are busy, so it is important to respect the reality that fathers may not have more than the allotted time set aside for the session.
- **Start each session with a check-in.** It could be a general quick question: "How are you doing this week?" "How is your baby doing?" The facilitator should include himself or herself in this, and model an open and honest response. Some participants will check in with their own troubles, and it is important to give them the space to express themselves without taking over the whole group.
- **Reflect on the last session.** Ask, "Any more thoughts on our topic from last week?"
- **Introduce the session's theme and the objectives.**
- **Use "icebreakers" and energizers.** Icebreakers are short activities that help participants to build trust in the group, usually in a lighthearted way. They are a good way to open a session, allowing participants to move around, share, and become more comfortable with one another. Energizers are short activities that are most helpful when the group appears to have low energy, lose interest, or not be responding to the activity. These help to change the routine, get people in motion, and relieve fatigue and boredom. They take only a few minutes.
- **Keep discussions from going too far off from the key messages.** One of the main facilitator tools you can use is the "bank," also known as the "parking lot." While all discussions are welcome, if a participant brings up a topic that cannot be addressed within the time allotted, write it on a flip chart paper called the "bank" or "parking lot." It is important that these topics are revisited at another time. However, if the topic is completely unrelated to fatherhood or parenting, say something like, "That's a great comment. We don't have time to address that right now, but let's talk more about it after the session."
- **Manage your time.** Keep track of time; do not spend more than about two hours on a given session. Keep in mind participants' attention spans and schedules.
- **At the end of the session, remind participants of any homework.**
- **Close.** Go around the group quickly to transition out of the current issue to the topic of the next session by asking something like, "What is one thing you are looking forward to this week or weekend?"



# GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE TRAINING ONLINE

Implementing the Papa Schools training during the COVID-19 pandemic may mean delivering sessions in an online format, to protect the health and safety of participants and trainers. Should this be the case, the following guidelines can help you modify sessions to better engage your participants.

**Send materials in advance.** Send participants copies of the slides and handouts for the session in advance, so they can read along without having to look at the screen and complete activities on paper if they should choose. This is also helpful for individuals with low bandwidth who may experience technical difficulties during the session.

**Check in (icebreakers).** It's difficult to get a sense of where participants are emotionally, without being able to read body language. Are they tired, engaged, distracted, anxious? Using check-ins at the beginning of each session is a good way to find out how participants are doing and to let them share their emotions. Acknowledging emotions and situations up front will also make it easier for participants to concentrate during the rest of the session. The following are examples of simple check-in exercises, which can also be used as icebreakers:

- Use two words to describe how you're currently doing. (ex: "tired and anxious" or "nervous and excited")
- If you could pick a color to describe your day, what would it be? (ex: "bright yellow" or "dark blue")
- What percentage of you is available today? (ex: "The baby kept us up all night, so I'm about 60% available" The goal is not to get participants to 100%, but to acknowledge their current state.

Participants will likely go beyond just answering the question to give you more information on their current situation. This is perfectly fine; let them speak.

**Take breaks.** If you are conducting a 1.5- or 2-hour session, make sure to take a 15 minutes break at the halfway point to allow participants to turn off their screens, rest their eyes, and stretch their legs.

**Use breakout rooms.** Breakout rooms can be used for exercises that may have been conducted as small groups for in-person sessions. These allow participants to get to know each other better and interact in a more intimate format. Most videoconference applications allow you to place participants in either random or intentional groupings - make sure you have practiced doing this beforehand.

**Use polls.** Polls are a good tool to engage participants and get a sense of group experience and opinions. Some videoconference applications have built in polling features. If this is not available to you, a good free resource is Poll Everywhere, but it requires you to create your poll in advance and make sure participants have access to the link by posting it in the chat box.

**Use whiteboards.** Whiteboards allow participants to interact together and in real time by



typing in answers or adding images or drawings onto a blank page or a document. Some videoconference applications have a built in whiteboard feature. If this is not available to you, a good free resource is [Jamboard](#), which allows you to create an exercise ahead of time for participants to engage with. As with PollEverywhere, you will need to provide the link to your Jamboard exercise to participants by posting it in the chat box.

**Use the chat box.** Encourage participants to share their thoughts, ideas, and questions through the chat feature, if they do not feel as comfortable raising their hand and speaking. Make sure you or another facilitator is monitoring the chat box so that you can engage equally with both verbal and written engagement.





# LEARNING MODULES

## OVERVIEW AND STRUCTURE: HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

Each session in this manual includes the following aspects:

**Title:** Indicates the main theme of the meeting or session. In a phrase or sentence, the title summarizes the scope of the session, and the main topics to be addressed.

**Objectives:** Describe specific information, ideas and skills to be addressed; these outline the learning goals for each session. Unless the session's instructions say otherwise, the facilitator should share the objectives with the participants at the beginning of each meeting.

**Recommended Time:** Suggested time interval for conducting the session. Depending on the number of participants and other factors, the recommended duration for each session may vary. It is important to adapt the length of each session to the work rate of the participants.

**Audience:** Recommended audience for the session. While most sessions are designed for fathers only, there are sessions in which the presence of their partners is helpful to further encourage the gender transformative norm changes in their relationships.

**Materials Needed:** Materials required for carrying out the activity or activities. If not otherwise specified, basic materials, such as paper and marker pens, should be made available. In cases where the materials listed may not be easily acquired, the facilitator has the freedom to improvise. For example, a flip chart can be replaced by cardboard, newspaper or a chalkboard.

**Key Ideas:** A summary of key educational messages that should be conveyed during a session and reiterated at the close. These help the facilitator to be clear on the primary messaging points for each meeting.

**Session Structure:** The stages or steps for performing the activity or activities during a session. In general, the activities are designed to be easily adaptable to groups with different proficiency levels in reading and writing, and the facilitator must carefully assess whether or not the steps are feasible and appropriate for participants. The structure is broken down further into "Activity 1, Activity 2" and so on, for easy reading.

**Closing Remarks and Homework:** Additional guidance for closing the session. At the end of each meeting, the participants will be guided through a task; experiences from these tasks will be shared at the following meeting. Homework helps put into action and reinforce the new practices developed during class. Not all sessions will end with homework.

**Notes for Facilitators:** Supportive commentary for facilitators, which includes information or evidence on key topics and conceptual distinctions. This will allow the facilitator to feel more comfortable with the subject, especially if it is an unfamiliar topic. Note that not all sessions contain notes for the facilitator.

**Session Handouts:** Additional information and tools that complement the activities are offered in some sessions.

The sessions are organized to facilitate full understanding and implementation. Some sessions include more than one activity. The purpose of including more than one activity is to facilitate deeper group understanding and reflection of the topic at hand.

# SESSION 1: EXPECTATIONS

## OBJECTIVES

- Receive feedback on the needs, expectations and motivations of participants
- Use the expressed needs and interests of men to encourage their participation and to answer their most pressing questions
- Get input from the participants on planning or adapting future sessions to address the particular needs of the group

**RECOMMENDED TIME:** 2.5 hours

**AUDIENCE:** Men only

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Flipchart or white board
- Markers

## PREPARATION

- Review Notes for Facilitators for this session in advance
- Print copies of the handout: [Benefits of an Involved Father](#)



### KEY IDEA

Sharing experiences with other parents provides a valuable educational opportunity for men participating in these sessions: they become more aware of and responsive to each other's concerns, and benefit emotionally from the supportive environment.

## WELCOME

- During the first session, start by introducing yourself, explaining the purpose of the meetings and facilitating an activity or game that helps participants to build trust in the group (see Appendix for suggestions of ice-breakers).
- Provide an overview of the day's objectives.

### ACTIVITY 1: "WHO LIKE ME..." ICE BREAKER

- Form a circle and have all participants stand up.
- Explain that spontaneously, one by one, participants can move to the center of the circle asking the question, "Who like me...?" They will complete the question with a detail about their family situation or experience of fatherhood, for example, "Who like me has twins?" or "Who like me is a first-time father?" In these examples, all men who also have twins or are first time fathers would join the man in the center of the circle.
- As facilitator, start the activity from the center of the circle by asking a question, "Who like me...?" Then, encourage others to move to the center and ask their own questions, "Who like me..."

### ACTIVITY 2: CREATING GROUND RULES

- Use this first session as a time to collectively build group guidelines (see "Creating Ground Rules" in the Introduction above under the sub-heading, Methodological Recommendations)

### ACTIVITY 3: MY NEEDS AND CONCERNS AS A FATHER

- Divide the participants into groups of 3 or 4 people and ask them: "What would you like to reflect on, learn, share or understand in these sessions together?" Tell them they have five to ten minutes in their groups to discuss.
- If the session is with couples, ask each couple to turn to his or her partner and discuss the question among themselves and report back to the group.
- After the five to ten minutes are up, ask for a volunteer from each group to report back two to three questions or comments from the group.
- Record the comments and questions on a chalkboard or flipchart paper.
- Once all groups have had a chance to report back, read the first question and answer it, modeling the behavior for the group (using "I" statements, validating that it is a good question to ask).
- For the rest of the questions, invite volunteers to answer from their own experience and perspective by asking, "Who would like to share their experience on how they were able to resolve this issue?" or "What do people think about this comment?"
- After the group members have finished answering the question, you can summarize and highlight the key ideas and those that best exemplify ideals of gender equality and shared responsibility.
- The most important piece of this activity is that the questions move the group to share their personal experiences. If time permits, measure and give equal attention to all shared experiences, in an attempt to answer all questions.

## ACTIVITY 4: GROUP DISCUSSION

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### QUESTIONS

- How did it feel to hear about the experiences of your peers? Did you learn anything new?
- Was there any comment that surprised you?
- Why do men talk so little about their concerns about fatherhood?
- Are there any more questions?
- Using a large poster board, whiteboard, or flip chart, present the remaining sessions and their key topics.

### CLOSING REMARKS

- Thank all participants for sharing their questions, concerns and experiences.
- Express appreciation for the environment of respect and trust they have sustained throughout the session, and encourage participants to take part in future meetings.
- Explain that you will use all questions posed in these activities to further inform and shape the coming sessions.
- Remind the group about confidentiality, and the importance of keeping what it said during the group sessions within the group.
- Finally, mention that all sessions will include a critical reflection on gender socialization, i.e. how boys and girls are raised and educated.

### HOMEWORK

At the end of each session, explain that the participants will be assigned a task that will be reviewed during the following session. The assignment this week is:

### ASSIGNMENT

- Converse with your partner or the mother of your child, and share with them a concern or fear with regard to fatherhood; invite her to share with you as well (if not already done in the group).
- Ask your partner or the mother of your child what is expected of you as a father. Listen to her.
- Come prepared to share voluntarily in the next session (if applicable) your experiences about the conversation.



## NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

In any group, the first challenge is to build a secure group framework so that participants feel they may share their feelings and experiences in confidence. If this confidence framework is built from the beginning, then it is much easier to maintain the environment as the group becomes self-regulating. Also, the facilitator functions as the moderator of the framework; he/she must refocus the group if participants stray from the agreed-upon rules. Typical cases in which to intervene or take control are: when a participant verbally assaults another when interpreting the experience of a participant, or when someone “steals the microphone” and takes time away from the others. Intervention is also necessary if sexist views are expressed or any of the values of the sessions are rejected (See “Values of the Group”); in this case, ask other group members how they view that person’s comments, and reflect on what his partner would think about these views. Invite others to question the views in a supportive manner, without confronting the person who expressed them.

The participants’ experience is the raw material of any group learning process.

Individuals are much more likely to change their attitudes and behaviors when sharing and analyzing their own experiences and those of others, than when simply digesting facts.



# SESSION 2: SEX, GENDER, AND PARENTING

## OBJECTIVE

- Discuss the differences between 'sex' and 'gender' and reflect on how society's expectations influence the lives and relationships of men and women, as well as the ways in which they interact with and raise their children.

**RECOMMENDED TIME:** 2.5 hours

**AUDIENCE:** Men and their partners

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Flipchart or white board
- Markers

## PREPARATION

- Review Notes for Facilitators for this session in advance
- No handouts for this session



### KEY IDEA

Sex is biological, that is, we are born with male or female reproductive organs and hormones. It's the biological difference between males and females.

Gender is socially, politically, religiously, and culturally constructed. Gender is expressed via the roles men and women play in society.

## WELCOME

- Welcome everyone back to the group.
- Revisit the previous week's session and review homework assignment #1 from Session 1. Also review the ground rules.
- Provide an overview of the day's objectives.

## ACTIVITY 1: MAN/WOMAN BOX

- Explain to the group that the purpose of the activity is to discuss what it means when we talk about 'gender' and how societal expectations impact men, women and their relationships.
- Divide the participants into smaller groups of 4-5 individuals. These groups can have men and women in them.
- Provide each group with two pieces of flipchart paper and a marker.
- Tell each group to write the word 'man' on the top of the first piece of paper.
- Ask the groups to answer the question: "What does it mean to be a man?"
- Explain that participants can describe the characteristics of a man: how he looks, acts and behaves. It may be helpful to ask the group to explain what distinguishes a man from a woman?
- Tell the groups to write down their responses on the flipchart titled 'man.'
- After the participants have finished describing what it means to be man, tell each group to write the word 'woman' on the top of the second piece of paper.
- Ask the groups to answer the question: "What does it mean to be a woman?"
- Explain that participants can describe the characteristics of a woman: how she looks, acts and behaves. It may be helpful to ask the group to explain what distinguishes a woman from a man?
- Tell the groups to write down the responses on the flipchart titled 'woman.'
- After the groups have finished, ask everyone to come back to the circle. Ask each of the groups to report their responses of what it means to be a 'man' to the larger group. As the facilitator, you should write down their responses on a flipchart titled "man."
- After all of the characteristics of a man have been provided, ask the groups to report back what they discussed about the characteristics of a woman. Write their responses on a separate flipchart titled "woman."
- After all of the responses have been recorded, cross off the word 'man' on the first flipchart and write the word 'woman.'
- Ask the group: "Can any of the characteristics mentioned for men also apply to women?"
- Go through each characteristic and ask the group which characteristics absolutely cannot apply to women. Cross off any characteristics that cannot apply to women (For example, women do not have a penis).
- Next, repeat the same step for men. Cross off the word 'woman' on the second flipchart and write the word 'man.'
- Ask the group: "Can any of the characteristics mentioned for women also apply to men?"
- Go through each characteristic and ask the group which characteristics absolutely

cannot apply to men. Cross off any characteristics that cannot apply to men.

- Note for the Facilitator: All characteristics should apply to both men and women, except for biological differences, such as the ability to give birth, or having male or female genitalia.
- Explain to the group the characteristics that apply only to women, and that cannot be given to men, and the characteristics that apply only to men, are what constitute our 'sex'. Sex refers to the biological difference between men and women - we are born with either male or female reproductive organs and hormones.
- Explain that the social characteristics, or attitudes, behaviours and roles we normally associated with men and women constitute our 'gender.' Gender does not mean 'woman.' Both men and women have a gender (masculine or feminine). Gender refers to the societal expectations we associate with being a woman or being a man. We are not born with these characteristics, but we learn them as we grow up.
- Next, lead a group discussion using the questions below:

## ACTIVITY 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

- Where do we learn the characteristics we associate with 'being a man' or 'being a woman'?
- How do society's expectations of men and women impact us differently?
- How does our gender impact the types of jobs or work that men and women are expected to perform?
- How can some of these expectations negatively affect women's lives? How can they negatively affect men's lives?
- Is it hard to live up to the expectations of being a man? Of being a woman?
- What kind of future do you hope for your daughters? What kind of future do you hope for your sons?
- Does this exercise make you think differently about the way in which you might interact with your daughters and sons at home to help bring about those futures?
- What did you learn with this activity? Is there anything that you learned that you can apply to your own life or relationships?

## ACTIVITY 3: GENDER FISHBOWL

- Explain to the group that they are going to do a listening activity, where men and women will each have an opportunity to talk about their experiences as men and as women.
- Explain to the group that during the activity participants will be asked some questions about their childhoods and about being men and women, including some of the difficult moments they may have experienced. Tell the group that

sometimes participants prefer to do this activity in groups of the same sex (for example, men only, or women only.)

- Divide the male and female participants into two separate groups. Ask the women to sit in a circle in the middle of the room facing each other, and the men to sit around the outside of the circle, facing in.
- Explain that you are going to start by asking the women a set of questions. The men's responsibility during this time is to observe and listen to what is being said. They are not allowed to speak. Remind the men of the importance of listening respectfully to what the women say. Everyone in this group has the right to voice their opinions and experiences. It is also important to practice empathy, and not to judge others for their ideas or experiences.

### QUESTIONS FOR WOMEN

- When did you first realize that you were a girl? How did it feel?
- What is the best part about being a woman?
- What is the hardest part?
- What do you find difficult to understand about men?
- What do you want to tell men that will help them to better understand women?
- After 20 minutes, close the discussion and have the men and women switch places. Lead a discussion with the men while the women listen. Remind the women of the importance of listening respectfully to what the men say. Everyone in this group has the right to voice their opinions and experiences. It is also important to practice empathy, and not to judge others for their ideas or experiences.

### QUESTIONS FOR MEN

- When did you first realize that you were a boy? How did it feel?
- What is the best part about being a man?
- What is the hardest part?
- What do you find difficult to understand about women?
- What do you want to tell women to help them better understand men?
- After 20 minutes, ask the groups to come together and form a circle.
- Tell the group: "From a very young age, each of us is given messages about how to act or look based on whether we are male or female (our biological sex). We are socialized, or taught by our society, that there are certain roles and activities that are acceptable for men, and certain roles and activities that are acceptable for women."
- Next, start a discussion about the activity using the questions below:

## ACTIVITY 4: GROUP DISCUSSION

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- Did anything surprise you about this activity?
- How did it feel to talk about these experiences?
- Did you realize anything about how we are socialized, or taught by society, to become men or to become women?
- Can you think of any ways that these messages of how we should look or act can be harmful to our sons and daughters?
- What are the things we might say or do with our daughters to help counter stereotypes and reaffirm their value and equality?
- What are the things we might say or do with our sons to help counter stereotypes and expand their emotional and caring skills?

### CLOSING REMARKS

- It is it very easy to confuse gender with sex. Gender is constructed by our society. The society assigns certain attitudes and behaviors to individuals based on their sex (e.g. women care for children) and every individual is influenced by these social expectations. These expectations change over time and across locations.
- Our opinions and perspectives about the other sex are often informed by stereotypes and gender and social norms, which are reinforced over time by different sources. This often makes it difficult for us to understand the other sex and their needs and concerns. By having a better understanding of the opposite sex and their needs and experiences, we are able to have greater empathy for how they experience gender and how it affects them.

### HOMEWORK

- Bring an object that you associate with your father or main male role model to the next session. This could be a tool, a book, a set of car keys, a strap used for punishment, etc. Come prepared to the next session ready to tell a story about the object and about your father.

# SESSION 3: FATHER'S IMPACT

## OBJECTIVES

- Reflect on the influence that fathers or other male authority figures have had on the participants while they were growing up
- Discuss how participants can take the positive aspects of their fathers' influence as well as address the negative impacts so as not to repeat the harmful patterns

**RECOMMENDED TIME:** 2.5 hours

**AUDIENCE:** Men only

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Flipchart or white board
- Markers

## PREPARATION

- Review Notes for Facilitators for this session in advance
- No handouts for this session



### KEY IDEA

It is important that men talk about their relationship with their fathers, to heal and learn from their experiences, and to apply this new awareness to their own roles as fathers. Making this reflection will allow men to identify those positive aspects of their life stories they want to replicate for their children, as well as those negative aspects they do not want to repeat.

## WELCOME AND CHECK-IN

- Welcome everyone back to the group.
- Revisit the previous week's session. Also review the ground rules.
- Provide an overview of the day's objectives.

## ACTIVITY 1: "MY FATHER'S LEGACY"

- Taking into account that this exercise requires an emotional openness and concentration, it is recommended that you use an "Ice Breaker" to open the session, one where participants can have physical mobility, stretch, take a deep breath and relax. Take a look at the Appendix for ideas.
- Next, ask each participant to bring out the object that they associate with their father (Assignment #2 from Session 1). For those who did not bring an object, give them a few minutes to think about what that object might be. This object may be a tool, a book, a set of car keys, a strap used for punishment, etc.
- Going around in a circle, ask each participant to share a story about the object and how it relates to their father, or main male role model from their early lives.
- Once everyone has finished sharing, write on a piece of flipchart paper the following statements:
  - "One thing about my father that I want to take into my relationship with my children is..."
  - "Something about my father I do not want to repeat with my children is..."
- Read the statements out loud. Then, with the person sitting next to them, ask the pairs to share their thoughts.

## ACTIVITY 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

### QUESTIONS

- What are the positive things about your relationship with your father that you would like to put into practice or teach to your daughters? What about your sons?
- Which things would you rather leave behind?
- How do traditional definitions of manhood impact the way our fathers and other male role models cared for their sons? What about their daughters? *Some examples: Men cannot cry; men should not express physical affection to sons such as kissing or hugging; men use violence to resolve conflict.*
- How do traditional definitions of manhood impact the way girls are raised and cared for? *Examples: Girls should help their mothers with chores. Girls should care for other children so they can learn to be mothers. Girls should not play outdoors or get dirty. Girls don't need to do well in school because they may not have jobs after they marry.*
- How can we "leave behind" harmful practices to be more involved and gender equitable partners? And more involved and gender equitable parents for our children?

### CLOSING REMARKS

Close the session with a positive message, helping to give a positive meaning to a painful experience as an opportunity for personal development and to replace negative attitudes and beliefs with positive attitudes and beliefs of respect and equity.

## HOMEWORK

Ask participants to share with someone they trust how they plan to emulate the positive actions of their fathers, and how they want to learn from and transform the negative experiences in order not to repeat them.

If a participant expresses the desire to discuss their reflections from the session with his own father, say that it is a personal decision, and add that if they feel the need to, they should do so, especially if they have resentful feelings toward their father.



### NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

This activity can have a serious emotional impact on participants and facilitators because violent experiences or other traumatic life events, such as abandonment, may be recollected. Therefore, it is important to give the participants emotional support during this process. Generally, this can be achieved by respectfully listening to the participants, without judging or pressuring them.

Overall, create an atmosphere where participants are validated for sharing personally emotional and intimate details. The confidentiality commitment should also be reiterated, so that the participants are reminded not to comment on what was said during the session once they leave. For those who shared traumatic experiences, acknowledge the fact that they were able to press on and continue with their lives despite facing such adversity.

If a participant begins to break down and cry in front of the group, normalize the experience by giving them room to express that emotion. Consider saying, "Thank you for being brave and trusting us with that story. I'm sure many of the people in this room have had similar experiences like yours." Others in the group may also feel the need to support this person, and encourage them to do so if it feels appropriate. Often, these moments are what binds a group together. Additionally, explain that you are available and willing to have a separate conversation in private with any participant who requests it, and offer more personalized support by referring those who may need it to professional counseling or therapy.

If a participant begins to take over a group by spending too much time with a story, find an opening and kindly say, "It sounds like you have a lot of valuable experiences to share with the group. That is great! Do others have similar or different stories they would also like to share?" This technique can be used in any session.

Recommend to all that they take care of themselves (especially immediately following the session), take time to rest, take a shower and drink enough water. Tell them it is possible that some of them may feel traumatized after the session, and that this is a normal reaction after remembering difficult experiences. If there is no pressure, only those who are ready to share will do so.



# SESSION 4: FAMILY PLANNING

## OBJECTIVES

- Reflect upon the benefits of family planning and the value of couples' communication in this process; talk about the use of condoms and other methods of birth control.
- Remind the couple that even if their first child was not planned with the use of birth control methods, they can decide when to have other children, or they can make the decision not to have any more children.
- Invite a reproductive health professional to speak at the session, in order to increase the participants' knowledge of available birth control methods.

**RECOMMENDED TIME:** 2.5 hours

**AUDIENCE:** Men only

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Samples of contraceptives and/or drawings of methods
- Paper and pencils or pens

## PREPARATION

- Review Notes for Facilitators for this session in advance
- Print copies of the handout: [Contraceptives Resource Sheet](#)
- TO NOTE: It is recommended for this session to be delivered by a health professional.
- TO NOTE: There are multiple main activities in this session; choose the one that best meets the needs of your group.



## KEY IDEAS

Each individual and couple is responsible for looking up information about contraception, and for informing himself or herself about how to avoid unwanted pregnancies. This is an especially important conversation to have before a birth, when women are fertile and the couple may not be thinking about family planning.

Using contraceptives continues to remain within the woman's domain of responsibilities. It is important to discuss how beliefs around manhood and sexuality affect men's willingness to participate in contraceptive use.

The strongest foundation for parenthood is laid when a couple consciously decides they want to have children and are prepared to undertake the responsibilities that come with that decision.

Parenthood at an early age and unplanned childbearing are risk factors which may lead to parents having troubled relationships with their children, as well as high levels of stress and irritability. A man with children that he did not plan for and expect may feel as though he has been cut off from exploring other opportunities in school, work, leisure, relationships with other partners, etc.

## WELCOME AND CHECK-IN

- Welcome everyone back to the group.
- Check in with the participants.
- Revisit the previous week's session and review the assigned homework.
- Also review the ground rules.
- Introduce the session's objectives.

## ACTIVITY 1: GENDER AND CONTRACEPTION RESPONSIBILITIES<sup>28</sup>

- Divide the participants into six teams. Distribute the samples of methods and other specific information about each method to each of the teams.
  - Group 1: Hormonal Methods
  - Group 2: Intrauterine Device (IUD)
  - Group 3: Barrier Methods
  - Group 4: Rhythm Methods
  - Group 5: Tubal Ligation and Vasectomy

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28 Modified slightly from Promundo (2002) Project H Working with Young Men Series.

- Group 6: Emergency Contraception (next-day pill)
- Ask each group to try to answer the following questions about the methods they have received:
  - How does this method prevent pregnancy?
  - How is it used?
  - What are the myths and facts about this method?
  - What are its advantages?
  - What makes it hard to use?
  - What is the group's opinion about this method?
- When they have finished, distribute the Contraceptives Resource Sheet to each of the groups for them to clarify any doubts and obtain additional information about the methods.
- Ask the teams to use their creativity to prepare a presentation about their method. They can dramatize it, produce posters, a comic strip, a TV commercial, etc.
- Each group should then present their method.

## ACTIVITY 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

### ASK THE GROUP:

- Who has to think about, or keep track of, contraception? The man or the woman? Why?
- Who has to talk about it, the man or the woman? Why?
- How do you imagine this conversation would go?
- What are the most recommended contraceptive methods for couples who have recently had a baby?
- How should couples choose the contraceptive method they are to use?
- How can we normalize a mutual responsibility for contraception in relationships?

## ACTIVITY 3: PRESENTATION ON CONTRACEPTION

- Invite a professional with knowledge of reproductive health to give a 30-minute presentation on birth control methods. If possible, ask the presenter to bring birth control samples.
- The presentation should include information about:
  - Hormonal methods
  - Intrauterine devices
  - Barrier methods

- Natural methods, including periodic abstinence
- Tubal ligation and vasectomy
- Ask the health professional to come ready to speak with participants about the importance of attending prenatal, postnatal, and family planning consultations with their partners. Engage participants with the following question:
  - Why do you think men do not attend prenatal, postnatal, and family planning visits with their partners? What are the main reasons or barriers?
  - What points to you hear from in regard to how they would like men to be involved in prenatal, postnatal, and family planning visits? Where do you think those perspectives come from?
  - What steps can men take to ensure they are available to attend these visits with their partners?
  - Is there anything you would like health professionals in general to know about your experiences with prenatal, postnatal, and family planning visits and how to make it a more comfortable and helpful experience for you?
- For activities modeled around contraception, please reference the Sexuality and Reproductive Health Module in Program H, available for download in Portuguese, English and Spanish here: <http://www.promundo.org.br/en/activities/activities-posts/program-h-manuals-download/>
- For another excellent resource, see EngenderHealth's Trainer's Resource Book to accompany Introduction to Men's Reproductive Health Services - Revised Edition. This handbook provides basic information on a variety of reproductive health issues relevant to reproductive health services for men, including sexuality, gender, anatomy and physiology, contraception, and sexually transmitted infections. It is downloadable at [http://www.engenderhealth.org/files/pubs/gender/mrhc-1/mrh\\_trainers\\_manual.pdf](http://www.engenderhealth.org/files/pubs/gender/mrhc-1/mrh_trainers_manual.pdf)

### ACTIVITY 5: FATHER BY ACCIDENT OR BY CHOICE? (COUPLES)

- To begin the activity, construct two squares on the floor with tape to represent a house big enough to accommodate four people standing upright.
- Explain that the participants will be telling a story about two couples (i.e. Giorgi and Marija, Alexandre and Sibel). One person in each couple will be the mother and the other will be the father. Ask four volunteers to take on these roles.
- Say that, on the count of "three," the actors will begin the scene. "One, two, THREE!"
- Begin the story by saying, "Giorgi and Alexandre are brothers, and so they decided to get married on the same day: Giorgi married Marija and Alexandre married Sibel." Ask the volunteers to enter their assigned "house" (box with tape) and to dance in it. Have the participants clap together to create music.
- Now, say, "In the first year of marriage, the two couples each had their first child." Ask for two volunteers from the group to play the part of these children, adding a

participant to each house.

- Continue, "Alexandre and Sibel make the decision to use family planning. Giorgi and Marija did not initiate family planning, and Giorgi refused to even talk about this issue. In the second year of marriage, Giorgi and Marija had their second child" (another participant is added to their home).
- "In the third year of marriage, Giorgi and Marija had their third child" (another participant stands in their home). "In the fourth year of marriage, both couples had a child each." And so on, until Giorgi and Marija have seven children while Alexandre and Sibel have three.
- Finally, give the mother or father of each family a loaf of bread, or the object representing the family's resources, and tell them to distribute it among the family members.
- Then, ask the participants to show these pieces to the group, so that they can appreciate the differences in quantity.

## ACTIVITY 6: GROUP DISCUSSION

- If this is a session with couples, create space for couples to talk among themselves about their expectations regarding having children (e.g. if they are satisfied with the birth control method they have chosen, the number of children they wish to have, etc.).
- After several minutes, ask the couples to share any insights from the discussion with their partner.
- Tell participants now to "step out" of their roles and discuss how the role play went.

### ASK THE FAMILIES:

- How did it feel to do this activity?
- Was there anything that you noticed about how you acted during this activity?

### ASK THE GROUP:

- What did you notice, or what impacted you as you were watching this role play?
- What effects can lack of family planning have on a family?
- Is there something wrong with having a large family?
- Should people plan how many children they want to have and space them, i.e. take some time (two to three years) before having another child?
- In what ways can men contribute to family planning?
- Why do some men (and some women) ignore the issue of family planning?
- What does the community believe about male-focused contraception such as vasectomies? Condoms? How does this connect with norms around what it means to be men?
- What does the community believe about contraception for women?

- Why is it important to ensure a woman and her partner’s right to access quality sexual and reproductive health services such as family planning?
- What is one thing that you can do now with your partner to plan a family and avoid unexpected pregnancies?

## CLOSING REMARKS

Talk about the importance of taking responsibility for finding information about contraception, and emphasize that avoiding unwanted pregnancy is both women’s AND men’s responsibilities.

Tell participants to talk with their partners about the risk of pregnancy. Communication is key. The best way to prepare for parenthood is for couples to decide when they want children and when they are ready for that responsibility.

Fatherhood before a person is ready, or young fatherhood, are risk factors for absence from the parental role, poor relationships with children, and high levels of stress. Men and women who have children before they are ready may feel that they are losing out on other opportunities in life (school, recreation, etc.).

## HOMEWORK

No homework assigned.



## NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

Do some research around family planning and consult with professionals in the community prior to the session. If no health professional is available to speak at the meeting, bring materials to hand out to the group. It is not necessary to be an expert in family planning, but it is crucial to know where participants can find more information on the topic and to encourage them to seek out information on their own. For more information, go to [www.ippf.org](http://www.ippf.org), [http://www.who.int/topics/family\\_planning/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/family_planning/en/) and the Men as Partners curriculum at <http://www.engenderhealth.org/files/pubs/gender/ppasamanual.pdf>

Emphasize that contraception is a responsibility that should be shared. If neither of the partners want sexual intercourse to result in pregnancy, it is essential that both take precautions so that this does not happen. Remind participants that women are especially fertile after a birth, and that prenatal pills with lower levels of hormones are available and safe for women to take while they are breastfeeding. However, encourage participants to discuss the options available to them and their partners with their healthcare provider.

# SESSION 5: PREGNANCY

## OBJECTIVES

- Normalize men's involvement in maternal health and the prenatal period
- Address many of the concerns men have about the experiences of pregnancy, such as couple conflict and stress, and loss of sexual desire.

**RECOMMENDED TIME:** 2.5 hours

**AUDIENCE:** Men only

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Flipchart or white board
- Markers

## PREPARATION

- Review Notes for Facilitators for this session in advance
- Print copies of the handouts:
  - [Fun Facts about Sexual Pleasure During Pregnancy](#)
  - [Facts About Male Post-Partum Depression](#)
  - [The Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale](#)
- TO NOTE: There are multiple main activities in this session; choose the one that best meets the needs of your group.



### KEY IDEAS

During pregnancy, mothers should have healthy physical, environmental, nutritional, emotional and social conditions. For optimal development of the fetus during pregnancy, mothers should feel relaxed, at ease, and emotionally supported.

Pregnancy can be a joyful but also stressful experience for a couple – especially for first-time parents. It can deepen the emotional connection between partners, but can also create new tensions due to uncertainties about parenting, heightened economic stress, etc. It is important to remain patient and talk openly about issues that may cause conflict. In later sessions, participants will have an opportunity to explore more deeply issues related to violence.

Men, in their roles as partners and/or fathers, can play an important role in promoting the physical and emotional health of mother and child during pregnancy.

It is essential that men participate actively during pregnancy by making their partner feel cared for and emotionally supported, talking about their future child, giving massages, accompanying the mother to prenatal check-ups, and planning for the birth of the child and welcoming him or her into their home.

Men, like women, are at risk of postpartum depression after a new baby is born. Depression can be exacerbated by lack of sleep and financial stress, and result in sadness, irritability, anger, loss of interest, and increased focus on work. Talking about it in support groups and with your partner can help.

### WELCOME AND CHECK-IN

- Welcome everyone back to the group.
- Revisit the previous week's session and review homework assignment.
- Also review the ground rules.
- Provide an overview of the day's objectives.

### ACTIVITY 1: "PARENTING STORIES"

- Introduce the guests you invited to today's session - two or three involved fathers from the community.
- Note: These fathers will serve as role models for your group members. When selecting these fathers ensure that each of them is a parent and has been so since pregnancy. For example, it is desirable that the fathers participated in prenatal health check-ups, were present in the delivery room (if permitted by their hospital), share domestic chores, do not use corporal punishment against their children, and believe in gender equality. If it is not possible to invite involved fathers to the group, prepare a realistic story of an involved father from the community. Read this story to the group and continue onto the Group Discussion.
- Each invited father should come prepared to tell his story about his involvement in his partner's pregnancy. What were the things he did to support his partner? What about pregnancy was stressful to the relationship? How did he acquire information about pregnancy? How did other men in the community view his involvement?
- Next, divide the participants into groups of three or four and assign a father to each group.
- Once all groups are arranged, the invited fathers should introduce themselves again and tell their story.
- Groups should be dynamic and participants should feel free to ask questions to the invited fathers.



## ACTIVITY 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

- Once the invited fathers have finished their stories and the group participants have asked their questions, invite everyone back to the larger group.

### QUESTIONS:

- What affected you about the panelists' answers?
- Did you learn anything new?
- Was there anything you heard that made you feel uncomfortable?
- How was what you heard different from what you experienced during your partners pregnancy, or what your own father experienced? Why was this different?
- How does pregnancy affect the quality of the couple relationship?
- Was there anything you heard that you could do now?
- Is there anything that you cannot do?
- How can you go home and talk with your partner about what you heard today?
- Conclude the activity by thanking the guest fathers and the group participants for their participation and by summarizing the key ideas.
- Continue to say that, in the next activity, participants will have an opportunity to think more deeply about what they can do specifically to support their partner during pregnancy.

## ACTIVITY 3 (ALTERNATE): ASKING A HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

- For those men who were not recruited from a prenatal clinic, it may be necessary to invite a maternal health professional to your group so that they can ask questions. This could be an obstetrician, nurse, or midwife able to give information about the nine months of pregnancy. Try to invite a specialist who believes that fathers should play a more active role during and after the pregnancy.
- Ask the health professional to address the following topics:
  - The importance of prenatal visits. Fathers: come to appointments with your written questions!
  - The most important biological and hormonal changes for the mother and baby during these nine months
  - How the father can support the health of the mother during the pregnancy
  - Sexual relations and pregnancy, including a discussion of cultural norms, and de-bunking myths
  - Facts about postpartum depression
- If it is not possible to have an obstetrician, nurse or midwife at the session, collect online resources or informational pamphlets from a clinic in your community to share with the participants.

- Most of all, try to empower the participants to look for more information on their own, and remind them of the importance of providing support for the mother during pregnancy.

#### ACTIVITY 4: MY FATHER CAN DO EVERYTHING<sup>29</sup>

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- Indicate specific ways that men can provide support to their partners during pregnancy.
- Prepare a flip chart with two columns: on one side, write “Mother,” and on the other side, write “Father.”
- Explain that, during pregnancy, a woman has many tasks and responsibilities: some that biologically only she can do, and others that are socially assigned to her because of her gender.
- Ask the participants, “What can women do to ensure a healthy pregnancy?” and write down their answers.

Here are some topics to include:

- Attend prenatal classes
- Live in a home free from physical, verbal or psychological violence
- Eat healthy and nutritious foods
- Abstain from drinking alcohol
- Get plenty of rest
- Drink plenty of water
- Abstain from smoking cigarettes
- Do light exercise
- Stay away from others who may have a cold or other infectious sickness, and wash hands with soap and water often
- Refrain from using cleaning supplies that have harmful fumes, and work in a well-ventilated area and wear safety clothes (such as gloves and a mask)
- Take vitamins
- Limit caffeine intake (such as coffee)
- Avoid undercooked meat or raw fish
- Now that you have a list, ask the fathers what role they can play to help support the mother in each of these tasks.
- Compare the two lists.

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29 Inspired by Father School: Step by Step.

## ACTIVITY 5: GROUP DISCUSSION

### QUESTIONS:

- What makes an impression on you when you observe the two lists?
- How can father's participation in pregnancy promote their involvement in the child's life after he or she is born?
- How can couple conflict such as physical violence impact the health of the mother and the child?
- What effects would it have on the mother if fathers took more responsibility in taking care of domestic chores and caring for children? What impact would it have on the father?
- Based on the list, what are some things you can do now to provide support for the mother? (For example: cooking meals, taking children to school, cleaning, providing emotional support and going to prenatal care visits.)

### CLOSING REMARKS

Close the session by emphasizing that pregnancy can be a stressful and emotional time for the mother as she is experiencing both physical and hormonal changes in a short time span.

Many women experience mood changes in the first two weeks after birth; this is normal. In 12.5% of cases, however, new mothers will develop postpartum depression, which is more intense and lasts longer. It may include some of the following symptoms:

- Crying more often than usual
- Trouble bonding with the baby
- Withdrawing from loved ones
- Feelings of anger
- Feelings of anxiety
- Irritability
- Doubting her ability to care for the baby

TO NOTE: If your partner expresses thoughts of hurting herself or the baby, talk to her about seeing a health care provider - therapist, counselor, or psychologist - immediately.

Men can be supportive partners by engaging in domestic housework such as cooking, cleaning, taking care of children living in the home (e.g. taking them to school, reading to them) and accompanying the mother to prenatal care visits. Listen to your partner without judgment and encourage her. If she is experiencing postpartum depression, let her know that it is not her fault - it is a condition that can be addressed with help from your healthcare provider.

## HOMEWORK

Propose as homework one of these options:

### OPTION #1

Inquire about the development and experiences of unborn babies as well as the special needs that pregnant women have by asking the mother of their child, a health professional, or by searching for this information in other sources (magazines, Internet, library, books, etc.).

### OPTION #2

For those men whose partners are currently pregnant, their homework will be looking for a new way to provide support, loving care and security to the mother based on today's session. Be prepared to come to the next session to talk about this experience.



### NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

Facilitators are not expected to be experts on these topics. However, group participants will find it useful if they know where to get information about reproductive and maternal health on their own. If time and resources permit, take the initiative to seek out information from a reproductive health expert prior to the session to share with the group.

# SESSION 6: BIRTH

## OBJECTIVES

- Share ideas and experiences about the role of a father during birth, and prepare the father for his role as a companion for the mother
- Address concerns men have about childbirth
- Highlight the importance of physically and emotionally bonding with their sons or daughters from the moments after birth and beyond

**RECOMMENDED TIME:** 2.5 hours

**AUDIENCE:** Men and their partners

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Pillow
- Laptop/screen and speakers if showing film on birth process

## PREPARATION

- Review Notes for Facilitators for this session in advance
- Print copies of the handouts:
  - [With the Father Involved, Everyone Wins!](#)
  - [The Father's Backpack: What Should I Take?](#)
  - [Breathing Exercises and Other Pain Alleviation Techniques During Delivery](#)

This session is best done with the expectant partner as it loosely simulates the birthing process. It may induce bouts of laughter and feelings of silliness, which are completely normal! However, if you feel that it is not appropriate for an all-male group to do this activity (as it may elicit feelings of discomfort) consider showing a film about the birth process instead. Continue on with Group Discussion questions provided.



## KEY IDEAS

The process of labor and delivery is usually very physically demanding for the mother. The most important aspect of the process is to provide the mother with the physical and emotional support she needs.

Birth is also stressful for babies! Emphasize with participants that skin-to-skin contact with both parents is not only essential for parents to physically bond with the child, but also has health and developmental benefits for the child as well. Consider that, if the bonding is not possible at the birthing center, it will be possible at home.

Men's presence in the delivery room helps to build an emotional bond between the father and child. Men should speak with their partners about being present in the delivery room and receive her consent. It is also fundamental that the health care provider is in agreement, and supports the participation of the father during birth. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to have had a conversation prior to the delivery.

In some health centers or hospitals, the father is not allowed in the delivery room. In others, fathers are expected to be present. It is important that each father ask the health center if a companion is allowed, and, as long as the mother is in agreement, request access to the delivery room.

## WELCOME AND CHECK-IN

- Welcome everyone back to the group.
- Check in with the participants.
- Revisit the previous week's session and review homework assignment.
- Also review the ground rules.
- Provide an overview of the objectives of today's session.

## ACTIVITY 1: DELIVERY ROOM ROLE PLAY (ALTERNATIVELY, CAN REPLACE ACTIVITY WITH VIDEO OF BIRTHING PROCESS)

- Explain that, participants will play different roles today, such as: mother, fathers, midwives, and other health professionals, and simulate what goes on in the delivery room when a woman is ready to give birth.
- Ask the participants to form groups of three. If there are groups of less than three participants, assign them to other groups to form groups of four or more.
- Ask each group to assign the following roles to its members:
  - The mother giving birth

- The father
- The midwife, traditional or faith healer, nurse or doctor
- If there are more than three people in a group, assign the remaining individuals the role of other health professionals
- Emphasize that once the participants have been assigned a role, they are actors, and not themselves. In order to act, they will need to “become” the character they have been assigned.
- Next, set the scene: “It is 22:00 in the evening. Your partner is in the delivery room and in some pain because she is about to give birth. The doctor and midwife are preparing to deliver the baby. The father is also present.”
- Tell participants that, on the count of “three,” they will act out the scene in their groups. “One, two, THREE!” Give the groups 5 minutes to act out the scene.

### ACTIVITY 2: GROUP DISCUSSION, PART 1

- After 5 minutes, ask the participants to return to the circle.
- Ask everyone to “step out” of his or her roles.

#### ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How did it feel to play the roles in this exercise?  
For those who played the father, how did it feel to play the supportive partner?
- How did the mothers feel giving birth?
- And health professionals?
- Was there anything you would do differently, if you could do it again?
- Next, pass out the Supporting Information for Group on breathing exercises.
- Read through the information with the group and practice some of the tips.
- Emphasize some of the main points from the Supporting Information for Facilitator, “With The Father Involved, Everyone Wins!”
- Overall, encourage fathers that, after the mother has had an opportunity to physically bond with the child, they should do so as well (if they feel comfortable) by practicing skin-to-skin contact, singing or rocking the baby, or doing whatever they feel comfortable.

### ACTIVITY 3: DELIVERY ROOM ROLE PLAY CONTINUED

- Ask for three volunteers to re-enact the birth scene again using the information they received.
- Have everyone give them a big round of applause.

## ACTIVITY 4: GROUP DISCUSSION, PART 2

### QUESTIONS

- What are your anxieties as a father about your partner giving birth? Or, what *anxieties did you have? For example, some men and women believe seeing their partner give birth will impact the couple's sexual desire for one another.*
- Do you think it is important for fathers to be present at the birth of their child? If so, why? If not, why not? (For the child, for the mother, for the father?)
- For those who were present at the birth of their child, and those who were not present, ask those men to reflect on those experiences.
- What types of support do mothers need during birth, and what kinds of support can the father provide?

### CLOSING REMARKS

Summarize the practical suggestions given during this session about how men can participate in the labor and delivery process.

### HOMEWORK

Find out if the local health center or hospital has policies that permit or prohibit women from being accompanied during childbirth. Come prepared to share what is learned to the next session.

For those fathers whose partners are approaching their delivery dates, begin to prepare the backpack with things to bring to the hospital or clinic (see Supporting Information for Facilitator, "Father's Backpack").



### NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

Fathers often experience anxiety during delivery, but this can be alleviated by giving them the opportunity to discuss their feelings in a safe space with knowledgeable men who have had similar experiences. It is important that each father shares his emotional experience during the exercise (in a role, building the physical bond, etc.). If there are jokes, make them brief; remind the group that the sharing of emotional experiences should always be respected.



# SESSION 7: CAREGIVING

## OBJECTIVES

- Learn about a baby's care needs and reflect upon men's capacity to satisfy these needs.
- Question the stereotype that women are naturally better equipped to provide better care and upbringing for children than men are.
- Reflect on how gender stereotypes influence a father and mother's behavior towards his and her son or daughter.

**RECOMMENDED TIME:** 2.5 hours

**AUDIENCE:** Men only

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Several baby dolls (boys and girls if possible) wearing real diapers
- Device to play music (stereo, CD player, iPhone)

## PREPARATION

- Review Notes for Facilitators for this session in advance
- Print copies of the handouts:
  - [Baby Care: Useful 'How-To's'](#)
  - [Men are Biologically Able to Care for their Babies](#)
  - [Fathers Play an Important Role in Breastfeeding](#)
  - [A Few Sleep Training Options](#)
  - [Questions about Masturbation](#)



## KEY IDEAS

Parenthood can be a very stressful time for many couples. Babies cry and require constant attention and love from both mother and father. It is important to remember that the best thing to do is to respond to the baby with affection and try to figure out what the baby needs.

The world is changing. Before, parental roles were not flexible: men went to work and women took care of domestic affairs, but now, the only thing men cannot do is breastfeed. The acceptance of men as involved caregivers is growing.

Gender equality includes sharing domestic responsibilities. If father and mother work outside the home, they should equally share childcare and domestic tasks.

Even for fathers who work outside the home, it is necessary to dedicate at least 30 minutes daily to the baby (including activities such as feeding, bathing, singing, rocking and dressing) in order to develop the emotional connection necessary to form a special relationship with the baby.

If paternity or flexible family leave is offered, encourage men to take those days to spend time with his partner and child.

The father and baby should spend time bonding every day.

The father can respectfully remind those who want to place him in a secondary role that it is his responsibility to care for his baby and communicate with him/her.

## WELCOME AND CHECK-IN

- Welcome everyone back to the group.
- Check in with the participants.
- Revisit the previous week's session.
- Also review the ground rules.
- Introduce the session's objectives.

## ACTIVITY 1: CARING FOR MY BABY - PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

- Play relaxing music.
- Break into groups of two or three participants and provide a baby doll wearing a diaper to each group.
- Explain that you will do two exercises: the first is how to change a diaper, and the second is how to properly hold a baby. If possible, try to have one experienced father in each group.
- First, explain how to change a diaper. Give a demonstration of each of the following

steps listed in the Supporting Information for Group, "Useful 'How To's,'" or ask an experienced father to do so.

- Each person from the group must take a turn.
- If time permits, do the second exercise: Tell the participants they will practice how to hold and carry the baby properly, using the dolls. Follow the steps listed in the Supporting Information for Group, "Useful 'How To's,'" or ask an experienced father to demonstrate.

## ACTIVITY 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

### QUESTIONS

- Did anyone learn anything new, or want to comment on anything you noticed while you were doing this activity?
- Why don't fathers participate more in taking care of young children particularly babies? What makes it difficult for fathers to participate in caregiving?
- How is the community and how we are socialized play a role in this?
- How does having a new child in the family affect the couple relationship? *Examples: babies cry all the time and require constant attention, and parents become very tired.*

Imagine this: It is 2 o'clock in the morning. Your child is crying and you are not sure why. Your partner is exhausted because she has been breastfeeding all day and night. You have to get up in a few hours to go to work. As a father, what can you do?

- In what ways is it difficult for a mother to care for a baby? What about a father?
- Can one get angry with the baby? Does your level of emotion differ if your baby is a boy versus a girl? Why or why not?
- Can one get angry with the mother?
- What do you do if you get angry? What are the options?
- What are one or two things you can do to be more involved in caregiving of your newborn? How will this affect the mother?
- What are 1-2 things you can do together with the baby?
- How can men support each other in their caring roles?
- What are some ways that we can be more responsive to the needs of our young children?

### IF SESSION IS CONDUCTED WITH COUPLES, ASK MOTHERS

- How did you feel when you saw your baby's father change the baby's diaper and hold the baby in his arms?
- Are there some instances when women may make it difficult for men to equally participate in the care of their baby and in performing domestic tasks?
- Why?

## CLOSING REMARKS

- Conclude the session by stating that caring for a newborn can be an exciting, but also exhausting and stressful period in mothers' and fathers' lives.
- A baby cannot express himself or herself with words, so they cry. Some babies cry a lot, while other babies cry less. Many times, babies do not even know why they are crying!
- The most important thing a parent can do is provide warmth through physical affection (e.g. hugging, cradling, and rocking the child), and try his or her best to figure out what the baby needs.
- Men should spend quality time every day with his child.
- Men are capable of caring for babies and can satisfy all their babies' needs (except for breastfeeding).
- The roles of motherhood and fatherhood are social constructs, i.e. they are formed by society; with enough practice, any man can become a competent caretaker.

## HOMEWORK

Share the Supporting Information for Facilitator, "The Importance of Breastfeeding."

You should practice a new way to care for babies (or older children). For example, if you are in charge of bathing the baby, take on a new task such as washing the baby's clothes. If you do not know how to perform this task, ask for help. Come prepared to talk about those experiences in the next session.

Also, if you plan to proceed to Session 7 the following week, please ask participants to each bring a toy that their child plays with, such as a doll, ball, etc.



### NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

During the actual activity, make sure to place added emphasis that participant swipe the baby clean only from the front to back, and that they should take care to support the baby's head at all times. There are many videos available online, searchable on websites such as [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), that present this topic with visuals on how to both change a diaper and to hold a baby correctly.

If paternity leave is available in your community, encourage fathers to take the days offered.

After the conclusion of the session, men and women may have questions about how to better respond to the needs of their young children. See Section 1: Fatherhood in the Health Sector that references Positive Parenting.

# SESSION 8: GENDER IN PLAY

## OBJECTIVES

- Reflect upon norms of gender socialization, i.e. the different ways in which we treat and educate our children based on gender.
- Reflect upon the communication and affection between parents and their sons and daughters.

**RECOMMENDED TIME:** 2.5 hours

**AUDIENCE:** Men only

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Traditionally masculine and feminine toys

## PREPARATION

- Review Notes for Facilitators for this session in advance
- Print copies of the handouts: [Games and Fun in the First Year](#)
- In the previous session, you asked that participants bring a toy that their child uses (optional). Facilitators can also bring toys to the session. Bring a variety of toys for participants, i.e. toys that are popular, and viewed as suitable for one gender over the other. For example, some toys traditionally selected for boys are toy guns, balls and video games, while girls traditionally are given toy irons, toy dish sets and dolls. You can also print out online images of toys, or cut out magazine pictures of toys.



## KEY IDEAS

Many toys are designed for children with gender in mind, and socialize children such that boys play masculine roles with plastic guns and toy soldiers, and girls play feminine roles with similarly ascribed gendered toys, like baby dolls. Equally, the games that caregivers play with boys or girls shape ideas of what is considered to be appropriate roles for boys and girls. The manner in which we play with boys and girls is a socialization process that, if gender roles are rigidly enacted in play, can foster unequal and unjust relationships later between grown men and women.

However, we all play when we are children; it is only as we grow older that we forget how to play. Games are a very important part of life. They are crucial for our own well-being, and help us as adults have a better connection with our children.

Games/playtime serves as a special bridge for communicating with children. As parents, it is important to remain conscious of how we play and that underlying messages about inequality are not being communicated to children.

## WELCOME AND CHECK-IN

- Welcome everyone back to the group.
- Check in with the participants.
- Revisit the previous week's session and review the assigned homework.
- Also review the ground rules.
- Introduce the session's objectives.

## ACTIVITY 1: GENDER AND TOYS

- Ask participants to bring out the toys they brought (homework from the last session), and place all toys in the middle of the room.
- Ask participants to think of a game they like to play with their children. Give them a few minutes to think about it. Next, ask participants to choose a toy to play this game.
- Ask participants to form pairs and assign the role of "child" or "father" to either person in the pairing. Instruct the "parent" to ask the "child" to play together using the selected toy.
- Before letting them role play, say that, on the count of "three," they must begin acting. "One, two THREE!" Give them five minutes to play these roles.

## ACTIVITY 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

- Form a circle and ask each pair to show the toys, or describe the toys, they played with to the group. Reflect upon the similarities or differences in the toys used to play with boys and the girls by asking the group:

### TO THOSE WHO PLAYED THE "CHILD"

- How did it feel to play this activity?
- Did you play the role of a girl or boy? Why did you choose this gender? In what ways did the toy you selected influence this?

## TO THOSE WHO PLAYED THE “FATHER”

- How did it feel to play this activity?
- How would you have played with your partner differently if he/she had been a boy rather than a girl?
- When you were a boy did you ever play with dolls? Is it okay for a boy to play with dolls? Why or why not?
- Is it okay for girls to play with toy guns, soccer balls, etc.? Why or why not?
- What do you think your child learned about being a girl or boy during playtime?
- What do these toys say about social expectations of being a male child or a female child, and being a grown man or woman?
- How can these social expectations be harmful to girls? And to boys?
- As fathers, how can we communicate positive messages about equality to our children? Equality meaning that our daughters have the same opportunities for a successful future as our sons do (i.e. have access to quality health services, education, good employment, an environment free from violence, etc.), and that sons are allowed to show their feelings including pain and vulnerability.

## IF THE SESSION IS CONDUCTED WITH COUPLES

- Is there a difference in how you play with your sons and daughters based on the gender of the child?
- How do the children play with their father and with their mother?
- How can parents and children work together to break traditional roles? *For example, consider having a weekly family meeting.*
- Ask that each couple share their plan.

## CLOSING REMARKS

Emphasize the Key Ideas.

## HOMEWORK

No homework assigned.

# SESSION 9: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

## OBJECTIVES

- Reflect on the violence that occurs in families, among couples (mostly of men against women), and violence against children.
- It is recommended that this activity be undertaken by men without the mothers so that men may express themselves more freely and honestly.

**RECOMMENDED TIME:** 1.5 hours

**AUDIENCE:** Men only

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Rope to form a clothesline
- An object to hang paper on the clothesline, such as paperclips
- Pencils, colored markers
- Sheets of papers

## PREPARATION

- Review Notes for Facilitators for this session in advance
- Print copies of the handouts:
  - [Practical Methods to Control Anger](#)
  - [Communication Styles](#)





## KEY IDEAS

There is no excuse for violence. Under no circumstances is it justifiable. We have a responsibility to control ourselves when we feel angry. We can learn more effective ways to communicate and resolve conflicts. Communicating in a more assertive way is much more powerful than being passive or aggressive. Everyone, big or small, deserves respect and protection against any kind of aggression whether physical, verbal, psychological, sexual or other. To live a life free from violence is a human right that is never lost, even when we make mistakes.

Although most men have experienced violence in their childhoods and thereby may have learned to deal with conflict primarily through violence, they have a duty not to reenact this violence. It is possible to stop, get help, and cut the chain of violence between generations. Our sons and daughters are not guilty of their parents' past or present problems, and we must not take our past experiences out on them.

Violence against children is usually manifested in the form of physical punishment and justified as a measure of disciplinary correction. This type of violence is still legal in most countries, and is perceived as acceptable behavior. The cycle of violence creates the conditions for violence against women in intimate relationships, because children who are physically punished learn that the stronger or more powerful person can punish the weaker one. However, violence can also be psychological, for example, when parents make fun of, humiliate, or distance themselves from their child emotionally as a form of punishment.

This approach to conflict resolution is learned during childhood and can continue into adult relationships in families.

The behavior witnessed since childhood by adults who are fighting, taught us to associate anger or rage with violence. Usually the violence children experience or witness is accompanied by anger. It is possible to separate the feelings of anger from violent behavior; one does not have to lead to another. We can learn to manage our anger, calm down and channel it in a useful, constructive way, without threatening or assaulting others. Perhaps we have succeeded in controlling our anger with certain people who have authority over us (a boss, a public official, etc.), but we easily unleash our anger with our closest family members.

Implementing good practice parental programs can help both parents shift parental norms and practice such as corporal punishment and have positive effects on household functioning and wellbeing. Programs are most effective when they involve both mothers and fathers to promote nurturing, violence-free households and enhance women's ability to recognize and report incidents of violence.

## WELCOME AND CHECK-IN

- Welcome everyone back to the group.
- Check in with the participants.
- Revisit the previous week's session and review the assigned homework.
- Also review the ground rules.
- Introduce the session's objectives.

## ACTIVITY 1: VIOLENCE CLOTHESLINE

- Explain that there will be two clotheslines, and that participants will be asked to draw images on pieces of paper and then hang them up on the clotheslines. If they would like, they can also write down words instead.
- Hand out the sheets of paper and markers, pens or pencils to each participant and explain that this exercise will focus on experiences of violence in the family.
- Ask the participants to describe their first experience of family violence from childhood on the first sheet. It does not have to be in writing or an image depicting violence. It could be shapes or colors representing emotions and feelings. It can be any type of violence: physical, verbal, psychological, sexual, etc. They do not need to put their names on any of these papers.
- On another sheet of paper, ask participants to write, draw or color to describe how they felt at that moment of violence.
- Then, on a third sheet of paper, ask participants to write or draw an instance of family violence that they acted out as adults (may be violence against a partner or against a son or daughter).
- Assign approximately 10 minutes for each task.
- With the strings, form two clotheslines and on each one, hang the following titles:
  - Violence I have witnessed or experienced.
  - Violence I have carried out.
- Ask the participants to attach their responses to the corresponding clothesline, and after everyone has placed their answers on the clotheslines, invite the participants to describe what they drew, or simply ask participants to make a tour of the clotheslines.

## ACTIVITY 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

While sitting in a circle, invite participants to reflect on what they read and what they recalled from their personal experiences. You may ask:

- How was it for you to talk about the violence used against you or that you have witnessed, and the violence you carried out?

- How do you feel when you perform an act of violence?
- What are the common factors that provoke violence against women in intimate relationships and violence against children?
- How acceptable is it in our communities for men to use violence against women? And what about violence against children?
- Is there a connection between the violence that you do and the violence done against you?
- Some researchers say that violence is a cycle, i.e. victims of violence are more likely to commit violent acts later in life. If this is true, how can we break this cycle of violence?
- What can we do about the violence we witness?

### ACTIVITY 3: RESOLVING CONFLICT - A ROLE PLAY

- Conduct a role play to practice non-violent ways to react when we become angry (see Supporting Information for Group for this activity).
- Pass out the Supporting Information for Group for this activity, "Practical Methods to Control Anger" and "Communication Styles." Read through the information with the group.
- Next, explain that the activity you will do now involves a role-play with two volunteers.
- Present a scenario like this: "Alexandre and Alina are disagreeing about who is responsible for bathing the children tonight."
- Ask the two volunteers to first act in impulsive ways, e.g. by venting their anger against a partner without reaching an agreement on who will bathe the children.
- Next, ask all participants to get into groups of two or three and prepare and act out a situation in which the couple comes to a mutual agreement, taking into account the methods included in the Supporting Information for Group, or other non-violent forms of conflict resolution.
- If time permits, do one or two more role plays with different situational disagreements about housework or caregiving including one between a father and child.

### ACTIVITY 4: GROUP DISCUSSION

#### ASK THE ACTORS

- How did the first scenario compare with the second situation?
- How did you feel in the first versus the second scenario?

## ASK THE GROUP

- Generally speaking, is it difficult for men to express their frustration or anger without using violence? Why or why not?
- Often, we know how to avoid a conflict without using violence but sometimes this does not happen. Why?
- What are the main causes of disagreement or conflict in your home?
- Are these methods for preventing arguments from escalating realistic? Why or why not?
- What are the benefits of communicating in an assertive way versus in a passive or aggressive way?
- Can anyone provide an example in which they disagreed strongly with their child or partner on something, but resolved it without yelling or using violence?
- What is one way in which men can control difficult emotions such as frustration or anger against their partner?
- What about against their child?

## CLOSING REMARKS

Thank the participants for sharing their experiences.

Recognize the participants' efforts, what they have learned about their experiences, and how this learning will allow them to approach stressful situations without violence and to instead use dialogue to resolve problems with their families.

Use the Key Ideas to reinforce the major points from this session.

## HOMEWORK

As homework, invite men to have a conversation with either their partners or ex-partners and with their sons or daughters. During this conversation, they may share how they felt when remembering an act of verbal, psychological or physical violence that was done against them.

This would be an excellent opportunity to make a promise within the family that disagreements will always be resolved without using violence and with respect for the other person's right to disagree.

Additionally, recommend that men practice one or two of the techniques from the Supporting Information for Group from this session with their partner this week. Tell them to advise their partner when they will practice it! Come back ready to explain their experiences.



## NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

Like Session 2, this session can trigger strong emotional reactions due to remembering painful experiences. It is important to create an atmosphere of respect and confidentiality. While some participants may express relief at being able to reflect and share past experiences, some may choose to comment but not give details. Participants should never be forced to share more than they feel comfortable. Talking about the violence they have committed can be even more difficult. Men may try to justify their violent behavior or to blame others for instigating the conflict. However, it is essential to remind participants that they must own their emotions and walk away from situations that may otherwise provoke them to use angry words or physical violence. It is important to have resources on hand to refer those who may need additional counseling or therapy.

For additional advice, refer to “Notes for the Facilitator” in Session 2.

# SESSION 10: GENDER-BIASED SEX SELECTION AS A HARMFUL PRACTICE

## OBJECTIVE

Identify (and carry out) realistic and actionable solutions to promote gender equality and prevent son preference and the practice of gender-biased sex selection.

**RECOMMENDED TIME:** 2 hours

**AUDIENCE:** Men only

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Flipchart or white board
- Markers

## PREPARATION

- Review Notes for Facilitators for this session in advance
- No handouts for this session
- Review key research findings from UNFPA studies on the practice of gender-biased sex selection in the country in which the Papa School is being implemented, as applicable:
  - **Armenia:** <https://eeca.unfpa.org/en/publications/sex-imbalance-birth-armenia>
  - **Azerbaijan:** <https://eeca.unfpa.org/en/publications/mechanisms-behind-skewed-sex-ratio-birth-azerbaijan>
  - **Georgia:** <https://eeca.unfpa.org/en/publications/gender-biased-sex-selection-georgia>



## KEY IDEAS

### UNFPA SITE: ENDING GENDER-BIASED SEX SELECTION

The normal sex ratio at birth ranges from 102-106 males per 100 females. But ratios much higher than normal – sometimes as high as 130 – have been observed, especially in countries with deep-rooted gender inequality and patriarchal values.

Gender-biased sex selection in favor of male offspring perpetuates the culture of gender inequality and can lead to serious, long-lasting social and economic consequences and demographic impacts. In EECA, birth registration documents provide statistical evidence of gender-biased sex selection in favor of boys in Azerbaijan (116.8 boys born for every 100 girls), Armenia (114.8), Georgia (113.6), and Albania (111.7).

The practice of gender-biased sex selection distorts the natural sex ratio, leading to long-lasting population imbalance and reinforcing sexist stereotypes about women by devaluing them. Fewer women can make it difficult for men to find partners and may lead to higher emigration levels among young men and increased violence and discriminatory acts against women, including bride trafficking, prostitution, lowered marriage ages, and a resurgence in forced or arranged marriages.

## WELCOME AND CHECK-IN

Welcome everyone back to the group.

- Check in with the participants.
- Revisit the previous week's session and review the assigned homework.
- Also review the ground rules.
- Provide an overview of the objectives of today's closing session.

## ACTIVITY 1: BRAINSTORMING EXERCISE

- Explain to participants that gender-biased sex selection is a harmful practice against women and girls. Present key facts about this practice (see UNFPA research findings noted in Preparation section) and why it is a problem for society.
  - On flipchart paper, create 4 boxes (minimum) with each box having one of the following titles:
    - Cultural Practices and Beliefs
    - Household Decision - Making Dynamics
    - Economic Opportunities
    - Laws and Policies

- It should look something like this:



- Feel free to add in other boxes such as “Popular Media” if they are relevant.
- Ask participants to think about their community and what gender norms and power dynamics need to change in order to eliminate the practice of gender-biased sex selection. This brainstorm can be done in small groups or altogether. Touch upon the topic areas in each box and use the examples below to start the discussion:
  - **Cultural practices and beliefs** - Examples could include beliefs that only men can carry on the family’s lineage and family name; traditionally, it is more acceptable for men to inherit property; beliefs that biological sons should be responsible for preparing funeral arrangements; that caring for children and the home are primarily a woman’s responsibility.
  - **Household decision-making** - Examples could include married women often being subservient to both their male partners and mothers-in-law; men dominating family planning and decision-making.
  - **Economic opportunities** - Examples could include women being forced to leave their jobs once they have children, limiting their earning potential; women not being considered as competent or competitive as men in the job market.
  - **Laws and policies** - Examples could include lack of family friendly policies that encourage men to take on paternity leave or policies promoting equal hiring opportunity.
- You may find some participants balk at some of the norms to be challenged saying that they are part of their culture and cannot be changed. Ask if anyone has a different viewpoint. After receiving a few comments, affirm that culture and tradition form an integral part of a community’s identity. At the same time, they are not static - they do evolve over time. The purpose of this exercise is not to say that tradition and culture are bad, but rather to identify some beliefs that are actually harmful to men and women and challenge those.



## ACTIVITY 2: ROLE PLAY

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- Break participants into groups of 3-5 and ask them to prepare and perform a short role play that addresses the category of cultural practices and beliefs, as well as the following questions:
  - What kinds of changes can men make in their households to ensure that their daughters grow up knowing that they are just as valuable as their brothers and are capable of the same things boys are capable of in life?
  - How would this change happen? What is the solution?
- Write the key messages (how will the change happen) from each role-play on flipchart paper.

## ACTIVITY 3: GROUP DISCUSSION

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### QUESTIONS

What is one (or more) solution(s) you can carry out this week?

### CLOSING REMARKS

In this session, solutions were developed to address gender inequalities and unequal power dynamics to prevent the practice of gender-biased sex selection. It is especially important for men to use their power and privilege to speak to other men about these solutions.

### HOMEWORK

No homework assignment.

# SESSION 11: THE NEEDS AND RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

## OBJECTIVES

- Make connections between the long-term goals fathers and mothers have for their children (ages 0-4) and how harsh discipline affects those goals.

**RECOMMENDED TIME:** 1-2 hours

**AUDIENCE:** Men only

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Pens, markers or pencils
- Paper

## PREPARATION

- Review Notes for Facilitators for this session in advance
- Print copies of the handouts:
  - [Stages of Child Development](#)
  - [Positive Discipline Principles](#)
  - [Positive Discipline Tools](#)
  - [Recognizing Emotions](#)
  - [Understanding Child Fears](#)
  - [Managing Temper Tantrums](#)
  - [Managing Stress in Children](#)
- TO NOTE: There are multiple main activities in this session; choose the one that best meets the needs of your group.



## KEY IDEAS

Children have the right to protection from all forms of violence. This violence includes physical or humiliating punishment such as spanking, hitting or yelling.

Providing warmth such as unconditional love, verbal and physical affection, empathy and sensitivity to children's needs, is an essential part of raising children, encourages your children to cooperate with you and teaches them long-term values

Parenting is a lifelong commitment. Fathers and mothers are not expected to change their behaviors overnight, but it is important to put new skills to practice gradually.

As you interact with your children, have your life long goals in mind - your vision of your children at age 20 and older.

Parents often feel that punishment is the only way their children will learn to behave well. In fact, any form of punishment - verbal or physical - is a hindrance to learning. Think about your own childhood and how you reacted when you were punished. Punishment often brings about the following reactions in children:

Resentment ("This is unfair. I can't trust adults.")

Revenge ("They may be winning now, but I will get even.")

Rebellion ("I'll show them that I can do whatever I want.")

Retreat (In the form of sneakiness: "I just won't get caught next time" or lower self-esteem: "I am a bad person.")

Positive discipline, which focuses on learning, is more effective in the long-term and teaches children to handle problems, disappointments, and their own feelings in a way that builds resilience and strengthens their relationships with caregivers<sup>30</sup>.

## WELCOME AND CHECK-IN

- Welcome everyone back to the group.
- Check in with the participants.
- Revisit the previous week's session and review the assigned homework.
- Also review the ground rules.
- Introduce the session's objectives.

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30 Nelsen, J., Tamborski, M. N., & Ainge, B. (2016). *Positive Discipline Parenting Tools: The 45 Most Effective Methods to Stop Power Struggles, Build Communication, and Raise Empowered, Capable Kids*. Random House USA Incorporated.

## ACTIVITY 1: "MY CHILD IN 20 YEARS"

- Introduce the activity by saying something along the following:
- "For new mothers, fathers and other family members, having a young baby is joyful, exhilarating, exhausting and an enormous challenge. Parents feel like they have an extraordinary responsibility to ensure the health and happiness of their child. But few, if any of us, ever received a "How to" guide on how to raise a child. Many learn by instinct, or by remembering how our parents raised and disciplined us."
- "But many instincts related to parenting are emotional reactions that are not thought out. As we explored in "My Father's Legacy" and "Clothesline of Violence" parents are at risk of repeating harmful behaviors that they themselves experienced during childhood. In this session we will explore how to replace harmful discipline like spanking, yelling, or isolating that can negatively impact young children with more positive parenting techniques."
- Individually, or in couples, ask participants to close their eyes and imagine the following, "Your child is all grown up. You are about to celebrate your child's 20th birthday. Imagine what he or she will look like at that age. What kind of person do you hope your child will be? What kind of relationship do you want with your children?"
- Next, ask participants to individually, or in couples, identify 5 characteristics (long-term goals), that they want their child to have when they are 20 years old. Some examples may be:
  - Kind and helpful
  - Honest and trustworthy
  - A good decision-maker
  - Caring towards you
- Give participants a few minutes to discuss with the person sitting next to them, or with another couple, the characteristics they desire for their child.

## ACTIVITY 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

### ASK THE GROUP THE FOLLOWING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some of the characteristics you would like your child to have by age 20?
- How does yelling or hitting affect children? How might it impact your long-term goals?
- What does yelling or hitting teach children instead about resolving conflict?
- What happens when you isolate, alienate or disconnect from your child emotionally to punish them? How do they react? What are they learning? How does this affect your relationship with them?
- Is it possible to prevent all misbehavior of children?

Close the activity by stating a few key points. Be sure to pass out the Supporting Information for Group on Stages of Development as you review the first key point:

- Children constantly change and develop as they grow. It is important to understand what your child is capable of doing at his or her stage of development. Note: Read through the Stages of Child Development Supporting Information with the group.
- Parenting can be especially difficult in the early years because young children cannot verbalize (or even know!) what they want.
- The key to effective discipline is to see short-term challenges such as getting children to eat dinner, pick up their toys, etc. as opportunities to work towards long-term goals.
- When you feel yourself getting frustrated, this is an opportunity to teach your child new skills and work towards your vision twenty years from now!

### ACTIVITY 3: PUT IT INTO PRACTICE - POSITIVE PARENTING<sup>31</sup>

- Explain to the group that now you will discuss and practice different positive parenting techniques. However, before taking any action, it is important to ask yourself the following questions. Write these questions down on flipchart paper and read them aloud to the group.
  - Is the child doing something truly wrong? Is there a problem here, or have you just run out of patience? Say to the group, *"If there is no problem, release the stress away from the child. If there is a problem go onto the next question."*
  - Think for a moment (and refer back to the Stages of Child Development Supporting Information for Group). Is your child really capable of doing what you expect? Say to the group, *"If you are not being fair, re-evaluate your expectations. If you are being fair, go onto the next question."*
  - Did your child know at the time that he or she was doing something wrong? Say to the group, *"If your child did not know what he or she was doing was wrong, then help him or her understand what you expect, why it was wrong, and how he or she can do it. Offer to help. If your child knew what she was doing was wrong and disregarded your reasonable expectations, then your child misbehaved."*
- Ask if there are any questions.
- Next, ask participants to get into pairs and pass out the "Positive Discipline Techniques» handout.
- Explain that, in groups of 3 or 4, participants will create and then role-play a realistic scene between a child and parent. In the scene, the child is misbehaving and the parent must use positive discipline to address the unwanted behavior. Ask a few groups to volunteer to role-play their scenario for the larger group.
- Give participants 10-15 minutes to design a scene.

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31 Inspired by "Positive Guidance and Discipline" (1998) by Georgia Knight and Jackie Roseboro. North Carolina State University.

## ACTIVITY 4: GROUP DISCUSSION

Ask the group the following questions to process the role plays:

- For any of the role plays presented, what other forms of positive discipline could have been used with the child?
- Which technique would be the easiest to use with your own children? Why?
- Which technique would be the most difficult to use? Why? What could you do to make it easier to use?
- What are other ways to discipline children of non-violent and respectful ways?
- What are ways in which we can recognize children for positive behavior?
- How is “warmth,” such as showing physical affection or saying, “I love you” to your child a form of positive reinforcement of good behavior?
- Positive discipline techniques are not what we are used to, they can be difficult to learn, and sometimes don’t work as immediately to quiet the child as hitting, slapping, or yelling. However, those techniques create fear and not understanding. Positive discipline, on the other hand, helps the child learn to become the kind of person you’d like them to be. Parents must be patient, as the rewards of positive discipline can take some time. Even though it may be a new tactic, positive discipline is a technique that everyone can use - mother-in-laws, grandfathers, cousins, teachers, etc.
- Who do you need to “convince” in your home and community to use positive discipline? How will you do it?

### CLOSING REMARKS

Using the Key Ideas (on the next page) thank the participants for their active participation and openness around child discipline - an often sensitive subject that is rarely discussed in groups such as this.

### HOMEWORK

With their partners, ask participants to create a personal parenting plan that outlines 1) what they are already doing well as parents and 2) positive discipline techniques they will use with their children. Fathers or couples will come back together for the next session and share their personal parenting plans.



## NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

These activities provide just an introduction to positive discipline. Participants may have more questions throughout and at the end of the session than can be answered through this manual. Take the time to look up resources for positive discipline, or positive parenting, in your country. If there are none available, here are a few resources available in English:

“Positive Discipline – What it is and how to do it” by Joan Durrant, PhD. This is a simple and easy-to-use manual for both parents and practitioners that explains the principles of positive discipline and how to use it in an age appropriate way with children. [http://seap.savethechildren.se/South\\_East\\_Asia/Misc/Puffs/Positive-Discipline-What-it-is-and-how-to-do-it/](http://seap.savethechildren.se/South_East_Asia/Misc/Puffs/Positive-Discipline-What-it-is-and-how-to-do-it/).

“Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment of Children” <http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/>. This website provides factsheets and tools for parents on how to practice positive discipline. The website is also in Spanish.

# SESSION 12: DIVISION OF CAREGIVING

## OBJECTIVES

- Reflect upon the time men dedicate to caring for and attending to their children, and compare it to the time spent by women. Encourage a fairer distribution of such activities.
- Analyze the relationship and communication fathers have with the mothers of their children in order to identify weaknesses and strengths
- Discuss the devaluation of daily housework in society.

**RECOMMENDED TIME:** 2.5 hours

**AUDIENCE:** Men and their partners

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Pencils
- Sheets of papers

## PREPARATION

- Review Notes for Facilitators for this session in advance
- Print copies of the handout: [Four Ways to Increase Participation in Parenting and Housework](#)
- TO NOTE: There are multiple main activities in this session; choose the one that best meets the needs of your group.





## KEY IDEAS

It is essential that men devote a significant amount of time on parenting, education and domestic tasks. Ideally, men and women would devote an equal amount of time, but working conditions and wage differences do not always permit this. Women also have to accept and give their male partners space to participate in domestic tasks.

Equity, understood as fairness in the family, does not always mean equal time spent; sometimes it must take into account the family's situation. The key is to negotiate, communicate, and to be fair, considering the obligations of each person within and outside of the home.

Many men do not bear the same responsibility as women, because many couples live in an unequal and gendered society that assigns men the role of breadwinners. In contrast, women are usually expected to fulfill the role of motherhood and housekeeper.

Changing the way men prioritize their time usually affords men more opportunities to spend time with their children.

If work keeps men from being more involved, remember that spending "quality time" with children is what really matters: for example, ignoring the telephone or television when the children are present.

With the arrival of children, satisfaction levels in a couple's relationship can change, sometimes improving and sometimes worsening. There are men who are jealous of the attention that mothers pay to their children. There are women who resent the domestic workload that a child may bring. Some couples may disagree on how to educate their children.

In cases of conflict, men must learn how to negotiate in a non-violent manner in order to reach decisions about parenting arrangements, keeping in mind the welfare of their children. Emphasize the importance of respecting the child's mother and being attentive to her, regardless of whether the father is part of a couple or an ex-partner, or had no more than a sexual encounter with the mother.

## WELCOME AND CHECK-IN

- Welcome everyone back to the group.
- Check in with the participants.
- Revisit the previous week's session and review the assigned homework.
- Also review the ground rules.
- Introduce the session's objectives.

## ACTIVITY 1: HOURS IN A DAY

- Give each participant a blank sheet of paper and ask him to draw a large circle on it. Imagine that the circle is a pie, and that it is cut into slices of time, with the entire pie corresponding to a 24-hour day.
- Ask participants to draw slices in the pie to reflect the amount of time they spend on daily tasks: work, sleep, eating, recreation, leisure, housework, etc. Also, ask them to identify the time spent on tasks of child rearing, education and playing with children. Show the group a sample of pie you drew. If there are participants who cannot write, the facilitator can help, or these participants may draw their activities.
- Next, ask participants to draw another pie picture, but this time from the perspective of the mothers of their children. In other words, how do they think the mother divides her time in a 24-hour day?
- If the session is conducted with couples (both parents), have each one develop their pies of time separately, and then share their pies in pairs to talk about the differences between their pies.

## ACTIVITY 2: GROUP DISCUSSION

- Make time for each participant to share his reflections. If the activity is carried out with couples, invite each pair to share what they observed when they compared their pies with their partner's.
- Then ask the following questions:
  - What did you realize when doing this exercise about how men and women use their time differently?
  - How do you feel about the differences in the way in which time is spent between men and women? Do you feel these differences are fair? Why or why not?
  - How does your partner feel about the current time distribution of household tasks? (If the partner is present, ask them this question directly)
  - Why do we tend to undervalue domestic work such as cooking or cleaning, and time spent caring for children? And why is paid work seen as having more value?
  - What would you do to change how you currently distribute your time?
  - What can men gain from being more involved in domestic work like cooking and cleaning? Why would women benefit?
- Next, explain that in the next activity, you will all do a role play about this very activity – housework!
- How did it feel to play this activity?

### ACTIVITY 3: MOTHER OF MY CHILD AND ME - WORKING AS A TEAM

- Ask a few participants to represent members of a household doing housework and caregiving. Each participant should be assigned a role, such as babysitting, ironing, cooking, washing clothes, cleaning the house or shopping. Say that they will begin the role play on the count of three, "One, two, THREE!"
- All participants begin doing housework. After one minute, ask one of the participants to stop doing housework, and tell the rest of the participants to divide his/her share among themselves. Meanwhile, the non-working participant listens to a radio, sits around the "house" or rests.
- Ask another participant to stop working as well. He or she may also rest somewhere, dance, sleep. And, again, his/her share is to be distributed among the remaining participants.
- Continue this sequence until there is only one participant left, while the others take naps, read the newspaper, or talk on their cell phones.
- Finally, ask the last person to stop working.

### ACTIVITY 4: GROUP DISCUSSION

- Ask the participants to "step out" of their roles, and ask them the following questions:

#### ROLE PLAY PARTICIPANTS

- How did you feel doing this exercise?
- How did the working participants feel when the others stopped working?
- How did the last worker feel?

#### QUESTIONS FOR THE GROUP

- Which of the staged activities do you perform at home? Note: Some men may note that some housework is carried out by men such as repairing a light fuse or fixing a broken motorbike. Make sure to probe how these tasks also reinforce gender inequalities between men and women.
- Who generally performs these activities? Why?
- Is it realistic for men to do this work? Why or why not?
- In what ways can men participate more fairly in the home, even when they work full time?
- There is some evidence that boys who saw their fathers participate in housework were more likely to do it later in life themselves. What are your thoughts on this?
- What effect would your doing housework have on daughters' future relationships?
- There is some evidence that women who have male partners who participate in

housework have greater sexual satisfaction in their relationship. Why do you think this is?

- What are one or two things you can do this week in the home?

### IF PARTNERS ARE PRESENT

- What do you expect of men in relation to housework? Or what would you like them to do?

### CLOSING REMARKS

Using the key ideas, thank the participants for their participation and stress that it is essential for men to devote time to not only caregiving tasks but domestic tasks as well. Though it may not be possible to devote an equal amount of time, the key is to negotiate and communicate a fair distribution of tasks within the family.

### HOMEWORK

For homework, ask participants to observe how tasks are distributed among themselves and their partners at home. Then, they should perform at least one domestic activity that they usually never do. What is the partner's reaction? They should come to the next session with a reflection to share.

# SESSION 13: COUPLES COMMUNICATION

## OBJECTIVES

- Describe and be able to use good communication skills that form the foundation of an open and trusting relationship.
- To discuss the importance of couple communication and to rehearse creative ways of communicating to successfully resolve conflicts.

**RECOMMENDED TIME:** 2 hours

**AUDIENCE:** Men and their partners

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Markers
- Flipchart
- Tape
- Blindfolds or cloth
- Illustrations of a couple communicating in a positive, non-violent way vs. a couple yelling or husband yelling at wife

## PREPARATION

- Review Notes for Facilitators for this session in advance
- Print copies of the handout: [Interviewing My Partner Exercise](#)

## WELCOME AND CHECK-IN

- Welcome everyone back to the group.
- Check in with the participants.
- Revisit the previous week's session and review the assigned homework.
- Also review the ground rules.
- Provide an overview of the objectives of today's closing session.

## ACTIVITY 1: BLINDFOLD EXERCISE

- Pair up husbands and wives together. Have one of the partners be the Guide. (Note: Give each pair a blindfold or scarf to use.)
- Guides will put the blindfold on their partner. Make sure that the blindfold (or scarf) is tight enough so that the partner cannot see anything.

- Guides will take their blindfolded partner for a walk around the Dialogue Club site. Do not go too far from the area.
- When I say, “Stop”, you will change roles. The person who was blindfolded will now be the Guide. The Guide now has to wear the blindfold.
- The new Guides will walk their blindfolded partner around. Try to explore new places, but not too far from the meeting area.
- When I say, “Stop”, stop the exercise and come back to the meeting space.

### ASK THESE OR OTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT BEING BLINDFOLDED

- How did it feel to walk around blind?
- Did you trust the person leading you? Why? Why not?
- What did the Guide do to make you feel more comfortable and confident?
- What did the Guide do to make you unsure or uncomfortable?
- Ask these or other questions about being the Guide:
- What was it like to lead a blindfolded person around?
- Did you give any instructions? Why or why not?
- What kind of instructions did you give?
- Did the instructions work? If not, why?
- What did you do/say to make the blindfolded person more comfortable?
- Ask the group what they learned from this

### ACTIVITY 2: INTERVIEWING MY PARTNER

- Point out that open-ended questions are the best to use to have good communication. This is because:
  - They give you more information.
  - People can provide information, feelings attitudes, and understanding of the topic in their answers.
- Mention that open-ended questions usually begin with:
  - Why?
  - What?
  - When?
  - How?
- Ask the group to give examples of open-ended questions.
- As needed, review other examples of open-ended questions:

- What do you think about that?
  - Why did you do that?
  - How do you plan to achieve that?
  - What do you think will happen now?
  - How would you change things?
  - What do you want to happen?
  - What's causing the problem?
  - Tell me more....
- Explain that close-ended questions only require a "Yes" or "No" answer and do not give you much information.
  - Ask how you can change these close-ended questions into open-ended ones?
    - Did you cook lunch? (ex: "What should we cook for lunch?")
    - Are you upset with me? (ex: "Why are you upset with me?")
  - Think of something that made you very happy recently.
  - Say: "I am thinking of something that made me very happy. Take turns asking me open-ended questions about what made me happy."
  - Ask how difficult was it to find out what made me happy?
  - Ask the group why we are talking about different kinds of questions. Point out that asking questions can be an opportunity to build and deepen relationships. This will form a solid foundation for times when you disagree.
  - Ask participants to get back into their husband and wife pairs. Have them find a place in the room where they can talk and no one will hear them. Note: If they would like to go outside, explain the exercise first and then let them go.
  - Explain that in this exercise all they need to do is ask open-ended questions and answer honestly. They should take turns asking these open-ended questions to one another:
  - What is a childhood memory you have that is close to your heart?
    - Who is someone who inspires you? Why do they inspire you?
    - If you could be anywhere in the world, where would you be and why?
  - The person who is asking the questions should listen and not interrupt. However, they can ask follow up open-ended questions to find out more about their partner's answer.
  - Give them 15 to 20 minutes for this exercise and come back to the circle.
  - Ask for a couple volunteers to share their reflections from doing this exercise.

### ACTIVITY 3: THE FOUR PHRASES

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- Tell the group that open communication is a very important way to resolve conflict, and can even help us to avoid conflict in the first place. We will now discuss and rehearse creative ways of communicating in order to resolve conflict – ways that can be used in our relationships with our spouses/partners, but also with friends, family members and others.
- Ask the group: “When you are upset or having a disagreement with your partner or other family member, do you usually communicate why you are upset? How?”
- After the group has finished discussing, you may present them with some sample phrases that can be helpful to communicate our feelings, using the information below.
- Ask, “What other ways can we communicate without using violence to resolve a disagreement?”
- Divide the participants into small groups of 3 or 4 individuals. These groups can be a mix of men and women. Explain that each group will now have 10 minutes to role-play a healthy relationship, using communication, rather than violence or aggression, to resolve conflict.
- Explain that each group should imagine a scenario where a husband and wife are quarreling over how money is spent in the household, and both partners are becoming angry. The role-play should practice communicating to resolve the conflict without resorting to violence. This can use some of the four phrases, but does not have to. Think about how the couple would act, what would they say? Encourage the men to also include some of the strategies for managing anger that they discussed in the previous session.
- Give the groups 20 minutes to practice resolving the conflict through discussion and communication.
- After 20 minutes, ask everyone to come back to the circle. Remind the group that conflict always exists, but can be an opportunity for personal growth and development, rather than an opportunity for violence.

### ACTIVITY 4: GROUP DISCUSSION

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#### QUESTIONS

- Did you discover anything while doing this exercise?
- What are the main causes of disagreement or conflict in between spouses/partners? What about other types of relationships?
- Often, we know how to avoid a conflict without using violence but sometimes this does not happen. Why?
- Are these methods realistic for preventing arguments from getting worse? Why or why not?



- What are the benefits of communicating your feelings during a conflict?
- Do you think you could use these skills for communicating in real life? Why or why not?

### CLOSING REMARKS

- To maintain a healthy, open relationship, we need to use good verbal communication skills to explain what we want and our point of view.
- Good communication also involves having trust in one another.
- Like you did in the first exercise, it is important to show patience, understanding, and respect towards our partner, even when we disagree.

### HOMEWORK

Explain that the Commitment of the week assignment for this session is to start taking steps to build a healthier relationship with your partner. If you find yourselves in conflict, try communicating your feelings to each other, rather than shouting or using violence. Think about how it feels. Does it work? Come to the next session prepared to share some of the steps you have taken to build a healthier relationship.



### NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

In this session, men and women will be asked to share personal stories about themselves to one another. Some couples may be ready to engage in these more intimate discussions while others will need more time. Be aware of the dynamics in the group and - to the extent possible - between couples. Make sure that people feel comfortable sharing and do not force anyone to share.

Below are some examples of phrases that can be used to communicate one's feelings during a conflict. You can share these phrases with the group as a guide to help facilitate the discussion. Participants should be encouraged to think of their own phrases that can be useful when resolving conflict.

Four phrases for communicating during conflict:

**I can see...** This is how we can express the behavior that we see in the other person. For example: "I can see that you did not greet me when you arrived."

**I imagine...** This phrase is how we say what we imagine when we observe the other person's behavior. For example: "I imagine that you are annoyed."

**I feel...** This phrase is how we say what we feel to the person about what we can see and imagine. For example: "I feel sad and what happened really hurt me because our relationship is important to me."

**I want...** This phrase is how we make a proposal for how to improve things. For example: "I want you to tell me if something is bothering you."

# SESSION 14: FINAL REFLECTIONS

## OBJECTIVES

- Reflect on the experiences participants have had in this cycle of sessions.
- Make a commitment to be a more involved father.
- Encourage the participants to continue to meet after the session ends.

**RECOMMENDED TIME:** 1-2 hours

**AUDIENCE:** Men only

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Ball of yarn, ribbon, or brightly colored string

## PREPARATION

- Review Notes for Facilitators for this session in advance
- No handouts for this session

## WELCOME AND CHECK-IN

- Welcome everyone back to the group.
- Check in with the participants.
- Revisit the previous week's session and review the assigned homework.
- Also review the ground rules.
- Provide an overview of the objectives of today's closing session.

## ACTIVITY 1: GROUP DISCUSSION

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- Ask participants to form a circle and ask each of them to complete the following phrases:
  - "My favorite moment of this group was..."
  - "Something unexpected that happened in the group was..."
  - "I will be a better and more involved father by..."
  - "Something I feel proud of is ..."

## ACTIVITY 2: THE FATHER'S WEB

- Next, holding the ball of string, say that this will be the last activity that you will do together as a facilitated group, but you hope the group will continue to meet after the session cycle concludes.
- Say that, for this activity, everyone will mention one thing that they learned while in this group that they will take with them back to their families. They will then hold on to the end of the yarn and toss the ball to another person in the group. This will continue until everyone has had something to say.
- Begin the activity by saying, "One thing I have learned from this group that I will take with me to my family is..."
- Once everyone has finished saying what they learned, a web will have formed. Explain that this web represents the sum of their experiences in this group, and how they are all now connected because they have acquired a new definition of what it means to be a father.
- Optional: Cut the web into pieces and tie it into bracelets for each of the participants.

## ACTIVITY 3: EXCHANGING CONTACT INFORMATION

- Encourage participants to continue meeting and providing support to one another. This will help them to fulfill their commitments to the group and serve as a source of emotional support in difficult moments.
- Give participants time to exchange contact information, such as mobile numbers, Facebook details and other contact information.. If you can do this ahead of time, set up a contact information sheet with Name, Mobile number, Home number, and other contact information that you can then distribute to the entire group (with the permission of all participants).

### CLOSING REMARKS

There is a chance that participants may want to share what they have learned with the larger community. If this is the case, see Section 3 on mobilizing the community and starting a community campaign. This may be a good way to change community norms around masculinity and men's caregiving.

Above all, thank participants for their openness and participation. It takes a lot of strength to be vulnerable and to share experiences in a group. Even if one attitude that participants have concerning fatherhood and parenting has changed, or one participant has become more informed, the program will have been a success.





# ANNEX 1: ICE BREAKERS AND ENERGIZERS

## ICE BREAKERS

### THE NAME GAME

**Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Objective:** The purpose of this game is to share everyone's names in a fun way. This game helps to learn the names of the participants.

**Description:** There will be two rounds in which the group plays "catch," while everyone has a chance to say their names. In the first round, each person says his or her name before throwing the ball. So, one by one, each participant says his name and then throws the ball to someone else. The facilitator can begin, in order to better demonstrate the game. This round ends when everyone has had a chance to say their name, and has passed the ball back to the facilitator. Repeat the game for the second round, but after a participant says his name, he should put his hand on his head to signal that he has already gone. Continue the second round until everyone has had a turn.

### THE BUS OF EMOTIONS

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Objective:** This game helps the participants interpret or express different emotions, and help each other to do the same.

**Description:** Ask four participants to “role play” people getting on a “bus.” Each person should approach the bus while expressing a different emotion. When the driver and passengers see this emotion, they are infected by it, and begin to express it as well. Follow this pattern for each additional volunteer. At the end, to process this game, ask the participants what they observed, and then ask them how they felt during this exercise.

### THE MAIL CARRIER

**Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Objective:** The objective of this game is for participants to share their personal information and to get to know each other a little more in a fun way.

**Description:** The participants are placed sitting in their chairs in a circle. Only the facilitator stands. The facilitator explains that he/she is going to start playing the role of “the postman” and that the postman will bring a letter to various people. Those people called by the postman have to change seats. For example, if the postman says: “Bring letters to all the people who like ice cream,” all people who love the ice cream will change places. When people get up and go to change seats, the postman will take out a seat so another person will be left standing. The person left standing becomes the postman, and the game continues.

### ABOUT MY FAMILY

**Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Objective:** To learn about other people in the group.

**Description:** Ask participants to form pairs, and then turn to the person next to them and share their name, number of children, and three other facts about themselves that others might not know. Allow 3-5 minutes for this. Then, have each pair introduce each other to the group. This helps to get strangers acquainted and people to feel safe - they already know at least one other person, and did not have to share information directly in front of a big group at the beginning of the meeting.

### TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

**Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Objective:** To have the group get to know one another better.

**Description:** In a large group, have everyone write down two true statements about themselves and one false one. Then, every person reads their statements and the whole group must guess which one is false. This helps participants get acquainted and relaxed.

### VOTE WITH YOUR FEET

**Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Objective:** To clarify values around fatherhood

**Description:** In a large group have everyone stand in one long line. They will listen to one statement. Those who “agree” with the statement will step forward from the line. Those who

“disagree” with the statement will step back from the line. Have volunteers explain why they agree or disagree. Sample statements:

- Men are less emotional than women.
- Men are less able to care for children than women.
- Men are better at raising boys than raising girls.
- Spanking a child is a necessary form of discipline.
- Women are better able to carry out domestic work, such as cleaning, than men

## ENERGIZERS

### SPAGHETTI

Groups of 5-10 people.

- The group forms a tight circle. Everyone sticks their hands into the center. With one hand, everyone grabs the hand of another person. Then, using the other hand, grab a hand of someone different.
- The object of the game is to get untangled without letting go. By climbing, crawling, and wriggling around, participants can create one large open circle or, sometimes, two unconnected ones.
- If they are totally stuck, you can tell them they can choose to undo one link, and then reconnect once that person has turned around, and see if that works.
- This energizer is fun and creates a nice physical bond between participants. It also subtly communicates ideas of working together to accomplish a task.

### SPAGHETTI

Groups of 5-8 people.

- Put a blanket or several sheets of newspaper on the floor. Ask the group to stand on it. Then explain this is an iceberg that is melting away, reducing its size by half every month. Their object is to see how long they can all stay on it.
- You ask them to get off it and fold the blanket in half or remove half the paper. Each time, reduce the area by half and see how they can find ways to support each other to allow everyone to stay on.

### THE SCREAM

Only use where others won't be disturbed.

- Ask group members to stand. Tell them to close their eyes. Breathe slowly and deeply. Ask everyone to breathe in unison. Ask them to keep breathing together while they stretch their arms as high as possible. Ask them to jump up and down together and, finally, to scream as loudly as they can.

## THE RAINSTORM

Can be used as a closing.

- Ask the group to stand in a circle with their eyes closed. Say that a rainstorm is approaching.
- Ask everyone to rub their palms against their pant legs. Then ask them to lightly pat their thighs with their fingertips. Ask them to do it harder.
- Now, ask them to pat their hands against their thighs. Now start slapping your hands faster and faster against your thighs.
- After a while, go back to lighter slapping, then patting, etc., to reverse the whole order until it is quiet again and the storm has passed.
- *[At first the wind was blowing the trees, then light rain started, then heavier rain, then a downpour, and then the whole thing slackened off.]*

## EXERCISING

- More basic than all the rest. Ask someone to lead the group in some simple stretching.

## HOT PEPPER

- Gather the participants in a circle. Toss a ball (or another tossable object) gently to a participant. Participants should continue gently tossing the ball, saying "Hot" when they catch it.
- As the ball is being tossed around, randomly call out, "Pepper!" The person holding the ball when "Pepper!" is called is removed from the circle.
- Tossing the ball continues until only one person is left.

## I'M GOING TO THE STORE...

- Create a circle of chairs in the center of the room. Have enough chairs so that only one person does not have one.
- Have one person stand in the center of the circle. They should start the game by saying, "I'm going to the store, and I'm taking my friend who..." and choosing a trait that some of the people seated have. For example, "I'm going to the store, and I'm taking my friend who has a red shirt on." All of the students with a red shirt on will get up and race to another chair, including the person in the center, leaving the remaining person without a chair to stand in the middle of the circle.
- The next person in the center repeats the phrase with a new trait. The rule is that participants **MUST** get up and move to another chair if the trait applies to them. They cannot move to the chair next to them.
- Repeat several times.



## STOMP PATTERN

- Teach the participants a three-count stomp pattern and do it together. (Pattern: stomp-stomp-clap, stomp-stomp-clap.)
- Then, teach the participants a four-count stomp. (Pattern: stomp-stomp-stomp-clap, stomp-stomp- stomp-clap.)
- Divide the participants in half. Have one group do the first pattern and the second do the second pattern at the same time.
- If there is a bit more time, you can have individuals create their own patterns for the group to imitate.



# ANNEX II: SESSION TOOLS AND HANDOUTS

## BENEFITS OF AN INVOLVED FATHER

- Boys and girls with involved and loving fathers perform better academically and show better social and emotional development.
- Having a non-violent father helps boys reduce aggressive behavior and question sexism.
- For girls, having close and positive relationships with their fathers or male authority figures is associated with having healthy and non-violent relationships in their adult lives, and gives them a greater sense of personal empowerment.
- Couples are happier when they share the responsibilities of childcare.
- Involved fathers live longer and report having less mental and physical health issues, such as high blood pressure, heart disease and alcohol abuse.

## CONTRACEPTIVES RESOURCE SHEET<sup>32</sup>

CONTRACEPTIVE METHOD	<b>Periodic Abstinence</b>  These are practices that depend basically on the behaviour of the man or woman and on observation of the body.	<b>Mechanical</b>  A small plastic and copper device with a nylon thread at the tip which is placed inside the uterus.	<b>Barrier</b>  Methods that form a barrier, preventing the contact of spermatozoa with the ovum.	<b>Chemical</b>  Substances which, when placed in the vagina, kill or immobilize the spermatozoa.	<b>Hormonal</b>  Pills or injections made with synthetic hormones.	<b>Surgical or Sterilization</b>  This is not exactly a contraceptive method, but a surgery that is performed on the man or woman with the purpose of preventing conception permanently. Female sterilization is better known as tubal ligation; male sterilization is known as vasectomy.
TYPES	Rhythm Method, Cervical Mucus, Temperature, Coitus Interruptus (Withdrawal)	IUD (Intra-Uterine Device)	Diaphragm, Male and female condoms.	Cream, Jellies, Ova and Foam.	Pill, Injections.	Vasectomy, Tubal Ligation.
ACTIONS	To stop fecundation through sexual abstinence in the presumed fertile period. Should only be used in combination with condom/diaphragm.	Impedes access of the spermatozoa to the ovum. Requires medical check-up every 6 months.	Impedes contact of the spermatozoa with the ovum.	Spermicide which kills or immobilizes the spermatozoa, should be used in combination with the condom/diaphragm.	Prevent ovulation. Used with medical guidance.	Vasectomy: interrupts the flow of spermatozoa in ejaculation.  Tubal Ligation: Prevents contact of the ovum with the spermatozoa.

32 From: Promundo (2002) Project H Working with Young Men Series.

ADVANTAGES	Permits greater awareness of the body itself.	An efficient and comfortable method for most women.	The condom, male and female protects against the risks of STIs/ HIV/ AIDS. Condoms require no medical prescription or exams and are generally easy to acquire. Male condom use enables the man to participate actively in contraception.	Efficient when used with the condom or diaphragm.	When correctly used, birth control pills are one of the most effective contraceptive methods.	Efficiency is very high.
DISADVANTAGES	Does not protect against STIs/HIV/AIDS.	Increases the flow and duration of menstruation. Not recommended for women who have not had children.	The diaphragm does not protect against STIs/HIV.	The isolated use of the spermicide has a high incidence of failure and also does not prevent STIs/ HIV.	Requires discipline to take the pill every day at the same time. Women who smoke, have high blood pressure or varicose veins should not use this method. If used alone, do not protect against STIs/HIV.	A definite method with little chance of being reversed.

## FUN FACTS ABOUT SEXUAL PLEASURE DURING PREGNANCY<sup>33</sup>

- Most women can continue to have sex up until they go into labor. Sexual activity will not hurt the baby. The baby is kept safe by the amniotic sac, cervix, and uterine muscle. There is also a thick mucous plug that seals the cervix and protects the baby from infection.
- It is normal for sexual desire in women to decrease in the first trimester due to breast tenderness, fatigue nausea. Other women find the freedom of not having to worry about birth control or conceiving makes sex more enjoyable. By the second trimester, many women feel less nausea and experience heightened sexual desire.
- Fathers can support and/or raise their partner's self-esteem about their changing body by offering positive comments.
- As the body changes during pregnancy, couples may need to try different sexual positions to find what is comfortable for her. Some women discover new or increased sexual pleasures during pregnancy because of such experimentation. "Spooning" while sitting up offers plenty of room for manual stimulation, sidelying allows for comfortable oral stimulation, and experimenting with pillows and support devices can help enhance and support a variety of positions and activities.
- Due to a sense of fullness, some women find vaginal penetration uncomfortable at some points during pregnancy and opt for manual, oral, or self-pleasuring sex instead
- Some cramping after making love is normal throughout pregnancy. The uterus contracts during orgasm and these contractions might be more noticeable during pregnancy as the uterus gets bigger.
- If the partner is at risk of experiencing pregnancy complications (vaginal bleeding, leakage of amniotic fluid, etc) the health provider will advise you to stop having sex. Be open with your health provider and ask what sexual activity can be done instead.

33 Excerpted from Chapter 6: Relationships, Sex, and Emotional Support in Our Bodies, Ourselves: Pregnancy and Birth © 2008 Boston Women's Health Book Collective

# FACTS ABOUT MALE POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION<sup>34</sup>

## A FEW FACTS

- About 10% of fathers worldwide show signs of depression from the first trimester of their partner's pregnancy to six months after their baby is born.<sup>35</sup>
- Postpartum depression in men is most prevalent (26%) between 3-6 months after the baby is born.<sup>36</sup>

## SIGNS OF POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION IN MEN

Symptoms of postpartum depression can look different in men and women.

- Anger, irritability, aggression
- Loss of interest in sex, work, or favorite activities
- Working all the time
- Acting distant or withdrawing from family and friends
- Feeling frustrated, discouraged, or cynical
- Feeling sad, hopeless, or overwhelmed
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Engagement in risky behaviors like abusing alcohol or drugs, gambling, or extramarital affairs

## RISK FACTORS

- Having a partner with postpartum depression
- Having a history of depression
- Sleep deprivation
- Hormonal changes
- Relationship stress with spouse, parents, in-laws
- Financial stress

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34 Jonathan R. Scarff (2019) Postpartum Depression in Men. *Innovations in Clinical Neuroscience*. 2019 May 1; 16(5-6): 11-14. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6659987/>

35 Paulson JF, Bazemore SD. Prenatal and Postpartum Depression in Fathers and Its Association With Maternal Depression: A Meta-analysis. *JAMA*. 2010;303(19):1961-1969. doi:10.1001/jama.2010.605

36 bid.

### HOW TO CARE FOR YOURSELF

- Sleep - try to nap when the baby naps
- Exercise, even if it's just a walk outside
- Eat well; get a good diet
- Drink plenty of water
- Talk about what you're feeling with family or friends (or anyone who will listen without judging)
- Seek out the help of a counselor or health professional

Fatherhood is a huge job, and most societies don't support men well in this role. Stress and anxiety are normal during this period, and there is nothing wrong with asking for help - it means you are trying to be the best father you can be!



# THE EDINBURGH POSTNATAL DEPRESSION SCALE<sup>37</sup>

The following questionnaire is a screening tool. It does not diagnose postpartum depression or anxiety.

<b>1. In the past week, I have been able to laugh and see the funny side of things:</b>	
• As much as I always could	(0)
• Not quite so much now	(1)
• Definitely not so much now	(2)
• Not at all	(3)
<b>2. In the past week, I have looked forward with enjoyment to things:</b>	
• As much as I ever did	(0)
• Rather less than I used to	(1)
• Definitely less than I used to	(2)
• Hardly at all	(3)
<b>3. In the past week, I have blamed myself unnecessarily when things went wrong:</b>	
• Yes, most of the time	(3)
• Yes, some of the time	(2)
• Not very often	(1)
• No, never	(0)
<b>4. In the past week, I have been anxious or worried for no good reason:</b>	
• No, not at all	(0)
• Hardly ever	(1)
• Yes, sometimes	(2)
• Not at all	(3)
<b>5. In the past week, I have felt scared or panicky for no good reason:</b>	
• Yes, quite a lot	(3)
• Yes, sometimes	(2)
• No, not much	(1)
• No, not at all	(0)
<b>6. In the past week, things have been getting to me:</b>	
• Yes, most of the time I haven't been able to cope at all	(3)
• Yes, sometimes I haven't been coping as well as usual	(2)
• No, most of the time I have coped quite well	(1)
• No, I have been coping as well as ever	(0)

**TOTAL SCORE: -----**

37 Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS). Adapted from the British Journal of Psychiatry, June, 1987, vol. 150 by J.L. Cox, J.M. Holden, R. Segovsky.

- If you scored a 1, 2 or 3 on Question 10, please call your health care provider (family doctor, nurse, midwife, psychologist, psychiatrist) or go to the emergency room now to ensure your own safety and that of your baby.
- If your total score is 11 or more, you could be experiencing postpartum depression or anxiety. Please call your health care provider now (family doctor, nurse, midwife, psychologist, psychiatrist) to keep you and your baby safe.
- If your total score is 9-10, we suggest you repeat this test in one week or call your health care provider (family doctor, nurse, midwife, psychologist, psychiatrist).
- If your total score is 1-8, your feelings may be normal - new fathers often have mood swings. However, if they worsen or continue for more than a week or two, call your health care provider (family doctor, nurse, midwife, psychologist, psychiatrist).
- Regardless of your score, if you have concerns about depression or anxiety, please contact your health care provider (family doctor, nurse, midwife).

## WITH THE FATHER INVOLVED, EVERYONE WINS!

When fathers are involved and present during the prenatal period and birth, the benefits are tremendous.

### FOR MOTHERS:

- Involved fathers contribute to reducing maternal stress during pregnancy.
- Mothers who are accompanied during prenatal visits usually attend more of them, compared to mothers who are not accompanied.
- When the fathers are present in the delivery room to help the mother, mothers have a more positive experience and feel less pain during childbirth than when they are alone.

### FOR CHILDREN:

- Infants with involved fathers have better cognitive functions.
- Infants with involved fathers more frequently develop into children with high self-esteem who can resolve conflicts without violence.
- Children with involved fathers generally have fewer behavior problems.

### FOR THE FATHER:

- Fathers involved in their children's lives are more satisfied and more likely to stay involved.
- Involved fathers have better health: they take fewer drugs, consume less alcohol, live longer, and feel mentally and physically healthier.
- Some studies show that fathers involved in caregiving have more satisfying relationships with their partners, feel more connected to their families and report better sex lives with their partner.

## THE FATHER'S BACKPACK: WHAT SHOULD I TAKE?<sup>38</sup>

The couple should prepare their backpacks before going to the hospital or clinic to give birth. The health care provider should give the mother a list of things that she should bring with her to the hospital. And the fathers who will accompany their partners should also be ready. Below are some suggestions for the things you, the father, should have during your stay at the hospital.

- **Something to eat or drink.** Keep in mind that labor may take several hours. After deciding with your partner on your presence during delivery, make sure you prepare or buy what is needed. Ask the clinic or hospital staff if they have a microwave oven you can use if needed. Keep in mind that your partner may not be allowed eat during this period of time (if she is having or is at high risk of having a C-section), so please find a place outside of the delivery room where you can eat.
- **Cellular phone.** While several people will wait for your call, some people will actually call you. You cannot use your mobile phone in the delivery room. If you have to use it, please do so outside of the delivery room, so that your conversation does not bother other patients or interfere with staff work. Also ask the healthcare staff to refrain from using their personal cell phones in the delivery room.
- **Camera or video camera.** If you want to take photos to record these memorable moments, it is better to do so before and after birth - with your partner's permission, of course! Please disable the flash feature before taking pictures of the baby - the baby's arrival into the world is stressful enough.
- **Clothing.** It is usually possible to stay at the clinic or hospital for one or two nights. You will need extra sets of clothes in your backpack, so that you will not have to go home to get them.

## BREATHING EXERCISES AND OTHER PAIN ALLEVIATION TECHNIQUES DURING DELIVERY<sup>39</sup>

The breathing exercises optimize oxygen intake into the mother's body and help to alleviate the pain of labor contractions. During a contraction, your partner must take slow and deep breaths. It is very difficult to maintain a steady rhythm of breath, so you must help her relax while she is having contractions.

### FOR THE PARTNER:

- Your partner must maintain a breathing rhythm, and complete a cycle every four seconds.
- Breathe in through your nose in the first second.

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38 Adapted from "Father School: Step by Step"

39 From "Father School: Step by Step"

- Exhale through your mouth in short intervals while counting two three and four seconds.
- Exhale for a longer period of time during the fourth second.
- Repeat.

#### AT THE SAME TIME, THE FATHER MUST:

- Breathe with his partner.
- Make sure his partner is softly exhaling air in his face.
- Help her relax in between contractions.

You need to watch your partner, and you should hold her hands or place her hands gently over your shoulders. She can continue the breathing pattern as she inhales through her nose and softly exhales air in your face. Practice this during the pregnancy. This may feel strange at the beginning, and both of you may feel awkward or shy. Nonetheless, breathing jointly with your partner is a wonderful technique to use while she is giving birth, especially at times when she feels she can no longer continue.

#### POSITIONING:

If your partner feels pain in her lower back caused by contractions, she will need to adjust her position to help alleviate the pressure. This could involve leaning forward, positioning herself on all fours, leaning against a table or chair, or stretching her arms forward and holding on to your shoulders. She can also try sitting on a big exercise ball during contractions.

#### MASSAGING:

- The mother can use both her hands to massage her belly starting from the bottom of her pelvis and working her way up on both sides of her belly (left and right).
- You can massage your partner's back in a diagonal direction with a closed fist or using the palms of your hands.
- The mother can take a shower with lukewarm water or place a bottle filled with hot water on her lower back (or a towel soaked in lukewarm water).
- You can caress her abdomen with your fingertips in time with your shared breathing rhythm.
- You can also massage her hips and inner thighs in a circular motion.
- Massage her gluteal area with a closed fist. This massage can be either soft or firm, depending how the mother feels.

## A FEW LABOR POSITIONS<sup>40</sup>



## BABY CARE: USEFUL 'HOW-TO'S'

### HOW TO CHANGE A DIAPER

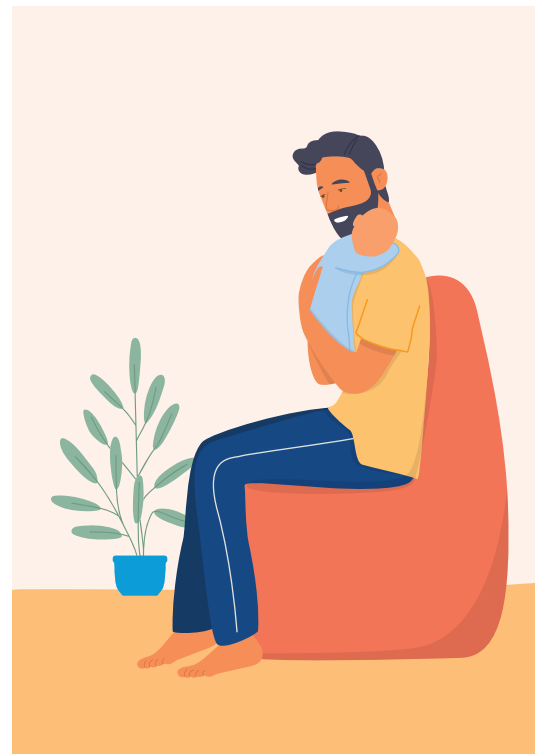
- Wash your hands with soap and lukewarm water. Use clean towels to dry your hands. Always use a paper towel to close the faucet.
- Prepare the changing room/space. Make sure that you have all necessary materials and that a trash can or garbage bag is within your reach.
- Place the child on the changing area. Do not use safety straps. Always maintain physical contact with the child.

40 Images from <https://www.thebump.com/a/birthing-positions>

- Remove the diaper. Use wet towels to clean the child from front to back. Use a clean towel each time you wipe. Throw away any dirty items in the trash bin or garbage bag.
- Wash your hands with soap and lukewarm water from the faucet only if you can maintain physical contact with the child. Otherwise, use disposable wet towels.
- Place a clean diaper on the child and dress him/her.

#### HOW TO HOLD AND CARRY A BABY<sup>41</sup>

- Always hold the baby's back and head when carrying him/her. The baby's neck is not able to hold up the head on its own for approximately the first three months.
- With one hand, hold the baby's back and with your other hand support the baby's head so that it doesn't wobble.
- Once you have the baby in your hands, support all of the baby's body in one of your arms, placing its head on the crease of your forearm while you support below the back with the other hand. When you have acquired enough practice, you can hold the baby with one arm.<sup>42</sup>



41 Images from <https://raisingchildren.net.au/newborns/health-daily-care/holding-newborns/how-to-hold-your-newborn>

42 From Bebes y Más ([www.bebesymas.com](http://www.bebesymas.com))

## MEN ARE BIOLOGICALLY ABLE TO CARE FOR THEIR BABIES<sup>43</sup>

Women are not the only ones who are biologically able to care for their babies when they become mothers. A new study has revealed that fatherhood produces hormonal changes in men, such as decreased testosterone, to help them become better fathers. This reduction in testosterone does not mean that men lose their sexual desire, nor does it hinder sexual performance. This reduction of testosterone facilitates a stronger father- baby bond, and makes the father's body more open to developing a strong biological and psychological connection with the baby.

According to scientists at Northwestern University in the United States, this "abrupt reduction" of the male hormone makes men more inclined to stay at home with their families. Also, the study showed a significant reduction in levels of testosterone when men were more involved in caring for their babies. "Raising a child is a difficult task; therefore, it is one that must be done jointly. And our study demonstrates that men are biologically able to help raise a child," researchers say. Many men report having a positive experience, and they feel a sense of tranquility at this time. In addition to a reduction in testosterone, men who have close physical contact with babies or young children also show an increase in other hormones such as vasopressin that allows them to bond with children.

## FATHERS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN BREASTFEEDING<sup>44</sup>

Supporting the health of your family is a great responsibility: you want to make healthy choices. This is why you, the father, should encourage your partner to breastfeed.

Some fathers may feel left out if their partner breastfeeds the new baby, but there are many other ways you can help your partner care for your baby, including the following:

- **Help with the housework and cooking.**
- **Help limit the number of visitors and visiting time.** New mothers need plenty of rest!
- **Bathe and dress your baby. Change the diapers. Sing and talk to your baby.** If you see the baby searching for mother's breast, sucking his fist, or making sucking noises, take him/her to mother for a feeding. It takes time for a mother to learn how to breastfeed. If your partner is uncomfortable or experiences pain while breastfeeding, it may be because the baby is not latching on correctly or because the breast is engorged with milk. Many new mothers need help in the beginning.

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43 BBC Mundo (BBC Health), "La paternidad reduce la testosterona," Tuesday, September 13, 2011. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/noticias/2011/09/110913\\_paternidad\\_testosterona\\_men.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/noticias/2011/09/110913_paternidad_testosterona_men.shtml).

44 United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). (2002). <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/fathers/MakingtheDecision-brochure.pdf>.



Contact a breastfeeding counselor who can help the new mother stay on track, such as a midwife.

- **Take the baby to his/her mother when ready to feed.** Look at your baby's tiny fist and remember that it is about the same size as his/her stomach! The baby will need to nurse often, every 1 to 3 hours, around the clock.
- **A mother's early milk, called colostrum, is expressed from the beginning and is the only food a baby needs.** Colostrum's special role is to help your newborn stay healthy. It is filled with important vitamins, minerals, proteins and immunities. Between the third and fifth days after birth, the mother will start to feel fullness in her breasts, indicating her milk has come in.
- **If possible, do not give your baby water or formula in the first six months.** Try to avoid using a pacifier in the first month until breastfeeding and lactation have been established.
- **Feeding the baby anything other than breast milk interferes with a mother's ability to produce enough milk.**
- **Let your partner know how proud you are!** Breastfeeding is a loving commitment. Sometimes mothers worry that their babies are not getting enough milk. You can reassure her that the baby is getting plenty of breast milk in a number of ways:
  - Baby is interested in feeding every 1 to 3 hours, around the clock.
  - Baby wakes to feed.
  - Mother can see or hear baby swallowing.
  - Baby appears satisfied and content after feeding.
  - Mother's breast softens during the feeding.
  - Baby has 3-5 wet diapers and 3-4 soiled diapers by 3-5 days of age.
  - Baby has 4-6 wet diapers and 3-6 soiled diapers per day by 5-7 days of age.
  - Baby's excrement is yellow and seedy (by day 3).

Do not worry if your baby loses a little weight in the first few days. After about 5 days, the baby should gain 4-8 ounces or more per week with breast milk. After 6 weeks, the number of dirty diapers may decrease.

- **You can bond with the baby too!**
  - Babies love skin-to-skin contact with their fathers!
  - Talk, sit, sing, rock, read to, burp, or diaper the baby.
  - Make some time in the day just for you and your baby - babies need cuddling and hugs from their fathers too.
- **Breast Milk is Healthiest for Babies**
  - Breast milk is easier to digest than formula. Breastfed babies have less diarrhea, constipation, and colic than babies who are not breastfed.

- **Breast milk contains antibodies to fight infections.**
  - Babies may have less risk of becoming obese, having diabetes, and developing other diseases.
  - Breastfed babies have a lower risk of asthma, allergies, and certain cancers.
  - Breast milk contains special ingredients to promote brain growth.
- **Breastfeeding is Healthiest for the Mother**
  - Breastfeeding helps the mother's uterus shrink to its pre-pregnancy size.
  - It may help the mother lose weight faster.
  - It reduces her risk for breast and ovarian cancer, and osteoporosis (brittle bones) later in life.
- **Breastfeeding Saves Money**
  - It saves on formula, bottles, utilities, and medical bills.
  - It reduces sick days used by working mothers.
  - It's good for the environment because there is less trash and plastic waste.

## A FEW SLEEP TRAINING OPTIONS<sup>45</sup>

At five or six months old, your baby is neurologically mature enough to fall asleep on their own. Setting up good sleep habits early on is critical to your baby's good behavior and functioning. And if your baby is getting good sleep, you and your partner can get better sleep, decreasing the likelihood of postpartum depression, anxiety, and relational stress. The following method come from the Sleep Lab at Boston Children's Hospital in Harvard.

To note: this method is only appropriate for babies older than 4 months.

### PROGRESSIVE WAITING METHOD

- Provide the identical sleep ritual (books, song, cuddling) at nap and bedtime.
- Have your baby sleep in the same place for naps and bedtime.
- Avoid sleep crutches (i.e. pacifiers)
- Put your baby down relaxed but not asleep.

### PROGRESSIVE WAITING.

- If your baby protests, you make a brief appearance at increasing intervals (add five minutes each time) to reassure your baby that you have not abandoned them. This is not intended to console you baby. In fact, they will yell louder. Eventually, your baby

45 From Brown, A., & Fields, D. (2003). *Baby 411: Clear answers & smart advice for your baby's first year.* Windsor Peak Press.

will fall asleep on their own.

- This process requires your baby to do the work to fall asleep. They are capable. But the first night will be very difficult to tolerate.
- Don't back down once you have committed to this plan. The second night will be much easier. The night's events will last half as long as the first night. The third night may only last ten minutes. By the fourth night your baby should have adjusted to their new sleep schedule.

For parents who find it too difficult to let their child cry, other methods provide more flexibility, recommending that parents check on their baby as frequently or infrequently as they and their baby can tolerate until their baby has learned to self-soothe. The key is to set up a sleep routine and be consistent about it.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT MASTURBATION<sup>46</sup>

Masturbation is common and normal for children of all ages, and part of the process of discovering their own body. It can begin very early in the first year of life and for babies, is considered to fall in the same category of self-soothing behavior as thumb sucking. The topic is uncomfortable for many parents, who often struggle to know how to respond to it.

A few points to remember:

- Masturbation in children is healthy and developmentally normal behavior.
- Before 18 months, there is not much a parent can or should do in response.
- Starting around 18 months, parents can begin having conversations with their child about public and private behavior and teach them that no one else should touch or look at their genitals except for the doctor and their parents or primary caregivers.
- By the age of 6, many children are socially aware enough to cease masturbation in public although they will continue in private - this is also developmentally appropriate and healthy and should not be punished.

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<sup>46</sup> From Brown, A., & Fields, D. (2003). *Baby 411: Clear answers & smart advice for your baby's first year*. Windsor Peak Press.

## GAMES AND FUN IN THE FIRST YEAR<sup>47</sup>

Remember that every baby decides for themselves what they want to learn, when, and how. They will choose what they consider the most appealing. Some will try to learn a variety of new skills, using one or more of their sense. Some will seem particularly interested in exploring this new world with their eyes. Some will prefer to try out their talking and listening skills Others will try to become more adept with their bodies. A baby's likes and dislikes are determined by their unique makeup - their build, weight, temperament, inclination, and interests. It is important to remember that your baby will make choices and will not do everything right away.

WEEKS	WHAT YOUR BABY IS LEARNING	GAMES AND FUN
<b>8 Weeks (Approx.)</b>	<p><b>Patterns</b> Your baby may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at complex shapes and colors</li> <li>• Hold their head upright</li> <li>• Turn their head toward something interesting</li> <li>• Try to lift their head and body when lying facedown</li> <li>• Make short bursts of sound</li> <li>• Attempt to grab objects within reach (but does not succeed)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep toys at various distances: this way, you train your baby's eye muscles</li> <li>• Show your baby "real" things: does your baby like something in particular? Lift your baby up so they can see it clearly</li> <li>• Show your baby different things: the family room is getting boring now. Time for variation!</li> <li>• Chat back if your baby "chats"</li> <li>• Show your baby many things with patterns on it</li> </ul>
<b>12 Weeks (Approx.)</b>	<p><b>Transitions</b> Your baby may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have smooth head movement when turning to one side</li> <li>• Have smooth eye movement when following a moving object</li> <li>• Roll independently from their back to stomach or vice versa</li> <li>• Express enjoyment by watching</li> <li>• Use different behavior with different people</li> <li>• Shake a rattle once or twice</li> <li>• Discover shrieking and gurgling, easily shifting between loud and soft tones, low and high notes</li> <li>• Blow saliva bubbles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playing slide on your lap (very carefully)</li> <li>• Rocking</li> <li>• Shaking a rattle</li> <li>• Feeling fabrics</li> <li>• Playing "airplane"</li> <li>• Try to provoke you baby to discover new skills</li> <li>• Answer your baby's gibberish (this gibberish is a way for your baby to exercise her vocal cords)</li> <li>• Teach your baby to grasp by keeping toys in front of them, getting their attention, and putting the toy in the hand that they use to reach for it</li> <li>• Give your baby many compliments when they try something and encourage them to keep trying</li> <li>• Help your baby roll over from their back to their stomach</li> </ul>

47 From Plas-Plooj, X., Plooj, F. X., & van de Rij, H. (2019). The Wonder Weeks: A Stress-free Guide to Your Baby's Behavior. The Countryman Press.

WEEKS	WHAT YOUR BABY IS LEARNING	GAMES AND FUN
<b>19 Weeks (Approx.)</b>	<b>Events</b> Your baby may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search for you and turn around to do this</li> <li>• Start moving virtually every part of their body as soon as they are put on the floor</li> <li>• Grab things with either hand</li> <li>• Stick your hand in their mouth</li> <li>• Stick objects in their mouth to feel and bit them</li> <li>• Try to play with an activity center</li> <li>• Respond to their own name</li> <li>• Get grumpy when getting impatient</li> <li>• Use the consonant “d”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stimulate your baby to roll over by making it a game</li> <li>• Let your baby play naked occasionally (to feel their body better, which will help them master physical skills)</li> <li>• Give your baby an activity center, so they can do and feel many different things and materials</li> <li>• Give your baby time to discover the world. Let them observe something small and insignificant for as long as they want.</li> <li>• Play with the things that attract your baby’s attention the most. Are they a music lover? Sing a lot and play a lot of different kinds of music.</li> <li>• Play games like “Peek a Boo”, sing songs, and make funny faces in the mirror</li> </ul>
<b>26 Weeks (Approx.)</b>	<b>Relationships</b> Your baby may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay a lot of attention to smaller details or parts of toys and other objects</li> <li>• Lift rugs to look under them</li> <li>• Undo your shoelaces</li> <li>• Empty cupboards and shelves</li> <li>• Puff and blow air out of their mouth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play peekaboo</li> <li>• Play hide and seek with objects (ensure that the hidden object is still a little visible)</li> <li>• “Read” picture books</li> <li>• Sing songs with motions to them</li> <li>• Give them a box filled with toys (the fun part is taking all the toys out of the box!)</li> <li>• Play at sitting and standing</li> </ul>
<b>37 Weeks (Approx.)</b>	<b>Categories</b> Your baby may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show that they think something is dirty</li> <li>• Imitate other people more often, mimicking what they do</li> <li>• Make silly faces at their mirror image and laugh</li> <li>• Exaggerate their mood to let everyone know how they are feeling</li> <li>• Play peek-a-boo with a younger baby</li> <li>• “Ask” their mother or father to sing a song</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your baby a lot. Name things that you see or things that appear interesting to them, but be careful to mind your words. Name the things that they can see only at that moment or things that keep them occupied.</li> <li>• Observe variations within a category. For example, take your baby to see an actual cow, show her a picture of a cow, and show her an abstract painting of a cow.</li> <li>• Teach your baby the concepts of rough and gentle</li> <li>• Read many pictures books that have various materials in them for your baby to touch</li> <li>• Explore the outside world with them</li> </ul>

## PRACTICAL METHODS TO CONTROL ANGER<sup>48</sup>

- **Step away from the situation, leave or take a walk.** To calm down, walk away and count to 10, breathe deeply, walk around or do a physical activity. This will “cool your head” and clarify your ideas. It is also important that people who are angry share their feelings with the other person involved. For example, they can say, “I am very angry right now and I need to leave. I need to do something now, like go for a walk, so I can release my anger. When I cool down and feel calm, I’d like to talk to resolve this.”
- **Use words to express your feelings without attacking.** Express anger without “attacking.” For example, you can say, “I am angry because...” or, “I would like you to know...” Another example: if your partner is late in joining you for an appointment, you could yell something like, “You’re a fool, you’re always late, and I have to wait for you all the time.” Or, you can use words without attacking. For example, say, “I’m upset because you were late. I wish you had arrived at the scheduled time or warned me that you were going to be late.”

## COMMUNICATION STYLES

Developing an effective communication style is key in any successful relationship as well as in parenthood! Men can help by clarifying their own desires in nonviolent ways and encouraging their female partners to be more assertive.

- **Assertive communication:** Asking for what you want or saying how you feel in an honest and respectful way so it does not infringe on another person’s rights or put him or her down.
- **Passive communication:** Expressing your own needs and feelings so weakly that they will not be heard.
- **Aggressive communication:** Asking for what you want or saying how you feel in a threatening, sarcastic, challenging, or humiliating way.

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48 From “Preventing youth violence: Workshops with gender and masculinities” - CulturaSalud

## STAGES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

AGE OF CHILD	STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT	HOW I BEHAVE
<b>0-6 months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am easily frightened so I need to feel safe and protected.</li> <li>I can't understand rules or explanations yet.</li> <li>I need unconditional love and affection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I cry when I need you to know something. I don't know any words.</li> <li>Crying a lot is normal. Sometimes I do not even know why I am crying.</li> <li>I love to put things in my mouth. It is the way that I explore the world.</li> </ul>
<b>6-12 months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I begin to speak sounds like "ba" and "ma"</li> <li>I need to know that you are close by. This is how I build trust in you.</li> <li>My teeth are beginning to come in. This causes me a lot of pain so I may cry a lot.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I like when you speak sounds back to me. It encourages me to communicate with you.</li> <li>I cry less and smile more. Sometimes my crying may come at the same time every day. This is my brain "organizing" itself.</li> </ul>
<b>1-2 years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am an explorer! I begin to talk and walk.</li> <li>I learn lots of new words very quickly.</li> <li>I love my new independence, but I need to do so in a safe environment.</li> <li>I don't understand that you are trying to keep me safe when you tell me "No."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I want to touch and see everything. I learn the word "No!" This is a way to tell you how I feel.</li> <li>I have tantrums because my frustration builds and I can't communicate in words what I am feeling.</li> </ul>
<b>2-3 years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am beginning to understand my feelings.</li> <li>Suddenly I may be afraid of things, like the dark. This is because I understand danger.</li> <li>I may suddenly become shy around people I do not know. This shows that I understand the difference between people I know and strangers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you have to leave the room I may cry because I do not know if you will come back.</li> <li>If you ask me to say "Hello" to someone I do not know I may refuse because I do not know that this person is trying to be friendly.</li> </ul>
<b>3-5 years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I want to learn everything! This might cause me to get into danger so rules are important.</li> <li>Playing is an essential part of my brain development. It is how I see other people's point of view and develop empathy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I ask lots of questions. One of my favorite words is "Why?"</li> <li>I love to play imaginary games. I get lost because it feels so real.</li> <li>I want to help you do your daily tasks so I can learn important life skills.</li> </ul>

## POSITIVE DISCIPLINE PRINCIPLES<sup>49</sup>

From their earliest moments, young children have four basic needs:

- A sense of belonging (connection)
- A sense of personal power and autonomy (capability)
- Social and life skills (contribution)
- Kind and firm discipline that teaches (with dignity and respect)

The following principles are the building blocks of positive discipline, which prioritizes your child's need for connection, capability, contribution, dignity, and respect:

- Mutual respect. Parents model firmness by respecting themselves and the needs of the situation, and kindness by respecting the needs and humanity of the child.
- Understanding the belief behind the behavior. All human behavior happens for a reason, and children start creating the beliefs that form their personality from the day they are born. You will be much more effective at influencing your child's behavior when you understand the beliefs behind it. If your child is younger than three, you will also need to understand their developmental abilities and needs.
- Understanding child development and age appropriateness. This is necessary so that parents don't expect behavior of children that is beyond their ability and comprehension. (For example, the word "no" is an abstract concept that toddlers cannot understand at the advanced level parents think they can.)
- Effective communication. Parents and children (even little ones) can learn to listen well and use respectful words to ask for what they need.
- Discipline that teaches. Effective discipline teaches valuable skills and attitudes, and is neither permissive nor punitive.
- Focusing on solutions instead of punishment. Blame never solves problems. At first, you will decide how to approach challenges and problems. As your little one grows and develops, you will work together to find respectful, helpful solutions to the challenges you face, from spilled milk to bedtime woes.
- Encouragement. Encouragement celebrates effort and improvement, not just success, and builds a long-term sense of self-worth and confidence.
- Children do better when they feel better. Where did we get this idea that in order to "make" children behave, we should make them feel shame, humiliation, or even pain? Children are more motivated to cooperate, learn new skills, and offer affection and respect when they feel encouraged, connected, and loved.

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49 Nelson, J., Erwin, C., & Duffy, R. (2015). *Positive discipline: The first three years*. Harmony.



## POSITIVE DISCIPLINE TOOLS<sup>50</sup>

The following are a few examples of positive discipline tools that emphasize learning over punishment, and prioritize your child's need for connection, capability, contribution, dignity, and respect.

### CONNECTION BEFORE CORRECTION

Create closeness and trust instead of distance and hostility by communicating a message of love.

- "I love you and the answer is no."
- "You are more important to me than your grades. What do your grades mean to you?"
- "I love you and have faith that we can find a respectful solution."

### TAKE TIME FOR TRAINING

Training is an important part of teaching your child life skills. Don't expect them to know what to do without step-by-step training.

- Explain the task in a kind way as you perform it, while your child watches.
- Do the task together.
- Have your child do it by themselves while you supervise.
- When they feel ready, let them perform the task on their own.

### KIND AND FIRM

Firmness and kindness should always go hand in hand to avoid extremes of either. Begin by validating feelings and/or showing understanding. Offer a choice when possible.

- "I know you don't want to brush your teeth, and we can do it together.
- "You want to keep playing, and it is time for bed. Do you want one story or two?"

### WINNING COOPERATION

Children feel encouraged when you understand and respect their point of view.

- Express understanding for your child's thoughts and feelings.
- Show empathy without condoning the challenging behavior.
- Tell them about a time when you felt or behaved similarly.
- Share your thoughts and feelings. Children listen to you after they feel listened to.
- Focus on solutions together.

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<sup>50</sup> Nelsen, J., Tamborski, M. N., & Ainge, B. (2016). Positive Discipline Parenting Tools: The 45 Most Effective Methods to Stop Power Struggles, Build Communication, and Raise Empowered, Capable Kids. Random House USA Incorporated.

## VALIDATE FEELINGS

- Allow children to have their feelings so they can learn they are capable of dealing with them.
- Don't fix, rescue, or try to talk children out of their feelings.
- Validate their feelings: "I can see you are really angry [or upset or sad]."
- Then keep your mouth shut and have faith that your child can work it through.

## RECOGNIZING EMOTIONS<sup>51</sup>

As children grow, they learn how to express themselves and look to you, as parents, to learn how to do so. Young children have a hard time identifying how they are feeling and often react in frustrating ways such as hitting or biting. However, these moments are also opportunities for learning. Starting at 6 months of age, children become sensitive to how their parents react to situations and this in turn influences how they themselves respond.

### WHY SHOULD WE TALK ABOUT FEELINGS?

- It helps children communicate their own feelings. It helps children understand emotions (i.e., what does someone do when they are sad?), how to cope with specific emotions, and how to use the understanding of their emotions to alter their behavior
- It helps children connect feelings to actions and to understand their body language
- Children learn that all feelings are OKAY and important!
- It helps us learn about our child's feelings
- It becomes easier for children to be empathetic and to connect to our feelings
- It helps children recognize feelings in other people
- It shows children that they have choices on how to behave

### STRATEGIES TO HELP CHILDREN EXPRESS EMOTIONS

- Name the feeling: Help children name their feelings by labeling them. "Daddy had to go to work, you are sad. You said you want your Daddy." Naming feelings allows young children to develop an emotional vocabulary that provides them with a means to talk about their feelings.
- Identify feelings in themselves and others: Talk about feelings they have and those that you see in others. For example, "I hear you laughing, are you happy?" Or "She fell down, how do you think she feels?"
- Talk about how feelings can be expressed: Lead by example. Talk about your own feelings and how you express those feelings. What do you do when you get mad? How do people

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51 Promundo (2020) Program P - Early Childhood Development: Engaging Men as Equal Partners in Early Childhood Development, Violence, Prevention, and Gender Equality. Facilitator Guide.

know you are happy? Talk about ways that your child can express their emotions.

### WAYS TO COMMENT ON FEELINGS

- You look very proud when you put on your shoes by yourself!
  - This is a frustrating game, and you are remaining calm
  - I feel happy when you greet me with a smile
  - You look excited when we are going on a walk together
  - I really enjoyed playing with you!
  - It can be sad to put away the toys
  - It makes me feel good when you help your brother
- Learning to identify and express emotions in a positive and healthy way helps young children build a strong foundation for well-being later in life!

## UNDERSTANDING CHILD FEARS<sup>52</sup>

### SEPARATION ANXIETY

At around 6 months of age, your baby will begin to perceive distance between things, including between you and them. This can cause fear as they realize they cannot control your movements and cannot keep you from leaving them. Babies begin to learn “object permanence” between 6 and 12 months; until then, if you leave the room, to them you no longer exist. During this period, your baby may cling to you more, and if they can crawl, will follow you from room to room. You can help your baby through this period by carrying them more often, staying close to them than you might usually, and letting them follow you. You can get them accustomed to distance by warning them before walking away and talking to them while you’re in another room. You can also help them through “peek-a-boo” games; for example, hiding your face behind your hands and then reappearing, or hiding behind walls, doors, and furniture then reappearing.

### FEAR OF STRANGERS

Stranger anxiety typically peaks between 12-18 months; your child may cry or cling to you whenever a person they don’t know looks at them or tries to speak to, touch, or hold them. This is normal, healthy, and will not last forever. You can help your child get through this developmental period by giving them time to assess new people before interacting with them, by having friendly conversations to show you know and like the new person, and by warning family members who don’t see them often that it may take several days for your child to adjust to them.

### FANTASY AND REALITY

Until the age of 6 or 7, children are not capable of differentiating between reality and fantasy, and this can cause anxiety and fears that parents may not understand, such as the fear of

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52 From Brown, A., & Fields, D. (2020). *Toddler 411 6th edition: Clear Answers & Smart Advice for Your Toddler*. Windsor Peak Press. and Plas-Plooi, X., Plooi, F. X., & van de Rijt, H. (2019). *The Wonder Weeks: A Stress-free Guide to Your Baby's Behavior*. The Countryman Press.

monsters hiding under their bed or in their closet. Telling your child that their fear is irrational and that they shouldn't be scared will not help them – be kind, acknowledge their fear (to them it is real), and try to find a solution to it together.

## NIGHTMARES

Nightmares are normal in babies and not an indication that anything is wrong or that you have done anything wrong. They can occur as early as four months and tend to increase during times of stress, including when your child is going through separation anxiety. Although opinions differ among physicians, many recommend letting your baby continue to sleep when they are having a nightmare; some parents will try to soothe their baby by gently reassuring them or placing a steady hand on their head or stomach without waking them.

## NIGHT TERRORS

Night terrors are different from regular nightmares and are generally seen around age 2 or 3; your child may experience a panic attack during sleep and cry and scream inconsolably. Night terrors occur during non-REM sleep in the first half of the night and may be triggered by stress or being overtired. They can happen regularly at the same time every night. When this is the case, one solution parents have used is to wake their child up 15 to 30 minutes before the time their night terror usually happens. This partial awakening will cause them to bypass the end of the sleep cycle when the night terror occurs and start the next sleep cycle. However, in the long term, try to find out what the underlying issue is. If they are overtired, make sure they are napping or going to bed early. Think about ways to reduce stress in the household.

# MANAGING TEMPER TANTRUMS<sup>53</sup>

All toddlers experience temper tantrums at some point in their development; this is normal and understanding the reasons for their emotional reaction (which may seem irrational to adults) can help parents manage them in a way that teaches children to identify their own feelings and handle disappointments in life.

Young children experience big emotions, just as adults do, but they lack the words to name and understand those feelings as well as the skills to manage them. Sometimes, those feelings can be overwhelming and result in a tantrum.

## WHAT TO DO DURING A TEMPER TANTRUM

- First, **calm yourself**. Take some deep breaths. When you are calm, you will better be able to respond to your child's emotions and will provide a good example for them to follow. Remain firm but kind.
- **Ensure your child's physical safety**. Without yelling at your child or lecturing them, move any potentially harmful objects away from your child, or objects that could be thrown or broken. If necessary, physically move your child to a safer location or to a more private area if you are in a public space.

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53 From Nelson, J., Erwin, C., & Duffy, R. (2015). *Positive discipline: The first three years*. Harmony.

- **Don't try to "fix" it by giving into demands or offering rewards.** This will teach your child that tantrums are the way to get what they want. Children learn by repeating successful behaviors.
- **Remain calm, kind, and firm** and let your child finish their tantrum, however long that may take. Your child is not trying to be difficult or bad - they simply don't have the words or skills to manage their emotions at this age.

#### WHAT TO DO AFTER A TEMPER TANTRUM

- **Let your child cool down.** Give them a quiet moment to catch their breath.
- **Reconnect FIRST.** Talk to them in a quiet tone about what happened. Tell them that their behavior was inappropriate but that you love them very much. They may also need a hug after such strong emotions. A wordless, comforting hug can make them feel better. When you reconnect first, your child is more likely to be in an emotional place to learn from the experience.
- **Help your child "make things right".** Once everyone has calmed down, offer to help your child pick up any mess that has been made or fix anything that has been broken. Make sure what you are asking of them is developmentally appropriate. For example, picking up thrown items, putting pillows back on the couch, or putting tape on a torn book. This may help your child feel some self-control and help them learn what it looks like to "make things right."
- **Forgive and forget but plan ahead.** Focus on re-establishing your relationship with your child and understanding what led to the outburst. Tantrums can sometimes be prompted by changes in routine, or when a child is hungry, tired, or in an unfamiliar environment.

#### A SCRIPT FOR HELPING YOUR CHILD IDENTIFY AND MANAGE ANGER

- **Use words to label your child's feelings** "You look very angry! I can see that your fists are clenched, and your eyebrows are furrowed, and you are stomping." Labeling and describing can help a child make the connection between what their body is doing and how they are feeling.
- **Validate their feelings** "It's ok to be angry. I would also be angry if someone took my toy. It's not ok to hit me or your sister. It makes me scared when people throw things." Indicate that feelings are always ok, but some actions are not. Avoid using accusatory language and replace the word "you" with a statement on how you feel when they have a tantrum.
- **Offer appropriate ways for them to express their feelings** "What would make you feel better right now? Do you want to make a drawing about how angry you are? Do you want to run outside in the yard as fast as you can?" Physical outlets can be helpful to manage emotions before they become tantrums.

## MANAGING STRESS IN CHILDREN<sup>54</sup>

Learning to handle everyday stressors is an important aspect of child development. When experienced in the context of loving and supportive relationships, positive stress helps children develop a healthy stress response system. Meeting new people, starting daycare or kindergarten, and getting shots at the doctor's office are examples of everyday stressors that can be positive if your child has the support they need from loving caregivers. Tolerable stress can negatively affect the brain but typically is not long-lasting; children can recover and reverse harmful effects. This could happen when a pet or loved one dies, after a serious accident, during divorce, or with structural or systemic discrimination. Like positive stress, tolerable stress can help children learn to cope with adverse experiences if they are supported by caring adults.

However, when a child is not experiencing the world in the context of supportive relationships, and when their stress response is long-lasting and extreme, they can experience toxic stress. Examples of toxic stress can include severe neglect, physical or sexual abuse, as well as household disfunction (domestic violence, mental illness). Toxic stress impairs brain function responsible for learning, memory, and executive functioning. Over time, it can result in learning and behavior problems, academic difficulties, trouble with social adjustment, depression, and chronic physical disease such as diabetes.

### HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD MANAGE STRESS BROUGHT ABOUT BY EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES; I.E. THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC OR ARMED CONFLICT?

Research indicates that children can heal from and become resilient in the face of toxic stress when they have healthy relationships with caring, safe, compassionate, and reliable adults who help them through the situation. Some examples of ways to build supportive connections with your child:

- Spend time playing and snuggling with your child
- Spend time talking and listening to your child
- Go on walks with your child and spend time outdoors together
- Use sources of faith or cultural traditions to provide hope and stability to your child

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54 From Harvard University (no date) Center on the Developing Child. "Toxic Stress." Available at: <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress/> and Texas Children's Hospital (2019) "The impact of toxic stress in children." Available at: <https://www.texaschildrens.org/blog/impact-toxic-stress-children>



## FOUR WAYS TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN PARENTING AND HOUSEWORK<sup>55</sup>

1. Perform incidental or sporadic tasks and increase frequency over time.
2. Distribute some tasks more evenly, or perform routine tasks usually completed by women.
3. Share the responsibilities equally (or as fairly as possible) between men and women, which will need planning, organization, management, and realization of a group of interrelated tasks.
4. Open communication with your partner is key when discussing the reshuffling of tasks.

<sup>55</sup> Jorge Ruiz, Yolanda Sánchez Utazú y Josefa Valero Picazo. (no date). Trabajo doméstico. Román Reyes (Dir): Diccionario Crítico de Ciencias Sociales. Madrid, Spain. [http://www.ucm.es/info/eurotheo/diccionario/T/trabajo\\_domestico.htm](http://www.ucm.es/info/eurotheo/diccionario/T/trabajo_domestico.htm)

# INTERVIEWING MY SPOUSE EXERCISE

Open-ended questions are helpful for good communication.

- They give you more information
- People can provide feelings, attitudes, and understanding of the topic in their answers

Open-ended questions usually begin with:

- Why?
- What?
- When?
- How?

For example:

- What do you think about that?
- How do you plan to achieve that?
- What do you think will happen now?
- How would you change things?
- What do you want to happen?
- What's causing the problem?
- Tell me more...

## EXERCISE: 15 MINUTES

In this exercise, all you need to do is ask open-ended questions and answer honestly. Take turns asking the following open-ended questions to one another:

- What is a childhood memory you have that is close to your heart?
- Who is someone who inspires you? Why do they inspire you?
- If you could be anywhere in the world, where would you be and why?

The person who is asking the questions should listen and not interrupt. However, you can ask follow-up open-ended questions to find out more about your partner's answer.

Asking questions can be an opportunity to build and deepen relationships. This will form a solid foundation for times when you disagree.











**TOGETHER AGAINST  
GENDER STEREOTYPES AND  
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**  
#eu4genderequality