Promising Practices: Adopting, Implementing, and Replicating Fatherhood Curricula

Dr. Allison Metz

Child Trends
Main Points of Discussion

• Define program implementation
• Identify 10 concrete steps for adopting, implementing, and sustaining a fatherhood curriculum
• Discuss research-based strategies for effective program implementation
• Explore special issues related to replicating an existing fatherhood curriculum
What is Program Implementation?

- Implementation is a specified set of activities designed to put into practice a program model, intervention, or curriculum of known dimensions.

- Implementation is a “mission-oriented process involving multiple decisions, actions, and corrections.”
Stages of Implementation

- Exploration
- Adoption
- Early Implementation
- Full Implementation
- Sustainability
- Innovation
- Implementation can take two to four years!
Adopting and Implementing Fatherhood Curricula: 10 Concrete Steps

- Planning and Assessing Readiness
  - Step 1: Prioritize outcomes
  - Step 2: Conduct readiness assessment
  - Step 3: Garner support of critical stakeholders
Adopting and Implementing Fatherhood Curricula: 10 Concrete Steps

- Creating the “Perfect Fit”
  - Step 4: Research and identify a “good fit”
  - Step 5: Decide on necessary program adaptations
  - Step 6: Seek information, TA, and program consultation
Adopting and Implementing Fatherhood Curricula: 10 Concrete Steps

- Training Staff and Getting Going!
  - Step 7: Provide staff training and coaching
  - Step 8: Begin initial implementation

- Learning, Reflecting, and Improving
  - Step 9: Conduct ongoing evaluation and fidelity assessments
  - Step 10: Create feedback loops for opportunities for learning and reflection
“What Works” for Effective Implementation?

- A closer look at Step 8
- Six “Drivers” of Successful Implementation
  - Staff Selection and Recruitment
  - Staff Training
  - Coaching, Mentoring and Supervision
  - Internal Management Support
  - Systems-Level Partnerships
  - Staff and Program Evaluation
Replication of Fatherhood Curricula

- Identify core curriculum components
- Identify core implementation components
- Identify discretionary or adaptable components
- Clarify “stand alone” modules
- Understand efficacy of curriculum and modules
- Seek expert consultation
- Critically assess issues of culture
What do we know?

- Implementation is complex!
- There are research-based strategies which can help facilitate the effective implementation of program models, interventions, and curricula
- Consider certain issues when replicating an existing curricula
- Successful implementation is critical for achieving outcomes
Promising Practices: A Practitioners Perspective for adopting a curriculum

Jon Morris
Support to Eliminate Poverty
(formerly, Fathers at Work)
Main Points of Presentation

- Curriculum must fit your population
- Curriculum should enhance a program, not drive a program.
- Don’t limit yourself
- Seek feedback from fathers. Give them ownership.
- Progression of Topics
- TRAIN, TRAIN, TRAIN!
- Lessons Learned.
Curriculum must be appropriate

- Curriculum should resemble fathers’ situation, age, and even their language.
- Participants should have a hand in choosing topics.
- Curriculum must be engaging. Fathers don’t want a lecture. Make it interactive.
Curriculum should enhance

• What’s more important, knowledge gained, or knowledge applied?
• Let services drive your program (Child support, legal assistance, improved parenting skills, father involvement, employment, etc.).
• Be flexible enough to drop the topic for a session.
• Group sessions should bring fathers closer (to other dads, children, children’s mother, their families, and even staff).
Don’t limit yourself

• One curriculum may not work if you work with different populations or if you host several groups.

• Be flexible to change if your population changes.

• The more curricula you are exposed to, the better. Always search for new material.

• Seek input on curricula from other programs.
Seek feedback

- Fathers know what they like. Ask them.
- Let fathers evaluate individual group sessions and curriculum topics.
- Get staff feedback.
- If possible, allow fathers to choose curriculum or add content/topics to existing ones.
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TRAIN, TRAIN, TRAIN

- Great facilitators can make a huge difference.
- Attend annual trainings and conferences.
- Provide regular staff meetings and staff development opportunities.
- Expect staff to serve fathers!
- Staff must be aware that they are role models. Staff persons who are dads must also “live” the curriculum.
- Develop a training plan to be updated annually.
Lessons Learned

- Make it fun!
- Make it measurable (knowledge, actions, attitudes, etc.)
- Incorporate mothers when appropriate
- Train alumni to facilitate groups
- Never stop learning
- Expect success
- Facilitate….don’t lecture.
- Use outside resources.
- Guest speakers should be sensitive to the fathers. They should hold fathers accountable, but not preach.
Closing thought

• Curriculum alone won’t make the difference with fathers.
• Emphasis should be placed on hiring quality staff with great facilitation skills.
• A great facilitator that is trained, is empathetic and non-judgmental, alongside a great curriculum can bring program success.