

# CARING DADS

## HELPING FATHERS VALUE THEIR CHILDREN



Perth, Australia

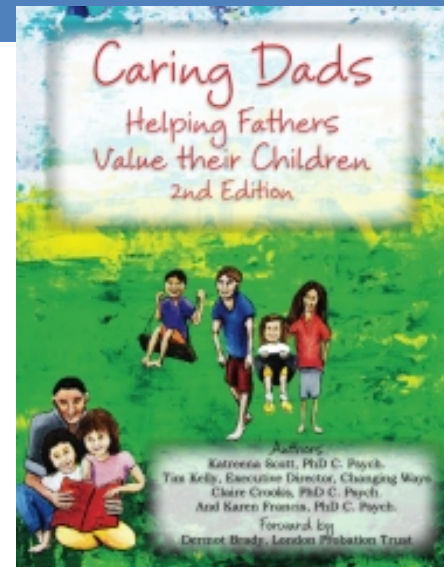
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# Caring Dads: Helping Fathers Value their Children

- Fathers' Group
  - Individual intake
  - 17 week program – 2 hour group and individual sessions
  - Groups consist of around 10 to 15 fathers
  - Referrals primarily through child protective services and probation, though also from men's perpetrator programs, child and family mental health, substance abuse services, family court, early intervention services, self-referral, etc.
- Mother Contact
- Coordinated Case Management



# Child Exposure to Domestic Violence

- Twenty-five per cent of children are exposed to domestic abuse between adults in their homes at some point in childhood (Radford et al, 2011)
- Domestic violence is a high percentage of the work done by police
- High levels of domestic abuse is one of the most common concerns for child protection services

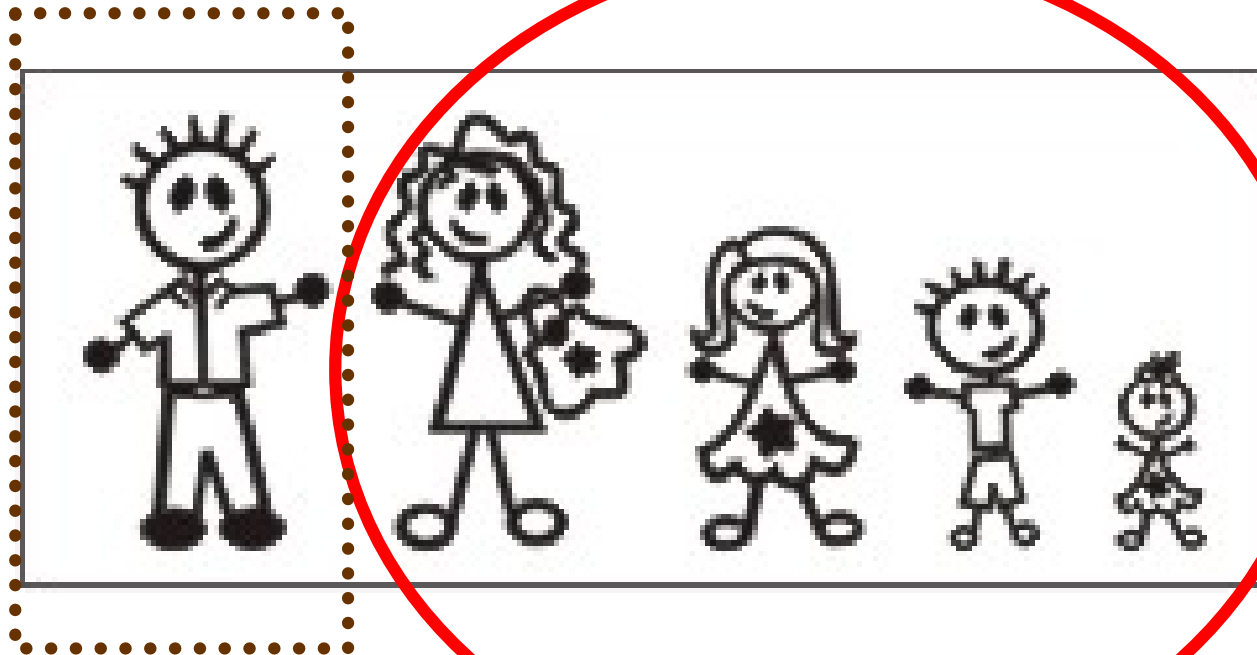
# Fathers as Perpetrators of Child Maltreatment

## Canadian Incidence Study Data

- Intact bio families account for 38% of those where maltreatment is substantiated

Perpetrator Type	Number of Investigations	Percent
Biological Mother	6152	18.8%
Biological Father	13498	41.2%
Both Parents	11929	36.4%
Other Perpetrator	1155	3.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32734</b>	<b>100%</b>

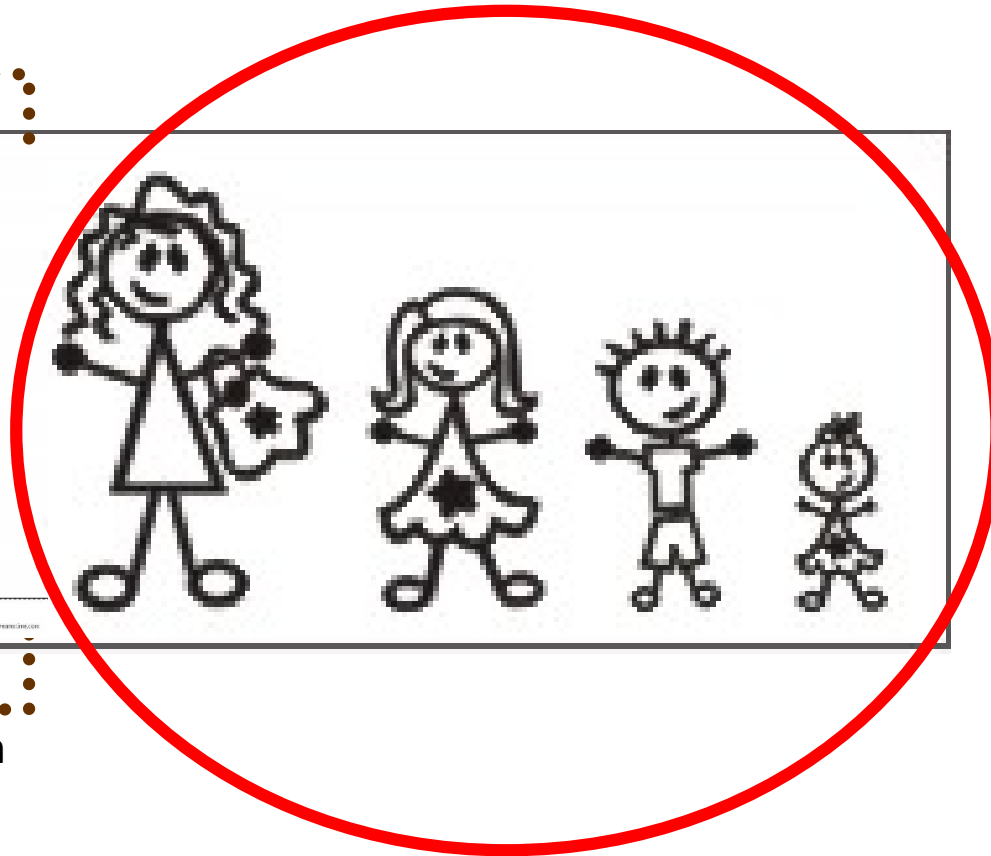
# What We Have Been Doing for a Long Time



Isolate or punish  
Anger/Drug/DV  
Intervention  
Risk Assessment

Children  
Protected by  
Mom  
Safety Planning  
Risk Assessment  
Monitoring of her  
contact  
Shelter Referral  
Protection Orders  
Educate her on  
the effects of DV  
on children

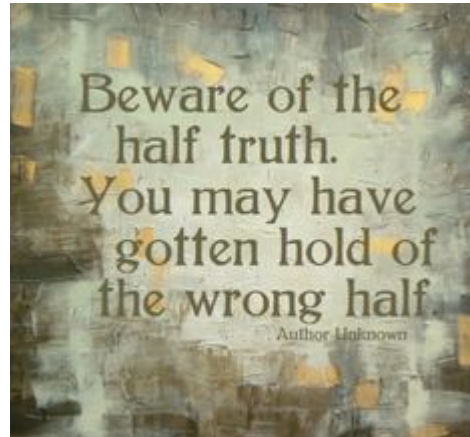
# What We Have Been Doing for a Long Time



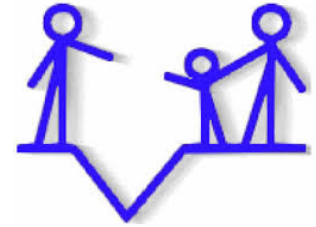
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# Consequences for Women



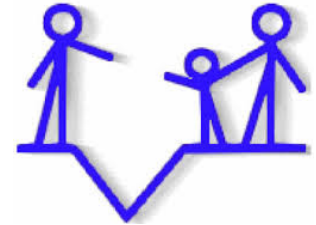
# Consequences Less Often Discussed



"I HAVE MORE STEP-DADS THAN YOU DO!"



# Consequences Less Often Discussed



“No one is going to come between me and my children, because they are mine”

“I’ve told them I will get their mother sent to prison if she does not allow more contact”

# Consequences for Children



From professionals....

“Despite father’s violence, suicide attempts, he is still a good father”

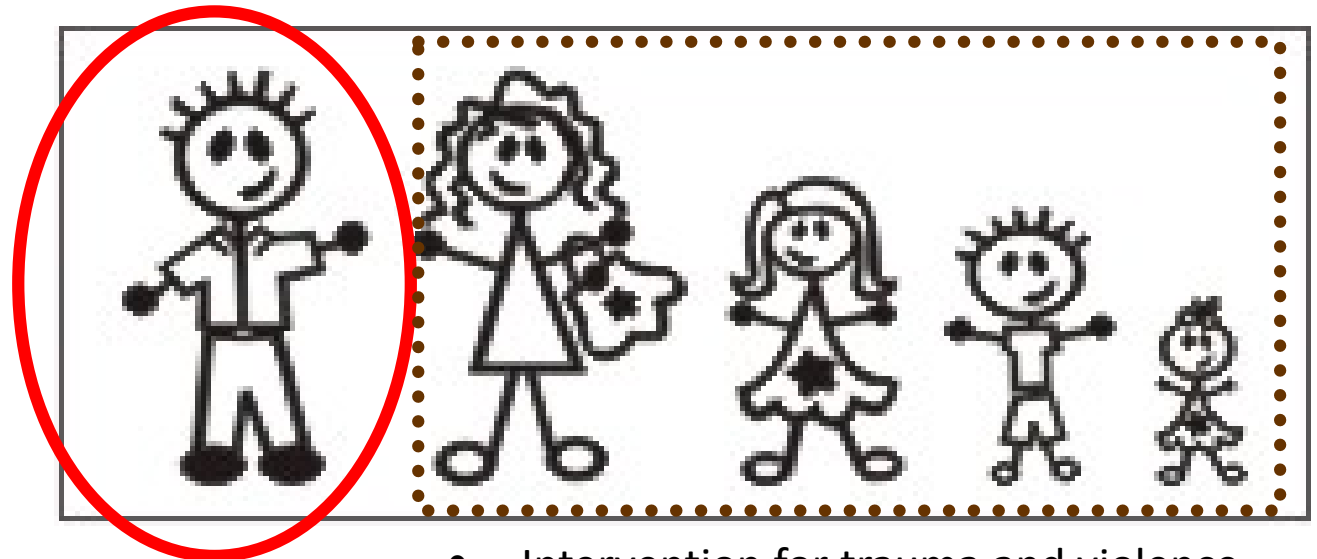
“Father is uncaring and horrible but...he will be alright with the baby and wants to bond”

# So many problems....

- Doesn't adequately address the needs of families who wish (and intend) to stay together
- Risk to children increases due to dad's isolation and depression. Other problem with "demonizing" him as well.
- Mothers are left with the responsibility of protecting children and without the support of our intervention systems
- Fathers move on to other families. When they do, they often abandon their children. Moreover, in these new families, fathers are more of a risk to children
- We lose an opportunity to promote change in men and in the father-child relationship

# Towards Safer Practice

- Father held accountable for keeping family safe
- Probation monitors and assesses risk
- Ongoing safety planning for him
- Collaboration and information sharing between systems



**Court system**  
**Probation Services**  
**Child Protection**  
**Women's Advocates**  
**Addiction Services**  
**Mental Health Services**

- Intervention for trauma and violence
- Support in keeping herself and her children safe
- Support for housing and other practical needs

# A Gap and a New Space

- Touched on in perpetrator and parenting programs, but fundamental differences
- Responding to *children's* needs for safety and well-being, thinking about children's rights
- Reaching a broader population of men
- Opening new opportunities for collaboration and cross-agency professional training
- Part of a menu/range of services that we might be able to leverage to create non-violent families

# Program Principles

**Guiding Principle #1:** Men's participation in Caring Dads must have the potential to benefit children regardless of his success, or lack of success, in change.



- Coordinate with others
- Set goals and monitor fathers' progress towards ensuring child safety from their abuse
- When containment is necessary, be willing to have frank and difficult conversations with fathers about limiting their contact with their children

# Program Principles

**Guiding Principle #2:** Children's safety and well-being is intrinsically connected to that of their mothers



- Requirement that at least one facilitator with a strong background in women's advocacy and a keen appreciation of the dynamics of woman abuse
- Contact with mothers as one component of intervention
- A core goal is to help men understand that you can't be a good dad and an abusive partner (or ex-partner)

# Program Principles

**Guiding Principle #3:** Intervention must be prepared to address clients whose motivation for change may be low



- First goal of intervention is **engagement**. Efforts to promote engagement need to begin at the initial intake interview
- Facilitators need to be skilled at motivational interviewing



# Failure to Engage is Information

- A failed referral is an important indicator of risk:
  - About a 20% increase in risk for re-assault associated with completion of batterer program (Bennett et al., 2007; Gondolf, 2001)

*This goes back to the principle around using program information to benefit children regardless of whether or not he changes*

- We have an intake plus 3 weeks to engage. When this fails, we begin collaborative case planning.

# Program Principles



**Guiding Principle #4:** Focus needs to be on promotion of child-centered fathering rather than building on child-management skills.

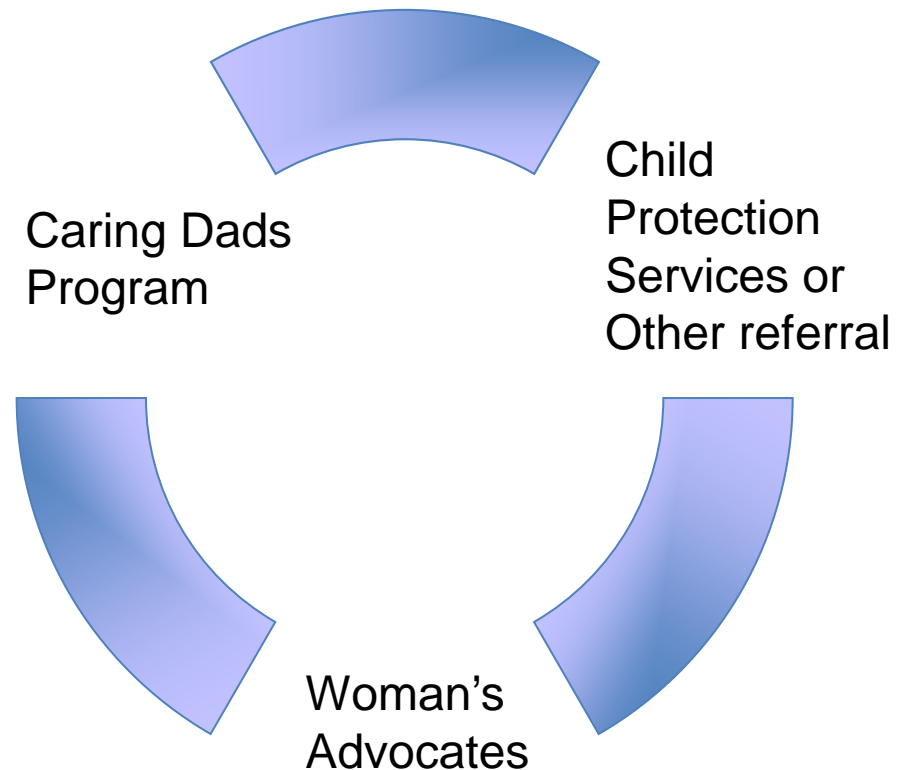
**Guiding Principle #5:** Because abusive fathers have eroded their children's emotional security, the need to rebuild trust will affect the pace of change and potential impact of relapse on the child

# Caring Dads: Goals & Strategies



# Mother Contact and Collaboration

- Open communication with referral agents
- Contact with mothers, or those working with moms
- Multiple contacts, esp. with risk
- Clear final reports



# Caring Dads and Men's Behaviour Change Programmes

## Points in Common

Aimed at ending men's use of violence in their families, overlap especially in concern about domestic violence

Run with a framework of accountability to victims of violence and to the community as a whole. Collaborative approach with other agencies working to end violence.

Includes outreach to women who may be at-risk due to his violence for information sharing, safety planning and to connect with appropriate services

Requires that facilitators have training and expertise in working with men who have been abusive and also expertise in "seeing" domestic violence, i.e., woman's advocacy

Uses a gendered lens to understand men's abusive behaviour

Recognition that children's safety and well-being is integrally connected to the safety of their mothers

# Caring Dads vs Men's Behaviour Change Programmes

Caring Dads	Men's Behaviour Change
<p>Explicitly aimed at ensuring <i>child</i> safety and well-being including men's physical and emotional abuse and neglect of children. Violence towards women addressed in the context of co-parenting.</p> <p>Gendered lens but less direct educational material about sexism and patriarchy in society.</p> <p>Partnerships with child protection and child and family services essential.</p> <p>Facilitation team needs a child trauma and parenting lens as well as MBC and VAW</p>	<p>Explicitly aimed at ending violence towards intimate partners and women, some material on fathering. Topics such as sexual abuse, isolation, economic abuse of women is core in the work.</p> <p>More explicit attention to sexism and to men's attitudes towards women in society as a whole.</p> <p>Tend to have stronger partnerships with justice system partners.</p>

# EVIDENCE BASE

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(where we are at the moment....)

# Key Publications

- Scott, K. L. & Lishak, V. (2012). Evaluation of an intervention program for maltreating fathers: Statistically and clinically significant change. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 36(9), 680-684.
- Scott, K. L. & Crooks, C. V. (2007). Preliminary evaluation of an intervention program for maltreating fathers. *Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention*, 7, 224-238.
- McConnell, N., Barnard, M., Holdsworth, T., & Taylor, J. (2016). Caring Dads, Safer Children Evaluation Report. National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. London, UK. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/research-and-resources/2016/caring-dads-safer-children-evaluation-report/>
- Quasi-experimental study at the Children's Aid Society of Toronto with the Child Welfare Institute



# The Bottom Line

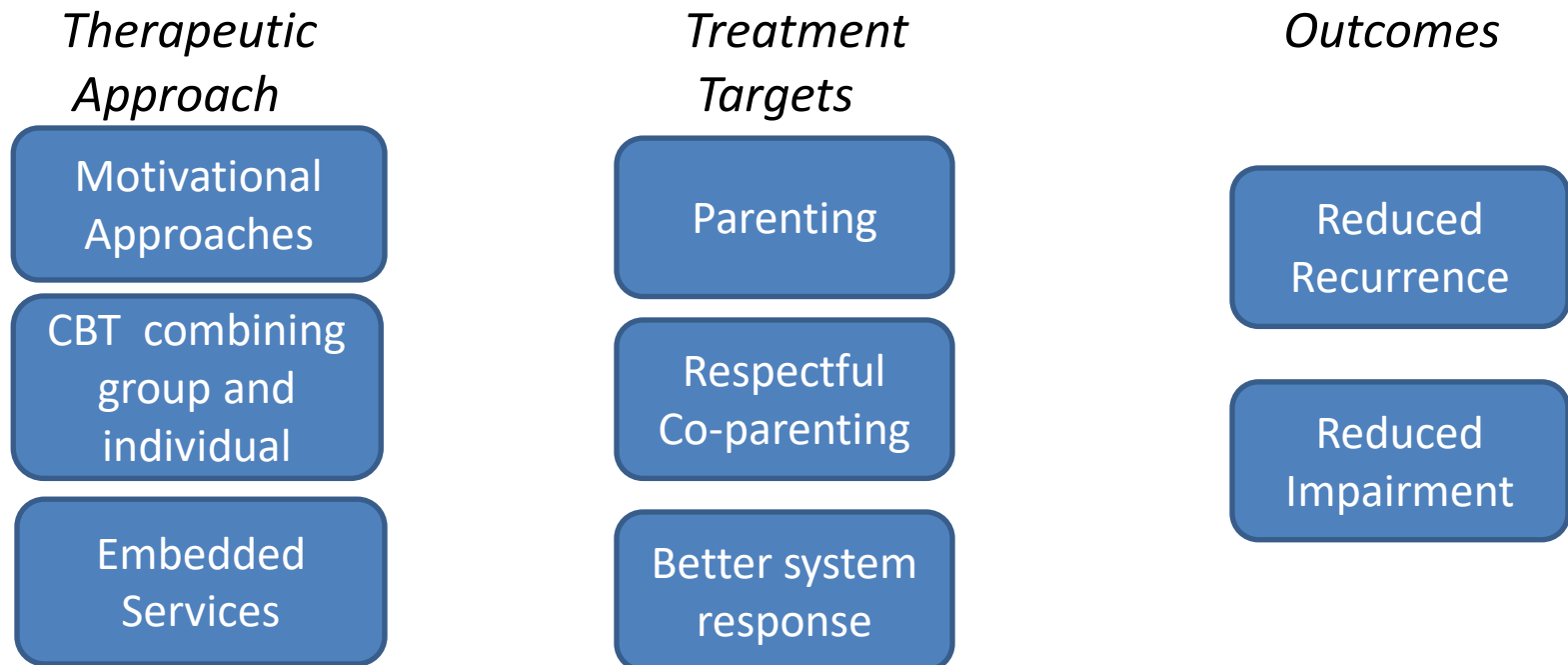
- Caring Dads is currently considered a “promising practice” for addressing child maltreatment (California Clearinghouse, 2015).
- Early research using a comprehensive evaluation framework, established that Caring Dads addresses a need in communities, can be implemented in a way that is acceptable to clients and stakeholders, and matched, in its underlying theory, the characteristics and needs of most referred client (Scott & Crooks, 2007).
- Examination of Caring Dads using a pre to post research design showed that intervention is associated with changes in fathers’ over-reactivity to children’s misbehaviour and respect for their partner’s commitment and judgment, with results being statistically significant, medium in size, moving mean scores into the normative range (Lishak & Scott, 2012).

# The Bottom Line

- Independent research on Caring Dads in the UK (McConnell, Barnard, Holdsworth, Taylor, 2016) based on starting data from over 350 fathers, 132 partners and 38 children, finds that completion is associated with pre to post group reductions in parenting stress and in level of hostility, indifference, and rejection as reported by fathers and reductions in domestic violence victimization (emotional abuse, isolation, violence, injury, use of children), depression, and anxiety as reported by mothers. Changes in identified domains persist over six months and are in excess of changes made by a small wait-list comparison group fathers over a similar time period.
- A small ongoing study by the Child Welfare Institute and K. Scott in Toronto finds that, consistent with Caring Dads' model of collaboration, enrolment in Caring Dads is associated with substantially higher levels of contact between men and their families' child protection workers for men enrolled in the program as compared to those referred but on a waitlist for service. Rates of re-referral over two years were almost double (29%) for men who did not attend Caring Dads as compared to those who did (16%) (Child Welfare Institute, 2016).

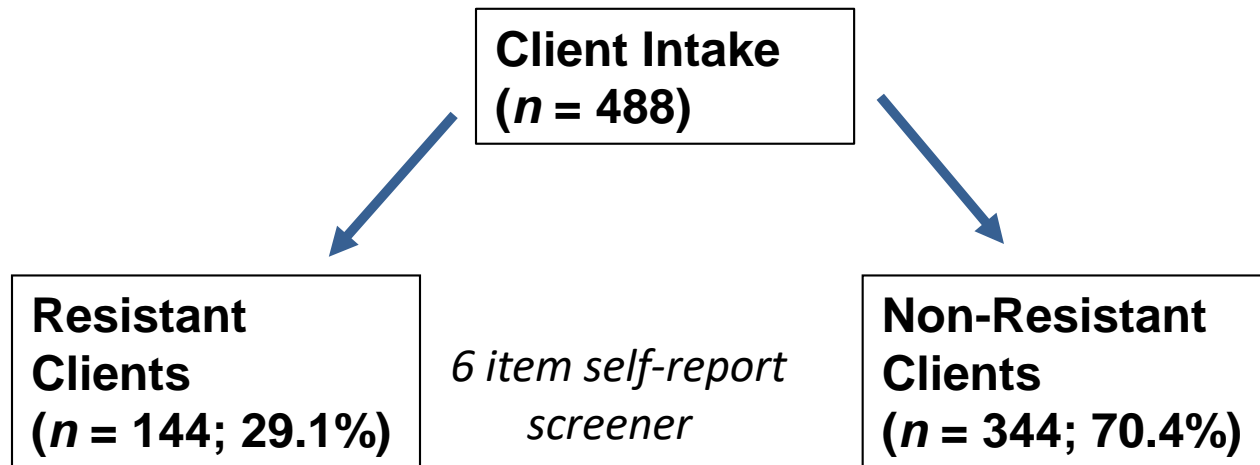
# Thinking About Evidence

- We need to think about the “package” - Does Caring Dads work?
- We also need to think about the things in the package – What about Caring Dads makes it successful?



# Motivational Approaches

- We want men “in the room” with us so that we can work toward change (or at the very least, monitor and contain risk)
- Minimization, blame, anger and unwillingness to engage in the system is part of the problem



- “I don’t believe this program can help me change my behaviour”
- “My abusive behaviour really isn’t that bad and others make it out to be worse than it is.”

Scott, K. L., King, C., McGinn, H. & Hosseini, N. (2011). Effects of motivational enhancement on immediate outcomes of batterer intervention. *Journal of Family Violence*, 26, 139-149.

# Differences in Intervention

	Resistance from Clients	Challenging from Facilitators
Standard Treatment	8.1%	6.0%
Motivation Enhancement Group	25.4%*	2.1%*

***Despite high levels of resistance, facilitators used challenging behaviors less frequently***

# Program Completion Rates

	<b>Completed</b>
Motivation Enhancement ( <i>n</i> = 39)	82.1%***
Standard Group ( <i>n</i> = 99)	47.5%

*Controlling for other predictors of dropout, resistant clients in the ME group still 3.5 times as likely to complete than those in the standard program*

# Evidence Base for Initial Focus on Engagement

Scott, K. L. & King, C. G. (2013). The (dubious) benefits of second chances in batterer intervention. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 28*, 1657-1671.

Taft, C. T., & Murphy, C. M. (2007). The working alliance in intervention for partner violence perpetrators: Recent research and theory. *Journal of Family Violence, 22*(1), 11-18.

Murphy, C. M., Linehan, E. L., Reyner, J. C., Musser, P. H., & Taft, C. T. (2012). Moderators of response to motivational interviewing for partner-violent men. *Journal of Family Violence, 27*(7), 671-680.

Also increasingly supported as a responsivity factor in RNR



# Thinking About Evidence

## *Therapeutic Approach*

Motivational Approaches



CBT combining group and individual

Embedded Services

## *Treatment Targets*

Parenting

Respectful Co-parenting

Better system response

## *Outcomes*

Reduced Recurrence

Child Safety and Well-being

Women's Safety and Well-being

# CBT and Combination Work

## Combining group and individual


- Bronte-Tinkew, J., Carrano, J., Allen, T., Bowie, L., Mbawa, K., & Matthews, G. (2007). *Elements of promising practice for fatherhood programs: Evidence-based research findings on programs for fathers*. National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse
- Lundahl, B. W., Nimer, J., & Parsons, B. (2006). Preventing child abuse: A meta-analysis of parent training programs. *Research on Social Work Practice, 16*(3), 251-262.


## Therapeutic CBT versus punitive

- Lipsey, 2009
- Marcus, O'Connell, Norris, & Sawaqdeh, 2014

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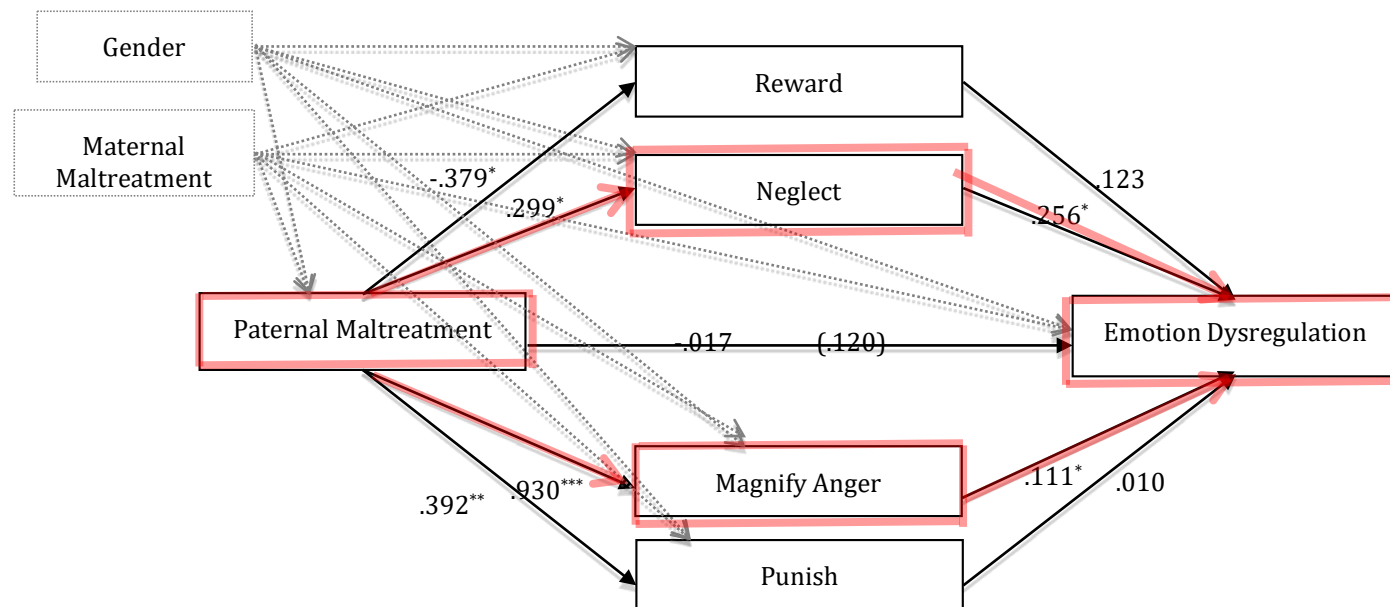
Women's Safety and Well-being

# Continuing Research on Treatment Targets

- Fathers and Kids study: 200 fathers, half who have perpetrated DV, along with as many women and children as we could get!
- *What are the differences in the parenting of fathers who have and don't have a history of perpetrating DV?*
- *What kinds of problems "run together?"*
- *What attitudes, behaviours, features predict recurrent abuse?*
- Also pull on studies of change over Caring Dads

# Hostile and Over-Reactive Parenting

- Hostile and over-reactive parenting
  - Men's over-reactivity to children's anger mediates the relationship between DV status and children's emotional regulation (McGinn & Scott, not published yet)



The multiple mediation model had a significant total indirect effect with a point estimate of .137 and a 95% bias corrected CI of .0514 to .2513. Unstandardized path coefficients are presented. The coefficient in parentheses represents the total relationship between variables. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

# Hostile and Over-Reactive Parenting

- Hostile and over-reactive parenting
  - Significant and substantial change from pre- to post- intervention with men after treatment scoring within the normal range (Scott & Lishak, 2012)
  - Significant pre- to post- to follow-up reduction in men's perception of their child as difficult and their interaction as stressful. Changes are significantly in excess of those waiting for service (McConnell et al., 2016)

# Problems in Responsiveness

- Laxness and failure to “see” the child
  - Large differences between DV and non-DV fathers is their ability to respond to their children (Dyson & Scott, not published yet)
  - Significant and substantial change from pre- to post- intervention in laxness with men after treatment scoring within the normal range (Scott & Lishak, 2012)
  - Less evidence so far for reflective functioning
  - Looking now at involvement as a potential outcome variable
  - *“He’s kinder, nicer. He’s more interested. Yeah, he was interested before but, like, he actually listens to everything you say.”*



# Co-parenting and DV

- A core difference between DV and non-DV fathers
- Analyses of the narratives of 20 separated, unhappy fathers with and without a history of perpetrating DV (Scott & Thompson-Walsh, submit)

Community fathers	DV fathers
I value my ex-partner's involvement with our children	My ex-partner is a bad mother
We're good as co-parents	She is responsible for our difficulties in co-parenting
How we co-parents has an impact on our child	

- “I *hate* that and their mother is all up in to that, entertainment, and who's who [...]. She has these kids, up into that because these kids, Halloween, they want to dress up as these people that they see on TV. My daughter wanted to dress up as Nicki Minaj one Halloween and I had no power over that because I'm not in the household [...]. (6)”

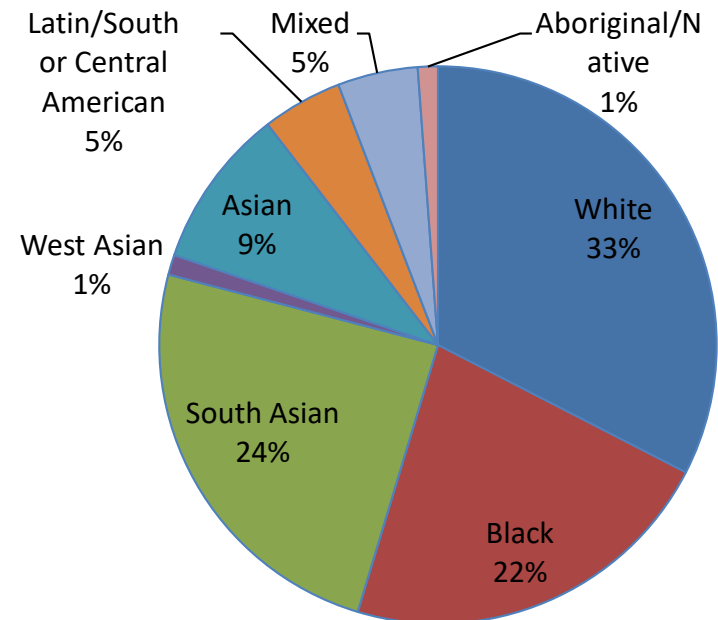
# Co-parenting and DV

- Significant and substantial change from pre- to post- intervention in men's level of respect for mothers' commitment and judgement with men after treatment scoring within the normal range (Scott & Lishak, 2012)
- No change in communication and teamwork (Scott & Lishak, 2012)

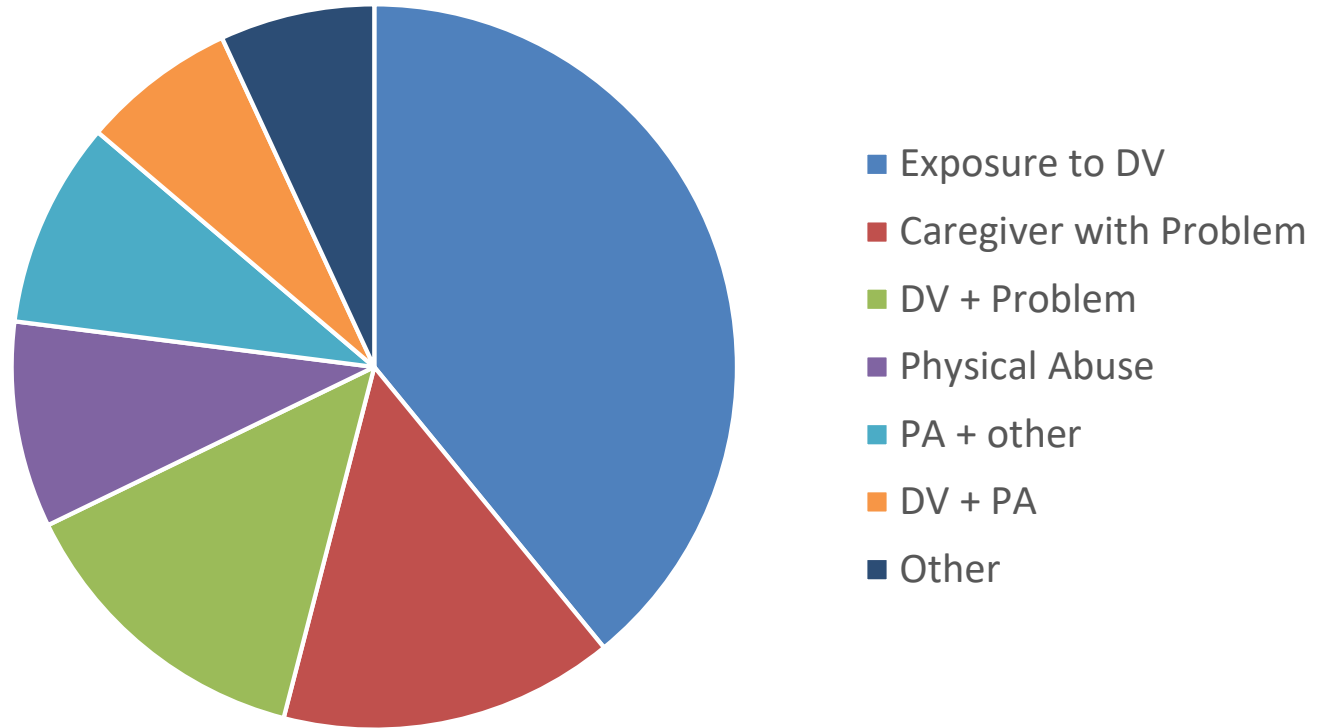
# Systems Change: Seeing Fathers and Holding them Accountable

# Research with Toronto Children's Aid Society

- Followed 38 men who completed Caring Dads, across 4 groups
- Compared to 49 men who were referred, but did not start intervention
- Fathers were parenting 177 children (that we know about)
- 50% of investigations were of children 6 and younger
- Sample was mixed in ethnicity



# Reasons for Referral (Substantiations)



# Number of Contacts with Fathers

Research Groups	Average	SD	T-test
<b>completers</b> (n=20)	11.20	11.039	$t(26) = 2.176, p=.039$
<b>non-completers</b> (n=20)	5.35	4.760	

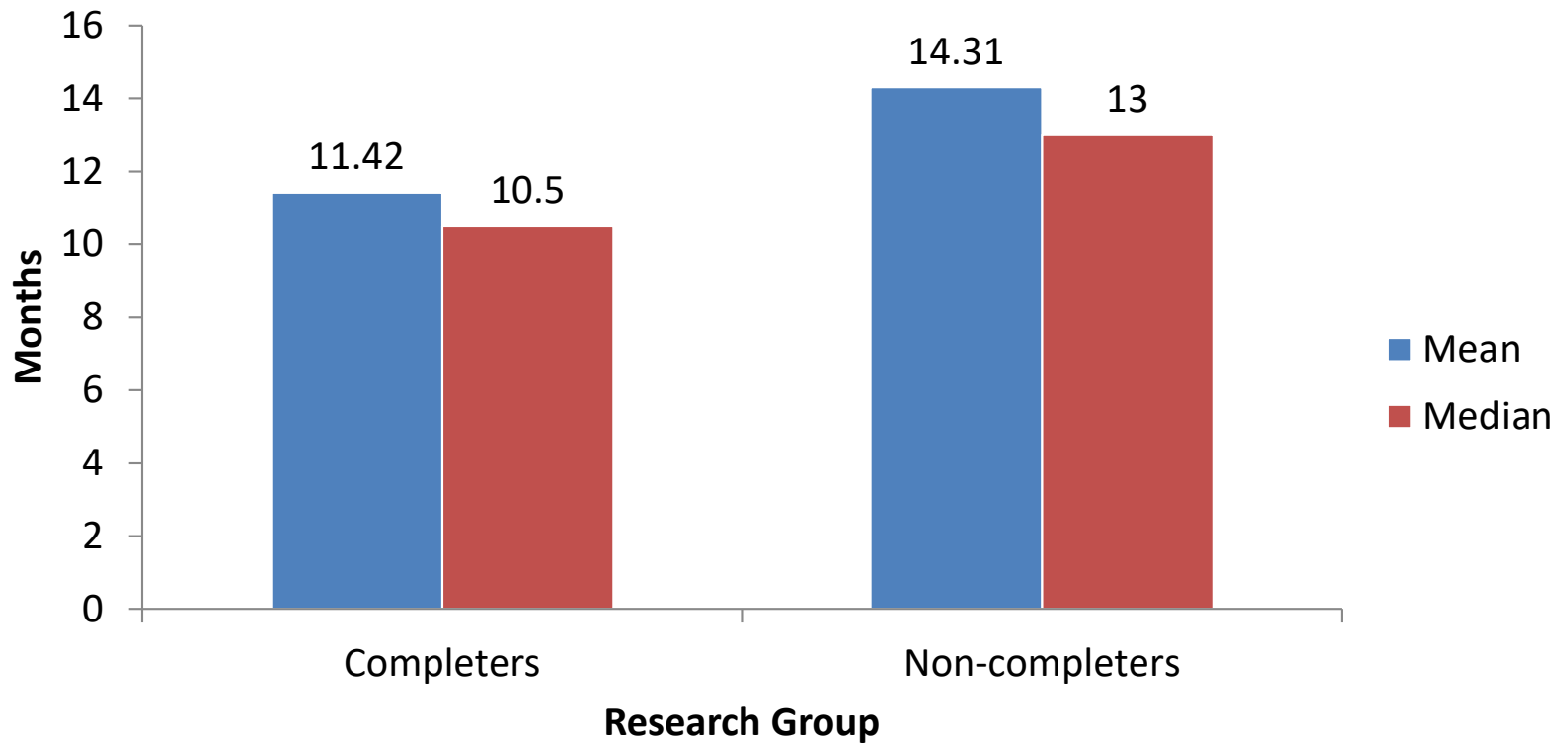
*“He recognised that he was not going to be able to care for these children full time. So he was supportive of foster carers and the system as well and that makes a difference I think for children when they’re in care. He valued the stability that was being offered to them, that he hadn’t been able to offer them.”*

(CDSC worker) McConnell et al. 2016

# Women's Experiences (McConnell et al., 2016)

- Experiences of DV
- Well-being
- Hopes and reflections from women themselves

# Months the Case was Open





# Thinking About Evidence

## *Therapeutic Approach*

Motivational Approaches ✓

CBT combining group and individual ✓

Embedded Services ✓

## *Treatment Targets*

Parenting - hostility ✓

Parenting – responsiveness

Respectful Co-parenting ✓

Better system response

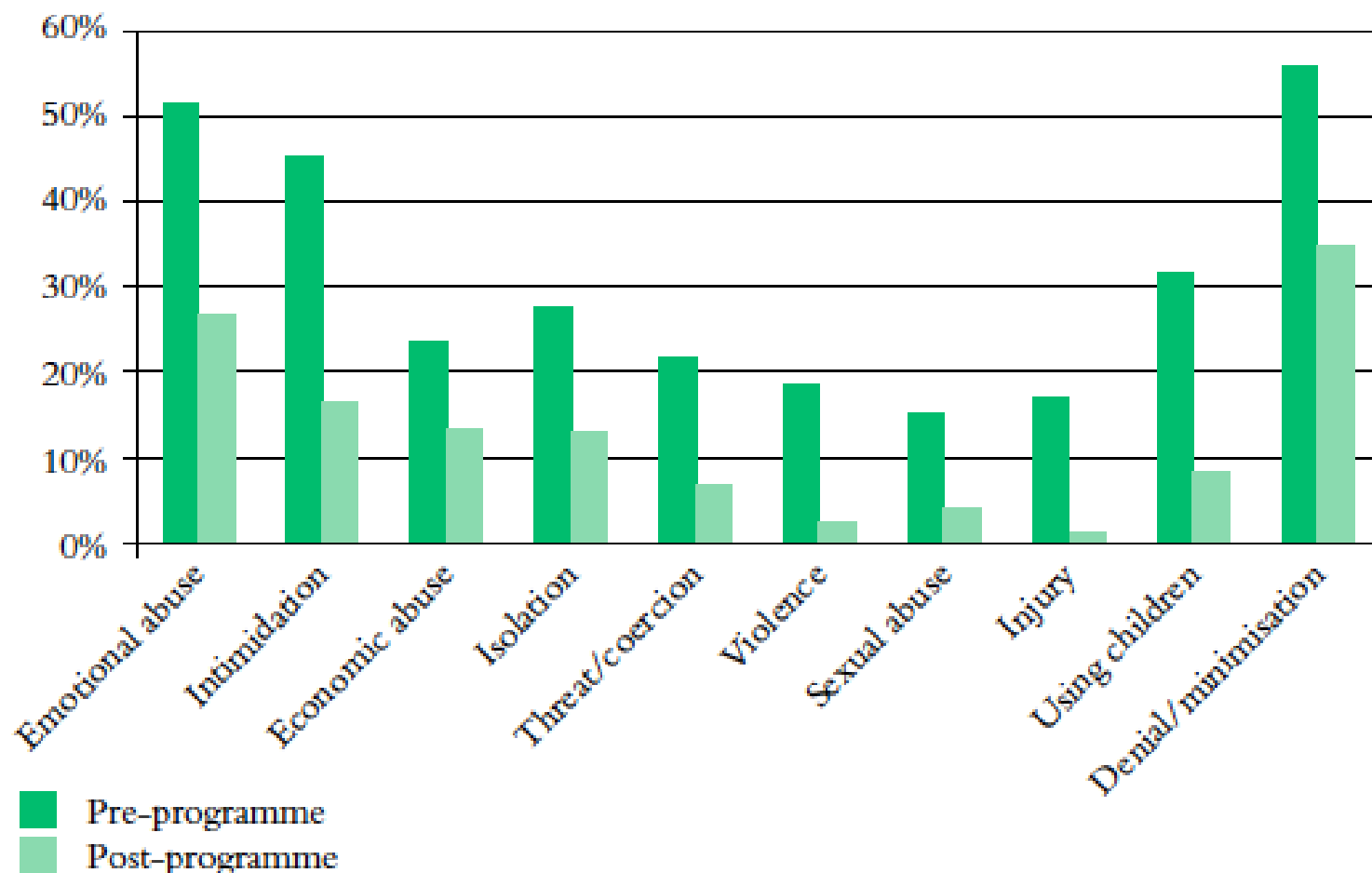
## *Outcomes*

Reduced Recurrence

Child Safety and Well-being

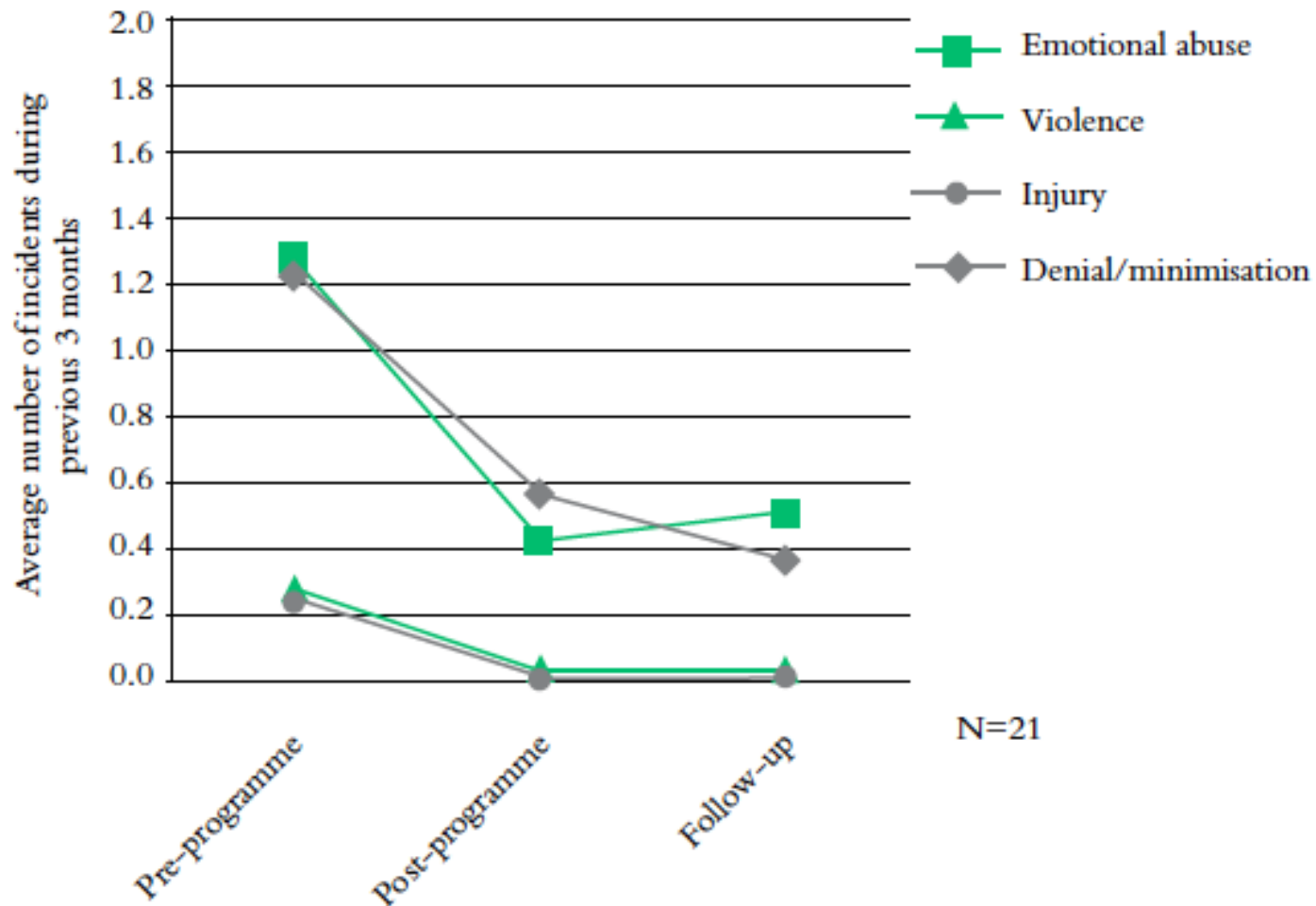
Women's Safety and Well-being

Chart 6: Percentage of partners reporting one or more incidents of controlling behaviour before and after the programme, N=66

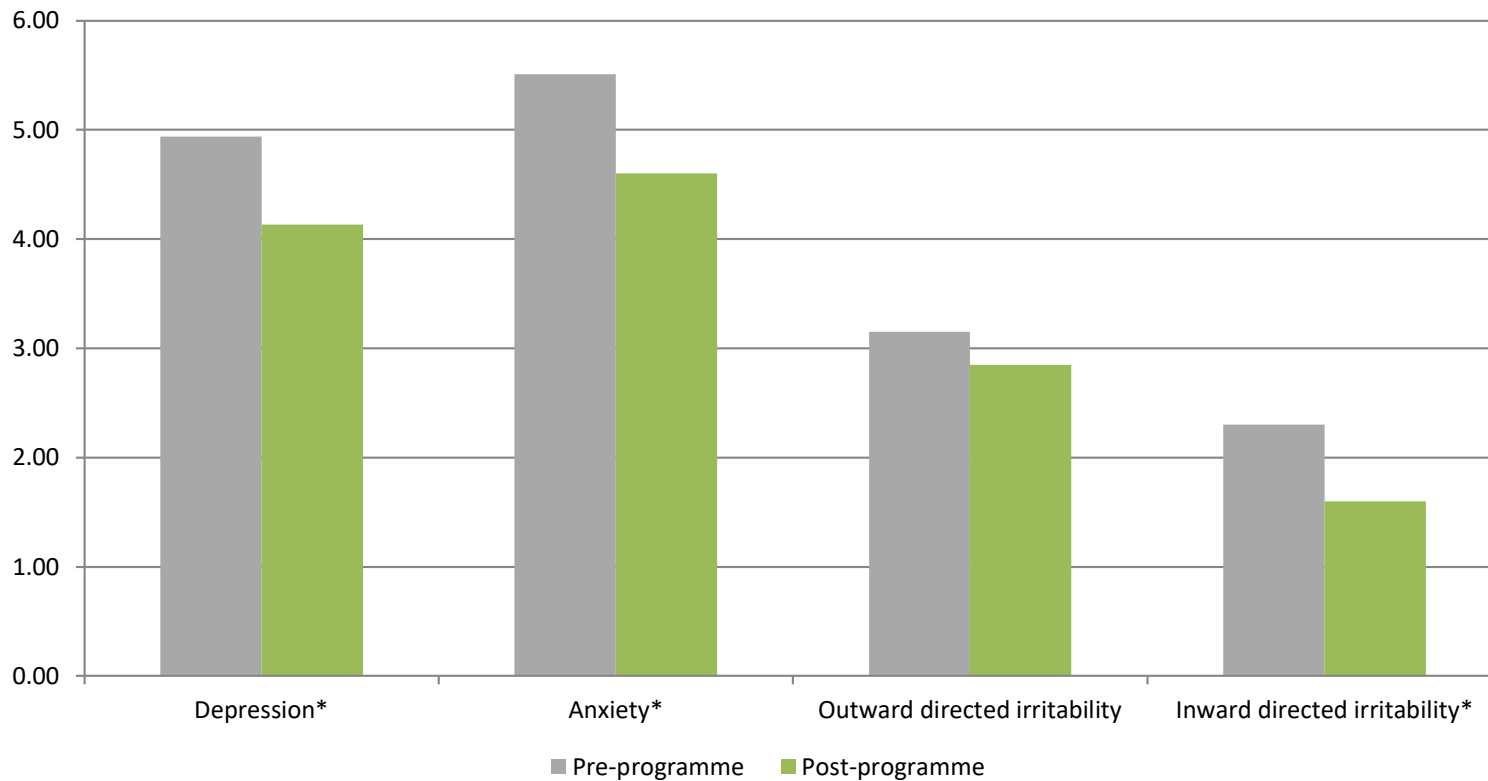


Source: NSPCC Caring Dads: Safer Children teams

Chart 8: Differences in the average number of incidents of controlling behaviour from the father during the previous three months reported by partners at each time point



# Women's Well-Being (McConnell et al., 2016)



# Child Behaviours and Symptoms

- Typically used as a key outcome measure in parenting programs
- Exploring this at the moment, but I am not sure that we can use fathers' reports.
  - DV dads tend to report VERY LOW levels of problems with their children

# Repeat Abuse over Two Years

- Completers
  - 6 of 38 (**16%**) had subsequent substantiation
- Non-Completers
  - 14 of 49 (**29%**) had subsequent substantiation

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## *Outcomes*

Reduced Recurrence ✓

Child Well-being

Women's Safety and Well-being ✓

# Current Research

- Large multi-site study launching in Melbourne, PI is Cathy Humphreys
- Queensland is also looking at pilot research work
- Independent studies being conducted in two Ontario provinces
- I have a cluster randomized RCT underway

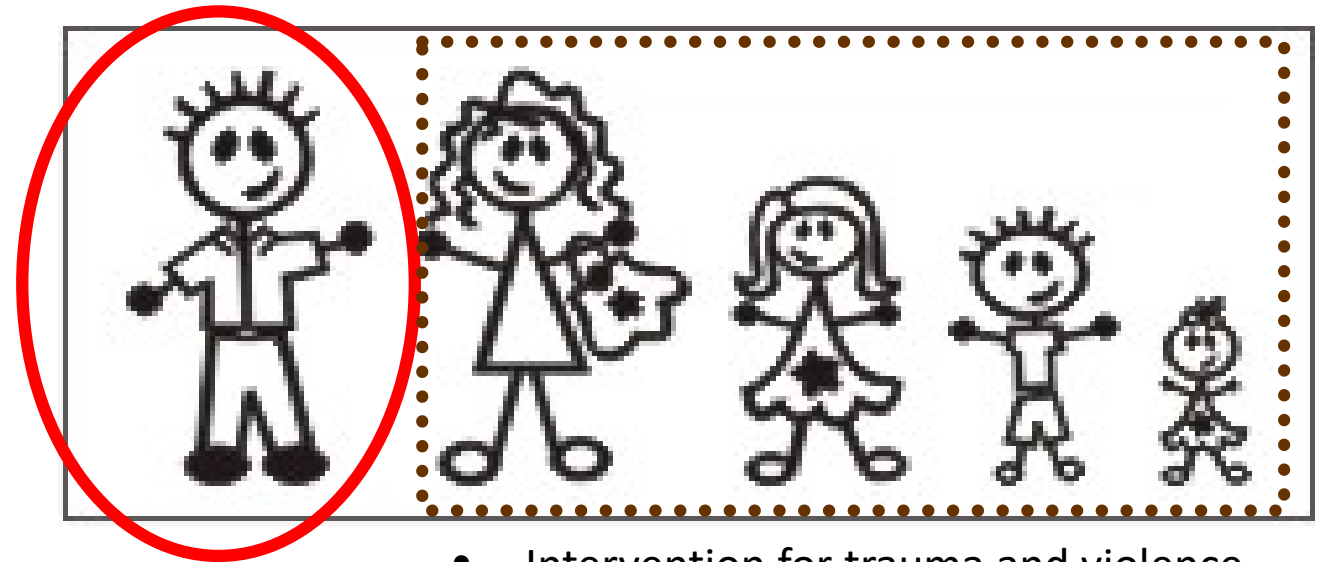


# Program Development

- Co-delivery with fathers who have experienced significant racism
- Partnering with our Indigenous communities
- Specialized materials for fathers with infants and young children
- Online community of practice

# Towards Safer Practice

- Father held accountable for keeping family safe
- Probation monitors and assesses risk
- Ongoing safety planning for him
- Collaboration and information sharing between systems



**Child Protection  
Women's Advocates  
Community agency  
expertise**

- Intervention for trauma and violence
- Support in keeping herself and her children safe
- Support for housing and other practical needs

# Cautions and Concerns

- Competition and confusion between men's behaviour change programs and Caring Dads
- Challenges in beginning work with child protection
- Need for strong group facilitators with VAW, MBC and child trauma/protection perspectives
- Need for good ongoing supervision and quality control
- Ongoing struggle in our communities to work collaboratively and with accountability to victims of abuse



# Thank you!

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