Talking about fathers (and mothers) and parenting courses

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Recommendations for engaging fathers

- Being ‘persistent’ (Ghate et al, 2000)
- Strengths based approaches (Ferguson and Hogan, 2004; Berlyn et al, 2008)
- Motivational Interviewing (Scourfield et al, 2012)
- Assuming a ‘desire for cooperation’ (Featherstone and Peckover, 2007)
How to access fathers in the first place?

- Most referred parents are mothers
- What do practitioners say to mothers that engage fathers?
- When is the most effective time to say it?
The study

- PhD at University of Bristol 2011 – 2014
- Recordings of initial telephone calls
- 3 parenting services
- 5 practitioners
- 28 recordings

Agreement between speakers at the end of the call that the father would be involved in the service
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other carer invited and fully accepted</th>
<th>Calls to women (25)</th>
<th>Calls to men (3)</th>
<th>Total (28)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Other carer invited                     | 12                  | 2                | 14         |

| Other carer mentioned by either speaker | 19                  | 3                | 22         |
Two principles in all calls

- Keeping the call progressing forwards (identification, purpose, arrangements, closing call)
- Cooperating with each other (and building the relationship)
- Six calls with no mention of other carer
Eight calls with only a mention of other carer

Extract 6.1a
05.17 – 05.44

01 Rec: This has [come on] in the last couple of years,
02 Cal: [“yeah”]
03 Rec: bu’ .hh it was always elsewhere, bu[t ne]ver with
04 Cal: [“yeah”]
05 Rec: me and now it’s (.) with me with his ’e even his
06 dad turns round and says ‘he’s hard work on the
07 weekends’
08 (0.3)
09 Cal: right ok
Invitations – type 1 (no specific person)

Extract 7.11
02.00 - 02.10

01  Cal:  can I just double check, I’ve **only** got your
02       name Nicola . hh is there another **parent,**
03       another **carer,** another **partner** that (.) would
04       like to come along to the group as well?
05
06  Rec:  . hh **no it’s** **only** myself
This does not always mean there is no other carer

Excerpt 6.3
02.47 - 03.06

01 Cal: we’re gonna run it on a *Tuesday evening*. hh at six o clock in Brooklands is that something that sounds like you’d be able to *manage?*

04 (0.8)

05 Rec: yeah that’d be fine, [c o s ] I can my . hhh

06 Cal: [that’s]

07 Rec: *mother* or the d uh: m: (0.4) mt my (0.5) *girl’s* dad to watch em

09 (0.4)

10 Cal: lovely [ okay so that shoul]dn’t be a problem

11 Rec: [ (*° ° that’s no worries° ° ?) ]

12 Cal: ‘n you can get to Brooklands ok can you?
Wor: ok ‘n if you’ve got a partner uhm (0.3)
they’re they’re welcome to come along as well (0.3)
Par: ooh at’d be good as well yeah lovel– I know he w– ‘e’s a train driver so he does some awkward shifts but yeah I’m definitely interested in .hhh in doing some more courses: see if I can .hhh >I don’t know make myself< a better parent ‘oo knows
In the conversation, Callum receives a referral from Dawn Champion from Silverwood School. He mentions that there's a suggestion that Callum and Owen Marsh might be interested in a parenting group. Record replies with agreement, saying "right, yeh."
Invitations – type 3 (name, without relationship)

Extract 6.10b
00.37 – 00.58

10  Cal:  is that something that you were aware of?
11          (0.5)
12  Rec:  yeah
13          (0.3)
14  Cal:  yep . hh uhm: is it something that you are
15          still interested in Emily?
16          (0.7)
17  Rec:  uhh yeah I am
18          (0.3)
Invitations – type 3 (name, without relationship)

Extract 6.10b
00.37 – 00.58

19 Cal: yes: (0.6) i s =
20 Rec: = yeh
21 (0.4)
22 Cal: e: (.) do you think Owen n as well?
23 (1.0)
24 Rec: no.
25 (0.4)
26 Cal: no, (0.4) .hh can I just double check (0.5)
27 a:re yourself and Owen still together, or
28 [yo ]u separated?
29 Rec: [no.] w[e ’r ]e separated
30 Cal: [right]
Invitation – type 4 (name with relationship)

Extract 7.2
01.33 - 01.46

01 Wor:  _uhm so_, (0.2) u uh _like I say_, < I think we
02       got the referral back in _April_ I believe, and
03       it’s for yourself and _Lizzie your wife_ is
04       that correct?
05 Par:  yep
06       (0.5)
07 Par:  _[that’s correct]_
08 Wor:  _b r i l l i ant_ .h
09 Par:  =yeah=
10 Wor:  =and _is it both of you that will be coming_   
11       _along on the course Graham?_
12       (0.7)
13 Par:  _it is both of us, yeah_
## Invitation types and outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name and relevance</th>
<th>Name without relevance</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>No specific person</th>
<th>No invitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full acceptance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial acceptance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejection</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No invitation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Getting the name of the father / mother

- In all successful calls, the practitioner already knew the name of the other carer.

- Further strong support for including all names on referral forms.

- More evidence needed of how practitioners identifying previously unknown fathers (and mothers).
Establishing the father’s / mother’s relevance

- Simply inviting other carers is not effective.

- Working to establish the relevance of fathers (and mothers) helps when inviting them.

- Practitioners sought to establish relevance through an ongoing relationship (mostly with the parent and rarely through the child)
The relevance of gender?

- The vast majority of referrals were for mothers.
- But, the pattern of interactions was consistent across mothers and fathers.
- Evidence for thinking systemically rather than only by gender?
References


