

A Guide for Building Partnerships between Fatherhood and Anti-Domestic Violence Organizations

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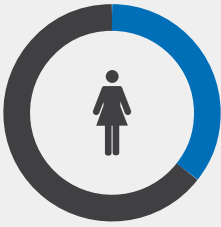




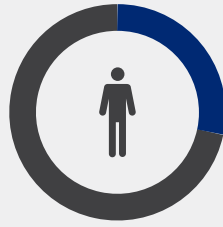
This Guide provides fundamental considerations and steps in forming partnerships between fatherhood organizations and anti-domestic violence organizations and the critical role of each in increasing family safety and positive father involvement for the benefit of all family members.

The guidance offered herein is in no way meant to be exhaustive, but rather a primer or starting point in partnering. We recommend, initially, that organizations work with a technical assistance provider along with this Guide to establish these critical, but often complex, partnerships.

To get more information on technical assistance, contact Fathers Incorporated at 770.804.9800 or fathersincorporated@gmail.com. We also list additional resources throughout the Guide.



35.6%



28.5%

More than 1 in 3 women (35.6%) and more than 1 in 4 men (28.5%) in the United States have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

(National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2010 Summary Report, CDC)



Step 1: Choose Good Partners

Consider the characteristics of the agency or organization you approach. Just because it may be located in your community does not necessarily make it the best fit for an on-going working collaboration. If you sense the agency isn't a good fit, keep looking for other local programs or consult with national technical assistance agencies¹.

The following characteristics of “good” partners can help guide you.

A GOOD ANTI-DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PARTNER:

1. Recognizes that not all men are violent and most men do not use violence against women.
2. Recognizes that men can be victims of domestic violence, and that men and women use violence as a way to address relationship conflict.
3. Provides services for male victims of domestic violence and finds creative ways to engage non-violent men in the agency's work.
4. Recognizes the cultural competence needed to do this work effectively and understands the many individual and societal barriers faced by most men in fatherhood programs.
5. Acknowledges that men are taught, and experience violence, on many levels, but with the proper support and intervention, responsible fathering is possible even after violence.
6. Has protocols and appropriate services in place for victims who voluntarily remain in contact with their abusers and makes appropriate referrals for men to receive services and supports they need, such as, battering intervention, referral to fatherhood programs, etc.
7. Publicly supports fatherhood partners' efforts/work (e.g., promotes & attends events, etc.)
8. Acknowledges the realities faced by fatherhood providers; for example, minimal funding, fathers may be victims of domestic and community violence, and that their mission is, first and foremost, to support fathers in staying positively engaged with their children.

¹To find domestic violence program partners, locate your state's domestic violence coalition by contacting the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence [www.ncadv.org] or the National Network to End Domestic Violence [www.nnedv.org]. You can also identify fatherhood providers through the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse [www.fatherhood.gov], which lists fatherhood programs across the country.



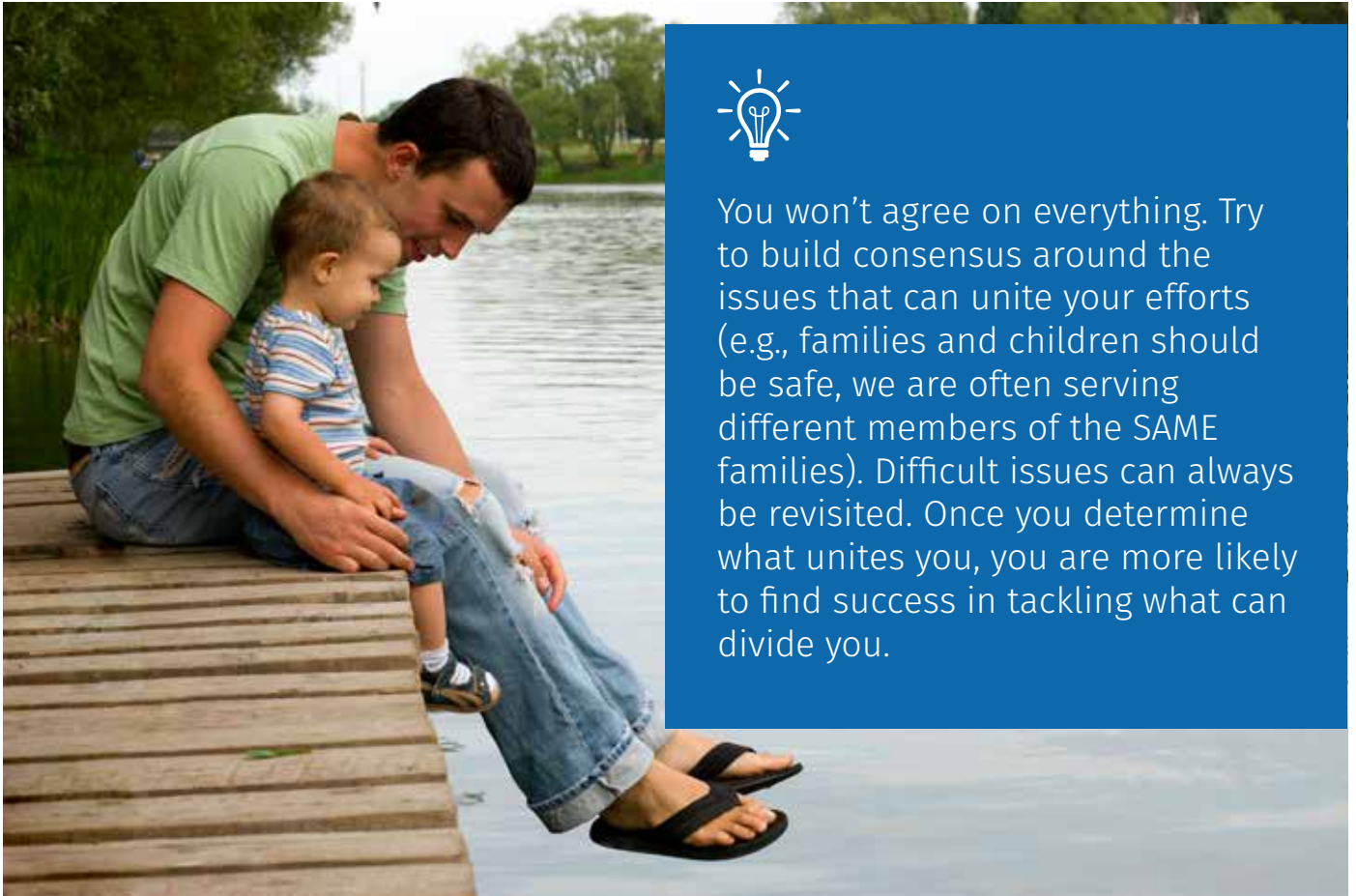
If fatherhood practitioners don't know the complex dynamics or the dimensions of domestic violence, how they address it (or not) could make the violence worse-- something that seems helpful might jeopardize the safety of family members and a father's ability to stay positively connected to his family.

A GOOD FATHERHOOD PARTNER:

1. Acknowledges the existence of domestic violence.
2. Agrees that physical violence is NEVER an acceptable way to control or coerce desired or expected behavior, punish, retaliate, or deal with conflict.
3. Acknowledges that while anyone can be a victim, domestic violence is rooted in broader gender-based social systems (i.e., it is a world-wide epidemic, and women overwhelmingly suffer more serious physical, emotional, sexual, and economic damages).
4. Acknowledges they need to be effectively trained to do intervention work with abusers .
5. Is willing to financially compensate their domestic violence partner for training.
6. Effectively screens clients about domestic violence, has appropriate responses and protocols in place when domestic violence is disclosed or suspected, and makes appropriate referrals.
7. Publicly supports anti-domestic violence partners' efforts/work (e.g., promotes & attends events, etc.) and institutionalizes anti-violent and anti-sexist messages in the provision of services.
8. Acknowledges the realities faced by anti-domestic violence organizations; for example, minimal funding and that their mission is, first and foremost, to keep families safe.



Step 2: Find Areas of Agreement



You won't agree on everything. Try to build consensus around the issues that can unite your efforts (e.g., families and children should be safe, we are often serving different members of the SAME families). Difficult issues can always be revisited. Once you determine what unites you, you are more likely to find success in tackling what can divide you.

1. Identify a neutral convener to facilitate the initial conversation—one experienced at providing technical assistance and whom both fields trust.
2. Each program should be given time to present their respective agency's services and strengths to the other.
3. Identify areas of common ground. Going over the lists under Step 1 above can be a good starting point.
4. Acknowledge and discuss any preconceived notions each agency may have of the other and existing stereotypes about the work they do (e.g., Anti-domestic violence organizations only advocate for women; fatherhood programs put the needs of fathers above family safety).
5. Consider and discuss cultural issues, such as, gender roles, race and ethnicity, poverty, discrimination, and community accountability.
6. Respectfully identify areas where compromise may be necessary--You don't have to agree on EVERYTHING!



Step 3: Agree to Shared Principles

For example:

1. The urgency of ending domestic violence
2. The value of supporting healthy family relationships
3. The importance of child-well being
4. The value of safe and responsible father involvement
5. The value of social services and social support for low-income men and women
6. The value of engaging fathers individually and collectively in ending domestic violence—a) safer families and communities; b) a chance for men to get genuinely connected to other men in their community around a meaningful cause; and c) fathers can deepen their empathy for women and girls.



“Those practical questions, “How are we going to do it?” are very important; however, I will promise you that mutual understanding...is going to be much more important than the exact specifics of your screening tools and your protocols. Do you both understand what the work is? Do the advocates understand what the men are dealing with? Do the fatherhood service providers understand what domestic violence is and how it's impacting children and their families?”

Jacqueline Boggess, Addressing Domestic Violence: The Role of Fatherhood Programs, National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse Webinar, April 16, 2014, www.fatherhood.gov.



Step 4: Address Issues related to Program and Practice

1. Develop and share agency tools and resources.
2. Develop joint tools, materials, media, presentations, etc.
3. It is essential for fatherhood programs to work with their anti-domestic violence partners to develop and incorporate screening tools and appropriate responses/protocols to general and specific occurrences of domestic violence.
4. Domestic violence organizations can not discount the cultural & personal significance to a woman of the man with whom she has had a child--even in instances of domestic violence, many women express a desire for the father of their children to receive supportive services and maintain relationships with his children².
5. Provide periodic on-going cross training, particularly for new staff.
6. Consider partnering to apply for funding for special joint projects, such as, public awareness campaigns, coalition building, sharing your stories of success, or for process evaluations to document what worked and what didn't.
7. Promote best practices in both fields through workshops and presentations to other organizations and audiences at conferences and local events.

²Boggess, J. & Groblewski (2011) Safety and Services: Women of color speak about their communities, Center for Family Policy and Practice. Retrieved from cffpp.org on April 14, 2015.



Step 5: Maintaining the Relationship

1. Allow time for the partnership and each agency to mature and integrate the shared principles of the partnership.
2. Consider developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). A good MOU will include a project timeframe, assignments, and responsibilities of each agency to the project, and any necessary financial agreements. This MOU should be revisited and revised as necessary over the course of the partnership.
3. Cross Referrals: If your agency offers services other than responsible fatherhood or domestic violence intervention, this is a good time to explore opportunities to make referrals for clients to other services your partner offers. Cross referrals go a long way in building trust and strengthening partnerships.
4. Continue training, education, and consultation: The best partnerships include on-going case consultations and regularly scheduled case reviews. You might consider meeting with your partner on a quarterly basis to review cases and discuss new ways for strengthening protocols and the partnership.

Further Resources:

- Beyond Silence and Violence: Engaging Men in Advocacy Against and Prevention of Domestic Violence. (2015) by Stacey Bouchet and Kenneth Braswell, Fathers Incorporated (<http://www.fathersincorporated.com/dvbrief.pdf>)
- Guidebook: Collaboration and Partnership Fatherhood Practitioners and Advocates Against Domestic Violence Working Together to Serve Women, Men, and Families. (2007) by Jacquelyn Boggess, Rebecca May, and Marguerite Roulet, Center for Family Policy and Practice (www.cffpp.com)
- National Save Our Daughters Night, May 8 (www.saveourdaughtersnight.com)

Conclusion

A coordinated effort to end domestic violence has the potential to significantly advance the fields of fatherhood and anti-domestic violence's objectives as well as their common commitment to ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of the families they serve.

However, this requires a commitment to work to address it on the part of the fatherhood field and recognition on the part of anti-domestic violence advocates that many fathers can be a positive influence in their children's lives--even after violence.



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