

FATHERS AND FATHER-FIGURES IN SCHOOLS VIDEO PROJECT

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Fathers and Father-Figures in Schools Video Project

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is widely recognised that most health-related behaviours are adopted during childhood and adolescence. While schools provide a logical setting for health education for young people, it is clear that parents should also be targeted with information and skills. Parents provide primary role models for children and thus play a significant role in the development of children's knowledge, attitudes and behaviours regarding health-related behaviours. However, a considerable amount of parent interventions involve mothers as the predominant participants and respondents. Evidence suggests the involvement of significant family members, in addition to mothers – in particular fathers – in the drug education of their children can positively influence the drug use behaviour of their children. Further, parent/father health education programs need to start early so that by the time children are exposed to risks to their health, they have an open and trusting relationship and communication strategies are well established.

To this end, the Child Health Promotion Research Centre (CHPRC) was contracted by Professor Bruce Robinson, on behalf of the University of Western Australia, to test the use and effectiveness of video as a mode of intervention to actively engage fathers/father figures in the lives of their children. Specifically, the objectives of the CHPRCs role in the evaluation were to:

- trial the pilot DVD and accompanying materials with fathers of 11-13 year old children; and
- assess the use and satisfaction of the DVD and accompanying support materials for fathers of 11-13 year old children.

This was achieved through the following stages:

1. A literature review was conducted, targeting literature published up to 2004.
2. Focus group interviews were conducted with fathers and father figures of children and young people. The aims of the interview were to obtain feedback regarding the DVD, 'Being a Father' and accompanying support material, and to explore fathers and father figures attitudes, opinions and suggestions to ensure the most acceptable strategies and methods are used to engage fathers and father figures.

This report describes the findings of the literature review, as well as results of the focus group interviews with fathers and father figures of children and young people.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The child's experiences during early adolescence can have a long-term impact on later cognitive ability, engagement in drug abuse, physical and mental wellbeing and interpersonal relationships. Adolescents often have a greater reluctance to accept parental advice or criticism than when they were younger (Neinstein, 1996) and opportunities for participating in drug abuse increase as adolescent age increases (Brook & Brook, 1992; Coombs & Landsverk, 1988; Johnston & O'Malley, 1985) with adolescents who have close friends who abuse drugs also tending to abuse drugs (Bahr, Maughan, Marcos, & Li, 1998). Combined and consistent pressures from home and school are necessary to affect health behaviours (Michell & Stenning, 1989).

The level of attachment, connection or closeness adolescents feel toward their parents is described as bonding (Barber, 1997). High levels of parent-adolescent bonding have been found to be associated with reduced likelihood of adolescent engagement in drug abuse (Brook, Brook, Gordon, Whiteman, & Cohen, 1990; Clayton, 1992; Hirschi, 1969; Petraitis, Flay, & Miller, 1995). Also, adolescents who experience a positive and supportive family environment are more likely to establish and maintain successful interpersonal relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), less likely to participate in criminal behaviour, be better parents (Blum & Mann Rhinehart, 1997), experience improved mental and physical health (Blum & Mann Rhinehart, 1997), and achieve greater academic attainment (Linver & Silberg, 1997) than those adolescents who experience a negative family environment. Peers also have an important role to play and may play a complementary role to the values and beliefs of the parents.

The important role that fathers play in their children's lives is being increasingly studied (Amato, 1998; Belsky & Hsieh, 1998; Belsky, Putnam, & Crnic, 1996; Lamb, 1997). Hwang and Lamb (1997) found that children's relationships with their fathers were related to school achievement, engagement in antisocial behaviour, psychological adjustment and success in intimate relationships. Similarly, Amato (1994) found closeness to fathers made an impact on their child's life satisfaction, happiness and psychological distress. Further, the impact of closeness to one's father was independent from closeness to one's mother (Amato, 1994) and there is evidence that father-child communication is a stronger predictor than mother-child communication of aggressive behaviours of pre-adolescent children in 2-parent homes (Lambert & Cashwell, 2004). However, Youniss and Ketterlinus (1987) found that adolescents were more likely to perceive mothers as more available than fathers for discussing problems on a variety of issues, pre-adolescent children have reported better communication with their mothers than with their fathers (Lambert & Cashwell, 2004), and adolescents spend proportionately less time with their fathers than with their mothers (Montemayor & Brownlee, 1987). Therefore, the role of fathers in the prevention of drug abuse and delinquent

behaviours is likely to be under-utilised. The childhood experiences of the father often impact negatively on his involvement with his children (Cowan & Cowan, 1987; Snarey, 1993). Therefore, interventions to assist fathers in the efficacy of their relationships with their children could be useful.

Rates of alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse have been found to be very low among sixth and seventh graders (Botvin, Dusenbury, Botvin, & Diaz, 1995; Dielman, Shope, Leech, & Butchart, 1989; Johnston, O'Malley, & Bachman, 1994). At about this time, there is a noticeable transition period when father-child relations become particularly important (Kirkman, Rosenthal, & Feldman, 2002) and distance frequently develops between parents and adolescents (Steinberg, 1987, 1988). The children are capable of cognitively engaging in reasoning tasks, and are becoming more vulnerable to the effects of peers and society (Caldwell et al., 2004). Therefore, the time prior to adolescence represents a window of opportunity to provide interventions to optimise parent child relations, develop drug refusal skills and reduce the likelihood of child participation in delinquent behaviours or drug abuse prior to exposure to delinquent or drug abuse behaviours.

The purpose of this literature review is to present key findings which will inform the content and presentation of a video aimed at encouraging fathers to increase their children's connectedness to family and mental health.

2.2. DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

2.2.1. Fathers / Father figures

Fathers are defined as the biological male parent of the child and father figures are defined as other men who participate in the care, rearing or support of children within the context of the family (Coley, 1998; Fagan & Iglesias, 1999).

2.2.2. Mental Health

As defined by the Department of Health and Human Services and cited by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (1998), "mental health is the capacity of individuals and groups to interact with one another and the environment, in ways that promote subjective wellbeing, optimal development, and use of cognitive, affective and relational abilities. It refers to an individual's ability to negotiate the daily challenges and social interactions of life without experiencing undue emotional or behavioural incapacity.....mental health is more than the absence of mental illnessit is the realisation of one's potential..... At an individual level, it is also a sense of wellbeing and functioning unique to each person."

Therefore, the concept of mental health is a broad concept that is concerned with both mental illness and mental wellbeing. Mental health promotion programs can be concerned with strengthening and

improving the mental function of people who may or may not be mentally ill and who may not be at a high risk for mental illness (Moodie, 1999).

2.2.3. Connectedness

The concept of connectedness refers to a person's sense of connection and closeness to parents, family, other adults outside the family, to school and to other community-based organisations (Resnick, 2000). More specifically, family connectedness refers to the emotional availability of the caregiver in the presence of the child (Clark & Ladd, 2000), and is characterised by closeness, caring, satisfaction with family relationships, and feeling loved and wanted by family members (Caldwell et al., 2004). Similar constructs include "warmth", "closeness" and "dyadic synchrony" (Clark & Ladd, 2000). The characteristic of connectedness is a protective factor that can offset the deleterious effects of risk factors on wellbeing (Resnick, 2000).

2.3. PRESENTATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Label the intervention with **a title alternate to drug prevention**, which can be threatening to some parents and may discourage participation, especially if the parent believes the topic is not for their family (Cohen & Rice, 1995).
2. Program **messages should be simple, straightforward and memorable** (Spoth, Redmond, Hockaday, & Yoo, 1996).
3. Clearly state that **parents are important resources in their children's development and in helping their children to succeed** rather than the cause of their children's problems (Shepard & Carlson, 2003).
4. Use **male discussion leaders and actors** who will act as positive role models and help ensure that the intervention is not perceived as for mothers (Meyers, 1993).
5. Use a **strengths perspective and avoid using a deficiency focus**.
 - a. Use **didactic teaching methods to supplement other learning strategies** to avoid creating the perception that the instructor has the information to impart that the father lacks (Anderson, Kohler, & Letiecq, 2002; Fagan & Stevenson, 2002).
 - b. It has been suggested that counselling for fathers should **take a multi-generational approach** to examine a father's relationship with his own father and to make modifications from this relationship to the relationship with his child (Lambert & Cashwell, 2004). A parenting "deficiency" can then be reframed "not having a good father model" and "needing practice" which suggests a strong potential for change.

6. Use **multiple learning strategies** to address the many determinants of health behaviours such as knowledge, attitudes, skills, decision-making and coping (Hawe, Degeling, & Hall, 1990). For example:
 - a. A 15-minute video, based on Social Learning Theory and including modelling, familiar contexts and skill-oriented strategies, used together with home counselling, was successful in preventing the early introduction of complementary feeding to 3-month old infants by African-American, adolescent mothers of infants compared to those in the control group (Black, Siegel, Abel, & Bentley, 2001).
 - b. A 15-minute video based on Social Learning Theory was successful in promoting mealtime communication between adolescent mothers and their infants (Black & Tetti, 1997).
 - c. Levant and Doyle (1983) developed a parent education program for fathers of school-aged children comprising didactic and experiential components. Each session consisted of an introduction, demonstration of skills using videotaped and live examples, practising of skills with videotaped feedback, and practise of skills learnt via homework exercises.

7. **Demonstrate cultural sensitivity to the target population by reflecting the cultural, norms, values, language and location** of the target population. Also, **reflect the target population rather than professionals** in the video scenes. For example:
 - a. The content of the video interventions developed by Black and Tetti (1997) and Black and colleagues (2001) was determined from the advice of an advisory group whose members were representative of the target population of African-American adolescent mothers, together with an interdisciplinary group of health professionals. For ecological validity of the video developed by Black and Tetti (1997), filming was done in the homes of the mothers in the advisory group. Also, no professionals were seen or heard in the video except for a narrator who was used occasionally to repeat and highlight statements made by the mothers. Qualitative comments at post-test from the mothers in the study suggested that they identified with the young mothers on the video. Fagan and Stephenson (2002) collaborated with fathers when developing the curriculum for their parenting program, "Men as Teachers", and trained fathers led the group sessions.
 - b. Check the cultural sensitivity of the video (e.g., appropriateness and understanding of language, the problem situations, the culture's approach to parenting style etc.) with piloting.

8. **Acknowledge diversity** of fathers and father figures (Meyers, 1993).

9. **Illustrate content in vignettes** that demonstrate child and father interaction, problem situations and the skills to manage the problem situations. These are bite-sized sources of information, add variety to the video content and can be connected with some additional information. Demonstrate the “right” and “wrong” ways to practise the relevant skills (Webster-Stratton, 1990, 1994; Webster-Stratton, Kolpacoff, & Hollinsworth, 1988). Videos often work by illustrating situations with selected examples and personal testimony rather than complex details. For example:
- a. In a parent-education program for fathers, Levant and Doyle (1983) used videotaped and live examples to demonstrate the skills being taught. Also, video was used to film course participants when practising the skills in role-play exercises for immediate feedback.
 - b. The video intervention for parents of 3- to 8-year-old children with conduct disorder tested by Webster-Stratton and colleagues (1990; 1994; 1988) was described as 10 videos each of approximately 25 minutes duration with a total of 250 vignettes for all 10 videos. Each vignette lasted approximately 2 minutes and illustrated a child/parent interaction.
10. **Support the content of the video with the availability of therapist contact.** The video can provide general guidance and answers to the questions of many parents but therapist input may be necessary to tailor the therapy to provide for the unique problems and needs of each family. A telephone number for parents to call with questions or concerns could accompany a video intervention in order to answer questions and identify families needing more intensive personalised therapy (Webster-Stratton, 1990). For example:
- a. Webster-Stratton (1990) developed a video parenting program for parents of 3- to 8-year-old children with conduct disorder and compared the self-administration of the video program with self-administration of the video program plus approximately 2 hours of therapist contact. The therapist contact comprised availability of the therapist over the telephone and two scheduled 1-hour appointments at the mid-point and after program participation. Both interventions were effective in reducing child behaviour problems and parental stress, but the latter form of the intervention resulted in even fewer child behaviour problems.
11. If there are other materials to accompany the video, use the same stories and images as used in the video to illustrate the accompanying materials.

2.4. RECOMMENDED CONTENT OF THE VIDEO

The recommended content of the videos is concerned with categories consistent with the structures of the Health Belief Model (HBM), Social Learning Theory (SLT), the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Social Development Model (SDM). These categories comprise

1. Knowledge (SLT)
2. Cognitive processes, beliefs and attitudes including:
 - Perceptions of risk (HBM)
 - Perceptions of benefits versus barriers to behavioural change (HBM)
 - Self-efficacy (SLT)
 - Outcome expectations (SLT)
3. Skills (SLT) and beliefs about behavioural consequences (TRA)
4. Environmental factors (SLT) including the promotion of:
 - Motivation to comply with others (TRA),
 - Modelling of behaviour by influential others (SLT),
 - Positive reinforcement (SLT),
 - Development of strong bonds to school (SDM)

The following table comprises a combination of all content concepts and strategies that were identified in the literature that could be effective in improving the abilities of fathers to increase connectedness with their 11- to 13-year old child and to support positively their children's mental health. The category of strategy is listed in the column "Category of content" and details of the recommended strategies are contained in the column "Description of content". It is recognised that changing cognitive processes, beliefs and attitudes is inter-related to increased knowledge, the learning and practising of new skills and environmental effects. Cognitive processes do not have their own section in the table, but rather, are linked to the categories of strategies pertaining to knowledge, skills and the environment.

Table 1: Content concepts and strategies

Category of content	Description of content
<p>1. Knowledge (SLT)</p> <p>2. Cognitive processes, beliefs and attitudes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceptions of risk (HBM) - Perceptions of benefits versus barriers to behavioural change (HBM) - Self-efficacy (SLT) - Outcome expectations (SLT) 	<p>1. Information relevant to the developmental stage of the child to enable parents to set developmentally appropriate tasks and expectations (Cohen & Rice, 1995; Fagan & Stevenson, 2002; Hawkins, Catalano, Jones, & Fine, 1987). For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Information that boys feel loved and recognised through doing things together with their father during childhood and that during adolescence, they prefer doing things with their peers. During this period, the adolescent can feel less loved by his father and fathers should make particular effort not to replace the activities of childhood with criticism and judgement of behaviours (Tremblay, Tremblay, & Saucier, 2004). b. The onset of adolescence is an important time for the maintenance of a close connection with parents because the continuous relationship helps the adolescent to feel more secure, to take risks and explore (Tremblay, Tremblay, & Saucier, 2004). Close family support also helps to alleviate depression (Colarossi & Eccles, 2003). c. Information pertaining to the importance of both peer and family influences on adolescent delinquency or drug abuse (Colarossi & Eccles, 2003; Hawkins, Lishner, Catalano, & Howard, 1986; Kandel, 1985; McCallum, 1994; Meyers, 1993; Michell & Stenning, 1989). d. Adolescent self-esteem is positively affected by friend and teacher support. Support from friends and teachers is associated with less depression (Colarossi & Eccles, 2003). <p>2. Understanding the protective effects of the positive, supportive and emotionally sensitive family environment for all children (Caldwell et al., 2004; Cohen & Rice, 1995; Jaccard, Dodge, & Dittus, 2002; Kumpfer, 1999).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explain the benefits of positive father involvement (Meyers, 1993). b. Information to highlight the importance of effective communication and to allay parental fears that communication will encourage the discussed behaviour (Jaccard, Dodge, & Dittus, 2002).

3. Information to enable parents to give their children advice about the implications of drug abuse (Jaccard, Dodge, & Dittus, 2002) and support for the strong parental expression of disapproval of drug abusing behaviours (Caldwell et al., 2004; Kumpfer, 1999; Michell & Stenning, 1989).

- a. Specific information about the effects of drug abuse (Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004).
- b. Strong expressed norms by parents against drinking and drug abuse (Caldwell et al., 2004; Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004).
- c. Reduce involvement of children in family substance use activities such as getting beer for parents (Caldwell et al., 2004).
- d. Information pertaining to why children and adolescents avoid certain topics including –
 - Relationship motivations – children need to create and maintain personal relationships, protecting these relationships and avoiding anything that will lead to the deterioration of the relationship. E.g., “I don’t want to ruin my Dad’s image of me.” (Afifi & Guerro, 2000; Golish & Caughlin, 2002).
 - Individual-based motivations – children need to protect their identity and may avoid certain topics to maintain a positive impression with others and themselves or to maintain their sense of identity. E.g., “I avoid talking to my Mum about my friends because it is none of her business. I like my privacy.” (Afifi & Guerro, 2000; Golish & Caughlin, 2002).
 - Information-based motivations – children and adolescents desire information that is of interest and high quality but if the person receiving the information is unhelpful, information motivation may result in topic avoidance with that person. E.g., “My father doesn’t want to hear about my relationships with girls – he wouldn’t say anything.” (Afifi & Guerro, 2000; Golish & Caughlin, 2002).

4. Information about the different parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative and permissive) and the protective effects of the authoritative parenting style which is characterised by combining parental control and support behaviours (Baumrind, 1991; Cohen & Rice, 1997b; Dorius, Bahr, Hoffmann, & Harmon, 2004; Kumpfer, 1999).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Parental control strategies include clear rules, appropriate discipline, limits and monitoring (Cohen & Rice, 1997a; Dorius, Bahr, Hoffmann, & Harmon, 2004; Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004). b. Parental support strategies include warmth, nurturance, closeness, receptiveness to the child's communication, parent's explanations of reasons for behaviours and consequences, provision of positive feedback and parent involvement in schooling (Cohen & Rice, 1997a; Dorius, Bahr, Hoffmann, & Harmon, 2004; Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004). c. Exploration of parent and child discrepancies in perceptions of parenting styles. Children's perceptions of their parents' parenting style are more strongly related to outcomes than parents' perceptions of their parenting style (Cohen & Rice, 1997b).
<p>1. Skills (SLT) and beliefs about behavioural consequences (TRA)</p> <p>2. Cognitive processes, beliefs and attitudes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceptions of risk (HBM) - Perceptions of benefits versus barriers to behavioural change (HBM) - Self-efficacy (SLT) - Outcome expectations (SLT) 	<p>1. Support the child's development of a resilient temperament, positive social orientation and intelligence (Baumrind, 1991; Radke-Yarrow & Sherman, 1990) and develop child feelings of closeness to parents by being involved, and providing a positive, cohesive, supportive and emotionally sensitive family environment (Blum & Mann Rhinehart, 1997; Cohen & Rice, 1995; Coley, 1998; Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Linver & Silberg, 1997).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Participate in mutually enjoyable activities with your child on a regular basis (Kumpfer, 1999; Meyers, 1993; Thomas, Farrell, & Barnes, 1996). b. Talk through worries with the adolescent, take an interest in school and help with plans for the future (Flouri, Buchanan, & Bream, 2002; Thomas, Farrell, & Barnes, 1996). c. Respond to requests for attention from the child (Coley, 1998; Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001; Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004). d. Provide comfort when necessary (Coley, 1998; Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001; Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004). e. Show affection during childhood and continuing into adolescence and young adulthood (Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000; Thomas, Farrell, & Barnes, 1996) including hugs, kisses, pats on the back.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. Give encouragement and praise (Dorius, Bahr, Hoffmann, & Harmon, 2004; Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000; Thomas, Farrell, & Barnes, 1996). g. Encourage fathers to spend more time with their children via regular, mutually enjoyable activities, and routines such as at bedtime (Flouri, Buchanan, & Bream, 2002; Meyers, 1993). h. Take an interest in daily ups and downs, schoolwork (Flouri, Buchanan, & Bream, 2002; Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004). i. Talk about plans for the future (Flouri, Buchanan, & Bream, 2002). j. Check that the child is satisfied with the level of support provided by the father (Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001). k. Criticise behaviours rather than your child's characteristics (Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000). l. Accept your child for who he/she is and demonstrate unconditional positive regard, i.e., love and accept your child's feelings and self-concept whether they are the same or different to your feelings and self-concept (Dorius, Bahr, Hoffmann, & Harmon, 2004; Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000). m. Tell your child why he/she is so special as an individual, and not just when something special is achieved (Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004). n. Involve your children in adult-supervised after-school activities that they are interested in (Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004). <p>2. Teach the child how to refuse drugs (Kumpfer, 1999).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Act out scenes with your child where people offer him/her drugs. Let your child know that he/she can use you as an excuse to refuse drugs (Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004). b. Make sure your child knows not he/she shouldn't continue friendships with children who have offered drugs (Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004). c. Give your children the power to make decisions that go against their peers (Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004). d. Make it easy for your child to leave a place where drugs are being used by offering to pick them up at any time (Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004).
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3. Enforce appropriate behavioural boundaries and monitoring (Bahr, Maughan, Marcos, & Li, 1998; Coley, 1998; Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001; Dorius, Bahr, Hoffmann, & Harmon, 2004; Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004).

- a. Make it clear that you do not want your child to abuse drugs (Coley, 1998; Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001; Dorius, Bahr, Hoffmann, & Harmon, 2004; Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004).
- b. Provide clear and reasonable rules, expectations and guidance, e.g., set curfews (Coley, 1998; Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001; Dorius, Bahr, Hoffmann, & Harmon, 2004; Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004).
- c. Enforce reasonable consequences (Coley, 1998; Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001; Dorius, Bahr, Hoffmann, & Harmon, 2004; Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004).
- d. Be consistent with rules and consequences (Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000).
- e. Monitor children's behaviour - watch, supervise and be aware of children's activities and behaviour (Coley, 1998; Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001; Dorius, Bahr, Hoffmann, & Harmon, 2004; Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004).
- f. Know children's friends and continue to maintain this awareness (Coley, 1998; Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001; Dorius, Bahr, Hoffmann, & Harmon, 2004; Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004).
- g. Avoid psychologically controlling techniques to shape the child's behaviour (Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000).

4. Develop problem-solving strategies to reduce levels of family conflict, especially father-daughter conflict (Brook, Brook, Gordon, Whiteman, & Cohen, 1990; Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000).

- a. Consider the child's feelings when discussing issues of conflict (Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000).
- b. Listen to the child's viewpoint (Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000).
- c. Keep calm when solving problems (Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000).
- d. Welcome the child's ideas (Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000).
- e. Work together to find solutions (Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000).

	<p>5. Develop communication skills with the child (Fagan & Iglesias, 2000; Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000; Kumpfer, 1999; Leaper, Anderson, & Sanders, 1998; Levant & Rabinovitz, 1984; Meyers, 1993).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engage in open discussion on an ongoing basis with the child about refusing and avoiding drug abuse behaviours. Ask open-ended questions about the issues of drugs. Talk about facts and not fears. Talk about the immediate effects and problems of drug abuse. Talk about the long-term effects of drug abuse, chemical dependence, the unpredictable nature of dependency, the effects on society and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Use everyday 'teachable moments' to discuss drug abuse (Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004). b. Allow speaking turns with the child and avoid dominating conversations. c. Listen to your child's problems, knowledge and views using passive listening, open-ended questions and active listening (Levant & Doyle, 1983; Meyers, 1993). d. Respond to your child's feelings (Levant & Doyle, 1983; Meyers, 1993). e. Ask for clarification of comments and feelings (Levant & Doyle, 1983; Meyers, 1993). f. Develop the ability to express your own feelings (Levant & Doyle, 1983; Meyers, 1993). g. Confront your child's unacceptable behaviour with statements limited to your own feelings ("I messages") (Levant & Doyle, 1983; Meyers, 1993). h. Manage unwanted behaviours without resorting to arousing guilt or withdrawing love (Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000). i. Watch TV and movies with your child and ask questions to reinforce the distinction between reality and make-believe (Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004). j. Encourage open dialogue with children about their experiences and tell them you will give an honest answer (Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 2004).
<p>1. Environmental factors (SLT) including: the promotion of</p>	<p>1. Provide appropriate role models (parents and friends) who do not abuse drugs (Bahr, Maughan, Marcos, & Li, 1998).</p>

<p>motivation to comply with others (TRA), modelling of behaviour by influential others (SLT), positive reinforcement (SLT), development of strong bonds to school (SDM)</p> <p>2. Cognitive processes, beliefs and attitudes including: Perceptions of risk (HBM) Perceptions of benefits versus barriers to behavioural change (HBM) Self-efficacy (SLT) Outcome expectations (SLT)</p>	<p>2. Identify the social support networks for the child (Caldwell et al., 2004; Colarossi & Eccles, 2003) for reinforcement of individual competencies (Werch et al., 1991).</p> <p>3. Cultivate social supports outside of the family to reinforce the child's individual competencies and belief systems (Werch et al., 1991).</p> <p>4. Identify the social support networks of the father (Caldwell et al., 2004; Kumpfer, 1999; Meyers, 1993) to identify resources to meet father's parenting needs.</p> <p>5. Utilise school commitment to the optimal development of the child (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992; Newcomb, Maddahain, Skager, & Bentler, 1987; Oetting & Beauvais, 1987; Sher, 1991).</p> <p>6. Develop future school achievement goals (Huizinga, Loeber, & Thornberry, 1995; Jessor, 1991; McBride, Joe, & Simpson, 1991).</p>
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2.5. SUMMARY OF CONTENT AND PRESENTATION OF THE VIDEO

Given much of this research is from mainly correlational studies, the effectiveness and relative importance of implementing the suggested strategies as an intervention is not known. Further, most studies investigated the relationship between a small number of strategies and the child behaviour. The relationship between the use of multiple strategies as detailed in the above table and child behaviours is not known, although the recommendation for multiple strategy interventions suggests that combining many strategies is likely to be more effective for a greater diversity of people (Hawe, Degeling, & Hall, 1990).

There was little literature describing the development of video interventions for parents including fathers. Recommendations for the presentation of the video were identified from the few available studies and other recommendations that could be applied to the presentation of the video were identified in the descriptions of other interventions for fathers. To summarise, successful video interventions have used vignettes of real life examples to illustrate the skills, have used multiple learning strategies, and have displayed cultural sensitivity. Other suggested presentational characteristics include attention to the video title, the simplicity of the messages, use of male actors and narrators, use of a strengths perspective, acknowledgement of diversity among fathers, and the provision of contact details for professionals who can offer additional support.

There were consistent themes in the literature indicating that successful interventions need to use multiple learning strategies including the provision of appropriate information, and in particular, the development of skills to facilitate abilities of strong communication skills, parental monitoring, and parental closeness, involvement and support. Additional protective factors include positive support from the environment such as positive role models and social networks.

The information and skills required are many and complex and it is likely that more than one video will be required to effectively convey this information. Potentially, some of the information could be given in an instructional booklet with instruction about skills training presented in the context of the video, and consistency of examples in the booklet and video is recommended to reinforce learning.

3. METHODS

3.1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE DVD 'BEING A FATHER'

The DVD was developed using four men who were willing to participate, and whose children were willing to be videoed. This formed the core of the video. These four men were chosen with the following characteristics:

- a. test cricketer
- b. lecturer in education
- c. biker and computer technician
- d. TV sports journalist

In addition, several other opportunities were utilised to video fathers and their children, including family and organisation picnics. The content of the video was decided in advance and the tapes edited to be certain that these messages were included. From approximately six to eight hours of tape, a brief 12 minute video was developed for testing by the focus groups.

3.2. FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The specific objectives of the focus group interviews were:

- To determine the effectiveness of DVDs aimed at assisting fathers, and father figures, to initiate and maintain involvement in their 11-13 year old children's education;
- To determine the effectiveness of DVDs aimed at assisting fathers, and father figures, to initiate and maintain involvement in their 11-13 year old children's mental health;
- To determine the key content (for DVD format) to encourage fathers/ father figures to take action (and what are these key actions) increase their connectedness to their children;
- To determine the key content (for DVD format) to encourage fathers/ father figures to take action (and what are these actions) to improve the mental health of their children;
- To determine the effectiveness of the DVD aimed at assisting fathers, and father figures, to initiate and maintain involvement in their 11-13 year old children's lives;
- To identify effective methods to engage fathers, and father figures, in watching educational DVDs describing methods of initiating and maintaining involvement in their 11-13 year old children's education, health and mental health; and
- To identify effective ways to improve the quality and duration of communication between fathers and their children.

Based on these objectives, a script and questions for the focus groups was developed (Appendix 1). Participants were recruited through purposeful, convenience sampling of fathers and father-figures known to staff at the Child Health Promotion Research Centre (CHPRC). Research staff at the CHPRC requested participants watch the DVD and read the accompanying booklet. Staff were given the interview protocol and asked to conduct the interview with the participant, alternatively, the participant was given the name and contact number of the project coordinator who conducted the interview by telephone.

The majority (n=26) of interviews were conducted individually however, nine fathers/father-figures viewed the DVD and responded to the interview as a group, at a workplace in Nedlands. This focus group was attended by the project coordinator, who facilitated discussion, and a research assistant, who acted as a scribe. To ensure an accurate record of all comments was obtained, the focus group discussion was audio taped. On return to the CHPRC, the focus group discussion was transcribed into a Word document. The remaining focus interviews conducted on a one-on-one basis were also transcribed into a Word document.

3.3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOOKLET

The booklet was developed by an associate of the Child Health Promotion Research Centre who has published in the area of parenting, particularly with regards to drug education. Development of the booklet was guided by the findings of the literature review, as well as evidence-based recommendations for intervention content of a 'fathers video' (Appendix 2). The following objectives specifically related to the development of the booklet:

- Fathers/father figures identify which overall parenting style is the best for raising healthy, resilient children;
- Fathers/father figures list benefits of positive father involvement in the lives of adolescent males and females;
- Fathers/father figures describe the ways they help children to feel close to school ('connected') and other community-based organisations;
- Fathers/father figures give examples of the standards and limits they set for adolescents; and
- Fathers/father figures state at least one source from where they could obtain additional parenting information.

4. FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW RESULTS

A total of 35 fathers/father-figures responded to the interview questions after viewing the DVD 'Being a Father' and reading the accompanying booklet. The fathers ranged in age from 24 years to 58 years and were from mixed socio-demographics. The majority of fathers/father figures were married (n=33) and employed in a full-time capacity (n=34).

Participants' perceptions of the main message of the DVD

The participants were asked to identify the main message represented throughout the DVD. Table 2 displays the response from the participants relating to the main message of the DVD.

Table 2: Main message of the DVD

Themes	n	%
Spend more time with your children	15	43%
Make your child feel special	7	20%
Talk to your children	5	14%
Tell your child that you love him/her	5	14%
Foster an open relationship with your child	3	8%

The participants believed the main message in the DVD was about spending more time with your child/children. One parent extended on this by adding: *"if you're a parent with one or more children, then the take home message is about spending individual time with each child"*.

The participants further identified that communicating with your child/children and fostering an open relationship with your child/children by making them feel special *"by giving hugs and telling your child that you love them"* were other main messages identified throughout the DVD.

Participants first overall impressions of the DVD including images and language used

The question regarding the participants' first impression of the DVD received a mix of responses that was evenly spread across likes and dislikes towards the DVD. The participants' responses concerning the first impressions of the DVD are presented below in Table 3.

Table 3: Responses to first impressions of the DVD

% Like / Dislike the DVD	Reasons
46% did not like the DVD	Cheap production Poor quality No clear start or end DVD aimed at older fathers No new information presented
54% did like the DVD	Was nice, but would only influence on a short term Liked it, but a little middle class The tips are helpful for parenting Liked it, helped to reconfirm what we should be doing as parents

Fifty-four percent of participants (n=19) liked the DVD overall. Common positive reasons related to the DVD helping to confirm what fathers already know but should be practising. The following are a selection of quotes from these participants:

"It was nice, but the DVD would only influence me on a short term, then everything will be back to the same"

"I did like the DVD, even if I felt that I already do a lot of these things, it's good to be reminded to keep on doing it, or to do it more often"

"The DVD was well done and would influence the way I spend time with my children"

Despite liking the DVD overall, some respondents expressed concerns the DVD did not present any new information and the fathers in the DVD appeared 'older' and 'middle class'.

The remaining 46% (n=16) of participants did not like the DVD overall. Most of the reasons provided related to the production of the DVD. This is represented by the following quotes from the participants:

"The quality of the DVD was bad and poor. The voice from the second dad was not clear and there was no clear start or end to the DVD"

"The DVD started suddenly and I missed the beginning. The DVD needed an introduction"

"The dads in the DVD were talking separately with no particular order or clear message"

"The DVD seemed all over the place and did not have any order to it"

The participants were also asked their opinions of the images and language used in the DVD. These responses can be found in Table 4.

Table 4: Response to images and language used throughout the DVD

Themes	Yes	No
Fathers natural		✓
Children natural	✓	
Language was simple	✓	
Language was understandable	✓	
Sound quality consistent		✓
Sound quality clear		✓

All the respondents agreed the children appeared the most natural in the DVD and quoted some of the following. *“The young children looked and felt more natural and were good”* and *“the children were a sharp grabbing tool because they were very natural in the DVD”*.

In response to the fathers being natural, 60% of the participants thought the fathers in the DVD were unnatural and unrealistic. The following quotes provide a sample of typical responses.

“The fathers are very unrealistic as they only represent middle/upper class”

“Not much for the struggling/battler to connect with”

“All the stories were all positive. It was as if the fathers never experienced any bad or difficult situations”

According to the participants, the language used in the DVD was simple and easy to understand (85%), but the quality of the voices from the fathers was found by over half to be unclear and inconsistent (65%).

Types of fathers to whom the DVD appeals

The participants were asked to what types of fathers they believed the DVD would appeal. Common themes are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5: Types of fathers to whom the DVD may appeal

Themes	n	% yes
Middle/upper SES	14	40%
Busy fathers	10	28%
All fathers	7	20%
Fathers wanting to improve	4	11%

Participants identified middle/upper class ‘white collar’ fathers as the group to whom this DVD would most appeals.

Strategies and the ending of the DVD

Respondents were questioned about the strategies used in the DVD and their opinion on the ending of the DVD. The overall themes from this question can be found in Table 6.

Table 6: Preferred ending for the DVD

Themes	n	%
Verbal messages	13	38%
On-screen listed strategies	8	23%
Both verbal and on-screen messages	8	23%
None	6	17%

More respondents appeared to prefer verbal messages relative to on-screen strategies at the end of the DVD. However, some of these respondents chose verbal messages because they felt the listed on-screen strategies were “not realistic enough” and that the “on screen messages were (presented) too quickly to read or absorb and therefore I paid no attention to them”.

Fifteen percent of the participants thought neither the verbal messages nor the on-screen strategies were effective as an ending. One respondent cited “None were effective! The messages and strategies that were given were not realistic. There should have been (more specific) ideas on how to talk to your kids about drugs, alcohol etc”.

Approximately two-thirds of respondents (37%) did not believe the strategies suggested in the DVD were helpful, and found the strategies unrealistic and too positive. The following are a sample of quotes about its helpfulness from the respondents:

“The DVD did not provide any realistic strategies”

“There was no reinforcement. Need an expert to reinforce messages and add credibility”

“The messages and strategies used reflected only positive situations, would have been great to show a problem or negative situation and then the step that a parent can do to fix the situation”

“The strategies used all seemed successful. There were no fathers who didn’t seem very good or have any of problems with their children”

Most believable characters in the DVD

The DVD contained fathers and both children and young adults. Participants were asked who they thought were the most believable characters in the DVD, and their responses summarised in Table 7.

Table 7: Most believable characters from the DVD

Character	n	%
Children / young adults	13	37%
Fathers	10	28%
Both children/young adults and fathers	12	34%

The father who took his sons fishing in the DVD elicited slightly more positive comments from the participants. The following provides a sample of the responses to this question:

“The broadcaster was the most believable, NOT the cricketer. The cricketer was not involved in his daughter’s life, he was supportive of the things she was doing but wasn’t involved. This is not sending the right message across to fathers”.

“The father that took his boys fishing was the most believable, because he represented something practical that fathers can actually do with their boys”

Advice provided by the fathers in the DVD

The participants agreed the ‘fishing’ and ‘broadcaster’ fathers provided the best advice because they gave practical examples of what they did with their children. The following are some quotes from the respondents:

“The fishing trip dad provided great advice because it was practical”

“The broadcaster father gave useful advice because he gave practical examples of what he does with his kids”

"I disagree with the father who said that if the main things in life are your kids then you will be a good parent. This is far from true as it takes a lot more than that to be a good parent"

"Not the cricketer father. He gave me the impression that it was okay to not be active in your child interests as long as you were supporting them"

Age of the fathers in the DVD

The participants believed the fathers in the DVD were all of a similar 'older' age and were therefore not inclusive of the majority of fathers. The respondents also believed the fathers appeared financially 'well off'. This is illustrated by the following quotes: *"A bit too much of the same ages"*

"Too old"

"Only represented Caucasian 40+ fathers and not very accurate to the diversity of the Australian culture"

"They all seemed very well off"

"There were no real men"

"They were all old, none in their 20's or early 30's"

What the DVD is missing

In response to the question of what, if anything was missing from the DVD, the most common themes included:

- Credibility from professionals/experts in the field to reinforce the message
- Practical advice that can be applied to everyday situations
- Representatives from ethnic or indigenous groups
- A more representative age range of fathers
- Different types of dads, not just professional dads
- Information about conflict resolution between fathers and daughters/sons
- Footage or representation of mothers as part of the family
- No mention of the 'serious parts of life' that fathers may face with their children (e.g. discussion about drugs, alcohol, etc)
- Different perspectives from single and/or married fathers

The respondents mostly indicated that the DVD would be more effective in reaching a wider audience if it addressed more of the themes identified previously *"because not all dads are the same"* and *"what works for one may not even work for another, and therefore we needs lots of different practical advice"*.

Participants were also asked to list one thing they would change about the DVD. The most common suggestions included:

- Include practical advice that could be applied to everyday situations
- Provide examples of how fathers can deal with negative situations
- Create more realistic situations/solutions
- Include fathers from different cultural and socio-economic groups (wider representation of fathers)
- Include fathers from more varied age brackets
- Introduce individual characters
- Create a clearer start and end to the DVD
- At the end of the DVD, list the characters again and the production team
- Provide a list of where fathers can go to get further information/help
- Include strategies from single fathers and married fathers

Summary of Fathers/Father-Figures Thoughts on Booklet

A total of 26 fathers/father figures provided feedback on the text for the booklet designed to accompany the DVD 'Being a Father'. Responses to fathers and father figures thoughts on the booklet varied. While respondents appeared to like the booklet overall, there were some concerns regarding its format and content, including:

"Not detailed enough. How to 'really' communicate with your kids. More 'tools' on how to"

"The booklet had good ideas but was too much like a report"

"Booklet does not flow. Setting for rules and limits is in the wrong spot"

"It could include more information about or ideas about where else to go other than one website, eg., books"

The majority of respondents (n=20) liked the booklet, describing it as "good" and found it to contain useful, thought-provoking strategies to support the DVD. Comments to support these findings included:

"The booklet is good. The quiz is good and though provoking, it made me think about the things I do with my boys. There was nothing in the booklet I didn't like"

"Helped by providing extra ways to get closer to my child. The quiz was an eye opener"

"The book contains specific references of individuals and includes case studies"

A small number of fathers / father figures (n=2) indicated they "didn't take much in" while reading the booklet, while one father/father figure suggested including answers for the quiz questions as some readers may not have the answers.

DISCUSSION

The majority of participants identified that the main message of the DVD was to spend more quality time with your child/children. Overall, one half of the respondents liked the DVD with the other half indicating it lacked reinforcement from a credible expert in the field. The production of the DVD was believed to be of cheaper quality, with no clear start or finish or sequencing of idea development. Some of the respondents also expressed concerns the DVD did not present any new information and the fathers in the DVD appeared older and from a homogeneous demographic (Caucasian, older, more 'professional' affluent group). The respondents felt that the DVD portrayal of this demographic made the DVD appear less realistic and harder to relate to.

The respondents indicated the younger children were the most believable characters in the DVD because they were the most natural and realistic and that the language used throughout the DVD was simple to understand. In contrast the respondents thought the quality of the voices from the fathers was difficult to hear and understand.

The respondents appeared to prefer verbal messages but also indicated that the listed on-screen strategies were presented too quickly and of those who could read them – they were considered to be not sufficiently practical to be implemented in everyday situations and addressing only how to deal with / create positive situations.

According to the respondents, the DVD was missing the following:

- Credibility from professionals/experts in the field to help reinforce the message
- Practical advice that could be applied to everyday situations
- Fathers from different age groups, ethnic, indigenous and SES groups
- A clear order for when the DVD started or finished
- No mention of conflict resolution or negative or more challenging issues that fathers may face with their children (e.g. discussion about sex, drugs, alcohol, etc)
- Representation/acknowledgement of mothers
- 'Where to go' for more information
- Character information – 'who is that guy?'

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to test the use and effectiveness of video as a mode of intervention to actively engage fathers and father figures in the lives of their children. Further, it tested an information booklet designed to accompany the video (DVD) and support its messages. The concept of a DVD and booklet to deliver the information to fathers and father figures was developed in response to evidence suggesting the involvement of fathers in their children's lives can positively influence their children's resilience and health-related behaviours. Moreover, education programs for fathers need to start early in their children's lives to establish open, trusting relationships and effective communication strategies.

The DVD entitled 'Being a Father' and accompanying booklet were tested with 35 fathers and father figures of young children through the use of interviews. The majority of interviews were conducted individually, with one formal focus group of nine fathers/father figures conducted. While the DVD and booklet were overall well-received, several recommendations for the improvement of these resources were made, including: modifying the DVD to include a broader range of fathers from different age groups, cultural and social backgrounds; providing advice on conflict resolution; and consistently reinforcing the messages from credible experts. The booklet received positive feedback with suggestions made to modify the format and content, including greater referral to other sources of information.

The results of these interviews with fathers and father figures of young children will be used to make any necessary modifications to the DVD and supporting booklet, ensuring the most appropriate and salient messages and strategies are used to engage fathers in the lives of their children.

Thus the goals of our initial project were reached, although the project took two years instead of one to complete. We are now in a position to build upon the feedback obtained from this project to further develop the video, making the changes suggested by the focus groups, and test its efficacy in schools. A submission for further funding to complete this work is being considered.

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7. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Focus Group Script and Questions

**Fathers and Father Figures
Focus Group
Fathers of 11 to 13 year old children**

Aim: To obtain the fathers' feedback regarding the proposed DVD, 'Being a Father'. Further, the focus groups aim to explore fathers' attitudes, opinions and suggestions to ensure the most acceptable strategies and methods are used to engage fathers.

Objectives:

- To determine the effectiveness of DVDs aimed at assisting fathers, and father figures, to initiate and maintain involvement in their 11-13 year old children's education;
- To determine the effectiveness of DVDs aimed at assisting fathers, and father figures, to initiate and maintain involvement in their 11-13 year old children's mental health;
- To determine the key content (for DVD format) to encourage fathers/ father figures to take action (and what are these key actions) increase their connectedness to their children;
- To determine the key content (for DVD format) to encourage fathers/ father figures to take action (and what are these actions) to improve the mental health of their children;
- To determine the effectiveness of the DVD aimed at assisting fathers, and father figures, to initiate and maintain involvement in their 11-13 year old children's lives; and
- To identify effective methods to engage fathers, and father figures, in watching educational DVDs describing methods of initiating and maintaining involvement in their 11-13 year old children's education, health and mental health.
- To identify effective ways to improve the quality and duration of communication between fathers and their children.

1. Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this project, which aims to test the use and effectiveness of DVD as a mode of intervention to actively engage fathers and father figures in the lives of their children . The purpose of this discussion is to learn more about what you think and feel about the DVD titled 'Being a Father', and the accompanying booklet.

I will be asking you to talk about your ideas and opinions about the 'Being a Father' DVD. Because we are talking about *your thoughts and opinions*, there are no right or wrong answers. All of your comments, both positive and negative, are welcome.

2. Procedure

I have series of questions to ask you about the DVD and the accompanying booklet. We will start with the DVD questions.

3. Questions

Are there any questions before we begin?

INITIAL REACTION TO DVD

What do you think is the main message of this DVD?

What is your first impression of this DVD? Do you like it, not like it? Do you think it would influence what you do or how you do things with your children?

To what types of Dads do you think this DVD would appeal?

How do you feel about the images used? (Prompt - were the participants natural, do they appeal to you?)

Was the language used engaging? (Prompt - too simplistic/too complex?)

What was the take home message – call to action?

Which ending works well – action messages/strategies on screen or not

Were the strategies helpful? (Prompt - too specific or not specific enough?)

What did you like most about the DVD?

What did you like least about the DVD?

Who were the most believable characters?

Who provides good advice?

Who didn't provide good advice?

How did you feel about the age of the Dads (Prompt - too young / too old / just right mix?)

Who was the most credible - father talking or children talking?

Did you think there was the right mix of people discussing their fathering experience and printed advice on screen?

What did you think about the use of the children in the DVD? Were they believable?

All fathers in the DVD said they tried to make their children feel special – what did the fathers in the DVD say they do to make their children feel special?

What will you do if anything as a result of watching this DVD?

If you could change one thing in this DVD, what would it be?

If anything, what do you think this DVD is missing?

Repeat with booklet – likes dislikes etc...

APPENDIX 2

Evidence-Based Recommendations for Fathers Video Intervention Content

**FATHERS VIDEO
INTERVENTION CONTENT
EVIDENCE-BASED RECOMMENDATIONS**

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January 2005

1.0 Background

Most health-related behaviours are adopted during childhood and adolescence. As parents provide primary role models for children they play a significant role in the development of their children's health-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours. In many evaluations of parent-directed educational interventions mothers have been the predominant participants and respondents. Evidence suggests, however, the involvement of significant family members (in addition to mothers) - particularly fathers - in the growth and development of their children can positively influence the resilience and health-related behaviours of their children. Research also suggests many fathers believe they have limited influence on their children's decisions and choices, and especially so when their children reach and progress through adolescence. Therefore, father/father figure education programs need to start early so by the time children are making significant health-related decisions for themselves, they have an open and trusting relationship with their father/father figure and effective communication strategies are well established. The aim of this project is therefore to develop an educational video for fathers/father figures with 11-13 year-old adolescents.

2.0 Evidence-based video intervention content

The following ten recommendations regarding the presentation of a video intervention for fathers/father figures to improve connectedness with and mental health of their 11-13 year-old children have been gleaned from published scientific literature and the findings of several parent-centred researched studies undertaken at the Child Health Promotion Research Unit at Edith Cowan University. These evidence-based recommendations are expressed as actions and encapsulate the key parenting-related attitudes, knowledge and behaviours known to be associated with raising resilient healthy adolescents. Objectives 1-5 will receive priority emphasis in the video. While the remaining objectives (6-10) may or may not be addressed in the video, they will be addressed in the accompanying written materials.

1. Father/father figures describe strategies they use to help children to feel close to (“connected”) the father/father figure and the family.
2. Father/father figures discuss ways of helping each child feel special.
3. Father/father figures believe they have an important role in the lives of the adolescent children they are raising.
4. Father/father figures describe ways they positively and actively monitor the whereabouts and behaviours of adolescents.
5. Father/father figures provide examples of the strategies they use to communicate effectively with adolescents.
6. Father/father figures identify which overall parenting style is the best for raising healthy resilient children.
7. Father/father figures list benefits of positive father involvement in the lives of adolescent males and females.
8. Father/father figures describe the ways they help children to feel close to (“connected”) school and other community-based organisations.
9. Father/father figures give examples of the standards and limits they set for adolescents.
10. Father/father figures state at least one source from where they could obtain additional parenting information.

3.0 Format and length

The final video will be between 12-15 minutes in length. Each of the objectives are to be addressed via dialogue excerpts and vision sourced from conversations between fathers/father figures and between adolescents. The selection of excerpts for inclusion in the video will be based upon how well they reflect and demonstrate each of the objectives. These excerpts will describe or depict specific examples of things fathers/father figures can actually say and do. Only positive and enabling information will be included. That is, a strengths perspective will be used and a deficiency focus will be avoided. The video content should tell fathers what they can do rather than what they shouldn't be doing.

4.0 Prompts designed to initiate discussions from which relevant dialogue and vision can be sourced
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4.1 *Father/father figures describe strategies they use to help children to feel close to (“connected”) father/father figure and the family*

Prompts for father/father figures, grandfathers etc:

What things do you do to help each of the children you are raising to feel special?
What things can fathers who are absent (due to work, divorce, etc) do to stay in touch with their children’s everyday lives?
What are the names of your children’s closest friends?
How important is showing positive emotion and affection in your family?
Compared to younger children, how much affection do adolescents need? What are the best ways to show this affection?

Prompts for adolescents:

What do you like doing with your Dad?
What does your Dad do to help you feel special?
Finish this sentence: ‘My Dad makes me feel special because/when ...’
Finish this sentence: ‘The best thing my Dad does for me is...’
Finish this sentence: ‘One thing I would like my Dad to do more is...’
How well does your father know your best friends’/mates’ names?
How well does your father know your friends’/mates’ parents?

The dialogue and vision chosen should reflect the following:

Be involved in the everyday life of children - take an interest in daily ups and downs.
Know children’s friends and continue this awareness.
Be emotionally available.
Respond to requests for attention.
Provide comfort when necessary and show affection throughout childhood-adolescence and young adulthood.
Give sincere and genuine encouragement and praise.
Participate in mutually enjoyable activities on a regular basis.

4.2 Father/father figures discuss the importance of helping each child feel special

Prompts for fathers/figures, grandfathers etc:

What do you do to help each child feel special?

When was the last time you told each of your children why he/she is special?

What did you say?

Prompts for adolescents?

When was the last time your father/father figure told you why you are special?

What did he say?

The dialogue and vision chosen should reflect the following:

Accept the adolescent for who he/she is and demonstrate unconditional positive regard.

When disciplining adolescents identify the behaviour that was unacceptable rather giving the message the adolescent is unacceptable.

Tell each adolescent why he/she is special as an individual – not just when something special is achieved.

Assist adolescents to achieve things/solve problems etc for themselves enhance self-esteem.

4.3 Father/father figures believe they have an important role in the lives of the adolescent children they are raising

Prompts for fathers/fathers figures, grandfathers etc:

What is it that fathers/fathers figures provide for children that is unique/special?

How does what you do as a father/father figure change as children reach adolescence?

Who is most important to adolescents – their friends or their parents?

Do parents become more or less important when children are going through adolescence?

Do father/figures become more or less important when children are going through adolescence?

What is the most important things father/father figures can do to ensure they have a positive role in their children's life?

Prompts for adolescents:

On a scale of 1-10, how important is your father/father figure in your life?

On a scale of 1-10, how much influence does your father/father figure have on your opinions and actions? What/where do they influence you the most?

What is the most important thing your father/father figures does for you that makes you feel special?

Finish this sentence: 'The most important thing I need from my Dad is...'

Apart from your father, which other male adults are important in you life?

The dialogue and vision chosen should reflect the following:

Debunk the myth parents/father/father figures have no influence on adolescents. Parents are important resources in their children's development and in helping their child to succeed. This is especially so as children reach and progress through adolescence because while peers become increasingly important and adolescents prefer doing things with their peers, parents don't necessarily become less important. Mothers are important but children/adolescents also need a father/father figure. Fathers/father figures make unique contribution to raising children.

While fathers are defined as the male biological parent, father figures are defined as other men who participate in the care, rearing and support of children within the context of the family. Appreciation of this definition broadens the concept and diversity of fathering.

4.4 *Father/father figures describe ways they actively monitor the whereabouts and behaviours of adolescents*

Prompts for fathers/father figures, grandfathers etc:

How does the supervision of children differ to that of adolescents?

How often do you check children are where they say they are going to be?

How do you go about this?

Have you actually talked with other parents to check issues such as party supervision, availability of alcohol, security, etc?

How do you check up on your children without embarrassing them?

How do you monitor children but still demonstrate you trust them?

Prompts for adolescents:

When you go out with friends, do you think your father/mother/somebody would actually check to see if you are where you said you were going to be?

When invited to a party, how often do you think your father/father figure or mother would contact the other parents about issues such as party supervision, availability of alcohol, security etc?

How do you feel about this 'checking' – what do you think is the best way for your parents to check things like this without embarrassing you?

How can adults show they trust you?

The dialogue and vision chosen should reflect the following:

Knowing the whereabouts of children/adolescents is an important part of parenting because children who think someone may check are less likely to participate in high-risk behaviours.

The time between the end of school and evening is especially important in terms of monitoring.

Ensure children know father/father figure will pick them up from any situation/place at any time.

Using monitoring to keep track of children is a proactive and more important than reactive and excessive punishments.

Active monitoring means actually checking children are where they say they are, discussing arrangements with other parents etc. Such monitoring is not the same as actively supervising ('eyes-on') younger pre-adolescent children.

4.5 *Father/father figures provide examples of the strategies they use to communicate effectively with adolescents*

Prompts for father/father figures, grandparents etc:

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your father's communication skills?

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your communication skills?

What makes a parent/father good to talk with?

What things do you do to make talking with your adolescent easy?

Where/when are the best places/times to talk with your children?

During discussions with children it is important to check his/her understanding of what you are talking about. How do you check with to see you have understood what the child is saying?

On a scale of 1-10, how much do you think your child enjoys talking with you?

What do you do that may encourage your child to want to listen/talk with you?

Prompts for adolescents:

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate how well your dad listen/talks with you?

What encourages young people to talk with/listen to their dads?

How do you know if a father was a good listener?

Can you talk with your father/father figure about things that are important to you?

What helps you to talk with your dad about things that are important to you?

How do you know when your father is really listening to what you are saying?

On a scale of 1-10, how much do you enjoy talking with your father/figure?

What makes you feel this way?

The dialogue and vision chosen should reflect the following:

Use open-ended questions and displaying genuine interest in and concern about such problems.

Talk with adolescents about their interests, concerns, aspirations etc.

Use paraphrasing during discussions with adolescents to ensure father/father figures understand what adolescent children mean. This communication skill also conveys respect and sincerity on the part of the father/father figure.

Ask for clarification of adolescents' comments and feelings.

Positive language should be used with adolescents. This means explaining what adolescents can do rather than giving them a list of don'ts.

Adolescents' perception that their parents are good parents, rather than parental reports of good parenting, is an important influence on children's attitudes and behaviours. The practical implication is father/father figures should check what the adolescent thinks the father/father figure means/wants/has said.

Be proactive in raising issues – don't wait for adolescent to ask a question.

4.6 Father/father figures identify which overall parenting style is the best for raising healthy resilient children.

Prompts for father/figures, grandfathers etc:

What is the most important characteristic of a great father?

Which of the following is the most important part of being a great dad?

Setting rules and limits

Enforcing rules and limits

Showing positive emotions and feelings

Spending time with children

Prompts for adolescents:

What is the most important characteristic of a great dad?

Which of the following is the most important part of being a great dad?

Setting rules and limits

Enforcing rules and limits

Showing positive emotions and feelings

Spending time with children

What are the ingredients of a great dad?

The dialogue and vision chosen should reflect the following:

Effective parenting is characterised by combining clear parental control/rules/limits with caring, warmth and support. (As different to parenting that is too “authoritarian” or too “passive”.)

4.7 *Fathers/father figures list benefits of positive father involvement*

Prompts for father/father figures grandparents etc:

Finish this sentence: ‘Looking back my father helped me most when he...’

Finish this sentence: ‘The most important thing my father helped me learn was...’

Prompts for adolescents:

Finish this sentence: ‘Having a great dad helps people my age to...’

Finish this sentence: ‘The most important things I have learned from my dad so far are...’

Finish this sentence: ‘The best thing my dad does for me is...’

The dialogue and vision chosen should reflect the following:

Good Fathering:

- Helps adolescents feel secure, important and special.

- Improves their self esteem.

- May help to reduce adolescent depression.

- Helps children resist negative peer influences.

- Protects children from engaging in hazardous and harmful behaviours. In the absence of protective parenting/father practices, children are more likely to engage in a range of hazardous behaviours e.g. early sexual involvement, antisocial behaviours such as vandalism, stealing, truancy, cigarette smoking, harmful alcohol and other drug use, etc.

4.8 Father/father figures describe the ways they help children to feel close to (“connected”) school and other community-based organisations

Prompts for fathers/father figures, grandfathers etc:

What do you do or what have you done to show your children school is important?

What do you do or what have you done to help your children like school?

Prompts for adolescents:

What does your dad do or what has he done to show you that school is important?

What does your dad do or what has he done to help you like school?

The dialogue and vision chosen should reflect the following:

Father/father figures can try to help adolescents to like school and to develop strong bonds with school.

Discuss a range of school-related issues not just academic topics and progress.

Participate in school-based activities.

Help with homework and projects.

Get to know teachers.

Participate on the P & C.

Discuss adolescents’ plans for their future.

Help adolescents to identify and cultivate social supports outside of their family.

Involve children in adult-supervised after-school activities.

4.9 Father/father figures give examples of the standards and limits they set for adolescents

Prompts for fathers/father figures, grandfathers etc:

How important is setting family rules and limits for adolescents?

When was the last time you discussed any rules or limits with your children?

What were they? How did your children respond?

What conditions would you place on a teenage party held at your place?

Do you have different rules and limits for different aged children?

Who should set and enforce important rules and limits for children in the family?

What happens if an important rule is broken?

What does your child expect to happen if important rules are broken?

Prompts for adolescents:

How important are family rules and limits for people of your age?

What rules and limits should parents set for people of your age?

When was the last time you discussed any rules or limits with your father/father figure?

What are some important rules that parents should set?

What happens if an important rule is broken?

The dialogue and vision chosen should reflect the following:

Adolescents need parents to set rules and limits as this assists them develop in a healthy way and to feel secure.

Parents agree on rules and consequences and consistently apply these.

Specify age-appropriate rules and limits for each child. This means verbalising what behaviours are acceptable and not acceptable.

Some rules might be more important than others.

Negotiate curfews in consultation with children – i.e. involvement in decisions related to rules and limits.

4.10 *Fathers/father figures state at least one source from where they could obtain additional parenting information*

Prompts for father/father figures, grandparents etc:

Finish this sentence: 'If I needed help or information about a parenting issue or parenting situation I would...'

What do you talk about to other parents?

How often do you speak with other fathers/father figures about parenting successes challenges?

What agencies or places provide professional help for fathers about parenting?
