The I’mPerfect Fathers Group

A gathering of fathers of children with disabilities

By

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India
• Fathers are the final discipline makers.
• Fathers are the only breadwinners.
• Fathers need to be tough, they are not emotional and sensitive.
• Fathers need not be involved into day to day care of their children.
• Fathers are responsible for teaching their boys to become MEN.
• Fathers are the HEROs for their children especially for their sons.
• Fathers never have time for their children.
• Fathers have to secure their child’s future.
• Fathers should use physical methods of disciplining.
Alternate ways of fathering
A systematic review of studies which controlled for maternal involvement and gathered data from different independent scores, found ‘positive’ father involvement associated with a range of desirable outcomes for children and young people.
When programmes actively involve the fathers of children with disability with their children, this foster’s father-child involvement at home, enhancing father-child attachment and contributing to the child’s cognitive and social development as well as providing mothers with support in child care.
Substantial research however shows these fathers being ignored or dismissed by services and variously described as ‘hard to reach’, ‘the invisible parent’, or ‘the peripheral parent’.


historical focus on mothers,

the understanding that father’s role is secondary by many care-providers

research focus on stress and coping rather than diversity in parenting styles of fathers and paternal creativity

Patriarchy and Hegemonic Masculinity
So we began......
In particular research has shown the importance of support groups when cultural norms and gender stereotypes make it difficult for individuals to reach out for help.
A Narrative Practices Framework
Developed by Michael White and David Epston

Our lives are shaped by stories

“alternate states of identity” vs “dominant states of identity”

Socio-cultural--historical -politics

people are experts of their own lives

Therapist’s stance is decentred yet influential
Consulting the Consultants (fathers)
Collaboration
Methodology
Planning for The First Gathering
The First Gathering

How would you describe your child, the way you want him to be known by people around you?

What are some of the hopes you have as we go along the six sessions?
The Second Gathering

What are the things you do together that gets your child to engage with you and makes both of you happy?
The Third Gathering

What are some of the ideas you have around disciplining?
The Fourth Gathering

What is a perfect father all about?

Let’s call out “The Father Blame”
The Fifth Gathering

“Is it my child or is it the disability.”
The Sixth Gathering

What are some of the learning’s from this group sessions? How do you see yourself using them in the future?
Exploring The Impact.....
Five major themes
First theme

Learning from each other’s experience
Second Theme

Redefining Discipline
Third Theme
Navigating through fatherhood.
Fourth theme

Benefits of a non judgmental space
Speak about our, about the mess that we are in.
“We don’t talk. (I) don’t know how to do it (fathering). Here is a space where we spoke to each other. Means here I spoke more than whatever I speak at home also.”
Fifth theme

Advocacy
“You know, certain, some of our learnings could be shared. You know, could be adapted, adopted by the other fathers.”
“every father should be given an opportunity to think about what the disability means for his child and to clarify what he understands. A chance to understand what his contribution to the child’s journey can mean and the importance of this for the child’s development would be a significant start for most families.”
Thankyou