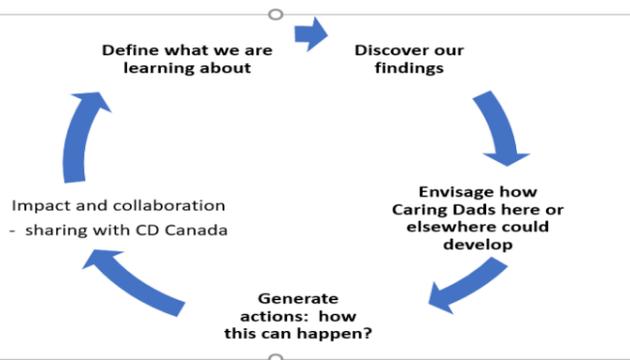


An appreciative inquiry on the implementation of the Caring Dads programme in diverse communities and contexts (Tower Hamlets, London)

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Caring Dads is a Canadian evidenced based group work programme for fathers, generally delivered within children and family services, which addresses neglectful and abusive fathering. Working with family IPV and domestic abuse are central to this work. Aspects of the programme, particularly the programme materials, evidence base and implementation methodology, have developed significantly over time. The programme is now available in several countries and increasingly in different languages. www.caringdads.org/

Appreciative Inquiry Process



Tower Hamlets, London. The Caring Dads programme has been provided in Tower Hamlets since 2012 in the Sylheti language to fathers from the Muslim faith and Bangladeshi community. Tower Hamlets has the largest Bangladeshi community in the UK making up 32% of the population. Tower Hamlets has the highest rate of child poverty in Great Britain with children in Bangladeshi households having the highest poverty rates. There are high levels of migration, discrimination and other adversities. This delivery centre has a high level of retention and completion.

- An Appreciative Inquiry Approach (Cooperrider and Srivastva 1987) was used to explore the complexities of delivery in this East London community and the factors promoting successful delivery.
- This case example is part of a large scale Appreciative Inquiry into the delivery of the Caring Dads in the UK.

Key findings: Factors promoting successful delivery

- Inclusive local context including strong links with Muslim faith community
- Choice of acceptable venue for the programme
- Expertise of programme leaders, including professional faith roles and embedded links with children's and women's services.
- Persistence, resilience and creativity and belief in the efficiency of the programme by leaders, who also forged good links with other CD delivery centres to develop professionally. Strong culture of team development
- Adopting a restorative practice approach, not engaging with negatives and building on strengths
- Providing the programme in the "home" language of fathers attending the programme. The dynamics of translating, describing and delivering key programme components in a culturally appropriate manner, and some of the challenges and solutions generated
- Co-production of interventions to meet the needs of participants – such as integrating relevant teaching from the Qur'an and the Hadith and including sessions on IPV and child protection
- Ethos of care for the fathers attending the programme
- Joined up work with children and women's services

Fathers' perspectives (participants)

- Changes in their relationships.
- Spending more time with family
- Learning "to defuse it, not lose it"
- Some programme materials were particularly valued and used regularly
- Valued connecting with other participants and support
- Sharing problems they would never previously have shared with others
- Sombre moments were important
- Doing more family things such as cooking (quite a shift for this particular community of men)
- "A big shift in mindset"

Case example

"The gunslinger entrance" – "What have you got to offer?" Facilitator feeds back "you scare me". The man is surprised by this feedback and later asks children in his family network about this. Most don't say anything much, but a young niece and nephew comment that "yes, he does scare them". This prompts him to shift. At the midway review he is asked what his motivation to change is. He points to the empty chairs in the room and says "them". At the end he felt he was in a better position and this was confirmed by facilitators who had professional links with his family.

Messages and challenges

- Adapting Internationally developed programmes to have local cultural resonance can be effective, with appropriate facilitator expertise and commitment
- Programmes will need to be "added to" to meet participant need and cultural understandings
- Provision of programme in "home language" for migrant communities is an essential component in securing authentic engagement
- A supportive policy context is critical but policy contexts and priorities change. Resourcing may be withdrawn and resilience is required

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Tower Hamlet Caring Dads Facilitators