

Parenting Programmes for Incarcerated Fathers

This literature scan aims to provide some considerations on parenting programmes for the incarcerated and re-entry fathers in Singapore. First, a review of existing literature and research on parental incarceration will be given, with emphasis on paternal incarceration, and its impact on their families and children. The parenting needs and services deemed important by incarcerated fathers will also be examined to allow a better understanding of the assistance needed by them. A few parenting programmes will also be outlined to highlight the learning points and possible considerations when implementing parenting programmes for previously incarcerated fathers in Singapore.

Impact of Parental Incarceration

The impact of parental incarceration has been widely studied. The effects of paternal incarceration are particularly far-reaching, due to a higher percentage of inmates being men. In the United States, it was estimated that 92% of incarcerated parents were fathers (Rosenberg, 2009). The number of children separated from their incarcerated father was also much higher than those separated due to their mothers' imprisonment (Rosenberg, 2009). However, there has been a lack of official statistics in Singapore on the proportion of incarcerated fathers and the number of children affected due to paternal incarceration. Nevertheless, following the same line of reasoning, this would mean there are more incarcerated fathers than mothers in Singapore as approximately 90% of the prison population is made up of men (Singapore Prison Service, 2020).

The incarceration of fathers has differing impact on families. It could differ based on prior living arrangements with the family or other factors which affected the parent-child relationship (Wildeman & Western, 2010). It may also be dependent on the role played by fathers prior to imprisonment. Often, men would be the ones contributing financially to the family. The loss of income could lead to financial stress and loss of housing stability for their partner and the caregivers (Hairston, 1998).

Parental incarceration also increases the risk of intergenerational offending. Evidence shows that children with incarcerated parent(s) were more likely to commit crimes and be incarcerated themselves later in life (e.g. Farrington, Coid, & Murray, 2009; Johnston, 1995; Mazza, 2002). Specifically, children of fathers with a history of incarceration were 2 to 2.6 times more likely to have a criminal conviction than those with non-criminal fathers (Hjalmarsson & Lindquist, 2012). Further, a study conducted by Ang and Huan (2008) found father's criminality to be a significant predictor of adolescent recidivism in Singapore.

It has been found that children with incarcerated parents are more likely to have maladaptive developmental outcomes (e.g. Foster & Hagan, 2009; Geller, Garfinkel, Cooper, & Mincy, 2009; Murray & Farrington, 2005; Murray, Farrington, & Sekol, 2012; Turney & Haskins,

2014; Wilbur et al., 2007). There were also differences in children's reactions between paternal and maternal incarceration. A study by Fritsch and Burkhead (1981) suggested that children with incarcerated mothers reported more "acting in" problems which indicated withdrawals, while children with incarcerated fathers reported more "acting out" problems, including hostile behaviour, use of drugs or alcohol, and involvement in delinquent activities. Paternal incarceration has also been associated with early onset of sexual behaviours among youths (Nebbit, Voisin & Tirmazi, 2017).

However, children's reactions were also dependent on their developmental stage when the incarceration occurred. For example, children may exhibit disorganised feelings and behaviours in early childhood, while showing maladaptive behaviours such as conduct disorders and depression in later childhood (Wright & Seymour, 2000). Evidence suggested that youths with incarcerated parents may experience adverse effects on their physical and mental health (Lee, Fang, Luo, 2013). A study conducted in Singapore by Afiqah and Ler (2016) thus highlighted the importance of having a social group in helping children to cope, as it gave them an identity and a sense of purpose which was important for their psychological development. Also, children might display signs of developmental deficits if they lacked the mental capacity to handle the distress. This may be determined by two factors – age of the child, and whether they had witnessed the arrest.

Incarceration has an impact on the fathers. Arditti (2012) highlighted how being involved in the criminal justice system may create a conflict in their identities as an inmate and a father. Underlying these conflicting identities is the process of prisonisation, in which an individual takes in the prison subculture so much that the identities present before incarceration dwindle while the identity as an inmate escalates. This could be due to the environment where there are more opportunities to put in effect an inmate identity rather than a fathering one. Thus, as the inmate identity becomes more salient, the fatherhood identity becomes less so. As a result, fathers may detach themselves from their children, or minimise their responsibilities as a father (Arditti, 2012).

Despite the large number of incarcerated fathers, much attention had been given to services for incarcerated mothers as they are commonly seen as the ones responsible for raising their children (Schober, 2012). On the other hand, men are regarded as the financial provider of the family, who leave the parenting role to the mother. However, previous studies have indicated a desire by fathers to maintain the parent-child bonds (Hairston, 1991). By directly examining fatherhood, it was found that incarcerated fathers placed great importance on their role as a father, and incarceration may have hindered them from accomplishing that role (Arditti, Smock, & Parkman, 2005). At the same time, incarcerated fathers voiced a number of concerns about parenting during imprisonment. Greif (2014) highlighted some of the common issues regarding child rearing experienced by detainee fathers: (a) how to parent while incarcerated, (b) how to tell their children the reason for their incarceration, (c) how to interact with their children, especially daughters who were angry or crying, (d) being physically absent for significant events in their children's lives, (e) pressure to provide financially for the family, (f) worried that their children might follow them into a life of crime, and (g) the remorse of missing out on large parts of their

children's lives, and, for fathers with long sentences, how to tell their children that they would be away for a long time.

Regardless, fathers' continual involvement and contact with their children and families can be mutually beneficial (Fontaine, Cramer, Paddock, 2017). On one hand, fathers who stayed in contact with their children may reduce the negative impact of parental incarceration on children. At the same time, incarcerated fathers would be able to reintegrate into the community more successfully. Nevertheless, many fathers had voiced fears of their competency to return to their familial roles, and lacked confidence in their parenting ability (Arditti, 2012).

Despite their fears, parenting is a protective factor and plays an important role on attachment outcomes (Eddy, Martinez Jr., & Burraston, 2013). Positive parenting may reduce negative outcomes experienced by children due to parental incarceration, while problematic parenting could lead to attachment problems, as well as the development of antisocial behaviours in them (Eddy et al., 2013). However, many incarcerated fathers may not have an appropriate role model when it comes to developing positive parenting skills. Hence, parenting programmes offer fathers the opportunity to improve these skills and their relationship with their child(ren).

A meta-analysis of 29 evaluation studies provides some insights on the feasibility, appropriateness, meaningfulness, and effectiveness of parenting programmes delivered in prisons (Troy, McPherson, Emslie, Gilchrist, 2018). The most commonly reported aim of these programmes was to enhance parenting knowledge and skills to improve the parent-child relationship, as well as the competence of parents in responding to their children's needs. Other less frequently reported aims included: improving parental well-being; preventing or reducing children's social, emotional, and behavioural problems; mending relationships between caregivers; acquiring problem-solving skills; and lowering the risk of child maltreatment and parental recidivism. Common focal areas of these programmes included disciplining children, parent-child communication, and general positive parenting concepts. Overall, it was found that these programmes could be effective in improving parenting attitudes, knowledge, behaviour, and increased the frequency of contact between parent and child(ren).

Overseas Parenting Programmes

While this paper offers neither a comprehensive nor exhaustive review of all parenting programmes for incarcerated fathers, it aims to provide broad considerations for applications in Singapore. Hence, a few parenting programmes will be outlined for the purpose of this paper. InsideOut Dad® has been selected as it was specifically designed for incarcerated fathers, while Parenting Inside Out had been subjected to high quality evaluation (randomised controlled trials), and 24/7 Dad was picked as it was a community-based parenting programme.

InsideOut Dad®

InsideOut Dad® is an evidence-based fatherhood programme developed by National Fatherhood Initiative (Rutgers University - Newark, 2011). It was implemented based on the outcome of evaluation on the Long Distance Dads (LDD) programme, which was designed to help incarcerated men develop skills to become more involved as fathers and to ensure responsible parenting. The sessions were structured in a small group format facilitated by a trained inmate peer leader. However, the evaluation showed little evidence that the programme improved inmates' fathering knowledge, attitudes, skills or behaviours. A number of changes were made from the process evaluation, and eventually led to the implementation of a new programme – InsideOut Dad®.

While the focus of InsideOut Dad® was still on the relationship between incarcerated fathers and their children, what differed were the content, structure/design, and the addition of evaluation tools. It also added a re-entry component which was intended to reduce recidivism and help connect or reconnect the inmates to their families. The programme had 12 core sessions: (1) Getting Started, (2) About Me, (3) Being a Man, (4) Spirituality, (5) Handling and Expressing Emotions, (6) Relationships, (7) Fathering, (8) Parenting, (9) Discipline, (10) Child Development, (11) Fathering From the Inside, (12) Ending the Program. The curriculum targeted the criminogenic factors, such as anti-social attitudes, values and beliefs, lacking family relationships, anger, and the lack of empathy.

Facilitators were expected to provide opportunities and encourage the participants to speak out during group sessions. They were also provided with materials to guide them through the programme: (1) "Facilitator's Guide" provided facilitators with advice on running successful sessions, (2) "Activities Manual" described the pre-session procedures and procedures for conducting the sessions (e.g. learning objectives and questions for participants), (3) two surveys to evaluate the programme, and (4) "Fathering Handbook" designed to complement and boost the learning that had taken place over the sessions. The handbook was also provided to the participants, which included session logs, open-ended questions for the participating fathers, and instructional materials regarding child growth and development through the teenage years.

To examine the impact of the programme, an evaluation study was conducted to measure the gains in parenting knowledge and skills (Rutgers University - Newark, 2011). Using a quasi-experimental, mixed-method approach, 307 fathers who were part of the programme participated in the evaluation study. The study consisted of three components: (1) a pre and post-test survey (n = 307), (2) interview with programme graduates (n = 27), and (3) staff interviews (n = 5). The control group was made up of 104 subjects who did not participate in the programme, or who would participate in the programme after the evaluation.

Pre to post-test comparisons showed improvements in parenting self-efficacy, parenting knowledge, parental attitude regarding child behaviour, and an increased likelihood to contact their children through calls among fathers who participated in the programme. Qualitative interviews with participating fathers also indicated a high level of satisfaction with the programme, as they

felt that it was beneficial to their personal needs. The programme format, which consisted of open discussions with the facilitators and other inmates, as well as the handbook provided, proved to be key in the participants' successes. The handbook served a few purposes, such as allowing them to study the material and make clarifications, strengthen certain topics covered during sessions, and continue to review the handbook after programme completion.

Five areas of improvement were identified. Firstly, there could be more involvement of their children and families. Typically, fathers would practice the ideas discussed during sessions through letters, phone calls, or certain face-to-face meetings with their children. Hence, they reiterated the need for more direct involvement as it would be easier to put the ideas that were discussed in sessions into practice. Secondly, every group should have both male and female facilitators. As male and female facilitators approached the topics differently, different perspectives could be explored if both genders were involved during session facilitation. Another area of concern was attrition within the programme as it had a negative effect on the morale of the group. Next, there should be some follow-up after programme completion. The formation of alumni would allow regular meetings for discussion of issues that came up after the programme has ended. Lastly, family members should be included when fathers graduate from the programme as it helped to recognise their achievements.

Parenting Inside Out (PIO)

Parenting Inside Out (PIO) is an evidence-based, cognitive-behavioural parent management training developed by Oregon Social Learning Centre (OSLC) for incarcerated parents, their children and families (Eddy et al., 2008). In developing the programme, information was collected directly from various parties who would be involved in the programme. This included current and former inmates, caregivers, and the instructors. This helped the team to understand the areas that may be lacking in current programmes, and other skills that may be needed by incarcerated parents.

Parenting instructors – called coaches – were also hired and trained. Their main responsibilities were: (1) to have a comprehensive preparation for each session, (2) to deliver each session as stated, (3) to provide feedback on homework, and (4) to refer inmates to other services as required. Coaches were not to serve as case managers or counsellors as this would shift their focus away from the activities designed to serve all participating parents. They were trained and observed monthly in a classroom by a “master” coach and would receive feedback on their curriculum adherence and teaching principles.

Eventually, a 36-session programme was created, informed by both scientific and practice evidence on parenting intervention. The programme was held over 12 weeks, with approximately three-hour meeting held three times per week. It was a group-based parenting work, where each session would include brief lectures, small and large group discussion, practice exercises, and role play on the topic of the day. Participants were also assigned homework which provided them with

opportunities to practice parenting skills even in the absence of day-to-day interaction with their children. The focus of the programme was on effective communication and parenting knowledge, skills building, positive norm setting, parenting from a distance, and preparing for transition to home. In addition to group meetings, participants also met up with their coach individually to discuss any family circumstances and identify any need for referrals to other services. Participants were encouraged to discuss information and activities of the sessions with the caregivers. Caregivers could also ask for class materials or contact the coaches if they required assistance.

Two additional components were used to complement the programme. Firstly, a weekly support group was held for those who were taking or had graduated from the course. This allowed learners the opportunity to discuss certain problems or issues which may not have been possible during the structured curriculum. A second component was the visitation programme for the graduates. These special visits by their children and the caregivers provided parents the chance to review and practice their skills they had learnt. Visits were videotaped and subsequently reviewed by the coach and parent to understand what went well and not so well.

The immediate intended outcomes of the intervention focused on three aspects: (1) parental adjustment, particularly parental stress, depressed mood, and perception of playing an active role in the life of the child, (2) parent-caregiver relationship, in terms of feelings of closeness and ease of relationship to caregiver, and (3) parenting with respect to improving positive parent-child interactions. To evaluate whether the programme had an impact on the incarcerated parent and their families, the Parent Child Study was conducted (Eddy et al., 2013).

The study was a randomized controlled trial which compared the outcomes of incarcerated fathers and mothers who received parent management training to a control condition. Participants assigned to the intervention group received the PIO programme, as described above. Participants in the control condition had access to all other parenting programmes available. They are often non-standardised programme that may not be offered on a consistent basis, which concentrated on how an inmate had been parented rather than how they might parent their own children, and varied widely in the approach used. Most of them were lecture or discussion based, with little opportunities to practice the skills. Participants were assessed at the start of the intervention, after programme completion, and 6 and 12 months after release. There were 359 participants, with 45% being incarcerated fathers.

Overall, participants indicated high satisfaction with PIO. A majority of the parents found the information helpful, and rated the programme as having positive effects on them. Post-intervention results showed improvements of the intended outcomes upon programme completion. In terms of parental adjustment, participants in the intervention group reported significantly less stress, and were less depressed than the control group at the end of intervention. Participants who completed PIO also reported significantly more positive parent-child interactions, and rated themselves as being more likely to play an active role in their child's life compared to the control group.

Preliminary reports also showed promising results for the impact of PIO intervention at follow-up one year after release from prison (Parenting Inside Out, n.d.). Participants in the intervention group were less likely to have been rearrested, and reported a lower likelihood of being involved in criminal behaviour compared to the control group. They reported more family contact, were more likely to be involved with their children, and use positive reinforcements. Parents who received PIO also reported less stress and depression as compared to the control group. Lastly, they reported significantly less substance abuse than those in the control group.

24/7 Dad

The 24/7 Dad is a programme designed to help fathers improve their parenting skills and fathering knowledge (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2006). The programme was separated into two parts – 24/7 Dad A.M. which is a basic fathering programme, and 24/7 Dad P.M. that is more in-depth. Each programme was made up of 12 two-hour sessions which could be administered in a group or individually. The programme covered five aspects which were deemed as key to fathering – self-awareness; caring for self; fathering skills; parenting skills; and relationship skills. It was based on an ideology that boosts the growth and development of fathers and their children as caring, compassionate people who treat everyone with respect and dignity. This formed the underlying framework for the values that were taught in the 24/7 Dad programme. Pre- and post-assessment tools were administered to determine how well the participating fathers did in the programme, as well as find out areas where more support may be required.

Traditionally, 24/7 Dad is a community-based programme attended by fathers who may not have any history of incarceration. As part of the Iowa Prisoner Reentry Project, an evaluation study was conducted for fathers under community supervision who participated in the 24/7 Dad programme (da Rosa & Melby, 2012). Surveys were administered at the beginning (Time 1) and end (Time 2) of the programme to determine whether there had been a change in attitudes due to the programme. A total of 132 fathers participated in the programme, of which, 48 completed the surveys at the start and end of the programme.

The first survey, 24/7 Dad Fathering Skills Survey, measured their fathering and parenting knowledge and skills. The survey measured the domains of self-awareness, caring for self, fathering skills, and parenting skills. For participants who had completed both surveys, the results suggested a significant improvement in the overall fathering skills as evidenced by the improvement in all domains measured after programme completion. The second survey, 24/7 Dad Fathering Inventory, measured their fathering and parenting attitudes and beliefs. The survey measured all five domains – self-awareness, caring for self, fathering skills, parenting skills, and relationship skills. Results suggested that fathers tended to take a less traditional perception of the male roles and relationships upon programme completion. Specifically, participants showed significant improvements in the domains of self-awareness and relationship skills.

A comparison was also done between two groups: (a) individuals who participated only at Time 1, and (b) individuals who participated at both Time 1 and Time 2. No significant differences were found between these two groups. However, there are doubts on whether the former group may be regarded as the “control group” as data was not collected at all time points. Secondly, there was no clear indication on how the mean scores were computed to ensure a fair comparison between both groups. Nevertheless, the programme has shown some hopeful results on parenting skills for fathers under community supervision. It would be beneficial to conduct a randomised controlled study to find out how effective the programme is over a control group, as well as the long-term impact and benefits of the initiative.

Guidelines on Programme Implementation

Under the Healthy Marriage & Responsible Fatherhood initiative, 36 organisations across the United States were funded to provide Responsible Fatherhood activities to help fathers practice more responsible parenting. The key activities available for participating fathers included: case management to provide counselling, make referrals, and links to services when required; curriculum-based parenting classes and/or support group to develop knowledge on parenting and child development; increase contact and communication between fathers and their children; provide fathers with assistance in child support services or child care (Fontaine et al., 2017).

An implementation study was conducted with six of the organisations to understand the key strategies used to provide parenting activities to participating fathers and their families. In the report, recommendations were given to guide practitioners on the implementation of parenting activities for re-entry fathers. The following suggestions were drawn from lessons and experiences of these organisations (Fontaine et al., 2017):

1. Leverage on opportunities available in the pre- and post-release environments

As fathers had fewer activities and obligations to attend to during their incarceration, attendance for parenting sessions was better. Such an environment provides a chance for programme administrators to build rapport with the fathers for a significant period of time. Nevertheless, there would be more logistical barriers to conduct certain activities in the institutions. In contrast, parenting programmes implemented in community-based offices would allow a greater variety of activities that can involve the fathers, their children, and the families. Hence, programmes operating in both settings provide different opportunities, and can be used to complement each other to build a comprehensive programme.

2. Use a variety of parenting activities that help fathers reunite with their children

While programmes may consist of sessions to impart parenting skills to fathers, other activities should also be included. This would allow fathers the opportunity to interact with their children

during incarceration and in the community. Having a range of activities can be beneficial as fathers may be at different levels of readiness to reunite with their children or their families, and other caregivers may still be unsure about letting fathers back in the children's lives. This would allow fathers to have more choices and choose the appropriate activities to reunite with their children and families.

3. Address economic stability needs of returning fathers

The need to look for employment and housing were common challenges faced by returning fathers. Helping re-entry fathers to achieve economic stability would thus allow them to commit more time and resources to connect or reconnect with their children and become a successful parent.

4. Promote child/family-friendly environments in institutions

The importance of implementing parenting activities in institutions should be conveyed to correctional staff. The benefits of allowing fathers to have contact visits with their children and families during incarceration should also be advocated. Nevertheless, it is essential to ensure appropriate security measures are in place while still creating a welcoming physical environment for family members to interact in.

The following lessons can also be drawn from the parenting programmes outlined above:

5. Understand the needs and services that incarcerated and re-entry fathers seek

In developing a parenting programme for fathers, there is a need to understand their needs and/or to focus on aspects deemed important by them or where they perceive a lack of ability or knowledge. Getting regular feedback from various parties involved in the programme will help to inform the programme developers on what refinements are required. The programme should also be based on theories that have been proven to work with adults and parents.

6. Create opportunities for constant parenting practice

For incarcerated fathers, the process of prisonisation may render their identities as a father less salient. Being incarcerated also reduces their opportunity for daily interactions with their children. As part of the programme, fathers should have sufficient opportunities to practice the skills they have learnt during the sessions. This may help to reinstate their identity and responsibility as a father. It may include activities that can be carried out in their daily routine, or be coached during visits. Special visits can also be organised to allow fathers to spend a longer time with their children while instructors or coaches are around to guide them.

7. Evaluate parenting programmes regularly

There is a need to understand the short and long-term effects and benefits of parenting programmes for re-entry fathers. Many parenting programmes have lacked a follow-up evaluation to determine if participation in these programmes continued to affect parenting after release. From the 29 studies reviewed by Troy et al. (2018), follow-up data was collected in only four of the studies. As the needs of fathers may shift after release, a follow-up evaluation may be needed to understand how parenting programmes can better meet their needs. It would also be beneficial to assess the effects of programme on the recidivism rates of participants, and how involvement may have helped in their re-entry.

Implications and Suggestions

There are a number of programmes targeted at the families and children of incarcerated parents in Singapore. Specific programmes targeted at children and youths include Early Reader from New Life Stories and Friends of Children & Youth from Life Community Services Society, while services for families include counselling and support groups. One programme with a parenting component is the Prison Support Services – Kids In Play (PSS-KIP). It allows incarcerated parents to attend sessions on parenting skills in preparation for the Family Bonding Programme component, where children get to interact with their parents without physical barriers (The Salvation Army, 2020). The programmes provided by DADs for Life, an initiative of Centre for Fathering, have also created significant impact thus far. The initiative equips incarcerated fathers with skills through parenting classes such as ICAN (Involvement, Consistency, Awareness, and Nurture) Fathering and Navigating the Teens Years workshops, which aim to help them become a more effective father (Centre for Fathering, 2019). Open visit sessions are also organised to provide opportunities for interactions through bonding activities. From the feedback given by incarcerated fathers who have participated in the programme, these activities have proven to be impactful in strengthening the father-child bond. The ICAN programme has been launched in prisons, and has been officially recognised for its impact on the incarcerated fathers and their families (Centre for Fathering, 2019). However, there are several gaps that have yet to be addressed by the programmes available locally. Hence, the above review of existing literature highlights considerations for future services that can be provided by various agencies in Singapore for re-entering fathers.

Firstly, it should be kept in mind that the programmes reviewed above may not be culturally suitable to be replicated in Singapore even though they have shown positive outcomes. It is a widely accepted fact that culture plays a significant part in how parenting styles and behaviours are viewed within various societies, and this has varying effects on children and youth across different cultures (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009). While the underlying theories and programme structure may be replicated, the aims and areas of focus obviously need to cater to the parenting needs of incarcerated fathers in a local context. As there is no locally published study on the

parenting needs of incarcerated fathers, future studies can look into exploring the services deemed important by them to be effective parents.

Secondly, parenting programmes for incarcerated fathers should take a throughcare approach. Local programmes mentioned above offer group work sessions during the period of parental incarceration. However, as highlighted previously, difficulties and concerns faced by fathers when they were still in prison may change after release. The lack of support services after release may then hinder their ability to effectively perform their role as a parent. While they may be more concerned about how to parent while in prison, they may be more worried about supporting their children as they return to take up the responsibility of being the financial provider of the family. Parenting sessions can continue to be conducted after the fathers' release to help them address any issues that may arise then. At the same time, case management can be provided to help them address any problems that may hinder their reintegration, thus allowing them to reconnect with their families. Support groups and establishment of alumni can provide re-entry fathers with more opportunities to pick up skills and learn from the experiences of other fathers. It may also provide them with a space to discuss problems and get inputs from others regarding the parenting problems which they are facing. As outlined in the guidelines for programme implementation, different opportunities are available in different settings and should be used to complement each other.

Children may face a number of developmental problems and issues due to paternal incarceration. Involving children as part of the programme would be crucial to improve the parent-child relationship. Most of the local programmes target parents, children, and caregivers separately, and conduct separate sessions for each group. It may be beneficial to include joint sessions occasionally by involving children to help fathers rebuild the parent-child relationship, and guide fathers to address any issues that may be impacting the development of their children. Continuing to organise events and workshops for fathers and their children is equally important to maintain the parent-child relationship and allow them to practice the skills learnt. As noted, a variety of activities should be available to cater to varying levels of readiness among incarcerated fathers to engage their children. Hence, for fathers who may not be prepared for a face-to-face session, opportunities to connect with their children should also be created through other means of communication.

Also, local programmes currently do not seem to provide sustained opportunities for parenting practice. Incarcerated fathers may have opportunities for parenting practice during interactions when their children are allowed for special open visits. Even then, such visits do not happen often. Hence, allowing fathers to have constant practice as part of parenting programmes will be beneficial as they (re)learn to take on the responsibility of being a father. It may also help to ease the process as they return to their role of parenting after release.

Lastly, programmes should be evaluated longitudinally to understand their long-term impact. While it is important to know the immediate effects of these parenting programmes, the key is whether the knowledge can also be translated into practice after release. Assessing the

impact of programmes after release can also help to address the knowledge and skills needed by fathers in order to further refine the curriculum.

Conclusion

It cannot be denied that paternal incarceration can have a detrimental impact on the children and their families. However, the negative impact can be mitigated by positive parenting efforts. Yet, many incarcerated fathers lack the knowledge and confidence with regards to skills needed for positive parenting. This highlights the importance of having appropriate parenting programmes for fathers while they were in prison, with appropriate follow-up upon release. These programmes need to be reviewed regularly for continued programme development that addresses the changing needs of incarcerated and re-entry fathers.

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