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Caring Dads and Safe Visitation Programs, PACE Sexual Assault and Trauma Center

Theme: Children Exposed

P.A.C.E. provides onsite supervised visits for families where there is a high risk of family violence between parents or family members. The Safe visitation services are provided by trained staff to ensure children have a positive experience visiting with their parent.

The Caring Dads group program runs once a week for 17 weeks. This group offers a unique opportunity for men to connect as fathers through the use of a combination of active group discussions, exercises, and homework.

- Develop skills to cope in healthy ways with frustrating situations
- Understand how different fathering strategies and choices affect children.
- Increase their awareness of controlling, abusive, and neglectful attitudes and behaviours.
- Be provided with strategies to strengthen the father-child relationship

Critical Elements

- Caring Dads program supplements the safe visitation program. The focus of the program is to enhance fathers' understanding and compassion for their children and develop their empathy, all through a combination of information sharing and support.
- An important element of the work is discussions about how the men themselves were parented; family of origin discussions and focus on intergenerational learning and healing are essential to build understanding and empathy.
- Setting up the Safe Visitation program in a way that provides access to and invites dads to receive information and healing. There is time allotted before and after the visit for the visiting parent to meet with program staff and receive crisis intervention and support as required.
- Strict guidelines are in place to ensure safe and effective visits.
- In all of its programming PACE distributes a guide defining assaultive behaviours to enhance clients' understanding of domestic violence, and uses an Intervention Referral Assessment Matrix to inform its community referrals and connections.