



FATHER'S CLUB MANUAL

**ENGAGING MEN IN MATERNAL, NEWBORN
AND CHILD HEALTH, AND IN SEXUAL AND
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH FOR THE
MULTI-COUNTRY SHOW PROGRAM**



Acknowledgements

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About Promundo

Promundo is partner to Plan International Canada in the SHOW Program for the effective implementation of SHOW's male engagement initiatives across the five implementing countries. Founded in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1997, Promundo works internationally to promote caring, non-violent and equitable masculinities and gender relations. Promundo's independently registered organizations in Brazil, the United States and Portugal and its affiliate in Democratic Republic of the Congo collaborate to achieve this mission by conducting research to build the knowledge base on masculinities and gender equality; developing, evaluating and scaling up gender transformative interventions and programs; and carrying out national and international advocacy to achieve gender equality and social justice.

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Summary

The Fathers Clubs Manual on Engaging Men in Maternal, Newborn, and Child health and Sexual and Reproductive Health (MNCH/SRH) was developed for the Strengthening Health Outcomes for Women and Children (SHOW) Program by Promundo, with technical guidance from Plan International Canada and support from Global Affairs Canada. SHOW considers engaging men to be one of the core gender-transformative strategies to positively impact MNCH/SRH outcomes, as well as increase the agency of women and girls overall. In SHOW, young and adult men will be engaged using peer-to-peer models to become active partners of change. Gender-equitable men who are or will become fathers will be trained as community role models and champions promoting more gender justice-oriented versions of manhood. Male religious leaders will also be sensitized as to the importance of male involvement in promoting MNCH, preventing gender-based violence (GBV), and challenging harmful practices. This Fathers Clubs Manual is an evidence-informed tool for Plan International staff and local partner staff in Bangladesh, Ghana, Haiti, Nigeria, and Senegal. These countries will engage young and adult men as a critical component of achieving the expected outcome of SHOW, and this manual will guide them in the development of their male engagement programming, through the lens of gender equality and masculinities.

Men have a profound influence on the health of women and children, but often the support they provide before, during, and after pregnancy is limited or absent. Engaging men in programs designed to influence MNCH/SRH outcomes provides a means to address gender inequality within households and couple relationships. Programs that engage men can support them in challenging norms relating to masculinity that underpin gender inequalities in intimate partner relationships and parenting.¹ This has the potential to impact future generations as children whose fathers were actively involved in their lives grow up to develop more gender-equitable attitudes.

Thus, to improve both gender-related and health outcomes for women and children, and improve the lives of men themselves, this adaptable curriculum aims to work directly with men to question what it means to be a man and a father, and to promote their equitable involvement at the household level. These Fathers Clubs will be a safe space where men can identify and reflect on challenges related to MNCH/SRH and develop solutions within the group and with their partners.

The Fathers' Clubs manual is informed and adapted from an evidence-informed curriculum developed by Promundo called Program P² ("P" stands for "*pai*" or "*padre*" meaning "father" in Portuguese and Spanish respectively). Program P is a direct and targeted response to the need for concrete strategies and action steps to engage men in active fatherhood from pregnancy until early childhood. It was designed and developed for use by health workers, social activists, non-profit organizations, educators, and other individuals and institutions that aim to promote men's involvement as caregivers as one of multiple strategies to promote maternal and child health, family well-being, and gender equality.

¹ Comrie-Thomson, L, Mavhu, W, Makungu, C, Nahar, Q, Khan, R, Davis, J, Hamdani, S, Stillo, E, & Luchters, S. (2015) *Men Matter: Engaging Men in MNCH Outcomes*. Toronto: Plan Canada.

² Promundo, REDMAS, EME. (2013) *Program P: A Manual for Engaging Men in Fatherhood, Caregiving and Maternal and Child Health*. Washington, DC: Promundo.

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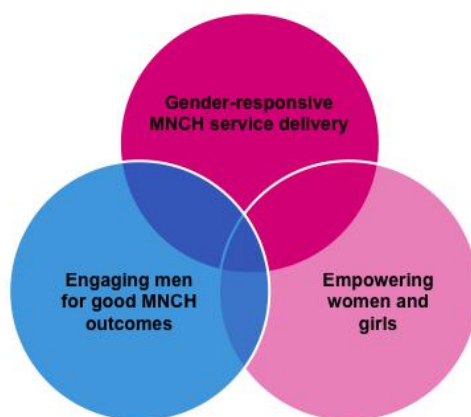
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Acronyms

| | |
|-------|--|
| ANC | Antenatal care |
| MNCH | Maternal, newborn and child health |
| PMTCT | Prevention of mother-to-child transmission |
| PNC | Postnatal care |
| SBCC | Social and Behaviour Change Communication |
| SHOW | Strengthening Health Outcomes for Women and Children |
| SRH | Sexual and reproductive health |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WRA | Women of Reproductive Age |

Introduction

The Fathers Clubs Manual contributes to the 4.5 year multi-country gender-transformative program, Strengthening Health Outcomes for Women and Children (SHOW) by promoting **male engagement** in MNCH/SRH. It is directly linked to one of the three gender-transformative strategies of SHOW.



The **overall objective** of the Fathers Clubs is to promote men’s equitable and nonviolent involvement as partners in MNCH/SRH. This manual contains a series of interactive and engaging activity-based sessions to be carried out by a well-trained facilitator over several months. The **purpose** of these sessions is for men – sometimes alone and sometimes with their partners – to reflect on what it means to be a man and a father in the context of MNCH/SRH. Through this reflection, male participants become aware of how gender-based discrimination negatively affects the lives of their partners, their children, and also men themselves. In these safe spaces, participants will reflect on and learn from their own experiences, as well as from the experiences of others, and begin developing and acting out gender-equitable solutions to improve MNCH/SRH. Every Fathers Club session is targeted to contribute to the expected outcomes of the SHOW program, including:

| Outcomes | Indicators |
|--|--|
| Increased ability of women and adolescent girls to make decisions on MNCH/SRH service utilization (1120) | % of WRA (distributed by age) and their male family members who know at least 2 key gender equality messages related to MNCH/SRHR |
| Improved social capital and network of women and adolescent girls (1130) | Average level of support provided by male family members for the utilization of MNCH/SRH services by female family members (dis. by sex and by age for women) Average level of satisfaction of WRA (dis. by age) and their male partners with the quality and responsiveness of MNCH/SRH services |

WHAT IS MALE ENGAGEMENT?

Plan International Canada defines “male engagement” in MNCH/SRH (also referred to as “men’s engagement” or “male involvement”) as “**men taking an active role in protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of their partners and children.**”³ This definition is premised on a vision of sustainable behavioural and relational change and more gender-equitable relationships between male and female partners. It views male engagement **as a broad concept rather than a list of actions or decisions in which men should participate** in the MNCH/SRH continuum of care. It encompasses:

- Men’s **subjective experiences, motivations, relationships, and active participation** rather than specific actions as indication of engagement;
- A focus on **men’s agency and relationships as distinct from male participation or involvement**, which can be understood to be more passive.

To promote male engagement in MNCH/SRH, Plan International Canada and Plan International countries implementing SHOW aim to highlight men’s roles in MNCH/SRH through development of the Fathers Clubs, direct education and outreach, and identification of male gender equality champions and role models. The titles of these “clubs” will be contextually established. However, the target group remains constant, i.e. adult male partners of women of reproductive age.

Male engagement is critical in improving women’s access to and use of MNCH/SRH services. Men also play a critical role in providing safe and equitable households for their children and sharing the burden of household and caregiving chores long after the child is born.

WHAT IS THE APPROACH OF THIS MANUAL?

The curriculum takes a **gender-transformative approach**, by engaging participants in **actively questioning what it means to be a man or a woman in society and in challenging inequitable gender norms and power imbalances**. The sessions are designed to promote critical reflection and dialogue through active participation in activities and discussions guided by a trained facilitator. The aim of such discussions is to promote long-term changes in gender relations and power dynamics, which can improve men’s relations with their partners and their children well beyond the perinatal period. Throughout the sessions, men (and women, where mixing groups is feasible) will be encouraged to develop solutions for common challenges to men’s participation, and establish a new set of gender-equitable group norms, based on equality, nonviolence, openness, and respect.

³ Comrie-Thomson L, Mavhu W, Makungu C, Nahar Q, Khan R, Davis J, Luchters S, Hamdani S, and Stillo E. (2015) *Men Matter: Engaging Men in MNCH Outcomes*. Toronto, Canada: Plan Canada. Page 10.

SO, IS THIS MANUAL JUST ABOUT GROUP EDUCATION?

As stated in the *Guidance Note on Male Engagement in Maternal, Newborn and Child Health/Sexual Reproductive Health*, SHOW aims to improve MNCH/SRH outcomes and transform gender norms through a **socio-ecological model approach**:⁴ working to promote change at **multiple levels of society**. The socio-ecological model helps identify the many entry points for challenging harmful gender norms at the individual, relationship, community, and societal or structural levels – where gender norms are learned, internalised, reproduced, and reinforced. Within SHOW, it is important for interventions with men and their partners to be **designed in conjunction with strategies to sensitise the larger community and key institutions on gender-transformation and the importance of male engagement**.

As much as possible, it is important that this curriculum strive for connections between interventions implemented at these different levels. For example, group education interventions at the individual/ relationship level are often more effective when **combined with** community campaigns that promote new perceptions of men's caregiving and validate changes in men's behaviour and attitudes. To this end, SHOW's broad behaviour change communication (BCC) activities will integrate messaging to encourage men's caregiving role, and targeted engagement of traditional and religious gatekeepers will be carried out to support positive changes in men's attitudes and behaviour.

⁴ Heise LL. (1998) Violence Against Women: An Integrated, Ecological Framework. *Violence Against Women*, 4: 262-290.

How to use this manual

Welcome, colleague! This manual is for Plan International and partner staff involved in implementing the SHOW Fathers Clubs in Bangladesh, Ghana, Haiti, Nigeria, and Senegal. It contains a series of interactive activity-based sessions to be carried out with fathers alone and, at times, with their partners. Prior to implementing the manual, it will be essential for the facilitator – either you or someone whom you will train – to undergo an intensive training on gender, masculinities, and fatherhood to learn how to carry out the sessions, reflect on deeply held biases, and promote positive growth. In the first years of SHOW, Promundo, a Plan International Canada partner, will be leading the in-country trainings with Plan International and partner staff.

MANUAL STRUCTURE

This manual is designed to slowly build fathers’ understanding of how gender-inequitable norms impact MNCH/SRH outcomes for women and children, as well as impact men themselves. It uses various techniques such as role-playing, group discussions, debates, homework, and more to appeal to a diversity of men and different learning styles.

Though the main focus of the Fathers Groups is on MNCH/SRH, there will also be sessions on joint household decision-making, women’s right to make household decisions, conflict resolution, challenging harmful practices, and more equitable division of household labour and care work. Gender roles, norms, and equality will be discussed throughout each of these sessions, rather than be confined to the beginning of the intervention.

The manual is organized broadly into 6 themes:

- 1) Welcome
- 2) Unpaid Care Divide
- 3) Men, Gender & Power
- 4) Pregnancy, Delivery and Beyond
- 5) Relationships
- 6) Planning for the Future

At the beginning of each theme you will find important **background information**, including frequently asked questions, key facts about the topic to supplement the group reflection and dialogue, and facilitator tips to ensure a well-run session. Take time to review this background information well in advance – at least 2 to 3 days – before your next meeting.

Within each theme, you will find a set of activities. Each activity is designed to be one hour in length, including a check-in at the beginning and a check-out at the end of the activity. The activities are designed in such a way that they can be implemented in settings where men have limited time to participate, or can be combined with other activities to create longer sessions where more time is available. For example, if men are available to meet for 2 hours, you could complete 2 activities, including a check-in at the start of the session and a check-out at the end of the second activity.

The manual includes 19 “core” activities, but the Fathers Clubs can meet many more times. Each facilitator will carry out the main activity (1 hour in total duration) and assign homework

related to the theme of the activity. The following week, facilitators will lead a session where participants will share their experiences of carrying out the homework assigned in the previous session. This will also be an opportunity for facilitators to further reinforce main themes from the previous session. In short, Fathers Club sessions can alternate between the “core” activities and a homework reflection meeting each week.

Facilitator Tip: Make sure to emphasize the key messages or takeaways at the end of each session so participants leave the session understanding the purpose of the exercise!

Other MNCH/SRH education components such as the social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) activities can and should be incorporated, as well as the provision of knowledge-based information about MNCH/SRH, such as identification of danger signs during pregnancy. It is recommended, where possible, that relevant service providers or professionals provide the knowledge-based information on MNCH/SRH.

CUSTOMIZING THE FATHERS CLUBS MANUAL

This manual is a global “template” for carrying out your Fathers Clubs. It will be important to tailor the content of your groups – the key themes, messages, and activities – to the local context and to the target population(s). Use the following questions to inform how you will adapt this manual:

- What do men want to learn to become better fathers or partners?
- What challenges do men face as fathers?
- How do women want, or not want, men to be involved in MNCH/SRH?
- What are the key MNCH/SRH policies or priorities of the health system and government that you can incorporate in your intervention?

Many of the answers to these questions, especially the first three questions, can be answered by looking at the SHOW Gender Assessment and baseline research gathered at the beginning of the program.

Overall, take the time to listen to what women and men say about pregnancy, raising children, and their relationships because you want the sessions to respond to their needs. In addition, be aware that the content may need to be modified to respond to the needs of particular populations – such as men from polygamous households or men who migrate for work. These groups may require different recruiting strategies (e.g. inviting a man and 1-2 of his wives if possible) or sites of implementation (e.g. conducting workplace interventions with men who migrate for work). Piloting your intervention and requesting feedback from community members (and health workers) can help refine the content and strategies to improve the intervention’s resonance with the community.

For more information on adaptation read the *Guidance Note on Male Engagement in Maternal, Newborn and Child Health/Sexual Reproductive Health*.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Some sessions will focus on very sensitive and often taboo topics not commonly discussed in group settings. It may be that participants were victims of violence when they were young or are currently using violence against an intimate partner. Facilitators should be prepared to address the theme of violence and have referrals ready should participants ask for them. Above all, maintaining a safe and confidential space while discussing such sensitive topics will be critical. Encourage the group members to support one another, and be available to provide one-on-one discussions as well. Usually, all that participants need is a kind and sympathetic ear.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNTRY-LEVEL PREPARATION

After the careful work of country-level adaptation of the manual, but *prior* to facilitating the Fathers Clubs, facilitators will need to deepen their knowledge about gender, men's roles in caregiving, and masculinities. For this reason, it will be important for Plan International country SHOW staff and partners to provide useful information to the facilitators about the status of gender equality in the local context. This includes:

- Expand your knowledge on gender and masculinities:** Brush up on resources by reading informative publications and studies on gender equality, gender roles, gender-based violence, violence against women, feminism, and masculinities in your country. Create a short 2 or 3-page summary with key statistics and basic definitions and examples. Important definitions and concepts are provided within this Fathers Clubs Manual as well.
- Get legal:** Learn about laws and governmental policies in your country and surroundings. What policies exist to protect women's access to maternal, newborn, and child health services? What laws exist for addressing domestic violence and other kinds of gender-based discrimination and abuse? Plan International country offices implementing SHOW are requested to please provide this information to facilitators.
- Take time to reflect:** How do you see women's and men's roles in families, and the distribution of labour in the home? What is your outlook on each? As a child, what were you taught a man or father "should be"? What about a woman or mother? How were men and boys treated differently in your household than the women and girls? When you train your facilitators, come ready to share your own experiences, such as the challenges of living up to unrealistic ideals of manhood and personal stories of change. This will help set an example of the tone we want for the Fathers Clubs.
- Identify and create a list of referral services for your facilitators:** Some participants may prefer to discuss a particular topic, obtain information, or seek support outside of a group setting, or they may need attention from a specialized service provider. Facilitators should be aware of places where they can refer participants if needed (and if such services exist).

The role of the facilitator

See yourself as a facilitator, not a teacher. Ask questions to better understand the participants and to help them reflect more. Remember: you are not a parent or a gender equality expert. You do not need to have all the answers. The role of the facilitator is to create an open and respectful environment in which men (and women, where applicable) can feel comfortable sharing and learning from each other.

HOW TO ASK QUESTIONS THAT PROMOTE DIALOGUE⁵

See your group as a process. Ask “process questions,” or questions that cause participants to reflect more. These are questions that cannot be answered with a “yes” or “no,” and that are not biased.

YES, DO THIS!

- ✓ **Ask process questions:** “What do you think about being present in the delivery room? How would you feel being there?” And “What do you think about being absent from the delivery room? How would it feel not to be there?” Process questions cannot be answered with a “yes” or “no” – instead, they encourage the participant to provide a more detailed and personal response.
- ✓ **Be simple:** Ask, “When?” “Where?” “What?” “How?” “Who?” “Why?” You should continue with a full sentence: “What were you thinking when that happened? Why do you think that is?”
- ✓ **Be unbiased:** Exclude your own feelings and values from the questions.

In the groups, the process questions should always relate to the needs of children, to gender-equal parenting, and to gender-equal relationships.

DON'T DO THIS!

- X **Ask questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no”:** Examples: “Will you be present at the delivery? Do you think a father should be present during delivery?”
- X **Ask leading or biased questions:** Examples: “In order to be a caring man, will you be present during delivery?” or “Did you feel sad? Did you feel bad about that? Did you not think it would be a problem?”

⁵ Written by Vidar Vetterfalk, Men for Gender Equality-Sweden, and adapted by Jane Kato-Wallace, Promundo-US.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL FACILITATION⁶

- ✓ **Create a safe and equal space:** It is important for the group to be in a space where participants feel safe and comfortable. The facilitator(s) and the participants should sit in a circle during the discussions to encourage exchange and equality.

What is a “safe space”?

A safe space is a place where members of the Fathers Clubs feel physically and emotionally secure to share personal experiences and feelings without fear of ridicule, shame, or insult. The safe space should be easy to get to, located a good distance away from centers of power (such as a chief’s house), and situated where people passing by cannot listen in. Emotionally, it is the facilitator’s responsibility to build a trusting group dynamic where everyone feels open and free to contribute. Facilitators should also feel able to challenge members who may wish to “take over” the group or disrespect others. This is done through the enforcement of group agreements (or “ground rules”) and utilizing the other Tips for Successful Facilitation.

- ✓ **Enforce the group agreement:** Ask participants to establish a group agreement (commonly known as “ground rules”) and reinforce them throughout the activities. Important aspects of a group agreement include listening to and showing respect for others (not talking when others are speaking, not making rude comments or talking on the phone); confidentiality; and participation.
- ✓ **Do not judge:** Remember, you are here to facilitate discussion and reflection. Your role is not to teach or punish anyone. Be friendly and create rapport with your participants. Be aware of your own position of power – avoid judgmental and authoritarian attitudes. Never impose your feelings or opinions on the group.
- ✓ **Promote inclusion:** Ensure that all participants have the opportunity to speak. Be careful not to let one person dominate the conversation or make other people feel that they cannot share their own opinions. Consider starting every session with a general check-in (details on how to do this are provided in the Sessions), going around in a circle so everyone has a chance to speak from the beginning. Some people may be shyer and therefore require encouragement from the facilitator to share with the larger group. If you find that there are some members who are more talkative than others, say something supportive like “[Name of group member] has contributed wonderfully to today’s session. Does anyone else want to help him out?” Additionally, consider modifying activities to allow for more small-group discussions and then ask for feedback from each group after time is up.
- ✓ **Address participants’ concerns:** As a facilitator, you can engage the larger group in helping to propose solutions to the problems individuals are facing. Ask the group, “How do you think this problem could be solved?” or “Has anyone faced a similar situation? What did you do?” For example, a participant may say that he would like to share the domestic work, but doesn’t want everyone in his village to see him

⁶ Adapted from The Program M Manual, UNFPA and Promundo, 2007, and informed by the Change-Makers Training Concern Liberia Facilitator Handbook, prepared by Men’s Resources International.

sweeping the floors. What should he do? Rather than answer the question yourself, ask others to come up with suggestions.

- ✓ **Manage conflicts respectfully:** If a conflict arises among the group, or if a participant shares a discriminatory view, remind the participants of the group agreement and keep it visible during the session. Also, encourage other members to help mediate the situation. Ask the group what they think about the question raised or how they would suggest handling the problem. When necessary, you can offer brief responses to questions and clarify misinformation.
- ✓ **Appreciate honesty and openness:** Encourage participants to be honest and open. They should not be afraid to discuss sensitive issues for fear of ridicule from their peers. Thank the group members for sharing their personal stories. Never force anyone to participate in the activities.
- ✓ **Promote movement and interaction:** Include as much physical movement as possible so that participants remain active, alert, and interested. Use short energizer activities, such as songs or dances, in between activities in order to keep the participants engaged in the topics you are discussing.
- ✓ **Manage your time:** Keep track of time. Keep in mind participants' attention span and schedules.
- ✓ **Focus on the participants who are present:** If some participants don't show up, remind yourself to focus on the ones coming and not on the ones who did not come. Even if only one participant arrives, focus on him and remind yourself that a good conversation with him about his life and relationships might mean a lot to him and his family. He might also recommend attending the next meeting to his friends. The water carves the stone drip by drip.
- ✓ **Use energizers:** Sitting and talking for 1 or 2 hours can be exhausting for anyone. If your participants look tired or show that they are losing focus, use an energizer to lighten the mood and get participants' energy levels up again. Here are some fun ones:
 - **The Spaghetti (groups of 5-10 people):** The group forms a tight circle. Everyone sticks his or her hands into the center. With one hand, everyone grabs the hand of another person. Then, using the other hand, they each grab a hand of someone different. The objective of the game is to get untangled without letting go. By climbing, crawling, and wriggling around, participants can create one large open circle or, sometimes, two unconnected ones. If they are totally stuck, you can tell them that they can choose to undo one link, and then reconnect once that person has turned around, and see if that works. This energizer is fun and creates a nice physical bond between participants. It also subtly communicates ideas of working together to accomplish a task.
 - **The Shrinking Iceberg (groups of 5-8 people):** Put a blanket or several sheets of newspaper on the floor. Ask the group to stand on it. Then explain that this is an iceberg that is melting away, reducing its size by half every month. Their

object is to see how long they can all stay on it. You ask them to get off it and fold the blanket in half or remove half the paper. Each time, reduce the area by half and see how they can find ways to support each other to allow everyone to stay on.

- **The Rainstorm (physical but calming exercise; can be used at the closing):**
Ask the group to stand in a circle with their eyes closed. Say that a rainstorm is approaching. Ask everyone to rub his or her palms against their pant legs. Then, ask them to lightly pat their thighs with just their fingertips. Ask them to do it harder. Now, ask them to pat their hands against their thighs. Next, ask them to start slapping their hands faster and faster against their thighs. After a while, go back to lighter slapping, then to patting, etc., reversing the order until it is quiet again and the storm has passed. [At first the wind was blowing the trees, then light rain started, then heavier rain, then a downpour, and then the whole thing faded away.]

FATHERS CLUBS ACTIVITIES

THEME 1: WELCOME

Congratulations, you are about to start your first Fathers Club session!

The first series of activities are designed to welcome participants to the group and to create a comfortable, safe and trusting environment. The first session is crucial for setting the tone for the rest of the Fathers Club sessions. To ensure a well-run session, consider practicing the first session at home or with friends or close colleagues. At the session, try your best not to read the manual. Instead, put the instructions and key takeaways in your own words. For the group discussion, keep the manual near you so that you do not forget any of the questions, or have them written separately on a sheet of paper or card.

We recommend that the first session be longer than the rest of the sessions (about 2 to 3 hours total) in order to have enough time for participants to become comfortable and get to know each other. If possible, we strongly recommend completing Activities 1-3 in a longer, first session. If this is done, it is good to remind the participants of the length of the session and inform them that it will be longer than the others.

Prepare the Space!

- ✓ If available, put chairs in a round circle (no table in the middle) so everyone can see each other. This helps sets the tone that this is an equal and non-hierarchical setting.
- ✓ If no chairs will be used, ensure that a straw mat or other material is laid cleanly on the floor where people can sit and see each other comfortably. Participants should still sit in a circle.
- ✓ If women will be present, ensure everyone is seated at the same level – no one, including the facilitator, should be seated on a chair or bench if others are on the floor.
- ✓ On a separate flipchart paper, write the following headings: (1) Name, (2) Partner's name, (3) Children's names and ages, (4) Something you love to do together as a family, and (5) Something you would like to do more of as a family.
- ✓ Hang three separate pieces of paper where everyone can see them, such as on a tree or on the floor. One paper should have a 😊 (happy face) drawn on it, a second paper should have a ☹️ (frowning face) drawn on it, and the third should have a 😐 (neutral/unsure face) drawn on it.
- ✓ **(Optional)** If possible, prepare a table on the outside of your space with something to drink – water, tea, or coffee – and, if possible, some simple cookies. If this is not possible, find other ways to create an atmosphere where participants can feel welcome, can relax, and can mingle informally with you and with each other as they arrive.

Create the Safe Space

Remember to review the “Tips for Successful Facilitation” before you start. In addition, the following guidelines are recommended for this first activity:

- When you share, **use “I” statements** to ensure you are only speaking for yourself rather than for others;

- **Listen attentively.** You can do this by leaning forward and looking into the eyes of the person sharing;
- **Avoid asking questions or making comments when one person is sharing.** By listening attentively, you are providing space for the person to feel really listened to and supported in deepening his/her reflections. When people have the full attention of others, they can suddenly hear themselves saying wise things they did not know they knew. To listen is to provide a gift that brings out the wisdom of the person who is sharing;
- **Decide on a time limit** for sharing (e.g. 2 minutes). Use a timer or watch, if needed.
- In general, just be yourself. You are not expected to be an “expert.” You do not need to have all the answers. The role of the facilitator is to create an open and respectful environment in which men can feel comfortable sharing and learning from each other.

Dealing with Negative Responses

Since this will be the first session, you will still be in the process of creating a safe space for personal sharing. During this time, it is possible you will experience negative reactions from participants because some may be confused about the purpose of the Fathers Clubs. This can be distressing because you have the best intentions. However, keep in mind:

- Be patient and try to understand where the group member is coming from. In other words, put yourself in his or her shoes prior to addressing a concern.
- Use points of disagreements as opportunities for discussion and reflection. This can be your chance to invite others in the group, who may hold alternative and more equitable perspectives, to participate.
- Take the long view. You won’t change everyone’s attitudes in a single session.
- Reinforce the group agreement that you will establish in the first session if things get out of hand (For example, everyone has the right to his or her opinion; participants should speak one at a time, etc.).
- You are not expected to know all the answers, so do not be afraid to say, “That’s an excellent question. I don’t know the answer, but I will find out for you.” Write down the question in a place where you will remember it, and assure participants that you will find the answer by the next session.⁷

⁷ Adapted from the USAID Health Policy Project “Gender and Sexual Diversity Training: A Facilitators Guide for Public Health and HIV Programs.”

Collaborating with others to respond to potentially negative comments

Promundo recently organized a workshop to train partners on how to implement a curriculum engaging men as fathers for gender equality. Partners raised concerns about backlash and ridicule from men in their communities, particularly those who ascribe to more conservative ideals of family and tradition. Promundo asked partners to write on a piece of paper **one challenging question** they expected to get from their group members. Then, the questions were placed into a bag and mixed around. Promundo then asked 5 group members to pick one question from the bag and describe how they would respond to it. Other group members also contributed how they would respond. Sharing these ideas helped build partners' confidence. The responses were also recorded and included in the partners' curriculum.

Takeaway: In your country adaptation process, consider going through a similar exercise. This type of activity also encourages buy-in from those participating in the adaptation.

Caution: We have to ensure that the responses to these challenging questions do not unintentionally reinforce gender stereotypes, make fun of others, or stigmatize certain groups. For this reason, before including the answers into your curriculum, verify them with Plan International SHOW project Gender Advisors.

ACTIVITY 1: WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

(45 minutes)

PURPOSE: To welcome participants to the group and set the tone for the safe space; to allow everyone to get to know each other.

MATERIALS: Timer or a watch; (Optional): Flipchart stand, flipchart paper, and markers; cups and something to drink (water, tea, or coffee) and some simple cookies.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Meet each participant individually at the door and greet him by looking into his eyes. This shows respect and it gives the facilitator a sense of the participant's mood that particular day.
2. Introduce yourself and ask each participant's name. If possible, offer them something to eat or drink.
3. Let participants introduce themselves to each other if they do not know one another, and take time to mingle with them informally while you are waiting for all of the participants to arrive. Feel free to talk about the weather or anything else that helps create a relaxed social atmosphere.

What would you, as the facilitator, feel comfortable asking? What is normal in your context to ask about when meeting others for the first time in an informal setting?

If it feels appropriate you can ask questions like: *"How did you hear about the Fathers Club? What made you want to come? Do any of you already know each other?"*

Notes:

4. Once it is time to start, invite everyone to take a seat in the circle (some or all may already be seated).

Suggested statement when seated together in the circle:

“Welcome to the group and thank you for coming! You were invited to this group because men play an important part in the family. In these sessions, we will discuss how men and women can work together to improve the health of women and children as well as address men’s own concerns. These sessions will promote a more peaceful household.”

5. Set the tone: lead by example and model what the participants are invited to share. Show that the space is safe by sharing something personal and important. It can, for example, be a challenge that you have experienced in your relationship with your partner, For example, you may have found yourself manifesting gender stereotypes and falling into unequal patterns of behaviour that you would like to change. Share why you would like to overcome the challenge.

Example:

“For me, this group is important because I found that I was not well-prepared for what it means to live and cooperate well with a partner in a relationship. I was trained to be a “real man,” always strong. Instead of communicating in an open and honest way, I was always silent. At the beginning of our marriage, I wanted to treat my wife/partner as an equal but found it difficult because my family would not respect me if I did. So, I did what was expected of me, by making my wife do all the housework and doing much less myself. Sometimes, she had a closer relationship with the children and I was more on the periphery with my main role being the provider, where I was only expected to provide money. It made me feel empty and sad.

When I meet men in a safe space where we can talk about what really matters to us, I realize that I am not alone. There are many men who want to make a change, and we can start by reflecting and sharing our challenges and dreams with each other. This is important to me. Today, my wife/partner and I have managed to share time with our children so that I have equal responsibility for them and the household. This makes me happy.”

What personal story would you, as the facilitator, feel comfortable sharing?

Notes:

6. Next, tell the group that your role as the facilitator is to support the group and encourage everyone to talk and share, and to ensure that it is safe to do so.
7. Say, "*Even though many of us have already met each other, it is good to introduce ourselves again.*"
8. Ask each participant to share: 1) their name, (2) their partner's name, (3) their children's names and ages, (4) something they love to do together as a family and (5) something they would like to do more of as a family. If you have a flipchart and group members can read, write these questions down on the flipchart to remind participants of the questions.
9. As the facilitator, you should start.
10. Tell participants that you will have a timer to ensure everyone gets at least 2 minutes to share.
11. Once everyone in the circle has shared, say: "*Thank you for sharing!*"
12. If the sharing in the first round was rich and the group process feels safe, ask participants to turn to their neighbour and, in pairs, reflect for 3 minutes on how it felt to do this round of introductions.
13. Then, ask them to turn back to the group and share some of the reflections.

ACTIVITY 2: MAKING A GROUP AGREEMENT (30 minutes)

PURPOSE: To agree on a group agreement in order to create a respectful environment where participants are comfortable sharing and learning, without fear of backlash or ridicule.

MATERIALS (Optional): Flipchart, markers, tape.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Explain to the group that in this activity, they will create a group agreement to establish a safe and confidential space.
2. Ask the participants: *“What rules or agreements would help you feel safe and comfortable discussing and sharing in this group?”*
3. Ask the participants to contribute ideas they would like the group to adopt in order for them to feel comfortable and to trust the other group members.
 - **Facilitator Tip:** If available, you should write down the list of ground rules on a flipchart. If literacy is low, you can write them on a small piece of paper and then read them out to the group. On the next page is a list of several recommended rules that you can share with the group to help guide the discussion. If these rules are not mentioned first by the group members, recommend that they be included.
4. After a list of recommended rules is created, ask: *“Is there anything missing that you would like to add?”*
5. Make any additions that are suggested.
6. After the list is complete, ask, *“Does everyone agree to this list and commit to upholding this group agreement during our sessions?”*
 - **Facilitator Tip:** If someone does not want to commit, ask the person which agreement he or she is hesitating about and why. Allow the group to discuss any concerns that participants have about a particular ground rule. Suggest that the rule be changed or removed depending on the desires of the group. Ask the group: *“Are there alternative rules that you would feel more comfortable with?”*
7. After everyone has agreed to the group agreement, explain that it will remain in place for the duration of the group sessions and will need to be followed in order for everyone to feel comfortable, safe, and respected.

8. Tell the group that each member has a role to play in upholding the group agreement. If someone is not respecting the agreement, the facilitator and group members should remind the person of the agreement to which they have committed. These should be polite reminders, not punishments.
9. Thank everyone for committing to uphold the group agreement. You may end the activity by reading the key message below.

Key message

Establishing a group agreement is important because it will help these Fathers Clubs meetings to be a space where men (and women) can find honesty, trust, and support. I encourage each of us to respect this agreement and to support each other in following it.

Important Ground Rules for a Successful Group

Privacy and Confidentiality:

The privacy of personal experiences must be secured. No one should discuss the private information shared in the group with others in the community. All personal stories and experiences that are shared in the group will remain in the group.

However, participants are encouraged to share any knowledge or lessons they have learned in the sessions with others outside of the group, such as friends, family members, and neighbours.

Equality:

All members of the group are equal, irrespective of age, sex, or background.

All members have a voice and the right to speak, share, and contribute.

Respect and Empathy:

Speak one at a time – allow each person the time to speak. Everyone’s viewpoint is important, so we need to make sure everyone is heard. Listen and show interest in what others have to say. There should be no side conversations when a participant is speaking.

Practice empathy. Imagine yourself in the other person’s position and try to understand how they feel. Respect the opinions of others and try not to judge others for their experiences or opinions.

Share the space. Show support and encourage others to speak if they are too shy to participate.

ACTIVITY 3: VALUES CLARIFICATION (30 minutes)

PURPOSE: To listen to, debate, and reflect on different perspectives and opinions about men and women's gender roles in society.

MATERIALS (Optional): 3 pieces of paper: one with a 😊 drawn on it, one with a 😐 drawn on it, and one with a ☹️ drawn on it (one face for each paper).

INSTRUCTIONS

Before the activity begins: hang three pieces of paper on the walls or on trunks of tall trees. One should have a 😊, the second should have a 😐, and the third should have a ☹️ drawn on the pages. Alternatively, you can lay the pieces of paper on the floor/ground.

1. Tell the group that the purpose of this activity is to reflect on their own attitudes about men and women.
2. Explain to the group that you will read aloud a few sentences one by one. After each sentence is read, they should walk to the side of the space that best represents what they think. If they *agree* with the sentence, they should walk to the side with the "happy face." If they *disagree*, they should walk to the "sad face." If they're *unsure*, they can walk over to the "neutral face."
3. To begin, ask everyone to stand in the middle of the room.
4. Read out any one of the sentences below. Repeat it to make sure everyone understood. ***Note on adaptation:** You can add other sentences about gender stereotypes according to your context.

Statements:

"Men should be leaders of the home."

"A man should feel ashamed if he cannot earn enough money to support his family."

"A woman's main role is to take care of the home and family."

"Real men do not cry."

"A real man has many children" or "A real man has a male child."

5. Ask people to think about the sentence and then walk to the side that best represents their answer.
6. Once everyone has chosen a side, give them a few minutes to discuss their responses.

7. Do not respond to their statements with your own opinions. Just listen. However, do look for patterns in the responses. For example, if women are in the group, do men tend to answer one way and women another? Or do younger men tend to answer one way and older men another?
8. Share these observations with the group and ask them why they think some men might have different opinions than other men. Could this be based on any differences of age, education, or other factors? Encourage participants to pose questions to those who have opposing views.
9. After each side has had a chance to explain their responses, ask if anyone would like to change their answer. If anyone decides to change sides, ask them what led them to change their mind. If everyone chooses to stay where they are, that is fine!
10. After a few minutes, ask participants to come back to the center of the circle and read the next statement. Repeat the exercise once again. Depending on time, you may be able to read 1 or 2 more sentences before the time is up.
11. When the time is up, ask participants to sit back down in a circle so you can share the closing message.

Key message

It is good to discuss and debate men's and women's roles in society. This helps us gain new perspectives and share opinions in a respectful way, without offending others.

CHECK-OUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Tell the group that each session will end with a "check-out," where participants will have an opportunity to reflect on what has been discussed during the session.
3. Ask the group:
 - *"Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?"*
 - *"Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?"*
4. After finishing the questions, assign the homework below and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

Share one to two things you discussed today with your partner, if you have one, or another loved one. What are things you wish you could do more of together? What are the things you enjoy doing together? Also, consider starting a discussion about men's and women's roles with your partner and/or your friends and family members, and share any new perspectives you gained while in today's session.

HOMWORK REFLECTION #1 (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the homework assignment from Session 1 and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

***Note on adaptation:** This is an example of how you may choose to run a Homework Reflection session in between the “core” activity-based sessions.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous Fathers Club meeting.

Share one to two things you discussed today with your partner, if you have one, or another loved one. What are things you wish you could do more of together? What are the things you enjoy doing together? Also, consider starting a discussion about men’s and women’s roles with your partner and/or your friends and family members, and share any new perspectives you gained while in today’s session.

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing your impressions of the first Fathers Club meeting, what you learned, and what you shared with your partner or good friend.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - “How did the homework assignment go?”
 - “How did you feel after doing the assignment?”
 - “What was the result of the assignment?”

6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group related to the topic of men's and women's roles. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.

THEME 2: THE UNPAID CARE DIVIDE

In the second series of activities, participants in the Fathers Clubs will explore how men and women spend their time differently. Women often shoulder the heavy burden of domestic chores and childcare. According to research from around the globe, men report that they spend less time on **unpaid care work** than women. What do we mean when we say “unpaid care work?” We mean domestic work like meal preparation, cleaning, and washing clothes, and direct care of persons including children, older people, people with disabilities, and able-bodied adults, with no financial compensation.⁸

To complement individual and group reflection, facilitators should share contextually relevant facts about the unequal division of household and caregiving chores. This helps to reinforce the fact that these problems do not exist only in their group; it is a countrywide issue as well. Include these facts during the Group Discussion portion of your session. Do your own research and include that information in your session. Many men will be surprised about how unequal the division of household responsibilities truly is!

| Country | Facts about Unpaid Care Work |
|------------|---|
| Bangladesh | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On average, women (age 15 and above) spend 3.6 hours per day on unpaid care and domestic work.⁹ Men (age 15 and above) spend on average 1.4 hours per day on unpaid care and domestic work.¹⁰ When time spent on unpaid care work and paid work is combined, women work 8.8 hours per day on average, compared to 8.3 hours for men.¹¹ |
| Ghana | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On average, women (age 10 and above) spend 3.48 hours per day on unpaid care and domestic work.¹² Men (age 10 and above) spend on average 1.15 hours per day on unpaid care and domestic work.¹³ When time spent on unpaid care work and paid work is combined, women work 7.58 hours per day on average, compared to 6.3 hours for men.¹⁴ |

⁸ Levto, R. et al (2015). *State of the World's Fathers*, A MenCare Advocacy Publication. Washington, D.C: Promundo, Rutgers, Save the Children, Sonke Gender Justice, and the MenEngage Alliance.

⁹ Levto, R. et al (2015). *State of the World's Fathers*, A MenCare Advocacy Publication. Washington, D.C: Promundo, Rutgers, Save the Children, Sonke Gender Justice, and the MenEngage Alliance. Page 264.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Levto, R. et al (2015). *State of the World's Fathers*, A MenCare Advocacy Publication. Washington, D.C: Promundo, Rutgers, Save the Children, Sonke Gender Justice, and the MenEngage Alliance. Page 265.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Senegal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women spend 7 times more time than men on unpaid domestic work.¹⁵ • 87% of all household production in Senegal is performed by women and girls.¹⁶ • In an average day, a woman spends 4 hours 23 minutes performing household chores and care work.¹⁷ • If the time spent on household production were valued, it would equal 22% of Senegal's GDP.¹⁸ |
| Nigeria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 94% of men in Nigeria believe that a woman's most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family, but 77% of those same men believe that men should share household tasks such as cleaning and doing dishes.¹⁹ • 25% of men play an equal or greater role in washing clothes and cleaning the house.²⁰ • Less than 40% of fathers engage in one or more educational activities to support their children's learning.²¹ |
| Haiti | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In rural Haiti, men engage in heavy agricultural work such as clearing and tilling land, producing export crops, tending large livestock, and wage labor. Women produce for local markets and do the majority of unpaid care work in the home.²² • Haitian women spend twice as much time on domestic tasks as men.²³ • Haitian women spend up to five hours a day collecting firewood for cooking, and numerous hours per day collecting water.²⁴ |

Men often say that it is difficult for them to spend time with children because they work full time. But all fathers should start to dedicate at least **1 hour a day** to their children, doing activities like preparing food, reading to their children or telling them a story, giving children baths, singing, or helping with homework. This helps fathers develop a special relationship with their children. Also, care work does not stop at caring for children. Men should discuss with their partner how they could share the burden of domestic chores such as fetching water and firewood/fuel, cooking, cleaning, and washing clothes.

According to the *State of the World's Fathers* report, unpaid care work limits women's and girls' opportunities for education, employment, and participation in political life, reduces their earning power, and keeps them dependent on the men in their family.²⁵

¹⁵ "The World's Women 2015."

¹⁶ Counting Women's Work (2016). University of Cape Town. Available at <http://www.cww-dpru.uct.ac.za>

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Nigeria Men and Gender Equality Survey (NiMAGES). 2015. Voices for Change (V4Change), UK AID, and Promundo.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Levto, R. et al (2015). *State of the World's Fathers*, A MenCare Advocacy Publication. Washington, D.C: Promundo, Rutgers, Save the Children, Sonke Gender Justice, and the MenEngage Alliance.

²² Cohen, Marc. *Planting Now: Agricultural challenges and opportunities for Haiti's reconstruction*. Oxfam International: Oxford, UK, October 2010.

²³ USAID (2016). *USAID/Haiti Gender Assessment. Volume I: Gender Assessment Report*. Washington, D.C.: USAID, September 2016.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid

When men take on a more equal role in the home, it provides opportunities for women to work to earn an income, study, and relax. Men also benefit: when men become more involved, they better understand the joys and stresses of caring for their children. It also allows men to become positive role models for their sons and daughters while also improving their own health and development. For more information on unpaid care work and fatherhood, go to the *State of the World's Fathers* website: www.sowf.org

COMMON QUESTIONS AND POSSIBLE RESPONSES

***Note on adaptation:** Some of the common questions and responses might not be relevant in your area. There may also be other common questions that are not featured here – please add them and brainstorm the types of responses you think are appropriate within the context.

| QUESTION | RESPONSE |
|---|---|
| <p><i>“If men and women are equal, why don’t women work in the mines, or the fields, [insert other hard and physical labour traditionally carried out by men]?”</i></p> | <p><i>“Traditionally, women’s roles are inside the home doing the invisible work of cooking, cleaning, and caring for children. Men work outside the home earning the income. This is seen as “high value” work because it allows the family to purchase things they need. In our society, men have more power than women and they get to decide who is able to do what. Restricting women’s roles in this way is a form of having control over them.</i></p> <p><i>Additionally, even if men do more physically difficult work, this does not mean they work more than women. In many places, women actually do more work than men because they do the work inside and outside the home too.”</i></p> |
| <p><i>“What, you want your wife to spend money on you? What kind of man are you?”</i></p> | <p><i>“A man is expected to be the sole and primary “breadwinner” of the household. This puts great pressure on him in his role as a provider. Any inability to do so decreases his perceived worth as a man. In a more equal society, men and women work together as equal partners to plan and act upon their financial well-being.”</i></p> |
| <p><i>“Why should men be involved in caring for children and doing the housework? Women are naturally better at these things than men.”</i></p> | <p><i>“Society looks down on a man who is an emotional, sensitive, and loving figure. In many cases, the man is expected to be the disciplinarian of the household. It is important to think about how these beliefs about men’s and women’s roles have more to do about society’s expectations and pressures than biology.”</i></p> |

ACTIVITY 4: HOURS IN A DAY²⁶ (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To discuss how men and women spend their time differently, and to identify ways that men and women can work together to support women's work outside the home.

MATERIALS: Flipchart or large pieces of paper; markers.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a "check-in" by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - "How are you?"
 - "Has anything new happened that you want to share?"
 - "Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in our last session?"
3. Introduce today's session by explaining to the group that they will explore how men and women spend their time differently during the day.
4. Divide participants into two groups.
5. Give each group a piece of flipchart paper and markers.
6. Explain that each group will write down the 24-hour schedule of a family member.
 - **Group 1** will write down the schedule of a **man** who has a wife and two children (a girl and a boy) and lives in the village.
 - **Group 2** will write down the schedule of a **woman** who has a husband and two children (a girl and a boy) and lives in the village.
 - **Facilitator Tip:** It is possible to change the location. For example instead of VILLAGE you can use TOWN or CITY. It should depend on where the participants themselves come from.
7. Show an example of what you are looking for. An example might be*:

²⁶ Adapted from the "24 Hour Day" in the Men Talking to Men Methodology by Promundo, Men for Gender Equality-Sweden and UNFPA-Georgia.

| Time | Activity |
|---------------|------------------------------------|
| 07:00 – 07:45 | Wake up, bathe, and have breakfast |
| 07:45 – 08:30 | Take children to school |
| 08:30 – 18:00 | Work |
| 18:00 – 19:00 | Relax with friends |
| 19:00 - 20:00 | Eat dinner with family |
| 20:00 - 22:00 | Watch TV |
| 22:00 – 07:00 | Sleep |

***Note on adaptation:** It's useful to adapt this schedule to reflect common activities undertaken by people in the community where you work.

8. Give the groups 10 minutes to write their schedules.
9. Give each group 5 minutes to present their respective 24-hour schedules to the larger group.
10. Ask all participants to return to the circle. Ask the Group Discussion Questions.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Facilitator Tip: At some point in the discussion, share the statistics provided in the Background Information to further reinforce the message about the unequal division of household and caregiving chores.

- *“How did you feel during the group work?”*
- *“How do you feel now?”*
- *“Do you think that this exercise reflects reality? Why or why not?”*
- *“What differences do you see between men and women regarding the roles they play at home? And in society more broadly?”*
- *“Why is it that men are often not responsible for many of the household tasks that women do?”*
- *“How does this unequal distribution affect women’s health and well-being? Children’s health?”*
- *“How can we more equally distribute domestic roles at home? In society?”*
- *“What are the advantages of this more equal distribution?”*

Facilitator Tip: If you have time and access to a computer, play the film “Impossible Dream?”²⁷ by the United Nations. It is a 10-minute, no-words cartoon about men’s and women’s roles inside and outside the home. Afterwards, have a discussion about the film and whether the impossible dream is possible!

Key message

Women and men are often raised to perform different caregiving roles, with women usually bearing a significant proportion of the childcare and domestic work. There are many benefits when men and women work together and share the burden of household and childcare work, such as a happier and healthier home and more open, honest communication between partners!

CHECK-OUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

What are one or two things men can do to more equally share household and caregiving chores in the home? The participants should try to carry out at least one of these activities this week and come ready to share during the next session.

²⁷ The film can be found online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2JBPBIFR2Y>.

HOMEWORK REFLECTION #2 (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the homework assignment from the last session and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous Fathers Club meeting.

What are one or two things men can do to more equally share household and caregiving chores in the home? The participants should try to carry out at least one of these activities this week and come ready to share during the next session.

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing your impressions of the first Fathers Club meeting, what you learned, and what you shared with your partner or good friend.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - “How did the homework assignment go?”
 - “How did you feel after doing the assignment?”
 - “What was the result of the assignment?”
6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group related to the topic of men’s and women’s roles. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.

7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: WHO DOES THE CARE WORK?²⁸ (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect discuss who does the care household tasks and how gender roles influence the distribution of care work, and to encourage a more equitable distribution of care work between men and women.

MATERIALS (Optional): Props for the role-play such as a jerry can, basin, doll, etc.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in our last session?”
3. Explain to the participants that this activity will help them to reflect on how gender roles influence the distribution of childcare and household tasks within the household.
4. Ask five individuals from the group to volunteer to participate in a role-play.

Facilitator tip: If women are present, it is important that there are some men who volunteer for the role-play and that it is not just women who volunteer.

5. Explain that each of the volunteers will represent a member of a household doing housework or childcare activities. Assign each participant a role:
 - 1st volunteer is **caring for a child**.
 - 2nd volunteer is **cooking the dinner**.
 - 3rd volunteer is **washing the clothes**.
 - 4th volunteer is **sweeping the house**.
 - 5th volunteer is **collecting water**.

***Note on adaptation:** The tasks above can be adapted to reflect the common household tasks that women perform in the local context.

²⁸ Adapted from “Domestic Tasks: We only notice when nobody does them!” from the *Program H Manual* (Promundo, Instituto Papai, Salud y Genero, ECOS, 2002).

6. Give the volunteers one minute to prepare their character. Tell them that on the count of three the role-play will begin and they should **not** stop doing their household task until you tell them.
7. Begin the role-play: *"One, two, three, start!"*
8. After a few minutes, ask the 1st volunteer to stop. Tell the volunteer to give his or her task to one of the four remaining people in the household. Explain that this person has to do the new task in addition to the other task he or she was assigned. Let the role-play continue.
9. After one minute, ask the 2nd volunteer to stop and give his or her task to another member of the household. Explain that that person now must perform all the duties assigned to him or her. The three remaining members of the household are now sharing all 5 household duties. Let the role-play continue for one minute.
10. After one minute, ask the 3rd volunteer to stop and give his or her duty to another member of the household. The two remaining household members should now be sharing all 5 duties. Let the role-play continue for 30 seconds.
11. After 30 seconds, tell the 4th volunteer to stop and give his or her duty to the last remaining household member. Remind the remaining household member that he or she is now responsible for all 5 duties.
12. After 30 seconds, ask the 5th volunteer to stop working and sit down. Open the discussion using the questions below:

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Role-play participants:** *"How did you feel doing this exercise? How did you feel when you got to give your task to someone else? How did you feel when someone else gave your their task?" How did the last worker feel?"*
- *"Who generally performs the activities from the role-play in the home? Why?"*
- *"Why is it that many men and boys are usually not responsible for household activities like cooking, cleaning or caring for the children?"*
- *"How can it negatively impact the lives of women and girls when they are expected to perform all of these activities?"*
- **Women (if present):** *"Are there any activities that you would like men to participate more within the home?"*
- *"What can men gain from being more involved in household work like cooking and cleaning? How would women benefit?"*

- *“What are one or two things you can do differently this week to share responsibilities more fairly in the home?”*

Key message

Household tasks are everyone’s responsibility. It is not always possible to share these tasks equally amongst all household members, but everyone can take on their ‘fair share’. Each family should discuss the activities that need to be done and agree on a distribution of tasks that is fair and right for their family.

THEME 3: MEN, GENDER & POWER

In the next series of activities, you will guide the participants toward a deeper understanding of how gender expectations can trap men in rigid “boxes,” and how power is often used to have control over others.

Important Tip on Preparing for the “Man Box”

The Man Box is probably the most difficult activity in the Fathers Clubs manual because it has many steps, but it is an important activity that you will keep referring back to throughout your sessions! For this reason, take time to prepare your activity before your group meets.

You will need four flipchart papers. Each one will have a different title. Prepare the flipcharts with the titles you see below. This will help you by ensuring you do not mistakenly skip an important step.



GUIDING IDEAS

Keep these Guiding Ideas in mind as you facilitate the next several sessions with fathers.

- ✓ From a young age, both men and women are socialized to follow strict definitions of manhood and womanhood.
- ✓ In patriarchal societies, gender socialization creates inequality that negatively impacts the well-being of women and girls. For example:
 - Many women lack financial and overall household decision-making power
 - Many women and girls suffer a ‘double burden’ – having to carry out domestic chores and working outside the home (for example, farming, marketing, etc.)
- ✓ While many men are supportive of efforts to promote equality between men and women, such as ensuring both girls and boys have equal access to education, some feel threatened and insecure about the increasing attention on women’s empowerment. Some men think of gender equality like this: *“When women are empowered, men lose out.”*
- ✓ However, it is important to challenge this way of thinking and tap into **your participants’ own self-interest for change because gender inequality disadvantages men and**

makes them vulnerable too (though mostly not to the extent that it disadvantages women and girls).

- ✓ **Negative impacts on men** as a result of unrealistic expectations of manhood include:
 - Inability to cope with the demands of idealized manhood. For example, a man must appear “tough” and never show fear or vulnerability; and he must be the breadwinner.
 - Poor mental health (such as depression and anxiety), while at the same time men are societally discouraged from seeking help.
 - Poor physical health because men are encouraged to engage in risk-taking behaviour such as binge drinking, having sex with multiple partners, abusing drugs, etc.

- ✓ Remind participants that the Fathers Clubs provide a space for men to reflect on these rigid expectations and their negative effects. Through this reflection, men can see the benefits of redefining masculinity for themselves and, within that, sharing power within households and communities.

COMMON QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

***Note on adaptation:** Some of the common questions and responses might not be relevant in your area. There may also be other common questions that are not featured here – please add them and brainstorm the types of responses you think are appropriate within the context.

| QUESTION | RESPONSE |
|--|---|
| <i>“I feel like my culture and tradition are under attack.”</i> | <i>“The purpose of these activities is not to say that tradition and culture are bad, but rather to identify some beliefs that are actually harmful to men and to women because they create poverty, cause sickness, or impact their ability to exercise their fundamental rights.”</i> |
| <i>“The wife is more like an appendage, just like an extension of the man. Why did God not make Eve before Adam? It is because God knew that the utmost important person is Adam, and Eve is the appendage.”</i> | <i>“The woman came out of a man’s rib, not from his feet to be walked on and not from his head to be superior, but from his side to be equal. Under the arm to be protected and next to the heart to be loved.”</i> |
| <i>“Why should men and women be equal when men earn more money in the family and they are the breadwinners?”</i> | <i>“Men and women should be equal because they both contribute to family well-being.”</i> |

“If we spend too much time on men, aren’t we feeling sorry for them and making excuses for bad behaviour such as using violence?”

“These sessions are a key step toward understanding why men are absent fathers or use violence, NOT excusing it. We must better understand the social expectations and “rules” about what a man should be. By doing this we can work to challenge these harmful ideas and prevent such behaviour before it occurs.”

KEY DEFINITIONS

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| EMPOWERMENT | <p>Power is the ability to shape one’s life and one’s environment. The lack of power is one of the main barriers that prevent girls and women from realising their rights and escaping cycles of poverty. This can be overcome by a strategy of empowerment. Gender-based empowerment involves building girls’ assets (social, economic, political, and personal), strengthening girls’ ability to make choices about their future, and developing girls’ sense of self-worth and their belief in their own ability to control their lives.</p> |
| FEMININITIES | <p>How women are socialized and the discourses and practices that are associated with the different ways of being a woman. In short, what it means to be a woman.</p> |
| GENDER | <p>The norms, expectations, and beliefs about the roles, relations, and values attributed to girls and boys, and women and men. These norms are socially constructed; they are neither invariable nor are they biologically determined. They change over time. They are learned from families and friends, in schools and communities, and from the media, government, and religious organizations.</p> |
| GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE | <p>Gender-based violence refers to physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence inflicted on a person because of being male or female. Girls and women are most frequently the targets of gender-based violence, but it also affects boys and men, especially those who do not fit dominant male stereotypes of behaviour or appearance. Gender-based violence may refer to criminal acts of aggression committed by individuals, or to socially sanctioned violence that may even be committed by State authorities. Among these are human rights infringements such as domestic violence, trafficking of girls or boys, female genital cutting, or violence against men who have sex with men.</p> |
| GENDER DISCRIMINATION | <p>Gender discrimination describes the situation in which people are treated differently simply because they are male or female, rather than on the basis of their individual skills or capabilities. For example, social exclusion, inability to participate in decision-making processes, and restricted access to and control of services and resources are common results of discrimination. When this discrimination is part of the social order it is called systemic gender discrimination. For instance, in some communities, families routinely choose to provide higher education for their sons but keep their daughters at home to help with domestic work. Systemic discrimination has social and political roots and needs to be addressed at many different levels of programming.</p> |

GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality means that women and men, and girls and boys enjoy the same status in society; have the same entitlements to all human rights; enjoy the same level of respect in the community; can take advantage of the same opportunities to make choices about their lives; and have the same amount of power to shape the outcomes of these choices. Gender equality does not mean that women and men, or girls and boys are the same. Women and men, and girls and boys have different (but related) needs and priorities, face different constraints, and enjoy different opportunities. Their relative positions in society are based on standards that, while not fixed, tend to advantage men and boys and disadvantage women and girls. Consequently, they are affected in different ways by policies and programmes.

A gender equality approach is about understanding these relative differences, appreciating that they are not rigid and can be changed, and then designing policies, programmes, and services with these differences in mind. Ultimately, promoting gender equality means transforming the power relations between women and men, and girls and boys in order to create a more just society for all.

GENDER EQUITY

Gender equity means being fair to women and men, and girls and boys. To ensure fairness, measures are put into place to address social or historical discrimination and disadvantages faced by girls and women relative to boys and men. A gender equity approach ensures equitable access to and control of the resources and benefits of development through targeted measures. Scholarships for girls are one example of an equity approach that contributes to all children, boys and girls, accessing school and equally benefiting from education opportunities. Increased gender equity is only one part of a strategy that contributes to gender equality.

GENDER GAP

The gender gap is a measurement of inequality that shows the unequal distribution of opportunities, resources, or outcomes between men and women and between boys and girls. Gender gaps are usually revealed through the analysis of gender-disaggregated statistics that illustrate the extent of inequalities.

GENDER JUSTICE

The concept of gender justice underlines the role of duty bearers for the rights of girls and boys. Gender justice is the ending of inequalities between females and males that result in women's and girls' subordination to men and boys. It implies that girls and boys, and women and men have equal access to and control over resources, the ability to make choices in their lives, and access to provisions to redress inequalities, as needed. A commitment to gender justice means taking a position against gender discrimination, exclusion, and gender-based violence. It focuses on the responsibility to hold duty bearers accountable to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights, particularly those of girls and women.

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| GENDER MAINSTREAMING | <p>Gender mainstreaming is the promotion of gender equality into all aspects of an organisation’s work and into its systems and procedures. It is a process that addresses what an organisation does (external mainstreaming) and how an organisation works (internal mainstreaming).</p> <p>Gender mainstreaming means that all policies and programmes, as well as organisational and management processes, are designed, implemented, monitored, and evaluated taking into account the different and relative needs and constraints of girls, boys, women, and men – with the aim of promoting gender equality. The goal of gender mainstreaming is to make sure that women, men, girls, and boys realise their rights and that inequality is not perpetuated.</p> |
| GENDER STEREOTYPES | <p>Gender stereotypes are socially constructed and unquestioned beliefs about the different characteristics, roles, and relations of women and men that are seen as true and un-changeable. Gender stereotypes are reproduced and reinforced through processes including the education and upbringing of girls and boys, as well as the influence of media. In many societies, girls are taught to be responsive, emotional, subservient, and indecisive while boys learn to be assertive, fearless, and independent.</p> <p>Gender stereotyping occurs when such characteristics are persistently attributed to the roles and identities of males and females in society. Gender stereotyping shapes people’s attitudes, behaviours, and decisions. It locks girls and boys into behavioural patterns that prevent them from developing to their full potential and realising their rights. Gender stereotyping can lead to social exclusion of those who do not fit the stereotypes.</p> |
| MASCULINITIES | <p>How men are socialized, and the discourses and practices that are associated with the different ways of being a man. In short, what it means to be a man.</p> |
| PATRIARCHY | <p>A system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it.</p> |
| POWER WITH | <p>The collective strength of a community, group, or couple to find a common goal and make positive changes that will benefit all. This promotes a “win-win” mentality.</p> |
| POWER WITHIN | <p>A person’s feeling of self-worth and self-knowledge. It is related to the ability a person has to imagine a better life and to have hope and the sense that he/she can change the world. It involves having a sense of self-confidence and a feeling that they have value because they exist.</p> |
| POWER OVER | <p>To exercise authority over, control, dominate, exploit, or command others. This promotes a “win-lose” mentality.</p> |

POWER TO

Refers to the ability to be able to shape and influence one's life. When many people have this kind of power, we create "power with."

SEX

Physical and biological differences between men and women, including the different sex organs, hormones, etc. It can also refer to sexual contact, like intimacy, touching, and all other options that make up the richness of sexuality, including sexual intercourse.

ACTIVITY 5: THE MAN BOX (1 hour+)

PURPOSE: To recognize the challenges men, especially fathers, face in trying to fulfill social expectations about gender roles; to understand the costs; and to convey that it is possible to change.

MATERIALS: Flipchart or large pieces of paper with the different titles for the Man Box (see “Background Information for Session 2”); colored markers

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in our last session?”
3. Explain that this session will explore how men are taught to behave in society and the costs this has on men, women, and children.
4. Place the flipchart stand in the circle.
5. Draw a box on the flipchart and ask participants what comes to mind when they hear the phrase “Act like a man.”



6. Write all the words on flipchart as they are spoken. Keep repeating the phrase “act like a man” with different expressions in your voice to encourage participants to think of more words.
7. Ask: “Where do these messages come from? Who is the messenger?” Discuss whether the messages or delivery differ if they come from a man or a woman (mother, father, teacher, sibling, peer).

8. Holding up or pointing to the list of associations and stereotypes you have just made, say, *“This is the Man Box.”*
9. Ask the group to share any experiences or feelings in relation to the messages they have been given (or seen men close to them given).
10. Explain that the **“Man Box” refers to gender roles and expectations of how men and boys must behave; these expectations come from family, peers, society, media, stories, etc.**
11. Ask the group, *“What advantages there are for men to follow these rules and fit inside the box?”* For example, they are seen as “real” or “tough” men whom other men look up to.
12. Write the advantages down on the corresponding flipchart page.



13. Ask the group, *“What happens to a man or boy who does not fit in this box, or chooses to step out of the box?”* For example, they get called mean names; they are threatened with violence or beaten up.
14. Write these responses around the outside of the box.
15. Explain to the group that there are consequences when individuals do not conform to these societal expectations of gendered roles.
16. Write on a separate flipchart page called **“Disadvantages of Staying in the Box.”**



17. Ask the group, “*Are there any disadvantages to staying in the box? What does it cost individual men to live inside the box?*” For example, men can feel depressed because they have no one to talk to about their problems; they become alcoholic; or family members may fear them. Ask, “*What does it cost to the community?*” For example, you may see more violence against women and children, or there may be more crime committed by men.
18. Conclude by explaining how this shows us society trains men to fit into a box by rewarding certain kinds of behaviours and punishing other kinds of behaviour.
19. Write on a separate flipchart page, “**Advantages of Stepping Outside of the Box.**”



20. Ask the group, “*Are there any advantages of stepping out of the box?*” For example, men become closer to their children because they spend more time with them, and communities are better off because men are becoming role models for others.
21. Ask, “*Can you think of examples of men in your own lives who do not conform to the messages inside the box? How are they able to move beyond the box?*”
22. Take the flipchart stand aside and close the circle.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- “*Much of what we discussed talks about men in general, but there are some challenges that are specific to fathers. In what ways do you feel that **fathers** are expected or pressured to live inside a ‘box’?*” For example, men are often expected to have the last word on all household decisions, or provide all the money for their children’s and partners’ daily needs.
- “*How does this pressure limit men’s emotional connections with their **children**?*” For example, men may feel that the only way to show that they love their children is to give money.
- “*How does this pressure limit men’s emotional connections with their **partners**?*” For example, men do not share their fears and pressures about being a provider openly with their partners.

- *“How does this pressure limit men’s emotional connections to **themselves** and to **other men**?”* For example, men do not feel able to seek out others for emotional support when they are experiencing high levels of stress.
- *“What are the benefits for our **families** when fathers step out of their ‘boxes’?”*
- *“How can we as fathers step outside of our “boxes” to be more involved caregivers for our children? For our partners?”*

Key message

By challenging society’s expectations of what it means to be a man and a father, fathers can become free of their “boxes” and able to decide for themselves how to be more involved, caring, and loving individuals.

CHECK-OUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

Ask participants to share with their partner how they plan to get out of their “boxes” in order to become more involved fathers. Encourage them to do one thing to support their partner, particularly as it relates to MNCH/SRH. For example, they can accompany their partner to their next prenatal care visit or take on house chores in the home to allow time for their partner to breastfeed or rest.

HOMEWORK REFLECTION #3 (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the homework assignment from the last session and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - *“How are you?”*
 - *“Has anything new happened that you want to share?”*
 - *“Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”*
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous Fathers Club meeting.

Ask participants to share with their partner how they plan to get out of their “boxes” in order to become more involved fathers. Encourage them to do one thing to support their partner, particularly as it relates to MNCH/SRH. For example, they can accompany their partner to their next prenatal care visit or take on house chores in the home to allow time for their partner to breastfeed or rest.

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing how you get out of the “Man Box” to support your partner (or female sibling/friend, if you do not have a partner) as it relates to MNCH/SRH. How do you feel when you do this? How does your partner feel and what was the result?
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - *“What did you do to get out of the box?”*
 - *“How did you feel after doing the assignment?”*
 - *“What was the result of the assignment?”*

6. Ask participants if they:
 - *“Faced any resistance or pushback from their partners being involved? If so, what kind of resistance?”*
 - *“Was there any resistance from other family members?”*
 - *“How did they address this resistance, or how would they face it in the future?”*
7. Next, encourage reflection of how women and girls are also expected to fit into the “Woman Box” in the same way that men are expected to fit into the “Man Box.”
8. Ask them the following questions:
 - *“In what ways are mothers expected or pressured to live inside a ‘box’ of their own?”*
 - *“How does this pressure impact women’s health, particularly when they are about to become mothers?”*
9. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
10. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
11. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.

ACTIVITY 6: GENDER STEREOTYPES²⁹ (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on how proverbs and stereotypes perpetuate gender norms in the community and the impact this has on relations between men and women.

MATERIALS (Optional): 3 large pieces of paper

INSTRUCTIONS

Before the activity begins: hang three pieces of paper on the walls or on trunks of tall trees. One should have a ☺, the second should have a 😐, and the third should have a ☹ drawn on the pages. Alternatively, you can lay the pieces of paper on the floor/ground.

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in our last session?”
3. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to discuss negative stereotypes about men and women and the impact they have on relations between men and women as well as on men’s involvement as fathers.
4. Ask the group to name some of the stereotypes, sayings, or proverbs about men and women that are common in the community. You may share with them the examples below or add local ones:

Examples Of Common Sayings And Stereotypes About Men And Women

1. *A bull can have sex with whomever he wants.*
2. *A woman’s place is in the kitchen.*
3. *A hen should not speak while a rooster is present.*

²⁹ Adapted from “Gender Stereotypes” in the *Bandeberaho Facilitator’s Manual: Engaging men as fathers in gender equality, maternal and child health, caregiving and violence prevention* (RWAMREC, Promundo, 2014).

Facilitator, what are some example sayings or proverbs about men and women that are common in your community?

Notes:

5. Write down the sayings, proverbs, or stereotypes the participants identify on the flipchart.
6. After the group has identified a number of sayings, ask the group to stand up. Tell the group that you are going to read the sayings out loud and ask each participant whether they agree with the statement, disagree, or are unsure. Explain that the ☺ represents “agree,” the ☹ represents “disagree,” and 😐 represents “unsure.” They will move and stand in front of the one of the three pieces of paper that represents their views.
7. After you read one of the sayings, ask the participants to share why they agree, disagree, or are unsure. Allow at least 1 to 2 participants from each group to share their views.
8. If participants begin talking over one another, remind them of the group agreement.
9. Once you have read 3 or 4 sayings, ask the group to sit down in the circle and open the discussion using the questions below.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“Where do these sayings come from? Where do we learn them?”*
- *“What impact do you think these sayings and stereotypes have on how men treat women?”*
- *“How do these sayings and stereotypes help keep men in the ‘Man Box’?”*
- *“How can sayings like this negatively impact women’s health, especially when they are pregnant or are taking care of small children?”*

- *“How can these sayings limit children’s potential?”*
- *“Do these stereotypes give some individuals power over others?”*
- *“How can we challenge others when we hear these stereotypes in our communities?”*

Key message

Stereotypes and sayings about men and women have the potential to cause real harm to women’s health and well-being, as well as to men themselves. It is important for us to challenge these beliefs when we hear them in our communities!

CHECK-OUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

Invite men to have a conversation with their partners and with their sons or daughters (if they are old enough) about stereotypes. Do not limit such conversations there. Also think about engaging mothers, fathers, and other respected elders in this dialogue. During this conversation, men should share how stereotypes about men and women affect their relationships and health. Men should ask what other stereotypes exist that their partners, elders, and children might know about, and how they can challenge these together.

HOMEWORK REFLECTION #4 (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the homework assignment from the last session and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - *“How are you?”*
 - *“Has anything new happened that you want to share?”*
 - *“Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”*
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous Fathers Club meeting.

Invite men to have a conversation with their partners and with their sons or daughters (if they are old enough) about stereotypes. Do not limit such conversations there. Also think about engaging mothers, fathers, and other respected elders in this dialogue. During this conversation, men should share how stereotypes about men and women affect their relationships and health. Men should ask what other stereotypes exist that their partners, elders, and children might know about, and how they can challenge these together.

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing how you address and challenge gender stereotypes in your daily life.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - *“How did the assignment go? What did you talk about?”*
 - *“How did you feel after doing the assignment?”*
 - *“What was the result of the assignment?”*

6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.

ACTIVITY 7: PERSONS AND THINGS³⁰ (1 hour+)

PURPOSE: To increase men’s awareness about the existence of power in relationships; to reflect on how we communicate and demonstrate power in relationships; and to examine the impact of power on individuals and relationships.

MATERIALS: None

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in our last session?”
3. Divide the participants into two groups with an imaginary line in between. Each side should have the same number of participants.
4. Tell the participants that the name of this activity is “Persons and Things.” Choose at random one group to be the “things” and one group to be the “persons.”
5. Read the following directions to the group:

“THINGS: *You cannot think, feel, or make decisions. You have to do what the ‘persons’ tell you. If you want to move or do something, you have to ask the person for permission.”*

“PERSONS: *You can think, feel, and make decisions. Furthermore, you can tell the things what to do.”*

Facilitator Tip: It might be helpful to ask for two volunteers to first act out for the group how a “person” might treat a “thing.”

6. Ask the “persons” to take the “things” and do what they want with them. They can order them to do any kind of activity. (Alternatively, the “persons” can direct the “things” with hand gestures or words, using their gestures to show they must move ahead or back, jump up and down, move to one side, or twirl around.)

³⁰ Adapted from “Persons and Things” in *Program H Manual* (Promundo, Instituto PAPAI, ECOS, Salud y Genero, 2002).

7. Give the groups five minutes for the “things” to carry out the designated roles.
8. Finally, ask the participants to go back to their places in the room and use the questions below to facilitate a discussion.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“For the ‘things,’ how did your ‘persons’ treat you? What did you feel? Why? Would you have liked to have been treated differently?”*
- *“For the ‘persons,’ how did you treat your ‘things?’ How did it feel to treat someone as an object?”*
- *“Why did the ‘things’ obey the instructions given by the ‘persons?’”*
- *“Were there ‘things’ or ‘persons’ who resisted the exercise?”*
- *“In your daily life, do others treat you like ‘things’? Who? Why?”*
- *“Why do people treat each other like this?”*
- *“What are the consequences of a relationship where one person might treat another person like a ‘thing’?”* For example, a pregnant woman who is treated as a “thing” cannot make choices about her health and body, putting her at risk for MNCH/SRH-related complications.
- *“Who in our society and culture has power over women? Can you give an example?”*
- *“How do you think this makes women feel?”*
- *“How does our society and culture maintain or support these kinds of relationships in which some people have power over other people?”*
- *“How can this activity help you think about and perhaps make changes in your own relationships?”*

Key message

There are many different types of relationships in which one person might have power over another person. The unequal power balances between men and women in intimate relationships can have serious repercussions for maternal, newborn, and child health, and women’s sexual and reproductive health.

CHECK-OUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

Reflect on the people in your life. Is there anyone whom you sometimes treat like a “thing”? Make a personal action plan for one thing you can do differently to avoid treating your partner, your children, or other people in your life as “things.”

HOMEWORK REFLECTION #5 (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the homework assignment from the last session and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous Fathers Club meeting.

Reflect on the people in your life. Is there anyone whom you sometimes treat like a “thing”? Make a personal action plan for one thing you can do differently to avoid treating your partner, your children, or other people in your life as “things.”

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing how, in your daily life, you treat your partner and children as “persons” instead of “things.”
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - “How did the assignment go? What is included in your action plan?”
 - “Did you share it with anyone else? If so, who? What was their reaction?”
6. Remind participants that the group also discussed how society perpetuates situations where some people have power over (or oppress) certain groups of people. These “power over systems” are based not only on gender but also on poverty, age, ethnicity, and mental/physical disability.

For example, an unemployed man from an ethnic or religious minority may have power over his wife to decide how to spend household money, but feels powerless in front of the police. A female executive may have power over her male driver, but may feel powerless if she is walking down the street at night alone.

7. Ask the group, “*Can you share personal experiences of how factors, such as age, poverty, ethnicity, and other factors may influence who has power over others?*”
8. Ask if there are any questions participants may have for the group. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
9. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
10. Remind them of the time, date, and place of the next meeting.

THEME 4: PREGNANCY, DELIVERY & BEYOND

In the fourth series of activities, participants in the Fathers Clubs will explore how men can be more involved and supportive of their partners during pregnancy, delivery and during the first few weeks and months of a newborn's life. Activities in this theme will explore the different ways that men can support their partners during pregnancy and delivery, the importance of antenatal care, how men can be involved in breastfeeding and how they can provide critical, skin-to-skin contact with their newborns.

When promoting men's involvement in antenatal care and delivery, it is very important to think about and to emphasize that men's involvement in and support for their partner should be done in ways that respect women's wishes and choices. Men should ask their partners what type of involvement and support they prefer – they should not force their involvement. It is also important to encourage men to think about how their support for their partner can be sustained after the child is born, and how they can continue to remain actively involved in their children's lives. Pregnancy should be viewed as an important entry-point for greater fatherhood involvement, not a one-time opportunity for men to show support and engagement.

*** Note on adaptation:** It is important to know and understand the various laws and policies in place regarding men's attendance at antenatal care visits and their presence at delivery. Some countries have policies that promote men's involvement during the first antenatal care visit. Some countries or health facilities may prohibit men's presence in the delivery room or maternity ward due to privacy issues. It's important to be able to give the participants the correct information for your country in order to set realistic expectations of what they will and will not be able to do.

MEN AT ANTENATAL CARE VISITS

Antenatal care (ANC) visits are critical for monitoring the health of the mother and development of the foetus. The World Health Organization recommends that women attend at least eight ANC visits during their pregnancy.³¹ However four ANC visits are critical as established by WHO and are being promoted by SHOW as a minimum. Men can (and should!) attend these visits with their partner if she wants them to, unless prohibited by law or health facility policy. In some countries, men are actually requested to attend the first ANC visit so that the couple can be tested for HIV, and if needed, women can be referred to services for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT). These visits are an opportunity for expectant parents to gain information on what to expect during pregnancy and how to ensure a healthy pregnancy for mother and child. It is important for both parents to be informed of the health of the pregnancy and equipped with knowledge to help identify or prevent emergencies that may occur.

³¹ <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/news/antenatal-care/en/>

Some Benefits of Male Involvement in Antenatal Care:

- A woman may feel more supported during her pregnancy if her partner attends the ANC visits with her. It can also strengthen the relationship between the partners.
- A man may feel more connected to his child if he begins to become involved during the pregnancy. He will also be more informed of how he can support his partner's health during the pregnancy.
- A man may learn valuable information about warning signs or obstetric emergencies during the ANC visit, which can help him to assist his partner in case of emergency.

MEN IN THE DELIVERY ROOM

Labor and delivery is very physically and emotionally demanding on the mother. Though they may not know it, men play an important role in this process! The most important thing is for fathers to provide the emotional and physical support that their partners need. Fathers too often experience anxiety during delivery, but this can be alleviated by giving them the opportunity to discuss their feelings in a safe space, with men who have had similar experiences. It is important that each father shares his emotional experience during the exercise. If there are jokes, make them brief; remind the group that the sharing of emotional experiences should always be respected.

Key Points about Men's Roles in the Delivery Room:

- Men's presence in the delivery room helps to build an emotional bond between the father and child. It also helps men better understand how demanding labor and delivery is for the mother.
- Men should speak with their partner about being present in the delivery room and receive her consent. It is also fundamental that the health care provider is in agreement, and supports the participation of the father during birth.
- In some health centers or hospitals, the father is not allowed in the delivery room. It is important that each father ask the health center if a companion is allowed, and, as long as the mother is in agreement, request access to the delivery room.

Birth is also stressful for babies. In the following activities, you will also emphasize the importance of skin-to-skin contact. Skin-to-skin contact not only helps parents to bond with their child, but also provides important health benefits for the child. If bonding is not possible at the birthing center, it will be possible at home. It will be important to state during the activities, that men's presence at birth will not prevent all MNCH and SRH risks. But, men's presence can be, and is for many men, the beginning or continuation of a desire to be an involved and equal partner, which is desired by many women.³²

³² Levtoy, R., et al. (2015).

COMMON QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

***Note on adaptation:** Some of the common questions and responses might not be relevant in your area. There may also be other common questions that are not featured here – please add them and brainstorm the types of responses you think are appropriate within the context.

| QUESTION | RESPONSE |
|--|--|
| <p><i>“I thought antenatal care visits were only for women?”</i></p> | <p><i>“Antenatal care visits (or ANC) can be an excellent opportunity for men to learn about the development of their child, and the health of their partner during her pregnancy. Although it might feel uncomfortable at first, there is a lot to be gained by attending these visits with your partner, if she wishes you to.”</i></p> |
| <p><i>“I have to work to support my family and don’t have the time to go with my partner to all of the ANC visits. What can I do to show support?”</i></p> | <p><i>“Even if you cannot attend every visit with your partner, you can talk to her about what she learned during the visits (such as the stage of development of the fetus). Ask her to share with you any concerns she has, or how you can support her during the pregnancy. Ask if there is anything you can do to make it easier for her to attend the ANC visits.”</i></p> |
| <p><i>“I am not allowed in the delivery room. What should I do?”</i></p> | <p><i>“In some health centers or hospitals, the father is not allowed in the delivery room. Sometimes, this is the policy of the health center while in other cases it is because health providers simply do not want men involved. If the mother is okay with it, meet with the hospital administrators and explain why you want to be present and ask for permission to be present in the delivery ward. If they still say no, accept what they say, but this might be an opportunity to create a campaign with other men and with women about the importance of fathers’ presence.”</i></p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p><i>“If I see my wife giving birth, won’t I lose sexual desire for her?”</i></p> | <p><i>“First, it is important that women who have just given birth abstain from sex for at least six weeks, or according to her provider’s recommendations. After this, many factors influence a couple’s level of sexual desire. This includes hormone levels, stress, and how much energy you both have if you are taking care of a newborn. However, some studies show that being supportive of your partner and feelings of closeness actually increase sexual desire in the relationship!”</i></p> |
| <p>What other common myths or misconceptions exist in your setting?</p> <p>Common myth / misconception in my setting:</p> | <p>Possible response:</p> |
| <p>Common myth / misconception in my setting:</p> | <p>Possible response:</p> |

ACTIVITY 8: HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR PARTNER DURING PREGNANCY³³ (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To identify specific ways that men can provide support to their partners for a healthy and happy pregnancy.

MATERIALS: None

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in our last session?”
3. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to discuss what women need for a healthy pregnancy and how men can support their partners during pregnancy.
4. Divide the group into two smaller groups (if it is a mixed group, divide the participants into separate groups of men and women: Women in Group # 1, men in Group # 2).
5. Ask Group # 1 to discuss and name one thing that a **WOMAN** can do (or should not do) to have a healthy pregnancy? (For example, the group might suggest that a woman should receive antenatal care (ANC)).
6. Ask Group # 2 to discuss and name one way or thing that a **MAN** can do to support his partner to do this? (For example, what can a man do to support his partner to attend ANC?) Group #2 can act out the different types of support men can provide, if comfortable. [**Note:** This activity can also be done using a large piece of paper with a column for WOMAN and a column for MAN (similar to the box below).]
7. Ask Group # 1 to name another thing that a woman should do during pregnancy, and ask Group # 2 to identify ways that a man can support her to do so. Continue until there are no new recommendations.

³³ Adapted from “My Father Can do Everything” from *Program P* (Promundo, REDMAS, EME, 2013).

8. If any recommendations in the WOMAN column in the box below are missing, suggest them to the group. Ask for possible ways a man can support each recommendation.

| Things a WOMAN can do for a healthy pregnancy | Things a MAN can do to support her in a healthy pregnancy |
|---|---|
| Attend antenatal care for at least the 4 recommended visits. | Encourage his partner to attend the 4 antenatal care visits and accompany her to and participate in as many visits as he can. |
| Avoid heavy lifting. | Assist in heavy lifting and strenuous physical activities (also household tasks!) |
| Get plenty of rest. | Encourage your partner to rest. Do household tasks, like cleaning, or care for the children so that she has time to rest. |
| Drink plenty of water. | Kindly remind your partner to drink water, or bring her water to show her you care. |
| Eat healthy, nutritious foods. | Buy healthy foods and prepare (or assist in preparing) them for his partner. |
| Do light exercise. | Go for a walk with your partner or do simple stretches together. |
| Avoid alcohol and cigarettes. | Provide encouragement and abstain from taking alcohol and cigarettes around her. |
| Live in a home free from physical or psychological violence. | Love and care for her and ensure your home is a non-violent one. |
| Get the required vaccinations. | Accompany your partner to get the vaccinations. Talk about them with her or calm her fears. |
| Take iron, folic acid, and de-worming tablets to help prevent anaemia. | Kindly remind her to take the pills and bring her water to take with them. |
| Sleep under a mosquito net to help prevent malaria. | Place the mosquito net around the sleeping area for your partner. |
| Stay away from others who may have a cold or other infectious sickness. | Don't invite guests over who might be sick. |

***Note on adaptation:** You should contextualize the recommendations to your country by reviewing guidelines for pregnant women and/or working with health institutions to adapt the recommendations.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“Did you do any of these things to support your partner when she was pregnant?”*
- *“Do men usually provide this type of support to their partners during pregnancy? Why or why not?”*
- *“What other ways do men show support for their partners during pregnancy?”*
- *“How many of you have attended an antenatal care visit with your partner? What was it like? Would you do it again?”*
- *“What benefits are there if men attend antenatal care visits with their partners?”*
- *“Are there any barriers or challenges that a men face if they want to be more involved in their partner’s pregnancy? Where do these challenges come from?”*
- *“Do you think that you could show support in these ways? Which would be easiest? Hardest?”*
- *“How will your partner feel if you showed support in these ways? How can it benefit your relationship?”*

Key message

A healthy environment – physically and emotionally – during pregnancy is critical to the health of a woman and her future child. A mother must feel relaxed, at ease and live in an environment free from violence. Men can support their partners in many ways – by attending antenatal care, providing emotional support, or doing domestic tasks to allow her more time to rest. These activities also promote stronger, happier relationships.

CHECK-OUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

If your partner is currently pregnant, try to do one thing to support her that we discussed, such as cooking meals, providing emotional support, taking the children to school, cleaning, or going to antenatal care visits. If your partner is not pregnant, are there other things that you can do to show her you care? Before you do the activity, inform your partner of what you want to do and why, and find out from her the type of support that she prefers.

HOMEWORK REFLECTION #6 (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the homework assignment from the last session and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous Fathers Club meeting.

If your partner is currently pregnant, try to do one thing to support her that we discussed, such as cooking meals, providing emotional support, taking the children to school, cleaning, or going to antenatal care visits. If your partner is not pregnant, are there other things that you can do to show her you care? Before you do the activity, inform your partner of what you want to do and why, and find out from her the type of support that she prefers.

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing some of your own experiences of providing support to your partner during a past pregnancy (or currently). What types of support did your partner request?
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - “How did the assignment go? What did you do to support your partner?”
 - “How did your partner react?”
 - “How did you feel after doing the assignment?”

- *“What was the result of the assignment?”*
6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
 7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
 8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.

ACTIVITY 9: DELIVERY ROOM ROLE-PLAY³⁴ (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To share ideas and experiences about the role of a father during birth; to prepare the father for his role as a companion for the mother; to address concerns men have about childbirth.

MATERIALS: Enough copies of the illustrated Handout, "Controlled Breathing and Skin-to-Skin Contact" for each participant. (Optional): a few pillows.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a "check-in" by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - "How are you?"
 - "Has anything new happened that you want to share?"
 - "Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in our last session?"
3. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to role-play what it is like in the delivery ward when a woman is giving birth, and to think about the ways men can support their partners during childbirth.
4. Ask the group, "What do men usually do when their partner is giving birth? Are they ever in the delivery ward when the child is being born?"
5. After the group has responded, ask for three people to volunteer from the group. If this activity is being done in a mixed group of men and women, ask for at least one female volunteer.
6. Assign each of the volunteers a role – one person should be the mother giving birth, one should be the father, and one should be a doctor, nurse, midwife, or other health provider as appropriate.
7. Explain to the group members that they will be role-playing the birth of a child in the delivery ward. Emphasize to the participants that they are now actors and not themselves. Tell them to imagine that it is 18:00 in the evening. The woman is in the delivery room and in some pain because she is about to give birth. The health providers are preparing to deliver the baby. The father is also present. Give the volunteers five minutes to act out the scene.

³⁴ Adapted from *Program P: A Manual for Engaging Men in Fatherhood, Caregiving and Maternal and Child Health*. Promundo, REDMAS, EME. (2013)

8. After five minutes ask the participants to return to the circle. Ask everyone to “step out” of his or her role and open the discussion using the questions below.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“How did it feel to play the roles in this exercise?”*
- *“For those who played the father, how did it feel to play the supportive partner?”*
- *“How did the mother feel giving birth?”*
- *“How did the health professionals feel?”*
- *“How did it feel to watch the role-play?”*
- *“Was there anything else that the father could have done to support his partner?”*
- *“What concerns do you have as a father or soon-to-be-father about being in the delivery room?”* For example, some men may feel frustrated because they are not allowed in the delivery room because of clinic policy.

Facilitator tip: Rather than respond directly to these concerns, encourage other members of the group to share their own experience and give recommendations.

- *“Why is it important to ask your partner’s consent before deciding that you would like to accompany her in the delivery room?”*
9. Pass out the illustrated version of the Supporting Information Handout on “How to Do Controlled Breathing and Skin-to-Skin Contact” to each participant.
 10. Explain that in the next session, participants will do the role-play again, but using the techniques included in the Handout.

Key message

Being a supportive partner – either inside the delivery room (with your partner’s consent) or outside the room – is one of the most important steps men can take toward being more involved, emotionally connected, and supportive fathers and partners.

CHECK-OUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.

2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

Read the illustrated version of the Supporting Information Handout on “Controlled Breathing during Labor and Delivery” and “Skin-to-Skin Contact.” Share this information with your partner or trusted family member. Come ready to practice these techniques in the next session!

SUPPORTING INFORMATION HANDOUT: CONTROLLED BREATHING AND SKIN-TO-SKIN CONTACT

This Supporting Information Handout is accompanied by illustrations on the next two pages. Show the illustrations to your Fathers Group participants and use this handout to provide supporting information on how they can be supportive to their partners during the labor and delivery process. Here are the tips:

1. CONTROLLED BREATHING DURING LABOR

For the pregnant woman: Maintain a breathing rhythm, and complete a cycle every four seconds.

- Breathe in through your nose in the first second;
- Exhale through your mouth in short intervals while counting the second, third, and fourth seconds;
- On the fourth second, exhale deeply for a longer period of time;
- Repeat.

At the same time, the man must:

- Breathe in sync/at the same time with your partner;
- Make sure your partner is softly exhaling in your face;
- Help her relax between contractions;
- Watch your partner and hold her hands while she breathes in through her nose and out through her mouth.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF SKIN-TO-SKIN CONTACT

Directly after birth, providing newborns with direct skin-to-skin contact is essential for their health and well being, and both mothers and fathers can do it!

- Skin-to-skin contact occurs when the mother's or father's skin touches the baby's skin. This can be done through hugging, placing the baby on your bare chest, etc. Babies love skin-to-skin contact!
- Research shows that after birth, skin-to-skin contact between the mother and her baby immediately reduces infant crying, improves mother-infant interaction, keeps the baby warm, and helps the mother breastfeed successfully.
- Fathers can play an important role in providing skin-to-skin contact. For example, babies born by caesarean section need to have contact with a significant caregiver, but sometimes the mother is not in a condition to immediately provide that care. This is where fathers can play an important role in body temperature regulation and cardiorespiratory stabilization for the newborn. This kind of physical closeness also helps promote the emotional bond between father and child. Fathers can talk, sit, sing, rock, bathe, burp, or tell stories to the baby. Make some time in the day just for you and your baby; babies need cuddling and hugs from their fathers too.

Activity #9

CONTROLLED BREATHING



Breathe in through your nose in the first second.



Exhale through your mouth in short intervals while counting two three and four seconds.



Exhale for a longer period of time during the fourth second.

Repeat.



At the same time, the father must:

Breathe with your partner.

Make sure your partner is softly exhaling in your face.

Help her relax between contractions.

The father should watch his partner and hold her hands while she breathes in through her nose and out through her mouth



Activity #9

THE IMPORTANCE OF SKIN-TO-SKIN CONTACT

Skin-to-skin contact is when the mother or father's skin touches the baby's skin.

This can be done through hugging or placing the baby on your bare chest.



Fathers can talk, sit, sing, rock, tell stories to, burp or bathe the baby.

Make some time in the day just for you and your baby.

Babies need cuddling and hugs from their fathers too.

ACTIVITY 10: PAIN ALLEVIATION TECHNIQUES & SKIN-TO-SKIN CONTACT³⁵ (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To highlight the importance of physically and emotionally supporting your female partner during the labor and delivery process and of bonding with your newborn.

MATERIALS: A few water bottles filled with water; copies of the illustrated Handout, "A Father's Backpack" for each participant.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a "check-in" by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - "How are you?"
 - "Has anything new happened that you want to share?"
 - "Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in our last session?"
3. Tell participants that there are many benefits of being an involved father, and that research indicates that when a man is present during childbirth, the female partner is often calmer and feels less pain during the delivery.
4. Review the illustrated version of the Supporting Information Handout from the previous session by first practicing the controlled breathing techniques. Everyone should participate.
5. Next, model how a father would engage in skin-to-skin contact with his child by using filled water bottles. Encourage other fathers to participate in this with you.
6. Ask for three volunteers to re-enact the birth scene again, this time using the techniques on controlled breathing and skin-to-skin contact that they learned. One person will be the mother, one the father, and one a health professional.
7. After 2 minutes, thank them for their participation and ask them to return to the circle.
8. Ask for participant feedback on the role-play. What did they notice about the differences in the role-plays between today's session and last session?
9. After a few minutes of sharing, say that when mothers are about to give birth they

³⁵ Activity adapted Program P: A Manual for Engaging Men in Fatherhood, Caregiving and Maternal and Child Health. Promundo, REDMAS, EME. (2013)

often bring certain things with them to the hospital, such as extra clothing and a blanket. Fathers too can bring important supplies, especially if they will wait at the health center or stay overnight.

10. Hand out copies of the illustrated version of the Supporting Information Handout, “A Father’s Backpack,” and go through the information with participants.
11. After going over the handout, start a group discussion using the questions below.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **For the women** (if present): *“What are some of the anxieties you have about giving birth?”*
- **For the men:** *“What are some of the anxieties you have about your partner giving birth?”*
- *“What are the benefits of being present at the delivery of your child?”*
 - *For the child?* For example, studies show that newborns (particularly those who are born premature) who receive skin-to-skin contact thrive better than those who do not;
 - *For the mother?* For example, she may feel more in control and supported if her male partner is there to share the experience;
 - *For the father?* For example, this is a crucial opportunity to build the emotional and physical bond with your child.
- *“What can happen if the husband is not present?”* For example, if the male partner is not there and a medical decision needs to be made, this can delay a woman’s access to care and can lead to serious health consequences, including death.
- *“Were any of you present at the birth of your other children? Can you share with us your experience?”*
- *“Is it easy to be present? Is it accepted or allowed?”*
- *“If a father is not allowed to be present, what can he do to still be supportive to his partner?”* For example, he can help with housework and be present in the waiting room.
- *“What types of support do mothers need during birth, and which of those types of support can men as partners provide?”*
- *“What can men do to help support their partners prepare in the days before giving birth?”*

- *“What can you do immediately after the birth to make the mother comfortable and ensure the health of mother and baby?”*
- *Did you learn anything valuable in this activity? Will it be helpful to you in your own life?*

Key message

Like mothers, fathers often experience anxiety during delivery, but now you have important knowledge and awareness of the ways men can support their partners during childbirth and bond with and promote the health of their new babies.

CHECK-OUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

Find out if the local health center or hospital has policies that permit or prohibit women from being accompanied by their male partner during childbirth. Come to the next session prepared to share what you learned. For those fathers whose partners are approaching their delivery dates, begin to prepare the backpack with things to bring to the hospital or clinic (see Supporting Information Handout, “A Father’s Backpack”).

SUPPORTING INFORMATION HANDOUT

A FATHER'S BACKPACK: WHAT SHOULD I TAKE?

This Supporting Information Handout is accompanied by an illustration on the next page. Show the illustration to your Fathers Group participants and use this handout to provide supporting information.

Please note: Other than the food and clothes which would be essential, the suggested items are not mandatory. Please consider other things that you may feel would be necessary.

The couple should prepare their backpacks before going to the hospital or clinic to give birth. The health care provider should give the mother a list of things that she should bring with her to the hospital. And the fathers who will accompany their partners should also be ready. Below are some suggestions for the things the father, should have during his stay at the hospital.

- **Something to eat or drink.** Keep in mind that labor may take several hours. After deciding with your partner on your presence during delivery, make sure you prepare or buy what is needed. Ask the clinic or hospital staff if they have a microwave oven you can use if needed. Keep in mind that your partner cannot eat during this period of time, so please find a place outside of the delivery room where you can eat.
- **Cellular phone.** While several people will wait for your call, some people will actually call you. You cannot use your mobile phone in the delivery room. If you have to use it, please do so outside of the delivery room, so that your conversation does not bother other patients or interfere with staff work.
- **Camera or video camera.** If you want to take photos to record these memorable moments, it is better to do so before and after birth – with your partner's permission, of course. Please disable the flash feature before taking pictures of the baby – the baby's arrival into the world is stressful enough.
- **Clothing.** It is usually possible to stay at the clinic or hospital for one or two nights. You will need extra sets of clothes in your backpack, so that you will not have to go home to get them.

(Adapted from *Father Schools: Step-By-Step* by Northern Way)

Activity #10

THE FATHER'S BACKPACK: WHAT SHOULD I TAKE?



Something to eat or drink.



Cellular phone.



Camera or video camera.



Clothing.

HOMEWORK REFLECTION #7 (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the homework assignment from the last session and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - *“How are you?”*
 - *“Has anything new happened that you want to share?”*
 - *“Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”*
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous Fathers Club meeting.

Find out if the local health center or hospital has policies that permit or prohibit women from being accompanied by their male partner during childbirth. Come to the next session prepared to share what you learned. For those fathers whose partners are approaching their delivery dates, begin to prepare the backpack with things to bring to the hospital or clinic (see Supporting Information Handout, “A Father’s Backpack”).

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing what you did to be supportive of your partner and child even when confronted with barriers from the health system, if applicable.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - *“How did the assignment go? What did you find out?”*
 - *“Did you share what you learned with anyone else? If so, who? What was their reaction?”*
6. Ask if there are any questions participants may have for the group. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.

7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time, date, and place of the next meeting.

ACTIVITY 11: FATHERS AND PNC SUPPORT (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the importance of men's roles in post-natal care (PNC) and encourage them to be involved both for the health of the baby and their partner.

MATERIALS (OPTIONAL): Flipchart paper and markers

Note: In this session, it will be best to invite a health professional (e.g. community health worker, facility based health provider or health professionals from the SHOW program) to share information about how to take care of babies in the postnatal period. Being aware of how to support children in this stage is another step on the road towards a long, healthy life. Before the session begins, share with your guest what your Fathers Group participants have learned so far and the purpose of this session. Advise him or her that the session should cover the following topics among others:

- ✓ Ensuring mothers continue to receive plenty of rest to recover following childbirth
- ✓ The importance of PNC visits for the baby and mother in the recommended timeframe i.e. 48 hours/2 days
- ✓ How fathers can support their spouse/partner in accessing the PNC visit
- ✓ Key information that is provided in PNC counseling
- ✓ Sexual relations after birth
- ✓ Importance of equal care for girls and boys
- ✓ Child development visits
- ✓ Child vaccinations
- ✓ Child birth registration
- ✓ Taking children to a health facility for treatment if they become ill
- ✓ Caring for children during childhood illnesses

However, if it will not be possible to invite a healthcare professional because they are not available or there is not one nearby, consult with a Plan International colleague on the specific topics listed above. Solicit key information fathers will need to know to support their partners during this crucial period so that you can share them appropriately with the group in the first half of this activity.

If that is not possible, follow the activity below. The point is to get fathers to understand and appreciate that their role to support their spouse doesn't end as the baby is born!

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in our last session?”
3. Explain that in this activity, they are going to explore the important role fathers play immediately following the birth of their new baby. You may say something like this:

Caring for a new baby can be exciting, but also very exhausting. Babies cry a lot! Mothers also need emotional and physical support because giving birth can be a difficult experience for both the mind and body. They often receive this support from other women in the community, but fathers also play an important role. This role is often invisible and we will explore this in this activity and how men can be more involved.
4. If you were able to invite a healthcare professional to your session, introduce him or her to the group. Explain that he or she will share life-saving information about caring for your female partner and new child following right after birth, also known as the post-natal care phase.
5. If there will be no healthcare professional present, say that together as a group you will explore what men can do to support their spouse and baby in the post-natal period.
6. If you have invited a health professional, as your guest speaks, record his or her main points on a flipchart paper.
7. After the discussion, split participants into small groups to brainstorm how they can support in their roles as fathers. Afterwards, have them share their ideas with the group.
8. If there is no health professional, carry out the session as follows:
 - a. Ask the group to share what they think about the importance of the post-natal period and the PNC visit. Cover the following:
 - i. To ensure that both the mother and the baby are doing well e.g. mother is bleeding normally, she doesn't have fever, she is not in post-partum depression, baby's umbilicus is healing well, baby is breathing normally, all other vital signs are fine (has passed blackish stool etc.). Emphasize this is the period when the mother and baby

are most vulnerable in health terms.

- b. Ask the group what normally happens in their homes when the baby is born. Cover traditional practices such as feeding the newborn traditional foods; secluding the mother etc. Explore the reason why the PNC visit (in 48 hours/2 days) is not prioritized.
- c. Explore how men can participate actively to support their spouse and baby:

Examples

- ✓ Be aware that their partner may be extra tired or in pain following giving birth so they should refrain from having sexual relations for several weeks.
- ✓ Fathers can take their child to get routine vaccinations and health check-ups
- ✓ Fathers can share a greater burden of the domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, and providing affection to children as their partner rests.
- ✓ Fathers should be aware that women may experience depression during the post-partum period, which is usually normal, but if ignored can become very serious.
- ✓ Fathers should be aware that this period requires great understanding, care and emotional support.
- ✓ Fathers should be aware of their own mental and physical health by eating healthy food, ensure only moderate alcohol consumption, and go to their own routine doctors' visits.
- ✓ Fathers can be aware of the major postnatal danger signs a woman and baby may experience and know where to seek immediate medical care.

9. Thank participants for their great ideas. Lead a discussion on men's roles in PNC using the questions below.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *Why don't fathers participate more in taking care of newborn babies? What does this have to do with "The Man Box"?*
- *Do other people in the community also prevent men from being more involved in this period?*
- *How does having a new child in the family affect the couple relationship? For example, babies cry all the time and require constant attention. This can limit the amount of intimate time couples have together.*
- *Who has more difficulty providing care for a baby? The mother or the father? Why?*
- *Is it possible for fathers to become angry with the baby especially when they need so much attention? Can one get angry with the mother?*

- *What can you do if you become angry or frustrated? What are your options?*
- *Based on the brainstorming we did, what are one to two things you can do to be more involved in the care of your newborn?*
- *How can men in this group support each other in their caring roles?*

Key message

Men are capable of caring for babies and can satisfy most of the babies' needs (except for breastfeeding). It's important to challenge harmful ideas about men's and women's roles in society because they can cause great harm to women, children and men themselves. Any man can become a loving and involved father right from the very beginning!

CHECK-OUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *"Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?"*
 - *"Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?"*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

Talk to your partner about what you learned today. Pick one or two new tasks and share with her how you plan to support her in taking care of your young children. Ask what she thinks and listen to her opinion. Do those tasks this week. Come prepared to share those experiences in the next session.

HOMEWORK REFLECTION #8 (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the homework assignment from the last session and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous Fathers Club meeting.

Talk to your partner about what you learned today. Pick one or two new tasks and share with her how you plan to support her in taking care of your young children. Ask what she thinks and listen to her opinion. Do those tasks this week. Come prepared to share those experiences in the next session.

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing what you did to be supportive of your partner during the post-natal period and how that experience was for you and your family.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - “How did the assignment go? What did you find out?”
 - “Did you share what you learned with anyone else? If so, who? What was their reaction?”
6. Ask if there are any questions participants may have for the group. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to

that problem.

7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time, date, and place of the next meeting.

ACTIVITY 12: THE IMPORTANCE OF BREASTFEEDING³⁶ (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the importance of breastfeeding for a baby's health and how men can support and encourage their partners to breastfeed.

MATERIALS (Optional): The illustrated version of the handout, "Fathers Can Play an Important Role in Breastfeeding"

INSTRUCTIONS

10. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
11. Lead a "check-in" by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - "How are you?"
 - "Has anything new happened that you want to share?"
 - "Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in our last session?"
12. Explain that in this activity, they are going to discuss what they know about breastfeeding and how men can support their partners in breastfeeding their new child.
13. Ask the group what they know about breastfeeding. "Why is it important to breastfeed? How long should a woman breastfeed? Did your wife breastfeed after your last child was born?"
14. Allow the men to share their own ideas and experiences.
15. Explain to the group that breastfeeding is very important for a baby's health and development. You can share with them information below:
 - **Why:** Breastfeeding allows a mother to pass on vital nutrients to help the child grow and become strong and healthy. The breast milk also helps protect the child from common illnesses by building up his or her immune system.
 - **For how long:** Health professionals recommend that a woman breastfeed exclusively for the first 6 months of the child's life to ensure that your baby grows healthy and strong. This means that no formula or food other than

³⁶ Activity adapted from "The importance of breastfeeding" in the *Bandebereho Fathers' Group Education Manual* (Promundo, RWAMREC, 2014) and from a manual developed by Promundo for Concern Worldwide Rwanda.

breast milk is given for the first 6 months, unless instructed otherwise by a doctor.

***Note on adaptation:** This information should be updated to reflect the guidelines and recommendations of the health ministry or relevant institution in your country.

16. Tell the group that sometimes women face barriers, or have challenges, when trying to follow these recommendations about breastfeeding.
17. Ask the group: *“Can you name any reasons why a woman might not start breastfeeding immediately after giving birth? Any reasons why a woman might not be able to breastfeed exclusively for the first six months of the baby’s life?”*
 - **Facilitator Tip:** Participants can discuss the challenges in small groups and then propose solutions and ideas for how men can support their partners to breastfeed. If both men and women are present, listen to see how men and women’s ideas differ or are similar to each other.

Possible barriers to exclusive breastfeeding:

Research has found that women sometimes face barriers or challenges when trying to breastfeed exclusively for the first 6 months of a child’s life, including:

- Beliefs that breast milk alone is not sufficient to meet a baby’s nutritional needs in the first six months, and a desire to give a baby other foods or formula (mothers, fathers or other family members may have this belief!)
- Insufficient time to exclusively breastfeed for the entire six months due to the demands of women’s roles within and outside the home
- Encouragement from others to stop breastfeeding and provide the baby with foods or liquids other than breast milk
- Lack of support from husbands/male partners or other extended family members (such as a mother or mother-in-law) for exclusive breastfeeding
- Difficulty to breastfeed, including not producing enough milk or finding breastfeeding to be painful or uncomfortable

18. After the group has finished, ask them: *“Can anyone think of solutions to these challenges? Are there specific ways that fathers can support women to breastfeed?”*
19. Feel free to share some of the suggestions from the illustrated version of the Supporting Information Handout, “Fathers Can Play an Important Role in Breastfeeding”.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Women (if present):** *“What do you think about the suggestions provided by the group? Would you like fathers to be more involved or supportive of breastfeeding?”*
- **Men:** *“Have you ever done anything to support their partner to breastfeed? Do you think you can do some of the solutions the group identified? Why or why not?”*
- *“How can men in the community be encouraged to be more involved in and supportive of exclusive breastfeeding?”*
- *“Are there any other ways men can support their wives/partners to breastfeed that weren’t already identified?”*

Key message

Breastfeeding is an important way for new babies to get the nutrients they need to grow strong and healthy. Although men cannot breastfeed, there are many ways that men can support their partners while breastfeeding, such as encouraging them to breastfeed and helping them by taking on household tasks. By taking an active role in breastfeeding, fathers can also bond with their children.

CHECK-OUT

4. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
5. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
6. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

Talk to your partner about breastfeeding. If your partner is currently breastfeeding, ask her about any challenges she has breastfeeding and how you can support her. If she is not currently breastfeeding, talk to her about her past experience (if relevant) or about how she would like you to support her to breastfeed in the future.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION HANDOUT

FATHERS CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN BREASTFEEDING

Breast milk is healthiest for Babies! A mother's early milk, called colostrum, is expressed from the beginning and is the only food a baby needs. Colostrum's special role is to help your newborn stay healthy. It is filled with important vitamins, minerals, proteins and immunities. If possible, do not give your baby water or formula in the first six months. Feeding the baby anything other than breast milk interferes with a mother's ability to produce enough milk.

- Breast milk is easier to digest than formula. Breastfed babies have less diarrhoea, constipation, and colic than babies who are not breastfed.
- Breast milk contains antibodies to fight infections.
- Babies may have less risk of becoming obese, having diabetes, and developing other diseases.
- Breastfed babies have a lower risk of asthma, allergies, and certain cancers.
- Breast milk contains special ingredients to promote brain growth.

What can a Father Do? As a father you can:

- **Encourage your partner to breastfeed** and let her know she is doing a good job breastfeeding!
- **Follow the recommendations.** Make sure not provide, or allow others to provide, the baby with formula or food other than breast milk in the first 6 months.
- **Help with the housework and cooking, and limit the number of visitors.** New mothers need plenty of rest!
- **Take the baby to the mother when he or she is ready to feed.** If you see the baby searching for the mother's breast, sucking his fist, or making sucking noises, take him or her to mother for a feeding. The baby will need to feed often, every 1 to 3 hours and will wake up to feed. Look at your baby's tiny fist and remember that it is about the same size as his/her stomach!
- **Bond with the baby.** Bathe, change and dress your baby. Sing and talk to your baby. Babies love skin-to-skin contact with their fathers! Make some time in the day just for you and your baby – babies need cuddling and hugs from their fathers too.

Breastfeeding is a loving commitment. It takes time for a mother to learn how to breastfeed. If your partner is uncomfortable or experiences pain while breastfeeding, it may be because the baby is not latching on correctly or because the breast is engorged with milk. Many new mothers need help in the beginning.

(Information adapted from: United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). (2002).)

Activity #12

THE IMPORTANCE OF BREASTFEEDING



Make sure not to provide, or allow others to provide, the baby with formula or food other than breast milk in the first 6 months.



Help with cooking, and limit the number of visitors. New mothers need rest.



Bond with the baby. Bathe, change and dress your baby.



Help with the housework.

HOMEWORK REFLECTION #9 (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the homework assignment from the last session and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - *“How are you?”*
 - *“Has anything new happened that you want to share?”*
 - *“Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”*
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous Fathers Club meeting.

Talk to your partner about breastfeeding. If your partner is currently breastfeeding, ask her about any challenges she has breastfeeding and how you can support her. If she is not currently breastfeeding, talk to her about her past experience (if relevant) or about how she would like you to support her to breastfeed in the future.

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing any discussions that you have had with your partner about breastfeeding or the ways that you have supported your partner to breastfeed.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - *“How did the assignment go? What did discuss with your partner?”*
 - *“What types of support did you, or will you provide to your partner in the future to help her breastfeed?”*

- *“How did you feel after doing the assignment?”*
 - *“What was the result of the assignment?”*
6. Ask if there are any questions participants may have for the group. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
 7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
 8. Remind them of the time, date, and place of the next meeting.

THEME 5: RELATIONSHIPS

In the fifth series of activities, participants in the Fathers Clubs will discuss different aspects of their relationships with their partners and with their family. Activities within this theme will explore issues of household decision-making, violence, communication and conflict resolution, and substance abuse. Some of these activities may be challenging to facilitate and may provoke negative reactions from the group. Prepare yourself before the session by reviewing the commonly asked questions and thinking about other questions that might be asked during the group meeting. Think about and write down your responses. This will help you to navigate any tricky conversations that might arise.

To complement individual and group reflection, facilitators can share contextually relevant facts about violence and decision-making. Or, you can use this information to help you respond to any difficult questions that might be asked. You can include these facts during the Group Discussion portion of your session. This helps to reinforce the fact that these problems do not exist only in the group; it is a countrywide issue as well.

| Country | Facts about Decision-making and Violence Against Women |
|-------------------|--|
| Bangladesh | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 14.1% of women indicate that they make the decisions about their own health care.³⁷ • 53% of women indicate that they make major household purchases jointly with their husband, but more than 38% of women say that it is mainly their husband or someone else makes these decisions.³⁸ • 48.7% of women ages 15-49 have ever experienced physical violence since age 15, and 22.4% of married women have experienced physical or sexual violence from their partner in last 12 months.³⁹ |
| Ghana | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 27.4% of women indicate that they make the decisions about their own health care.⁴⁰ • 51.1% of women indicate that they make major household purchases jointly with their husband, but more than 26.1% of women say that it is mainly their husband or someone else makes these decisions.⁴¹ • 36.6% of women ages 15-49 have ever experienced physical violence since age 15, and 19.2% of married women have experienced physical or sexual violence from their partner in last 12 months.⁴² |

³⁷ Statistics from the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2014 (published 2016). Obtained from ICF International, 2015. The DHS Program STATcompiler. Funded by USAID. <http://www.statcompiler.com>. December 12 2016.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Statistics from the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2007 (published 2009). Obtained from ICF International, 2015. The DHS Program STATcompiler. Funded by USAID. <http://www.statcompiler.com>. December 12 2016.

⁴⁰ Statistics from the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey 2014 (published 2015). Obtained from ICF International, 2015. The DHS Program STATcompiler. Funded by USAID. <http://www.statcompiler.com>. December 12 2016.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Statistics from the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey 2008 (published 2009). Obtained from ICF International, 2015. The DHS Program STATcompiler. Funded by USAID. <http://www.statcompiler.com>. December 12 2016.

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Haiti | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 34.5% of women indicate that they make the decisions about their own health care.⁴³ • 37% of women indicate that they make major household purchases jointly with their husband, but more than 22% of women say that it is mainly their husband or someone else makes these decisions.⁴⁴ • 28.2% of women ages 15-49 have ever experienced physical violence since age 15, and 14.9% of married women have experienced physical or sexual violence from their partner in last 12 months.⁴⁵ |
| Nigeria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 6.2% of women indicate that they make the decisions about their own health care.⁴⁶ • 32% of women indicate that they make major household purchases jointly with their husband, but more than 62% of women say that it is mainly their husband or someone else makes these decisions.⁴⁷ • 27.8% of women ages 15-49 have ever experienced physical violence since age 15, and 11% of married women have experienced physical or sexual violence from their partner in last 12 months.⁴⁸ |
| Senegal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 6.6% of women indicate that they make the decisions about their own health care.⁴⁹ • 14.7% of women indicate that they make major household purchases jointly with their husband, but more than 81% of women say that it is mainly their husband or someone else makes these decisions.⁵⁰ |

COMMON QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

***Note on adaptation:** Some of the common questions and responses might not be relevant in your area. There may also be other common questions that are not featured here – please add them and brainstorm the types of responses you think are appropriate within the context.

⁴³ Statistics from the Haiti Demographic and Health Survey 2012 (published 2013). Obtained from ICF International, 2015. The DHS Program STATcompiler. Funded by USAID. <http://www.statcompiler.com>. December 12 2016.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Statistics from the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2013 (published 2014). Obtained from ICF International, 2015. The DHS Program STATcompiler. Funded by USAID. <http://www.statcompiler.com>. December 12 2016.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Statistics from the Senegal Demographic and Health Survey 2014 (published 2015). Obtained from ICF International, 2015. The DHS Program STATcompiler. Funded by USAID. <http://www.statcompiler.com>. December 12 2016.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

| QUESTION | RESPONSE |
|---|---|
| <p><i>“Are you saying that I now have to make <u>every</u> decision together with my wife?”</i></p> | <p><i>“No. There are some decisions, for example about our own bodies, how we spend our own time, where we choose to go, or who our friends are, that each individual should make for him or herself. But, when it comes to major household decisions, it’s important for men and women to discuss and agree together, because these decisions affect men and women, and the entire family.”</i></p> |
| <p><i>“How can women make decisions about money [or another issue women do not typically engage in] when they don’t have any knowledge or experience about these things?”</i></p> | <p><i>“Often, it is not that women do not have knowledge or experience, it is that few ask for their opinion. This is because in our society it is not considered proper for women to talk with men about these issues. If they do speak out they are seen as “bad women,” or as “trying to be like men.” Take the time to recognize the limitations society places on women and encourage the women in your life to speak out and be involved in decision-making.”</i></p> |
| <p><i>“Why should I give up my power to make decisions and give it to my wife?”</i></p> | <p><i>“When we talk about more equitable, or joint decision-making, we don’t mean that men and women each make 50% of the decisions. But, it does require men to share their decision-making power. However, making joint decisions comes with benefits. Many men feel that as the ‘head of the household’ they have to make all of the major household decisions. This can put a lot of stress and burden on one person’s shoulders. When men and women work together to make decisions, it can lessen this burden. Remember the saying: ‘two heads are better than one’.”</i></p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p><i>“Shouldn’t we just ban alcohol, because it’s the cause of violence in the family?”</i></p> | <p><i>“Policies that limit alcohol consumption, or the days and times that alcohol is sold have had some success at reducing rates of violence. However, alcohol itself isn’t a <u>cause</u> of violence. Many people can drink alcohol without ever using violence. Alcohol is a contributing factor to violence, but violence is mainly fuelled by attitudes that promote acceptance of violence and men’s superiority over women – these attitudes need to change in order to stop violence.”</i></p> |
| <p><i>“Women are also violent against men – why aren’t we talking about that?”</i></p> | <p><i>“It is true that both men and women can use violence against a partner, or a child. However, around the world, men’s violence – against women, as well as men’s violence against other men – is more common. It is important for us to recognize how common men’s use of violence is, and to challenge the attitudes that accept violence and assume that it is an important part of men’s role and identity in society.”</i></p> |
| <p>What other common questions, myths or misconceptions exist in your setting?</p> <p>Common question / myth / misconception in my setting:</p> | <p>Possible response:</p> |
| <p>Common question / myth / misconception in my setting:</p> | <p>Possible response:</p> |

ACTIVITY 13: WHO MAKES DECISIONS?⁵¹ (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on imbalances in decision-making power between men and women and to discuss the advantages of women and men making decisions together.

MATERIALS (Optional): 3 large sheets of paper, one with “Men” written on it, one with “Women” on it, and one with “Joint/together” written on it, Illustration for Who Makes Decisions?

INSTRUCTIONS

Before the activity begins: hang three pieces of paper on the walls or on trunks of tall trees. One should have the word “Men” written on it, the second should have the word “Women”, and the third should have the words “Joint/together” written on it. Alternatively, you can lay the pieces of paper on the floor/ground.

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in our last session?”
3. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to discuss who makes the decisions in our homes and relationships.
4. Ask everyone to stand up. Tell the group that you will read a series of questions, and the participants need to think about **who usually makes these decisions**.

Facilitator Tip: If it is a mixed group of men and women, divide men and women into separate groups. (Note: Each group will need a facilitator).

5. If the participants believe **MEN** usually make this decision: move to one side or to where you have hung the “Men” sign.
6. If they believe **WOMEN** normally make this decision: move to the other side or to where you have hung the “Women” sign.

⁵¹ Activity adapted from “Who decides”, from the *Change-Makers Training Facilitator Handbook*, developed by Men’s Resources International for Concern Liberia, and also inspired by the session “Decision-Making” in the *Gender Road Map (GRM) Guidebook: A Couple-based transformative model to address unequal power relations*, developed by Oxfam and Gender and Development Cambodia (2014).

7. If they believe **WOMEN AND MEN TOGETHER** make these decisions, they can stand in the middle or to where you have hung the “Joint/Together” sign.
8. Ask if everyone understands the directions. It may be helpful to demonstrate the activity the group.
9. Choose 3-5 questions from the list below (you do not have to ask all questions).
10. After each question, ask a few volunteers to explain why they chose the side they did. Encourage a diversity of responses. If people are unsure about the questions, encourage them to think about who makes the decision **most of the time**.

- *“Who decides who does the housework?”*
- *“Who decides if or when a pregnant woman can go the health facility?”*
- *“Who decides what the children will eat?”*
- *“Who decides which food to buy?”*
- *“Who decides what crops to grow?”*
- *“Who decides how money is spent or invested?”*
- *“Who decides purchases of small household items?”*
- *“Who decides to buy or sell major household items (such as livestock)?”*
- *“Who decides what to do with the money that is earned?”*
- *“Who decides if children go to school?”*
- *“Who decides if children need medical care or vaccinations?”*
- *“Who decides if children should be punished?”*
- *“Who decides when to have sex?”*
- *“Who decides how many children they should have?”*
- *“Who decides when a girl should be married?”*

***Note on adaptation:** There may be important decisions that you feel are missing from the list above. There may also be decisions that don’t seem relevant for the participants in your group. You should adapt this list to your context.

11. After both groups have finished the statements, ask everyone to sit down in a circle. (If men and women were in separate groups, ask them to come together in a larger group if possible).
12. Show everyone the illustration on Who Makes Decisions located at the end of this activity. Ask them to compare what is going on in the first scene versus the second scene? Use the following questions to further analyze the illustration.

- Which scene is typically more common in your community?
- Why is this man in the first scene inside “The Man Box”?
- How do you think his wife feels in this scene?
- Looking at the second scene, how did the man get outside of “The Man Box”? What happened in their relationship?

13. Continue with the discussion using the questions down below.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“What types of decisions do women usually make? Why is this?”*
- *“What types of decisions do men usually make? Why is this?”*
- *“What did you notice about who makes most of the important decisions?”*
- *“Is it fair that some people have more power in decision-making than others?”*
- *“What happens when someone does not have power to make or participate in decisions that directly affect their lives? What problems occur when one person makes all the important decisions for the family?”*
- *“What are some of the disadvantages for women or for children when men are the primary or sole decision-makers in the family? Are there any problems for men?”*
 - For example, if men are the sole decision-makers on the number of children to have, this takes away his partner’s rights to make decisions over her own body and puts her health at risk. It also further burdens her with the task of taking care of more children than she may be able to. For men, they often report feeling large amounts of stress with having to make all the decisions in the family. They also feel a burden of being the sole provider for the needs of their family.
- *“What are the benefits to men and women sharing power and making decisions together?”*
- *“Is it realistic for men and women to share decisions within the family? Why or why not?”*
- *“Are there any disadvantages to sharing decisions? Why or why not?”*

Key message

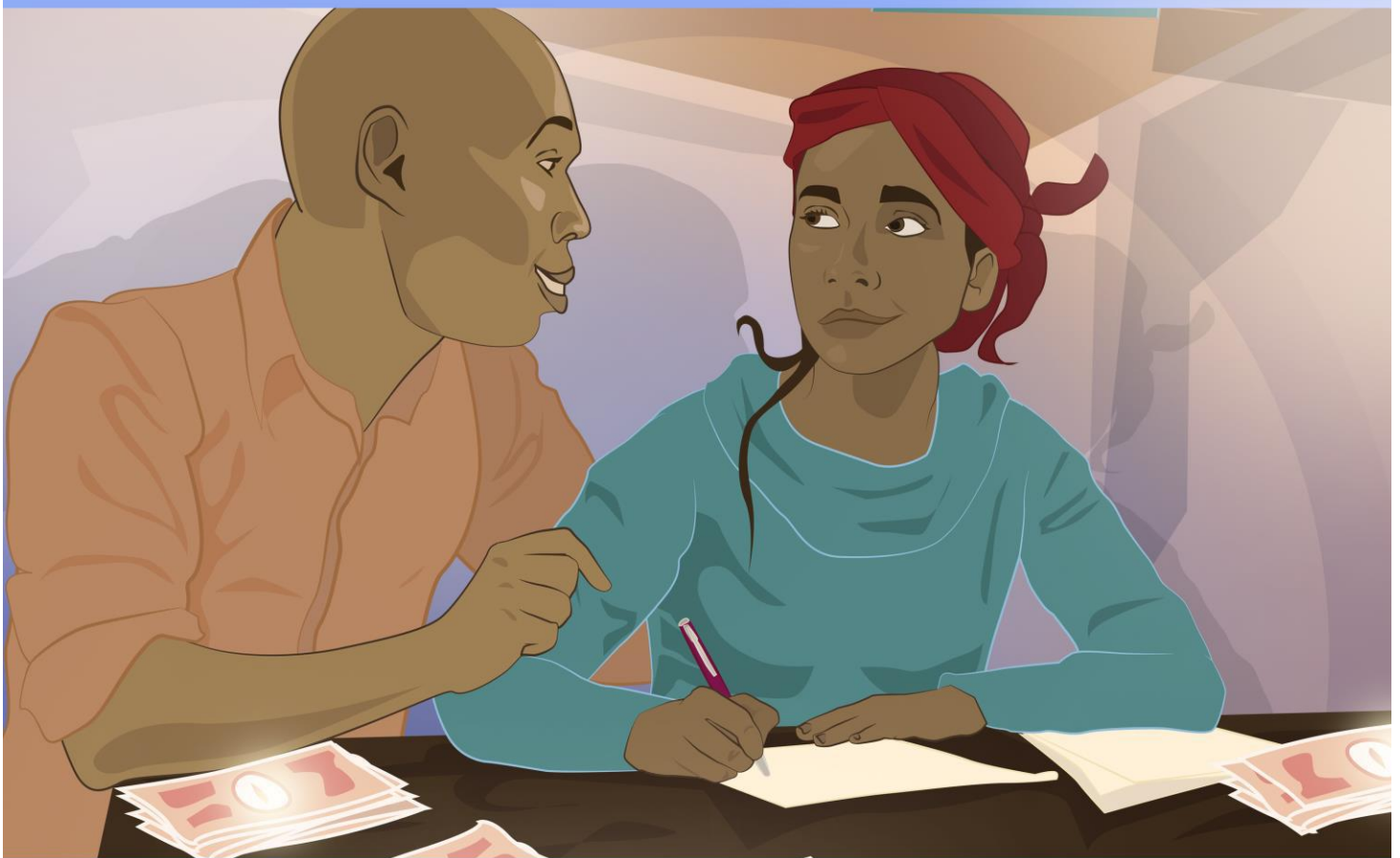
There are many decisions that men make on their own, often because they are expected to as the head of the household. These decisions directly impact their wives' and children's lives and wellbeing. Lack of shared/joint decision-making can have negative consequences for children, women and men themselves. Shared decision-making brings benefits, but requires taking concrete steps to share power between men and women.

CHECKOUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

Think about how you could share decision-making power in your household. With your partner, discuss concrete steps to take towards more equitable and shared decision-making. What types of decisions, or additional types of decisions, could you make together?



HOMEWORK REFLECTION #10 (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the homework assignment from the last session and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - *“How are you?”*
 - *“Has anything new happened that you want to share?”*
 - *“Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”*
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous Fathers Club meeting.

Think about how you could share decision-making power in your household. With your partner, discuss concrete steps to take towards more equitable and shared decision-making. What types of decisions, or additional types of decisions, could you make together?

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing how some of the ways that you share decision-making power with your partner. What types of joint decisions do you and your partner make? You can also share how you took the steps towards more joint decision-making.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - *“How did the assignment go?”*
 - *“What types of decisions did you discuss with your partner?”*
 - *“How did you feel after doing the assignment?”*

- *“What was the result of the assignment?”*
6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
 7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
 8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.

ACTIVITY 14: WHAT IS VIOLENCE (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To identify the most common types of violence that occur in families and between partners.

MATERIALS (Optional): Flipchart or large pieces of paper, markers.

PREPARATION: Hang three flipcharts on the wall: (1) Violence you have experienced; (2) Violence you have witnessed; (3) Violence you have used against another person

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain that the purpose of the activity they are going to do is to discuss what violence is and the different types of violence that exist.
4. Ask the group, “*What is **violence**?*” Allow them to share their opinions. You can write down the responses on a flipchart if you prefer.
5. After everyone has shared their ideas, explain to the group that, “*We’ve all experienced violence in one way or another – as a victim, a witness, or a perpetrator. At its simplest level, violence is the use of force or the threat of force by one individual against another. Violence is not a random act. Violence is something that is learned, and therefore can be unlearned.*”
6. Tell the group that we will hand them three post-its and they will write down the following:
 - a. 1 type of violence they have experienced
 - b. 1 type of violence they have witnessed
 - c. 1 type of violence they have used against another person
7. After a few minutes, ask participants to stick the post-its on the relevant flipchart.
8. Once everyone has finished, ask participants to walk around to each flipchart and read the participants responses.

9. After a few minutes, ask everyone to sit down and then ask if one person would like to share their own personal experiences with violence. If no one volunteers, pick a post-it and read it out to the group.
10. Ask the group, *“Can anyone tell us what kind of violence this is?”*
11. Allow a few participants to volunteer responses.
12. Repeat by asking for another example of a different kind of violence until you have examples of the four categories of violence.
13. At the end, provide the following definitions of violence:

*“**Physical violence** is the use of physical force, such as hitting, slapping, kicking, burning or pushing.”*

*“**Sexual violence** includes pressuring or forcing someone to perform sexual acts (from kissing to sex) against their will, or making sexual comments that make someone feel humiliated or uncomfortable. It does not matter if the person has previously consented to sexual behaviour – consent must be given at the time of the act.”*

*“**Emotional or psychological violence** is often the most difficult form of violence to identify. It may include humiliating, threatening, insulting, pressuring, and expressions of jealousy or possessiveness, such as controlling someone’s decisions and activities. It can also include restricting someone’s movements. This form of violence can be verbal or non-verbal.”*

*“**Economic violence** is when someone else exercises complete control over a person’s money and other economic resources. This type of violence is a way of exerting power and can be used to control someone’s movements, for example by keeping them from meeting with friends, etc.”*

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“What are the most common types of violence that occur in the family? In romantic relationships? Between friends?”*
- *“Why do men use violence against women? What does this have to do with the ‘Man Box’?”*
- *“Does a person, man or woman, ever “deserve” to be hit or suffer some type of violence? Why or why not?”*
- *“Think back to the activity we did a few sessions ago called ‘Persons and Things’ where we explored how power is used to treat other people like ‘things.’” How is violence used to treat other people like ‘things?’” For example, the threat of physical violence (a show of power) may be used against an intimate partner in order to control whom she speaks to or whom she socializes with.*

- “How acceptable is it in our communities for men to use violence against women?”
- “What are some of the consequences of violence on individuals? On relationships and the family? On communities?”

| Some examples: | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Individual | For example, consequences for an individual can include physical injuries such as bruises, cuts or broken bones, and even death. Physical violence can also happen while a woman is pregnant – impacting the health of mother and child. Sexual violence, such as unwanted intercourse can lead to unplanned pregnancy and vulnerability to disease. Violence also causes psychological suffering and can have negative impacts on a person’s mental health. |
| Relationship and family | Consequences for relationships and the family can include fear, mistrust and disharmony between partners. In addition, children who witness violence against their mother often suffer many of the same symptoms as children who have experienced physical or sexual violence themselves. These same children, particularly boys, often grow up to repeat these cycles of violence by perpetrating violence against a female partner when they become adults. |
| Community or society | Consequences for the community can include the high costs of health care for treating the physical and mental consequences of violence on individuals. Other costs include those incurred by the police, courts and legal services to prosecute perpetrators of abuse. Women who have experienced violence may be less able to work, or prohibited to do so, which can lead to losses in their earning potential. |

- “What needs to be done to stop violence within the family?”

Key message

At its most basic level, violence is a way to control or have power over another person. People often only think about violence as physical aggression, but there are other forms of violence as well. All forms of violence have a detrimental impact on the health of wellbeing of individuals, their families, and the community.

CHECKOUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

Reflect on your own behaviour, in your relationships with your partner and with your children. Are there things that you could do differently? If you feel comfortable, talk to your friends and break the silence surrounding violence by challenging some of theirs and your own attitudes and beliefs about violence.

HOMEWORK REFLECTION #11 (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the homework assignment from the last session and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - *“How are you?”*
 - *“Has anything new happened that you want to share?”*
 - *“Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”*
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous Fathers Club meeting.

Reflect on your own behaviour, in your relationships with your partner and with your children. Are there things that you could do differently? If you feel comfortable, talk to your friends and break the silence surrounding violence by challenging some of theirs and your own attitudes and beliefs about violence.

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing your own experiences of discussing and challenging attitudes towards violence.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - *“How did the assignment go?”*
 - *“What did you discuss and with whom?”*
 - *“How did you feel after doing the assignment?”*
 - *“What was the result of the assignment?”*

6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.

ACTIVITY 15: HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To discuss the characteristics of a healthy, non-violent relationship and how to use communication to resolve conflict and build more equitable, respectful relationships.

MATERIALS (Optional): Illustration on Healthy Relationships, Flipchart or large pieces of paper, markers.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”

Facilitator tip: If men and women are present, you can divide the participants into one group of women and one group of men. Each group will require a facilitator. Ask the groups to move to different parts of the room, to allow enough space for each group to talk openly without disturbing the others.

3. Open up the illustration for this activity on Healthy Relationships.
4. Pointing to the illustration, ask participants what is the difference between the two scenes shown on the page? Alternatively, ask for participants to split into pairs or small groups of three and discuss the differences between the two scenes. Then ask them to share insights from their discussion.
5. Explain to the group that in this activity they will discuss what a healthy relationship looks like and how to build healthier relationships with their partners.
6. Ask the group: “A couple can feel lots of stress right after a child is born because they have many new responsibilities. It is important that they have a healthy relationship to deal with this stress. In your community, what does a healthy, respectful relationship look like? How do the partners in a healthy relationship treat each other?” You can record the responses on a flipchart if you prefer.

***Note on adaptation:** In some settings the term “respect” or “respectful” is

understood in different ways (e.g. the respect you show a teacher or elder) or is interpreted to mean the “respect” that men, as the head of the family, deserve to receive from their wives. In such cases, you might want to substitute the term “equitable”, meaning relationships that are characterized by a shared, or equal standing and between men and women, where both partners care for, value, and support each other.

| Examples of Healthy Relationships |
|--|
| <p>Partners/spouses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate calmly without using violence • Share household responsibilities equally • Have equal and positive involvement in the health of children • Male partner is positively involved in and supports the health of his partner • Male partner respects the ideas and opinions of his female partner • Give love and respect one another • Give each other space • Are honest with one another • Encourage / cheer on one another • Give privacy to one another • Have their own friends |

7. After the group has shared their ideas of what a healthy, respectful relationship looks like, ask the group: *“How do the partners in a healthy relationship feel?”*

| Examples of Feelings in Healthy Relationships |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women feel heard and respected • Men may feel less stress because they communicate and listen to frustrations and solve problems together • Men feel more connected to their children because they are more involved • Both partners feel loved and respected • Both partners feel that the relationship is honest |

8. Next, ask the group: “*What does an unhealthy relationship look like? How do partners in such a relationship treat each other?*”

| Examples of Unhealthy Relationships |
|--|
| <p>Partners/spouses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accuse one another of cheating (infidelity) • Lie to one another • Do not share responsibility, giving an unfair burden of household and caregiving chores to women • Do not communicate about the number of children to have • Use violence to resolve conflict • Criticize one another • Act controlling or jealous, such as wanting to know where you are at all times • Check one another’s Facebook page/ phone to know who they communicate with |

9. Next, ask the group: “*How do the partners in an unhealthy relationship feel?*”

| Examples of Feelings in Unhealthy Relationships |
|--|
| <p>One or both partners may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mistrust each other • Feel scared of the other • Fear for the safety of the children • Have paranoia and jealousy • Feel overwhelmed or trapped |

10. Tell the group, “*Once we know what a healthy relationship looks like, we can begin to think about the steps we need to take to create healthier, happier relationships with our partners, our families and our friends. Creating a healthy relationship is a daily, on-going process that requires **mutual respect** and **commitment to improving partner relations**. Healthy relationships also help ensure that children grow up in a happy and safe home.*”

11. Tell the group, *“Sometimes when we are angry, or having a disagreement with our partner, we behave in ways that aren’t respectful or constructive. Communicating our feelings is a very important way of resolving, or even avoiding conflict in the first place. But, many of us find it difficult to communicate to our partners why we are upset. We will now discuss and rehearse creative ways of communicating in order to resolve conflict – ways that can be used in our relationships with our spouses/partners, but also with friends, family members and others.”*
12. Use the four phrases below as a guide to help facilitate role-play and discussion. Participants should also be encouraged to think of their own phrases that can be useful when resolving conflict.

Four phrases for communicating during conflict:

- **I can see...** This is how we can express the behaviour that we see in the other person. For example: “I can see that you are upset with me.”
- **I imagine...** This phrase is how we say what we imagine when we observe the other person’s behaviour. For example: “I imagine that you are upset because...”
- **I feel...** This phrase is how we say what we feel to the person about what we can see and imagine. For example: “I feel sad and what happened really hurt me because our relationship is important to me.”
- **I want...** This phrase is how we make a proposal for how to improve things. For example: “I want you to tell me if something is bothering you.”

13. After sharing the phrases (or asking participants to role-play different situations in which they could use the phrases), open a discussion using the questions below.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“Think about all the stresses a couple with young children must experience. Do you think these phrases could be useful for you to communicate when you have conflicts in your relationship? Why or why not?”*
- *“Are there other ways of communicating your feelings that you think would help you to resolve conflicts without violence?”*
- *“Do you think it would be easy for a man to express his feelings during an argument? Why or why not?”*

- *“Do you think it would be easy for a woman to express her feelings during an argument? Why or why not?”*
- *“What are the benefits of communicating your feelings during a conflict?”*
- *“Do you think using these communication skills could help improve your relationship with your partner? With your children?”*

Key message

Communication is an important characteristic of a healthy, non-violent and respectful relationship. It is a good way to ensure that everyone feels like they are being heard. Sometimes when we are sad or frustrated, we don't talk about it, and the frustration or anger builds up until it is expressed through physical aggression or shouting. Take the time to talk with and listen to your partner. When we communicate, we can often resolve or stop conflict before it starts. This will also benefit young children when they see that their mother and father are able to resolve problems together.

CHECKOUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Are there any changes that you will make?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

Start taking steps to build a healthier relationship with your partner. If you find yourselves in conflict, try communicating your feelings to each other, rather than shouting or using violence. Think about how it feels. Does it work? Come to the next session prepared to share some of the steps you have taken to build a healthier relationship.



HOMWORK REFLECTION #12 (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the homework assignment from the last session and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous Fathers Club meeting.

Start taking steps to build a healthier relationship with your partner. If you find yourselves in conflict, try communicating your feelings to each other, rather than shouting or using violence. Think about how it feels. Does it work? Come to the next session prepared to share some of the steps you have taken to build a healthier relationship.

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing some of the tips you have used in your own relationship to manage conflict.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - “How did the assignment go? What steps did you take?”
 - “Did you try any of the exercises we discussed in the last session?”
 - “How did you feel after doing the assignment?”

- *“What was the result of the assignment?”*
6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.
 7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
 8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.

ACTIVITY 16: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT SUBSTANCE ABUSE?⁵² (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To encourage discussion about drug and alcohol abuse and how it impacts men and their partners and families.

MATERIALS: Ball or other small object that can be safely tossed around

***Note on adaptation:** The use of alcohol and drugs differs by country depending on laws, and religious and local customs. In some settings this activity may need to be adapted to be locally applicable (for example, by removing reference to alcohol), while in other settings you may feel it is not relevant at all.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in our last session?”
3. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to discuss the use of substances, like alcohol and drugs, and the potential consequences of overusing or abusing these substances.
4. Ask the group: “What are the most common substances that men in the community use? Are some substances worse than others?”
5. Allow the group time to identify and discuss the different types of substances like alcohol or drugs that are used in their community.
6. Ask the participants to stand in a circle. Toss the ball to someone. Ask him to name one “**reason**” why men use drugs or alcohol, and then toss the ball to another person, who will do the same.
7. Encourage the participants to give a different reason from the others who have gone before. (If needed, remind the group that the focus is on the *reasons* for substance use. The *consequences* will come later).

⁵² Adapted from the activity “Throw the Drunk Ball” in *Journeys of Transformation* (Promundo, CARE International, 2012).

8. Let the participants toss the ball until everyone has received the ball or until the group can no longer think additional reasons.
9. Take the ball and explain that this time around, when someone receives the ball, he will say one **“problem”** or **“consequence”** caused by excessive use or abuse of these substances. These can be immediate problems or long-term consequences for the man, his partner, and his family.
10. Toss the ball to someone. Allow the activity to continue until the group cannot think of new consequences. Ask everyone to sit down in a circle and open the discussion.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“Do men generally use drugs or drink more than women do? Why or why not?”*
- *“Is there a connection between alcohol or drug use and being a “real man”?”*
- *“What is the difference between healthy drinking, where it is allowed, and drinking that leads to problems? How much is too much?”*
- *“How does excessive use of drugs or alcohol impair our ability to make good decisions? To be a good husband/partner? A good father?”*
- *“What types of support does someone who is abusing alcohol or drugs need to help them reduce these risks?”*
- *“How can men support each other in preventing alcohol and drug abuse?”*

Key message

Alcohol and drug abuse occurs in many communities and can negatively impact men, and their relationships with their partners and their children. Substance abuse can also have a long-term impact on the health and well being of the family. It is important to identify one’s own limits and consider how these pleasures can put at risk the goals you have for yourself and your family.

CHECKOUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*

- *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Will you make any changes?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

Try to do one thing to support yourself, a friend, or a family member to make healthier choices regarding the use of alcohol or drugs. It might be reaching out to a friend or partner to ask for help, or it could be letting a friend or family member know that you are there to help.

HOMEWORK REFLECTION #13 (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the homework assignment from the last session and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous Fathers Club meeting.

Try to do one thing to support yourself, a friend, or a family member to make healthier choices regarding the use of alcohol or drugs. It might be reaching out to a friend or partner to ask for help, or it could be letting a friend or family member know that you are there to help.

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing one of the ways in which you have made healthier choices for yourself, or supported a friend to control his substance abuse.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - “How did the assignment go? What did you do?”
 - “How did you feel after doing the assignment?”
 - “What was the result of the assignment?”
6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.

7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting.

THEME 6: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

In the sixth series of activities, participants in the Fathers Clubs will explore issues of fatherhood as they relate to the future – including using and communicating about family planning, setting goals for the children they have, and thinking about the opportunities that men want for their children, both male and female, to have as they grow up.

One topic of discussion in this theme is family planning, which can be a sensitive topic and should be discussed with care. It is recommended that you do combine the activity “Parents by Accident or by Choice?” with information provided by a trained health professional. Remember, you don’t have to be knowledgeable about all of the different contraceptive methods that are available. A health professional (such as a doctor, nurse, or community health worker) can provide accurate information on the methods of family planning available in the community and address any questions or concerns that women and men have about family planning. There are often lots of myths or misinformation about family planning, so opportunities to provide accurate information are very important.

| Country | Facts about Family Planning/Birth Spacing |
|------------|--|
| Bangladesh | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total fertility rate in Bangladesh is 2.3 children per woman. 23% of currently married women (ages 15-49) say that they would like to use a method of family planning for <i>spacing</i> their births. 51.4% of currently married women say that they would like to use a method of family planning for <i>limiting</i> their births. 12% of currently married women say that they have an unmet need for family planning – meaning they would like to use a method of family planning either for <i>spacing</i> or <i>limiting</i> their, but are not currently using one.⁵³ |
| Ghana | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total fertility rate in Ghana is 4.2 children per woman. 32.3% of currently married women (ages 15-49) say that they would like to use a method of family planning for <i>spacing</i> their births. 24.2% of currently married women say that they would like to use a method of family planning for <i>limiting</i> their births. 29.9% of currently married women say that they have an unmet need for family planning – meaning they would like to use a method of family planning either for <i>spacing</i> or <i>limiting</i> their, but are not currently using one.⁵⁴ |

⁵³ Statistics all from the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2014 (published 2016). Obtained from ICF International, 2015. The DHS Program STATcompiler. Funded by USAID. <http://www.statcompiler.com>. December 19 2016.

⁵⁴ Statistics all from the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey 2014 (published 2015). The DHS Program STATcompiler. December 19 2016.

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Haiti | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total fertility rate in Haiti is 3.5 children per woman. • 29.1% of currently married women (ages 15-49) say that they would like to use a method of family planning for <i>spacing</i> their births. 40.7% of currently married women say that they would like to use a method of family planning for <i>limiting</i> their births. • 35.3% of currently married women say that they have an unmet need for family planning – meaning they would like to use a method of family planning either for <i>spacing</i> or <i>limiting</i> their births, but are not currently using one.⁵⁵ |
| Nigeria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total fertility rate in Nigeria is 5.0 children per woman.⁵⁶ • 20.4% of currently married women (ages 15-49) say that they would like to use a method of family planning for <i>spacing</i> their births. 10.8% of currently married women say that they would like to use a method of family planning for <i>limiting</i> their births. • 16.1% of currently married women say that they have an unmet need for family planning – meaning they would like to use a method of family planning either for <i>spacing</i> or <i>limiting</i> their births, but are not currently using one.⁵⁷ |
| Senegal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total fertility rate in Senegal is 5.0 children per woman. • 34.7% of currently married women (ages 15-49) say that they would like to use a method of family planning for <i>spacing</i> their births. 13.0% of currently married women say that they would like to use a method of family planning for <i>limiting</i> their births. • 25.6% of currently married women say that they have an unmet need for family planning – meaning they would like to use a method of family planning either for <i>spacing</i> or <i>limiting</i> their births, but are not currently using one.⁵⁸ |

All individuals have the right to choose whether and when to have children, as well as the number and the timing of their children. There are different methods available that can help couples to either space their births, meaning to delay or wait a period of time in between births, or to limit the number of births. An important message to impart is the importance of communication between men and women when planning a family. Each couple should discuss and decide together how many children they want, when to have them, and the right family planning method to use, if they choose to use one.

⁵⁵ Statistics all from the Haiti Demographic and Health Survey 2012 (published 2013). The DHS Program STATcompiler. December 19 2016.

⁵⁶ Nigeria MIS 2015. Obtained from ICF International, 2015. The DHS Program STATcompiler. December 19 2016.

⁵⁷ Statistics from the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2013 (published 2014). The DHS Program STATcompiler. December 19 2016.

⁵⁸ Statistics all from the Senegal Demographic and Health Survey 2014 (published 2015). The DHS Program STATcompiler. December 19 2016.

COMMON QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

| QUESTION | RESPONSE |
|--|---|
| <p><i>“Are you telling me that I shouldn’t have more children?”</i></p> | <p><i>“No. Each individual and couple has the right to decide how many children they want to have. But, it’s important to communicate openly and honestly with one another about how many children you and your partner want, as well as the resources that you have to support the needs of each child. Multiple pregnancies, especially when close together, can also have negative impacts on a woman’s health. It’s good to get the right information and decide with your partner the right number of children for your family.”</i></p> |
| <p><i>“Won’t my partner experience side effects if she takes contraceptives?”</i></p> | <p><i>“Sometimes women can experience side effects from different contraceptive methods, which can be unpleasant. But, there are different types of contraceptives available to fit the needs of each person. A health professional can help to identify the right type of contraceptive for you and your partner. There are also methods that men can use, such as condoms, which are temporary, or vasectomy, which is a permanent method.”</i></p> |
| <p><i>“Isn’t family planning a women’s issue?”</i></p> | <p><i>“Family planning is everyone’s issue! Men and women need to discuss and decide how many children they want to have and whether to use a family planning method to delay or limit births. There are family planning methods for women as well as for men, and men can also attend family planning services. However, only a woman can become pregnant, and each woman has the right to decide whether and if to be pregnant.”</i></p> |
| <p>What other common myths or misconceptions exist in your setting?</p> <p>Common myth / misconception in my setting:</p> | <p>Possible response:</p> |

Common myth / misconception in my setting:

Possible response:

ACTIVITY 17: PARENTS BY ACCIDENT OR BY CHOICE?⁵⁹ (1 hour)

Purpose: To discuss the benefits of using a family planning method and the value of couple communication in this process.

Materials: 2 containers of beans, or other items to represent household resources; (Optional): rocks, paper, rope, or other objects to mark 2 squares on the ground

INSTRUCTIONS

***Note on adaptation:** This activity is best when it is conducted in conjunction with the provision of accurate information by a trained health professional on the specific contraceptive methods available in the community.

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking for a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and respond to these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in our last session?”
3. Explain to the group that the purpose of this activity is to discuss couples’ use of family planning to and birth spacing to delay pregnancy.
4. Construct two squares on the ground or floor (this can be done with paper, by drawing in the dirt, or by using rope or other materials to demarcate the two spaces. Each square should be big enough to accommodate six people standing).
5. Explain that each square represents a house. You are going to tell the story of two couples, and you will need some volunteers to help illustrate the story. One person in each couple will be the mother and the other will be the father. Ask four volunteers to take on these roles:
 - **Couple # 1:** man and woman
 - **Couple # 2:** man and woman

***Note on adaptation:** It is good to provide locally relevant names for each couple and to use these names throughout the story.

⁵⁹ Adapted from “Father by Accident or by Choice?” in *Program P* (Promundo, REDMAS, EME, 2013) and “Parents by Accident or by Choice” in the *Bandebereho Facilitator’s Manual: Engaging men as fathers in gender equality, maternal and child health, caregiving and violence prevention* (RWAMREC, Promundo, 2014).

6. Tell the volunteers that while you read the story they will act out the story. When the story requires it, the volunteers can ask for new volunteers to join them in their home (square). Begin the story:

“This is the story of two brothers who decided to get married on the same day.”

Ask each couple to enter their "house". The observers can clap or sing to celebrate the marriages.

“Within a year of marriage, both couples have their first child.”

Ask for two volunteers to play the children and join their parents in their respective house.

“After the birth, Couple #1 decides to space their next child and begins using a family planning/child spacing method recommended by the local health facility.

Remind the volunteers to continue the role-play as you continue reading the story.

“Couple #2 does not use a family planning/child spacing method. In fact, the husband refuses to even discuss it. A year later, the couple has a 2nd child.”

Ask a volunteer to play the second child and join the parents in their house.

“The following year, both couples have another child.”

Ask two volunteers to play the children and to join the parents in their respective houses.

“After the birth, the Couple #1 begins to use a family planning/child spacing method again. Couple #2 does not use family planning/child spacing. The following year, couple #2 welcomes their 4th child.”

Ask a volunteer to play the fourth child and to join the parents in their house.

“Two years later, both couples welcome a new child. It is the 5th child for couple #2 and the 3rd child for couple #1.”

Ask for two volunteers to play the children and to join the parents in their respective houses.

7. Remind the volunteers that each family needs to remain inside their house (within the square).
8. Give each couple a container of beans (or other object representing the family's resources). Ask each couple to distribute the beans among the family members and ask each family to take a few minutes to role play/act out what it's like to live in their household. Ask the rest of the group to observe.
9. After the role-play, thank the volunteers and ask them to “step out” of their roles. Open a group discussion using the questions below.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Observers:** *“What did you notice as you listened to the story and watched these families?”*
- **Actors:** *“How did it feel to participate in this activity?”*
- *“Is there anything wrong with having a large family?”*

Note to the facilitator: The point of this question is to say that there is no such thing as the ‘perfect’ family size. However, each couple has to decide together how many children they can provide for so that each child has the opportunity to have a healthy start in life.

- *“Why do some couples choose not to use family planning/child spacing methods or to space their children?”*
- *“What effects can lack of family planning/child spacing have on women? On women’s health? On the family? On the family’s resources?”*

| Some examples | |
|-----------------|--|
| Women | <p>Increased likelihood of depression</p> <p>Reduced likelihood of breastfeeding, resulting in less healthy children</p> <p>Increased risk of physical violence during pregnancy</p> <p>Greater risk of maternal mortality / morbidities</p> |
| Men | <p>Increased stress and risk of abandoning family as a result of having to provide for a large family</p> <p>Perpetrate violence against his pregnant intimate partner</p> |
| Children | <p>Born with low birth weight</p> <p>Increased risk of infant mortality</p> |

- *“What are the benefits of men and women planning their family together, meaning to discuss and agree how many children they want to have and to space the children (waiting 2 to 3 years in between children)?”*
- *“What challenges do men and women face in using family planning/child spacing?”*

- *“Do most couples discuss family planning/child spacing? What could make it easier for men and women to discuss family planning?”*
- *“How can men contribute to, support or participate more in family planning/child spacing?”*

Key message

Every couple has the right to decide the number, timing and spacing of their children. Unplanned pregnancies can put an emotional and financial strain on women, men and the entire family. There are also serious health consequences as well particularly for mothers and young children. It is important for couples to discuss and agree on the number of children they want to have, and whether they have the resources to support them.

CHECKOUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Will you make any changes?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

Discuss how to plan your family with your partner. Do you want to have more children? Does she? Do you want to space the births? What methods can you or are you using to prevent/delay/space pregnancy?

HOMEWORK REFLECTION #14 (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the homework assignment from the last session and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - *“How are you?”*
 - *“Has anything new happened that you want to share?”*
 - *“Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”*
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous Fathers Club meeting.

Discuss how to plan your family with your partner. Do you want to have more children? Does she? Do you want to space the births? What methods can you or are you using to prevent/delay pregnancy?

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing how you’ve talked to your own partner about planning your family.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - *“How did the assignment go? What did you discuss with your partner?”*
 - *“Was it easy or hard to have this conversation?”*
 - *“How did you feel after doing the assignment?”*
 - *“What was the result of the assignment?”*
6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to

that problem.

7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting

ACTIVITY 18: YOUR CHILD'S FUTURE⁶⁰ (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the goals that participants have for their children's futures and how their own behaviours impact these goals either positively or negatively.

MATERIALS: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a "check-in" by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - "How are you?"
 - "Has anything new happened that you want to share?"
 - "Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?"
3. Explain that in this activity the group will think about the future they would like for their new child and how harsh discipline affects the achievement of those goals.
4. Tell the group: *"Having a child is joyful, exciting, and rewarding. But, it can also be exhausting and challenging. Parents feel an extraordinary responsibility for the health and happiness of their children, but very few of us ever received instructions on how to raise a child. Many times we learn by doing or by remembering how our parents raised us. In turn, our children learn from us and mirror our behaviour and the way they see us treat others."*
5. Divide the participants into pairs (small groups of two). If men's partners are present, the pairs should be couples.
6. Ask participants to close their eyes and imagine the following: *"Imagine that your child is all grown up and is turning 18 years old. What type of person do you want him or her to be? What kind of relationship do you want to have with your child at age 18?"*

***Note on adaptation:** You can adjust the age of the child in the brainstorm to reflect the age at which a child is perceived as becoming an adult in the local context.
7. Allow the group a few minutes to reflect.

⁶⁰ Adapted from "My Child in 20 Years" in the *Program P Manual* (Promundo, REDMAS, CulturaSalud, 2013).

8. Ask everyone to open their eyes and face their partner or participant with whom they have been paired.
9. Tell the participants that they now have an opportunity to share what they envisioned with their partner/in their pairs. Give everyone 5 to 10 minutes to discuss.
10. Next, ask each everyone to think about 5 characteristics that he (or she) wants for their child to have when he or she is 18. Alternatively, they can think of 5 long-term goals they have for their child. Each person can share with their partner/in their pairs.

Some examples of characteristics may be:

- Kind and helpful.
- Honest and trustworthy.
- A good decision-maker.
- Caring towards others.
- Has empathy for other people.
- Respects women.
- Confident in his or her opinions and beliefs.

11. Give participants another 5 or 10 minutes to discuss the characteristics they desire for their children. After the time is up, ask everyone to come back to the circle and start a group discussion.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“What are some of the characteristics you would like your child to have by age 18?”*
- *“How are men’s and women’s expectations or goals for their children similar? How are they different?”*
- *“Do we have different expectations of boys than girls?”*
- *“How does the way we raise our children affect their future?”*
- *“Are there positive practices that your parents did or experiences from your childhood that you would like to repeat with your own children?”*
- *“How does your relationship with your partner impact your child? The goals you have for your child?”*
- *“What kinds of decisions do you need to make now in order to be able to give your child the future you want for him or her?”*

Key message

Just as who you are today was shaped by your experiences growing up, so will your children's future be shaped by how you behave, how you treat them, and how they see you treat others in their lives. As parents you should discuss and reflect on how you do and how you do not want to raise your children so that you can give them the best future possible.

CHECKOUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *“Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?”*
 - *“Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Will you make any changes?”*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

If your partner was not here today, share with her your goals for your child(ren) and allow her to share her own reflections. Discuss how you can work together towards these goals. For those whose partners were here today, continue discussing and decide on tangible steps that you can take together to shape the future you envision for your child(ren).

HOMEWORK REFLECTION #15 (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the homework assignment from the last session and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - *“How are you?”*
 - *“Has anything new happened that you want to share?”*
 - *“Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”*
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous Fathers Club meeting.

If your partner was not here today, share with her your goals for your child(ren) and allow her to share her own reflections. Discuss how you can work together towards these goals. For those whose partners were here today, continue discussing and decide on tangible steps that you can take together to shape the future you envision for your child(ren).

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing how you and your partner have discussed or reflected on your goals for your children.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - *“How did the assignment go? How was the discussion with your partner?”*
 - *“Did your partner have similar goals for your children?”*
 - *“How did you feel after doing the assignment?”*
 - *“What was the result of the assignment?”*
6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group. Encourage the

group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.

7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting

ACTIVITY 19: CARLOTA'S STORY (1 hour)

Purpose: To examine how societal influences and power inequalities impact young girls' risk of entering into an early marriage.

Materials: Illustration for Carlota's Story at the end of this activity.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a "check-in" by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - "How are you?"
 - "Has anything new happened that you want to share?"
 - "Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?"
3. Explain that this session is focused on understanding the roots and effects of early marriage on girls. You will read out a story about a young girl who will be married to an older man. Before reading her story, think about the following details to adapt the story to your context.

To adapt this story, think about the following details:

Name of young girl: _____

Name of village: _____

*Adapt the title of the activity based on the name you choose.

4. Open up to the illustration of Carlota's Story located at the end of this activity. Share the illustration with the group as you read the following story.
5. Read out the story you have adapted to the group:

*"Hello. My name is Carlota and I am 14 years old. I live in _____.
My dream is to become a teacher because I love to learn! However, last week my mother and father told me that they have arranged for my marriage to a much older man in the next village.*

The wedding will take place in 6 months. I do not feel ready to be a wife. When I am asked about my marriage and future husband I just smile and say nothing even

though I am sad and scared. If I am married now, I will have to leave school and take care of my husband, his family, and give birth to children.

When I asked my mother and father about delaying my marriage until after I finish school, they said, "This is the way things are. We do not have much money to support you, and your marriage will bring honor to the family." I do not ask such things anymore."

6. After you have finished reading the story, open the discussion.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *"Does Carlota's story sound similar to others you have heard about or experienced yourself?"*
- *"What was the cause of Carlota's early marriage?"* For example: Poverty? Societal pressure to bring "honor" to the family? Gender inequality?
- *"Why does Carlota's future husband want to marry a girl much younger than he is? What does this have to do with the "Man Box"?"*
- *"What effect does Carlota's marriage have on her dream to become a teacher?"*
- *"What do you think Carlota's parents meant when they said, "This is the way things are"?"*
 - Probe: *"What role does society play in pushing families to marry their daughters off early?"*
 - Probe: *"Do you think her parents also felt powerless? Why or why not?"*
- *"Why is it that girls are more likely to be married early than boys?"* For example: in some places, girls have less value than boys do, have to be protected from sexual violence or activity and are not expected to contribute to family wealth as boys are expected to do.
- *"Why is early marriage harmful to young girls' health especially when they become pregnant?"*
- *"What can men in the community do to prevent families from marrying girls early?"*
- *"What is one thing you can do to empower young girls either at home or in your community?"*
- *"What is one thing you can do with other men or with your sons to empower girls?"*

Close the session with some key facts. Include additional information such as local and national laws about early marriage.⁶¹ ***Note on adaptation:** You can add country-specific information on laws, policies or data to the key messages.

Key message

- Child, early and forced marriage is a serious human rights violation faced by girls around the world.
- This practice effectively curtails girls' childhood, harms their health and wellbeing, puts them at greater risk of GBV compared to older women, isolates them from their peers, hinders access to education and livelihood opportunities, and perpetuates the cycle of poverty.
- There are numerous harmful consequences of child marriage, including: serious health complications associated with early pregnancy, such as obstetric fistula, a higher risk of sexually transmitted infections., and they are at higher risk of maternal mortality. In fact, pregnancy is the #1 cause of death for adolescent girls ages 15-19 worldwide.
- With limited education or skills training, a girl's potential to contribute positively to her family, her community and her country is stunted.
- Child marriage is preventable. Families and communities have a responsibility to work together to support a girl's right to wellbeing.

CHECKOUT

1. Explain that the session is ending and thank the group members for their participation.
2. Ask the group:
 - *"Do you have any questions about the session? Any doubts or confusion?"*
 - *"Did you learn something today that will be useful in your own life? Will you make any changes?"*
3. After the questions, assign the homework and confirm the time, date, and place of the next session.

HOMEWORK

Have you ever talked about the issue of child marriage with your family or friends? Discuss the topic with someone whom you feel comfortable having this discussion. What are some things that you, your friends, and your family could do to challenge child marriage in your community?

⁶¹ 2013 World Vision, Promundo A MenCare Manual to Engage Fathers to Prevent Child Marriage, Washington, DC.



HOMEWORK REFLECTION #16 (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To reflect on the homework assignment from the last session and discuss how it went.

MATERIALS: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - *“How are you?”*
 - *“Has anything new happened that you want to share?”*
 - *“Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”*
3. Explain to the group that you would like to reflect on the homework assignment assigned during the previous Fathers Club meeting.

Have you ever talked about the issue of child marriage with your family or friends? Discuss the topic with someone whom you feel comfortable having this discussion. What are some things that you, your friends, and your family could do to challenge child marriage in your community?

4. As the facilitator, start by sharing how you approached your friends or family members to discuss the issue of child marriage.
5. Go around the circle and ask each participant:
 - *“How did the assignment go? With whom did you discuss?”*
 - *“How did you feel after doing the assignment?”*
 - *“What was the result of the assignment?”*
6. Ask participants if there are any questions they have for the group. Encourage the group to discuss these issues. This can be an open discussion with everyone in the group. If participants raise a problem, encourage others to come up with solutions to that problem.

7. Thank the participants for sharing their experiences and for doing the homework assignment.
8. Remind them of the time and date of the next meeting

ACTIVITY 20: CLOSING CIRCLE⁶² (1 hour)

PURPOSE: To appreciate how the group meetings have impacted the participants and the positive changes participants have made in their lives and relationships.

MATERIALS (Optional): Ball of string or rope (at least 10 meters in length)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thank all of the participants for coming to the session.
2. Lead a “check-in” by asking a few volunteers (3 to 5) to go around the circle and answer these questions:
 - “How are you?”
 - “Has anything new happened that you want to share?”
 - “Did you talk to anyone about the issues discussed in the group?”
3. Explain that this is the last official meeting of the group, where each participant will have time to reflect on his (or her) experiences in the group and the connections made with each other.
4. Tell the group: “*Change is a gradual process. It is important to reflect on where we have come from and the changes we have made. You can continue to use the information learned in this group and from each other to make changes that will benefit you and your families.*”
5. Ask the participants to stand up in a circle, shoulder to shoulder.
6. Explain that each participant will share one thing he (or she, if women are present) is **grateful for** after participating in the group sessions. Each person will say, “*Something I am grateful for about this group is...*”
7. Allow each participant to share and then share what you, as the facilitator, are most grateful for.
8. Next, explain that everyone will go around the circle one more time and share one thing they **learned** in the group. Each person will say, “*One thing I have learned that I will take with me in my relationships with my family is...*”

Facilitator tip: If you have a ball of string or rope, you can create an actual “web” to

⁶² Adapted from “A Father’s Web” from the *Program P Manual* (Promundo, REDMAS, EME, 2013) and “Closing Circle” from the *Change-Makers Training Facilitator Handbook*, developed by Men’s Resources International for Concern Worldwide Liberia.

illustrate the connections between the group members. Each person will hold on to the end of the rope and toss the ball of rope to another person in the group. Each person should hold onto a piece of the rope before throwing the ball. This will continue until everyone has had something to say. Once everyone has finished, a web will have formed.

9. After everyone (including you as the facilitator) has shared what they have learned, tell the group: *“Take a moment to look at everyone standing around the circle and appreciate all that we have experienced and learned during our time together. There is an invisible web connecting all of you, which represents the sum of your experiences in this group. You are all now connected because you have acquired a new definition of what it means to be a parent and a partner.”*

10. Allow the group a few moments to look at each other and appreciate what each person has contributed.

***Note on adaptation:** This can be done silently, with a nod of the head, or in another way that is a culturally appropriate form of showing thanks or appreciation.

11. Close the activity by saying: *“Now we have the opportunity to take what we have learned together and share it with your family and friends. Remember, the changes you have all made inside yourselves are like a drop of rain on the surface of the water, creating ripples that affect everyone around you.”*

12. Congratulate everyone for completing the sessions and thank them all for contributing to the group.

13. Encourage the group members to continue to meet and find ways to support each other. Everyone who wants to can share his or her contact information (phone number, or where they live) with each other in order to stay in touch.

Closing message

All of you should be proud of the positive changes you have made in your lives. This is only the beginning of the process of change. I encourage all of you to support each other and seek support from your family as you continue in this process of change. All of you can commit to being caring, involved fathers, and more supportive partners, who have equitable relationships and share power with their wives/partners.

