

## Practice Profile:

David Drysdale of Fathers Network Scotland talks about the importance engaging with and supporting men in their role as fathers.

### What is the Father Network Scotland?

Fathers Network Scotland is a network created to connect organisations, professionals and individuals around the topic of fatherhood. From his experience in the field, David found that there was limited information sharing and that many organisations want to work with fathers but simply did not know how to do it. Fathers Network Scotland helps raise awareness of services and resources for fathers and provides a space for a dialogue around fatherhood to take place.



### What is unique about the Fathers Network Scotland?

It is oftentimes common for services and resources to emphasise mothers over fathers. Fathers Network Scotland is trying to change the image of parenthood to be more balanced between mothers and fathers. Fathers Network Scotland emphasises helping dads wherever they are because 'it is much easier for dads to leave when they don't have the support to deal with pressures and issues that are normal.'

In order to advance good practice around work with fathers, Fathers Network Scotland, in partnership with Children in Scotland, National Childbirth Trust, NHS Lothian, West Lothian Sure Start and NHS Health Scotland, played a part in the development of the Dads2B Resource. This is a resource for practitioners providing antenatal education and support for fathers. Dads2B contains session plans, activities and other resources to help practitioners in their groupwork with fathers-to-be. It covers such topics as introductions and icebreakers, emotions and relationships, labour and birth, postnatal care and infant development, and ready for fatherhood.

Additionally, Fathers Network Scotland supports the work of community groups that engage with fathers, like 'Mellow Dads' in West Lothian. 'Mellow Dads' is an intensive 14-week intervention that provides a space for fathers to learn about and understand their parenting style, to positively interact with their children and to build parent-child relationships.

'Dads generally feel excluded from services and we are doing something positive about it,' says David.

### Goals for the future

The Fathers Network Scotland is seeking to build its membership of organisations and practitioners who work with fathers and families. They would also like to increase the number of individual fathers who are active in the network.

More specifically, Fathers Network Scotland hopes to further engage with fathers of school-age children, since much of its work focuses on dads-to-be and fathers of very young children. If you or your organisation works with fathers of school-age children or would like to in the future, connect with the Fathers Network Scotland for support, training and to share good practice.

To find out more information or to get involved with the Fathers Network Scotland, visit their website at <http://www.fathersnetwork.org.uk/>.

