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Enhancing Single Custodial Father's Parenting Skills: A Group Protocol

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ENHANCING SINGLE CUSTODIAL FATHER'S PARENTING SKILLS: A GROUP
PROTOCOL

by

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Advisor: Julie Grabanski, PhD, OTR/L

A Scholarly Project

Submitted to the Occupational Therapy Department

of the

University of North Dakota

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Occupational Therapy

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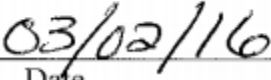
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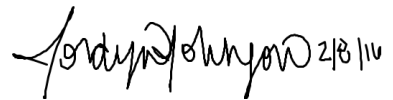
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February 8, 2016



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February 8, 2016

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ABSTRACT

The rate of single-custodial fathers is increasing (Leininger & Ziol-Guest, 2008). As single-custodial fathers have become more prevalent (Leininger & Ziol-Guest, 2008), programs are needed to provide them with support and information regarding the skills needed to raise children at each developmental stage (Panter-Brick et al., 2014). The purpose of this project is to create a set of group protocols that will provide single-custodial fathers that are living in transitional housing with the skills necessary to raise children at different stages of development.

An extensive literature review was conducted, and information pertinent to parenting programs for single-custodial fathers was collected and synthesized. Families living in transitional housing facilities or homeless families living in shelters were also researched. The literature review revealed that there is limited information regarding parenting programs for single-custodial fathers, specifically for families living in transitional housing facilities. To guide the formation of the protocols, the Model of Human Occupation (MOHO) was also thoroughly researched, to ensure an occupation-based, client-centered and evidence-based product.

The final product of this project is a set of twelve group protocols, tailored for single-parents living in transitional housing. Overarching parenting themes that address communication styles, discipline, and establishing rules and routines are included in the final product. The protocols consist of step-by-step guidelines for the facilitator, and include activities, games and discussion questions for the participants. The protocols

were developed with the intention that occupational therapists or certified occupational therapy assistants would implement the parenting groups in community settings.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As single-custodial fathers have become more prevalent in today's society (Leininger & Ziol-Guest, 2008), programs are needed to provide them with support and information on the skills needed to raise children at all stages of development (Panter-Brick et al., 2014). Much of the literature reports that the prevalence of single fathers is increasing (Astone & Peters, 2014; Cohen, Finzi-Dottan & Tagir-Dotan, 2014; Coles, 2009; Yopp & Rosenstein, 2012). These fathers often do not have equal opportunity or access to resources or assistance to aid in the occupation of child rearing (Frank, Keown, Dittman & Sanders, 2015; Panter-Brick et al., 2014).

The purpose of this project is to create a set of group protocols that will provide single-custodial fathers that are living in transitional housing with the skills necessary to raise children at different stages of development. Based on the findings of the literature review, specific group protocols were created to address different aspects of single fatherhood. It is intended that this product be incorporated into the existing services provided for single-custodial fathers living in transitional housing throughout the community. Transitional housing provides temporary housing for families who are transitioning between being homeless and finding permanent housing.

Homelessness is typically thought to be an adult issue; however, families are the fastest-growing homeless population in the United States (Paquette & Bassuk, 2009).

Single fathers and their families are an especially vulnerable population, and often experience unique barriers (Schindler & Coley, 2007). Paquette and Bassuk, (2009) reported that single fathers experiencing homelessness may need to learn about basic child care, how to provide their child with support through difficult situations, and how to interact with their children in a more positive manner. Homeless parents often struggle to provide the basic necessities for their children (Paquette & Bassuk, 2009). Often times, single fathers in a homeless situation are experiencing unemployment or financial crisis which can cause distress as fathers are often viewed as breadwinners (Schindler & Coley, 2007).

Single homeless fathers living in shelters or transitional living facilities often feel as though they are not able to make autonomous parental decisions (Schindler & Coley, 2007). Many transitional living facilities have extensive rules and a restricted amount of space (Schindler & Coley, 2007). In addition to the physical constraints, parents often face psychological distress and stigmatization (Paquette & Bassuk, 2009; Schindler & Coley, 2007). Paquette and Bassuk (2009) noted that “parenting in public” (p. 295) provides for additional feelings of being monitored or scrutinized. Upon completion of a qualitative research study focusing on single homeless fathers, the authors recommended that intervention is needed to help increase fathers parenting skills and psychological welfare (Schindler and Coley, 2007). In addition, fathers who live in homeless shelters tend to transition into the role of primary caretaker; therefore, father-specific parenting classes are vital (Schindler and Coley, 2007).

The final product of this project are a set of group protocols, tailored for single-parents living in transitional housing, providing strategies and techniques that address

various developmental stages of children. The protocols are designed to have an overarching topic with sub-categories. The overarching themes for the protocols address communication styles, discipline, and establishing rules and routines. The protocols were developed with the intention that occupational therapists or certified occupational therapy assistants would implement the parenting groups in community settings. The program is intended to be twelve weeks in length to maintain father's interest and prevent dropout. An occupational therapist could vary the frequency of the program and hold two groups per week which would shorten the overall length of the program to six weeks. This flexibility in frequency was intended to suit the varying rules of different transitional housing facilities.

The theoretical model utilized for this project was the Model of Human Occupation (MOHO). The group protocols will address the volition, habituation and performance capacity aspects of each individual that will participate in the groups (Kielhofner, 2008b; Turpin & Iwama, 2011). Volition is the motivation for one to take action on completing a task (Kielhofner, 2008b; Turpin & Iwama, 2011). Volition is focused on throughout the protocols by honing in on various issues that the families may be facing and providing education on how to address issues experienced by families; therefore, single fathers would be motivated to complete groups tailored to their individual family needs. Habituation is the internal readiness to perform repetitive behaviors directed by roles, habits and routines within the context of the environment (Kielhofner, 2008b; Turpin & Iwama, 2011). Habituation is focused on throughout the protocols by teaching techniques and strategies to parents thoroughly enough to minimize the amount of conscious effort made in deciding on what action to take (Turpin & Iwama,

2011). Performance capacity is the ability an individual possesses to complete occupations (Kielhofner, 2008b; Turpin & Iwama, 2011). Performance capacity is focused on throughout the protocols by educating parents on various skills necessary to be able to perform the skills successfully within their family context. According to Kielhofner (2008e), the environment may place undue limits or constraints upon individuals. These environmental demands influence the development of an individual's habits, roles, and routines (Kielhofner, 2008e). Due to these contextual influences, the environment of the transitional living facility was taken into account when creating the group protocols. In addition to the MOHO, the Adult Learning Theory was utilized to address the unique learning style of each single father (Bastable & Dart, 2011). The protocols were created to be more learner-centered rather than teaching centered so that the individuals participating learn the information more effectively (Bastable & Dart, 2011).

Various factors will impact and influence the application of this scholarly project. One factor impacting the implementation of this group protocol is that the families will have children at different ages going through various developmental stages. Therefore, the protocols were developed to be more generalizable and applicable to fit the needs of all of the families.

Chapter I presented an outline of the literature regarding the topic of single custodial fathers as it pertains to the role of occupational therapist-driven protocols. Chapter II encompasses a comprehensive review of literature regarding single-custodial fatherhood in transitional housing. The literature review outlines (1) the prevalence of single-custodial fathers, (2) a description of the lack of support for this population, (3) the

role single fathers play in the household and different challenges they may face, and (4) the role occupational therapy holds to educate these fathers. Chapter III provides a description of the methodology used to develop group protocols for single fathers living in transitional housing. Chapter IV presents the purpose, description, and copies of specific group protocols. Chapter V includes the summary and recommendations for future use and possible modifications.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Single-Custodial Fathers on the Rise

The number of single-father homes has nearly quintupled in the last 40 years, with roughly 17 percent of single-parent homes directed by fathers (Leininger & Ziolo-Guest, 2008). This increase may be due to a number of different causes. The current trends in fatherhood and births outside of the marriage have increased from 11 percent in 1970 to 41 percent in 2012 (Astone & Peters, 2014). This increase in births outside marriage has played a large part in the rise of single-father households (Astone & Peters, 2014).

Researchers have found that cancer is the cause of more widowed fathers than any other illness or disease (Yopp and Rosenstein, 2012). These authors reported that the surviving families of mothers who pass away from cancer often face unique challenges, and they may require a different approach than other single-father families (Yopp & Rosenstein, 2012). Increasing rates of divorce and non-marital childbearing within the past few years have resulted in children dwelling in a variety of diverse family structures (Coles, 2009). Cohen et al. (2014) reported that fathers gain custody of their children following divorce more often than in previous years. These fathers have much different barriers to overcome, and may find it difficult to integrate their work life with raising children (Cohen et al., 2014). In addition, single fathers may experience other life events that impact their ability to provide shelter for their families (Schindler & Coley, 2007).

Single fathers who participated in the qualitative study of Schindler and Coley (2007), reported that loss of employment or significant decrease in socioeconomic status lead them to seek out shelters or transitional living facilities. All single-custodial fathers, especially those living in transitional living facilities, may encounter challenges that single mothers may not face (Frank et al., 2014; Panter-Brick et al., 2014; Schindler & Coley, 2007). Living in a shelter brings up a whole new set of challenges for fathers. Fathers stated with much detail how the new contexts that they were living in affected family interactions and overall psychological well-being (Schindler & Coley, 2007). Support and education for this rapidly increasing population will be crucial to meet the needs of this growing population.

Low Incidence of Support/Education for Single-Custodial Fathers

There has been scant research published that focuses solely on homeless fathers and parenting (Schindler & Coley, 2007). Therefore, there was a focus on finding literature that addressed fathers receiving education on parenting. As Frank et al. (2014) noted, fathers experience barriers to receiving parenting education. Panter-Brick et al. (2014) described that parenting policies often contain gender biases that may increase fathers' difficulty in receiving services. Multiple social welfare policies that provide money to low-income families exclude men completely (Panter-Brick et al., 2014; Schindler & Covey, 2007). Other income supportive programs describe women as the caregivers of children, while failing to mention fathers (Panter-Brick et al., 2014). Other parenting policies describe parenting from the mother's perspective with little or no focus on a father's perspective (Panter-Brick, 2014).

When fathers do have access, they often participate much less in parenting programs (Frank et al., 2014). Panter-Brick et al. (2014) conducted a systematic review of father-focused interventions, and found that there is scant literature to support the topic, and the research that is present is of poor quality. Fathers are often not aware of parenting programs, and when they are, the programs are often promoted in a way that may deter fathers from becoming involved (Frank et al., 2014). Parenting programs often appear to be more focused on the role of the mother than the father (Frank et al., 2014).

Recommendations for improving father engagement and adherence to parenting programs were provided by Panter-Brick et al. (2014), but they did caution that these programs must respect fathers' cultural norms and values. Frank et al. (2014) also provided suggestions about how to increase father participation in parenting programs. It is recommended that programs include information about emphasizing the importance of the father, creating positive relationships with their children, improving communication, and managing emotions and difficult behaviors (Frank et al., 2014). Overall, if parenting programming evolves to be more conducive to father involvement, fathers may begin to receive more support and education.

Role of Occupational Therapy

The use of occupational therapy services are appropriate for providing a parenting program for single parents living in transitional housing because occupational therapists are trained in analyzing the needs of the family, as a system, within the larger environmental context of the community (Schultz-Krohn, 2004). Case-Smith (2010) described an occupational therapist's role in family-centered care, noting that occupational therapists must possess strong communication skills, an ability to

demonstrate respect, and the ability to provide honest feedback while maintaining a therapeutic relationship. Jaffe, Humphry, and Case-Smith (2010) reported that family structure (single-parent households) can impact occupational performance of both the parent and the children. Fathers living in homeless shelters reported that the obstacles they face in the shelter environment affect communication between the family members and the psychological well-being of each individual (Schindler & Coley, 2007). This then affects each family member's ability to perform occupations at an optimal level (Schindler & Coley, 2007).

One important aspect of the MOHO is the environment (Forsyth et. al, 2014; Kielhofner, 2008b; Kielhofner, 2008e), and occupational therapists working with single fathers living in transitional housing would ensure that the effect of the environment on occupational performance is addressed. The most effective methods to strengthen single-parent families are to encourage the parents, to empower them to reestablish routines, and to provide feedback about each of their strengths (Jaffe et al., 2010). This provides more evidence to support the use of the MOHO, as each of these methods are identified as appropriate therapeutic strategies (Forsyth et al., 2014; Kielhofner & Forsyth, 2008b). Occupational therapists possess the unique ability to apply their knowledge of the person, occupation, environment, and organization of occupations in order to provide holistic services (Forsyth et al., 2014; Kielhofner, 2008b). Through the application of the MOHO, occupational therapists are able to address each of these areas while working to maximize occupational engagement and adaptation (Forsyth et al., 2014). Following intervention provided by occupational therapists, single fathers may develop the skills needed to successfully parent, and in turn, may gain feelings of

self-worth and self-efficacy in regard to their abilities. Indirectly, children may also benefit from parent training, and they may gain improved relationships with their single parents.

Adults, learn best when the educator approaches sessions with a learner-centered perspective (Bastable & Dart, 2011). Andragogy is defined as the “art and science of teaching adults” (Bastable & Dart, 2011, p. 173). Merriam (2008) noted that when teaching adults, it is important to encourage reflection and dialogue, connect new learning material with previous experience, and implement creative teaching strategies. By applying concepts of andragogy, occupational therapists working with single fathers in transitional housing may be more successful than they would if they applied more traditional teaching principles.

The Role of the Father in Single-Custodial Homes

Single custodial father homes, where fathers have primary responsibility for raising their children, are becoming increasingly more common (Coles, 2009). Segal (2005) described how fathers typically get their identity as a father through being the breadwinner and being a playful father. Through an interview process, Cohen et al. (2014) found that custodial fathers in Israel perceived their family role as unusual and do not feel they have had socialization enabling them to prepare for this role. Often, single-custodial fathers must participate in roles typically associated with mothers, as well as being the breadwinner (Segal, 2005). These extra roles include providing children with daily needs such as bathing, clothing, feeding their children, and becoming more involved in school activities while maintaining a nurturing approach (Dufur , Howell, Downey, Ainsworth, & Lapray, 2010).

Dufur et al. (2010) found that single fathers are less likely to attend school meetings and parent/teacher conferences than single mothers. However, this poor attendance did not lead to decreased performance in the classroom by the children of single fathers (Dufur et al., 2010). Single fathers often are more playful and fun when it comes to their parenting role (Maier & McGeorge, 2014). On the other hand, Maier and McGeorge (2014) also reported that single fathers' have a perceived ability to be the disciplinarians and exert more authority over children compared to single mothers. Biblarz and Stacey (2010) noted that single fathers scored higher on parenting scales, completed more housework, and tended to enjoy more verbal relationships with their children than married men. Overall, single custodial fathers may be required to develop skills and approaches often thought to be more feminine, while still maintaining their roles typically fulfilled by fathers (Biblarz & Stacey, 2010; Dufur et al., 2010; Maier & McGeorge, 2014; Segal, 2005).

Child Development and the Importance of Parenting Skills

As children grow and develop, it can be the most exciting aspects of parenthood (Caring for Kids, 2014). Children are continually developing new skills and each child will demonstrate skill development at different rates than other children (Caring for Kids, 2014). Homelessness provides children and their parents with distinct disadvantages in regard to physical and mental development (Paquette & Bassuk, 2009). Paquette and Bassuk (2009) reported that children living in homeless environments are four times more likely to display developmental delays, and two times more likely to demonstrate learning disabilities. Parenting interventions often facilitate parent-child interactions which can then improve a child's overall development (Engle et al., 2011). A child's

gross motor, fine motor, social, language and cognitive skills will develop as a child ages (Caring for Kids, 2014). Through the use of parenting programs and support, children's cognitive, psychological and social-emotional development may improve (Engle et al., 2011).

Challenges Associated with the Role of Parent in Transitional Housing

As a child develops, difficult situations will inevitably arise between a parent and a child. Single fathers living in transitional housing may be subject to more challenges in regard to the relationship with their children. These fathers must learn the skills necessary to effectively resolve difficult situations when they do arise (Schindler and Covey, 2007). Knowledge of strategies and techniques that appropriately defuse difficult situations will facilitate a more successful conversation and maintain a healthy relationship. Single parents living in shelters often engage in more effective conflict resolution and less harsh parenting styles when the parents have social supports (Paquette & Bassuk, 2009). These social supports may include support groups or parenting classes. Research suggests that many fathers would like to learn about building healthy, positive relationships with their children to enhance their child's development in areas such as social skills and self-efficacy (Frank, Keowen, Dittman, & Sanders, 2015). The strain of living in a transitional living facility may present fathers with additional challenges. Paquette and Bassuk (2009) stated, "Homelessness undercuts parent's ability to protect their children, often leaving mothers and fathers feeling depressed, anxious, guilty, and ashamed" (p. 292). Fathers often associate their feelings of pride and self-respect with their ability to provide for their family (Paquette & Bassuk, 2009). Schindler and Coley (2007) noted that these feelings are due to a gender role discrepancy, in that males are

expected to provide for their families, and when they are not able to, they are perceived as less of a man. The fathers who participated in the study conducted by Schindler and Coley (2007) reported that the constraints of shelter life greatly interfered with their ability to parent effectively. They felt as though they were being micromanaged and observed (Schindler & Coley, 2007). Because of the many barriers and challenges associated with the role of father while living in transitional housing, parent education programs and gender-specific supports are needed (Paquette & Bassuk, 2009).

The Psychosocial Aspects of the Child/Parent Relationship

Single custodial parents are often the subject of many negative societal attitudes and stigmas due to being a single parent (Haire & McGeorge, 2012). Fathers of families living in homeless shelters experience psychological stress due their perceptions of how others view them (Schindler & Coley, 2007). They often feel disrespected by shelter staff, family members and/or the general public once moving into a shelter (Schindler & Coley, 2007). Unfortunately, never-married single fathers receive more negative feedback than any other parent group (Haire & McGeorge, 2012). These negative perceptions however, do not accurately describe single parent families (Haire & McGeorge, 2012). The negative perceptions of others can become overbearing on families and can lead them to experience oppression (Haire & McGeorge, 2012). Since single-parent households are viewed as being less correct by the greater society, this population of parents, experience a loss of power and self-efficacy due to the stigmas and negative stereotypes from others (Haire & McGeorge, 2012).

A father's involvement can play a vital role in a child's life. Father involvement can be defined as the direct engagement with children, including both behavioral and

emotional areas (Coles, 2009). For example, close relationships between fathers and their children demonstrate shared communication and support for one another (Coles, 2009). Coles (2009) reported that the role of a parent is extremely rewarding, however it can often be the cause of increased stress in single parent households. Even under the most normal circumstances a parent is going to undergo stress related to parenting (Coles, 2009). Furthermore, fathers living in homeless shelters experience increased stress due to shelter restrictions such as physical space, rules established by the facility, and overall lack of freedom (Schindler & Coley, 2007). This parenting stress often occurs from the parent's perception of his or her own competence as a parent, as well as their perception of the child's behavior (Bloomfield & Kendall, 2012).

Managing Stress

Significant distress can occur in single fathers if their perception of typical male gender roles does not match with their current reality (Schindler & Covey, 2007). Bendixen et al. (2011) conducted a research study to determine maternal and paternal stress of parents with children diagnosed with autism, and how paternal stress affects family dynamics prior to and after receiving in-home parent training. These authors found that upon completion of a 12-week intervention program, a parent's stress can be reduced (Bendixen et al., 2011). The results of this article indicate that a program plan, which incorporates the four strategies used in this study, could improve family dynamics by facilitating positive interactions with their children with autism, at their specific level of understanding (Bendixen et al., 2011). These strategies could be incorporated into facilitating a positive relationship with parents and their children through ongoing positive communication and interactions, particularly for children with disabilities. It

may also be helpful for fathers communicating with young children. Strategies included (a) following the child's lead during play, interacting with the child in a lively manner to facilitate positive, (b) reciprocated communication and social skills, (c) providing cues as to an expectation of a response from the child, and (d) commenting on the child's actions and responses (Bendixen et al., 2011). The strategies provided by Bendixen et al. (2011) could be utilized by and an occupational therapist to aide in the creation of programs to decrease stress of single fathers while simultaneously increasing communication and positive interactions with their children.

Establishing Routines

Establishing and maintaining family routines demonstrate a family's overall functioning and health (Schultz-Krohn, 2004). Routines consist of having an established recurrence or sequence of events where two or more family members engage (Schultz-Krohn, 2004). Habits and routines provide structure and predictability in day-to-day activities (Kielhofner, 2008f). Kielhofner (2008f) noted that the regular implementation of routines relies heavily upon the environment. Unfortunately, individuals and families, who are homeless often have disrupted routines, and experience difficulty establishing new routines (Schultz-Krohn, 2004). This is due to the fact that the shelters provide the needed housing for families however; these environments simply do not facilitate the establishment of meaningful routines by parents (Schultz-Krohn, 2004). Occupational therapists recognize this disruption in routines and can address them by creating meaningful family routines that are applicable within the environment (Jaffe, Humphrey & Case-Smith, 2010; Kielhofner, 2008f).

Communication and effective parenting

Effective communication plays a vital role when parenting. There are various strategies for communicating healthy and facilitate a positive and effective relationship between the parent and child. According to Brunk, Martin, Molitor & Sanchez-Hucles (2015), the most effective strategies for communicating are being available for your children, active listening, and responding positively with feedback or constructive criticism. Other strategies include, setting aside time to talk with children and spending quality time engaging in activities to learn and discuss interests. Setting aside time and spending quality time with children enables a positive communication pattern between the children and their parent (Brunk et al., 2015). Parents who attend to their children's verbal and nonverbal communication are then able to respond appropriately by expressing interest (Brunk et al., 2015). Communication between a parent and a child can be one of the most difficult aspects of the relationship, it is important to maintain a strong communication between all family members to have as healthy of a relationship as possible. The possibility for difficult conversations may arise across the development of children, various topics include, divorce, substance abuse, death, bullying and puberty.

Conversations about divorce with children have changed over the years (van Nijnatten & Jonjen, 2011). During and after a separation, children should be informed of what is going on and able to express his or her opinion of the situation (van Nijnatten & Jonjen, 2011). Studies have also demonstrated a weak emotional bond between children in adulthood and divorced parents (Amato & Cheadle, 2005). Substance abuse is another difficult, yet important, conversation to engage in. Adolescents are at a greater risk of developing substance use disorders than any other developmental age group (Chaplin et

al., 2014). Children who have regular conversations about substance use are less likely to engage in the behaviors themselves (Luk, Farhat, Iannotti, & Simons-Morton, 2010). Death is an emotional and difficult experience to go through; it is never easy to lose a loved one. Following the death of a parent, bereaved children are at risk for a number of negative outcomes such as mental health distress, decreased academic performance, and lowered self-esteem (Haine, Ayers, Sandler, & Wolchik, 2008). Maintaining an open line of communication, and being open to answering questions is important for parents to remember when discussing death with children. (Haine et al., 2008). Bullying is another difficult topic that parents may need to communicate with their children about. According to Nation, Vieno, Perkins, and Santinello (2008) reported that in schools today, bullying is the most common form of violence. Nation et al. (2008) found in order to raise children who do not engage in aggressive or passive behaviors, parents must empower their children.

Conversations about sex, sexual activity, and puberty with children can be among the most difficult tasks a parent faces. Wilson, Dalberth, Koo, and Gard (2010) reported that due to the uncomfortable stigma, parents often do not speak with their children about sex. During their qualitative study, these authors found that parents often did not know what to say during these conversations (Wilson et al., 2010). Parents often feel more comfortable talking about sex if they have a close relationship with their children (Wilson et al., 2010). Wilson et al. (2010) reported that fathers may be more likely to wait to initiate these discussions by waiting for their children to ask questions. Akers, Holland, and Bost (2011) reported that adolescents who recall discussing sex with a parent are more likely to delay sexual initiation and increase safe sex practices. Following a

systematic review of research on the topic, Akers et al. (2011) found that parents who received education demonstrated improvements in communication about sex with their children.

Puberty is a difficult stage in life for both adolescents and their families (Planned Parenthood, 2014). Difficulties experienced during this stage of life can be minimized through open conversations between parents and children (Planned Parenthood, 2014). Single fathers with teenage daughters may find the topic of puberty more difficult to discuss than those with sons. Kalman (2003) noted that girls typically seek out information about puberty from their mother. Young girls being raised by single fathers may experience increased feelings of anxiety and embarrassment when faced with the topic (Kalman, 2003). By educating single fathers on female sexual health issues, they may feel more comfortable addressing the topic, which in turn may also decrease the adverse feelings of their daughters.

Depending on the age of the children, various strategies and techniques can be utilized to keep them informed and involved with the situation, from games for younger children to simply engaging in conversation for older children, keeping the children involved will create a more successful parent-child relationship (van Nijnatten & Jonjen, 2011). Overall, Brunk et al. (2015) highlighted that parents must maintain an open line of communication with their children to facilitate comfortable sharing, advice seeking, and respect during the communication process.

Discipline

As noted previously, Maier & McGeorge (2014) found that single fathers tend to perceive themselves as disciplinarians and exert more authority over children when

compared to single mothers. Without involved parents, children are at risk for developing behavior problems and overall have a poorer health and well-being (Bloomfield & Kendall, 2012). Parenting has also been recognized as playing a vital role in education and crime prevention (Bloomfield & Kendall, 2012). Families undergoing various stressors of living in disadvantaged communities do not receive thorough support for anticipating or addressing behavior issues, or simply raising healthy children (Brotman et al., 2011).

Disciplining is about changing unhealthy, negative behaviors not punishing children (CPS Statement, 2004). Discipline means to communicate knowledge and skills, by teaching right from wrong, establishing boundaries and rules, and demonstrating and expecting respect and an understanding of family values (Bloomfield & Kendall, 2012; CPS Statement, 2004). With parenting, comes discipline, and parents don't often know the most effective techniques and/or strategies to utilize when this time comes (CPS Statement, 2004). As a child develops, he/she will need disciplining accordingly (CPS Statement, 2004). Educating parents on the appropriate techniques and strategies to implement when disciplining is important to maintain an effective and healthy relationship.

Learning to manage a child's behavior can be a difficult aspect to deal with as a parent, especially those living in underprivileged circumstances. Even when parenting programs and/or preventative services are available to families living in poverty, the services tend to have no evidence base to them (Brotman et al., 2011). The National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (2000) noted the importance of accounting for the child's age when determining the most appropriate form of discipline. Children eight

months to two years old require firm boundaries and distraction or removal from trying situations (National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, 2000). The most effective method for children two to three years old set firm limits, remain consistent, use redirection, and remember they imitate behaviors (National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, 2000). Children who are four to eight years of age benefit when their parents explain what is wrong about their behavior, and let them learn from their own mistakes (National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, 2000). During the pre-teen years, it is most effective for parents to set clear expectations and consequences prior to difficult behaviors, and if they do occur, parents must discuss the behaviors with the children (National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, 2000). Finally, teenage children should understand right from wrong and often spend a majority of time with peers; therefore open parent-child communication is crucial (National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, 2000).

Overall, discipline is an important and inevitable aspect of parenting. Single parents experiencing stressors such as homelessness often experience amplified difficulties in this area (Brotman et al., 2011). By better understanding child development, single fathers may find it less difficult to employ effective discipline techniques.

Summary of Literature

Based on the most recent findings from occupational therapy literature, social work, family-based medicine, and child development, a need for parental programming directed towards single fathers living in transitional housing is indicated. The incidence of households led by single fathers is increasing, and this population has historically had

access to fewer resources than single mothers (Panter-Brick et al, 2014; Schindler & Covey, 2007). According to the literature, single fathers would embrace education regarding the important IADL of raising children without a co-parent (Frank et al., 2015). Upon completion of the review of literature, five areas of focus for group protocols became apparent: improving parent-child communication, decreasing parental stress, the importance of defined roles and routines, maintaining the child's emotional well-being, and discipline.

Occupational therapists working in community-based settings possess the skills necessary to teach these skills to single fathers living in transitional housing. Based on the review of literature, occupational therapists are able to view these single fathers from a holistic point of view (Forsyth et al., 2014; Kielhofner, 2008b). This view allows occupational therapists to fully assess the needs of single fathers and provide services while taking into account all aspects of their role of single father while living in transitional housing. According to the literature, the MOHO would be an appropriate guide to use for a parenting skills group. The main concepts of the MOHO are: volition, habituation, and performance capacity, and the author also places emphasis on the impact the environment has on these concepts (Kielhofner, 2008b). This model serves as an evidence-based guide to occupation-based practice, and accounts for all aspects of the individual (Kielhofner, 2008b). Due to this fit, the MOHO was utilized and often referenced during the creation of the group protocols. The methods used to create the protocols are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

An extensive literature review was conducted to collect information regarding single fathers living in transitional housing, successful parenting, and occupational therapy using the Harley E. French Library and Chester Fritz databases. Multiple search engines were utilized to collect journal articles throughout the process including: PubMed, CINHALL, Psych Info, and Google Scholar. Information regarding single fatherhood, homelessness, occupational therapy's role, and the use of MOHO while teaching parents was gathered. Pertinent journal articles were obtained through the online library at the University of North Dakota. Textbooks were also used while gathering information regarding the role of the occupational therapist.

The review of literature yielded information regarding the experience of single fathers, and highlighted the need for programming for single fathers (Frank et al., 2014; Panter-Brick et al., 2014), especially single fathers in homeless situations (Schindler and Covey, 2007). With the information gathered, it was determined that both single fathers and their children living in a transitional housing facility would benefit from education regarding child rearing.

Occupational therapists possess unique skills such as the ability to analyze the needs of families within specific environmental contexts of the community, contexts such as a single parents living in transitional housing (Schultz-Krohn, 2004). This scholarly project was created due to a lack of available resources to the homeless single fathers

living in transitional housing. The product of this scholarly project is a series of group protocols and activities for single fathers to gain knowledge and insight into the skills needed to successfully raise their children. These protocols were created to maximize knowledge and competency of single fathers throughout the development of their children. The specific protocol topics were determined based upon the information found during the review of literature. The initial session was intended to provide the facilitator with background knowledge of each participant. Sessions two through six focus on broad parental skills, and sessions seven through ten place emphasis on teaching the participants specific information for interacting with their children. The group culminates with a session that focuses on the participants' achievement, and the last group is a celebration where participants bring their children. There are a series of twelve group sessions which are intended to be implemented across twelve weeks to encourage fathers to participate. If the implementing occupational therapist determines this series must be completed in a shorter amount of time, then it could be completed in six weeks.

The group protocols were developed for an occupational therapist to implement within a community setting. The protocols were tailored for an occupational therapist by implementing the Model of Human Occupation (MOHO) throughout the protocols. The model is described at great lengths to ensure its proper application during each group session. An important aspect of the group protocols is that they address different aspects of the MOHO such as roles, habits, routines, performance capacity, and environmental context. Addressing the MOHO concepts ensures an occupation-focused, client-centered, evidence-based product (Kielhofner, 2008a).

Aspects of the Adult Learning Theory were also used during the creation of the final product. The protocols employ a multidimensional approach to providing education as to provide for enhanced understanding (Merriam, 2008). The participants in each group will be encouraged to connect new learning with previous experiences while reflecting and processing information (Bastable & Dart, 2011; Merriam, 2008). The sessions focus more on the learners (Bastable & Dart, 2011), with specific questions developed to facilitate active learning through participation in each group.

CHAPTER IV

PRODUCT



**Enhancing Single-Custodial
Fathers' Parenting Skills:
A Group Protocol**

Jordyn Johnson, MOT & Alicea Steir, MOT

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

In recent years, the prevalence of single-custodial fathers has steadily increased (Astone & Peters, 2014; Cohen, Finzi-Dottan & Tagir-Dotan, 2014; Yopp & Rosenstein, 2012). All too often these single fathers do not have equal access to resources or assistance for the important occupation of child rearing (Frank, Keown, Dittman & Sanders, 2015; Panter-Brick et al., 2014). These families living in transitional housing facilities are even more vulnerable (Schindler & Coley, 2007). Evidence has shown that single fathers living in transitional housing would benefit from education about effective parenting techniques and strategies (Frank et al., 2015). The review of literature demonstrated a need for programming geared specifically towards this population.

The following set of group protocols was designed specifically for single fathers living in transitional housing. Aspects of the Adult Learning Theory were used in the creation of the group protocols to successfully educate these single fathers. By utilizing principles of the Adult Learning Theory, the groups will facilitate the development of parenting skills across the various developmental stages of their children.

Purpose and Rationale

This chapter will consist of the purpose of the product, how the protocols will be organized, the model used to guide development, a description of the implementation of the final product, and the final product. The purpose of a program plan was to teach single fathers parenting skills to foster a successful father-child relationship. As Bendixen et al. (2011) found, fathers of children with autism who have received parenting education and interventions experience less stress, and feel more confident in their parenting skills. Literature has consistently demonstrated that such programs are effective for maximizing parenting behavior and attitudes as well as children's behaviors. Effective parenting programs have improved parenting knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy as well as increasing children's positive behaviors (Stahlschmidt, Threlfall, Seay, Lewis, & Kohl, 2013). Research suggests that many fathers would like to learn about building healthy, positive relationships with their children and enhance their child's development in areas such as social skills and self-efficacy (Frank et al., 2015). Therefore, for the content of the project, the authors created group protocols that are taught to the parents to facilitate healthy child-parent relationships.

The Model of Human Occupation (MOHO) was used to aide in the development of group protocols for single fathers living in a transitional living facility. This model was described at length in the literature review, and will be addressed later in this chapter.

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Information for the Occupational Therapist

Occupational Therapist Role

- ❖ To provide information regarding the topics covered.

Timing of Administration

The subsequent group protocols were created to maximize participation and engagement in each session. This product was created for implementation one time per week for 12 weeks. The facilitating occupational therapist may alter the frequency to two times per week for six weeks to provide for more convenience for the participants.

Model of Human Occupation

The Model of Human Occupation (MOHO) was used while creating the group protocols. This model is used by occupational therapists as an evidence-based guide for occupation-focused practice (Kielhofner, 2008b).

Major Concepts of the MOHO

Volition	Habituation	Performance
-----------------	--------------------	--------------------

		Capacity
The motivation a person possesses to engage in occupations	The order in which individuals organize occupations into patterns or routines	The physical and mental skills an individual possesses, enabling them to engage in occupations

(Kielhofner, 2008b)

Environment

Different aspects of the context that influence volition, habituation, and performance capacity (Kielhofner, 2008d)

Aspects of Transitional Living Environment

- Physical- small living areas, poor quality housing
- Social- shared spaces with other families, stigma of being homeless
- Cultural- differing roles, routines, and habits among families
- Economic- some fathers may not have employment

Other Concepts and Key Terms of the MOHO

- **Achievement:** the stage of change in which an individual has developed the skills and habits that allow them to fully participate in occupations (Kielhofner, 2008c)
- **Environment:** different aspects of the context (i.e. physical, social, cultural, economic, and/or political) that influence volition, habituation, and performance capacity (Kielhofner, 2008d)
- **Habits:** personal tendencies to engage in tasks in consistent patterns within familiar environments or contexts (Kielhofner, 2008a)

- **Motivation:** personal drive an individual has to engage in occupation or to fulfill role expectations (Kielhofner, 2008a)
- **Occupational identity:** the combination of who an individual is and who they seek to become as an occupational being (Kielhofner, 2008b)
- **Occupational performance:** completion of occupational task, and is influenced by volition, habituation, performance capacity, and the environment (Kielhofner, 2008b)
- **Performance skills:** observable actions that an individual uses while engaging in occupations (Kielhofner, 2008b)
- **Roles:** an individual's personal status based on a set of socially or personally defined attitudes and actions (Kielhofner, 2008e)
- **Routines:** include habits and other patterns of engaging in occupation within a variety of temporal cycles (i.e. cooking, eating, and washing dishes within the day) (Kielhofner, 2008e)
- **Volition:** pattern of thoughts and feelings in which an individual is able to anticipate, choose, engage, and interpret what they do (Kielhofner, 2008a)

MOHO Therapeutic Strategies

- **Advising:** counsel individuals by recommending appropriate intervention plans
- **Coaching:** utilize multiple methods (instruction, demonstration, and verbal/physical prompts) to enable improve performance
- **Encouraging:** provide support to maintain a positive emotional state
- **Giving Feedback:** utilize appropriate communication skills to share personal perspective about the individual's performance capacity, volition, and habituation within a particular environment
- **Identifying:** recognize personal traits or contextual factors that may influence improved occupational performance
- **Negotiating:** collaborate with individuals to achieve an agreement regarding intervention plans
- **Structuring:** provide individuals with treatment parameters: providing choices, setting limits, and forming ground rules for intervention
- **Validating:** express respect the individual's personal experiences that influence their unique perspective

(Kielhofner & Forsyth, 2008b)

MOHO

Application

MOHO Assessments address each of the major concepts of the MOHO while accounting for the impact of the environment while living in a transitional living facility. The initial session will allow the facilitating occupational therapist to gather general information regarding each concept. To determine which concepts are focused on for a particular session, look at the bottom of the session protocol under the heading “Application of the MOHO”.

Your Perspective

What are your family values?

What does a typical day for your family look like?

--

Alternate MOHO Assessments

If the facilitating occupational therapist does not feel as though adequate information was obtained from use of the “Your Perspective” Worksheet, the following assessments may be utilized:

- ❖ **Interest Checklist**
 - Provides information regarding the individual’s interest patterns and characteristics.
- ❖ **Occupational Circumstances Assessment-Interview Rating Scale (OCAIRS)**
 - Provides information about the individual's’ occupational adaptation with regard to: volition, values/goals, interests, roles, performance skills, and occupational environments.
- ❖ **Occupational Performance History Interview-Second Version (OPHI-II)**
 - Provides information about the individual’s occupational adaptation over time with regard to: occupational choices, critical life events, routines, roles, and occupational environments.
- ❖ **Occupational Questionnaire**
 - Provides information on time use patterns and feelings about use of time.
- ❖ **Occupational Self-Assessment (OSA)**
 - Provides information about an individual’s perception of occupational competence of occupational adaptation.
- ❖ **Role Checklist**
 - Provides information regarding productive roles adults engage in.
- ❖ **Volitional Questionnaire**
 - Provides information regarding an individual’s motivation within their environment.

(Schell, Gillen, & Scaffa, 2014)

Group Protocols

Format:

The Father's Perspective

- Overview of goals and objectives: 1 minute
- Warm-up: 10 minutes
- Activity: 15 minutes
- Sharing: 10 minutes
- Discussion: 10 minutes
- Summary: 5 minutes

Materials:

- “*Your Perspective*” Worksheet
- Writing utensils (pencils, pens, markers, etc.)
- Assorted candy: enough for each person to have at least 5 pieces

Goal:

- To gain a narrative perspective of the father. This will entail how he feels being a single parent, the difficulties each individual experiences and gain an idea of what the fathers would like to address.

Objectives:

- Complete a narrative piece from the father's perspective.
- Gain a more thorough understanding of how the father feels being a single parent.
- Have the participants address specific challenges they are experiencing being a single parent.

Warm-Up Activity: *Candy Introductions*

- Bring a variety of candy (candy with a variety of colors), enough for each person to have at least five pieces. Pass around the candy and tell each participant to choose 1-5 pieces, instruct them not to eat it yet. After they have chosen their candy, tell them what each candy type/color represents, and write them on the board if possible:
 1. Snickers: Favorite Hobbies
 2. Skittles: Favorite Place on Earth

3. 3 Musketeers: Favorite Memory
 4. Starburst: Dream Job
 5. M&Ms: Wildcard- tell us anything about yourself
- *“We will go around the room and allow everyone to introduce themselves, tell us how many children you have, and then explain each of the pieces of candy you chose”*
 - *“Great! Thank you all for participating! Now I believe it would be good to start off by setting some ground rules that will be maintained throughout these meetings. Does anyone have any suggestions? For example: everyone must be respectful of all others.”* (write the ground rules down to reference later).

Activity Description: Gaining Your Perspective

- Hand out “*Your Perspective*” worksheet. Have participants complete the worksheet. Remind them to be honest about their answers; they will get more out of the activity that way. Also remind them that everything within this group is going to remain confidential so they should feel safe with the answers they provide.

Sharing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - What are your family values?
 - What does a typical day look like for your family?
 - What motivates you to become a better father?

Processing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - How does your current living situation affect your ability to effectively parent?
 - How did you feel while completing this activity?
 - What difficulties did you have during this activity?
 - While completing the worksheet, were there things in your life you realized you wanted to change?

Generalizing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - How do the comments you made compare with the comments of others?
 - What did you learn by completing this activity?
 - What common values do you share?

Application:

- Questions for discussion:
 - How can you utilize this worksheet throughout your everyday life?

Summary:

- *“Today we gained insight on your perspective of being a father and various aspects pertaining to your family. Each of you provided examples from your own experiences and were able to reflect, compare and contrast the different answers. Throughout the next several weeks we are going to be addressing various aspects of parenting to increase your knowledge and overall confidence when it comes to parenting your children. Again, remember that everything said within this group is to remain confidential. Thank you all for being a part of this group.”*

Application of the MOHO:

- Participants will create a narrative expressing their perspective on the *role* of being a single parent.
- Participants will reflect on their daily *routine*.
- Participants will reflect on their *occupational identity* through the questions asked in the group.
- Participants will reflect on how the *environment* supports or inhibits their *occupational performance* as a father.

Your Perspective

What motivates you to become a better father?

What are your family values?

What does a typical day for your family look like?

Does your current living environment affect your ability to parent effectively? Why or why not?

How do you feel you perform as a father?

The Importance of Father

Format:

- Review of last week - *The Father's Perspective*: 2 minutes
- Overview of goals and objectives: 2 minutes
- Warm-up: 8 minutes
- Activity: 15 minutes
- Sharing: 5 minutes
- Discussion: 10 minutes
- Summary: 5 minutes

Materials:

- Note cards with a single word written on them: structure, discipline, masculine, feminine, caring, caregiver, playful, worker, provider, loving, sympathetic, involved, and authoritative
- Enough chairs for everyone

Goal:

- Participants will begin to understand the critical role fathers play in their children's lives. This will be seen when individuals report at least three instances where they have positively impacted their own children.

Objectives:

- To allow each of the fathers to become acquainted with each other.
- To discuss the single father's role.
- To highlight the positive impact fathers have on their children.

Warm-up activity: Favorites

- Tell participants to think of their favorite aspect of being a father. (Give them about a minute). Then ask participants to share their favorite aspect of being a father to the group and have them explain why it is their favorite aspect.

Activity Description: Importance of a Father

- Ask the fathers to move their chairs into a circle to promote discussion throughout the activity.
- *“Now we’re going to discuss the role of the single father, and then we will touch on the positive impact each of you have on your children.”*

- Retrieve note cards which have one single word on them that could be used to describe a father. (Cards have one of each of the following words written on them: structure, discipline, masculine, feminine, caring, caregiver, playful, worker, provider, loving, sympathetic, involved, and authoritative).

- Pass each of the cards out so each father has at least 2.

- *“Now I would like a volunteer to go first, read your card out loud, and discuss what it means to you in your role of parent.”*

Sharing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - After each participant shares: *“Do others have anything to share about what this word means to you?”*

Processing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - Was this activity difficult to complete?
 - Why?
 - Was it more difficult to think of ways these words applied in a positive manner rather than a negative one?
 - Which words were more difficult to discuss the positive meaning than the negative?
 - What is your motivation for playing the role of a father?

Generalizing:

- Questions for discussion:

- What trends do you see?
- How do you feel about your role as a father now?

Application:

- Questions for discussion:
 - Do any of you feel any differently about your role as a father now?
 - How is your role as a single father different than that of a co-parenting father?
 - How are you going to apply this information?
 - Possibly give them a journal to do

Summary:

- *“Today we discussed the roles each of you play in your children's’ lives highlighting the positive impacts each of you have while becoming more familiar with each other. Each of you reported that at times, it is easier to place a negative meaning on a word describing your role. It is important that each of you remember these positive attributes when interacting with your children day-to-day.”*
- *“Thank you for being a part of this group, I hope to see each of you next time!”*

Application of the MOHO:

- Participants will utilize the *motivation* of their children to participate in the group.
- Participants will identify with the *role* of being a father.
- Participants will recognize how they have positively impacted their children's lives through their *performance* as a father.

Establishing Routines in Transitional Housing

Format:

- Overview of goals and objectives: 2 minutes
- Warm-up: 5-10 minutes
- Activity: 15 minutes
- Sharing: 5 minutes
- Discussion: 10 minutes
- Summary: 5 minutes

Materials:

- Enough Chairs for Everyone
- Black and Red Pens
- 'Weekly Schedule Worksheet'

Goal:

- Participants will demonstrate the ability to determine the routines they would like to establish in their family, and then will set action steps to implement them regularly.

Objectives:

- To discuss the importance of establishing routines for the benefit of their children.
- To identify currently established routines.
- To identify routines they would like to establish.
- To identify actions steps to needed for implementation of each routine.

Warm-Up: *Time-Clock*

- The room is described as a large clock, with one point on a wall representing 12 o'clock and the point directly opposite representing 6 o'clock, and all numbers in between have a place around the room just as on a clock.

- Participants are asked "what is your favorite time of day" and respond by moving to the spot in the room that represents that time of day, then share verbally.
- Other questions: "what is your busiest time of day?" "What time of day do you get the most work done?" "What time of day is problematic for you?" (for work teams)

Activity Description: *Establishing Routines*

- Discuss the importance of routines for children:
 - *“Routines and rituals provide children with structure, predictability, and opportunities to develop many of the skills needed for success in the future. Depending on the routine, children can develop language skills, academic skills, and even social skills. Language skills may be developed during routines like: dinnertime or joint book reading. Academic skills may be developed during routines like: reading books and scheduled homework time for older children. Social skills may be developed during routines like: play with others and routines of daily living that encourage independence.”* (Spagnola & Fiese, 2007)
- Write the skills and examples on the board for the fathers to reference.

Sharing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - “What are some of the routines you currently practice?”
 - “What is the main influence on your current routines?”
- Ask the participants to write their current routines into the ‘Weekly Schedule Worksheet’ using a black pen.

Processing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - Do you believe your current routines are conducive to skills development in your children?
 - What routines would you like to practice?
 - How does your current living situation interfere with your ability to engage in those routines?

- How do you think time management affects the routines you engage in?
- Ask the participants to write the routines they would like to engage in into the ‘Weekly Schedule Worksheet’ using a red pen

Generalizing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - “Do you notice any patterns?”

Application:

- Questions for discussion:
 - How will you go about implementing these important routines in your lives?
- Participants will then be asked to generate action steps needed to implement each routine they would like to incorporate.

Summary:

- *“Today we discussed the importance of routines and developing habits, especially in this environment. You all had the opportunity to identify routines you would like to incorporate into your family’s lives, and then determine the steps you will need to take in order to make these routines a reality. If you have no more questions for me, I will give you a little homework this week. I would like you to try to implement at least one routine until we meet again, then report back to the group about how it went. Thank you all for participating today! Have a great week.”*

Application of the MOHO:

- Participants will apply the concept of *habituation* to their own circumstances by identifying *routines* they would like to begin to implement, and actually implementing at least one.
- Participants will be encouraged to determine the aspects of their *environment* that make engaging in *routines* more difficult.

Weekly Schedule Worksheet

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

New Routine	Action Steps to Implement

Addressing Stress and Parenting

Format:

- Review of last week: 3 minutes
- Overview of goals and objectives: 2 minutes
- Warm-up: 5 minutes
- Activity: 10 minutes
- Sharing: 5 minutes
- Discussion: 10 minutes
- Summary: 5 minutes

Materials:

- Pencil/Paper
- Card Stock
- Enough Chairs for Everyone

Goal:

- To address the stress involved with the role of a single fathers living in a transitional living facility, and to provide each father with the tools necessary to decrease stress.

Objectives:

- To gain a better understanding of stress
- To highlight personal role in stress creation and reduction
- To begin to create an individualized resource of strategies to reduce stress

Warm-Up Activity: *One of My Stress Busters*

- Ask participants to move chairs into a circle to promote group discussion and participation of all members.
- *“Think about a time when you felt stressed, and you found a way to positively manage your feelings and reactions. Now turn to your neighbor and finish this sentence: ‘When I am feeling stressed, one of the best things I can do for myself*

is...’ Please be prepared to share your responses with the rest of us when you are finished.

- Ask participants to think for a minute prior to turning to their neighbor to finish the sentence.

Activity Description:

- *“Now that you all have discussed some of the strategies each of you use to decrease stress, we will discuss what stress actually is.”*
- *“What is stress?”*
 - *It is our body’s response to different events that may cause bodily or mental tension*
 - *Stress can be good or bad”*

Sharing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - What are some common causes of parent stress?
 - Too much to do, too little time
 - Children’s activities
 - No co-parent
 - Environmental stress--living in transitional housing
 - Money
 - Health disparities
 - Feelings of little control
 - What are some common symptoms experienced during times of high stress?
 - Poor memory
 - Poor concentration
 - Feeling irritable
 - Increase in nervous feelings
 - Stomach ache
 - Trouble sleeping

Processing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - What are some examples of good stress?

- What are some examples of bad stress?
- *Now, we are going to discuss stress in regard to each of your own lives. I would like you to ask yourselves:*
 - What are my own sources of bad stress?
 - Do I play a role in my own levels of stress?
 - How do I know when I am too stressed?
 - How does my body react to stress?
- Ask the participants to write their answers down, then to share with the group.

Generalizing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - Does anyone notice any themes?
 - What seems to be the common cause of stress among each of you?
 - Why do you think it is the most stressful?
- *Now we are going to create a reference sheet you can take home and refer to that outlines coping strategies that work for you. There are many different strategies, and having a variety on this reference sheet may be the most beneficial.*
- Pass out sheets of cardstock, allowing participants to choose the color they would prefer, with the phrase “Strategies to Reduce Stress” written at the top. Then, allow the participants to take 5-10 minutes to write down strategies.

Possible Strategies Include:	
Eat well	Get enough sleep
Exercise	Take ‘me time’
Write in a journal	Practice deep breathing
Visual imagery	Listen to music

Application:

- Questions for discussion:
 - How will you use the information you learned today in your day-to-day life?
 - Which situations do you predict these strategies will be the most beneficial?

Summary:

- *“Today we discussed stress, and each of you had the opportunity to identify your own role in the creation and reduction of personal stress. Finally, each of you created an individualized resource that could be used to reduce your day-to-day stress. Does anyone have any questions for me?”*

Application of the MOHO:

- Participants will discuss the *role* they play in their own stress.
- Participants will address how the *environment* influences the participants stress level.
- Participants will discover how stress can influence their *performance capacity* and ability to complete desired *occupations*.

**Information adapted from the Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

Positive and Negative Communication

Format:

- Review of last week - Addressing stress and parenting: 5 minutes
- Overview of goals and objectives: 2 minutes
- Warm-up: 7 minutes
- Activity: 10 minutes
- Sharing: 10 minutes
- Discussion: 10 minutes
- Summary: 3 minutes

Materials:

- Blank note cards
- Writing utensils (pens, pencils)
- Enough chairs for all participants

Goal:

- The participants will discuss various types of positive and negative communication and how it can influence relationships with their children. Participants will also practice skills to utilize positive communicating.

Objectives:

- Have the participants explore various types of communication styles and what is appropriate for different situations.
- Identify the participant's preferred communication style.

Introduction:

- There are three types of communication, aggressive, non-assertive and assertive (Belmont, 2013). Aggressive communication means utilizing "you" statements such as "I'm better than you." Aggressive communication means being too direct, judging other, states things without filtering and being over-confident (Belmont, 2013). Non-assertive communication means keeping thoughts and feelings in, having a low self-confidence, judge's own-self and allows others to walk on them (Belmont, 2013). Assertive communication is the healthiest and

most ideal type (Belmont, 2013). Assertive communication means using “I” statements, being confident, respects others, being non-judgmental and speaking openly but tactful (Belmont, 2013).

Warm-Up Activity: *One Word*

- Ask the participants to think of one word that describes the type of communication they utilize most often. (Give them with about a minute). Then have the participants share their word to the group. Once everyone has shared ask the following questions for discussion:
 - *How is everyone’s communication style different?*
 - *Explain a communication style that you would like to have.*

Activity Description: *Effective and Non-effective Communication*

- Prior to beginning the activity, notify the participants that, *“The instructor will be collecting the notecards after they are filled out, so do not put any names or identifying information on them to keep things anonymous.”*
- The instructor will pass out the notecards to each participant. *“Write down an example of positive and respectful communication that they have seen specifically related to parenting. Then write down an example of negative and disrespectful communication, specifically related to parenting, on the other side of the notecard.”* Once both sides of the notecard are completed, have the participants hand them to the instructor. The instructor will then read the cards randomly. As the cards are read, it should stimulate a discussion about positive and negative types of communication while parenting.

Sharing:

- Participants will share their feelings about the various situations that the instructor is reading. Participants will reflect and share on the positive and negative types of communication while parenting.

Processing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - How did you feel when I was reading the negative examples of communication?

- How did those feelings differ from when I was reading the positive examples of communication?
- What parts of this activity did you find easy?
 - More difficult?
- In what specific situations is your go-to mode of communication more negative? Could this be related to stress?

Generalizing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - How does your type of communication with your children compare or differ from the examples read?
 - What are the advantages of positive communication with your children?

Application:

- Questions for discussion:
 - What did you learn about positive and negative communication?
 - How does your current living situation affect your communication?
 - What are the specific steps you are going to take to apply the positive, respectful concepts learned today with your own children?

Summary:

- Summarize by having participants sum up the main points of positive and negative communication that was discussed. Thank the members for their honesty and willingness to participate. Remind the participants that everything that was discussed today is to remain confidential.

Application of the MOHO:

- Participants will reflect on their *role* as a father and the types of communication they utilize with their own children.
- Participants will reflect on the *habits* they have to communicate in a specific way towards their children.

Discipline and Behavior Management

Format:

- Review of last week - Positive and Negative Communication: 3 minutes
- Overview of goals and objectives: 2 minutes
- Warm-up: 5 minutes
- Activity: 15 minutes
- Sharing: 5 minutes
- Discussion: 10 minutes
- Summary: 5 minutes

Materials

- Enough chairs for all participants
- “Leader Resource” handout
- “Age Makes a Difference” handout

Goal:

- The participants will demonstrate the ability to identify appropriate responses to children’s behaviors in preparation for effective behavior management with their own children.

Objectives:

- To provide the fathers with the opportunity to identify constructive and age-appropriate ways to respond to their children’s behavior.
- To allow the participants to reflect upon how their current living situation affects their ability to manage their children’s behaviors.
- To allow the participants to reflect upon how their role of single father affects their methods of discipline.

Warm-up:

- Begin the session by asking the participants: “*What do you think is the motivation behind children’s misbehavior?*” (Possible answers: they want attention, they are angry, they are bored, they want to control the situation, they do not want to

accept the rules, they want to test their parent's limits, and they want to express their frustrations).

- *“Generally, children act out in an attempt to communicate something. This means it is important to determine what is really behind the misbehavior. For example: a father whose four-year-old daughter is visiting for the weekend: On Saturday afternoon, Dad’s girlfriend comes to visit; the little girl becomes cranky, pulling on Dad and causing problems. Can you think of what might be behind this young girl’s behavior? (she’s jealous and wants attention from her father) Can you think of any ways that this father may be able to provide his daughter with much needed attention without allowing her to gain control in the relationship?”*

Activity Description:

- *“Let’s review the 4 basic guidelines about discipline on the “Age Makes a Difference” handout”*. Review the guidelines and answer any questions they may have. *“Now let’s play a game.”*
- Divide the fathers into 3 groups (2 of equal size-Teams A and B, and 1 smaller group-the judges). Give Teams A and B paper and pens/markers. *“Now, I will read you a list of situations (“Leader Resource”). Teams A and B will have 2 minutes to write down as many responses as you can think of. The judges will listen to each team’s answers, and will decide which one is most appropriate.* (the judges may need assistance making decisions at times)
- State the rules of the game:
 - Hitting cannot be a response to the situation; the teams must find alternatives to violence.
 - When the time is up, participants can finish their thoughts, but cannot add any responses.
 - Judges will give five points to the team whose responses are more likely to handle the discipline problem effectively while also teaching the child self-control. Remind the teams that their responses should be appropriate for the child’s age level.

Sharing:

- Questions for discussion:

- Thinking back, have you experienced any situations with your children where you expected too much from them, given their age? What happened?
- How does your current living situation affect your ability to manage your children's behavior?
- How does being a single parent influence your choices in regard to discipline?

Processing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - After completing this activity, do you have any other opinions about children's motivation behind acting out?
 - What are the main differences between how you discipline a child who is 2 or 3 years old? How about one who is four or older?

Generalizing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - Do you believe fathers respond differently to their children's behavior than mothers do? If so, what is different?

Application:

- Questions for discussion:
 - What are some new ideas you got from today's activity?
 - How will your methods of discipline affect your children as they get older?
 - Is there any way that this environment is conducive to disciplining your children effectively?

Summary:

- *"Today was another great group! Are you feeling more comfortable with your ability to effectively manage your children's behaviors in this difficult environment? I believe that we were able to come up with some very effective methods of discipline. Just remember that your children's ability to demonstrate control over behaviors depend upon their age, the younger they are the more difficult it is. Also, living in a transitional living facility such as this does affect*

*your children's ability to cope, which may increase the incidence of behaviors.
Does anyone have any final questions for me? Thank you!"*

Application of the MOHO:

- Participants will reflect upon the impact the *environment* has on their ability to manage their children's behaviors (*performance capacity*).
- Participants will reflect on the impact the *environment* has on the behaviors their children display.
- Participants will reflect upon children's *motivation* behind inappropriate behaviors.
- Participants will reflect upon how their *role* of single father affects their methods of discipline and behavior management.

**Group session and Handouts adapted from the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

Age Makes a Difference

There are four basic guidelines for fathers to keep in mind as they discipline their children:

Age matters. It's important to know what children can and cannot learn during each stage of their growth and development. Parents need to make sure that the discipline they use fits their child's age and development.

The power of love. To do a good job of teaching your children desirable behavior, you need to develop a positive emotional relationship with them. Parents need to demonstrate their love for their children through kind words and physical affection. Children can be taught that you love them, even if you don't always love their behavior.

Mean it. Parents need to be firm with their discipline so that their children know that they mean what they say and will back it up.

Praise, praise, praise. Recognize and make positive comments whenever your children behave well (even if it is something small). Parents often fall into the trap of commenting on their children's behavior only when it is unacceptable.

The following are some age-specific hints that can help parents manage their children's behavior.

Birth to 7 Months

- ❖ Babies cannot help being babies. They do not understand what they have done wrong, and so they cannot be disciplined effectively. Don't try.

8 to 14 Months

- ❖ Your baby will start to explore the rules but cannot really understand or stick to them.
- ❖ Firmly say — and if necessary repeat — “No.”
- ❖ Remove the baby from the situation, or distract the baby with a toy.
- ❖ Never leave the baby alone except in a safe place, such as a crib or playpen.

15 Months to 2 Years

- ❖ Your baby will begin to test the rules but still cannot stick to them. Most of what the child does at this age is still a reflex. The child cannot yet think about what will happen as a result of his or her actions.
- ❖ The best way to manage behavior problems is to remove the child from the situation or to distract the child with another activity.

2 to 3 Years

- ❖ These are the “terrible twos.” Your child will actively challenge the rules to test limits and to get attention.
- ❖ At this age, children begin to imitate; so watch your own behavior, and model the behavior that you want from the child.
- ❖ Set firm limits, and watch your child closely. Children at this age cannot yet control themselves, so you must be in charge.
- ❖ Use redirection (get the child to focus on something else) to manage your child's behavior. When this doesn't work, establish a “time-out” chair where your child has to sit quietly for a short period after misbehaving to help him or her get back in control. Redirection and time-outs are good responses because they do not reward the child's behavior with attention from you. (The length of the time-out should match the child's age. For example, a two-year-old's time-out should be two minutes; a three-year-old's time-out should be three minutes, etc.)
- ❖ Find ways to show your child that she or he does not have to misbehave to get your attention.

4 to 8 Years

- ❖ Most children during these years come to understand when they have misbehaved. Although they usually are able to control their own behavior, they still need your direction and guidance.
- ❖ Explain to your child what is wrong about the behavior, say how it made you feel, and spell out what you expect in the future.
- ❖ Let your child learn from natural and logical consequences as much as possible. (An example of a natural consequence is when a child gets cold as a result of playing outside without a coat; an example of a logical consequence is when a parent takes the child's toy away for a day because the child left it in the middle of the living-room floor.)

9 to 11 Years

- ❖ During these years, children should be getting better at managing their own behavior. They know the difference between right and wrong, and they can understand that their behavior has consequences.
- ❖ Be clear about expectations, and decide on consequences in advance. (For example, if your child's bedtime on Friday night is nine o'clock and the child refuses to go to bed on time, he or she will lose the privilege of staying up late next Friday.)
- ❖ The most effective way to handle misbehavior at these ages is to talk about what the child did wrong and why it was wrong.
- ❖ Growing children continue to need praise and positive reinforcement so that they can feel good about themselves. Being there for your children when they need someone to talk with will prevent many situations from becoming problems.

12 to 18 years

- ❖ By the time your children are teenagers, they know the difference between right and wrong. They are also at an age where they will be spending more time away from your protection and guidance.
- ❖ Good communication is essential to your relationship with your teen. Establish a particular time every day when the two of you will talk about how things are going.
- ❖ Try not to preach to your children. They are now likely to turn to their peers and other adults for advice, so get to know the people who are important to them.
- ❖ Limit rules to those that are necessary for your child's safety.
- ❖ Be clear about your expectations for behavior, and follow through with logical consequences for misbehavior. (For example, tell your 17-year-old daughter that if she misses her curfew, she will not be allowed to go out the next night.)

* Handout adapted from the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

Leader Resource

Game Situations

1. Your three-month-old son cries a lot. The baby's mother tells you not to pick him up so much because you'll spoil him.
2. Your 18-month-old daughter can get stubborn at times. In the morning when you need to get to work or school, she often refuses to leave the house to go to the babysitter's.
3. Whenever you take your two-year-old daughter to the grocery store, she has a tantrum when you go past the candy aisle.
4. Your son is about to turn two. Whenever you have company, he refuses to share anything with other children. This embarrasses you.
5. You are visiting your girlfriend's house with your two-and-a-half-year-old son. Your girlfriend has a four-year-old daughter. While playing, your son takes away the girl's favorite toy, and she starts to cry.
6. When you take your three-year-old son to the basketball court with you, he often gets tired and begins to whine.
7. Your nine-month-old daughter puts anything and everything into her mouth.
8. Your two-year-old daughter wants to play with her younger brother, who is six months old. She likes to touch the baby's face, and to kiss and hug him. Sometimes she hugs him roughly and sticks her fingers in his eyes as she names the parts of his face.
9. You, your grandmother, and your four-year-old daughter are walking down the street. An elderly woman walks by and bumps into your daughter without saying "excuse me." Before you know it, your daughter calls the woman an "asshole."
10. Every day for a week, your six-year-old daughter comes home from school and tells you that she forgot her books to do her homework.
11. Your ten-year-old son comes home from school without the new jacket you recently bought him. He says that he took it off while he was playing basketball and that somebody stole it. You've told him a hundred times not to wear the jacket to school.
12. Your 12-year-old son has been suspended from school for the third time because he disrupted the classroom.
13. Your 17-year-old daughter has been fired from her job because she had been late every day for a week. You are counting on her to help pay for her college tuition, because you've been out of work for two months.
14. Your seven-year-old son gets furious at his five-year-old-brother for messing with his things, and so he breaks his brother's bike.
15. Your 14-year-old daughter has come home late every Saturday night for the last month. It's now Saturday again, and she asks you whether she can go to a party.
16. Your 15-year-old son was arrested for shoplifting with a group of his friends. He did not have any store merchandise in his possession, but his friends did. You have already talked with him about his friends' negative influences on him

* Handout adapted from the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

Support and Guidance Through Difficult

Developmental Phases: Social Skills

Format:

- Review of last week: 3 minutes
- Overview of goals and objectives: 2 minutes
- Warm-up: 5 minutes
- Activity: 15 minutes
- Sharing: 5 minutes
- Discussion: 10 minutes
- Summary: 5 minutes

Materials

- Whiteboard and markers
- Enough chairs for all participants
- Pens and Paper

Goal:

- Participants will demonstrate the ability to generate different ways to teach children social skills at different stages of development.

Objectives:

- Participants will brainstorm different ways to teach their own children social skills
- To provide participants with an opportunity to discuss their role in teaching their children social skills at different stages of development
- To provide participants with an opportunity to reflect upon the impact their environment may have on their children's current social skills

Warm-up:

- Ask participants to brainstorm situations where appropriate social skills are the most important then have them share.

Activity Description:

- *“As you all know; your influence is crucial to your children’s success later in life. As parents, you are the first teachers your children will have. Teaching your children appropriate social skills is one aspect of parenting that is easily overlooked. Today, I hope to give you some suggestions and tips to use while teaching social skills” (Prince, 2006)*
- Ask the fathers to come up with a list of important social skills for children to possess, and write them on the board. (examples: taking turns, helping others, praising, sharing, asking for help, participating, staying on task, saying kind things, sharing ideas, organizing materials, following directions, resolving conflicts, active listening, accepting differences, communicating clearly, or waiting patiently)
- Ask the fathers break into pairs, assign each pair 2-3 examples, then ask them to brainstorm ways to teach their children these skills. Ask them to keep their children’s age in mind while brainstorming.
- Then the fathers will report back to the large group, and together will process each idea.

Sharing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - In the past, what was your role in teaching your children social skills?
 - Think of a time when your children didn’t demonstrate appropriate social skills, what was your reaction?
 - Think of a time when your children did demonstrate appropriate social skills, how did you react?

Processing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - Why do you think it is important for your children to learn these social skills?
 - Why do you think it is important to remember child development when teaching social skills?
 - How do you believe living in a transitional living facility affect your children’s social skills?

Generalizing Questions:

- Questions for discussion:
 - Did you notice any similarities with responses?
 - What social skills do your children need when they are toddlers? Young children? Adolescents? Young adults?

Application Questions:

- Questions for discussion:
 - In the future, what will your role in teaching your children social skills be?
 - How will address social skills with your children of varying ages?
 - How will addressing social skills be different while living in a transitional living facility?

Summary:

- *“Today we discussed the role each of you play in teaching your children social skills across the age span, we brainstormed specific ways to approach it, and you all reflected on the impact your current environment has on social skills. Does anyone have any questions for me?”*
- *“Thank you for your participation!”*

Application of the MOHO:

- Participants will discuss their *role* in teaching social skills to their children.
- Participants will discuss the impact their current *environment* has on their children’s social skills

** Adapted from Super Duper Publications

Support and Guidance Through Difficult

Developmental Phases: Academic

Format:

- Review of last week - *Support and Guidance Through Difficult Developmental Phases: Social Skills*: 3 minutes
- Overview of goals and objectives: 2 minutes
- Activity: 30 minutes
- Sharing: 5 minutes
- Discussion: 5 minutes
- Summary: 5 minutes

Materials:

- *Academic Jeopardy Board Set-Up* worksheet
- *Academic Jeopardy Question* worksheet
- *Academic Jeopardy Answer* worksheet
- Whiteboard or large sheet of paper where board can be set up
- Enough chairs for all participants

Goal:

- Provide helpful strategies and knowledge of academic related issues to fathers so they are more prepared when addressing these issues with their children.

Objectives:

- Participants will participate in and complete a game of Academic Jeopardy.
- Participants will analyze, process, and discuss answers for questions addressing various aspects of a child's academic process.
- Participants will learn of numerous strategies, tips and techniques for guiding their children throughout their academic process.

Warm-up:

- Ask participants to describe one aspect of school, referring to their children, that has been (or they think will) be a challenge.

Activity Description: Academic Jeopardy

- Utilizing the, *Academic Jeopardy Board Set-Up* worksheet, create a similar board on a larger scale so the participants can see it. (i.e. on a whiteboard or a large piece of paper).
- Split the participants into teams. The participants can be on a team and work together or play independently (this could depend on the size of the group).
- Upon completion of the board set-up and determining the size of the teams, the game can begin. Utilizing the *Academic Jeopardy Question* worksheet and the *Academic Jeopardy Answer* worksheet, the game is played as a normal game of Jeopardy.
- The participant or team select a category then an amount (i.e. *Tips to know before school starts, 100*) then the host (instructor) asks the question from that box and that person/team gets the chance to answer it. If the answer is correct then you move onto the next question, if the answer is incorrect another participant/team gets the chance to answer it. If they provide the correct answer they get the points but if they don't no one gets those points. The game is continued until all of the questions have been asked.
- The participant/team that has the most points at the end of the game, wins. You can choose to provide some sort of small prize for the winner (i.e. candy).

Processing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - What was difficult for you while completing this activity?
 - How were you able to overcome that?
 - Why is it important for you to know and understand the various strategies that have been discussed today?

Generalizing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - What are other issues that your child has been dealing with while in school?
 - What are ways that you can address those issues?

Application:

- Questions for discussion:
 - Describe ways that you will implement the different strategies, tips and techniques you learned while playing the jeopardy game.
 - What are other resources that you could utilize when you don't know an answer to something your children are asking about?

Summary:

- Have each participant summarize one main point that they learned from the session. Be sure to thank the participants for coming and remind them that things stated within the group are to remain confidential.

Application of the MOHO:

- Participants will engage in an activity that facilitates *volitional thoughts and feelings* by addressing a major occupation in their children's life.
- Participants will find value in the activity by becoming more knowledgeable in an area that is *meaningful* to their children.
- Participants will increase their *performance capacity* by gaining skills and knowledge of various aspects of the academic process.

*Information for protocol was adapted from Super Duper Publications

Academic Jeopardy Board: Set-up

Tips to Know Before School Starts	Is My Child Ready to Start School?	Constructive Feedback	Bullying in School	Improving Social Skills for School
100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400
500	500	500	500	500

Academic Jeopardy Board: Questions

Tips to Know Before School Starts	Is My Child Ready to Start School?	Constructive Feedback	Bullying in School	Improving Social Skills for School
T/F Children should watch a lot of T.V.	What are language skills?	What is constructive feedback (criticism)?	Name some signs that a child might be being bullied.	What are social skills?
What are healthy activities that you can do with your child(ren)?	What is social and emotional development?	You should watch the _____ of your voice when providing feedback.	T/F You want to talk regularly with your child?	T/F When working with a child on social skills you should work on multiple social skills at once.
Children can learn and grow by _____ these.	What is a way that you can help your child develop appropriately?	Do you direct your constructive feedback towards the child or the behavior/mistake?	Be a _____ model for your children.	Provide an example of what appropriate behavior looks like when communicating with someone.
What is an easy and effective way to communicate with a teacher?	What is fine and gross motor development?	T/F It is okay to just not say anything at all and let them learn on their own.	Name 1 way to build confidence in your child.	Name 2 situations where social skills are needed.
How many hours does the National Sleep foundation recommend a child sleep at night?	What are cognitive skills?	How would you provide constructive feedback for when a child asks for help writing a sentence and the sentence doesn't make sense to you?	Who at the school could you talk to about what/how your child is doing at school?	What are signs that a child is having difficulty with social skills?

Academic Jeopardy Board: Answers

Tips to Know Before School Starts	Is My Child Ready to Start School?	Constructive Feedback	Bullying in School	Improving Social Skills for School
False. A child's attention span, performance and overall behavior in school is different than children who have limited T.V. time.	Ability to listen, understand it and use it to communicate. For example, can they say his/her name, speak in sentences or tell stories from beginning to end?	Strategy that offers suggestions to help the child become better the next time he or she goes to do that again.	Possible answers could include: damaged or missing things, avoidance of recess or school activities, difficulty sleeping, sudden decrease in grades*.	Social skills are your child's communication, problem solving, decision-making and relationships with friends and classmates.
Possible answers: go for a walk, play at the park, play a board game, read, etc.	Ability to get along with others. For example, can your child agree to rules and games and follow by them, play alone and be okay with that and/or share with others?	Tone of your voice. Having an assertive yet helpful tone of voice will show your concern for helping them, show that you are serious but not scare them away.	True. Communication is vital. You want to talk to your child about who they hang out with and what they do while at school, recess, in the neighborhood, etc.	False. You want to just work on one skill at a time. There are different ways to focus on one skill at a time for example, working on a different skill each week.
Reading books or having you read books to them.	Possible answers: practice writing, get them moving (jumping, walking, running), talk to them and allow them to tell stories.	You direct your constructive feedback towards the behavior/mistake.	Role model. Children are always watching, show how to treat others with kindness and respect.	Possible answers: Telling someone, "Good job or I'm proud of you.", smiling, or clapping*.

<p>A quick email. Teachers are often busy and cannot meet throughout the day so this is a quick and easy way to get ahold of them.</p>	<p>Being able to control hands/finger while writing, coloring, etc. and being able to control body and legs while running, jumping, walking etc. For example, can your child print letters of the alphabet, use a knife and fork appropriately and hop?</p>	<p>True. Sometimes children will learn from their own mistakes and when they do, they will be less likely to repeat them. There is no need to point out the mistake when they already learned from it.</p>	<p>Possible answers: Get them involved in sports or other extracurricular activities, simply support them. Being involved will allow them to build their self-esteem by being with people who support them*.</p>	<p>Possible answers: Taking turns, asking for help, participating in something, helping others, sharing items, resolving conflicts or following directions*.</p>
<p>Children between the ages of 5 and 12 need anywhere between 10-12 hours of sleep. Without proper rest, children can't appropriately comprehend the things they are trying to learn.</p>	<p>Utilizing mental (brain) skills to analyze and process information. For example, can your child identify 5 different body parts correctly, recognize different shapes and colors and understand the concept of time (yesterday, tomorrow, hour, etc.)?</p>	<p>Different answers possible, an example is, "I am not understanding this sentence, did you mean to say...?" Or could you explain this to me?</p>	<p>Possible answers: Teacher, counselor, principal, and social workers*.</p>	<p>Possible answers: Poor eye contact, facial expressions do not match topic, talks constantly or doesn't talk at all, doesn't know how to introduce him or herself, or doesn't consider other's emotional state before talking*.</p>

*These are just possible answers; utilize discretion of participant's answers to determine if they get the points.

**Information adapted from Super Duper Publications

Support and Guidance Through Difficult

Developmental Phases: Puberty

Format:

- Review of last week - *Support and Guidance Through Difficult Developmental Phases: Academic*: 3 minutes
- Overview of goals and objectives: 2 minutes
- Warm-up: 5 minutes
- Activity: 15 minutes
- Sharing: 5 minutes
- Discussion: 10 minutes
- Summary: 5 minutes

Materials:

- ‘Puberty 101’ handout
- Enough chairs for all participants

Goal:

- Participants will demonstrate an increased comfort level while discussing puberty with their children.

Objectives:

- Participants will engage in a ‘Puberty 101’ Activity
- Participants will analyze and discuss how their role of single father impacts their approach to puberty-related talks with their children
- Participants will reflect upon how their environment affects/ will affect their children during this sensitive time.

Warm-Up:

- *“Puberty can be a challenging time for children and their parents. Many of us wish we had a ‘Puberty 101’ course to help us through this time. Families who know what to expect and who talk about puberty together will find this time easier.”*

- Ask participants to share their own experiences with learning about puberty, and what they wish they had learned.

Activity Description:

- Split the participants into two equal groups to complete a competition-type group. The facilitator will read the questions provided on the “Puberty 101” handout, and the first group to raise their hand will provide their answer. If they answer correctly, they score 1 point, if they answer incorrectly, the other team will have the opportunity to answer. Teams will be awarded points based upon the facilitator’s discretion. If both teams are having difficulty answering a question, the facilitator may answer it, then ask a new question. Upon completion of the game, the group will process the questions together.

Sharing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - What are your feelings about discussing puberty with your children?
 - Does anyone have any experience discussing puberty with your children?
 - How did you approach the conversation?
 - How did it make you feel?

Processing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - What makes this topic so difficult to approach for some?
 - How old do you believe your children should be before discussing these topics with them?
 - How is your role as a single father different than that of a co-parenting father with regards to these topics?
 - Those of you with daughters, do you believe that being a single father makes this topic more difficult to discuss?

Generalizing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - Did you notice any similarities among responses?

Application:

- Questions for discussion:
 - How do you plan to approach this topic with your children now?
 - How will the more public environment at the transitional living facility affect your approach when addressing this personal issue?

Summary:

- Summarize by asking the participants to summarize the main points of the discussion. Review the objectives, and thank the members for their honesty and willingness to participate. Remind the participants that everything that was discussed today is to remain confidential.

Application of the MOHO:

- Participants will discuss and reflect upon how their *role* as a single father affects their approach when addressing puberty with their children.
- Participants will discuss how their *environment* will affect their children's experience with this personal issue.

** Information for this group was obtained from Planned Parenthood

Puberty 101

Question	Possible Answers
What is puberty?	<p>Puberty is the time between childhood and adulthood when girls and boys mature physically and sexually. It is the period when a girl is becoming a woman and a boy is becoming a man. Puberty is marked by changes such as breast development and menstruation in girls and facial hair growth and ejaculation in boys.</p> <p>Puberty is also the start of adolescence, which is a longer period of emotional change.</p>
When should you start talking with your child about puberty?	<p>There's no magic age at which to have "the talk" about puberty. In fact, it is a good idea to have many talks. Try to talk with your child before any signs of puberty develop so that they don't come as surprises. If your child knows what to expect ahead of time, the changes that come with puberty will be easier to deal with.</p> <p>Some parents wait until their child asks questions. If your child is shy, or doesn't ask questions, you may have to take the lead. And if changes happen before you get to talk, your child may become confused or frightened.</p>
When does puberty happen?	<p>Puberty happens to everybody, but it doesn't happen to everybody at the same time. Generally, girls start puberty earlier than boys. The bodies of some girls begin changing at age eight. Others don't start changing until they are 14. Boys' bodies start changing between ages 10 and 12. Most often these changes are complete before a person is 16, but puberty can go on throughout the teens.</p>
What changes can girls and boys expect during puberty?	<p>During puberty, both girls and boys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● grow taller quickly ● develop pubic, underarm, and body hair ● may sweat more and notice more body odor ● often get pimples on their faces, backs, chests, or buttocks because of changes in sweat and oil glands ● see their body shapes change — wider hips for girls and broader shoulders for boys

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● find that their voices become deeper — this usually happens much more suddenly for boys ● develop more sexual feelings
<p>What are children’s biggest concerns during puberty?</p>	<p>Children going through puberty need lots of reassurance that they and their bodies are normal. We need to help them understand that every person is different from every other person and that being different is normal.</p> <p>During puberty, children need most of all to know that their bodies and body functions are normal. Girls and boys need help in developing healthy feelings about their bodies. They need to know that breasts, penises, nipples, labia (lips of the vulva), testicles, and clitorises come in many different shapes, sizes, and colors and that they are all normal. They need to know that menstruation, sexual thoughts and feelings, wet dreams, orgasms during sleep, and masturbation are normal, too.</p>
<p>Should boys learn about girls? Should girls learn about boys?</p>	<p>Yes. Understanding what’s happening to both sexes helps satisfy children’s healthy curiosity, reassures them that everyone goes through puberty, and builds respect and understanding about the other sex. Learning about puberty in both sexes also helps children understand how reproduction happens.</p>
<p>Is it okay to talk with my child about puberty if we are not the same sex? Why not why not?</p>	<p>Yes. This is a great way to show our children that it's normal for adults to be knowledgeable about the bodies of both women and men.</p> <p>Children may ask different questions of different people in their lives. And different opportunities for discussion may arise when children are with different people. If you are in a relationship, your child may ask your partner one thing and you another. If you are a single parent, your child may talk to you about most things, but also ask questions of another trusted adult. If your child has older siblings or other family members, your child may talk to them about their questions, too. Ultimately, our children benefit from learning different points of view, and from the closeness formed by talking openly about sexual health issues.</p>

**Information for the above handout was obtained from Planned Parenthood.

Support and Guidance Through Difficult

Developmental Phases: Cleaning Your Glasses

Format:

- Review of last week - *Support and Guidance Through Difficult Developmental Phases: Puberty*: 3 minutes
- Overview of goals and objectives: 2 minutes
- Warm-up: 5 minutes
- Activity: 10 minutes
- Sharing: 10 minutes
- Discussion: 10 minutes
- Summary: 5 minutes

Materials:

- Enough chairs for all participants
- Paper and writing utensils
- Glasses with clear lenses- place tape across the lenses (enough for all participants)
- Picture 10.1

Goal:

- Participants will create a list of 10 strategies to utilize while interacting with their children in order to demonstrate positive praise and promote an increase in self-esteem.

Objectives:

- To provide participants with an opportunity to reflect upon their ability to provide their children with positive praise.
- To provide participants with an opportunity to discuss aspects of the environment that affect their ability to ‘keep their glasses clean’
- To provide participants with an opportunity to reflect upon and discuss specific strategies that can be implemented to maximize positive praise and improve the parent-child relationship.

Warm-up:

- Begin by asking each participant to describe one positive thing that has happened since last week.

Activity Description:

- *“Positive and effective praise is a key element in the development of your children’s positive self-esteem. However, it can sometimes seem like your children don’t act in ways worth praising. This is when it becomes extremely important to ‘catch your child being good’ (Redshaw, 2007). Sometimes it can seem nearly impossible to witness positive behaviors in your children, this is when ‘cleaning your glasses’ may be necessary, metaphorically speaking (Redshaw, 2007). Over days, weeks, months, and sometimes years of not so positive interactions between you and your child, an accumulation of film can build up on your ‘glasses’ making it nearly impossible to see your children doing good (Redshaw, 2007).”*
- Present the participants with the glasses. Instruct each participant to don the glasses explaining the metaphor further.
- *“Without regular cleaning, this is what can happen to the glasses through which you view your children (Redshaw, 2007).”*
- The facilitator holds up Picture 10.1, and asks the participants to describe what they see. (the participants should not be able to see what is depicted in the picture) Instruct the participants to remove the tape from the lenses of the glasses, hold the same picture up, and ask them to describe the behaviors they see.
- *“In order to keep your glasses clean, it is important to continually ask yourself these questions:*
 - *What are my child’s strengths?*
 - *What are my child’s interests?*
 - *What does my child do that makes me happy?*
 - *What does my child do that makes me feel proud?*
 - *What is my child great at?*

- *“By asking yourself questions like these, you can enable yourself to ‘catch your child doing well’”.*
- Now pass out paper and writing utensils, and ask the fathers to brainstorm a list of 10 ways to demonstrate positive praise. Upon completion, ask the fathers to share 5 of their responses.

Sharing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - What are some of your children’s strengths?
 - Do you feel that you are missing out on seeing strengths because of having your ‘dirty glasses on’?
 - Describe a time when you had on ‘your dirty glasses’ on and missed an opportunity to see your children doing something respectful and positive?

Processing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - What motivates you to ‘keep your glasses clean’?
 - Describe why it is important for you, as a father, to ‘keep your glasses clean’?
 - How does your current living situation affect your ability to ‘keep your glasses clean’?
 - How does stress with the role of being a single father impact your ability to ‘keep your glasses clean’?

Generalizing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - Did you notice any similarities among responses?
 - Can these concepts be applied to children of all ages?

Application:

- Questions for discussion:
 - What are some specific steps you will take to ‘keep your glasses clean’ in the future?

- What strategies, that other participants have described, will you apply to your own life?

Summary:

- Ask the participants summarize the main points of today's session.

Application of the MOHO:

- Participants will reflect on their *performance*, as a father, by discussing what they do to “keep their glasses clean.”
- Participants will reflect on and discuss what *motivates* them to “keep their glasses clean.”

Picture 10.1



Image retrieved from: Google Images

Sense of Achievement

Format:

- Review of last week: 3 minutes
- Overview of goals and objectives: 2 minutes
- Warm-up: 5 minutes
- Activity: 15 minutes
- Sharing: 5 minutes
- Discussion: 10 minutes
- Summary: 5 minutes

Materials:

- Enough chairs for all participants
- “Progress Note” handout- enough for all participants
- Writing utensils

Goal:

- Participants will demonstrate the ability to identify their own personal achievement in this program through the use of a progress note.

Objectives:

- To provide participants with an opportunity to identify their personal and family achievements.
- To provide participants with an opportunity to reflect upon how their achievements affect them in a positive manner.
- To reflect upon changes they have made with regards to roles, routines, environment, and their approach to their children.

Warm-Up:

- Pair off the people. Have them sit facing each other.

- Tell them you are going to give them a question to talk about for 3 minutes each. *Person A* will talk first while *person B* remains totally quiet. Then after 3 minutes *Person B* will talk while *Person A* listens.
- First tell them they cannot talk about what they do for a living or their work, only about their person. You may need to give personal examples.
- The question they are to answer is:
- "I am"
- If the speaker stops speaking for 30 seconds, then the listener repeats the question "Who are you?" If the speaker does not respond, wait another 30 seconds and say the question again.

Activity Description:

- Distribute the "Progress Note" handout to each participant. *"Today we are going to discuss your progress and achievement thus far in this program. It is important for each of you to reflect upon how much you have achieved through your participation in this program. Maybe you now you interact differently with your children or maybe you see your role as a single father differently. Some of you may have established new routines with your family, or have adapted a new way to approach discipline with your children."*
- *I want you to take about 10 minutes to write down a list of all of your personal or family achievements as a result of your participation in these groups.* Provide the participants with sufficient time to complete the activity.

Sharing:

- *"Now we will go around the room so each of you will have the opportunity to share your achievements."*
- Questions for discussion:
 - How has the overall mood/energy within your family changed since the beginning of this group?
 - How has this group impacted your day-to-day routines and habits?
 - How have your children's actions changed?

Processing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - How do your identified achievements make you feel?
 - Do you see your role as a single father differently now? If so, how?

Generalizing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - Does anyone share the same achievements?
 - How will you maintain these changes even after leaving this facility? Do you think it will be easier or more difficult?

Application:

- Questions for discussion:
 - Which achievements will you continue to practice after we are no longer meeting weekly?
 - How do you plan to maintain these changes?

Summary:

- *“I can see that many of you feel as though you have made some great strides in this program. You have all achieved so much! When you go back to your daily lives, and begin to feel pressure to return to old habits, I would like you to look at this progress note to remember everything you have learned. Next week is our final meeting, and because of that we will be doing things a little differently. Please bring your children, and be aware that the group may last longer than it typically does. I will provide some drinks and snacks. Have a great week!”*

Application of the MOHO:

- Participants will reflect on how their *occupational identity* has been reshaped by engagement in this program.
- Participants will reflect on how they now view their *role* of single father.
- Participants will reflect upon their establishment of new *routines and habits*, and how those have impacted their everyday lives.
- Participants will write a progress note, highlighting their own personal *achievement* through engagement in this program.

Building Positive Relationships with Your Child

Format:

- Review of last week- *Sense of Achievement*: 5 minutes
- Overview of goals and objectives: 1 minutes
- Activity: 40 minutes
- Sharing: 3 minutes
- Discussion: 3 minutes
- Summary: 4 minutes

Materials:

- Board games that are appropriate for the ages of the children
- Snacks (if possible)

Goal:

- The participants and children will demonstrate ability to play a game together while communicating effectively to facilitate a healthy relationship.

Objectives:

- Participants and their children will engage in a game together demonstrating healthy communication thus formulating a stronger relationship.

Activity Description: *Game Day*

- Have a variety of games, for all ages, available for the participants. Have participants and their children select a game (families can join and play a game together). Instruct participants to simply play the game with their children. Provide assistance if needed.

Sharing:

- Participants will share what they enjoyed about playing the game.

Processing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - How did you feel while playing the game as a family?
 - How did you feel teaching your children to play the game?

Generalizing:

- Questions for discussion:
 - What did you learn about yourself upon completion of this activity?
 - What did you learn about your children upon completion of this activity?

Application:

- Questions for discussion:
 - How will you utilize the things learned from this activity within your everyday life?
 - How do you feel you have grown as a father over the last few weeks?

Summary:

- Have participants summarize main points that they have learned over the course of the groups.

Application of the MOHO:

- Participants will engage in an activity that is *motivating* to them and their children.
- Participants will utilize various *performance skills* to successfully complete activity with children.

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CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The purpose of this protocol booklet is to maximize single custodial-fathers' parenting skills by providing them with the information necessary to facilitate a more effective parent-child relationship. A review of current literature indicated a lack of parenting resources geared toward promoting single-custodial fathers' parenting skills.

The information gathered during the review of literature guided development of the protocol booklet. The literature review focused on various important issues pertaining to parenting such as discipline, communication, and establishing roles and routines. Environmental aspects of the transitional living facility were accounted for throughout the literature review as they may affect the single-custodial fathers' ability to parent efficiently and effectively. The Model of Occupational Therapy (MOHO) was also focused on throughout the literature review to ensure an occupation-based, client-centered and evidence based product.

The protocol booklet contains a set of twelve group protocols that are intended to be implemented by an occupational therapist to enhance the skills of single-custodial fathers within a transitional living facility. However, it could be implemented in other community-based settings serving single parents. Information for the occupational therapist is presented at the beginning of the booklet, and will aide in the administration of each session. The booklet also contains information regarding the MOHO and how to utilize its concepts; this will ensure maximized efficacy of the entire group protocol.

Upon completion of the product, some limitations were found. First, the product was not specifically created for fathers of children with disabilities. However, occupational therapists are trained to analyze all aspects of patients and their ability to complete different tasks. This allows the occupational therapist to provide interventions to maximize their patients' overall performance. Therefore, occupational therapists who implement these protocols are able to adapt or modify the protocols to better suit the needs of fathers of children with disabilities. A second limitation is that not all transitional living facilities are the same. The facilities may have specific rules and regulations that may limit the father's ability to participate in the group or not allow for the father's to utilize the information within the protocols as effectively as they should. However, if the occupational therapist becomes familiar with a facility and how it is run, he or she can adapt and/or modify the protocols to maximize the outcome of the sessions. A final limitation is that there is no specific amount of time that families stay at a transitional housing facility. The occupational therapist could however, allow all single fathers to come to the groups, not just the fathers living at the transitional housing facility. This will provide the family with access to the groups even after leaving the facility.

Overall, the protocol booklet facilitates an occupational therapist's ability to effectively teach parenting skills single-custodial fathers living in transitional housing facilities within a community setting. This protocol booklet will allow occupational therapists to provide evidence-based, client-centered, and occupation-based interventions to each of the participants. Following implementation of the parenting skills protocols it

is anticipated that the participants living in a transitional housing facility will demonstrate the ability to more parent their children effectively and efficiently.

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