



Background

I have had this idea for a while, but never got round to 'testing' it out
As a Dad of 4 I have literally none of the answers, not expert – ask my wife! – but I do know a little of the charity sector and there could be something interesting here.

There are some relevant factors that could be on our minds as we begin:

- Social isolation is as bad for health as smoking according to a 2015 study
- An estimated 10% of men will suffer from post-natal depression
- 78% of suicides are men
- Rates increasing in men over 45 and it is the biggest cause of death for the under 35's
- Stay at home dads and lone caring dads are more common than ever
- Grandads roles are changing to be more involved with baby boomer generation

Pinned post to social media/blog at beginning of project

'The beginning is the most important part of the work'

Well Plato wrote that in far simpler, yet deeper-thinking times ...you know what? it might be true, but its certainly exciting to make a start on a new project. More about me in the next post(busy dad of 4 bla bla bla), but for now

Its fashionable to talk about vision and values, so i'll start there ever hopeful that even a bit of it resonates with others.

The vision for this network is so that dads, grandads and other male carers can have a space to connect with one another, learn from each other - all as informally as possible (ok, ok even setting up a group with a title and meetings etc is already way too formal?!)

The problem is that for many men, who aren't naturally a 'joiner' of things, networks and friendships don't happen naturally. SO without doing something we end up doing NOTHING. We watch with interest the significant women in our lives going off to playgroup and coming home with friends! How does that happen? There are a couple of truths that we don't always like to admit, because we are men and we have it all in hand, have a cunning plan, have never dropped a ball yet!

(1)Parenthood and maintaining a positive, healthy relationship and work-balance is hard....and (2) we cant do it alone.

Just being human and a grown up male is hard enough some days, so we wont run away from the chance to share life enhancing, inspiring messages on here that have helped some men on the journey. Take what you need and scroll down past the rest.

But...promise that actual meet ups will be simply coffee or a pint or two away from the noise and mess of the little ones. Unashamedly social and sociable. Who knows though whether a parallel programme of courses, day trips, sport or events could happen in time- depends on some funding and interest.





At least until we are more established and can take a sounding from members we will welcome 'likes' from anyone to the Facebook page (ie its not a closed group limited to dads or men) So it would be lovely to have lots of our family and friends to share the vibe too.

So whether new Dad, widowed Dad, grand-dad, foster Dad, young Dad, step-Dad, single Dad, estranged Dad, Dad of 1, adoptive Dad, or Dad of 9 - you are welcome. Join the mailing list, follow the social media

This is absolutely not a group or network which is about father's justice in the family court system, pushing a men vs women agenda, being preachy or judgemental, fighting culture wars or the like. It doesn't mean that if these are big things in your life you want be welcomed and heard- its just that this network want be your vehicle. Sorry, there are plenty of other spaces.

I've given it a try to pin this thing down- it isn't an exhaustive list, after all it is only day 1, where everything is possible, nothing is definite and there is room for infinite creativity and growth. Actually quite a cool space to be in! maybe Plato me-old-lad was right after all!

Existing provision

Single dads groups or separated dads- but not an overall, inclusive group under which various activities can take place and there is scope for friendly peer to peer support between Dads, Grandads and male carers.

There is Saturday morning playgroup in Ainsdale, a mens mental health group on a Tuesday afternoon on Norwood Road and in the past churches have tried 'who let the Dads out' programmes.

The NCT do their own unique work around pre and post natal anxieties for new parents- but not specifically for Dads.

There are also semi political Fathers for Justice type groups – an issue we will steer clear – while welcoming warmly those chaps who are going through a tough time. Women are not the enemy of 'Identity Dads group but our best allies!

Possible activities- not exhaustive....theres probably loads more!

- A range of advice leaflets, to the highest standards on male post natal depression, parental stress, financial stress for fathers
- Fathers Day Festival
- Dad's Café
- Saturday Morning club – with kids
- Pub Quiz team





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- Sunday subsidised swim with kids
 - Emergency grant to crisis families
 - Leaflet for new Dads
 - Life skills – subsidised Baby First Aid course
 - Fathers Day cards to sell/raise awareness
 - Cinema – subsidised showing in school holidays
 - A simple - coffee and catch up monthly meet
 - Lots of regular no-pressure or expectation 'drop ins' for simply a drink among Dad friends
 - Life skills - finance and budgeting
 - Coastal walk
 - 'Head Space' – a day for tackling the taboo of mental well being
 - Silly Sports Day
 - Southport FC event
 - Blocks of counselling bought in advance so Dads can pay what they are able
 - Summer BBQ, friends families, wives, kids- everyone
 - 'Daddy Soul' – a day with a range of contributors on men's spirituality &/or faith
 - Games Night
 - Outreach Worker – funded to get access into hard to reach groups of men in Sefton&West Lancs, linking with health visitors, midwives, social workers etc Promoting all the above.





- *Over to you....anything else?? There will be im sure*

Next Steps

Promotion, press release, social media, web	Done
Consult with Sefton CVS	Done
Open Bank Account	Done
Have initial meetings – really informal	
Group constitution- something simple but could be used later to apply for charitable status. People prepared to be named officers??	
Apply for £500 grant from Resilience Fund	
Produce a 2019 calendar and promote activities	

