

## **Fathering Without Violence**

Recently the Worcester Local Management Board received funding from the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore to develop the “Fathering with out Violence” Program. This program assists fathers with a history of family violence (either spousal or child abuse) to examine and confront their underlying beliefs and values that support their use of violence with family members and to develop new skills that will allow them to parent and interact with the child’s mother in a healthy and effect way without utilizing abusive tactics. The service is provided in a group setting and is facilitated by trained group leaders. The service is for male offenders only. Men may participate if they self-refer or are court ordered. In that most fathers who commit acts of family violence do not see themselves as having done anything warranting intervention, it is highly advantageous, although not a necessity that referred men be court ordered to participate. This is a time limited group of no more than twenty sessions, provided weekly. The service will be funded through participant fees to be assigned on a sliding scale, with a minimum fee of \$10 a session. Key concepts of the curriculum include:

- Educating men that there are forms of abuse other than just hitting. Emotional, sexual, abandonment and neglectful care is also identified as “abusive and “violent” toward family members;
- Men learn the importance of being supportive of the child’s mother, whether she is part of the family household or not;
- Men learn about how violence in the family home not only effects the victim, but also harms others who are exposed indirectly to the abuse;
- Men gain a greater understanding that values and beliefs that support violence in the home are often no longer relevant or are not based in reality;
- Men obtain a greater understanding of the inter-generational transmission of violent and abusive beliefs from father to child;
- Men learn the difference between being respected and feared by their children;
- Men learn healthy and effective alternatives to using violence as a means to manage their relationships in the family home;
- Men obtain a better understanding of the relationship between society’s definition of “being a man” and the use of violence in relationships;
- Men identify their use of blame, minimizing and denial as ways of justifying their violent behavior.

The service is scheduled to become available in July of 2010. Place and times are to be determined in the near future. Members of the team that developed this service (Judy Center, Health Department, WCDSS and the LMB) are available to facilitate a detailed presentation for your organization should you desire. In the interim if you would like more information about the Fathering with out Violence Program please feel free to contact Pete Buesgens at 410-677-6806

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**Eastern Shore Community Foundation.**