



PROGRAMME OUTLINE

For Baby's Sake is a novel whole-family psychosocial programme created by the Stefanou Foundation. It is targeted at expectant parents who are experiencing domestic violence and abuse. Parents receive intensive therapeutic support throughout the perinatal period, until the child is two years of age.

The programme is currently being piloted and aims to:

- Reduce domestic violence and abuse
- Improve parent child attachment
- Improve parental mental health

METHODS

King's College London is independently evaluating the pilot work of *For Baby's Sake*. As part of the evaluation, 13 fathers who engaged with the programme were interviewed between October 2016 and July 2017. The aim of the interviews was to explore fathers' experiences and help-seeking behaviours to reduce violence. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed using thematic analysis.

RESULTS

Three main themes were identified: (1) acknowledging abuse and choosing change; (2) motivation to change and hope for positive family relationships; (3) identifying impact of abuse and making changes:

Engagement: acknowledgement and choice

The other key thing, as far as I know it's a voluntary programme. For me that's a big difference. If you tell someone they have to be there it's pointless...because they're not going to engage properly.

It can only change us as much as a person is willing to change.

I think the mention of the word 'perpetrator' was an interesting one that he [practitioner] brought up and that we had a discussion about, which is a very pejorative word to use in that first meeting...I'd still challenge them to change that.

I've come to terms with actually people who are domestic abusers aren't monsters, they are humans with issues and they have a lot of the time got deep-seated issues or been mistreated in the past.

Motivation and hope

I never thought I can kind of step over that line. I always had a line of what I thought was a good person and I managed to cross that line.

He [practitioner] was talking with a great deal of confidence about his field and about previous experience in cases. He did a very good job building my confidence in him and in the programme.

So I can learn to be a better father, really. Better than my dad was

...have that family around him [child] that I never had, that's the most important thing that I want him to have, the family that I wanted.

Early learning and impacts

He [practitioner] said if ever you feel a bit stressed at home, everyone needs timeout. Just go on out and come back. I've done that a couple of times and it's worked. Come back and then just talk about normal things.

Thinking about the other parties and how they feel and how things affect them and how things sometimes come across, because we might see things one way and someone else will see it another

Kind of going through this process of understanding all of it, assimilating it...Creating some choice in how we behave towards each other. I think that's probably invaluable

Sample characteristics	N (%)
Age (mean (SD))	29 (7.7)
Education level	
No formal qualifications	2 (15.4)
GCSE	4 (30.8)
A-Level/NVQ/BTEC	5 (38.5)
HND/Bachelor's degree	2 (15.4)
Ethnicity	
White British	11 (84.6)
White other	1 (7.7)
Mixed other	1 (7.7)
Self-reported mental illness	7 (53.8)
Current smoking	10 (76.9)
First time fathers	5 (38.5)
Marital status	
Partner, not cohabiting	6 (46.1)
Married or cohabiting	7 (53.8)

CONCLUSIONS

Men in the *For Baby's Sake* programme were able to recognise the need for change but found identification with the role of perpetrator challenging. They had a range of motivations for taking part, including acknowledging their own abusive behaviours, wanting a better start for their children, and finding early contacts with practitioners helpful. At this early stage, they were already noticing some changes in their understanding of their own behaviour and their close relationships.