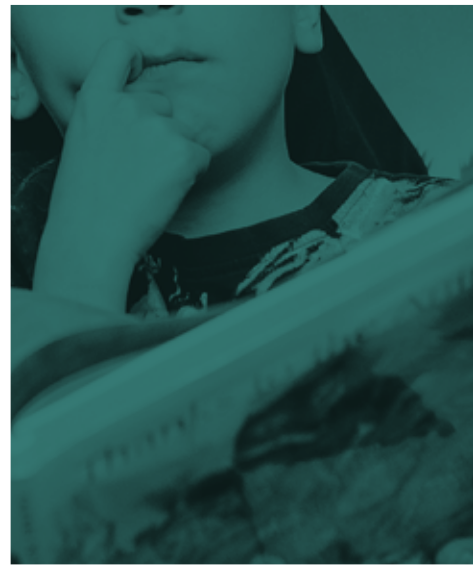
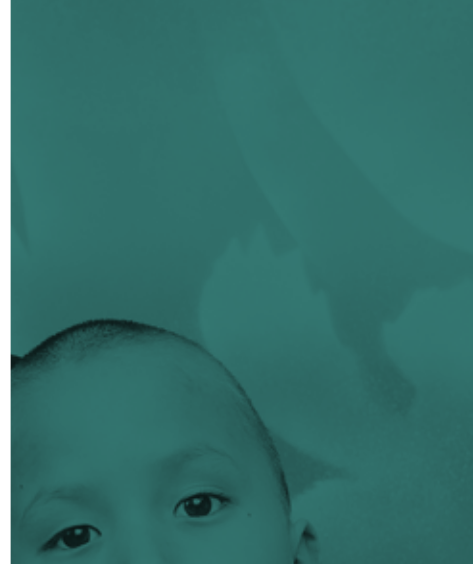


**BOLD
NESS**

**THE
WINNIPEG
BOLDNESS
PROJECT**

SUPPORTS FOR DADS: INCREASING FAMILY TOGETHERNESS

**PROTOTYPING FOR CHANGE
JUNE, 2019**





THE WINNIPEG BOLDNESS PROJECT IS WORKING TOWARDS A BOLD GOAL:

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN POINT DOUGLAS WILL EXPERIENCE DRAMATICALLY IMPROVED WELLBEING IN ALL ASPECTS OF SELF: PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, MENTAL, AND SPIRITUAL.

We are working with groups across the community including families, community leaders, and businesses, to test new ideas to support the wellbeing of children and families. These ideas, which we are calling Proofs of Possibilities (POPs), support a vision for change in our community. We are exploring possibilities in the following areas:

PROOFS OF POSSIBILITIES



SUPPORTS FOR DADS: INCREASING FAMILY TOGETHERNESS

COMMUNITY VISION

All dads will have the supports they need to be fully engaged with their families.

Dads in Point Douglas need many different supports to help them be fully engaged with their family, including supports around basic needs, healing from trauma, and strengthening their parenting skills. There are already some resources like this in the community, such as the North Point Douglas Women's Centre (NPDWC) Men's Sharing Circle. We focused our Supports for Dads POP on understanding the NPDWC Men's Circle, learning what other help is needed for dads in Point Douglas, and creating a toolkit for scaling these approaches. In order to achieve this we:

Learned About the NPDWC Men's Circle: We spent time with the facilitators and members to learn about what makes this support helpful for dads.

Identified Other Needed Supports: We connected with community leaders and dads to learn about their needs through a survey, discussion circles, and interviews.

Scaled These Approaches: We developed a toolkit and principles for applying what we have learned to other supports for dads



WHY DID WE FOCUS ON SUPPORTS FOR DADS?

Babies and young children thrive with support from many different caregivers, including dads. But dads in Point Douglas face many barriers that make it difficult for them to be fully engaged with their family. Many of these barriers are similar to those faced by people across the community, but where there are some helpful and needed resources for women and children, often there are no supports for dads or for whole families as one unit.

Dads are an important part of the natural support system surrounding children and families. If we hope to provide resources to women and children we need to do the same for dads as well, including through fathering peer support, mentorship, and programs that give time and space for moms, dads, and families to connect and grow together.

Reducing the number of Indigenous children in care and keeping families together is action that has been called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Providing support for dads is an important step in giving children the best care possible.



WHAT STOPS MEN FROM BEING FULLY ENGAGED AS PART OF THE FAMILIES?

System Barriers

Our systems assume that moms are the primary caregivers of children, which is not always the case. This leaves dads with many barriers—specifically single dads—when applying for social assistance, getting access to the supports and documents they need for their children, finding housing, and accessing healthcare, making it more difficult for them to parent effectively or be fully involved with their family.

History with the Criminal Justice System

Many dads in Point Douglas have had contact with the criminal justice system and, more broadly, systemic racism. Indigenous men have the highest rate of being imprisoned in Canada, and having a criminal record makes it hard for dads to get work and often prevents them from even seeing their children.

Lack of Safe Supports

Dads need spaces where they can feel safe and trust those around them. As many systems exclude men, there are limited places where dads can feel safe in sharing their experiences.

Lack of Proactive Supports

Dads highlighted that there is a need for more supports that help them train and find employment, as well as supports that focus on maintaining mental health. Many dads find that resources are only available for 'people who are at rock bottom,' rather than providing preventative programming that helps them learn and grow.

Lack of Supports that Include Men, Women, and Families

While separate supports for men and women are important, there is also a need for programming that brings dads, moms, and families together. These opportunities for family togetherness are an important part of supporting the whole child and men's roles in their development.



WHICH DADS AND MEN ARE WE FOCUSING ON?

Throughout this report we talk about dads/men and their need for supports. We have found that the men who are seeking this help in Point Douglas are often:

- Indigenous
- Facing additional systemic barriers
- Living in poverty or low-income households

Due to the fact that programs are often geared towards children and mothers/women, this subdemographic of men in Point Douglas often struggles to find resources to help with their specific needs. This has demonstrated a clear gap in the programming being offered in this community.



PUTTING THE CHILD-CENTRED MODEL INTO ACTION

The NPDWC Men's Circle is just one example of the support that is needed for men and fathers. It provides a model for what support for dads could look like, a model which closely aligns with the Child-Centred Model – a way of working for positive change developed by the community of Point Douglas

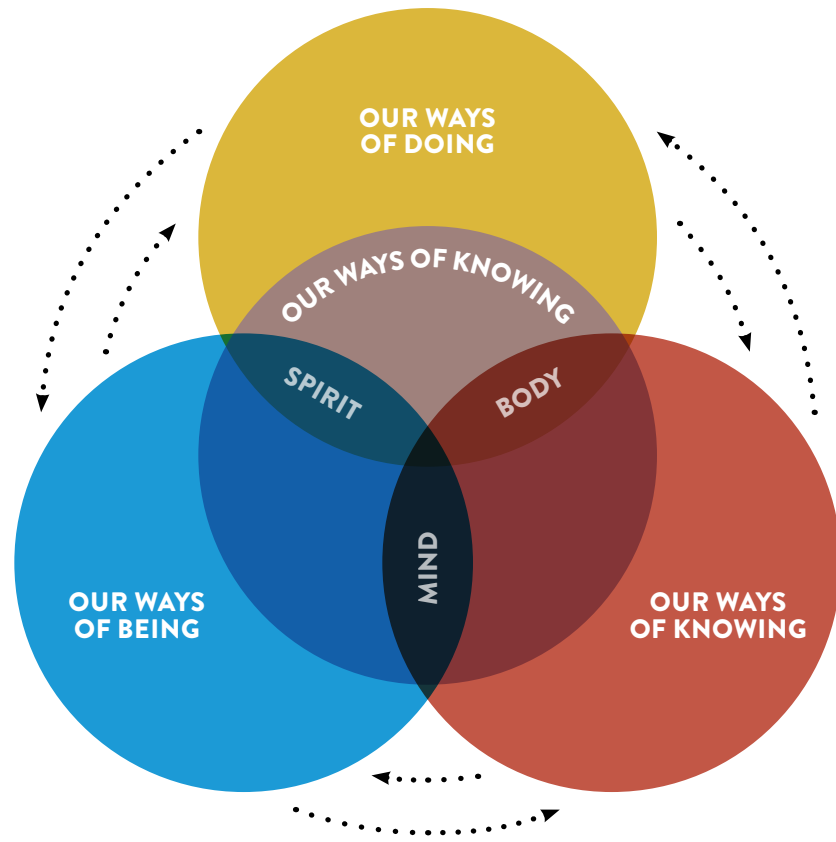
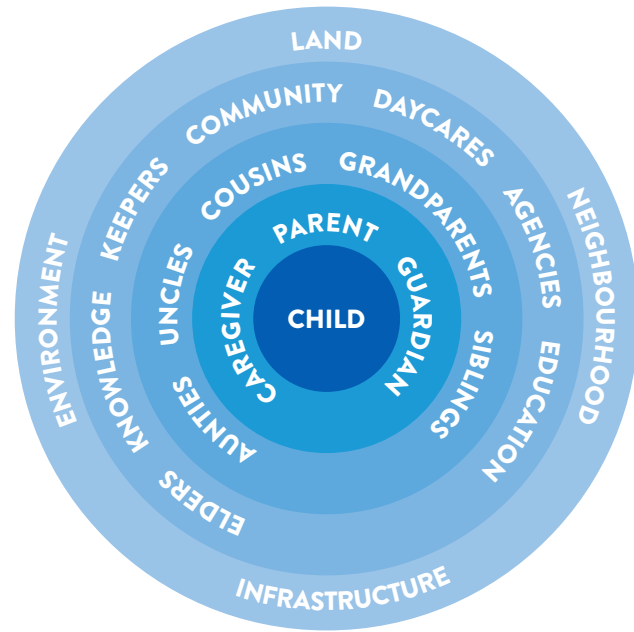
The mens circle is open and flexible to the individual needs of all participants, rather than following a rigid structure.

The mens circle provides a space free from judgment, rather than telling dads what they should or shouldn't be doing.

The mens circle operates within the natural support systems of peers and fathers, rather than solely focusing on connecting dads and children with professionals.

When we work within the Child-Centred Model, we are able to support positive change for children, parents, families, and the community.

To learn more about the Child-Centred Model, read the full report at winnipegboldness.ca/childcentredmodel



“HERE I DON’T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT WHAT OTHERS THINK, I CAN CRY, I CAN WORK ON MYSELF SO I CAN BE STRONG FOR OTHERS. NO ONE HERE EVER SAID NO, NO MATTER WHAT STATE I COME IN HERE”

– NPDWC Sharing Circle Participant

“WE ARE [YOUNG PEOPLE’S] ROLE MODELS. WE CHANGE THE STEREOTYPES. I HATED BECOMING THAT NEGATIVE STEREOTYPE. [NOW] I SET GOALS, TALK ABOUT STUFF. I’M A HYPOCRITE PARENT WHAT I DID, I DO NOT WANT MY KIDS TO DO.”

– NPDWC Sharing Circle Participant

“I HAVE TO KEEP IT TOGETHER, MAKE THESE KIDS PROUD OF US. THERE ARE NO OTHER HEROES OUT THERE - WE HAVE TO BE THE HEROES FOR THESE YOUNG GUYS.”

– NPDWC Sharing Circle Participant

“I HAD TO KEEP COMING HERE. THIS IS A SPACE WHERE I CAN ALSO VENT AND LAY IT ALL OUT ON THE TABLE. HEARING FROM OTHER PEOPLE GIVES YOU THAT STRENGTH, WE FEED OFF OF EACH OTHER.”

– NPDWC Sharing Circle Participant

SUPPORT FOR DADS POP TIME

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN (MARCH 2016)

We looked at the supports that are available for dads in Point Douglas. We found gaps in mentorship programs, access to arts and leisure, employment assistance, help with the criminal justice system, and anger management.

PEER SUPPORT CIRCLES (MARCH-SEPTEMBER 2016)

We facilitated 26 weeks of peer support circles in partnership with Wahbung Abinoonjiag. The findings from this circle became the basis for many of our recommendations.

CO-CREATION (MAY 2017-MAY 2018)

We held meetings with people who participated in the knowledge gathering activities, to discuss possible solutions and supports for dads.



PREPARATION (JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2019)

We worked with community leaders to develop three, 13-week support programs, as well as guiding principles for father engagement that formed the basis for these programs.

TOOLKIT FOR IMPLEMENTATION (JULY 2019)

We created a toolkit and guiding principles for running similar types of support for dads, based on what was learned from the community and through the Supports for Dads prototype.



SUPPORTS FOR DADS VIDEO (JULY-OCT 2019)

We spent 4 months filming and editing a video to post on YouTube in order to document the supports for dads prototype, at the request of the men who participated in the circles. The purpose was to build awareness of the gaps that exist for men and dads, as well as the potential positive impact that supports such as this can have on men and their families.



COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS (APRIL-JULY 2016)

We held group conversations with participants at the NPDWC Men's Group, Andrew's Street Family Centre, and the Winnipeg Boldness Parent Guide Group to learn about the strengths, gaps, and barriers that dads experience.



COMMUNITY-WIDE MEN'S SURVEY (APRIL-JULY 2016)

We collected 100 responses from men who work, live, or access services in Point Douglas. The survey covered themes such as employment, access to resources, and experiences with systems such as Manitoba Health.

COMMUNITY LEADER INTERVIEWS (APRIL-JULY 2016)

We interviewed community leaders and role models to understand what fatherhood looks like in Point Douglas, and the challenges and successes of dads.



SUPPORT FOR DADS PROTOTYPE (JANUARY-JUNE 2019)

We tested the guiding principles and a toolkit for implementation at three different organizations. Each circle was run according to the needs of the organization and their participants:

- **Andrew's Street Family Centre** created a new men's circle and is currently seeking funding to continue offering this service
- **Mount Carmel Clinic** added elements from the toolkit into their existing parenting program for men
- **North Point Douglas Women's Centre** was able to add resources to their existing Men's Circle. There is not currently funding in place to support these extra resources in the future.



EVALUATION REPORT (JULY 2019)

We worked with Eupraxia Training to evaluate the Support for Dads prototype, as well as to develop a social impact analysis that gives evidence of the impact these types of programs have on father engagement with children and families.

SUPPORTING DADS TODAY



As long as today's systemic barriers exist, the best ways that we found to support dads are:

PROVIDE A RANGE OF SUPPORTS

Dads need more supports to help them be fully engaged as a member of their families. They need connections to helpful resources, peers, and staff that can help them with their unique needs.

CREATE SAFE SPACES

Dads need spaces where they can feel comfortable being vulnerable, ask for help, and trust others. This means creating a space that accepts them as they are, without judgment.

SUPPORT CONNECTIONS WITH PEERS

Peer relationships are important as dads prefer to work with those who have had similar experiences or challenges. As well, peer relationships give dads the opportunity to both give and receive help, allowing them to discover and share their own gifts.

PROVIDE CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Supporting a connection to culture helps to build strong relationships, identity, belonging, and self-esteem, which are all needed to support dads' roles in families. Cultural activities can include ceremonies, teachings, and medicines

SUPPORT CONNECTIONS TO WOMEN AND FAMILIES:

It is important that supports for dads also create opportunities for men, women, and families to connect with each other and strengthen their relationships.



CHANGING THE SYSTEM FOR TOMORROW



Through this work we found that there are larger barriers that affect families and community members. We need governments, non-profits, and businesses to:

1

SUPPORT DADS TO BE INCLUDED AS PART OF THE NATURAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR HEALTHY CHILDREN.

Many existing systems inadvertently focus on keeping men apart from children and families rather than repairing those relationships. Dads must be included in their children's lives in order to contribute to healthy development.

2

ENSURE THAT FUNDING STRUCTURES SUPPORT FLEXIBLE, PREVENTATIVE APPROACHES.

Existing structures focus primarily on women and children, or on crisis situations. Dads and families need long-term, flexible supports that provide help to keep families healthy and out of crisis.

3

REPAIR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DADS AND THE SYSTEMS AROUND THEM.

Dads in Point Douglas have many negative experiences with justice, health, and social development systems, which create barriers to housing, employment, and to connecting with families. Supports for healing and growth need to replace systemic racism and punishment.

If you would like to learn more about the barriers that families in Point Douglas face to celebrating the arrival of a new child, read the full POP report winnipegboldness.ca/supportfordads, working from a child-centred lens winnipegboldness.ca/childcentredmodel, and explore our other POP reports winnipegboldness.ca/research.



“WE ARE THANKFUL TO OUR ANCESTORS WHO ENTRUSTED US WITH THE CARE OF THIS GENERATION, AND THE GENERATION WE WILL NEVER KNOW.”

—(MacNeill, 2014, p.29)

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the development and implementation of our prototypes, including our guide groups, partners, community organizations, local residents, and the North End community as a whole.

Many thanks to our funders for their continued support in the project, including the Province of Manitoba, the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, and United Way of Winnipeg.

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