



**Bandebereho**  
Indatwa mu buzima



# FACILITATOR'S MANUAL

Engaging men as fathers in gender equality, maternal and child health, caregiving and violence prevention



This manual was produced by RWAMREC in collaboration with Promundo-US for the MenCare+ project in Rwanda.

The Rwanda Men's Resource Center is a Rwandan NGO with a mission to mobilize men to support women's leadership; to contribute to the eradication of men's violence against women; and to serve as role models for the promotion of positive masculine behaviors.

MenCare+ is four-country initiative led by Rutgers WPF, known for its international experience in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights, in collaboration with Promundo, an international NGO doing groundbreaking work on engaging men and boys in promoting gender equality and ending violence. Rutgers WPF and Promundo are working with long-term partners with extensive knowledge and experience working in Brazil, Indonesia, Rwanda and South Africa.

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# Introduction

This manual was created for use by facilitators in the MenCare+ Bandebereho project. It is designed to engage expectant fathers and their partners in group education sessions to promote men's involvement in maternal, newborn and child health, family planning, caregiving and preventing domestic violence. The manual includes 15 sessions with activities designed to help new and expecting fathers reflect on issues of pregnancy, parenting, family planning, violence, and caregiving. The manual was designed in support of the MenCare+ program and the activities were developed through a process of formative research and adaptation for the Rwandan context.

## How to use this Manual

Before beginning to work with expectant fathers and couples, it is important that the facilitator read the entire manual to understand its contents and how it is organized. The manual is organized in 15 sessions, each containing activities that last between 45 minutes and 2+ hours. Each session contains one or two activities and group discussion questions to help participants reflect on key topics within the module. It is highly recommended that the facilitator work with the group to establish basic rules, seeking to guarantee the privacy and respect of all participants.

## MenCare+ Program

The MenCare+ Program is a three-year, four-country initiative to engage men ages 15-35 as caregiving partners in maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The program is being implemented in Brazil, Indonesia, Rwanda and South Africa with funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. The program is aligned to the global MenCare Campaign to promote men's involvement as equitable and non-violent fathers and caregivers in order to achieve family well-being and gender equality.

# Session Summary

Session	Session Objective	Main Activities
<b>1</b> <b>Gender Equality</b>	To create a space of trust and confidentiality and to discuss the differences between sex and gender and reflect on how gender norms influence the lives and relationships of women and men.	<b>Activity 1.1:</b> Gender values  <b>Activity 1.2:</b> What is this thing called gender?
<b>2</b> <b>Becoming a Father</b>	To reflect on men's concerns about becoming a father, and to discuss the benefits that being an involved father can bring to men's children, their partners and themselves.	<b>Activity 2.1:</b> My concerns about becoming a father  <b>Activity 2.2:</b> What are the benefits of being an involved father?
<b>3</b> <b>Pregnancy</b>	To inform expectant fathers and mothers about the biological process of pregnancy, including what men can do to ensure the health of the mother and fetus during and after birth, and to address many of their concerns.	<b>Activity 3.1:</b> Ensuring a healthy pregnancy
<b>4</b> <b>Supporting Your Pregnant Partner</b>	To help men and women understand how men can support women during pregnancy and to discuss the role of men in accompanying their partners to antenatal care visits.	<b>Activity 4.1:</b> How can I support my partner during pregnancy?  <b>Activity 4.2:</b> Attending antenatal care
<b>5</b> <b>Birth</b>	To share ideas and experiences about the role of the father during birth, and to prepare men to accompany their partners during delivery, including the importance of bonding with their new sons and daughters.	<b>Activity 5.1:</b> In the delivery ward



Session	Session Objective	Main Activities
<b>6</b> <b>Family Planning</b>	To reflect upon the benefits of family planning and the value of couple communication in this process and provide information on different contraceptive methods.	<b>Activity 6.1:</b> Learning about contraceptive methods  <b>Activity 6.2:</b> Parents by accident or by choice?
<b>7</b> <b>Caring for your Baby</b>	To learn about a baby's care needs and reflect upon men's capacity to satisfy these needs and to reflect on how gender stereotypes influence a father and mother's behaviour towards their children.	<b>Activity 7.1:</b> Caring for a new baby  <b>Activity 7.2:</b> The importance of breastfeeding
<b>8</b> <b>Our Parents' Impact</b>	To encourage men to reflect on their parents' influences on their own lives and reflect on the future they envision for their children, including how to use the positive influences and avoid the negative aspects so they do not repeat themselves.	<b>Activity 8.1:</b> My father's impact, my mother's impact
<b>9</b> <b>Identifying Violence</b>	To identify the different forms of violence that men perpetrate or that are committed against them and to become familiar with the different types of violence that exist.	<b>Activity 9.1:</b> What is violence?  <b>Activity 9.2:</b> The cycle of violence
<b>10</b> <b>Gender-based Violence</b>	To discuss gender-based violence and the law and to reflect on the ways that men can break the culture of silence surrounding violence in families and romantic relationships.	<b>Activity 10.1:</b> Learning about the GBV law  <b>Activity 10.2:</b> Speaking out about violence

Session	Session Objective	Main Activities
<b>11</b> <b>Resolving Conflict</b>	To identify non-violent ways to resolve conflict and to reflect on the importance of strong relationships and social networks when we face difficult moments as fathers and husbands.	<b>Activity 11.1:</b> Resolving conflict  <b>Activity 11.2:</b> My support network
<b>12</b> <b>Alcohol and Drug Use</b>	To encourage discussion about the risks and consequences of alcohol and drug abuse and how men can help each other in reducing the harm caused by drugs and alcohol.	<b>Activity 12.1:</b> What do we know about alcohol?  <b>Activity 12.2:</b> The pleasures and risks of alcohol and drug use
<b>13</b> <b>Raising Children</b>	To make connections between the long-term goals fathers and mothers have for their children (ages 0-5) and how harsh discipline affects those goals.	<b>Activity 13.1:</b> The needs of children  <b>Activity 13.2:</b> Positive parenting skills
<b>14</b> <b>Sharing Responsibilities At Home</b>	To reflect on how gender roles influence the distribution of care work within the household, and to encourage a more equitable distribution of childcare and housework between men and women. To also promote discussion about household finances and help couples develop a household budget.	<b>Activity 14.1:</b> Who does the care work?  <b>Activity 14.2:</b> Making a family budget
<b>15</b> <b>Reflection</b>	To reflect on the experiences participants have had in the group sessions and make a commitment to be a more involved father.	<b>Activity 15.1:</b> A fathers' web



# Session 1

## Gender Equality

**Session objective:**

To create a space of trust and confidentiality and to discuss the differences between sex and gender and reflect on how gender norms influence the ideas and expectations of men and women as parents.

**Required materials:** Flipchart, markers, tape

**Recommended time:** 3 hours

**Support sheet:** None

**Session overview:**

1. Introduction and Expectations (30 minutes)
2. Setting Ground Rules (15 minutes)
3. Activity 1.1: Gender values (45 minutes)
4. Activity 1.2: What is this thing called gender?  
(1 hour 15 minutes)
5. Closing (15 minutes)

\* This session is can be done with men alone, or with both men and women, if the participants prefer \*

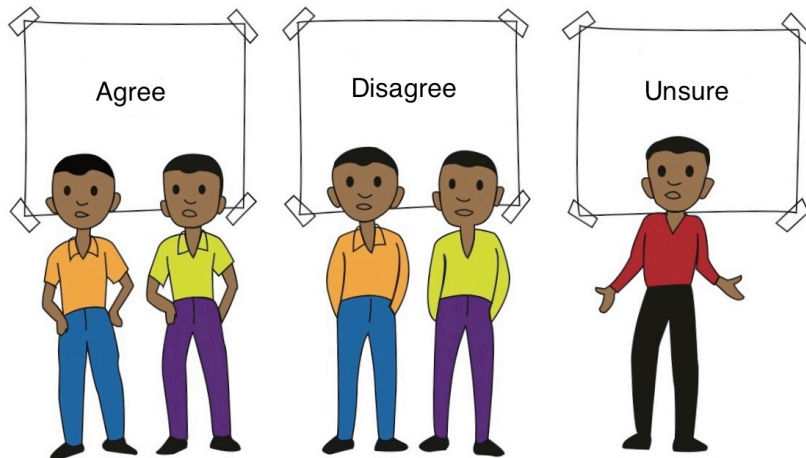
## Activity 1.1

### Gender values (45 minutes)

**Purpose:** To explore our values and attitudes about men and women.

**Key Message:** Men and women receive messages from family, community and the media about how they should act and how they should relate to each other. These messages influence our attitudes and beliefs about men and women, often without us even realizing it!

Before the activity begins, tape the three posters on the wall, leaving enough space between each sign to allow a group of participants to stand near each one.



### Instructions:

1. Explain to the group that you are going to do an activity that will help them to reflect on their own attitudes and beliefs about men and women. Remind the participants that everyone has a right to his own opinion, and no response is right or wrong.
2. Ask the group to stand up and move to where there is plenty of space and you have hung the three posters on the walls.
3. Explain that you are going to read a series of statements. After you have read a statement, the participants should stand in front the sign that reflects their own opinion – they can agree with the statement; disagree with the statement; or maybe they are not sure whether they agree or disagree.

**List of statements:**

- It is easier to be a man than a woman.
  - Men can't clean the house or wash dishes.
  - Men should make the final decisions in the household.
  - A woman is more of a woman once she has had children.
4. Read aloud the first statement you have chosen. After the participants have moved to their sign, ask for one or two participants beside each sign to explain why they are standing there (why do they agree or disagree or are unsure?). Ask if anyone wants to change their minds?
  5. Read the next statement and continue the same steps until you have read all four statements and participants have had a chance to explain their opinions.
  6. After you have finished the four statements, ask the group to sit down in their chairs and ask the following questions:

**Questions for Group Discussion:**

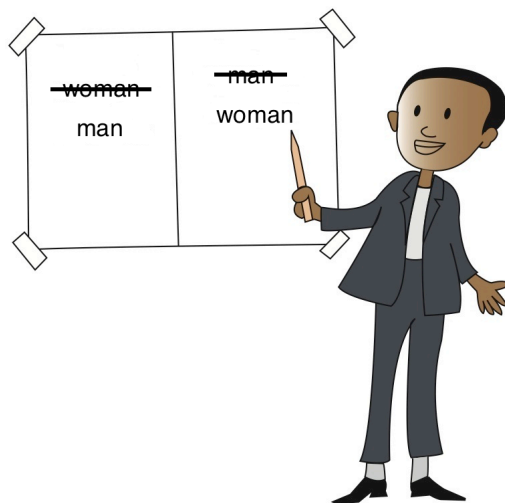
- Which statements did you have the strongest opinions about? Why do you think this was so?
- How did it feel to talk about an opinion that was different from some of the other participants?
- How do you think these opinions and beliefs we have about men and women might influence the way we interact with men and women?

## Activity 1.2

### What is this thing called gender?<sup>1</sup> (1 hour 15 minutes)

**Purpose:** To discuss the differences between sex and gender and to reflect on how gender norms influence the lives and relationships of men and women.

**Key Message:** Although there are biological differences between men and women, many of the differences we attribute to men and women are constructed by our society. These differences are not part of our biology – we are not born this way. These characteristics can be learned from family members, friends, cultural and religious institutions, and at school.



#### Instructions:

1. Explain to the participants that this activity will help them think about the gender roles assigned to men and women and how society influences our ideas and expectations of being a father.
2. Hang two pieces of flipchart paper on the wall. On the first write 'Man' and on the second write 'Woman.'
3. Ask the participants what it means to "be a man" (or "be a father"). Write down the words and phrases they say on the piece of flipchart that says "man." Explain that the responses can be positive or negative, and the participants should think of both BIOLOGICAL aspects and SOCIAL characteristics.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the activity "What is this thing called Gender?" in the *Program M Manual* (Promundo, Instituto PAPI, ECOS, Salud y Genero, World Education, 2007).

4. After everyone has responded, ask the group what it means to “be a woman” (or “be a mother”). Write down these words and phrases on the second flipchart that says “woman.” Remind them to think of both biological and social characteristics of women.
5. After all of the responses are written down, exchange the titles on the pieces of paper so that the ones titled “man” are now “woman,” and vice versa.
6. Ask the participants if the characteristics (social and biological) they mentioned for men could also be attributed to women. Then ask whether the characteristics mentioned for women could also be attributed to men.
7. Explain to the group that the BIOLOGICAL characteristics of women (mothers) that cannot be given to men, and vice versa, are what constitute our ‘sex’. Sex is biological – that is, we are born with male or female reproductive organs and hormones.
8. Next, explain that the SOCIAL characteristics of women (mothers) – the roles and characteristics we usually equate with women, but can be done by both women and men, constitute our ‘gender’. Gender is how we are socialized – that is, how attitudes, behaviour and expectations are formed based on what society associates with being a woman or being a man. We are not born with these characteristics, but learn them as we grow up.
9. Tell the group that it is very easy to confuse gender with sex, but explain that gender is constructed by our society. The society assigns certain attitudes and behaviours to individuals based on their sex (e.g. women care for children, men care for cattle) and that every individual is influenced by these social expectations. These social expectations based on sex do not remain the same, but change over time.
10. Now, open the discussion using the questions below. Help the group discuss about which characteristics the participants do not think can be attributed to both men and women, and why. However, make sure that these sex and gender categories are not presented as rigid, inflexible or unchanging.

### Questions for Group Discussion:

- Where do we learn the characteristics we associate with ‘being a man’ or ‘being a woman’?
- How do our families and friends influence our ideas of how women and men should look and should act?
- Do these gender roles influence the way that boys and girls are raised?

- Is it hard to live up to these expectations of being a man?
- How do these different expectations of how women and men should act influence our relationships with our partners?
- How do the ways that we are supposed to 'be men' influence our expectations and anxieties as fathers?
- Are there things that you as a man and a father you feel you cannot do for your family? Anything that you would like to do?
- Do you think that expectations for how men and women should look and act are different today than when your parents and grandparents were growing up? How? Why?
- What did you learn with this activity? Is there anything that you learned that you can apply to your own lives or relationships?

\* The next session is for men only. \*

# Session 2

## Becoming a Father

**Session objective:**

To reflect on men's concerns about becoming a father, and to discuss the benefits that being an involved father can bring to men's children, their partners and themselves.

**Required materials:** Flipchart, markers, tape, and copies of Support Sheet # 1

**Recommended time:** 3 hours

**Support sheet:** Support Sheet # 1 – page 18

**Session overview:**

1. Check-in (15 minutes)
2. Activity 2.1: My concerns about becoming a father (1 hour 30 minutes)
3. Activity 2.2: What are the benefits of being an involved father? (1 hour)
4. Closing (15 minutes)

\* This session is for men only. A visiting couple is required. \*



## Activity 2.1

### My concerns about becoming a father (1 hour 30 minutes)

**Purpose:** To help participants reflect on their needs and interests as expectant fathers and to learn from the experiences of an involved father.

**Key Message:** Expecting a child and becoming a father can be a stressful time for a man. Sharing your worries and concerns with other men can help to alleviate some of this stress.

The invited couple should come prepared to tell how the man was involved in his partner's pregnancy. What were the things he did to support his partner? What about pregnancy was stressful to the relationship? How did he acquire information about pregnancy? How did other men in the community view his involvement? How did his partner feel having a supportive partner during her pregnancy?

#### Instructions:

##### Part 1: A Father's Story

1. Explain to the group that in this activity they will have the opportunity to meet a couple from the community, who will share their story about becoming parents and how the man supported his partner during her pregnancy.
2. Ask the couple to introduce themselves and tell their story. Tell the participants that they should feel free to ask any questions they have to the visiting couple.
3. Once the couple has finished their story and the participants have asked their questions, open up the discussion using the questions below.

#### Questions for Group Discussion:

- What did you feel when the couple was giving their testimony?
- Did you learn anything new? Was there anything you heard that made you feel uncomfortable?
- Was anything that you heard different from your own experience as expectant parents?
- Why was it different?
- How does pregnancy affect the quality a couple's relationship?
- Was there anything you heard that you could do now?

- Is there anything that you cannot do? Why or why not?

End part one of the activity by thanking couple for their participation. Explain that in the next part, participants will have an opportunity to think more deeply about how men can support their partners during pregnancy.

## Part 2: My Concerns about Becoming a Father

1. Explain to the participants that this part of the activity will help them to reflect on any concerns or anxieties they have about becoming fathers. [Some men will be becoming fathers for the first time, for others, it will be their second or third child. Encourage men to share their different worries that they have.]
2. Tell the participants to pair up with the person sitting next to them and discuss some of their anxieties about becoming a father. *What scares them? Is there something they feel they need more information about before becoming a father?*
3. Tell them they have 10 minutes in their pairs. After 10 minutes, ask if anyone would like to share their worries or anxieties with the group.
4. Ask if anyone has anything to share from his own experience. You can ask the group, “Who would like to share their experience on how they were able to resolve this issue?” or “What do people think about this comment?”
5. After everyone has shared his experiences or answered questions from the group, open up the discussion using the questions below.

## Questions for Group Discussion:

- How did it feel to hear about the concerns and experiences of your peers? Did you learn anything new?
- Was there any comment that surprised you?
- Have you ever spoken to anyone else about the needs and concerns you have as a father? Your partner? Your friends? Family?
- Why do men talk so little about their concerns about fatherhood?
- How can we make it easier for men to discuss about being father and receive information?

## Activity 2.2

### What are the benefits of being an involved father? (1 hour)

**Purpose:** To help men reflect on the benefits of being an involved father, including benefits for the child, the mother and the man himself.

**Key Message:** Being an involved father begins during pregnancy! When men are actively involved in their child's life it has positive benefits for the man, the woman and the child.

#### Instructions:

1. Explain that in this activity the group is going to discuss more about the benefits of men being involved fathers – how it benefits the mother, the child and men themselves.
2. Start a group discussion using the questions below. Allow everyone in the group to share their ideas. Ask the group:

“What are the benefits of a man being an involved father - meaning that he is present and actively involved in the life of his child beginning from the prenatal period throughout the child's life?”

- What are the benefits for the child?
  - What are the benefits for the mother of the child?
  - What are the benefits for the father himself?
  - When does being an involved father start? (For example, at birth, before birth, etc.) Why?
3. After the group discussion, tell the group that being an involved father begins even before the child is born.
    - An involved father can participate in antenatal visits, support his partner through her pregnancy, and be present during the birth of his child. Doing these things enables a father to promote the health of his partner and the child, and also allows him to build strong bonds with his child.
  4. Next, pass out copies of Support Sheet # 1. Alternatively, you can read the information on the support sheet out loud.

5. Next, divide the participants into small groups of 4 or 5 people. Give the participants 10 minutes to read through the resource sheet or discuss the information you have shared about being an involved father.
6. After 10 minutes, ask everyone to come back to the circle and continue the discussion using the questions below.

## Questions for Group Discussion:

- What do you think about the benefits of being an involved father that are listed on the support sheet?
- Did anything surprise you? Why?
- How can a man be an involved father?
- Is it hard for men to be more involved in their children's lives? Why or why not?
- What could be done to make it easier for a man to support his partner during pregnancy, childbirth and in the raising of children?
- Have you learned anything in this activity that you will use in your own life?

### Homework:

Explain to the participants that when they go home they should speak with their partner and share any concerns or fears they have about being a father. They should invite their partner to share her own concerns about becoming a mother. Ask your partner what she expects of you as a father. Listen to her. Come prepared to share voluntarily in the next session your experiences about the conversation.

\* The next session is for men and women. \*

# Support Sheet # 1

## **The Benefits of Being an Involved Father<sup>2</sup>**

Research shows that when fathers are involved and present during the prenatal period and during birth, there are many benefits for the mother, child and the father!

### **Benefits for the mother:**

- Involved fathers contribute to reducing maternal stress during pregnancy.
- Mothers who are accompanied during pre/antenatal visits usually attend more of them, compared to mothers who are not accompanied.
- When the fathers are present in the delivery room to help the mother, mothers have a more positive experience and feel less pain during childbirth than when they are alone.

### **Benefits for the child:**

- Infants with involved fathers have better cognitive (learning) functions.
- Infants with involved fathers more frequently develop into children with high self-esteem who can resolve conflicts without violence.
- Children with involved fathers generally have fewer behavioral problems.

### **Benefits for the father:**

- Fathers involved in their children's lives are more satisfied and more likely to stay involved.
- Involved fathers have better health: they take fewer drugs, consume less alcohol, live longer, and feel mentally and physically healthier.
- Some studies show that fathers involved in caregiving have more satisfying relationships with their partners, feel more connected to their families and report better sex lives with their partner.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the *Program P Manual* (Promundo, REDMAS, EME, 2013).

# Session 3

## Pregnancy

**Session objective:**

To inform expectant fathers and mothers about the biological process of pregnancy, including what men can do to ensure the health of the mother and fetus during and after birth, and to address many of their concerns.

**Required materials:** None

**Recommended time:** 3 hours

**Support sheet:** None

**Session overview:**

1. Check-in (15 minutes)
2. Activity 3.1: Ensuring a healthy pregnancy (2 hours 30 minutes)
3. Closing (15 minutes)

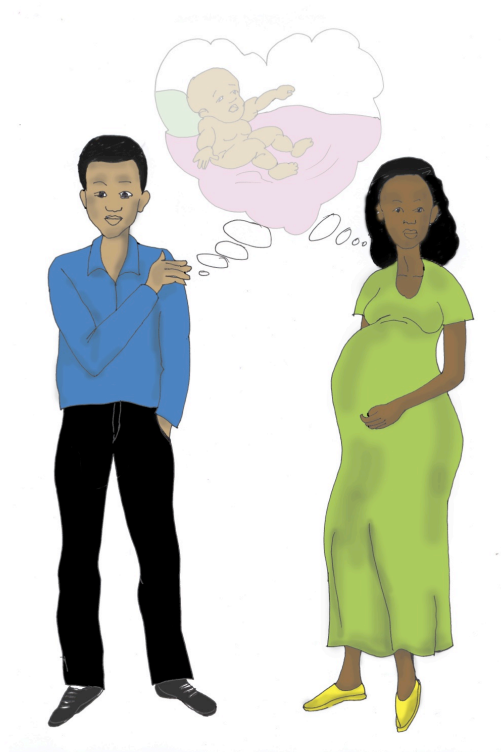
\* This session is for men and women. A health provider is required. \*

## Activity 3.1

### Ensuring a healthy pregnancy (2 hours 30 minutes)

**Purpose:** To inform expectant fathers and mothers about the biological process of pregnancy, including what men can do to ensure the health of the mother and fetus during and after birth, and to address many of their concerns about the experience of pregnancy.

**Key Message:** Women undergo many physical changes during pregnancy and it is important to see a health professional to monitor the health of the mother and fetus. Men have an important role to play in ensuring a healthy pregnancy by being active, supportive partners.



#### Instructions:

Before the session you should have identified a health professional (a doctor, nurse or midwife) to come to the group. The health professional should come prepared to the session to share information about the nine months of pregnancy, including:

- The most important biological and hormonal changes for the mother and baby during these nine months.
- The importance of antenatal visits for pregnant women and their partners.



- How the father can support the health of the mother during and immediately after pregnancy. This should include warning signs and symptoms to look for prior to and immediately after giving birth and what should be done to ensure the health of the mother during and after pregnancy.
- Information about fistula.
- Sexual relations and pregnancy: this should include a discussion of safe sexual practices during pregnancy, including a discussion of cultural norms and addressing any myths they have about sex during pregnancy. The discussion should also focus on harmful practices regarding sex immediately after birth.
- The consequences of drinking alcohol on the pregnant woman and the child.
- Hygiene for couples during and after pregnancy (avoiding urinary infections, etc.)

\* The next session is for men and women. \*

# Session 4

## Supporting Your Pregnant Partner

**Session objective:**

To help men and women understand how men can support women during pregnancy and to discuss the role of men in accompanying their partners to antenatal care visits.

**Required materials:** Flipchart, markers, tape

**Recommended time:** 3 hours

**Support sheet:** None

**Session overview:**

1. Check-in (15 minutes)
2. Activity 4.1: How can I support my partner during pregnancy? (1 hour 15 minutes)
3. Activity 4.2: Attending antenatal care (1 hour 15 minutes)
4. Closing (15 minutes)

\* This session is for men and women. \*

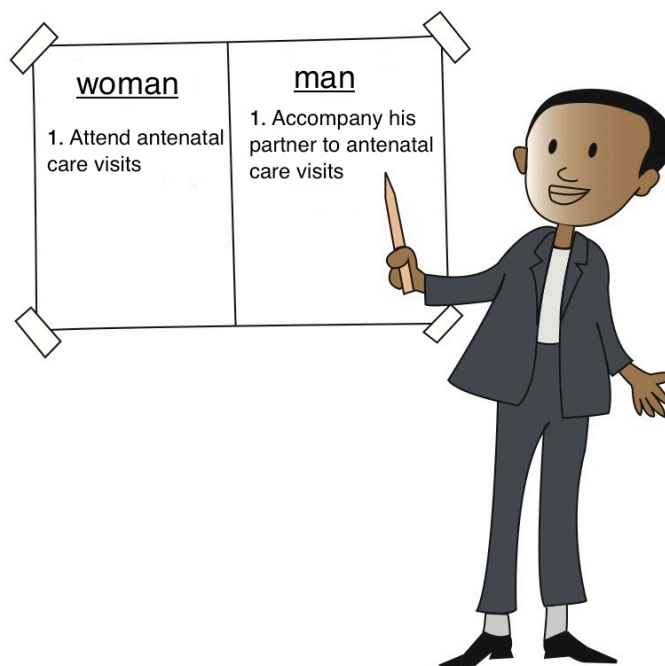
## Activity 4.1

### How can I support my partner during pregnancy?<sup>3</sup>

(1 hour 15 minutes)

**Purpose:** To help participants identify the specific ways that men can provide support to their partners during pregnancy.

**Key Message:** There are many ways that men can support their partners to have a healthy and happy pregnancy. This can include attending antenatal visits, helping out around the home, and providing emotional support to your partner.



#### Instructions:

1. Explain to the participants that they are going to do a short activity to help them understand how men can support their pregnant partner during pregnancy.
2. Prepare a flip chart with two columns – on one side write “Woman” and on the other “Man.”
3. Explain that, during pregnancy, a woman has many tasks and responsibilities: some that biologically only she can do, and others that are socially assigned to her because of her gender.

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from the activity “My Father Can do Everything” in the *Program P Manual* (Promundo, REDMAS, EME, 2013).

4. Ask the participants, “What can women do to ensure a healthy pregnancy, including their own health and the health of the fetus?” and write down their answers. Allow the group to provide as many responses as possible. After they have given all of their responses, see if any of the items in the box below are not included and suggest them to the group.

**Some things women can do to have a healthy pregnancy:**

- Attend antenatal consultations.
- Live in a home free from physical or psychological violence.
- Eat healthy and nutritious foods.
- Abstain from drinking alcohol.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Do not smoke cigarettes.
- Do light exercise.
- Avoid heavy lifting.
- Stay away from others who may have a cold or other infectious sickness.
- Get the required vaccinations.
- Sleep under a mosquito net.

5. Explain that during pregnancy, the mother must live in an environment with healthy physical, environmental, nutritional, emotional and social conditions. For the optimal development of the fetus during pregnancy, the mother must feel relaxed, at ease and supported and she must live in an environment that is free from violence.
6. Now that you have a list, ask the participants what role they can play to help support their pregnant partner in each of these tasks (“what can men do to ensure a healthy pregnancy for their partner and their future child?”) For each thing that was listed for a mother to ensure a healthy pregnancy, there should be one way that the father can support her.
7. For example, if the group said that a mother should attend antenatal consultations, you must ask the group, “what can the father do to support his partner in attending ANC?” Or, if it was suggested that a woman must eat healthy and nutritious foods, ask the group, “what can a man do to ensure his partner has healthy and nutritious food?” Continue in this manner.

8. Compare the two lists and open the discussion using the questions below.

### Questions for Group Discussion:

- What makes an impression on you when you observe the two lists?
- In your community, do men take responsibility in providing support for their partners during pregnancy and share in the tasks listed? Why or why not?
- Why do men not involve themselves more during pregnancy? What are the barriers to this?
- How can conflict within couples, such as physical violence, impact the health of the mother and the child?
- What effects would it have on a pregnant woman if her partner took more responsibility in taking care of domestic chores and caring for children?
- What impact would it have on the man?
- Based on the list, what are some things you can do now to provide support for the your pregnant partner? (Some examples include cooking meals, providing emotional support, taking children to school, cleaning, going to antenatal care visits).

## Activity 4.2

### Attending antenatal care (1 hour 15 minutes)

**Purpose:** To help men and their partners understand the importance of men accompanying their pregnant partners to antenatal care visits.

**Key Message:** Antenatal care (ANC) visits are critical for monitoring the health of the mother and development of the fetus. Women and their partners should attend all four recommended ANC visits.



#### Instructions:

1. Explain to the group that you are going to do an activity to reflect on why men should support and accompany their pregnant partners in attending antenatal care.
2. Before beginning the activity, describe to the group what happens during the antenatal care visits.

### **Antenatal Care:**

The first ANC visit, which most men are familiar with, provides the opportunity to provide the expectant parents with information on what to expect during pregnancy, to do HIV testing and refer those who need it to PMTCT (prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV services).

The second through fourth visits help the pregnant woman and her partner to prepare for the delivery process, to provide information on adequate nutrition for the mother, explain the signs and symptoms to recognize in case of illness or emergency, give vaccinations, and discuss family planning and contraceptive use to plan for future pregnancies.

The ANC visits give very important information to help protect the health of the mother and fetus, which is important for a woman's partner to know. It is important for men to accompany their wives to these visits in order to be able to effectively support their wives during pregnancy and birth.

3. Explain to the group that you are now going to do role-plays to reflect on the reasons why men should attend as many ANC visits as they can with their wives. Divide the participants into two small groups. Assign each group a role-play to develop. Explain that not all participants have to act in the role-play, but they should participate in the development of the role-play.
  - a. **Group 1:** A pregnant woman is at home with her husband when she develops a bleeding problem. Her husband never attended an ANC visit with her and does not know what to do. After delaying for a long time, a neighbor comes by and tells the husband to take his wife to the health facility. By the time they reach the health facility, the woman is very weak and cannot answer the nurse's questions. The nurse asks the man how many months pregnant his wife is and her health status. The man does not know.
  - b. **Group 2:** A pregnant woman is at home with her husband when she develops a bleeding problem. The husband remembers from the ANC visit that this is a symptom of a serious problem and decides to take her to the hospital. When they reach the hospital, the woman is now very weak and cannot answer the nurse's questions. The nurse asks the husband about the woman's health and her pregnancy. He is able to answer all her questions because he remembers their discussion with the health provider during their antenatal visits.
4. Give the groups 10 minutes to prepare their role-plays. After 10 minutes, ask each group to present their role-play. Once the role-plays are completed, open the discussion using the questions below.



## Questions for Group Discussion:

- What did you notice in the role-plays? Are these situations realistic?
- Do any of you know someone who has experienced a similar situation?
- What are the benefits of men attending more than one ANC visit?
- What information can men learn that will help them support their partner to ensure a healthy pregnancy?
- Are there other risks that are involved when men are not informed about their partner's pregnancy and her health?
- How many ANC visits have you attended already?
- For the women - How many visits do you plan to attend?
- For the men – How many visits do you plan to attend?
- What are some of the reasons that women do not attend all four visits?
- What are the reasons men don't attend all four visits?
- What can you do to encourage other men to attend ANC visits with their partners?
- What did you learn in this activity? Will it be useful to you in your own life?

### Homework:

Explain that after this session, you want the participants to go home and think of a new way to provide support, loving care and security to their pregnant partner or mother of your child based on today's session. Be prepared to come to the next session to talk about this experience.

\* The next session is for men and women. \*

# Session 5

## Birth

**Session objective:**

To share ideas and experiences about the role of the father during birth, and to prepare men to accompany their partners during delivery, including the importance of bonding with their new sons and daughters.

**Required materials:** Copies of Support Sheet # 2 and Support Sheet # 3

**Recommended time:** 2 hours and 30 minutes

**Support sheets:**

Support Sheet # 2 – page 34

Support Sheet # 3 – page 35

**Session overview:**

1. Check-in (15 minutes)
2. Activity 5.1: In the delivery ward (2 hours)
3. Closing (15 minutes)

\* This session is for men and women. \*

## Activity 5.1

### In the delivery ward<sup>4</sup> (2 hours)

**Purpose:** To share ideas and experiences about the role of the father during birth, to prepare men to accompany their partners during birth, and to highlight the importance of physically and emotionally bonding with their sons and daughters.

**Note to the Facilitator:** This session is best done with the expectant partner as it loosely simulates the birthing process. It may induce bouts of laughter and feelings of silliness, which are completely normal!

**Key Message:** Men can support their partners by being present at the birth of their child. It also provides an opportunity to begin bonding with the child right from the start! Ask your partner if she would like you to be present during delivery.

### Instructions:

1. Explain that the purpose of the first activity is to role-play what it is like in the delivery ward when a woman is giving birth and to think about the ways men can support their partners during childbirth.

### Part 1: In the Delivery Ward

2. Ask the group, “What do men usually do when their partner is giving birth? Are they ever in the delivery ward when the child is being born?”
3. After the group has responded, ask for three people to volunteer from the group. If this activity is being done in a mixed group of men and women, ask for at least one female volunteer.
4. Assign each of the volunteers a role – one person should be the mother giving birth, one should be the father, and one should be a doctor, nurse or midwife.
5. Explain that they will be role-playing the birth of a child in the delivery ward. Emphasize to the participants that they are now actors and not themselves. Tell them to imagine that it is 18:00 in the evening. The woman is in the delivery room and in some pain because she is about to give birth. The doctor and midwife are preparing to deliver the baby. The father is also present. Give the volunteers five minutes to act out the scene.

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<sup>4</sup> Adapted from the activity “Delivery Room Role Play” from the *Program P Manual* (Promundo, REDMAS, EME, 2013).

6. After five minutes ask the participants to return to the circle. Ask everyone to “step out” of his or her role and open the discussion using the questions below.

## Questions for Group Discussion:

- How did it feel to play the roles in this exercise?
- For those who played the father, how did it feel to play the supportive partner?
- How did the mothers feel giving birth?
- And health professionals?
- How did it feel to watch the role-play?
- Was there anything that the father could have done differently?

## Part 2: Pain Alleviation Techniques

1. Next, remind the group about the activity from an earlier session, on the benefits of being an involved father, and that research indicates that when a man is present during childbirth, the woman often is calmer and feels less pain during the delivery.
2. Share with the group Support Worksheet # 2. Read through it and practice some of the tips.

**For the pregnant woman:** maintain a breathing rhythm, and complete a cycle every four seconds.

- Breathe in through your nose in the first second.
- Exhale through your mouth in short intervals while counting two three and four seconds.
- Exhale for a longer period of time during the fourth second.
- Repeat.

**At the same time, the father must:**

- Breathe with your partner.
- Make sure your partner is softly exhaling in your face.
- Help her relax between contractions.

The father should watch his partner and hold her hands while she breathes in through her nose and out through her mouth.

3. Ask for three volunteers to re-enact the birth scene again using the information they received. One person will be the mother, one the father, and one a health professional.
4. After the volunteers have re-enacted the birth scene, share with the group the importance of skin-to-skin contact, using Support Sheet # 3.

#### **Skin-to-Skin Contact with Your Baby:**

- Once the baby is born, it is important to have skin-to-skin contact with your baby. Providing newborns with direct skin-to-skin contact is essential for the health and well-being of the child, and it can be done by both mothers and fathers!
- Skin-to-skin contact is when the mother or father's skin touches the baby's skin – this can be done through hugging, placing the baby on your bare chest, etc. Babies love skin-to-skin contact!
- Research shows that after birth, skin-to-skin contact between the mother and her baby immediately reduces infant crying, improves mother-infant interaction, keeps the baby warm, and helps the mother to breastfeed successfully (World Health Organization).
- Although fathers cannot breastfeed, they still can play an important role in providing skin-to-skin contact. For example, babies born by caesarean section need to have contact with a significant caregiver but sometimes the mother is not in a condition to immediately provide that care. This is where fathers can play an important role in regulating the newborn's body temperature and in cardiorespiratory stabilization. This kind of physical closeness helps promote the emotional bond between father and child.
- Fathers can talk, sit, sing, rock, tell stories to, burp or bathe the baby. Make some time in the day just for you and your baby – babies need cuddling and hugs from their fathers too.

5. Once you have shared the information on skin-to-skin contact, open the discussion using the Group Discussion Questions.

### **Questions for Group Discussion:**

- For the women - What are some of the anxieties you have about giving birth?
- For the men – What are some of the anxieties you have about your partner giving birth?

- Do you think it is important for fathers to be present at the birth of their child? Why or why not?
- What are the benefits of being present at the delivery of your child? For the child, for the mother, for the father?
- What can happen if the husband is not present? [For example, if the male partner is not there and a medical decision needs to be made, this can delay a woman's access to care, and can lead to serious health consequences, including death.]
- Were any of you present at the birth of your other children? Can you share with us your experience?
- Is it easy to be present? Is it accepted or allowed?
- What types of support do mothers need during birth, and which of those types of support can men as partners provide?
- What can men do to help support their partners prepare in the days before giving birth?
- What can you do immediately after the birth to make the mother comfortable and ensure the health of mother and baby?
- Did you learn anything in this activity? Will it be helpful to you in your own life?

\* The next session is for men and women. \*

## **Support Sheet # 2**

### **Breathing Exercises and Other Pain Alleviation Techniques During Delivery**

#### **For the pregnant woman:**

Your pregnant partner must maintain a breathing rhythm, and complete a cycle every four seconds.

- Breathe in through your nose in the first second.
- Exhale through your mouth in short intervals while counting two three and four seconds.
- Exhale for a longer period of time during the fourth second.
- Repeat.

#### **At the same time, the father must:**

- Breathe with your partner.
- Make sure your partner is softly exhaling in your face.
- Help her relax between contractions.

The father should watch his partner and hold her hands while she breathes in through her nose and out through her mouth. This may feel strange at the beginning, and both of you may feel silly.



## **Support Sheet # 3**

### **Skin-to-Skin Contact with Your Baby**

- Once the baby is born, it is important to have skin-to-skin contact with your baby. Providing newborns with direct skin-to-skin contact is essential for the health and wellbeing of the child, and it can be done by both mothers and fathers! Skin-to-skin contact is when the mother or father's skin touches the baby's skin – this can be done through hugging, placing the baby on your bare chest, etc. Babies love skin-to-skin contact!
- Research shows that after birth, skin-to-skin contact between the mother and her baby immediately reduces infant crying, improves mother-infant interaction, keeps the baby warm, and helps the mother to breastfeed successfully (World Health Organization).
- Although fathers cannot breastfeed, they still can play an important role in providing skin-to-skin contact. For example, babies born by caesarean section need to have contact with a significant caregiver, but sometimes the mother is not in a condition to provide that care. This is where fathers can play an important role in regulating the newborn's body temperature and in cardiorespiratory stabilization. This kind of physical closeness helps promote the emotional bond between father and child.
- Fathers can talk, sit, sing, rock, tell stories to, burp or bathe the baby. Make some time in the day just for you and your baby – babies need cuddling and hugs from their fathers too.

# Session 6

## Family Planning

**Session objective:**

To reflect upon the benefits of family planning and the value of couple communication in this process and to provide information on different contraceptive methods.

**Required materials:** examples of contraceptive methods, copies of Support Sheet # 4

**Recommended time:** 3 hours and 15 minutes +

**Support sheet:** Support Sheet #4 – page 39

**Session overview:**

1. Check-in (15 minutes)
2. Activity 6.1: Learning about contraceptive methods (2 hours)
3. Activity 6.2: Parents by accident or by choice? (45 minutes)
4. Closing (15 minutes)

\* This session is for men and women. A health provider is required. \*

## Activity 6.1

### Learning about contraceptive methods (2 hours)

**Purpose:** To provide couples with accurate information on different contraceptive methods and answer any questions they may have.

**Key Message:** There are different contraceptive methods that couples can use to plan and space births. It is both women's and men's responsibility to seek information to avoid unwanted pregnancy. It is important for couples to talk with a health professional, and with each other, when deciding which method to use.

Before the session it is important to identify a health professional with knowledge of reproductive health from the nearest health facility to provide information on different contraceptive methods. Invite the health professional with knowledge of reproductive health to give a presentation on contraceptive methods. If possible, ask the presenter to samples of contraceptive methods. It is important that the health professional be able to explain the different types of contraceptive methods and also be able to respond to questions about side effects or other worries that couples may have about using contraceptives.



## Instructions:

1. Explain that the group will now have the opportunity to learn about different contraceptive methods from a health professional. Invite the health professional to introduce him or herself.
2. Ask the health professional to give a presentation on the different forms of contraceptive methods. The health professional should explain to the group the different types of contraceptives that are available in the community, including:
  - a. Hormonal contraceptives
  - b. Intrauterine Devices
  - c. Barrier methods
  - d. Rhythm methods (e.g. using cycle beads)
  - e. Vasectomy and Tubal Ligation

The health provider's presentation should include information on each method, how it is used, how it prevents pregnancy, the advantages and disadvantages of different methods, and should allow opportunity for the participants to ask any questions they may have regarding different methods, including side effects. The health provider can also provide information on sexual hygiene and answer any questions that couples have regarding sex and hygiene.

3. After the health provider has presented and the participants have asked all of their questions, open the discussion using the questions below.

## Questions for Group Discussion:

- Who has to think about contraception? The man or the woman? Why?
- How should a couple choose a contraceptive method to use?
- What are some of the reasons why couples do not use family planning?
- Do you worry about side effects?
- How should you choose the method that is best for you?
- Have you ever discussed family planning as a couple before? Why or why not?
- What are some of the reasons why couples do not communicate with each other about family planning?

## Support Sheet # 4 – Family Planning Methods

Contraceptive Method	Rhythm Methods (e.g. cycle beads)	Barrier Methods	Intrauterine Device (IUD)	Hormonal Contraceptives (pills, injections)	Surgical / Sterilization (Tubal Ligation, vasectomy)
<b>How it works</b>	Practicing periodic abstinence or withdrawal. A woman's menstruation and ovulation is monitored using cycle beads or tracking cervical mucus to avoid sex during a woman's fertile period.	Condoms (male and female) work to prevent the man's sperm from meeting and fertilizing a woman's egg.	Works to prevent the man's sperm from meeting and fertilizing a woman's egg.	Hormonal contraceptives work to prevent ovulation (creation of a woman's eggs).	Vasectomy interrupts the flow of a man's sperm during ejaculation. Tubal ligation prevents contact of the egg with the sperm.
<b>Advantages</b>	Permits greater awareness of the body itself and is less costly than other methods.	The condom, male and female, protects against the risks of STIs/HIV/ AIDS. Condoms require no medical prescription or exams.	An efficient and comfortable method for most women	When correctly used, birth control pills are one of the most effective contraceptive methods.	Efficiency is very high.
<b>Disadvantages</b>	Does not protect against STIs/ HIV/AIDS.	Requires negotiation between partners, but can promote men's active involvement in contraception.	Increases the flow and duration of menstruation. Not recommended for women who have not had children. Does not protect against STIs/ HIV/AIDS.	Requires discipline to take the pill every day at the same time or to return to the health facility for injections. Not ok for women with certain health conditions. If used alone, it does not protect against STIs/HIV.	A definitive method with little chance of being reversed.

## Activity 5.2

### Parents by accident or by choice?<sup>5</sup> (45 minutes)

**Purpose:** To reflect upon the benefits of family planning and the value of couple communication in this process; to talk about the use of condoms and other contraceptive methods.

**Key Message:** Each couple has the right to decide the number of children to have – including the spacing and timing. Unplanned pregnancies can put an emotional and financial strain on the family. It is important for couples to discuss the number of children they want to have and ensure they have the resources to support their children.

#### Instructions:

1. Explain to the group that they are going to be discussing the impact and benefit of family planning on a family's long-term goals.
2. Tell the group that you are going to tell them a short story.

“Chris and Silas are brothers, and so they decided to get married on the same day: Chris married Justine and Silas married Louise. In the first year of marriage the two couples each had their first child. After the first child, Louise and Silas make the decision to use family planning to plan the timing and spacing of their children. But, Chris and Justine decide not to use family planning and in the second year of marriage, Chris and Louise had their second child. Five years after being married, Louise and Silas have two children, while Chris and Justine have four.”

3. Explain that you are going to divide the participants into 2 groups to develop role-plays. The first group will develop a role-play about Louise and Silas, who use family planning. The second group will develop a role-play about Chris and Justine, who do not use family planning. The role-play should show the impact that using family planning, or not using it, has on the family's development.
4. Give the groups 10 minutes to prepare their role-plays. Explain that not all participants have to act in the role-play, but they should contribute ideas in the creation of the role-play.
5. Ask both groups to act out their role-plays and then open the discussion using the questions below.

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from the activity “Father by Accident or by Choice?” in the *Program P Manual* (Promundo, REDMAS, EME, 2013).

## Questions for Group Discussion:

- What did you notice, or what impacted you as you were watching these role-plays?
- Is there something wrong in having a large family?
- Should people plan how many children they want to have and space them, meaning take time (two to three years) before having another child?
- In what ways can men contribute to family planning?
- Why do some men (and some women) ignore the issue of family planning?
- What effects can lack of family planning have on a family?
- What are the benefits of planning your family?
- Is it easy or hard to discuss family planning with your partner? Why?
- What could make it easier to discuss with your partner about family planning?
- What is one thing that you can do now with your partner to plan a family and avoid unexpected pregnancies?

\* The next session is for men only. \*

# Session 7

## Caring for a Baby

**Session objective:**

To learn about a baby's care needs and reflect upon men's capacity to satisfy these needs and to reflect on how gender stereotypes influence a father and mother's behaviour towards their children.

**Required materials:** 2 baby dolls, copies of Support Sheet # 5 and Support Sheet # 6

**Recommended time:** 3 hours 15 minutes

**Support sheets:**

Support Sheet # 5 – page 47

Support Sheet #6 – page 49

**Session overview:**

1. Check-in (15 minutes)
2. Activity 7.1: Caring for a new baby (2 hours)
3. Activity 7.2: The importance of breastfeeding (45 minutes)
4. Closing (15 minutes)

\* This session is for men only. \*



## Activity 7.1

### Caring for a new baby<sup>6</sup> (2 hours)

**Purpose:** To learn about a baby's care needs and reflect upon men's capacity to satisfy these needs. To question the stereotype that women are naturally better equipped to provide care and raise children than men.

**Note to the Facilitator:** It is important to be aware that men may feel a bit uncomfortable practicing with a doll at first. Emphasize the importance of practicing these skills with the doll – where you can afford to make mistakes! It will help them be prepared for when their baby arrives.

**Key Message:** New babies require a lot of care! There are many things that fathers can do to care for their new child, such as holding, bathing, singing and talking to the baby. Interaction and communication are important ways that babies learn and allow fathers to bond.



### Instructions:

1. Explain that this activity will help the participants to know their baby's needs and how to care for them, including how to properly hold a baby.

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from the activity "Caring for my baby – practice makes perfect" in the *Program P Manual* (Promundo, REDMAS, EME, 2013).

2. Ask the group to sit in a circle and explain that the first exercise will talk about how to hold a baby properly. Take the baby doll and use the information below to explain how to hold a baby – show the participants how to do it.

### **How To Hold a Baby:**

Always hold the baby's back and head when carrying him or her. The baby's neck is not able to hold up the head on its own for approximately the first three months.

With one hand, hold the baby's back and with your other hand support the baby's head so that it doesn't wobble.

Once you hold the baby in your hands, support all of the baby's body in one of your arms, placing its head on the crease of your forearm while you support below the back with the other hand. When you have acquired enough practice, you can hold the baby with one arm.

3. Now, tell the participants to practice how to hold and carry the baby properly using the dolls using the instructions below. Demonstrate using the baby doll. You can also ask any experienced fathers in the group to demonstrate.
4. Divide the participants into two groups. Give each group a baby doll and tell them to practice holding the baby. Give the groups five minutes to practice.
5. After five minutes, ask everyone to come back to the group. Explain that you are they are now going to discuss how to care for a baby in ways like bathing and keeping them clean or changing their diapers.
6. Ask the group whether anyone knows how to change and clean a baby after he or she has soiled the diaper or clothes? Allow the participants to share any experience they have in changing or cleaning a baby.
7. Ask if anyone can demonstrate using the baby doll?
8. Next, share the useful information on how to change a baby, from the box below. Ask if anyone would like to volunteer to demonstrate. Allow a few minutes for demonstration and then open the discussion using the questions below.

**How to change a baby:**

1. Wash your hands first and make sure they are clean.
2. Get any materials you need such as a cloth or towel and a new diaper or clothes for the child.
3. Place the child on a flat, safe surface. Maintain physical contact with the child and make sure that he or she is secure. Do not leave the child unattended.
4. Remove the dirty clothes or diaper. Use a wet cloth or towel to clean the child. It is important to clean the child from *front to back*. Once you have wiped the child, do not use the same cloth to wipe the child – it can spread bacteria and cause the child become ill. Use a clean towel or cloth each time you wipe.
5. Throw away or put aside any dirty items so they can be washed.
6. Wash your hands again and use soap if possible.
7. Place a clean diaper or cloth on the child and then dress him or her.

**Questions for Group Discussion:**

- Do you think these are things that men can do? Why or why not?
- Why don't fathers participate more in taking care of young children, particularly babies?
- How does having a new child in the family affect the relationship between you and your partner? (For example, babies cry all the time and need constant attention, and parents become very tired.)
- Imagine this: It is 2 o'clock in the morning (am). Your child is crying and you are not sure why. The mother of the child is exhausted because she has been up breastfeeding the child all day and night. You have to get up in a few hours to go to work. As a father, what can you do?
- Who has more difficulty providing care for a baby? The mother or the father? Why?
- Can one get angry with the baby? Does your level of emotion differ if your baby is a boy versus a girl? Why or why not?
- Can one get angry with the mother?
- What do you do if you get angry? What are the options?

- What are one or two things you can do to be more involved in caregiving of your newborn baby? How will this affect the mother? What are 1-2 things you can do together with the baby?
- How can men support each other in their caring roles as fathers?
- What are some ways that we can be responsive to the needs of our young children?
- Did anyone learn anything new? Do you think will use any of these tips?

# **Support Sheet # 5**

## **Caring for a Baby**

Fathers can play an important role in taking care of a new baby, and helping their partner to get some much needed rest after giving birth! New babies need a lot of attention and care as they begin to experience the world. Holding and changing your baby are also important opportunities to bond with your child.

### **How To Hold a Baby:**

1. Always hold the baby's back and head when carrying him/her. The baby's neck is not able to hold up the head on its own for approximately the first three months.
2. With one hand, hold the baby's back and with your other hand support the baby's head so that it doesn't wobble.
3. Once you the baby in your hands, support all of the baby's body in one of your arms, placing its head on the crease of your forearm while you support below the back with the other hand. When you have acquired enough practice, you can hold the baby with one arm.

### **How to change a baby:**

1. Wash your hands first and make sure they are clean.
2. Get any materials you need such as a cloth or towel and a new diaper or clothes for the child.
3. Place the child on a flat, safe surface. Maintain physical contact with the child and make sure that he or she is secure. Do not leave the child unattended.
4. Remove the dirty clothes or diaper. Use a wet cloth or towel to clean the child. It is important to clean the child from *front to back*. Once you have wiped the child, do not use the same cloth to wipe the child – it can spread bacteria and cause the child become ill. Use a clean towel or cloth each time you wipe.
5. Throw away or put aside any dirty items so they can be washed.
6. Wash your hands again and use soap if possible.
7. Place a clean diaper or cloth on the child and then dress him or her.

## Activity 7.2

### The importance of breastfeeding (45 minutes)

**Purpose:** To reflect on the importance of breastfeeding for a new baby and how men can support their partners in breastfeeding.

**Key Message:** Breastfeeding is an important way for new babies to get the nutrients they need to grow strong and healthy. Although men cannot breastfeed, there are many ways that men can support their partners while breastfeeding.

#### Instructions:

1. Explain that in this activity, they are going to discuss what they know about breastfeeding and how men can support their partners in breastfeeding their new child.
2. Ask the group what they know about breastfeeding. *How long should a woman breastfeed? Why is it important to breastfeed? Did your wife breastfeed after your other children were born?* Allow the men to share their own ideas and experiences.
3. Explain to the group that breastfeeding is very important for a new child.
  - The Government and the health professionals recommend that a woman breastfeed exclusively (meaning that she does not give any other type of food or formula) for the first six months, unless she is instructed by her doctor to do otherwise.
  - Breastfeeding allows a mother to pass on vital nutrients to help the child grow and become strong and healthy. The breast milk also helps protect the child from common illnesses by building up his or her immune system.
4. Ask the group what they think men can do to help support their partner in breastfeeding. Allow the men to share their own ideas and experiences.
5. After the men have shared their experiences, share with them the information about how men can support their partners from Support sheet #6.

\* The next session is for men only. \*

## Support Sheet # 6

### Fathers Can Play an Important Role in Breastfeeding<sup>7</sup>

**Breast milk is healthiest for Babies!** A mother's early milk, called colostrum, is expressed from the beginning and is the only food a baby needs. Colostrum's special role is to help your newborn stay healthy. It is filled with important vitamins, minerals, proteins and immunities. If possible, do not give your baby water or formula in the first six months. Feeding the baby anything other than breast milk interferes with a mother's ability to produce enough milk.

- Breast milk is easier to digest than formula. Breastfed babies have less diarrhea, constipation, and colic than babies who are not breastfed.
- Breast milk contains antibodies to fight infections.
- Babies may have less risk of becoming obese, having diabetes, and developing other diseases.
- Breastfed babies have a lower risk of asthma, allergies, and certain cancers.
- Breast milk contains special ingredients to promote brain growth.

**What can a Father Do?** Supporting the health of your family is a great responsibility: you want to make healthy choices. This is why you, the father, should encourage your partner to breastfeed. There are many other ways you can help your partner care for your baby, including the following:

- **Help with the housework and cooking and limit the number of visitors.** New mothers need plenty of rest!
- **You can bond with the baby too!** Bathe, change and dress your baby. Sing and talk to your baby. Babies love skin-to-skin contact with their fathers! Make some time in the day just for you and your baby – babies need cuddling and hugs from their fathers too.
- **Take the baby to the mother when he or she is ready to feed.** If you see the baby searching for mother's breast, sucking his fist, or making sucking noises, take him or her to mother for a feeding. The baby will need to feed often, every 1 to 3 hours and will wake up to feed. Look at your baby's tiny fist and remember that it is about the same size as his/her stomach!

**Let your partner know how good a job she is doing breastfeeding!** Breastfeeding is a loving commitment. It takes time for a mother to learn how to breastfeed. If your partner is uncomfortable or experiences pain while breastfeeding, it may be because the baby is not latching on correctly or because the breast is engorged with milk. Many new mothers need help in the beginning.

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<sup>7</sup> Adapted from: United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). (2002).

# Session 8

## My Parents' Impact

**Session objective:**

To encourage men to reflect on their parents' influence on their own lives and on the future they envision for their children, including how to use the positive influences and how to avoid the negative aspects so they do not repeat themselves.

**Required materials:** None

**Recommended time:** 2 hours

**Support sheet:** None

**Session overview:**

1. Check-in (15 minutes)
2. Activity 8.1: My father's impact, my mother's impact (1 hour 30 minutes)
3. Closing (15 minutes)

\* This session is for men only. \*



## Activity 8.1

### My father's impact, my mother's impact<sup>8</sup> (1 hour 30 minutes)

**Purpose:** To encourage men to reflect on the influences their fathers and mothers (or other female and male authority figures) had on their lives growing up, including how to use the positive influences and how to avoid the negative aspects so they do not happen again.

**Note to the Facilitator:** This activity can have a serious emotional impact on participants and facilitators because violent experiences or other traumatic life events, such as abandonment, may be recollected. Therefore, it is important to give the participants emotional support during this process. Generally, this can be achieved by respectfully listening to the participants, without judging or pressuring them.

**Key Message:** Who we are today was shaped by our experiences growing up. But, they do not have to determine who we will become in the future. Reflecting on our own past enables us to make positive choices for the future by replacing negative attitudes and behaviors with positive ones.

#### Instructions:

1. Explain to the group that they will do an activity to reflect on the influence that their mothers and fathers had on them as children growing up. Tell them that in the activity they will think about how they can learn from the positive aspects of their parents in raising their own children and how to avoid the negative aspects so that they do not happen again.

#### Part 1: Our Fathers' Impact

2. Tell the group that first they will think about the influence their fathers had on them. If someone did not grow up with their father, explain that they can think of another man who was important to them during their childhood— an uncle, grandfather, older brother, etc.
3. Ask everyone to close their eyes and think about an object or a smell that reminds them of their father. It can be a tool, a book, a piece of clothing, the smell of beer, etc.
4. Tell the group to spend a few minutes focusing on the object or the smell that they identify with their father. What emotions does this object or smell recall for them?

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<sup>8</sup> Adapted from the activity "My Father's Impact" from the Program P Manual (Promundo, REDMAS, EME, 2013).

5. After two minutes, ask the group to open their eyes. Tell them to turn to the person sitting next to them and explain the object or smell they identified. Ask them to share how it relates to their father, or main male role model from their childhood. Give them five minutes to share.
6. Once everyone has finished sharing, read the statements below out loud:
  - “One thing that my father did that I want to repeat with my own children is...”
  - “One thing that my father did that I do **not** want to repeat with my own children is...”
7. Then, explain that each person should think about these two statements, imagining how they would like to be in the future. Ask them to share their thoughts with the person sitting next to them. Give them 10 minutes to share.

## Part 2: Our Mothers' Impact

1. Next, ask everyone to close their eyes again and think about an object or a smell that reminds them of their mother. If someone did not grow up with their mother, explain that they can think of another woman who was important to them during their childhood– an aunt, grandmother, older sister, etc.
2. Tell the group to spend a few minutes focusing on the object or the smell that they identify with their mother. What emotions does this object or smell recall for them?
3. After two minutes, ask the group to open their eyes. Tell them to turn to the person sitting next to them and explain the object or smell and how it relates to their mother, or main female role model from their childhood. Give them five minutes to share.
4. Once everyone has finished sharing, read the statements below out loud:
  - “One thing that my mother did that I want to repeat with my own children is...”
  - “One thing that my mother did that I do **not** want to repeat with my own children is...”
5. Then, explain that each person should think about these two statements, imagining how they would like their partner to be in raising their children.
6. Ask them to share their thoughts with the person sitting next to them. Give them 10 minutes to share. After 10 minutes, ask everyone to rejoin the circle and open the discussion using the questions below.

## Questions for Group Discussion:

- What are the positive things about your relationship with your father that you would like to put into practice or teach to your children?
- Which things would you rather leave behind?
- What do you look forward to in becoming a father?
- How do traditional definitions of what a man should be impact the way our fathers cared for us as children? [Some examples: Men cannot cry; men should not express physical affection to sons such as kissing or hugging; men use violence to resolve conflict.]
- What are the positive things about your relationship with your mother that you would like to put into practice or teach to your children? Or that you would like your partner/wife to have or to teach your children?
- Which things would you rather leave behind?
- How do traditional definitions of what a woman should be impact the way women are raised and cared for? [Examples: Women are responsible for raising children and doing domestic work, women are weaker, etc.]
- What do you expect of your partner as a mother?
- How can we “leave behind” harmful practices to be more involved and gender equitable partners? And be more involved and gender equitable parents for our children?

\* The next session is for men only. \*