

Defining Fathers' Growth Toward Self Improvement

Mental Health Care – If a father is prohibited from seeing his children because of a mental health concern, counseling with a mental health professional may need to happen prior to visits between the father and his children to assure safety. The Child Welfare professional could assist the father in this endeavor by suggesting counselors who specialize in adult psychopathology and encouraging him to attend the sessions. If lack of money is an issue for the father, the Child Welfare professional could suggest community resources that might be available.

Sobriety Support – If a father is prohibited from seeing his children because of a substance abuse issue, regular attendance with a support group may be crucial for sobriety. Many communities have support groups that are free of charge that are listed in the phone book as “Guide to Human Services.” Depending on the level of addiction, however, in-patient or out-patient care may be needed. The Child Welfare professional may need to assist the father by giving him specific locations of an appropriate support group.

Job Support/Training – Unemployment can cause stress for a father because he may not be able to provide financial support for his children. It can also do damage to his concept of self worth. The Child Welfare professional can refer the father to agencies within his county that might offer job training as well as employment opportunities.

Parenting Education – Parenting can be an important opportunity for men to learn about themselves and relationships. It is important to point out the many ways fathers can learn alongside their children. The focus should be on growth, not just erasing deficits. The Child Welfare professional could assist the father in this endeavor by suggesting classes that might be offered through community resources and encouraging the father towards attendance in these classes without being “pushy.”

Establishing Self Worth – An all male support group can be helpful to fathers who want to focus on issues with relationships that may stem primarily from their socialization. Issues that come up about sensitivity, control over children, expression about feelings, how to express affection can be shared in a more direct and open manner among a group of men once trust has been established. The Child Welfare professional should encourage the father toward this endeavor, thus building up a concept of self worth within the father.