

ABSENT PARENTING

Background:

Recent research indicates that the challenges educators have to face today are often as a result of **poor parenting skills** and **absent fathers** particularly in relation to the development of boys and their behaviour (Tiwani, 2010: 20).

SLIDE 3:

Furthermore, problems in society such as the lack of living space and amenities, **substance abuse** [drugs , alcohol, medicine etc] and the perennial problem of **bullies** who tease and generally make life difficult for their peers (Dewitt & Lessing, 2013:3-5) also add to the educators classroom behaviour dilemmas.

SLIDE 4:

These problems are not limited to a South African educational environment, but of international concern and prevalent amongst many boys and at their **worst** at **the early adolescent years (13-14)[F3]** in the classroom context (Lewis, 2009).

ABSENT FATHERS [SLIDE 5]

What is meant by that term? [SLIDE 6]

Several meanings:

1. An absent father is one who is unknown to his son or whom the his son has never come to know [there are quite a significant number of these boys particularly amongst our black community] **[SLIDE 7]**

2. An absent father is one who is totally uninvolved in the life of his son and who is completely absent [**SLIDE 8**]
3. An absent father is one 'who does not care about anything to do with his son' even though his son lives with him and is in daily contact [**SLIDE9**]
4. An absent father is one who is physically away a lot because of his work commitments and is not in touch with his son even though this is not a deliberate action on his part and makes the building of a father –son relationship difficult [**SLIDE10**]

CHARACTERISTICS OF ABSENT FATHERS [SLIDE 11]

1. They are 'Workaholics'
2. They lack empathy
3. They lack emotional maturity
4. They are irresponsible
5. They are self- centred

WHY is the role of a father so important for young men from the age of 14-21+? {SLIDE ?} -

Recent research indicates that :

SLIDE ?; A father's presence has a significantly positive impact on boys' lives and the protectiveness a father has to offer, can allow his children's growth as individuals.

SLIDE ?; Fathers make valuable contributions to the development and well-being of their children that are felt across all domains of that development. It

is asserted that a child can absorb the father's influences by merely being in his presence.

SLIDE ?: High levels of a father's participation are correlated with highly positive outcomes including psychosocial adjustment and cognitive competencies of their children.

SLIDE ?: Research has consistently, over decades, correlated the positive involvement of fathers with their children's positive social, cognitive, behavioural and emotional development.

SLIDE ?: Father involvement has the most positive results when a warm and supportive relationship exists between father and child.

WHAT DO FATHERS NEED TO DO? [SLIDE ?]

SLIDE? John Badalament author of the Good Men Project and leading expert of fatherhood's research indicates the following:

SLIDE? What do teenage boys want to know? [SLIDE15]

SLIDE ?

Am I good enough?

Am I a good enough son?

Sportsman?

Academic?

Good looking ?

WHAT DO 'GOOD DADS' DO ? [SLIDE?]

- They are there and **present** in their sons lives [Craig Wilkinson **BE THERE!**] **SLIDE ?**

- SLIDE ?They foster and have a **meaningful relationship** with their sons [leads to better health and less stress; need to engage at school]
 - ***Connectedness (to parent, to school) is the single most protective factor in reducing behavioural risks ... including drug use, early sexual activity, smoking, and depression.***
- SLIDE They understand
- SLIDE They are **trustworthy** and keep their promises [if they say they will be there they ARE]
- SLIDE They give time willingly [Time and presence creates meaningful relationships; build in **dad ritual time** father & son]
- SLIDE They know what is going on in their sons lives [their friends, like and dislikes etc]
- SLIDE They **TALK** with their son [need to raise the verbal bar]
- SLIDE They guide their son
- SLIDE They are worthy role models [display appropriate emotion; behaviour modelling] for their son

WHAT DO MOTHERS NEED TO DO TO SUPPORT FATHER-SON RELATIONSHIP? [SLIDE]

SLIDE

Mums need to accept and encourage Dad's involvement.

SLIDE Dad's need to assert themselves in parenting roles.

SLIDE Look at your Dad's legacy

SLIDE Speak about the importance of the father-son connection

SLIDE If no father around, provide other positive images/role models of men

SLIDE Be supportive – be a team player – accept different approaches

CONCLUSION: SLIDE

What can we do as educators and parents? [Slide]

SLIDE Paddy Upton “Winning with Kids ‘ seminar]:

Sons/boys require acknowledgement, recognition, affirmation, support [Maslows Hierachy of Being] and love no matter what they are involved in and no matter how successful or not they are. They ultimately want to know:

“Am I good enough?”

It cannot be contingent on results.

Please do not reprimand them and worse than that do not ignore them. They want you to be their parent

SLIDE Craig Wilkinson: “Journey of Parenting”

BE THERE!

“For us as dads our job is to be there. Be there in the boring moments in the day to day moments. Be there emotionally; be there spiritually; be there physically; be there for the highlights for the plays and the school plays and when they hit the home run or the six and they're run out and they realise that they're terrible at cricket – it's to **be there**. And that's really our job. And if we get that right we're 90% on the way to being a great father. The start of it is to **be there.**”