



How's Your Father?

a Free Show about challenged & challenging dads

THU 5TH OCT 7.30PM NORWICH ARTS CENTRE*
FRI 6TH OCT 7.30PM GREAT YARMOUTH LIBRARY
WED 18TH OCT 7.30PM THE HUNTER CLUB, BURY
THU 19TH OCT 7.30PM LOWESTOFT LIBRARY
THU 2ND NOV 7.30PM CHANTRY LIBRARY, IPSWICH



The importance of emotion work and working with emotions in father inclusive practice.

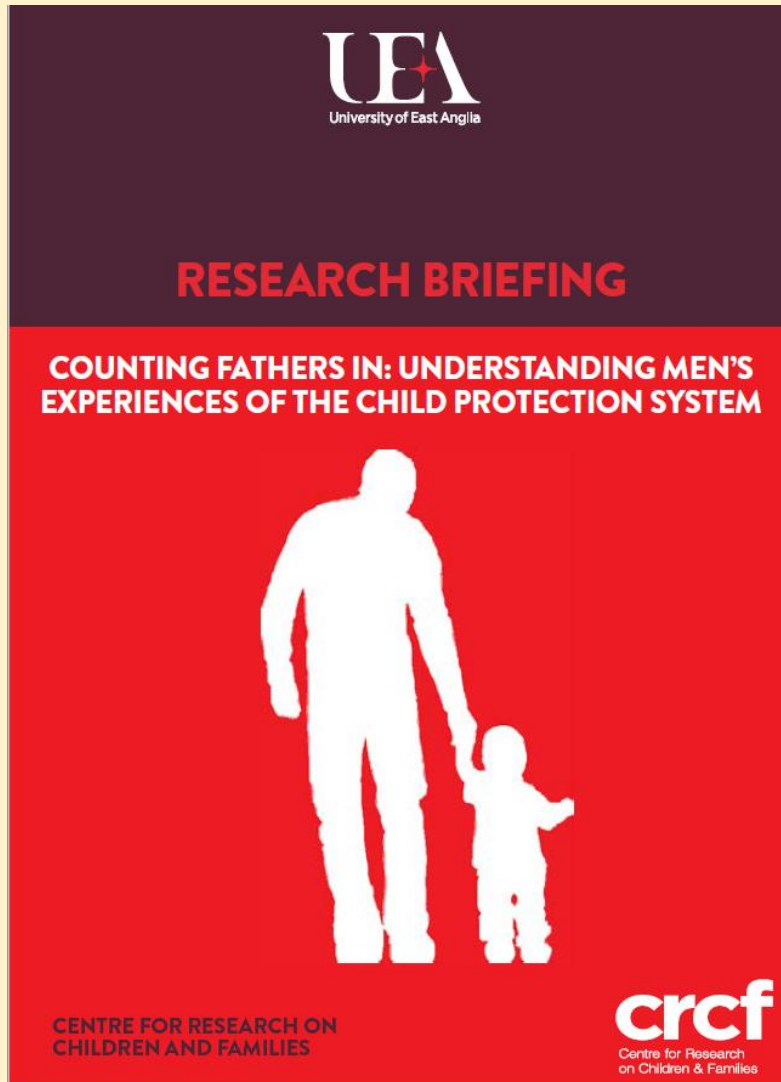
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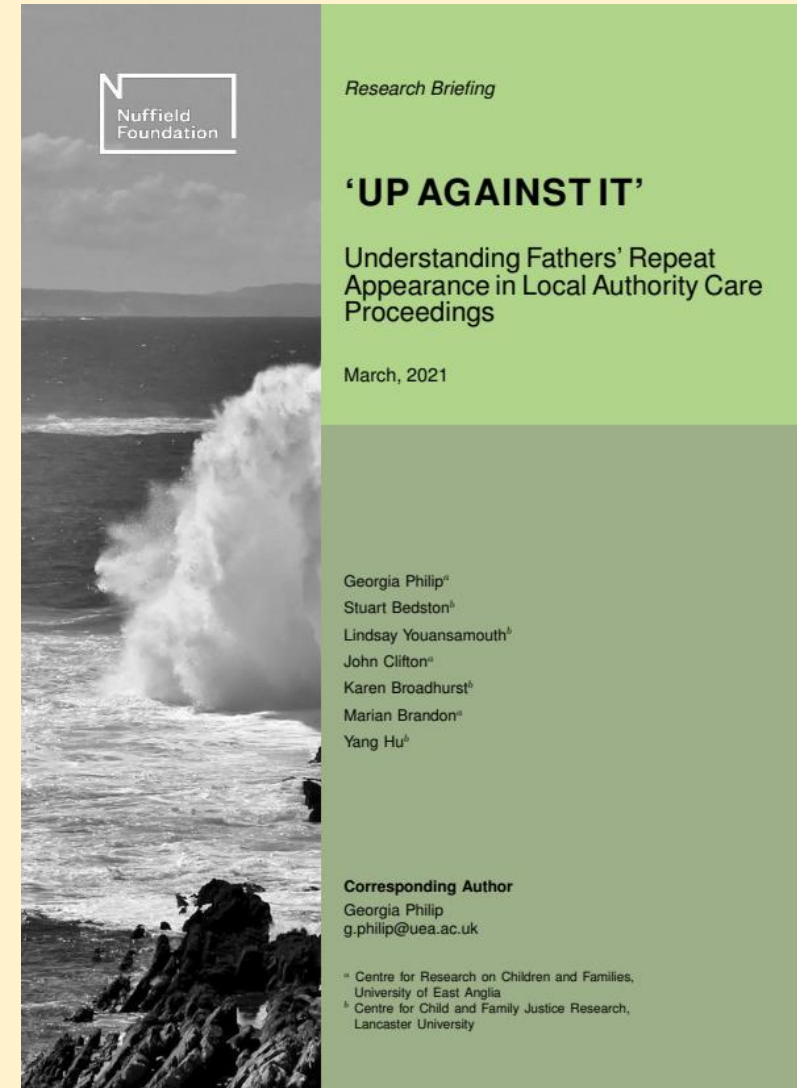


How do we respond to fathers' intense emotions?

- *“Dads love just as hard as mums”*
- Consider fathers' experiences of shame, guilt, grief, humiliation.
- Consider ways that practice/interventions can be shaming.



‘Counting Fathers In’
Understanding men’s experiences of
child protection (2014-2017)



‘Up Against It’
Fathers’ experiences of recurrent
care proceedings (2017-2020)

Some key findings from our research on fathers' experiences of recurrent care proceedings.

“I am not going to be known as the dad that didn't care, never!”

- **There is an urgent need for direct and longer-term support for men when children are removed** to address harmful coping strategies, which may exclude them from being seen as suitable fathers in the future or from rebuilding relationships with existing children.
- **Fathers often had unresolved childhood trauma that created problems with managing emotions, building trust, and so affected relationships and family functioning.**
- **Fathers and couples need resources and support to manage *emotions* and *relationships* differently.** Without this, couple conflict and its impact on parenting remains a key factor in families becoming stuck in a cycle of recurrence.

Emotional Impact: Grief, Shame, Guilt.

“When they were taken it is like grieving, it’s the grieving process because I’m, even though my kids are not dead... there is a sadness”.

- Findings are comparable with experiences of mothers; though gender differences in terms of how pain is expressed/defended against, by fathers, and how it is interpreted by professionals.
- Some fathers experienced a gradual emotional shut down which was damaging to their mental health and relationships, including with professionals.
- Other fathers actively resisted shame using ‘bravado’, or fighting for their children as a means of defending moral and paternal identity.

Navigating grief and shame

- *They tell you not to hold on to the past, and then what's the first thing they do in court? They go by the past. (Jonathan, aged 44).*
- *I had a nervous breakdown and I used to self-harm and I had no hope, I had no what do you call it err 'help', I had no help at all. (Keith, aged 39).*
- *I have been through it and I have taken beatings for my past, I have been outcast for my past, had my kids taken off me because of my past, you know you walk around with your head in shame most of the time. (Michael, aged 35)*
- *They just didn't give me a chance so, that's why I just told them 'I don't give a fuck anymore, do what you fucking want'...If they talk to you like a piece of crap then I talk to them back like it (Danny, aged 23)*

Links to the Good Practice Guide

- **Early and meaningful contact – as routine.**
- **Full curiosity full history!**
- **System change to support frontline practice.**
- **Both-And approach – challenge AND support.**
- **Sensitivity to how powerful emotions are expressed (or not) by fathers, and then interpreted, and responded to, by professionals.**
- Philip, G., Youansamouth, L., Broadhurst, K., Clifton, J., Bedston, S., Hu, Y., & Brandon, M. (2023). 'When they were taken it is like grieving': Understanding and responding to the emotional impact of repeat care proceedings on fathers. *Child & Family Social Work*, 1–10
- **Shame sensitive and dignity conferring practice.**
- Salter, M., & Hall, H. (2022). Reducing shame, promoting dignity: A model for the primary prevention of complex post-traumatic stress disorder. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 23(3), 906–919.

