

Handout 5: Myth Cards

Myth: Men who can't provide an adequate standard of living for themselves and their children are failures as fathers.

In our culture, the role of the breadwinner is seen as essential to being a good father. This belief traps men into a rigid role that limits their opportunities for developing intimacy with their children. The primary of the breadwinner role needs to be challenged by men as they search with women to find new family structures that support greater male involvement with children.

Myth: Men are not as nurturing as women. They are not able to meet the emotional needs of developing children.

This myth makes it difficult for men to develop a sense of parental competence. It often leads to abdicating the major responsibility for child rearing to women. Male nurturance may be different from female nurturance but it should be recognized and encouraged as important for children.

Myth: Men are strong, independent, problem-solvers who don't need support in learning to be parents.

This myth leads men to believe that they can figure out parenting on their own in a trial-and-error fashion. It also keeps men isolated and often lacking both information and support in their search to become more involved fathers.

Myth: Men are dangerous for children to be around because they might direct their sexual and aggressive tendencies on the children.

This myth has been strengthened in recent times by the focus on sexual and physical abuse. It discourages men from involvement and limits their contact with their own children. The opportunities for men to develop both the communication skills and discipline skills that form the basis of a healthy relationship are lessened by this perceived need to protect children from men.

Handout 5: Myth Cards (Continued)

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Adapted from: *Working With Fathers*, The Minnesota Fathering Alliance, 1992.