

Engaging Men in Moreton Bay: Male Volunteering and Inclusiveness in Community Services

For the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre based at Lawnton.

As Part of the Moreton Bay Community Consortium.

“Thinking regional, staying local”

Conducted by Chris Mundy

Period of Project: January 1st 2013 to June 30th 2013

Summary

A needs analysis of men in the Moreton Bay Region in 2009 highlighted that community services would be more attractive to male clientele if there were more men involved in the provision of services to men. Based on a male volunteer project in 2005 by the Family Action Centre, NSW, the “Engaging Men in Moreton Bay” project implemented male volunteer recruitment strategies and workshops designed to increase the number of men volunteering in Community Services in order to make the services more attractive to male clientele. Discussions about the challenges for men being involved in volunteering for community services were also undertaken.

Community Services that utilised a number of recruitment strategies such as referrals from other agencies and print media observed an increase in male volunteers and male clientele. Community Service Organisations that only utilised less feminine positions descriptions and word of mouth observed no increase in male volunteers and male clientele. Feedback identified numerous challenges for men being involved in Community Service organisations and a promotional video clip was developed for organisations to use as an ongoing male recruitment tool. Reflections for making community services gender inclusive are also included.

Engaging Men in Moreton Bay Project 2013

Aims

To increase the volume of men volunteering in family support services across the Moreton Bay Region. In Australia, less men volunteer (34%) compared to women (38%)¹. Men are more likely to volunteer in sports, management or maintenance whilst women are more likely to volunteer in cooking, social support and community care². ABS statistics reveal that overall 17.3% of the Moreton Bay population volunteer, just over 1% lower than the Greater Brisbane area (18.8%).

Objectives

The “Engaging Men in Moreton Bay” Project sought to educate and enhance support organisations to better utilise male volunteers. The desired outcome was to strengthen men and their family relationships in the community. It aimed to increase male volunteers in support services to assist men living in the Moreton Bay Region by:

- Creating a more inclusive culture in support services
- Increasing men’s knowledge of family issues and their impact on relationships and parenting
- Giving men a greater sense of connectedness with their community
- Increasing knowledge and information on men’s issues and supports available
- Enhancing existing family support services to better service fathers

Outcomes

The proposed outcomes of the “Engaging Men in Moreton Bay” project sought to enable greater community capacity to improve personal, family and community relationships. Increasing male involvement in community organisations assists men experiencing distress to more comfortably seek support. Fathers in a wide variety of family situations are also more effectively supported. Men experiencing isolation can build a greater sense of connectedness and engagement with their community through volunteering.

Process

A grant was awarded by the Moreton Bay Regional Council to assist with funding the Engaging Men in Moreton Bay Project. The activity of the project involved:

- Researching the gender imbalance of women to men in support organisations in the Moreton Bay Region.
- Researching the benefits of using men in family support programs for child development and emotional support
- Conducting training to educate support organisations about why it is important to engage men
- Running a workshop training new male volunteers in family support type programs
- Producing a promotional video of outcomes of the program to encourage increased male involvement and break stereotypes within community services.

Chris Mundy (Community Development Worker, Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre) was designated as project coordinator on behalf of the Moreton Bay Community Consortium until 30th June 2013. The project was

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007, [Voluntary Work, Australia, 2006](http://www.abs.gov.au), (cat. no. 4441.0) <www.abs.gov.au

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007, [Voluntary Work, Australia, 2006](http://www.abs.gov.au), (cat. no. 4441.0) <www.abs.gov.au

supported by a steering group of support service representatives and male volunteers who guided Chris in fulfilling the activity of the project. The Steering Group met monthly between January and June 2013

Identified Need for Project

A needs analysis of men in the Moreton Bay Region in 2009³ highlighted that men were facing a number of issues when seeking personal and family support in the local area:

- There were low numbers of men volunteering in support organisations
- Many services did not feel community organisations were “male friendly”
- A large number of men felt isolated and had difficulty engaging and connecting with others
- Men almost universally waited for a crisis before seeking help, often during family breakdown
- Men would not follow through on referrals for individual or family help

The analysis also noted:

“Without exception, agency workers said that their service would be more attractive to male clientele if there were more Men involved in the provision of services to Men”⁴

Additional research was conducted into male inclusivity in support services⁵, fatherhood research⁶, and the diversity of family units men are involved in after separation⁷ (shared care, primary care and blended families). The research highlighted the increasing level of participation men were having in family life and the benefits for child development. It also highlighted the need for services to more effectively engage with men.

Male mentoring based programs were additionally investigated. In 2005 the Family Action Centre, NSW in conjunction with the University of Newcastle released an evaluation of 3 men-only preparation courses conducted by the centre⁸. These preparation courses trained volunteer men to become “Home Start” volunteers – a family visiting program traditionally utilising women. It noted...

“When talking about volunteering to help families with young children....the common perception is that women will provide the assistance and support.....Men as fathers and father-figures are stepping up to contribute to a family’s well being.....The time has come for men to think outside of the traditional volunteering roles and consider what they contribute to a family who has young children”.⁹

Whilst encouraging men to think outside of traditional volunteering roles, it also highlighted that much work needed to be done to explore the stereotypes within the organisations themselves. The aforementioned Homestart project began by having direct conversations within the services on why men were not engaging in family services, challenging stereotypes and having frank conversations within about how the services needed to operate differently to become more male friendly.

Homestart’s evaluation also highlighted a number of important factors when recruiting, engaging and training men for home visitation:

³ An analysis of Men’s needs in the Moreton Bay Region of South East Qld, Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre/ Moreton Bay Community Consortium, Ric Collough, February 2009

⁴ An analysis of Men’s needs in the Moreton Bay Region of South East Qld, Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre/ Moreton Bay Community Consortium, Ric Collough, February 2009

⁵ Father inclusive practice and associated professional competencies, Richard Fletcher. Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse, Number 9, 2008

⁶ <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research-centre/fac/research/fathers/afn.html>

⁷ <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/fm2011/fm88/fm88f.html>

⁸ Men Providing Friendship to families. Family Action Centre, University of Newcastle, 2005

⁹ P7, Men Providing Friendship to families. Family Action Centre, University of Newcastle, 2005

- The volunteer recruitment program had benefits *for both the families and the male volunteers*. The men felt a greater sense of confidence, connectedness and satisfaction.
- Advertising should highlight the *benefits of men supporting families*.
- Specifically advertise for men, particularly fathers and grandfathers.
- A Strengths Based approach is important, particularly concentrating *on fathering skills and how they can be used in the work*.
- Support Services should have a male-friendly environment.
- Training for men is better outside of work hours or on weekends.
- Content of training needs to be male orientated. Role plays and scenarios are useful. The connections between theory and practice need to be concrete, direct and specific. Don't side step issues and explain the purpose behind exercises.

Project Work

Male Volunteer Recruitment Drive

A male volunteer recruitment drive was conducted between 19th March and the 30th May 2013. A presentation was conducted at the Moreton Bay Region Volunteer Manager's Network Meeting on the 19th of March. Discussion took place about the gender disparity in community services and a number of male volunteer recruitment strategies were offered, including male orientated position descriptions and advertisements (see appendix). 12 representatives signed up to project. The representatives were sent regular emails advising them of project's progress and provided them with numerous tips for recruiting men using media releases, signage, contact with men's organisations and social media.

A media release concerning recruiting male volunteers for the project was sent to a variety of local media outlets in the Moreton Bay Region on the 22nd of March 2013. 3 Local Newspapers ran stories on men volunteering for community services and 3 radio interviews were conducted on community radio stations.

Additionally ad hoc conversations about gender disparity occurred with staff members, representatives and volunteers in community organisations. A steering group was established to inform the project's direction comprising of 5 men from the local community. 3 male staff members from community services also attended some meetings.

Male Volunteer Workshop

A free workshop was conducted on 30th May 2013 for new male volunteers. 11 men attended the workshop. The content was delivered in a male friendly manner and aimed to assist men working with individuals and families using their unique strengths and skills. The workshop:

- Was run outside of working hours.
- Had a male facilitator – Ross Adams (Family Therapist, Parenting Program and Men's Group Facilitator).
- Addressed issues pertinent for men volunteering.
- Assisted men to identify their unique strengths and skills as fathers and grandfathers.
- Identified potential roadblocks for men being effective communicators.
- Taught men reflective listening techniques.

Video Promotional Tool

Short interviews were conducted with male volunteers in community services. These interviews were compiled into a video promoting male involvement in support services. The video concentrated on the unique strengths men bring to the community sector and challenges stereotypes about "women's work" with families. The video was made available to support organisations to use as an ongoing recruitment tool on their official website, Youtube channel, social media page or in their reception area.

Video Interviews were conducted with 7 men:

- 1 Volunteer Coordinator
- 6 Volunteers from Support Services.

The male volunteers were diverse in age and participated in a variety of volunteer roles such as reception, administration, furniture deliveries, older people's programs, family support and community journalism.

The following questions were used during interviews with participants being given the freedom to make any additional comments:

- 1) What is your first name and what service do you volunteer for?
- 2) Why do you think it's important for men to volunteer in community services?
- 3) What do you get out of volunteering on a personal level?
- 4) What stops men from volunteering in community work?
- 5) What would you say to other men thinking about volunteering with community services?

The men indicated how much volunteer work gave them a sense of satisfaction in helping others and they would thoroughly recommend volunteering to other men because it was rewarding, fun and kept them active. They noted that there was a "stigma" that community work wasn't a masculine activity however they refuted this notion after doing the work. They expressed the importance of men being involved in community work, especially for children without fathers who are in need of good male role models. Their overall message was that when it comes to men volunteering for community services, men should "just do it", highlighting a practical approach. The video can be viewed on Youtube¹⁰

Project Responses: Gender Disparity in Community Services

Responses from Men's Steering Group

The most valuable insights about men being involved in community services came from the men of the steering group. The group noted few men involved in community services and few support services targeting men. They offered numerous suggestions concerning why men aren't more involved in the sector including:

- There's a perception that support work is women's work because of the stereotype that men are not "nurturing" or "caring" types.
- There are negative stereotypes in the media of men being portrayed as irresponsible and disconnected from family.
- Many government and non-government services are not recognising the significant role of fathers.
- Roles for men in community services are often limited. There's an assumption that men purely do physical work, but they also have many skills in personally supporting people and can do this in a different way to women.
- Roles are often not concise enough. Men usually need a clear position description.
- Community services often have meetings with no clear outcomes. Men like "action" rather than talk.
- Men sometimes communicate directly and assertively. They felt some women in the sector may find this communication style difficult to work with.
- Many men work during the day (when Community Services operate) creating barriers to volunteering. This also creates barriers for male clients and their families needing support.
- Female dominated community sector may be resistant to change.
- Fathers often feel disempowered by mothers in separated circumstances creating challenges when looking for support.
- Many men were afraid of being labelled as sexual predators if they volunteered to work with children and single women. They identified the risk of false accusations being made against them.

The Steering Group's suggestions for making the sector more male inclusive included:

- When recruiting for male volunteer positions, passion is more important than previous training. Training can come later. "You can teach someone how to do a job but you can't teach passion".
- Less Talk at meetings and more focus on taking action.
- Need to use more gender neutral resources in programs than feminine arts and crafts.

¹⁰ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7ARkfHEZmQ&feature=c4-overview&list=UUKWFN8T3SIXTY77AKU72HA>

- Physical space is important:
 - Change feminine names of meeting rooms (such as “frangipani) to gender inclusive names.
 - Be mindful of feminine colours being used in buildings
 - Environments should be functional and practical
 - Too many tapestries and paintings of flowers should be avoided
 - The need of using posters of fathers and their children or featuring photos of male pioneers in the local area.
 - Use more metal sculpture, wooden creations, etc.
- Allow men to “rub against” the culture of community organisations and create awareness of issues that have not been considered before

Many of these insights could be considered by community services as they seek to implement more male inclusive practices.

Responses from Community Service Staff Members

Various conversations were conducted with representatives from community organisations about the gender imbalance in community services. Some barriers to male volunteer recruitment were a basic lack of any structured recruitment procedure or processes. One neighbourhood centre stated that their volunteer recruitment process was “whoever Centrelink sends us or whoever comes in the door and seeing what they can do”. Community organisations need to start with good volunteer recruitment and management practices in order to be more intentional about placing male volunteers.

A female multicultural worker noted that cultural differences and personal experience can sometimes be a barrier to men volunteering in community services. In some cultures it is not appropriate for a man to work individually with a woman that is not his wife. This is especially the case in Islamic cultures. Other clients have negative personal experiences with male school teachers or fathers that affect their willingness to work individually with a male volunteer. The majority however, were willing to work with either gender.

A staff member observed that some male volunteers find roles such as reception too much of a “big step down” from their paid employment while other male volunteers feel so much ownership about their roles they are hesitant to share them with new male volunteers. These observations made it clear that mens’ previous work environments often influenced how they approached their volunteer work.

Other staff members resited the notion of specific strategies to attract men because they believed the strategies were based on gender stereotypes. It was their firm belief that community services needed to focus on the individual and both genders displayed enormous diversity.

Organisations stated that men were attracted to volunteer roles such as groundwork, maintenance, mentoring, education, client support, driving, financial literacy, management and group facilitation. Roles such as reception, administration and family support were identified as roles avoided by men. This highlighted the need to “reframe” roles in a way that made them more appealing to men.

Responses from Volunteer Coordinators

15 people attended the Moreton Bay Volunteer Manager’s Network Meeting. 14 were female volunteer coordinators, council representatives, trainers and students in Community Services. 1 male job service agency representative attended. During the course of discussion about the gender disparity in community services various responses were gathered. Some noted:

“Women are more nurturing and caring”.

“Women play with dolls and dolls houses from a young age. They are trained to nurture and care for families from childhood. Men aren’t brought up in the same way”.

“Men don’t do words”.

“People in the Moreton Bay Region have further distance to commute to work. This may affect men’s free time to volunteer”.

“Men like to volunteer in practical roles like emergency services and sports”

A Volunteer Coordinator of a Community Assistance Transport Program noted that apart from 1 female volunteer, the program’s entire volunteer workforce was made up of men as transport roles really attracted men. However this was the exception and all other programs recognised few men supporting families and children.

When presented with the “Engaging Men in Moreton Bay” project, there was resistance from some volunteer coordinators. There was concern that changing the language of volunteer position descriptions and job advertisements may be treating men as “stupid” by dumbing down community service terminology. There was also concern that removing social service terms did not comply with funding agreements or would lead to a lack of professionalism. Others were sceptical that the effort being put into the project would yield any results.

However others commented that adjusting job ads wasn’t a gender issue but recognised the language of the general community and targeting the audience. Positions open to the general community should use terminology that appeals to the general community. One male job service provider noted...

“My male clients flick through a pile of job ads and look at each one for a brief few seconds. It’s about having a job title and blurb that grabs them in those brief few seconds”.

This comment highlighted the task orientated nature of men in finding what they want as quickly as possible and acting upon it.

Many Volunteer Coordinators agreed that an opportunity to increase volunteer levels, male or female, was a worthwhile investment.

Project effectiveness

Male Volunteer Recruitment Drive:

The Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre male volunteer enquiries increased from an average of 21 per month during January-February 2013 to an average of 48 per month between March-June 2013 during the project period. Number of men conducting volunteer work increased from 49 in March 2013 to 56 in April to 61 in June 2013. However the levels of female volunteers also dramatically increased, with 46 extra female volunteers recruited throughout the period. Bribie Island Neighbourhood Centre observed an instant increase in enquiries from male volunteers after a story and photo on the project in a local newspaper. Male volunteers increased from 26% prior to 33% after the release. Centacare Community Services Caboolture received minimal male volunteer enquiries in January to April, however this increased to 5 in May and 6 in June. Centacare identified referrals from Job Service Agencies and Centrelink as an additional strategy used and 1 Job Service Agency stated the project made them more aware of the resources available for their clients.

Other project participants that responded via the online survey observed no or marginal increases in male volunteering. These participants only used word of mouth or removed feminine jargon from position descriptions as a recruitment strategy.

A Facebook page was established to promote volunteering opportunities to men with limited success. Studies into social media marketing indicate that more women than men utilise Facebook.

Male Volunteer Workshop:

Men who attended the workshop indicated that their primary motivation for volunteering was the satisfaction of helping others. Other responses included:

- Giving back to the next generation after retiring.
- Belonging – finding a “place”.

- Owning the experience – it’s yours because you choose to give it
- Putting extra experience on their resume
- Sharing experiences with others and having stimulating conversation

There was some discussion about the role of men being unclear since women’s liberation and previously men were seen purely as providers. It was helpful for men to gain some definition about themselves in this context. Men identified themselves as:

- being solution focused
- needing a project
- being less emotional and therefore more practical
- liking a “champion”
- being “fixers” (although it was later recognised that this was sometimes a roadblock for men)
- having honour and integrity.
- having strengths as fathers that were in being authoritative, effective in discipline and demonstrating good boundaries.

Feedback from the workshop indicated that those who attended were attracted to the idea of a male –only workshop. They believed that the male facilitator delivered valuable content and they had experienced greater definition of their role as a man and believed future workshops should concentrate on male roles.

Male clients:

The Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre observed an overall increase in men contacting the centre from January to June 2013, seeking support for themselves and their families. 1182 men contacted the centre in January, rising sharply to 1439 in March and finally peaking at 1485 for the month of June (the highest ever recorded for the centre in its 25 year history). Project participants that experienced no increase in male volunteers saw no increase in male clients seeking support for themselves and their families.

Project Observations

Despite an explanation of the research supporting the need for the project there was some resistance or lack of involvement from organisation representatives. Their responses indicated they had concerns about making changes to their work in order to have a more male inclusive approach to volunteering. 80% of the paid workforce of Community Services is made up of women. Many don’t see a need to change that as long as women and children are being supported and some expressed outright suspicion of men wanting to be involved. As one male steering group member put it:

“Do I act upon feminist principles? No. Do I feel the oppression of being a woman and being denied rights? No. Do I understand what feminism means from an academic level? Yes. It is the same for men. Women are acting from a feminist framework in community services to support women. They may understand from an academic perspective what it means to operate from a masculine framework. But they don’t understand what it means to act upon the principles of it to support men.”

Organisations that utilised local media and referrals from other agencies achieved the greatest results in terms of male volunteer recruitment. Newspaper stories along with accompanying photos of men attracted immediate enquiries from both men and women. Many of these enquiries lead to male volunteer placements. These organisations also recorded an increase in male clients seeking support for themselves and their families.

Men involved in the steering group offered valuable insights for improvement however numbers waned in the last months of the project. In the initial meetings men stated they liked “less talk, more outcomes” and they believed community services hosted too many meetings that didn’t achieve anything. Men indicated that their strengths were in being more practically orientated and prefer getting in and doing the work rather than talking about it. A similar sentiment was expressed by men attending the workshop who wanted to work with

families and children. If community services are to work in more male inclusive ways there needs to be a careful balance between “slowing men down” to the point they become disinterested and having men eager to jump too quickly to solutions. This is particularly important as men engage with families in the community in their volunteer work.

Men engaging with community services have often come from sectors with very different management structures than community services. One male volunteer (with a background in risk management in the Banking Sector) highlighted the enormous difference between working in management structures with hierarchical organisation structures and individual decision making to “bottom up” organisational structures that emphasised collaboration and consultation. From his perspective, Community Work seemed a lot more fragmented and had less focus on productivity.

Research into masculine and feminine management styles must be noted at this point, particularly the work of Eagley and others who found the main difference in management styles in men and women were that women were more democratic, while men were found to generally be more autocratic.¹¹¹² Many non-profit organizations take a feminine style of leadership approach when handling paid and unpaid staff. They tend to encourage participation among group members, show flexibility, and maintain a non-hierarchical work environment¹³

The reason why Community Services, in particular Neighbourhood Centres have adopted more feminine styles of leadership in Australia may have a historical basis. In her paper “Mapping Australia’s Neighbourhood Centres”, Lecturer Donna Rooney states:

“While a few isolated centres were in operation in the 1960’s, they are said to have amassed alongside the women’s movement in the 1970s (Golding et al. 2008; Henry 2000). This development was fostered by the considerable legislative reforms of the Whitlam era’s socially progressive government. At this time, reforms reflected an ideological shift in the way human services were provided and organisations espousing community development approaches began to appear alongside older benevolent institutions”¹⁴.

McMahon notes that even from earlier periods in Australian history, female social activists from the first wave of feminism were instrumental in social welfare.¹⁵ The predominate role that women have played, and continue to play in community services have an obvious role in their management structures that are obviously different than more male dominated sectors.

The “Engaging Men in Moreton Bay” project raises many questions about how feminine management structures incorporate the task-orientated strengths of men. Such questions create tension in Community Services because on the surface they appear based on gender stereotypes and an assault against the underpinning values of the sector. However throughout the “Engaging Men in Moreton Bay” project men recognised unique strengths within themselves that can greatly benefit families and children. Uniqueness cannot exist without the recognition and acceptance of difference. Community Services need to wrestle with the tension between avoiding gender stereotypes whilst acknowledging the differences that men express

¹¹ Eagly, A; Makhijani, M.G.& Klonsky, B.G. (1992). "Gender and the effectiveness of leaders: A meta-analysis". *Psychological Bulletin* 111: 3–22.

¹² Eagly, A; Karau, S. J., & Makhijani, M. G. (1995). "Gender and the effectiveness of leaders: A meta-analysis". *Psychological Bulletin* 117: 125–145

¹³ Questioning the notion of feminine leadership: a critical perspective on the gender labeling of leadership, Yvonne Due Billing & Mats Alvesson, *Gender, Work and Organization*, 7(3), 2000, pp 144-157

¹⁴ Rooney, Donna (2011). "Mapping Australia’s neighbourhood centres." *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* 51:2

¹⁵ McMahon, Anthony (2003) Redefining the beginnings of social work in Australia. *Advances in Social Work and Welfare Education*, 5 (1). pp. 86-94.

about themselves and how they believe they can uniquely support families and children. As Community Services recognise and embrace the general differences in the skills of fathers and mothers, they can offer a more diverse and holistic service to families.

The “Engaging Men in Moreton Bay” project highlighted that as Community Services become more intentional about accepting and embracing the unique strengths men have to offer, the more their services and the community will benefit. Community Services that wholeheartedly adopted the project saw an increase in male volunteers and males seeking support for themselves and their families. Equally as important, men of the project felt a sense of satisfaction about themselves in volunteering to assist families and children. The flow on effects to their own families cannot be underestimated and is subject for further exploration.

Example: Male Orientated Volunteer Position

Description – Family Support

Mission Statement: “Enabling and encouraging individuals and families to take informed control of their own lives and together enriching our community.”

Position Title: ~~Family Support Visitor Volunteer~~ **Mates and Families Volunteer**

Type of Position: Volunteer Hours as agreed

Purpose of the Role: Provision of outreach support to families with needs in relation to parenting and related issues.

Organizational Environment:

Your Organisation..... is a not for profit community owned and operated organisation for individuals and families in thecommunity. The Centre responds to personal and community needs within a safe and welcoming environment through our focus areas that provide a flexible range of activities, supports and information.

Your Organisation..... operates in accordance with its Mission Statement, Policy and Operating Principles. All staff and volunteers will adhere to Privacy and Confidentiality requirements and a Code of Conduct. Volunteers are invited to actively participate in organisational planning and development.

The Family and Individual Support (FIS) focus area aims to strengthen the overall capacity and well being of families and individuals through the provision of support, advocacy and intervention options within *Your Organisation.....*

The Mates and Families Volunteer reports to the Family Support Worker of the *Your Organisation.....*

Key Responsibilities:

- Under the guidance of the Family Support Worker, to support, educate and empower families through a confidential, strength-based approach to create healthy family relationships **within a nurturing environment** utilising the **unique parenting skills that men bring to the role.**
- Under the direction of the Family Support Worker, to facilitate the establishment of purposeful communication with supports and networks for the families to ensure appropriate ongoing assistance.
- Maintain a commitment to administration tasks, skills development **and self care** and **looking after yourself.**

Duties:

- To develop a supportive relationship built upon individual strengths. Have unconditional regard for families and assist them with their parenting and/or related issues and to reach their goals.

- To visit the family each week in order to help the family through modelling appropriate behaviours, educating and empowering the family to make positive choices.
- To encourage families to develop support networks, create and maintain friendships and attend activities for their own and their children's benefit.
- To offer practical help and support to attend appointments that are related to the case plan and goals as set out.
- To maintain case notes, records and provide feedback to the Family Support Worker to ensure the effectiveness of the Program
- To be aware of and alert the Family Support Worker of any issues in relation to child abuse, self-harm or harm to others.
- Participate in regular debrief & 6-weekly formal check-in with the Family Support Worker.
- Participate in monthly skills development workshops and initial volunteer training.

Requirements:

- Demonstrated knowledge of Social Justice Principles and the ability to support families in an empowering, strength-based way.
- Experience in parenting
- Drivers license
- Blue Card
- 1 year commitment
- Able to volunteer within the hours of 9am and 4:30pm

Example: Male Inclusive Volunteer Position

Description – Emergency Relief or Referral

Position Title: Intake Support Volunteer (Men and Women needed)

Type of Position: Volunteer hours as agreed

Purpose of Role:

- Under the guidance of the Intake and Response Coordinator to provide assistance as required to support an integrated response for clients.

Key Responsibilities:

- Respond to clients in crisis
- To assist with research, referral and follow-up in response to client's immediate needs
- ~~Maintain a commitment to Perform~~ administration tasks, ~~skills development~~ participate in ongoing training and ~~self care~~ to looking after yourself


Duties:

- ~~Assist in the provision of support to clients by facilitating appropriate referral pathways and undertaking follow-up as required. Listen to clients in crisis and offer suggestions on ways they can help themselves – using the networks our centre utilises~~
- Maintain effective working relationships and communication processes with internal and external services and stakeholders.
- Maintain up-to-date client and statistical data
- Participate in regular debrief & 6-weekly formal check-in with Intake Supervisor
- Attend monthly skills development workshops and initial volunteer training

Requirements:

- Internal and external training as identified by the Intake and Response Worker and/or the CD Manager
- Computer skills
- Drivers license
- Blue card
- Be able to distance yourself from client problems and not get emotionally involved – good personal and professional boundaries

Example: Male Orientated Volunteer Job Advertisement

Job Category	Visiting/Support	
Job Title	Mates & Families Volunteer *	
Time(s) required	1 to 2 hrs between 9am-4:30pm weekday	Male clients and volunteers more available outside of work hours
Days Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mon <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tue <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thu <input type="checkbox"/> Fri <input type="checkbox"/> Sat <input type="checkbox"/> Sun	
Job Details	 <p>We are seeking men to be "Mates and Families" volunteers in our Family Support program. We recognise that men bring unique strengths to this role as fathers and grandfathers. "Mates and Families" volunteers will visit families with children to help educate and guide parents in the areas of positive discipline, behaviour, routine, development, communication and emotional management.</p>	
Recruitment Start Date	1/01/2010 (This is also the date the job will appear on the web)	
Minimum Commitment	12 months	Is the job part of an Event ? <input type="checkbox"/>
Job Status	On Hold	Is the job part of a project ? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Skills required for this job (max 250 characters):



Life experience, particularly fathering skills. Practical ideas for household management. Understanding of parenting and child development.

Characteristics required for this job (max 250 characters):



Non-judgemental person with good listening skills. Encourage others to solve their problems themselves. Able to communicate in a clear manner. Someone who non-judgemental, gives equal access to all and has a passion to see families thrive using their strengths.

What benefits/skills will the volunteer gain by undertaking this job (max 250 chars)?



Groundbreaking opportunity to change community perceptions about men and families. Experience in the community sector. Satisfaction of helping others. Specialised training for men provided as well as regular support.

Engaging Men in Moreton Bay Media Release

Community Service organisations are putting out the call for men to volunteer as part of Moreton Bay wide initiative. The “Engaging Men in Moreton Bay” project is currently being rolled out across the region and concentrates on the unique skills men bring to supporting families.

“Men are involved more than ever in parenting their children”, states project co-ordinator Chris Mundy. “We want to recognise that men make an important contribution to their own families and can bring that experience and wisdom to support parents and children in their community”.

Community organisations, such as the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre, Bribie Island Neighbourhood Centre and Deception Bay Neighbourhood Centre, are encouraging men to volunteer. Volunteer opportunities are numerous including programs that visit parents, mentor children, facilitate support groups, provide emergency relief, bargain shops, community education and financial advice. Specialised training for men in community services will be provided.

In 2012, the Fair Work Ombudsman found that over 80% of employees in community services were female and significantly higher proportion of females volunteered than males. “Many men in our community are reluctant to seek personal and family support because they struggle to connect with services that aren’t catering for them”, states Chris. “We basically need more men to be involved so we can offer services that will support all genders and family types in our community. Men have so much to offer and we want to change the stereotype that working with families and children is ‘women’s work’”.

Men who are interested in volunteering in community support can contact the Volunteer Coordinator at their local Neighbourhood Centre for more details or visit www.prnc.org.au/community/engaging-men for a full list of project partners.

We thank the following partners for their participation in this project:



Proudly supported by

Moreton Bay
Regional Council



Places to send: Quest Newspapers, Local Community Newsletters/Newspapers, Political Offices, e-Mailing Lists, Local Church bulletins, Men’s Sheds.

Neighbourhood centres calling for more male volunteers



Darrell Marriott and Michael Daniel working at the Bribie Island Neighbourhood Centre. Photo Vicki Wood / Caboolture News

BRIBIE Island's volunteer centres need more men like Darrell Marriot.

The Bribie Island and District Neighbourhood Centre volunteer has been helping out for nine years, in between time at Global Care Bribie Island and other charities. He said it was important for men to be involved because "sometimes a male just needs to talk to a male".

"I think it's something everyone should do," he said. "A lot of people don't even know about it."

The neighbourhood centre is one of several in the region behind a push to attract more men to community services. The Engaging Men in Moreton Bay Volunteer Project aims to increase male volunteer numbers, and hopefully client numbers as a result.

Bribie neighbourhood centre co-ordinator Cecelia Taylor said about one quarter of the centre's volunteers were male, but she was only too happy for that number to increase.

"I think if men don't see that there's men here they're not going to feel like they belong," she said.

"Gender is important; people are going to feel more comfortable when there's both genders."

In 2009, a neighbourhood centre analysis of Men's Needs in Moreton Bay revealed that many community organisations had trouble getting men through their doors as volunteers and clients, despite many men needing assistance. EMMBV project co-ordinator Chris Mundy said the initiative, which started late last month, was about breaking down barriers that stopped men from volunteering. He said everything from long work hours to a perception that community services were for women contributed to the low rate of male volunteers.

"I think in this day and age there's an increasing awareness that dad plays an increasingly important role in families," he said.

"That's why we need more men involved in volunteering."

The male volunteer shortage doesn't extend to other sectors such as sporting groups, leading Chris to believe a change of approach will help bring in more numbers.

The Bribie Island and District Neighbourhood Centre's next volunteer intake is April 9 and 10, 9am-3pm. Phone 34088440 by April 8 for more information.

Moreton Bay region finds engaging way to break tradition around women's work



Neighbourhood centres across the Moreton Bay region are launching a new program to engage men. *Source:* Quest Newspapers

A new men's program in the Moreton Bay region is aiming to break the stereotype that working with families and children is women's work.

Co-ordinator Chris Mundy is rolling out the project Engaging Men in Moreton Bay with the help of Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre, Bribie Island Neighbourhood Centre and Deception Bay Neighbourhood Centre.

“Men are involved more than ever in parenting their children,” Mr Mundy said. “We want to recognise that men make an important contribution to their own families and can bring that experience and wisdom to support parents and children in their communities.”

Volunteer opportunities include programs that visit parents, mentor children, facilitate support groups, provide emergency relief, bargain shops, community education and financial advice. Specialised training for men in community services will be provided.

“Men have so much to offer and we want to change the stereotype that working with families and children is 'women's work,'” Mr Mundy said.

Get in touch with the Volunteer Co-ordinator at your local Neighbourhood Centre or visit prnc.org.au/community/engaging-men for details on project partners.

Strategy seeks to harness skills men can offer

MEN'S parenting and mentoring skills are about to be put to good use across Moreton Bay Region.

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