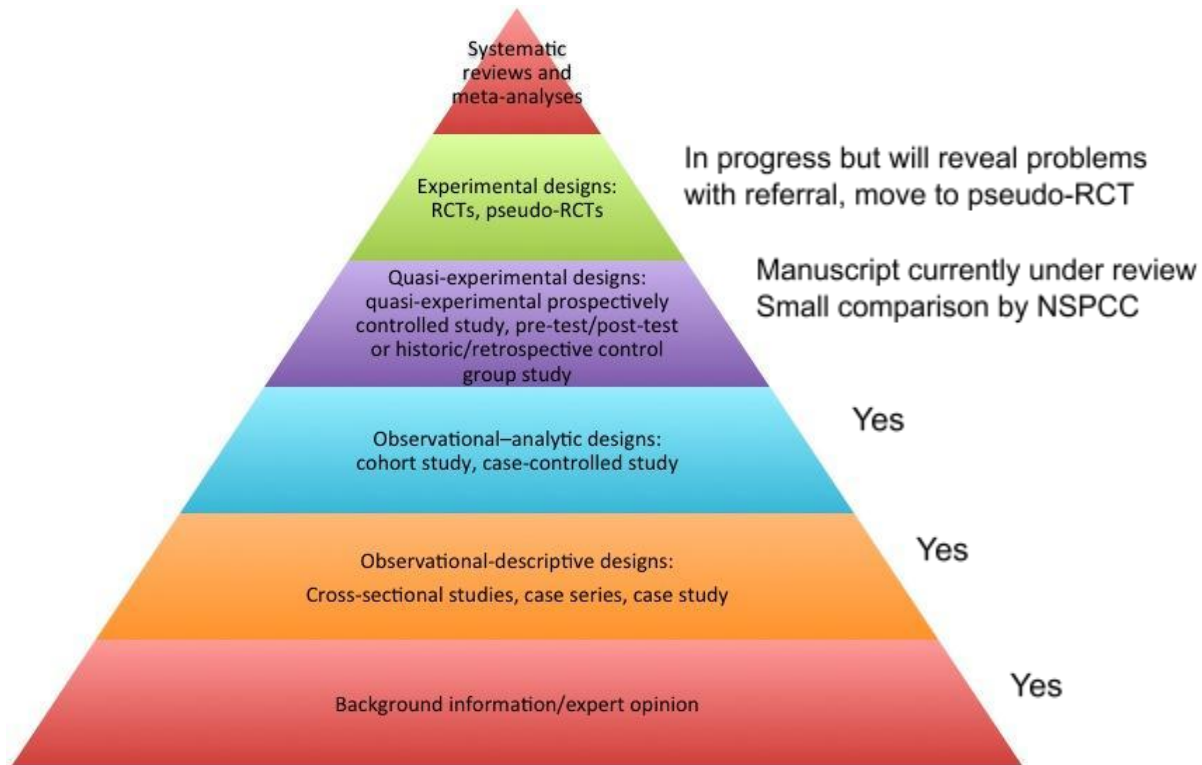


Caring Dads – Summary of Evidence



Caring Dads which was one of the first, and still one of the most highly regarded, intervention programs for fathers who have perpetrated violence in their families. *Caring Dads* programs have been started across many developed countries outside of Canada including: Australia, Germany, Sweden, England, Ireland, US, Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia and Japan. *Caring Dads* has also been profiled and discussed by many independent writers including UK's Fatherhood Institute, Canada's Centre for Research and Evaluation on Violence Against Women and Children, and the US's Child Welfare Information Gateway and Futures Without Violence sites, and it has been the subject of a TV documentary show in Germany. Independent evaluations and reviews of *Caring Dads* have been completed by Emerge in the US, NSPCC and London Probation in the UK, Diakonie Düsseldorf in Germany and by the University of Melbourne in Australia. The figure above shows the progression of evidence for the program. Some of the key studies and findings are summarized below.

Papers and studies that established the foundation for *Caring Dads*

Early studies of *Caring Dads* aimed to determine if there was a need for the program and if there was a match between the aims, goals and philosophies of the program with the issues that were being faced by men and their families. Early work also established the principles that form the foundation of *Caring Dads* and consider how these principles might help to change practice in work with fathers. The foundations of

Caring Dads are what resonated with other organizations and communities, contributing to its spread across countries.

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Evaluations of Caring Dad that have used observational-descriptive and observational-analytic designs

A number of studies have examined change in men who have completed the Caring Dads program. These studies have used a range of methods including self-report and interviews of men, their partners and their children and examination of systems and process of referral and retention into the program. A number of these studies have been completed by independent research teams. It is clear that fathers are satisfied with the program. Results from 89 fathers who attended the program following a referral from child protection services found that 89% were either very satisfied or satisfied with the program, 97% would recommend CD to another father in a similar situation and 95% said that attending the program made them a better parent to their child. To summarize, fathers who complete Caring Dads generally show positive change in a range of outcomes including: hostility and over-reactivity to children, respectful treatment of children's mothers; parenting stress, anger and emotional dysregulation, ability to identify the impact of their aggressive and abusive behavior on their children, and child-centredness. Interview data confirms that men enjoy the program and refer to using tools and ideas from the program to improve their parenting. Interviews with men also find that shifts in men's attitudes and treatment of children's mothers is more difficult can lag behind changes in parenting. Reports from mothers and children show that participation in Caring Dads is associated with reduction in men's use of domestic violence, emotional dysregulation and exposure of children to adult conflict. Interviews confirm these findings but also point to the importance of the coordinated management that is built into Caring Dads to ensure appropriate response to the minority of fathers who are not making change or who quick return to the "old ways" after the program.

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- Jenney, A. & Scott, K. The provision of specialty DV parenting intervention within child protection settings: outcomes and practice applications. IFSW 2020 Conference (online). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxpyxP4z9fs&feature=youtu.be>
Posted July 15, 2020 with 69 views to date.

Evaluations of Caring Dad that have used experimental designs

Conducting experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations of interventions for vulnerable populations is challenging as outcomes need to be compared to a group of families who are either randomly assigned to not receive intervention (experimental) or who do not receive intervention for another reason (often because they are on a waitlist). So far, Caring Dads has been evaluated in a quasi-experimental manner, against a waitlisted control group. Results have found that fathers who complete the program, as compared to those who have not, show significant reductions in subsequent domestic violence and child maltreatment, as reported by children's mothers and in child protection re-referral records. Our most recent study, completed in collaboration with the Child Welfare Institute at CAST, we explored outcomes associated with care and recidivism. We found that, in 11 cases, three in the intervention group (3.6%) and eight in the comparison group (8.1%), children within the family were taken into permanent care of the state, a difference that was non-significant across groups (mostly as a result of very low numbers). Re-referral outcomes, examined for all files where ongoing father-child contact was legally and practically possible (i.e., children were not in protective custody and had not definitely ended contact with their fathers), rates of verified re-referral rates among fathers who completed intervention were significantly and substantially lower (20.5% of cases) than that for the comparison group (36.0%).

Scott, K.L., et al., (submitted). Caring Dads intervention program for fathers who have caused harm: Quasi-experimental evaluation of child protection outcomes over two years.

McConnell, N., Barnard, M., & Taylor, J. (2017). Caring Dads Safer Children: Families' perspectives on an intervention for maltreating fathers. *Psychology of violence*, 7(3), 406.

