

Session 8: Sharing Child Care Responsibility



8.0: Introduction

Participants | Women and Men separately

Objectives |

1. To reflect on the time men and women dedicate to caring for and shaping their future.
2. To identify how men and women can be more involved in family life
3. To promote reflection and increase awareness about gender differences in terms of caregiving and caring relationships.
4. To improve men's self – confidence and efficacy in care giving.

Duration | 2 hours

Preparation | Review advance information about participants; revise/ expand questions accordingly and prepare questions on flipcharts.

Activity 8.1: Review of home practice

Time | 20 minutes

S T E P S

- 1** | Welcome everyone for session eight.
- 2** | Review home practice by asking individuals to share their experience (*Encourage them to discuss benefits and challenges about the discussion promise of having a non- violent home and how they practiced the new techniques of resolving conflict*).
- 3** | If participants had problems, ask others to suggest ways that these problems might be overcome.
- 4** | Encourage participants to continue doing the home practice.

Activity 8.2: Fatherhood/ motherhood and care giving

Time | 50 minutes

Objective | To reflect on the time men and women dedicate to caring for their children and shaping their future.

Materials | Flipchart, markers and masking tape

STEPS

1 | **Provide** an overview of the session objectives.

2 | Draw four columns on a flipchart

3 | At top of the second column write 'women', at top of the third column write 'men' and on top of the fourth column, write 'Both'

4 | Ask participants to think of all typical household duties that take place on a daily basis and are usually performed by women, relating to child care. Write them in the second column as they are being said, until they are exhausted.

5 | Repeat the same step for the column 'men',

6 | In the fourth column, write 'Both' for activities that are done by both men and women as below

	Women	Men	Both
1.	Looking after children	Looking for money	Looking for money
2.	Digging	Paying Rent	Paying School fees
3.	Cooking	Paying school fees	
4.	Home Cleaning	Building/ house construction	
5.	Washing/ laundry		
6.	Taking children to school		

7 | Ask the participants to count the number of activities that women, men or both sexes normally do.

Use the questions below to facilitate a discussion

- Who spends more time in a day doing activities that relate directly to childcare? How does participation affect the parent-child relationship?
- What factors contribute to men's limited participation in child care?
- What are the benefits of men participating in childcare?
- What can be done to promote more equitable distribution of care giving in the households?

Close the activity by highlighting some of the following points:

1. *Most traditional roles associated with 'being a man' or 'being a woman' prescribe a small role for men in the care of their own children.*
2. *Fathers who are more involved enjoy more positive relations with their children.*
3. *Men can do many simple things to help redefine their role and build their skills in childcare, including:*
 - ⊙ *Spending time talking about each family member's needs and roles*
 - ⊙ *Working together with mothers – everybody benefits when parents work together to maintain the home*
 - ⊙ *Taking responsibility. This involves noticing what needs to be done, and planning when and how it gets done.*
 - ⊙ *Planning to spend time alone with their children. This helps to forge strong bonds and warm relations with children, understand children's needs and develop parenting skills.*
 - ⊙ *Avoiding authoritarian parenting and not relying on intimidation.*

Activity 8.3: Men, Women and Caregiving

Time | 40 Minutes

What the facilitator needs to know (You should prepare the required materials for this activity ahead of time)

- a) The father can respectfully remind individuals who want to place him in a secondary role that it is his responsibility to care for his baby and communicate with him/her.
- b) It is common to attribute to women the task of caring for people, animals and plants, as well as daily housework. Men are usually associated with caring for objects, like cars, electrical work in the house, painting the walls, repairing the roof, etc. However, this can be changed to allow men take on tasks associated to women.
- c) These cultural norms have deeply penetrated society and affect how parenting is understood and performed by men and women
- d) There will be resistance from some men to attempt to challenge the power they hold, especially by men in dominant social groups. These men perceive gender equality and sharing of domestic chores and child care-giving as a threat to their privileges and an attack on their way of life. Thus during the discussions be patient with participants and try using their own responses to help them discover the underlying challenges
- e) Give an example that illustrates how norms affect caregiving and encourage parents to take on norms that benefit the wellbeing of their families.

For example, Tom and Jessica, invited their friends, Moses and Simon, to visit a week after their wedding. During the discussion at the new bridegroom's home, Tom thanked his friends for working during the preparation and requested them to be served with juice. Some of the juice poured on the floor and Tom requested Jessica to clean the floor using one of his t-shirts. Simon realized that the T-shirt was actually the gift he had given the couple with USD 10,000 in its pocket to support the couple in the transition. Tom picked the t-shirt with the money and both of them (Moses and Simon) left in total sadness.

- f) How do you think the couple felt? (get about 3 responses)
- In the same way, God has given us children as gifts, for us to raise them well, educate, care and support them with positive discipline, in order for them to become very important people in our lives as parents and to the community. BUT, many of us treat our own children like rugs 'to clean the floor' and therefore never live to have the opportunity to receive the 'pounds and dollars', and the 'silver and gold' from these children.

Objective | To promote reflection and increase awareness about gender differences in terms of care-giving and caring relationships.

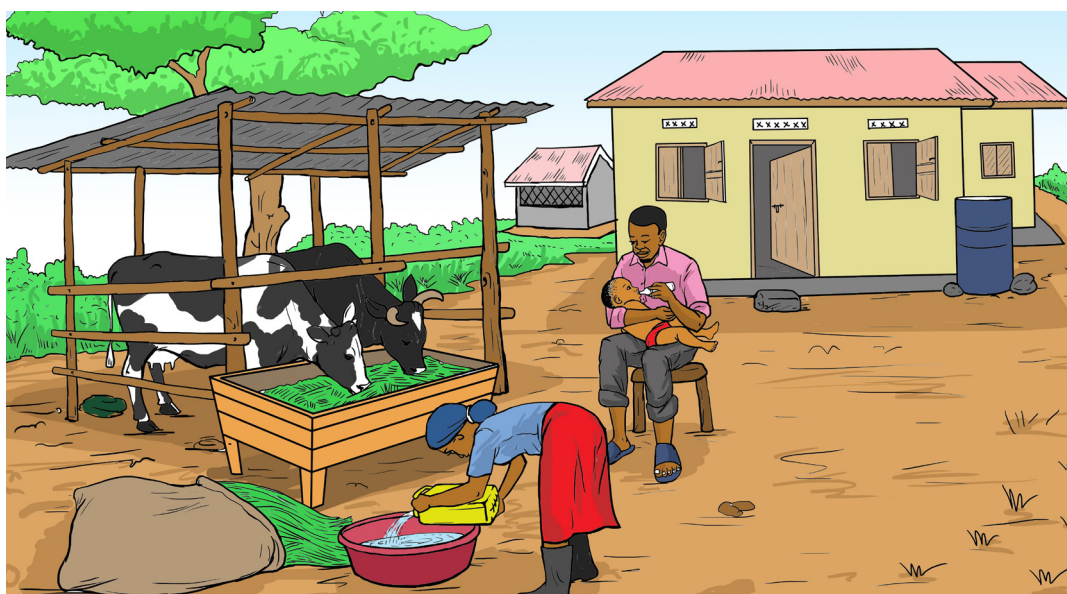
Materials | Two empty boxes, household items such as a radio, phone, plates, baby oil, clothes, hoe, electronic items, baby toys etc flipchart, markers and masking tape.

STEPS

- 1 | **Provide** an overview of the session objectives.
- 2 | Place the materials mentioned above on the floor or table in front of the participants.
- 3 | Also, place the two boxes labelled 'man' and 'woman' in front of the participants.
- 4 | **Ask** the participants to place in the woman's box pictures and / or objects of things that women care for, better.
- 5 | In the man's box ask the participants to put pictures and/ or objects of things that men care for, better.
- 6 | **Open up a discussion, exploring why;**
 - a) Some types of pictures and objects are only found in the man's box
 - b) Some types of pictures and objects are only found in the woman's box
 - c) Some types of pictures and objects appear in both boxes

Continue the discussion by asking;

 - a) Do you think that any man can properly care for the pictures and objects that were in the woman's box? How? And Why?
 - b) Do you think that any woman can properly care for the picture/and objects that were in the man's box? How? And Why?
 - c) What would you change to improve your own role in taking care of your children?
- 7 | Present the picture below and let participants share what they learn from them **(Provide 5 minutes)**



Close the activity by highlighting some of the following:

1. *Men and women should spend quality time everyday with their children.*
2. *Men are capable of caring for babies and can satisfy all their babies' needs (except for breastfeeding).*
3. *Gendered ideas about care-giving are historically and culturally constructed and passed on to new generations. We can now change in our setting because children actually belong more to the men's family than the women's families.*
4. *Just like men can care for objects, they can also make a unique contribution in caring for people, most especially their children.*

Activity 8.4: Home Practice

Time | 10 minutes

Materials | Flipchart and markers

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- 1 | For men, try to spend time alone with your children for at least one day of the week, understanding your children's needs and developing your parenting skills. Report, in the next session, the experiences and feelings about taking care of your children.
- 2 | Practice a new way of caring for children. For example; bathing the baby, washing the baby's clothes, supporting children with home work. If you do not know how to perform this task, ask for help.
- 3 | This week choose one different domestic chore or child care activity each day that you can do together as husband and wife for 3 days. It can be different each day.