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**Fatherhood, Masculinity and Anger: Men Undertaking Emotion
Work in Families**

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In memory of my father

Melvin Jackson Jarrell

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Preface and acknowledgements

My father, the son of a coal miner, was born in the Appalachian Mountains where men are quiet, aloof and quick to anger. After my grandmother died, and my grandfather could not cope with caring for five small children, my father was raised by an aunt in Texas before returning to the mountains as a young man. He met my mother during World War Two when he was based in Europe as a military policeman in the 101st Airborne Division of the American Army. They married, returned to the Appalachian Mountains, where my two brothers were born, and then the family came back to England in 1952. I was born in 1955 and my sister in 1960. As a child, living in a working-class Anglo-American family, the messages I received about my cultural identity were mixed and sometimes confusing. I was an English schoolboy during the day and then would go home and have meatloaf, mash potatoes and green beans for supper, play horseshoes in the garden with my father and play checkers with my brothers before going to bed. When my friends' fathers were growing leeks and cabbages in southern suburban England, my father would grow sweetcorn and pumpkins.

In addition to my confused cultural identity, I quickly picked up the idea that to be a man I would need to be tough and prepared to be angry, not talk about my feelings, engage in physical labour, marry and have children. I learned from my father that men were peripheral to child care. He would be at work all day as a compositor in the print industry, would spend his time at home gardening and decorating and, when he had the opportunity, he went fishing. I remember him being distant, both physically and emotionally, and yet kind and caring. I also have clear memories of

him patiently teaching me to fish. The intimacy of those times we spent fishing together on the banks of the River Thames gave me a clear message that my father loved me. My father was a good and consistent provider for my family but he was never part of the family in the same sense that my mother was. She was the homemaker and her husband and children were extremely well cared for physically. However, although I received love and affection from both my parents, the emotional centre of my family was a space in which family members often competed to have their emotional needs met. This was a space that could be characterised by tension and anger. My mother's anger was explicit and explosive and my father's anger was subdued, hidden and full of the potential for violence. As a child in this often turbulent and frightening environment, I developed the ability to avoid conflict, keep myself safe and, without realising, I developed a sense of responsibility for keeping the peace.

I grew into a quiet and aloof young man who was quick to feel anger. My education took me away from my family and its traditional values of 'men are men' and 'women are women'. The 1970s brought messages about 'women's liberation', equality in the workplace and the need for men to be more emotionally responsible in relationships with women and children. I entered the nursing profession and became a professional carer, married young and was a father of two children by the age of twenty nine. My partner and I took it in turns to stay at home and look after the children and keep house while the other worked. As a man, I felt that my lifestyle was the right way of living for me even though as a young father I was the only man with a baby at the One O'clock Club for mothers and babies in Peckham Park. Despite my chosen life-style, my life as a man and father continued to be influenced by the early messages I heard as a child. I struggled with intimacy in relationships,

was unable to talk about my feelings and often became angry when I felt frustrated, not in control or hurt and upset. I would be embarrassed when caring for my children in the company of 'real men' and sometimes felt that I should be at work full-time earning the family income.

In the late 1980s I left the nursing profession and trained as a humanistic counsellor. My training, and subsequent continuing professional development, required periods of personal therapy during which I was encouraged to experience my emotions and take responsibility for what I was feeling. As I became more aware of my emotional self I developed an appreciation for the feelings of others that had been denied me partly as a result of my social construction as a man. My developing ability to be empathic in relationships was encouraged by my reading of Carl Roger's (1951) *Client-Centred Therapy* and my deepening experiences of relationships with my family, friends, work colleagues and clients. This emotional maturation was accompanied by periods of shame and guilt as I realised how cut off I had been from my self and other people throughout my life and how much, in particular, my relationship with my partner and children had been affected. At home, the patient and consistent support of my partner helped me to develop as a father who was involved in all aspects of my children's care. I also became more aware of my anger and how it affected my family, and over a period learned to manage this more effectively by undertaking emotion work.

It was by continuing to develop a genuine and respectful approach to my own regard as well as other people's well-being that, at work, I shaped my professional self as a person-centred counsellor working with individuals and groups. My approach to working with groups was influenced by my reading of Yalom's (1975) *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy*; a book which instilled in me the importance

of creating the kind of atmosphere in groups where people feel safe enough to talk about their experiences of life. Through listening to the life-stories of my clients, I acquired a better understanding of how men's emotional illiteracy can limit their own fullness of experience and deny them equal participation in human relationships. I also developed, through listening to first-hand accounts, a profound appreciation of how damaging men's anger can be in relationships within families. And so, when provided with the opportunity to undertake a PhD, I decided to consolidate my personal and professional learning about the emotional lives of men by studying, within an academic context, fatherhood, masculinity and anger.

Although my initial thoughts for this study were about exploring what made fathers angry in families and how they managed their anger, I came to realise that the fathers who participated in the fieldwork framed their experiences around conflict avoidance. This led me to conceptualise what they were telling me, and my own personal experiences, as a form of emotion work. Hochschild (1983) contends that emotion work is characterised by managing our own and other people's feelings according to rules about how we should and should not feel in certain social situations. Calhoun (1992) argues that emotion work is something that women are expected to take responsibility for in families and Frith and Kitzinger (1998) further contend that emotion work is heavily gendered. Women, according to these authors, are expected to be compassionate, comforting and discrete whereas men are expected to be emotionally controlled and controlling, and in particular to use anger to maintain power and control in relationships. Seidler (1989) argues that men expect women to take responsibility for difficult emotions in relationships and Duncombe and Marsden (1995) contend that until men learn to take responsibility for their own emotions, women will continue to bear the weight of emotion work within

relationships. Seery and Crowley (2000) contend, however, that some women in families assume responsibility for emotion work and, at the same time, encourage fathers to become involved in promoting positive feelings in families by undertaking emotion work. And so this thesis, with its origins in the exploration of fathers' anger in families, builds on the notion that emotion work is a joint responsibility for mothers and fathers and that, indeed, some fathers are able to undertake a form of emotion work that helps them to manage their anger and contribute positively to the emotional well-being of their children.

I would like to acknowledge the invaluable support of the following people in the completion of this thesis: my academic supervisors, Dr. Rachel Alsop and Mr. Colin Creighton, who have patiently and skilfully guided me through the process of successfully completing a PhD. My partner, Sue Jarrell, for her unconditional love and support during the inevitable ups and downs of such a challenging project. My friends Keith Bremner, Hilde De Volder, Mike Hermanovitz and Graham Till - who have listened to me talking about this project, and supported me in its completion, during the past eight years. Former colleagues at the University of Hull Counselling Service: Linda Hastings, Sue Montgomery, Denise Townsend and the late Fay Simpson - whose interest and support helped to sustain my work through the early years of the study. I would also like to thank the fathers I interviewed - all of whom were courageous enough to tell me about their sometimes difficult and painful experiences of involved fatherhood.

In the preface to her book 'Housewife', Ann Oakley concludes by saying, 'Lastly, it is obligatory for me to thank my own family for the experience of my own

oppression as a housewife. Without this, I would never have wanted to write the book in the first place.’ And so, lastly, I would like to thank my children, Mike and Rosie Jarrell, for continuing to love and accept me as a ‘good enough’ father throughout their experiences of my anger and my developing ability to undertake emotion work. Without them, I would never have wanted to write this thesis in the first place.

1. Introduction

In the summer of 1983 I began caring for my baby son full-time while my partner undertook post-qualifying nurse training in South East London. One day, after my partner had left for work, I prepared breakfast as usual for my son, bathed him, dressed him, cuddled him, put him in his buggy and left for the shops - buggy handles firmly clasped in both hands. As I approached a gang of men digging the road I began to feel uncomfortable. Feeling a sense of shame, feeling less of a man, I switched to pushing the buggy with one hand, holding the left grip in my right hand as if detaching myself from my son and his care. Once past the gang of men I reverted to pushing the buggy normally, enjoying my son's company as we went shopping together.

It would be many years before I began to understand the sense of self that contributed to my difficult feelings as we walked past that gang of men. And many years before I could begin to articulate a sense of my own masculinity that was not ashamed of being soft and caring in front of other men. Over the last twenty five years I have been involved, with my partner, in raising my two children. I have also worked in Health and Social Care as a Nurse, Counsellor and Social Work Educator. As a result of my personal and professional experiences my curiosity has grown about masculinity, power and relationships culminating in undertaking a doctoral study into fatherhood, masculinity, anger and emotion work.

The objectives of this thesis are:

1. To contribute to the contemporary agenda on research into fatherhood by focusing on the successes and difficulties of fathers being more involved in the intimate care of their children.
2. To contribute to the understanding of how traditional discourses on fatherhood and masculinity may affect involved fathers' ability to nurture children.
3. To consider how involved fathers manage predominant discourses on fatherhood, masculinity and anger within the home.

When I first began to think about this study I was not aware my thoughts were based on traditional discourses that resulted in a limited approach to defining fatherhood, masculinity and anger (and, indeed, the term emotion work was unknown to me). My feelings about not living up to traditional discourses were experienced as negative and difficult, even though being a more involved father and a soft and caring man felt right and appropriate. It was not until I began to read about poststructuralism, and in particular discourse theory, that I realised my difficult feelings were the result of powerful forces within discursive fields insisting I adhere to predominant discourses on fatherhood and masculinity. I had no conscious understanding that these difficult feelings were indications of points of resistance, and the associated possibility of a sense of agency, and were to provide me and my family with opportunities to embrace change.

Discourse theory, in short, deals with how identity is shaped by individual subjective experiences of language and cultural norms within societies (Foucault, 1981; Weedon, 1997). Some gender theorists have, according to Alsop, Fitzsimons and Lennon (2002), appropriated discourse theory as a way of deconstructing binary gender divisions in society and, in particular, work on discourse has been useful in understanding how fatherhood, masculinity and anger have been socially constructed (Lupton and Barclay, 1997; Lupton, 1998; Connell, 2005). This thesis considers the notion of discursive fields and points of resistance as significant aspects of discourse theory. A discursive field is defined as the way in which organisations and social structures compete to give meaning to the world through the use of language, social norms and individual identities (Weedon, 1997). Discursive fields operate at an unconscious level, or for some individuals more consciously, and are characterised by points of resistance. Points of resistance provide an opportunity for some individuals, through a sense of agency, to develop more personalised identities based on discourses that may have been subordinated or marginalised by more predominant discourses. For example, Swain (2006) describes how some boys are developing, in resistance to a more traditional form of masculinity, more personalised identities as young men who are caring, emotional and more able to participate equitably in relationships¹. The development of personalised identities as a result of being exposed to discursive fields is not considered a linear process and is often the result of a mix of discourses influencing individuals. The notion of discursive mixes indicates that an individual is subject to a

¹ Swain (2006: 334) resisted the invention of a new typology to describe the boys he identified as behaving differently. Instead, he preferred to consider the boys in his sample as responding in a personal way to their experiences of more dominant and persuasive masculinities. I have appropriated this term in preference to attempting to pigeon-hole the men who participated in this study. Although, for convenience, they are described as involved fathers, I have resisted calling them 'new men'. Their personal accounts speak for themselves within the context of personalised masculinities and men undertaking emotion work in families.

number of sometimes contradictory discourses competing for dominance within specific social situations and across the life course (Lupton and Barclay, 1997; Petersen, 2003).

My own sense that pushing a baby in a buggy past a gang of men digging a ditch was a shameful act is an example of a discursive field in operation. A powerful discourse on traditional masculinity was in evidence as men were portrayed, in my imagination, to be engaged in a physically tough occupation while their 'wives' were at home caring for their children and cooking their meals. The power exerted by this discursive field changed my behaviour as I reverted to a stance that traditional men often employ - pushing a buggy one handed in order to indicate a degree of uncomfortableness at being involved in childcare. Real men don't push buggies. However, also at play around this point of resistance was my awareness of a changing social norm that indicated men could be carers and participate more publicly in child care. My growing sense that this was my preferred life style motivated me to continue to develop an identity as a man and a father more involved in caring for my children. This personal journey was, and still is, characterised by an increasing awareness that my subjective identity as a man and a father is the result of a complex mix of competing discourses on masculinity and fatherhood.

Involved fatherhood is one of three discourses on fatherhood - traditional, emergent and involved - employed by this thesis as a convenient way of conceptualising approaches to fatherhood. Involved fatherhood is characterised by fathers accepting, at least, equal responsibility with mothers for the physical, psychological and emotional care of their children (Lupton and Barclay, 1997; Dienhart, 1998). This often involves men balancing work and home better and mothers developing opportunities for employment and

education. Although some authors contend (Smart and Neale, 1999) that the motivation for involved fatherhood often comes, for some fathers, after divorce or separation places demands on fathers to keep contact with their children, this thesis emphasises more positive motivations for fathers being more fully involved in the care of their children. Involved fatherhood is in contrast to a traditional fatherhood that locates the father as the breadwinner who is responsible, as head of the family, for discipline (Lamb, 1976; Warin, Solomon, Lewis and Langford, 1999; Zoja, 2001). Traditional fathers are often emotionally distant and rely on the mother for their own emotional nurturance as well as the emotional well-being of their children. Traditional fatherhood locates the mother within the family home with sole responsibility for child care and limited access to employment and educational opportunities. Emergent fatherhood, so called because it emerged as a major discourse during the latter half of the twentieth century, is a way of describing an approach to fatherhood that embodies aspects of both traditional and involved fatherhood (Benson, 1968; Pleck, 1977; Fein, 1978). Although emergent fathers may see themselves as being at the head of the family and predominantly responsible for income generation and discipline, they are also located more within the family and acknowledge child care as partly their responsibility. However, emergent fathers tend to rely on mothers to take primary responsibility for childcare and often act as 'mothers' helpers' rather than fully involved fathers.

A discourse on traditional masculinity insists that men are socially constructed to be rational, physically strong, competitive, aggressive and emotionally inarticulate (Brod, 1987; Morgan, 1992; Brod and Kaufman, 1994; Kimmel and Messner, 1998; Pease, 2000; Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2003; Connell, 2005). Men's emotional inarticulacy often

results in the use of anger and violence to deal with difficulties and maintain power in relationships (Kaufmann, 1994; Seidler, 1998). Because traditional masculinity is hegemonic in nature it often has a hidden and profound effect on the subjective identities of most men and so appears to be natural and legitimate. In particular, the use of anger by men in relationships is often perceived as natural and legitimate by both men and women. In order to challenge this assumption, this thesis conceptualises anger as a socially constructed emotion. Although it is commonly experienced as a naturally occurring spontaneous emotion, the sociology of emotions argues anger is a constructed response to social cues (Lupton, 1998). Furthermore, anger is gendered - men and women's attitudes to and experiences of anger being different because of their socially constructed gender identities (Brody, 1999; Shields, 2002; Seidler, 1994; Stearns, 1987; Stearns and Stearns, 1988). Brody (1999) and Shields (2002) argue anger is a socially constructed response to issues of power and control in relationships and men in particular feel they have a right to exercise power and control through the use of anger.

Anger has been a consistent theme within my personal experiences as a man and a father and my professional experiences as a nurse and counsellor. During my three decades as a worker in the helping professions anger has consistently appeared in the life histories and daily struggles of many of my clients – in particular the effects of male anger within abusive relationships and, more specifically, the effects of fathers' anger in families. A contemporary response to helping men address anger in relationships is to provide anger management training. This often takes a cognitive approach to recognising triggers and teaching avoidance or management techniques. However, I contend that the fathers who participated in this study were managing their anger by undertaking emotion work, a

concept that goes further than a cognitive and behavioural approach to managing anger. Emotion work in families means taking responsibility for the physical, psychological and emotional well-being of children by being actively involved in promoting positive family routines and experiences (Seery and Crowley, 2000). This encourages well-being and positive feelings as well as helping to manage difficult and painful feelings in a supportive and sensitive way. In addition to this sociological definition of emotion work I have incorporated a consideration of men's personal experiences of emotions and intimate relationships as a significant aspect of fathers undertaking emotion work in families (Seidler, 1995, 1998). The fathers who participated in the interviews and focus group discussions during the fieldwork had discovered alternative ways of maintaining discipline within the family that did not involve the use of anger. This does not mean to say these fathers did not at times feel angry or sometimes become angry. As the fieldwork progressed the fathers began to reflect on their experiences of anger and talk about their attitudes to fatherhood, masculinity and anger as well as some of the reasons fathers become angry in families.

Research into fatherhood during the latter half of the twentieth century focused primarily on the social construction of fatherhood and encouraged the progressive involvement of fathers in the care of their children (Benson, 1968; Pleck, 1977; Fein, 1978; O'Brien, 1982; McKee and O'Brien, 1982; Marsiglio, 1995; Lupton and Barclay, 1997; Dienhart, 1998). These studies provided examples of how the performance of fatherhood was changing across time in Western Europe and North America - changing from a predominantly traditional fatherhood to approaches to fathering that were more nurturing and inclusive. In addition, Gillis (2000: 227) provides an overview of the historical performance of

fatherhood and reminds us that the traditional discourse on fatherhood is a recent Western industrial invention, preceded by a more benevolent and nurturing (although patriarchal) style of fathering. Lamb (1987) illustrates the diverse nature of fatherhood across a range of cultures and, more recently, Nsamenang (2000) and Sideris (2005) provide examples of cultural performances of fatherhood encompassing discursive mixes of traditional, emergent and involved fatherhood. The above changes in how society thought about fatherhood were consolidated in the United Kingdom at the turn of the century by changes in thinking about social policy that encouraged fathers' involvement in the care of their children (Burgess and Ruxton, 1996; Burghes, Clarke and Cronin, 1997; Lewis, 2000).

Much research at the beginning of the twenty first century has shifted its focus from historical and cultural perspectives and is informed more by the changing function and structure of the family. For instance, Carbrera, Tamis LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth and Lamb (2000: 132) argue:

Participation of women in the labor force will likely to continue to rise during the next century. The extent of fatherhood involvement and responsibility in child care is also likely to increase. As men become integral to domestic and child rearing activities, they will take more responsibility for the organization and planning of their children's lives.

The nature of fathers' involvement and responsibility in families is debated by contemporary authors. The *Promise Keepers*, in North America, argue that the position of the father at the head of the family is essential for the health of society (Donovan, 1998).

Similarly, authors such as Christiansen and Palkovitz (2001) indicate the continued relevance of some aspects of traditional fatherhood and focus on the 'bread winner' role as still being the responsibility of the father. However, many research agendas continue to encourage the development of father-friendly social policies (Lewis, 2000) and seem to indicate a preference for involved fatherhood and challenge the idea of gender specific roles in parenting. Indeed, Lewis and Warin (2001: 1) argue:

A parent's gender is far less important in affecting child development than broader qualities such as warmth and kindness

Marsiglio and Pleck (2005) review the research literature on fatherhood in North America and find that contemporary research issues focus on whether father involvement can uniquely influence children's development, how fatherhood styles may contribute to gendered social inequalities and the influence of diversity on fathering. They argue, and I agree, that future research should focus on the study of fatherhood in relation to hegemonic masculinity, continued attention to cross cultural examples of fathering and how the politics of the reproduction of knowledge on fatherhood may contribute to social policy development and the attitudes of the helping professions and the general public (Marsiglio and Pleck, 2005: 250). Connell (2000: 32) argues strategic research directions into men and masculinities should include 'practical concerns such as boy's education, men's health and men's violence developing a more explicit knowledge of the process of change in masculinities.' Petersen (2003) continues with a discursive approach to the study of fatherhood and reminds us that the meaning of fatherhood is not fixed and should be considered as flexible and changing.

However, it is Connell (2005) who provides a location for my thesis within existing research agendas on fatherhood. Connell (2005: xvi) indicates:

This work [research priority] considers men's relationships to their children, especially as fathers; difficulties in traditional masculinities and the development of new models of fathering and family relations.

This thesis argues that the fathers who participated in this study demonstrated their abilities to develop intimate relationships with their children and undertake emotion work, despite the limitations and restrictions imposed by traditional discourses on fatherhood and masculinity. The changes they illustrated were closely connected to their desire to manage their anger in relationships differently to their experiences of their own parents. This resulted in their approach to issues of power and control and the expression of painful and difficult feelings in relationships being markedly different to the approach of more traditional men in families. This new perspective on involved fathering closely resembles the ideal discourse often associated with mothers – being responsible for the emotional well being of their partners and children – and, as we shall read later, illustrates some interesting and thought provoking shifts in family structures.

Lewis and Warin (2001) write about the emotionality of fathers and the importance of warmth, affection and sensitivity in their relationships with their children. However they stop short of writing about men undertaking emotion work in families, an issue I seek to address in this thesis. Brandth and Kvande (1998) consider how traditional masculinity

continues to place emphasis on the breadwinner and mother's helper roles in fatherhood and Gillis (2000) indicates a crisis of fatherhood characterised by absent fathers, a crisis in traditional masculinity and a lack of clarity about the father's role in society. A reliance on traditional masculinity as a prerequisite for successful fathering is challenged by this thesis as the accounts of the fathers interviewed provide evidence of a more genderless expression of parenting. Dowd (2000) indicates a new model for fathering and family relations that encompasses a discursive mix valorising traditional, emergent and involved fatherhood. However, perhaps the best example of a study that illustrates some of the key aspects of this thesis – fathers' relationships with their children, traditional masculinity and new models of fathering - is provided by Sideris (2005: 111):

In a remote corner of South Africa a group of men are negotiating more caring and equal relationships with their wives and children ... They are concerned how they treat women and children, reflect on their roles in family life, consciously attempt to create more equal ways of sharing domestic tasks and decisions, and explicitly reject violent ways of resolving conflicts.

Articulating my understanding of how fathers are able to undertake emotion work in families has been challenging. The accounts of the fathers interviewed will illustrate that this process of emotional involvement is far from linear. The process of acknowledging the damaging effect of anger on families, deciding to parent differently, managing often conflicting and contradictory aspects of masculinity, developing intimate relationships with children (despite the limitations imposed by a traditional discourse on fatherhood) and

undertaking emotion work does not have a logical order in real life, even though at times I have written as if this is the case.

In order to provide a conceptual framework for my argument chapter two considers the literature on fatherhood, masculinity, anger and emotion work within the context of gender theorising and, in particular, discourse theory. This chapter also includes an exploration of some of the literature on anger, intimate relationships and emotion work in order to provide a conceptual framework for further developing a definition of involved fatherhood that includes undertaking an extended form of emotion work in families. The development of involved fatherhood throughout the latter half of the twentieth century is explored with particular reference to fathers developing intimate relationships with children. The chapter concludes with a description of how traditional masculinity validates the use of anger and violence in intimate relationships and limits men's abilities to undertake emotion work.

Chapter three provides an explanation of the fieldwork methodology by locating it within feminist methodology and specifically considering the eclectic use of qualitative research methods. Ethical considerations are explained ahead of the development of the research questions and research design because during the design stage the sensitive nature of the research required attention to child protection issues and the health and safety of research participants and the researcher. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the research design (a combination of individual interviews and focus group discussions) and an account of the process of data analysis and thesis writing.

Chapter four begins the examination of the accounts of the fathers, a group of predominantly white, middle-aged, middle-class fathers who indicated they were involved in the care of their children. This chapter argues that a fundamental prerequisite for fathers undertaking emotion work in families is their ability to develop intimate relationships with children. The fathers begin their accounts by talking about fatherhood and intimacy and then each of the three discourses on fatherhood – traditional, emergent and involved – is considered within the context of fatherhood being a complex discursive mix. Three further perspectives on intimacy are explored - children choosing intimacy, intimacy with children changing over time and the genders of the parent and the child - before the chapter concludes with accounts of fathers undertaking aspects of emotion work in families.

Chapter five begins by challenging the idea that men are not able to talk about their feelings by providing accounts of fathers talking of their feelings about fatherhood. This theme is continued with a further explanation of the limiting effects hegemonic masculinity has on the emotional lives of men by considering further accounts of the fathers interviewed. The chapter goes on to consider hegemonic masculinity and its impact on intimacy in families and provides further accounts of fathers undertaking emotion work with particular reference to their discursive construction as men. The chapter concludes with accounts of fathers reflecting on their experiences of anger and how these experiences have motivated them to develop more personal expressions of fatherhood and masculinity.

Chapter six is introduced by fathers talking about anger and, in particular, reflecting on two aspects of anger that this thesis contends are particularly important in the consideration of fatherhood, masculinity, anger and emotion work - power and control in families and the

experiencing of difficult and painful feelings. The final section of this chapter provides two detailed discussions of fathers managing their anger in families by undertaking emotion work and brings together the themes presented throughout the three substantive chapters prior to a formal consideration of a new contribution to the concept of involved fatherhood in chapter seven.

Chapter seven concludes the thesis by first providing an explanation of my own personal learning throughout the course of this eight year investigation into fatherhood, masculinity, anger and emotion work. I then confirm the thesis's contribution to the study of fatherhood by describing a new contribution to the concept of involved fatherhood in which some fathers may manage their anger in families by undertaking emotion work. This thesis now goes on to begin this exploration of how fathers may manage their anger in families by undertaking emotion work with a theoretical consideration of the four main themes of the study: fatherhood, masculinity, anger and emotion work.

2. Theorising Fatherhood, Masculinity, Anger and Emotion work

During the course of the fieldwork I interviewed a father (participant 19), married with a five year old daughter and a two year old son, who was involved² in the care of his children. The following extracts from this interview illustrate a discursive mix in the performance of fatherhood and masculinities – a mix embodying performances of fatherhood and masculinity that are kind and caring as well as possessing the potential for the expression of anger and violence.

I make it quite clear that I love my children, I make it quite clear. I hug them, I kiss them and I play with them. You know, that physical contact that I think is required. And I think it is important that the children see me give my wife, or my wife give me, a kiss and a cuddle.

The feeling of anger is there but I don't think it comes out. If she [his daughter] will just not listen you just want to grab her and put her head through the door. But it would never come to that, of course.

Most parents would recognise the apparently contradictory sentiments expressed by the above father. How we can both love our children and then experience such extreme emotion that, if left unchecked, might lead to physical violence is a paradox of parenting

² This father's involvement in the care of his children took the form of being equally involved in their physical, psychological and emotional care. He would, for example, wash them, bathe them, prepare meals, read stories, play, listen and try to consider their emotional needs. He agreed this parental involvement with his partner by sharing responsibilities within the home and negotiating employment opportunities and responsibilities for income generation.

that challenges both fathers and mothers³. Discourses on fatherhood and masculine identities validating the expression of anger and violence produce a tension within families inhibiting men from controlling their anger. This thesis explores the apparent social acceptability of fathers expressing anger openly and destructively⁴ in families and the challenge provided by some fathers' everyday experiences of managing their anger differently. This anger control is not the result of a simple act of will but the consequence of a complex process of being more involved in family life. The process often begins with a decision to parent in a way that is different to their experiences of their own fathers followed by the development of an involved approach to fatherhood resulting in spending more time with their children as carers. For some men, this increased exposure to caring for children brings with it the opportunity to develop intimate relationships which increases their understanding of their children. This increased understanding provides the opportunity to be involved in the emotional lives of their children by helping them to address issues of power and control in relationships differently to more traditional approaches to parenting. The fathers who participated in this study were able to undertake emotion work, i.e. the enhancement of positive feelings and the minimisation of difficult and painful feelings in families, by developing intimate relationships with their children and increasing their understanding of them as individuals and as members of the family. All of this takes place within the context of a masculine identity antagonistic to the notion of men being able to

³ The capacity for women to experience the same contradictions is apparent in Judith Arcana's (1981) account of mothers' violence in her book *Our Mothers' Daughters*. Parker, R. (2007) provides an account of mothers' ambivalence toward their children that may result in feelings of hatred and the expression of violent feelings.

⁴ Anger is thought by some to be a useful emotion bringing about required outcomes in relationships. For example, an historical perspective on the social use of anger is provided by Rosenwein (1998) in *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in The Middle Ages*. A predominant assertion in this thesis is that anger is generally not useful in relationships and that parents should seek to minimise its occurrence.

care for children. A gendered discourse on anger contributes to the complexity of our understanding of this process.

This chapter presents a theoretical understanding of the above process drawing on a framework that became apparent as the fieldwork data was analysed within the context of reading a diverse literature on gender, emotions, fatherhood and masculinity. The chapter begins with a consideration of gender as a starting point for contextualising fatherhood, masculinity, anger and emotion work and then proposes poststructuralism as a primary intellectual tool for understanding how the possibility for change in gendered identities may be understood. Gendered anger is then considered within the context of intimate relationships and emotion work. The chapter goes on to provide an overview of discourses on fatherhood and how these may limit or enhance the opportunities for fathers to spend time with their children as carers, a prerequisite for undertaking emotion work in families. The chapter concludes with a view of how a hidden and powerful discourse on masculinity, hegemonic masculinity, influences the emotional lives of fathers by separating them from their emotional experiences of themselves and their families as well as validating the expression of anger through violence.

Gender

A discussion of gender at this point is relevant to this thesis because I am acknowledging that we live in a society divided along male-female gender lines which impact on what we do and how we make sense of ourselves in the world. Although the primary theoretical

perspective employed by this thesis is poststructuralism, and my contention is that we are socially constructed as men and women, this is only one of a number of theoretical approaches employed by gender theorists. Alsop, Fitzsimons and Lennon (2002: 13) write that the concern of gender theorising is:

.... to explain how we end up as gendered human beings, with a categorization as men or women, which we may be happy or unhappy with, but which in any case is one of the defining features of our subjectivity. What we are exploring, in exploring gender, is the binary division of people into male and female, a categorization that becomes fundamental to people's sense of their identity and carries with it associated expectations of patterns of behaviour.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide an exploration of the full and varied range of gender theories. Instead, this chapter goes on to provide a critique of poststructuralism and discourse theory - examining how discourse theory, in particular, can be used to explain how we become gendered beings and, in addition, provide a conceptual framework for understanding the experiences of the fathers who participated in the fieldwork.

A Poststructuralist Approach

Weedon (1997) explains that the principles of poststructuralism are grounded in attention to language, subjectivity and the language associated with discourse. By considering such factors gender theorising is able to challenge the language and cultural meanings and

systems that devalue women in society. Weedon (1997) explains that a structural approach to the use of language limits meaning to a fixed binary relationship between the word and the concept being named, or given *meaning* through the use of the word. However, by employing Saussure's theory of the *sign*, she explains (1997: 23):

Saussure theorised language as an abstract system, consisting of chains of signs. Each sign is made up of a *signifier* (sound or written image) and a *signified* (meaning). The two components of the sign are related to each other in an arbitrary way, and there is therefore no natural connection between the sound image and the concept it identifies. The meaning of signs is not intrinsic but relational.

Weedon (1997) argues that language, when approached from a poststructuralist perspective, may be understood as social and political rather than reflecting a natural state of affairs. The use of the words *woman* and *man* may then be open to different possibilities, as indeed would the words *fatherhood*, *masculinity*, *anger* and *emotion* work.

Weedon begins to explain how identity is developed by first identifying the notion of subjectivity (1997: 32):

'Subjectivity' is used to refer to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of self and her ways of understanding her relation to the world.

The importance of poststructuralism to gender theorising and the notion of subjectivity is that it locates identity in the realms of the imagination and provides an opportunity to challenge fixed meanings of gender identity; meanings fixed through a structural approach to the use of language. We make sense of our world in relationship to different and varying discourses or systems of meaning we are subject to over the course of our lifetimes.

Discourse theory and subjective identities

Weedon (1997:34) considers the formation of individual subjective identities by first describing how discourse is located within society:

Social structures and processes are organized through institutions and practices such as the law, the political system, the church, the family, the education system and the media, each one of which is located in and structured by a particular *discursive field*.

The concept of discursive fields was developed by Foucault (1981) as he attempted to make sense of the relationship between language, social institutions, subjectivity and power. Weedon indicates (1997: 34):

Discursive fields consist of competing ways of giving meaning to the world and of organising social institutions and processes.

Discursive fields operate at a subconscious level, as individual identities and lives are shaped throughout the life course, and at a conscious level, as individuals develop a sense of agency rather than being unconsciously subject to predominant discourses. This sense of agency is possible because of the notion of points of resistance within discursive fields that provide individuals with points of reference for their developing identities. Foucault (1981) argues, according to Weedon (1997), that points of resistance do not exist in isolation but are the points within discursive fields where predominant discourses exert power over individual identities (and where individuals with a sense of agency may resist the influence of predominant discourses). Weedon (1997) further explains points of resistance as the site where some discourses may maintain their dominance whereas other discourses may concurrently be marginalised or subordinated.

An example of the above, according to Weedon's (1997) reading of Foucault (1981), is the predominant discourse on sexuality that regards heterosexuality as the only natural and normal expression of human sexuality. This discourse has historically been enshrined within law, the church and the education system and has had the effect of marginalising homosexuality as a valid expression of human sexuality. Homosexuality has historically been perceived by society as a deviant and pathological discourse (Weeks, 2000). The predominant discourse on heterosexuality now has a hegemonic position in society with an associated deeply embedded system of meanings and practices that are difficult to identify, understand and challenge. It is within the discursive field of sexuality that individuals may be subconsciously subjected to these binary hegemonic sexual identities or, conversely, develop more personalised sexualities through a sense of agency that resists dominant

discourses on sexuality which marginalise, devalue and even, at times, outlaw homosexuality.

The notion of the discursive development of individual identities is incomplete without a consideration of power. Weedon (1997: 110) argues:

Power is a relation. It inheres in difference and is a dynamic of control, compliance and lack of control between discourses and the subjects constituted by discourses, who are their agents. Power is exercised within discourses in the ways in which they constitute and govern individual subjects.

The exercise of power within discursive fields is a primary influence on the development of subjective identities. Individuals may be shaped by the power of predominant discourses or may resist their power and, through a sense of agency, develop more personalised identities that feel more appropriate to the way in which they sense their place in the world.

As well as the development of identity, Weedon (1997: 110) goes on to argue that power is also at play in the structuring of relationships. This is apparent in relationships between men and their families. Traditional discourses on family relationships locate the father at the head of the family and the mother in the 'emotional centre'. Men in families are expected to be rational whilst women are expected to be emotional. The power exerted on individuals and families within discursive fields on gender and parenting, either within individual identities or the structuring of relationships, may result in some women and men finding it hard to resist traditional patterns of femininity, masculinity, motherhood and

fatherhood. For example, policy structures that emphasise the primary role of mothers as carers may ensure women stay at home and continue with feeling responsible for the care of children. Similarly, the experiences of boys, as they are bullied by peers and shaped by the educational system into developing traditional masculine identities, may ensure that some men continue to exercise their power in relationships through the use of anger and violence.

Poststructuralism, and the preoccupation with language and discourse, has not been universally welcomed by feminist theorists, and men studying masculinities, as the most appropriate tool to help us understand gender construction and power in relationships. Ramazanoglu (1993) provides a critique suggesting Foucault (1981) may undermine feminist practice by placing identity in the realms of imagination and ideas, explaining societal and relational structures in terms of discursive fields and by addressing power as intangible. This approach may detract from the real life experiences of women in areas such as domestic violence, discrimination and second class citizenship. Traditional fatherhood and masculinity take the form of concrete social practices that legitimise the use of anger in the exercise of power and control in relationships. Indeed, although employing discourse theory in the understanding of gender relations may be empowering it has its limitations. Bordo (1990) asserts poststructuralism may detract from the need for individuals to define their sense of self, organise politically and bring about change in societal structures and individual relationships. She also indicates that the notion of competing and conflicting discourses within discursive fields may detract from the very real material difficulties people experience as they attempt to make sense of themselves and their lives in relation to a number of different binary oppositions. Seidler (1989: 4) argues that a poststructuralist

approach relies too heavily on grounding identity in discourse and language, and in doing so diminishes the importance of the influence of individual experience on personal identity. Weedon (1997) argues that personal experience is an important aspect of challenging predominant discourses and this aspect of feminist practice is a consequence of, rather than a precursor to, a critical consideration of discourse theory. However, Alsop, Fitzimons and Lennon (2002: 238) suggest that:

We must be careful, however, not to be pushed into accepting a false dichotomy between material and discursive accounts. Accepting such dualism is to oversimplify a situation constituted by a complex play of interdependencies.

Although this thesis explores in some detail the discursive construction of fatherhood, masculinity and anger it also provides substantial material accounts of the experiences of fathers undertaking emotion work in families. I have found it useful to think in terms of the discursive construction of fatherhood, masculinity and anger in order to help me understand how the fathers who participated in this study were able to change their approach to parenting. Furthermore, a discussion of normative discourses on fatherhood and masculinity helped me to understand, for example, the feelings of guilt and shame that some individuals experience when they fail to live up to the demands of ideal discourses on parenting and manhood.

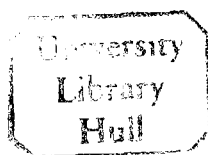
Weedon (1997) argues that discourse theory is fundamental to understanding how individuals and groups develop subjective gendered identities. She explains it is possible to influence and change predominant discourses in a practical way by deconstructing meaning

through paying attention to the use of language, researching historical and cross cultural examples of difference and utilising feminist research methods by, for example, encouraging real people to talk about their everyday experiences. These aspects of feminist research practice are apparent in my account of the fieldwork in chapter three. However, before turning to an account of the methodology, this thesis continues with a theoretical exploration of fatherhood, masculinity, anger and emotion work.

‘Women Are Emotional and Men *Have* Emotions’: A Critique

This section begins by considering the discursive construction of emotions, issues of power and control within relationships and the problematic nature of difficult and painful feelings. It then presents a brief consideration of the history of anger control leading to a contemporary valorisation of anger management. However, anger management in isolation is presented as problematic and the section continues by arguing that in order to understand how fathers manage their anger in families we need to increase our awareness of how some men approach intimate relationships in families and go on to manage their anger by undertaking emotion work.

Lupton (1998), in her consideration of the major ways in which emotions have been conceptualised and researched in the humanities and social sciences, describes emotions as either inherent or socially constructed. An inherent emotion is an internal experience and is often a physiological response to an event linked to impulse rather than thought. In contrast Lupton (1998:15) describes a socially constructed emotion as one that is ‘.... always



experienced, understood and named via social and cultural processes'. She goes on to argue socially constructed emotions are learned and are often the product of social institutions, social systems and power relations. Lupton (1998) provides shame and guilt as examples of socially constructed emotions and goes on to say men and women are socialised differently regarding emotion. In her 1995 study of forty one people in Sydney, Australia, Lupton (1998: 39) aimed 'to focus on people's personal biographies of emotional experience, their understanding of emotion and emotional management' together with ways in which they related emotion to their concept of selfhood. Lupton (1998) describes emotional people as empathic, compassionate, sensitive, demonstrative, expressive, open and capable of intense feeling, irrational and less controlled and goes on to say that women are perceived as emotional and men as unemotional. The concept of gendered emotions is apparent in other authors' accounts of men and women's experiences of anger (Brody, 1999; Shields, 2002; Seidler, 1994; Stearns, 1987; Stearns and Stearns, 1988) and this chapter now goes on to draw these perspectives together and considers men's anger from two perspectives – power and control and a response to difficult and painful feelings.

According to Shields (2002:140) anger is conveyed as a problematic emotion linked to human survival which prepares the body for focused activity and gives other people clear messages of intent linked to the exercise of power. Brody (1999: 201-226) argues emotions are closely linked to 'the interpersonal processes of power, status and intimacy and ... have been theorised to be the basic dimensions of human social interaction.' She argues emotions are gendered and men and women experience emotions differently. Men, according to Brody (1999), use power and the associated emotion of anger, to coerce whereas women use the emotions associated with intimacy in order to influence people.

She goes on to say men appear to value a sense of control in relationships more than women and avoid disclosure of emotions in order to maintain control (whereas women might avoid disclosure in order to protect the relationship). Brody (1999) suggests men also think disclosure of feelings risks retaliation by others and so appear to be more individual and have a 'secret inner life'. Men, in contrast to women, according to Brody (1999), may be involved in controlling emotions and utilise strategies such as impassive faces and distracting behaviours when distressed. Brody (1999) argues these emotional differences between men and women are socially constructed and change is possible. Despite this positive view, emotion is still generally perceived within the everyday experiences of men and women as gendered and authors such as Shields (2002) argue the dominant perception is still women *are emotional* and men *have emotions*. In particular, Brody (1999) argues although anger is perceived as a problematic emotion linked to human survival, it is intrinsically linked to power and control in relationships. She explains (2002: 140) 'power is the ability to get what you want; anger is the means to exercise power when faced with the loss of or the threat of losing what you have'.

Shields (2002) views anger from a social constructionist perspective and argues anger is elicited when there is a sense of loss or failure linked to a sense of entitlement. According to Shields (2002), anger is stereotypically thought of as a male emotion and is often directed towards someone when they are perceived as being responsible for a loss or failure. In addition to this, anger may be the result of a perceived infringement of a sense of hierarchy and entitlement. Shields (2002) argues, when commenting on gendered differences in emotion, anger is perceived as a typically male emotion and is deeply

implicated in the exercise of power. She goes on to agree with Brody (1999) that men and women weigh the consequences of expressing anger differently.

A popular perspective in Western society is men express their anger and women internalise it by worrying, withdrawing and blaming themselves. Shields' (2002) assertion that women are emotional and men have emotions resonates with later theorising in this thesis that men are socially constructed to be distanced from their emotional lives. This distancing from emotion is reflected in emotion language that describes, for example, men as 'having moist eyes' whereas women weep. The gendering of emotion results in women being encouraged to be peacemakers while men are expected to be 'manly' and stand up for what is right and control their emotions. In addition, women are expected to know how they are feeling, be able to name the feeling and express it appropriately as well as empathise with other people's feelings. Men, in contrast, are expected to be strong and not 'give in' to difficult feelings. Seidler (1994: 209) provides an insight into what may happen when men experience difficult and painful feelings within intimate relationships:

In heterosexual relationships men often learn to blame women for what they are feeling themselves, as if it is the women's task to take the resentment or frustration away. It is also because men learn to be constrained and to take pride in being able to put up with things that women are often left carrying the emotions for the relationship. This can confirm a sense of the man's superiority as he learns to see his partner as 'emotional'.

Seidler (1994) views this arrangement of angrily blaming women for difficult and painful feelings as an exercise of power and suggests if men were to take more responsibility for their emotions the 'emotional economy' of a relationship may become more stable and contribute to more equitable emotion work within families. According to Shields (2002), the gendered construction of men and women's emotional lives fortifies existing gender divides and unless we change the way we *do emotion* on a daily basis this divide will continue.

The management of anger at work and in the home

Changing the way men and women *do anger* has, according to Stearns and Stearns (1988), been the subject of continuous research and application. Historically anger has been problematic in the work place and in the home and has resulted in the need for approaches to anger control. Stearns and Stearns (1988) indicate anger at work has often been linked to a masculine hierarchy and management style that has exerted its power through anger. The conditions of early industrialisation contributed to the potential for conflict in the work place as populations struggled with new technology, work patterns and social proximity. The increase in the experience of anger in the work place contributed to early notions of home being a haven of peace and offering shelter and protection for workers returning from a hostile work environment; again a perspective considered later in this thesis as an entitlement of traditional fatherhood. This set of circumstances led to the introduction of standards for the control of anger in the work place. In contrast, according to Stearns and Stearns (1988), the domestic labour environment provided another example of the

gendering of anger as 'the mistress of the house' was expected to use persuasion and negotiation rather than anger to manage her domestic employees.

Stearns (1987) commented on the growing concern for emotional control in the home in order to protect the family from anger. Interestingly, early nineteenth century advice literature, according to this author, was not explicitly gender specific. It emphasised the 'haven home' and the need to protect families from anger but boys and girls were equally required to learn about emotions. Even so, these sources still indicated women were naturally free from anger whereas men needed to learn to control it. Boys were encouraged to 'channel' their anger and aggression in the competitive world outside of the home; a notion sitting easily with the attributes of a traditional masculinity encouraging boys and men to be competitive and aggressive and ignoring the potential for male violence in the home.

More contemporary approaches to anger control take the form of guidance on anger management⁵ encouraging emotional awareness and different techniques and strategies for minimising the occurrence of anger and its safe expression. Although anger management is important as a cognitive technique for controlling anger this thesis argues an awareness of how identities and the relationships within which anger is generated are equally as important. By understanding the social context, and the associated socially constructed identities of the individuals concerned, we can then go on to consider how difficult and

⁵ Guidance on anger management is available from The British Association of Anger Management (www.angermanage.co.uk) and publications such as 'How To Deal With Anger' (MIND, 2003). More specific advice for men is available through publications such as 'Managing Feelings: An Owner's Manual for Men' (Kundtz, D.J., 1990) and 'The Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum' (Hayes, E. and Sherwood, K., 2000).

painful feelings, often the cause of anger within relationships, may be generated. For some men, and for some women⁶, this may be a consequence, for example, of a perceived threat to power and control within relationships, a loss of entitlement or the difficulty with experiencing difficult and painful feelings and blaming others for them. It may be argued the social construction of men as men contributes to the way in which anger is generated as well as the way in which men manage their anger. Such an awareness is particularly important if more men become involved in the intimate care of children within the home space - a space historically the domain of women. In order to consider the management of anger within families it is important to acknowledge, according to my understanding of the accounts of the fathers I interviewed, anger management does not exist in isolation. It is part of a complex social process of being aware of personal identities, developing and maintaining intimate relationships, being aware of the structuring of relationships (with attention to issues of power) and the undertaking of emotion work.

Intimate relationships and the challenges for men

This thesis considers three aspects to intimacy particularly relevant to fathers: trust and understanding; appropriate boundaries; and sexuality. Jamieson (1998: 7-10) argues intimacy may simply occur by people spending time together and sharing information and feelings about each other. The latter may result in a deeper understanding of the other person's experience of life which in turn may lead to (1998: 8) 'not just cognitive knowledge and understanding but a degree of sympathy or emotional understanding which

⁶ Reiser (1999) undertook a study of fifty men and women and concluded that there are many similarities between how men and women experience and express their anger.

reveals deep insight into an emotional self'. She goes on to explain that this understanding extends further than an empathy which is based on being able to imagine another person's situation or experience because of a common cultural context. Intimacy is the result of being loved and trusted enough to share information with each other to an extent that allows a deep understanding – to really know someone. Jamieson (1998) also indicates the existence of trust in a relationship is a more fundamental dimension of intimacy than knowing and understanding the other person. As more fathers become involved in the intimate care of their children, spending time with their children and building intimate relationships, the opportunity to build trust and develop a deeper understanding of their children as individuals becomes more available. As will be explained later, this approach to parenting not only provides an opportunity for fathers to share the intimate care of their children with mothers but also challenges men to understand and manage difficult feelings in intimate relationships. As we shall read later, a discourse on traditional fatherhood locating men at the head of the family (and a discourse on traditional masculinity that constructs men to distance themselves from emotions and intimacy) does not contribute to the development of intimate relationships with partners and children. Although some fathers may be spending more time with their children as carers the demands of intimacy may challenge some men, particularly as the gendering of anger may result in them reacting angrily to events such as a challenge to their power or their role as fathers. In addition to this complex scenario, a father's construction as a man may limit the successful management of his anger as he firstly thinks he is entitled to be angry and then struggles with anger management, partly because, as a man, he thinks he has a right to express his anger and partly because he does not possess the necessary anger management skills. This thesis demonstrates that the fathers I interviewed had spent time with their children and

concurrently reflected on their gendered identities as fathers and men. This had provided them with the opportunity to respond to events within intimate relationships in a way that differed to how more traditional fathers may have responded. In addition, I discovered these fathers had become more familiar with their emotional selves and, as a consequence, seemed less likely to express their anger destructively with their partners and children. Instead they had entered into a complex process of developing intimate relationships within their families, increasing the level of trust and understanding and using this as a basis to undertake emotion work.

Developing trusting relationships with children does not remove the need for the parental use of power and control as children do need boundaries and discipline. Jamieson (1998: 65) posits:

A commonly identified problem of late modernity in conservative political rhetoric is a loss of parental authority. Parents can no longer rely on traditional authority (you obey because I am your God-ordained parent) but rather have to bargain, justify restrictions and demands, negotiating acceptance and respect from their children.

However, she goes on to stress (1988: 66) 'contemporary parents may play down the power they have vis-à-vis their children but parents are undoubtedly more powerful than young children.' This presents a dilemma for fathers, in particular, who may be subject to traditional discourses on fatherhood and masculinity engendering a sense of entitlement to control within families and a predisposition to exercise power through the use of anger.

This is further complicated by the difficult feelings engendered by conflicts being angrily projected onto others within the family rather than being owned, when appropriate, by fathers. As shall be seen later, many of the fathers who participated in this study made early decisions in their lives to parent differently to their own parents and their attention to issues of power within intimate relationships with their partners and children highlighted both the potential dilemmas and successes of men being involved in intimate child care and managing anger.

In addition to Jamieson's (1998) dimensions of intimacy, Seymour and Bagguley (1999: 1) suggest that for some, 'Intimacy implies close familiarity, close in acquaintance or association, often pertaining to sexual relations'. They go on to argue a broader definition (1999: 1) 'allows the term to also encompass non-sexual relationships such as those of parent and child' but despite this broader meaning the connection between intimacy and sexuality is still experienced as problematic by some fathers (Sharpe, 1994; Kirkman, Rosenthal and Feldman, 2001). A consideration of male sexuality and intimacy and the possible implications for fathers is beyond the scope of this thesis but it is important to recognise this aspect of men's lives may be problematic for fathers and their children. Some of the fathers with older daughters who participated in this study did experience uncomfortable feelings around their daughters' growing sexuality. Speculating on why the fathers I talked to felt uncomfortable about continuing intimate relationships with their daughters would not be useful here but, as will be seen in chapter 4, many of the fathers also restricted their contact with older daughters out of respect for *their* feelings; thus providing an example of their ability to undertake emotion work.

Emotion work in families

Gardner (1993: 22-26) offers a useful perspective on emotion work when he writes about different intelligences to which men and women have access. In particular, he writes about *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* intelligences. Intrapersonal intelligence, according to Gardner (1993: 24-25), is '.... access to one's own feeling life, one's range of emotions, the capacity to effect discriminations among these emotions and eventually to label them and to draw upon them as a means of understanding and guiding one's own behaviour'. Interpersonal intelligence 'builds on a core capacity to notice distinctions among others; in particular contrasts in their moods, temperaments, motivations, and intentions.' This distinction between internal and external worlds is utilised throughout this thesis as broader definitions of emotion work are considered. Research into fatherhood has identified the importance of fathers developing their ability to undertake emotion work in families (Dowd, 2000; Townsend, 2002). According to Seery and Crowley (2000), emotion work within families may be understood as relationship management by way of, for example, identifying joint activities; organising family schedules and environments; relaying information about positive feelings; utilising peace keeping-strategies designed to mediate angry/hurtful feelings and anticipating and preventing unhappy feelings. DeVault (1999: 53) provides an example of a mother undertaking emotion work:

The second example is of a white secretary who hurries home considering how to use the leftovers from a week-end pot luck. She pulls them quickly from the refrigerator and calls her husband to the table; he has half an hour to eat before leaving for his night shift job. Just before he leaves the house, she proposes a family

day on the weekend; she will cook something special if he will take them to the zoo. He grumbles, too rushed to think that far ahead; she takes a few moments to control her angry frustration and then settles down to play and read with the children, saving the dirty dishes until they have gone to bed.

This example of a woman undertaking emotion work in a family tends to focus on her use of her interpersonal intelligence. However, in order for this woman to successfully understand her family's needs, as well as her own, a degree of understanding of emotionality and intimate relationships is required. The above example assumes the woman is able to both understand what her family may need in order to enhance its well-being as well as be familiar with and able to manage her own emotions – it doesn't shed any light on how she may have been utilising her intrapersonal intelligence. For a man to have undertaken the same example of emotion work he would have needed to be both familiar and comfortable with the intimacy that might provide the knowledge of his family's needs. Furthermore, in order to manage his own difficult feelings he would need to be able to both identify them and manage them. The woman in this example appears to simply 'know' her family and 'manage' her feelings with a degree of intelligence many would assume to be natural for women. The above example of emotion work can only suggest the intrapersonal intelligence the woman is drawing on in order to enhance the well being of her family. It may also be argued she is not simply undertaking emotion work within the context of Seery and Crowley's (2000) definition, but also undertaking a form of personal work that may be described as anger management as she 'takes a few moments to control her angry frustration'. If we were to think about the above scenario from a different perspective, substituting the male and female roles, the story may read quite differently:

The second example is of a white bricklayer who hurries home considering how to use the leftovers from a week-end pot luck. He pulls them quickly from the refrigerator and calls his wife to the table; she has half an hour to eat before leaving for her night shift job. Just before she leaves the house, he proposes a family day on the weekend; he will cook something special if she will take them to the zoo. She grumbles, too rushed to think that far ahead; he immediately becomes angry and shouts at her before banging round the house and sending the children to bed without their bedtime story, too angry to sit and read to them. The children lie in bed and listen to him noisily washing the dirty dishes before slamming the backdoor as he goes into the garden to calm his anger by smoking a cigarette.

This example of a man and father responding in a traditional way to difficulties in relationships within his family emphasises the importance of the structuring of this thesis. Although it may not be unusual for a man to be involved in domestic routines and child care at the beginning of the twenty first century it cannot be assumed that he would possess the required emotional awareness to occupy the emotional centre of the family home. This thesis considers how some fathers have not only negotiated their physical presence in the home, as the above bricklayer seems to have done, but have additionally gone on to manage their anger by undertaking emotion work. They have been able to do this by developing intimate relationships with their partners and children and by, either consciously or unconsciously, managing complex and intersecting discourses on fatherhood, masculinity and anger.

Having considered a discursive perspective on anger, this chapter now goes on to describe how discourses on fatherhood over the last fifty years (the period during which the majority of the fieldwork sample have lived) have influenced the opportunities for fathers to spend time with their children and care for them both physically and, in particular, emotionally. The chapter concludes with a consideration of how hegemonic masculinity influences fathers' emotional lives, their relationships with their families and their subsequent ability to undertake emotion work.

The Discursive Construction of Fatherhood

In their book *Constructing Fatherhood: Discourses and Experiences* Lupton and Barclay (1997: 14) locate fatherhood as a complex discursive experience of identity:

The poststructuralist notion of the interrelationship between discourse and subjectivity, related contemporary definitions of masculinities and the current focus in the academic literature on the performative dimension of gender have implications for how the concept of "the father" should be understood (and by corollary, femininity and 'the mother').

The fathers who participated in this study, through their autobiographical accounts, demonstrated the way they thought of themselves as fathers and cared for their children was the result of complex intersecting discourses on both fatherhood and masculinity. Recent literature on fatherhood identifies three predominant discourses on fatherhood - traditional,

emergent and involved which are adopted by this thesis as a convenient way of considering the subjective identities of the fathers who participated in this study. Traditional fatherhood locates fathers physically and emotionally outside the family and the father's role is to provide materially for families by being the breadwinner (Lamb, 1976; Warin, Solomon, Lewis and Langford, 1999; Zoja, 2001). This discourse is linked, as we shall see later, to a discourse on masculinity constructing men as emotionally distant, rational and instrumental – a discourse also locating women as being central to nurturing and socially supportive relationships, particularly in the home with their husbands and children. Traditional fathers are not able to relate emotionally to their families and they spend long periods outside the family, returning only to be nurtured by their wives and enforce discipline over both their wives and their children, often through the expression of anger. There is a sense of entitlement with traditional fathers demanding respect for their positioning at the head of the household and the associated power and control.

Traditional fatherhood was the predominant discourse in Western society at the beginning of the twentieth century. With the advent of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s, together with changing patterns of employment, an emergent discourse paved the way for fathers being more involved with raising children and for the involvement of fathers in the home in a more connected way than traditional fatherhood allowed. Indeed, the emergent discourse allows for fathers being involved in childcare in the form of 'mother's helper', playing with and entertaining children, for example, while mother gets on with her domestic duties, or even, in some cases, caring for children in the absence of the mother through illness. During this period researchers began to identify and acknowledge the father as part of the family (Benson, 1968; Pleck, 1977; Fein, 1978) and subsequent authors developed the

notion of an emergent discourse on fatherhood by acknowledging the child care abilities of some fathers (O'Brien, 1982; McKee and O'Brien, 1982).

Involved fatherhood, a third major discourse, locates the father more fully in the home, sharing equal responsibility for child care with the mother (Formaini, 1990; Lupton and Barclay, 1997; Dienhart, 1998). This allows the father to be more involved with the intimate care of children in a way traditionally seen as the role of the mother - the physical care of children as well as paying attention to their emotional well-being. Concurrently, this involvement allows the mother to access work and educational opportunities in a way more traditional parenting arrangements often prevented. Involved fatherhood presents different challenges for men in the areas of, for example, responsibility, motivation and child care skills (Marsiglio, 1995) as well as in relation to their sense of identity as men (O'Brien, 1982; Lewis, 1986).

The diversity of meanings of fatherhood available to men and their families as the result of different discourses shaping different identities can be complex and confusing. As can be seen, there is no fixed meaning of fatherhood and no one way of being a father. Any individual man's experience of fatherhood depends on the culture within which he lives as well as the demands placed on him by the world of work and home. As Lupton and Barclay's (1997) thoughts on interrelated discourses suggest, it might be possible for a father who embodies a discourse on distant fathering to be aware of some of the benefits of involved fathering. This may be further complicated by coming into contact with a health and social care agency which does not encourage fathers to be involved in caring for their children and a mother who may be preventing access to childcare because of a discourse on

inadequate fathers which is suspicious of a man's motive for wanting to be involved in child-care. If the man is subject to a traditional discourse on fatherhood he may also embody some aspects of a discourse on masculinity constructing him as being socially and emotionally inarticulate; reinforcing the mother's view of his inadequate child-care attributes and abilities. However, the mother may be aware of the advantages for her and her children in allowing the father to be involved in childcare. This complicated mix of sometimes complementary and sometimes antagonistic aspects of parental identities does not seem to be an ideal environment within which to raise children. As shall be seen in later chapters, the fathers who participated in this study managed not only the complexities of multiple discourses on fatherhood but also their impact on their identities as men, particularly in the area of intimacy, emotions and anger control. The fathers who participated in this study grew up and learned about fatherhood during the second half of the twentieth century – a period in which discourses on fatherhood were changing and adapting. The following review of the literature tracks the emergence of involved fatherhood through this period with the purpose of putting later autobiographical accounts into context within the literature on fatherhood.

Fathers' emotional involvement with their children over time

In the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries, fathers' involvement with the care of their children became more acceptable within public attitudes and social policy (Burgess and Ruxton, 1996; Burghes, Clarke and Cronin, 1997; Lewis, 2000). However, there are historical accounts of involved fathering in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Burgess, 1997) suggesting involved fatherhood is not a new phenomenon. The growth of

capitalism in the nineteenth century required stable family units controlled and provided for by traditional fathers who were clear about their roles as authoritarian, distant providers. This predominant discourse did not allow for the shared care of children but Burgess (1997) indicates alternative discourses to fathering *did* exist during this period but were marginalised or hidden by the predominant discourse enshrined in legislation and public policy. For this reason, it is important to recognise that the following historical consideration of discourses on fatherhood begins in the nineteen fifties as a convenient starting point rather than any suggestion that involved fatherhood did not exist before this time. The contributions of the fathers who participated in this study suggest their experiences of their fathers were, despite being predominantly traditional fathers, also subject to, in particular, the emergent discourse as they sometimes cared for their children when the mothers were ill or otherwise absent. This is not surprising as this chapter now goes on to demonstrate, with particular reference to emotions and relationships, how discourses on fatherhood are able to co-exist with varying degrees of dominance over time.

Back in the 1950s, English and Foster (1953) offered practical advice to fathers in a parenting manual clearly encouraging involved parenting whilst recognising the continued importance of the provider role. They wrote about true security for children being provided by a loving and emotionally involved father. They also say (1953: 256):

It almost goes without saying that a father and mother need to present a common front on all matters having to do with bringing up their children. They should talk things over between themselves and try to understand exactly what the other thinks and feels about the problems, difficulties and eventual goals. Having argued,

compromised, planned and come to fundamental agreements together, they can then both give, teach, advice and achieve with a mutuality that is certain to impress the young ones and get good results.

Bearing in mind this was written in the 1950s, this perspective advocates a style of shared parenting foreshadowing discourses on involved fatherhood prevalent in the early 2000s. Bernstein and Cyr (1957), researching in the 1950s, studied sixty nine social work interviews with first time fathers who were either graduates on a low income or studying for their first degrees. They introduced the concept of the father being located within the family unit in terms of a triad of relationships made up of the mother, father and children. Although some of the fathers were concerned about income and housing, two of the main responsibilities of a traditional father, they also talked about their feelings about fatherhood and their reactions to the birth of their babies. Interestingly, when the fathers talked about housing and income concerns, they were offered reassurance and advice by the social workers whereas the same workers would focus on the wife if there was an emotional difficulty to be resolved. An example of this predominant health and social care discourse in action is provided by the following example where a father is upset by the mother's continued attachment to her mother after the birth of their baby. Instead of helping the father to explore his feelings and attitudes to the changing shape of relationships within the family, the worker focuses on the wife. Bernstein and Cyr (1957: 478) describe the social worker's approach:

Counting on the wife's essentially understanding nature and on her recognition of her husband's devotion to her, the worker directed her efforts toward encouraging

the wife in loosening the ties to her own family and in bolstering her husband in his new role.

So much for English and Foster's (1953) view that parents should be encouraged to talk to each other and try and understand each other's before making decisions. Although it seems the social workers' interventions were influenced by a discourse on traditional fatherhood, this study also provides data on how fathers may be subject to more than one discourse. Bernstein and Cyr (1957: 477) noted '.... some of the fathers showed a particular aptitude in what might be referred to as the feminine aspects of parenthood by demonstrating more competence in infant care than the mothers.' They were, in some instances (1957: 477), '... more gentle and maternal than the mothers.' These authors acknowledged the fathers demonstrated a strong capacity for child care and thus contributed to setting a research agenda for the second half of the twentieth century.

In the 1960s the emergent discourse continues to evolve against a backdrop of a discourse on traditional fatherhood. For example, Benson (1968:3) began his book, *Fatherhood*, by saying the mother was the primary carer, but he also acknowledged the growing awareness in the literature of the possibility of multiple discourses. However, he resisted the possibilities for change, in terms of the performance of fatherhood, by emphasising that although fathers may have become more involved with parenting at an emotional level, their primary responsibility was of a more traditional nature (1968: 21):

The *instrumental* orientationevokes a disciplined pursuit of goals transcending the immediate situation and encourages resistance to any emotional involvement as an end in itself.

He went on to say fatherhood is primarily about ensuring the survival of the family although he recognises at times a father may be a mother substitute. He also recognised the family triad of relationships and said (1968: 75) '.... the family becomes the locus of much more intensive emotional interaction.' However, he qualified this by saying the father, increasingly isolated emotionally in a capitalist society, relied on the family for emotional nurturance and stability.

In the 1970s Pleck (1977) offered a more complex perspective on the relationship between mother and fathers in families by considering work and family roles in a number of combinations. His starting point, which differs markedly from previous authors, was both men and women have the potential to fulfill both work and family roles. He said there are three issues needing to be addressed when considering these new roles within families (1977: 424-425). Firstly, he considered the balance of domestic labour when both men and women are in employment. He said women, although in employment, were still perceived as being responsible for the majority of domestic tasks. Men, in contrast, were perceived as only becoming involved when consideration had been given to the effect this might have on their work role. Again, this falls short of accepting a more equitable approach to relationships in the home that later studies may suggest as possible. Secondly, Pleck (1977) highlighted the breakdown of occupational sex segregation and welcomed the involvement of women in high status occupations. He suggested as women became more involved in the

world of work their involvement in families should have decreased; it may have been easier to employ someone to take the place of the woman in the home. Thirdly, he acknowledged men had been able to succeed in the workplace because women had subordinated their work potential to the needs of the family and the working man. He went on to say:

...greater equality in the sharing of work and family roles by women and men will ultimately require the development of a new model of the work role and a new model for the boundary between work and the family which gives a higher priority to family needs.

Pleck's (1977) paper occupied a transitional place in the literature on fatherhood, bridging the traditional provider role with an emerging involved role by systematically addressing a model of the relationship between work and the family. He was clearly signaling the need for the emergent discourse on fatherhood to influence legislation and social policy.

Fein (1978), in a special edition of the *Journal of Social Issues*, reviewed the literature on fatherhood and identified three major discourses: the traditional, the modern and the emergent. The traditional (distant provider) and the modern (focusing on child development and in this thesis considered as an aspect of the emergent perspective) have been outlined previously. Fein (1978:127) described the emergent perspective:

What I am calling the *emergent* perspective on fathering proceeds from the notion that men are psychologically able to participate in a full range of parenting behaviours, and furthermore that it might be good both for children and parents if

men take active roles in childcare and child rearing. While some research in the emergent perspective focuses on the effects on the child, analysis has begun to examine the impact of father-children relationships on all members of the family. Researchers are exploring the idea that children's lives are enhanced by the opportunity to develop and sustain relationships with adults of both sexes. Issues of adult development are under consideration, including the idea that the opportunity to care for others, including and especially children, can be a major factor in adult well being.

Fein (1978) went on to say one of the benefits of the emergent perspective on fatherhood is the concurrent possibilities for women to seek paid employment. He echoed Pleck (1977) by stating changes in social policy were necessary in order to facilitate these changes.

In the 1980s McKee and O'Brien (1982) continued with the documentation of an increasingly popular discourse of involved fatherhood and recognised the importance of considering both parents and children as mutual participants in family life. This was in contrast to fathers being located outside the family as distant providers and men who lacked the ability to develop intimate relationships with their children. These authors outlined three major areas of research during this period – transition to parenthood, fathers and infants and the experience of fatherhood in single and re-married families. They speculated on the growing awareness of involved fatherhood as an alternative discourse to traditional fathering (1982: 4):

.... it seems to us that the overriding impetus has come from a combination of certain structural occurrences and societal changes, all of which challenge traditional male and female roles and necessarily affect the character of modern family life....

These changes, according to McKee and O'Brien (1982), included the impact of the women's movement in the previous two decades, changes in women's employment status, growing male unemployment and an increased interest in fathers in the care of their children. They went on to say (1982: 5):

....as men and women's external social roles become more parallel, diffuse and volatile the possibility of variation, fluidity and interchangeability within the home becomes more real

These comments lay the foundations for the more personalised approaches to fatherhood and masculinity that, as we shall see later, are a predominant theme within this thesis.

Lewis (1986), in his study of one hundred fathers and their first experiences of parenthood, recognised the confusing influence the co-existence of traditional, emergent and involved discourses on fatherhood may have been having on families:

The emergent and differentiation⁷ perspectives obscure our understanding of fatherhood, since neither provides us with a detailed account of the man's role in the family ...A common theme in the literature on fathers throughout this century suggests they [fathers] find their role confusing. (1986: 9)

In addition, Lewis (1986) went on to provide an example of a public performance of traditional fatherhood concurrent with a private experience of thoughts and feelings associated with involved fatherhood and linked this to aspects of masculinity (1986: 89):

During pregnancy the expectant father is likely to display an air of detachment, while privately either sharing in the psychological change which his wife goes through, or bottling up his emotions by adopting a 'sturdy oak' style.

This difference between private thoughts and feelings and public performance may have been related to how these fathers felt about themselves as men. O'Brien (1982) interviewed fifty nine fathers who, through separation or divorce, had taken on the day to day care of their children. She speculated (1982: 184) these fathers, in terms of their performance as men, may historically have been thought to be involved in 'unmanly behaviour':

It could be argued that men becoming lone fathers cross the traditional boundaries of female and male terrains: on an interpersonal level by being involved in the process of "*mothering*" (the intimate one-to-one caring and giving relationship) and

⁷ Lewis's (1986) identification of the differentiation perspective on fatherhood has been omitted from this thesis in order to aid clarity when reviewing what can at times be a confusing literature. The differentiation perspective emphasises the differences between mothers and fathers.

on a structural level by entering into the institution of “*motherhood*” (with its home centred, unwaged and ambiguous state).

The aim of O’Brien’s (1982) study was to explore men’s entry into lone fatherhood and the ‘inter-relationship with their perception of gender identity’ although any such links seem to be implied rather than made explicit. But at least the relationships between fatherhood and masculinity were now, in the 1980s, being explored more openly as part of ongoing research and were paving the way for further research into involved fatherhood. However, not all of the literature during this period recorded positive outcomes in terms of fathers being involved on an equal basis with mothers in the care of their children. Backett (1982) documented the limits of a shared approach to child-care. For example, fathers were not necessarily expected to take more of a share of the household work and involved fathers were still seen to be supporting the mother rather than taking a shared responsibility for the practical and psychological responsibilities of parenting. Backett (1982: 204), in her study of twenty two middle-class families in Scotland, provides one possible reason for the limitations of involved fathering in terms of the relationship between the mother and the father:

In addition, he [the father] could never be certain that he had grasped the ‘total picture’, since, inadvertently or deliberately, the mother’s account was bound to be selective. As the transmission of information is essentially an interpretative act, the mother’s images and assessment inevitably played a highly influential part in the development of paternal behaviour.

Backett's (1982) account highlights the gatekeeper role mothers may have in enabling or preventing men's access to childcare. The relationship between the mother and the father could be seen to have a limiting effect on the involvement of fathers in child care and this is an early example of the need to negotiate with others, in this case the mother, a more involved approach to childcare. Historically, fathers had been perceived as lacking childcare skills and empathy because of the effects of a traditional discourse on fatherhood. However, sociological studies undertaken within the next decade recorded fathers developing a more nurturing and involved approach to fathering.

In the 1990s sociological studies into fatherhood continued to deconstruct traditional meanings of fatherhood and uncover alternative discourses. Lupton and Barclay (1997) and Dienhart (1998), for example, undertook qualitative studies seeking to document and understand fathers' lived experience of involved fatherhood. Lupton and Barclay (1997: 134) indicated:

Research with men who extensively engage in child care on an everyday basis (still a minority of fathers) has also suggested that men are as capable as women of taking on a nurturing role and do so in ways that are not distinctly different from the archetypal 'maternal' role.

At the beginning of the twenty first century authors such as Townsend (2002) have identified fatherhood as a discursive mix of traditional, emergent and involved fatherhood. He describes the four facets of fatherhood, identified after interviewing fathers in America, as emotional closeness, provision, protection and endowment (of personal qualities). This is an example of a more personalised approach to fatherhood and highlights meanings of

fatherhood are now negotiable and fluid. However, Lewis and Warin (2001) indicate the importance of fathers being more involved with the care of their children and suggest the results of this involvement would, for example, reduce the likelihood of children turning to crime and enhance their educational achievement. Their account suggests fathers offer something different to mothers in childcare and is reminiscent of an emergent perspective on fatherhood. It suggests mothers may not be able to help, or are less important in helping, children in this area of their lives. Lewis and Warin (2001: 1) argue, however, 'A parent's gender is far less important in affecting child development than broader qualities such as warmth and kindness'. Again, Dowd (2000: 175) acknowledges the predominance of the view that traditional fathering is about breadwinning and protection but then goes on to suggest a social model of fathering based on the nurturance of children and the sharing of power within families. Dowd indicates (2000: 181) many men find this approach to fathering problematic and goes on to argue:

Fatherhood is connected to two gender intersections: the concept of masculinity and the relationship between fatherhood and motherhood. Men's identities as fathers do not exist in isolation from their identities as men. Indeed, that broader masculine identity arguably poses the most difficult challenge to a redefined and differently lived fatherhood.

Dowd (2000) is commenting here about men's concept of themselves as carers and how this may limit their motivation to undertake a more social model of fathering involving nurturance at its core. Men are limited as carers because of this broad masculinity identity and this chapter now goes on to consider this 'gender intersection' with a specific focus on the emotional lives of men.

The Discursive Construction of Masculinity

The study of men and masculinities by men, or Men's Studies, has produced a complex literature (Pleck and Sawyer, 1974; Brod, 1987; Morgan, 1992; Brod and Kaufman, 1994; Kimmel and Messner, 1998; Pease, 2000; Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2003; Connell, 2005; Seidler, 2006)). A commonality across this literature is that masculinity is a social construct and that personalised performances of masculinities are possible, and indeed evident, across time and cultures (Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1994; Blount and Cunningham, 1996). Furthermore, my reading of the literature suggests that a man's performance of his masculinity identity is often the result of a complex discursive mix that embodies both traditional masculinity and more personalised forms of masculinities. These more personalised approaches to being a man are based on what feels right for individual men and sometimes encompasses a more public performance of a softer, more emotional approach to relationships (Christian, 1994; Swain, 2006). The literature on men and masculinities acknowledges the hegemonic nature of an historically predominant discourse on traditional masculinity continuing to influence the emotional lives, identities and behaviour of men. Through the use and abuse of power, hegemonic masculinity ensures white, heterosexual, middle class men maintain control reaching across societal, organisational, group and interpersonal dimensions of human existence (Hearn, 2004; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity is embedded in the lives of boys and young men through cultural images and messages and the policing of these messages in the form of bullying by other boys and young men (Askew and Ross, 1988; Poynting and Donaldson, 2005; Stoudt, 2006).

The influence of a traditional discourse on masculinity on the emotional lives of boys is graphically described by Askew and Ross (1988: 2):

There is a *dominant* view of men with which we are bombarded through the press and other media. This view of men represents them as being tough, strong, aggressive, independent, brave, sexually active, rational, intelligent, and so on. The corresponding view of women is that they are vulnerable, weak, non-aggressive, kind, caring, passive, frightened, stupid, dependent and immature.

As boys experience the pressures and demands of conforming to an ideal masculinity they internalise many of the aspects of a discourse that disables emotional awareness and articulacy. Boys are often bullied and coerced into 'being a man'. Askew and Ross (1988: 38) provide a perspective on bullying and aggression as boys use and abuse their power with each other as they seek to find their way through an environment where boys don't cry and men are tough:

We suggest that to some extent it [bullying] is bound up with 'acting out' the power structures within the school itself (and in wider society). One dimension of bullying has to do with the way physical power and strength are part of stereotyped male attributes. Bullying is a major way in which boys are able to demonstrate their manliness. Even though a boy may be physically weaker than another, to be able to 'take it like a man' is usually considered to be a good second best masculine quality.

Askew and Ross (1988) identified that boys are bullied if they appear to be soft or wimpish – attributes often associated with being gay or effeminate. They go on to provide an account of how boys are constructed as men and how their behaviour is often antagonistic to the building of healthy relationships with others (1988: 36):

We also repeatedly observed how difficult many boys seemed to find listening to one another. They would meet each other's statements with contradiction, comparison, derision or direct challenge. More often, they would simply not bother to listen, especially if they had something they themselves wished to say.

The unwritten rule book ensures boys grow up striving to meet the demands of an ideal form of masculinity which celebrates detachment, competitiveness and aggression.

The hegemonic nature of traditional masculinity

Hegemony, according to Donaldson (1993: 645), is about 'the winning and holding of power and the formation (and destruction) of social groups in that process'. He goes on to say:

The ability to impose a definition of the situation, to set the terms in which events are understood and issues discussed, to formulate ideals and define morality is an essential part of this process. Hegemony involves persuasion of the greater part of the population in ways which appear 'natural', 'ordinary', 'normal'. The State,

through punishment for non-conformity, is crucially involved in this negotiation and enforcement.

Brod and Kaufmann (1994) describe men who are subject to a hegemonic masculine identity as being emotionally distant, independent, competitive, physically strong, rational and believing themselves to be superior to any one who is different. Jackson's autobiographical account (1990: 146) provides an insight into a boy's experience of growing up in an environment within which he was expected to become a 'man':

It was through language that my sexual difference was organised and differentiated into "common sense" assumptions of masculinity I learned to view myself as someone who had a "natural" right to special treatment and servicing very different from the ordinary and commonplace expectations of other people's lives (especially girls and women).

This appropriation of power over others by men who are subject to hegemonic masculinity has an adverse effect on men's relationships with other people and men themselves. Kaufman (1994: 150) comments on the alienating effects of hegemonic masculinity:

.... for masculinity has become a form of alienation. Men's alienation is our ignorance of our own emotions, feelings, needs and potential for human connection and nurturance.

Kaufmann goes on to argue in order to maintain control over others, men need to be in control of themselves resulting in personal isolation and pain. Kaufman also explains (1994: 148):

... men come to suppress a range of emotions, needs and possibilities, such as nurturing, receptivity, empathy, and compassion, which are experienced as inconsistent with the power of manhood. These emotions and need do not disappear; they are simply held in check ...

A traditional discourse on fatherhood accommodates a hegemonic performance of masculinity whereas a discourse on involved fatherhood, by its very nature, requires men to be receptive, for example, to their own and other people's feelings. This section now goes on to consider the influence of hegemonic masculinity on the emotional lives of men.

The influence of hegemonic masculinity on the emotional lives of men

There are two aspects to the consideration of the influence of hegemonic masculinity on the emotional lives of men and how this influences their relationships with themselves and others. Firstly, Hearn (2004) argues any study of men and masculinities should incorporate a consideration of male power and control, often linked to anger and violence. Secondly, Seidler (2006) argues any exploration of men and masculinities should accommodate a consideration of men's internal lives and their need for a critical understanding of how their culture and history have shaped them as people. It is only by acknowledging both these

perspectives we can go on to consider men's negotiation of their power in society and, specifically, how they may use anger and violence to control people.

Seidler (1998: 195), when considering men's violence within the context of their emotional lives, argues:

A dominant masculinity is tied to a particular notion of control. For it is a matter of mind over matter and so of proving masculinity through proving self control. For within modernity masculinity can never be taken for granted but always has to be proved. At any moment I have to be ready to 'take someone out' to prove my male identity. This control is built around the automatic suppression of emotions, feelings and desires

Seidler (1998: 196) continues his analysis of masculinity and anger in working class families (also acknowledging the relevance to middle class families in which violence was often hidden) by indicating:

In traditional working class families, women were supposed to know their place, a man thought little about giving his wife a 'back-hander' to keep her where she belonged. If women were supposed to be emotional then it was assumed that they could not be reasoned with. This is what legitimated the physical violence....

We can see from these two statements that men's violence is a result of the need to control their external worlds as well as their internal emotional lives. Men also learn that violence

is legitimate and necessary in order to maintain power and control in families. Men's violence is constructed in relation to their perception that women are not only more emotional and caring but also more irrational and weak. What men don't learn is that relationships need time and attention in order to develop equitably. Instead, they rely on women to undertake the emotion work necessary in families and blame them if this fails. According to Seidler (1998), traditional men only pay attention to relationships when they break down and then, instead of listening, they try and fix the relationship in a way that reaffirms the status quo. When the others involved in the relationship do not respond by being reasonable the man may then withhold his feelings until they do see reason or else he may respond by being violent. Seidler (1998) argues when men's traditional ways of relating do not work they can feel silently desperate and violence can soon follow. He goes on to explain sometimes men feel regret and remorse after being violent not only because of the consequence of their violence but also because the lack of self control reflects on their masculinity. He explains it is likely men will argue they were taken over by a force beyond their control and resist acknowledging their anger as part of who they are. Angry and violent behaviour becomes a cycle as they frame it as a moment of weakness and guarantee it will never happen again. No responsibility is accepted and any offers of help are refused as the acceptance of help is, again, a threat to their masculine identity.

Responding to threat, according to Kindlon and Thompson (1999: 233) is another aspect to masculine anger and violence that begins to suggest a more sympathetic, but equally problematic, perspective. They identify a parallel with the biblical story of Cain who also had difficulty with managing his anger:

This is the story of so many boys today whose shame becomes anger, and whose anger so swiftly moves to violence. These boys, too, need fuller emotional resources to deal with the distress they experience from a teacher's criticism, a parent's harsh comment, a classmate's taunt, or a girl's rejection.

They go on to suggest boys' aggression is usually in response to a perceived threat and they are socially constructed to see the world as a threatening place and to respond to threat with aggression. This is often further complicated by boys not really being aware of what they are angry about – they lack the ability to read cues and make connections between their external and internal worlds. However, it would be a mistake to think all boys grow up to be stereotypical traditional males in the sense they are emotionally inarticulate and socially inept, incapable of undertaking emotion work.

Many men live their lives subject to a complex discursive mix of masculinities. Harris (1995) analysed the data from nearly one thousand questionnaires asking questions about the messages boys and men hear when their gender identity is being constructed. These messages include, for example, aspects of traditional masculinity such as the need to be in control of relationships and to be emotionally tough as well as attributes traditionally associated with women such as harmony with nature and being gentle, supportive and warm – concerned about other people's feelings. All of the fathers I talked to in this study seemed warm and sensitive to other people's feelings as they talked about themselves and their families but all, to varying degrees, recognised male stereotypical behaviour as being emotionally distant and controlling. They had all decided to live their lives differently not necessarily because they were anti-sexist or pro-feminist men but because their sense of

what was right for them and their families included taking responsibility for their emotional lives. Seidler (1985: 156) argues, 'It can be hard for men to accept that 'real strength is recognising your own weakness', since this threatens our very sense of masculinity. By estranging ourselves from our feelings we block whatever access we might otherwise develop to our inner lives'. It is not surprising then, given their construction as men, that some fathers may have difficulties with not only identifying how they feel but also expressing how they feel in a way that contributes to positive emotion work and detracts from the potential for male anger and violence in families.

Despite the above difficulties, the fathers who participated in the fieldwork provided evidence of change. As the following chapters will illustrate, they were often motivated to change by their experiences of their own fathers' distant and unempathic style of parenting. As the field work data was analysed it became apparent that in order to change their experience of anger in their families they had, by choosing a more personal approach to masculinity, reduced their need for power and control and learned how to manage their difficult and painful feelings. They did this, despite at times experiencing a sense that they were 'less of a man', by being more intimately involved in the care of their children and developing an awareness of their own emotional lives. As their understanding of themselves and their children grew they were able to undertake emotion work by anticipating and avoiding conflict situations as well as dealing with conflict by persuasion rather than force. They did this against a backdrop of managing their own painful and difficult feelings in contrast to more traditional men who may have expressed their anger through physical, verbal and emotional violence directed at their families.

3. Methodology

This thesis is based on a qualitative research study undertaken with a group of twenty predominantly white, middle-class, heterosexual, middle-aged fathers⁸ living in the city of Kingston upon Hull (population approx. 245,000) in the North East of England. This chapter first considers feminist methodology and then goes on to explore the process of undertaking the research and writing the thesis within the context of qualitative research methodologies, ethical considerations, developing the research questions, sampling, individual interviews, focus groups and data analysis and writing up. The chapter is not linear in terms of describing the chronological events that took place during the design and implementation of the research study. Instead, it has been written in a way that prioritises research design issues in terms of how they have influenced the fieldwork. For example, I have chosen to write about ethical considerations before writing about developing the research questions. This is because I realise with hindsight that although I was not explicitly addressing ethical considerations from the beginning of the study design, they were incorporated from day one because of my professional training in the helping professions. Similarly, the study of gender theorising and feminist methodology had a profound impact on me and began to influence my thinking and the design of the research from an early stage, particularly when considering power and relationships.

⁸ Two younger fathers (see appendix: the participants) participated in the study. Two of the fathers were factory workers. There were no participants from a black or ethnic minority background, although Kingston upon Hull has a growing population of people from these backgrounds. Had the study been undertaken in a neighbouring city, such as Leeds, it is believed the sampling method employed would have resulted in a more culturally diverse sample. What all of the fathers had in common was that they perceived themselves as being significantly involved in all aspects of their children's care.

Feminist methodology

Feminist approaches to research can be identified largely by their theories of gender and power, their normative frameworks, and their notions of transformation and accountability, even though these are not uniform. Methodologically, there is likely to be overlap with the concerns and visions of other approaches to social investigation. (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002: 147)

The above authors' perspective on feminist methodology provides a useful framework for considering the methodology of this study. In one sense, power is addressed in this thesis in terms of the exercise of power by men and fathers through their expression of anger. The experiences of a small group of fathers in transforming gender norms have been identified and considered within the context of the literature on fatherhood, masculinity and anger. However, in addition to the content of this thesis, the process of designing and undertaking the fieldwork has also been influenced by my social construction as a gendered man, particularly in the area of emotions. Carter and Delamont (1996: 1) recognise the importance of considering emotions within the context of feminist methodology:

The theory and practice of Feminist Methodology has placed considerable emphasis on the emotions. It has been widely claimed that an emotional element must inevitably be present with the research at every stage – planning, implementation and writing up.

The previous chapter identified that hegemonic masculinity has a profound impact on the emotional lives of men and so, throughout this study, it has been important for me to recognise that my social construction as a gendered man has influenced the research process. The content of the study has been at times difficult and problematic emotionally. Segal (1993: 635) argues:

.... no-one can be masculine through and through without constantly, and in the end rather obviously, doing violence to many of the most basic human attributes: the capacity for sensitivity for oneself and others, the expression of fear, the admission of weakness, the wisdom of co-operation, the satisfaction in serving, the pleasures of passivity, the need to be needed ...

As I have read about and listened to the personal and social consequences of the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity in the lives of men and fathers, I have reflected on my own personal and professional experiences and have felt guilty and ashamed of my limitations as a man and a father. However, as my understanding of discourse theory has increased I have come to be more aware of the possibilities for change that a poststructuralist approach provides. Indeed, I can now better understand how I have made changes in my life that have resulted in me benefiting from many of the attributes that Segal (1993) refers to above. And this has helped me to read and listen reflectively as the emerging data uncovered the lived experiences of the fathers that I spoke to. In addition, I have become more aware of how my social construction as a gendered man may have influenced the design of the study. Hearn (1998: 786) explains:

Not explicitly talking of men, not naming men as men, is a structured way of not beginning to talk of and question men's power in relation to women, children, young people, and indeed other men.

Hearn (1998) has identified, within the study of men and masculinities, six discursive practices that are reproduced below in order to help to place the design of this study in context:

- *Absence, fixed presence and avoidance*, in which either the topic (men) or the author are absent, avoided or present yet non-problematic.
- *Alliance and attachment*, in which both the topic and the author are present, yet both or either remain non-problematic. There is an alliance/attachment between the author and the topic.
- *Subversion and separation*, in which both the topic and the author are problematic and subverted.
- *Ambivalence*, in which the topic and/or the author are problematic and ambivalent.
- *Alterity*, in which the topic and/or the author are problematic and made other.

- *Critique*, in which the authors critically and reflexively engage with both themselves and the topic, within an emancipatory context.

I have come to understand Hearn's (1998) list as a continuum whereby *absence, fixed presence and avoidance* may be associated with a scientific mode of enquiry that seeks to understand human experiences within a theoretical framework that does not allow for divergence, difference and change. Whereas *critical and reflexive* engagement with both the literature and research data allows for research design and thesis writing that allies more closely with feminist research methodology seeking to give a voice to the everyday lived experiences of people – in this case men who are fathers. During my period of study I have endeavoured to think and write critically but I know at times I have shifted backwards and forwards along Hearn's (1998) continuum. This has not always been a negative experience as one of the criticisms of feminist theorising is that by consistently deconstructing predominant discourses the opportunity for people to identify personally and socially with groups is diminished (Ramazanoglu, 1993). However, I am also aware that I have distanced myself from some of the more problematic areas of the lives of men and fathers as I have listened to fieldwork participants. This has no doubt been partly to protect my self from the often painful awareness that hegemonic masculinity and traditional fatherhood have shaped my life, and the lives of the participants, in ways that have impacted on people that we have come into contact with during our life-course. To think and write critically within such emotive circumstances will almost certainly result in some absence, avoidance, alliance and attachment. Young and Lee (1996) identify the importance of fieldworkers undertaking research with an emotional dimension to receive regular support and supervision in order to debrief. Throughout the my period of study I received regular support from two academic

supervisors and, at times, my studies coincided with periods of personal therapy undertaken as a requirement of practicing as a British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy accredited counselling practitioner.

Young and Lee (1996) identify that one of the criticisms of research with an emotional dimension is that fieldwork reports are perceived as being anecdotal and not located within a theoretical framework. Furthermore, they also suggest that reflecting on first hand accounts of people's emotional lives and writing about these accounts within the context of the literature may challenge a researcher's ability to balance established theoretical knowledge with new understanding and ways of thinking. This study has been undertaken within the context of my social construction as a man; the diverse literature on fatherhood, masculinity, anger and emotion work; the strengths and limitations of discourse theory; the problematic nature of reflecting on and analysing first person accounts within an emotionally charged subject area; and the need to identify a framework for thinking about and understanding the experiences of the fathers that I talked to. As such I hope not only to consider the fathers' accounts⁹ within the context of the literature on fatherhood, masculinities and emotions but also contribute to current knowledge through the analysis of the fieldwork data and the development of a grounded theory. However, despite the above criticism identified by Young and Lee (1996), it is hoped that, at times, the experiences of the fathers interviewed may speak for themselves.

⁹ This study focuses on the accounts of the fathers who participated in the individual interviews and focus groups discussions. At times, the fathers were asked what they thought their partners' might say in answer to some of the questions posed. For a more comprehensive account of mothers' perspectives on fathers' involvement in family life see, for example, Yaxley, Vintner and Young (2005).

The eclectic use of qualitative research methods

Returning to Ramazanoglu and Holland's (2002) perspective on feminist methodology, the methodology employed in this study has been drawn eclectically from the literature. Although not ethnographic¹⁰ in nature, some of my thinking about the research design was drawn from the literature on ethnographic research. For example, it seeks to understand people's everyday experiences and allows these experiences to speak for themselves (Berreman, 1962; Fielding, 1993). It is from ethnographic studies that subordinated and marginalised discourses may be allowed to surface and find a language that may speak of Ramazanoglu and Holland's (2002) transformation and accountability. McNeil (1990: 64) explains:

The purpose of such research is to describe the culture and lifestyle of the group of people being studied in a way that is faithful as possible to the way they see it themselves. The idea is not so much to seek causes and explanations, as is often the case with survey-style research, but rather to 'tell it like it is'.

However, 'telling it like it is' without reference to the literature or an interpretive framework may result in a thesis that is perceived as anecdotal and not residing within a theoretical framework. Although I resisted theorising during much of the fieldwork

¹⁰ Although this research was not ethnographic I found the study of ethnographic research methodology during my research training useful. It helped me to understand, for example, how demographic groups may present with a participant front (Berreman, 1962) beyond which the researcher may not elicit further information. As my personal biography was similar to many of the interviewees I felt I had a lived, ethnographic understanding of some of the issues they discussed. This helped me to be empathic, build appropriate relationships and ask questions behind the participant front.

interviews and initial data analysis I found that I was reflecting heuristically on what I was hearing and reading. Moustakas (1990: 9) describes heuristic research methodology as:

The self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge.

The researcher immerses himself in the area of study and, according to Moustakas (1990: 28):

Primary concepts for facilitating the immersion process include spontaneous self dialogue and self-searching, pursuing intuitive clues and hunches, and drawing on the mystery and sources of energy and knowledge within the tacit dimension.

My location within the field of study as a man and a father as well as my training and experiences as a humanistic counsellor contributed to the heuristic aspects of this study. Making sense of what I was hearing from the fathers who participated in the study was an heuristic process that took place within the context of my reading of the literature, my experiences as a man and father and discussions with my supervisors, colleagues, family and friends. This process that took place over an eight year period and resulted in a grounded theory. According to Denscombe (1998: 214-218) a grounded theory is characterised by the researcher beginning a study with an open mind. My experience of starting this study was that, because of my personal and professional life journey, I felt that I would like to undertake a PhD in Gender Studies, not really knowing what this would

entail. The subject of fatherhood fitted with my personal and professional interests and, as a man and a counsellor, I was particularly interested in emotions. The focus on anger came at a later stage when I realised that this emotion had significant relevance to me personally and professionally. Apart from these initial thoughts and feelings I had no clear idea of how the study might progress. My initial thinking was that involved fathers would embody aspects of traditional fatherhood and masculinity that would impact on their abilities to be involved in family life but my ideas about how this might be articulated by the fathers I planned to speak to were limited. Another of Denscombe's (1998: 214) characteristics of a grounded theory is that, 'The analysis of qualitative data should be geared towards generating new concepts and theories.' It was not until after a long period of heuristic reflection that I realised that it was not *what* I was hearing but the *context* within which I was being told that was new. It was then I began to realise that the fathers I spoke to were describing a process of change and a potential new contribution to the concept of involved fatherhood. As I sought to understand this process, and the context within which it was taking place, I began to employ key words and phrases such as personalised fatherhoods and masculinities, intimacy and emotion work within the family and attention to issues of power and control through, in particular, the avoidance of conflict and the management of anger. It was at this point I began to realise that a grounded theory was developing from the empirical data I was analysing. Denscombe (1998) indicates that to produce a grounded theory requires a pragmatic analysis of qualitative data. This was a particularly problematic tension for me as a novice researcher. Despite my understanding of how feminist methodology challenges a scientific presumption that empirical data should be understood within the context of existing theory, I still felt that my theory chapter should direct the substantive chapters produced from the data analysis. However, through supervision and

attempting to keep an open mind I was able to keep a balanced perspective. I went on to locate the thesis within the existing literature on fatherhood, masculinities and emotions and, at the same time, draw eclectically from a diverse literature on gender, masculinity studies, social psychology and sociology in order to find the language to explain my understanding of what the fathers were telling me.

Ethical considerations

Epidemiological research involving people has inherent risks. The Council for International Organization of Medical Sciences provides guidance on the ethical principles of epidemiological research, including respect for people, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice. (Ellsberg and Heise, 2002: 1)

Undertaking research into fathers' experiences of anger in the home has to be approached from a worst case scenario perspective. The expression of anger through violence may lead to domestic violence and child protection issues. The purposive and snowball sampling employed in this study minimised the possibility of the reporting of violence in the home because my initial purposive sample was drawn from people I knew well as kind and caring fathers. However, I could not assume that I would not be told about experiences of abuse as the size of the snowball sample increased. With that in mind, I decided to use Ellsberg and Heise (2002) as a guide to ethical considerations during the eight year life of the project.

Ellsberg and Heise (2002) discussed the application of the guidance from the Council for International Organization of Medical Sciences to research on domestic violence. They

considered the minimisation of harm, ensuring participant safety, protecting privacy and confidentiality, minimising participant distress, referrals for care and support, assuring scientific soundness, the interview as intervention and using study results for social change. Although Ellsberg and Heise (2002) are referring specifically to researchers working with women that might be in extremely vulnerable situations, when I considered minimisation of harm and ensuring participant safety I kept in mind the safety of children who might be witness to domestic violence directed at their mothers or the recipients of violence themselves. I addressed this possibility in the interview contract sheet by stating if I thought any child was at risk of harm I would need to talk to the participant about this. My contact with Social Workers and Child Protection Trainers through my work as a Social Work Lecturer and Counsellor ensured that I was adequately networked to follow up any suspicion of abuse. I was in a position to either seek further guidance and support or make a direct referral to Social Services. Similarly, I was sufficiently professionally located to advise about further care and support for the fathers or the families should the need have arisen. By ensuring the informed consent of participants, I was taking steps to minimise participant harm should any of the above action been necessary. I also ensured privacy and confidentiality by leaving the choice of interview venue to the participant (most of whom asked to be interviewed at home); including a clause in the interview contract that agreed control of tape recording and the use of subsequent material stayed with the participant; coding transcripts and data sheets and keeping participant contact detail physically separate; storing tapes securely and changing names to numbers within the writing of the thesis. At the beginning of the series of focus groups I negotiated a ground rule with the group that allowed for the use of contributions for research purposes but protected the sharing of specific information about participants by other group members. They agreed

that they could talk generally about the focus group discussions outside of the group in a way that ensured confidentiality. Minimising participant distress was addressed in the structure of the individual interviews by starting with 'safe' subjects and gradually building up to more challenging areas; making judgements during interviews as to the relevance of potentially distressing material and keeping boundaries where I felt appropriate; facilitating interviews by openly acknowledging difficult material and discussing whether the interview should proceed; finishing interviews by inviting fathers to talk about pleasant experiences with their children and checking that the fathers were OK to finish the interview – whether there was anything else they wished to say. Another aspect of minimising participant distress and harm is raised by Etherington (1996) when she writes about her experience of undertaking research into the sexual abuse of men. She worked closely with participants to minimise exploitation by exploring their motives for participating in interviews and considering her motives for undertaking the research. In some instances the sense of justice was balanced as the men she interviewed told her that they chose to be interviewed for personal benefits. This helped her to reconcile one of the reasons she undertook the research – which was to gain the benefits of a PhD (as well as contribute to a knowledge base). This dialogue between participants and researcher was a feature of my work whenever possible as some of the fathers told me that they had volunteered for interviews because of personal interest and the possibility for personal reviews and further learning; fathers often finished interviews by saying they had talked about issues they had never thought about or talked about before and had found the experience useful; fathers asked me about why I was undertaking the research and what I might do with the results and, finally, I made offers for participants to read my work in order to check accuracy and validity. This

offer was taken up by two fathers who proof read chapters and offered constructive feedback during the writing of the thesis.

Although Ellsberg and Heise (2002) write about research as intervention into domestic violence there was no sense of the need for intervention as my study progressed. However, there were times when I was left wondering about whether I had heard the full story and whether I should have probed further in order to break through a participant front in order to elicit a fuller story. One example of this was when a middle-aged man, a father with four children from two different relationships, talked about hitting his children when they were younger. He told me, with no sense of hesitation, how one day he had hit his daughter in the kitchen. Although I left the interview thinking that this happened a number of years ago and, by his own admission, he had learned to control his temper over the ensuing years, I was left thinking I should have directly asked him whether or not he still hit his children. This coincides with Ellsberg and Heise's (2002) insistence on scientific soundness as they explain studies should not only be grounded in strong ethical and theoretical design but should also be conducted with thorough attention to safe and skillful research skills.

Developing the research questions

Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002: 149) indicate:

Clarifying your research question clarifies what you care about and can be an emotional process. It also makes it necessary to reflect on how you are constituted

as a knowing subject Your research question starts you off on a social process of exploration, including exploration of the research process and your place in it.

The process of developing the research questions was far from linear and was influenced by both my personal and professional interests. After submitting an initial research proposal that generally referred to studying 'involved fatherhood' and 'feelings' I undertook a Gender Theory Workshop that ran one morning a week over a university semester. My background had been in humanistic counselling theory and educational studies. Participating in the Gender Theory Workshop introduced me to fundamental concepts such as binary gender construction and associated power imbalances; poststructuralist theorising; the importance of historical and cultural comparisons and the notion of hegemonic masculinity. It was this experience that helped me to begin to understand fatherhood as a social construct and the importance of considering hegemonic masculinity in any exploration of gender difference. During this period of study I also reviewed the literatures on both fatherhood and masculinities. From these early readings I began to think about both content and methodological issues. The questions for the individual interviews were based on the initial key words for the area of study –fatherhood, masculinity and anger. The interviews were structured around these themes and were modified during the design phase as a result of an initial pilot interview and discussions in supervision. The decision to initially undertake individual interviews followed by focus group discussions was primarily based on the need to provide a varied structure that might allow for individual participants to contribute to the study in a way with which they felt comfortable.

I decided to run a pilot focus group in order to experience talking with a group of fathers as a researcher and to begin to test out some of the theories around fatherhood and masculinity about which I had been reading about. With hindsight, I can see that I was testing the validity of existing knowledge with a small scale empirical study. At that time, I had been a member of a Men's Group for three years and all three of the men I had been meeting with fortnightly were involved fathers. I decided to invite them (one of them brought a friend) to participate in a focus group discussion on fatherhood. This was because I was part of this group and I would be able to elicit contributions from behind the participant front. I also saw this as an opportunity to practise being a researcher with a safe group of men¹¹. I structured the focus group in two halves. The first half I asked each father to talk in turn about their involvement with the care of their children. During the second half of the focus group each father spoke in turn about an item that they had been asked to bring that reminded them of a time when they were close to their children. My use of the word *close* brought about unexpected discussions about the meaning of intimacy. Already within the pilot focus group I was able to use my developing understanding of poststructuralist theorising to recognise that there was no one meaning of the word intimacy and each father had his own perception based on individual experience. Other key words began to appear such as caring, emotions, feelings, conflict, tension, empathy and distance (when talking about their own fathers). With hindsight I can see that these fathers were exploring the language that described the context within which they were involved in the care of their children. Culturally it may be argued that these educated, middle class fathers were familiar

¹¹ I convened a follow-up session with the same fathers in order to receive feedback on the pilot focus group. I was told by the fathers who participated it was important to take time to feel comfortable enough to raise and explore issues and to be able to share and listen. It was also felt important not to use judgemental language. This feedback reminded me of the importance of setting ground rules for further group discussions to address these aspects of group process.

with this use of language but, as a researcher, I began to think, consciously and heuristically, about how fathers experienced intimate relationships within the home. Concurrently I began to realise that 'emotions' was too broad a concept for effective study and, given my background in Health and Social Care, I decided, after a period of discussion and reflection, to focus on the problematic emotion of anger. This part of the process of developing the research questions resulted in a three part individual interview schedule that addressed fatherhood, masculinity and anger in turn.

Sampling

The pilot focus group was produced as a result of purposive sampling. Robson (1993: 141) argues:

The principle selection in purposeful sampling is the researcher's judgement as to typicality or interest. A sample is built up which enables the researcher to satisfy her specific needs in a project.

Although it might be argued the pilot focus group was opportunistic, it was chosen as a course of action for reasons argued above. This group of educated, white middle class men¹² set the course for the recruitment of further participants as I asked them to identify and recruit fathers they thought would be interested and would feel comfortable enough to

¹² Jump and Haas (1987) indicate that educated, middle class fathers are more likely to be involved in the care of their children. Although commenting on fatherhood twenty years ago, Jump and Haas's (1987) perspective may have been relevant to the fathers who were recruited to this study.

talk about their experiences of fatherhood, masculinity and anger. However, this snowball sampling which, according to Robson (1993), is often useful when it is difficult to identify participants, was not the only approach to recruitment used. I also asked a colleague in a fostering and adoption agency for contacts and placed an advert in the university staff news sheet (with the intention of recruiting fathers who self-identified as involved fathers). The overall sampling strategy resulted in a mainly homogenous group of twenty fathers who participated to varying degrees in the fieldwork. Within this demographic there was a degree of heterogeneousness in terms of age, marital status and occupation. Although most of the fathers were middle-aged, there were two younger fathers¹³ in their twenties, one of these being a factory technician (one of two fathers in this occupational grouping). The eldest father was seventy years old. The majority of the participants were in long term relationships with their children's mothers but five fathers were separated from their families and one was widowed.

The combination of purposive and snowball sampling produced a homogenous group of participants that was characterised by personal experiences of traditional fathers who were emotionally distant. As a result of their experiences of their own fathers they were motivated to parent their own children differently. This was more than physical care of children. It was a direct involvement in the emotional lives of their families, and in particular, it transpired, their willingness to undertake emotion work in families. This attention to emotion work was particularly focused on the avoidance of anger. This is not to

¹³ The majority of the fathers who participated in this study were middle-aged and so a consideration of the experiences of young fathers is beyond the scope of this study. Osborne (1999) provides an account of a project for young fathers that identified difficulties for young men in adopting the fathering role in families. Speak, Cameron and Gilroy (1997) explore the experiences of young, single fathers and the difficulties they encounter when seeking access to their children.

say they never became angry, but, often because of their experiences of their own parents (both fathers and mothers), they had made a decision to manage their anger differently. Most of these fathers said they felt different to more traditional men but during interviews and focus group discussions they were often unable to articulate how this related to their sense of their own masculinity. Two fathers, both of whom were factory workers, were introduced to the study by a fostering and adoption social worker. Interestingly, they were very much like the majority of the other fathers from professional backgrounds in terms of their attitudes to parenting and emotion work. One of these fathers thought this was because the fostering and adoption screening and training process had insisted he examine his own masculinity and emotional life, something most of the other fathers had undertaken through choice. One of the other fathers, whose partner had died when their daughter was a little girl, was a very involved father who was focused on both the physical and emotional care of his daughter. Five of the participants responded to the advertisement in the university news sheet and, again, during individual interviews it became quickly apparent they shared many similarities with the other participants. The sampling for this study produced a homogenous group of twenty fathers who were brought together as a result of their desire to be good fathers. The sampling, however, was limited by its exclusion of gay and lesbian fathers. This exclusion was not purposely undertaken but was the result of my initial decision to bring together a pilot focus group of fathers I knew personally and trusted to be open and honest with me about their experiences. Gay and lesbian fathers were not part of my immediate personal and professional network. With hindsight I could have, when advertising for participants, included a diversity statement encouraging participants from these cultural backgrounds. This omission brings together a number of interesting methodological considerations. My social construction as a white, educated, heterosexual,

middle class man has resulted in the embodiment of a social construction of fatherhood that is a discursive mix of traditional and more personalised forms of parenting. This mixed discursive approach to fatherhood and an openness to challenging my social construction as a man has resulted in a study design and development producing a grounded theory contributing to the literature on fatherhood, masculinity and anger. However, my lack of attention to marginalised masculinities and different sexual identities at the research design phase may have resulted in a homogenous white heterosexual sample. This is an example of Hearn's (1998) continuum as I am acknowledging gay and lesbian fathers are possibly absent from this study because I have avoided them or I am presenting them as non-problematic. Despite this tension, I think the sample selected provided open and detailed accounts of their lives as fathers, through both individual interviews and focus group discussions, enabling me to make significant comments in this thesis about how this particular group of fathers manages anger by undertaking emotion work. The sequence of fieldwork work events, although not completely linear, was as follows:

Pilot focus group
12 Individual interviews
3 focus group discussions
4 individual interviews
4 exit interviews

Figure one: Sequence of fieldwork events

The participants

Twenty fathers took part in the fieldwork and appendix two provides details of which of the fieldwork events they participated in. Although the following participant profiles focus mainly on a description of the fathers' employment status and family structure, I have also included information about their cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, with particular reference to their own fathers and family of origin. Where appropriate I have included comments on their views on fatherhood, and their experiences of anger, as a further aid to orientating the reader to the narratives in the substantive chapters that follow this methodology chapter.

Participant one was a retired university lecturer and was 70 years old. He was married with three grown up children and had two grandchildren. When his children were younger he was fully involved in their care because academic conditions of work allowed for this. He believed that closeness with children 'comes and goes over time' and that older children, although living separate lives, will often come back to their parents for support and encouragement. An example of this is that he is now involved in the care of his grandchildren; in particular he supported his daughter after the birth of his first grandchild because her partner was not able to do so. He brought a photograph of him cuddling his baby granddaughter to the pilot focus group as an example of him being intimately involved in the care of a baby.

Participant two, aged 52, was a prison teacher and artist. He was separated from his partner and had two teenage daughters who lived with their mother. He had recently spent a

lot of time with his daughters post separation and described himself as an involved father. This participant came from a working class family in North America, had seen active service in Vietnam and was a founder member of the men's group that I participated in over a ten year period.

Participant three was 64 years old and a retired university lecturer. His father ran a grocer's shop in the North East of England and was a staunch member of the local Methodist community. This participant had three grown up children, all in middle class occupations, and two grandchildren, both adopted from overseas. He and his partner regularly spent time with their grown up children and the family offered close support for all of its members. Similar to participant one, his conditions of work had enabled him to be at home and care for his children on a regular basis when they were younger. This participant was a founder member of the men's group and he participated in the pilot focus group.

Participant four was a forty five year old social worker with three children who was separated from his partner. He was brought up on a farm in North West England, the son of a farm labourer, and went on to live in London and study for a psychology degree before training as a social worker. When living with his family, he was consistently involved in his children's care and, after separation, he still had daily contact with them. His new home was purposely sited close to the family home in order to make independent travel for the children between the two houses possible. His son lived with him and he remained in regular contact with his two daughters, and still kept contact with his ex-partner regarding

the well-being of his children. This participant was also a founder member of the men's group and he participated in the pilot focus group.

Participant five worked full-time as a practice manager in a firm of solicitors. He was aged between 46 and 55 and earned between £40,000 and £50,000. He came from a working class family, had been married before and had one grown up son from that marriage. He had two children from his second marriage, a son with disabilities and a daughter. He was involved with caring for his children when not at work and valued his identity as a father. Although his partner was a full-time carer at home, he tried as much as possible to be fully involved with the care of his children. He has maintained a relationship with his adult son and sees him regularly. Over the eighteen months of the fieldwork, he participated in an individual interview, attended two focus group discussions and participated in an exit interview.

Participant six was a full-time worker in education and was aged between 36 and 45 years old. He had an unusual childhood characterised by, for example, his parents buying a boat and taking the family off travelling. He remembered experiencing his parents' anger and decided at an early age not to repeat that pattern with his family. His partner was a part-time college lecturer and counsellor and the family income was between £40,000 and £50,000. He had three children, aged ten, eight and five, and described himself as an involved father who participated in all aspects of their care. He would cook, clean and care for the children on the same basis as his partner although because he worked full-time this was not always possible. Over the eighteen months of the fieldwork he participated in an individual interview, two focus group discussions and an exit interview.

Participant seven worked part time for a charity and was also a full-time carer for his two daughters. As a young man he began to train as a priest but decided against that path in life. After a period of personal therapy he adjusted to a more regular life before going on to marry and have children. He valued his role as home maker and full-time parent and was very close to his children, thinking a lot about their well-being and working hard to ensure that they experienced a positive childhood. His partner worked full time as a priest and the family income bracket was between £20,000 and £30,000. During the eighteen months of the study he experienced a difficult transition as he started full-time work and his partner spent more time at home with the children. He participated in an individual interview, two focus group discussions and an exit interview.

Participant eight was a part-time care co-ordinator for a social services agency and was aged 52. His father was a manual worker and had worked six days a week 'to make ends meet' for his family. This participant's family income bracket was less than £10,000 a year and he had four children from two different relationships. One of his children, his son, lived with him and he had regular contact with his other three children. He was regularly involved with the care of one of his daughters who lived nearby with her mother. He participated in an individual interview. He was very involved with his children and talked a lot about the joys of bike rides, picnics and trips out as a family. He was particularly aware of how, over the years, he had grown and matured as a parent and talked about some difficult experiences for him as a young father struggling to be part of family life.

Participant nine, aged 47, was a widower and described his family make-up as himself, his daughter, his mother, his brother and sister-in-law and their two sons. His father had been a bank manager. He worked full-time as an Educational Welfare Officer and earned between £15,000 and £20,000 per year. He was a full-time carer for his teenage daughter. His partner had passed when his daughter was quite little and he often referred to being both a mother and a father at the same time. He was not sure that he was performing either role satisfactorily and missed the opportunities that two parent families have to support each other. He participated in an individual interview, three focus group discussions and an exit interview and contributed a substantial amount around the difficulties of men parenting teenage daughters.

Participant ten was a factory worker, aged between 36 and 45, and his family income was between £30,000 and £40,000. His father was working class and had been a keen amateur football player. This participant worked shifts and so was able to be involved in the care of his adopted 3 year old son. As part of the adoption process, he had been encouraged to talk about his personal life, including his feelings and his relationships with his partner and other members of his family. He felt that this experience had been invaluable and had helped him to be more open to his partner's willingness to teach him about the emotional dimensions to caring for children. He had been married before and had two teenage sons from this previous relationship. He kept in touch with his older sons and valued his relationship with them. He participated in an individual interview.

Participant eleven, aged 36, was a full-time factory worker whose family income was between £30,000 and £40,000. He was adopted and lived with his fiancé and their three

year old daughter. His adoptive father had worked in the mining and steel industry in the North East of England and was 'a hard working guy who used to put the hours in'. This participant was very close to his adopted parents and they formed part of his extended family. Both of them were present in the house when I interviewed him and he was not concerned about them being in the next room and being able to hear the interview. This did not prevent him from talking about intimate and difficult issues and his willingness to do so in a semi-public space indicated his degree of intimacy and trust with his parents. He was able to be involved in his daughter's care because he worked shifts in a nappy factory. He participated in an individual interview.

Participant twelve was a full-time systems engineer aged between 26 and 35. His father had spent twenty five years in the forces and then worked for fifteen years at British Aerospace. At the time of his individual interview this participant was living in his mother and father-in-law's home with his partner and baby daughter. They were soon to move to their own new house. His family income bracket was between £20,000 and £30,000. He enjoyed being involved in his baby daughter's care and talked about his desire to be a good father and to support his partner as much as possible in the daily routine of caring for a baby. He talked fondly of his own father and was one of the few participants who said his father was involved in more than a peripheral way in his own care as a child. He said his father was a good friend to him.

Participant thirteen was aged between 46 and 55 and worked full-time as a university technician earning between £20,000 and £30,000 a year. He had been born 'in the back streets of Goole' and his father drove a crane on the docks before going to college,

qualifying as a chartered engineer and then working for British Aerospace. This participant was married and had two daughters in their early twenties. He participated in an individual interview. He saw himself as a traditional father who was a provider and protector for his family. However, as his interview progressed it became clear that he was deeply concerned about his daughters' well-being and was involved in their upbringing in more than a peripheral sense. He also had been through a period of counselling and he referred to this on more than one occasion during his interview as an experience that had helped him to gain insight into the emotional aspect of caring for himself and his family. His father had been a distant, traditional father and this participant talked about his experience of him in terms of a lack of cuddles, affection and words of praise.

Participant fourteen, aged 46-55, described himself as a full-time university teacher with a family income of £40,000 to £50,000 a year. He was married with two teenage sons and said that he had been equally involved with their care over the years. He said that his father, a Methodist minister who had died when he was eighteen, was never angry with him. He remembers his father as having 'a great deal of self control' and being a very good and caring man who was slow to anger. This participant's preferred style of disciplining his children was through setting an example and encouraging them to develop healthy relationships. Paradoxically, his partner preferred a more challenging approach to discipline in the family and he was reluctant to engage with this approach and support his partner. He participated in an individual interview and said that he had volunteered to participate in the study because he wanted the opportunity for a 'personal review' of how he parented his children.

Participant fifteen was a full-time university lecturer whose family income was over £50,000. He was aged between 36 and 45, married and had three children aged between ten and fifteen years. His father was the manager of a resettlement unit and a Methodist minister with a 'great concern for people'. His parents never openly displayed anger and so he didn't have the opportunity as a child to experience anger and develop strategies for coping with and managing angry conflict. He talked about the shock of experiencing his partner's anger when first married and had slowly learned, over a period of time, to express his anger safely in the family. He shared the care of his children with his partner, who was also a university lecturer, and said that he was involved in all aspects of their care. He was clearly focused on their emotional well-being and put a lot of thought into managing family routines in order to promote a positive family atmosphere. He participated in an individual interview.

Participant sixteen, aged 50, was a full-time headmaster of a small primary school and his family income was over £50,000. His parents met during World War Two when his father was an army quarter-master and his mother worked for the UN helping displaced people. His mother had had mental health difficulties and his father, who had a long term career in the military, would often be frustrated and angry because of the consequences of this. This participant learned as a child, in order to avoid conflict and anger, to take responsibility for ensuring that the house was in good order for when his father came home. He had been married for twenty five years and had three children between the ages of eighteen and twenty three. He and his partner had negotiated that she would stay at home and look after the children, although he said it could just as easily have been him. He described himself as being involved in the care of his children over the years and was conscious that he did not

want his children to experience the level of anger that he did as a child. He participated in an individual interview and a focus group discussion.

Participant seventeen was a part-time researcher, aged between 26 and 35, with an income between £10,000 and £15,000. He remembered his father as being a train enthusiast who would not interact with the family and often sit in his room listening to music and reading books. The family of five children lived in a terrace house and his father, who had a military background, worked five days a week and would often come home exhausted. This participant lived separately from his seven year old daughter and her mother. His transition into fatherhood had been problematic as he struggled with the resultant loss of his partner's attention, differences in parenting styles and his loss of freedom as a young man. His daughter regularly stayed with him at week-ends and he described their time together as being intimate and rewarding. He worried about his daughter's well-being and, in particular, he didn't want her to remember him as an 'angry father'. He participated in an individual interview.

Participant eighteen was aged between 36 and 45, worked as a full-time editor and proof reader and earned between £20,000 and £30,000 per year. This participant was separated from his partner and saw his two sons, aged 7 and 16, on a regular basis. He suffered with regular periods of debilitating depression and talked about his difficult experiences of being a young father in terms of lack of choice and restriction of career opportunities. He spoke with warmth and affection about his children and was clear that he did not want to repeat his father's approach to parenting (characterised by a lack of warmth, affection and emotional awareness). He showed insight into his father's parenting approach by explaining

that his father was from a military background and had molded into being in control of his emotions because of the demands of army culture. He participated in an individual interview.

Participant nineteen was 38 years old and worked as a full-time community nurse with a family income of between £30,000 and £40,000. He didn't talk about his father during his interview because he quickly focused on contemporary experiences of parenting as he developed his own themes and accounts of fatherhood. He was married with a daughter, 5, and a son, 2, and described himself as being involved in their care. He felt more than capable of caring for his children in his partner's absence although he still felt there were certain things that 'mothers do'. When pressed on this he said that, for example, his partner chose all the children's clothes. Although he felt this was a particular strength of hers, there were still times when he felt he would like to have chosen clothes for his children, although he was aware that his choices may have been different to his partner's choices. This father clearly used his professional training as a frame of reference when he talked about caring for his children's emotional well-being during his individual interview.

Participant twenty was a head teacher of a special school, aged between 46 and 55, with a family income of between £40,000 and £50,000. His parents, who he described as caring and pacifist, sent him away to school. He remembered this as being a particularly unhappy time when he developed a number of coping strategies that he carried into adulthood. His childhood was also characterised by developing strategies for managing conflict and avoiding anger in his family – his two brothers being the main source of conflict. He felt that this approach to relationships had followed him into adult life and he now saw this

approach as a resource in both his work and family life. He was married with three children between the ages of 15 and 19 and talked a lot about managing family routines in order to avoid conflict and promote well-being. His professional training and experience had enhanced his ability to undertake emotion work in his family.

Individual interviews

Three main aspects to the individual interviews needed consideration: the structure of the interview, the gender of the interviewer and the use of interview skills. Denscombe (1998: 111) explains interviews are best used as a research tool when the data being collected is 'based on emotions, experiences and feelings' and gives access to sensitive and privileged information. I chose a semi-structured interview based on my reading of the literature and use of the three initial key aspects of the study, i.e. fatherhood, masculinity and anger. However, in order to provide the fathers with the opportunity to develop their own themes I explained, at the beginning of each interview that, although I had a structure, it was important for them to feel they could talk about what they wanted to talk about. By facilitating a balance between a structured interview and an unstructured interview I was able to use the literature to frame my questions at the same time as adhering to a fundamental principle of feminist research encouraging people to give voice to their everyday experiences. I think the nature of the sample allowed this approach to work as many, if not all, of the fathers who participated were, despite the influence of hegemonic masculinity in some of their contributions, to varying degrees pro-feminist. This situation was the result of a conscious decision to initially purposively sample and then snowball sample. Using key words from the working title of the study to frame the sections of the

interview resulted in much of the data being compartmentalised and, as shall be seen later, presented difficulties with conceptualising themes as the study unfolded. However, the strength of this approach was that taking a semi-structured/unstructured perspective on framing the interview questions meant the framework I eventually identified for explaining the experiences of the fathers was a grounded theory. As well as paying attention to the structuring of the questions I also began each interview by explaining the purpose of the research and asking each father to read and sign an interview contract. This contract included the proviso that interviewees were in control of the tape recording and could ask for it to be switched off at any point during the interview. The contract also agreed if they changed their mind about giving permission for any data to be shared through the study their wishes would be respected. It was hoped by taking this approach the participants may have felt more comfortable about talking about sensitive emotional issues. The second part of the interview contract considered child protection issues and took a more challenging approach by stating if, during the course of the interview, it appeared a child may be at risk I would need to discuss appropriate action with the interviewee. In addition to the interview contract each interviewee was asked to complete a personal data sheet. After covering formalities at the beginning of the interview I asked each father to talk about their children as a way of introducing the subject, letting them hear their own voice and allow both of us to relax into the interview.

The more challenging questions about anger were in part three of the interview although on a number of occasions the interviewees began talking about challenging issues early on. Their readiness to contribute drew on my skill as a novice researcher and an experienced counsellor and therapist. There were times when the interviewees talked about sensitive

issues when I was, as a novice researcher, tempted to develop the themes and explore these issues further. However, as an experienced counsellor and therapist, I was aware I was facilitating a research interview and not a counselling session. So, for example, when one father talked about his history of severe depression I was careful not to explore this further. Similarly, when another father commented the interview was covering areas of 'conversation' he would have talked about with his partner had she still been alive I was careful to acknowledge what he said and then move on. Owens (1996: 56) writes about how researchers may '.... use emotion to judge how to pace the interview, how far to go at what point, and typically, when to draw back from issues that are causing distress.' My training as a counsellor helped me to feel comfortable about keeping appropriate boundaries around areas of the interview that may have led to the participant becoming distressed. Paradoxically, given the subject of the study, my intention was not to explicitly encourage the fathers to express their feelings in interviews. However, many of the fathers finished the interviews by commenting on how useful it had been to talk about issues that had sometimes never been talked about before and how they learned something about themselves and the issues around involved fatherhood. This may have been about Owen's (1996: 63) recognition that '.... in many cases the men were speaking for the first time of things they had suppressed, and disclosing to another some of their deeper feelings, hopes and fears.' There were times during interviews when I realised I was using counselling skills as I reflected, mirrored, self-disclosed, provided empathic responses and used probes and prompts (Egan, 2006). In addition, Denscombe (1998: 124) explains good research interviewers need to be attentive, sensitive to the feelings of the informant, able to tolerate silences and adept at using prompts and probes – skills correlating with those I employed during individual interviews. In addition, I employed summaries at regular intervals in

order to check understanding and, at times, to move the interview on (Denscombe, 1998: 125). However, I also used summaries when the participants seemed lost, confused or uncertain about the validity of their contributions. It was the use of such summaries that, in my opinion, drew fundamentally on my skills as a counsellor because by summarising accurately at such crucial points in the interview the participants knew I was listening and valuing their contribution. Owen (1996: 65) argues ‘.... an understanding of, and training in basic counselling skills would be of help, not so that interviewers could become some kind of counsellor, but rather because many of those skills make one better equipped to deal with emotional interviews and remain professional’

I was often struck, during the interviews, by the poignancy of two men sat talking about childcare. The literature on hegemonic masculinity would suggest men talking with men about intimate areas of their lives is difficult and necessarily problematic; going against an ideal masculinity embodying competitiveness, isolation and separation from emotionality and intimate relationships. However, the notion of personalised masculinities (Swain, 2006) allows a more liberal understanding of how two men may talk intimately about family life and child care. I encouraged participants to talk about their family life and themselves by clearly indicating, when appropriate, I was open to my own and other people’s feelings and, in addition, was prepared to and was comfortable with talking intimately with other men about my involvement with caring for my children. However, I may have limited discussion and disclosure by my lack of awareness of how hegemonic masculinity still influences my performance as a man. How many cues and clues I gave about not wanting to discuss feelings and intimacy will remain unknown. Paradoxically, there may also have been occasions during individual interviews and focus group discussions when my

presentation as an involved father was counterproductive. By indicating that, as a man, I was sensitive to gendered power issues within relationships, I may have inhibited the expression of more traditional masculine attitudes.

Men talking in groups with other men about their feelings and intimacy may be problematic. For example, Allen (2005) undertook a qualitative study exploring how young men constituted their sexuality with other young men in groups. She concluded the young men she interviewed talked differently with other young men from how they may talk more privately with their girlfriends. Public displays of masculine identity within her focus groups tended to be traditionally heterosexual with a marked reluctance to talk about more personalised and sensitive forms of masculinity. Although she 'probed' for these more sensitive expressions of self she met with limited success and, interestingly, it was not until she formulated mixed gender groups that she began to hear the young men talk more openly about themselves. She argues her gender may have influenced the young men's behaviour in three ways. Firstly, they responded to her sexual identity in their formulation of their responses. For example, she tells the story of when contacting a potential participant she asked for his phone number. The young man jokingly asked if she was planning to ask him for a date. Secondly, she considers the potential for researcher collusion in the formation of particular masculine identities during the research process. For example, if she had responded to the above humour by acknowledging the linkage between women asking men for phone numbers and sexuality she would have colluded with and compounded the young man's public performance of a predatory heterosexual masculine identity. Thirdly, she questioned the possibility the young men found it easier when they did talk about different expressions of masculinity and sexuality because she was a woman.

However, she argued the latter was not necessarily the case as male researchers have successfully facilitated research processes into men and masculinities by helping men to talk about the multiple and complex nature of the formation of gendered male identities.

Focus groups and exit interviews

Throughout the planning and implementation of the fieldwork the dilemma of a predominant hegemonic masculinity limiting participants' ability and openness to sharing information about other personalised forms of masculinities and fatherhoods was consistently addressed. The planning of the focus groups is a good example of this. Morgan and Krueger (1998) indicate focus groups draw on three fundamental strengths shared by all qualitative methods: exploration and discovery, context and depth and interpretation. They also contend that focus groups are useful for researching sensitive subjects and, by employing a combination of direct facilitation and going with the flow of discussions, it is possible to maximise discovery of participant's experiences and feelings on a given topic. When employed in this way, focus groups are, according to Morgan and Krueger (1998: 58):

....especially useful for topics where people are not in touch with or able to articulate their motivations, feelings and opinions. Many of the behaviours that researchers wish to understand are not matters of conscious importance of everyday life. As the participants in a focus group hear others talk, however, they can easily tell whether what they are hearing fits with their own situation. By comparing and contrasting they can become more explicit about their own views.

In contrast to the above authors' optimistic view, Denscombe (1998: 115) argues focus groups, although useful for obtaining insights that may not come to light in individual interviews, may be limited in their usefulness because it may be difficult to hear what is being said as speakers interrupt one another and:

.... that there is the possibility that people will be reluctant to disclose thoughts on sensitive, personal, political or emotional matters in the company of others, or that extrovert characters can dominate the proceedings and bully more timid members of the focus group into expressing opinions they would not admit to in private.

The gender of the researcher facilitating a focus group for men is also significant. Grogan and Richards (2002) undertook an interesting study into boys' and young men's attitude to body image. They used focus groups as a primary research tool and, although their methodological comments on the influences of hegemonic masculinity on group dynamics are limited, they said (2002: 230):

Arguably, discussions with a male facilitator may represent more natural conversations that groups of men have around body image. However, pilot work suggested that men and boys were more reticent about discussing the topic with a male facilitator (focus groups were much shorter).

Their published data suggests the *natural* conversations participants undertook replicated gendered norms in the sense their comments supported cultural norms around male body image rather than challenge these norms by talking about alternative expressions of

different masculinities through different body images. In other words, the boys and young men that took part in the discussions used traditional forms of masculinity as a reference point for their discussions. My dilemma, when deciding on the use of focus groups as a research tool, was how to manage the above dynamics within my focus groups. I needed to minimise the possibility that the fathers would be restricted by being bullied and intimidated, however covertly, into speaking about their experiences of fatherhood using traditional fatherhood and masculinity as points of reference. I also needed to ensure I minimised my collusion with any attempt to set up this dynamic within the group. This was one of the main reasons why I decided on a pilot focus group. By employing purposive sampling I was able to ensure the fathers who took part in the group discussion were able to talk across a range of possibilities in terms of the performance of fatherhood and masculinities. Furthermore, because of their professional background and training they were able to participate thoughtfully and reflectively in the group discussion. This was made possible because they were able to listen to themselves and the others in the group and, by doing so, create a culture of understanding and acceptance. My group facilitation skills contributed to this process. Snowball sampling from this initial focus group and the clarity of the fieldwork advertisement contributed to further participants being able to contribute in similar ways in both the individual interviews and the focus group discussions. The first focus group consisted of five fathers who were, to varying degrees, articulate and confident enough to speak out as well as skilled and sensitive enough to listen to others. However, this was not always the case as on occasions I used group facilitation skills in order to limit a father's contribution if I felt he was talking too much and taking up too much time. I also encouraged quieter participants who perhaps were either reluctant to contribute or were unable to break into the conversation. At other times I

occasionally asked a father, when I felt it was relevant or potentially useful, if he would like to talk about something he talked about in his individual interview with me. Three groups took place over a period of six months (see appendix for attendance) and reminder letters were sent to each of the five participants in the first focus group prior to subsequent groups. Despite these reminders, the attendance at each group fluctuated and the final group was attended by two fathers only. When I undertook exit interviews with four of the five fathers I discovered attendance had varied because of personal and work commitments.

During the exit interviews the fathers still seemed engaged with the subject and were keen to participate. Rather than employ a questioning approach during focus groups and exit interviews I used a series of prompts. These prompts were drawn anonymously from all of the individual interview transcripts and were designed to check the validity of the data as well as prompt further discussion. I also used selected quotes from focus group transcripts as prompts. My intention was to move the study away from a structured approach into a more explorative phase based on participants' previous contributions. However, I was aware towards the end of the focus groups and the beginning of the exit interviews my approach to prompt selection was based on my need to begin to understand how the initial themes of the study – fatherhood, masculinity and anger – may relate to one another. Perhaps unrealistically I was hoping participants would begin to produce this linkage but my probing and prompting began to result in the fathers repeating earlier contributions. My growing frustration with these responses helped me to realise the field work phase was coming to an end. With hindsight, I was expecting the fathers to engage in a reflective process I was to be immersed in for a further two years as I reread transcripts, undertook further reading and discussion and thought about what the data was telling me.

Data analysis and writing the thesis

All research involves the posing of problems or the positioning of ideas, innovations or questions of some form or another. This happens at the start of the research and often during it at different stages, sometimes following revelations or disappointments, successes and failures (Wisker, 2001: 217)

The analysis of the data collected from the pilot focus group, the sixteen individual interviews, the three focus group discussions and the four exit interviews was far from linear. My preliminary research proposal, an enquiry into how involved fathers manage their anger in families, quickly began to feel naïve and simplistic as I began to read the literature on fatherhood and masculinity and undertake the initial fieldwork. Although some of the individual interviews provided examples of anger management as a single event, most of the fathers talked about complex family experiences suggesting no particular consistent or regular framework of understanding. As I typed the transcript from each research event I was able to revisit the data and think about what the fathers were telling me. Although I knew I was listening to men talking about intimate and private experiences in their families I had no awareness of what sense this was making, simply a realisation I was in a privileged position as the fathers' stories unfolded and they interacted with each other in the focus group discussions. From time to time I recognised themes from the literature and was able to test out my developing knowledge and the reliability of the literature as I asked supplementary questions and probed. After the first six interviews I undertook a preliminary analysis of the data and then conducted six more interviews before starting the focus groups. As interviews six to twelve began to produce repeat data I started

to select samples from transcripts for the focus group discussions and exit interviews in order to promote further discussion and enquiry. This process of preliminary and ongoing data analysis has been summarised by Robson (1993: 377) who suggests researchers should: 'Generate themes, categories and codes, etc. as you go along. Start by including rather than excluding, you can combine and modify as you go along.' I initially looked at themes from each of the three interview sections and coded them by referencing them to contributions in individual transcripts and grouping them under sub headings. This approach to analysis not only helped me to organise my data but also suggested new themes and categories. A primary example of this was the question about asking the participants to talk about their own fathers. The original idea behind this question was to introduce one of a number of equally important themes. However, the data produced was so substantive it contributed significantly to my understanding of the motivation and formative experiences of many of the fathers to whom I spoke. Another example of this need to respond openly to new categorisations was when the word 'power' began to appear in the transcripts. This led me to undertake further reading and, after further reflection, became another substantial theme in the writing of this thesis. It was in this area I was challenged most to provide an explanation about how the fathers I spoke to managed their power in their families and how this, in turn, related to them managing their anger. Although the initial coding of the data concentrated on the three themes of the study I began to build linking categories such as 'links between masculinity and fathering.' It was during this period of data analysis I began to select prompts to explore these linking categories further. However, it was not until I began to write the final draft of the thesis that Wisker's (2001) 'revelations' began to influence my developing understanding of what the fathers had been saying to me. Perhaps

the most important aspect of the analysis of the research data may be summarised by Moustakas (1990: 49):

Transcription, notes, and personal documents are gathered together and organised by the investigator into a sequence that tells the story of each research participant. Essential to the process of heuristic analysis is comprehensive knowledge of all the materials for each participant and for the group of participants collectively. The task involves timeless immersion in the data, with intervals of rest and return to the data until intimate knowledge is obtained.

On reflection, much of the heuristic aspect of data analysis happened by default. Being a part-time student meant I had to manage my time carefully and inevitably this meant I was only able to undertake reading and research for a maximum of two days per week. This did not mean, however, I was not thinking about issues and I would often leave notes and memos for myself during my 'time off'. There were also two periods during which I left the data for longer periods, a year of intercalation (after the completion of an initial reading of the literature, participation in a Gender Theory Workshop and facilitating the pilot focus group) and then another year of absence through the demands of my personal life (after completion of the fieldwork). Although at the time these long periods of separation were experienced by me as negative and difficult experiences, with hindsight I realise I never really stopped thinking about the study. One of the difficulties of undertaking the study over this eight year period was maintaining a consistency in data analysis and interpretation. This can best be explained by Wisker (2001: 252) who suggests: 'As you analyse your data and start to produce some findings that could be shared with others, you

will need to think about the different parts of the findings and the conclusions 'jigsaw'. She goes on to indicate researchers need to consider the significance of their findings when analysing data. In terms of significance, which, according to Wisker (2001), means the findings should have some meaning and some weight, there has been an interesting and challenging tension for me in the writing of this thesis. Hughes (2002: 174) explains:

Social scientific training encourages us to look for systematization, linkage, unification, and synthesis. It encourages us to ask if there is a founding principle that will provide an explanatory framework for understanding. This is the case even perhaps where none exists.

The writing of this thesis was, in a similar fashion to the analysis of the data, far from uniform and linear. Returning to Ramazanoglu and Holland's (2002) comments on gender, power and normative frameworks, it was tempting to spend much time and energy on writing the thesis in order to meet the requirements of Hughes's (2002: 174) 'systematisation, linkage, unification and synthesis'. My concern was that if this did not exist within the data analysis this thesis would fall short of the requirements for a doctoral examination process. However, Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002: 147) state theories of gender and power are not uniform and are likely to overlap with other theoretical approaches. Consequently, the writing of this thesis was at times disjointed and opportunistic as I sought to understand what the fathers had told me and compare this with the existing literature and my personal and professional understanding. I was also aware I was attempting to write about power, which by definition when related to masculinity and gender relations, is linked to a hegemonic discourse on masculinity that is difficult to 'see'

and understand. At times the literature was very clear about the influence of hegemonic masculinity on the emotional lives of men (Seidler: 1989, for example) but at other times both the literature and the data were limited in their usefulness. A good example of the latter was my exploration of fatherhood and anger. I systematically searched the literature on fatherhood for key words such as anger, emotions and feelings and found nothing specific about fathers and anger. Similarly, with emotion work the literature tends to focus on relationships between men and women in families and less, if at all, on men undertaking emotion work with their children. And so in order to find a way of explaining what I thought was happening, I drew on a diverse literature from gender studies, sociology, masculinity studies and social psychology.

In the following accounts of the fathers who participated in the fieldwork, their participant number is recorded in brackets. My questions and contributions are in italics. The accounts of all the fathers are drawn upon throughout the following three substantive chapters although some accounts appear to be utilised more heavily than others. Qualitatively there has been a balance drawn as some fathers encapsulate in one contribution what many of the other fathers were saying across a number of interviews and focus group discussions. The pilot focus group, in particular, produced unexpectedly crucial data on intimacy that went on to significantly contribute to the analysis of the data and the conclusions drawn about the process of fathers undertaking emotion work. The fathers who participated in the final four of the initial sixteen individual interviews were beginning to repeat the data and so their contributions are not drawn on as heavily as other fathers who participated earlier in the fieldwork.

There are four further aspects of data collection and analysis that merit consideration here. The first is that, according to Wilkinson (1998), focus groups may help researchers to mediate power between researchers and participants. Unlike individual interviews, which may be structured according to how the researcher conceptualises categories, definitions and meanings, focus groups provide participants with the opportunity to construct their own meanings as discussions develop and unfold. When I designed the individual interview structure my purpose was to engage with the fathers by beginning the interviews with general questions about their children and then go on test the accuracy and validity of the literature, and my hypothesising, by asking questions about the meaning of fatherhood, the emotional lives of men and the fathers' experiences of anger. Wilkinson (1998) argues that this structured approach to data collection imposes meaning on participants and prevents them from thinking about their own use of language and what meaning their experiences hold for them. I think my skills as a counsellor and therapist helped with mitigating the effect of this imposition of meaning as I employed an open approach to questioning, encouraged reflection and 'gave permission' for the fathers to talk about their own experiences in a language that had meaning for them. Interestingly, on more than one occasion a father would say, 'I hope this is what you want to hear.' Or they would ask, 'Is this what you wanted me to talk about?' It would seem that these comments and questions would indicate that the fathers had expectations of the interview process that support Wilkinson's (1998) contention that structured interviews may impose meaning and restrict the creation of new meaning.

The second aspect of data collection and analysis is Wilkinson's (1998) contention that focus groups may produce high quality data. This is linked to the notion that the power of

the researcher is diminished through the group process of participants sharing experiences, debating meaning and going on to produce data that may not have been accessed through the limitations of an individual interview. This is the reason I chose focus groups as a method of data collection. My intention was to moderate my power as a researcher by creating an environment in the groups whereby the fathers felt comfortable and confident enough to talk with each other about fatherhood, masculinity and anger. I utilised prompts drawn from responses made in individual interviews in an attempt to provide the fathers with an opportunity to think about emerging data and, again, contribute to the construction of meaning within this thesis. Wilkinson (1998) argues that focus groups help with the co-construction of meaning for research participants, thereby significantly contributing to feminist principles of challenging established discourse.

The third aspect of data collection and analysis that deserves consideration here is that, according to Frith and Kitzinger (1998) focus groups may provide an opportunity for researchers to observe how participants behave with other group members rather than rely on self reporting. These authors reported that, when facilitating focus groups for young women talking about sexual negotiation, they were clearly undertaking emotion work with each other as they listened, supported each other and considered each others feelings. Data collection on emotion work, according to Toerein and Kitzinger (2007), often relies on self-reporting and for a researcher to witness this in context, such as Frith and Kitzinger's (1998) study, is unusual. A good example of witnessing emotion work in context is provided in chapter four of this thesis where I write about witnessing two fathers sharing an intimate moment together across the group. My theory chapter contends that men and fathers may experience difficulty with intimacy in relationships, and in particular with other men. Individual interview questions tested out this theorising by asking specifically about

men and feelings and more generally by employing prompts and probes to elicit more information about the fathers' experiences of their emotional lives. I then took emerging data, based on the fathers' self-reports, into the focus groups to provide them with an opportunity to talk about feelings and intimacy. I was aware that I would need to facilitate the group in such a way as to encourage this kind of dialogue and I did this by encouraging an accepting and non-judgemental atmosphere. I did this by modelling such behaviour myself and encouraging the fathers to engage with each other in the same way. When one father suddenly 'reached out' to another father in the group in recognition of a shared loss (and the other responded empathically), I recognised this kind of interaction from my previous experiences of therapeutic groups. However, it was not until I later listened to the recording of the group and reread the transcript that I realised that this father was demonstrating his ability to be intimate with another man, in the company of other men – and I had been witnessing emotion work in context. With hindsight, I now understand that I could have maximised the usefulness of the focus groups by structuring and facilitating them differently. For example, Christian (1994) facilitated a series of closed groups for men, or a 'men's group', in order to research men's transformational experiences from traditional masculinity to softer and more open approaches to being men. Had I have taken a similar approach to structuring my focus groups, and drawn more fully on my therapeutic background as a facilitator, I may have been able to record more high quality data about men actually undertaking emotion work rather than relying on self reporting.

The fourth and final aspect of data collection and analysis to be considered is the notion that the term 'emotion work' may be employed as participant resource. Frith and Kitzinger (1998: 316) contend that the focus groups they facilitated suggested that:

.... talk about doing 'emotion work' may offer women a legitimate and socially acceptable language for explaining and justifying their actions, and for presenting themselves (to themselves and others) in a favourable light.

Frith and Kitzinger (1998) are careful not collude with the notion that women 'naturally' undertake emotion work and argue that they are responding to the societal expectations of women. Instead they promote the notion of 'emotion work' positively as a participant resource. What they mean by this is that researchers may move further than using the term 'emotion work' as an analytical category and go on to facilitate the co-construction of meaning within focus groups as a resource for participants to understand their experiences, find a language to explain these experiences and then go on to present an account of themselves undertaking emotion work. The resultant meaning of emotion work is less about society's expectations of women and more about women speaking out and advocating for themselves by employing the language of emotion work as a resource. With Frith and Kitzinger's (1998) study, emotion work as a participant resource was seen to be particularly useful as the women talked about the negotiation of sexual contact with men. I attempted to encourage the fathers who participated in the focus groups to engage in a similar process as they as they talked about managing their anger within the context of their sense of their masculinity and relationships with their partners and children. However, I think the focus group discussions fell short of the fathers producing Frith and Kitzinger's (1998: 316) 'legitimate and socially acceptable language for explaining and justifying their actions'. Despite my attempts to encourage some of the fathers to develop this perspective in the exit interviews, it was not until I analysed the data, and engaged in the writing of the thesis, that I developed the concept of 'fathers undertaking emotion work'. Frith and Kitzinger (1998) might argue that this was my attempt to impose my meaning on the data and use my power

as a researcher to influence the construction of meaning. However, in the following substantive chapters I develop my argument that although the fathers talked about conflict avoidance in a way that had meaning for them, they were actually self-reporting examples of fathers undertaking emotion work. I go on to develop the notion of fathers undertaking emotion work in families by proposing that this form of emotion work has certain characteristics that other fathers may find useful to read about. By writing the thesis in this way, I think I have used my power as a researcher responsibly and have consistently addressed Wilkinson's (1998) contention that the imposition of meaning by researchers is ethically problematic. I further believe that I have engaged with the fathers in an ethically responsible way by providing them with the opportunity to talk freely with each other in groups, participate in the construction of what emotion work means for them and read drafts of some of the thesis chapters. I have also demonstrated in this thesis how I have worked with the fathers to develop a different perspective on emotion work by reframing their accounts of conflict avoidance. In doing so, I believe we have co-constructed a new perspective on emotion work and I now go on to present it as a participant resource for future generations of researchers and fathers.

4. Fathers, Intimacy and Emotion Work

It's harder to be intimate as a father. It's easier when they are babies and then gets progressively harder, you have to go with the flow. It also depends on whether the children want to be affectionate with you, you have to be respectful of how they are feeling. Intimacy cannot be claimed as a right, you have to be involved in the hard slog of daily life, be available and be patient. (2)

This chapter argues that a fundamental prerequisite for fathers undertaking emotion work in families is their ability to develop intimate relationships with their children. The fathers I talked to in this study were all involved, or in the case of some of the older fathers, had been involved, in caring for their children. The interview questions were designed to gather data about emotional involvement as well as physical caring. As the data was analysed it became apparent the fathers had negotiated complex circumstances in order to be involved intimately with their children and undertake emotion work. The pattern that emerged was, firstly, the fathers were subject to complex intersecting discourses on fatherhood – traditional, emergent and involved. This chapter focuses specifically on how these discourses influenced the fathers' performance of fatherhood in terms of being emotionally involved with their children and how they undertook emotion work in families. On further reading and consideration of the data, it became apparent that, secondly, there was a prerequisite for fathers undertaking emotion work in families – the ability of the fathers to develop intimate relationships with their children. Again, this chapter considers this ability to develop intimate relationships in the light of predominant and changing discourses on

fatherhood, as well as how intimacy may change over time and according to gender. As the chapter progresses, the nature of intimate relationships is developed by considering the tension between being empathic and supportive as well as being able to set appropriate boundaries and managing power. It is within this scenario the scene is set for a later chapter on understanding fathers' anger in families. The chapter ends by acknowledging the performance of emotion work by fathers in families is not only linked to their experiences of multiple discourses on fatherhood but is, in addition, limited by the influence of a predominant discourse on masculinity. Consideration of 'masculinity' and its influence on the emotional lives of men who are fathers is the focus of the following chapter. It is in the penultimate chapter that the thesis draws together the three strands - fatherhood, masculinity and anger - by considering examples of fathers undertaking emotion work and managing their anger in families.

Fatherhood and intimacy

In order to consider fathers undertaking emotion work in families, it is necessary to take into account the effects of fathers being located within the intimate family space of relationships. Definitions of emotion work fall short of considering intimacy as a prerequisite for emotion work and this study introduces intimacy as both a consequence of involved fatherhood as well as a family dynamic needing to be developed. Traditional fatherhood at first seems to lack the necessary prerequisites for intimacy with children. However, we shall see later this may not be the case. The emergent perspective on fatherhood that became more visible during the latter part of the twentieth century seems to be more favourable and provides more opportunities for fathers to spend time with their

children in a way that might develop trust and understanding. However, it is involved fatherhood that provides the greatest opportunity for fathers to develop intimate relationships with their children and then go on to undertake emotion work that is informed by a deeper understanding of their children's emotional needs.

In order to understand the complexity of fathers' experiences in terms of multiple discourses on fatherhood and their impact on intimacy, this section considers the experiences of the fathers in terms of both their experiences of intimacy with their own fathers and intimacy with their own children as involved fathers.

Traditional fatherhood and intimacy The predominant discourse on fatherhood in the nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries ensured fathers remained emotionally distant from their families and expected mothers to undertake emotion work in families. Wolf-Light (1999:9) when writing about his experience of his own father, says this about traditional fathers:

As far as children went, fathers seemed to be peripheral figures who acted as an occasional helper to mother this lack of engagement on a practical level was reinforced by his emotional detachment.

Most of the older fathers in this study talked about their own fathers in terms of this traditional discourse on fathering. Their fathers were breadwinners, providers of discipline and emotionally distant and their mothers were focused on providing both physical and emotional nurturing within the home. They commented that this experience of distant

fathering was one of the influences motivating them to become more involved in caring for their children and consequently influenced their performance of fatherhood. However, within the traditional arrangement described by the participants there were stories told about traditional fathers being intimate with their children. The stories reflected both physical intimacy as a result of fathers 'being there' as well as sharing information about feelings and experiences. One father, a forty five year old social worker (4), talked about his own father's ability to care for him when his mother was hospitalised:

I remember my father was just this guy in the background. There were times when my mother was in hospital so he was really under scrutiny then. I remember those times well. And then she came out and got better and he would sort of disappear into the background again. He used to cook for us but all he could cook was bacon and eggs and I used to think, 'Why doesn't he do this all the time? He cooks it better than my mother.

This father's experience of his own father's ability to care for him in a physical way provides a good example of negotiating involved fatherhood – the opportunity to be involved in caring for his children was only available, or it could be argued taken up, when his partner was ill and he was able to perform as a 'mother's helper'. The above father went on to tell the group his father returned to the background when his partner became better, ensuring the family re-established the status quo at the same time as leaving his son with questions about that status quo.

Another father, a prison teacher with two teenage daughters (2), talked about his traditional father physically caring for him as a young child in a way that reflected a discourse on involved fatherhood:

I can remember very clearly how distant my father was I can remember when I was younger asking him to do things with me and him point blank refusing, 'I'm too busy' or whatever. It came as a real surprise to me when my mother told me he used to be very close to me when I was little. He used to enjoy bathing me, he used to enjoy having me on his knee She used to say that he wanted to do things with me.

This father went on to talk about how his father seemed unable to make changes as he grew older, subsequently becoming more distant:

I don't think he knew what to do. I think he was really not only frightened but just, 'kids!' And then he would run the other way, 'They've got their own mind now, shit! What do I do with them?'

Another example of this seeming inability to change, and its subsequent impact on intimacy as children grew older, was provided by the above father when talking about his father's relationship with his brother:

She [his mother] used to say that as soon as my brother was old enough to have an idea about doing something my dad would say, 'No, I don't want to'. That closeness

melted away, he didn't persevere, he didn't find a new way. He thought, 'Well I've done my bit for you. Off you go now you're making your own mind up, you're a man.' But he was only about three years old or something. I can remember my mum saying that very clearly.

Although this participant was surmising what his father was thinking, the example of closeness 'melting away' is clear – and at such a young age. And it seems to be at a point where his brother was developing a mind of his own; which would suggest a loss of intimacy was concurrent with a growing ability to be independent and challenge the father's view of what was to be done within the family. Seidler (1988) locates the reluctance or inability of traditional fathers to relate intimately with their children within the construction of a masculinity which values reason, distance and authority. Seidler (1988: 280) contends:

Within this world of men it becomes difficult to listen to claims that are made by partners and children. It is also difficult for men to value their relationships – to give time and attention to them.

In addition, Lewis (1986) comments on the difference between the public performance of traditional fatherhood as a physically and emotionally distant form of parenting and the private experiences of men who struggled with their emotions. It was interesting when the fathers I talked to were asked about their experiences of their own traditional fathers. Their accounts suggested an emotionality that perhaps was not allowed to be expressed publicly.

It was often as if their fathers were on the outside of something looking in. One father, a sixty four year old retired university lecturer (3), told me, when talking about his father:

The thing I remember about him [his father], he's been dead such a long time and I can hardly remember what he looked like, but what I can remember is when I was closest with him was when I felt he understood what was happening to me. I was eighteen and I was ready to go off to London from Leeds. He just muttered something like 'I wish I'd done something like you're doing – left home at eighteen'. He understood, he gave me that extra reassurance that it was the right thing to do – leave home and go and start on my own away from everybody.

The feeling of closeness was there for this father. He and his father had connected in a way that was meaningful and relevant to his life at that moment. Another similar example, from the father who was a social worker (4), illustrates these moments of understanding provided by otherwise traditional fathers:

My dad, when I was thinking of not going to London and I was just hanging around at home, he was very forthright and said 'Don't be bloody daft, off you go'. And there was no arguing. I mean, it wasn't so much he made sweeping life decisions for me but I could tell that he meant that!

Emergent fatherhood and intimacy Fathers in the pilot focus group were asked what they thought closeness and intimacy meant in terms of being with their children. They all echoed Jamieson's (1998) definition that intimacy meant being physically close to their children

and subsequent interviews consistently provided examples of this kind of intimacy. Holding hands, cuddling, bathing, reading stories, putting children to bed, getting up to children in the night, dressing them in the morning and giving children breakfast were all given as examples of closeness. However, fathers also talked about simply spending time together and enjoying activities as an intimate experience. For example, one father, a seventy year old retired university lecturer (1), spoke fondly of memories of playing with his children:

When my daughter was very little and her brother was pushchair age, I used to take them to the cemetery a lot. There was a very nice quiet cemetery nearby, we had a little Scotty dog we used to take with us, and we used to play all sorts of games in that cemetery.... I remember the sheer enjoyment of those times.

It could be argued that although this father saw himself as an involved father, this is an example of emergent fatherhood in terms of 'mother's helper', i.e. taking the children off to play in order to give the mother a break. However, the example clearly shows intimacy was taking place between this father and his children. Other fathers talked about feeling close to their children when playing outdoors, going to football matches and camping. There are two ways of looking at this. Firstly, their construction as men and fathers contributed to helping mothers out by playing with children in what may be seen as a traditional masculine way focusing on outdoor activity. Secondly, as a result of their experiences of their own fathers, they desired to be more involved with their children but were having to negotiate the time and place of this intimacy.

For example, one father, the social worker (4), talked about going camping with his children:

I suppose I was thinking a couple of years ago my daughter and I camped on the south coast in Dorset and that was a time when we were close to each other, doing things. I bought her tea sets and cups and a teapot cos she does like camping, the three of them do, which their mother hates. So you could say that's why I could get close to them.

At first, these camping trips may be misunderstood – a father accessing time with his children in a typically masculine style. But listening further we hear a different story:

You've got to buy the food, you've got to cook the food, you've got to time things, everything, the whole routine. Everything that happens depends on the parents and if there is only one there then it is you. There's a stress in all of that but also a great fulfillment.

This father went on to talk about camping as an opportunity to parent in a style he was comfortable with – a style he didn't have to negotiate with his partner. For example, his partner didn't like cooked breakfasts. They made the house smell and camping was an opportunity for him and his children to enjoy cooked breakfasts in a way he remembered his father cooking for him when his mother was ill. This example also provides an insight into what might be perceived as a masculine style of being with children that may not be possible when some mothers are involved. The following contributions (made quickly and in close succession) from the pilot focus group discussion illustrate the point:

(4) Cooked breakfasts, the house smells of hot fat. 'I don't like my house smelling of hot fat!' But when you're camping what else are going to eat? (lots of laughter) How else are you going to smell? It's wonderful!

(2) It's a bit 'Boys Own', isn't it? In a way. Mum isn't there and we are going to have fun! (laughter) And we are going to eat trash! (chuckles) And dad is gonna get away with farting! And in a way that's It's a way of opening up, isn't it? (general comments of agreement) It's kind of like breaking some rules.

(4) Don't tell your mother (nervous chuckles) – in a small way.

If the laughter and nervous chuckling are to be understood as signs of tension, this discussion touched on an area these fathers felt nervous about discussing in public. They clearly perceived themselves as being involved fathers although publicly they may be seen as 'mother's helpers' drawing on the emergent discourse on fatherhood. They also display competent and caring childcare skills that are, at the same time, seen as 'not good enough' and possibly interpreted as inappropriate – a masculine approach to childcare breaking the rules of good parenting skills even though they are cooking and caring for their children. For some of these fathers, being involved in their children's care on the terms they wanted involved negotiation with their partners, with the mother acting as gatekeeper to their children's care.

Involved fathers and intimacy The fathers I talked to were all involved in the physical, psychological and emotional care of their children and most had, to varying degrees, negotiated a more equitable style of parenting with their partners. By being as equally involved as mothers in their children's lives they all had a good knowledge of their children as individuals. One of the opening questions in the interviews, designed as a warm up and introduction, asked the fathers to talk about their children. I was consistently amazed at their knowledge of their children as individuals and their ability to talk about their children in a way that historically, perhaps, has been associated with mothers. An example of this knowledge and understanding was provided by one father, a university technician (13), who had shared the care of his children when they were small. After telling me he had two daughters, both in their early twenties, and describing their employment and accommodation status, he then went on to say:

The elder one isn't in a relationship at the moment, she's just recovering from a broken relationship and the other is in a relationship at the moment, but it's the usual on-off late teenage thing [they are both] possibly emotionally scarred by what's happened over the years in our family, both quite emotional, both quite frustrated in possibly an emotional, possibly a physical state. I like to think they are both well brought up and both very intelligent. Where they get that from I don't know. I just make things. The wife is the one with all the qualifications. They are wonderful girls but they are both hard work.

In what way?

Emotionally. I can repair broken things, but I'm not very good at repairing broken emotions, if you like. My wife tends to do the emotional side, I tend to deal with the taxi driving, moving house, beating boy friends up, all this sort of thing, I'm more practical than emotional.

Do you mind me asking what has scarred them?

Not at all. This all came up with my counselling a couple of years ago. When the girls were possibly about 4 and 6 years old my wife had a fairly [sic] nervous breakdown, it came out of the blue and it lasted, the intense part of it lasted about a year. Obviously it's ongoing to a certain extent but it's under control. And it came out that I never really explained to the girls what was happening. The girls thought that mum was dying and it was just a case of waiting for her to die and, of course, that has emotionally scarred them somewhat.

Despite the presence of aspects of traditional fatherhood and masculinity in this contribution, this father's awareness and knowledge of his children's emotional lives is clear. (Although it cannot be assumed his daughters shared this information with him directly). An example of knowledge of older children, based on more obvious direct sharing of information, is provided by another father, a practice manager (5), talking about his relationship with his adult son:

He still comes round once a fortnight, he either comes down to our house and has his tea or he meets me at work and we go out for a coffee or something. I think he's

seen the emotional side of me.... he had mixed feelings because he thought that because I'd remarried and had children with somebody else that he was going to get pushed out. That was emotional trying to explain to him that he was equally as important ... he got emotional at that point because he was all mixed up and didn't quite know where things were leading. So I think we have shared some emotion.

A father's knowledge of younger children was often based more on what Jamieson (1998) calls 'cultural awareness' rather than open sharing of information. For example, one father (19), a community nurse with two young children, when talking about his five year old daughter at the beginning of an interview, said:

She started school in September last year and she settled down very quickly. Thankfully went to the same school that a number of her friends went to from play group.

That helps, doesn't it?

It does. And for that reason, that passage, it wasn't a problem. As I say she has settled down and seems to cope very well with the demands of schooling. Although I don't fully appreciate what she has to cope with or what she has to contend with. When I ask her in the evening what she has done (chuckles) I get the impression that she has just coloured all day long. But I'm sure there is more to it than that.

How do you mean?

Well, I'm sure there must be a little more directed learning than colouring pictures but she comes home Obviously there's reading and numeracy skills being brought in. Not having the contact that my wife has, not going to collect her, I don't seem to pick up the finer points of the school day.

This father is using his knowledge of the school day to help him to understand his daughter. It would have been interesting to further develop this line of questioning with him about what he and his daughter did talk about, and whether this mirrored Jamieson's (1998) concept of a trusting relationship within which personal information could be shared. Another father (6), a worker in education with three children, volunteered information about intimate exchanges with his ten year old daughter:

Well, she said things to me like Dad, I want you to be there, Dad I always want you to be there, I don't want you to be replaced, I never want you to go away.

He went on to say he felt slightly sad about this but realised this was about her thinking out her relationship with him. However, there were times when he was left guessing about his daughter's life and inner world:

She is a good all rounder and very eager to please and I sometimes worry that she is too eager to please, and she's actually not happy inside.

He said his concern was partly a reflection of his own childhood and he didn't want his daughter to have similar experiences to him. His concern motivated him to encourage his children to share information about how they were feeling:

So with my own children I talk to them quite a lot about their own feelings really. And try to help them name their feelings as they go along, if you like. Rather than getting caught up in them, not being able to (inaudible word) how they're feeling about things really.

He said his ability to encourage his children to talk about their feelings was a result of his background in the helping professions. This is an example of a father undertaking an aspect of emotion work in families. However, before going on to consider emotion work more fully, this section now considers two more dimensions to intimacy with children – firstly, how children may choose the time, place and parent and, secondly, how intimacy may change over time and gender.

Children choosing intimacy

One of the fathers I talked to, a practice manager (5), explained he and his partner were equally involved in the care of their two children, a five year old daughter and an eight year old son with a disability. Because this father worked all day, his contact with the children was limited to early morning, evenings and week-ends. During these periods he would care for both his children on an equal basis with his partner. But as he talked, it became apparent

the contact his partner had with the children had resulted in a different quality of relationship developing:

I think my wife would understand their needs better than I do because she is with them on a more regular basis. And she seems to have that seventh sense, particularly as my son can't communicate, she can actually listen to the tone of a cry or the tone of a moan or a gesticulation and know more what he wants. It becomes more intuitive rather than anything else.

Although this father thought there was an intuitive aspect to his partner's knowledge of his son he went on to say he thought this was partly due to his partner excluding him from his care when he was a baby. Although through careful discussion and reassurance he was able to become more involved in his care, his partner had already developed an intimacy that seemed to exclude him as a parent. In addition to having to negotiate with his partner the opportunity to be intimate with his children, another factor apparent in this account was the influence of traditional fatherhood limiting the time he could spend at home. He also went on to talk about gender divisions within his family that took the form of a 'mother's helper' performance of fatherhood (further complicated by his sincere desire to be a fully involved father). His children had responded to this complicated alignment of parenting styles by choosing parents for different activities and situations:

Because I'm not there all the time, as soon as they clap eyes on me they want my attention all the time. One of the first things he learned was 'daddy's car', he wants to go in daddy's car quite often. I mean when he was born the first thing I would do

on a night was pick him up and go out, before my daughter was born, we use to go through this ritual of sitting in the boot of the estate car, and he would sit there and drive.

Would he do that with your wife?

He doesn't say 'mummy's car' in the same sort of way. I think there are certain things he latches on to me for and certain things he latches on to my wife for. He knows that she feeds him. He asks mummy for a banana and a biscuit and things like that My daughter likes me to play and have a little rough and tumble, she likes tickling and things like that. With my wife she likes to do more crafty things and she likes to do reading with me.

This father went on to talk about how his children would choose which parent to be intimate with during the night. They were happy with him taking them to bed and reading them a story but if they woke up during the night they would ask for their mother. He thought this was because his partner had a maternal bond with his daughter that was a result of her breastfeeding her. He also considered that when the children were babies his partner was more able to be alert and awake during the night because he had to get up for work the next day. So although on the one hand he thought his children's preference for their mother during the night was a natural state of affairs (in the sense that mothers and children are located centrally within the family to the exclusion of the father), he was also acknowledging to some extent this may have been a constructed situation. When asked about how he felt about this he said:

It's very difficult, I realise that it is nothing I have done, it's just one of those things. It's very frustrating, I'm there willing and able but I'm not allowed because of the way the children see it. It's a holding operation with my daughter until my wife has finished with my son and then can sort her out. and I feel inadequate at times, I feel for the kids and their mother, she could be an hour or more. And I feel guilty in bed, I could be sorting it out and willing to do it. It's about finding a way through for the children.

This father explained to me one of the reasons he felt excluded from the care of his children during the night was because when his son had been a baby his partner had excluded him from his care. This early pattern of parenting may have contributed to his son making later choices about which parent he felt he needed contact with during the night. Children choosing the time, place and the parent to be intimate with further complicates an already complex scenario of fathers balancing their physical presence in the home with the impact of their experiences of intimacy with their own fathers. A further aspect of this complex scenario is how intimacy with children may change over time.

Intimacy with children changing over time

In a previous section we saw an example of how, with traditional fatherhood, personal care and intimacy may change over time; one of the fathers I spoke to told me how his father had been involved with caring for him when he was baby and small boy but then became more distant as he grew older. Although the fathers in the sample were all involved fathers to varying degrees and talked about staying involved as their children grew, there were still

examples of changing intimacy over time. One of the fathers (4) in the pilot focus group, a social worker with three children, explained:

One thing that has come to mind just over the last few minutes is that I used to feel that it would be sad the day I couldn't actually lift and carry my children, because when they are small you can do that. I'd be missing something, I'd have lost something and I suppose that day has come and gone and has been in the distance for a few years, my youngest being nearly thirteen. I haven't consciously been waking up thinking, 'Oh my God, I can't pick up my children.' You know what I mean, things move on to a different sort of relationship but I was very aware that was something I valued for me. It met my need to meet their need.

Another father (7) I spoke to, a full-time carer for his two daughters, provided a good example of how he had managed to maintain intimacy over time. He spoke first about his relationship with his daughter when she was a baby and then spoke about his contemporary relationship with her:

I took her to my parents down in Norfolk with a great cool box full of expressed milk. You know, it was quite bizarre and amusing in a way, really. But there was no question about sharing in that, really. There was sort of things that became my own particular role, I suppose They were things that I enjoyed doing. One of the things, which persists to this day, even though she is nearly thirteen, and that's the bedtime story. Except now, especially in winter, we sit for a bedtime story down here in front of the fire. At the moment it's Lord of the Rings, there's no surprise in

that really. But it's just a sort of role that's emerged, that I was keen to develop early on.

This example of maintaining an intimacy based on being with and caring for children was complemented by other contributions that helped me to understand how the other dimension to Jamieson's (1998) perspective on intimacy, the sharing of information and experiences within a trusting relationship, also changed over time. This seemed to be more apparent with fathers and their daughters and, in particular, related to daughters maturing physically and emotionally. Kirkman, Rosenthal and Feldman (2001) and Sharpe (1994) have written about the impact of daughters' growing sexuality on their relationship with their fathers, particularly within the context of traditional masculinity. This area of study was not a prime focus of this thesis but it does need to be considered as one of the reasons why intimacy may change over time. One father (9), whose partner had passed away when his daughter was four, said:

If I had a lad I would be closer than with my daughter, especially with being an adolescent, they're rebelling about boundaries, I suppose that's why they relate more to a female.

In what way?

Well you know, about periods, sexual development, that sort of thing, they may talk more to their mother about more than their dad. I think up until the time they become sexually aware, mum and dad's role are quite similar.

He went on to give an example of his daughter not wanting to share a family room with him on a recent Youth Hostelling holiday – an arrangement that had always worked well in the past. He also told me about his daughter having recently gone on holiday with a friend's family. He had asked the friend's mother to check his daughter's suitcase and, as he had suspected, she had forgotten to pack sanitary products. This was something he hadn't felt comfortable talking to his daughter about directly. This reluctance may have been the consequence of an incident when he had acknowledged his daughter was menstruating. He remembered the look of horror on his daughter's face when he publicly (between the two of them) acknowledged this and realised he had crossed a boundary. Kirkman *et al's* (2001) study recognises the limiting influence of traditional masculinity on shared intimacy with older daughters and it seems it was the above father's daughter's perception of traditional masculinity that may have produced the look of horror. The father finished his account by saying: 'She put me firmly in my place as a dad and probably as a man as well'. This is an example of a number of responses during the field work where fathers alluded to sexuality and relationships with children but did not develop their contributions. Seymour and Bagguley's (1999) account of intimate relationships includes sexual intimacy and a number of the fathers I spoke to did talk about feeling uncomfortable with their daughter's sexuality as their bodies changed and their identities developed as young women. Sharpe (1994: 85) has written about how some fathers view of their daughters' sexuality is complicated by possessiveness, a desire to preserve their innocence and an 'implicit threat presented by male competition for their daughter's affection and attention'. However, further exploration of this aspect of intimacy is beyond the scope of this thesis.

In addition to sexuality, another limiting factor to intimacy that changed over time was the notion of power and resistance in intimate relationships. This theme was repeated in many of the contributions from other fathers as they talked about children of all ages challenging boundaries. Rather than develop this theme here, it is left to the next chapter on masculinity to explore how fathers' construction as men may contribute to tensions within intimate relationships with their children as boundaries are challenged and issues of power and control unfold.

Returning to the theme of intimacy with children changing over time, one of the fathers (1), a seventy year old retired university lecturer who participated in the pilot focus group, challenged the idea that children growing up diminished intimacy. He suggested, instead, that intimacy is merely displayed differently or returns at different times:

There's an historical dimension when one thinks of one's own parents and relationship. It was obvious they loved you very much but your interaction with them was less often and less close and much less close and intimate than you have with your own children. I think your point about being with them and relying on you and doing things with them, this came out when my daughter had her first baby. At the time her husband had some defect with his eyesight so he couldn't see properly, he couldn't hold the baby, he couldn't feed the baby - that was just a fortnight after the baby was born. So I went through to stay with them. I amazed myself I could do it actually (chuckles). But I felt formed, reinforcing the bond between my daughter and forming new bonds with my granddaughter, which

remain ever since. So the other point I make is, I don't know whether someone used the phrase 'lose the closeness over time'

I did, yeh.

I question that, I think there are times, often critical times, when the closeness comes back again.

Some fathers are able to develop intimacy in families, albeit with difficulty, within the context of changing parent-child relationships. For some, their children becoming adults themselves was not a barrier to continued intimacy. This chapter now goes on to consider how some fathers undertake aspects of emotion work in families – emotion work that would not be possible without the knowledge and understanding acquired through being involved in intimate relationships with their children.

Fathers undertaking emotion work in families

The fathers I spoke to were all involved to varying degrees in the intimate care of their children. They had been able to develop this intimacy by successfully negotiating¹⁴ their place in the family alongside the care traditionally provided by mothers, or, in the case of one father whose partner had died when his daughter was small, with the extended family.

¹⁴ For an analysis of men and women negotiating housework and domestic practices in families, see *Gender and Domestic Life: Changing Practices in Families and Households* (Chapman, 2004). *Fathers, Work and Family Life* (Warin, Solomon, Lewis and Langford, 1999) provides a perspective on some of the difficulties fathers manage when balancing work and family life.

This time spent with their children enabled them to fulfill their expectations of themselves as involved fathers as well develop a cultural awareness of the emotional landscape of family life and an understanding of their children as individuals. This helped many of the fathers to undertake successful emotion work in their families – a prerequisite for effectively managing anger in families. One of the fathers (6) I spoke to, a worker in education with three children, explained his view of his family's emotional life, a view shared by many of the other fathers:

Lots of mixed emotions. Lots of ups and downs in family life. You have to learn how to assess people's moods, allow things to happen rather than try and be in control and also take account of your mood as well. I think it's quite easy sometimes as a man to assume that you are not entering the room with a mood.

This contribution highlights three important aspects of this thesis. Seery and Crowley's (2000) contention that emotion work includes the active management of emotions within the family is apparent here. This father is paying attention to his and other people's feelings in order to mediate difficult feelings and prevent unhappiness. He is only able to take the first step towards this because he understands his children – the result of being involved in both their physical care and their emotional lives. Secondly, he acknowledges power and control are an issue in families and the challenge for him is to go with the flow and not assume control. Thirdly, he says men may not know how they are feeling, or how their feelings may be perceived by others, when they enter a room. The point I would like to develop here is the challenge for men to 'go with the flow', leaving the other two points for the next chapter on masculinity and emotion work.

The above father went on to endorse Jamieson's (1998) view that the acknowledgement of children's feelings needs to be balanced by the need to provide children with a disciplined environment:

I don't know, sometimes I don't feel like going with the flow. I'll put my foot down and I'll want things to be as I want them to be. A sense of order, I find that quite difficult. If I come back from work and the house is a tip and there are the children playing, it's not easy to go with the flow.

The tension between going with the flow and being in control is usefully illustrated by another father's contribution, a practice manager (5) with two small children and an adult son living away from home:

I agree, lots of mixed emotions, particularly during school holidays. My wife's been there all day, you come home from work and you have got to assess the mood of the house. You can speak on the telephone and find out if they've been swimming or if they've had a good day. But certain situations I can sense between my daughter and my wife and I think, 'What's all that about?' But I've not been party to what's gone on in the day in the build up to it. I don't know if she's been unhelpful or disruptive, gone to a friend's and not come back when she's supposed to and my wife is just trying to be firm with her. The danger is to come in and destabilise what she is trying to achieve by doing something different. That can be difficult at times. You think, 'Oh, I have a treat for her here' but you can tell when you get in that it's not a

good time to hand the treat out. You have to wait and assess the situation before jumping in. Because I am a person who likes to be in control, I find that difficult sometimes, to actually hold back and let somebody else get on with it, particularly if it is not being done how I would have done it.

The above father recognises the need to assess mood in the family when returning home but sometimes struggles with accepting the emotional climate. He would sometimes prefer to be more in control and 'do things his way'. This dilemma adds further to the complexity of understanding how fathers undertake emotion work in families and manage their need to be in control.

Many of the initial interviews in this study provided examples of fathers undertaking complex aspects of emotion work in families. Although they were not able to name what they were doing as emotion work, they talked a lot about physically caring for children, spending time with them, listening to how they were feeling, acknowledging difficult feelings, mediating in disputes and attempting to organise routines and activities to minimise difficult feelings. In other words, they tried to make their children happy by meeting their needs and attending to their difficulties. However, the fathers I spoke to also talked about the need to maintain discipline and exercise power and control in families.

Many of the fathers interviewed had experienced their fathers' exercise of power and control as anger and one of the motivations for managing anger in their own families was to avoid repeating their fathers' performances of anger. Although not always aware of what they were doing, they often seemed to be talking about undertaking delicate emotion work

within the context of power and control. There were some heart-rending examples of this. One father (19), a community nurse with two small children, told the following story about how he managed his five year old daughter's temper tantrums:

I may have to literally sort of bundle her under my arm and take her upstairs and isolate her upstairs for five minutes or whatever that might be. Uhm, you know, that will mean her going to her room and me standing outside and that gives me a chance to distance myself. I'm not angry, you won't see me getting angry, you'll see me getting annoyed, you know, I don't do anger That is what you would see. And that's it, it would go quiet and she would be saying, 'Daddy, daddy, speak to me, speak to me' and I think I just have to leave it for two or three minutes just for her to get the message. And I suppose it's about asserting (sighs), I don't know whether authority is too strong a word. I suppose it's about asserting control. That she doesn't need to bother with trying to take control of us as parents or of the situation. She needs just to get on with her childhood, and it's about mummies and daddies do the parenting. Mummies and daddies ensure, you know, that people don't get harmed.

Another father (15), a university lecturer with three children, when talking about maintaining his authority with his children, said this about his power:

Sometimes you do use power, there is an associated concept of authority. I'm not saying I'm authoritarian but at the end of the day we are parents and the children recognise this. We make decisions for the family, even a simple thing like 'It's bed-

time right now because it's school tomorrow. Now go!' That's an exercise of power, I exercise power in that sort of way.

In the first part of the interview this father demonstrated that he knew his children well, spent time with them, listened to them and understood, as much as any parent is able to, their feelings. When I asked him about how he managed his power when his daughter was challenging a boundary he told me:

Well I think she's a child that has got so much energy she finds it difficult to switch off at the end of the day. It's just that in a situation like that she recognises that the point has arrived where it is the end of her messing about (chuckles) ... at least until she has got to the top of the stairs. I know that when I look at her in that way she will get the message that this is the time to go upstairs. And she will go upstairs.

Despite the above examples of fathers talking positively about undertaking emotion work and managing their power competently by being firm but not angry, there were other contributions from fathers who were still learning. One father (10)), a factory worker who was very involved in the care of his three year old son, provided the following example:

It's like tonight I said 'We'll put Coronation Street on for mummy'. She [mummy] said 'Well, you're going to bed in a minute, anyway'. I said [after his son had refused to switch channels], 'Well, if you're not going to put it on then you are going to bed!' And she said, 'There you are! Because he's not turning the TV over,

because he's not giving you the remote to turn the TV over, you've said he's going to bed'.

What did she mean by that?

Uhm, he was going to bed anyway, so instead of me giving him a 'you either turn the TV over or you go to bed'. It sends the wrong signals sort of thing, doesn't it.

This father's developing ability to undertake emotion work as he learns from his partner about how to manage his son's behaviour in a way that minimises conflict and bad feelings is demonstrated by the following extract from his interview:

....she'll get him to do something. It's like if he throws something on the floor (laughs) I'll say 'Pick it up and he'll maybe (unclear). And I'll say 'PICK IT UP'. But she would say, 'Oh, if you pick that up we'll go and do so and so [said in a quiet, non threatening voice]'. And she does it that way.

How do you feel about that difference?

Well, I'm learning, I wish I did it her way. Hopefully I'm getting round to doing it that way. Less hassle and everything. Everybody's happy.

This father then goes on to provide an example of how, as a father who is involved in the intimate care of his son, he manages his anger. This is a father who has negotiated with his

partner the opportunity to spend time with his son in a caring role. They both work shifts and proactively share the care of their little boy. He has an intimate understanding of his son because he has spent time with him building a relationship and getting to know him. He cares for his son physically and emotionally in a way that mirrors his partner's involvement although he does, at times, need to be guided by his partner. He is learning to undertake emotion work and is succeeding in managing his anger within difficult situations that maybe a more traditional father would find problematic. The following contribution (in which the child's name has been changed) was made following a difficult exchange about the interviewee's experience of his own father's anger and, at times, associated physical violence:

Oh (long sigh) sometimes he's [his son], sometimes, we let him watch the cartoons on telly, and I like him to watch a bit of telly now but he's started to watch it a bit more. And he has his desk and stool and I let him have his tea at his desk. Which is what we got it for - we've got a dining room and all that but there's all that stuff in there. And I'll say, 'Martin eat your tea, eat your tea.' But he'll be watching telly and I'll say 'Martin, if you don't eat your tea then we will have to go in there and eat it'. It's our fault. Then I'll turn the telly off. 'Oh, I'm eating it, I'm eating it!' and he'll turn it on again and [say] 'Oh, I don't want it!'. And we'll be like 'Go and eat it' and he'll put it on the floor. I've gotta walk out and then come back in again.

When you say you've gotta walk out, you've gotta walk out because?

(long silence) phew, I'd never hit him.

What happens?

Well, it just gets me so mad. You know what I mean, I feel although he's trying me. I feel as though he's seeing how far I can go.

Seeing how far he can go with what?

With him being only three I don't think he knows he can tease me or owt like that, but, I don't know, I think he's not listening. I always think that by letting him watch telly while he's having his tea I've been sort of doing him a favour. Well not doing him a favour but giving him a bit more lee way, you know, 'Eat your tea and watch telly while you're eating' without him actually in there [the dining room] and stuff like that. And sometimes I think it's thrown back in my face a bit. I have to walk out and come back in and wipe it up and say 'Come on, eat your tea (said in a child-friendly, encouraging voice). My wife is the other way, she'll say 'Come on Martin, let's turn the telly off and eat'.

How do you know when you are reaching that point when you have to walk out?

Because me blood starts boiling! (laughs). Oh yeh!

Is that a physical thing?

I think steam comes out of my ears as well! (laughs) I don't know, you feel yourself getting (stops).

Feel yourself getting?

You start pumping a bit, don't you.

What, physically pumping or?

Well, I think your heart starts, you start pumping a bit more blood or whatever, I don't know.

So when you start getting mad your heart starts pumping and you know it's time to leave the room.

Yeh, (thoughtfully), yeh.

I mean, you probably don't think that but ...

I reckon that's probably the way, yeh.

What happens when you get through the door then, when you are on the other side of that door?

I just stand there and look out the window for a couple of seconds and then I come back in and talk to him (laughs).

What happens in that couple of seconds?

I just calm down and then I realise he's only three. And, ehm, he's only three and not thirteen. A lot of the time my wife says to me 'He's only three'. I think, I expect, he's really bright and stuff like that. You're driving in the car and he'll say, 'That's where so and so was' and you've maybe been down there a year ago. And he'll know where he is. He's that bright. And I, like, I think I expect too much of him sometimes, I don't know.

This open and frank account of a father's experience of anger in the home is characteristic of many of the contributions from the fathers I talked to during the field work. Although further examples are considered in later chapters, the above contribution provides a good example of an important aspect of fathers and emotion work. It demonstrates that fathers need to be intimately involved in the care of their children in order to be best placed to learn how to undertake emotion work. Furthermore, this father's account is linked to his experience of his own father's anger which often led to violence in the family. Many of the fathers I talked to were insistent they would never hit their children and this was often linked to experiences of their own fathers who did hit their children. However, the motivation for not allowing anger to develop into violence was more complex than this as, for example, some fathers talked about moral justifications for not hitting their children angrily and also suggested they would be 'less of a man' if they were to hit their children.

Other fathers talked about the negative effects of children experiencing their anger - stories and contributions that fell short of linking anger to violence. Returning to the above contribution, this father had negotiated being with his son as a carer which gave him the opportunity to develop an intimate relationship with him. Without this intimacy he would not have had the understanding apparent when reading the above account. Furthermore, his performance of fatherhood may be seen to be the result of more than one discourse on fatherhood. Although he is very much behaving as an involved father, there is also evidence of a discursive mix as elements of emergent fatherhood are apparent in his account. As he works towards being involved and developing his understanding of his son's emotional needs he also, it may be argued, performs as 'mother's helper' as his partner coaches and guides his efforts to undertake emotion work with his son. His ability to understand the concept of emotion work is apparent as he makes reference to how the family organises routines and physical space to enhance positive feelings within the family. He also appreciates the need to limit his son's behaviour through setting appropriate boundaries and acknowledges the complexity of the situation as he points out he and his partner have some responsibility for setting up, it may be argued, an unworkable meal time routine attempting to accommodate informality. As he is guided and coached by his partner in managing both boundary issues and positive feelings he acknowledges his anger. As with many of the fathers in this study, the interview process helped him to think through how he manages his anger and he openly acknowledges his anger may be linked to potential violence. Although he quickly places a limit on this possibility his linkage of anger to violence was unprompted by the interviewer. He then went on to talk about images and metaphors of anger in a way that, again, was characteristic of many of the other fathers in the study.

At its simplest, the above contribution provides an example of anger management. Developing a positive attitude to anger management; being able to recognise angry feelings within the context of conflict situations; taking action to divert or diffuse the anger before it generates negative behaviour; and then go on to reflect on the experience in order to learn and influence future parenting behaviour are all components of a cognitive approach to anger management. This father demonstrated all of the above as his 'blood boiled', the 'steam came from his ears' and he left the room in order to divert and manage his anger. *How* he calmed down in those few seconds was not fully explored by the interviewer but his rapid acknowledgement that he thought he might have been unrealistic in his expectations of his son's ability to 'be reasonable' indicated a period of reflection that, no doubt, went on to inform his developing ability to undertake emotion work in his family. All of this is in direct contrast to the notion of a traditional father who is not involved in the physical and psychological care of his children and so is unable to develop intimate relationships, undertake emotion work and manage his anger more appropriately.

In conclusion, this chapter has argued that being an involved father requires fathers to be closely involved in the intimate care of his children. The intimate relationships that are developed and maintained as a result of this close involvement in children's care depend on the age of the child as well as whether the child desires intimacy with the father. Traditional notions of fatherhood preclude intimacy and involved fathers need to get over that barrier and learn how to parent differently. And even then intimacy cannot be assumed to be immediate as the father sometimes learns from the child's mother about how to undertake emotion work, and this takes time and commitment. In addition, fathers need to negotiate closeness and trust within the context of the need for clear boundaries with children -

boundaries that are about children being clear about accepted ways of behaving, fathers managing their need to be in control and fathers feeling comfortable with intimacy with older daughters. This chapter also demonstrates the difference between anger management and managing anger by undertaking emotion work. Anger management can be seen to be a reaction to a difficult event within a family whereas undertaking emotion work is preventative, as the account of eating a family meal whilst watching TV demonstrates. These points all emerged over a period of time from the data analysis and indicated to me that intimacy with children is a fundamental aspect of involved fatherhood. The delicate process of getting to know their children, in a way that was different to their relationships with their own fathers, located these fathers more firmly within the family than perhaps a traditional father would be. However, the process of learning about and negotiating relationships within complex family emotional environments was further complicated by the fathers' experiences of their own masculine identities - as the next chapter now goes on to demonstrate.

5. Fathers, Masculinity and Emotion Work

The mother at home quietly placing dishes on the supper table

The mother with mild words, clean her cap and gown, a wholesome odor falling
off her person and clothes as she walks by,

The father, strong, self sufficient, manly, mean, anger'd, unjust,

The blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain, the crafty lure

Extract from: 'There Was a Child Went Forth' (Walt Whitman)

Whitman's writing closely links the performance of fatherhood within families to a form of masculinity that legitimises anger and violence as a means of disciplining children. He doesn't separate the father from 'the man'. When I asked one of the fathers (5), a practice manager with two children, to talk about his experience of his own father, he said:

Very difficult really because he was very loving in a lot of ways but because he was not around a lot of the time, it was my mother that really brought us up as kids and me dad was from a different era when men were men and could go out to work and more or less do what they liked. It was very difficult for us as kids because he would come home, he would have had a good drink and he would be drunk and that would prompt an argument and he would cause all sorts of problems. You know, Christmas was always the worst, when he broke up from work, come home and he

used to cause friction so we used to feel that, you know, and there were always problems in that. He had a very short temper.

This father acknowledges his father's love, a quality not openly associated with a traditional style of fathering, but then goes on to talk about his lack of ability to be intimate and undertake emotion work. Indeed, it seems that quite the opposite occurs here as his father gets drunk and causes friction in the family. The linkage to 'being a man' can be seen here as he talks about life with his father during a period when 'men were men'. The lack of motivation, or opportunity, for 'real men' to spend time with their children, develop intimate relationships and go on to undertake emotion work is a significant contemporary issue for men in families. Dowd (2000: 181) contends:

Men's identities as fathers do not exist in isolation from their identities as men. Indeed, that broader masculine identity arguably poses the most difficult challenge to a redefined and differently lived fatherhood.

The fathers who participated in my research were often reluctant to associate their performance of fatherhood with their social construction as men; instead seeming to feel more comfortable responding to my questions about masculinity with comments about personality and preferred styles of parenting. Indeed, as the fieldwork progressed I became more frustrated as my questioning and prompting appeared not to produce specific discussion by the men about themselves as men. It was not until the analysis of the data was reaching its final stages I realised evidence of the effects of masculinity were often implicit in the *process* of the individual interviews and focus group discussions. As a result,

this chapter draws not only on the fathers' account of their parenting of their children, but also on their accounts of their relationships with their partners, extended families and friends. In addition, this chapter draws on my observation of the process of a focus group discussion during which the fathers demonstrated some aspects of their changing abilities to relate to themselves and other men. The chapter begins with a consideration of fathers talking about feelings - something not usually openly associated with men. It then goes on to provide an account of the fathers' attitudes to and experiences of intimacy before considering their undertaking of emotion work within the context of their social construction as men. The chapter concludes with an exploration of their motivations to change as men and fathers as a result of their experiences of their own fathers' anger and their early experiences of boyhood and young adulthood.

Fathers talking about feelings

Although the literature suggests men find it difficult to talk about their feelings (see for example, Sattell, 1976), the fathers I interviewed were able to talk about a wide range of different feelings when asked about how they felt about being a father (or when they were talking generally about their experiences of fatherhood). These feelings ranged from worry, annoyance and anger to 'loving her to bits' and tenderness. They also talked about feeling anxious, alone, shattered and frustrated. Positive feelings such as joy, pride and happiness were talked about as well as feeling guilty, sad and upset. This willingness to talk about their feelings is at odds with the view that traditional masculinity prohibits men from talking about their feelings, although I acknowledge these fathers were often reporting feelings rather than talking about how they were feeling in the moment of the interview.

Seidler (1989), as has been considered in a previous chapter, writes about the inexpressiveness of men and their reluctance to talk about their feelings. Not sharing feelings, according to Seidler (1989), is a powerful act and limits effective relationship building. However, the fathers I talked to were, at an early stage in the interview process, able and willing to talk about their feelings with me and share aspects of their emotional lives in a way that built rapport during the interview. The individual interviews and focus group discussions demonstrated that some men are able to talk about their feelings with other men in a way that nurtures and encourages intimacy. This was at odds with the accounts of some of the fathers who talked about their experiences of their own fathers.

One of the fathers (18), with two sons aged seven and sixteen, was able to compare his father's emotional life with his own in a way that demonstrated changing and diverse masculinities over time:

There is a lot of talk these days about men needing to be more in touch with their feelings, more articulate about their feelings, what do you think to that?

Yeh, I think that is probably true enough. But I don't think it applies to me in the sense that my feminine side has always been very strong. I'm using terminology derived from stereotypes here, people talk about their feminine side, don't they? I don't like it because it implies that men are incapable of the tenderest of feelings. The example that springs to mind again is my own father who is very much not in touch with his feelings. Or certainly never gives away any emotional sensitivity. Much of his conduct suggests that he is still incapable of imagining other people's

feelings (laughs) – so if I’m at one end of a continuum and my dad’s at the other, yeh, I suspect there is a continuum. I think in recent years that proposition is less true than it would have been 20/30 years ago. I think men have been, in recent years, given permission to have feelings - a kind of permission that my dad wasn’t given when he was a young man. I wouldn’t want to blame my dad for what he was as a young man. His father was a military man who believed in discipline and little else.

This father’s account acknowledges that attributing tender feelings exclusively to women and ‘femininity’ is problematic. His willingness to talk about his ‘feminine side’ challenges traditional masculinity and its insistence that men are emotionally detached from themselves and others. His contribution also illustrates men’s performance of masculinities may change over time and according to acceptable and predominant discourses. He also implies his father’s private experiences of his emotional life may have been different to his public performance of being a man. These dimensions were acknowledged implicitly by many of the other fathers in their contributions but making them explicit was problematic for me. When asked how their experiences of fatherhood were influenced by their ‘masculinity’ they often minimised this and attributed them to personality traits. At times, however, there were comments about tensions with what seemed like an underlying masculinity. For example, one father (13) said many of his workmates called him ‘the old woman’ because he worried about his children and talked about his feelings. Another father (9), within a focus group discussion, asked whether talking about feelings and relationships so openly with other men made them ‘women’. Although most of the fathers I talked to

said they valued their sensitivity they were also acutely aware some people might say this made them 'less than a man'.

Seidler (1994) argues men's inability to manage their emotional lives contributes to the oppression of women by consolidating the mother's position in the home. He explains that during the 1960s women were beginning to challenge the reliance that men had on women taking responsibility for emotions in relationships. Many of the fathers who participated in this study were children or young people during this decade and so would have been experiencing this change in gender politics as they began their adult lives. Although some of them talked about explicitly agreeing more equitable parenting and income generating arrangements with their partners the interviews and discussions fell short of exploring the details of the early stages of their young adult relationships with women. However, many of them developed adult lives and relationships that seemed to encompass responses to feminist demands for emotionally equitable relationships. In a study similar to this thesis, Christian (1994) described his sample of men as experiencing unconventional childhoods departing from the usual gender norms. They went on to be influenced by early feminist experiences and this in turn affected their attitudes and behaviour towards women, children and other men. Christian (1994) explains the men he spoke to about their emotional lives were not overtly feminist or anti-sexist but simply lived according to what felt right for them in terms of equitable and nurturing human relationships. Although not explicitly investigated, the fathers I spoke to seemed to fit with this demographic and talked about their feelings and relationships in a way that implied a degree of sensitivity and awareness of other people's feelings. However, again, the influence of a traditional masculinity was apparent when I asked them what their wives and partners would say about their ability to

talk about their feelings. Virtually all of them said their partners would like them to talk about their feelings more. Seidler (1989: 60-61) explains:

But when women demanded that men learn to talk for themselves, they often met a withdrawn and morose silence. It was as if we men had learnt to talk for others, but had never learned to find our own voices There was also the painful realisation that the difficulties we have as men, caught up in the contradictions of our masculinity, to share our individual feelings and emotions.

Some of the fathers I talked to said when they were experiencing conflict with their partners or their children they would often 'go quiet' and this was perceived as sulking. However their public performance may have been misunderstood by their partners as being related to the view that men withholding feelings is about seeking to control a relationship. Interestingly, however, their silences were often an example of them attempting to undertake emotion work by *not saying* how they felt about a situation – fearing this may cause conflict and difficult feelings. One father, a practice manager (5), told me, when asked about his partner's perspective on his emotional articulacy:

I think she would say that she would agree that I can show my feelings. Sometimes I think she thinks I bottle things up, unable to express how I feel in words, I think sometimes that can be a problem because I try not to, I don't like upsetting people. As I say, it goes back to the confrontation thing. Sometimes I'll bottle something up, rather than come straight out with it.

This father's contribution illustrates the difficulties of trying to understand men's lived experiences of masculinity within the context of their partners and families' expectations of them in relationships. Although this father perceived himself as emotionally articulate he was sometimes seen by his partner as being emotionally distant and inept, a trait learned earlier in life through his exposure to the influence of hegemonic masculinity. Public displays of being in touch with feelings is bullied and coerced out of boys at an early age and they may grow up to experience difficulties in relationships in later life. However, before going on to consider how these experiences may influence men's abilities to form relationships with others, this section concludes with a poignant example of how the hegemonic embodiment of traditional masculinity, at both an interpersonal and a structural level in society, may shape a young person's experience of their own masculine self. The father (7) who had home educated his two daughters for a number of years told me:

I think, yeh, men have this image of not being in touch with their feelings, not being very emotive, not being able to express their feelings, you know. And I think my own experience bears that out for myself As an adolescent I expressed an interest in becoming a priest and my parents got quite enthused with this idea and that kind of affected my relationship with them quite deeply. I was sent to a Benedictine school and I kinda got stuck on this track really.... which was fine the first two years because I was really into it. But I suppose the problem, perhaps, was all this began just before my adolescence. During, as I was in my teens I began to realise it wasn't what I necessarily wanted to be doing. But I couldn't find a way out really because my parents were so keen and had spent a lot of money.... I suppose I found myself having to suppress a lot of feelings that I had at that time, a very

crucial time being my adolescence. Pretending that I wasn't interested in girls and things, you know. So that was all a bit of a mess really. I actually went through school and university and went into a theological college before I extricated myself. But all of that, as I say, involved quite a lot of suppressing of feelings.

He then went on to talk about his need for counselling and therapy to help him to try and unravel what had happened and get back in touch with some of his feelings. In individual interviews and focus group discussions, I listened to this father's accounts of his contemporary family life and there was no doubt he had developed the ability to talk about his feelings, although, again, he was one of the fathers who said his partner would have liked him to talk about this feelings more.

Although all of the fathers I talked to seemed to talk easily about their feelings there were times when they set limits on what they talked about. One of the older fathers (3), a sixty four year old retired university lecturer, made this contribution during a discussion in the pilot focus group on the meaning of closeness:

Something that we might come back to, Chris, I don't know. It's just what I've been thinking while listening is, (group member's name) mentioning love. If we were five women I'm just wondering if it would be a different approach to closeness, that's all. I'm thinking back to this incident in London [when he watched with pleasure as his son walk hand in hand with his son's daughter]. My daughter and wife were with me and said, 'Oh, look! Don't they look happy.' They were quite surprised a man holding a little girl's hand could be so content. They saw it, not as

unusual, but worthy of note. And I thought, 'well, I think it's lovely, it should happen, it can happen, you know.' You think, is it as a *man* I'm frightened of using that word 'love' as well, you know, all the connotations and so on. When I talk about people who are not part of an intimate sexual relationship. This affects how I struggle with understanding and expressing my closeness with my children.

Would you like to say a little more about that?

Can I think about that one?

The focus group discussion didn't return to the issue of closeness, love and sex within the context of talking about fatherhood and, again, it would be irresponsible to speculate on a group dynamic that may have prevented this. But this contribution highlights a difficulty some men may have with separating intimacy and sex in relationships. This chapter now goes on to further consider men and intimacy and, in particular, the hegemonic effects of a normative masculinity that isolates men within families.

Hegemonic masculinity and intimacy

Seymour and Bagguley (1999: 1) suggest, 'Intimacy implies close familiarity, close in acquaintance or association, often pertaining to sexual relations'. It is not surprising, then, the father quoted previously who began to talk about love and sexuality, within the context of child care, was reluctant to continue with his contribution to the focus group (if this was

his frame of reference). Many of the fathers I spoke to who had older children, particularly girls, talked about an increasing distance and 'wariness' as their daughters became pubescent and began adolescence. However, this seemed to be mainly around the need for discretion about protecting the feelings of their children. Although, in the previous chapter, I gave an example of a single father who asked a neighbour to check his daughter had packed sanitary products for a forthcoming holiday, exploring the tensions around the other fathers' perceptions of sexuality and their relationships with daughters was more problematic. Kirkman, Rosenthal and Feldman (2001) interviewed fourteen fathers (as well as their partners and children) and asked them about their experiences of talking to their adolescent children about sexuality. They argue (405) 'A particular issue of the entanglement of masculinity and sexuality is the tension between men as sexual beings and as participants in affectionate relationships'. Despite the limitations and tensions imposed on the fathers in Kirkman, Rosenthal and Feldman's study (2001), they were committed to being involved fathers. This was also apparent with the fathers to whom I spoke. The following contribution demonstrates one particular father's (7) commitment to being involved with the intimate care of his children together with a growing ambivalence and uncertainty:

There's an emotive side [to parenting] as well which I haven't touched on really. The girls like, and I guess they might say they need, a physical intimacy with my wife. That I used to feel comfortable, but feel less comfortable with. I mean they don't get into bed with me for a cuddle. Well actually my younger daughter does occasionally but my elder daughter doesn't and that's right, I think. I say that's

right, I would feel uncomfortable and I guess that she would feel uncomfortable with that kind of intimacy now.

Because?

(silence) Well, I would feel uncomfortable because I am aware that she is developing sexually, I suppose. I haven't checked it out with her, verbally, you know, but I imagine that she is aware of that and would also feel less comfortable getting in bed for a cuddle. But they still get that from my wife.

He went on to acknowledge sexuality and intimacy was an issue and this was a recurring theme with many of the other fathers. However, the influence of male sexuality seemed to change over time as some of the fathers with older daughters reported their relationships became easier and a closeness returned when their children became adults.

Another limiting factor on intimacy produced by traditional masculinity is men's reluctance to talk to other men about their feelings. Lewis (1978: 109) explains 'self-disclosure, a vital component of emotional intimacy, has been reported in many studies to be very low or utterly lacking between males'. He describes the barriers to intimacy among men as competition, homophobia and aversion to vulnerability and openness. Although the fathers I interviewed had experienced the limitations traditional masculinity had placed on their relationships with their own fathers (see chapter four) they also gave clear examples of how they were developing different ways of relating with other men. Many of them talked about having male friends and talking to them about their lives. One father (5) had a friend he

would meet after work once a week, another (20) met his friends in regular band rehearsals and another (7) met with a group of men occasionally in a pub. One of the younger fathers (11) I talked to gave a surprising insight into men talking at work. He was a full-time factory worker who worked shifts and was very involved in caring for his three year old daughter:

But them early months, it's like 'God, phew! Is this what it's going to be for life?' We all say, don't we, it gets easier, when they're teething, oh, it will get easier. There's always people to ask, I think, I think people are quite open about it these days, child care and that. It's not just a woman-only thing no more, attitudes have changed, to be honest with you. As I say I work in an industrial background, all lads together, if you like. But we'll quite happily sit and have our break and talk about things with the kids, which is good really.

What kinds of things do you talk about?

Things like when did your daughter stop using nappies? When did your daughter stop needing to use a dummy? How much sleep did you lose in the first few months? Does your wife breast feed? Things like that. Certainly they are quite open about it and they'll sit and discuss it and I think that's good for you. Like you don't feel you're on your own, you know what I mean?

This example of a group of men finding ways of being together that challenges a traditional masculinity preventing men from developing intimate relationships was unexpected. The

notion that caring for children is *women's work* runs deeply in masculine culture and here is an example of men talking about *women's work* in the heart of a male industrial work space (although it was in a factory that manufactured sanitary products, including nappies).

However, the notion that being an involved father and undertaking aspects of emotion work such as talking intimately was *unmanly* was often referred to by the fathers with whom I talked. How far this thought limited their intimate relationships was unclear. The following extract from a focus group discussion illustrates the tension that some of the fathers experienced between *being a man* and undertaking *women's work*. Focus group one was attended by fathers in middle class occupations and the discussion began with a prompt sheet presenting emerging data from the individual interviews. The data had been chosen to be deliberately challenging. Previously, the energy in the group had risen as the men talked about 'womenly wiles' in relationships:

Prompt: Being involved in women's things is seen by other men as being unmanly.

You mentioned womenly wiles. It's women things now.

(Silence)

(Chuckles and laughter)

(7) What do we mean by women's things?

(More chuckles and laughter)

- (7) This has come out of your interviews?

They've all come out of my interviews.

- (16) I think this is definitely true, probably less true as time goes on, but it's still there. I can remember when I was first married our house had low fences, my wife was heavily pregnant with our first child and I'm hanging all the support bras and all that stuff. And I'm thinking, 'Oh my god, what must people be thinking?' There's all these other blokes, I mean a fisherman next door, I thought he thought I was a right wuss. But I thought, 'Stuff them, I'll do it anyway'. There was that feeling there

Do you other guys recognise that?

Yes (from other group members)

- (6) I mean, just silly things like going to the supermarket with three young children: 'Oh, you've got your hands full'.
- (16) Yes, you wouldn't say that to a woman, no

(6) If you've got a new born baby and you go to a supermarket, everybody drops everything, packs your bags for you.

(9) Yeh (chuckles)

(6) There are women in there all the time [with small babies] but they're not noticing it. That used to tickle me.

(Comments of agreement)

The discussion then went on to compare experiences of their own fathers and there was general agreement their fathers definitely saw child care as women's work. It's worth noting here the above discussion was permeated by silences and chuckles. The silences may have been attributed to the men thinking about what was being said before replying – a reflective silence. But there was also a sense they were reluctant to share in what may have been perceived by some men as a challenging area of discussion. This double bind situation, men talking intimately with each other about 'not being men', continued as they shared experiences of their own fathers:

(16) My dad, he never pushed a pram.

(5) That's right, yeh. Even being present at birth: 'You wouldn't catch me doing that.'

(16) No, no.

(6) How many [men] work in nurseries, it's very few.

(16) Well, I retrained as a nursery teacher as part of my career, in order to become a head teacher. I was the only man on the course. I was known as 'the token man'.

What was it like being 'the token man'?

(16) Actually it was great. (Big burst of energetic laughter) No, I was made a fuss off, it was great.

(More laughter).

(After calm had returned). So things have changed now. You can be involved in 'women's things' and still be a man.

(Comments of agreement)

During this part of the discussion I realised I was witnessing a group of men laughing at another man talking intimately about his life. And yet this didn't feel like the bullying laughter described by Askew and Ross (1988) when they wrote about how some boys relate to each other. Some of the school children they talked to and observed would have accused

the above fathers of being 'queer' or effeminate. Indeed, all of the men, including me, may have been described as being 'unmanly'. But the quality of the laughter did not feel like bullying. It felt supportive. These men were talking about a difficult and challenging area for them. They were all involved fathers and had no difficulty in acknowledging that for them there was little or no difference between mothering and fathering (even though in the previous extract they acknowledged social responses to men and women as parents can be different). And yet here they were in a group of like-minded men talking about involved fathering and masculinity in a way that was supportive and encouraging. Their use of laughter to manage what might have been difficult feelings seemed entirely appropriate. What was even more interesting was as the discussion progressed the noise level outside the room we were meeting in began to change. (The focus group took place in a meeting room within a university student's union.) As the father's shared their thoughts and feelings about new masculinities and new ways of being together with their children, their partners and other men, a group of young men walked past the building. They were chanting and singing rugby songs at the top of their voices. They were shouting and swearing and, it seemed, had been drinking. I was struck by the paradox of the performance of a traditional masculinity passing by as a group of fathers witnessed together the possibilities of new and personalised masculinities.

In the same focus group there was a further demonstration of the tension between the possibilities for intimacy personalised forms of masculinity present and the limiting impact of traditional masculinity:

Prompt: Fathers talk mainly to their partners about their feelings, they don't have a wide circle of friends.

(9) Well, do they talk to their partners? That's my question. Can they? Is it other male friends they talk to rather than their partners.

(16) I don't know, I think it depends. On their partner

(loud laughter)

Or, indeed, whether they have a partner.

(Yeh, hmmm, yeh, from the group)

(9) It depends on the topic, doesn't it.

(16) I think it's difficult to talk to other men about feelings, I have to say, I think it is more difficult. I would be more happy to talk to any woman about feelings, actually, how I'm feeling (unclear contribution)

(Loud laughter)

(7) (Shouted above the laughter.) If any one will listen!

(more laughter)

- (16) I mean, I don't find it a problem. Perhaps because I've always worked mainly with women anyway. I've got used to having to and I don't find that a problem. I do think it's a problem talking about feelings with other men. And I also think, I don't know whether these two things are connected, but I don't have a wide circle of friends, male friends. I don't tend to ... you know. We had a mutual friend (indicating another group member (5)) who died. Certainly for me, I don't know, this chap was as near as I got
- (9) Yes, definitely, I would agree with that.
- (16) And I think since then (5) and I, who know each other quite well now, have been able to open up a bit to each other and I think that's nice but, I don't know what you feel, but I don't find it particularly easy.
- (5) No, I don't.
- (16) Whereas women, they genuinely talk about feelings more and I think they are good at it.
- (9) Yeh, sometimes I don't want to talk to anybody about it, I want to deal with it in my own way.
- (16) Yes.

(5) And that's the problem sometimes when people try and get 'What are you thinking about, what are you feeling about?' I don't know, because I can't put it into words.

(16) That all depends on personality as well.

(6) I think, I mean some women don't talk about their feelings. I mean, I feel very similar to what you've said. But some women, I think, don't feel comfortable about talking about their feelings. If you look at some families, that puts the fathers in quite a different position really in terms of taking on more of that role, touchy feely role, with the children than otherwise it would happen. So it would be interesting to talk about fathers' anger in that kind of situation. Because I agree in the main that women are very good at talking about their feelings and it's a bit of a shock when you find women that aren't very good at it at all.

(5) I know somebody who shares their feelings with the dog! They tell the dog everything, because they know the dog is not going to split on them.

(loud laughter)

(5) That's genuine! The dog won't throw it back at him later on. It's a sign of weakness to talk about how you feel.

There are a number of aspects of traditional masculinity apparent in the content of this discussion. Even though these fathers did have friends who were men, they acknowledged the difficulty of talking to them about their feelings. According to these fathers, women are naturally better at talking about feelings and, indeed, men would rather talk to women about their feelings. Men may also prefer to be independent and work things out themselves rather than talk about their feelings because perhaps they can't always find the words to talk about how they are feeling. Furthermore, talking about how you are feeling is a sign of weakness and by doing so you are making yourself vulnerable. Despite these tensions presented by traditional masculinity, these men were talking intimately with each other. The poignant reference to the death of a friend and the acknowledgement of a friendship with another group member was an illustration of men talking together. Even though both men acknowledged the limits of their friendship and how they found it difficult to talk to each other about how they were feeling, they were still able to acknowledge a tender connection within an environment offering support. This happened despite the possibility of the ambience quickly reverting to a laughter that could have been misconstrued as mocking and derisory. They felt safe enough to talk in a group of men. What was also noticeable in the above examples of fathers talking together in the group was the absence of any attempt at coercion or the abuse of power. On the contrary, there was evidence of men supporting each other in talking openly about difficult issues. The fathers were listening to each other and agreeing in a supportive way. Even though traditional masculinity was in evidence in the content of what they were talking about, in terms of their feelings and attitudes about being involved in what some men would perceive as 'women's work', their contemporary performance of their masculinity, or masculinities, was different. They had

found a way of relating to other people in a way that encouraged intimacy by using social skills and attributes some may see to be at odds with traditional masculinity. However, when I asked specific questions about how their new ways of behaving may have been restricted or enhanced by their construction as men they found it difficult to answer and often attributed it to 'personality differences'. As indicated before, some of the chuckles and silences suggested some uneasiness in talking about feelings. It was only when I revisited transcripts of the focus group discussions I became aware the *process* of the groups provided evidence of their performances of personalised masculinities. This chapter, having considered the influence of traditional masculinity on men's emotional lives and intimacy, now goes on to explore the fathers' abilities or limitations, as men, to be empathic and undertake emotion work within their families.

Men undertaking emotion work

Duncombe and Marsden (1999) undertook research into the emotional dimension of heterosexual relationships by talking to sixty couples who had been in long term relationships. Their emerging data suggested the women in these relationships took responsibility for the emotional work in their relationships with their partners. In addition, they accommodated their partners' emotional distance by building separate emotional lives through, for example, their children, friends and work. However, despite this apparent consequence of a traditional discourse on masculinity, Duncombe and Marsden (1999) said the male respondents reported they did have feelings. These feelings were often private and not for disclosure, mainly because the pressures of work and life outside the home resulted in them wanting to come home and relax and not have to enter into complex emotional

relationships with their partners. The male respondents felt the emotional needs of their partners were both unsympathetic and unsupportive of their need to unwind after work. This dynamic was further complicated by the men wanting to renew intimacy, in particular their need for sex, whilst on vacation, away from the pressures of work. However, the women respondents said they needed a consistent intimacy with their partners in order to be validated within their relationships as individuals with emotional needs. Duncombe and Marsden (1999: 105) offered an explanation of why the men would behave in this way:

Such inequalities of actual or expressed emotional need for intimacy are integrally related to gender inequalities of power, for true intimacy between men and women would imply an equal emotional reciprocity....So men's withholding from women of the emotional validation which they seek through intimacy may become a source of male power, and indeed some women reported that they experienced men's usual emotional 'remoteness' as a form of power.

This resonates with Seidler's (1989) view that men may withhold their feelings in order to achieve control in relationships. One of the characteristics of the sample of fathers I spoke to was their apparent willingness to share power, either consciously or unconsciously, with their partners on a daily basis. This not only took the form of responsibility for income generation, housework and childcare but also involved an awareness of their intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences and, as a consequence, the way they related to their partners and children. They acknowledged they were more comfortable about sharing their feelings with their partners than perhaps more 'traditional men'. Indeed, some of the fathers said being in touch with their feelings, and being able to share how they were feeling with their

partners, made them 'more rounded' as men. They also said accepting they had feelings, and sharing them, helped them to realise they didn't need to be strong and isolated individuals and help and support was available. They didn't have to 'sort things out for themselves' all the time. Another advantage to talking about feelings some of the fathers shared was that by talking about how they felt made it possible to understand dilemmas and identify possibilities for change. This often motivated some of the fathers to identify and articulate uncomfortable feelings. One father (14) in particular said he felt it was important to talk to his partner if he was experiencing difficult feelings because he didn't want her to 'think it was her fault'. This approach to an increased responsibility for emotions, and a consequent sharing of power in relationships, seemed to have an impact on the emotional life of the families within the sample. And it is here the data begins to illustrate how the fathers I talked to undertook aspects of emotion work in a way that perhaps a traditional masculine style would not encourage. One father's contribution clearly illustrates his performance of emotion work with his partner in a way that may historically be ascribed to women. This father (6) with three young children told me:

Well, I did let rip recently with my wife. I thought she misunderstood me and I felt quite angry and insulted about what she said. But, as I say, really when we talked about it and checked it out that was partly based on a misunderstanding anyway. But on that occasion I did feel very angry and let her know that In that situation I was feeling very uneasy and unhappy with a situation I found myself in and choosing to be, wanting and choosing to be in a different place emotionally to where I found myself. I was sort of thrown into a situation that I wasn't happy with.

Uneasy, unhappy, not wanting to be in that emotional place that you were in.

Yeh, so it was about taking steps really to change the situation. Cos I felt misunderstood and I wanted to change, wanted to be understood in a different way. I wanted to take some steps to change the situation.

Something about affecting change?

Yeh, yeh. Rather than feeling sort of powerless, sort of. Yeh.

Something about affecting change, something about being powerless. Or not wanting to be powerless. Something about power?

Yes.

Do you want to say a bit more about that?

I think being misunderstood means you are not being appreciated for the person you, you don't feel appreciated for the person that you are.

(Silence)

This father's contribution resonates with Duncombe and Marsden's (1999) view power is at issue in intimate relationships. But this father, talking from the perspective of an individual

man, is talking about his feelings of powerlessness and his need to be understood - his need for his feelings to be validated and to be appreciated for the person he is. Although this contribution was unusual in its clarity and reflexivity, it was characteristic of many of the fathers' insights into relationships with their partners and their children. This apparent shift away from a traditional masculine approach to relationships, and a mirroring of a traditional female approach, seemed to provide the basis for undertaking emotion work in the family in a way many of their fathers had been unable to do.

Another aspect of men doing emotion work that became apparent as I talked to the fathers in this study was their ability to undertake interpersonal emotion work and be empathic. Again, a discursive mix of masculinities was apparent as they talked both about the importance of listening and appreciating other people's feelings, in particular their children's, as well as acknowledging the tendency for men to concentrate on practical things within the home rather than take responsibility for emotion work. However, despite an acknowledgement of being empathic, some of the fathers talked about not recognising the early signs someone is distressed. Although this may simply have been about general distractions occurring in all relationships, a small number of fathers did say they could often be preoccupied with their own feelings rather than tuned in to other people. The following contribution from an individual interview (16) illustrates this latter point:

What about other people's feelings? You're aware of how you are feeling, and able to talk about how you are feeling, how aware are you of other people's feelings?

I don't know that, not as good, I think I'm more in touch, funnily enough, with my own feelings than I am with other people's sometimes.

Can you say a bit more about that?

I don't think sometimes I recognise, perhaps because I'm under a lot of stress a lot of the time, I'm quite, I've tended over the last few years to turn more into myself than I used to be. In order to try and cope with all of the various pressures that are on me. I'm not as good as picking up when somebody is upset I don't recognise the early signs. That people are actually getting distressed. And because we are quite jokey and vocal as a family, you know, there's quite a lot of jokey criticism of each other. Not in a nasty way but in a funny way. Sometimes people are not wanting that ... they're feeling what we would call 'egg shelly', easily broken, and sometimes I can't pick up on that. I don't pick up on that and they get upset and I think, 'What's the matter with you all of a sudden?'

This father's contribution not only illustrates the tension between managing work pressures and home responsibilities, and how this may influence a man's ability or readiness to undertake emotion work, but also provides evidence of a traditional masculine way of relating within groups – the tendency to joke and criticise without acknowledging people's feelings. Although this father is clear the joking and criticism is friendly, it is reminiscent of Askew and Ross's (1988) description of a male culture insensitive to boy's feelings and requiring children to toughen up. But this same father spoke later in the interview about his

relationship with his son displaying a depth of intimacy and empathy that belies a traditional masculinity:

Well, I talk to my son like this. So I would say to him that, yes, you need to be in touch with your feelings. He talks like this, he will say that he is in touch with his feelings, more so perhaps than his mate. He's got a friend whose mother is very, very ill. And he is appalled that this lad has said nothing, and yet he knows him quite well. And he says, 'Well, it will kill him, there will be two dead people if he doesn't say something soon'. So he recognises that you have to be open about things. Having two sisters has helped because they are quite open emotionally. And he has been quite supportive of his friends who have had difficulties. He's a very gentle and nice lad in many ways. But he can be grumpy and I've said to him, 'You don't want to be doing the same as me and ending up like granddad, an angry old man.' So I said, 'You tell me if you think I'm getting like that because I need to know and I will tell you if I think you are being too grumpy.'

This discursive mix of traditional and personalised performances of masculinity is also apparent in the following contribution from a father (20), a headmaster in a special school, who grew up in a family where he had to think ahead in order to avoid difficult and painful feelings:

You're fairly sensitive to other people's feelings then.

Yes, I would say so. I would like to think sensitive to situations, sensitive to the way people feel, sensitive to people's tolerance levels. I think throughout my experience of my working life, I've spent ten years working in schools for children with emotional and behavioural problems, that, like, kind of sensitivity to reading a situation and trying to be able to be ready to sort something out in a way that you are confident that you have a mechanism to deal with it.

It must be quite a difficult thing to do to be sensitive to other people's feelings but also to have what sounds like a fairly pragmatic approach to dealing with 'it'.

No, no, I would say (silence) reading a situation, and being able to read a situation is a result of the experiences you have had. To be able to either plan a different route round it or to feel strong enough or confident enough to actually deal with it. I think you need to be able to make a decision about how you are going to do it. That has to come as a result, I think, of dealing with issues in the past. I like to be, I like to have a plan about what's going to happen and it certainly annoys, I'm not talking about work now...., but I like to know what's happening in our family life. So that you know what's happening next and in your mind you can rehearse what's going to happen. So I feel confident that I like to know what's going on so that you can work out what's happening next. And I think that's come from a situation where I was away at school myself when I was little. I was very, very unhappy and you are always planning ahead thinking, 'When am I going to be happy again?' So maybe that's a vestige of that.

The above father's apparent need to be in control of situations may well be thought of as a traditional masculine approach to relationships. However, it is clear from his contribution that his need to be in control is more about a desire to avoid conflict and difficult feelings for both himself and his family. As with many of the other fathers I spoke to, this approach to relationships had its origins in difficult childhood experiences. This chapter now goes on to explore why many of the fathers I talked to decided, as a result of their early experiences, to develop ways of being a man often at odds with traditional masculinity. The hegemonic discourse on masculinity not only would have limited the development of their intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences but also influenced their ability to undertake emotion work in families. The following section explores their motivation for developing personalised performances of masculinities as a response to their childhood experiences of their fathers' anger.

Fathers reflecting on anger

The fathers I spoke to in this study would have all experienced, to varying degrees, a culture of bullying and harassment by other boys ensuring they grew up to embody some aspects of hegemonic masculinity in their identities as men. In addition, they would have been subject to social and cultural influences encouraging their development as traditional men. However, many of the fathers had consciously rejected hegemonic masculinity as a performance of fathering and *manliness* and, instead, had made individual decisions and choices about how they preferred to live their lives. It seemed that a significant factor in this decision making process was their experiences of their own fathers and families of origin. Although some of them reported their fathers as being involved in their care when

they were little, their significant memories were of them becoming more distant as they grew older. The fathers talked about their fathers in a way that mirrors much of the literature on men and masculinities suggesting traditional masculinity limits a man's ability to develop intimate relationships that are based on the sharing of personal information. In addition to this, the use of anger, or silence, to maintain or regain power and control within relationships was a consistent theme in contributions from individual interviews and focus group discussions. Descriptions of physical violence linked to anger were rarely volunteered although one of the fathers (12), a systems engineer with a baby daughter, said the following about his father's anger:

I can remember one or two incidents when I was a kid when he did fly off the handle and gave me a right walloping. I don't think I realised at the time but I can remember one of my sisters being concerned that he was going to smack two shades out of me. I think I was more afraid of my mum, I mean my mum and dad both walloped me. I remember the last time he walloped me and I gave an obligatory 'ow'. Just to show that it had had some sort of effect but it didn't actually hurt, not physically.

This reference to mothers' anger was not uncommon during the interviews. One interviewee also talked about the traumatic effect of living with an older brother who was often angry and violent. So it is again appropriate to acknowledge here it is anger in families, and not simply fathers' anger, that is significant in shaping the identities of young men in terms of their attitudes towards anger in their adult lives. However, because this

thesis focuses on fathers' anger, this section continues with a consideration of the participants experiences of their fathers' anger.

Shouting a lot, arguing with wives and partners, throwing things and 'going quiet' were often given as descriptions of fathers' anger. Being 'told off' angrily was another recurring theme throughout the fieldwork. The fathers also reported their perceptions of why their father became angry. These were often about power and control in the sense that their fathers sought to influence their behaviour by becoming angry with them. Some of the fathers acknowledged this approach to disciplining children was not a personal thing but a result of a generational approach to disciplining children. This also led to comments about fathers being angry because of missed life opportunities and unhappy marriages resulting in 'taking it out on the kids'. A number of the fathers also spoke about their fathers getting drunk and lashing out at either them or their siblings. Anger about inanimate objects such as damaged or broken-down cars also featured frequently in accounts of fathers' anger, as well as examples of becoming angry when they were rude to their mothers or answered back. Many of the fathers I spoke to viewed their fathers' anger as being the result of a traditional approach to fathering and 'men being men'. At times there seemed to be an almost affectionate acceptance of their fathers' behaviour although, in families where anger was more extreme and overtly linked to violence, there had been a more profound impact on their attitude to anger in families. The following extract from an individual interview with a father (13) with two adult children provides an example of the complexity of a participant's experience of his family and his father's anger:

He was a chauvinist of the old school. We were born in Grimsby, in the back streets of Grimsby and he was an apprentice on the docks, he drove a crane and worked the coal hoist, that sort of thing. Then he realised he was wasting his time and went to college and did very well. He became a chartered engineer and ended up at Blackburn's Aircraft factory which became British Aerospace. He had a very good job there. He was very intelligent, opinionated. And I used to worship the ground he worked on as a youngster. We never talked particularly. We would talk about things like aeroplanes, space, fishing, cars, we always loved cars, he always had a fancy car. I would sit on his knee and we would drive around the block, I would steer round the block. So he was good in that respect, but emotionally he was hopeless. As a provider he wasn't bad.

Can you say a bit more about being emotionally hopeless?

Well, he was just emotionally hopeless.

What did that mean for you as a child? How did you experience him being emotionally hopeless?

There were no cuddles. No bedtime stories. There was only criticism when we did something wrong. I was very rarely, in fact I can't ever remember being praised. But I guess maybe most people can't. But I remember being told off a lot and criticised. Especially as I was very lazy at school. And he just gave up eventually.

Did he ever get angry?

Oh yes.

Can you tell me a bit about that?

He'd shout a lot and him and my mum were always arguing, that's one thing I do remember, they were always arguing bad. That used to upset me. I used to go out of the house, I couldn't stand it. I don't think there was any physical, he never used to hit us. My mum used to hit us. She used to clatter us round the legs and all that sort of thing. My dad never hit us. He was a very strong physical person. I think if he had hit us he would have killed us.

Can you remember a particular time when he got angry?

Only when seeing my school reports and exam results. But he wouldn't particularly flare up, he would just look skyward and not say anything.

How did you know he was angry?

Because he was usually fairly quiet. He'd have a shout, 'You useless (unclear)' And then he would go to the pub.

Can you remember the quality of that quietness? Was it any different to any other sort of quietness that you experienced with him?

It was frightening quietness. You knew to get out of the way. Not because – there was always the fear that he would clatter you, yes – but he never did. But he did give off – he had a presence about him, did me dad, that you knew to get out of the way. I would go fishing or something like that.

This father's experience of his own father was both one of distance and lack of intimacy as well as time spent together in an enjoyable and loving way. His father was a traditional father in the sense that he provided for the family but was also an emergent father or even, possibly, a mother's helper as he played with his son in the car and talked of 'men's things' such as cars and aeroplanes. He was also focused on his son's academic development and became angry when his son did not perform as he would have liked him to. However, this display of anger was not as might be expected from a traditional father. He did not hit his son but would become quiet when displeased. This quietness may be understood as a manifestation of a traditional masculinity that, on the one hand, prevents the sharing of feelings but on the other hand utilises the non-expression of feeling as an aspect of power and control in relationships. Again, it was his mother who used physical violence to discipline him rather than his father. Despite this father's experience of his own father, fear and affection are mingled in this contribution. This was a theme that often appeared in other fathers' contributions. Whatever their experiences of their own fathers in terms of intimacy, power, control and anger, they were sometimes able to express affection and a degree of understanding about why their father behaved in the way they did.

Not all the fathers I spoke to experienced anger from their fathers. A number said their fathers never got angry. They may have occasionally been frustrated or annoyed but never openly angry. However, when I asked supplementary probing questions it was often the case their fathers hid their anger from them rather than openly expressed it. One of the fathers, for example, talked about how his father would go and dig the garden when he was annoyed and would be inaccessible and distant if his son tried to approach him. Some of the fathers who made these contributions acknowledged this type of behaviour was a form of anger management. However, other fathers said that by not being exposed to anger as children they were in some way disadvantaged by these kinds of experiences. One father (15), a university lecturer with three children, talked about how, after experiencing an 'anger free' childhood, he was shocked and upset when his partner first became angry with him:

I have no memory of conflict in our family. When I left home I had no model of how to deal with conflict or anger. I didn't learn any constructive lessons and I was devastated when I got married and my wife got angry with me.

This father went on to describe how his father would at times get 'tetchy' with him but never angry. When he was 'tetchy' he was short with him and not as warm as usual. He said he would get the message and 'clear off'. He then, surprisingly, contributed the following:

These are the occasions when he got a bit tetchy. And he never got angry?

I have no memory, it depends what you call angry. I mean, there were certain things that were too (silence) in dealing with us. Ooh, I tell you what, there was one occasion when he got very angry. I must tell you about that I have a brother and we were coming out of church or something like that and he had been bugging me and I had been bugging him and I hit him. I hit him in such a spot that he just, I only hit him once, but he curled up and he kind of, I knocked him out. And he just rolled over backwards and he hit his head on the pavement. And he needed, he lost consciousness for a second or two and then he, I'd forgotten about this, and then his head needed stitching. My dad (chuckling) was really cross about that. As you can imagine, because that was quite a serious thing to hit somebody and knock them clean out and they had to go hospital and have stitches. So he gave me a good telling off about that.

Your dad was cross then.

He certainly was.

How did you experience that?

Well, he said some, I think he just gave me a telling off in the kitchen and he said it was completely unacceptable to hit your brother and that he was very angry

He said he was very angry.

Uhm.

I mean, not verbatim.

I would think so, I would think so.

Was he angry or saying he was angry?

No, he would be angry on that occasion.

If I had been a fly on the wall, what would I have seen?

You would have seen us both standing in the kitchen, as I recall, me looking very chastened, examining my shoes, and maybe going off and having a cry afterwards. And him wagging his finger and really telling me off. His voice would have been raised. He wouldn't have gone on at great length but I would have got the message. Because it was such a rare thing.

What was it like being told off by your dad in that way at that time?

I fully expected it and fully deserved it. It wasn't enjoyable being told off.

Anger can be justifiable sometimes with dads? When the kid does something as bad as knocking

Oh yeh!

... a brother out?

Absolutely, absolutely, I don't have any doubt about that at all.

What about you and your anger? You mentioned that you get frustrated and tetchy with your kids.

Yeh, I've learned. We have in our house a much more open display of anger. I will show that I am angry probably more often than my father would have done. Uhm, sorry, what did you ask me again?

It would be irresponsible to read too much into this father's confused and contradictory contribution. On the one hand he is saying his father never got angry with him but, when subjected to probing questions, he contributed a vivid account of both his own and his father's openly expressed anger. Later in the interview he talks again of how he never gets angry with his children and, indeed, the night before his interview he asked his children about their experiences of his anger. They told him he didn't get angry with them but at times seemed frustrated and annoyed. He described the expression of this frustration and annoyance as: ' ... not laughing, it involves looking at them quite directly, possibly with a

raised eyebrow, and it means this is where the boundary is, I'd better go and do as I am told.' In the following extract he provides an insight into how he changed from being disabled by his early experiences of his father's hidden, and occasionally explicit, anger to being more comfortable with his own anger in his family:

There are times when she [his partner] gets angry and chucks the cushions about or something. And I remember on one occasion I did a similar thing, I had a good rant and a rave and I'd never done it before. And I chucked a cushion around and I thought actually this is good fun and it's not something I do very often.

Good fun?

Yeh, well I thought it was actually enjoyable to really make it very plain (laughs). I think my wife said afterwards that she found it surprising that I had been so overt in my display, if you like because it's so uncharacteristic. And I don't usually, you know, there are some things that I tends to bottle up a little bit and won't talk about. But on this occasion I had gone completely the other way and said very openly and plainly what I thought about what ever the issue was at the top of my voice and it all blew over very quickly. I remember thinking 'I don't usually behave like this but I am doing now and nobody's going to get hurt and it will do me some good'. That's what happened.

When I went on to ask him about why he had made reference to nobody getting hurt he insisted his anger would not lead to violence and that he avoids any conflict situation where

anger may be linked to violence. He then talked about his experiences of being bullied at school:

I can't imagine situations where I could get as angry as that. I mean, there was one occasion when I was at school when I was bullied. It was quite a serious assault which ended up with the other lad being taken to court. And one thing that does make me very, very angry is any kind of bullying of that kind. And it's quite possible that if ever I witnessed some sort of assault in the street, or something like that, I could in those circumstances, and I can't think of any other circumstances, completely lose it and do somebody a lot of damage. That could happen, I mean, years ago I used to do a lot of judo which involved fighting, of course, so I would have some residual skills in fighting. There are circumstances like that, if I saw someone being assaulted or picked on in the street, that really gets into my anger circuit and I could conceivably lay into somebody and hurt them.

This poignant contribution about how this father's experiences of being bullied at school have resulted in such strong contemporary feelings towards bullying illustrates, again, a discursive mix in terms of masculinities. A man who rejects the expression of anger through violence as a general principle in his life can, when encouraged by probing questioning, imagine a scenario where he deals with conflict through violence. Although he went on to describe how he and his family manage conflict in a way that would not result in violence, his contribution illustrates a key theme of this study – the discursive mix of traditional and personalised masculinities creating a tension within families as men who are fathers learn to manage their anger in a way that does not involve violence. Many of the

fathers I spoke to were motivated to change towards a new way of managing their anger by undertaking emotion work in families a result of their early experiences both at school and at home. They often talked about observing angry conflicts produced by traditional discourses on fatherhood and masculinity which gave permission to their fathers, who were often emotionally distant, to discipline their children through the use of anger and occasional violence. Some of the fathers became adept at emotion work from an early age as they sought to minimise conflict in their families and for many of the fathers I spoke to this seemed to be a significant starting point for change. The following contribution from one of the fathers (16) illustrates how as a child he attempted to be proactive in his family and avoid conflict and the resulting painful and difficult feelings:

Because my mother had [mental health] difficulties she didn't run the house very well, you know, she would forget things and lose things and my father would get very angry with her. So I would try and tidy up when she wasn't well. I would try and do some of the wifely things that he wanted doing. Because he was quite old fashioned. You know, he wanted his tea on the table and all of that stuff.

The above reference to a traditional masculinity that relied on women to keep house and care for both the children and the husband was often a point of reference in the accounts of the fathers I interviewed. However, none of the fathers seemed to be consciously aware that they were referring to traditional discourses on fatherhood and masculinity, and in particular hegemonic masculinity, in the sense that I am writing about in this thesis. Instead, they made comparisons between their fathers' way of behaving and their own expression of masculinity and fatherhood. They based these comparisons on their everyday

personal experiences. This has helped me to better understand Seidler's (1989) criticism of discourse theory which argues that men's personal experiences in themselves are valid and to be valued as expressions of the human condition. Seeking to theorise these experiences within a discursive context may detract from men's accounts and in some way diminish their effectiveness as other men read this material. Despite the limitations of theorising men and masculinities, I was none the less struck by how the fathers I interviewed had managed such change in their lives without a cognitive framework to help them and provide them with a map. I think this thesis has the potential to provide such a map for fathers.

In conclusion, although the fathers who participated in this study did not demonstrate an awareness of the discursive context within which they were contributing their accounts they often made comments about how other men might perceive them. As the accounts in this chapter have demonstrated, they asked whether they might be perceived as 'womanly' by other men. As I sat and listened to these comments I was reminded of my experiences of fatherhood and, in particular, an occasion many years ago when I was acutely embarrassed as I pushed my baby son past a gang of men digging a ditch in the road. I did not want them to perceive me as 'being a woman'. Another oblique reference to hegemonic masculinity within the accounts of the fathers in this chapter is the discussion around men and intimacy. These fathers, despite making changes in their lives, still found it difficult to talk to other men about their feelings and relied on their partners as their main confidants. Male sexuality was also alluded to, but not developed as a discussion point, when considering physical closeness with children. Many of the fathers I spoke to chose to approach fatherhood and anger differently, by undertaking emotion work, because they had experienced and observed anger in their families and had been frightened and distressed by

this experience. Some of them had developed the ability to think ahead and try and avoid difficult and unpleasant experiences for their families. They had also, like the above father, felt some responsibility for mediating the effects of their fathers' (or mothers' and siblings') anger. They had minimised the reproduction of traditional discourses on fatherhood and masculinity and had taken responsibility for managing anger by undertaking emotion work, and in doing so decreased the potential for conflict. They did this by becoming involved in the lives of their families in a way that allowed them to develop well-bounded intimate relationships that were the basis for understanding their children and being sensitive to their feelings. Many of the fathers talked about protecting children from anger and violence. Although they often seemed reluctant to talk about their experiences of anger and violence, both in their families of origins and their contemporary families, they often acknowledged feeling angry with their children. The next chapter continues to develop examples and explanations about how the fathers who participated in this study managed discursive mixes of both fatherhood and masculinity within complex emotional family environments. The examples considered in the following chapter provide further evidence of their attempts to limit the effects of traditional discourses on fatherhood, masculinity and anger - discourses that, historically, have given permission for men who are fathers to express anger openly and violently as a means of maintaining power and control within families.

6. Fathers, Anger and Emotion Work

I suppose I find pretty much being angry difficult still. Sort of being highly trained from an early stage not to be angry because my parents were angry, seemed to be angry quite a lot of the time. I know that it's healthy to be honest with yourself and mop things up. I think I still find that difficult if I am quite honest. I think it's good to allow children to experience the range of human emotions and feelings. As long, you know, they're witnessing anger they can see some resolution to it as well. Not feel responsible for it, which they can very easily become. Feel that they've caused it or something, they've done something wrong.

The above father's (6) comments on anger illustrate the complexity of anger in families. In this account, he is not only saying he has difficulty with expressing his anger but is also commenting on the importance of children having positive experiences of anger within families. By having these positive experiences they may learn about the full range of human emotions and not end up feeling responsible for the anger in their family. Such childhood experiences may have helped the father in the previous chapter who said he had no resources to deal with his partner's anger when he was an adult because his parents never openly displayed anger. Although this chapter begins with a recognition that an anger-free childhood may be as equally problematic as a childhood that is characterised by frequent and overt displays of anger, this thesis continues with the contention that anger within families is mainly problematic for all concerned. Different aspects of this complex scenario were talked about consistently throughout the individual interviews and focus

group discussions and this chapter draws heavily on empirical data in order to present the everyday experiences of fathers who are intimately involved with the care of their children. In contrast to the previous two substantive chapters, there is little or no framing of the sections within the literature as I begin to write about aspects of fatherhood, masculinity, anger and emotion work that are specific to this study. The texts on fatherhood that I have consulted have little or no mention of anger in the index and no consideration of the management of anger within the body of the texts. In addition, as far as I am aware, there is no empirical work within the literature on fatherhood and masculinities that considers the process of fathers undertaking emotion work within families in the way that I have in this thesis. Lupton and Barclay (1997), a key text in the study of involved fatherhood, has no mention of anger. These authors do, however, consider the anxiety experienced by new fathers (1997: 123) but do not go on to explore how this anxiety is managed by fathers within the family. In contrast, this chapter begins by considering anger, an emotion as equally strong as anxiety, as a problematic emotion in families from the perspective of some of the fathers who participated in this study - again drawing on accounts of relationships with partners and children in order to maximise the use of data produced from the fieldwork. It then goes on to explore, within the context of fatherhood and masculinity, some of the reasons why some of the fathers I spoke to became angry. These reasons, for convenience, have been written about within the context of the two reasons proposed in chapter two: issues of power and control and the experience of difficult and painful feelings (Seidler, 1994; Brody, 2002; Shields, 2002). The substantive section of this chapter provides detailed examples of fathers managing their anger by undertaking emotion work – examples drawn from the contributions of some of the fathers who participated over the

eighteen month period of the fieldwork and contributed through individual interviews, focus group discussions and exit interviews.

Fathers' experiences of anger

One of the recurring themes throughout the individual interviews was fathers being reluctant to express their anger because of their experiences of their own fathers (and mothers). However, they often talked about a growing confidence in both talking about their anger and expressing it responsibly. For example, the same father, quoted above (6), said:

I would internalise [anger] quite a bit. That wouldn't necessarily come out as anger. I might sulk, or when I was a teenager I used to sulk, apparently, I never got angry, showed anger about anything. Whereas now I've got older life's too short really to muck about and if someone has done something wrong I sort of talk to them about it and follow it through.

How would you describe yourself when you are angry?

Yeh, I can pin-point what's bothering me and take action and I'm more confident about following it through with other people that I'm bothered about.

Do you ever get really angry where you just, kind of, 'lose it'?

No, not really. I'm pretty even keeled.

Any ideas why you are pretty even keeled?

I think I saw my parents get angry a lot when I was a child and I didn't like it so I went to the opposite extreme. As I'm getting older I'm starting to have my own mad moments, being able to let rip a bit more, but I still don't like to go for it.

What are you like when you let rip?

Uhm, I might shout and bang things around a bit. But not very often, really. But I can be angry, yeh,

Understanding how fathers grow in their ability to understand their anger and manage it more productively through undertaking emotion work is one of the central themes of this thesis. One of the ways I explored this theme was by asking the fathers to tell me what they thought anger was. When they talked about angry feelings they indicated a gradation of intensity that included feelings such as annoyance, frustration, grumpiness, crossness, anger and explosive anger. One of the fathers (19), a community nurse with two young children, illustrated the gradation with the following contribution:

I just think that anger is a much more sort of fierce emotion and anger is red in the face and waving arms. Being a sort of monster almost and having a sense of being

on the verge of losing control. Whereas to me annoyed is about 'Daddy wants you to stop now' or about her seeing that 'Daddy wants you to stop now' or 'Stop!'

This ability to talk about feelings within the context of his relationship with his daughter belies a traditional fatherhood locating fathers as emotionally distant and a hegemonic masculinity preventing men from being emotionally aware and articulate. Balancing the effects of these two major discourses was also apparent when I asked one of the younger fathers (12), a systems engineer with a baby daughter, to describe an example of his anger. He said:

And other times when I'm just being quiet because maybe I'm a little bit tired she [his partner] takes that to be there's something wrong and she keeps digging at it. And digging and digging and digging. 'There was nothing wrong with me five minutes ago, I was just quiet, and now I'm starting to get cheesed off with you asking me what's wrong.' Then you get to the point when there is something wrong now, 'You're getting on my nerves, will you please shut up.' And I think the snap is where I feel I'm losing control and I'm either not getting my way or I'm not getting my point across. And I just feel that I've lost control at that point and that's when I'll snap and I'll shout. I've never hit her. I've never, I did grab her once, just sort of, I grabbed her and said, I didn't say anything. I just grabbed her and she immediately froze. And I straight away let go and I thought, 'I've gone a little bit too far here.' And it wasn't something that I, without thinking about it, I didn't think, 'Right, if I grab her what will that do?' it wasn't something I reasoned, I just grabbed her and I'm glad to say that is the furthest I ever went. I've never hit her,

I'd never want to hit her. She slapped me once (nervous chuckle), if there's anytime anybody had raised their hand, she's done it to me once and only once.

Although this father, who was very involved with caring for his baby daughter, was able to understand and articulate this account of him expressing his anger, his apparent reluctance to talk about his feelings with his partner may be construed as an aspect of traditional masculinity. Certainly his anger, loss of control and potential use of violence is a direct manifestation of traditional masculinity and its abuse of power through inappropriately expressed anger leading to violence. However, this father did realise what had happened and quickly stopped holding his partner and went on to say this was the only occasion on which this had happened. This account demonstrates a discursive mix of traditional masculinity and a personalised approach to masculinity that was also apparent in many of the contributions of the other fathers to whom I talked. Traditional masculinity is associated with the use of anger and violence as a means of exerting power and control over women and some men are said to lack the necessary intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence that may provide insight into this approach to relationships. However, new and personalised forms of masculinity provide the opportunity for men to learn how to change and be more in touch with their internal worlds as well as the consequences of their actions towards others.

Other fathers gave examples of expressing their anger by raising their voices, banging and kicking things, sulking, raising eyebrows and giving direct stares to children, physically picking children up and, in one of the interviews, hitting children. Anger was generally seen as a scary and dangerous emotion from which children should be protected. One of the

fathers (8), a care coordinator with a social services department, when I asked him how he thought his children experienced his anger, said:

Scary. I think they would be scared. I think as small children they were. I mean, I'm only talking two or three occasions [when he hit them as a younger father].

Yes, I understand that.

It's not a regular occurrence.

And I am encouraging you to focus on those two or three occasions. I'm aware of that.

Yeh, on those occasions they were frightened. Yes, they were frightened. And then I was ashamed because I was doing exactly what my father did to me. Made me scared.

He scared you?

Oh yeh, he scared me. When he was really angry he was scary.

The need to protect children from anger was often linked, as we see here and in the previous chapter, to the fathers' experiences of their own fathers (and mothers and siblings). The above father's feelings of shame may also be construed as a motivating

factor in his decision to parent his children differently as he realised he was repeating his father's performance of anger. Another father (9), a single parent of a teenage daughter, talked about feeling guilty about being angry in front of his daughter because, again, he realised he was repeating a pattern of behaviour he had experienced with his own father:

I definitely remember moments of his anger that stand out in my mind. And they've stood out to an extent that when I've been angry in front of my daughter, that makes me feel guilty that she's going to remember those moments as well. Kids are great at overcoming incidents like that in the home and getting over them and forgiving you, I think. But you wonder how, I don't want me being angry to stand out in her mind in years to come.

With some of the fathers, it was their early experiences of fatherhood that led to an increasing awareness of the effects of anger and the need to protect children. For example, the father quoted above (8) who talked about hitting his children when he was younger also told me:

I can remember hitting my daughter once when she answered me back.

Can you tell me about that?

I can't remember what the circumstances were. I just remember I was in the kitchen. I mean, we must have been discussing something and she sort of gave me a clever answer, so I just sort of whacked her one. But I suppose, I mean, I usually felt so

bad about it if ever I did hit them. I mean I never hit my youngest ever. I mean I can't, maybe my eldest once or twice in his whole life. But the other two more when they were younger. But I think after a while I started to think, you know, I used to feel so bad about it that within half an hour I used to go and ask them to forgive me, sort of thing. I tried to, sort of, you know, understand better what was triggering me off.

The above example of the spontaneous expression of a violent emotion illustrates the view of many of the fathers I spoke to that anger can be an uncontrollable emotion. They consistently spoke about the potential for losing control and some described anger as something that took them over and overwhelmed them. One father said anger is when you are no longer functioning as a reasoning person. This loss of reason was referred to by other fathers and many of them acknowledged that anger could do irreparable damage to families if not channelled appropriately. They often spoke about anger as an initial reaction to something they felt they had no control over and linked this reaction to feeling powerless. Reacting angrily to situations in which they felt powerless and describing anger as a natural emotion overwhelming rationality (when their sense of entitlement to authority as a man and a parent was challenged) was a feature of their accounts of relationships with their partners and children. It might be argued the ability of fathers to understand the dimensions of anger in relation to their social construction as men and fathers might be limited by the influence of hegemonic masculinity. Masculinity in its traditional form does not encourage men to be emotionally articulate and valorises the use of anger and violence within intimate relationships with women and children. However, the majority of the fathers I spoke to also

thought of anger as a socially constructed emotion that could be understood, controlled and managed through undertaking emotion work.

Fathers reflecting on anger, power and control

A number of the fathers I spoke to said they thought their anger was linked to issues of control. This fundamental aspect of the study of men and masculinities was not apparent immediately in the early stages of the interviewing but became more visible as interviews progressed, focus group discussions unfolded and the fathers, including myself, reflected on what was being said. One of the fathers (6), the worker in education with three young children, said towards the end of his interview:

I'm interested about that thing about control. I shall probably think about that (laughs) because I think that's what it's about. When I feel out of control, that's when I start getting angry. And it's either out of control with other people or out of control with myself.

A number of the dads that I've interviewed have mentioned that, that it's something about control.

It's not that I want to be in control of other people or be manipulative or anything like that. I'm not actually, at all, because I can't be bothered, take it or leave it really. But if there is too much work or my children won't do what I ask them to do,

if their agenda is different, there's a mismatch, I feel I'm being pushed around. But I am quite placid in lots of ways, I don't get angry a lot.

Not needing to or wanting to be in control was a recurrent theme throughout the study. Although this was not explored further, it could have been another factor in these fathers' motivation and ability to understand and manage their anger in a way that was different, perhaps, to a father subject more predominantly to traditional discourses on fatherhood and masculinity. However, many of the fathers echoed the above contribution when they spoke about feeling angry as a result of lack of control. For example, one of the fathers (13), a university technician, linked feeling angry to the need for routine in his life when I asked him what he thought anger was:

It's an initial reaction to something you feel you have no control over.

It's something about control?

Now you are putting words into my mouth. Control is one of those key words in psychological circles. I think, I like to, I'm very mistrustful of the word control. I always feel it's going to be used against you. My life consists of a lot of routines and I'm quite happy with my routines. If I get out of my routines I feel a little bit anxious. I wouldn't like to say I have a syndrome or I have to put all the cups straight or anything like that. But I like to have the breakfast pots ready. I like to put the breakfast pots out last thing at night because it makes breakfast, traditionally a fairly stressful time, easier. Because everything is there. All you have to do is pour

the cereals in and put the kettle on and you're away. The kids think it's hilarious, they think I am some sort of control freak. And I like to know where the girls are going and what time do they think they are going to be back, only because I care for them and worry about them. I don't want to control their lives.

This is an example of a father managing a family routine in order to avoid stress and conflict at breakfast. However, he is misunderstood by his family as needing to be in control. He went on to talk about the anxiety he experiences when his routine is challenged or he doesn't know the whereabouts of his daughters. He said, 'Yeh, I get cross, I get cross, a bit frustrated and anxious. If I'm out of routine I get quite anxious.' He agreed his anger was linked to a need to be in control in order to relieve his anxiety but also acknowledged his anxiety was also about his need to care for his family. The use of anger to regain control because of an inability to express difficult feelings is too simplistic a view as this father, and many of the other fathers, talked about their need to be in control of certain situations because of their sense of responsibility and love for their families. However, it is reasonable to assume aspects of hegemonic masculinity may contribute to this scenario as this father does not talk to his family about his anxiety - instead responding to his anxiety by becoming angry with his family.

Although most of the fathers I spoke to described themselves as being intimately involved in the care of their children in a way that was different to a traditional father, discipline and the associated notion of power and control, was often an issue. Intimate relationships with children based on understanding and trust need to be balanced with a clear understanding of which behaviour is and is not acceptable. With most of the fathers there was clarity around

boundaries and their need to maintain their authority for the sake of the family's well being. When I asked one father (6), the worker in education, to tell me about times when he had been angry with his children he said:

I do just feel very angry with the situation and I feel like putting my foot down. And sometimes that does feel appropriate, really. Always bending over backwards to clear up around them and sorting things out that go wrong. Because children can be incredibly selfish, can't they, if you let them. Sort of not thinking through the consequences of what they are doing and that sort of thing. And I think it's quite important for their own sake as they grow up to learn to relate to other people and to make friends and care for one another and to understand, you know, manners, and not just live for themselves.

This contribution is interesting because this father is saying it is OK to be angry when you feel you've had enough and you 'just need to put your foot down'. But the reasoning behind his statement is more complex. What might be at first understood as a traditional father being spontaneously angry in order to maintain control in the family can be seen, as a result of the above explanation, to be more altruistic in nature. This father identified the lack of maturity of his children (in terms of being able to take responsibility for themselves and relate to each other) and consciously decides to intervene. He's not advocating the use of anger but we are left wondering how much this feeling of appropriateness is related to a traditional fatherhood validating the use of anger to maintain control in families. This traditional discourse on masculinity, as we shall read later, also validates anger as a way of responding to difficult feelings arising from conflict in relationships. Another father (14), a

university lecturer with two teenage children, provided an alternative approach to maintaining discipline with his children that did not involve the use of anger. When I asked him what he thought his partner would say about his style of fathering he said:

(Long silence) I'm not sure why I'm finding that question so difficult to answer. There are times when she is more of a disciplinarian than I am and I think she looks to me to back that up. And I find that a little uncomfortable sometimes because she can be quite argumentative, which I think she inherits from her father.

He then went on to talk about how he always tries to negotiate with his partner if she is asking him to back her up in her attempts to angrily discipline the children and he feels unable to do so. He saw this as a strength in their relationship and went on to talk more about their different approaches to parenting:

Yeh, I think something that springs to mind is that she wants the boys to contribute more to the day to day running of the household. And she says 'you must' whereas I'm more keen to lead by example. And my son has changed, he is beginning to say much more 'What can I do to help? Would you like help with that?' And that is what I like, this sort of process of wishing to volunteer rather than being told it must happen.

He described his partner's preferred style of parenting as more disciplinarian with clear rules and boundaries and said he felt uncomfortable with this approach to maintaining discipline, preferring a style encouraging negotiation and individual responsibility.

Although this is in direct contrast to the previous example of an angry approach to maintaining discipline in families, this father too was challenged in his attempts to undertake emotion work by his teenage children, as the following contribution illustrates:

I think the thing that makes me angriest in my current family is the relationship between the boys because they squabble and snipe at each other a lot. Which again I know is not uncommon and unusual but a lot of it seems to be competitive. He seems to feel that because he is the oldest he has to put his brother down all the time. And that makes me cross because when he was his brother's age I get the feeling that he must have had quite low self esteem and low confidence. So I can't understand why he has to do it with his brother. Fortunately, he is quite robust and self confident. They'll often come in and either physically or verbally poke at each other. I will say, 'You don't need to do that, please don't do that.'

Are you cross in that moment?

Yes. Yes, I think so. Well, disappointed. Sad. And sometimes if they carry on after I've said, 'Please don't do that.' it makes me cross. You know, it's a bit like, 'Stop it now, I've seen you doing it, you don't need to do it, I don't like you doing it, please stop.' And if they carry on, which they often do, it's, '*DON'T DO IT!*' So I think that's what, I suppose, makes me angry. Seeing them do that.

Although this father consciously aspires to parent in a way that may be seen to be at odds with a traditional form of fatherhood (and some may argue motherhood), he can also be

seen to revert to a traditional response when seemingly pushed far enough. This was a recurring theme in this study which signposted the existence of discourses on both fatherhood and masculinities. Many of the fathers I spoke to talked about consciously working to avoid the expression of anger as a way of disciplining their children but, at times, still became angry when either their children 'pushed them too far' or they experienced strong feelings. For example, the above father, when I asked him whether his son's behaviour made him cross responded initially by saying he felt disappointed and sad. The complexity of this scenario may only be assumed as we can see he not only reverted to angry feelings when his authority was challenged as a father but he may have also, as the previous chapter has demonstrated men often do, responded angrily as he experienced difficult and painful feelings (because his son was bullying his younger brother). When I asked him to talk more about how he felt during these periods of conflict he provided further evidence of the latter by saying, 'I blame them for making me cross, I think. You know, they know I don't like that sort of thing.' When I went on to ask him to explain this further he said he didn't think they were consciously seeking to annoy him but he did say, later in the interview, one of the things that made him angry generally was when people did not take other's feelings into account. He said he didn't like people being selfish and self-centred. As there seemed to be an element of this in his descriptions of his sons' quarrelling it may be assumed this was another of the factors contributing to his anger. However, he stopped short of what I expected him to say which was that he was angry because his sons would not do what he wanted them to do, they would not 'behave themselves'. There was evidence of a further dimension to his distress as he witnessed his eldest son behaving in a way contrary to his own values of respect for other people's feelings. So it is possible this father was reacting angrily not because he was seeking to control and discipline his sons in

a traditional way but because he was genuinely feeling upset and hurt. The inevitable embodiment of hegemonic masculinity in his subjective identity resulted in an inability to articulate these feelings - and so he reacted by angrily blaming his sons.

Another father (18), an editor and proof reader with two teenage sons, talked about his difficult feelings when he witnessed his oldest son bullying his younger sibling. The following contribution begins by demonstrating this father's intimate knowledge of his son's perception of life in his family and, in particular, his relationship with his brother:

Well, he's just coming out of the Kevin phase, his feelings are very mercurial at the moment. They change rapidly. He seems to feel a lot of frustration about life. Yeh, frustration seems to be one of his leading emotions. I wouldn't call him an angry young man but he's, yeh, he gets frustrated by life, by adults, by his younger brother. It feels like, I think he feels that, as I probably did at that age, that the world misunderstands him. He's got gifts and qualities that nobody recognises. And his parents indulge his brother at his expense. And he doesn't get a fair deal from his parents.

How do you find yourself responding to his frustration?

Aaah, pretty indulgent on the whole but I won't tolerate him telling me to fuck off (laughs), which he does occasionally. And I won't tolerate, he sometimes turns on his brother who is very much younger and very much smaller and, while he doesn't

beat him up, he does get a bit too physical sometimes. And he speaks to him very aggressively sometimes and I don't tolerate that.

How do you know where to draw the line?

Uhm, (silence) well sometimes it's a complicated equation. I mean, sometimes you don't stop and think about it. I mean, I have tolerated him swearing at me but on the whole I won't because I have strong feelings about respect for parents.

He went on to say the bullying of his youngest son by his brother made him angry as did the lack of respect shown through, for example, swearing. Although this may come as no surprise, his contribution does indicate a discursive mix underlying his understanding of the situation and his responses. For example, when he was talking about his eldest son, he articulated an intimate knowledge and an empathy that a traditional father may not have either been aware of or been able to talk about. In addition to this, he used the term 'it feels like' when describing his son's predominant emotions, a term that might, from a traditional masculine perspective, be associated with a feminine way of perceiving the world. This approach to understanding his son's feelings and behaviour seemed to help him manage his anger as he tolerated a degree of 'disrespect' from his son. His comment on 'a complicated equation' (when I asked him how he knew where to draw the line) indicated the presence of a personalised discourse on masculinity challenging a traditional hegemonic masculinity. This personal approach to being a man included sensing rather than rationalising his eldest son's sense of self, being respectful of both his sons' emotional well-being, maintaining discipline in the family by drawing a line around unacceptable bullying behaviour,

tolerating a degree of disrespect but expecting, on the whole, respect from his children because he was their father and, finally feeling angry when his son bullied his brother.

Another example of reacting angrily because of difficult and painful feelings produced by witnessing bullying and injustice was talked about by another father (15), a university lecturer with three children, who said generally he didn't get angry very often with his children. But he did tell me about how he could imagine being angry outside of his family:

I am usually a very placid and calm person I think even in somebody who is fairly calm, like myself, and quite placid, there is the circumstance, and I can see it in myself, where I could completely blow a fuse and I could completely go off the wall, or whatever the phrase is, and I recognise in myself that I could damage somebody. Uhm, but the only circumstances that I can think of is if I witnessed somebody else bullying, you now, another adult picking on somebody or, you know, an assault in the street of that kind.

Later in the interview he told me, when I asked this father to tell me what it felt like to be angry, about the following incident:

I mean, I was in the middle of Leeds on a sunny day and the stall was manned by a group of people who were dressed as you might imagine them to be. Members of the National Front and they had posters up that said all sorts of things Feeling like that [angry] is a strange mixture of a flattening of your affect, if you like, you suddenly become intensely aware of the situation and I could tell that I did not like

what they were saying one little bit and I felt completely opposed to it. I was, I think, I had my wife with me at the time and I thought, 'Well, you've either got a choice of walking away or having a blazing row.' And I thought that in that situation they might gain more out of that than any point I might prove so I didn't do anything. I don't know whether that was right or wrong. I think when you are faced with people like that it's perfectly reasonable to feel angry about it. I'm not quite sure whether it would be reasonable to get into a fight about it, that wouldn't perhaps prove any point, you know.

This distinction between being angry outside of the home being permissible under certain circumstances was mentioned by a number of the fathers I spoke to. Some of them made similar comments to the above father, often with reference to work situations and dilemmas, but consistently about injustice and unfairness that may involve bullying. Although not overtly talked about by the fathers I spoke to, my understanding of their anger towards bullying, particularly with older sons, was that they were challenging one of the key ways in which hegemonic masculinity reproduces itself in boys and men.

Feeling angry and behaving aggressively when not in control of situations is a facet of fatherhood legitimised by predominant traditional discourses on both fatherhood and masculinity. However, the above contributions seem to suggest that with the group of fathers who participated in this study, their feelings of anger were not primarily associated with the need or the assumed right to be in control of their families. Instead, the complex scenarios seem to suggest that although there is an element of a traditional expectation that fathers are respected and should maintain discipline in families, there is also an element of

them having to manage difficult feelings. These difficult feelings are the result of witnessing situations where they feel they need to intervene in order to promote positive relationships and feelings in their families. It may be argued that because of the influence of hegemonic masculinity, or possibly because of the sheer complexity of the situation, they are unable to articulate a range of difficult and painful feelings – and their children and partners witness them as simply being angry. This argument is only valid within the context of this thesis being framed within a particular perspective on Men's Studies. Acknowledging a creative tension between Hearn's (2004) hegemonic nature of men's power, and its associated impact on the lives of women and children, and Seidler's (2006) perspective on the influence of hegemonic masculinity on the emotional lives of men is important here. It is only through acknowledging this dynamic that this chapter is now able to go on to consider other causes of fathers' anger related less to power and control within families, and more to their individual experiences of painful and difficult feelings.

Fathers talking about difficult and painful feelings

The contention that fathers become angry because of a selfish need to maintain power and control within families was challenged by the accounts of some of the fathers to whom I talked. The previous section demonstrated that some fathers who may at first be seen to become angry as a result of the need to control their children are also reacting, for example, to an increased sensitivity to the abuse of power through bullying. And so what at first may be perceived as oppressive behaviour now begins to have a different feel. Similarly, this section now goes on to consider the contributions of fathers who said they became angry when they felt hurt, misunderstood, devalued or experienced a sense of loss. For example,

one of the fathers (7) talked about difficult feelings he experienced when he and his partner re-negotiated their work/life balance. He had been the primary carer, home-educator and housekeeper for a number of years but then, after prolonged discussion, they decided his partner would spend more time at home with the children and he would go back to work. He talked about the impact this change had on the family routine:

Well, one of the things I was alarmed about and I noticed when I went back to work full-time, this is only three months ago, the first sort of month or so I was on a very short fuse. I would get angry with, well, I suppose with the girls but with anybody really. I seemed to get angry very quickly, it was quite alarming really I can remember one evening when I was sort of, I realised that we had run out of a lot of things. When I was home-making, the larders and the fridge and the freezer would always be full, permanently replenished with whatever we might need week by week. This particular evening I went [in the kitchen] and there was nothing, it was like Mother Hubbard's cupboard. And so I kind of was, I was cross about that in a way that made my wife quite upset, I think. But that was about, well it was about me trying to come to terms with relinquishing that role, or not coming to terms with doing it really. I don't know whether this is making sense.

He went on to explain that, after he had thought about this incident and talked it through with his partner, he had realised this was less about his need to be in control but more about feeling devalued:

Well, I think it came so far as to symbolise an acknowledgement or lack of an acknowledgement of part of my role being the sort of homemaker, and that was what I was doing, you know. It's like keeping the house stocked with provisions I felt was an important part of my role and something I took pride in making sure that I did and now you are taking this over it clearly isn't a important part of your role. Does that mean then that you never saw it as an important part of my role either? And if so, that undermines, that devalues what I have been doing. Can you see the logic of that? So that's how I kind of took it, really. And we did talk through all that. It was OK.

This surprising development illustrates how easy it can be to misunderstand the reasons why fathers become angry. What at first seemed like an issue of control became a clear statement about feeling devalued and undermined. When I asked further questions about this episode he told me his partner had said she was finding things hard as well and was concerned that he thought she wasn't able to perform as a homemaker in the way in which he would like. Since they have talked about this the larder is now more consistently and fully stocked. However, this father's reaction to his partner accommodating his feelings and changing her behaviour provided a further insight into his social construction as a man and his ability to develop and maintain an intimate relationship with his partner:

So since then she has been making sure that it's really all stocked up and pointing out that she has this and that. And I'm sort of thinking, 'you're not taking the mickey here, are you?' I mean, I don't think she is. I'm sure she isn't, in fact. But I

could sort of read it that way I suppose, that she is going too far the other way to make a point.

A detailed consideration of the relationship dynamics between these two parents is beyond the scope of this study but it is interesting here that within the perspective of intimate relationships being about shared information and the building of trust, this father had doubts, however momentarily, about his partner's motives. The notion that men who are subject to a hegemonic discourse on traditional masculinity mistrust the sharing of feelings in relationships because of a loss of power and control comes to mind here. This father, who elsewhere in the study clearly demonstrates new and personalised ways of being a father and a man, is demonstrating a traditional male response to conflict. However, what is new here, after the initial display of anger, is an ability to reflect on how he is feeling. He then goes on to express his feelings and talk them through with his partner - an indication of his ability to undertake both intrapersonal and interpersonal emotion work. There is also a clear discursive mix illustrated here as this father demonstrates he is subject to both traditional and personalised masculinity in his approach to undertaking emotion work and managing his anger in his family.

On further consideration of the above data, it is apparent what this father did not talk about was his sense of loss. He had been the full-time carer for his children for a number of years and he had embraced and celebrated this role. During my two visits to his home he demonstrated, both in the way he spoke about his children and how I observed him interacting with them, a close and loving relationship. What he didn't talk about during his exit interview was how he felt about losing this intimacy with his children. However, one

of the other fathers (17) I spoke to did give a clear example of anger associated with loss. He had been separated from his seven year old daughter's mother for some years and now lived alone. When I asked him about the last time he had got angry he said:

When did I get angry? (said quietly to self). The last time was when we met in a local café. I don't know whether it's angry, when she informed me that she had this new bloke and it had moved onto a sexual level I became very angry (voice cracks and he coughs). But it's that 'not knowing what to do with yourself' anger. It's very directed into me and it's very, it might have been grief more than anger. Like a loss, perhaps, but I remember that as having a real, you know, feeling sick in my stomach and wanting to punch a wall. That kind of, just a huge build up inside and not knowing what to do with it, really.

This father had also talked about another experience of anger related to loss earlier in his interview when he told me about how he struggled with coming to terms with his newborn daughter being the focus of his partner's attention. After talking about how exciting it had been to become a father, he then went on to say:

I mentioned earlier as well that it was great at first, an exciting time, it was all new. But then I think gradually, and this is something that I have found out from other men as well that have had children, it sounds very selfish to say that you are not the centre of attention anymore. Do you know what I mean by that? I suppose the other thing to mention was that she was my first relationship and I suddenly found myself thinking, 'Right, I'm twenty years old here, I'm going to miss out on the

traditional twenties of seeing lots of people, of going out lots. And I think I've had a lot of resentment, not directed at any one in particular, well it was directed at my ex before, and to an extent probably directed at my daughter as well. So I think I carried this through with me, this resentment and this constant fighting against this new role..... I was fighting settling down, I didn't want this new role thrust upon me, in all honesty. And I can recall, it's horrible to think back on this now because my daughter is a person and I wouldn't be without her. But when my ex was pregnant with my daughter part of me was thinking, well, maybe she would lose the baby and it would be a relief almost. I feel guilt for saying that but I distinctly remember thinking that and blaming her getting pregnant as well. Which was wrong because I know it takes two people obviously to produce a child.

Again we may see here this father's experience of anger was the result of multiple factors – the loss of attention within a relationship he perceived as being exclusive and his perceived loss of freedom as a young man in his twenties. The temporary blaming of his partner for the pregnancy rather than an acceptance of a shared responsibility is another example of a traditional discourse on masculinity producing men who project and blame when they are experiencing difficult feelings. The experience of anger as a reaction to loss, and the blaming of another person for these difficult feelings, was also talked about by a father (18) who told me about his early experiences of his marriage when he was a younger man:

I did have some problems with anger when I was with my ex-wife but it was anger relative to her rather than the kids. I mean, I was basically very angry 'bout my first son's conception. From the beginning I was, I was an angry young man after that

because I just felt it was so ill-timed. I was just finishing my PhD. I was planning to go abroad for a year, do some voluntary work of some kind. And she knew all of that, somehow contrived to get pregnant. I always felt she contrived to do it and I was very angry about it. She didn't know how angry I was about all that. I stuck with her and got married but clearly that was, in retrospect, a mistake. But for years I was angry all the time feeling that my life had been wrecked by this event. I wanted to be an academic, I had to give this up because I needed to get a proper job.

It would be irresponsible to speculate on the underlying causes of this profound experience of loss by a then young father who felt, in his words, that he had been robbed of certain major choices in his life. There is a sense of powerlessness permeating this account as this father takes on the role of the 'good father' that an ideal discourse on traditional fatherhood requires of men. However, my understanding of the word powerlessness here feels different to the meaning used within Men's Studies when considering men's relationships with women. Seidler (1997: 51-53) writes about men's anger related to their experience of powerlessness as women regain their power in individual relationships and society more generally. He argues men need a space within which to express and explore the difficult feelings associated with powerlessness and it seems some of the fathers who participated in this study were actively managing these difficult and painful feelings on their own within the complexity of everyday family life. The way they talked to me about these experiences seemed more about their own personal struggles rather than a conscious reaction to a major shift in gender politics within personal relationships. These struggles, motivated by a desire to father their children differently to their experience of their own fathers and, in particular, to manage their anger safely and productively through undertaking emotion work may now

be seen to be not simply about a stereotypical need for power and control. Instead, it may be argued the fathers who participated in this study felt angry for reasons that were often multiple and the consequence of conflicting discourses on fatherhood and masculinities.

Fathers managing their anger by undertaking emotion work in families

This thesis demonstrates that anger may be managed in families by fathers undertaking emotion work. Although, as we have seen, some of the fathers said children experiencing anger may be a positive part of their development, this chapter continues with a consideration of examples of fathers undertaking emotion work in an attempt to reduce the occurrence of difficult feelings and minimise anger in families. This section draws on data provided by two fathers who substantially participated in the study over a period of eighteen months.

The first father (5), the practice manager with two young children and an older son from a previous marriage, took part in an individual interview, two focus group discussions and an exit interview. He was in his early fifties, married with two children (a son with disabilities aged ten and a daughter aged five) and worked full-time in a firm of solicitors as a practice manager. He also had a twenty five year old son from a previous marriage who he kept in touch with on a regular basis. From an outsider's perspective he would appear to be a traditional father working full-time with his partner as the full-time carer for their children. This meant his income provided for his family and his partner's unpaid labour supported the family in the home. His partner did all the housework during the week so the family could spend time together at the week-ends. However, he was very much involved in the

care of his children before he went to work in the morning and when he came home in the evening. His employers were amenable to him taking time off during the working day should either of the children become ill. From this perspective he may have been perceived as an involved father as he provided physical and emotional care for his children in partnership with his partner. However, there was another perspective suggesting an emergent style of fathering as he described apparent gender-related activities with the children in terms of his son preferring him to drive him around in his car (whereas he preferred his mother to feed him) and he played rough and tumble with the children, did DIY around the home and took the children swimming. This 'mother's helper' approach to parenting was compounded by his view that his partner understood his children's needs better and had a 'seventh sense', particularly when it came to anticipating his son's needs. He thought she had developed this awareness as a result of being the primary carer for the children. When his son was a baby she had excluded him from his care until they reached a point where he became frustrated and 'had to talk things through'. As a result of this he became more involved in caring for his baby son. This father was involved in the care of his children as far as his full-time employment would allow. He gave them breakfast in the mornings, helped with bathing and would sometimes leave work to care for them if their partner was not available. He worried about the children when they were ill and would ring from work to see how they were. He also worried about his son's future in terms of his disability¹⁵. He was very proud of being involved in the care of his children. He sometimes got frustrated, as we read earlier, when his children woke up in the night and would only be

¹⁵ A detailed consideration of the experiences of fathers with children with disabilities is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, Harrison, Henderson and Leonard (2007) draw together stories of fathers' experiences of caring for children with disabilities. Carpenter (2002), in a consideration of the relationship between social care agencies and families of children with disabilities, indicates the need for fathers to be caring and nurturing often goes unrecognised by professionals.

comforted by their mother. He would have liked to have helped more but realised his children's preference for their mother (when they woke in the middle of the night) was important and needed to be respected. He would sometimes 'look after' one child while his partner settled the other and then came back to settle the one he was 'holding'.

In terms of his masculinity, he was comfortable about showing his feelings (he said, for example, he cried when he watched TV) and thought the opposite to this kind of masculinity was confrontation and aggression. He said he sometimes bottled his feelings up because he didn't like upsetting people and, indeed, his partner would have liked him, at times, to share his feelings more with her. However, he did talk about sharing his feelings with his elder son during the break-up of his first marriage and when his disabled son was born and nearly died when the life support machine was switched off. He said he was frightened of losing control of his emotions and only 'let his guard down' if he was comfortable with someone. He also said his partner saw more of the 'real' him and with her he could open up and express himself. He did have a male friend he spent time with after work and was comfortable talking to him about, for example, how his working week had gone. However, he didn't have a close and intimate male friend. He said that other more traditional men may have called him a 'big Jessie' for expressing his feelings and thought some men might have preferred to go out in the street and 'thump someone' rather than talk about their feelings. He thought he took after his mother and his brother took after his father. Although at times very loving, his father was emotionally distant and at work most of the time. He would sometimes come home drunk, cause friction in the family and would want to 'take his brother outside' and fight him. He said the 'haze would come down' with his father and brother and all logic would go out the window.

This father said he didn't get angry, he got frustrated. However, on closer questioning he talked about raising his voice, shouting, firmly telling the children what to do instead of asking them and sometimes physically picking up his daughter when she didn't do as she was told. He told me about one occasion when he got angry with his daughter for refusing to get in the car:

I'm a different character to my dad, I couldn't have done things like, I see my brother, the way he does things, I can't physically do that. The thought of trying to confront people the way my two other brothers do, it makes me sick the thought of having to do something like that. I would do anything to avoid the confrontation.

Do you get angry?

It's more frustration I think more than anger. I get frustrated at certain situations. Yeh, I can remember I got so frustrated once, I think my daughter wouldn't do what, you know, we wanted to get ready to go and everybody was waiting to go out and she was just messing around and we were getting frustrated, you know, we asked her, we told her and all the rest of it, you know. I can remember getting really uptight and, you know.

If I had been a fly on the wall, what would I have seen?

If you had been a fly on the wall, yeh, my voice was getting more raised and I think I was more than asking her to do it, I was telling her to do it, quite forceful about it and then in the end I picked her up and carried her to the car without her shoes on and told her she would have to have her shoes put on later, you know (voice going quieter).

Can you remember the feeling?

Oh yeh, I didn't like myself for doing it because I thought because I was the adult and her dad I could have been more controlled. I should have had more, been calmer with it. But at that particular point in time, I couldn't. Most situations I can be quite placid about but, you know, obliging and it doesn't really matter, quite laid back. But I think on that particular day we just needed to be, I don't know whether we were against the clock or other pressures, other factors had come in.

In order to avoid situations like the above, he went on to tell me, he always tried to plan ahead so the family could avoid pressure and the possible resulting confrontation. He said planning ahead also helped with avoiding anxiety. He would try to organise the family and 'gear people up' so there would be time to spare should a problem arise. He told me his partner would say he planned too much and she didn't seem to understand he was planning ahead in order to try and manage pressure points so that the family could avoid stress. In order to be in a position to undertake this aspect of emotion work in his family, this father had successfully developed opportunities to be involved with the care of his children. The negotiation of a more involved form of fatherhood had taken place between him and his

partner, children and employer, as well as in terms of his social construction as a father. This had resulted in him being involved in the intimate care of his children and had enabled him to develop a knowledge and understanding of his children that a more traditional father would have lacked. In terms of his masculinity, he was aware there was a tension between his personal approach to being a man (allowing emotionality) and a more traditional discourse on masculinity (resulting in confrontation and aggression). Despite a more personal approach to being a man, his partner's comments on his reluctance to talk about his feelings and his need to be in control suggest the influence of a more traditional hegemonic masculinity. He also talked about the need to be in control of his feelings although this may be considered from two different perspectives. The influence of hegemonic masculinity would ensure the control and censure of feelings. However, there is clear evidence in this example that this father talked about being in control of his feelings in order to undertake emotion work – i.e. prevent the occurrence of painful and difficult feelings in the family. He undertook this emotion work by understanding his own feelings, in particular how anger was likely to occur, and being aware of the needs of his family in what was often a busy and challenging family environment. This father's attention to emotion work centred on anticipating need, planning ahead and paying attention to the timing of family events and activities. He was motivated to undertake emotion work of this sort in his family because of the experiences of his own father in relation to anger – an anger that was acted out in his family in seeming isolation from any involvement in childcare and the lack of any form of intimacy that may have resulted in a better understanding of his children's needs. However, this father, because of his intimate involvement with the care of his children and his personal approach to a masculinity

encouraging and facilitating emotion work, was able to approach anger in his family very differently.

During his exit interview he told me a story about his family wanting a dog. Although he wanted the dog just as much as his partner and children, he also wanted to fence the garden off before the dog was brought home. However, his partner, with his agreement, arranged for the dog to come home before this had happened. She then went shopping and left him at home with the children and the dog. The dog predictably escaped and he was angry. He told me he had foreseen this happening but had gone along with the dog coming home early because he was 'sometimes accused of being a control freak'. He then went on to talk about feeling angry and frustrated and having no-one to talk to about what had happened. He could see it had been no-one's fault although he was angry with himself for allowing it to happen in the first place. This was balanced by a realisation he couldn't always take control and make all the decisions. He eventually channeled his anger into recovering the dog (which had to be returned until the garden was more secure). His daughter was 'heartbroken' over this decision but he was aware, as she was only six years old at the time, had she been involved in making the decision the dog would not have gone back. He said with hindsight he should have insisted the dog was not brought home until the garden was ready but at the time his daughter wanted a dog and they thought it would be good for her. He told me, 'We saw a picture in the paper and our emotions took over and we let our heart rule our head. Common sense told me it was too early but I went with the flow.' Again, a mixture of discursive influences are illustrated here as this father also demonstrated his understanding of the emotional needs of his family and, concurrently, manages his anger within a situation where individual needs are conflicting and confrontational. It could be

argued a traditional father would have insisted the dog was not brought home until the garden was secure. He may have argued and become angry as the family expressed their disappointment and perhaps blamed him for not allowing the dog home. However, he may have then progressed to ensuring the garden fence was made adequate, or if the funds were unavailable due to limited resources, he may have said no to the dog all together. This imagined scenario would have contributed to an individual and family perception that the father was responsible for discipline and control within the family as well as making major decisions about family projects. Emotionally, the father would have been distant and unaware of the feelings of his children or, as has been argued earlier, he may have felt unable to make a public display of his awareness because of the limitations imposed on him by traditional discourses on fatherhood and masculinity.

This negative view of traditional fatherhood is proposed here in order to polarise the argument that this particular father managed his anger differently to his own father because of his negotiation of different discourses on fatherhood and masculinity. He was located within the family to such an extent he was aware of the benefits a dog would bring to his daughter and he publicly participated in displays of feeling that occurred when they saw the dog in the paper. The tension between a traditional discourse arguing for a rational, common-sense approach and a personal discourse enabling him to be intimately involved and aware of the need for emotion work were apparent in his account. Indeed, it was these thoughts that produced angry feelings as he blamed himself when the dog escaped. He 'should have known better' and 'should have been in control of the situation'. He was left on his own, both physically and emotionally, with these difficult feelings but was able to channel them safely. He then went on to consider his daughter's feelings as the dog was

returned – this part of the story providing further evidence of the need to consider both trust and support as well as attention to boundaries within intimate relationships. His decision to ‘go with the flow’, it could be argued, was based on his ability to be intimately involved in the care of his children and be aware of the need for emotion work – attributes not commonly associated with traditional discourses on fatherhood and masculinity. The above story illustrates the complex nature of a father’s involvement in the emotional life of his family. He may have been perceived as acting as a controlling and angry man but, according to his account, he was motivated to work hard at considering the feelings of his family and hold in check his own views on the situation.

During the above father’s contributions to the field work interviews and group discussions it became apparent his approach to managing angry feelings by undertaking emotion work again provided evidence of different discourses at play. He told me he tended to go quiet when he started to feel angry so he could think things through and didn’t say what he didn’t mean. He also needed time to think because he wasn’t able to think quickly enough and he wanted to ensure he said things that would help the situation and enable the family to ‘get over it’. He said when he was younger people would accuse him of sulking and bottling his feelings up but he was actually taking time out to ‘sort things in his own mind’. The difference between a public display of traditional masculinity, where it could be argued he was perceived as either withholding feelings as a means of control or not articulating feelings because of an inability to do so, and a personal approach to masculinity where he was privately engaged in intrapersonal emotion work is apparent here. He went on to say that as he became older he was able to ‘come round much quicker’ and diffuse the anger

himself. However, when asked to talk about anger as an emotion he made a surprising contribution:

What do you think anger is?

It's another expression of feeling, I think, if I was asked to define that I would say that it's another way of expressing feeling. Letting off steam in that sort of way.

Anger is expressing your feelings by letting off steam.

Yeh (silence)

Can you say a bit more about that?

It's another side of your character. A way of showing others how you feel. (silence)

What's it for?

(Silence)

As I say, anger shows somebody that they are not doing what you want them to do, or they've not done what you want them to do. So, you know, if somebody shouts it makes you react to them in a different way to how you would if they were speaking

to you normally. It's another way of expressing and warning people how you feel (said very quietly).

Why do they need warning?

So that they change their response and interaction with you, uhm, because you don't want them to do what they're doing, I suppose.

And what would happen if they didn't change what they were doing?

Well, they say that if you are of an aggressive nature it would escalate and ultimately it could end in a physical fight.

This father's reference, it could be argued, is to another side of his character that may be linked to the influences of traditional discourses on fatherhood and masculinity. This possibility is further indicated as he goes on to talk about the use of anger in order to exert power and control in relationships – an anger that could possibly result in violence. This perception of anger and its potential impact on relationships was one of the motivating factors encouraging this father to develop a personal approach to fatherhood. His ability to manage the tension between different discourses is even more remarkable given the clarity of the above contribution. However, he then went on to provide another equally surprising perspective:

Well, they say that if you are of an aggressive nature it would escalate and ultimately it could end in a physical fight. Other, I'm more that, I get more frustrated because I'm obviously not expressing myself with people. I always take it that it's my fault in a situation. If somebody doesn't react how I want them to or I get the wrong response from somebody, I feel as if it's my fault because I've not done something in the way that they want it to, or answered it correctly.

A consideration of the intrapersonal processes at work here is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, a traditional discourse on masculinity would ensure it would be the other person who is blamed for difficult and painful feelings when communication is uncertain and possibly confrontational. But this father is clearly taking responsibility, however appropriately or inappropriately, for his feelings when people either don't behave as he would like them to or seem not to understand what he is saying. It could be argued here his attention to emotion work within the family, based on his experience of anger in the past, has attenuated his motivation, and possibly his ability, to assert himself within relationships. It is here that fathers may learn from normative discourses on motherhood. According to Lawler (1999) some mothers define motherhood as meeting the needs of children first and foremost. However, Lawler (1999: 73) contends that '“good mothers” are constituted as having needs congruent with those of the child.’ She goes on to argue that some mothers assert their own needs by including them in the articulation of their children's needs. Had the following father known this, his attempts to manage his anger by undertaking emotion work, and his concurrent lack of assertion in terms of his own needs, may have been made easier.

The second account of emotion work is drawn from the experiences of an educational welfare officer (9) who was a single parent to his twelve year old daughter. He participated in an individual interview, three focus group discussions and an exit interview. His partner had passed away when his daughter was four and a half and he had been supported by his extended family during the ensuing eight years. He was, however, the main carer for his daughter and described himself as being both 'a mother and a father' at different times. He paid for someone to come in and clean the house and prepare his daughter's tea so he could continue to work full-time in education. When I asked him how he was involved in the care of his daughter he said:

Basically for making sure she's, you know, she's got fed, taking her where she wants to go, taxi service, talking, you know, talking about things. But now I find she's growing up and she's on the mobile phone to her friends and the spare time we have got, so I tend not to see her that much.

Because she wants to be off with her friends.

And she says, 'Oh, we're not going, I'm not going round town with you dad because it's so boring, you're boring. I don't want to be seen with you.' She's going through the adolescence, not wanting to be seen with me, which I don't mind, that's part of what I went through. I think it's part of being independent and growing up.

And you also mentioned talking to her about things?

Yeh, we talk about school and we talk about friends and how to do things. Because I'm amazed really, because if I was, when I was her age I would not have, you know, been as sort of outward about things as she is, you know Like today she's gone off, you know, left, locked up herself, gone out, gone swimming and gone to get something to eat for dinner. Gone round town all by themselves and at her age I probably wouldn't have done that. I wouldn't have been secure enough to do that. Now whether that's because, because she hasn't got a mum and she's been more independent or whether it's her personality or whether it's the new generation.

Or maybe it's something about the parenting you've provided.

This father's contribution may be understood in terms of a personal approach to fatherhood that involves him in not just the physical care of his child but also her emotional well-being. Although this father did not choose to be a single parent (he lost his partner through illness) he became, in his words, both a mother and a father to his daughter when she was four and a half. His awareness of his daughter's needs is clear as he talks about her growing independence and sense of self. Within this contribution there is no sense of a need to control his daughter, indeed there is a sense of celebration as he talks about her independence and gradual distancing from him. However, my comment at the end, although meant to be reassuring, prompted him to talk about a particular difficulty with parenting his teenage daughter on his own:

Or maybe it's something about the parenting you've provided.

Yeah, could be. With her mum not being here, I mean sometimes parents talk with them about sort of early adolescence girls' things.

Does she talk to you about those things?

Not so much. There's a friend of mine who has a daughter who is the same age as her, three months difference. And she has the time to talk to them about female things, for instance. I haven't really sat down and talked to her about that but I think she's picked some of that up from her friends She [his friend] says basically what happened one night was that my daughter had a sleep over with her and her daughter and she was doing something about sanitary towels. She got some sanitary towels and she put water on them to show them in an indirect way what happens, and this sort of thing. I know my daughter has started wearing bras now which is something she didn't do before but I know me mum's shopped with her about that. She tends to do a bit of that talking, I think, in a certain way.

This awareness of his daughter's needs could only be the result of close involvement with her care and the ability to develop an intimate relationship. Talking and sharing had consistently been a part of their relationship but now this father was making space and opportunities for his daughter to talk about things that were difficult for a teenage daughter to talk to her father about. In chapter four we read about how he had ensured that, by talking to his friend, his daughter had taken sanitary products with her on holiday. However, this kind of delicate emotion work would sometimes become problematic for this father when his daughter challenged boundaries within the home. A traditional father would

have ensured a firm disciplinary approach without attention to his daughter's feelings but this father continued his sensitive approach to discipline even when he felt challenged and, on occasions, upset by his daughter's behaviour. He told me the story, for example, of his daughter wanting to redecorate the hall, even though he had recently redecorated. She had started to take the hall apart by stripping the walls and in order to avoid conflict he involved his brother-in law in mediation. His daughter had not agreed with his standard of decorating and his brother-in-law, who was an architect, had offered to redecorate with his daughter. He said he then 'stayed out of the way' and felt he had 'lost'. But he could also see his daughter's point of view and made a careful note that in the future he would need to consult with his daughter before making any changes. In addition, he could foresee conflict arising when they would eventually talk about removing a number of bookcases his daughter didn't like. Although he understood they were annoying her, he had hundreds of books and felt the book shelves were 'his space'.

The above father may have felt angry at times during the hall decorating episode but he said his daughter never saw him angry. He told me:

She doesn't see me angry. I see her angry, slamming doors. But I smoke in the garden. I don't express anger in front of her. I don't know why, it's a bit like slapping. If you slap then you just end up winding each other up. So not getting angry is a way of defusing it. You lose rationality, lose it.... Maybe I need to express anger. Maybe it would be more helpful for me to do that. Maybe she would like to see me angry. Maybe she would think I was more real as a person. Maybe I would shift from being dad to a real person.

In his individual interview this father had talked about feeling angry about a number of things including lack of local government child care resources to help him care for his daughter during school holidays and missed life opportunities such as developing areas of work that particularly interested him. I suspected he might also still have had strong feelings about the loss of his partner but I did not ask about this because of a respect for boundaries. Although he said he did not dwell on his anger he talked about how he might often feel down and depressed. Speculating on the links between his anger about his own life and any anger that might occur as a result of his relationship with his daughter would be irresponsible here. However, I did wonder how much of his avoidance of anger with his daughter was about his awareness of other deeply held anger that may have been inappropriately expressed with his daughter should he, in his own words, 'lose it'. He attributed his avoidance of anger with his daughter to his professional awareness that becoming angry with young people only exacerbated the situation. Over the years he had developed the ability to detach and take a measured and reasoned approach to challenging behaviour. However, as indicated above, this led him to reflect on whether he had lost his sense of self in his relationship with his daughter and that, indeed, his daughter had missed out on experiencing him as a person rather than a father who was there to meet her every need.

The tension between undertaking sensitive emotion work with children and individual fathers asserting their needs within their relationships with their children was talked about by the above two fathers who were the only fathers to attend the third and final focus group. At first, I thought only two fathers attending was a difficulty but the ensuing conversation

between them provided fascinating insights into their views on fatherhood, masculinity and anger. The complexity of family life and the difficulties of negotiating different discourses on fatherhood and masculinities were commented on when these two fathers, identified by their numbers in the participants' appendix, spoke together in the final focus group:

- (5) I think there comes a point when you can't carry on discussing whether something is going to happen or not (chuckles) because you would never, there comes a time when you say, 'Look, we are doing it!' it's difficult because you don't like to say it's for grown up reasons. It is because we know the importance of going or doing something. The kids don't understand so they've 'got to do' rather than go through a lot of discussion.
- (9) I suppose that's easier if you say that one person makes the rules and that person has a tradition of being dad and everybody else has to obey those rules. That's fine as long as you agree with what is said. It's when you disagree with what is said that there is a problem. Or that the wife doesn't agree with what the
- (5) Well, that's where there is conflict, isn't there.
- (9) eh, and you get sabotage and all different power struggles going on to try and over topple

- (5) And I suppose as the child gets older the more difficult that is, as they get to teenage years.
- (9) Well, it's like me recently. My daughter's thirteen in July and up to very recently I've said to her, 'Look, we're going away this week, away on Sunday.' But she's started saying, 'I don't want to go.' So now I've got to think, I've got to consult her. Which is fair enough, she has her own feelings and I am her dad; but not the dictator that says we are gonna do!

Both of these fathers, who were representative of many of the other fathers I spoke to, were intimately involved in the care of their children - both physically and emotionally. Their early experiences of anger from their mainly traditional fathers had motivated them to seek out a different and personal way of parenting their children. They both acknowledged their limitations around emotional involvement in their family life, limitations this thesis has ascribed to their social construction as men. However, despite the influence of hegemonic masculinity in their emotional lives they had been able to develop intimacy with their children and had built up a knowledge and understanding of their lives enabling them to take a measured perspective when conflict arose within their relationships. Their need to exert power and control with their children was diminished as they took a more relaxed approach to participating in family life. Instead, they directed their energy into anticipating and avoiding conflict in an attempt to reduce the likelihood of difficult and painful feelings in their families. However, with both of these fathers, there was evidence of losing their sense of self in this process as they attempted to hide their anger from their children. When the pressure was on as busy and complicated family life progressed they would sometimes

become angry as they felt they were losing control of the situation or they felt not listened to or misunderstood.

In conclusion, this chapter has demonstrated that the fathers who participated in this study felt it was important to protect children from anger because of their own experiences of anger in their families of origin. They were aware that anger within families was linked to power and control, often exerted by parents through violence and coercion. This awareness had led them to parent differently by maintaining discipline by being clear about boundaries within relationships. They also talked about feeling angry because of difficult and painful feelings caused by loss, feeling misunderstood, feeling undervalued and witnessing bullying and coercion. They were hampered in their ability to share these feelings because of aspects of hegemonic masculinity influencing their emotional lives. However, despite some of the above insights into men in families being angry, it is apparent through reading these accounts that men in families are sometimes misunderstood when they become angry - partners and children thinking that this is about an abusive exercise of power and control. In addition, a number of the fathers I interviewed seemed to be struggling with these difficult feelings on their own. The complexity of fathers attempting to minimise the occurrence of anger through undertaking emotion work has been illustrated through the example of the family dog that ran away from home. This example demonstrated how this father was undertaking intrapersonal emotion work as he thought about his feelings and the possible consequences of expressing them; interpersonal emotion work as he tried to understand and take into account how his partner and children were feeling; and emotion work through managing family routines and events as he tried to anticipate difficulties and plan ahead. The example is made more poignant as he

demonstrates his humanity by being drawn into the family drama as he succumbs to the temptation to bring a dog home without a secure garden fence. Chapter four has evidenced how the fathers in this study developed and maintained relationships in their families, within the context of the discursive construction of fatherhood, prior to undertaking emotion work. Chapter five has demonstrated that, despite their social construction as men, they have developed and maintained relationships with their partners and children. This chapter, in turn, has provided a perspective on a complex and non-linear process that some fathers undertake in order to manage their anger in their families by undertaking emotion work. Throughout these three substantive chapters I have illustrated how, despite the limitations of discourses on fatherhood, masculinity and anger, these fathers have developed a personal approach to fatherhood and masculinities that have contributed to their abilities to undertake emotion work. In the following concluding chapter of this thesis, after some comments on my own personal learning, I clarify the dimensions of fathers undertaking emotion work in families. This clarification is presented as a new contribution to the concept of involved fatherhood that some may argue is not that different to our expectations of an ideal discourse on motherhood.

7. Conclusion

My girlfriend says I frighten her. When she told me this, about six months ago, I was horrified. We seldom argue and when we do I'm never threatening. I've never been violent in my life. But, she said, when I'm in a mood she's terrified. What seems like a mere sulk to me is to her a rage so powerful it becomes almost a living thing. It swamps the flat, pushes the air from the rooms and bends out the walls.

Mark Elbeck, *'Letting Off Steam', The Observer Magazine, 18 March 2007*

I remember when my partner said something very similar to me just after I had started my studies into fatherhood, masculinity, anger and emotion work. She then went on to tell me my children experienced me in a similar way. I asked my adult son whether he remembered me as being particularly angry when he was a child and he told me he remembered me being angry but not in any 'over the top way', he simply thought I had 'things going on' for me in my life. I took some comfort in his words although I haven't yet asked my adult daughter about her experiences of me. Deep down I know she would be equally as kind as my son, and my partner was indeed correct. I think I have yet to feel the shame and embarrassment fully, perhaps I never will. However, whatever difficult feelings I experience now when I think of how I may have fallen short of being the 'good father', my relationships with my partner and two grown-up children more than compensate and show me that, for them, I was, and continue to be, a 'good enough' father.

Personal learning

Beginning the conclusion to an academic thesis with such a personal statement would, at the beginning of my studies, have felt inappropriate but, since reading Hearn (1998) I now realise writing in the first person when studying men and masculinities is a significant political act. Hearn (1998) contends there are a range of styles available when writing academically about men and, historically, the appropriation of Western science by men has usually resulted in distance, absence from the field of study and a third person writing style. To write personally would have been seen to be over involved with the field of study with a concurrent loss of objectivity. Having completed this thesis I now find it easier to locate my personal writing style within an academic context.

Foucault (1981) argues that the study of people and society and the defining of discourses on ways in which people should think and behave have been essential in the exercise of power and control by men in Western society. Understanding difference and cataloguing the human condition brings with it the means of controlling people and ideas. Some discourses, such as those on gender and parenting that polarise definitions of man/ woman and father/mother, develop status and power legitimising certain ideas and forms of behaviour. Other ways of thinking, behaving and being in the world become marginalised and subordinated. This apparent loss of human agency is compounded by predominant discourses on gender and parenting being embodied in individual identities, social and legal constructs within society, religion and scientific thought. This embodiment gives the appearance of predominant discourses being essential in nature, natural in origin and unchangeable. Some feminist theorists argue (Weedon, 1997) the binary gender division of

man and woman has been presented as an essential truth, a natural occurrence and an unchangeable state of affairs. Similarly, a traditional discourse on fatherhood, which locates the father at the head of the family with a right to ensure discipline through the use of anger, is often presented as a natural state of affairs. Furthermore, a traditional hegemonic discourse on masculinity, which ensures men exert power and control in relationships through the use of anger and violence and are distanced from their own and other people's emotional lives, is also perceived by some to be a natural state of affairs. The emotional landscape in families is further complicated by the socially constructed notion that 'women are emotional' and 'men have emotions'. This contributes to the sense of a natural order in which some argue women are responsible for managing anger in families while men have little or no control over their anger. And so, when considering men's anger in families, predominant discourses on fatherhood, masculinity and anger create the impression fathers cannot change. Any attempt to change predominant discourses may be seen as a political act. Men writing about men in the first person may at first be thought, or they may feel themselves to be, self-indulgent. However, it is important for me to recognise that in order to engage in a political process of change in personal relationships I need first to understand my own identity as a father and a man, acknowledge my personal history of anger and incorporate these themes into my thinking and writing.

My reading of gender theory has helped me to understand that the apparent binary division of genders between two sexes, male and female, is a social construct. Weedon (1997) significantly contributed to my understanding of the historical reasons for this binary division as she contended women are seen as the good wife and mother and in contrast, she argued, men are perceived as being head of the family in terms of income generation,

discipline and protection. Men insulate themselves from the emotional demands of life by attributing this responsibility to women in the home. Weedon (1997) goes on to say this often perceived natural state of affairs is further institutionalised by a system of cultural signs and systems attributing meaning to *men* and *women* – meaning conveniently corresponding with a status quo locating women in powerless positions in the home and society more generally. Once I understood this deceptively simple basic concept I was then able to go on and understand discourse theory as one way of conceptualising fatherhood, masculinity and anger.

Recognising my identity as a father as the site of a number of different subjective identities (Lupton and Barclay, 1997) has not been an easy learning curve and the following example is a good illustration of how this study has impacted on my life and relationships with my family. For a number of years I had a vague awareness that when I became angry with my children I had a right to do so. I didn't know where this awareness had come from and I didn't really think too much about it, and certainly didn't articulate this feeling *dad has a right to be angry*. Now I understand this sense of entitlement was the result of a complex discursive mix primarily locating me, in a deeply embodied personal way, at the head of my family. This was contributed to by my social construction as a man leading me to be, again in a deeply embodied sense, emotionally unaware and isolated from my partner and children and unable to develop relationships that would enable me to understand the needs of my family. In addition, I felt I had a right to be angry because that is how *father* controls *his* family. I understand now that at times, particularly when I was under pressure, my performance of fatherhood was located in traditional discourses on fatherhood, masculinity and, indeed, anger. However, at a more conscious level I had negotiated over many years

being a part of my family in both the care of my children and the sharing of power, resources and educational opportunities with my partner. I was considered a kind and considerate father and a gentle and understanding man by myself, my partner and friends. My experiences of my own family of origin, an awareness of the demands of feminism in the 1970s and a professional biography regularly bringing me into contact with the consequences of male abuse of power had motivated me to resist a conscious acceptance of traditional masculinity. As a consequence, my performance of fatherhood, masculinity and anger has gradually changed over a number of years to a more personal style that has helped me to develop my ability to more consciously undertake intrapersonal and interpersonal emotion work in my family. Having a sense of what felt right for me, participating in a men's group for ten years; facilitating and participating in men's and fathers' workshops; discussing my feelings with my partner, friends and therapist; being very involved in the care of my children and talking to the fathers who contributed to this thesis have all helped me in my journey. This process of change has not only helped me personally, resulting in deeper and more fulfilling relationships with my family, friends and work colleagues, but has also contributed, I would argue, to the body of knowledge on fatherhood in the following way.

Contribution to the study of fatherhood

There are examples of boys and men changing in the literature (Christian, 1994; Swain, 2006) and fathers adopting more equitable styles of parenting (Lupton and Barclay, 1997; Dienhart, 1998). The issues influencing the motivation for and the negotiation of involved fatherhood are well documented (Marsiglio, 1995) and the experiences of involved fathers

have been the subject of numerous studies (see, for example, Deinhart, 1998). The formal presentation of formulaic discursive mixes on fatherhood are becoming more prevalent (Dowd, 2000; Lewis and Warin, 2001; Townsend, 2002) as the politics of fatherhood are appropriated by various stakeholders in society. The impact of masculinity on fatherhood is again the subject of ongoing research agendas (see, for example, Kirkman, Rosenthal and Feldman, 2001) and the influence of hegemonic masculinity on the emotional lives of men has been documented by, for example, Seidler (1989, 2006). This leaves the question of what there is new to say. In fact, when I began this study eight years ago I had lunch with a peer who was finishing the writing of her thesis on fatherhood and she told me she had contacted Charlie Lewis to discuss her studies. He had said to her 'Fatherhood? What else is there to say?' I believe this thesis adds positively to the understanding of fatherhood, masculinity, anger and emotion work and further develops our understanding of involved fatherhood. It is firmly located within Connell's (2005) research agenda requiring further consideration of men's relationships to their children within the context of traditional masculinity and fatherhood - with a concurrent identification of new models of fatherhood and family relations. This thesis achieves this by contributing a new perspective on how involved fathers manage their anger in families by undertaking emotion work (and in doing so contributes to further developing the concept of involved fatherhood). The following section provides a preliminary sketch of a pathway through the tensions and contradictions that traditional discourses on fatherhood, masculinity and anger impose on men who face the challenges of becoming more involved in the care of their children.

How fathers manage their anger in families by undertaking emotion work

Many of the fathers I spoke to had been motivated to change their approach to fathering because of their early experiences of their own fathers and early attempts to recruit them into the world of hegemonic masculinity. A small number of fathers had arrived at involved fatherhood through routes such as loss of a partner and separation. But in the main, the fathers had made positive choices to share income generation with their partners, spend more time at home with their children and become involved in not just their physical care but also their emotional lives. Their degree of involvement was very apparent when at the beginning of each individual interview I asked, as a warm up question, for them to tell me about their children. The comprehensive answers I received were often quite startling as they told me about their children's personalities, achievements and struggles, emotional styles and aspects of relationships with each individual child and between siblings. As the interviews progressed and the focus group discussions unfolded there were clear examples of the complex interweaving of different discourses on fatherhood and masculinity. One father (13), a middle-aged father of two grown up daughters, told me he felt he had been responsible for the economic and physical well-being of his children as they were growing up and his partner had dealt with their emotional needs. And yet, later in the interview he talked about a deep understanding of how his partner's illness had impacted on the emotional well-being of his daughters and how he had supported them throughout this difficult time. Again, later in his contribution he talked about his knowledge of their adult lives in a way that indicated he was very involved with them as young adults, demonstrating his performance of fatherhood encompassed traditional, emergent and involved perspectives. In terms of his masculinity, he told me many of his work mates

considered him an *old woman* because he was concerned about his children's welfare and yet he seemed comfortable with a style of masculinity that accommodated the needs of others in a supportive and empathic way. This discursive mix of traditional and a personalised approach to masculinities again was a consistent feature throughout the accounts of fathers to whom I spoke. The above father talked about his feelings in a way that many traditional men would not have but at the same time said his partner would like him to talk about his feelings more, again evidence of a discursive mix in terms of the lingering impact of aspects of hegemonic masculinity on the emotional lives of men. He often felt his anger was linked to his lack of tolerance and his children felt he was a 'control freak'. But he knew his attention to routine within the family was about his desire to protect and nurture his children in the best possible way he was able. This negotiation of different discourses on fatherhood and masculinity influenced the expression of his anger in ways that, as with many of the other interviews and discussions, were difficult to make sense of in an ordered and logical way. However, during the data analysis two themes emerged regarding anger – the need for control and blaming others for difficult and painful feelings such as feeling hurt and misunderstood. But rather than give in to anger, whatever the reason, the fathers who participated in this study demonstrated they were involved in a complex process of locating themselves within their families in a way that enabled them to avoid the expression of anger by undertaking emotion work.

So what was it about this particular group of fathers that motivated them to talk to me about their experiences of fatherhood, masculinity and anger? They were often at great pains to tell me they didn't get angry with their children and were never violent, and yet their accounts were punctuated of stories about their anger with their children. They were keen

to talk about their experiences of their own fathers' anger (or in a small number of cases apparent lack of anger) in ways that made clear links to their decisions to parent their children differently. They often spoke about the management of anger in terms of avoiding difficulties and it was not until I was well into the analysis of the data I realised that they had replaced avoiding difficulties with a developing ability to undertake emotion work. It seemed that undertaking emotion work in families had been the outcome or the consequence of their desire to avoid difficulties, rather than a clearly defined goal. It is this aspect of my thesis that makes a clear contribution to the literature on fatherhood. I have asked questions and uncovered a process of difficult and complex negotiation of discursive mixes on fatherhood, masculinity and anger. This has resulted in me naming a newly defined concept of emotion work as a way of fathers managing anger in families. For the purposes of convenience, I have categorised the stages of this process as follows:

1. Understanding fathers' anger
2. Men changing the focus of their lives
3. Negotiating involved fatherhood
4. Developing intimacy
5. Managing the influence of hegemonic masculinity
6. Fathers undertaking emotion work in families

It is important to recognise this is not a linear process and to suggest otherwise would be naïve and simplistic. However, in order to acknowledge the existence of such a process, for the sake of convenience I have presented it in a linear fashion.

Understanding fathers' anger The fathers I spoke to during the course of this study were not presenting themselves as the 'good father' and in many ways were aware of their flaws and shortcomings as parents. They did get angry and some of them used the individual interviews as a means to reflect on their experiences and to take stock. The only time I felt their anger was gender related ¹⁶ was during the pilot focus group discussion when I sensed difficult feelings about relationships with ex-partners and partners. Even then, I don't think this was anger related to the changing political and personal location of women in society, and the resultant effect on the power and privilege of men, but rather anger related to difficult personal experiences in individual relationships. I also didn't think exploring these feelings at that time would have been useful, indeed one of the aims of the pilot focus group was to provide me with the opportunity to facilitate a group of fathers and an exploration of such potential difficult feelings at that point in the study may have been too challenging for me as a facilitator. Many of the fathers presented as men who were motivated to develop equality within their relationships with their partners and parenting was one of the primary sites of these negotiations. In addition, a sense of fairness was also apparent in their relationships with their children as they sought to be fathers who parented differently from a traditional father who may have employed anger as a means of discipline.

When I spoke to the fathers about their experiences of anger they were able to provide me with examples of when they felt angry and how they managed this feeling. What I struggled with initially was a way of articulating these experiences within the context of the literature I had consulted and my personal and professional experiences. I was also acutely aware

¹⁶ For an account of 'gendered related' anger, anger that men and women feel towards members of the opposite sex because of changes in power relationships in society, see Christa Reiser's (1999) book *Reflections on Anger: Women and Men in a Changing Society*

men's anger is politically sensitive and any attempt to present my understanding in a way that reflected positively on men would need to be carefully considered and clearly articulated. The example of the father (7) who had home educated his children becoming angry with his partner when they renegotiated their parenting responsibilities resulting in him going back to work full-time is a case in point. He had taken pride in his ability to look after his children and part of this was about preparing family meals and making sure the larder was well stocked. When his partner became the full-time carer she didn't pay as much attention to the stocking of the larder and he became angry with her. There are two ways of understanding this anger. Firstly, within a critical consideration of power relationships between men and women it is important to acknowledge men's use of anger to subordinate women in the home (Hearn, 2004). This thesis has demonstrated that the fathers who took part in this study were subject to complex discursive mixes on fatherhood and masculinities and so the potential for this father to have been using anger to control his partner is real. However, as he made his contributions to the study through an individual interview, focus group discussions and an exit interview, I became aware the balance of discursive mix seemed to be in favour of an involved father who was aware of his own emotional life and sensitive to the needs of his family. This awareness and sensitivity was demonstrated through his accounts of undertaking emotion work in his family. And so, secondly, a more challenging perspective on this father's anger is when we begin to consider it from a more individual and personal perspective (Seidler, 2006) and go on to analyse the accounts of fathers who have made positive choices about change.

Men changing the focus of their lives How do individual men change the focus of their lives from being outwardly looking and blaming others to accepting their emotionality and being more empathic? The motivation and opportunities for some of the fathers I spoke to included the experience of disproportionate amounts of anger in their families of origin and the influence of the feminist demands of women in the 1960s and 1970s (with concurrent growing awareness that men are responsible for the subordination and marginalisation of women and children in society). *Achilles Heel*, a magazine published by men and for men in the 1990s, provided numerous first person accounts of the struggle of individual men and groups of men in coming to terms with the consequences of aspects of hegemonic masculinity in their lives. They did this by participating in consciousness-raising groups, writing reflectively and taking risks in their personal and professional relationships in order to learn about themselves and other people. The fathers who participated in this study talked about changing the focus in their lives in response to professional training in the helping professions; emotional and relationship training during adoption and fostering processes; reflecting on their early experiences of their own parents' style of parenting; opportunities to spend more time with their children because of favourable employment conditions; participating in therapeutic relationships and benefiting from living with understanding and supportive partners and children. As I listened to their accounts I became aware, in a similar fashion to Christian's (1994) sample, many were motivated simply by a sense of what was right and proper in human relationships. Some of the younger fathers talked about a changed focus being supported through general demographic and cultural changes reflecting women's changed work positions and changing norms for men and intimacy. For example, one man (11), who was a factory worker and the father of a

preschool daughter (11), told me it was not unusual for him to talk with work-mates during coffee breaks about baby care.

Negotiating involved fatherhood Fatherhood is a socially constructed identity and activity changing across time and culture. Political stakeholders who are responsible for developing and implementing social policy and employment practices have encouraged particular perspectives on fatherhood according to contemporary needs and circumstances. So, for example, at the beginning of the twenty first century it is now generally acknowledged that children benefit from a warm and nurturing fathering style. Popular opinion, however, varies as to whether a father should be the primary breadwinner with responsibility for discipline in the family, through an intermediate position where fathers may help mothers with parenting when necessary, to a perspective encouraging involved fatherhood and equitable participation in child care by both parents. In addition, men who are fathers are influenced by complex and intersecting discourses on masculinities that influence their emotional lives and relationships with others. How do individual men develop a preferred style of fathering in such complex circumstances? Some of the older fathers who participated in this study told me their moves towards involved fatherhood were aided by, for example, their partners' desire to seek paid employment and develop careers, a mistrust of the educational system resulting in home schooling, employment practices allowing more contact with children or a sense there need be little difference between being a mother and a father. Negotiation of parenting style either happened early in the partnership as parents made decisions about which of them would generate the most income or came later as circumstances and desires changed within the partnership. A feature of many of these negotiations was a willingness for the mothers to share parenting with their partners.

However, this was not always the case as some fathers, although involved with their children's physical care, often felt excluded from some of the more intimate areas of child care by both their partners and their children. Some of this exclusion, according to the fathers who participated in the pilot focus group, was due to mothers not trusting the fathers' child care abilities and, according to other fathers who participated in the study, some children had preferences for contact with particular parents at particular times. Other exclusions were the result of, for example, the changing needs and circumstances of children as they grew into young adults. Another feature of the negotiation of involved fatherhood was the fathers' thoughtfulness about the needs of their partners and children. Some fathers felt somewhat excluded at times as they put the needs of their partners and children first. This delicate negotiation took place within the context of complex discursive mixes including a hegemonic discourse on masculinity and a traditional discourse on fatherhood entitling fathers to assume control in families and have their needs met. Confusingly, how do men who are subject to such powerful discourses validating their power within families manage themselves in such difficult and delicate negotiations? The answer was they sometimes didn't and they did become frustrated and angry at times. As indicated above, one man, who was the father of two young daughters whom he home educated, became angry when he and his partner changed roles and he went back to work. Initially, this anger was because his partner did not pay attention to managing the home in such detail as he had for a number of years, particularly in the kitchen. But there were numerous examples of other fathers managing their frustration as they experienced their need and desire to be involved fathers. One young man (10), the father of a preschool adopted son, learned from his partner how to undertake emotion work with his son by arranging meal time routines more appropriately in order to avoid conflict with his son. His

partner was willing for him to be involved and he was willing to learn from his partner. This level of trust within such delicate circumstances was an achievement not to be underestimated. In contrast, another example, from a father (14) with two teenage sons, provided evidence of conflict as two older and more experienced parents tried to develop appropriate and consistent parenting styles in order to manage their sons' disruptive behaviour.

Developing intimacy Research into fatherhood in the second half of the twentieth century has demonstrated an emergent perspective on fatherhood paving the way for fathers being more involved in the care of children. This was in contrast to a traditional form of fathering ensuring fathers remained emotionally distant and not able, at least publicly, to be intimate with their children. Social understandings of intimacy locating it solely within the area of sexual relationships may contribute to this distancing of fathers from children. Indeed, during the pilot focus group undertaken in preparation for this study, the word intimacy was treated cautiously by myself and the other fathers. I framed initial questions and discussion points around 'closeness' and one father in particular, an older father (3) with three middle aged children, declined to talk further when his contribution led him to the possibility of further discussion around the meaning of intimacy and sexuality. Studies such as Kirkman *et al.* (2001) have demonstrated fathers and children struggle as the children, particularly girls, mature and become more sexually aware. One of the fathers (6) I spoke to had become increasingly aware of his elder daughter's developing sexuality and no longer cuddled her as he did his younger daughter. But despite predominant discourses on fatherhood not encouraging intimacy; cautious usage of the word because of sexual connotations; and acknowledgement of young people's developing sexuality; the fathers

who participated in this study were comfortable, to varying degrees, with developing intimate relationships with their children and discussing these relationships with me.

Within a wider definition of intimacy, focusing on relationships characterised by trust and understanding (Jamieson, 1998), many of the fathers I spoke to had developed an understanding of their children as individuals. They had managed this as a result of negotiating the opportunity to spend more time with their children and developing a degree of intimacy that had contributed to both a cultural awareness of their children's lives as well as a more individualised perspective. This intimacy was both physical and emotional. Rather than simply being close to their children by, for example, caring for them when they were ill, bathing, dressing, preparing and serving meals, reading stories, playing and going for bicycle rides, they listened to their children and communicated with them in a way indicating they understood. There was a consistent theme of negotiation in the fathers' contributions often based, it seems, on them using their experiences of their own fathers as a benchmark. They remembered what it was like, on occasions, not to be listened to and not feel understood. However, this was not the case for all the fathers to whom I spoke. One younger father (12), who worked as a systems manager and had a small baby daughter, talked about his father being a friend who spent time with him, listened to him and nurtured him.

The fathers' accounts indicated developing intimacy with children changes over time. But intimacy is also influenced by the wishes of individual children who may make positive choices about who they wish to be intimate with at any one time and within any one context. This thesis has documented evidence of one man (5), a father of a child with

disabilities, and another (9), a single parent of a teenage girl, whose children both made positive choices about who they wanted to be intimate with depending on their emotional needs at the time. Indeed, one of the men (2) in the pilot focus group discussion, a father living separately from his two teenage daughters, said he felt intimacy had to be earned rather than demanded as a right from children.

Another aspect of relationships between fathers and children is one of boundaries and discipline. Trust and understanding is important for the health and well-being of both fathers and their children but intimacy does not always mean, according to Jamieson (1998) and many of the fathers I spoke to, that fathers should always put the expressed needs of their children first. There were many accounts of fathers treading the delicate line between being a 'friend' to their children and being a disciplinarian. It was often these contributions that led to fathers talking about feeling frustrated and angry. For example, one man (11), a factory worker who had a preschool daughter, talked about managing his child's behaviour by talking to her in a firm yet supportive way. When on one occasion she pulled a curtain rail off the wall he made it clear he was unhappy by talking firmly to her but also explained he was unhappy because it meant he was going to have to get the ladder out and re-fix the curtain rail. However, offering an explanation was not always thought appropriate in some other scenarios. One man (6), a full-time worker in education, said that sometimes he would come home from work and the house would be untidy, the children 'unruly' and not responding to his demands to clean up and behave. He told me at times like that he would feel like putting his foot down and telling the children to do as they were told.

Managing the influence of hegemonic masculinity The literature on men and masculinities describes a hegemonic discourse on masculinity deeply embedded in the subjective identities of men (Connell, 2005). The embodiment of characteristics such as competitiveness, individuality, aggression, rationality and emotional insensitivity is not just the result of cultural signs and systems encouraging men to be men, but also a result of boys being bullied into accepting aspects of hegemonic masculinity as the norm. This bullying takes place in peer groups as well as being the result of the institutionalisation of aspects of hegemonic masculine values in Western educational systems. The possibility for change is documented in studies such as Swain (2006) where there is evidence some boys are making positive choices about their softer and more caring masculine identities – a more personal approach to being a man. Similar choices are apparent in this study within the fathers' accounts of their experiences of their own fathers and families of origin. Their subsequent motivation to change the focus of their lives, develop an involved approach to fathering and form intimate relationships with their children was informed by these early decisions. Despite this, the influence of aspects of hegemonic masculinity on their emotional lives (Seidler, 1989) was still apparent in their accounts of their relationships with their internal lives, their partners and children.

Intrapersonal intelligence was apparent in many of the accounts of the fathers I spoke to as they talked of being aware of their feelings. However, a number of them acknowledged it was sometimes difficult to talk about their feelings to their partners and many of their partners, according to the fathers' accounts, wished they spoke more about their emotional lives. The fathers also found it difficult to talk to other men and fathers about how they were feeling. This reluctance to talk about their feelings was sometimes about not being

clear about how they were feeling (and not knowing how to articulate their feelings) but often about not wanting to upset their partners and children by saying how they were feeling. Certainly in terms of articulating and expressing angry feelings most of the fathers reported their primary motivation as avoiding conflict. Interestingly, they also reported displacement behaviour similar to their experiences of their own fathers. When they felt angry they would, for example, go for a walk, smoke a cigarette, dig the garden or go quiet (with the appearance of sulking). However, one father (20), a head teacher of a special school, would often anticipate potential conflict and attempt to manage the family environment or routine in order to reduce the likelihood of anger occurring. This use of interpersonal intelligence, being sensitive to other people's feelings and moods, was evidenced by contributions from other fathers and was often, it seemed, informed by their intimate knowledge of their partners and children. Overall there seemed to be an imbalance between the uses of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence as the fathers often seemed more sensitive to others' emotional needs than their own. In fact, one father told me he thought most men would not realise when they enter a room they bring an emotional dimension just as much as other people would. Another father (14), however, a university lecturer with two teenage children, said he felt comfortable about talking about his feelings with his partner and indeed felt it was sometimes him that was more in tune with his children's emotionality than his partner. She tended, according to him, to take a more traditional disciplinarian and confrontational approach to conflict within the family. Another father (9), the single parent of a teenage daughter, talked in one of the focus groups about his difficulties in his relationships with his daughter. He said he did not get angry with his daughter but often felt angry. He would displace his anger by going into the back garden to smoke a cigarette. He was aware his anger was not always about his daughter,

sometimes it was about, for example, the lack of child care provision by his local authority or difficult feelings about his career path. He acknowledged if his partner had still been alive he would have talked to her about his feelings but also said he was quite able to go to a pub for an hour and sit alone with his thoughts and feelings. This presented a paradoxical image of an involved father who was sensitive to the needs of his adolescent daughter but also behaved as a traditional man who was isolated at times and happy with his own company.

One of the clearest examples of how the fathers I spoke to were subject to a conflicting range of discourses on fatherhood and masculinity was provided by a young researcher (17) who was separated from his family and caring for his daughter at week-ends. His description of his time with his daughter indicated he was very much involved in looking after her in a skilful and caring way. He was also concerned about his daughter's well-being as a potential change in the family structure was imminent, his ex-partner having found a new partner. This concern was accompanied by feelings of inadequacy as he compared his income with that of his daughter's new second family. He felt he was 'less of a man' because he was not able to financially provide to the same level as his daughter's new second family. This father had experienced a difficult transition into fatherhood - feeling angry and resentful of the loss of his partner's attention and a concurrent loss of freedom. He was at times angry within this complicated family scenario and during his interview expressed feelings of shame and remorse at his behaviour during this difficult time in his daughter's life. He had also recently experienced difficult and painful feelings as a result of his daughter's mother finding a new partner. He experienced anger, to the extent of rage at times, and partly dealt with these feelings associated with loss by drinking alcohol. To all

intents and purposes this father was very involved with the care of his daughter in both a physical and emotional way. And yet the influence of aspects of hegemonic masculinity on his emotional life are clear as he deals with his loss of control and his difficult feelings by becoming angry. Although it may be argued his difficulties are more generally about loss and loneliness, in many ways, this example exemplifies the reasoning behind me undertaking this study. This father's account illustrates that even if a father is subject to emergent and involved discourses on fatherhood, and attempts to live his life according to a personal style of masculinity, the effects of aspects of hegemonic masculinity are deeply embedded. It is inevitable that hegemonic masculinity will continue to influence relationships with children and partners. This does not excuse the behaviour associated with traditional masculinity but rather contributes to our understanding of why some men who are fathers may struggle to accommodate the demands of changing fatherhood and masculinities. The fathers who participated in this study provided examples of how aspects of hegemonic masculinity continued to influence their emotional lives as they talked about anger within the context of power and control, difficult and painful feelings (associated with feeling misunderstood and a sense of loss) and blaming their partners and children for their angry feelings. Their experiences of anger were complicated by aspects of hegemonic masculinity diluting their ability to understand their emotional selves and be empathic with others.

Fathers undertaking emotion work in families This thesis contains a number of examples of fathers undertaking emotion work in families. It was not until writing the substantive chapters and undertaking further reading and analysis of the data that I began to realise this

was indeed what they were doing. Much of my thinking had been focused on identifying and analysing examples of discursive mixes on fatherhoods and masculinities. I knew that I eventually wanted to write about fathers managing their anger and was looking for a link between these two areas of thought and reflection. When I finally began to realise what the fathers were telling me, it became easier to identify examples of emotion work and then develop a way of articulating what I thought was happening. The process I have identified could be the basis for further exploration and research into how fathers manage themselves, and the influence of traditional discourses on fatherhood, masculinity and anger, within complex family relationships and intimacies. In conclusion, I would argue that the characteristics that enable some men to undertake emotion work in families are encompassed in the following list:

Being sensitive to intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences. For many of the fathers who participated in this study, this was a fundamental aspect of their lives. This awareness began for many of them at an early age as they experienced their fathers' emotionality and the emotional landscapes of their families of origin. This sensitivity was a precursor to being motivated to develop differently as men and fathers. Their achievements, within an educational and peer group environment that actively discouraged boys' sensitivity and emotionality, evidences the importance of contemporary developments in encouraging boys and young men to be more emotionally literate. It is only by developing sensitivities to our own and other people's feelings, by managing the influence of hegemonic masculinity on our emotional lives, that men may begin to undertake emotion work in families.

Negotiating involved fatherhood with employment, partners and children. These negotiations take place across a range of dimensions, according to the accounts of the fathers interviewed. For some fathers, employment opportunities within academia or shift work allow them to be at home with their children more often than men working within a more regular working day. Learning from mothers about childcare is an important aspect of involved fatherhood and, when differences in style arise, being able and willing to negotiate is important. Giving ourselves permission to care for our children across the range of parenting roles and responsibilities, rather than restricting our involvement according to the demands of traditional discourses on fatherhood and masculinities, is often difficult. The power of normative traditional discourses to engender feelings of embarrassment may limit our private and public displays of involved fatherhood.

Respecting children's choices about with whom they want to be intimate. According to some of the fathers I interviewed, parents do not have a right to intimacy with their children regardless of their children's feelings and preferences. No matter how much we may like to be involved in all aspects of their care, issues of parental preference, age and sexuality may limit our involvement. It is helpful to remember that relationships develop over time and may be characterised by alternating periods of close intimacy and distance. This may be problematic for us as men because of our tendency to need to be in control of relationships and have fixed expectations of how and when our needs should be met. Accepting that relationships within our families are characterised by change and the need for flexibility is an important aspect of being an involved father.

Listening to how children are feeling and accommodating their wishes. Many of the fathers who participated in the fieldwork thought that listening to children was important but not always easy. Men often take a fixing approach to relationships and so trying to problem solve may at times take the place of simply listening. In addition, the competing demands within daily family life may result in not everyone being heard and accommodated. Listening is a multi-dimensional skill that can be learned. Care of the self is an important aspect of listening as we may hear things that are difficult to accept and may threaten our sense of self. Being clear about our needs as men and fathers, and taking time to acknowledge those needs, is an important precursor to listening to children. Although normative discourses on parenting quite rightly place the needs of children within families first, this should not always be at the expense of the parent as an individual.

Understanding children as individuals. All of the fathers I interviewed, when asked to tell me about their children, spoke affectionately and at length about their children's personalities, relationships and achievements. This holistic awareness of children as individuals is at odds with traditional fathers and men who focus simply on children's achievements. Normative discourses on fatherhood and masculinity locate the responsibility for ensuring a child's educational and employment attainment with fathers. This results in a cultural awareness that locates children collectively as future breadwinners or homemakers, depending on their gender, in the eyes of traditional fathers. Valuing children as individuals in their own right, with all their strengths and failings as individuals, is obscured by this perspective. However, as well as accommodating children as individuals, it is important that boundaries and rules are adhered to within families. Being firm and clear about boundaries around behaviour, for example, may give the impression

that some involved fathers are not considering children as individuals and are unfairly exerting power and control within families. The accounts of the fathers who participated in this study indicate this is a particularly sensitive area for both fathers and children. Most parents and children would recognise this struggle as they attempt to live together and balance the roles and responsibilities of parenting with the needs of children to express their individuality.

Checking the family emotional landscape when coming home. When some men come home they expect, as a right, to be cared for and nurtured by their partners. Some of the fathers who were interviewed for this study talked about the importance of taking time to check out what had been happening at home during the day, and considering how people might be feeling as a result of this, when they come home. It is important that we don't expect our partners to take responsibility for our emotional and physical well-being. Instead, a more equitable approach to relationships ensures that relationships in the home are not taken for granted and abused. Our ability as men to talk about feelings, and be able to listen to our partner's and children's feelings, may be limited by a discursive construction that ensures we are estranged from our emotional lives and do not value the emotional lives of others. This important aspect of emotion work in families, taking time to check how we are feeling and check-in with our families, is fundamental to men developing as fully involved fathers.

Managing family routines in order to promote positive feelings. Two of the fathers who were interviewed talked about feeling responsible from an early age for managing family routines in order to avoid the occurrence of anger. Some of the other fathers talked about

how their professional training had prepared them for this involvement in family life. A number of the other fathers provided accounts which indicated they had learned how to instigate and manage family routines in order to avoid the possibility of conflict and anger. Planning ahead was talked about on a number of occasions and anticipating potential conflict was featured in other contributions – both important aspects of managing family routines. Paradoxically, because men are stereotypically thought of as needing to be in control of situations and relationships, their efforts to manage family routines may be misunderstood. As involved fathers, we need to develop the ability to manage family routines by delicately balancing the needs of individuals against the needs of the family without reverting to traditional ways of men behaving in families. This may mean learning to go with the flow within sometimes complex and fast changing family emotional environments – which could be just the time we feel the greatest need to be in control.

Taking time to think before expressing anger at home. Women are stereotypically thought of as taking time to think about expressing anger in the home and weighing up the potential consequences before speaking or acting. Some of the fathers I spoke to struggled with this and talked about ‘losing it’ or ‘losing control’ when becoming angry. This perspective is supported by some of the literature on the gendering of anger that contends that men express anger in the home more spontaneously and with a sense of entitlement. It is here within this complex process of undertaking emotion work in families that knowledge of contemporary perspectives on anger management is important for fathers. Managing angry feelings is a skill that can be learned. In addition, taking time to think about the cause of the anger, which may be about, for example, a sense of not being in control or the experience of difficult and painful feelings, may prevent partners and

children being blamed angrily for being responsible for the upset. It may then be possible to take a less confrontational approach when trying to find a way through a family dilemma. However, we need to be careful here as men taking time in families to think about the consequences of expressing their feelings may be misconstrued as withholding feelings for negative reasons such as attempting to regain control of a situation. In addition, men have a tendency to withhold their feelings as an expression of the power and control they generally hold as men, and so taking time to think about the consequences of expressing anger may unwittingly contribute to this unhealthy tendency.

We may, as involved fathers, feel an echo of a traditional fatherhood that entitles us to angrily enforce discipline and have our needs met as head of the household. Developing our understanding that fatherhood, masculinity and anger are linked to a complex set of ideas about how we feel about ourselves and what families and society require of us as fathers and men, is fundamental to fathers undertaking emotion work in families. This understanding opens up the possibility that becoming fully involved fathers in families may contribute to a destabilising of gender differences in parenting where mother and father no longer have such different meanings. It may also mean that we, as men, may be able to participate more equitably in human relationships by not feeling the need to angrily assert control. Furthermore, if we are able to stop angrily blaming others for our difficult and painful feelings, and take responsibility for ourselves, we will not only experience a better quality of life but also teach our children well.

Appendices

1. The advertisement (Placed in the University of Hull news sheet)

Fatherhood, masculinity and anger: a study of fathers' experiences of being angry at home

We hear a lot these days about fathers being involved in caring for their children and more mothers going out to work. Sometimes this is through choice and sometimes it is because of unemployment or marital separation. We also read in magazines and newspapers that some men are becoming more in touch with their feelings and better at relationships. But are men who are more involved with the care of their children necessarily better at relationships and more in touch with their feelings? Or are they the same as more traditional dads who tended to be distant and emotionally unavailable.

This study is about trying to understand the links between being a man and being a father within the context of relationships and feelings. In particular, the focus is on the feeling of anger and how it affects men and their families.

The interview will ask questions about fatherhood, being a man and feelings in general. It will also ask fathers to talk specifically about their experiences of being angry at home. What makes them angry? How do they express their anger? How does anger affect them and their families?

If you are a father and would like to be interviewed , or think you know of a father who might like to be interviewed, please contact Chris Jarrell at the University of Hull Counselling Service.

2. Participation Record

(X indicates participation)

Participant Number	Pilot Focus Group	Individual Interview	Focus Group One	Focus Group Two	Focus Group Three	Exit Interview
1	X					
2	X					
3	X					
4	X					
5		X	X		X	X
6		X	X	X		X
7		X	X	X		X
8		X				
9		X	X	X	X	X
10		X				
11		X				
12		X				
13		X				
14		X				
15		X				
16		X	X			
17		X				
18		X				
19		X				
20		X				

3. Interview contract

This interview is being taped in order to help me with my memory of what you have said. If you would like the tape to be switched off at any time, please say so. Similarly, if, at the end of the interview, you decide that you do not want me to use anything you have said, your wishes will be respected.

What you talk about is confidential and will be used anonymously in anything published as a result of this study. However, if during the course of the interview it becomes apparent that a child is at risk of harm, I would need to discuss with you the best course of action. This is not to say I am expecting this to happen, I am simply adhering to 'good practice' in interviews where the care of children is discussed.

This research is being ethically conducted under the supervision of Dr. Rachel Alsop and Mr. Colin Creighton at the University of Hull. You may contact them at any time if you feel you need to talk to a third party about the conduct of this research project.

Interviewee's name:

Interviewee's signature:

Date:

4. Personal data sheet

Age:

Under 18	18 - 25	26 - 35	36 - 45
46 - 55	56 - 65	66 - 75	over 75

Family make-up:

Ethnic background:

Family income bracket :

Under 10,000	10,000 - 15,000	15,000 - 20,000
20,000 - 30,000	30,000 - 40,000	40,000 - 50,000
Over 50,000		

Occupation: (please state)

Full-time **part-time**

5. Individual Interview Questions

Part One

1. Can you tell me about your children? How old are they? Gender? Could you tell me a little about them?
2. Can you tell me how you are involved with the care of your children? How often? Every day? Once week? Any particular time of the day? Any particular situations?
3. If one of your children were ill, who would look after them? Who do you think would worry about them the most?
4. Why do you think this is?
5. What other sorts of things do you worry about regarding your children?
6. What other sorts of things does their mother worry about?
7. Before we move on, is there anything else you would like to say about what we have talked about?

Part Two

1. I'd like to ask you about parenting now. What do you think is society's view of what a father should be? And a mother? And your view?
2. What about your partner, what would she say about fatherhood? And motherhood? And your children, what would they say?
3. Do you see any similarities or difference here?
4. How do you feel about what we have talked about so far?
5. Talking about feelings, as a man, what do you think about all the talk these days about men needing to be more in touch with their feelings? And more sensitive to other people's feelings? How do you think this reflects on being a man?
6. What do you think your partner would say about men being more in touch with their feelings? And your children?
7. Do you think you are in touch with your feelings?
8. What about other people's feelings, are you in tune with them?
9. If no, what happens to your feelings? And other people's, do they matter?

10. As a dad, what sort of feelings do you experience?
11. Do you think you understand your family's feelings?
12. Before we move on to talk about your experiences of anger, is there anything more you would like to say about what we have talked about so far?

Part three

1. I would like to ask you more specifically now about your experiences of anger. But I would like to start by asking you about your father. Can you tell me about your father? What was he like?
2. Was he in touch with his feelings? Did he understand your feelings?
3. What sort of things did he used to get angry about? How did this affect your family?
4. Can you remember a particular time when you father got angry? Who was there? What happened?
5. Looking back, how do you feel about that episode now? Do you think you do things differently?

6. What sort of things do you get angry at home about on a day to day basis? And other more background issues?
7. Can you remember a particular time when you got angry? Who was there? What happened?
8. Looking back, how do you feel about that episode now?
9. If you were to get angry again in a similar situation, how would you like things to work out in terms of managing your anger?
10. What is anger? What's it for? Where does it come from?
11. We've been talking about some difficult feelings in this interview. Before we end, can you tell me about a particular time with your children that you feel really good about? A particular event? An achievement? A happy memory?
12. Is there anything else you would like to say about anything we have talked about in this interview?
13. May I ask what, if anything, you are taking away from this interview?

6. Focus Group Prompts

Focus Group One:

1) Emerging Data Summary Sheet

So far I have interviewed twelve fathers between the ages of 26 and 55 from a diverse range of occupational backgrounds with children from one year to twenty five years old. The data collected can hardly be seen as representative of fathers generally but it does provide some useful comments from fathers on fatherhood, masculinity and anger.

The fathers interviewed used words such as annoyed, frustrated, cross, angry and explosively angry. They talked about expressing their anger by raising their voices, banging things, physically picking children up, kicking things, sulking, hitting children, going quiet, raising eyebrows and giving children direct meaningful looks. Anger was seen to be a dangerous and scary emotion from which children should be protected. This was linked to their own experience of their fathers when they were children. Anger (but not explosive anger) was also seen to have a place in disciplining children as well as playing a part in preparing children to manage anger as adults. An absence of anger with their own fathers resulted in experiencing difficulties with anger as adults.

Anger was perceived as both an uncontrollable natural emotion (both silent and expressive in nature) and an emotion that could be controlled and managed. Most of the fathers had

learned to manage their anger in ways that were both useful (e.g. leaving the room) and damaging (e.g. smoking).

A general theme when the fathers interviewed talked about being angry with their children was power and control both in terms of the fathers' power and control being challenged and the need for children to exert their power. Anger was also linked to frustrated understanding and communication, loss of agency, affecting change and self indulgent fun. In addition, anger was seen to be a response to a received hurt or discomfort resulting as hitting back as a defence.

Environmental factors such as low income, high stress levels, frustrated life expectations and social injustice was also linked to anger. Some fathers thought that a low anger threshold was significant together with a perspective in society that 'allows anger'. There was a difference between being angry at home and being angry at work or outside the home, where feelings needed to be protected.

When asked what advice they would give to other fathers about managing anger the fathers said:

- i. Try and deal with it before you get to the point where your blood boils.
- ii. Try and deal with the initial problem and any consequences of you getting angry (repairing the damage of what you have said and done) when you are calmer.

- iii. Stand back and count to ten and look how old the child is. And you will realise that you expect too much.
- iv. Ask yourself, 'Is losing your temper going to benefit them?' Take your time and think about it because a lot of the time it is a split second thing. Just take ten seconds.

2) Questions based on contributions made in individual interviews.

'Men concentrate more on practical things, less on how children are feeling.'

- 1. When there is a crisis in the family, who listens to how the children are feeling?
- 2. Who 'picks up' the practical tasks?
- 3. Do you talk to your children about your feelings?
- 4. Do you 'listen' to how they are feeling?

'It's a man thing, getting cross when authority is challenged (because men are usually the ones in authority).'

- 1. How does authority sit with being a man?

2. How does authority fit with being a father?
3. Are there any links between the two?
4. How do you feel when your authority is challenged?
5. How does this affect your family?

‘Fathers are less intimately involved with their children because of their construction as men’

1. What do we mean by intimacy?
2. What about when mothers are breast feeding?
3. Who do children go to first when they are upset or ill?
4. Who do children go to for advice about practical things?
5. Are fathers intimate with older girls in the family?
6. Do fathers cuddle older boys?

‘Being involved in women’s things is seen by other men as being unmanly.’

1. What are ‘women’s things’?
2. Are there some things that may be seen as women’s things that you wouldn’t do in front of other men?

‘Fathers talk mainly to their partners about their feelings, they don’t have a wide circle of friends.’

1. Not having a wide circle of friends was mentioned often in the interviews. What do you think this is about?
2. Who do you usually talk to about your feelings?
3. Would you talk to other men about your feelings?

Focus Group Two:

- 1) **Quote:** An enduring problem in research on gender, from any perspective, has been the tendency to focus on differences between women and men and to overlook extensive similarities between the sexes.

(Petersen, 2003: 58)

(I asked how the above might relate to participants in terms of their construction as gendered men, their emotional lives, their parenting style and their expression of anger. And then asked how this compared to their parents.)

2) Extract from previous focus group transcript.

(Participant numbers employed to identify speakers)

9. But it's amazing how much stereotypes have come up with these questions. How it is sort of expected that, it's strange.

5. We've come from an older person.

9. We've probably been programmed by our parents.

6. And by the TV.

7. I think a lot of stereotypes do still prevail.

16. I think we are all influenced by them and as susceptible to them as anybody else. However open and liberal we think ourselves to be.

9. But does that cause anger? Does that cause more anger do you think? These stereotypes, the breaking of stereotypes. Is that a cause of anger in men? Because we are losing our stereotype.

7. That's a very interesting question.

16. And is that why there is more marital breakup because the roles are not as clear as they used to be?

9. Yeh, it could be.

16. You know, so that when people move out of their role, or the role that they had before. When there was no movement involved it was easy. Dad went out, earned the money.

9. You knew what your role was.

16. Gave mum most of the money, went to the pub. And that's how my dad was.

8. Role confusion, isn't it? And then you get a power struggle there because the roles are up for grabs. There's no stereotypes when the roles are up, and I suppose you get a power struggle.

Focus group three:

Open space to consider themes that the participants wanted to talk about. Any further contributions they would like to make? Any questions they would like to ask?

I asked the group to further consider their thoughts on the whether parenting is a binary activity divided between fathers and mothers or whether parenting was a role that could be shared between men and women.

I also asked about a point that had been raised in the previous focus group discussion about when men who are seeking to change the way they parent, when under pressure they revert back to previous stereotypes.

I asked for further examples, asked open questions and allowed the group process to flow.

7. Exit interview prompts

1. Although most, if not all, of the fathers interviewed said there was little or no difference between being a mother and a father, there were a number of comments made about *valuing difference* and that if we were to be simply parents we would lose something.
2. Some of the fathers I interviewed talked about shifting and changing roles meaning that they had to learn to *go with the flow* rather than rely on fixed ideas about how a father should behave.
3. Family life is complicated by lots of mixed emotions that go up and down and some fathers have learned how to assess mood, listen and allow things to happen rather than try and be in control.
4. There are different types of intimacy in families and who is intimate with who may depend on, for example, age, gender, personality, availability, parenting skills, location and who's around.
5. Being able to listen to and appreciate your children's feelings may depend on personality; experiences of intimacy in your family; being available and having the time to listen; having the opportunity to be in tune and familiar with your children's lives.

6. Many of the fathers interviewed talked about finding ways of managing both angry feelings and being angry in the home. This was further complicated by the sometimes fast changing emotional landscape of family life and that, for some fathers, children witnessing anger may be a healthy experience for them.

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