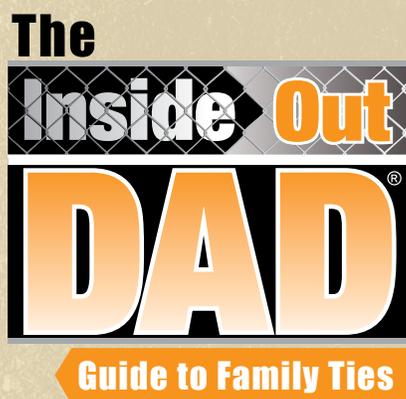


How to Combine the
InsideOut Dad[®]
Guide to Family Ties
with the
InsideOut Dad[®] Program



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**National
Fatherhood
Initiative[®]**
www.fatherhood.org

What is the InsideOut® Dad Guide to Family Ties?

The [InsideOut® Dad Guide to Family Ties](#) is a self-paced fatherhood resource by National Fatherhood Initiative® (NFI) for incarcerated dads that helps them learn the importance of getting in touch—and staying in touch—with their family, maybe even for the first time. The activities in the guide help incarcerated fathers proactively begin (or further create) strong ties between themselves and their children, and also between them and the mother of their children.

The guide contains almost entirely different content than the full, 12-week, group-based [InsideOut Dad® program](#). You can download a complementary Facilitator's Instruction Guide, Certificate of Completion, and other support materials [here](#).

NFI's partners have used the guide in the following ways:

- Given to dads in short-term stay facilities (e.g. local jails and reentry facilities) who are unable to participate in long programs (e.g. that last several months) due to their short length of stay.
- Given to dads in facilities who, for whatever reason, cannot participate in a fatherhood program like InsideOut Dad®.
- Mentors/Volunteers/Facility Staff use it with dads who need or desire fathering skills. They often follow their work in the guide by checking in to discuss topics, review progress, etc.
- Given to dads on a waiting list to enroll in an InsideOut Dad® program.
- Given to dads who have taken or are currently enrolled in an InsideOut Dad® program.

Purpose of this Guide

NFI partners who run the evidence-based [InsideOut Dad® program](#) at their facility often like to supplement and enhance their work with dads who are in, or who have graduated from the program. As such, NFI recently learned about a creative solution on how to combine content from the self-paced InsideOut Dad® Guide to Family Ties with the InsideOut Dad® program.

This creative solution was developed by Corey Pack who works with incarcerated fathers in the [Talbot County Detention Center](#) in Easton, MD. Corey runs Responsible Fathers, an independent organization that since 2019 has contracted with the Talbot County Department of Social Services to facilitate NFI's InsideOut Dad® program at the detention center.

You can use the sessions described in this guide with dads who have graduated from InsideOut Dad®, those who are currently in the program (e.g. insert one or more sessions amongst the InsideOut Dad® sessions), and with dads who haven't participated in the program.

Preparation and Planning

The first step in preparing and planning how to implement this solution is to use the Table of Contents in the InsideOut Dad® Guide to Family Ties to create the following four sessions:

- **What to Expect**
- **Assess Yourself as Dad and Partner**
- **Getting and Staying in Touch**
- **Create a Reentry Plan**

Determine whether you have the time to go through all of the content in each of these sections of the guide or whether you will have to select only some of the content to cover. (The second and third sections are the longest; therefore, they might present a challenge to cover in their entirety.) As with facilitating sessions of InsideOut Dad®, it's vital to prepare and plan how you'll facilitate these sessions. If you can't cover all of the content, here are a couple of pointers:

- Choose the content that will best serve the needs of the dads in each group. If you use these sessions with graduates of InsideOut Dad®, think about the content that the specific dads you've worked with will benefit from the most (e.g. content they wanted to spend the most time on during the program, such as how to communicate effectively with the mother of their children).
- Cover the practical tips in each section. Dads benefit the most from learning about practical tips they can apply to being a better dad and partner.

The following session descriptions provide general guidance on what to cover—what to emphasize—regardless of whether you cover all or some of the content in the guide. **Each dad will need his own copy of the InsideOut Dad® Guide to Family Ties to participate in the sessions.** Think of the guide as their Fathering Handbook. (To purchase copies of the guide, visit FatherSource™ by clicking [here](#) or call FatherSource™ at 240-912-1263.)

Session 1: What to Expect

This session lays the foundation for the subsequent sessions. Because this is a short section of the guide, you should be able to cover all of the content. In this session:

- Discuss what dads should expect when they reunite with their family.
- Discuss self-forgiveness, accountability, apologizing for poor behavior, and trust, and that it may take time for some family members to fully rely on them again.
- End the session by reviewing the tips throughout this section of the guide.

Stress that dads should not expect the worst or the best when they reunite; being real about the relationships with family members; admitting the hardship of being incarcerated; being patient with other people to accept dad's apology for any pain they caused; allow people to express their feelings; and never give up on yourself.

Session 2: Assess Yourself as Dad and Partner

In this session, start by talking about the *traits* of the dad and mom.

- Discuss the traditional *roles* of the dad and mom in the family. Discuss those “ideal” character traits of a dad and those not so enviable traits. (The latter lead to leads such terms as deadbeat dad, absent father, etc.)
- Next discuss the content and take dads through the exercises in the “The Real” and “The Deal” sections of the guide. The Real helps dads look at the perception each father has about himself as a dad and partner. The Deal focuses on four topics: 1) showing and handling feelings; 2) power and control; 3) violence in the family; and 4) caring for your body and mind.

As you choose which exercises to use (whether all or only some of them), think about which ones you can use to take the discussion deeper.* For example, after dads complete the checklist in The Real section, take time to review each statement and the dads' responses, allowing the dads the space to talk openly about their feelings.

Session 3: Getting and Staying in Touch

This session focuses on how dads can get and stay in touch with their children and their mother (or primary caregiver). It emphasizes how to communicate effectively with mom and how to empathize with her situation (e.g. raising their children without dad).

- If you can't cover all of the content in this section of the guide, emphasize the content on the dads' relationship with the mother of their children.** That's because that relationship is often the biggest barrier to incarcerated dads' access to their children.
- Emphasizing this content doesn't mean that you shouldn't cover any of the content on how dads can connect with their children. But if the dads don't have at least a decent relationship with the mother of their children, it might be difficult for them to apply what they learn about connecting with their children. (Depending on how much content you can cover in a single session, consider breaking this section of the guide into two sessions—one that focuses on the content on the dads' relationship with their children's mother and the other on how to connect with their children.)
- In emphasizing that content, do your best to go through each of the exercises. They help dads to see things from mom's point of view (e.g. "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" is a role reversal exercise that builds empathy for mom), They also build communication and other skills to open the door to a better relationship (e.g. "Emotional Bank Account" builds proactive communication and behavior skills), which can be especially helpful to dads whose relationship with the mother of their children is of poor quality.

Session 4: Create a Reentry Plan

This session focuses on the importance of and responsibilities involved in reentry planning. It also emphasizes the importance of helping dads transition back home effectively. Because it's the shortest section of the guide, you should be able to cover all of the content. **It can be especially helpful to graduates of InsideOut Dad® who did not participate in any of the optional reentry sessions.**

Close out this session by encouraging the dads to create a reentry plan prior to their release. And, if you have time, review the highlights of the four sessions—what dads found the most valuable content and how they plan to use what they learned or already have used what they learned.

In Closing

We hope this guide helps you to better understand not only the multiple uses of the InsideOut® Dad Guide to Family Ties, but more specifically how to incorporate its content into the 12-week InsideOut Dad® program.

Should you have any questions, we're always here to support our partners! Contact us at info@fatherhood.org or call 301-948-0599.

* If the dads went through Session 4: Showing and Handling Feelings in InsideOut Dad®, you'll notice that the "Holding Feelings Inside" exercise is included in this section of the guide. Consider whether to include that exercise again to reinforce it or skip it.

** If the dads went through Optional Reentry Sessions #4 and #5 in the 3rd edition of InsideOut Dad®, there is some overlapping content and exercises. Review the content and exercises in those sessions and in the guide so that you can consider whether to include any of that content or exercises again to reinforce or skip them.