

LET'S TALK DADS

#GLOBALGUYTALK

CONVERSATION GUIDE

A COOPERATION BETWEEN:

MAKE
EQUAL

Si. Swedish
Institute

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide contains several questions that you can choose from when hosting a **#globalguytalk** for dads. They have been divided into different categories. Decide which questions you will answer and in which order. Choose questions based on what is most suitable for the target group and the local context.

INTRODUCTION

'I've always been scared of being a father. Scared of doing the wrong thing, not being good enough. It wasn't until one of my friends who just had his first child mentioned that he was scared that I realised I wasn't alone. He had grown up without a dad himself, and he didn't really know what makes a good dad. Even though I grew up with my dad, I felt the exact same way.'

'I've never had the courage to talk to my dad about our relationship. In many ways, he's been the world's best dad. Took me to soccer practice, helped me fix my

bike, put up shelves, and stuff like that. But he never really talked to me. I mean, he never really seemed to care about how I was doing and never suggested that we just hang out. It feels quite sad. After joining #globalguytalk, I've heard similar stories and that other people have managed to find the courage to start talking with their dads. It really made me hopeful that I will one day.'

"I love you" – three words I never got to hear from my dad, not even as a child. I can easily count the times he hugged me. That was just the way it was. And I didn't have any friends with loving fathers, so I had no one to compare mine with either. As an adult, I've come to think more about my father's total lack of affection towards me and my siblings. From what I can remember, he spent a lot of time with us, and perhaps he tried, in his own peculiar way, to show us his love. Right before my daughter was born, I decided to become the exact opposite of my father. I promised myself to shower her with as much love and affection as possible and to tell her that I love her every day. A year and a half has passed since, and I've kept my promise.'

These are just a few of all the stories we've received from anonymous men when we asked: 'What would you like to talk about, if no one could judge you?'. We hope these stories can inspire you to open up and speak from the heart during the **#globalguytalk**. With this guide, you will get to talk about **parenthood**. You will talk about society's expectations and your own experiences of being a son, brother, partner, or father. You will also address your relationship with your own father or father figures.

The questions in the #globalguytalk for dads exceed what you usually have time for in one #globalguytalk session. Make sure you split the questions into one or two themes per session.

WARM-UP QUESTIONS – ANSWER YES OR NO

- I think that my partner/the parent of my child/children has a stronger connection to our child/children, and I envy that.
- As a child, I sought comfort from my mother or other female family members more often than from my father.
- Today, I can talk with my father about almost everything – or at least as much as with my other parent.
- Being a parent turned out to be just like I imagined.

**THEME:
PARENTHOOD AND
THE ROLE
OF A
FATHER**

**QUESTIONS
LEVEL 1**

- How have you tackled difficult events while transitioning into parenthood? For example: sleep deprivation, lack of energy, or increasing amounts of housework, planning and responsibilities? Possible follow-up question: How can you make sure that responsibilities and housework are shared equally between yourself and your partner/fellow parent?
- Have you ever felt that the expectations on your relationship with your child/children are limited? For example: What you're expected to do or be responsible for. Possible follow-up questions: If you were to disregard all of these expectations – what would the reaction be? Do you ever feel forced to do what's expected of you?
- In what way do you think expectations and norms of fatherhood have affected you? Have they affected your relationship with your child/children?
- Do you feel that you have the tools and skills to be a good father? Possible follow-up questions: Compared to your partner, are you better or worse at expressing your emotions? What about other adults that are close to your child/children?

- If you cannot carry children, how do you feel about not being able to be the pregnant parent?

Possible follow-up question: Have you compensated for the fact that you can't be the pregnant parent by taking on more responsibilities for the child/children? If so, is this true during the pregnancy as well as after childbirth?

**THEME:
THE
RELATION
SHIP WITH
YOUR
CHILD/CHI
LDREN**

QUESTIONS

LEVEL 1

- Which values would you like your child/children to live by?
Possible follow-up question: How can you encourage this?
- What would you do if your child/children cried?
- Do you and your partner/fellow parent equally share the responsibility for setting boundaries and rules for your child/children?
- Do you tell your child/children that you love them? Possible follow-up questions: Would you like to tell them more often? In what other ways do you show them your love?

**THEME:
THE
RELATION
SHIP WITH
YOUR
PARTNER/
FELLOW
PARENT**

DIRECTIONS

QUESTIONS

LEVEL 1

- Do you and your partner/fellow parent take on an even share of any parental leave and childcare? Why/why not?
- If you're currently living with a partner/fellow parent, do you believe that having children has affected your opportunities to an equal relationship? Possible follow-up questions: Why do challenges arise when children are involved? What traps are there? What strategies can you use to get out of those traps – or avoid them all together?
- Based on the previous question: do you and your partner/fellow parent discuss or have a system in place to reach equal parenthood? Possible follow-up questions: Who comforts, plans birthday parties, prepares lunch boxes, or takes care of the child's/children's personal hygiene? Who keeps track of their daily routines, schedules, play dates and activities? Who is responsible for doctor appointments or other big decisions, such as choosing a preschool? Who makes sure that you parents get some child free

alone time?

QUESTIONS

LEVEL 2

- Do you ever feel that you have 'lost yourself' somewhere along the way of becoming a father (for example, lost your values, your social network, or hobbies)? Possible follow-up questions: How do you maintain the interests and hobbies that help you feel good? Does your partner/fellow parent have the same opportunity to maintain hobbies or interests as you?
- Did your father or some other close adult hurt you in any way as a child? If so, has it affected your role as a father?
- Have you ever used violence, threats of violence, or feared that you might become violent? If so, how did you deal with that afterwards? Did you turn to anyone for help?
- Have you ever wished your child/children would reach your own unfulfilled dreams or become a better version of you? If so, how is this apparent? Possible follow-up questions: Did

you feel like your dad had those kinds of expectations on you? Or was it the other way around, that you would have liked more pressure or encouragement?

- How do you feel about the norm that 'nothing is stronger than a mother's love'? Do you think that people expect you to be less loving because you are a father?

QUESTIONS

LEVEL 2

- Are you comfortable with discussing serious topics with your child/children? For example: sex, sexuality, consent, violence, racism, death, sorrow? Possible follow-up questions: If not, how does that make you feel? Would you want to change that, and how could that happen?
- Are you comfortable with showing intimacy and affection to your child/children? Why/why not? In which situations? Possible follow-up question: Would you like to be more intimate and affectionate than you are now?
- Are there times when you treat your child/children poorly or in a way that you never thought you would do before you became a parent? Possible follow-up question: How do you communicate with your child/children if you make a mistake?

QUESTIONS

LEVEL 2

- According to you, did your sex life change when you had children? If so – how?
- Have you felt envious of your partner/fellow parent? For example: jealous of the level of intimacy involved in breastfeeding a child if you can't breastfeed; jealous of a stronger or more quickly developed connection to the child; or jealous that your child has a tendency to look for comfort from your fellow parent first?
Possible follow-up question: Does it stop at envy, or have you consciously taken any actions to strengthen the connection between yourself and your child/children?