Absent black father's effect on the blackmales' development

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THE ABSENT BLACK FATHERS' EFFECT ON THE BLACK MALES' DEVELOPMENT

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS.

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The problems among young black males stem from many areas such as lack of occupational opportunity, low self-esteem, living in a violent environment, drugs, etc. The root of the problem of black males may be the absence of the father in the black family. This research examines the direct relationship between the absence of the black father and the problems of the young black male. The relationship between the absent father and the problems of the young black male is definitely a strong one. Black males need strong black fathers as models in which to live their lives. They need them for their self-esteem, because without them they are missing a part of themselves. The absent black father tends to turn into a cycle among black males. Young black males whose fathers were not there for them tend not to be there for their children. This research shows the relationship between the absent black father and his black male children’s development, socially, and psychologically. This research also includes the results of a survey of 25 black men who have either been to jail, are on probation, have criminal records, have pending criminal charges.
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

In recent history, black males have become the victims, as well as the perpetrators, of many crimes in their communities. They have been accused of violent crimes, which include murder, robbery, car jacking, drugs and many others. The question is often asked, Why is it that black males commit these types of offenses? Many answers have been given but no one seems to agree on one specific reason. It’s been said that it stems from stress, low self-esteem, anger frustration, & etc. Why are black males stressed? What are some causes of their low self-esteem, anger and frustration? Also there can be many answers to these questions, but when you look closely at the black males that have these problems, you recognize a trend. Many of their fathers were not around when they were growing up. Is this a coincidence or are they directly related? Is there a direct relationship between the absence of the black father from the home and social problems among young black males in America?

The father, in the family structure is the foundation of that family system. The father should provide stability to the family which keeps the family in order and functioning. This is similar to how the sun is the stable body in our solar system which keeps the nine planets in perfect rotation. If the sun were to ever go out or move from its place in our solar system there would be mass destruction among the planets. This is what is happening to the black family. The fathers have been separated from the families in America since blacks arrived on slave ships over 400 years ago. This separation was by force. Today it is by both choice and force. The results of this separation are evident and cause mass destruction in the black family.

The writer’s objective in this study is to: (a) get black fathers to look closely at their roles, the importance of their roles and their responsibilities to their sons and daughters: (b) encourage more research in this area using different and more reliable
means of investigating this relationship, and (c) to provoke discussion and answers to the problems.

The writer wants to determine the relationship between the absence of the black fathers from their homes and young black males' problems. The writer is aware of the fact that there is a high percentage of black male offenders whose fathers were not in their homes with them.

Problem

The problem was to investigate the relationship between the absence of the black father from the home and problems among their young black sons in America.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of the black father's absence from his home on the social and psychological development of their young black sons. More specifically, this study was made to seek information to answer the question: What does the literature reveal about the effects of black fathers' absence from their homes on their son development socially, and psychologically?

Significance of study

This study is significant because it addressed the effect of the absence of black father on the problems experienced by their black male children. It is relevant to problems which exist among black males in America today. This study is significant to the entire black family not just the fathers and sons. This study should expand our knowledge of the father-son relationship, why it is important, and the effects of the absence of it.
Assumptions
The following assumptions were made in conducting this study:
1. Writers had adequately researched the information they published.
2. Writers had fairly presented comments and points of view they had thoroughly researched.

Limitations
The writer recognized the following limitations in conducting this study:
1. The information was limited to the literature relevant to the research problem and question.
2. Temporal factors may have to be interpreted to allow for fairness of reporting authors' comments.

Definition of terms
The significant terms used in this study will have the following meanings.
Absent father- a biological father that does not live in the same household with his children
Present father- a biological father that does live in the same household with his children.
Relationship- the connection of persons by blood or marriage.
Black male offenders- black males that have been charged or convicted of some sort of crime
Black family- a social unit consisting especially of a black man a black woman and their offspring.
Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Statistics

There are many black single parent homes headed by mothers. Approximately ninety percent of black children born today will spend some part of their childhood in a single-parent household, usually with their mothers (Gable, 1992). In 1970, there were 1,063 black families headed by single mothers. In 1980, there were 1,984 in 1984, there were 2,652, and in 1988, fifty percent of all black families were headed by a single mother (Nichols-Casebolt, 1988). One can safely assume that this number has increased significantly. Robert I. Lerman (1986) found that, in 1979, about 340,000 of the 17 million 14-21 year-old men were fathers absent from the homes of their sons. These absent fathers made up only two percent of the population, but over forty percent of young fathers. Over the next five years, he found that the number of absent fathers tripled to over 1 million. The striking fact here is that one-third of all 18-25 year old fathers lived away from at least one of their children. Lerman (1986) found that black young men are most likely to become absent fathers and more likely to become fathers at an early age. By age 22, over one fourth of young black men had become fathers. In contrast, only about five percent of white and nine percent of Hispanic 22 year olds were absent fathers. He also found that Hispanic fathers were much more likely to live with their children than were black fathers (1986). These statistics show that, though blacks are a minority, they are still more likely to be absent fathers. The absence of the father can be attributed to several factors, e.g., death, by choice, divorce, military or incarceration. The reason for the absence of the father plays a part in how it affects the son.
Effects of Incarcerated Fathers

Black men constitute the majority of persons in the jails in America today. They are very likely to have some type of criminal record during their life as black men. Many black fathers that are absent from their sons are absent due to incarceration. According to the Oprah Winfrey show (1993) Black men were over represented in the jail system. Estimates indicate that blacks make up about eleven percent of the total population in America but represent about seventy two percent of all the prisoners in the American jail system. “Millions of children in the united states either currently have a parent who is incarcerated or have had an incarcerated parent at some point” (Gable, 1992).

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin (1989b) there were over 700,000 individuals in U.S. state and federal prisons at the end of 1989. The number of incarcerated individuals in local jails in 1988 was about 343,000 (Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin, 1990b), adding further to the number of incarcerated individuals in the united states at any one time.

Little is known about the psychological reactions of children whose parents are incarcerated, although a variety of behavioral disorders apparently related to separation stigma and deception of the child has been reported. The possibility of aggressive of antisocial behavior emerging in sons of incarcerated fathers has been mentioned as of particular concern in some reports (Gable, 1992). Several investigators suggest that some children may experience a wide variety of problems due to separation from their parents (Gable, 1992). It has been shown that when boys are separated from their fathers, they are far more likely than girls to demonstrate aggressive behavior. Also adult males are ten times more likely than females to be incarcerated in federal or state prisons (1992).

Many mothers who have sons whose fathers are in prison don’t tell them the truth of the matter because of the stigma, shame and community hostilities that come with incarceration. Wilmer, Marks and Pogue (1966), in a clinical descriptive report, discuss
the harmful effects of parental deception about imprisonment of fathers on children. They argue that children’s reactions such as disobedience, temper outburst, destructive or delinquent behavior are results of these deceptions. A deception is also emphasized as a particularly deleterious consequence for children of incarcerated parents by others such as Friedman S., and Esselstyn T.C. (1965). Hannon, Martin, and Martin (1984) argue that deception is practiced by the parents because of the social stigma of incarceration. They emphasize that this practice may make it impossible for children to discuss or work through their feelings about the incarceration.

Gable (1992) mentioned the possibility that antisocial behavior in boys may develop from on paternal incarceration. Swan (1981) reported, in a study of 192 black male prisoners’ families in Alabama and Tennessee, that thirty percent of the mothers reported the jailing of the father had a major effects on the sons’ behaviors. It is well known that the boys of fathers with criminal backgrounds are at a high risk for juvenile delinquency and adult criminal behavior (Gable, 1992). In a study done on 6 families in which the fathers were in prison, out of 24 children, 12 showed behavioral disturbances, and it was the male child, between the ages in which many males go through puberty and emotional as well as psychological changes, that the mother cannot relate to. This may cause the male child to react negatively if the father is absent (1992). Gable (1992) found that separation from parental figures and disrupting personal and family bonds can be traumatic to the child. Hannon, Martin and Martin (1984) studied the effects of incarceration on male prisoners and their families. Several hundred prisoners and their families were interviewed. Overall, About forty five percent of the male children were felt to have deteriorated behaviorally after the fathers imprisonment.

Another article, reported by Fritsh and Burkhead (1981), on male prisoners’ impressions of the behaviors of their children in response to parental incarceration
explained that two-thirds of the prisoners felt that behavioral problems in their sons had developed since their incarcerations.

Gable (1992) explained, in a study of six families seen at a health center in Boston, in which a number of boys were between the ages of 6 and 13, that there was a rather abrupt onset of aggressive or antisocial behavior problems within 2 months of their fathers' imprisonment. Out of the total of 24 children in the 6 families, 12 or fifty percent showed behavioral disturbances. It was the male child, between the ages of 11 and 13, who seemed the most vulnerable to the effects of separation, although younger children did sometimes show separation anxiety of a temporary nature. Also three of the six families were further disrupted through divorce. This seemed to have been precipitated by the imprisonment. These three families had histories of prior separations, marital discord, and physical abuse. The boys' antisocial behaviors were similar to their fathers' recent antisocial activities that had resulted in incarceration. From Gable's follow-up study 2 years later, the boys in these three families showed significant disturbances as teenagers.

Social Effects

The social effects of the absence of black father from his family are vast and many and vary according to the reason that the father is absent. Thirty two years ago Pettigrew (1964) found that the absent father was a factor in delinquency, schizophrenia, sexual identification and related problems to young Negro boys. He also found that lower-class male youth, coming from female dominant homes, manifested a toughness response, as a reaction to feminine identification, which, supposedly, increased the likelihood of them becoming delinquent.

Although there have been many attempts by theorists in several disciplines to specify the link between matriarchy and male delinquency, among American
sociologists, Pettigrew is probably best known. His concern was the lower-class situation, however it is possible to relate this to the more general problem of the absent male role model. He says:

The boy... has a tendency to form a direct feminine identification since his mother is the model most readily available and significant to him. But he is not destined to become an adult woman... Hence, when boys emerge into what Freidians call the latency period, their behavior tends to be marked by a kind of compulsive masculinity... This universal pattern bears all the earmarks of a reaction formation. It is the result not simply of masculine nature but largely of a defense against a feminine identification... (The mother) internalizes the symbols of what is "good" behavior, of conformity with expectations of the respectable adult world. When he revolts against identification with his mother in the name of masculinity, it is not surprising that a boy unconsciously identifies goodness with femininity and that being a "bad boy" becomes a positive goal... there is a strong tendency for boyish behavior, in striking contrast to that of pre-adolescent girls, to run in anti-social if not directly destructive directions (Pettigrew, 1964, pp. 257-258).

In a study reviewed by Gable (1992) by McCord, McCord, and Thuber, 1935, they studied the outcome of a group of 55 black boys who were living with their biological mothers, but were from father-absence homes. These boys originally were part of a larger group of children specifically selected for study during the 1930's because they were thought to show signs of "incipient delinquency." The youngsters had received repeated assessments by staff of the Cambridge-Sumerville Youth Study during a period of 5 years, between the ages of 10 and 15. The fathers of the boys studied had died, deserted, been in mental hospitals, been divorced or legally separated, and, in 3 cases, were serving long prison terms. These father-absent boys were compared with a group of 150 boys whose natural parents were living together. He found that significantly more boys with parent substitutes for their fathers became gang delinquents than did boys who lived in homes with two parents and little conflict.
S. Glueck, and E. Glueck (1975), addressed the question of whether emotional disturbance and delinquency are related to paternal absence due to imprisonment specifically. They compared 24 male children, from father-imprisoned families with 24 male children from families in which fathers were absent due to divorce, matched on parameters such as socioeconomic status, parent educational level, ethnic group membership, and age at the time of separation from the father. The average length of paternal imprisonment was 1.8 years, with a range of less than 6 months to over 2 years. In every case, the father did not return to live with the family after his imprisonment, although there was some visitation in a few cases. Interestingly, in this study, on nearly all dimensions studied, including father-child relationship, self-concept, and problems with authority, there were no significant differences between the two groups. Both of whom had father absence and low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Goldstein (1984) studied the relationship between father-absent families, parental supervision, and conduct disorder in youth by examining Cycle III data of the Health Examination Survey that was conducted by National Center for Health Statistics. This survey, conducted between 1966 and 1970, included several thousand youths 12-17 years of age. The data collected were from youth report, parent report, and school report. Conduct problems were assessed on the basis of reported police contact, arrest, and disciplinary actions in school.

Goldstein’s findings (1984) indicated that youths, who were from father-absent families, reportedly had been questioned by police significantly more often than youths from father-present families. Analysis by sex indicated that boys, and not girls, who were from father-absent families had significantly more contacts with police. He also found that, in homes that had no supervision, boys but not girls, showed significantly greater likelihood of having had police contacts if they were from father-absent compared to father-present homes. Boys from father-absent homes, with low supervision, also
showed a significantly greater likelihood of having had discipline problems in school than did boys from father-present homes.

Gable (1992) has reviewed the literature on the relationship between marital discord in divorced and non-divorced couples and childhood behavior problems. He found that biological fathers and their children commonly developed emotionally distant relationships after divorce, despite visitation. Few children had close bonds with both divorced parents. Also he found that boys earlier demonstrate more problems than girls, e.g., school difficulties, peer relationships, and managing aggression. Intense parental conflicts around custody and visitation issues pose major threats to the psychological adjustment and stability of the child.

**Psychological Effects**

It appears to be a societal consensus that an intact nuclear family is both desirable and essential for the psychological development of normal behavior in children. The catalyst for much of the research arises from the psychoanalytic position that a male child deprived of a father or father figure will experience difficulty achieving necessary sex-role identification and, consequently, will develop behavior insufficiently masculine for appropriate adjustment.

Support for the psychoanalytic position has been provided by Bach’s finding (1946) which indicated that father-absent male children creates an idealistic and feminine fantasy picture of the father. Also by Biller (1968), who found a lesser degree of masculinity in father-absent black male children as compared with father-present controls. Hetherington (1966) provided qualified support which suggested that relative to father-present children, sex-role identification problems were experienced by children if separated from their fathers prior to the age of five years, and less aggression was evident if the child was separated while under four years of age.
Additional consequences have also been related to the absence of the father in the home. Biller (1971) found that a significantly larger proportion of children from father-absent homes preferred immediate to delayed reward compared to children from intact families. Hetherington (1966) reported that black male children from father-absent homes obtained lower scores on measures of moral development than did children from father-present homes. Barclay, Stilwell, and Barclay (1972) reported that in comparison with father-present elementary school children, father-absent children were rated by their teachers as lower on several personality dimensions, in personal and social adjustment, and they were considerably more handicapped in their own self-estimate of skills. In addition, teachers almost universally expected less personal effort and work from these children.

In a study done by Sherle L. Boone (1979) she stated that evidence suggests that the functioning of mothers and children in fatherless homes differs from that in father-present households. She found greater family disorganization in households with fathers-absent. Also, Boone, (1979) found that prolonged father’s-absence can affect many aspects of the male child’s behavior and personality development. Her research led her to believe that males reared in father-absent homes will develop more feminine components in their personalities than males reared in father-present homes. It has been suggested that males reared in mother-led families tend to display either homosexual tendencies, dependency, lack of aggressiveness, exaggerated aggressiveness, or a combination of these behaviors (1979). A widely held belief is that children, reared in families with fathers absent frequently, have to assume more “adult-like” roles and responsibilities in dealing with family tasks and needs than do their counterparts. It seems to follow that if this occurs before the child is emotionally mature enough to assume adult-like responsibilities, he may rebel. Thus the relatively high aggression among members of this group may be encouraged by this change in their roles and
functions within the family unit (1979). One could speculate that the problems associated with family functioning in the families with fathers absent may create a greater adjustment problem for the male child.
Chapter III

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects that the absence of the black fathers from their homes had on the social and psychological development of their young black sons. More specifically, this study was made to seek information to answer the question: What does the literature reveal about the effects of black fathers' absence from their homes has on their sons' social and psychological development?

Methodology

The writer used the content analysis technique of research. The writings of several authors were selected, according to their relevance to the issue, and examined for comments, suggestions and critiques about the issue. Also the writer used an oral survey in which he interviewed 25 black males ages 15 to 25 who have either been to jail, are on probation, have a criminal record or have criminal charges pending.

Findings

Overall, the literature reviewed in this study suggested that it is far better for the black male child to grow up in a home with both the mother and the father in a loving relationship. Some of the literature suggested that there are other factors involved in the way the absence of the black father affects the child, things such as the child's age at the time that the father leaves, socioeconomic status, the way in which the father leaves the family, the overall state of the family at the time of the father's departure and birth order.

In the oral survey the writer conducted with 25 black males ages 15 to 25 who had either been to jail, or on probation, or had a criminal record or had criminal charges pending.
pending, it was found that 21 out of the 25 subjects were raised by a single mother. Seventeen of them said they thought if their fathers were there, it could have made a difference in their lives. Three said it would not have mattered and one said he did not know. Eleven of the 25 had no relationship at all, that they could remember, with their fathers and thirteen said that their fathers had some types of trouble with the law.

In the review of literature conducted in this study, the writer found that: black male children from father-absent homes displayed various social and psychological problems. It was shown through the literature that many black male children go through some period of time in which the father is absent from the family due to various reasons. It was found that many absent fathers were absent due to incarceration. Also many mothers of children whose fathers were incarcerated don’t tell them the truth of the matter because of the stigma, shame and community hostilities that come with incarceration. This parental deception, about the imprisonment of their father, has harmful effects such as disobedience, temper outburst, destructive or delinquent behavior.

According to the literature, boys that are separated from their fathers, are far more likely than girls to demonstrate aggressive behavior. This is not to say that it does not affect female children just as much, but to say that the male child is more likely to display aggression which is an effect of the father being absent. The literature suggests that the absent father is a factor in delinquency, schizophrenia, sexual identification and related problems to black boys. Also that black male, youth coming from female dominant homes, manifested a toughness response. This seemed to have been a reaction to feminine identification, which, supposedly, increases the likelihood of his becoming delinquent. One author stated that youths, who were from homes where the father was not present are, more likely to be questioned by police.
The literature reviewed for this study along with the oral survey conducted by the writer, seem to warrant the statement that black male children without their fathers present are more prone to display problems with their social, sexual, and psychological development. These problems with their development seem to be manifested into behavioral problems at some point in their lives. The literature suggests a definite connection between the absent black father and problem that occur with their son due to the effect of their absence on the child’s development.

**Summary of the Literature**

Most of the literature reviewed for this study seemed to validate the theory that the absent black father does have a negative effect on the development of his male child. The writer found that the father can be absent from the home for various reasons. The reason that the father is away from the home plays a part in how it affects the child. Many black fathers in America are away from their children due to incarceration. The black man is overrepresented in the American jail system, and for this fact many more black fathers are away from their children due to incarceration than any other race. The effects of the absent father range from minor in home disciplinary problems to homosexual tendencies displayed by the male child.

One of the most important factors is that when the father is absent the male child does not have a model to live by as a man. The child, in some cases, only has his mother there from which to learn. Many times this presents a problem for the male child who sometimes rebels and acts out due to this.

Most writers on this topic, agree that there are other factors that play parts in how the male child develops. They agree that the father is a very essential part but not the only part in the healthy development of the male child.
Summary of the Findings

There are many major findings that emerge from the largely descriptive literature review and oral survey above:

1. Separation from a male parental figure is likely to be traumatic to the male child, disrupting personal and family bonds, and worsening the family’s social and financial condition.

2. Behavior problems emerge in a sizable amount of black male children due to fathers’ absences.

3. Many black fathers are absent due to incarceration. Deception of the children by the remaining caretaker and incarcerated parent is commonly practiced. Some children are never told that their fathers have been incarcerated. Such deception is universally condemned in the literature as harmful to the child, and perhaps the cause of behavioral difficulties.

4. Stigma is an important problem for many children, although the degree of adjustment difficulty experienced may reflect the family’s and subculture’s views of the meaning of incarceration.

5. Some male children show severe antisocial behavior at the time of their parents’ incarcerations. Boys at or near puberty may be at somewhat greater risk for antisocial behavior or conduct problems with the incarceration of their fathers.

6. Some male children in father absent homes exhibit homosexual tendencies, dependency, lack of aggressiveness, exaggerated aggressiveness or a combination of these behaviors.

7. Father-absent male children create an idealistic and feminine fantasy picture of the father.

8. Young black male fathers between the ages of 18 and 25 are far more likely to be absent fathers than white or Hispanic young fathers.
9. Black males are more likely to be incarcerated in American jails than any other nationality. This makes them more prone to be absent fathers. Also this makes the cycle of absent father more likely to continue.

10. The absent black father is a factor in delinquency, schizophrenia, sexual identification and related problems to young black boys.

Discussion

Most people tend to overlook the seriousness of the consequences of not having a father around for their son or daughter. Today, we have many so-called “independent women” whose main focus is on their careers. Many of these women have male children. These women feel as though they don’t need a man to help in the raising of a child. Our society promotes single parents. It offers things like the sperm banks where you can go and get your egg fertilized and never really know the father of that child. It also promotes the “independent women” who see themselves as being self-sufficient and capable of doing without men. These are dangerous trends in our society especially for black people in America. We already have so many factors keeping the black father away such as jail, death, lack of job opportunities to support his children, and divorce. We don’t need to get caught up in any others that we can control. The black male, in this country and around the world, is suffering. We need our fathers to be the strong role models that they are supposed to be. We need them to take responsibility for their actions and take care of their own. We are destroying our own when we don’t because it feeds the cycle of destruction. Our male children are suffering from low self-esteem and a hatred of self because they feel as though their own fathers don’t care for and love them. As a father, you are a part of your child and he is a part of you. This hatred, that he has within him, can enable him to go out and take the life of one just like him-self or harm one of his own. Yes, this is the hate that hate created but it is time for us, as fathers
and black males, to take control of this hate and turn it into love for our own children so
they will know how to love others. The family is the foundation of our existence; and, if
it fails, so do we. Now, ask yourself what is missing from the black family? Your
answer will be “the black father.”

This research shows a strong relationship between the absent black father and
social and psychological problems in the male child. Much of the research cited is from
recent history. We can safely assume that, if some of the patterns shown in this
information have continued, this problem has only become worse. We, who live in these
times, don’t have to look far to validate this assumption.

Conclusions

An analysis of the major findings derived from this study seems to warrant the
following conclusions:

1. The black father plays a vital role in the black family home.
2. The black father is more likely to be absent than any other type of fathers.
3. The absent black father affects the development of the black male child in
various negative ways.
4. The absent black father may be the underlying cause to many of the problems
facing the young black male in America today, such as, drugs, crime, poverty, and being
absent from their children.

Implications

The conclusions drawn from the findings seem to warrant the following
implications: In research and clinical practice, the absent fathers have been excluded by
perceiving and designating families as “one parent” or single parent families. This is
particularly tempting when dealing with single mothers in clinical practices. Yet, the
and black males, to take control of this hate and turn it into love for our own children so they will know how to love others. The family is the foundation of our existence; and, if it falls, so do we. Now, ask yourself what is missing from the black family? Your answer will be "the black father."

This research shows a strong relationship between the absent black father and social and psychological problems in the male child. Much of the research cited is from recent history. We can safely assume that, if some of the patterns shown in this information have continued, this problem has only become worse. We, who live in these times, don’t have to look far to validate this assumption.

Conclusions

An analysis of the major findings derived from this study seems to warrant the following conclusions:

1. The black father plays a vital role in the black family home.
2. The black father is more likely to be absent than any other type of fathers.
3. The absent black father affects the development of the black male child in various negative ways.
4. The absent black father may be the underlying cause to many of the problems facing the young black male in America today, such as, drugs, crime, poverty, and being absent from their children.

Implications

The conclusions drawn from the findings seem to warrant the following implications: In research and clinical practice, the absent fathers have been excluded by perceiving and designating families as "one parent" or single parent families. This is particularly tempting when dealing with single mothers in clinical practices. Yet, the
data remind us that this is misleading. The biological father is part of the family system. Conceptualizing fathers who are absent from the household as outside the family, narrows the lens through which the family is viewed and restricts the ability to comprehend the role and meaning of the absent father within the family system.

Recommendations

The implications drawn from the conclusions of this study seem to warrant these recommendations:

1. Counselors, and Social workers can assist families by encouraging single mothers to address issues concerning the absent black fathers. Otherwise, children’s inability to discuss taboo topics may lead to distorted perceptions.

2. Clinically, counselors, and social workers may encounter resistance from mothers who have proudly taken the responsibility to raise their children and who deny the importance fathers. This can be a particularly sensitive area for women who have experienced painful relationships with their own fathers or other men.

3. Outreach to absent black fathers may be useful for black men who are aware of and acknowledge their paternity, have ambivalent feelings about maintaining relationships with their children, and difficulty clarifying their relationships with the black single mothers.

4. Black male children may need support from counselors to help them cope with issues about themselves and their families. They may need assistance expressing questions and feelings about their family structure, and how it compares to the many different types of contemporary families. Counselors can help the black male children to understand that they are not to blame for their fathers’ absence from the home, and give them the opportunity to realize the relationship that they may fantasize about, but may never have.
5. Much more research is needed in this area with more valid and reliable means of testing the hypothesis that the absent black father is directly related to social and psychological problems among young black males.
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