

Fatherhood transforms bad behaviour

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Fatherhood can transform anti-social young men into responsible citizens, according to new research commissioned by Victoria's Institute of Policy Studies.

Dr Gareth Rouch studied a large group of fathers in the Wairarapa region, and found becoming fathers had transformed their lives.

The study looked at men who had all grown up in working-class families during the 1980s and 90s whose families were most affected by the widespread [unemployment](#) during that time. Prior to having children many of the men saw no economic future for themselves, and made little effort to get job skills or integrate with mainstream society.

"One of the subjects even went as far as saying that when he was a teenager he expected to be dead by the time he was 20, so saw no point in looking ahead to the future," says Dr Rouch.

All the men indicated that fatherhood changed their attitudes to the world.

"It made them see the value in taking up work, acquiring job skills and improving their lifestyle," says Dr Rouch.

"They were committed to doing the best for their children, and were open about the deep emotional bond they had with them."

Dr Rouch says that by becoming fathers these men obtained a social

status, a role, and a sense of their potential social capital as men who worked, supported their family, and engaged in a network of loving relationships.

"This has policy implications, as it is critical that any intervention in helping these men into work takes place during the early period of fatherhood when their self-concept as a bone fide member of society is still relatively novel to them.

"Helping them to find employment will reduce the economic pressure on these families, which in turn promotes the wellbeing of their children."

The research paper has been published on the Institute of Policy Studies website ips.ac.nz/publications/publications/list/7

Provided by Victoria University

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