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healthy marriage
resource center**

NHMRC June Webinar Transcript

Fatherhood and Marriage: What's the Connection?

Moderator: Mark Thomas

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Fatherhood and Marriage: What's the Connection?

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen thank you for standing by. Welcome to the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center and National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse June 2008 webinar.

During the presentation all participants will be in a listen-only mode. If at any time during the conference you need to reach an operator, please star zero. As a reminder, this conference is being recorded Wednesday, June 25, 2008. It is now my pleasure to turn the conference over to Mr. Mark Thomas with the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center. Please go ahead.

Mark Thomas: Good afternoon. We'd like to welcome everyone to our webinar entitled Fatherhood and Marriage: What's the Connection. My name is Mark Thomas with the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center. And along with the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center this webinar is being companysponsored by the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse.

I'll be moderating our webinar today along with the assistance of Nigel Vann, from the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, and he'll also be presenting to us later on this afternoon.

We look forward to hearing from each of our presenters today. Dr. Natasha Cabrera from the University of Maryland, Nigel Vann, who I mentioned, from the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, and lastly from Joe Jones, who's the founder and President of the Center for Urban Families located in Baltimore, Maryland.

Before we get started today, I would like turn the time over to (Stephanie Wofford), who will guide participants through some of the technology that we're using here with the webinar to help you understand how can submit questions to our presenters as we go along. And we certainly encourage you to take advantage of this feature so that you can ask questions of each of our presenters. (Stephanie)?

(Stephanie Wofford): Thank you Mark. As Mark said, we do enc everyone to ask questions throughout the presentation. By doing that, at the bottom of your viewing pane you should see a box that says questions and answers. What you would do is type your question in the area that I'm highlighting currently. And then after you type your question we ask that you click the ask button where the arrow is.

At that point you will receive and automated message that says, "Thank you for your question. It has been forwarded to the moderator." That lets you know that your question has been received and has been put in the question queue. And what that does is also free up your console so that if you have another question you can ask that.

Mark will then facilitate questions throughout. And at the end of the presentation but you at least know that you - your question has been received.

Thank you Mark.

Mark Thomas: Thank you (Stephanie). And to let people know how the format is - the webinar will happen today, you'll have the chance as Stephanie mentioned, to submit your questions throughout the webinar, and we'll take time after each of the presentation to address some of those questions. And then at the very end we'll have a general Q&A where you can ask questions of any of the presenters or multiple presenters at the same time.

Before I turn the time over to Nigel, I'd like to go over with you the learning objectives that we've identified for the webinar today, the first of which is to help you better understand some of the key findings that have emerged from the father involvement research and what they mean for both fatherhood and marriage programming.

The second objective is for you to understand the research on policy developments that have led to government sponsored programs that encourage responsible fatherhood and healthy marriages.

And lastly, the purpose of our webinar is to help you identify resources that marriage and fatherhood programs can utilize to strengthen their ability to understand and engage fathers and provide healthy marriage activities. And the end of the webinar we'll actually provide you with the opportunity to provide feedback for how well we've achieved these learning objectives.

Again, we're very pleased to have each of our presenters with us today and we look forward to the information they have to share with us. And we're grateful to have all of you in attendance. And with that I'll turn the time over to Nigel Vann to introduce our first presenters.

Nigel Vann: Well thanks very much Mark. And let me say welcome to all the promoting responsible fathers (grantees) and also the wider health marriage community out there.

I've been on board now with the father (unintelligible) for exactly three months. It was March 24 when I started, so this is my third webinar. And I believe the idea for this joint one came from our federal project officers, (Lisa Washington Thomas) and (Michelle Kloon).

So we certainly welcome this opportunity to really talk about the ways in which the responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage fields really do connect. So I think we're going to have some interesting things to come up with, and I hope everybody gets to take away at least a couple of ideas to implement as you move forward with the work.

Basically the way we're going to be doing this is that Natasha's going to really emphasize the impact of fathers in the lives of children. And I think you'll get some real good information just to sort of put in your back pocket to share with your own staff, with your clients, and with partner agencies out there for why we're doing this work and how to make the case for this work.

And I'm going to try and map out how some of how the field has developed -- the two fields have developed and converged, and then Joe is going to give us a real practitioner focus from fatherhood and health marriage perspective.

So with that, I would like to introduce Natasha Cabrera, who is Assistant Professor of Human Development at the University of Maryland. She's been studying fathers for the past ten years. And I did take a quick look at her resume this morning, and she's got pages and pages of research on father involvement, many of those with Michael Lamb, who you may know is a really lead person interesting the field of child development/fatherhood involvement.

Natasha was actually with the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development from 1998 to 2002, and during that time in 2000 she received the supportive Fatherhood Leadership Award from the Department of Health and Human Services.

And I actually had the pleasure of working with her a little bit a couple of years ago. There was a publication that came out at the end of last year in the applied developmental science that was edited by Natasha and a couple of other folk on understanding the impact of fathers on child development. So with no further adieu, let me pass it over to Natasha Cabrera.

Natasha Cabrera: Great. Thank you very much Nigel. Good afternoon everybody. I'm delighted to be here, and I really want to thank Mark and others for inviting me here today to share with you some of my findings. Often than not we keep our findings to ourselves and to (unintelligible) journals, and I really welcome this opportunity to share with you and see (if you) have some impact in the real world.

So let me begin with telling you a little bit about what I'm going to talk to you about today. And basically I'm going to present some findings on stuff that I've (been interested in) for the last the years or so. And they're generally in two areas -- how do we promote positive father involvement, and does it matter? Why are we doing this? And I'm interested in linking the father involvement piece to that child outcome piece, especially on - among low income families. Next slide.

Fathers matter for many reasons, but we're reminded of this every year in June. We celebrate Father's Day and I'm sure all of you got your dad a card, ties, or BBQ tools. But I also wonder how - why is it that such little public recognition of how important fathers are for the children's development.

And our thinking might be tied to this idea of what's a good dad. And it's generally tied to the notion of economic provider. Dads who provide for their children and the family are the good dads. But (I've been interested in) understanding what all the dads do for their children and does that matter at all. Next slide.

So I've been studying fathers for about a decade, as Nigel said. And generally I've done many studies on understanding where are these fathers. (Are they really) absent as some of the early rhetoric of the 1990's (seem to imply) or are they really around?

So as I said earlier, I'm going to focus today on two things -- how do we promote father involvement, and how does it specifically matter for children development, especially on the low income families whose children are - seem to be more at risk for negative outcomes in school. So this is a very important source of where we can reduce some of these risks for children. Next slide.

Okay, so in general my research on father involvement that I've done with my colleagues Michael Lamb and others, have generally point the finger at three things that have mattered to promote father involvement. And that's money, love, and commitment. Next slide, please.

So in terms of being involved with the children, what we find in the research that most fathers, when we talk to them, they want to be involved in the children's lives. But the reality is that some fathers are not. So we want to know why. Why is it that having the desire to be with the children in a family, they are not. What prevents them?

So we found that in terms of money, things like income and the production of income, education is important, (it matters). And in terms of love, relationship with the child's mother is a very important factor, and the commitment to both child and partner seem to be important. Next slide.

So a little bit - let me talk to you a little bit about the money thing, which includes income and education and also employment. So we find in our research that employment is key in really - or explains why fathers who are early - who are involved early in the children's lives -- that means when the pregnant, dad is around. He's buying things for mom, he's engaged with her, they go to the doctor's visit.

That involvement early on is very important. We've known that it's linked to later involvement. The fathers who do this early on tend to be around their families later on when the children grow up, but we didn't know why until recently. And my research shows that these men are more likely to transition into employment which supports the family, provides some income.

So it's very important that there's early commitment. They want to do the right thing that it makes them do other "right things" such as keeping - finding employment and keeping it. (In addition to) explain that association of early involvement with later involvement.

We also find that fathers who have at least a high school education, they interact with the children in different ways. They tend to be more supportive. That means they are more engaged with them in positive ways. They play in ways that encourage children's development, and they (show us) negative parenting and what we call intrusiveness. They're more - they're less likely to be controlling, to ignore kids from their (child during) play, et cetera. And these things are really good for children development as well as for bonding with dad.

We also find that especially for non-resident dads having an income and being employed are important predictors of how involved these men will be with their families. But it's not as important as being - as having a relationship with the child's mother. Next slide.

That takes me to love. How important is that relationship with the children's mother? We found this is critically that having a relationship at the very least a romantic relationship with mom, the man are more involved with their children's partners -- I'm sorry, with the children -- because of this relationship with mom. But we also find that this pattern of relationship involvement really there is (both race and) ethnicity.

Our research has shown that black fathers, for example, are more involved with the children -- these are non-resident black fathers -- are more involved with the children because they tend to be in a romantic relationship with the child's mother more so than other minority groups.

For example, we find that low income white mothers are more likely to repartner. When you repartner, biological father is less likely to have access to these children. This doesn't happen as often in black families, whose fathers - whose non-resident fathers continue to have this romantic relationship with mom.

However, we're also finding that minority men may also be more likely to have serial partners. So they are involved with the children, but then they have many children with different partners at the same time, which may reduce resources and attention to the children. We don't know exactly how negative or how the impact of that on children, but right now we're just finding out that this is (might be) be a problem. Next slide please.

So the next factor that really explains some - or promotes father involvement is commitment the fathers show early onto the child and partner. We find there's really interesting the fathers who are prenatally involved -- so they're involved in the pregnancy, as I said earlier with mom and child -- those men are different from those who are not. They show this early commitment, they are invested in the children, and this commitment places these men, who are often unmarried, on a positive trajectory of increased commitment to both mom and dad - and child.

So these fathers who are showing this commitment early on are staying with the children later on because they are committed to have a stronger more committed relationship with mom. So we find that transition - for example if dad - an unmarried dad was just visiting mom at the birth of the child, if he happens to be around or involved in - during the pregnancy, he's more likely to move in with mom.

So the transaction is going to a more positive relationship if these men are around and involved early on. So that seems to be an interesting point where most men at least are involved - if they're going to be involved during pregnancy, they are likely to stay involved later on because of this commitment they made.

They also - and it's interesting that they are because of this they are transitioning, as I said earlier, into this more committed relationship (so it really is explaining) why these men may stick around the children a little longer. So a couple relationship is a potential source of stability in a father involvement over time. Next slide please.

Okay, so we've shown that these three factors that are really important are promoting father involvement, but as a developmental psychologist I wanted to know so what? Is it good? Does it help children and does it do

anything for the development other than providing money? Next slide please.

And we're finding that yes, fathers matter on several levels. The first important one is of course they bring resources both in terms of education and income. Education's important because, as I said early, it helps them to interact in more positive ways with the children.

So fathers or example who have more than high school education tend to have children who do better in school where we have this language schools test or cognitive ability test, those children tend to be - to do better than children who don't have involved fathers. These children also seem to display fewer behavioral problems.

Of course family income does matter, but it's a tricky of when it matters more. We're finding that it may matter more when the children are older than when they are older. And as children get older, they need more stimulation, more (resource) to keep them engaged and to promote their language skills and cognitive skills. So being poor has some effect on what resources children have available that can promote their development.

But (an) involved educated father, at least a man with a high school education, can also just interact with the child early on in positive ways. And that seems to promote child development as well. Next slide please.

It's also, as I said early, father tend to interact with the children in the supportive emotionally responsive way, which is really important for children, especially in terms of cognitive language skills and social competent skills. So fathers - one study we have, we saw the fathers were supportive - I'm sorry, fathers of toddlers were more supportive than negative.

And those - that supportiveness, that engagement with the children, interacting in positive ways, really promoted the language skills (of these fathers). And that's an important issue, especially for the low income children, who as I said earlier, might be at risk for negative outcomes in school. Next slide please.

Now not everything that fathers do is positive. As any parent, as the research shows from parents and (unintelligible) fathers can be intrusive, although our research shows that there are more positive than intrusive. But when fathers are intrusive, it can have a negative effect, although this tends to be mixed.

So intrusiveness of either parent is not a good thing to have for children because it tends to hinder their social and emotional development. If you're intrusive you're not allowing the child autonomy to develop good social skills, to develop language, to negotiate problems and et cetera.

So intrusiveness in general is not a good thing. But we find some mixed effect with children that in general with the older children, father intrusiveness may have an effect on their language skills. Fathers who are more controlling don't allow children to take their own lead. Those children may have a little difficulty with language. (Unintelligible) controller for every other thing that could make a difference.

In terms of behavior problem, we find that the father intrusiveness may have an effect on kids' behavior problems with the children are a little younger but not when they're older. So it's possible that children interpret this intrusiveness controlling potentially negative parenting from fathers a little differently. And that's where we are still a bit in the dark from the research perspective. We don't know why this interaction that are potentially negative when mom does it has really this mixed effect and sometimes no effect on fathers. So - on children I mean.

So that's where most of the - or at estimated some of our research is going that direction (is tend to) really why negative parenting is bad, but when is it bad and how are fathers and children interacting and interpreting that behavior in a way that could help them or hinder their development. Next slide please.

(Unintelligible) overall we find that fathers can make a unique contribution to the children's development over and above mom's contribution. The early research in the field used to suggest that fathers were a kind of a two pair of hand hypothesis. And it was nice to have them around. They helped out, they took out the garbage, and they (brought) money.

Now we're finding that really they do make a unique contribution. Those children -- for example children interacting with fathers -- experience language skills in a different way. Fathers tend to ask more what we call WH questions -- what are you saying, where are you going, what? Those things are really important to promote language in kids and to promote problem solving.

So they're not just doing the same thing as moms. They're doing something slightly different and that seems to matter. So involved fathers have children who have better language skills, which is very good because prepares them for school. The children tend to have fewer behavioral problem, and they have more literacy skills, which is related to obviously succeeding in school. They also help them to develop this healthy relationship with their fathers, which (unintelligible) essential for development. Next slide.

So in conclusion, all the research is pointing to a couple of take home messages. First of all we find in a couple of relationships it's really an important source of potential stability and also father involvement. The fathers who have a positive and sometimes romantic relationship with their partners tend to be more involved with their partners and of course tend to be more involved with their children.

So one implication from this would be that programs that are trying to work with fathers should encourage also participation from mothers, even when that relationship between mom and dad is no longer romantic but having just a positive relationship between mother and father tends to be really beneficial for children as well as their parents.

The idea that early investments is good for parents or fathers especially, is really important and has shown in some of the research that I shared with you today. Having, you know, mothers get pregnant and they go through physical changes. Fathers don't. So to the extent the mom allows him to be part of that experience is really critical as they transition into the fatherhood role. I start thinking about, "Okay, what is it going to be to be

a dad? What am I going to have to do now? How am I going to prepare? What am I have to do for my child?"

And our research shown that these men that show that commitment -- that desire to be with their children, to be with their partners -- tend to transition into employment and they transition into this more positive relationship -- more committed relationship. I believe it's up until three years old. We would like to continue this research early on to see whether this effect continues over time. And at least from birth to three years old this (unintelligible) the fathers who were early invest in the children tend to be still involved with the children at three years old because of this relationship with the partners.

Also in addition to providing for the families, fathers are really capable of what we - what in child development's considered important for promoting well being (in children) is they capable of sensitive and stimulating interacting with the children, which is really important to help them develop the necessary academic and social skills that they need to succeed in school and later in life. Thank you very much. I think that's all I have.

Mark Thomas: Thank you very much for your presentation Natasha. It was very insightful.

Before I ask you some of the questions that have been submitted, I was just going to ask (Stephanie) if she could review one more time for the participants how they can go ahead and submit questions for our presenters. It looks like we had quite a few people join after the start. We just want to make sure that they also are aware of how to submit questions.

(Stephanie Wofford): Sure. Let me get back to - there should be a slide on everyone's screen that gives an example. Down at the bottom of your webinar window pane you should see an area that says - a box that says questions and answers. What we ask is that you type your question in the area I'm highlighting here, and then click on the acknowledge button where the arrow is. That will send your question to us.

You'll receive an automated message that lets you know that we've received your question and that it has been forwarded to the moderator. And then Mark will proceed to ask those questions. Thank you, Mark.

Mark Thomas: Thank you (Stephanie). So Natasha, one of the questions that was asked a few times thus far was around the term intrusiveness.

Natasha Cabrera: Yes.

Mark Thomas: Can you please define or operationalize what you mean when you refer to intrusiveness?

Natasha Cabrera: Yes.

Mark Thomas: ...for the participants?

Natasha Cabrera: Sure. I'll be glad to. That's a very good question. This - the data that I presented outstanding based on videotape interaction between fathers and the children. And what we do is we go in the home

and we ask them to let us observe them play with the children for about 10/15 minutes. When that behavior, that interaction, that play, is videotaped and we later take it to our labs and we code it on a number of behaviors that we see.

One of them - one of the things that we code for (are tied to parenting) that we call supportiveness, and the next one is intrusiveness as I said. And intrusiveness really is things like if fathers playing with their child and we say to Dad, "Okay here's a bag and has three toys." You know, "pretend we're not here and play with your child in a normal way," whatever normal means when someone's watching you.

So dad takes a toy out and if child wants to chew on it, you know, some of these guys are a little bit - two years or bang it, if dad just goes along with it instead of pulling the toy with the child and say, "Hey, don't do that. We don't do that," so it's - and as I said, it's r really - and sometimes children are not upset by this. When mom does this negative - this controlling behavior, the child wants to initiate an activity with a toy that's not what mom wanted.

Children get very upset. When dads do this, what we call intrusiveness, children do not get as upset. In fact, they kind of think it's, you know, maybe part of his rough and tumble thing that dad does. But in extreme form. It's more of controlling behavior where the initiative I taking away from the child -- initiative in play -- and dad takes over. Does that explain?

Mark Thomas: Yes. Thank you for defining that. And I know that you indicated when you were talking about intrusiveness that things are a little unclear as to why intrusiveness by fathers seems to have a different level of effect on the child than when it's done by mothers. Any thoughts, you know, maybe even just from, you know, a theoretical point of view...

Natasha Cabrera: Yes.

Mark Thomas: ...about why - what might account for those differences?

Natasha Cabrera: In terms of the intrusiveness for moms and dads?

Mark Thomas: Yes. In the - when mothers do it, it tends to have...

Natasha Cabrera: Right.

Mark Thomas: ...you know, an adverse outcome and when fathers do it, it seems to be less of the case.

Natasha Cabrera: Yes. That's, you know, we have some ideas and we love to test later on. And I think for this we just need more qualitative data. We need to really understand how fathers and children play.

We think that when - that the intent that mothers intrusive is intentionally of moms, it's a little more mean and

harsh than for dads -- that dads just play a little rougher and that we may say that behavior as intrusive or if dad's just going to be doing this rough and tumble play without intention to be mean or negative.

So that the child can interpret this, "Oh, I'm just going to," you know, "wrestle with dad over the toy," whereas mom, the intention and the motivation behind it might be a little harsh and less arm. We're currently trying to see if for example if the fathers who are intrusive but warm at the same time but does has dad has the same effect. It may be that, you know, can be intrusive and harsh disciplinarian, but if you're warm and loving, that may have not as harsh effect on kids as if you were not warm.

Mark Thomas: Okay thanks. One person asked about what might be some practical activities that they as practitioners might consider when they're working with young fathers to increase their involvement or engagement with their children early on like for example in the context of a parenting class or a...

Natasha Cabrera: Right.

Mark Thomas: ...fathering class.

Natasha Cabrera: Yes, that's very important. But we find in the way now we measure this prenatal involvements asking fathers and mothers whether they were allowed - when they went to Lamaze classes (with) the mom, was it paid for, things for the baby, whether they put their hands on the belly and, you know, listen to the babies move I mean feel them maybe move or listen to - and also some things like that that connect the men to the child.

What we find with parenting classes that often it may be because both mothers and fathers don't attend as often as other groups of families, but fathers generally don't go to these classes. And it may be that they're just seen as this is for her and not for me." That may be the message tend to say this is for both. It is for your child.

You encourage and support dad to attend these classes. It's just as important for the child's well being that he be there as it is for mom to be there. I think the message may be and I'm not entirely sure; I don't have hard data on this -- it may e more geared toward mom that this is good for her health and the child's health, but less implicit why this is good for dad to be in these classes.

So I maybe begin to engage them in, you know, the message of this is good for you as well as you are part of this family. You're transitioning into this new role of fathers.

Mark Thomas: Thank you. And we'll offer you - or ask you one final question before moving on to our next presentation. In your research have you, when you looked at the impact of father involvement on children, have you noticed any differences when looking at boys versus girls?

Natasha Cabrera: Yes, that's a very good question. You know, we - I just presented some findings at the early head start research (evaluation) here in town. We did not find at least at pre-k age when the children were

about four or five years old, we did not find any gender effect on fathering. So fathers as just as supportive to their girls - to their daughters as they are to their sons.

However, we did find a gender effect - we did find that moms were more supportive to their sons than to their daughters. But in terms of having an impact on children's development, we didn't find any interaction effects with gender. In other words, mothers who were supportive with their children, it - dad did not have an effect on children's behavior because they were boys or girls. Both - it was dad for both when moms were intrusive.

So we did not find the gender matter in that way. It just matters for mom's direct engagement. They tend to be a little more supportive with their sons than daughters. But fathers, at least up until four or five years old, they were not. We didn't find a difference. And again, this is a low end income sample of families whose children are involved in early head start. They may be a little different than other samples.

I know other folks have found gender effects with older children that - but that research tends to be a little more inconsistent, so at least with this sample with this study we did not find. It may show up later on when children develop a little, you know, when they get a little older.

Mark Thomas: Well thank you so very much, Natasha...

Natasha Cabrera: (Unintelligible).

Mark Thomas: ...for your presentation for answering those questions.

Natasha Cabrera: Thank you.

Mark Thomas: And we'll certainly allows participants to ask you more questions during the general Q&A at the end of the webinar. But at this point we'd like to turn the time over to Nigel Vann from the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse for his presentation.

Nigel Vann: Well thank you very much Mark. Before I start, actually (unintelligible) start my (unintelligible) but before I start, I would just like to say a couple of things in regard to that question about activities that you might do with young dads, just so I don't forget about this.

But, you know, I was involved with private ventures in the younger (unintelligible) with fathers unwed pilot project in the early '90's, and one of my roles there was to oversee the development of the fatherhood develop curriculum.

And one of the activities that always struck me from that curriculum was there was an activity where you have dads bring in toys or you bring in toys. And you have an activity where they actually get to play with these toys. So they might be playing with cars on the floor or playing a board game. But what you do with that is you help them step into the shoes of their children and remember what it's like to be a kid. I think that can be really valu-

able.

Natasha Cabrera: Yes.

Nigel Vann: That curriculum was written by (Pamela Wilson) and (Jeffrey Johnson). And Pam came up with another activity later on based on the IALAC activity that you may be familiar with. Stands for I am Lovable and Capable, and read a story about a child whose parents are loving and supportive when the child is born, but as the child gets older, there's various things s happen. And every time there's a conflict you feel the pain of the child and you tear a piece off his IALAC sign to demonstrate that.

So I think that's another way of showing young parents the fact that economy they do or say is seen and observed and heard by their kids. You know, it has an impact on them.

And another thing I think is really important in work with fathers is to create an opportunity for them to talk about their relationship with their own father.

And be that good or be that bad, just prefacing that with another group of fathers I think really helps you focus on where you've been, what your experiences are but what you want to be for your kids and how you're going to do that.

So with that, let me move to my presentation then where I'm going to talk about the connection between fatherhood and marriage. And basically the simple answer is the connection is child well being. You know, we're talking bout this, because if we do fatherhood programs, we're doing that to try and have an impact for children.

And the same with healthy marriage programs, particularly if they're - if it's public funding, you know, then the rationale for that has to be that we're trying to improve family life and improve the experience of children and improve their general outcomes.

So in general, if a healthy marriage program is helping a man to be a better husband, they also almost by default are helping him be a better father, because by improving their relationship skills, reducing tension in the household, you are helping the kids.

And in terms of responsible fatherhood program, if you're helping guys be more involved with their kids, you're also - you've got to help them bet a better dad - I mean be a better husband or a better partner to the mother.

And also the last point on this slide, you know, I think it is important from the responsible fatherhood program perspective. If you're working with nonresident fathers -- and I do like the fact that we do say non-resident much more than non-custodial, which tends to have the impression that we're talking about an object rather than a child (unintelligible)...

But, you know, there are a lot of responsible fatherhood programs back there that already working with dads

who are not in the home for various reasons. But we can still talk to them about relationships and help them manage the relationship with the mother of those children so that the kids do better.

Basically what I wanted to try and do today - and let me say up front I've got too many slides here, and I do not intend to talk about everything that's on all the slides, but I do want you to have a chance to go back and look at some of the things I've put down just to try and see how these things tie together.

But basically what I'm going to do is take a look at the roots of the fatherhood work, the roots of the healthy marriage work, some of the lessons we've learned in the two fields, and how we apply those lessons to the programs that we now offer, and the application of the lessons as we move forward basically is what I'm going to do here.

So if we look at the roots of the responsible fatherhood work, we really go back to the '70s and the early '80s. And there was a lot of grass roots works starting. Just people seeing the need in their community. There were a lot of concerns about the increase in teenage pregnancy, the number of young mothers and the number of young dads that were involved.

(Charles Boward) was really instrumental in doing a lot of this work in (unintelligible) and they actually had couples who did straight out reach and went, you know, to the homes of people to talk about these issues. The (Ford) foundation funded the young fathers demonstration in the early '80s with about 13 sites. And a couple of those, to my knowledge, is still working with fathers today. They've come and gone with funding, but they're still out there doing things.

The - was it - where I first got involved with this, it was with a child support project in Maryland in 1988 where a local - two local judges in Maryland saw (unintelligible) come into their child support court who couldn't pay child support,. And rather than putting them in prison for not paying child support, which didn't make any sense at all, they wanted to have some supportive services. So the state of Maryland came up with a small employment program where we worked with them to get jobs so they could pay their child support.

The next project I was involved in was - which I alluded to a few minutes ago was probably private ventures and the young unwed fathers pilot project. That actually came as an effort (at managing) pregnancy prevention. But the - and then as we went on through the '90's, increasingly there were more programs focused on child support mainly because the public policy perspective with welfare reform. The feeling was that if you could help dads to pay their child support, that was going to have an impact at the public policy level and there was a justification for using public policy funds for that.

So the programs tended to focus on non-custodial fathers. Again, I think the term is better used is non-residential. But a starting point was often getting them a job so they could pay their child support, so they tended to be lower income clients. What got lost in the mix there a lot of times, although the staff really pushed to do this, but what did get lost in the mix a little bit was some of the parenting work and certainly the relationship work.

Now at the same time, although the (unintelligible) was perhaps, you know, if you look at the healthy marriage work, as that developed, we've always had problems in marriages and relationships, but until I would guess sometime in the '80s perhaps -- and I'm reaching a bit more when I'm talking about healthy marriage work -- but, you know, to start individuals would just go seek therapy.

But then there became a growing awareness in the family and marriage therapy field that you could actually do a lot of this in educational setting and not in individual sessions. So I think, you know, the work of Dr. (unintelligible) (Gorgon) in (unintelligible) and (unintelligible) in (unintelligible) with prep and John (unintelligible) (Gottman) and (Leslie Paridin) in Washington State. And then a bit later (Mary Myrick) of public strategies and (unintelligible) marriage initiative and (Diane) (unintelligible) smart marriages. There's been this big push to provide marriage education classes for couples.

Although until recently that tended to be more middle income focused (unintelligible) for this, because a lot of these things were expensive. But we saw that this had an impact, and so there was sort of a convergence really around the (unintelligible) Reduction Act of 2005, which reauthorized the 1996 welfare reform act. And, you know, it's important I think to stress that that welfare reform act did incorporate family formation and the maintenance of two parent families as key aspects of the work.

So out of that we had the grants -- the healthy marriage and promoting responsible fatherhood, which has really provided an opportunity for the grantees to move this field forward to create what I think (unintelligible) was more (unintelligible) family services. Where we don't talk about services for mothers and children. We don't talk about services for fathers. We talk about services for families to really mean that. You know, and we really do focus on parenting from the mother's point of view from the father's point of view and from the relationship point of view.

So those of you who are listening who are grantees, you really do have this great opportunity right now, although I know some of you are sort of constrained by what you can actually do with your grant funds, but, you know, I think the important point is you've got this money. You do have the opportunity to move forward and do this work and help the fields grow.

So field lessons from the fatherhood work. It takes time to get folk in, and that's why a lot of the grantees have been (unintelligible) over the first 18 months or so. But in terms of recruiting men, you know, that they will come.

It just takes time. Basically you've got to know your target audience. You've got to have their trust as an agency. Your staff have got to have their trust. And I think perhaps most importantly you've got to have something real to offer so that when you get guys in you can actually have an impact so that the people in their world see that impact and they want some of what they're getting, if you know that I mean.

So if I've come to a program and I've benefited from that, I'm going to tell people in my world about that -- my friends, my family, my neighbors, the people I work with, the people I hang out with. I (unintelligible) going to

tell them. They're going to see some changes in me. But that's what we've got to strive for.

Although if we're working with low income and young fathers, you know, it's not easy work. There's a lot of barriers there, there's a lot of chaos in a lot of folks lives that we need to really spend time working on. So we do have to address personal development issues. And unfortunately I think for a lot of the fathers' programs, it's hard to get past that.

And (unintelligible) in the '90s I think a lot of fatherhood programs that were really manhood or personal development, we have to push folk a little bit to put the emphasize on parenting and to put the emphasis on relationships and involve children and mothers.

This next slide I'm not going to dwell on. It's the recent study from the Urban Institute, but I would encourage to read it. It's available on the clearinghouse website. Just a couple of things I would stress here.

Again, they're talking about the fact that fathers are only going to come if they trust you -- they trust the person they're talking to, they trust the agency they're talking to. And in order to get guys in, you need to use multiple out reach and recruitment approaches, not just get stuck on one approach. Try different things, talk to everybody in the community to make sure that everybody in the community has impact with impact with men, with fathers, with mothers, knows what you're doing, can talk about it in a positive way.

Just a sort of summary here of some things. If you want to get guys to come into a program, especially low income guys, you really need to offer them something tangible. Just talking about parenting or relationships may take it a bit longer, so if you can offer tangible support with getting a job, dealing with a child support issue, dealing with other legal issues, how to get access to your child if you're not in the home. Those kind of things can be important.

If you can 't do that with your grant funds, you know, you can still look at working with other people in the community. You can do that, or looking for alternative funds to do that.

From the healthy marriage side, you know, I think it's not easy to get couples to commit to coming to a (unintelligible) focused on prevention. We tend to wait until we're in crisis to come. And that's the same on the father's side. You know, can appeal to dads when there's an issue.

So an issue might be, "Hey I'm getting ready to have a child. I don't know what I'm going to do," or "My child's getting ready to change schools," or "We just had a crisis in the family." At that point I'm more likely to talk to you, you know, both you're reaching out to me then, you're more likely to be able to pull me in.

But in terms of couples, if you can stress the benefits of a positive relationship with the children, the fact that we can help you feel better is beneficial to you.

There's ways to perhaps to bring people in then, although then it still takes time to (fill) a class. What works to bring middle income folks doesn't necessary work for low income. And that's the same with your curricula and

one of the things that's been happening I know in the healthy marriage world is that some of the curricula have been modified to address those issues.

Again, you need to use a variety of strategies, have a variety of venues available. There's a very good paper I was just reading by Terry Roberts of Oklahoma State University that stresses that. And I hope we can put that on our website very soon as well.

Work through partner agencies -- be sure your partners (unintelligible) the message (unintelligible). Don't just leave fliers. Make sure that the staff know what they're talking about. They can talk your program up. The healthy marriage program -- talk to both partners whenever you can.

What are some of the goals of fatherhood and healthy marriage programs? I think it's important to sort of see the similarities. You know, again we're both focused on child well being. There's a focus for both on relationship skills, communication skills. So look for the similarities and where the things that one is trying to do that the other is not doing, then perhaps that is sort of where you can sort of add pieces in to what you're doing.

It's also I think important to think about what do we mean by healthy marriage? What do we mean by responsible father? So these next few slides are just some thoughts on that. This slide - the first slide is looking at the way a healthy marriage is defined on the (ACF) website. So healthy marriage is mutually enriching. Both spouses have a deep respect for each other. It's a relationship that is committed to ongoing growth, the use of respective communication skills, the use of successful conflict management skills.

On the other side of the screen there, you've got information from (unintelligible), emotional safety, person safety, commitment, and environmental safety. And these I took from the Oklahoma marriage initiative website. I think it's important to take a look and what I've got on the right hand side there.

These are things that you would want parents to do, father to do, folks to do in their relationship. So - and these are things that have impacts for children. So if we're doing these things, our kids are going to feel more secure. They're going to feel safer, loved, nurtured. And that's what we're trying to do.

This is a definition of a good father. It actually comes from an article that I had in the piece that I mentioned that I worked with Natasha on that just came out. So there's different ways of defining a good father, but again, think about (unintelligible) father programs how you're defining that, how does that correspond to the definition of healthy marriage. How do we make those things match as we do both things?

This is another slide just looking at lasting commitment, but I put this up here, because I really wanted to focus on the idea of self and couple awareness, because you move into looking at what do we do in these programs? I think one of the real similarities between good fatherhood programs and good marriage programs is that one of the starting points is we encourage people to reflect on who they are, where they've come from, what their ancestry is, what their baggage is.

And by doing that, and particularly doing this with young fathers, then I think with a lot of men, we don't let ourselves think about this. Having the opportunity to think about this in a group setting or with our partner can be really - it's a growth step.

And if we're going to be a good parent, if we're going to be a good partner, we have to grow up. We have to get past the adolescent stage, the adult stage, so that we can have empathy for our children, empathy for our partner. And I think what you see in fatherhood programs a lot of the time is guys get to the point where they say, "You know, I'm going to be there for my kids. I'm going to figure this out. I'm going to be what my dad was or I'm going to be better than what my dad was."

And in the healthy marriage programs, I think a lot of time we help people say, "You know, I do love my partner. I'm going to make this work. I'm going to work on this." And then from there, the fatherhood programs and the healthy marriage programs, they build from that and they help folk acquire a new skill set.

And again, the similarity here -- because we learn to have empathy for our kids, for our partner. We learn communication skills, we learn parenting skills, we learn how to fight fairly. And again, that's important for our kids to see.

Let me just skip this slide, because I know I'm running out of time here. Ways to apply these lessons. So fatherhood programs (unintelligible) are perhaps simpler. It's still difficult, but, you know, you've got the guys there. I think it's important for your fatherhood program. Not only do you talk about personal development, but only you talk about parenting and child development. You talk about relationship stuff.

So even if you haven't got contact with the mother, you help the guys thin about that. You emphasize the fact that everything they do to (keep) the -- and you've got to be respectful to the mother, you've got to have a positive relationship. What can be harder is when guys have got kids with more than one mother. How do you manage that? How do you get the mothers in if your target is the father? How do you have to the mothers to come in as well or do some mediation? That's been difficult for fatherhood programs.

The healthy marriage programs, what I hear a lot is, "Well how do I engage dad? How do I talk to dad? How do I get them to come in?" I think for the purpose of this slide - for this presentation, it's also important to take a look at how do we encourage this parenting perspective in the - in what we're doing in healthy marriage. But here's just a few ideas.

The fatherhood program - if you've got guys in multiple fertility situations, they probably need to manage child support issue, so help them with that. But in terms of relationships, focus on their current relationship or their future relationship. They may not be married now, but they can have a good marriage relationship next time.

Do offer some couples workshops. Look to bring in the mothers as well. The focus of the prenatal stage. This is a chance, you know, that golden (unintelligible) moment. You help dads - dads are worried before the babies are born. But they want to think about what's going to happen. Work with them and the mother at that point.

Talk about the family. You know, it's about the kids and the mother. It's not just about the dad.

Give your staff training on healthy marriage. Focus on child well-being. On the healthy marriage side, think about some of the hooks to get dads in. You do need to be able to provide some wrap around services, so again if you haven't got funding to do that, look for community partners that can provide other services or also provide referrals for you.

Look for additional funding sources. Include a focus on relationships with children, so when you're talking about ways to do things with communication with your partner, talk about communicating with your children too. Do staff training on father friendliness. Don't say just parent. Always talk about fathers if you want to include men. Often parent is heard by the staff and the clients as mothers.

Here's some ideas in how you might do this in your relationship skills classes, your healthy marriage classes. So if you're talking about communication skills, you know, I know that the pairs curriculum has the daily temperature reading. The prep curriculum has some listening skills that you go over with each other.

Encourage parents to do that with their kids as well. Encourage them to understand their children's world. Use validation when you're talking with your kids. Have empathy for your kids. I've got a whole lot other things there actually that I can maybe come back to at the end (unintelligible) on this slide.

Here I've said just pay attention to other fatherhood and healthy marriage websites. This is just a daily email message that came from All Pro Dads a couple of days ago, and it's talking about the fact that family relationships are like anything else -- they are predisposed to fray and fall apart. We have to work on our relationships. So share these kind of things with your staff. Share them with dads. Just give them some things to think about. This slide is general ideas on engaging dads. You know, expect men to be involved. Don't ask why aren't men coming. Rather, ask what keeps us from engaging them. Take a look inside. You know, we've got to be aware that our expectations for the staff, you know, all your staff when they're talking to a man, be aware that they're going to perceive what you're thinking, so process your own baggage first. They're going to hear that.

You know, if you want to engage a young dad, don't be afraid of it. If you see a group of young guys on the street, you know, they're just young guys. If you've got kids of that age, think of them. You know, that could be your kids.

So don't be afraid of these guys.

My last few slides, I just - some research links. I thought I skipped one there. I'll (let you) look through these later, but these are some of the links that you can find on the Fatherhood Clearinghouse. I took some of these ideas from some of these articles, and there's some really good stuff here.

The Albany University study did some good work. On this next slide, the Building Strong Families project at which (Joe's_ program has won some good lessons there on recruitment. Okay, so I know I'm over time, so let

me stop there. And you can get more information on a lot of these resources on the fatherhood website. And we'll be putting this up again on the final slide.

So then you go to Mark for any questions and then I'll come back and introduce Joe.

Mark Thomas: Thanks Nigel. A wealth of information. And also just as a reminder, also in response to a couple of questions that have come in, those of you who have received an invitation to participate in the webinar today, the PowerPoint slides for all the presentations are attached to that message, so you can actually print them off for your reference, but also the webinar in its entirety will be available on the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center website within a week and a half approximately.

And again, the handouts will be posted there as well. Along with a recording of the webinar itself. So please don't be too concerned if you haven't been able to jot everything down. We'll provide you with access to all of this information, which you'll want to certainly take a look at in your own time.

In the interest of time, Nigel, we'll just ask you one question and save some of the other questions for the general Q&A time that we have set aside. What would your response be, given that you've talked about responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage programs, to someone who's kind of thinking, "Do we need more of one or more of the others to evaluate responsible fatherhood or healthy marriage more?" What would your response be to someone who's kind of thinking which way is going to yield the greatest benefit for children?"

Nigel Vann: I wouldn't want to put more value on one than the other, Mark. I mean I think that they go hand in glove, you know, and I think really if we're doing one we should be doing the other. You know, I mean if we're doing this to improve child well being, then I think we have to do both. So yes that's my answer (really), you know.

Mark Thomas: Okay. Thank you very much. And again we have some more questions that we'll hold on to and save those for the general Q&A after Joe's had a chance to share his presentation. So with that Nigel, I'll go ahead and turn the time back over to you to introduce Joe Jones.

Nigel Vann: Okay. Great. Okay, well, you know, it's sort of common phrase. It gives you great pleasure to introduce someone, but it really does give me pleasure to introduce Joe. I mean he really is a leader in his field. And I so regard Joe as a friend. I've known Joe since the early '90's and I've really seen what he's done since then.

I first got a call from Joe when I was working with public/private ventures and we were developing that fatherhood development curriculum and Joe was working as a substance abuse counselor on the streets of Baltimore and had this idea to start a program for fathers through the healthy start program that works with mothers but didn't work with dads at the time.

You know, and so Joe just took that. He developed this fathers program through the mayor's office in the city of

Baltimore and then worked to - sort of his own organization to carry on that fatherhood work, saw the value of the relationship work, and the employment work and has really incorporated those two strands into the fatherhood work. He's really shown you sustain this work by working with national and local funders. He's a major presence in the public policy arenas of this country. He's just he's an exception person who is doing some wonderful work. He's got exceptional staff that he's surrounded himself with, and you know, it's a true model for how you'd do this work. So Joe give us some practical lessons here.

Joe Jones: Great. Thanks Nigel for that great introduction. I wish you would call my wife and tell her all those great things, man. Maybe I'll get a, you know, a better meal something tonight, man. But just let me say how excited I am to be on the call today. And I'd like to thank everyone for joining today's webinar and for choosing to dedicate this day to your professional careers to human service.

We are all involved in a time when services for families are undergoing significant redesign. This is somewhat ambiguous, it's some of the feeling of uncertainty, a sense of the unknown, because we're beginning to think about serving families a little bit different. I think you've all heard both Natasha and Nigel mention the inclusion of fathers as particularly important.

We think about services to families. Families has historically been somewhat of a code word for serving women and children and that's the way that our social welfare policy and programming has been designed. And rightfully so.

However, if we want to make a deeper impact in terms of increasing child well being and reducing child poverty, we've got to be more intentional about the ways in which we engage fathers.

And what I hope we come away with today from the presentation and the Q&A - and would also offer that I'm sure that many of the folks who are joining as listeners have tremendous knowledge and tidbits of creativity they're using in their respective communities. And it would be interesting to hear those things as well.

But as I move forward, I just want to share a few things with you in terms of the work that we've been doing in Baltimore. And if I can get to the next slide, please.

Previous to 1999 I worked at the Baltimore Health Department in an infant mortality program that, as Nigel mentioned, it served pregnant women and children and it did not have any services to fathers. As a matter of fact, there were only two males on staff at the time, myself and one other guy. And it was very, very difficult and challenging to think about providing services to men in an environment that had been exclusively designed and run by - for and by women.

And you know, when you think about the connection between the roles that men and women play, they're complimentary in nature. It's not that one is better than the other. It's just that they're complimentary and we both bring different perspectives to the equation in terms of raising children. It's important that we recognize that. And so since 1999 we have been the center for fathers, families and workforce development previously. Now we've branded to the Center for Urban families. Next slide please.

This is a bit of a mistake here. Well beginning in 1993 we actually introduced a men services program at the healthy start program, recognizing that the needs of men included a number of services, most importantly I think really Natasha kind of nailed this early on around the employments needs of men.

And so we introduced a three week job training program after some early fits and starts around trying to provide employment services, recognizing that many low income men face multiple barriers to employment. It is really important that we figure out how to get that right as best we could as a nonprofit.

In 1999, again CFUF was founded. In 2005 we established the Building Strong Families program. This is part of a seven state demonstration program working with couples around the birth of the child or the magic moment. And I think Nigel touched on that a little bit as well.

And this is an opportunity to engage couples very early on in the - in their parental relationship at least in terms of this focal child. In 2006 we began to provide training in (TA) to community and faith-based organizations as well as state agencies to help folks think through and benefit from the experient that we had.

We all have experience and I'm sure that we all value the experiences that we have. And I think it's important that as we hone those experiences and we find (unintelligible) with other, we also were very privileged to create the exploring relationship in marriage curriculum with fragile families -- ERM.

And I think this goes back to one of Nigel points relative to a lot of the curricula that has been available to work with folks in a healthy relationships (in a) marriage education setting have been designed for middle class and upper middle class folks. And very seldom is that material appropriate for the - many of the families that we care most about in terms of particularly in low income settings.

And some material has now been adapted. This curriculum has been designed from the ground up for folks who don't have the economic means to pay for it and is culturally tied to their life circumstance so it would engage them in a different way. Next slide please.

This is just a organization chart for those who want to think about how an organization like CFUF is set up today. I will tell you this is much different than the organization I created in 1999. We started with a staff of approximately eight folks and we've grown now to a staff of approximately 35 folks. So I figured this organizational chart would give some of us an opportunity to see how and organization is set up. Next slide please.

When I think about serving families and, you know, we think about this whole idea of connecting responsible fatherhood and healthy relationships in marriage, I see two categories of men. And this is just for general conversation purposes. You know, I think you know, the language we can, you know, we could debate over non-custodial versus non-resident. We can use them interchangeably, but here one group is the non-custodial group. And these tend to be low income men who are at risk from being disconnected from their children. In many cases they are disconnected from their children.

And as Nigel mentioned, many of these men have not had meaningful relationships with their own fathers so their notion of manhood and fathering is really shaped by a different set of experiences rather than by a loving two parent household that includes the father who is consistently involved in this person's life. And so that their attitudes and beliefs about family and community are a little bit different.

And so the second group would be parents still in romantic relationships. So you think about moms and dads who are - they've met one another, their, interrelationship, they have decided to - whether not planned or unplanned to have a child. And at that time, they're still romantically linked. And this provides a tremendous opportunity to work with fathers in a different way.

And if you do it real well in a really coherent and cohesive way, you're still serving fathers even if it's in a couples relationship situation. Next slide please.

We need to acknowledge that there's intersection between fatherhood and health marriage program. And as I mentioned, fatherhood programs - and I'm a fatherhood practitioner at heart, but I also recognize that if, you know, if you really want to help families and you can get them early enough, you can provide the kind of education information that will allow the couple to acquire the kind of skills that will hopefully allow the relationship to sustain itself for a long period of time so that the children that they produce have the benefit of having access to both mom and dad.

And again, if you do a healthy marriage or a healthy education, healthy marriage program in a very coherent way, you're going to serve fathers although you'll be serving them within a couple's context. It's - one of the things that I think is critically important is organizations consider how to move from simply serving fathers or from serving women and children to serving couples is to think about your organization philosophy around healthy marriage.

I don't think that you can just automatically -- particularly those who are founders of organization or an executive directors -- I don't think you can dictate this. I think this is something that has to be processed. And the way in which we approach it here in Baltimore, we created a internal working group on healthy relationships in marriage, and the working group was comprised of represents from every department within my organization.

We invited folks external to the organization from the healthy marriage community, folks with positions we didn't necessarily agree with, but we needed to know the scope of the work relative to this public policy. And as a result of that, we decided as an organization that it was in our best interest and in the best interest of the community that we care so much about to think about incorporating healthy relationships in marriage education work as a part of our overall organizational programming.

Public policy obviously dictates a lot of what happens. And, you know, we - there - in my mind there are two positions you can take relative to a public policy that may not be something as familiar to some communities as others.

You can stand on the sidelines and you can wait for that public policy to hit, and you can react to it, or you can get engaged with that public policy and help to shape it and hopefully influence the way that it ends up being over time. And that's the position that we took.

And we - and again we engage many external stakeholders. Those are folks from the federal level from the executive branch from the foundation community from the business community, from the health community. All of these partners were critically important to us figuring our organizational philosophy. Next slide please.

These are some of the guiding principles. I won't go through these. Obviously they are available for you, and you can look at them at your leisure. But these are the guiding principles that we use as a result of our internal working group process. Next slide please.

Following that was a set of values and beliefs, statements that we wanted to use to guide the way in which we work with families. We wanted to make sure that every person within the organization, all of our external shareholders understood the way in which we were approaching this from a values and belief standpoint. And this is critical to establishing with the community the way in which we were going to approach this body of work. Next slide please.

Here are some of the ways in which we engage outside stakeholders. We had community conversation. That was actually a designed activity to bring together in a setting approximately 100 to 150 folks comprised of those from the foundation community, family service providers, neighborhood association leaders, parents from our program to talk about this public policy and to help people to understand the way in which we were going to approach this work.

Some of the other bullets here are the activities that we've engaged in to date relative to taking on this body of work. And you can look at those - at your leisure, and obviously if you have questions we can respond online or offline. Next slide please.

Attracting couples. The BSF model -- the Building Strong Families model is the hospital based recruitment process. We actually work with five birthing hospitals in the Baltimore area. And that wasn't easy to do. We identified key leadership within the hospital. And we didn't approach it from what we wanted. We approached it from what would be a way in which we could help their hospitals to reduce their operating budgets, because so many low income families typically don't enter the hospital system until there's an acute health care issue. And the cost associated with that was huge.

We said to the hospitals that we can work with these families very early on, then the opportunity to reduce the cost through preventive health care would help save your operating budget. And that gave us an opportunity to get into the hospitals and to recruit couples -- both the mom and the dad.

Street outreach to pregnant women is also key. You got to be very careful, though, because sometimes you can approach a pregnant or what appears to be a pregnant woman, and she's not pregnant. And there's noth-

ing worse than, you know, that I think that you can do is to identify a woman as being pregnant and she's not.

But, you know, being able to engage her in her own community, talk about what she wants to do in terms of building her own strong family and giving her an opportunity to allow us to meet with her partner to talk about the benefits of being in a couples education program, holding community events, and community based partnership and family organizations are key to being able to create a referral and recruitment base. Next slide please.

Staff is key. Key attributes --people must be engaging and resourceful, and it has to be flexible. It's helpful if they've overcome barriers to success, because then they can model the kind of challenges that families are going through and say to them, "Hey it's not as difficult as you may think. I've done it and I can be there with you every step of the way."

It's beneficial if in they're in their own healthy relationships or marriage. Obviously this can be tricky, but you can employ the expertise of (HR) professionals to help you do this. They must be knowledgeable of the community and willing to hit the streets, highways, and byways. And I mean you can't sit behind a desk and expect that you will be able to recruit effectively. You've got to get out in the community and make your presence felt. Next slide please.

So create a family-friendly environment. Fill the environment with pictures of families. That includes fathers. Make available information about practical resources that low income family (needs). Obviously (there's the) precaution Natasha mentioned -- employment services, child care services, food co-ops.

You know, we're in a very tight economic time. Making sure that families have access to the resources in terms of food, free health screenings, especially for men. Most men don't have the ability or the resources to access health care, and free health care screenings just for some of the basic things that can be incredibly helpful. Next slide please.

Curriculum -- I've noticed that in some cases, folks have decided to use curriculum, but sometimes have not utilized the training associated with the curriculum to make sure that facilitators have the skill set to efficiently implement the curriculum as critical.

(We have a) possible use (season) facilitators, and one of the things that we've done is to work with community colleges to design customized training for our facilitators to make sure that they have the key attributes necessarily - necessary to be good facilitators. Next slide please.

Here are some of the incentives. I know it's difficult. As Nigel mentioned, using federal dollars can be restrictive, but one of the things that you want to be able to do is make sure that you attend the round tables, the conferences, the webinars, because information about allowable costs are often there, and creative ways to be able to address these issues and use federal resources in a way in which can be most helpful to your families and to your communities.

Answers to those questions can be made available, but if you're not attending, you know you're not going to have the benefit of knowing those things.

Be creative. Invite people to your program, particularly donors, large and small. You know, we've had people who've given us \$500, \$50. That \$50 will allow us to do something that we can't do with federal dollars, and it can be something as small as doing some kind of small activity with fathers and children, but it gives you that kind of flexibility.

And creating and nurturing activities for couples. Use couples to put on special events, particularly around holidays that are couple friendly like Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, and Father's Day. And don't under any circumstances, forget the children. Next slide please.

Start with your own experience. You can look through these lists of activities, but it's critical that, you know, you think about most of those service programs again are designed for just women and children. Men will participate in activities geared towards couples. They may come kicking and screaming initially, but when they can get into these couple sessions and begin to see other couples engaging and interacting with one another, they begin to let their guard down.

And men respond best to other men. You've got to figure out more and more ways to get higher men into programs that provide services to families, (all right). And couples are not afraid to explore the marriage conversation. You can inject a conversation and they won't reject it. It's not that you're forcing folks to do anything. These are voluntary and these are education sessions; they're not counseling.

And don't be afraid to explore this conversation with them. And keep the class interests with incentives and other activities. And again, this ties into allowable costs and begin able to have those flexible dollars. Next slide please.

Once couples engage, they will see the value of the program, enroll couples from new - they form new social networks, they begin to have conversations external to the organization. They begin to hang out with one other, they begin to invite each other to different events at their home. And remember, many couples, particularly as they begin to really think about the marriage question, don't have a lot of environments external to your program to talk about this issue. So these new social networks are important.

Transportation and childcare and food and can centers supplementing federal dollars again with private funding allows the flexibility to - needed to enhance retention. And with that, I would end, you know, my contribution to this discussion and look forward to the remaining time we have. Mark?

Mark Thomas: Thank you so very much, Joe. Again, a great wealth of information for both those working in the responsible fatherhood and the marriage space. Again, due to limitations of time we'll probably (unintelligible) or ask you to answers a couple of questions and then we'll provide the whole panel of Nigel, yourself, and Natasha to respond to a couple of questions.

And unfortunately during - due to our time constraints, we're not able to answer all of the questions that have been submitted, but wanted to remind people that we will be putting together a frequently asked questions document in relation to this webinar so that those questions that weren't able to be answered on air will do the job - good job of (fulfilling) those questions and providing you answers to those questions as participants in coming weeks.

First of all Joe, question for you. Given that you've worked in both the healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood world, what advice would you give to a healthy marriage program that would like to develop a relationship with a responsible fatherhood program either in terms of a partnership or a recruiting relationship? What might you advise them to do to try and develop and solidify a relationship with a responsible fatherhood program?

Joe Jones: Well, I think the first step is just to like any relationship. It's, you know, it's an opportunity to sit down and share what resources are available from the two organization - two organizations and how mutually they may be able to share and level resources. And then to think about, you know, drilling down to who are the key staff that need to engage each other. You know, definitely visit each other's organizations.

You know, and this is not a one time conversation. I think this, you know, this requires making sure that if you - for example if you're thinking about partnering with an organization that does not do healthy marriage programming, that you help them to understand what this public policy is, the benefits, and how it's been beneficial to you.

For fatherhood programs obviously, you know, this is - this can be new territory, you know, and look to be able to share the strengths and the resources that you bring serving fathers to a program that is looking to serve couples.

Fatherhood programs have some significant strengths, and sometimes I think we undervalue what we bring to the table. And I think if you think about those couple of things as starters, it can help us marriage, if you will, those two potential partnerships.

Mark Thomas: Great. Thank you. Another question that came in was around working with fathers who might be incarcerated or reentering the community. Could you maybe talk a little bit about your experiences working with those populations and things practitioner's might want to keep in mind both responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage programs in trying to engage those fathers and help them engage in the services that they provide?

Joe Jones: Well I think a couple of key things that - just to be brief. One, as much as you can, you want to engage folks before they're released from incarceration. The criminal justice system, you know, is kind of overwhelmed with a number of, you know, organizations that want to do good work within the prisons, so you have to be mindful that, you know, the criminal institutions have a mandate to, you know, kind of, you know, make sure that they look out for public safety.

And so sometimes it can be - appear to be frustrating when you're trying to get into an institution, but if you're patient, you make the right kind of connections and identify your purpose clearly in getting behind the fence before people are released, I think one of the failed strategies is allowing folks to be released from incarceration and then trying to find them after the fact.

You know, it doesn't take I don't think rocket science to understand that when people are released from incarceration, you know, many times you don't have resources to sustain themselves. And they're looking for housing, they're looking for shelter, they're looking for ways in which to meet their immediate needs.

And to be able to partner with organizations, whether it's parole and probation, the person still has time on their sentence they need to complete, to do the follow up with and to make sure that as much as you can, connect with those individuals as soon after the incarceration as possible and make sure that you have all the (link-ages) that are necessary, particularly around employment. And if the guy has children, obviously there's a potential of child support. And you've got to be able to identify the ways in which you can manage those issues.

Mark Thomas: Thank you Joe. Unfortunately we've run out of time. We need to bring things to a close, so we won't have a chance to address the others questions that have been submitted, but we wanted to thank again our participants for submitting those questions. And I'll remind you that we'll do our best to provide you with responses to those questions and the requests for the additional information you're looking for in the frequently asked questions document we'll put together.

So unfortunately we don't have time to have each of our presenters respond to questions as a group, but again we'll direct you towards that frequently asked questions document. What we'd like to do as we begin wrapping things up is turn time back over to (Jenn McHenry), who will help guide participants in answering some polling questions we have about your experiences today as participants in the webinar. (Jenn)?

(Jenn McHenry): Thanks, Mark. Everyone will look on their screens. You're going to see a (scan). We're going to go through four questions fairly quickly. If you could just click to the left of the color, that would be excellent. And the first question is, "I better understand the key findings of father involvement research." And again, your choices are strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, and strongly disagree. And as always there's a no vote down at the bottom.

And that's, "I better understand the key findings in father involvement research." And were just going to take a couple more seconds.

Okay, now we're going to move on to Question 2. "I am more informed of the research and policy developments that have led to government sponsored responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage programs." And again the choices are the same as before -- strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, and strongly disagree. You just take a minute and click on what you feel is most appropriate. Again, "I am more informed of the research and policy developments that have led to government sponsored responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage programs." Well take just about five or six more seconds with this.

And thanks. And Question number 3 is, "I am more familiar with the resources that marriage and fatherhood programs can use to strengthen their ability to understand and engage fathers." And that's, "I am more familiar with the resources that marriage and fatherhood programs can use to strengthen their ability to understand and engage fathers."

Again, your choices are strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, strongly disagree. And down there at the bottom there's a no vote. We'll take just a little bit longer. Okay and our very last question -- "I will be able to apply the knowledge presented today to my program." And, "I will be able to apply the knowledge presented today to my program." And your choices once again -- strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, strongly disagree or no vote. We'll just take a couple more seconds.

Okay and thanks for participating and helping us make these a little bit better for everyone. And now I'll turn it back over to Mark.

Mark Thomas: Thank you very much (Jenn). Again, we want to extend a - our sincere gratitude to Natasha, Joe, and Nigel, who provided us some really great information and helps us understand the intersection between healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood and pointed us to great resources that we can access as well as lessons that they've learned from their own experience.

I'd like to thank each of them again and thank each of you for taking time out of your day to join with us in this webinar, and encourage you to keep an eye on your email inbox to learn about upcoming National Healthy Marriage Resource Center National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse webinars.

With that, I'll turn the time over to Nigel Vann for our final wrap up comments.

Well thanks Mark and thanks everybody else. And I am sorry we didn't have time to answer all the questions. I think part of the issue here was there were so many people dialing in we waited a bit to get started. But I do encourage everybody to keep monitoring the Fatherhood Clearinghouse website and the Healthy Marriage website.

Certainly in the work with the Fatherhood grantees that myself and Joe involved in as part of the (TA) team, we will continue to explore these issues and we will be available to help the Healthy Marriage Resource Center as much as possible to follow up on some of these things. And, you know, I would encourage you also to check out other fatherhood websites, you know, particularly folk on the healthy marriage site, to see what else is out there.

For instance, the National Fatherhood Initiative website or fatherhood.org. There's some surveys on there about marriage, one called within - with this ring. There's a survey called pops culture asking fathers their views on marriage. The National Fatherhood Initiative is also working with Smart Marriages to come up with more information on ways in which fatherhood and marriage come together.

So keep checking that website for that kind of information, and, you know, beyond all the other websites that are out there. There's a wealth of information and we will continue to work together to improve child wellbeing.

So everybody keep up the good work, and I hope to meet as many as possible of you as we keep moving down this road. Everybody have a good afternoon.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen that does conclude today's conference call. We thank you for your participation and ask that you please disconnect your lines.

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