



T5. Getting the Word Out About Dads: From Messaging to Marketing to Social Media

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Moderator:

- Meghan Heffron, Family Assistance Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance, Washington, D.C.

Presenters:

- Madeline Miller, Campaign Director, The Ad Council, New York, New York
- David Miller, Social Media Manager, National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, Washington, D.C.

Meghan Heffron: Good afternoon everyone. Welcome to this afternoon's breakout session, Getting the Word Out About Dads: From Messaging to Marketing to Social Media. If you weren't already committed to this, hopefully you were inspired by some of the things Mr. Braswell said about social media and what an important role it has in reaching some of our dads.

We have two great speakers today. We're going to start with Madeline Miller, the Campaign Director at the Ad Council where she oversees the development of purpose driven marketing programs. We also have David Miller, the Social Media Manager for the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse. You can read more about them in the bio section of the app. Please welcome Madeline.

Madeline Miller: Hi everyone. My name is Madeline Miller and I am Campaign Director at the Ad Council. I'm excited to be here today to talk to you about how to create and leverage great messaging to get the word out to dads and to really build excitement around responsible fatherhood. I want to start by telling you a little bit about the Ad Council. We helped develop the public service ad campaign that really does drive awareness around responsible fatherhood. We are an organization that creates communications that help address the nation's toughest issues. We are the only nonprofit that brings together the brightest minds across media, advertising, technology, marketing, all in an effort to inspire action and improve lives. We address issues across safety and health, education, family and community.

The Ad Council takes on a number of different issues, and responsible fatherhood is one of those issues that we address through our public service advertising campaign. With so many issues to take on that are important to this country, how do we really make responsible fatherhood break through? How do we make this the issue people are really thinking about? The answer is, with a great Public Service Announcement (PSA) campaign. That's a really essential component.



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I want to talk to you about what makes a great PSA campaign. First, there are foundational elements that you need in place. The first is a credible sponsor. You need an organization behind this that is credible, that can really act as an expert in this space and with this issue. Of course, for the responsible fatherhood campaign, we have that. We have the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, and the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse serving as sponsors of this campaign.

We also need to ensure that the issue is non-partisan, non-denominational, and really affects and impacts a large percentage of the population. This campaign runs nationally, so we need to make sure it has an impact on not just a small segment of the population, but really a broad number of people. We also need to make sure that it's an evergreen message. We want to ensure that our PSA campaigns are relevant year-round.

Lastly, we need to make sure that an issue is what we call PSA-able. That is, there is a tangible call to action at the end, whether it's a video or a print ad. A single action that we want people to take once we have those foundational elements in place.

There are four key attributes of a great campaign. The first is that our message is clear and single minded. We only have a limited amount of space to talk and convey our message, therefore we want to make sure what we're saying is really streamlined. It's simple, clear, and easy to understand. We can't say 10 things in a 30 second video, so we need to distill that into a single message that can be easily understood, and that people can take away. Second, the PSAs need to be relevant. We want the audience to feel like this message is really for them, that it will benefit them. Third, we want to make sure that these PSAs and this message have tangible takeaways. That there's a single action that we want people to walk away with, that they can then go out and do on their own. Lastly, you want there to be an emotional component. This doesn't mean that our PSAs need to be sad or heart wrenching. You just saw the dad jokes PSA a couple of minutes ago and there were laughs across the room. We want there to be an engaging component. We want this to elicit some emotional reaction which is going to grab people's attention and really make sure that they are listening, and that they're taking away what we want them to hear.

How do we get here? How do we develop a PSA campaign like the dad jokes campaign that is clear and single minded, relevant, has a tangible call to action, and is emotionally engaging and connects with the audience? The first step we take is identifying an actionable PSA proposition. What that means is taking an issue which is often broad and complex and nuanced, like the issue of responsible fatherhood, and finding a way to address it. There are so many different ways we could approach responsible fatherhood, so many different angles that we could use to address this issue. How do we really distill that message and how do we decide how we're going to talk about this issue?



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Next is identifying our core target audience. We can't be all things to all people. What we do in terms of developing a PSA campaign is we really narrow down our audience to make sure that we're speaking to the right people. In our case, with responsible fatherhood, we're lucky that this audience is broad. We're speaking to all dads across different ages, races, ethnicities, socioeconomic status, and geographic location. That is our audience, all dads. Next, we often go into a research phase where we're learning more about our audience. What do we know about dads? What do we know that motivates them? What are their barriers to being more engaged and active in their children's lives? How do we best reach them? What messaging might be most relevant or interesting for them to hear? How should we deliver it to them? We do it in a variety of ways, often talking to dads, whether that's conducting focus groups or doing interviews with them. We're able to learn and better understand their motivations and also the challenges that they face.

There's often a desire to say everything we want to, and everything we know about dads in this one medium, which are our PSAs. But we have to resist the temptation to say too much. The next stage in this process, once we've identified the PSA proposition, is deciding on our approach. Once we've identified our audience and learned more about what motivates them, we then distill that information into what we call a brief. It's often a one or two-page document that really refines this information into a streamlined document. It includes the background, why we're advertising, and in this case it's to inspire a commitment to responsible fatherhood. It identifies our target audience of dads. It describes the strategic insight. It's what we know about dads that's really going to help drive our message home. What we know, and what research tells us, and what you all know is that an engaged father leads to better outcomes for children. We know that it's often hard to find the time and the resources to be a dad in today's society. That tension versus the challenges that these dads face, is what led us to the strategic insight that really drives our PSAs. It only takes a moment to really have a lasting impact. That becomes our main message, the making of a moment. We include support points, so all of the research backs up our claims. Finally, our call to action. What we want dads to take away from this, which is to spend time and engage with their children through these small moments. We end with the Fatherhood.gov URL. That's where the website comes in to really do the heavy lifting. Because the PSAs we deliver can only say one thing, we want to deliver one message, we leverage the website and the fulfillment on the back end to really do the heavy lifting in terms of providing additional resources and information. As Kenny shared, there's a whole library of research on Fatherhood.gov that people can access. There are tips and tools and activity guides for fathers. That's where we're able to deliver all of the additional information that we want to share with dads.

Once we have our PSAs, we've driven the dads to the website. How do we know, as the PSA developers, that we're actually making an impact? That's where we set up our evaluation



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framework. We're setting up metrics for success at the beginning to ensure that our PSAs are delivering the message and are doing so effectively. We use the framework to better understand if we're making the right directional shifts in terms of exposure, awareness, engagement, and impact. When we talk about exposure, we're talking about the media support. All of the Ad Council PSAs are run in time and space that is 100% donated by the media. We don't pay for media. When we talk about exposure, we're talking about how much media support our PSAs get. How many times have the PSAs aired? How many placements have the print or newspaper ads received? We're also talking about press pickup. Has there been interest from the press in this issue? Have we seen articles written about it? Have we seen this picked up by consumer press, by ad trades?

Next, we're looking at awareness. Of those who are exposed to our ads, what percentage of the population or what percentage of our audience is actually aware of our PSAs, aware of this issue? Then we talk about engagement. Yes, there are those who have been exposed, who are aware; but, how many have taken a step to actually engage or interact with the content? That can come in a few different ways. That could be a visit to the Fatherhood.gov website, a like on a social post on Facebook, a call to the toll-free number, a comment in response to a blog post or in response to a Twitter question. We're always looking and measuring those who are exposed, aware, and who are engaging.

Next is impact. This is where we can really see whether we're moving the needle or creating the behavior and attitudinal change that we want to see. Through the Ad Council, we're able to measure this through a survey. We're able to see, over time, are dads spending more time with their children, taking them to and from activities, spending more time doing homework with them, telling their children dad jokes? That's where we're able to see shifts over time and trends that really tell us that we're making the changes we want to see. That we're really increasing the engagement that fathers have in their children's lives.

The last step is really just a mindset, and it's about patience. We know that in nearly all instances that changing social norms does not happen overnight, and it takes time, but it is possible. We've seen it happen with other public service ad campaigns. Think of in the past how drinking and driving were perceived. It used to be okay, it used to be a norm, and now there's a designated driver in place all the time. It's not acceptable. Similarly, with smoking. It used to be perceived as cool, and now that whole paradigm has shifted. Smoking is not cool; it's widely understood as deadly. Same with seat belts. Buckling up wasn't the standard, and now, over time, that has changed. It's important to remember that we need to give these issues time to really see changes and to see movement.

I've talked a lot about how we create the messaging that you see. I want to shift gears and talk about how we get that message out there. How does the media come into play? How do we





actually amplify these messages? As I'm sure you know and as I'm sure you can attest to, the media landscape has really changed. Think about how everyone in this room uses media today. More and more we're seeing what people are calling cord cutters, those who no longer subscribe to cable providers in their home. Instead we're seeing an increase in streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Hulu. We're also seeing a big increase in internet streaming radio like Pandora and Spotify. Even the way media is purchased is changing. There are now algorithms in place that can make split second decisions to make media purchases, which used to happen really on a one-to-one level.

We're seeing targeting on social media be more effective than it has ever before. Social media isn't new anymore, but the way it's used is constantly evolving. We're now seeing a huge increase in the use of what we call influencers. They could be celebrities or athletes with massive followings that really have a lot of influence over their audiences. Even influencers with smaller followings, what we call micro-influencers, have people who they are really loyal to and can really affect their behavior, their decisions, and perceptions. We've seen a big increase in what we call place-based marketing. Advertisements aren't just on your TV screen or the newspaper. They could be in the back of an Uber, in a convenience store, or at the gas pump. They really are everywhere, and it gives us opportunities to place our message in places that we weren't able to before. Experiential marketing is on the rise. We can have opportunities to market and message in events, at concerts.

With this shifting media landscape, the Ad Council does a wonderful job of securing national media placements. You'll hopefully, if you haven't already, see the responsible fatherhood PSAs in your own lives. They're out there in the world. What we know is that when national media support is supplemented with local media support, that's where you see increased awareness and relevancy. National and local media work together. We often encourage our partners to supplement our national efforts with their own local media efforts, because we know it can increase awareness.

What I want to talk to you about now are some of the best practices for building relationships with the local media. What we know about the local media is that they have a very strong preference for locally relevant issues and locally based groups. Throughout this process I'm going to refer to the importance of making the issue of responsible fatherhood relevant in your local communities and in your local fatherhood programs.

The first tactical step in developing relationships with the local media is to develop an outreach plan. This starts by identifying media prospects that you can actually reach out to. Of course it's always helpful if you have existing relationships to leverage those first, but you can also do some of your own research to determine who might be the best person in your community, at your local TV station, at your local newspaper to start building that relationship with. Oftentimes it's





helpful to think about what outlets are running programs that are relevant to fathers. That doesn't necessarily need to be just father or family focused content. Sports for example could be an interesting way of having a local media partner talk about fatherhood and speak to fathers.

Once you have identified some of your initial contacts, the titles of the people you might be speaking with often have community affairs, public affairs, or public affairs director within their title; or, you might be connected with a general manager who oversees all of the operations and can likely direct you to the PSA director. The PSA director is the media gatekeeper who decides whether or not a PSA will air.

We recommend that you schedule a face-to-face meeting when possible. Of course, this is the best way to capture someone's attention and get their full attention, but we know that phone and email are often more convenient and are totally fine methods as well. In terms of scheduling outreach, it's helpful to find a time where this issue makes the most sense. We know that Father's Day of course is an obvious one. The release of new PSAs is often a good time as well. When there's new news to share, when there's something exciting or new or different to share about this issue, that is a great time to go to a local media contact and push this message. Other times could be a great seasonal hook as well. Think about summer or back to school or the holidays. Times when engaged fathers really could be top of the mind. Just think about the way you frame it.

Back to school could be a great time for fathers to start being more engaged in their children's school activities. Think about ways you can connect your conversation to the timeframe. You want to remind the PSA director when you're talking to them that this issue is relevant year-round and that you need their support all the time, not just during the summer or around Father's Day.

Once you have scheduled your outreach, you will then want to determine what you're going to say in this meeting, really crafting those key talking points into a pitch. We have some helpful guidelines for what you should include in that pitch. The first being the goals and the target of the advertising, inspiring a commitment to responsible fatherhood, and our target being dads. You also want to tell them a bit more about the PSA campaign. What's the insight driving this message? This really helps them better understand why this issue is important. It's always helpful to bring research and stats when possible. The library on Fatherhood.gov is a great resource, but whenever you can, tailor those stats to your community. Make it relevant for the local media contacts. They're most interested in what benefits the people they serve; so, when you can relate this issue to the people that they're reaching, they'll be more likely to take what you're saying to heart.

When building your pitch, in terms of underscoring the local relevance, think about local stories, anecdotes, local events, local activations that you can bring into the conversation to make this





issue feel relevant and important to them. During the meeting itself, it's important to come prepared with answers to questions you might get during this meeting. Keep the tone relaxed and friendly. You will want to support the issue, the message, and make sure that you start building the foundation of that relationship.

In the pitch, you want to end with an ask. A very clear and direct request to air the PSA. That could look different depending on whether you're talking to a TV station or a newspaper. However, there could be other opportunities that might be available to you. Let's say the local media outlet has a website. That's a great opportunity for us to offer up the dad jokes digital banners. The media contact might have great social channels, so they might be offering to post something on Facebook about responsible fatherhood.

It's also important that they understand the Fatherhood.gov website. They, like our general audience, will probably want more information. Knowing there's a website and a resource that they're driving audiences to is important. It's nice to mention that there are spokespeople available for interviews if they'd like to have that as part of their support of this issue. It's helpful to leave behind materials, if possible. Tomorrow there is a session about the responsible fatherhood media campaign toolkit where we house all of these wonderful resources that are great guides to bring to those meetings. After the meeting, make sure you're keeping the media in mind. You want to keep them informed as events come up, as new research is released, or new PSAs come out. Send them a note. Let them know about it. Make sure that you become the go-to person for them when they have questions around responsible fatherhood. Be sure to respond to questions quickly and promptly, and reiterate and underscore that you are a resource for them.

It's always nice to follow up with a thank you note as well. Let them know that you appreciated their conversation. If you've seen the PSA aired in the time since you've met with the media contact, follow up again. Let them know that you are acknowledging their support of this issue. This will help reinforce and build that relationship with the local media in the hopes that they continue to support and help extend the reach of our responsible fatherhood campaign.

I hope this was a helpful intro into how you can really start building and developing these local media relationships, all in an effort to really build excitement around responsible fatherhood in your community, and to help amplify the message itself. With that, I will turn it over to David who's going to talk more about social media.

David Miller: Good afternoon. My name is David Miller. I am from Baltimore, Maryland and have been working with the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse for a number of years. I actually built the Facebook page, Twitter page, and Instagram for the Clearinghouse. I'm happy to say we have over 240,000 followers on our Facebook page and it is growing. If you haven't had a chance to look at our social media platforms, we strongly suggest you do,





particularly in terms of the content which I'm going to talk about because the reality is, if you really want to reach dads, particularly younger dads, but all dads, and you really want to reach researchers and policymakers, social media is one of a number of strategies that we strongly suggest you look at.

There are just a couple of things I want you to consider and/or think about as it relates to social media. One is to create some social media policies. One of the things that we're very clear about in terms from a content perspective, we don't post anything related to politics. We stay away from politics and we stay away from religion. We have a very detailed plan in terms of how often we should be posting.

One of the things that is increasingly important is to determine your audience. Who are you trying to reach? With the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, we mainly have three buckets. Researchers, and that's one of the reasons why when you take a look at the NRFC library on Fatherhood.gov, you'll find that we have over 35,000 research articles and briefs that can help advance the work. Researchers in the field. There has not been enough research on the topic of fatherhood and responsible fatherhood. We're really trying to push the envelope as it relates to research. Policymakers and professionals, like many of you in the room, and that last bucket is fathers.

As we begin to delve deeper into our social media campaign, you'll begin to see that a lot of our efforts are really targeted toward ordinary dads. Whether they're dads in rural parts of America, urban communities, or suburban communities. We try to make sure that we have a very robust and diverse platform as it relates to reaching out to dads. There are a couple of topics that we post a great deal about. Dads raising children with special needs is often something that is not talked about. We often get emails or inquiries from dads who are raising children with special needs. Co-parenting is a very big issue. We do a lot of work around co-parenting. Balancing work and family. We get a lot of emails from dads or messages on our platforms; I'm working two jobs, noncustodial dad, I'm trying to figure out how to balance work and family. Child support and visitation is probably our single biggest issue. Because child support and visitation is such a big issue, I'm on the Twitter page 24 hours a day, seven days a week, because we know there's some angry dads out here. When we first started, we got the brunt of that anger. As we went through our first year, we were able to really help the dads understand that we understand that you are angry, but in order for us to direct you to resources, we need you to tell us what city and state you're in and what your issue is so we can suggest resources and/or agencies. We still have some angry dads out of that 240,000 on our page, but we have been able to connect dads to a lot of resources.

Determine frequency of posting. Interestingly enough, when I first started on this project, we didn't have a Facebook page. I had a lot of restrictions in terms of what I could and couldn't do.





Initially, we could only post between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. My pushback was, well if we really want to groom a robust audience, a lot of people work from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and are not supposed to be on their phone on social media during what we consider to be traditional business hours. You will see sometimes I post at 3:00 a.m., sometimes I'll post at 10:00 p.m., or 7:00 a.m. I've been given a lot of freedom and flexibility to pretty much post throughout the day. I also post on weekends. Because I have a lot of flexibility, we've been able to build a robust platform. Many of you might not have that kind of flexibility, but you really want to develop some guidelines in terms of posting frequency. Research topics run the gamut from child support to visitation to incarcerated dads and dads returning to the community. We do some really interesting things around dads raising young children, which again I think is both a research topic and a topic across-the-board that we have to do a better job at providing information to young dads.

Raise your hand if you are a dad. Raise your hand if you can remember when you had that infant, when you were holding them. Some of us can't remember back that far. One of the reasons why we try to focus heavily on dads raising young children is because a lot of times dads are having children and not emotionally ready and don't necessarily have the skillsets. We're able to use social media as a platform to disseminate that information. I produce a social media calendar which is sent to OFA for review. Sometimes they may have questions. Every once in a while I'll go overboard, they'll reel me back in, smack my hand, and tell me the direction that I need to be going in. I turn in a social media calendar and what that does is provide me with posts that I've already researched and developed. I also have the flexibility to do Google alerts; whenever there's an article, or when an article comes out that's written about fathers and families, I'll review and vet the article. If the article comes from a reputable news outlet, we will post. One of our colleagues across our team may, for example, be in Dallas, Texas driving down the street and they may see a billboard that says, "Take time to be a father." They'll take a picture of it, send it to me, and we'll post it.

Again, we have a lot of flexibility as it relates to content, but the social media calendar is extremely helpful. Social media integration. You can't do everything. You really want to decide which platform you want to master. For some of us it may be Facebook, for some it may be Twitter or Instagram. For many of you who are just starting, it's going to be difficult for you to try to run all platforms at the same time. You want to think carefully, talk to your staff, talk to your colleagues, do some research. The National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse is always available if you have follow-up questions, if you need training. Reach out to us because those are things that we can help you with, but you really want to decide what platform you are most comfortable with and what platform is going to really maximize the work you're going to do.





Set measurable social media goals. Our key metrics are around likes, comments, and shares. As Kenny mentioned, one of our most successful posts had over six million shares, and I just reposted it a few minutes ago for you to see. Those are pretty much our standard metrics. Those are the things that I really look at regularly to determine the success of our posting. There are some things that are not really exciting, that don't get a lot of likes. Often when we post information about webinars, that's not a really sexy advertisement, so we're trying to figure out a way to better position things like webinars and products.

How many of you are having events on or around Father's Day? Let's talk after this session because we would love for you to send us a camera-ready flyer. We will get it approved and post it. Throughout the year, if you are having any type of events, even if it's a local event, send us a flyer. It's good for a local event to get some national attention.

We spend a lot of time doing back end research, looking at trends, looking at what is the average age that is monitoring our pages. One of the things that has been very interesting is the large number of people that we get outside the United States. We have a large contingent from Europe, we have a large international following. Here are a few quick strategies that I think are really important. We are always looking at what other groups are doing in terms of their social media strategies. How many of you check out All Pro Dads? Even though they're not really considered our competitors, they are. All Pro Dads does some really good work; so, it's always important to look at what other agencies are doing, whether it's other federal agencies or other state agencies. How many of you represent the nonprofit sector? Knowing what other nonprofit organizations are doing work that is aligned with yours is really important. You want to establish a consistent, clear message and voice. Because I've been working with this project so long, I know a lot of people who actually post, even though we haven't met. I can almost tell you what they're going to post. We try to maximize articles and photographs with our work with the Ad Council and PSAs. Videos get a lot of mileage on social media. They get a tremendous amount of comments, likes, and shares.

Everything is not a research article or a brief. We try to mix it up. This is a sample post dedicated to stepfathers. One of the ways we're able to have high levels of engagement is because we're asking a lot of questions. A lot of times the questions can be very provocative. For example, if you were in charge of your state's child support enforcement office, what changes would you make? I guess many of you could just imagine some of the comments. Some people may say they would abolish the whole thing. Other people provide us with really good tips. We then categorize many of the comments that we get from those questions, and try to repurpose those comments for future webinars.

When people comment, we don't read the comments and take them to heart. All the comments we get, we try to figure out a way to repurpose.





Engagement tips. *Hashtags*. Whenever you have events, it's important for you to research a hashtag and come up with one that speaks to you and the essence of your event. It's a good way to document or archive the conversation that's going on in social media. Images increase engagement. *Tag influencers*. There are a great number of influencers. Approximately two years ago, Kenny Braswell, Patrick Patterson and I met with 30 of the top dad bloggers in the United States and were blown away by these dads blogging about being great dads and the amount of reach they had. Because of their reach, some of them have been endorsed by major corporations such as diaper and car companies. They would be considered influencers. We respond to both positive and negative messages. I tend to give a warning but will banish you from the page if I need to; and that has happened. The language and rhetoric have not been consistent with the work that we're trying to do. If you are going to be involved in social media, you have to make sure you have a staff person who is going to monitor, because the controls are really important.

I want to bring up our page, and I hope you will log on to it. We try to promote products, webinars, conferences, gatherings, summits. If you send us promotional material about your events that you are having, we'll review it, vet it, and we will try to post it.

Meghan Heffner: Thank you Madeline and David. Does anybody have any questions? Give us your name and your organization.

My name is Don Unger. I research and write about fathering issues. I am without an organization. Madeline, you mentioned the importance of having patience and wait and see; give something time to work. I have trouble figuring out when am I being sufficiently patient and waiting for something to work, and when am I being a moron and sticking with something that so clearly is never going to work. I'm wondering, as you're exercising patience, what are the cues that you're looking for that suggest that it's worth waiting, or that it's time to let this go?

Madeline Miller: When I talked about patience, I was really talking about seeing shifts in broad cultural norms; but, there are certainly indicators that what you're doing is okay. There are certainly key indicators that you can be looking for on a much shorter timeframe to understand whether what you're doing is effective, and whether it's working. For us and with the PSA campaign, we're actually able to see, every quarter or so, whether what we're doing is having any impact. Whether we're seeing increased levels of awareness, increased levels of engagement, shifts in attitudes or behaviors. Then, over time, we're looking at those as trend lines. That's not to say that you have to give something that you're not sure is working more time than is really needed. I think making sure that you're setting up milestones to check in and understand whether you're making any shifts in the right direction is probably a great way to start breaking that up and tracking it.





My name is Mark Taylor, I'm with a program called True Dads. You were both talking about influencers. Do you have a process in which you select your influencers, vetting them out to see if they fit with your messaging? How do you monitor that to make sure that it stays consistent? One of my fears is we find someone that works well with our program, we do a PSA, and then later they make a decision or say something that could change the public perception of what would work well with our program.

David Miller: I think when you're dealing with celebrities, particularly celebrities, those are the risks you take. I'm not going to name any names, but I can remember one or two celebrities that were vetted who ended up getting in trouble, so we had to go back and scrub all of the pages of that person's image and all of that content. I think that is part of the challenge when you're working with influencers and celebrities. It's your hope that they never get in trouble; but, it could be something very minor that could cause issues with your agency across-the-board. I think you have to be very careful with your vetting, and at the moment something does happen, you also have to get in front of it. You can't just say, okay, well this particular person got in trouble so we're no longer going to be associated with them. You also need to provide some kind of statement to say why you are no longer allowing this person to endorse the messages of your work. It's part of the work.

My name is Jesse Adolf and I'm a professor of African diaspora studies. Do you have any advice for a professor like myself who would like to start a vlog on fatherhood narratives in hip hop?

David Miller It's an important topic, particularly when you think about hip hop. I think there are a lot of positive images. We are constantly inundated with negative images in hip hop, and so there are some great examples of fatherhood throughout the music industry. I think that it would be a really important blog, and I would say jump in with both feet and do your research. I think there's some really great examples of bloggers out there, and we could certainly talk afterwards. I just think that it's a worthwhile body of work.

My name is Barbara Andrews from the US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families in Region Two. I wanted to mention to the professor that several years ago, under the Office of Family Assistance and the Office of Regional Operations, there was an African American healthy marriage initiative that one of the conferences devoted to healthy marriage and hip hop, so I'll talk to you later. Also, just a cautionary tale about celebrities. This isn't necessarily a bad thing. Sometimes sports figures get traded, and then you lose your local connection. They may be wonderful, they may be exemplary, but then they get traded.

My name is Jubi and I work with Madeline at the Ad Council. Just a couple of points I wanted to add. On celebrities, some of it is influence. You're not necessarily asking anyone to endorse your





message, you're inspiring them to take on the fatherhood message, so then it's theirs. There's a little bit of a distance for you, so you can go in that space, which is kind of nice. With the vlog, start small. Start getting your voice together, and then you have people in the room who can share that. I wanted to underscore what David said. For those who have the opportunity to start and craft their own guidelines, you don't necessarily have to be the content creator. There are a lot of people already in the space. There's a lot of stuff that you can share.

Dads, think about what you like to consume and where you get that from. People aren't always making the same things. They're like that person posted this, I like it, I'm going to share it. You can do that with your organization with the right guidance and guidelines. Just remember, you don't necessarily have to be ready to take it on and create it all on your own.

My name is Mark. I have a national program, a curriculum called Nurturing Fathers. My son and I just started doing podcasts together on different topics. I wonder if you have any words of wisdom about promoting those, sharing those, and keeping them moving.

Madeline Miller: Now more than ever there are many different podcast platforms, so those are always good to explore and really learn more about. Also, making your message into really succinct audio clips is helpful. We often provide what we call live announcer reads, which are essentially just short scripts, 10-15 seconds that we can then distribute to other radio announcers and hosts, so in their own words they're able to talk about our message in the way we want them to. They're helpful guidelines that you can hand off so that you're able to get more exposure for what you're trying to say.

Meghan Heffron: It feels like a theme here is getting started or how to get started. Can I get a show of hands of who feels like they have a very strong grasp on social media at their organization? I have two. Who has a grasp or a presence? Then who here feels like they have no concept whatsoever of how to approach social media? We have a few of those. I'm thinking about the idea of here's where you should look to start, or if you were going to pick one thing we've said so far and start on it.

David Miller: My best recommendation would be to start with Facebook because it is relatively easy to navigate. Everyone should be able to log onto YouTube which has some pretty simple tutorials that can show you how to set up your account, post, and view.

Meghan Heffron: I think another thing David said that resonated for me was having a dedicated staff person. I think an approach to social media similarly to marketing, it's a different realm but it falls in a similar camp. It is a skill that takes a lot of effort and some understanding to approach social media. It's not "I have a Facebook account; I'm going to be great at this." I think it requires





a distinct skillset. Any thoughts on what you would look for in someone who's going to represent social media? One person, multiple people, essential skills for those social media members?

David Miller: Someone who can dedicate the time to do the research; because, in order to do it right, a lot of research needs to be done in terms of not only understanding platforms but also understanding trends. It can be very time consuming. Someone who is not anti-technology and is already on Facebook or Twitter within their personal life.

My name is Terry and I'm with the Dads Making a Difference program in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Madeline, aside from what I do for the state of Wyoming, I have like eight million jobs, and one of them is actually in radio. You spoke earlier about how to approach the media. I was a PSA director. There are so many people I'd love to put on the air and help out and interview. Sometimes they let us get away with it, but they always say, "Hey, we need to keep the lights on here, so don't be, you know." Do you ever run into that snag? I know that a lot of stations, including ours, will give you reduced rates. For our Dads Making a Difference program, it's not a nonprofit, it's a not-for-profit, so we are able to allocate just a few funds for advertising and they try to match us. Do you find it harder to actually reach out in hopes that they will actually honor doing a PSA?

Madeline Miller: Yes. I think that goes back to what I was saying about how the media landscape has changed. We are approaching more and more of those radio streaming services like Spotify and Pandora to help get support to really get our message out in audio. We're still approaching traditional terrestrial radio stations as well, because a lot of them have a deep commitment to the people they serve and want to be running PSAs that they know will have an impact in their community. It's just making sure that we're framing the message and the reasoning why we want them to be airing, in a very compelling way for them. But of course, with the movement more toward digital, we're also focusing more of our efforts there too.

My name is Terry. You mentioned about the things that you post. If we have a story that we post on our Facebook page, can we extend that to you?

David Miller: Yes. See me after.

My name is Michael Boyer and I run a digital platform called Father Wellco. I appreciate everything you are saying here. My children are nine, seven, and five. As a dad who's just getting started building a platform, what's the reasonable amount of time that you put into actually developing social media posts? Are you scheduling things in advance? What are you doing so your social media time, on the side, is not soaking up the time you should be making moments with your children?





David Miller: I would wait until they go to sleep. I would also try and figure out some dedicated days and times, because you definitely want to have work-life balance. I'm also a writer, I write children's books. When my children were younger, I would only write on Wednesday nights after they were asleep. I would literally dedicate from 9:30 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. for writing time. You may not want to stay up until 2:00 a.m., I'm not advising it, but you want to figure out a dedicated time to focus on. I would love to learn more about the platform and would like to help you move it along.

Michael Boyer: On the practical side, do you use any kind of content scheduling? Do you automate it at all?

David Miller: People think I do. I probably should, but I'm just so into it that I don't. A lot of people do use Hootsuite and other formats to schedule, but I don't.

Participant: I'm from a CAP agency in Ladysmith, Wisconsin that runs a Head Start center, Early Head Start and home visiting program. Our issue is the towns that we serve are very small. I think the biggest one we serve is about 3,000 people, so everyone knows each other. Even the town Facebook pages, if anybody posts anything, it becomes a big bashing session. How do we keep it positive in a town where it's a nice community to live in, but that's what social media becomes in our town? If mom sees dad post something, it becomes an issue.

David Miller: One thing that you should do with your Facebook page is post a set of guidelines. What is accepted, what's not accepted, and then also think about making the page private so that any message that's sent has to be vetted first. A really good friend of mine out of Baltimore runs a Facebook page called Black Fathers. He has 52,000 dads on his page, but you can't just post a message on the page. Once a post is sent, someone reviews it so there's some control. We have controls on our page. You can't just start a conversation about your child's mother.

My name is Lashay. I'm from Chattanooga and work for an organization called Baby University. What we do is work intensively in the homes with the parents. We were primarily working with mothers and children and realized we were missing a component so added a fatherhood specialist component. We invested in a national fatherhood initiative to get a 24-7 dad curriculum, and we're now launching it this summer. We utilize social media for outreach purposes. As outreach coordinator I'm always in the community. On our fatherhood caseload it's not hard to attract older fathers. It is not hard getting teen moms enrolled, but we cannot get teen dads enrolled in our program at all. Is there any advice or suggestions on how to outreach toward adolescent youth males who may be fathers?

David Miller: I think you have to trick them. Organize sporting events. A flag football tournament or basketball tournament. Sometimes you have to do things to get them out, lock the





door, and then have some brief or mini workshops for dads. I think oftentimes, in our program design, we try to offer too much. I'm going to give you a really good example. I can't tell you the number of fatherhood events that I've been to for men that are all day. Men and women see the world very differently. When we program for men we want to try to pack everything into one day, when we should shorten up the program, maybe do something fun and then something educational. With the teen dads it may be something sports related; it could be as simple as a video game tournament. During the intermission of the video game tournament we have a mini workshop. The workshop isn't going to be four hours. Maybe 30 minutes with four tips, not 25 things we want them to remember as it relates to their role as a dad. A lot of times I think it's content and programming.

Madeline Miller: When thinking about adolescent fathers, you have to think about meeting them where they are. They're probably not going to be on Facebook, they're going to be on Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok. It's how we use those platforms to reach them, and as David was saying, how do we use what they're interested in, in order to grab their attention? Sports, video games and many other topics. Thinking about that and also how we package the information. Attention spans are short, how do we get and condense information so that it's easily digestible for them and attention grabbing so they really listen and respond.

Jubi: A video game type thing, a viewing party for a sports event, those types of things are the trick. Don't be afraid to put a little bit of money, like \$100 on Instagram, targeted to a very narrow age range in a very specific location. This will go a long way. Just doing it. Put a little bit of money into it and test it out, see what happens, see who responds. You'll be able to see the engagement with that ad once you start putting a little bit of money behind it.

Participant: Is there a Fatherhood.gov app?

David Miller: Yes, but we're not using it. It has to be rebuilt or repopulated.

Participant: You mentioned that there was a program in Baltimore that has like 50,000 fathers in it, and your particular platform has over 240,000. What's the secret?

David Miller: The secret is what we just talked about. Some of it is better understanding your audience that you're trying to reach. Do the research and understand who your targeted audience is. Find that person who is going to commit to doing it. We're not saying that this is easy because when we first started it was very slow. There were some lessons learned, but we had to make the time and the research investment, and it paid off.

