Working with Fathers in Groups: Tips to Enhance Your Facilitation Skills

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Moderator:
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Presenters:
Pamela Wilson: Trainer and Consultant
Luz Salazar: Vista Community Clinic, Vista, CA
Jack Strawder: Urban Ventures/Family Time, Minneapolis, MN
Working with Fathers in Groups: Tips to Enhance Facilitation Skills

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February 24, 2009
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Overview of Presentation

• Defining group & group development
• Keys to running effective educational groups
• Common mistakes to avoid
• Types of engaging experiential activities
• Overview of facilitation skills
What is a Group?

- Two or more people who come together around a shared purpose
- Begins as a collection of individuals...
- Becomes a distinct social system -- more than the sum of its parts
- Groups develop over time and go through predictable stages, from beginning to ending
Educational Groups

- Have clear objectives--KAS
- Require planning and preparation
- Facilitating vs. “Lecture-style teaching”
How Do They Compare?

**Teaching/Lecturing**
- Leader is expert
- One-way communication
- Group members are passive
- Leader runs the show
- Leader tells members the major lessons to learn

**Facilitating**
- Everyone has expertise
- Multi-directional
- Group members are active
- Group members have buy-in and input
- Through dialogue and experiential activities members have “Ah-Ha!” moments
Three Common Mistakes

• Lack of Purpose

• Lack of Preparation

• Ineffective Facilitation
  ✓ Lecturing/Preaching
  ✓ Disorganized
  ✓ Too much personal storytelling
  ✓ Not managing problem group behaviors
  ✓ Boring/Too much like school/Irrelevant
  ✓ Judgmental/Authoritarian/Talking Down/Phony
Types of Activities

- Audiovisuals
- Stories
- “Mythinformation” Games
- Case Studies
- Role Play
- Guest Speakers/Panels
- Dyad & Triad Activities

- Whips/Round Robins
- Guided Imagery/Memories
- Sentence Stems
- Brainstorming
- Forced Choice/Values Voting
- Art/Drawing
Facilitation Skills

- Planning & Preparation; Room Set-up
- Creating the climate/forming group contract
- Listening, observing & learning
- Being authentic
- Using experiential activities effectively
- Involving the whole group
- Asking good open-ended questions
- Keeping things moving/having back-up plans
- Using self-disclosure appropriately
- Being flexible
- Knowing your own limitations/making referrals
Strategies to Facilitate Small Groups

Luz Salazar
Parent Coach
Vista Community Clinic
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

• Low income fathers
• Multicultural population – mainly Hispanic
• Group size -- 20 to 25 fathers
• Classes are provided twice a month
WORKING WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS

• Understand the culture
• Language
• Traditions
• Beliefs
• Trust
• Values
• Background
• Needs
• Education
• **Understanding your clients:** Meet their basic needs.

• **Culture:** Where do they come from? What is their role as a man in their culture?

• **Language:** What language or dialect do they speak? Are you able to communicate?

• **Traditions:** What do and don’t they celebrate?

• **Values:** What do they value? (e.g. respect, obedience, humility)
• Trust: We must be honest, provide clear rules, and give them respect.

• Beliefs: For example, not bathing every day because of their faith or background.

• Background: How were they raised or disciplined as children? Were both parents present?

• Education: What school grade did they complete?

• Work schedule: Classes must be provided according to clients work schedule.
GETTING READY FOR GROUP

- Call clients the day before the group session.
- Create welcoming environment. Prepare the classroom.
- Welcome clients individually by name.
- Use sign-in sheets.
FACILITATING THE GROUP

• INTRODUCTION

• ICE BREAKER: games, physical activities

• WELCOME AND GUIDELINES

• PARTICIPATION: Confidentiality, respect, trust, communication, games
HANDLING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

• Different Education Levels
  • Speak in simple terms and to the point/ al Punto

• Fathers who Monopolize or Interrupt
  • Acknowledge their point of view.
  • Redirect the conversation.

• Fathers who Come to Group in Crisis

We must be flexible, be ready to change gears!
SELECTING A GOOD CURRICULUM

24/7 DAD / SIEMPRE PAPA

• Vocabulary must be compatible to the population that we are serving

• Making the curriculum accessible
  • Curriculum presentation
  • Hands-on activities
  • Visuals
  • Modifying the language when necessary
  • Appropriate sense of humor
  • Songs and poems
  • Providing additional educational materials
Qualities of a good facilitator

- Professionalism
- Patience
- Acknowledge their manhood
- Good listener
- Passion
- Good communicator
- Maintains Confidentiality
- Honest
- Respectful
- Knowledgeable
VISTA COMMUNITY CLINIC
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Questions for Jack Strawder

- Please give us some background on the groups you facilitate:
  - Target population
  - Curriculum you use
  - Meeting format (length and frequency)
  - Group size
What group facilitation strategies seem to work best with low-income urban populations?
Including Mothers in the Group

- How do you incorporate mothers into the group?
- How does it affect the group when mothers are included?
What opening or closing “rituals” do you use with your group?
Handling Difficult Situations

- Describe a difficult situation that has come up in your group. How did you handle it?

In general, how do you handle:
- Disruptive participants?
- Off-topic comments?
- Bored or uninterested participants?
- Fathers who come with a crisis?
Thank you Jack!

Contact e-mail:

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If you have other comments or suggested topics for future Webinars:

Email: info@fatherhood.gov

Or Call: 1-877-4DAD411

Or provide your feedback to your Federal Project Officer.