



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Family Assistance

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

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2pm – 3:30pm EST

Moderator:

Nigel Vann: NRFC Director of Training & Technical Assistance

Presenters:

Pamela Wilson: Trainer and Consultant

Luz Salazar: Vista Community Clinic, Vista, CA

Jack Strawder: Urban Ventures/Family Time, Minneapolis, MN





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Working with Fathers in Groups: Tips to Enhance Facilitation Skills

Pamela Wilson, MSW
Program Consultant and Trainer
February 24, 2009
pamwilson@comcast.net





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



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Strategies to Facilitate Small Groups

Luz Salazar
Parent Coach
Vista Community Clinic





RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD GROUPS

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



PUT YOURSELF IN YOUR CLIENTS' SHOES

- **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)



WORKING WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS

- **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



A FEMALE FACILITATOR WORKING WITH MALE GROUPS

Qualities of a good facilitator

- Professionalism
- Patience
- Acknowledge their manhood
- Good listener
- Passion
- Good communicator
- Maintains Confidentiality
- Honest
- Respectful
- Knowledgeable



VISTA COMMUNITY CLINIC CLUB DE PADRES

Luz Salazar, Parent Coach 760 407 1220 X 107

Silvia Alcantar, Manager 760 407 1220 X 113

Lola Enriquez Coordinator, 760 407 1220 X 130

menrique@vistacommunityclinic.org



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



Working with Low-Income Fathers

- What group facilitation strategies seem to work best with low-income urban populations?



Including Mothers in the Group

- How do you incorporate mothers in to the group?
- How does it affect the group when mothers are included?



Rituals

- 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:

jackstrawder@urbanventures.org



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

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info@fatherhood.gov

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1-877-4DAD411

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