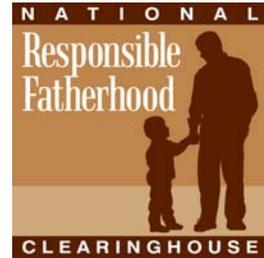




U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
Administration for Children
and Families
Office of Family Assistance

NRFC Technical Assistance Webinar



www.fatherhood.gov

“Promising Practices: Working with Teen Fathers”

Moderator: Nigel Vann, NRFC Director of Training and Technical Assistance

Presenters:

Michael Hayes, Director of Family Strengthening Initiatives, Office of the Attorney General - Texas

Bobby Verdugo, Coordinator of Youth Services, Bienvenidos Family Services/ National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute

Thursday, April 22, 2007

Webinar Transcription (provided by Global Crossing)

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen thank you for standing by and welcome to the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse Technical Assistance Webinar.

During the participation all participants will be in a listen only mode. Please be advised this conference is being recorded Tuesday, April 22, 2008.

I would now like to turn the conference call over to Nigel Vann, Director of Training and Technical Assistance. Please proceed.

Nigel Vann: Thank you very much (Brian). Yes this is Nigel Vann and I'd like to welcome you to today's Webinar. I've recently taken over Ron Clark's position as Director of Training and TA for the Clearinghouse. Ron has been promoted internally at NFI and he's going to continue to help build the infrastructure of program supporting dads around the country with that work.

I've been involved in this fatherhood work for exactly 20 years now. Actually I took my first job managing a program in Maryland in April 1988. And since then I've been involved in a variety of fatherhood initiatives which includes most of the major fatherhood demonstration programs in the country actually. I've been privileged to visit many programs and meet of a lot of staff and fathers and really just become sort

of who I am and what I do over the years. And so it's just very exciting for me to be taking this new role on.

Most recently I've been working with a healthy marriage funded project actually in Florida with PAIRS Foundation. And one of my duties there was to help write their semi-annual reports so I know what a lot of you are going through right now as you try and get those reports done.

I have also been working recently with some groups of fathers in New Mexico where I live. And I envy you chaps that you've got these funds to do this because we didn't have any funds for what I was trying to do there. But certainly one thing I've learned over the years in this work is that, you know, it's not easy. It takes time to establish yourself in the community with dads and other service providers. But it can be done, you know, with the right staff and the right approach.

And when your program does start to take off it's tremendously rewarding for everybody concerned not least the fathers and the children involved. So one advantage you've got there I think is you really can learn from some of the best practices of what's gone before. And know there are a lot of folk around who can help you think about some of these things and we're certainly going to bring you two of those today.

So the main purpose of my new job is to be a resource for you. So I'm certainly looking forward to opportunities to meet and hear from all of you as we move forward here. And I'll be interested to hear about, you know, (Barry) event successes. And those of you that are doing good things we may well want to include you in some of these future Webinars and other presentations for other grantees.

In terms of today's Webinar we're going to be focused on work with teen fathers. Being a new father is not easy at the best of times but trying to make the dual transition or adjustment from being an adolescent to adulthood and to being a father is particularly challenging as I'm sure you all realize. We know there are a lot of these teen dads struggle to remain involved with their children.

And some key factors in whether they can do this successfully and which is going to have profound implications for their children are the extent to which they can maintain a good relationship with the mother and the extent to which they get support from both sets of grandparents. But also I think, you know, the extent to which they can get support from programs like the services that you are providing.

We want to help these dads not get marginalized so they can stay involved and be there for particularly the first few months and years of their children's lives. So that their children can develop fully, you know, in terms of their physical and emotional development and also their brain development.

So I think today's Webinar is going to be a really important one. And as I said we've got two dynamic presenters lined up for you and I'll introduce them in a minute.

But first of all let me just pass it over to (Jen McHenry) so she can explain the housekeeping issues and how we're going to proceed here.

Jen McHenry: Great thanks Nigel. I wanted to tell everyone how you can ask questions. Today everyone's going to be on listen only lines so you won't be able to chime in necessarily vocally but you will be able to ask questions at any point during any of the presentation. And so all you do is there's a box here at the bottom and if you write in your question and then hit the ask button directly to the right if this is the screen you're looking at you'll be able to give us a question.

And we will send your response back to let you know that we've gotten your question it's been submitted to Nigel and the presenters. And at the end of both presentations we're going to go to questions and try to answer as many as we can. For those of you who may be looking at a screen that looks a little bit more like this your questions will be down here at the bottom. And again you should be able to ask at any point throughout the Webinar.

Also if you have the first screen and you'd like to make the presentation slides larger you can hit the F5 button and that'll take the presentation full screen. And in hitting the F5 button a second time will take it back down smaller to ask a question. So

again ask lots of questions. We'll be collecting those throughout the presentation and answering them at the end.

Okay, Nigel.

Nigel Vann:

Okay well thanks very much Jen. So as, you know, it gives me great pleasure and you hear that a lot but it's going to give me great pleasure to introduce both of these two guys today. I've known them both for more than ten years and they've been doing some tremendous work with teen dads, young dads and all sorts of other things.

Michael Hayes is the Program Director for Family Initiatives in the Child Support Division of the Texas Office of the Attorney General. And in that position he's responsible for the development of policy, partnerships and projects that support family stability and father involvement in the State of Texas.

I first met Michael I thought it was '94. I just asked him and he told me he thought it was '95. So that time he was working with young men around pregnancy prevention issues. And he participated in a training workshop that the group I was working for Public/Private Ventures put on around working with fathers. And since then he's gone on to provide training on a wide range of (fathered) issues to many, many professionals around the country and from other countries too.

Just prior to taking his job with the Attorney General Office in Texas he was the creator and director of the Texas Fragile Families initiative which was a statewide initiative. It involved community based, faith based and public agencies in working with fragile families. And there were a lot of young fathers involved in this project and Michael's going to start out I think telling us some about that. And then talk more generally about work with teen fathers.

He also participated in the development of writing of various educational curriculum for teens so he's bringing a wealth of experience here and we really appreciate him making time in his very busy schedule. He's been all over the place in the State of Texas recently so I'm very appreciative that he's, you know, to make the time to do this today.

So Michael over to you. Tell us what's going on.

Michael Hayes: All right thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be on here. It's good to be working with old friends not that you're old Nigel or Bobby but our friendships old. And I'm going to talk a little bit from our experience in the Texas Fragile Families initiative. But also from my experience now in the Child Support Division at the Attorney General's Office in Texas where we have a pretty strong program focused on young adults and teens including teen fathers. And so I'll be able to talk a little bit about that.

Let's just dive right into it. I'm going to tell you a little bit about what the Texas Fragile Families initiative was. It was an 11 site four year project that we ran here in Texas primarily funded through private foundations and some public agency money. The Attorney General's Office was one of our public agency partners, the Department of Health, our Texas Youth Commission, and our Health and Human Services Commission were linked in from the public side.

But it was primarily funded through grants from about 25 private foundations. We focused on what Ron Mency who was at the Ford Foundation at the time coined the Fragile Families. Which were young, unmarried fathers, mothers and their children and we targeted fathers in the 16 to 24 year old age range in this particular project.

Served over the four year period of over 1100 fathers. You see there on the slide the breakdown. Over half were Hispanic. About 1/3 we're black and 8% were white. The project really tried to provide a broad range of services designed around this notion of helping these young men kind of fulfill their own hopes and dreams to be responsible fathers in relationship with the mothers of their children.

So we included a strong fatherhood educational curriculum piece that was – the curriculum actually that Nigel trained me in back in 1994 and '95. The (father) development curriculum built around (appears) the (Ford) model. We had a strong connection to Workforce Development Services and to educational programs because we had so many young fathers. And we'll get into a little bit into the demographics but we had so many young fathers in the program that over half had not yet gotten a high school degree.

Excuse me. Paternity establishment and child support issues was one of the key elements that was provided. Trying to help address the issues of paternity and prevent maybe some of the negative stuff of child support happening to these young men.

We included a strong component of what we called team parenting and relationship skills really helping these young men learn to work with the mothers of their child but also recognizing that for young parents its often times not just the father and the mother that are raising the child. But, you know, maybe it's the grandmother or the grandfather, an aunt or an uncle or sometimes a new boyfriend or new girlfriend.

You know one of the things we found was in fact that over half of our fathers in our project still lived with one or both of their parents in their home. So they were the grandparents – at least the paternal grandparents and by and large the maternal grandparents as well – could play a very powerful role in either promoting or creating obstacles to the fathers participating.

And then we also had a comprehensive case management (person) speaking about everything from transportation, drug and alcohol, housing, driver's license. You know some kind of photo I.D. which was – I'll talk about a little bit as one of the barriers they experienced.

Here's some of the kind of key personal characteristics of the fathers who were in our project. They saw their kids a lot. You see 80% saw their child at least one time a week. About 60% were seeing them on a daily basis. Over 2/3 were still romantically connected to the child's mother when they entered the program.

We had 1/3 that entered the program in fact while their partner was pregnant which was really ideal. It was I think that's one of the real great learning things we had in this particular project was learning to work with and address some of the issues that young men face when their partner is pregnant. And they're not married to her and there's this disconnect between her prenatal experience and his prenatal experience. And we can talk a little bit about that too because there's been some interesting research on what happens during that prenatal period.

Over 1/3 were still in school. And 50% were unemployed when they entered the program. And one of the things that Nigel had asked me about in particular is to talk about maybe some of the differences between the younger fathers in our program and the older. And in our project about 1/3 were 18 or under, you know, so it matches that school number.

And that – the services that were focused on the guys who were in high school really emphasized graduation, preparation for becoming a parent, establishment of paternity and support of the mother/father relationship a little bit more than some of the other kind of employment services. And the data that we found was that the older the fathers got the more barriers they had to being kind of that responsible father that they had.

And so it was really for us the younger the father was really the more opportunities there were to intervene and you didn't have as much damage control maybe even in those settings. You look at the slide here looking at the personal barriers then. Obviously the high school diploma no GED was a big one. But the one that was very striking that caught a lot of us off guard was the fact that about 1/2 of our fathers had no driver's license. And about 1/3 had no I.D. no photo I.D. at all.

And that posed a huge problem for transporting their baby, getting to a prenatal visit or going to a job interview. And that played out in a lot of ways as we looked at that. The inaccess to – well the incarceration ones – that's a fairly obvious barrier but this is one of those where there's a strong difference by age of father. Our younger fathers who were in the program much less likely to have had a problem with incarceration.

I'm looking back in my notes here to see for our fathers who were younger than 18 about a quarter of them had some kind of criminal history for our fathers that were over 18 40% had some kind of criminal history. Similarly with substance abuse issues for our fathers who were younger than 18 7% had a substance abuse issue of some sort whereas if they were older than 18 it was double that 14%.



And so the – working with the younger guys was really strong. Another inaccurate stereotype that we really brought to light in this particular project was that stereotype about low income teen fathers having multiple children of multiple partners.

And in our project in fact 80% of all the fathers not just the 18 year olds but 80% of all the fathers had only one child. And then almost all if they had more than one child it was with that same partner. So we only had about 7% of our fathers that had the multiple partner fertility issue, you know, multiple baby mama drama happening.

So there's a little bit of a snapshot of the personal barriers. When they came into the program one of the things we really looked at was what they wanted from the program. And you can see overwhelmingly $\frac{3}{4}$ almost 80% in fact the driving force was getting help with a job. They were desperate for stable employment. Some kind of job had some future to it. That was obviously compounded by the fact that many of them didn't have a high school diploma or a GED.

That was followed by a little over half wanted help with parenting skills. Right at half wanted education and training. Almost a third wanted help with improving their relationship with their partner and then 10% - a little bit over 10% - wanted help with anger management. In fact 9% got some services during the program to help them with anger management.

The interesting thing here and I know that many of you all are dealing with fathers not only just on the parenting education piece but also on the marriage side. In that we had a really strong connection in our research between marriage and employment.

That was the most significant finding we had when we looked at family stability and, you know, relationship stability was that the really powerful connection was between those guys that had more employment, more hours of work, higher wages they were much, much more likely to be married or end up cohabitating with the mother. And that was a very striking finding from our project.

One of the issues that came up over and over again with our fathers were their legal issues around paternity and child support. When the fathers came into the program less than a quarter had established paternity or a legal relationship with their child.

Which meant that they had no legal rights in regard to the child's relationship and that became a real important resource that they were looking for.

Many of them in fact came in and wanted to get help seeing their kids or protecting that relationship with their child. And so establishing paternity and understanding the legal rights what that brought along with it. And then also understanding the child support issues that they faced coming into the program.

While many of them if not all of them – most all of them in fact – provided some kind of informal support to their children What they didn't understand though while they might have been providing that informal support to their children was that the mother was getting some kind of public benefits. Their child support arrears might be building up and they'd end up with some child support debt that then creates this problem for them down the line to be the economically stable resource to the family.

So that became a important component of our program not so much that they came clamoring looking for it. But as they learned about the issues they overwhelming wanted to deal with them so that they wouldn't get kind of bit further down the road and end up with some of the problems. There was a lot of misinformation. A lot of myths about paternity and child support that as they learned it through their program staff they really wanted to address the issues that were there.

Now our final evaluation of the program we identified some key practitioner learnings but also some program characteristics that were strongly associated with more success. And one of them probably really the most successful of our models in this program was – were ones that were based in schools.

Our team parenting model also was the more successful but the school based one was – our programs that were based in schools and we had two of those that were based in schools – were more consistent, manageable. They were the most cost effective. They generally – was a school district and a community based organization that were partnering together.

Because they were in schools they had younger dads so you had fewer barriers to program participation and more opportunity for the delivery of services than the older



fathers. They were more likely to be still connected to the mother. Living with their own parents they had some of that stability for the father. And they also were less likely to have some ongoing conflicts with the mother over custody or seeing the children. Less criminal involvement and they didn't have long histories of unemployment. So really that was the value of the schools programs.

Another kind of key to our program's success is we found was consistent staff presence. That these fathers developed relationships with staff that they wanted somebody they could trust and count on. It took a while for that trust to build though.

I know that, you know, I guess it's a (Cubby) that talks about putting deposits in your emotional bank account and that we really saw that having to happen a lot with the staff putting some, you know, deposits in the emotional bank account of the young men. Coming through for them on several occasions to show that they really were trustable.

And also the programs that were the most successful were the ones that had the strongest understanding of and connections to public systems that have impact on teen fathers. So workforce, school, child support, juvenile justice, substance abuse having the ability to negotiate some of those systems with the fathers.

Negotiating issues around traffic violations for instance was huge in a number of our sites. Guys who would get parking tickets or speeding tickets wouldn't pay them then there'd be a warrant out for their arrest. Talk about a barrier to being a responsible father if you're worried about this warrant that's out there.

So helping young men resolve those issues working with the courts. There needed to be multiple recruitment approaches with lots of flexibility and persistent not just counting on one way to get fathers in the door. But I will say the schools set setting was really the most successful at recruiting. You had guys right there it's a way to give them credit in class that was even better.

The other kind of bottom line learning we got was that there had to be real collaboration with community agencies that provided all those services. Not just

referrals. What we found and it's the same story that many people have found that you refer a guy to a service 50% of them drop off before they ever get to the service.

And so it really needed to be a referral that had somebody on the other end that the guy knew was going to be looking for them. Looking out for them and letting the staff from the fatherhood program know that they had shown up and actually gotten the service.

Here are some of the – here's the breakdown of how people came into the program from recruitment. And you can see there once again the value of program staff. Having known and trusted program staff was really critical out there talking to fathers being that consistent presence.

But look at the number two which was really striking and that is the health professional. And this is where the prenatal thing came in. We had a couple of our sites that were linked to teen health clinics or clinics that did a lot of pregnancy tests, prenatal care and talking with the mother to be and finding out about the father and connecting him with resources.

Really that prenatal period was an ideal time to capture them because the emotions were a mixture of anxiety and excitement which is kind of an ideal emotional state to learn and grow and change in. And they were feeling less doubt that pregnancy was kind of like just hers. And they were like this spare tire off to the side and they didn't feel like there was any role for them.

I heard (Alfred Young) from I think it's the University of Michigan who's doing some ethnographic study on young fathers who were in the National Partners for Fragile Families and he talks about every single one of them – of those young fathers that he did the in depth ethnographic research on.

They all talked about damage that they did to the relationship during the prenatal period because they didn't understand what was going on. And how that damage really was the biggest barrier to them having a stable relationship to the mother after their child was born. And so really a critical finding for us here was that the guys

wanted to be in there during the prenatal period. (Faust)'s girlfriend clearly was a strong recruitment source as well as then schools and friends.

So here what I think of as some broad themes that we learned and are continuing to use today now in the Family Initiative Section here at the Attorney General's Office of kind of these broad themes of onramps for teen fathers. And this is a concept that I'm borrowing from – Nigel what's the ...

Nigel Vann: Jim Levine.

Michael Hayes: Yes (Jim Levine) I totally blanked on it. Yes Jim Levine and his book **New Expectations**: Community Strategies for Responsible Fatherhood. Which for those of us who are in the field really early on was kind of a Bible. And hats off to Jim for all that work.

So prenatal father education. And there's this concept this comes right from (Barry Brazleton) who spoke at a conference that we put on last August here. About this idea of envisioning fatherhood and I think it was Roland Warren from NFI that talked about birthing the baby in his mind.

And so really addressing his fears and his ambivalence towards the pregnancy helping him learn what to expect when she's expecting what changes is she going to go through emotional, physical, how's that going to impact the relationship. Helping him understand that, you know, the attention is going to be on the baby not him. And so there's this kind of competition for attention both from the mother or his girlfriend and the people all around them.

But the positives here are that he can put his really powerful protective factor during the prenatal period. He can help her get in there for the prenatal visits. Help her stop smoking or reduce smoking, alcohol, drug use. There's some emerging research on the positive impact the expectant father or expectant male can have during the prenatal period. And it can prevent some of that damage to the relationship maybe that causes difficulties further down the line.

And then what we've also found those from the Fragile Families and child well being study and we saw in our project as well was that the prenatal connection was the single most powerful predictor to their postnatal involvement. If they were engaged during the prenatal period it felt like they had some connection then much stronger connection after the child was born.

Paternity establishment is another powerful onramp for teen fathers. The overwhelming majority are there at the birth. And almost every hospital in the country somebody from medical records or the social work staff or a nurse is going to talk to them when it comes time to fill out the application for the birth certificate. They're going to talk to them about paternity establishment. They're going to make some decision at the hospital around the time of their child's birth about whether they're going to be the legal dad or not of the child.

And they need to understand the ramifications of that the impact of that. What happens if they do sign what happens if they don't sign. And really one of the worst times to try and figure that out is when you're at the hospital right after the time your child is born. So for those of you who are working with expectant fathers or expectant young men there's a really great opportunity to educate them about that process of paternity establishment before they get to the hospital.

Because the hospital staff, you know, they're doing this amidst all their other duties. They're giving these paternity papers and trying to explain it to them but, you know, there's the pressures on amidst of an emotional rollercoaster. And so for many young men they can be overwhelmed by that and either sign or not sign. And the consequences of signing or not signing can be disastrous either way if they do it without full information.

But the (unintelligible) also really reinforces what (Cathy Eden) who's at Harvard doing Fragile Family too what she talks about is the do right dad instinct. Most of these guys that are there they want to be good dads. And this is an outward and formal legal way of reinforcing what their personal instinct is. And so that's great.

You've got this opportunity to address the lack of knowledge and misinformation about paternity. And, you know, the stories I can tell based upon what we hear from

all the teachers that we train here in Texas and all the stories about young men or women who have not signed or signed based out of ignorance.

There's also really striking research that came out of the Fragile Family and Child Wellbeing Study that paternity establishment is not only indicative of involvement of the fathers. It also is predictive of that ongoing involvement that signing that acknowledgement tends to reinforce and in fact increase their ongoing engagement at least in the first year of the child's life.

And then finally it protects their legal connection to the child. I still very clearly remember the story of one young father in our Texas Fragile Families site down in Spring, Texas outside of Houston. Who – he was doing all the right stuff. He was being the do right dad. He was, you know, had tried to be there during the pregnancy, gone on some prenatal visits. The baby was born and the girl's parents had pretty much – they just put a wall between him and seeing the child.

Now he was continuing to try to talk to the mom and he was sending her money every month. But he had no legal connection to the child. And so her parents and her in this case, you know, their word is the law. And here it was four or five months after his child was born and he'd seen his child once.

And he had no real legal recourse to see the child plus he had been giving her lots of cash child support that if further down the road she went in and applied for child support services would be considered by the courts to be a gift. And he'd have all this retroactive arrears of back child support he'd have to pay even though he had been giving her money. So it helps address that legal issue.

All right so another onramp education and employment. As you saw from the data three out of four fathers wanted help with the jobs half wanted help with education. And I can't stress this enough. Guys would come in and if you help them get a job you had a huge deposit in their emotional bank account. They needed relief immediately. They felt the need to be a provider acutely.

That created a bit of a balancing act though. They had to juggle these needs of immediate kind of cash versus thinking about some kind of long term potential. What

we found was this interesting – the difference between – and hourly wages was \$4.00 per hour between those fathers who had just a ninth grade education and those who had some kind – it can even be a six week training course – but it was post secondary education.

You had \$4.00 per hour gap in their wages in that. So we really emphasize in our project skills based training, apprenticeships, on the job training and then for those of you who have fathers with criminal histories they were three times less likely to be working than those without. So a huge impact on their employability.

And then finally parenting support so some basic education on parenting with a father flavor so what are the specifics for fathers. A real strong emphasis on teen parenting and the relationship with the mother and her extended family. Helping mend some fences there or rebuild some bridges perhaps if some things have happened.

Being really clear that, you know, from her parents' perspective he may be the guy that got their little girl pregnant and helping them move them along. Acknowledge their own personal experience both being fathered or lacking being fathered and some remediation that needed to be there. Keeping it developmentally thinking about where they are in their brain development, culturally appropriate.

And then we did a mixture of group and peer activities but also there had to be a lot of one on one approaches. I know a lot of people talk about like peer support groups being the be all end all for fatherhood education and what we found was that only about a third about 400 of the fathers in our program actually went to any of the peer support groups with any consistency.

And that most of the kind of fatherhood education actually happened one on one or in pairs. And so not just counting on the peer support group being your sole source of fatherhood education. So that wraps up my part of the presentation and I know there's going to be time for questions but thanks for listening.

Nigel Vann:

Well thank you very much Michael that was great. And we'll come back to some of those points but I did just want to underline some of the things Michael said there.



I thought it was really interesting that he pointed out the, you know, 30% of the youth they worked with came in while their partner was pregnant and I think the more we can do that the better. You know if you can make those prenatal connections and most that is fact that with the younger guys there's less damage control.

So again the earlier we can reach them the better. So that was I thought very interesting. And I'd like to come back later Michael and if there's time and perhaps ask you to talk a bit about the way you worked with the health professionals. So I think that's a really key way to reach some of these young men.

And I was also taken by your talk of the emotional bank accounts and how you have to build that with the young men because that made me immediately think of Bobby Verdugo who I'm now going to introduce to you as the next presenter.

Bobby is an extremely skilled practitioner in building bridges to youth in the community. He is the Coordinator of Youth Services with the Bienvenidos Family Services in East Los Angeles and he also works with the National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute. Which was set up by (JKO) and is a combination of many nationally recognized leaders in the field of Latino health education, social services and community mobilization.

And since 1995 which is probably a year or two before Bobby and I actually met he's been the Coordinator for the (Conolos) Padres Program which is an innovative mentoring and support program for young fathers in East Los Angeles. And he helps them to develop a positive and nurturing relationship with their children.

When I first met Bobby I was doing a lot of training work in California so late 90's and early 2000s. And several times I think four or five times Bobby came along to a training workshop that I was doing and brought with him two or three fathers to be on a panel of young fathers.

I've always thought that if you want to talk about training professionals to work with fathers you've got to have some fathers in the room. We've got to hear from the experts, you know, if we're going to be working with them. And every time that Bobby

did that and brought the panel of fathers and they were always an extremely effective panel. And, you know, I had panels that weren't always effective.

But the guys that Bobby brought me were always effective. And they always spoke very highly of Bobby which was another key point. And just observing the interaction with the young men and Bobby was truly a pleasure because you really got a glimpse of the impact that he was having on their lives. So he really is a very seasoned professional.

He's been a member of the National Practitioners Network of Fathers and Families and he was President of that organization for a while. Interestingly there is something I didn't know until we spoke last week he was featured in the movie (Walkout). Which if you've seen it was about the 1968 high school walkouts in East Los Angeles. And Bobby and his wife who was his girlfriend at the time are both portrayed in that movie.

And he also shared with Michael and me when we were preparing for this call last week that he's recently become a stand-up comedian. So we're expecting a lot of entertainment here in the next 20 minutes Bobby. Anyway let me hand it over to Bobby and he's going to really tell us what it's like to work with some of these young fathers.

Bobby Verdugo: Well thank you Nigel and good being here and welcome everybody and thank you for allowing me to share some stuff with you today. Just some things that I've had the pleasure and really the honor to be able to do over the years. Nigel and Michael mentioned that we've all known each other since the mid 90's and that's really when this fatherhood energy really first took off.

And there was real key to the work that we started doing here in East Los Angeles because just like everywhere in the country there were very few fatherhood programs. There were already people doing a lot of pioneering work like (Jim Levine) and others who and (Ron Minty) from the Ford Foundation who were already talking about these issues.

But there were very few programs in existence and even then in the Latino community. And when we started our program in 1995 the Con Los Padres Program we – I mean it was like hitting the ground running and with no blueprint. With no one looking to really guide us. We had to really, you know, develop this as we went along.

And luckily and, you know, I think just with a lot of help from a lot people from all over we were able to do and develop a successful program. So I'm going to share some of that stuff with you. Kind of give you a history we'll walk through – let me see I'm trying to think of how – hold on one second. How I changed my (plan) oh there we go.

A little bit of how we started and what really what were key to making this program work again, you know, Nigel was – to thank you for that introduction, you know, I, you know, coming in to this program – I was a young, new social worker at the time.

You know 43 years old I had just graduated from college so that's another story. But I, you know, this was an area that I have a lot of interest in. But having two daughters, you know, when we talk about teen pregnancy I was really more focused on young moms. As were many people across the country, you know, in fact all the programs that existed at the time were dealing with um - I'm sorry - trying to figure out... oh here we go.

How we would begin doing the work or why even do the work with young dads. So just to give you a little bit of a background here at Bienvenidos Family Services we have an agency that's been around since 1987. Serving the community serving families but families was really defined as working with mostly moms and with children.

And the real need was that when you started dealing with the issues of teen pregnancy and pregnancy prevention and even teen parents the only parents that were being identified and served were teen moms. The dads were pretty much left out of the picture. They weren't even – the father was an afterthought. It was like well why do you want to work with them especially those Latino young guys?

You know these guys they just make babies and then they take off and, you know, they're not involved with their children. And we realized that, you know, that there

was a lot – there were many reasons why we needed to work with the young dads. But one was specifically was that nobody was working with them. Nobody really thought about well what about their part in this? You know why is it that if they do take off, you know, what are the reasons why dads are not involved in the picture?

So we, you know, we were just fortunate because in fact I was working at another agency. I had started here doing my internship and then there were some, you know, how funding goes when you rely on public funding and (soft) money. Programs, you know, lose their grants and, you know, there's some shifting going on.

So I had left for a while to another agency having the degree and some of my co-workers didn't have it I thought it'd be easier for me to get another job. And I went to another agency that worked with teen moms. It was a (Calrim) Program where young moms would be involved and if they were receiving Welfare they would be given a stipend and a chance to go to school. In fact they had to go to school.

And it was there that I started hearing the stories of a young mom and, you know, horror stories. I mean just of abuse and the hardship that they were going through, you know, I think I felt just like a lot of people. That wow, you know, who's responsible for this? Probably those young guys out there they're getting them pregnant, you know, they're the ones who are not helping them out.

And being a father of two teen daughters at the time, you know, I took this to heart and I really poured my heart and soul into this work working with these young moms. Well what happened was the agency that I was working at before Bienvenidos suddenly had the opportunity to get a grant. A new program, you know, called Con Los Padres. And they were looking for somebody to work it.

And well I guess I was at the right place at the right time. I applied for the position and I got it thinking I'm going to help these guys – these knuckleheads, you know, these young guys who really need my help because I'm a good father and I know I can turn them around.

Well there were a lot of things that I started realizing that I need to start changing the way I thought because as soon as I got into the program I realized that it was going

to be tough to recruit. And to get young men involved and we were going to start working with teen fathers – Latino teen fathers – and we were going to help them to get connected to their children.

And the collaboration with the Montebello Unified School District was close by here and the L.A. County District Attorney's Office who used to handle child support enforcement at the time. And Bienvenidos which is a community based organization.

Well it was a pretty natural partnership with the school district because we've always worked with the schools, you know, helping young people with tutoring and, you know, making sure that we help them to graduate and get them services they may need. But working with the District Attorney's Office was a whole new thing for us. It was like here are the people that are many times looked at as the ones who are arresting these young kids and making life harder for them. And yet now we're going to partner with them to help them become better fathers.

Now they had their agenda which was to get the dads to be productive and to pay child support. And ours was to make them responsible fathers to teach them how to be connected to their children. But part of that responsibility was child support so we saw you know what, this relationship might work. And we started doing this program called Con Los Padres.

But obviously there's going to be challenges. And immediately we started thinking about what are we going to do? How are we going to get these young men and we have to recruit a staff and here is was just myself and we put out job announcements and, you know, hopefully the idea was to get someone who could be a positive role model and possibly a father himself. Maybe even an ex-teen father someone to come in to help do these programs.

Well we got two young men who came to apply – actually it was two young men and one young woman who applied. And of the three I liked the young woman better because she seemed to be more aggressive and she seemed to know how, you know, she was more positive about working with youths. And these other guys well they weren't even fathers.

But what attracted me to them was that these were young men who themselves had relationships with their fathers that were not necessarily a positive one. And I knew that this was going to be the issue with these young dads that we were going to be working with. And, you know, we were going to find some things out about these young guys that we knew, you know, would be revealing that they probably did not have a good relationship with their fathers.

So we ended up hiring the two young guys to start our program then here comes the challenges to start the program. Well we needed to have safe place to meet obviously and what I mean by safe place is – if you're familiar with Los Angeles – there are many gangs here. There are over 300 gangs in the Los Angeles area. Some of them are old gangs that go back to the 1920s.

We're located right in the middle of East L.A. You know this is a pretty safe place and people recognize this agency as being a very solid institution and a place to go for help. But to get here for some dads could be a problem. They would have to go through some other neighborhoods to get here. So we had to make sure that first of all that this place would be respected and that we would be able to get them here safely as well.

And I guess you can see where I'm going with this. Many of the young guys who eventually we did recruit not only were young dads but they were also involved in gangs. We had participants who had drug and alcohol issues and here this is a family service agency where there are children. We had to make sure that we set up rules and guidelines for participants that there would be absolutely no drugs and alcohol allowed anywhere on the premises. And they could not come intoxicated.

So here's all these rules that were suddenly looking at, you know, again anger issues. We started realizing that as we're talking to young men trying to recruit them there was a whole host of anger issues that these young men were feeling and acting out. Many of whom were in violent relationships, you know, with their girlfriends, with the baby's mom and with their families and with the community.

We expected that they would be either having trouble in school or already dropped out and really having a hard time to, you know, find jobs. And so that was something



we needed to prepare ourselves for. And there were no programs to model this after. This was something new. There were other programs that were developing across the country but there were very few for Latino teen fathers.

And we knew that this would have to be a special program. We knew there would be some special needs. Pardon me. The strength that we had though is that the agency did have a solid history. It had been run since 1987 working with families and it had a good reputation.

And, you know, so that's what we had and we also knew that we could also provide comprehensive services for anybody who would come in to this program because not only would we have the teen father program but we also had programs for the parents, for their parents, we would have child care available and there would be a whole host of things that we would be able to avail to them.

So I also had the benefit of having Jerry Tello come on board as a consultant who had a curriculum. And this was a big thing we knew we needed a special curriculum to work with Latino whether it be the language issue, the cultural issue. And just the whole thing of looking back at our history here in the Latino community what fatherhood really means. What the term father means. And Jerry's curriculum Raising Children with Pride, you know, fits that need. And it was a curriculum that we would be able to get trained on and could train others with.

The key thing was really you could have the greatest curriculum in the world, you could have a program that's safe, you could have money to do it but if you don't have a caring staff then, you know, you're already ten steps behind.

Because you need to have people who care and I was mentioning the two young men who we had hired as instructors and facilitators for the program. These were young men who really, really had a passion even at their young age I think they were 23 and 24 at the time when they came in. Had a passion for working with youth and both being social workers had the training to be empathetic and to understand that there was going to be a lot of things that they would need to not just give advice on but to be able to listen. And to listen to what the stories that these young men would bring.

And we also knew and I think, you know, Michael touched on this, you know, you have to network. There has to be collaborations not just referrals to other agencies and to other people. Were part of a growing network of other Latino leaders throughout the country who are starting to work with young men and young fathers and we develop a network of compadres.

We had everywhere from Washington D.C. to Texas to, you know, to the deep South. And this was something that was really valuable because we would always be able to rely on those networks to help us, you know, to do the work together.

How did we get them involved? Well, you know, we had to take up plan. First where are we going to get these teen fathers? Working with teen moms is easy you saw the teen moms they're the ones with the babies, you know, they're either with the babies in the strollers or they're pregnant moms, you know, to be. And, you know, they're in the schools and the schools would help us point them out.

There's a young mom we've already got a program for the young moms. We've got pregnant minor programs we've got different support groups. But the dads how do you find them? You know they don't have a D stamped on their forehead and many of them don't come out and tell you that they're dads either.

But luckily what we had was the moms who would point out the dads. And they were the ones that say that's my boyfriend right now that's the baby's dad. You know can you help him, you know, can you – we heard about your program – can he come and join you? So it was really the referrals from the moms, from agencies like the schools and other people who were working with the families where they knew that there was an expectant teen father or a teen father there.

And by word of mouth people would hear about this program and share it with others. Well, you know, we could identify them but then how do we get them to come? And that's the test right there. That was the real big test, you know, we found them in a number of ways, you know, and we thought about fliers, we did that. We thought of a bunch of the basketball courts we did that. We thought about going to the schools we did that.

The thing that really worked with us probably the best tool that we could ever use was putting an ad in the Penny Saver. One of those throw away magazines that advertises swap meets and yard sales. Well in the community section we posted a little blurb there that said, “If you’re a young dad who needs help with child support and with school and finding a job come to the Con Los Padres at Bienvenidos.” And we put all the information there.

The phone was ringing off the hook after that. You know and it wasn’t so much about the school or the child support although that was one of the things. The thing that really grabbed their attention was the jobs. Because a lot of these guys who responded were dads who were really, you know, expecting to go to the curb. I mean they were not able to deal with that part of the responsibility that they were being told over and over that was the most important thing. You need to support your baby financially.

And how could they do this if they didn’t have a job. And so that’s why then came and, you know, we were not set up to be a job, you know, a job finding agency but we did have a lot of resources and communities who could help us. But what we really pushed once we got them in – and it wasn’t it like a bait and switch tactic – but basically we told them that yeah we’ll help you with a job, you know, but how you going to support your baby at McDonalds?

I mean working at McDonalds or Jack-in-the-Box, you know, for the rest of your life. Well we could help you with better would be to help you get back into school and to stay in school and help you to be a good father. To teach you what it means to be a father and what it means to be a man.

And, you know, this is tough thing to sell to someone who’s really looking to make some money. But we, you know, those who came gave us a chance and they listened and pretty much found that this was important to them. But it’s hard to keep them coming unless you’re able to feed them. And that’s what you want to offer this as an incentive.

And we tried a lot of things. We tried incentives as well but, you know, it's really when they buy into it for the reason that they want to be a good father then that's when you get, you know, you get them to commit to doing this. When they want to do it for themselves and for their babies and for the baby's mom then that's when you know you've recruited and you've engaged them.

But you do have to feed them. And whether its pizza or bologna sandwiches or just peanut butter and jam or just cookies they'll clean you out but, you know, but they'll stay because, you know they come hungry. And obviously we needed to have parenting instruction. Teach them how to hold a baby, how to feed a baby, how to do these things.

And what we found was they came with different levels of skills in these areas. Some of them already knew this stuff. Some of them have already had been involved with the baby's lives to a certain degree. But not all of them and one of the things that we found was that many of them were not allowed to be a part of their baby's life. And we needed to educate them and to help them as Michael was talking about.

These issues are here child support, what it means to support your child emotionally as well as financially and physically. But, you know, what are the laws regarding custody and visitation. Many of these guys came with stories about not being able to see their babies and we had to help them with that. It was really about teaching them their rights and their responsibilities.

Establishing paternity this is an issue that, you know, throughout the country nationwide. Every state has and probably every county has different rules and regulations. And here in California its real clear especially with L.A. County that in order for you to be a part of your baby's life you have to establish paternity. And we walk them through the different ways that they could do this because many of them came into the program not even knowing what the word paternity meant.

They were not told this in the hospital that they needed to sign the Opportunity Program documents that would give them the legal rights to being a father. And, you know, not having that many of them felt well the balls in the mom's court she's the

one calling the shots because, you know, I'm not really the legal dad. And we help them to establish that.

And it's built to offer, you know, counseling and mentoring, you know, we knew we had to do that. It would come with a lot of issues. Latinos have a term what we call equipaje y regalo, you know, baggages and gifts. You know all of us have gifts and we also have our baggage and obviously their youth and their energy and just, you know, just the energy that they brought you could see that they had a lot of gifts.

You guys have a lot of character and many of them were characters. But they also have a lot of baggage. A lot of things that we realized it wasn't just being a teen father that we had to deal with it was the other issues of the violence and the drugs and the anger.

And how do you get them to really open up and be able to talk to, you know, with a mom. And, you know, we realized we weren't set up legally to do any kind of legal mediation but we knew we could initiate some type of conversations. Even though the program was set up just for the teen dads when we could and as often as we could we would involve with the teen mom if there was at least a relationship where they were still talking.

And here are guys that we found who knowing just from our own background of how we grew up and, you know, I grew up in East L.A. and I was born and raised here. And I know how it works for me not being able to experience a lot of things. But fortunately, you know, I had my dad who did take us camping. So those kind of things that I took for granted many of these young men have never been to the beach. Many of them have never been out of the community, you know, their neighborhood just for fear of being, you know, shot or just nobody had ever taken them.

So we realized that this had to be a part of what we did with them to make sure that they got to see something other than just the four blocks in their neighborhood. So let me share with you – I'm going to jump ahead because this next slide actually talks about some of the things that we do. And I'm going to come back to this one actually.

But what I'm going to jump to right now is something that worked for us and it worked for me really because this is, you know, what I had in terms of education. And I had my father I had my dad in my life and I was able to learn from him how to be a father. And I realized that these guys did not have that in their lives.

Well the fatherhood myth is a story that I always tell about my dad, you know, he wasn't the kind of guy that was always involved in my education. He did teach me how to be a man how to be a father but he didn't teach me how to read. That was my mom's job. But my dad he sacrificed for us and he showed us how to be – he taught me how to sacrifice for my children.

And the thing is that I used to get in trouble. Nigel talked about how I'm doing standup now well I've always done standup. Even in school and I used to do it too much and I used to get punished. And the movie (Walkout) they depicted me as always being swatted. Well I was a class clown so I was always ending up in the principal's office to be swatted, you know, there was corporal punishment in 1968 was the rule of the day.

And I was there sitting there and I knew how to work it, you know, I knew that my mom would come and it was a routine that I was used to. But my dad he, you know, he wasn't really the one who would come to the school it was always my mom.

But what happened was this one particular time when I was going to be disciplined they called home and I had forgotten that my dad was a truck driver. His hours had changed and he was not working nights so he was home that day when the phone call came. So here I was in the principal's office to get my swat and have my mom come in a lecture me and then she's was going to go.

Well my dad walked in. And I'm thinking, "Oh no." Now my dad never hit me and, you know, he never disciplined me in that way but he just had that stare – he had that look. And that would just, you know, I knew that I was in trouble. And the principal looked, you know, greeted my mom and my mom says, "Oh Mr. (Engels) this is my husband, Mr. Verdugo."



The principal looks at her and, “Mr. Verdugo oh my goodness. Wow! Good to meet you we thought you were a myth.” And my father with his ninth grade education looked at him and he goes, “I’m not a myth I’m a mister.” Well I was so embarrassed and I’m thinking “Oh no.”

But what Mr. (Engels) was saying was that Latino fathers are a myth. Like what are you doing here in the school? That’s not your role you’re not supposed to be here. And, you know, what I realized is that that’s a myth that’s perpetuated all over that father’s are not involved with their children. And that was one thing that – a myth that was blown away not just by what my father said but by the dads who came into the program.

Because I thought here are these gangsters and again I went back to my training of working with the young moms and then having daughters myself I thought that these guys would not be able to share. But you know what you give them a place that’s safe, give them a circle that’s supportive and they will share.

And they’ll come out and they’ll say things like, you know, “This is the best thing for me I’m here because I want to be a good father. I’m just not able to deal with my baby because the family doesn’t allow me to do this.” And we learn from them that out of the mouths of babes. And that’s the dads themselves that they really do want to get involved.

What we do is we teach them to keep their word and this is (palaga) which is Spanish for word. Giving your word and keeping your word. And the four points that we drill into all of them is that they need to keep their word. They need to not harm their circle and we define circle as anybody who affects your life or whose life you affect. So that really is everybody including the baby’s mom who they may not be talking to.

To be responsible for your actions you take responsibility, you know, it’s not enough to tell the baby’s mom, Mom your suegra as a mother-in-law that oh I’m sorry I got your daughter pregnant. Oh no that doesn’t apply you take responsibility you learn how to be a good father and how to take those responsibilities.

And if you do all these things you become a positive example for others. And this is what we really try to show them. And I know there's just so much that I want to cover and I just want to run through this but you've got to acknowledge them. Take them on field trips. This is the one trip we took them to Santa Barbara. And, you know, these guys they just want to hang out. Like I said some of them have never been to the beach, you know, and acknowledge them at the end.

Give them a certificate give them some kind of acknowledgement showing that you know what some of these (kids) who have probably dropped out of school have never competed at anything in their life but if they finish this program it's something that they feel proud about. And you want to make sure that they learn how to be successful so that they can teach that to these children.

And get other people involved, you know, you give them a certificate that you do, that you can get assemblymen involved or state legislators or congress to actually sponsor you and to help them. Oh I mean imagine a young kid 15 years old getting something like this from, you know, their elected officials acknowledging them that they did something to try to become a better parent.

So I just want to leave you with some shots of some of the young men who've been through our program. Some of them, you know, have taught me how to be a better father. In fact I felt bad – real guilty – that I had those prejudices, you know, being a father coming into the program. And, you know, I never had a son.

But this program has really allowed me to have many, many sons and the dads that Nigel was talking about who actually accompanied me and here's one right here (Ozzie). (Ozzie) Cruz who was a seventh year gangbanger when he came into the program and now he is a counselor with us. And three of the dads in fact the three dads who Nigel was talking about all three of them are now employed here at Bienvenidos as counselors for other young men.

So you've got to engage them, keep them and empower them and help them by example and that means that you too have to do the life of (palaga). If I'm teaching (palaga) and I can't live it then I would be there to teach it.

So this is my contact information. I know that, you know, you probably have a million questions that probably goes all over the place with this. But the thing about it is I'm 57 years old I forget some things some times. But I have a real passion for this work that was given to me by my parents. And I want to give back and – but I couldn't do that without meeting men like Nigel and Michael and others who really taught me that this work is so important. And even if you don't have a funding you find funding for it. And I just want to thank you.

Nigel Vann:

Thank you Bobby we certainly appreciate the little bit of standup humor there. And I also really take what you said at the end there, you know, that it's all about engaging them and keeping them and pairing them. But it's also about the passion and that's what really came through from you and Michael there.

And one of the questions I did want to ask you guys what are some of the specific skills that you would need to work with teens as opposed to older fathers perhaps. And Bobby certainly started answering out there in terms of saying, you know, you've got to have that passion to work with youths and, you know, this is not easy work. A lot of times people talk about it being 24/7 work and you have to manage your own boundaries with your own family life.

And you've got to have that empathy and the ability to really listen and hear before you give advice. But I'm just wondering if either of you have anything else you'd like to add to that to share with the folk on the call or any sort of skills you would look for in staff who were going to really engage with teen dads and help empower them.

Bobby Verdugo:

Certainly you need to have as a staff person working with young dads and, you know, young men in general you've got to leave all the prejudices, you know, look at yourself. You really have to think about what you're bringing into this work and what you're willing to accept. Because you have to be very open to people who you may not even think you might even like. I mean, you know, some of these young guys when they come, you know, they test you.

And they can be pretty demanding and angry and you've got to not let that get the best of you. You really have to be able to listen to them and that passion and compassion are essential I think just to be able to accept them where they're at right

now. And don't be so much in a hurry to give advice. I think be prepared more to listen before you start, you know, trying to counsel them.

Nigel Vann: Great thanks Bobby. That's wonderful advice. Have you got anything to add to that Michael?

Michael Hayes: One of the things that, you know, Bobby touched on this one I think you've got to have a lot of patience and persistence. And I also think there's a (quality) educator named (Michael Carrera) who uses the term (firmth) which is a combination of firm and warm so, you know, some firm warmth is what he talks about. You need to (comfort) them. So there's got to be both like the willingness to connect but also not to be a pushover.

There's a certain amount of testing that especially young fathers will do and they're looking for a limit. And to be firm with limits but that not to be mistaken as being cold or hard edged. So that's what I think.

Bobby Verdugo: Good point.

Nigel Vann: Okay that's a great point, you know, like Michael yeah, you know, I often say that I think that, you know, what we're doing in this work is helping dads whatever their age to understand their roles. And to think about their roles and, you know, two of the key roles that we play as fathers are to be nurturers who really do love our children warmly. But also we have to hold them accountable and the same thing the staff have to do with working with the dads so I think that term of (firmth) really sums that up.

So what the staff do is they say – they really model for the men they're working with what good fathers is all about. And I think (firmth), you know, that notion that Michael just talked about is a really key thing for that.

I was looking at some of the research on working with teen fathers and we did include a link to some recent research in the announcement for this Webinar. But one of the things that I've noticed is that research shows that young men often feel

excluded from involvement in prenatal and postnatal care by healthcare professionals so I do want to come back in a minute to talking about that Michael and Bobby.

Another factor is to predict some men's postnatal involvement with their babies is the quality of the relationship that they have with their partner during the pregnancy. So I wonder if you'd just like to talk about that a little but just some strategies perhaps to really intervene prenatally.

So that's that actually – plus that's the same question about the health professionals there as well. How do we approach health professionals, how do we get access to young men while their partner's pregnant and how do we work on – or help them work on the relationship as well. So that's a multipronged question there if you guys would like to dive in and talk about that.

Michael Hayes: Well one of the ways that we and our project have built a relationship with health professionals we funded two sites that were clinics. And that really helped us have some, you know, immediate entrée but also to gain understanding about what were the concerns of health providers. And it really became this process of us educating health providers as to the benefit of engaging the father to get better health outcomes for the pregnancy.

And there's some interesting research on the father's support for prenatal care being really the single biggest predictor of whether the mother comes in and gets prenatal care, on smoking cessation. And the other kind of – maybe it's a little bit of a flip side but – there is clear evidence that there's this uptake in domestic violence or inter-partner violence during the pregnancy. And if you've got some way of interacting and doing some screening with the father then too there can be some prevention of that.

And I think some of that is what was going on in the ethnographic study of the Fragile Family and those young men saying that they did irreparable damage to the relationship during the pregnancy because of their ignorance of what was going on. The jealousies that would kick in they interpret the mom's lack of interest in sex as some kind of betrayal or that she's interested in somebody else and respond poorly to that.

They don't understand the mood swings that they misinterpret that and so it's the opportunity of working with health providers to, you know, and what we would hear from health providers is we don't see the young men. I said well one of the things you should do is look out in the parking lot because they often gave the pregnant girlfriend a ride to the clinic. And so really working at making a clinic more father friendly and training staff to recognize that, you know, to be in some way at least welcoming to the guys who would come into the clinic settings and working with them.

Nigel Vann: All right thanks Michael. Anything to add to that Bobby? Particularly in terms of ways you might help the young men work on the relationship with the mother and keep that strong.

Are you there Bobby?

I guess we've lost Bobby.

Michael Hayes: Well I mean one of the things that we have done Nigel and this is something that we adapted from a program one of our grantees the Healthy Families Program out in Saint Angelo. They created a prenatal father's guide. And we've taken it and the AGs office here we've published it and called it Maps for New Dads. And it's a prenatal handbook for fathers. And it's really helping them understand what things they can do to be supportive of mom.

Whether it's getting the house ready, fixing her healthy snacks, understanding what, you know, for them to build some knowledge of what the different tests are and stuff like that that she'll be going through. So it's for them to become an active participant in the pregnancy. So that's really one of the key elements is for them to actively participate in that supporting and that helps build their relationship. I mean that has a supportive and facilitative impact on the relationship.

Nigel Vann: That's great. Yes. So Bobby are you back or are you not with us?

I just got a message that Bobby got disconnected. Okay thank you (Jen).

So I think we've got about five more minutes (Jen) right? So I do have a couple other things I did want to bring up here.

Michael you talked about the value of the one on one work and I have, you know, I've been on a few site visits recently with some of the grantees and that is something that I know a lot of the grantees are trying to sort of figure out the difference in doing the one on one work and the group work. And I'm just wondering if you have any sort of particular tips for how do you get the (parenting) education work done one on one. And what's the possible role of mentors and what else can you do in that one on one setting that you perhaps can't do in the group work.

Michael Hayes: Well I think you've got to have the one on one because if you don't you miss, you know, you miss half of the fathers. And because guys can't be there because of work schedules, they don't want to do the group experience and, you know, that was a mistake that I think we at one point initially made. We thought that really the parenting education is going to happen in the peer support group format and that that was the key that made the program work.

And it was a important part of the program but we relied on it I think too much in the beginning of our project. And it really was in doing home visits or going to the father's work or going with the father to court or accompanying the father in doing something that they had to do. That you could do both the modeling but also, you know, taking some of your curriculum stuff and turning it into one page handouts.

And just going over a couple of the key elements of that handout with the father when you're doing the visit. The home visiting is really valuable because you can actually have them, you know, interacting with their child. And, you know, if it's kind of an actual child care kind of thing. Do some of that modeling.

And so really making it practical. To me that seemed to be one of the real pieces that fathers gravitated for was, you know, almost that tell me what to do, you know, kind of, you know, just what's the practical piece here is that I'm supposed to do. And so there's a skill or understanding a system or something like that that really seemed to work on the one on one.

Nigel Vann: Great okay. And so did you do specific staff training for the staff that were doing that? Did they have a specific set of curriculum they were working from?

Michael Hayes: Well, you know, we did training we did all (indulging) staff training and we did some kind of, you know, like a counseling and case managing with teen fathers. And that was also something though that kind of was a skill that people built, you know, on the fly. It was, you know, we had no, you know, there's a curriculum that we use was we would adapt things out of the Fatherhood Development curriculum. We also the Saint Angelo Healthy Family (program) their whole curriculum was designed around the first three years of being a father.

The prenatal and the first three years and they had handouts for each home visit that they would do with the fathers. And so they really I mean I can't speak highly enough about what they did and we've borrowed heavily from some of what they were doing and learned from them a lot.

Nigel Vann: Okay well great. Thank you and I know we are about out of time here because we have to move on to do the survey but I understand your back with us Bobby.

Bobby Verdugo: Yes I'm sorry. I had a little technical problem here.

((Crosstalk))

Bobby Verdugo: But I'm back.

Nigel Vann: We're in the 21st Century but it doesn't always work quite right.

Michael Hayes: Nigel there's one resource book out there that's written by a professor at I think he's at Rutgers, Mark Kiselica it's called "Multicultural Counseling with Teen Fathers." And it ...

Nigel Vann: How'd you spell his last name?

Michael Hayes: K-I-S-E-L-I-C-A. Mark Kiselica. And it's got a strong counseling flavor to it but a lot of it really works in more of a case management and less therapeutic model as well. And it's called "Multicultural Counseling with Teen Fathers."

Nigel Vann: Great I'll follow up with you and get more information on that. And one of the things that I am going to do for everybody's information on the call is I am going to try and start writing up a brief summary of these Webinars so you can get this kind of information. So let me quickly go to Bobby and let's just have a final word of wisdom from you Bobby if we could.

Bobby Verdugo: Well, you know, I'm sorry I got cut off for a little while there and I know you were asking about fathers involved in prenatal care and, you know, any kind of care for the child and sometimes we find it difficult to engage them in that way. And what we really need to do I think part of it is that as men I know – will I can speak of Latino men and of history and from experience. But I think men in general we don't take care of ourselves the way we should.

You know mom's will go for not only prenatal care but for themselves when they're not feeling right and, you know, get regular health care more than men do. And I think that carries over to how a father will be with his child. If he doesn't take care of himself then he's really not going to be prepared or even wanting to take care of his child as best as he could.

That's something you have to put into your program is teaching them how to take care of themselves. Because, you know, I know my dad, you know, he wouldn't go to the hospital or to the doctor until he was really sick and I'm a diabetic now and I have to. But for the longest time I used to follow that same pattern. And lucky I have a strong partner in (Yolie) in that she made sure we went and took care of our children and got me involved.

But, you know, you don't always have those dynamics so that's something you really got to look at is making sure that they take care of themselves. That you get them to go to the clinics and check themselves out.

Nigel Vann: Absolutely. And, you know, as staff we also have to take care of ourselves as well, you know, and as administrators we have to take care of our staff. I think the whole thing sort of goes down the line there with the bottom line being payoffs for the children of the parents we're working with.

Well I know I need to go back to (Jen) now so we can do the survey but I do really want to thank you guys and I know we could have carried on here and had a lot more information so perhaps we can get you back to do something else down the road. But it's been a pleasure and, you know, Bobby and Mike you can hang on if you want for a few minutes but now let me go back to (Jen) and we're going to do the survey. And then I just need to say a few things to close things out.

Michael Hayes: Okay thank you.

(Jen): Thanks Nigel. We have a couple poll questions that we'd like you to answer to make sure that we're doing our jobs best way that we can.

So we're going to go to the first one and please click to the left of the color. First question "I increased my knowledge on working with teen and young fathers." And maybe a little while to answer. And its strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Okay now we'll move on to question number two. "I increased my knowledge on specific approaches to use in my work with young and teen fathers and their families." And this is a strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Just a couple more seconds.

Now we'll move on to question three and its three out of four so just two more. "I increased my knowledge on how to modify current program services to best serve young and teen fathers and their families." Strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, and strongly disagree.

A couple more seconds again for that one.

Okay we're going to move on to the last question. Which is, "The advice and suggestions on working with young and teen fathers was helpful to me." And it's very helpful, helpful, unsure, of little help, and no help at all.

I thank you all for helping us out and making sure that our next Webinar addresses your needs as well and we'll turn back over to Nigel. Thanks.

Nigel Vann:

Okay thanks (Jen). And I did just want to make one more point that there was one person who did send in a question or remark more I guess with the idea that we could perhaps do something else like this to next include some of the fathers in the program at some point.

And I do think that's a very good idea although I don't know if that's technically possible but I know that some of the programs I've worked with in the past have been really empowering for the young men when they do get to visit another program. Or just knowing that there's other programs out there that their part of a big national effort like this can be empowering.

But if you are working close by another grantee, you know, it might well be a good idea to look for ways to get your programs together. So let some of the dads visit each other and that can be very empowering as well I think.

So in terms of the slide in front of us as always, you know, if you have any comments or suggested topics for future Webinars then please email them to info@fatherhood.gov or call the number on your screen. And you can also go on to the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse and request technical assistance at any time.

I would certainly encourage you if you want to get in touch with me directly I'd love to hear from everybody out there. In terms of what you're doing and particularly if you're having any successes if you'd like to be a participant in one of these Webinars, you know, if you're doing something really successful we'd like to hear about that. And share that with other grantees.

So you can get in touch with me at that info@fatherhood.gov address as well. And we will I believe be having the next Webinar on the fourth Tuesday of May and we're going to try and stick to the fourth Tuesday of each month for the upcoming Webinars. And we'll be getting out the information on the next Webinar to you very shortly.

On the next slide we've got the information on the ACF conference for healthy marriage and promote responsible fatherhood grantees. So if you haven't already got this information these are the dates August 11 to 13. And we'll be waiting to get more details on the actual hotel and things.

But those are the dates so we look forward to seeing you in D.C. and I certainly hope that as many of you as can will come up and say hi to me and I really look forward to getting to know you over the next months and years as we move this thing forward.

Now we have one more slide here I believe. And again as always, you know, you can come to the Web site at fatherhood.gov and any questions you have that weren't addressed here or if you have them at any point in the project as you know you should get in touch with your federal project officer.

And as I said I am going to try and put together a summary of this and figure out with (Jen) how best we get that to you. But I think there were a lot of good points made.

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