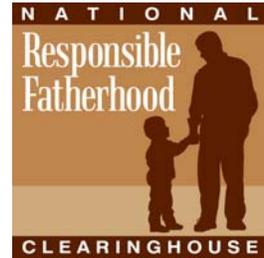




U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
Administration for Children
and Families
Office of Family Assistance

www.fatherhood.gov

NRFC Technical Assistance Webinar



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

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

Presenters:

Name, Organization

Pamela Wilson, Trainer and Consultant, Oxon Hill, MD

Luz Salazar, Parent Coach and Group Leader, Vista Community Clinic, Vista, CA

Jack Strawder, Parent Educator/ Facilitator, Urban Ventures/ Family Time,
Minneapolis, MN

February 24, 2009

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 conference call.

During the presentation, all participants will be in a listen only mode. If at anytime during the conference you need to reach an operator, please press star 0.

As a reminder, this conference is being recorded Tuesday February 24, 2009. I would now like to turn the conference over to Nigel Vann, Director of Training and Technical Assistance. Please go ahead sir.

Nigel Vann: Thank you very much. And good morning and good afternoon to everybody. We have a truly continental presentation team for you today. We're covering every time zone I think from - at least from Pacific time zone over to East Coast time zone.

And so the topic today is working with fathers in groups, tips to enhance your facilitation skills. And as I mentioned in the email I sent out this morning, we are providing this in response to requests from a - a good number of you actually after

Take Time to Be a Dad Today

the Grantee Roundtables last year. So, I think you're certainly going to find this helpful.

We also as I mentioned in that email are going to cover this further for those that are interested in some of the upcoming roundtables this year, which you'll be hearing about very soon.

And there's also opportunities that we can actually send people either on-site or to a localized group setting, where we can bring a few of you together for if you have staff you would like to get some hands on full day training and these kind of things.

And one other thing I want to say is well, just while I think about it, the - the next Webinar in March, we're actually going to push that back to the - the fifth Tuesday - Jen Webinar - Jen McHenry who makes the Webinars work for us so well isn't going to be available on the 24th.

So, we're going to have the March Webinar on March the 31st, and that will be focused on evaluation. We'll get more info on that to you shortly.

So with that, I'll pass this to Jen to get us settled and I'll come back and introduce the first presenter.

Jen McHenry: Thanks Nigel. Well and part of making these work correctly, as Nigel so - so flattery pointed out is letting you guys know how you can ask a question. So throughout all of our presentations today, if you think of something that you want to ask the presenters you'd like them to address, there's no need to keep it to yourself until the end.

You can ask a question at any point by using the question and answer pane. If you look at the top of your screen, you'll see a small button that says Q&A. When you click on that it'll open up a box for you. And you can type your question in that box, and then click on the word ask to submit your questions.

And that'll submit the question to us. You'll get a standard response that says something like thank you for your question it's been submitted to the moderator. And that will let you know that we have gotten your questions.

This will serve two purposes. The first is to let you know we've gotten your question. And the second is to let you ask another question. You know, we don't want you guys to be limited to just one question for one presenter. We want you to be able to ask as many - as many things as you'd like.

And just a couple of other technical issues. You may be looking at the screen and thinking to yourself that the print is too small, or there might be a couple of you in the room and it would just be easier to have the presentations larger.

If you'd want to do that, you can hit the F5 button. That'll take the presentation full screen. And then if you'd like to ask a question, hit the F5 button a second time, or the ESC button, and that'll bring everything back to the regular view for you.

Also if you have trouble hearing, if someone is being too quiet, you can send us a message using the question and answer tool, that says, you know, I can't hear Nigel or could someone speak up, and we will relay that message to the presenter as well.

Also as my last point, if you're interested in the slides, and you did not receive them prior to the Webinar, you can email us at info@fatherhood.gov. You can also send any questions you have after the fact to us at that email address as well. Enjoy the presentation. Now it's back to Nigel. Thanks.

Nigel Vann: Thank you very much Jen. I'm very very excited to be able to introduce Pamela Wilson to you today as our - our first presenter. She is truly a professional in the field of fatherhood work, and certainly in the field of training work.

I can safely say that everything I know about training I - I learned from Pam. I - I first met Pam in the early 90s when we worked on the Young Unwed Fathers Pilot Project, which was a six site national project.

Pam actually was the primary author of that curriculum for that project - the fatherhood development curriculum. And she - she went on to do a lot of training work around that and other fatherhood work.

She was hired by the Federal Head Start Bureau to lead their training of all Head Starts around fatherhood work in 2001. And so she really is as I say, she's a true professional, she always delivers a top quality product, deep knowledge of fatherhood work.

She's also testimony to the fact that women can relate to men. When we developed that first curriculum I remember some focus groups we did with some young men around the country, and I was amazed at some of the things she got - that Pam got these guys to talk about.

So, with no further a due, let me pass you into the very very capable hands of Pamela Wilson.

Pamela Wilson: Thank you so much Nigel. I wish you could see my face, because it's - I'm smiling. And it's - it's great to be with everybody. I love group facilitation. And one challenge that I will face as your presenter today is I don't have the luxury of having you all sitting around me and being able to look at your faces and watch your body language as we are - as I'm facilitating this.

So really what I'm ending up doing is something that I don't recommend, which is pretty much giving a lecture. But since I don't have you here, that's what I'm going to have to do.

But anyway, if you look at my first slide, you see that I give you my email address, and I really encourage you to contact me with comments or questions, if you believe that I can be helpful in any way.

If we go on to the next slide, I would like to share my overview. I'm going to present sort of a generic view of working with fathers in groups. I want to give you some background on exactly what is a group and how do groups develop over time.

I'll talk about some keys to running effective educational groups. And that is what we end up doing with fathers. We're running an educational group, not a therapy group.

I'm going to talk about some common mistakes to avoid. And then I'll try to bring to life a few of the types of engaging experiential activities that can really make a group facilitation with fathers effective. And finally, I'll end by giving an overview of some very common and basic facilitation skills.

So if we go on to the next slide. So what exactly is a group? A group is defined as two or more people who come together around a shared purpose.

So, in the case of fatherhood groups, we've got a group of - of fathers. A group of dads who come together to accomplish whatever the goal of your program is.

Maybe your program - maybe the goal is to increase parenting skills. Maybe your goal is to help increase life skills, such as communication, decision making, problem solving.

Skills that fathers can use in their - in their relationships with their children, in their relationship with their partners, perhaps with their co-parent on the job. Whatever it is, there's some purpose that you have for bringing the fathers together in a - in the group.

So when they first come, when they come to that first session, they're not yet a group. They're a collection of individuals. So, they've got to gel and come together as a group.

The point here with this second and third bullet is, when you have a group, and the group forms, they - the group becomes its own entity, or its own sort of succinct social system.

You'll see sometimes that if you have four or five people together, it's not just the sum total of those individuals. The group develops its own personality. And sometimes people will do things in groups that they wouldn't do individually.

And then there's just these sort of common group dynamics that happen in the way that people interact with each other. So it's important to look at the group as its own entity.

And then the final thing is that the groups develop over time. There are these predictable stages that groups go through.

So initially when - when folks have just gathered together that - initially in the room, as I said, they're not yet a group. So the first - the first stage is, you know, is - it's forming. How do we form? How do we come together and become cohesive as a group?

Now see the goal of the facilitator is to begin to put strategies in place to - to help members proceed through these stages. So how can we help them form and become cohesive as a group?

We may do energizers and ice breakers to help them kind of get over those uncomfortable feelings of anxiety in the beginning. We're going to give them an overview of what the program's all about, so they can understand what this is and what the purpose is.

We'll engage them in putting together a group contract, so they can kind of work together to figure out what are the rules of engagement. How are we going to interact with each other?

And then groups continue. They - they typically, they norm. They - in other words, they create their own ground rules. They storm, meaning that, you know, those of you who've had the - lots of experience running with - running groups. You know that conflict happens in groups.

You know, there - they're differences of opinions. You know, there can be scapegoating. All kinds of things can happen in the group that can be a little bit uncomfortable or - or conflictual.

And so it's important for group members to understand, you know, we can disagree. We can have a problem. We can have an incident. But we can also work it out and - and come to understand that we all have a place in the group, and we'll get through this.

And once you've weathered those storms, and figured out what the group norms are, you get into the performing aspects of the group, where the group really gets its work done. Whatever the goals of the group are, that you begin to really accomplish that work.

And I love that performing stage, because that's when you'll see the men taking off their masks more. You know, it's like allowing who they really are to come out in the group.

And, you know, sometimes they'll - they'll call each other on their stuff. You know, they'll - they'll hold each other accountable, you know, for - for responsible behavior. That's when you really start to see things happen.

And then at the end, the final stage is well how, you know, is - is like a journey. How do we bring this group to a close? And the goal of the facilitator is to figure out ways to help the group reflect and - and determine what is it that I'm walking away from this group with?

You know, what have I learned? How, you know, how can I make use of these things I've learned in my life as a father? You know, and then how can I plan to continue to get support once the group is over?

I think group is such a great methodology for fathers, because it's a time for them to come together and - and - and be with other fathers, and recognize, you know, I'm not - I'm not alone. There are other guys who feel the way that I feel. Who've been where I've been. And I can learn from you. And I can just - just have a place where I can come and just unload or de-stress.

You know, it's interesting, Nigel talked about the fact that we've worked together in the past. When we were developing the materials for that first, you know, fatherhood program, many people said, you know, men don't want to come to group.

You know, they don't want to do this touchy feely stuff. They - they're not going to do these activities. You know, that's not what men do. And we discovered that - that that was a real stereotype.

That men really do want to come to group. They may not have had a lot of experience with it. But once a facilitator can help create that environment that feels safe for them, that takes that sort of manhood mask off, where they can just be themselves and be comfortable, they definitely participate.

Let's go on to the next slide. So, as I said, fatherhood groups are educational groups. And an educational group is going to have clear objectives. You see KAS - K is for knowledge, A is for attitude, S is for skills.

So in our groups, typically there's some knowledge, you know, that we're trying to pass on. There's some attitudes that we would like the - the men to adopt. And typically there's some skills that we're trying to further develop. So we - we need to know what it is that we're trying to accomplish, and to keep that out in front of us all the time.

When you're running a group like this, it definitely requires planning and preparation. It's impossible to fly by the seat of your pants, and just, you know, pop into the - to the meeting room, you know, and - and just sort of make it happen. It just doesn't work that way. And I'm going to talk some more about that later.

And then finally, it's important to distinguish between facilitating and what I'm calling lecture style teaching. Let's go on to the next slide and look at some of those differences.

So - so that lecture style of teaching, you know, in that style, the leader is the expert. So the leader is the person who has all the knowledge, the communications typically coming from the leaders to the participants. So group members are passive.

They're sitting there just absorbing. The leader is running the show. The leader is the person with the power. And the leader is the person that's basically telling group

members what it is that they need to learn, what's important, you know. And that - that's very very different from facilitation.

And let me just say that there is a time and a place for this type of teaching and lecturing. If there's something that you know - that you know, that the group doesn't know, then you're going to spend a - a little chunk of time passing that information on. But for the bulk of your session, it really needs to be more facilitation.

The teaching lecturing style does not respect fathers as adult learners. See these guys have had their - their lifetime of experience that they're bringing to the program.

So when they come in, we need to recognize the expertise that they bring. And believe me, they are experts on their own lives. They're experts on their communities. They're experts on what they want for their children.

So we have to recognize their expertise. And when I talk to facilitators, and in my own experience, you know, we're often learning, you know, as much from them as they're learning from us.

So, in facilitation, the communications is not just two-way. It's not just from facilitators to participants, and participants to facilitators. I mean, it's multi-directional. So, everybody's communicating with everybody else.

Group members are active. You know, it's important for them to have buy-in, and to have input into what's going on in the group. So early in the program when your fig, you know, you're determining the content of the program, it's really important to have input from participants, so that they really have a say in what's being discussed.

The key in this last bullet is that through dialog, and what I'm calling experiential activities - we're going to talk some more about those in a few minutes.

But, activities that really get the guys engaged. Where they're doing something, they're participating, they're maybe going through some kind of simulated activity. But they're really engaged.

And through that engagement, and through dialog, they have these what I call ah-ha experiences where oh, you know, they just realized something about themselves.

Or they have like, you know, something that touches them in their gut that's very powerful. And it's like oh, okay, you know, that's important. These are ah-ha moments.

This isn't somebody telling you this is what's important. This is oh, I'm discovering this for myself. I feel this. I believe this. This is what we want to happen in - in our groups.

Let's go on to the next slide. There are common mistakes that - that we make as facilitators. One is, you know, not having a clear purpose.

Sometimes, you know, and - and in our groups and our programs, you know, we - we aren't exactly sure what it is that we're trying to accomplish. You know, maybe the program hasn't been effective in laying out a clear purpose.

But without that, it's hard to facilitate with - with a goal in mind. You know, when - when you just kind of get guys together and everybody just sort of sitting around just - almost like in a wrap session, you know, just sort of venting.

That may meet the goal of, you know, de-stressing. But typically our funders and our Board members, you know, our stakeholders, they're looking for some sort of results or outcomes. They're looking for some kind of change.

Whether it's, you know, increased knowledge, or some different skills, or some sort of behavior change. You know, our groups are, you know, aimed at trying to help reach those outcomes.

So, we've got to be clear about what we're trying to accomplish. And our groups have to be set up to help get us there. And again, we've got to prepare.

So even if you're using like a wonderful curriculum that's all spelled out. It's almost like cookbooks, fashion, you know, where it's really clear what you're doing from session to session. You still need that time to prepare.

You know, to - to just sit and either with your co-facilitator or by yourself and really just absorb everything in the session. To figure out now how am I going to say that? Or - or what questions would I really ask? You know, after that activity, in my own words, in my own language.

If there are materials you have to put together, you have to have the time to do that. Got to have time to prepare. So - so the Administrators, the Directors, you know, they - they have to understand that facilitators need time to prepare.

And then facilitators, you need to take that time, so that you can go into this - into the session feeling organized. You're going to be more comfortable. You know, there's going to be, you know, less time of, you know, dead time and - and disorganization and interruptions and that kind of thing when you're prepared.

So, looking at things that make facilitation ineffective, one thing is, you know, lecturing or preaching. We just talked about the downside of lecturing. You know, it's - it's - it's not really respecting the expertise that the participants bring to the program.

Being disorganized, as I said, when you're disorganized, you know, you leave yourself vulnerable to - to interruptions, to lapses, to people being sort of turned off or bored. And you - you're going to tend to feel insecure.

This third one's really important. And that's - I'm calling it too much personal story telling. You know, sometimes, I think this field tends to attract people who have been there and done that.

In my experience, I've worked with a lot of wonderful men who maybe were young fathers themselves, or maybe, you know, they went through a period where they were absent in some of their children's lives.

Or in some way, they really at a heart level feel bonds with this work with fathers. And because of that, it - it - it's tempting, and it can be really useful to tell some of your own story as a way of building connections with fathers.

But now, there's a line that you need to be careful not to cross. Because, you know, sometimes, for some people, when you get into the story telling it's, you know, it - it starts to be more of a focus on me than a focus on the group.

You know, I think we have to be careful am I telling the story because it feels, you know, it feels good to tell it? I like the attention. Or are we telling the story because it is meeting some need in the group?

It's - any story telling has got to be done because it meets a need of the group. So that's very very very important.

Another thing is like not managing problem group behaviors. I know we've all gone into groups where they're like one or two people who are talking, talking, talking, and sometimes on topic, and sometimes off topic. But they're like totally monopolizing.

You know, it's real important to figure out how to switch up that dynamic. I'm going to talk about that in a little bit. But, you know, not managing some of those problem behaviors can be - can help make facilitation ineffective.

You know, being - being boring. You know, speaking just in this monotone, you know, just, you know, flat line. If it's too much like school, too much paper and pencil activity, too much reading. You know, or if it's irrelevant.

If what you're - if what's being discussed in - in the group doesn't relate to the guys daily lives, you know, then it - it's not going to work.

And then finally, probably the - the, you know, the most serious thing here is when the facilitator is judgmental. You know, somehow the guys pick up the fact that, you know, you don't approve. You know, you - you - you think they're wrong, bad, whatever.

Or, you know, authoritarian. I'm up here, your down there. I'm talking down to you. Or being phony. It's like okay, the way I'm carrying myself, you know, I'm trying to carry myself like, you know, I'm in - I'm in the youth culture or the street culture. You know, and that's not who I am. Being inauthentic really hurts facilitation.

So let's go on to the next slide. So now we're going to look at some of the types of activities. I talked about experiential activities. You know, these are games. I - I would even call them gimmicks sometimes.

These are - these are ways, little strategies for getting your participants - in this case fathers, actively involved in whatever the content is. Engaging them. So that we can lead them to some of those ah-ha experiences.

So let's talk about some of those. Some of them are tried and true. Some may be kind of new to you. But audio visuals are always great. And, you know, I'll tell you, in this day and age with, you know, everything on TV and cable and movies, there's so much. We don't have to have, you know, professional educational films.

There's so much on TV and with DVDs that, you know, that you could use in your programs. I worked a lot with African American fathers and - and facilitators. And I'm telling you those Tyler Perry movies, you know, daddy's little girls, why did I get married, all kinds of sitcoms on TV.

You know, for whatever population you're working with, just kind of keep your eye open for things that you might be able to record and utilize in your program.

I - I had a lot of luck for quite a little period of time use - using a clip from the show - the sitcom The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air. It was an episode where Will Smith as the - the nephew who had sort of been adopted by his aunt and uncle was reunited with - with his father who had been absent from his life, you know, for the better part of his - of his childhood and adolescence.

And after a brief kind of period of getting back together, his dad deserts him again. And all the feelings that came up for him. That was a great little clip to use to help

fathers and facilitators begin to explore, you know, what is that like? What does that feel like? What is like for me in my relationship with my own father?

So whatever - whatever you're using, whatever audio visual you're using, it's important for you to figure out, well how am I going to process that? To try to help reach whatever objective or goal that I have in - in this session of my program?

You know, misinformation games. If we have some information that we're - that we're reviewing and we know that our participants have some of this knowledge, you know, you can turn it into a fun game.

You know, where you ask some questions or read some statements that could either be fact or myth. And you put the - put the guys into groups and have them compete against each other to figure out, you know, who knows the most about this topic.

And typically, you know, it could be about childhood development, or it could be about paternity. I mean, whatever it is, but make sure that you feel that the group already has some of this knowledge.

Case studies are great. Especially if they are based on the real lives of the fathers that you're working with. Role play is probably the absolute best technique for doing skill building.

But it's important when you're doing skill building, to make sure that somehow you model the skill first. Either yourself, or having participants that you've worked with model the skill.

Whether it's maybe listening skills, or communicating value - whatever it is. Model it, and then give participants opportunities to practice. And then give them a chance to get feedback from their peers and from you as the facilitator. Always beginning with what the participants did that was really effective.

Going down to dyads and triad activities. Let's say you have a group of 10 to 15 guys, which is a wonderful size group, you know. But, maybe in the larger groups, you know, you're not hearing from everybody.

If you break down into dyads, which is simply pairs. A dyad is two people. A triad is three people. But if you break down into these smaller groups, then you give your people who happen to be those quieter learners and participants a chance to really get actively involved.

So it's great to sometimes, instead of always staying in the large groups, to sometimes, you know, have people pair off. And I think it's great. You know, sometimes we'll have these wonderful questions that we think should lead to a lot of dialog.

But we don't always give people a chance to think about what they might say in advance. So it's great to put the question out there. Give people like a minute to think about it. And then have them turn to the person next to them and discuss it for like a minute or so. And then discuss it in the large group.

Round Robin is another way of getting everybody involved. Let's say you're in the large group and you're not, you know, the discussions falling a little bit flat. You know, you might say okay, we're going to just go around now real quickly. I'm going to hear from everybody.

You know, I want to hear one sentence from everybody in response to this question. Or maybe at the end of the session, you know, just to do a like a temperature check. You'd I'm going to go around, I want everybody to give me one word - one feeling word to tell me how you're feeling at the end of the session.

Let's go down on - on the right side. Another kind of activity (value deboding). (Value deboding) is a really fun and engaging way of - of helping fathers get clearer about their values about almost anything.

And what you'd do is you're read like a strongly stated - well, you'd read a - a strong value statement. And you'd ask them to position themselves in the room. The positions are strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree.

So for example, you might read the statement mothers are just naturally more capable of providing care to young children. So everybody get up and go stand in the position that - that reflects how you feel about this.

If you strongly agree, you're going to stand here. If you disagree here. Disagree here. Strangely disagree there. And you want to - you want to set the stage by letting them know, you know, there aren't any right or wrong answers here. It's what - it's what you think about this.

Now a big part of group facilitation is making it possible for people to - to respond authentically with whatever it is that they really really feel. But again, this is a - this is a technique that gets them not just actively involved, but gives them practice communicating their values, and expressing themselves verbally.

I remember, you know, after these kinds of sessions, one partner of a father saying, you know, he is so much more communicative now that he's been coming to these sessions. It's like he expresses himself, you know, differently. And just to have that practice communicating is - is a wonderful thing.

You know, this last activity - art and drawing activities. You know, we're all - we all learn in different ways. And we kind of have multiple intelligences. So for some of us, being artistic is another way of being able to express something in group.

You know, we did this activity in the fatherhood development curriculum that Nigel mentioned called Grow a Responsible Father. And, you know, it's just a way of using art and - and creative expression. You know, the - the instruction is, you know, sit together with a group of people, and figure out some way to depict through drawing what a responsible father looks like.

You know, and you can be creative. You can use words. You can use symbols. You know, whatever. And we'd have guys doing things like, you know, like drawing a guy with great big ears, because he needs to be able to listen. Or you know, a big heart, or you know, great big wide feet because he needs to be firmly, you know, he needs to have a firm strong foundation.

But again, it's just another vehicle. What we're trying to figure out what are the qualities of a responsible father, but we use that strategy to try to get them there.

The important thing with any of these sort of fun experiential activities is you don't just do the activity and say okay, that was fun. Now we're done. It's important to always process.

To always ask questions, to figure out what the activity was like for people. What they're walking away with, and then how they're going to use whatever they learned in their lives as fathers. You always want to process any activities.

Let's go on to the final - the final slide. And I'm - I'm hoping people will give me a little check in with time if I'm - if I'm running a little over.

Nigel Vann: You're doing fine Pam. You've got another five minutes.

Pamela Wilson: Okay. Very good. Okay. So now we're going to look at facilitation skills. So, there are plenty more than this, but this is - this is just a great beginning.

So as I said, planning and preparation - really really important to - to take that time every week, just to get - to get organized and to make sure that you know what you're doing in the session.

One of the worst things in the world, if you're using a curriculum is to go in as the guys would always say - oh they come in with that book, you know. Come in with a book and reading. That's a turn off, you know, to feel that you're being read to. And it's, you know, it's not good.

The other thing is room setup. You know, ideally, and I know many of you don't have complete control over the way that your room is set up. But if you do have control, it's great to have the chairs set up in a circle or a U.

Because for the group to really connect, it's ideal if everybody can see each (oth) - each other's faces, so that you can have that emotional connection. When you're

looking at the back of somebody's head, it's kind of hard to connect to that person. So room set up is really really important.

It's also important to create that climate. You know, I talked about that first stage - that forming stage. It's just so important to create that feeling in the group. That this is our group, we all belong, we're all important.

You know, if you don't show up, there's going to be a hole in the group. We're going to miss you because you're a key part of the group. You know, and this is how we're going to talk to each other. You know, that group contract.

A big part of creating the climate is how you come across as the facilitator. Just - you help set the stage just in the way you relate to the group. The way you kind of connect with them in terms of your - your eye contact and your body language. And just your tone of voice.

You know, they say that 90+% of communication is not what you say but how you say it. So how do you come across in the group?

Listening, observing and learning, you know, it's like as facilitators it's important for your eyes to sweep your group, to just kind of pick up on what's going on in the group.

You can pick up on body language. You can pick up on if - are people tuning out? Are they bored? Does (Travis) sitting over there to your right want to say something? Is he kind of leaning forward looking like he wants to say something? Maybe you'd want to call on him by name.

You know, although, you know, (John) is over there talking a lot, but you can see that (Travis) wants to say something if he could just get a word in edgewise. So if - if you're always looking at the group, then you get a - you can get a sense of how they're responding to what's happening in the group.

You know, another thing that I meant to tell you earlier is, you know, this whole - this whole kind of idea of falling into the trap of lecturing. At the beginning, when you're

just kind of getting the program going, and you're setting the stage, you may talk about 80% of the time. And the group is going to talk 20% of the time.

But your goal is to move that along, so that eventually, you're talking about 20% of the time, and the group is talking about 80% of the time. You're going to switch those proportions around.

Being authentic, I think I mentioned this earlier. It's so important to keep it real. To be who you are in front of the group. Sometimes newer facilitators are nervous and it's like okay I'm the facilitator, I'm going to put my facilitator hat on. And you end up being stiff and, you know, just not you. Your personality doesn't come through.

It's important to just be yourself. Yes, you want to be professional. You want to be organized and prepared, but you want to be you. You want to be authentic.

Because they need to connect with you as an authentic human being who cares about them. You know, who's connecting with them. Again, just - just being yourself.

You need to be able to use all those fun activities I talked about, but use them effectively. That means you have to know what it is you're doing. You have to have clear instructions and make sure that people understand exactly what they're doing. You have to run it in an organized fashion. And you have to really know how to process those activities.

I gave you some ideas about how to involved the whole group. You know, how do you - how do you, like if you're noticing that only a few people are participating, maybe you want to switch this from the large group to a (dyad) activity, or a small a group activity.

Maybe you want to use the Round Robin technique. Figuring out ways to get everybody involved. Maybe you want to call on people. Maybe you want to say, you know, let me hear from some people I haven't heard from in a while.

Different strategies to get everybody involved. Asking good open-ended questions. What is an open-ended question? It's a question that cannot be answered with yes or no.

It's a question that encourages discussion. It's a question that makes people want to talk. It's not a leading question that has a right or wrong answer. It's a question that's aimed at the objective of the activity.

So, as you're doing that personal preparation every week, you want to look and make sure that your - you're, you know, that you've written down, or at least thought about and prepared the kinds of questions that you want to ask.

It's - it's a real art. I think sometimes people will ask questions that are too complex. Or the questions are kind of leading, and - and people kind of figure out where you want them to go. And they're either going to go where you want them to go, or they're going to enjoy frustrating you and not going there. So, work on open-ended questions.

Keeping things moving, having back up plans. You know, you all know that lots of times you can be prepared. You go in and somehow the activity falls flat.

It's nice to have something that you can fall back on prepared. Just in case what you've planned doesn't work the way that you want it to.

And it's good to ask - go ahead and make that observation to the group. And get feedback from them about why something isn't working.

We talked earlier about using self-disclosure appropriately - remember? You self-disclose only when it's going to meet the need of your group. And I would encourage you to think of it this way - less is more.

It's really, you know, if - if - if there's any direction you want to go in, go in the direction of, you know, sharing less. And I'm not saying that you can't talk about yourself. But that's not the focus of the program.

The focus of the program is helping fathers, you know, accomplish whatever the objectives are. It's not about you. It's about them. That's the thing to keep in mind.

Being flexible, being able to go with the flow when you need to. If the guys comes in and something has happened that every, you know, that has everybody like, you know, riled up or concerned, you're going to have to spend some time with that, you know?

Or if something's not working, you're going to need to shift gears. But you also have to have the ability to come back to focus on whatever it is that you're trying to accomplish in the program.

And then finally, knowing your own limitations. I think all of us had times in group where something happens and you feel something happening, and your gut is like oh, and you know, uh-oh, I am in over my head here. I don't, you know, I don't quite know how to handle this.

And the important thing is to recognize that, you know. It may also happen when a - a father may come to you outside of the group, and - and ask you for, you know, some help with something that you - like perhaps maybe let's say substance abuse, or domestic violence.

You know, and you don't have specific training in that area. You know, it's important for you to make sure that you have good strong collaborative relationships with others in your community - other agencies in your communities, so that you can make a really good and strong referral.

Not just giving them a name, but, you know, not just telling them about an agency, but giving them a name, calling that person, you know, making that connection, and then following up on the referral. But know what you bring and what you don't bring. And - and - and make referrals as appropriate.

I have thoroughly enjoyed this. I - I wish that I could see your faces and see how you received it. And answer questions, but I guess that will come later. So again, I appreciate it and I look forward to answering your questions.

Nigel Vann: Thank you very much Pam. And we have had a few questions come in, so we'll hopefully have time to get to those at the end.

I did want to underline one thing Pam said. You know, she said they do want to come. I think a lot of times when we're doing this kind of work with dads, we tend to think they don't want to come and talk in groups.

But as we see, once you get them in a group, as Pam says, you know, and they get to start taking that mask off and start sharing with each other, that's when we really get to do the key work of these fatherhood programs.

And in a sense, one of the solutions to your recruitment problems is to provide excellent services, particularly excellent group services. So, thank you again Pam.

Let me now introduce our next presenter who will be Luz Salazar, who is a parent coach and group leader at Vista Community Clinic in Vista, California. That's just a little bit north of San Diego.

As you see from the - the bios we sent out, Luz was born and raised in Mexico. The primarily language is Spanish in which she works with her fathers.

So, just in case Luz has any translation needs during the presentation or the Q&A, her colleague Lola Enriquez is sitting next to her to be of assistance if needed.

I had the opportunity to sit in on a class that Luz led with her - she has two young male colleagues who work with her. But they led a class that I got to sit in on back in October, and I was very impressed with just the engagement with the fathers, and the obvious growth that was going on in the room. The obvious bonds that had been formed.

And Luz actually uses a - a Power Point presentation which I hadn't seen before, and wouldn't necessary be in favor of. But, she uses it very effectively, and she blends it in with a number of sort of hands on activities as well.

So, she - again, as it says in her bio, she came to the US in 1978. Worked with Head Start from 2000 to 2007, has been with the Vista fathers program since May of 2007. So let me pass it over to Luz, and now we get to have a little bit of a hands on experience here of what it is to work with fathers in groups, and particularly what it is to work with a group of fathers in Spanish. So Luz, the floor is yours.

Luz Salazar: Thank you Nigel. Hello everyone. My name is Luz Salazar. And I will present you a strategies to facilitate a small group.

Woman: Next slide please.

Luz Salazar: Responsible fatherhood group, in our program we serve multicultural low income fathers and any paternal care givers.

That population was there, is mainly Hispanic fathers. Because that is the population we have in our area.

The group consists of 20 to 25 fathers per group session. The classes are provided twice a month. We need to remember that we should make the classes available when most fathers can attend.

Woman: Next slide.

Luz Salazar: Working with the Right Tools. When we do a presentation to a small group, we need to have the right tools and identify what kind of group you will be facilitating.

We must try to understand the client's, culture, language, tradition, beliefs, trust, values, background, needs, education.

We gather this information when we do our needs assessment. Why is this important? Because...

Woman: Next slide.

Luz Salazar: Because part of working with a small group means that we need to put ourselves in our client's shoes. We must understand the participant's needs.

Do they have food, housing, jobs, transportation; are they healthy? They won't attend a group session if their basic needs are not met. We must go to know their culture; where they come from, what is their role as a male in their culture. Do they make eye contact when they speak with you or not? This is very common within the Hispanic community.

Language - what language do they speak or do they speak a dialect? Are you able to communicate? Can you get someone to help you translate?

Traditions - what (holidays) do they celebrate or don't celebrate?

Values - what do they value; respect, obedience, community?

Woman: Next slide.

Luz Salazar: Trust - we must be honest and provide clear rules. Give them the respect they deserve. Believe in the way they live for example, not bathing every day because of their faith or family customs, and this is just an example. It could be any other thing.

Background - how were they raised or disciplined as a child or the children? Were both parents present?

Education - can they read and write? What school grade did they complete, so that you won't embarrass them by asking them to read out loud.

We need to know their work schedule to ensure all fathers receive the education materials and make the group session available to them.

Woman: Next slide.

Luz Salazar: Getting ready for the group. Call clients the day before to remind them about the classes. Let them know how important their presence is in your group. People want to know they are wanted and needed. This will ensure their assistance.

Create a welcome environment. Prepare the classroom, set up tables and chairs, drinks, a snack or food. If you are going to use a projector or any educational materials, have them ready before the clients get there.

Welcome to the participants at the start. That makes them feel they are important, especially when you call them by their name. Have the sign-up sheet.

Ensure you give the program (reference).

Woman: Next slide please.

Luz Salazar: Facilitating the group. Have the team members and participants introduce themselves by name, where they come from, how many children do they have, how long have they been in the United States, and what kind of work do they do.

This is important because they (bring to you) community and if some need a job they can refer one another.

Then we have a nice break here to help them release the stress. Tell them get to know each other and help them get out their comfort zone. Laughter and a good sense of humor is always good for mental health.

Welcome and guidelines. We take this opportunity to let them know that we are not here to change them; we are here to give them the tools to be better fathers and husbands in order for them to have a successful life.

Part of our group guideline is respect. If they have a question, the participants can raise their hand and share with the rest of the group. All opinions are important. We encourage participation; participation is important because it's part of learning and group involvement.

Some other things that we do in our group; we play games - toss the ball. For example, the clients pretend they are a soccer player or a movie star. When the clients share, it's not them who's sharing, but the celebrity they are pretending to be. The idea of pretending to be a star helps them get involved in the group session.

You can be as creative as you want.

Woman: Next slide please.

Luz Salazar: Handling difficult situations. One of the difficulties you might have is the different levels of education. Speak in simple terms and go to the point -- el punta.

Fathers who monopolize or interrupt the group session. Acknowledge his point of view and tell him that what he has to say is important and that you will have time at the end of the group session for additional questions.

And for those that like to stay a little longer to discuss or share can stay if they want. Redirect the conversation and tell them that we need to respect the time and continue with our group session.

Fathers who come to the group session in distress or in any crisis have one of the parent coaches' assist him for his immediate needs. If the client wants to share with our big group, ask the group if it is okay to take some time from the group session.

If the clients don't want to share, don't force him. We must be flexible. Be ready to change gears.

Woman: Next slide please.

Luz Salazar: Selecting a good curriculum. It's very important we are using the 24/7 Dad - Siempre Papa. You can have a great curriculum, but if you don't have a good facilitator you won't have a successful group.

In reality, it's all about the facilitator. Good facilitator - good curriculum; bad facilitator - bad curriculum. Don't be afraid to change the language to make your point.

Be creative. Create a PowerPoint, hands-on activities, audio visual; use songs and poems for reflection or to introduction to the topics. Provide additional educational materials.

Woman: Next slide please.

Luz Salazar: A female facilitator working with male group. Qualities of a good facilitator are professionalism, patient, acknowledge their manhood, good listener, passion, good communicator, confidentiality, honest, respectful, and knowledgeable.

At the beginning of the program there was a concern that a woman would not be able to facilitate a small group for men because the men in the group will not feel comfortable sharing because of their machismo. That is a misconception.

As a woman I tell the father's group that I respect them and if they don't want - if they don't feel comfortable with me and they don't want me to facilitate the topic, I want them to be honest with me like I am honest with them, and they are not going to hurt my feelings.

I can take it - it's not about me, it's about them. I will give them the best of me and my professionalism and be acceptable to their needs.

I will be open-minded to any comments of the topic as long as we stay in the line of mutual respect. If I am a good group facilitator it shouldn't matter if I am a woman or a man.

What matters is that the fathers are getting the information to be the best fathers they can be. The success of our program consists in having a great, great, team, (unintelligible), case managers, and a good group facilitator. Thank you.

The next slide is our contact information. And thank you very much.

Nigel Vann: Thank you very much Luz. And Luz is living testimony to the fact that, you know, women can work with men.

The question often comes up - I've addressed it a little bit at some of the Grantee Round Tables. And some of you have heard me say, you know, that I really do feel I've been privileged to sit in on a lot of father groups around the country over the last 20 years, and I've seen some very well facilitated groups, but I've also seen some poorly facilitated groups.

But it does not make a difference really whether you're male or female, it's what's in inside and how you relate to the group, and how you use these skills that Pam and Luz have been talking about. So I think that is something that we should all bear in mind.

So our final presenter today is going to be Jack Strawder who is a parent/educator and facilitator at the Urban Ventures Family Time Program in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

I first met Jack at the Grantee Round Table that we did in Denver actually, and I had a sneaking feeling that this might be a gentleman that - who was doing a good job in the group setting with fathers.

And a few months after that I actually got the privilege of sitting in on one of his evening sessions at Urban Ventures when I accompanied the Federal Project Officer on a site visit there.

And on that evening actually, the group had to meet in a room that they did not normally meet in and there was another event going on at the same time in a nearby room. And so there was some background noise and the room we were in was not really conducive to a good father group, but Jack had this group in the palm of his hand and it was a large group. So I was extremely impressed with the job that Jack did which was why I have asked him to join us today.

He's been with the Urban Ventures Father's Program since 2007. Prior to that he had ten years experience working in the chemical dependency field,.

The population he's working with is primarily urban population, many of whom are just returning from prison so a range of issues there.

The way Jack's going to do his presentation, he's got a few questions on his slides he's actually going to talk to. So let me pass it over to Jack and let's have a bit of wisdom from Mr. Strawder.

Jack Strawder: Thank you Nigel. It's really my pleasure to, you know, just be a part of this right here. I heard some very positive things from everybody before me so I hope that I'll bring up the rear in a proper fashion.

Let me first say that you caught us on a day that we have so many things going on around here, and you know we have the -- I can't mute -- people that are knocking on the door or whatever.

So I got Ms. Priscilla here that's going to try to, you know, direct anybody away from making any noise why we're doing this. But if it happens, you know, that's a part of what we do. We just try to deal with things as they come up and again, we're just glad to be a participant in this.

I've been blessed to work at Urban Ventures for almost two years now, and one of the truly blessings of it is I grew up around this neighborhood so I get an opportunity to come back and do some work in the neighborhood that I did my - I lived throughout my childhood and throughout some of my crazy times.

So it's really a blessing to be able to touch families that I knew years ago and sometimes their kids and their kid's kids. So, it's a blessing.

Let me get started by first giving you a little background on the group that I facilitate.

The group I facilitate is a lower income; mostly African American. Most have been detached from society due to alcohol, you know, addiction problems - alcoholism, drug addiction problems. Also many of them have faced some sort of legalities with the court system.

Many are just coming back from prison; so many big ranges of issues that deter them from really being a healthy parent and really even worrying about if they, you know, the fact that they are parents or even trying to do anything in a direction that is positive towards their children.

We have a lot of low functioning adults with a lot of MI issues that just kind of want a place to belong or a place to come to that they feel might be doing some positive within the community. So we try to be that place that everybody revolves around in a positive, healthy atmosphere.

A lot of our clients don't even have GEDs and, you know, most of their means of getting around or transportation is the bus system.

We've been blessed to try to give participants bus tokens to get back and forth to group. We've even had gas cards -- and I guess we've probably had gas cards for a couple of months -- and haven't had anybody to give them to because our clients basically come back and forth through the general bus system. But that's kind of who we deal with.

The curriculum that we use is four different programming. We've got one from Effective Black Parenting, The Center of Improvement for Childcare, Nurturing Skills for Families, Survivor Skills for Healthy Families, and the Nurturing Father's Program.

And we've combined all of them together to come up with a curriculum that seems to address the population right here that we're dealing with.

Again, we have so many different issues that we have to attribute to that we need a lot of different curriculums to encompass all the needs.

Our meeting format - we meet twice a week now on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5 o'clock until 7 o'clock. We give a meal to the population from 5 to 5:30 and then we do group from one - for an hour and a half on both days.

The giving of the meal seems to really attract a lot of people because again, we're talking about folks that, you know, some days they don't have a healthy, hot, home-



cooked meal. And it becomes a benefit when they can bring their kids because we have child care also.

They can bring their kids up and then they can get a little knowledge of how to become a healthy parent. So it all works together to form a very positive entity.

Now our group size is - averages from 30 - 35 men and women to 50. We're starting to push 50 people in here now that it's getting a little warmer out, and it seems that that is going to even rise a little bit, so we have a kind of a packed house when we do group on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Next slide please.

When we talk about some of the facilitation strategies that work best with his population, we know that with this population is two things that really much be present. And the first thing is being honest and being real with the clients.

Most of our clients have been lied to long enough so they want someone to come to them and be honest with them and really show some genuine care. That you really care for them and see them as an individual; as a human being and not just as a number or you're just trying to make money off of them.

And we don't make any money off of them, but still that's what they're normally used to hearing.

The second thing is, most times they really want somebody that's experienced what they've experienced because in a lot of cases if you come around them and you haven't been where they've been, they think that you're phony or fake or, you know, that you're not - you would be able to help them in their situation of needs.

And we've been blessed enough that Urban Ventures who we work for, is a second chance facility. Just about everybody that works here has been through some form - something that has, you know, altered their life, and been able to come up out of it and do some very positive things with their life.

So everybody that they run into here is someone who has been through some type of dramatic things within their life so, they really feel comfortable with us as facilitators, with us counseling, and just giving assistance to the clients. Next slide please.

Now this is a deep one because it asks, you know, how do you incorporate mothers in your group because we do have a lot of mothers that come. And that's kind of a cultural thing.

And I thought about this long and hard and I came up with, you know, that culturally in African American community, mothers are one of the strongest, most consistent family member that most African American men know.

It's either the mother, the grandmother, the auntie - so they already have an undying respect for mothers in this community. And so when moms come to group and voice their opinion and become a part of what we would like to call this movement of positive, healthy parenting; the mothers come in with all the rights and views that any man has in this group because they already know.

In most cases they were probably raised by a single mother and they know how strong-willed and how they've been the mom and the father in certain circumstances in most of their lives.

So we just incorporate the mother's right in there and they seem to be some of the strongest soldiers within this movement we have of really trying to bring some positive, healthy parenting in this community.

You have to understand around this community and throughout this community, alcoholism and drug addiction is rampant. So to get people to even decide to want to do something different is kind of second nature to them because the first nature is where they're living at, and what's going on around them all the time. So the second nature is to try to do something different and healthy.

So the mothers and the men within this area seem to all gel together as wanting to do something positive in a healthy manner.

What opening and closing rituals do I use? Well again, we really try to get together as just being a family, and we try to have that family atmosphere together as people meeting and wanting to come here.

Of course, this is volunteer to come, and so we really try to have some things that people think about once they leave here and something that they want to be a part of consistently, and that's being - doing something positive in the community.

So what we do as far as some of our rituals is when we come in is a lot of times we allow any of the clients to do a check-in. Because in many instances they have a lot of things that's going on before they get here; issues that could become problems if we don't address them upon starting group.

So we have what we call a check-in and those that want to speak get up and, you know; a 3-minute check-in. We have a little clock that we start up and stop and when the clock goes off they have to end whatever they're saying.

And it seems to get a lot of stuff off their chest and so they begin to be able to receive this information instead of just sitting here listening to someone speak for an hour and a half.

They become a part of what we're trying to do because within that, if there's some serious issues that's going on, we'll address it within that group that night.

We have another ritual which we do and that's within our closing. Could you put that other - thank you.

This is called a Parent Pledge. Now we came up with this as - when we get ready to end group every Tuesday and Thursday, everybody stands up and we all read this off together.

And I mean people be almost yelling it at the top of their voice because it's something we do as a unit; it says that we love our kids, and we want to do something different with them. And it speaks about all the things that - what we want to do now. Not

tomorrow, but right now as far as the direction that we want to head in parenting our kids.

And it seems to make everybody feel great, and after we get through saying this you see everybody do the hugs and, you know, the handshakes and to really speak to each other as folks that want to know each other and want to try to do something as a group to better their community.

Can we go back to the last slide please? The next one I want to speak on is again, our population deals with a lot of people who have been incarcerated. And in incarceration, most times the guys will come out to do whatever they ask them to do because they get out of their jail cells.

You know, they go to class or go to church; they'll go any type of group that might come up because they get a chance to get out of the cell.

Well our population here, once they come back into society, there's so many ills out there in the street that continue pick at them that in order for them to graduate from this program, that's a big plus to be able to do it out here.

I mean inside there you're isolated; you have to go - you're locked up and you can get to go out to do something positive and that's cool, but out here there's so many ills around you that it's difficult to maintain positive people in your environment and around you.

So what we try to do is really promote someone when they complete our program.

We have an eight week program and they have the ability really to complete the program in a little over a month because they could come twice a week, and we have different curriculum on each week.

And we try to really promote completion of that because it's something that they did while they were out here and it was volunteer. And you really should see how happy and overjoyed that these people are that they completed something, you know, being free.

They completed something that's positive and they can run around and tell folks, hey you know what, I've completed that program over there fathering. And I learned a lot of stuff and I'm going to go back to try to help someone else get some more knowledge on healthy parenting, and you can just see the enthusiasm that it brings about within the population.

Can we go to the next one - okay. Is that telling me that my time is short? I was getting ready to finish up on -- what do we have -- difficult situations to come up.

Let me say this, I have been really blessed in the two years that I've been here that we really haven't had a lot of disruptive situations in group. And one of the main focuses on that is that we get out there and we really talk with the people and sit down and go hand-in-hand with them from the time that they get here.

Our group starts at 5 o'clock; most times people start getting here about 4 o'clock. And we go out and really have a relationship with the clients and speak to them.

So you can almost feel those that have some issues that they really need to get off their chest. And when that comes about - and we're blessed enough that me and Ms. Priscilla co-facilitate this group, so one of us can grab a person and take them in the back and do a one-on-one and try to clean up some of the, you know, mess that might be going on within their heads before group starts.

And I think that helps to deter any of the problems that might naturally occur when someone just comes straight off the street; they've got issues, and they run right into the group and they jump in there and probably get very disruptive or be disruptive to some other people with the group.

We kind of knock that off before it even has an opportunity to arise because you start to understand and feel your clients after - if you're really getting in there, you know, talking to them and understanding where they're coming from.

And dealing with some of the issues that are at hand and a lot of it being no job, poor housing, little or no food in the house and the ability to bring in a healthy meal is limited.

So once you start understanding that about them and you start discussing certain things with them, you kind of know them when they come in when their heads are down and when there's an issues going on.

So again, we have just been blessed with that one that we haven't had a whole lot of issues and again, we have 35/40, sometimes 50 people in there and we try to keep it organized and have very little disruptiveness.

Now there's times when we do group that we have that one disruptive person that always seems to want to take on whatever the topic is, and every, you know, question you asks, he wants to answer.

Ad what I do with that, I - since you know, I always say it's kind of hard to mess with a guy with the mic, and I just go around that person until they kind of understand that I'm not going to let them just control or manipulate any group. And they seem to kind of calm down and take their time and figure out times that they really want to put a point it. So, that's one other thing.

And if we ever have a crisis; a father comes through with a crisis, we again, we've been blessed enough we can pull them to the side, do a one-on-one, try to address any issues.

Because one of the things we do is go to court with these guys to try to parenting time with them. We try to help them with relationship problems when there's co-parenting going on, so we really get into these guys lives and so we know a lot about them and we're able to deal with any crisis ahead of time.

I guess my time is up. Am I up Nigel?

Nigel Vann:

Yeah, I think so Jack. Yeah, I know you've got a lot more to say, but we really do need to move on yeah.

Jack Strawder: Okay, well I really appreciate the time to be able to give what I gave. Hopefully if there's some questions out there that you want to ask me, I'll be here to answer them and I really appreciate it and thank you very much Nigel.

Nigel Vann: Thank you Jack.

Jen I have a quick question for you. I know we're supposed to finish in about ten minutes; do we have any latitude to go over by five minutes?

Jen McHenry: Sure, as long as people are able just to hang around for five minutes.

Nigel Vann: Okay, well what I'm going to suggest is - because I've got a lot of questions here so I'm really seeing that this has been a topic that has hit home with folks.

So what I'm going to suggest is that we spend about five minutes on the questions and then we'll do the poll questions, and then perhaps we'll do another question or two after that if people want to hang on if that's possible.

I had a couple of questions that are - well actually let me say one more thing and I know Jack had wanted to say there and didn't get to that I think it's an important to make.

One of the things that Jack does; they give their participants a Certificate of Completion after the first eight weeks, although some of them keep coming, and it's sort of like a promotion is the way they put it.

So at the end of the particular night when the participant has finished their eight weeks, Jack has a certificate for them and says a few words about them and they come up at the end of the class and then they get to say something.

And it really it empowering for people, so I think that's a good thing for people that Jack's doing there and Priscilla is doing there.

A couple of questions that perhaps Pam could address very briefly Pam; somebody wanted to know on one of your slides you talk about sentence stems. Can you just briefly say how you use that?

Are you there Pam; are you un-muted? Okay, well we'll come back to Pam later.

One general question that perhaps Jack or Luz could answer because I think it's a very interesting question. It says, "How can you relate to clients; let them know who you have been where they are when your employer strictly prohibits you sharing your own information."

So if you've been told by your employer not to share information of a personal basis, how can you let your clients know that you've been where they are?

You want to take a stab at that Jack or Luz?

Jack Strawder: Yeah I can. See I'm blessed again to work at a facility that's about redemption. It's about people that have had problems and starting over. At Urban Ventures that's part of their mission statement is, you know, to help turn the community and the people within the community around. And so they've never said what we can't say.

You know my boss is, you know - I won't put his business out there, but he's, you know, a felon and, you things of that nature. So I don't have, you know - I have not been covered up like so it's easy for me to talk to my clients - to my people because a lot of times I can relate to them and tell them, hey I've been there, I do understand what's going on with you and I do understand the system.

That's why they see me go out of my way; say if it's something to - if I'm trying to network them out for some other services that we don't offer. I go over there and find out how the services is and I give them a contact person so they can, you know, walk to that contact person and be able to get through the process a little easier.

And/or if we're in court I go down to court with them and I speak on their behalf because I have been there and I do understand. And I think that they see that and

they feel that and that's what makes our whole piece go together here that they understand that me and Ms. Priscilla we've been there and we understand.

We don't - there's no little I's and big U's or anything like that. We are all as one and we're trying to make this a movement; a family of doing something together.

Nigel Vann: So perhaps there's a way just to show almost non-verbally that you sort of get where they're coming from. You know, I certainly see that with some of the best facilitators there really is what I refer to as that heart-to-heart connection with people and you really sort of have almost a meeting of the eyes.

Let me ask one quick question of Luz and then we'll do the poll and then hopefully we've got Pam back and we can ask her...

Pamela Wilson: I'm back, I'm back.

Nigel Vann: Okay, good Pam. Let me just ask this question of Luz. Luz there was one question for you in terms of one of your slides you talked about traditions and holidays, one of the participants was wondering if you could give an example of a tradition or a holiday and a way you've used that connect with the fathers.

Luz Salazar: Okay, most of the - when we're doing our home visit, we find out what religion they've been or what they come from. And is the reason when doing the classes we identify who celebrates or not celebrate tradition or not celebrate holidays.

Because on the home visits we are more - you know, one-on-one, and we find out with the family - with the parent, with the father he celebrate or his tradition. For example, if he's for some religion; if he's some religion that don't be celebrate, we not encourage to the parents to be celebrate.

We figure it another way to be celebrate like they don't celebrate birthday parties, or they don't celebrate like Christmas. We encourage to be only - okay, we're going to celebrate only the winter time; this is another picture...

Nigel Vann: Mm-hmm.

Luz Salazar: ...for them to participate in those celebrations.

Nigel Vann: Great - okay, thank you. Let me just address one question that came in. Somebody was asking about is it a good idea to bring mentors or former participants in with this (off-putting) to the participants?

There's not time to ask that of everybody, but I do know I've heard, you know, a number of people who do that, particularly perhaps for the first session, you know, it might be good to bring some folk back who have been in before just to give their experience in a group to put other people at ease. So that's just one thought I had there.

Hey, let me go to Jen.

Pamela Wilson: Nigel can I just quickly say a sentence stem is simply an incomplete sentence. For example, the best part about being a father is; the hardest part of being a father is; being a man means. So it's just an incomplete sentence that participants complete.

Nigel Vann: Okay great; thanks Pam. And you know, even though we haven't got time to answer all the questions, if you send a question in and we haven't been able to address it, email that to me. You can send it to info@fatherhood.gov or you can just email directly to me nvann@fatherhood.org and I'll make sure that I have the presenters respond to you.

So with that let me give it to Jen the poll and then perhaps we can talk a little bit about body language. I might ask that question of Pam at this time, but Jen, if you could have us do the poll.

Jen McHenry: Great, I will get to question number one and the first question is, "I have a better understanding of facilitation techniques that I can use in my group work or recommend to other staff working in groups. I have a better understanding of facilitation techniques that I can use in my group work or recommend to other staff working with groups."



Okay, we're going to move on to question number two; "I have a better understanding of general strategies to improve the overall process of working with fathers in groups."

And your choices are strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, and strongly disagree.

And the question is, "I have a better understanding of general strategies to improve the overall process of working with fathers in groups."

And we'll go to question number three; "I have a more complete understanding of the difference between teaching and facilitation with groups." Again, strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, strongly disagree.

"I have a more complete understating of the difference between teaching and facilitation with groups."

Okay and it's the last question; "The advice and suggestions regarding group facilitation were helpful to me." And choices are very helpful, helpful, unsure, of little help, no help at all.

And again that question, "The advice and suggestions regarding group facilitation were helpful to me."

Thank you, and we'll go back to one last question from Nigel.

Nigel Vann:

Thank you very much Jen. And I do want to remind everybody again, you know, we are going to address this issue further in the Grantee Round Tables. And if you'd like to have someone come on site to work with your staff on this for a day, particularly if you're in an area where we could pull a group of four or five Grantee's together, please let me know that and we can see if we can arrange that for you.

I've just got - there's a couple of questions here I'm going to combine and I'd like to ask these of you Pam if you could just address them briefly.

One question was, “As a facilitator do you make a point of standing up, moving around or being at equal height seating?” “And generally, what message are you looking to send with your body language?”

That’s a question about body language and then the other one is...

Pamela Wilson: Okay.

Nigel Vann: ... “How flexible are you with your language? Do you pick up on lingo that is more in keeping with the participants come from familiarity or do you keep to ways more natural with your own terminology?”

So Pam if you could just for a minute or two just talk briefly about body language and the use of language; whether you put it in participant’s terms or in your own terms.

Pamela Wilson: Okay, so for the first one it really - it sort of depends on the group. I think it’s great if you’re working with a small group of parents to sit, you know, to sit with them, to be at their same level. You know, you’re the same as them; you’re not better than them, you’re not higher than them. I think that’s just - that’s sort of presenting yourself as an equal partner.

On the other hand there are times -- especially with larger groups -- I think it’s, you know, it’s an instance of your energy and making sure that you’re seen and heard.

If you giving directions in groups like Jack’s running with 50 people, there’s no way you can sit. You have to be up, you have to be moving, you have - your energy has to help - you’re doing more directing with a larger group like that. So I think it really depends on the group.

And then the second part, for me it’s being authentic, you know. If you authentically code switch and you can, you know, without being phony, move in and out of different language I think that can work really well. I think you should always be appropriate, but I think that works.

If you - if that's not who you are, don't ever be phony to try to, you know, engage people. But look at people's faces; look at body language. If you pick up; if you see that glazed over look; if you can tell that you're using language that's not connecting with people then you need to shift.

You know if they use language that you don't understand you need to say, hey educate me. You know I - what does that mean? And participants, you know, really enjoy educating you. You know, it's a mistake to set yourself up as the expert as facilitator.

Always set yourself up as someone who has, you know, something to bring, but you're not an expert and you have a lot to learn from them.

Nigel Vann: Wonderful, thank you Pam; yeah. Well I certainly feel that today's been a treat. I hope it's been good for everybody else.

I'll ask the presenters to stay on the phone so we can just debrief for a minute. And I wish everybody else a very good day and hope to see you again soon.

We'll have the next Webinar again on Tuesday March 31 on Evaluation. Have a good day.

Pamela Wilson: Thank you.

Luz Salazar: Bye.

Jack Strawder: Bye.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, this does conclude the conference call. We please ask that you disconnect your line. And thank you for your participation.

END