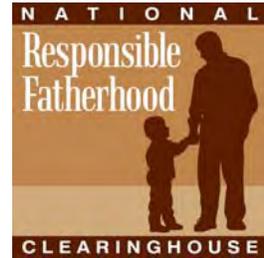




U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
Administration for Children
and Families
Office of Family Assistance

www.fatherhood.gov

NRFC Technical Assistance Webinar



“Working with Fathers from Rural and Small Town Communities”

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

Presenters:

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Jasmine Cyprian McCoy, MSW, Program Coordinator, B.U.I.L.D. (Building Up Involved Loving Dads), Gwinnett Children’s Shelter (GCS), Buford, GA

Steve Mojica, Program Coordinator, Fathers and Children Together (F.A.C.T.), Visiting Nurse Association, Colchester, VT

Neil Tift, Director of Operations, Native American Fatherhood and Families Association (NAFFA), Mesa, AZ

May 26, 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.

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

As a reminder, this conference is being recorded Tuesday, May 26, 2009.

It is now my pleasure to introduce Nigel Vann, Director of Training and Technical Assistance.

Please go ahead, sir.

Nigel Vann: Thank you very much. And welcome, everybody. I trust you had a good holiday weekend and that you’re all back in fighting spirit here. Also hope that you did have some time to pause and think about the dads serving in the military and ways that we

Take Time to Be a Dad Today



can continue to look to work with them and their families as they come home. Certainly important to remember all that.

Today our focus is going to be on working with fathers in nonurban settings. You know, a lot of the impetus for fatherhood work does tend to come from urban settings, but we do have to remember that there's dads and families everywhere. So today we're going to explore a little bit how the work is different and also how it's similar in rural, small town, and suburban settings.

And I was talking to Mike Simco, actually who I believe is on the line, a grantee from Iowa, who pointed out to me that rural can mean all sorts of different things depending on your setting. You know, we may be talking about a small community of 20,000, 25,000 population that's fairly cohesive or we may be talking about work over multiple (counties) over a wide area where it becomes a totally different ballgame.

I've had quite a bit of experience myself actually in small communities. I grew up as a young child in a small community. And when I first came to this country, I was in a reasonably small community in East Tennessee. And I now the last four years have been in a small town in New Mexico.

So I'm looking forward to hearing some wisdom from our four presenters today. We're going to have three PowerPoint presentations and then Steve Mojica from Vermont is going to come on just to give us sort of some commentary and feedback and observations. He doesn't actually have a PowerPoint, so that'll help us stay in our time a little bit.

So with that, let me introduce you to Matt Crews, who is standing in today for Jen McHenry, who's usually doing the technical side of this for us. And Matt, many of you I think have met Matt at the various conferences or roundtables. He's often there staffing the clearinghouse table. And he - he's going to just briefly remind you all how this works, how you can ask questions if you need to.

And let me turn it over to Matt.

Thanks.

Matt Crews: All right, thank you, Nigel.

I just want to quickly go over how you can ask a question. If you have a question that comes up during any of our presenters' presentations, you can actually send them to us via the Live Meeting tool. And when you do this, you'll get a standard response back to let you know that we've gotten your question and it will also free you up to ask a second question.

So please don't hold back if you have anything that you'd like to present. And at the end of all of the presentations today, we'll get back together with all of the presenters and pose these questions. If your question is not addressed, we will do so afterwards as a follow-up. But please, send as many as you have and here's how you can ask a question.

If you look at the top of the toolbar, you should see a button that says Q&A. Simply click on that button, type in your question, and hit Ask. It is just that simple. And you can also use this as a presenter - if - you can use this if a presenter is too quiet or if you didn't catch something. So please feel free to send those thoughts to us.

And just to cover a couple of technical issues aside from the question-and-answer tool, if you'd like to take your presentation full screen, if the current format is a little bit too small or if you - perhaps you're viewing the presentation with more than one person, if you hit the F5 on your keyboard, that will take the presentation full screen.

Also if you hit the F5 button a second time or the Esc button that will take you down to the original format. You have to be in that original format in order to ask a question, but after you've asked your question, you can go back to the full screen.

And, again, if you're interested in the slides from the presentation today or if you did not receive them ahead of time, you can email the clearinghouse at info@fatherhood.gov and we'll get those to you.

So thank you all for your participation and I'll run it back over to Nigel.



Nigel Vann:

Thank you very much, Matt.

(Unintelligible) it really does give me pleasure now to introduce our first presenter, Neil Tift. I've known Neil for a long while. Neil is truly one of the founders of this fatherhood work. He's currently as you see on your screen the Director of Operations for the Native American Fatherhood & Families Association, which is based in Mesa, Arizona.

He started work in this area with - when he founded the Fathers' Resource Center in Minneapolis back in the early 1990s. He's also a founding member of the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families, worked for the National Fatherhood Initiative for a little while and as you see from his resume has done, you know, a lot of very stellar things in this field. And I'm sure a lot of you have come across him already, but he's certainly got some very interesting things to share with us today.

You know, I think as Neil points out in his bio that you received copies of, perhaps the most important thing he's done is really be a father to - and grandfather to a lot of kids. I've got a lot of respect for Neil. He and I have been mixed up over the years as the two white guys out there, both with names beginning with N doing this work. But Neil's one of those folk who he really walks the walk of fatherhood, so he does this in a lot of different ways.

And so let me pass it over to you, Neil, and you can share some wisdom with us.

Neil Tift:

Thank you, Nigel. Good morning or afternoon to everyone. I'm - was flattered when Nigel asked to participate in this. I have been working with fathers full time for the past 19 years and some of that work has been done in rural areas and in small communities, as well as in suburban areas.

And what I want to share with you today are some of the things that I've learned in working with fathers in that when we look at how we work with fathers, clearly one of the issues we need to look at is why fathers don't show up, why fathers don't necessarily ask for help. Why it takes some fatherhood programs quite a while to get any mass, any number of dads coming in to ask for help. And so I wanted to begin with looking at some of the barriers that fathers face in rural areas and small towns.



Clearly one of the issues is that fathers don't expect social services to actually provide services to them. In many communities, the family resource center or the parent resource center at the elementary school are for moms and children.

And I would never say that this is any grand conspiracy to keep fathers out. I think it's just that for a long time, the focus has been to help low income moms and children, as well as mainstream moms and children, but not necessarily the fathers. So when we look at programs like maternal and child health, WIC, Women, Infants, and Children, and programs like maternal - Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies, those social services are focusing on moms and children.

And that - that's really good. Fatherhood work is never about taking any resources away from moms. It's about bringing fathers in. It's about father inclusion. You know, it's about gender reconciliation.

So one of the barriers is how do we get more social services to see that they really would benefit by serving fathers because clearly moms and children benefit when dads are involved.

The second issue is the mother/father relationships. And some of the areas that we're working, we're working with never-married fathers or divorced fathers. And so when you have the mother/father conflict, clearly one of the issues is most often moms have the children and have custody and so how do we move beyond some of those conflicts to help Mom and Dad get on the same page to work together in these communities and in their neighborhoods.

The third is the limited opportunities to apply for services due to time constraints. When we're working in rural areas and small towns, a lot of times we're working - the men take more traditional men's roles where they might be doing ranching or doing farming or making long commutes from where they live out in the rural areas to a place of employment.

So (the) time constraints often to benefit from social services have to be offered at times when dads can attend. So during the daytime, most of these dads because



they're working aren't able to benefit from services between say 8:00 and 5:00. So we need to look at when we would offer those services, which would be evenings or weekends.

Another barrier is the dissatisfaction that some fathers have in what are the prescribed roles. A lot of traditional fathers were raised with the messages that they're the protector, the provider, and the disciplinarian, that those are the primary roles that fathers of pretty much all studied cultures have taken on. And so many of the dads that we're seeing might have - be entrenched in those three areas and so there isn't necessarily a lot of social services other than job placement that help with those.

A big area I find is that what have men learned about their definition of masculinity. If they did have a father that was engaged, what did (unintelligible) his father teach him about what it meant to be a man, a husband, a father, a warrior, a worker, an American citizen, you know, how did - what did they teach about the work ethic, what did they teach about the roles that men and women play?

And so some of our work really has to be able to address those issues of what are healthy elements of masculinity and what are some of those old definitions of masculinity that we're going to have to help these guys move beyond, especially if they're pretty rigid gender roles.

The last barrier I think that we're seeing, or one of the major ones in the smaller towns, is that when they look at the economy today, it's obviously affecting both men and women. But according to The New York Times, The Washington Post, and other publications, in this year, in 2009, we're seeing that as more factories in some smaller towns close down, more car dealerships have their, you know, they're yanked because the - Detroit is closing the dealerships and more men are being put out of work, biofuel a few years ago was a big area for farmers to provide the corn for biofuels and that's not out on the front burner anymore.

And some of the smaller towns where there's mining, some of the mines are closing down because it doesn't pay anymore. We know that construction jobs are way down



across the entire country. And if these were traditional jobs in small towns in rural areas that men took on, these - their jobs are being totally eliminated.

So if we look at those that fathers tend to be losing his faith in - not in just his ability, but his prospects. So if we're seeing men who feel less in their primary role as a provider, they might see themselves as less of a man or less of a contributor, are all of those things that we see that these guys sometimes take on disproportionately.

And as we know, a lot of these dads tend to have fewer social supports. In a lot of the both larger and smaller communities, moms tend to have a broader network of support as women. They establish these networks. And so if the guy's primary support is his wife or ex-wife, we're going to see that he's going to be struggling. And if he's laid off or put back on part-time employment, we're going to see some issues around stress. And then as a provider he's impacted by that.

So, again, we're going to be seeing some issues that really are going to impact our service delivery system because the fathers are struggling. And as we know, for a lot of men, the definition of masculinity is you pull yourself up by your bootstraps. You don't necessarily ask for help. You don't go into town and tell strangers, other men, about your problems because that might be seen as not being the man he was taught he needed to be.

So let's go to the next slide.

When we're looking at nonurban service providers, we see as providers ourselves that a lot of times there are going to be fewer resources for fathers, for men and families in these smaller communities. Public transportation, whether we're in a small town, on a Native American reservation, in Appalachia, wherever we're working with the smaller communities, Upper Peninsula of Michigan, a lot of times there is very limited public transportation, so if dads don't have their own vehicles, how are they going to get there?

Clearly in smaller communities, there are longer distances. If there are fewer services and they're spread out, they might have to go several towns away or even to the next county to access those services.

And I've - what I've seen, it's really decreasing, but it's still there sometimes in some of these family service agencies or government programs like Office of Child Support Enforcement, some of the smaller counties, they see that if they start offering more services for fathers, it might be seen as diluting the resources for mothers.

And so I think our work as fatherhood practitioners is really helping these social service providers see that engaging fathers is in no way meant to diminish the importance of moms. It's not meant to take finances away from those good resources for moms and kids. But, again, we want to go back to that how can we promote co-parenting, how can we encourage more of that gender reconciliation that moms and dads are working together rather than taking from one to give to the other.

And the other one I'd say that we see is that the gender roles and responsibilities in some communities, it's really seen - if a dad were to stay at home and take care of the children while mom works outside the home because she might have a greater earning capacity. Some of these dads can really see that this is - well, we hear fathers getting - being kidded by their men friends or being suspect in their neighborhoods because he's being taken care of by a woman.

I think those stereotypes are decreasing. But I think in some smaller communities that it's still there, that the rigid gender roles need to be maintained to continue our American standards. And so we need to look at ways that are gently challenging those that say - that allow moms and dads to keep that respect they deserve but say we need to move beyond some of those rigid stereotypes.

Next slide, please.

So these are some promising practices in my work with smaller towns up on the Iron Range in Minnesota and in Maryland when I was working for NPNFF and then around the country. I did some work in Appalachia. I went to Upper Peninsula recently and worked there with their Fathers to Dads program in Houghton. I've seen that these are some strategies that can be pretty effective. And I'm not going to read all of them to you because you have this and there are multiple slides.



But I think what we need to do is look at who are our natural partners, who are our allies in the counties and the small towns and the rural areas and who can help us work together. We need to recruit service providers that can relate to our clients. So we need to have some services that have a history of working effectively with men, whether it's the YMCA, whether it's a men's club, whether it's a civic organization -- that's the Lions, the Rotary, the Kiwanis, the Knights of Columbus, the VFW, the American Legion, those types of things.

I really think the way to get some of these guys to come in the door is have some man-to-man, father-to-father resources. Guys will be I think more comfortable when they know it's just other guys who are similar to them. So if it's a group of guys who are all landowners, farmers or ranchers, or if they're all displaced workers or if they're all single fathers or if they're married fathers, so whatever it is, but offering some opportunities for dads just to share their stories with other men, it's going to be more comfortable.

I think one of the most - the number one retention strategy, the number one way to get fathers to come back that third and fifth and tenth time to our program is we need to look at the father's strengths. Almost every social service developed for men in the 20th Century in the United States looked at his deficits, at the big three -- why did he abuse, why did he abandon, or why didn't he pay?

And if those are issues, we really need to address those with these fathers. But I think the vast majority of fathers are not abusive and they're not abandoning. They're just struggling. So when we look at a father's strengths when he comes in the door, we ask what works well when you communicate with your child, what works well when you communicate with the mother of your child, what do you do well when you're teaching values or setting limits with your children? When we use the asset approach, dads like that because we're looking at his strengths and not why he's been bad.

And then what are some models of programs relevant to local fathers, what are the guys looking for in your community?

Next slide, please.

I think it's very important when we want to see this moms and dads, even if they're not living in the same household, that we promote the co-parenting, that we see that moms and dads are sharing responsibility for their children. Just because they divorced or they didn't marry doesn't mean that they're divorcing their children.

So one of the biggest ways I think is that we need to offer educational opportunities for staff that work with parents, as well as parents themselves, to understand maternal and paternal parenting styles, how moms and dads parent in different yet complementary ways.

I think if we offer models that offer win-win approaches for problem-solving with moms and dads instead of I'm a winner and she's a loser if we're having an argument or if we're trying to work out custody, if we're trying to work out visitation, we need to promote more of the win-win approaches.

Clearly they need to be culturally competent. If we're working with Spanish-speaking migrant families, if we're working with Native American, if we're working with African American in small towns or in the more rural areas, we need to have the materials that reflect their real lifestyles, their expectations, how they were raised.

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One of the biggest things is maintaining a father-friendly environment. We here at NAFFA, as well as other organizations, provide that type of training. We can help organizations look at how to become more father-friendly, how to implement father-inclusive practices in their policies and procedures. And so these are just some of the suggestions that I've come up with from - I developed a tool in 1993 called, "The Assessment Guide on Father-Inclusive Practices." And I've put some of these in there.

Drop-in discussion groups -- don't call them support groups because sometimes dads don't need support, but they might want to talk about their role as a father.

We never distinguish between court-ordered and voluntary clients. We let the guys make that determination themselves.

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Hello? Next slide?

Nigel Vann: Hey, Matt, you got the slides?

Matt Crews: It's freezing on me actually. Give me one moment.

Nigel Vann: Okay.

I guess just keep talking, Neil. We'll - the slides will catch up with you.

Neil Tift: Okay, I sure will.

The next slide talks about more promising practices. One of the things we want to offer is affordable, safe father/child activity. By safe, I mean nonthreatening.

Typical activities that dads in your communities like to engage in, if you're doing something really outside the box, they're not really ready for that. I would avoid that. But what are typically ones that have been offered before?

I would suggest offering a follow-up system, ways to track the fathers that come in. If he comes in in March and then he comes back in June and then he comes back in September, are there ways you can track some of those, because obviously for your evaluation, it's going to be required. But I'd have ones that help you track that, too, so you can get a sense of the continuity, what are they looking for and what might be lacking.

The next slide if you have that in front of you, promising practices, we need to acknowledge that there are barriers that these fathers will face. There are individual barriers that fathers face. There are institutional barriers.

The individual barriers that the fathers - barriers that the men themselves carry with them where they might not ask for help or they don't think they should be doing such and such. The institutional barriers are those that father organizations have where they might say they serve fathers, but they really don't do it very well.

So these are some of the suggestions. You might see if there'd be a way to audit city or county departments to see if they've ever looked at how father-friendly their programs are.

One of the most important things I think in working with the individual fathers themselves is what are the messages that they got? When we talk about family of origin, we're talking about when the dad walks in the door, he's carrying the messages that he learned from his father and mother and his father and mother's father and mother about parenting, about healthy relationships, about how he should communicate and what are methods of healthy conflict resolution.

You know, some of these guys are going to be dealing with anger issues and others are going to be dealing with domestic violence issues. And those are - they're related, but they're different. And they require different responses.

So looking at ways to do workshops for moms and dads on male/female communication or how to develop more healthy relationships, and not in accusing/blaming ways, but are just information that gives them more tools in their toolbox. Because any time we're working with fathers, guys are looking for those masculine images of how they do that. So when we talk to dads about more tools in his toolbox, he's going to be looking at that.

When we talk about, for example, when we do workshops on discipline, we've moved away from the term discipline because for some more traditional guys, they have that military mentality on discipline. And I'm not trashing the military. I'm just saying the -



that military mentality of discipline is when I tell my 10-year-old son to take out the trash, he must do it exactly when I tell him.

And some of these dads paint themselves into a corner and think they only have one or two ways they can respond if their child doesn't do what they tell them. So instead of using the term discipline, we prefer to use the term setting limits with their children because it gives dads more tools -- a timeout, natural and logical consequences and I messages and all those good things.

Then one of the things that we've seen in some smaller towns is as some jobs dry up, are there legal entrepreneurial opportunities that they might pursue. We always add legal because we don't want the pharmaceutical entrepreneurs, the, you know, those type. We want the legit ones.

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I would suggest for your agency, if you don't already have one, develop a written outreach plan, how are you going to do outreach to fathers and men and families. When we do our marketing, we talk about fathers and we talk about men and family.

And when we talk about fathers, obviously we mean the biological dad, usually. Men and families let's the stepdad, the foster dad, the adoptive dad, the live-in boyfriend know that your resources aren't just for the bio dad, but they're for anybody that's responsible for raising children. So look at ways you can let men know in the community that even if they're not the biological father, they can still avail themselves of your resources.

You want to have a staff training component that offers some of these. And I'm sure you're aware of these, but, you know, more focused, maybe develop a written staff training that addresses issues around cultural competency. If you have new people coming in, when I was with the Fathers' Resource in Minneapolis, we see - started seeing more fathers, more Somali fathers coming in and more Hmong fathers coming in.



So we ended up establishing a - hiring independent contractors who had experience because the - they - one of the fathers that worked with our dads was from Somalia himself. So the cultural competency is very important.

Gender awareness that we need to respect both genders and there are barriers that moms will confront and there are barriers that fathers will confront; cross-gender communication -- men and women have different learning styles, so if you're working in a program that's traditionally served women and men are coming in, staff need to know how to address men's learning style.

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Look - help - let staff address personal biases, without blaming them. Just help them do that.

Schedule home visits if possible with both parents, so that might be having some of the staff work evenings if that's what you're going to need to do. You might consider sponsoring a community fatherhood forum. That's one of the trainings that we offer here through NAFFA is how to gather people in your community together to look at what are the needs in your community and where might (unintelligible) be.

If you have opportunity to do focus groups, sometimes it's assumed that focus groups are pretty complicated and they don't have to be. But you could do focus groups with teen fathers. You could do focus groups with divorced dads or with fathers coming out of correctional facilities, whatever your focus is, to try and determine what are some of the growing needs.

Clearly one of the big ones that Nigel mentioned earlier is going to be returning veterans, those coming back from deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan. And in small towns, that could really be a big issue if there aren't resources to address issues around PTSD. One of the biggest mental health needs I see that fathers have that they don't necessarily state (but are helped to) dealing with issues around grief and loss.



Then obviously using Internet resources for state agencies, do some state agencies have a fatherhood contact like at the Office of Child Support Enforcement in your state or the Office of Maternal and Child Health. And then working with community colleges and tribal colleges on seeing what they offer to offer some of this training in interpersonal communication or cultural competency.

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One thing I would suggest is trying to promote awareness in your community on what can be done to make it more promising, to make it more interesting. One of the things that we've done in some communities, encouraged agencies to establish a speakers' bureau. And, again, it isn't a big thing, but just finding men and women in your community that might be able to go out and talk to a workplace over the lunch hour and do a brown bag presentation for employees in an office building to talk about parenting style.

One of the things that we do in order to get more fathers involved in some of these - attending some of these is we have male and female teams go in and talk to talk at a local insurance office or talk at a local place where you have major employers in your community. And just talk about the importance of father involvement. But if you have a male/female team talking about it, it appear - it is more balanced and it is saying that moms and dads should be in this together.

Next slide, please.

You really obviously want to involve the community. What are strategies that local businesses might do to implement father-friendly practices in the workplace? There are some of those that are seen as woman-friendly or working mother-friendly. And that's good. I mean, these don't have to compete with those, but I would say that most businesses don't realize that you can also do things to help them be more father-friendly.

Recruit civic organizations to volunteer. Again, go back to the civic groups I mentioned before, the JCs, the Elks, the Kiwanis, the Moose, the Lions Club, the VFW, because a lot of those are traditional men's organizations. And if you get them,



they don't necessarily just volunteer, but some of them are involved in charitable work. Some of them have pull-tabs or other ways that they generate their own funding. I worked with one in the Twin Cities and they'd re-paved their parking lot three times because they used all of their pull-tab money and didn't know where to spend it.

So we approached them to finance one of the projects at our local Fathers' Resource Center. So looking at local groups, especially if they have a pretty good contingent of men where they might want to do something to reach out and promote healthy father involvement.

Look at doing a countywide conference on healthy fathering that - and not - I wouldn't necessarily do it around Father's Day. We know that moms are moms 365 days a year and so or dads. So you could do it in June, but I'd do it in like February or October or some other time just to help ways to look at promoting father involvement.

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Approach youth organizations -- and this is what we're talking about as either prevention or early work, what might the Boys and Girls Club or the Big Brothers and Big Sisters or the Boy and Girl Scouts to, especially if the focus is on boys, on what can men talk to boys about on promoting healthy masculinity. And we don't have to have any hidden agenda.

We're going in just talking about teaching our sons to make our daughters safe in our communities, that they respect the girls and that they learn methods of responsible conflict resolution and healthy communication, looking at definitions of responsible manhood and responsible fatherhood, working with domestic violence agencies to coordinate efforts, so that the programs serving women who have been hurt by men see us as their allies. And also helping boys who have been victimized by this - these violent situations in their families, too.

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Culturally-specific organizations like if you have a program that works primarily with African American fathers or Spanish-speaking families or Native American or whatever that they have some services in those programs that do address issues around fathers and men and families.

What can the churches and other communities of faith offer? I've seen some churches that can do mentoring, doing a father-to-father, others doing healthy male spirituality, others promoting - some churches, though, have a Saturday monthly men's club meeting in the morning. Do they want to also offer like a father's club or a group that talks around how to be more responsible fathers toward our children, doing things around marriage education and working with adolescent fathers.

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Working with OCS, the Office of Child Support Enforcement, on what they can do to promote healthy (unintelligible) child support has changed a lot since the 90s. I see child support a lot more times now are allies with fatherhood programs.

And dads will come in thinking that child support is, you know, is something that they need to despise. And we can help them move toward reducing that and to see that while child support has a job to do, it can also be very supportive if they offer resources that allow fathers to have the earning capacity to really support their children, so offering assistance on supervised visitation and paternity establishment.

One of the things that we've done across the country and I - it's probably addressed now, but maybe not in smaller towns is a lot of times the United Way has a first call for help directory or some type of 4-1-1 directory on resources in your community for families. Ask them to add the category of father services to its database because a lot of times when fathers call in, the person on the other end doesn't know where to send fathers. But if you have a category called father services, then they'll add your resource, your program, to that. And that might be a way to recruit more fathers.

And then we've been working with technical colleges around the country and tribal colleges to offer assistance on campus for single fathers or divorced fathers or married fathers.

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Oh, if you are interested in more information about what we offer, our Web site is nativeamericanfathers.org. As I mentioned, we offer staff training on creating father-friendly environments, on working with fathers of children with special needs or others. We offer services to both Native and non-Native fathers.

And our founder, Al Pooley, has a curriculum called "Fatherhood is Sacred" that is very effective working with Native fathers, but now we're bringing that curriculum to non-Native communities. In fact, we're working with (Buck Holtz) and others in the Upper Peninsula to find ways to bring that curriculum to non-Native fathers because it offers a lot of structure on responsible fatherhood.

This is Neil Tift signing out.

Nigel Vann:

Thank you very much, Neil. So thanks very much for that sort of comprehensive overview there. What we're going to do with the next three presenters is burrow down a bit deeper here and hear from some of your fellow grantees out there in the field.

So just point, you know, Neil mentioned the sacred fathers curriculum (unintelligible) there was some issues with that meeting the (NRFA) requirements, so as with anything we do in this work, check with (unintelligible) before you do anything.

So now let me introduce you to Brian Clark, who's doing some very interesting work up in Maine. Brian is the Program Manager of the Strong Fathers Program through the York Community Action Corporation in Sanford, Maine.

I actually first met Brian at the first OFA conference when I was working over on the healthy marriage side with the PAIRS Foundation and on their project in South Florida. And he and I have stayed in touch since then, so I've been very impressed to see the way Brian's grown in his work.

He's someone who's really sort of thinking all the time about ways to do this work better. As you'll see from his bio, before coming to Strong Fathers, he was Director of



Education and Community Relations at the Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Maine. He sums up his work experience by saying that he likes to (keep) something for someone.

And he's been doing that since he began working in a group home for physically and cognitively-challenged adults when he was 18. And he also points out that he's the father of 6-year-old twins. And as we all are in this work, I think he considers himself a client as much as a program manager. You know, we all grow personally and professionally as we do this work.

So, Brian, tell us a bit about taking responsible fathers out of the 'hood and into the woods.

Brian Clark: Thanks Nigel. Thanks for everybody for being here today.

So we're going from (East Gish) to the willy-wacks. That's a couple of terms we use for some of the areas where we program out here.

And I - following Neil, it's going to be a bit of a challenge, but if we can go on to the first - the next slide there, so I want to sort of set the stage.

When you think about it, one of our other grantees is down there in Philadelphia. And I went and visited their program last winter and then came back and pulled some numbers.

You've got Philadelphia County versus my county, you can see the population difference. It's pretty staggering. Just the neighborhood alone where they do their work 88,000 people and our biggest city is Biddeford with 21,000 people. So you go from a population density of 10,000 or 11,000 people per square mile to 204.

So it's tough, you know. People are spread out. We've heard, you know, Neil alluded to that, too. And, you know, it made me feel better being somebody working in the rural context to go and look at those numbers and see his room of 12 guys, and then go back and see my room of three or four guys and go all right. It's not as scary or



dramatic as I think it might be, which isn't to say I wouldn't love to have a roomful of 12, 15 guys.

So let's move on to the next one.

All right, so there's obviously lots of challenges. And I imagine if you're on the other end of this call, it's - you know most of this stuff, so I'm not going to linger on it too much.

But, you know, it's tougher to get the word out out there because, you know, our major paper doesn't - in the Greater Southern Maine area doesn't necessarily get out there, but it's not the thing people go to all the time. A lot of those different kinds of publications and stuff are more urban-based than for some of our guys, who are really out in the willy-wack.

So when you're out there in that part of our county, we've got a lack of services. And Neil referred to this, too, the fact that they just don't even think that there's anything there for them, so why look for it? It doesn't make sense to waste my time looking for somebody to help me when there's no - there's not going to be anybody out here because there never has been. And so I'm not even going to think about looking for it.

So, you know, there's no central hangout, no gathering spot. There's no place to go where we can nail a bunch of guys and get our information out to a bunch of guys right then and, you know, know that we've had a nice, decent hit in raising the awareness of our services and stuff like that, definitely a - much more of a trickle kind of thing.

That population distribution, that physical distance, it takes us longer to get there. It takes them longer to get to us if we land stuff. If we set things up, it takes them longer to get to us. So it makes 2-hour class a 3-hour or a 3-1/2-hour class because of the travel distance in between.

Psychic distance, you know, you've got the regular physical distance, but for us, we can do a program in one town and have, you know, go into it with no expectation that



anybody from across the bridge in the next town will show up because you don't go from Saco into Biddeford to do anything.

You don't go from one of the tiny towns up in the northwest corner of our county like and then go to somewhere else to do something there. It's just not done. And so it's just - there's that psychic distance. For some reason, that's what we think of as not really a barrier becomes, you know, a real thing that people got to get over or we got to deal with on some way.

So let's go on to the next.

So I have one of my staff people says - tells a story of how to silence a coffee shop in pretty much one easy step. He was working for another agency, another program at the time, and stopped to get a cup of coffee at a place where, you know, there were lots of cars in the driveway and guys were hanging out and talking and stuff. You know, he could kind of hear the buzz as he was walking in. He walked in. By the time he got to the counter, the place was silent. So the one easy step is walk in the door and not be from there.

So there's this - there is a real issue around not being from there, especially, you know, I don't know. I'm sure there's some of it in terms of other people's locations, but in Maine, I sort of try not to tell people I wasn't born here until like a couple of classes in, you know, so if you're from away, you've got a couple of strikes against you just from the beginning.

(Unintelligible) also, you know, everybody knows your name up here and you can have these weird little connections to other people. So if you're the one going looking for help, if you're the one going looking for support and that kind of stuff, then, you know, you know that somebody's going to know about it. And especially in the small towns, you know, you show up, if somebody else shows up, odds are there's going to be a connection there somewhere. And some of our smaller cities, we know that our guys sort of have - at least know each other a little bit.



So, you know, and then trying to get through that masculinity, that message of I can do this by myself. I don't need somebody else's help. You know, it's sort of like the resistance to getting mental health treatment when somebody's feeling depressed.

You know, we feel like I can just stop this or I can just figure this out. I can do this by myself. I don't - it's not bad enough for me to need somebody else to help me, so whether it's feeling like you're imposing on a service or somebody who does the work or whether it's just feeling like it is a straight-up sign of weakness and not being able to do something.

So, you know, we've heard a little bit already today about the fact that the fatherhood work, the fatherhood movement really was born in an urban context. And I think for a lot of the guys that we serve, they don't have the context for what we're talking about. It doesn't occur to them that there's a different way to do it. It doesn't occur to them that this is the way my dad raised me and I turned out fine might not necessarily be the best bar to use going forward.

So it is really something that a lot of the guys really haven't thought about. And I was talking with one of my guys this morning and, you know, how long does it take to get to the point where you get to some - get it from that sort of surface level of yeah, yeah, it's great, you know. And oh, yeah, I really do need to do this, to something where they begin to see that difference and start to feel that change in the way that they interact with their kids and the co-parent and all that kind of stuff.

So without the context, it's hard to find that it's my problem, right, so if you don't have anywhere to go with it, you don't have - you can see all of the flyers. We, you know, we have pretty nice materials. I'm really proud of the stuff that we've created and the stuff that we put out there into the community. But I know that there's guys who see it, read it, and go hm, that's great for somebody else, because I've had them tell me, you know, people will walk up to me at events and stuff and go wow, it's really great that you're there for those guys who need it.

And I'm like well, we can actually be here for you, too, if you want. You know, and that's part of what I want to sort of always come back to for them is, you know, I thought I was really good at being a dad when I started this work three years ago.



Hm, I learned a lot and I feel like I'm a different kind of dad and I do think differently and I think I'm better, much better now, whereas I might not've seen it as being my problem.

Let's move on to the next one.

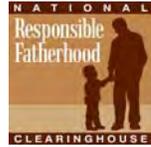
And before I go on to the current strategies that we're using, I did want to hit a little bit. Neil mentioned the economy and the impact of the economy on men. And we have a lot of work that we do through the Head Start programs in our country. Our larger agency runs all of the Head Start in York County. And we have a staff person devoted to working with those guys.

And one of the things that he really hears a lot is I really understand that it's important for me to be engaged and be with my kids and be a good parent. And, you know, the fact - and when guys have lost their jobs or when their co-parent or their girlfriend or their wife makes more money than them and all of that, they intellectually understand that there isn't men's work and women's work.

They intellectually get that, you know, I don't have to make - you know, I don't have to be the breadwinner. It's going from the head to the heart piece that's a really hard jump for a lot of these guys. They get it. They understand it. They're not, you know, they're not stupid, right.

They get it. It's just for them, the guys who have said to us but I still can't really accept it or I still feel like I'm not doing what I need to do as a father and as a man because I'm not working. So there's a big distance there. And if we can help guys bridge that even for, you know, we're never saying to them, you know, well, you know, you're not going to go back to work, so just embrace being a stay-at-home parent, whatever. We're not saying that. But when - the more that we can get them to work with themselves that way, the better.

Some of the stuff that we're doing that we think is working right now is one that we've just sort of make a commitment to working individually with guys. We are, you know, if we can't get them into a group, if we can't get them into a class, you know, we'll go to - with - go to them, we'll meet with them, we'll see what we can do for them on that



level. We'll run a class for a guy and, you know, just to build that connection and build that value to him that he may be able to share with somebody else.

I've been doing a lot of presentations to childcare professionals, people trying to get their CFA certificate and all that kind of stuff. Because of that they - people who may've been in this work for, you know, ten years already, but now because of the requirements and the regulations, they need to go back and get more continuing education work done.

So I - I'll go in and do a presentation. I've been working with one teacher pretty closely and I've done a few presentations now where I just talk to folks about what's different about when Dad walks into your childcare facility -- why does it matter how you adjust to their being there. Because we know that, you know, the more involved the father is in the academic life of their kid, the better the kid does. And so we try and bring that on, bring that out and really explain to that.

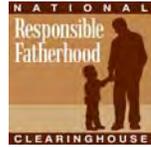
We have a thing called the (Shoppers Guide) up in the really more rural areas. It's not a paper necessarily, but it's just ads. It's just ads and it's got, you know, stuff, you know, yard sale stuff all the way through, you know, whatever businesses.

We are - we're going to begin putting some - buying some ad space there and using it as sort of a little venue for talking about what good parenting is and stuff like that. Because we know that some people, that - they'll read that cover to cover and - which is - I can't stand looking at it for more than a couple of minutes, but that's me.

But that's a real resource for people in our community. And that's awesome. And if they see us in there enough, maybe that'll sort of connect something when they decide that there's maybe something else they can do. So we are looking on the - at the online stuff and trying to develop a strategy there.

Next slide, please.

Obviously word of mouth is a big deal. We're trying to encourage the guys that we do work with to go out there and spread the word and do that.



Schools -- if you have schools that qualify for Title I services and that's based on who gets free and reduced lunch, the percentage of the school population that gets free or reduced lunch, they'll qualify for Title I, which is generally additional reading support and things like that.

Along with Title I money comes the requirement that they do parents involvement work. Sometimes it'll be a school district will have a parent involvement coordinator. Sometimes each building in the district has a person or two who does the parent involvement stuff. You kind of have to search out this person.

But I've had some great evenings with pretty large groups of guys who have come to parent involvement events that the Title I folks have organized. And I get a great opportunity to stand in front of them and really talk about what it means to be a dad, the difference between being a dad when my dad was raising me and when these guys are raising their own kids. That kind of stuff, talk a lot about communication and how to talk to our children, that kind of stuff.

And they come because the kids want them to be there, so they get invited by their kids. So it's a great thing for us to have them show up.

Again, our - the work we're doing in Head Start, I'm really proud of our Head Start coordinator, who has done a great job at really sort of taking this to a new level this year. We had great success getting guys to come in to the Head Start centers to do different kinds of activities and stuff. And this year, we've really added a lot of more conversations and things prior to the events. And I think it's working really well, really talking about parenting and stuff.

I've been talking to the ASPIRE program here in Maine, which is - I don't know if ASPIRE is the same everywhere, but it's, you know, the welfare-to-work program. The woman who teaches this particular version of it invites a lot of community service people in.

And so I can talk to somebody in Sanford at - in our home-base office (who) people from all over the county, so that's pretty cool. And just kind of talk to them about what - again, it's that sort of just beginning a conversation with a bunch of people about



what does it mean to be a dad, what are some of the challenges and what are some of the great things about it.

I've had great, great referrals from halfway houses, parole officers, stuff like that. And it's folks who get to the point where they see their clients, see their - the offenders that they're working with needing this additional service. It's not like they're doing it as part of their probation.

It's not part of, you know, their sentence or anything like that obviously because, you know, we're a voluntarily - we're a voluntary program. But they see the need in these guys and they know they can come to me. And I think we've had some good luck there and I think the guys have benefited from our involvement.

Next slide, please.

Some final thoughts on, you know, what we're really kind of coming up against, you know, there's not just one kind of dad in the rural setting. We have very different rural dads. And I think it's sort of that rural small community versus - one versus the other.

Ninety-five runs sort of through York County. The east of 95 is sort of the Kennebunkports, the more affluent but rural areas, which don't have a lot of guys who, you know, low to moderate income individuals living there and stuff. But I'll get more guys in - if I do a class in Kennebunk, I'll get a lot more guys calling me to do something there because it fits with their self-image of themselves as a father.

They're already at that point. They just want to - they figure that any kind of information that's new or better or from somebody else they can use it in their parenting. They already see themselves as active and involved and strong fathers versus the guys who are in some of the other communities where we got to get them to that point. We've got a lot more guys who are in crisis coming to us from over - on that side of 95, although it's not a clear-cut thing.

But they're different kinds of rural dads. Even out in the really, really spread-out rural areas, you've got people who have chosen to be there because, you know, they like that kind of lifestyle, but they're still open to this idea.



But that sort of hit a lot of the differences that are about the work in the rural areas, but also at the same time, you get the guys in the room, the issues are the same, right? You know that. You know that it's about access to my kids. It's about how do I do this differently than my father? How many guys have said to us I just - my dad hit me or my dad was a terrible father, he just did everything wrong. I don't want to be him. And I've tried so hard not to be that guy.

And so all of that work that they've put into not being their dad hasn't given them anything that they can actually do to be themselves, you know, so the absence of being my father is not me being me unless I've got the tools to do it. And so that's one of the things that we - and I think everywhere, I think that's one of the unifying pieces of fatherhood work.

And, again, the other thing is what brings them into the room is because they love their kids. They want to be able to see their kids. They want to be able to do right by their kids. And for a lot of them and a lot of us, we don't really have any idea how to do that at any given time.

Right now, we're working on investing our guys in something bigger. How is this one thing that you're doing with us now going to translate into something bigger? How do we make this a larger conversation within the community? And that's a challenge I don't know how we're going to - how that's going to play out for us, but that's something that we want to do.

You know, Neil mentioned discipline and things like that. And for us, that's a codeword for kids don't get hit enough. And so that's really what we bump into and that's where we have to begin with a lot of guys is when we talk about discipline, I use that word purposely because I want to have that conversation. I want to talk about what does that mean.

And so - and it also, it's a word that brings guys in. Our Head Start dads are struggling with the issue of discipline and they know that it's something they need to be able to do, but they don't really know what it means and how to do it well.



So those are our final thoughts. I hope that there's something useful in there for y'all. But thanks for doing what you do and thanks for listening to me.

Nigel Vann: Thanks very much, Brian. You made a lot of good points there. I certainly think, you know, the point about that everyone knows your name there, it's - it can help in terms of building relationships and that's what so key in rural communities.

I've actually found that here in New Mexico. I've sort of gotten myself known in my small community as the fatherhood guy, but I'm more connected to the agencies and the mayor and people like that, you know, for me to do the work here. And (unintelligible), you know, I've connected to dads in the community who are program grads who have - they have their recognition at the community level to bring other guys in.

So I wanted to say one thing on the word discipline because I learned this last week when I was at the roundtable doing a session on parenting skills. And the word discipline actually comes from the same Latin word or the same Latin root as the word disciple. And so really what the word discipline means, I think this is a good point to try to make to dads, to discipline someone means to be guided by a teacher. So it's, you know, it's about guiding. It's not about punishment.

Anyway, you raised a lot of interesting points, Brian. I hope we have time to come back to some of those things. And I do encourage you to keep sending questions in.

But let's move on to Jasmine McCoy, who's going to give us another look at a different grantee a bit further down south. Jasmine is the Program Coordinator for the Building Up Involved, Loving Dads, the BUILD Program, operated by Gwinnett Children Shelter in Buford, Georgia. Jasmine is - prior to coming to this, she worked for more than seven years with children and families in childcare programs providing crisis management and counseling services at local domestic violence shelters.

She's got a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from (Georgian) Southern University and a Master of Social Work from the University of Georgia. So she brings a wide range of experiences to the fatherhood work and she's going to tell us a little bit about the community down there in Buford.

Jasmine?

Jasmine McCoy: Great. Thanks Nigel.

I really enjoyed listening to both Neil and Brian because a lot of the points that they mentioned are things that we have definitely incorporated into our program. And hopefully today you all from this presentation will be able to gain an understanding of what some of the barriers that we have had in our work with fathers in nonurban areas, as well as how we are overcoming these barriers.

Next slide.

So where is Gwinnett County? We are a large, suburban county and we are considered to be a part of metropolitan Atlanta. Although metropolitan may sound like it would resemble a large city or urban area, it is quite different.

From the city of Atlanta, Gwinnett is located approximately 20 miles at the entrance and 40 miles at the farthest point. The estimated population in Gwinnett is 789,499 people, which is a little bit over the 225,000 -- a little but under, I'm sorry, the 225,000 - it's 225,000 less than in Atlanta.

(Unintelligible) within the county there are 15 cities, including Norcross, Duluth, and Lawrenceville, which are the most populated areas, and several others, which are considered to be small towns.

Next slide.

The land area of Gwinnett is 433 square miles. Several urban programs only cover one city and they are often just a little over 100 miles, so just kind of give you all an idea of the, you know, what we're looking at and what we're working with here in Gwinnett.

We are home to 125 public schools and around 20 private schools. The population in Gwinnett is approximately 14% of the total Atlanta region.

Those numbers listed there report the estimated population by race in the 2007 census.

Next slide.

To provide another visual, we're going to try and click on the map here. And it looks like it may not - oh, okay, great. It's coming up.

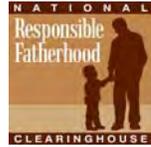
All right, on this map here, if you - you might have to scroll down on your screens a little bit -- you can see the land area covered by Gwinnett County and then you can see it in relationship to Atlanta there as well. Those are our highway systems and then you see Gwinnett right there smack in the middle. Well, kind of north middle, but just wanted to give you all a visual of that because we do cover a pretty large land area.

Next slide.

Okay, if you all recall from the - from an earlier slide that Gwinnett is 433 square miles, yet there is no sufficient transit system that - and the transit system that does exist has only been in existence for a few years.

Clients complain that taking the bus takes too long to arrive and then they often have to walk long distances in order to reach a bus stop. Additionally, the bus only runs in a few of our areas in - within the county. Out of the 100-plus clients that we've had complete our program, only two have used the bus as a mode of transportation to get to class.

Resources such as the Department of Family and Children's Services, Child Support Services, Department of Labor, and treatment facilities, including therapy and drug and alcohol treatment, continuing education services, and community centers are not centrally located and several, including child support, are not on the bus line.



And this poses just a difficulty in our clients being able to get to the services that they need because since we don't have very many sidewalks, if clients are willing to walk, it's difficult. And then it's basically impossible to get around without having a car.

Gwinnett has an abundance of options. Personally I can tell you that I go the - a different grocery store every week. There's so many choices here, there's no reason to just go to the same place, which happens a lot in urban settings.

I'm sure that there has to be at least 100 daycares and many restaurants. This makes recruitment a challenge because it's difficult for people to get to know you and get to know your face because they don't frequent the same places regularly.

Next slide.

Clients who attend our classes held in the community are just dads. More often than not, they have been - they have not been involved in drugs, gangs, or on parole. I'm definitely not saying that all urban dads have these issues, but a lot of the urban programs that we hear about highlight their success with ex-gang members.

Of course, sometimes we do get clients who are or have been affiliated with drugs and gangs, but many of our clients come to us because they are interested in learning more about communication with their families and children.

Our clients tell us that they come because they want to learn to be the best dad that they can be. Quoting one of our dads, "The most important thing that I learned in this class is patience. I thought my 3-year-old was crazy, but I learned that she was just being 3 years old."

Our dads stay in our classes because of the experience. We have very few fathers who start our program and don't complete our program. Usually if we can get them in the door, they will stay.

Next slide.



So how do we get them in the door? All of our classes are held in the community. Our office is located at the northern end of the county. We do not hold any of our classes here in our office. We go to where our clients are, typically in those three cities that I mentioned earlier that are the most populated in Gwinnett County.

We typically choose areas that are very populated and convenient to the bus system because we may (luck up) and get someone who's willing to use the bus.

We have what is called open enrollment. Although we have a nine-week program, clients can start the program at any time during weeks one through seven. This gives them an opportunity to start while they are still excited about the program rather than waiting several weeks until a new session starts.

Transportation assistance is also provided. Our most popular mode of assistance is gas cards, which are given at the end of each class. When applicable, we will also provide bus fare. Although it is not always the most convenient for our class facilitators, sometimes they even transport clients because we really want them (to be there).

Next slide.

We also work with incarcerated fathers in our program. This is the newest addition to our program. We teach in two minimum security facilities within our county, the Gwinnett work camp, which since these men have been incarcerated for short terms, this class resembles our classes in the community without the advantages of having food and gas cards and family involvement.

We just do a little bit of a lighter instruction. We still use the same material, but it's not as in-depth with the family in the incarcerated facilities, as well as Phillips State Prison's transitional center. And this class we teach from the Inside/Out Dads curriculum, which was developed by the National Fatherhood Initiative.

Next slide.



(In our) community classes, we work intensively with clients, providing additional services and getting their families involved. We have mothers' education day where we give moms the opportunity to have an overview of what dads and potential dads who are interested in our program would learn, as well as a chance to get to know other moms.

We have family communication day, which is a time where families can come and model and learn about positive parent/child interaction. Lastly, we have our next steps, which is the conclusion of our program where families are encouraged to go on and continue to use the skills learned in BUILD.

In the incarcerated population, we are not a reentry program. We simply teach the material and we teach how to stay involved with their children, although incarcerated.

The other thing that we've found in our incarcerated populations is that the jails just do not have a good track with keeping fathers involved with their children or even encouraging involvement with their children once incarcerated.

So our program definitely gets these guys an opportunity to get out of the everyday monotony of seeing the same guys over and over and actually giving them an opportunity to talk about, you know, what things, what changes maybe they're missing in their child's lives and what things they would like to be different when they return home.

Next slide.

One of our biggest strategies is agency awareness. This is often called partnerships. These agencies are aware of our services and allow us to recruit or use their facilities.

A few of the agencies that we have partnered with are listed. We have worked hard to align ourselves with other fatherhood programs so that clients can benefit from the services that they offer, as well as the ones that we do not offer, they can sometimes get from other fatherhood programs in the area. And sometimes that means going to Atlanta, where there are a few fatherhood programs that exist there as well.



Head Start, I think Brian mentioned Head Start earlier. There - as a part of their program, they have to show father involvement. So that is like an A-plus for us because we can connect with them and they can get us to come in and facilitate a class. And that will count as the father involvement that - that's going on with the fathers that are represented through their Head Start and pre-K programs.

Next slide.

We do receive referrals from other agencies, yet we keep this a simple process. We've found that our referral system is easy and quick. They just fax us over a referral or send an email, including the father's information. And this is just key information that is needed to get in touch with the father. We work to do - we work - we do the work so that the referral source does not have to do much work and they can send it to us and kind of be done with it.

And once we receive referrals, we also get back in contact with the (refer-ee) if it - if the father has indicated that this is okay and let them know that they're participating in the program, because, again, our services are voluntary. So if they've recommended - if Department of Family and Children's Services or Department of Juvenile Justice or probation has recommended that a father attend our program, we will inform them once they have attended if that is cleared with the father first.

Next slide.

We have learned to use the abundance of options to our advantage for recruiting. As I mentioned earlier, I don't go to the same grocery store weekly, so a lot of our clients don't do that as well. So what we do is we just drop in at different locations.

We try and get - build relationships with daycares, build relationships with people at restaurants, who own restaurants, just so that we can stop by, show our face, and connect with potential clients, as well as those partner agencies that I mentioned. We make sure that we go there regularly. You know, just getting to know them once and never showing up again is not going to keep the referrals coming. We have to go there and show our face and make sure they know who we are.



The other thing is that our classes are family atmosphere. They're very family-oriented, so we - when we're in the community and we're teaching, we involve our families. If moms want to come to mothers' education day, come to family communication day, we make sure that that is available for them. And they enjoy it.

We have street outreach. We do very little street outreach, but I guess that could kind of be what we do when it's in an agency. We don't do as much let's just jump out of the car and talk to someone because it's hard to find people unless they're going in and out of a place. So we try and get a relationship built with the facilities or built with like I said the stores or a daycare so that we can actually be inside and talk with fathers in an atmosphere where they're comfortable.

Word of mouth is, of course, important because when someone says this is a good program, hopefully their friends listen to them and they come.

Next slide.

Our clients choose the amount of disclosure that they -- excuse me. Our clients choose the amount of disclosure that is about them in the program. They are not asked by our facilitators to talk specifically about situations. This is something that is completely up to them.

We create that nice group involvement. And we try and get fathers to answer each other's questions rather than the facilitator always being the expert. Of course, we know a lot about children and parenting and the parenting issues that come up are often related or we hear the same ones that come up over and over again.

But rather than us just giving answers all the time, we try and get feedback and - from other guys in the class, maybe with suggestions. And we like to give them alternatives to like you all were talking about, discipline or, you know, alternatives to spanking, suggestions of other things that might work if they just take the time to try it.

We also as instructors gain an understanding of their family of origin. We teach clients how their families, what - you know, the families that they came from impact their lives of their current families and the children that they have now, as well as their significant others.

As far as service delivery is concerned, our facilitators are not interested in hearing themselves talk. They really get to know their clients. They really give the client the opportunity to talk and facilitate. They - it's almost as though the clients facilitate the class. And then we provide the book knowledge, you know, on what each topic is all about.

It is important for our facilitators to know their client, know the family that they come from, know the culture, know their experiences, because they are their own experts. You know, we - as the facilitator, we can not be the expert of their family.

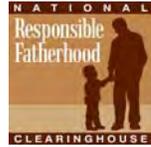
Our facilitators also receive continuous training, including working with educational barriers. In our community class and in our incarcerated populations, we have, you know, men that don't understand English, you know, but they speak -- they - sorry, they don't read English, but they speak English well.

So if we're giving paperwork, we have to make sure that it's translated. If we are in an area where there's men that don't know how to read, maybe they've - have not finished school, we make sure that we're reading. If we - when we do our post-test, when we have different things that are written, make sure the facilitators are actually reading.

Next slide.

More on service delivery -- we provide our dads with a reason to stay involved and keep coming to our class. We are not saying that they are bad dads, but who couldn't use a little help?

We provide additional resources, additional services, such as job search skills and interview skills, co-parenting skills, and parent coaching. We recognize that dads



have a lot of input to share, but they don't always get the opportunity to do so. So that's exactly what we do. We give them that opportunity.

Next slide.

Most importantly, having a good, solid team -- although it has been a lot of work for us, I can now say that we have a great, solid group. Although there's only four of us, we are committed to the work that we do and we have an awesome team.

So staffing your program wisely and making sure that everyone understands the purpose for the different things that you're doing. The marketing, the evaluations, and just being open to go out there and do the work is probably the most effective and, you know, the most solid piece of information that I can say is really having a team that's ready to go out and do the services that you have to provide dads is number one.

Next slide.

Thank you all for listening to me. And that is all I have.

Nigel Vann: Thank you very much, Jasmine.

I certainly think we're hearing some common themes here, you know, a couple of things I'd sort of like to highlight is I think this is where it's similar but different from the urban work.

I think everybody has mentioned in one way or another the importance of knowing and respecting your target population. Knowing your community, knowing the community leaders, developing relationships throughout the community. Becoming known, you know, having the respect of folk in the community and as Brian said really just beginning conversation with dads about what it means to be a dad and Jasmine I think just said the same thing as well and in slightly different words.

So it's - that's all - one initial take on my part. We've got quite a few questions come in that I'm going to pose to the group. I hope we have time to get through all of them.

If not, we will respond to you by email if you just send us an email with your email address and we'll get back to you.

But before we do that, I want to bring Steve Mojica into the conversation. If you can bring that slide up, Matt, thanks.

So Steve hasn't got a PowerPoint. He sort of represents himself as a bit technologically challenged I think would be fair to say.

Steve Mojica: Yeah, that's fair to say.

Nigel Vann: But what - you know, Steve, as you see on the screen there, this is just Steve's brief bio. He's been doing this work for a long while. He's been facilitating weekly dads and kids groups for the Fathers and Children Together program in Vermont. So this is through the Visiting Nurse Association, one of the OFA grantees.

And I think one of the interesting things that Steve brings to the table is that he's worked on the father side, but also the batterer side, which is a totally different ballgame.

So Steve, I'd just like to invite you, you know, just take about five minutes just to give...

Steve Mojica: (Unintelligible).

Nigel Vann: ...your reactions to some of what you've just heard and any key points that you - you'd like to highlight that perhaps haven't been made.

Steve Mojica: Okay, yeah, sure.

Well, I want to thank all of the participants, you know, that are joining in and (just say) I'm blown away by Neil, Brian, and Jasmine. It's great to know that we're all on the same page.



And I'm going to be brief because I know there's lots of questions. So I have, in fact, worked in both urban and rural settings in Vermont. There is actually a city up here.

And I do have - you know, there's certainly probably more similarities with the - with both those populations than not, but I think generally rural populations tend to be a little more conservative, a little more traditional, which I think only adds to the reluctance of them perhaps going to a discussion group of dads.

So I'm just going to briefly talk about some incentives that have worked for us. And one of the things that we find works is to perhaps - it doesn't have to be always, but it can be to have a dad be able to bring his child. And, of course, that entails childcare, of course.

But it kind of gives the dad an excuse to go. You know, sometimes dads don't want to admit even to themselves that they're going to a, you know, a fathers' group, they're going to talk about issues. And sometimes the child will be the excuse. And, you know, they're bringing their child to have a good time.

Certainly I'm sure everyone knows good is a great incentive, to provide a meal. That certainly has brought dads in.

And also, well, the programs that we do are - it's a group for - it's kind of both parenting ed and fun, so we do some fun things with the kids and also - and dads, but also some parenting education.

And (unintelligible) sometimes it's possible (unintelligible) field trips. If you go on field trips with the kids and the dads, then (unintelligible) fire station or apple-picking or something along those line, a park, and that will bring dads in. It's another excuse. And then we also invite the moms to come on those trips. So sometimes dads are reluctant to even go a first time to a group and so we do allow moms to come sometimes.

Also free giveaways, books are a great things to get dads in. And also I know some folks give gift cards or gas cards. But those are some the things.



And as far as meetings go, certainly out in the rural areas, you know, there - you need sort of a central location. And, you know, churches, it can act as that, community centers, town hall, things like that.

And also I had heard of folks going to people's work sites and doing workshops during the lunch hour, you know, that some times can work.

Transportation certainly is a biggie out in the rural areas and actually even in urban areas. So we sometimes try to do the transportation ourselves or we get volunteers. And that can be anything from grandparents or retired folks or church folks, maybe students, college students, and sometimes even other dads will help out in that area.

And then sort of outreach goes, you know, and I apologize if a lot of these things are repeat. They may well be, but certainly going to schools, to pediatrician's offices, hanging your flyers up as many places as possible, stores, childcare centers, churches.

And then if you - contact social service agencies, the courts and probation and parole, and go to their staff meetings and tell them about your program. They - it's always good to put a face on a program and that definitely has worked for us.

And then some other places, you know, especially during the summer, but even during the other seasons, to go to seasonal events and set up a table and give your flyers out, talk to folks, you know, anything from summer festivals to sports events, even auto shows, kind of things like that, things where dads are going to be around.

And then finally I just want to say I thought it was great that Neil was emphasizing quite a bit of that this isn't anything to take away from moms at all. And I also think, you know, and moms are - sometimes are - can be great recruitment tools, as well as grandparents, to talk to moms about the programs. And they can bring dads in.

And it certainly is true, once they come through that door, you pretty much have them. You know, all of the fear that they had pretty much goes away. And sort of getting through that door, that kind of is the big thing.

I think that's about all I have. So thanks again, everyone, and thanks for letting me add my 2 cents.

Nigel Vann: Okay, well, thanks very much for the 2 cents, Steve, yeah, we'll have a couple more questions for you before you can get out of here, but...

Steve Mojica: Okay, sure.

Nigel Vann: ...yeah. You know, I think one of the first things Steve said about bringing kids is - I think a lot of you have probably heard me talk about that by now, that I don't think it's a fatherhood program if you don't see kids or if you don't hear, you know, sort of pointed conversation about kids and parenting. Of course, all of that going with caveats that if you're doing things with father and child activities, you've got to make sure that's really guided by your curriculum, that you're really emphasizing the learning objectives so that you're in line with all of the allowable activities here. And in terms of using those incentives, again, you know, make sure you're checking with your (FPO) before you do any of this stuff, but a lot of great ideas there, again.

It's going to be tricky for me here because I can't get to all of these questions. But I - we'll get to as many as we can. And, again, if we don't get to your question, please send us an email and I'll make sure we respond to you after the fact.

The first question I got and actually it wasn't a question. It was more of a statement. So I'd just like to read this. And then Neil, I'm just going to ask you if you'd like to sort of perhaps sort of embellish this a little bit.

This was a - it was a comment about working with Native Americans and the importance of being aware of the cultural differences between the - if when groups of Native Americans and so to become aware, you're got to adapt your program with sensitivity to the men's cultural norms according to which particular tribe they may be coming from. So instead of radically changing the norms of the fathers, we need to challenge the father to expand what is in him naturally was the comment. And I think that's a very well-made comment.



So, Neil, I just wonder if you'd like to sort of perhaps embellish on that a little bit, but based on the work that you do at NAFFA in Native American communities.

Neil Tift:

Sure, I'd be glad to Nigel, thanks.

Yes, one of the things that we try to do, both through NAFFA and I did before I came here, was that to look at what are the issues that we have in common versus what are those issues that keep us apart. And I will say in working with Native American communities, one of the issues can be in some communities there is a sense of mistrust.

And I wouldn't call - I would not call it racism. I would just say that there's been a history of attempts to reach out by one group to another group without really understanding what's bringing them together, what are the needs. So I would say one of the things is looking at if you are reaching out to Native American fathers and their families is to try to determine through the organizations that serve those populations whether the Native dads are living on or off the reservation.

But starting with those that are on the reservations, I would say checking with behavioral health -- almost all reservations have a behavioral health department. They - a lot - some of them will work with Office of Child Support Enforcement or others will work with chemical health or mental health. But I would say what do the people who work in social services on those reservations see are some of the needs of fathers.

In some communities, it's going to be pretty high issues around unemployment. Others that are stereotypes that are - that do hold true, some reservations more than others, is issues around long-term alcohol dependency or - I mean, on reservations the - for Native men, it's a - suicide is the sixth highest contributor of death to men on reservation. So I would say what are the issues on that reservation that the Department of Behavioral Health sees are the issues that need to be addressed? I think it was Jasmine that mentioned working with Head Start.

I think going to the local Head Start program that's serving Native fathers, whether it's on the reservation or nearby the reservation where they might have Native preschool



children going to the Head Start and asking the staff there, what do you think are the issues that might be attractive to some of the dads seeking help?

One of the things, obviously, is it's - it has a much higher chance of working if you are able to employ a Native American man. I'm not saying you need to limit it to that, but if you were to bring in a Native father who is - even as an independent contractor as a consultant to start a drop-in dads group or a parenting class for dads or a mentoring group for dads or whatever they would see the need.

I would say one way that I've seen across the country to get fathers of all cultures to come in to a fatherhood program is to offer a family law clinic. Offer a chance for fathers to come in and find out what their legal options are as a father in your state where you bring an attorney in, a family law attorney, to help on five topics.

So five big topics in family law are custody, visitation, child support, paternity establishment, and divorce law, and having the attorneys answer the questions that low income dads have one-to-one. When we offer a family law clinic, we'll do it on a Tuesday night for two hours and we'll bring in a family law attorney.

And he'll sit one-on-one with the dad for 15 minutes and just answer the questions he has. We ask the dads to bring in their paperwork. But having something attractive that is across cultures like setting limits with your children or having a family law clinic or having a pancake breakfast at the local Head Start, and having it served by the dads for the moms and kids in that community.

Something that says while we have some cultural differences and we absolutely want to respect those, but we also say looking at what are those common factors that draw us together. And so I would say look at the gathering spots that was mentioned by Brian.

It's a stereotype, but I would say there are gathering spots in Native American communities. I would say the big ones are the Boys and Girls Club or the rec centers. Almost all reservations have a recreation center where family members come together or the Boys and Girls Clubs are really big on and off reservations.



Gathering spots for day laborers - I mean, for Native - or, I'm sorry, for Latino, a lot of times is there a community where the day laborers go and they stand on the corner waiting for people to come and hire them to do work. That's a gathering spot I find for a lot of Latinos.

In a lot of African American communities it's the barber shop. That's where men go to hear from other men of what's going on, who's doing what, where there might be there a job or something else. Sports bars are another place. Even in small towns, there might be a place that's a local watering hole and you can have information there that are brochures or pamphlets or flyer about resources for dads.

Nigel Vann: Okay, let me direct this next question to Brian if I could.

Brian Clark: Okay.

Nigel Vann: It's talking about the mistrust of federal programs and wondering if it's as strong in urban areas and as it is in rural areas. And the questioner is saying that it seems that rural places tend to be more conservative, so I just wonder what your take is on that.

Brian Clark: Yeah, I make the mistake of occasionally reading postings and bulletin boards and stuff and there's a few main right-ish-leaning ones up here. And, you know, one mentioned the PSAs, the - that the clearinghouse has put out.

Nigel Vann: Mm-hm.

Brian Clark: And there's a few that have been, you know, they pop up every now and then. And, you know, the bulletin board immediately was like well, you know, what is - what are the feds doing that, you know, and it's, you know, it's just another, you know, liberal plot kind of thing. I got a kick out of that.

So on one level, yeah, there's that stuff. You know, there's...

Nigel Vann: Well, I guess do you sort of identify the program as a federal program? Or do you...

((Crosstalk))

Brian Clark: ...it's in the stuff, but yeah, I mean, it's not in big, bold letters everywhere. But yeah, I think it's more - I don't think that's a particular barrier, although I could see if, you know, I could see it being a jumping-off point for a conversation (unintelligible).

Nigel Vann: Okay.

Brian Clark: It's an opportunity, right?

Nigel Vann: No, I think that's the way to look at it, you know, and again, you know, when we think of conversations being key in rural communities, I mean, obviously they're key in urban communities, too. But I think it is important to look for stopping off places, jumping off places, absolutely, yeah, yeah.

Brian Clark: Yeah.

Nigel Vann: Let me point this next question to you, Jasmine. It's I'm a manager of healthy marriage program and she's saying she's a female and she's wondering about ways to recruit husbands for the healthy marriage programs, so I'm wondering if you might have any specific ideas that she could use in terms of messages to relate to men around relationship education or just, you know, parenting in general.

Jasmine McCoy: We use the approach as I would say using the same approach that we use with our dads recruiting for fatherhood. We don't recruit them as though they're bad dads, so we wouldn't recruit them as though they're in a negative relationship or their relationship needs improvement, but suggesting to them that everyone can use help in certain situations because, of course, you know, we come across more on a joking manner.

You know, I'd say something to the extent of, you know, men and women think a lot differently. I mean, we know that, you know? Men, you know, men and women approach things differently. We communicate differently. So wouldn't it be interesting to learn a little bit more about how she communicates or how she could communicate better with you? So we like to use methods that are not saying that anything is bad or

negative, but going at it as a teaching tool where anyone can gain information and gain knowledge and that's always beneficial.

Nigel Vann: Yeah, no, I think that's actually a theme to what you've all been saying here. You know, start where they guys are, you know, respect what they bring to the table, looks at the strengths and assets, yeah, yeah.

Jasmine McCoy: Exactly.

Nigel Vann: But there was another question about how important is it to have men recruit men. Have you got a take on that, Steve?

Steve Mojica: I've thought about that a lot. And just over the years and going to fathering conferences where probably half the participants in the conference are women who are working with men, I think it could definitely work. And I can say myself that it - in our program, there's - we have women who help with the childcare.

We also have men, but - and then during our what I call - during the day during our regular programming, we do have dads to the program. Not as many as moms, but we - and so the women that work in that program do do recruiting, both they talk to the dads, but they'll also talk to the moms about the fathers group that we have.

And so oh, I definitely think it's got its place. It definitely can work.

Nigel Vann: Yeah, yeah. I mean, you know, that's a great conversation to have I think with staff, you know, about this. But (unintelligible) my take on that is, you know, it's what's inside you and how you relate to people. And I think, you know, women can do this work in all its forms as well as men. Just being a man doesn't mean you can do it.

But (unintelligible) need a male face for this, you know, and so certainly I think there's elements of recruitment where you need men involved. But I've seen some women do a fantastic job of just striking up a conversation with a man about fatherhood, you know, so.

Steve Mojica: I love to maybe have you do a Webinar at some point with women who do - who run men's groups because I haven't talked to a lot, but I know they're out there.

Nigel Vann: Yeah, that's a great idea. And I'm always looking for ideas for Webinars, you all know that, so, yeah.

Jasmine McCoy: Yeah, and we have two with our program and - well, myself and one other female. And it's great. We run a great program...

((Crosstalk))

Man: Yeah, you do - it sounds like you do such great things, Jasmine.

Jasmine McCoy: Thank you. Thank you.

Man: Yeah.

Nigel Vann: Here's another question and perhaps I'll put this to you, Steve, too, you didn't get to say as much in your presentation.

Steve Mojica: All right.

Nigel Vann: But you did mention the importance of, you know, having tables at local festivals and fairs. There was a question about what could we do to make our table presentation more appealing to men, you know, if you're doing a table at a local fair? How are you going to catch those guys as they walk by?

Steve Mojica: Yeah, yeah, sure.

Well, one thing I would say, a lot of those times at those kind of fairs and events, it's - the thing that dads take their children to. So, you know, I would say to have kind of a low table where kids can come and maybe play with Play-Doh or have paper and markers, so it draws the child over to the table and then the dad, of course, will follow. That's one thing.

And another things, if you have enough money in your budget or in your grant money to just have some - to give away stuff and that could be anything from tape measures or, I don't know, something along that line, but certainly everybody likes free stuff. So those are two things that come off the top of my head.

Nigel Vann: Yeah, I think...

((Crosstalk))

Man: ...and what I've found has been pretty effective is having posters that offer positive portrayals of men and kids.

Nigel Vann: Mm-hm.

Man: Or books that have the word father in the title. Bumper stickers, we have a bumper sticker that says the importance of a father is a parent or feed (unintelligible) hungry children, something that's going to catch their eye for the fathers as well as the children.

Nigel Vann: Yeah, yeah.

Brian Clark: Yeah, another thing, Nigel, that I've learned is - and, yeah, I agree with Steve in terms of the - having an activity for kids to do at your table, but also don't stand by your table all the time.

Nigel Vann: Ha.

Brian Clark: You can't just go - go to the guys. I did that at a thing last Saturday...

Man: Oh, yeah.

Brian Clark: ...in Portland and I was like well, they're not coming to me. I'm going to them, so.

Man: (Unintelligible).

Man: Yeah, I've done that, too. Walk around with your flyers and talk to dads and moms.

Nigel Vann: Yeah, great, great. Wonderful stuff, yeah.

You know, we've got about five minutes here. What I want to do is just go and let Matt do the survey questions with folk and then we'll come back and we'll see if we can talk about at least one more thing.

So, Matt, you want to just take us through these survey questions.

Matt Crews: Yeah, absolutely. Thanks Nigel.

If everybody wants to look at their screen real quick and answer just four questions that we have so you can let us know how we're doing.

The first question is I have a better understanding of specific issues faced by fatherhood practitioners working in rural and small town communities. And you answer this by clicking to the left in the colored box and your choices are strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, strongly disagree, or at the bottom you can choose no vote. Again, the question is I have a better understanding of specific issues faced by fatherhood practitioners working in rural and small town communities.

All right, thank you. And we'll move on to the next question. It is I have a better understanding of general strategies to utilize in work with fathers in nonurban settings. And here your choices are strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, strongly disagree, or no vote. And, again, you can answer by clicking to the left of each response.

And the question one more time is I have a better understanding of general strategies utilized in work with fathers in nonurban settings.

All right, and question number three, I have a more complete understanding of the variety of issues faced by fatherhood practitioners in urban and nonurban settings. And you can answer as you did in previous questions on this. Once again, that's I

have a more complete understanding of the variety of issues faced by fatherhood practitioners in the urban and nonurban settings.

And finally, question number four is the advice and suggestions for recruiting fathers in nonurban settings were helpful to me. And please note that the choices are a little bit different. The choices are very helpful, helpful, unsure, of little help, and of no help at all. And then there's a no vote down at the bottom again.

All right. And I want to thank you all for your participation and I'll turn it back over to Nigel for some closing comments.

Thanks.

Nigel Vann: Okay. Thanks, Matt, yeah.

Okay, there was one question that I did just want to put out there. And it's saying that we hear from husbands that they need anger management help. We've not been able to find any local resources. Does anyone know of any good Web-based resources for anger management?

That's a big question because I think you've got to sort of be careful how you phrase anger management, but I would direct you to the Family Violence Prevention Fund's site. And does anyone else have any quick Web site :INF; that you could throw out there on that?

Man: I'm sorry, what was that?

Man: No.

Nigel Vann: Okay, never mind. I would say to the person who asked that question then, you know, check out the Family Violence Prevention Fund. And if you'd like to email me directly, I'll give you a few more ideas on that.

Neil Tift: I will mention one thing -- in smaller communities, sometimes there's a county mental health board or mental health association. And a lot of times even in some smaller

communities, there's one male therapists that works with the guys on anger issues. I would check with the local mental health organization, see if they have a male therapist that works with those issues.

Nigel Vann: Great idea, Neil. Thanks, yeah. In fact, as soon as you said that, you know, the guy in this community who has that reputation, yeah, yeah.

Man: A lot of the batterers intervention programs in order to survive are doing a lot of anger management classes that they charge for as well. So you could go there to any batterers intervention that's local and sort of have the first stop there.

Nigel Vann: Okay.

Steve, you've done batterers intervention work. What would your response to that be?

Steve Mojica: Well, my response is sort of be a little bit careful about to separate what is a domestic violence issue or anger management issue.

Nigel Vann: Yeah.

Jasmine McCoy: I agree.

Steve Mojica: Because sometimes, yeah, sometimes it - you're couching anger management when in fact it's a domestic violence issue and an attitude towards women I guess and their partners. I would just caution that be a little bit careful because if it's anger management, then they're being violent at their workplace, as well as at home. If it's just at home, then to me it's sort of saying well, you know, you can control your anger in other areas, but you're violent at home, hm, it's kind of a domestic violence issue, not necessarily an anger management.

Nigel Vann: So thank you very much, yeah, that was why I was bit loathe to open the door on this one because it is - it's a copout for a lot of guys I think, yeah.

Jasmine, you've got something to say on this I think, yeah?

Jasmine McCoy: Yeah, I was just going to kind of piggyback and say the same thing is that a lot of times you really have to understand what is being considered. Is it anger management that you're looking for is it a domestic violence resource because that's a lot deeper than if it's just anger management. Anger management be - could be dealing with anger at work, dealing with anger with the kids, but not hitting the kids. Where you get into DV, you're kind of, you know, that's toward the spouse or the significant other and the kids and everything else. It's...

Nigel Vann: Mm-hm.

Jasmine McCoy: ...is more involved. So definitely figuring out which side it's on. And if it's actual anger management, then I think it's more providing resources of how to deal with stress, how to deal with managing anger, where DV is really a lot deeper.

Nigel Vann: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And I'd also say sort of direct folk to the recent Webinar we had on domestic violence, you know, you could go back to the Web site, fatherhood.gov, and listen to that and see some of the notes on that.

But the main question we haven't got to and we are out of time was about child support, so I would encourage the person who was asking that to send me an email and I can give you a few thoughts on that.

And we will be doing a Webinar on child support at some point in the future. Again, it's a major topic. And I certainly encourage everybody, the way I like to put it is, you know, there are friendly faces out there in child support. As Neil said, child support's certainly changed a lot over the last 10, 15 years. I think it's important to have conversations with your child support people and bring them in, make sure that the dads understand the way child support works and just sort of help them navigate that field.

So thank you, again, to all our presenters. You all did a wonderful job. And the presenters, please stay on the line so we can talk a little bit more.

Everybody else, it's been great seeing a lot of you at the roundtables and I look forward to seeing whoever's coming to the one next week.

And the next Webinar will be June - I think it's the 23rd, the fourth Tuesday. And we're going to be talking healthy marriage and working with couples in a fatherhood context. So we'll be getting more information on that out to you shortly.

So I wish you all a good week after the holiday weekend. So let's get out there and help some more dads.

Thanks very much.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, that does conclude the conference call for today. We thank you for your participation and kindly ask to please disconnect your lines.

Have a good day, everyone.

END