



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

The Role of Fatherhood Programs in Addressing Domestic Violence

Oct. 21, 2008

2pm – 3:30pm EST

Moderator:

Nigel Vann: NRFC Director of Training & Technical Assistance

Presenters:

Lisa Nitsch: Gateway Project Program Manager, House of Ruth Maryland, Baltimore, MD

Kelli Bennett: Program Specialist, Promoting Responsible Fatherhood, Colorado Department of Human Services

Johnny Rice II, Director, Office of Grants Management, Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR).





How To Ask A Question

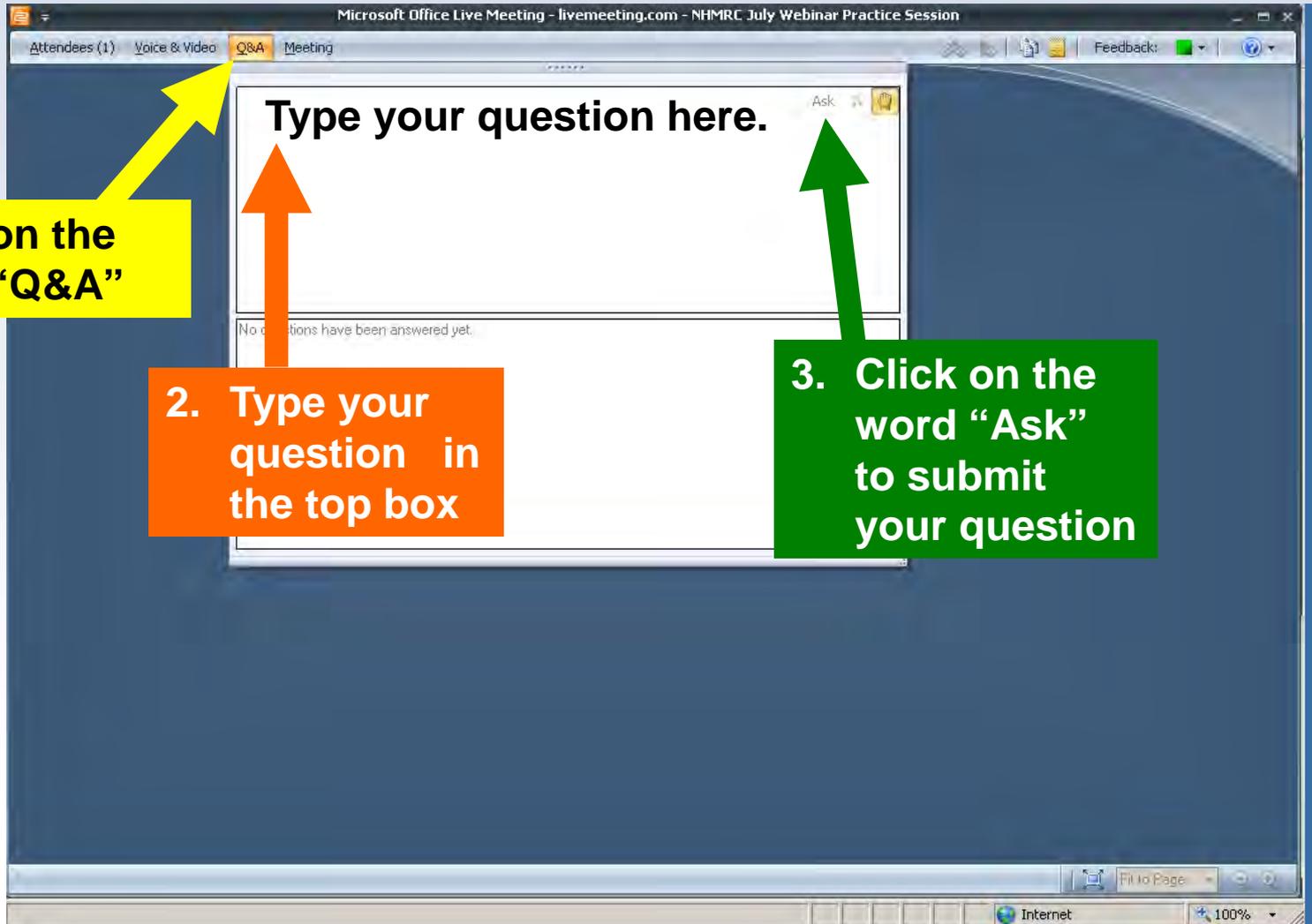
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How To Ask A Question

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Lisa Nitsch
Gateway Project Program Manager
House Of Ruth Maryland

National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse
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Language from the 2006 Promoting Responsible Fatherhood Funding Announcement

Assurances for Domestic Violence Consultation

- ◆ Applications must include evidence of a commitment for consultation with one or more experts on domestic violence prevention or with domestic violence coalitions in developing activities or materials. Applicants must describe how the proposed programs or activities will address issues of domestic violence (this should be clear and reasonable).



Grantee Domestic Violence Guidance

- ◆ It is not required of grantees, but it is good practice to develop a clear Domestic Violence Protocol for identifying and referring victims of domestic violence for services and to provide staff training on domestic violence awareness.



Breaking it down:

We'll review...

1. Engagement of domestic violence organizations.
2. Appropriate ways to address issues of domestic violence.
3. Establishing protocols for identifying and referring victims of domestic violence.

Past tensions...

What stereotypes come to mind when you think “domestic violence advocate”?



... Come on, let's be honest.



Qualities to Look For in a Domestic Violence Partner

- ◆ Doesn't approach all men as abusers
- ◆ Finds creative ways to engage non-violent men in the agency's work
- ◆ Recognizes that men can be victims of domestic violence
- ◆ Provides services for male victims of domestic violence
- ◆ Can see the benefit of your program and how batterers can benefit from the content
 - ◎ It IS a victim service to help her abuser get a job!!
- ◆ Understands the difference between a fatherhood program & a healthy relationship/marriage program
- ◆ Acknowledges that many victims are "in contact"



Qualities Domestic Violence Advocates Are Looking for in a Fatherhood Partner

- ◆ Acknowledges domestic violence exists
- ◆ Recognizes the gender issues in domestic violence
- ◆ Acknowledges they are not trained to do intervention work with abusers
- ◆ Agrees that physical violence is NEVER acceptable
- ◆ Is willing to financially compensate their DV partner for time and effort
- ◆ Do not support “father involvement at any cost” (putting safety of mother or children at risk)
- ◆ Does not advocate in court on a batterers’ behalf



Part I: Engaging A Domestic Violence Partner

- ◆ What does engagement look like?
 - ◎ Cross presentations of services offered – to staff & clients
 - ◎ Cross referrals
 - ◎ Donation drives
 - ◎ Exchanging and consulting on curriculums
 - ◎ Supporting community events



Part II: Addressing Domestic Violence

Communication training vs. Conflict resolution vs. Anger Management vs. Abuser Intervention

ABUSERS KNOW HOW TO COMMUNICATE!

- ◆ We make an assumption of respect and equality that is missing in violent relationships.
- ◆ Abusers manage their anger just fine.
- ◆ Abuse is a skill set... a very effective one.



Mutual Violence... Situational Violence...

- ◆ There is no such thing as mutual abuse.
- ◆ “Mutual violence” takes away someone’s right to be the victim
 - © Particularly in low-income communities and communities of color
- ◆ Just because both parties hit doesn’t mean no one is responsible for their behavior



Why Address It?

- ◆ The U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse suggests that domestic violence may be the single major precursor to child abuse and neglect fatalities in this country (US Dept. Health & Human Services, 1995).
- ◆ In a national survey of over 6,000 families, between 53% and 70% of male batterers also frequently abused their children (Straus & Gelles, 1990).
- ◆ Children from homes where domestic violence occurs are physically or sexually abused and/or seriously neglected at a rate 15 times the national average (McKay, 1994).
- ◆ Research shows that 80 to 90 percent of children living in homes where there is domestic violence are aware of the violence. (*Pagelow, 1990*)



Why Address It? (cont'd)

- ◆ Children who witness domestic violence are more likely to exhibit behavioral and physical health problems including depression, anxiety, and violence towards peers (Jaffe & Suderman, 1995).
- ◆ They are also more likely to attempt suicide, abuse drugs and alcohol, run away from home, engage in teenage prostitution, and commit sexual assault crimes (Wolfe, et al., 1995)
- ◆ In a 36-month study of 146 children, ages 11-17 who came from homes where there was domestic violence, all sons over the age of 14 attempted to protect their mothers from attacks. 62 percent were injured in the process. (Roy, 1988)



Part III: Establishing a Protocol

- ◆ Know your capacity and the capacity of your partnering agency.

- ◆ Protocols are uniquely developed based on the procedures and scope of all agencies involved.

- ◆ Minimum Standard:
 - ◎ Truth In Advertising
 - ◎ Quality Service Referrals and Follow-Up



Ideal Partnerships

- ◆ Work together to create standard operating procedures for both agencies.
- ◆ Have on-going case studies and reviews.
- ◆ Have cross referrals.
- ◆ Have cross trainings.
- ◆ Include each others' program content in curriculums.
- ◆ Recognize they cannot fulfill the function of the other.
- ◆ Keep abusers engaged in programs while also receiving domestic violence services and education.
- ◆ DO NOT limit the partnership to the parameters of one grant.



What We Have Learned

- ◆ A good “pep talk” doesn’t impact the level of violence a family is experiencing.
- ◆ While stressors like substance abuse and unemployment can compound domestic violence, they are not causal.
 - ◎ Someone who abuses substances and his partner has TWO problems.
- ◆ Some abusers have no intention or desire to stop their abuse.
- ◆ On average, 10% of fathers who enroll in your programs will have histories of domestic violence.
 - ◎ If no one in your groups is talking about it, you’re not addressing it!



What We Have Learned (cont'd)

- ◆ Basic screening tools will not identify most domestic violence.
- ◆ Often, neither the abuser or the victim will identify with terms like “abuse” or “domestic violence.”
- ◆ Being too responsive (alarmist) can scare people away from services.



Thank You.

And if you're left with more questions than answers:

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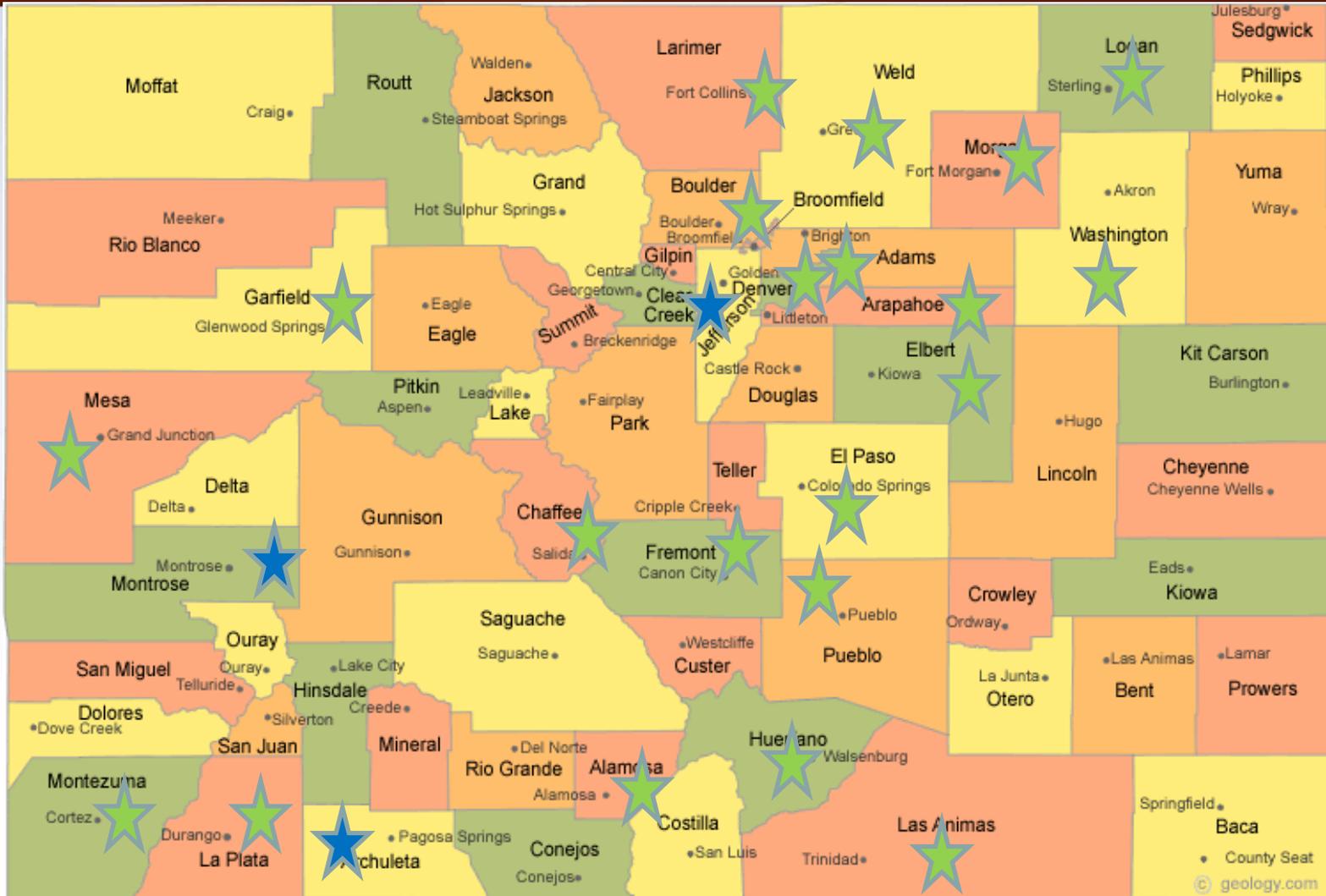
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
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Implementing Domestic Violence Protocols and Screening Guides – Fatherhood Programs in Colorado

Kelli Bennett
Colorado Department of Human Services



Fatherhood in Colorado





Grant Requirement – Collaboration

- ◆ All CDHS Fatherhood Sub-Awardees are required to develop a collaboration with an approved community-based, victim-services provider.
- ◆ Fatherhood sub-awardees are required to develop a DV protocol with their collaborator which includes the the use of a Screening Tool.



First Steps

- ◆ Fatherhood/DV Staff commitment
- ◆ One-Day Building Bridges Institute
- ◆ DV 101 & 201 for Fatherhood Programs
- ◆ Protocol & Screening Tool Templates
- ◆ Technical Assistance and Intervention



DV 101

- ◆ Definitions
- ◆ DV & Children
- ◆ Power & Control
- ◆ DV Programs & Services
- ◆ Protocols & Screening
- ◆ Continuum of Services



DV 201

- ◆ Added to this year's Fatherhood Academy
- ◆ Seeks to refresh and/or address:
 - Guiding principles
 - Additional lessons learned
 - Successes/Challenges
 - Batterer Characteristics and Tactics
 - Resources



Additional Trainings

- ◆ One-on-one training between Fatherhood Programs and DV Agencies
- ◆ One-on-one TA for Fatherhood Programs by CDHS staff
- ◆ Community presentations by DV experts, mental health professionals, etc...



Protocols & Screening

Designed to ensure that domestic violence issues for fathers who receive services are safely, routinely, and consistently identified.

- ◆ Template
- ◆ Collaborative Process



Protocol Template

- ◆ Description of partners
- ◆ Scope & purpose of protocol
- ◆ Underlying principles & shared values
- ◆ Definition of Domestic Violence
- ◆ Screening
- ◆ Info provided to referring partners
- ◆ Responding to disclosure of abuse

Parental Involvement

A man who

actively models,

the safe & healthy development of children, families & communities.

provides for

and enhances

- Presence
- Cooperative Parenting
- Healthy Living

- Material & Financial Contributions
- Caregiving

- Children's Social Competence



Collaboration

- ◆ Different Definitions/Different Ideas
- ◆ Funding . . .
- ◆ Sustainability



Additional Steps . . .

- ◆ Continue with current process . . .
- ◆ Provide Fatherhood Programs with more insights on batterers . . .
- ◆ Caring Dads Program Pilot . . .

- ◆ Technical Assistance and Intervention
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Thank You!

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Responsible Fatherhood and Domestic Violence: Foundation for Partnership Collaboration

Responsible Fatherhood Programs are in a unique position to engage men in productive dialogue concerning the issue of domestic violence.





What is Responsible Fatherhood?

Responsible Fatherhood Framework

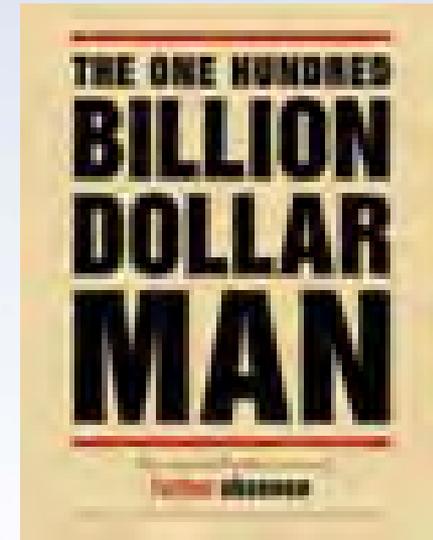
- ◆ *Responsible Fatherhood* is generally defined as – targeted efforts to provide comprehensive services to low-income, non-custodial, and non-resident fathers.
- ◆ Services include job training and referral, parent education, support groups, and help with child support obligations.



Societal Impact of Father Absence

“The Federal Government spent at least \$99.8 billion providing assistance to father-absent families in 2006. \$99.8 billion is the amount the Federal government spent on thirteen means-tested benefit programs and on child support enforcement for single mothers. These programs include the Earned Income Tax Credit, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), child support enforcement, food and nutrition programs, housing programs, Medicaid, and the State Children’s Health Insurance Plan (SCHIP).”

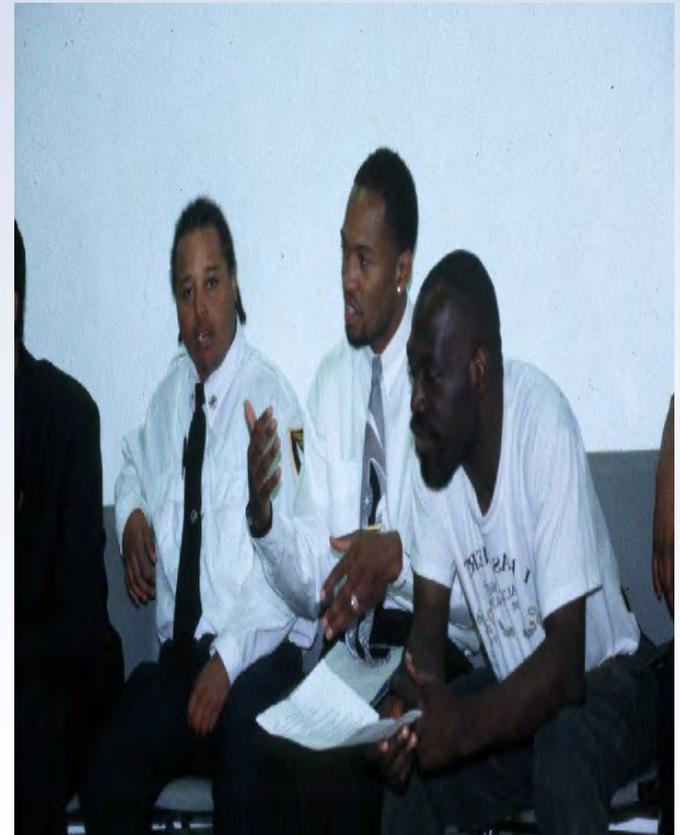
Stephen L. Nock and Christopher J. Einolf





Profile of Fathers

- ◆ Age range 16-35 years of age
- ◆ Low-income
- ◆ Unemployed/ Underemployed
- ◆ Non-custodial/Non-resident
- ◆ High school drop-out
- ◆ No paternity established
- ◆ Limited father involvement
- ◆ All Fathers are not the same!





Challenges Fathers Face

Barriers

- ◆ *Family history (no father present)*
- ◆ *Incarceration*
- ◆ *Myths and stereotypes*
- ◆ *Limited parenting skills and social skills*
- ◆ *Level of education*
- ◆ *Income level (i.e., poverty)*
- ◆ *Place of residence*
- ◆ *Change of relationship status*
- ◆ *Low-self esteem and fears of inadequacy*
- ◆ *Significant health issues*



Access to Hard to Serve Fathers.....

Intensive Community Based Outreach

Street Outreach

- ◆ *Distressed Neighborhoods*
- ◆ *Door to Door*
- ◆ *On the Corner*
- ◆ *Drug Infested Areas*
- ◆ *Basketball Courts*
- ◆ *Community Based Organizations*
- ◆ *Maternal & Infant Care Programs*
- ◆ *Neighborhood Community Service Centers*
- ◆ *Homeless Shelters and*
Prison Re-entry





Center For Urban Families and House of Ruth Maryland Partnership

The House of Ruth Maryland (HRM):

- ◆ Provides comprehensive domestic violence services that assist victims and their children to build stable and independent lives.
- ◆ Provides shelter services, legal services, victim and child counseling, 24-hour hotline, and abuser intervention services.
- ◆ HRM advocates for victims of violence brought on by an intimate partner. Statistically, this is most often the male counterpart in a heterosexual relationship. When requested by the client, the primary focus is on creating a way to help that person separate from the abusive partner.

Center for Urban Families (CFUF):

- ◆ CFUF advocates and provides services for men/fathers (hard to serve) who express the desire to reconnect and provide emotional and financial support for their children but lack the ability to do so.
- ◆ Participants are inclusive of men with violence in their background.



Should we partner? Internal Assessment for Readiness

- ◆ Questions Asked
- ◆ Are we the police?
- ◆ Will we risk losing community trust?
- ◆ How will our fathers/participants respond?
- ◆ Are we successfully addressing the issue in the best way possible?
- ◆ Why should we do this?



Fears and Concerns

- ◆ Fatherhood representatives voice the concern that DV programs often stereotype men and treat them all the same.
- ◆ DV programs fail to take into consideration some of the systemic and economic problems that contribute to battering, and ignore the facts that men are sometimes the victims of domestic violence.



Rationale for Partnership and Collaboration

- ◆ Couples that experience violence may choose to stay together.
- ◆ Mothers may want the children's father to have a relationship with their father if safety and respect are a part of the healing process.
- ◆ Provide a forum in which to develop positive attitudes towards women.





Rationale for Partnership and Collaboration

- ◆ Fathers may be granted court-ordered visitation which in itself does not address their issues of anger or parenting.
- ◆ Provide avenue to provide DV resource for dads that want to better themselves and address their issues of violence.



The Partnership Development Process: Building Common Ground

Ford Foundation Common Ground Dialogue

- ◆ Center for Impact Research and NPCL
- ◆ Center for Urban Families and House of Ruth Maryland selected as a pilot site along with Racine Wisconsin.



Part I: Engaging Experiences: What We Found

Men's Services Perspective

- ◆ Consulting on Curriculums
- ◆ Cross Referrals
- ◆ Cross presentations of services offered – to staff & clients
- ◆ Education and Awareness Groups: Violence Prevention Group
- ◆ Community Event: Men's Speak Out



Initial Findings

- ◆ HRM program participants who were also enrolled in CFUF were 25% more likely to complete the abuser intervention program.

Why Seek Common Ground?

- ◆ Partnership Strengths and Weaknesses
- ◆ Responsible Fatherhood programs that ignore the issue of domestic violence.....
- ◆ Next Steps





Thank You.

Look forward to talking with you further:

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