

REALTIME FILE

ICF CONSULTING GROUP
USING VIRTUAL TECHNOLOGY: A PRACTITIONER CONVERSATION
JULY 22, 2020, 2:30 P.M.

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>> HOST: Good day, and welcome to the "Using Virtual Technology: A Practitioner Conversation." This is being recorded. I would like to turn this over to Nigel Vann. Go ahead, sir.

>> NIGEL VANN: Welcome. This is our latest National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse event, using virtual technology, a practitioner conversation, and this is going to continue the conversation we began three months ago today, April 22nd, when we talked about virtual technology, and our speakers will tell us what they've been doing the past three months and before that, to bring out some of the features we have, we have changed this slightly, if you haven't been on our last two webinars. The chat box is still there in the top left-hand corner, you see that marked in green there. That's where you have already found it, talking amongst yourselves.

And then this shows where the downloadable resources are, and I'll say more about that in a minute. And then the questions for the presenters, you put that in that yellow box marked in yellow up in the upper right-hand corner, and we'll get to as many of those questions as we can. We'll have an extended Q&A session, and have my colleague, James Worthy, on the phone with you. As always, if we don't get time to cover them, we will post additional responses online with the other webinar materials.

One thing I did want to draw your attention to, you see the little red box, it's printing at the -- your square there with a few dots. If you want to maximize any of the pods there, you can maximize the slides and that's all you'll see, the chat box and that's all you'll see, and et cetera, and it's a feature that I didn't know about until recently, although it's been there all the time, probably. So those of you who are more technologically savvy have probably been braver than I've been.

If you're joining us for the first time, we're funded by the office of family Assistance and we try to have more relevant content for fathers. If you want to give in touch with us, fatherhood.gov, and if you're working with a father who has an issue or if it's a father who has an issue and not in a program locally, call the help line, you can do it, get some resources. If anyone is having parenting issues, we actually have trained mediators you can be referred to and talk to both parties, get them on the line together. And that's 1-877-4DAD411, or email us or join us, as you can see, on Facebook and Twitter.

You may or may not know about our new Virtual Collaborative Community. This is our latest way to be able to talk to each other, and this slide explains to you to do that. Again, go to learningcommunity.fatherhood.gov. Once you're on there, you can form groups, talk to people, engage on various issues. There is

an ongoing group, actually, talking about the role of women in fatherhood, which was one of the most popular webinars we had a couple of years ago, and today, you'll be able to talk, carry on the conversation you've had in the chat box, you can continue that in virtual collaborative communities, and I encourage you to do that. Emails if you're having issues, you can contact the VCC team. You can download this slide deck and you'll have all the information there.

I want to briefly introduce you to our speakers today, and we have representatives from five programs, all doing fantastic work. This has never been easy work, and it's harder right now, which is why we're talking about using virtual technology, and we know there are some days I'm still dismayed. Many of the issues we're grappling with and have been grappling with the last 30 years are still making life too difficult for too many families, and we're certainly seeing that today with all the issues going on. I do take comfort in seeing how programs and staffs like these guys who will be talking to you today, and you in the audience are all doing tremendous work as well. What you're doing to change lives is what continues to give me hope here, and I've gotten a lot of that hope just by going to some of the programs that we're going to be hearing from.

I've had the distinct privilege of going to South Carolina Center for Fathers & Families, I've known Guy and Richard, going back to the '90s. I've gotten to know James pretty well as well. And really had an opportunity to sit and listen to a lot of information around the wisdom of his staff, and (indistinguishable) back from 1993, a good personal friend of mine.

Nick Mazzeo, I have not met Nick in person, but we've had email conversations, and his staff work within southern California. I don't know Avis as well as some of the others on the line, but I've heard so many good things about Avis, and I've seen Avis give some powerful presentations. She is doing some fantastic work out there, and her bio, helping young fathers. I'm not going on do the normal introductions. You can download the bios in the downloadable resources box there and also download these things that I'm putting up on the slide.

The first two things, the brand-new, not on the website yet, and we will be posting them in a few weeks, but I wanted to make them available as PDFs today so you can download. The spotlights, we've actually assembled tips from the webinar three months ago so I think you'll find that helpful. And a companion -- there's one thing we didn't talk about in the April webinar, internet security, ensuring confidentiality and privacy when using virtual technology. And then the -- I don't know that they've been too widely distributed beyond that yet. They have

given us access to those, so I wanted to share those, tips on using social media to stay engaged.

And then, James Melton, who we'll be hearing from shortly, I already mentioned, fantastic work in Indianapolis, talking about what we've been doing and learning and he wrote a lot of that up and we created that two-document so you can see some of the things that they've been experiencing, true most programs. And then there is a full list of those resources and any other resources that you can download in the Other Helpful Resources document. With that, I'm going to pass the baton to my good friend, Richard Barr, and he's going to talk about what they're doing in South Carolina. He will talk about a brief overview from his program and then the virtual technology. So Richard, or if I can call you Ricky, please take it away.

>> RICHARD BARR: You can call me whatever you want to, as long as you call me. Good afternoon all over the world. I'm from the southeastern part of the United States where it's 100 degrees every day in July, but we do our best to stay cool in the pandemic. The South Carolina center for Fathers and Families has been around since 2002. We have organizations composed of about 15 offices. We're funded through a jumble of sources, everything from federal to state to local donations, all the way down to the legislature and foundation.

We have about 90 staff members all across the state of South Carolina. 15 based at the center. The center serves as the public policy -- the son in the middle of the fatherhood solar system in South Carolina, and Fatherhood organization being the planet that really do the heavy lifting, the men that walk with them, that talk with them, that go to homes, go to court, all those things. We've served about 12,000 men over the past five years and a little over 30,000 compose of those 12,000 men. We do groups that primarily focus on health, economics, relationships. We also have a strong network connection all across the state. We believe in building people's networks, the stone work from that, the more opportunity they have and a lot of reasons why a lot of men that we serve don't go that far, because a lot of people have net support so we try to help people build nets and bridges to sustain not only themselves but their families and to be good community men.

We have a high-level focus on parenting and healthy relationships. We have mediators in every office, and we also attend court with men all across the state.

The economic portion of what we do is probably the gold star for that. Our economic portion consists of identification of interests and personality, moving them over to a simulating job where we focus on what we call employment boot camp where people actually -- we simulate a job for a whole week. We do

everything from when they come in, when they go to lunch, what they consume, and we do men screening all the way across. We believe here in South Carolina there is no pursuing happiness in this type of life unless you are healthy, mind, body, and spirit. This has come in as a great resource at this particular time, because in our viral environment, we've even had to pay it more attention, and we've been doubling down in that area and hopefully we continue to do so.

With that said, I guess I can send it to Guy Bowling.

>> GUY BOWLING: Thank you, thank you. Appreciate being here today. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Guy Bowling. Thank you, Mr. Barr. I am the workforce Development Manager with the FATHER project Manager, Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota. I am a father. My sons and I also have two children, 18, Avery, David, 36, I'm dating myself, two children, two grandchildren. I've been with the Father Project since its inception, 1999. We serve all fathers, all different backgrounds, starting at about 17, but multicultural, multiracial, multiethnic folks. We are working with that. So we're primarily low-income, noncustodial, men of color in the Twin Cities, and we have three as a result of recent funding cuts, but we are still moving right along and trying to provide quality resources and services to men who are in need of our program.

Our main funding source is the City of Minneapolis health department. Also, the unemployment and economic development and also, goodwill Easter Seals, but we have some private donors, but primarily, those are the main funding sources.

Recruitment, you can never have too much recruitment. We do recruitment every way physically possible, we have referrals, word of mouth, canvassing, a little bit of everything to get the word out about our program. We also have served about 25,000 men and children in the time that we've been up and running and through the metropolitan areas, and we have a couple of other sites in greater Minnesota that have served.

Also, we provide the -- the services that we actually provide -- you can move to the next slide, Nigel.

The services we provide are parenting, curriculum based, parents as teachers, young dad, young mom curriculum through the parents as teachers program out of St. Louis, Missouri. We also provide individual intensive case management, support services, everything to stabilize these guys, because they come in with a lot of personal development issues, so you have to start with that before you can get into them with families, so we've resources for mental health services, and those are referred out, housing services. Some of these, and work supports and once they get a job, they're looking for a job,

just some creative ways to support them once they become gainfully employed.

We also do employment readiness, ERT, getting them ready, everything from how to interview, how they conduct themselves when they're in an interview, but also, create a job search and placement, retention, and services. And the other component we consider critical, goes -- that they require the program, we have leadership group after they complete our program, we have a leadership development group that focuses more on those individual leaders, how they get back in the programs or their communities and our relationships that they have with other folks within their environment that they're working in, trying to contribute to not only their families but society. So we have the leadership groups.

And then we have a chance to go through a parent group facilitator training, training them for 20 hours how to come back to the group and facilitate the parent group that they just graduated from and we give them a stipend to do that. And then the leadership development, they continue to ask on a regular basis, how can I give back to the program, what can we do. And we really have a whole lot for them to do, so we developed this in partnership with the University of Minnesota, so these easily came together and developed Citizen Fathers, so what they were doing from what they came in the program, what they've accomplished and what they're doing for the community, and it's in the mission statement, mentoring, talking to audiences, moms, dads, professionals, prisoners, jails, so they do extremely well creating an awareness, and we created that portion of the program about 12 years ago.

So I will now turn it over to the next presenter. I believe Miss Avis.

>> AVIS FILES: Well, good afternoon, everyone. My name is Avis Files, and I'm the director of Family and Supportive Services for Pathway, Inc., with Brothers United. Next slide, please. And I am so excited to be here to share with you about what we do and some challenges we've been having, being virtually and triumphs during virtually. We've been doing this since 2015. We serve a wide range, right? I like to tell people we are multifaceted, right? So we have young fathers, 16 through 19. Young fathers 20 through 24.

What doesn't kill you makes you stronger, so we created a very intense randomized control trial on the 20 to 24-year-old population. We serve older fathers and older expecting fathers. We have two funding streams from the Office of Family Assistance, Administration of Children and Families and we are a proud grantee and we also have funding from Healthy Start, and

we have a Brothers United Healthy Start program and Family Assistance program.

Recruitment is nontraditional, straight outreach and nontraditional, we work in the Pembroke neighborhood, primarily about 75% African-American, and low-income young fathers.

Next slide, please. Our program is six weeks, and we like to say it's 24 days, because if we say six weeks, they say no. We have an a.m. group, p.m. group, midday group. We do not use the term "baby mama" or "baby daddy" because it's disrespectful. Assist with child support because work incentives, interview clothing, subsidized and unsubsidized work and employment. Again, I am excited to be here and look forward to sharing with you about the challenges and triumphs we have had being virtual. Thank you. Nick.

>> NICK MAZZEO: Thanks, Avis, for that story. Okay. So yes, I am Nick Mazzeo, I'm the CQI coordinator for the Children's Bureau of Southern California. I'm going to focus on some of the factors that I think are the most relevant for when it came to virtual services. We are, like Brothers United, we are relatively new to the fatherhood service arena. So we serve both fathers and father figures, dads clubs, we call them. Usually, the same curriculum, just a little bit different for the families. Most improve the fathers -- community fathers, and are primarily low-income, Latino families. We also do serve a couple of populations that we set aside because we knew that the issues that were creating the separation with their children were unique -- veterans, in recovery, Salvation Army, and young fathers. So we have six full-time staff, also 12 independent contractor group leaders. That's something that's been relevant because challenges -- we need to be in order to provide services, and that's been -- that's a huge part of the program. Most of our recruitment comes from partnerships, so a little bit like work. Guy was saying he had to cast a wide net. Every partner we could possibly think to do outreach to. So when they come across maybe the one or two dads that they work with, they can -- father-specific services.

And then the special populations that we work with come partner-focuses on those populations. So a partnership with the north OC veterans center, Salvation Army, and Hope Builders that works with young people to do economic development -- I'm sorry, job development.

So the main curriculum that we use is 32 hours. We typically do that over 16 two-hour sessions, for fathers and father figures only, that's the dads club, and then separate group for coparenting couples. They don't have to be couples. They can be coparenting together. We only do about 25% of our groups this way, but I also want to highlight the curriculum, Dads for

Life from the Family Wellness Associates. That has been key during the pandemic. And that is eight hours, and we typically do that as four sessions.

The last thing that I'll say that most of the dads that we're working with already have jobs, so we focus most of our economic stability work on financial health. We do workshops, we talk about it frequently through the broader curriculum, but especially for young dads, we also have a partnership for that program, Hope Builders, and they do a 16-week, very in-depth program that gives people certification for a number of different paths, including construction, which is a really high-paying job opportunity for -- in Orange County. And then we also, for program supports, case management, we do meals and childcare services. I mention that specifically because, of course, the pandemic has completely changed that, and that has some other supports, which is the main challenge that we face now, which is technology.

So we've been reallocating the funds to help with technological barriers. The one thing that I'll say about Orange County, because there's been some show that are popular on TV about Orange County. It's got the -- it has the reputation of being very rich, and there are a lot of very affluent people in Orange County, but there's big pockets of poverty. It's the sixth largest by population in the county, but it's very spread out. So it can take ages to get from one part of the county to the other. So one of our challenges is getting the right resources to the right people at the right people and that's where being virtual during the pandemic has really helped out. Right now, over the virtual environment, a dad can join a class he would have never had access to because it would be a one-hour drive to get there at the time these classes start.

So that's all I'll say for right now. I think we'll talk about the challenges and how virtual services are helping, but for now, I will pass that on to James Melton.

>> JAMES MELTON: Right, good afternoon, first off, let me thank Nigel and James Worthy for making sure this goes forward, I'm picking up some lessons learned. I have the privilege of serving at Fathers and Families Center at the crossroads of America, Indianapolis, Indiana.

>> From the fathers and Families center, we were out of the wishes center, we came out of the SW* -- social work department, and from that child, the rest is history, some 27 years later. We started serving just young fathers and now, age 16, and the most singular place to come through, four years old, and that 74-year-old man got his high school diploma with us, disadvantaged, most have some prior criminal justice

involvement, with Lily Endowment and employ Indy, and a 501(c)(3), the staff at the county hospital, and the Marion County public health with a local food corporation, one part-time staff is located in our building, but she works for Warren township, advertising on the radio, and we try to keep up with the latest radio stations and alumni participants but the vast majority of our participants come through from past alumni who share the word about their success with their families, with their friends, within community. Recruitment is done right now, we've been doing intake recruitment for the past few years, and that made a seamless transition to the world we're existing in now.

Next slide, please. Services providing, parenting relationships, plans for coparenting, life skills. We have sessions that include -- we have a librarian that comes onboard to help them get library cards and access the library for themselves and look at tools, substance abuse, cessation, and prevention, counseling, education. We have local treatment centers. We have a great relationship with the Marion County Court system and the newly elected prosecutor to help fathers and their families navigate through services, and it's a hybrid for those who are in person, those online sessions, where we are now, and strong education component. We have a high school equivalency classes, the same location room, historically, where the guys who prepare for their high school equivalency is the same place they take the test. Strong workforce development, and what's wonderful is that every father in this class comes with a minimum forklift certification and other certification from CDL, electrician, and help with the funding, supportive services onsite, a mental health counselor and couples counseling. We've been doing video counseling with him for the past two years, and that pretty much transitioned wonderful.

And what's wonderful is, for those who need more intensive services for the substance and mental health, those extended to the fathers also extended by virtue of the dad being the gatekeeper, it extends services to their families, from their sisters, moms, daughters, wife by virtue of that.

Next slide, please. Thank you. And thank you for your time. I hope to be sharing more. Thank you.

>> NIGEL VANN: Thank you. We're going to move to our video pod. You can see everyone's picture there. Now, we'll see what they look like in real life. We had a comment on one of the previous webinars, everyone looked a lot younger in the pictures than in actuality. We'll see.

I did just want to highlight a few things that were talked about there. Ricky, with the planets, that was very cool, I thought, and talked about their goal was building networks and

bridges, and I wondered, that prompted me to think about a new information greet we have coming up in a few weeks. Dr. Armand Perry, how we can help fathers build social capital, and that's building bridges to people they don't know to help them. I think fathers programs do build social capital, and Guy, and one thing that I'm thinking about all these programs, no one explicitly said it, but I don't think any of you have had a lot of staff turnover. I mean, you've got much the same staff you've had for how many years, James, have you had the same staff?

>> JAMES MELTON: I'm sorry. Absolutely. So that's amazing. So average, ten years. The longest tenured, Dr. Wallace, 27 years, and 10 on the staff right now, five years. Turnover has not been an issue.

>> NIGEL VANN: Apologize for not being on camera. Great to see everybody. I wanted to start with Nick. I know you went through an extensive planning process. Can you talk about that?

>> NICK MAZZEO: Sure, the organization -- I don't know if Nate is on the call, but it's from an organization called family Wellness Associates, and it's geared towards dads. I wish I had the website that I could grab and put out there. I'll see if I can Google it and put it in the chat box.

>> NIGEL VANN: Talking about health issues?

>> NICK MAZZEO: Health issues, did you say? No, parenting and healthy relationships. The way we talk about it, it's highly skill based. It's really about taking a deep dive internally to find out what's motivating relationships and any challenges that dads might be having. But has created skill building, especially for those on the right track, but maybe they don't know how to navigate a particular challenge and need to dive in, but techniques for working with the kids and their co-parents.

>> NIGEL VANN: So tell us about the process that you went through. What we're going now is going back to the middle of March, right, when our world changed. And I know from some of the stuff you talked about, you went through a lengthy process before you decided how you were going to deal with the new situation. Can you just walk us through that?

>> NICK MAZZEO: We did, we took our time with it, which was a crisis of conscience. We know that people still need services. Nothing has changed, just because we're not able to be there physically. But we did take our time, because we knew, especially where we get our folks from is social services, children and family services, and we knew if we put something out there and it wasn't meeting the needs of the fathers that we're working with, then we're really just wasting people's time. This is the worst time to do that, if there ever was an

okay time, but this is definitely not it. So we took a while to look at that, started to look at web resources how to engage people. That was one thing we really did not know how it was going to work. How can you actually engage people through this medium instead of what we're used to, which was face to face. What were the differences, what were the similarities, and we didn't think it would work. We got all the resources, how to do it, how to do it well, and we did a couple of test runs with actually participants. Their services had been interrupted, so they had a vested interest in getting back to their group. They volunteered to be the Guinea pigs and they jumped on the call, and we said, here are the things we're not sure how it's going to work, we all took notes, came together, put our notes together, and started putting into groups what the issues are, what could be improved, what may be not as much of a problem as we thought. The second run, where we tested out ideas on how to fix things, and then we put that into a training, trained all of our group leaders and then we rolled it out.

We did have a staggered rollout, started with groups we thought would be a little bit more secure, like groups that were more established, that had built up those norms and that trust. And then we slowly started introducing groups that were closer in new development. Earlier in their development. And eventually by about mid-May, we had started doing new classes again, virtually and in classes.

>> NIGEL VANN: By May you were doing that.

>> NICK MAZZEO: Absolutely. In mid-March when we had to start working at home, we had 12 groups. We did have a significant number of groups to finish before we could start taking on new groups. That had to do with the reason why it took so long.

>> NIGEL VANN: Okay. Let's move to Guy, the center, what was going on, the epicenter, George Floyd and the protests afterwards, and you, yourself, Guy, for a little while, tell us about how you guys have moved into the new situation.

>> GUY BOWLING: Well, we still are moving into the new situation. Just based on -- we were already dealing with the pandemic -- well, last fall, we unfortunately didn't receive some funding, so I had to lay off a couple of my staff who were a couple of case managers, which is the most critical component with a group in terms of the services we provide. So we were already dealing with that. And compensating for the loss of two, you know, long-time staff. And you were saying earlier, Nigel, this work, we're in it for the long haul. We don't have a lot of high staff turnover. The folks that have been with me, I've some folks with me 25 years, and those I'd had to unfortunately lay off, they had been with me ten years, and

those remaining, ten-year supply, so a few of us in addition to partnering staff housed in our office, base on relationships I have with the county and other nonprofit services, in house, be it legal services, counselor services, all of those. So we were already adjusting to the loss of a couple of staff. But the numbers and the needs didn't change. Guys still calling in, coming in, needing services, and we're the only game in town with services, so we were already adjusting to that. We just couldn't stop the bleeding. We only had a couple of staff. So we were already dealing with that with a waiting list. And COVID hit. The majority of our groups are groups, and we had 15 to 25 people regularly. And we know the most perfect group is less than 10. But you do what you can do based on who is coming through the doors. So we were serving them as best we could.

So we're starting to adjust with a couple of staff, still coming in, and the COVID piece hit, and then we started to send our partners who housed with us, they couldn't come in our location anymore. Staff couldn't come in. So we began to, just like everyone else, who I'm pretty sure can agree with these guys, the most effective way to provide services and services is face to face. It's the intimacy, the relationship, just to -- just a hug, right? So that was an adjustment, the staff, managing those emotions, the stress that went with that, the partners who weren't able to provide the service, putting the name on child support and those services, barriers, not being able to navigate. But at the same time, and then, unfortunately, the organization, many 3,000 employees, three - fourths of the organization went on furlough. A lot of senior management positions, including my position. So I was on furlough from April until about a month ago.

And so what we had to do, there were some other folks that had to cover, so we were providing services over the phone, primarily, until we got the system set up to provide them virtually. It was challenging. We were struggling. It was emotional. While I was on furlough, we had the unfortunate death of George Floyd, just a few blocks away from my home, then you had the aftermath in terms of the riots, the police precinct was -- officer worked was burnt down to the ground, and our property was damaged with smoke, fire, we had to adjust to that. On top of everything else we're already doing, the layoff, the COVID, George Floyd, the aftermath, and moved on from that. We're still up and running, resources in different locations. We're still running the core services, child support services, legal services virtually, employment support virtually, parent services virtually, and we're trying to put that back together and our emotions from the untimely murder of George Floyd and

the looting and the riots came along with that with the organization.

>> NIGEL VANN: Quite a journey, then. In Toledo, Ohio, back in May and April.

>> AVIS FILES: We were in our fourth week. We turned it around in about eight days. At the time my -- getting stuff in the homes, making sure we were prepared, and then we originally began just on Facebook Live, right? We have a group, the Brothers United Nation, BU Nation, if you want to look it up. It's relatively closed, but we didn't want to lose too many people. That cohort, we've done six virtual cohorts now since that time. That was like -- we bonded. It was bad. We lost a lot of people. It was terrible. We couldn't find people. We are so heavy out in the communities, outreach, very -- we are at all the nightclubs, the -- right? Everywhere low-income young fathers are, that's where we are, so that hit us a little bit.

But we came back, a shout-out to the Brothers United staff who is so committed, because we are about 70% word of mouth, so we built a strong foundation, so we just started calling our old participants saying, do you know someone who needs the program, and we did a lot of recruitment that way. We were already heavy on Facebook, Snapchat, and kept using those same mediums to reach out. But it definitely was challenging at first. Still continues to be challenging. We like to say, lessons learned, right? We learn and we grow, right? We learn and we grow. So every cohort, we're actually writing down what went well, what didn't go well. Talking with the staff constantly, up my game, my managers, they've had game -- we do 22 assessments virtually, on the phone, or through Messenger, or FaceTime, and I'm proud of the work we've done and how we've been able to do that with our Chick-Fil-A (phonetic) service.

>> NIGEL VANN: In South Carolina, I know we spoke pretty early on in this situation, Ricky, and at that point you were still thinking about what to do and you said that you were very focused on keeping the current guys engaged and the recruitment was going to have to take a back seat for a while. So how has it evolved since then? Have you gotten back to recruiting? I think you're on mute.

>> RICHARD BARR: Is that better? Can you hear me? Is that better?

>> NIGEL VANN: Yes, you're good.

>> RICHARD BARR: I want to say hey to Gayl in the chat. I just can't talk and type at the same time. You ask yourself, is this a mist, is this a drizzle, is it a shower, is this a thunderstorm? And then you realize we need to build an ark. So the evolution of the process was actually ongoing. So we

fundamentally were on social media already, but we were on social media for projects, not hub and not true engagement.

So when I talked to you early on, Nigel, we had to shift our focus on social media, but we came up with a model to serve the keeper deeper. And one thing, I cannot forget, we're in growth and human development, and that's very different from touching people. Yeah, we touch people all the time, friends, something, but the process of growing, changing, developing, and then translating that to your children, is very hard work.

So the information -- we're not struggling with that. They're portable. All of our PowerPoints are portable. We have a portal, web base, outside, so we could get the information out. But our question was, is that application into transformation that we could transfer to the future. I think that's the challenge we had to look at. Guy was right. Our work is really -- it's really one on one, face to face. Information A, just because you are informed does not mean that information -- so people think they know stuff now because they can Google it. But to Google it and to actually Google it out and to walk it out and live it out is totally different. And it begins the transforming work of fatherhood.

Fatherhood is designed to change generation to generation. Yeah, I've got groups that give me a pre and post-test but if you can't translate that to the child's mother, changing his life -- now he has to go home and help his kid do homework. Seventh grade math, and I'm behind. Now we're coming into people's living rooms, bedrooms, porches. Now not only do we have to be fathers directly but scope, when that father is on Zoom or conference call or Facebook Live chat, if his son walks in, this is something, a development process of myself and my family.

So I think we've always known that intuitively, but now, to do it, because, hey, you might have come to group and left the child with his wife or girlfriend. But now, the baby is sitting on their lap. So how do we make fatherhood a real opportunity to really touch fatherhood in a realm where we've really got to get to the development phase. That's my concern. We get information out all the time. How do we take that information, make it applicable, transformational, and one reason I'm hung up with the transformational thing, in our model, every six weeks, we do a fatherhood activity.

We want to test the things we've learned. But guess what? I can't do that no more. I don't know how that interaction is. I don't know how this conversation is. I don't know how the conflict is, the child activities into the process of what to implement into the thing you've learned into real life.

One thing I do want to shout out particularly about, and Nick, is a focus on CQI. So CQI may have turned our lens to where we're always improving. We did some things in '15, '16, and '17, that I'm very grateful for that we are actually able to use in '20 or maybe '21. So we're building this ark, because let's be honest. If it doesn't improve, we're going to have to figure out a way to go deeper, stronger, wider, without getting thinner. And that's going to be a challenge, I believe, for all of us that not only that we get the information out to people but we make sure the information is applicable, that it's transformational, and wide enough that maybe with the right effort, our Zoom goes off, our Facebook Live goes off, people can looking at significant other put into action right then in real life, still be accessible all the time.

So, you know, we have another model that -- playlist every once in a while. We need a song where we can sharpen ourselves.

>> NIGEL VANN: Okay. Cool. I look forward to looking at the transcript and getting all that wisdom there, the ark. Let's bring James into the conversation here. One of the issues that has been hard, some people, James, has been the recruitment piece. I know you've had the online tool to do recruitment going back a few years. How did this change impact you based on what everybody else has just been saying?

>> JAMES MELTON: So one thing -- thank you, again. We were concerned, both about staff and our participant safety and just making sure that we didn't send anybody home -- there was a lot of anxiety, not just from the participants, but our staff. And what happened in March, we decided to close down the Walton portion of the Family Center, we were in the middle of our class, and we had (indistinguishable) last week, and we had to quickly move, get them exited out with enough materials. So that's a group that we're used to doing pen and paper work to send them home with packets. Three years ago, we did an online where they can type that information, upload it to the website, the contract information. That's great. We thought we were doing something easier, not realizing we could need it three years later. We learned about the program not coming into the building, so a lot of those platforms were in place.

About a year ago, we went to a new telephone system, (indistinguishable), which allowed the staff to forward offline to their cell phones, so not to disrupt the communication. That's what was great. And also other formats, group meet, and small course, we can chat instantaneously, but using (indistinguishable), a buffer program, they can input and answer questions. And all of this was accessed on our website to make it easy in that transition, not for recruitment. The initial issue we had with recruitment, like most of the others, most

recruitment came from individuals walking in the building. They could no longer walk into the building. We had to learn what would change. The building on it, you have every office line posted outside, every website, how to sign up for classes, how to find information about the program, just in case an individual stopped by the building just to learn. So it reads like a marquee that makes it easy to provide. So from an individual's call, it's the person in the building, answering the phone, call the same number, the same staff number would have called for issues, alumni and partners, they have the same phone number. So there was no disrupting in communication, getting to access staff or getting to access service or participants. So that was key. We didn't put the cell phone numbers up, but the same number they were used calling and accessing -- and that has been very instrumental in this transition that we've had to make.

>> NIGEL VANN: I know you mentioned this, but some of the benefits, the transportation, Nick mentioned, you don't have to worry about people getting to group if you're doing a virtual group, right? What you do have to worry about is, can they join the virtual group. Have they got the technology to do that. How it works, with that connection.

Can you tell us a bit about that, Nick, with the people you work with now? There's Latino, low-income guys that may not have legal status. How does that affect you being able to do this virtual work?

>> NICK MAZZEO: So early on, when we were calling participants to let them know that we have to cancel or postpone in-person services, we were also asking them, we already kind of knew what was coming. Hopefully. So we were asking them what type of technology did they have access to. But we were pleasantly surprised on the first part, which was that most of the people, I'd say probably 85%, had an internet connected device, maybe a Smartphone. What they didn't necessarily have was WiFi laid out, and they didn't necessarily have the technological know-how to download an app, much less troubleshoot any of the challenges that could come up. That, because of the large immigrant community that we have here in Orange County, it's just something that, you know, especially the older guys that we worked with, and that is a lot of them, maybe -- in the 35 to 50-year-old range, they seem to have it done. The monolingual Spanish seemed to have the most problems downloading apps and using Zoom, which is the platform we use.

We provided as much help as we possibly can. We provided YouTube links on how to download an app. If they can use the YouTube link. If not, we've texted pictures and screen shots to

them. If they can -- you know, since they're usually able to do texting and see pictures, we've done that.

And, of course, the one-on-one tutorials on the phone, okay, it should look something like this, and hopefully they can get somebody else in their family that might be a little bit more tech-savvy to help them out, but we've been able to get there for most people. If they're willing to put in the effort to keep trying, we've been able to get them where they need to be.

>> NIGEL VANN: South Carolina, Ricky, we've had a question about what it might be like in the rural areas. One of the unique features of where you are would be six programs, six planets that you're working with, they're all across the state, right? So some in very rural areas, some in urban areas. What's the difference been like between the rural and urban and how you get with internet issues?

>> RICHARD BARR: We had to upgrade. We used to have meetings once a month. We went to every week because we had to check on people's access, we had to analyze the environment, we had to account for the things we did have and make the necessary adjustments. Greenville has half a million people, one of the largest counties in the state of South Carolina, but then I got another county with 30,000 people. Where most people live outside the county. And we have a tremendous -- I think they're aware -- telephone access is very different from having computer access, you know, to be able to do things on your phone to be able to scroll, actually turning things in. So even some of the groups that we actually did, one of our organizations set up a drive-by pickup, and what I mean by that, we got work books, about you -- but what you do, you get your workbook, you come get it, drive by, get the workbook, give them a box time for an assignment, and then you turn around and do one on one with the person with their workbook, and then we would watch the presentation. So that really was three levels of engagement, because here in South Carolina, we believe in the trifecta, that you have to do something far over people's heads, hands, and hearts. So the workbook was putting it in there, the assignment gets back to the person, and then we could really find out, is the thing that we put in their hands different in the head, and the emotion only comes out, you know, as they start to go down the process of explaining the time.

But Nigel, you're correct. I have areas that live, honestly, on a dirt road with a street named after them. Ain't no broadband for them. So it's just broad. No bands at all. How can we make this accessible. So we have to figure out how to be tangible, at some places, we just had to use email, work books. Sometimes people could get on. Some people got audio, don't have video. There's a lot of things. One of the things we

learned, don't be upset with the fact that one size fits all. That's not true in this situation. And all of our transportation -- we focus on transportation, the van -- well, we're not going to pick anybody up, hand delivered. One of the things, we repurpose our childhood activity level and make father activity bags, and Friday in Aprils, we made an activity bag for parents and their children to do together. We even did things like putting seeds and flower plants in them and side walk chalk. We still had to have the practicality of fatherhood while removing the barriers that they may not have. We attempted every level of engagement, everything from social media, the platform like we're on now, all the way down to just doing what we do family drive-by, touching on people we have not heard from, particularly the people who were already enrolled.

One reason we did not focus on recruitment, there's no need to expand the box at the same time we're trying to limit the box. So I think the thing was to try to get people in, through, and get people to the finish line successfully, because we all know that fatherhood -- and if I'm wrong, tell me now -- the best people that recruit for are people that finish with. So as long as our people are finishing well, we feel that we'll be great, you know, when all this comes back, when everything gets, quote/unquote back to normal. So we want to have them better, stronger, than any cohort we've ever had. That's really our focus, to make sure that the people that they're adjusting in the COVID climate. Amazon called, they need people. Deliveries are a big thing. So where are the opportunities in this situation where we have opposition. For every place that we find opposition, our goal is to find the opportunity in the opposition.

>> NIGEL VANN: Okay. James, I just have a couple of more questions and I'll invite James Worthy in, questions coming in from the audience and I haven't been able to keep track of them.

One question I did say, James, you had -- have you been able to get them get new devices if they don't have devices?

>> JAMES MELTON: Yes, some of the devices -- use some of the money, don't provide in the building any longer, allocate the funding sources to help pay some cell phone bills, internet providers through the phone company. We have to be creative and making sure that we're willing to ask that (indistinguishable), and for those who did not have any electronic devices that needed services, so we do a weekly pickup packet just to keep them engaged until we can get them to come back into the building, until some things work out for them. Because some of the things referred to the program were in court and we didn't want to be able to show there wasn't satisfactory engagement services. So that's a question, yes, Nigel, we have provided

some money to help pay for the devices and services that were already -- now, what we have not done, we have not purchased internet services for individuals. We've not gone that far. But we've been able to help pay for the services (indistinguishable).

>> NIGEL VANN: Okay. Yeah. Yeah (indistinguishable).

>> JAMES MELTON: The court open. South Carolina, the courts are down. -- we've had staffers share updates about them virtually. So our courts -- almost six weeks that they've moved to virtual, and now they're limited and doing no new cases but catching up on old cases, but in a very limited capacity. So we've been able to share in the virtual court setting.

>> RICHARD BARR: All of my guys had virtual court dates, (indistinguishable).

(Laughter)

>> NIGEL VANN: One more question, then I'll invite James Worthy to share some of the questions that have been coming in. Obviously, it's a major thing to do these things virtually in groups, also, and -- a little bit in terms of individual case management. What kind of issues have you seen that have been different in the last couple of months in terms of the guys who -- post-case management streams, some of the means they have?

>> AVIS FILES: I don't think case management has changed very much. I think the fathers have the same needs around child support, coparenting, court issues. The things that my staff has had to be more creative, right? My staff has been (indistinguishable), talking with them -- 100%, right? Just making sure that -- and because things were closed, and we just opened up, our state just opened back up around June 1st, right, a little bit before that. But when it opened back up, one of the challenges was that we were open and we were all functioning virtually from the beginning. We never shut our services down. We kept doing what we could. But the agency was closed. So here again, people had child support court or we may have a father whose child is in child welfare, so the visits stopped. So how do we tell how they feel about the visits being stopped and protecting your child and protecting yourself and, again, how do we talk about people who were in child support court and court is down and more time not seeing his child.

So yeah, again, the challenge for us is -- I say to them, because the staff, we've always worked in an environment where it's been dangerous, mostly drug dealers and gang members. So COVID was just another thing. So we were like, this is a challenge. We saw it as being a challenge rather than frustrating for confused. We're always getting hit. Now we're getting hit against COVID. And I work with a lot of millennials, think outside the box. You always have to think

outside of the box. We kept pushing, pushing, and they just are calling them more, testing them more. We even have -- with each case manager up on the coaches, so each coach identifies a leader on their team. So that leader on the team, they're all in the group tank. So it's like, if Johnny don't show up, who is the leader. John, what's up. You're in group today. You asleep? Where you at? Whatever. That's all.

>> NIGEL VANN: We've gotten along here. Do you want to add to that, guy?

>> GUY BOWLING: Yeah, we constantly, the many years we've been doing this work, always encountering barrier after barrier after barrier after barrier and have to be creative how we provide the resources. So we had always a policy to meet guys where they're at, identify where they are and meet them where they're at. We didn't want to be self-prescribed where you have to come to our office on a certain day at a certain time. Walk in and address whoever happens to walk in. Because we felt that having that open, friendly, warm, environment come in don't mean you're going to get services that day, but we're going to start the process to get you into the program and begin to connect with you. So we're unable to do that anymore in person, connect with you, see you, feel you, embracing you, but we can do it on the phone.

And no, not everybody has the capability to be on Zoom or has the app or whatever the nature, but I go back to my elementary years, junior high school years, we were just beyond the phone. So as a matter of fact, the longer they can have you on the phone, the more they want to talk to you, because they want to be able to get those things out, and you being just the listening ear, that is the process of engagement. Before we have them come to a group with Zoom is a requirement, they're gone. Now, they're staying. The staff is more engaged with them and working them through a whole lot of things and supporting them through that process. So a lot of times you give them that map and tell them to find a destination, they don't know how to leave your building and get across the street. When you talk to them specifically, they can appreciate that support. Even if they're not able to come in person, they appreciate engaging with you, because I think Brother Richardson said before, that's where transformation comes in, when you're working with them over a period of time, checking in with them. Our staff has talked to these guys more now than before.

>> NIGEL VANN: That's one of the things, several are actually working more hours in a way, now, right, with more individual contact than before. Anyway, we are getting tight for time. I do need to bring in my colleague, James Worthy, to ask a question or two I haven't seen yet. Are you there, James?

>> JAMES WORTHY: Hey, how are you? Can you hear me clearly?

>> We can hear you. We can see you.

>> JAMES WORTHY: This is an incredible question, most incredible, rich dialogue. We have a lot of questions, some of them -- I do want to talk about -- and Nigel, you were bringing it up. I'd like to talk to Avis and Ricky and Guy and everybody about staff morale. We're out here serving, staff is serving people, but they're sifting through what's going on right across the street from your building and living. How are you addressing staff morale, one. And two, the fatigue of virtual engagement. If anybody wants to grab those, it's a two-parter. The morale and fatigue. Some might be working more hours than normal.

>> AVIS FILES: I'll step in on that one. We were already working more hours than normal. We have fathers who had, you know, one of our (indistinguishable) this is not a 9:00 to 5:00. This is not a 9:00 to 5:00 jobs. If you come in Toledo, Ohio, you're not working 9:00 to 5:00. They will call you 9:00, 10:00, Saturday, Sunday, whatever. We were used to that. But in order to keep staff morale, we talk every morning and we talk every night. We check in, right? That's the way we keep the energy up. Everybody together, how are you feeling, and try to just boost them up. I am very intentional. Every single day. Telling my staff I appreciate the work they do. Sometimes they've done -- we like seeing you. Right? And get it, right? And then we hear stories and that's the most important is that we share stories about our participants. So somebody is always whooping something, I check in, how are you all feeling, and we play around. We have fun. We were already doing that.

And then as far as the fatigue is concerned, my husband -- 16 years, he -- I got to -- most of my staff is out of here, and I think it's only the things that we've been experienced is the survey fatigue. Really, really confident the program with so much data and trying to do that virtually makes it really, really difficult. So that's the most difficult thing. But we find ourselves -- you know, what's happening, is somebody down, I got you. Sometimes we -- somebody might call you 11:00 at night to get some information, but it's not for clients, but I've got the information, here it is. So that team work ability to have that community that we need to be able to be to pull it off.

>> JAMES WORTHY: Anybody else?

>> JAMES MELTON: One thing we learned, the fatigue, 9:00 to 3:00, so we learned from staff to participants, 9:00 to 3:00 with a break, an hour, was too long of a day to be in front of the screen. So we moved from that to a 9:00 to 12:00, cut off at noon, but if there was a need to come back after lunch, did

some more work on sessions, that worked so much better. Also for participants who were sharing devices. Sometimes that sharing the device with a wife, a girlfriend, with mom, a child, and they don't have to worry on, okay, I'm only on it for three hours a day, and then you can have the device back.

So the staff morale, so we did not have so long of a day in front of the screen.

Also, the free resources that we share with our participants, that's also in this time, make sure staff also knew about resources for themselves and for their family members as well. So we want to service both staff and participants alike.

>> JAMES WORTHY: Awesome.

>> RICHARD BARR: James, that's one of the things we started with, and I'll be deeply honest, we had to start with staff priority. If it the servers aren't serving well, it's a ripple effect on everybody. So every 23 to 72 years old. If you want to talk about underlying conditions, you have to talk to the 72-year-old man. Hey, man, how do you feel? 23-year-old guy, (indistinguishable). Now, our staff, who also have kids that are home, and make sure they can help their kids. So the equilibrium changed. If we're truly fatherhood people, we have to do what we say we do based on what we do. And that's a leadership challenge. And at times, I've been guilty by prioritizing the work but not doing the work. And if we're going to be the work, we have to live the work and set the example to the people we serve about how to take care of the family. So the emotional fatigue, and the ability fatigue because when you get into the field of uncertainty, and -- am I going to be furloughed, am I going to be here tomorrow. I'm trying to help this guy get it, I might get let go. Trying to balance that whole thing. We took the staff, then the participants, then the organizational adjustments we would need to make to get this normalcy to consistency. If I can slim my goals to make my day more consistent, I can be more effective by hitting the top priorities first and making those secondary, secondary. So that was a challenge, as Nigel said earlier, we have people in rural areas, urban areas, and 90 staffers across the state. So every symptom was a little different. But I see this right here, the staff appreciated saying, are you okay first.

As far as that, when everything gets better, I don't want our people to be fatigued, on Indeed and Monster.

>> AVIS FILES: A couple of things we did, I didn't mention it, I had someone come in and do a staff development on self-care, right? So I've had that a couple of times where -- on the travel, you know, and what that -- what that means for participants, but what it also means for the person who is doing

the work. As well as thinking about monthly things. So we used sports, like anybody who knows me, I don't know much about sports, but we used basketball in basketball season, now we're on baseball season, and we have a monthly thing, run, hit the ball, hit it out of the park. So those kind of things, the energy of just talking about those things and staying focused and staying positive, I'll use that. So I want to make sure I mentioned that.

>> NIGEL VANN: We are getting very close. I do want to get everybody a chance to have a final thought. I will say, you know, this -- this webinar, perhaps more than any other one we've done, makes me so glad we have a diverse, collaborative community. So if there are any questions -- more questions on this one, we have not gotten to than usual. What we'll do, put those questions into the virtual collaborative Community, and I'll encourage the presenters to join the VCC, and over the next few days, we can have some back and forth with otherwise and each other, and this will be an exciting test of how you have a virtual community conversation. So I think that's where we're going to have to take this now, because it is almost top of the hour. Is there one question, James, you've seen that needs to be addressed today?

>> JAMES WORTHY: One question, because it cuts across all of us. How have we been dealing with employment services during this process. Because financial stability is key to most of the work that we all do. I'll throw that out there. So we have Guy, Avis, Nick, and let the superstar take it.

>> JAMES MELTON: Virtual job interviews, every Wednesday. It has not slowed down. The same thing we do in person, we do virtually, virtual job interviews, and it has proven more beneficial. We have a session on how to set your guys up for a virtual interview, give him tips, and it's just as strong now as they were previously.

>> JAMES WORTHY: Thank you, James. What do you think?

>> GUY BOWLING: I'll just piggyback on what James has said. Nothing has changed, just more intense of what guys are looking for. We do everything virtually, development of an employment plan to setting up a virtual career job fair, because we more or less focus on getting guys careers as well as jobs. We're still doing one-on-one assessments to see what interests are. We're doing resumes online. And like I said, we get more one-on-one attention being able to do it this way as opposed to people just coming in. We're still providing the resources. We started a virtual job club, find opportunities where they're available, more on one more than ever before.

And the last thing I wanted to say, I don't know if it's time to check out. I think when we're in leadership positions and

folks are working with us, they follow our lead in how to deal with crisis. As we grapple of what's going on, once we get a sense of it, it's easier to communicate to our folks. And it's okay to say, I don't know, let's figure it out. Listen to folks and they appreciate it, and not being in the middle of providing services other than virtually, they appreciate it.

>> NIGEL VANN: Just respond, Nick, so if you can say something about employment or give us a final thought here.

(Overlapping speakers).

>> AVIS FILES: I'm sorry, Richard.

>> RICHARD BARR: Go ahead.

>> AVIS FILES: I was going to say about employment is that - - experiencing the same thing. We have abundance of jobs and not enough people that will work them, drug dealers, always been difficult for us to employ them. Forklift -- and then they also smoking marijuana, so it's difficult for them to be employed because they can't -- so services and the same challenges and things like that. It's hard when you're talking to a guy that's out making my salary in a week, my whole yearly salary in a week, and (indistinguishable), something like that, it's always been difficult. I appreciate being here. If anyone wants to know anything else, please holler at me. I just appreciate being amongst you guys as well. Those of you who have been in the field a long time, who I've admired for years, and I appreciate the opportunity to share with you. So thank you.

>> NIGEL VANN: Nick.

>> NICK MAZZEO: I want to thank -- it's an honor to be here as well. Just like Avis said, with all my fellow centers and doing the work out there. The last thing that I'll throw in there is that what we're doing virtually and what we were doing before, it's the same thing. We're trying to create this really, really high-quality engagement with people, really good-quality human engagement and trying to create content that's going to make people want to come for services. Not that where we're talking at them, but finally giving them the opportunity to talk. Like Richard was saying earlier. So my analogy for that, virtual services is a movie. Whereas what we used to do is write a book. So you could tell an amazing story in a book and you can tell an amazing store in a movie. The goal is the same. It's just tweaking it a little bit to tell the story the right way. That will be the final thought I'll leave.

>> NIGEL VANN: Words of wisdom for California. We've had quite a few pieces of wisdom from North Carolina. Do you have one more thing for us, Ricky?

>> RICHARD BARR: What Nicky said, fatherhood, we have to be forecasters as well. I think the fatherhood forecast through COVID, reposition, redirect, and retrain the people we serve so

the economy does not lead, it shifts. The thing we're noticing right now, technology and -- logistics, technology, and one more. Healthcare. I don't know how I could forget that. But logistics, technology, and healthcare. And so as people come in, that's the thing that we can onboard them to, you have to -- we have to forecast to people what's coming and not necessarily where they work. So the power being of fatherhood, we have to be more future-focused and technology puts us there and we have some forecasting and look into the -- getting ready for logistics, (indistinguishable), you know, the people walk, we have a lot of tech people. If you get a guy that comes out of prison, trust me, he knows something about technology. I've heard some of the best music in prison who didn't have anything to -- blew my mind. And honestly, healthcare, healthcare, moving around, you can come in as a (indistinguishable), you can come in as a transportation specialist, and you can move into LPN and (indistinguishable). You've got to move them to get them in there.

>> NIGEL VANN: Okay. Let me quickly remind you all that James Melton has given some advice in terms of lessons learned in a document you can still download before this disappears. James, do you have one more thought for us? I think -- we haven't got to. What would your final take of a message be, James?

>> JAMES MELTON: (Indistinguishable), and don't get frustrated. And really, be safe, be visual, and don't get frustrated.

>> NIGEL VANN: James, we're going to give you the last word. Any wisdom you want to leave people with?

>> JAMES WORTHY: After 27, 28 years of this work, and knowing everybody here, I say this and I think the thing that Richard said, we're going to be in a new game. Life is going to be in a new game. And I think many of the things that we've learned doing this transition, we're going to be able to hold on them and make where we are able to directly engage, make it even more transforming because we'll have both pieces of the puzzle instead of just one piece of the puzzle. So keep doing what you're doing, and as James said, keep doing, stay safe (indistinguishable). I love that.

>> NIGEL VANN: We're learning lessons about how to do this virtually, and some things are easier. The whole transportation issue is easier. But we need human contact, right? We've got to still find ways to do that. Yeah. It's a journey. It's been -- it's been a real pleasure to share this conversation with you, and we will continue in the Virtual Collaborative Community. So come see as many people as possible there. Everybody, have a good day. See you.

>> Thank you.
>> Bye, everybody.
>> Thank you.
>> Thank you.
(End of session at 4:08 p.m.)