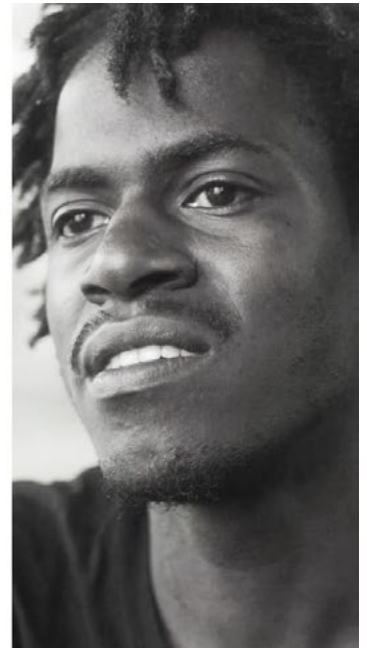


DADICATION



Discussion Guide to Foster Peer Support for Dads



This discussion guide is designed to foster peer support for dads and help them move through a process of self-reflection toward achieving their goals. The guide can be used to supplement current curricula-guided groups and/or peer support groups. If this guide is used in conjunction with a family viewing event, mothers and coparents can also contribute to the discussion.

Overview of Dadication

Involved fathers make essential contributions to their children’s well-being, even when parenting during tough times and circumstances. That’s what we at the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (NRFCH) call Dadication. We applaud and support all dads who show up for their kids, especially when parenting isn’t easy.

The DADication documentary features fathers who appeared in our [Dadication PSAs](#) and includes additional testimony from fathers and fatherhood practitioners. The short documentary emphasizes how essential fathers are to the lives of their children, illustrates the impact of growing up without a father, provides examples of fathers overcoming numerous barriers to be present for their kids, and demonstrates how fathers and their children are flourishing as a result. Be ready to shed a tear as you hear their stories.

The documentary was produced by the Ad Council and Campbell Ewald in partnership with the NRFCH and the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance. You can download the video and other companion documents from the DADication documentary page at [Fatherhood.gov](#).

NOTE TO PROGRAM LEADERS AND DISCUSSION FACILITATORS:

We recommend devoting one of your planned group sessions to show fathers the DADication documentary. Alternatively, or in addition to showing the movie at a group session, you may want to schedule a special event to invite mothers, coparents, and other family members to see the movie and participate in the discussion. We also recommend that you watch the movie several times before the group watches it to familiarize yourself with the contents. This will help you prepare for the group discussion and anticipate how to structure the discussion based on the interests and needs of your group.

You can facilitate a group discussion using the following discussion questions. The questions are arranged in the order in which the topic or quote comes up in the video. We provide specific time marks so you can either watch the whole movie before beginning your discussion, or you can choose to stop the video at specific points in order to cover a question immediately.

We include a section at the end of this document with links to NRFCH resources that provide additional information and may be helpful in following up on specific issues or questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

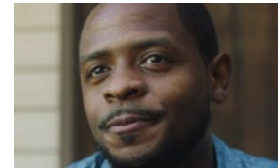
1. [0:59] In the opening scene, Durrell Lyons says:

"My dad wasn't around ... but when my children fell, I was always there to pick them up and put them back on and say, 'do it again' ... now they ride their bikes through the neighborhood."

DISCUSS: How do you think not having his dad around influenced Durrell as a father?

DISCUSS: Was your dad around to teach you things? If so, what did he teach you?

DISCUSS: If he wasn't around much, how has that affected how you parent your kids?



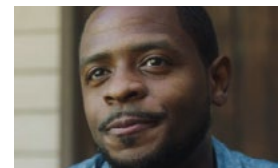
2. [1:20] In the same clip, Durrell talks about how his kids learned to ride a bike even though he never learned how to do so. He says:

"I didn't teach them. I just created an environment where they taught themselves ... Sometimes you don't have to know everything, you just gotta be there."

DISCUSS: What do you think about what Durrell said?

DISCUSS: How are you teaching your kids?

DISCUSS: What's something you've taught your kids that you're proud of?

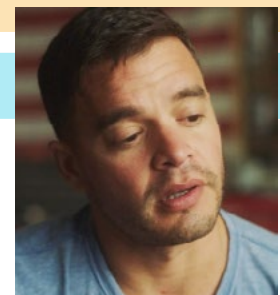


3. [2:00] Juan Scalone talks about how his two kids are different from each other.

DISCUSS: If you have more than one child, are your kids similar or different?

DISCUSS: If they are different, in what ways?

DISCUSS: Do you parent them differently?



4. [2:10] Durrell Lyons says:

"It's such a validating feeling when your 7-year-old son calls you his best buddy."

DISCUSS: Have you had that kind of experience with your kids?

DISCUSS: When is it hard to be your child's "best buddy"?



5. [2:16] Quintavious Greggs says:

"I used to wish my first child was a boy but having a girl you learn so much from a girl ... my baby, she's my life."

DISCUSS: Do you think fathers learn different things from their sons than they do from their daughters? If so, what do girls teach us that differs from boys?

DISCUSS: Do you need to parent girls and boys in different ways?



6. [2:37] Kenneth Braswell says:

"I remember when I got the news of the birth of my first daughter, and the first emotion I had was [feeling that] I was scared to death."

DISCUSS: How did you feel when you first became a father?

DISCUSS: How have you learned to be a father since then?



7. [4:01] Joseph Stiltner says:

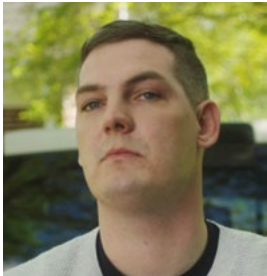
"I missed so much with my first child because of addiction and the situation with his mother. It doesn't get easier to stay away, but it really feels like it gets harder to come back ... it's a guilt that I kinda live with every day."

DISCUSS: Have you felt like that? If so, how do you deal with that feeling of guilt?

DISCUSS: If you've had a difficult relationship with a coparent, have you been able to improve that relationship?

- If so, how?
- If not, what supports do you think you and your coparent need?

DISCUSS: Has the program helped you with that? If not, how could we help more?



8. [4:52] Kenneth Braswell explains that he didn't meet his father until he was 23 years old, when his daughter was 2 years old:

"I wanted to be the father for my child that he wasn't for me ... but I'd gotten disconnected [from her]."

[5:20] He goes on to talk about one day when he was excited because he was going to see his daughter. He sees her and her mother coming out of the door:

"They walk towards me, and they walked right past me ... either she didn't see me, or she doesn't know me ... it killed me."

DISCUSS: What was your relationship like with your father?

DISCUSS: Have you ever experienced how Kenneth felt after seeing his daughter walk right past him? If so, how did you address that disappointment?



9. [9:39] Quintavious Greggs says:

"I made a lot of promises to myself I have to keep, and I came home to live for my purpose. Since I've been home from prison, it's like walking into heaven. I got custody of my daughter. That's a beautiful picture, there ain't nothing like being a father in this world."

DISCUSS: Would you agree that there's nothing like being a father?

DISCUSS: How would you describe the feeling of being a father?

DISCUSS: Have you made promises to yourself?

DISCUSS: Have you been able to keep those promises? If not, what got in the way?



[NOTE TO FACILITATORS: Emphasize that fatherhood is an ongoing process. We're all learning as we grow. Sometimes, just knowing when we've screwed up (and being able to apologize) is a real sign of growth.]

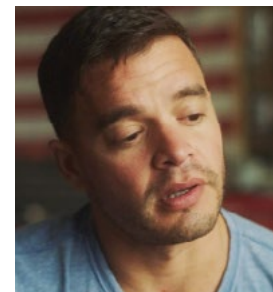
10. [10:05] Juan Scalone talks about a special moment with his children:

"When they see something new, and it just clicks in their brain, I just realized I could do this. You just see in their faces. It's such an incredible moment."

DISCUSS: Have you had moments like that, where suddenly your child learned something new?

DISCUSS: How did you feel when that happened?

DISCUSS: What do you think you did to help create that moment for them?



11. [10:38] Durrell Lyons talks about a time when he suffered from depression and anxiety:

"That depression ended up rolling downhill. My wife was critically depressed, and it emptied into my daughter ... [I was] coming down on her hard for stuff that's really not her fault."

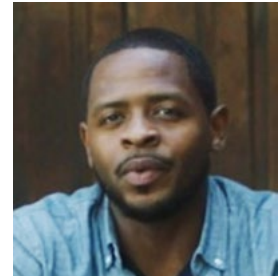
[11:20] He goes on to explain that he finally figured out he was the one with the problem and realized:

"It's not about me. Whatever happens to me and affects me mentally and physically, it's gonna run downhill. And my children are part of that hill."

DISCUSS: What's your reaction to that clip?

DISCUSS: How does stress affect the way you parent your children?

DISCUSS: How can you prevent the stress you feel from having an effect on your children?



12. [11:48] Cosette Bowles talks about how disputes between parents (e.g., about custody of their children or payment of child support) can have a negative impact on child well-being.

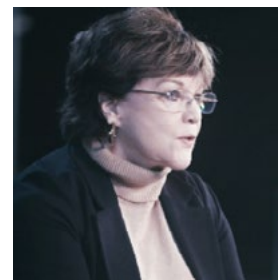
"I think that's really important. This is not a fight, it's not a contest where somebody wins and somebody loses, except your children."

DISCUSS: Do you sometimes feel like you're in a fight or a contest for your children with your coparent?

DISCUSS: How do you think your children feel if they see you and your coparent fighting? Do they blame themselves?

DISCUSS: Have you been able to improve your relationship with your coparent?
• If so, how? If not, how could the program help with that?

DISCUSS: Have you experienced challenges with getting to spend time with your children?
• Has the program helped you overcome these or other challenges?
• How could we do more?



13. [12:31] Kenneth Braswell asks:

"Where do we [men] go for help? Who do we ask when we're feeling vulnerable?"

DISCUSS: What kind of help do you think dads need the most?

DISCUSS: Are you able to get help and support when you need it?

DISCUSS: How can the program do more to help you?

DISCUSS: How can you help other dads?



14. [13:01] Mohammad Fahmy says:

"Internally, we're thinking, 'Am I doing the right thing, Am I being a good parent?'"

[13:36] Juan Scalone says:

"As a dad, as a male, sometimes you feel alone."

DISCUSS: Have you ever felt like Mohammad or Juan?

DISCUSS: Do you ever feel like you don't know what to do as a dad?

DISCUSS: Where do you typically get support – friends, family, your religious community, elsewhere?



NRFC Resources

Check out these resources to find additional information or answer questions that may arise during your discussions.

- [Coparenting Tips for Dads](#)
- [Safety Tips for Dads to Keep Babies Safe \(infants under 1 year\)](#)
- [Safety Tips for Dads to Keep Young Kids Safe \(ages 1 to 4 years\)](#)
- [Safety Tips for Dads to Keep School-Age Kids Safe \(ages 5 to 14 years\)](#)
- [Safety Tips for Dads to Keep Teens Safe \(ages 15 to 19 years\)](#)
- [Tips for Dads: Cook with your Kids!](#)
- [Helping Fathers Manage their Children's Screen Time](#)

This discussion guide was developed by Nigel Vann at Fathers Incorporated and Diego Quezada at MDRC, with assistance from Dina Israel (MDRC) and Dzu Bui (The Ad Council), on behalf of the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse under contract to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance.

Suggested citation: Vann, N. & Quezada, D. (2022). *DADication: Discussion Guide to Foster Peer Support for Dads*. National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse.