

Speaker 1:

Good day everyone and welcome to Understanding the Past to Improve the Future. As a reminder, today's webinar is being recorded and at this time I would like to turn the webinar over to Nigel Vann. Please go ahead Sir.

Nigel Vann:

Thank you very much. Good morning. Good afternoon to everybody and again welcome to today's National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse webinar. As you heard, we're going to talk about understanding the past to improve the future. We thought as we're entering this third decade of the century, it was a good time to take a look at what we've learned about fatherhood work over the last 30 to 40 years. So just a few quick reminders of how this screen works. You'll see on the left hand side, a chat box. You can talk to each other in there. If you do have a question for the presenters, we ask that you put that down in the ask a question box in the bottom right hand corner.

Nigel Vann:

The webinar is being recorded. The recording, the transcript, and all the presentation materials will be posted on our website in the next month or so. So please check back to review and you can also find recordings and materials from all the previous webinars at fatherhood.gov/webinars. We've got a bunch of downloadable resources for you in the downloadable resources box at the bottom, and we certainly encourage you to download all those. We'll talk a little bit about what's in there as we go through, and we've got various web links on the left hand side there. Including a link to our responsible fatherhood Toolkit, which we will be referencing quite a lot today.

Nigel Vann:

So let me move our first slide here. This is just a quick overview for those of you who haven't joined us before. Here at the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse we are supported by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance. On their behalf we provide various resources for dads, fatherhood programs, researchers, policymakers, and all other interested parties.

Nigel Vann:

You can find us on the web at fatherhood.gov. Again, you can find our toolkit and our webinars, those links. You can contact us via email at help@fatherhoodgov.info and we encourage you to use, or encourage fathers to use our national call center toll-free line which is 877-4DAD411. And also encourage you to engage with us via Facebook and Twitter. Talking of Twitter, we are going to have a Twitter chat next Tuesday, February the 25th.

Nigel Vann:

We did a webinar last year on co-parenting and it was one of the most popular webinars we've done. It was certainly the most attended one we did last year. So we are going to do this Twitter chat. You can follow that chat at #fatherhoodrocks at 8:30 to 9:30 Eastern time on Tuesday. Also, coming up our next webinar in April, April 22nd will be a followup to that co-parenting webinar from last year and we're calling this one Co-parenting 201 Fatherhood programs, so hope you can join us for that as well.

Nigel Vann:

Now today I am joined by four of my colleagues here from Clearinghouse and we are really looking forward to this conversation. Between us we've got over a hundred years of experience in this field. So it's quite exciting to be talking about this together. I'm not going to introduce my colleagues right now. You can download their full bio's from the downloadable resources section. I'll say a brief word about each of them as it comes up for their turn to speak. They are each going to speak for about 10 minutes and then we're going to look into future. So we're going to talk about where we are and then we're going to take a bit of a break for that. But it's a great honor to be able to share this with them today.

Nigel Vann:

Because we've got five presenters today, Linux is going to present a little bit today as well. We are going to stay on until 2:45 Eastern time if needed to answer any questions, so we encourage you to stay if you can for that. You can also in the downloadable resources, you can download the slides for the day so you have that later to view. So the focus today is going to be on promising practices that have been identified by research studies, as well as the lessons that we've learned from our work in the field.

Nigel Vann:

A lot of those lessons are in the Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit. Just in terms of how we decided to frame our comments today, you're not going to see this necessarily throughout the webinar, but we've been thinking about where we, in terms of those responsible fatherhood field done over the last 30, 40 years? What have we learned? What are we doing based on those lessons and where are we going?

Nigel Vann:

So you actually get to see my face for once this time. I am the product development lead for The Clearinghouse. On this slide we just jotted a few things down about what has happened in the field. We can definitely say that fathers are important in the lives of their children, but we also know that some fathers face challenges that can get in the way of their ability to be positively involved in their children's lives. That's why they have been in a lot of programs that work around the country to help fathers irrespective of whatever their personal situation may be.

Nigel Vann:

We've learned a lot about promising practices and so that's what we're going to talk about today. There's still a need for more random control. Commonly refer to it as RCT evaluations that can more clearly link program outcomes and strategies to evidence based outcomes. Mindy will be addressing that a little bit of some, she gets into her remarks. I'm just going to set the stage a little bit here with a little bit of brief history and I'm going to put in a little bit of personal history here too.

Nigel Vann:

You know we can trace this work actually back even further than I have here on this screen. We can trace it back to at least the mid 1970s when Charles Ballard started working with fathers in Cleveland. He had been incarcerated for a crime that he did not commit and wanted to help other men when he came out avoid some of the obstacles he faced. So he actually just started going door to door in Cleveland and he worked through a hospital outreach program.

Nigel Vann:

Well let me say after that, I got involved in this work in 1988, so I got involved in between those first two projects. I was actually hired to manage a program in Maryland that was referred to as the Absent Parents Employment Program. One of the first things I learned there was the many of those dads were not absent. Many of them were involved in their dads lives much more so than people tend to think. Even though they weren't involved but they had, what we've referred to in the field quite a bit, is a hole in the heart. But they faced a burden and carried a burden that still impacts other aspects of their lives, and really was a crying out for help in many ways even if they didn't know it.

Nigel Vann:

One of the first things I did in that job was start looking around the country to see what else was going on in terms of work with fathers. I was really surprised that there was a lot going on and the more I looked and talked to people, the more programs I found. A big starting point for me was a 1987 publication that came from the Children's Defense Fund. It was called, What about the Boys? And one of the big things it had in there was information on the Teen Father Collaboration that had run from 1983 to 1985. There were about eight programs involved in that, at least half of them were still serving dads. So I was able to talk to and meet a lot of the people who worked in those programs, and even some of the people who had done the earlier programs.

Nigel Vann:

As I talked to people I met more people. So I really, was just totally fortunate that I fell into this field and I've been in it ever since. I was involved in all the things on the screen here in one way or another. When I was at Public Private Ventures working on the Young Unwed Fathers Pilot Project, we developed the

Father Development Curriculum, and we began training programs around the country. That work has been carried on by the National Partnership for Leadership, commonly known as NPCL. So you can still get that curriculum through them.

Nigel Vann:

The curriculum is actually adapted as the Responsible Fathers Curriculum and that was the curriculum that was used in Parents Fair Share project. I've given on a flag here the National Practitioner's Network for Fathers and Families. That came about just after 1994. 1994, Al Gore who was Vice President at the time convened a gathering of fatherhood practitioners and other people involved in the work. A few years after that before foundation supported the development of this practitioners network and it, it lasted for, it may have actually started before 1997 I think about it now. It lasted for at least five years until the funding ran out, unfortunately.

Nigel Vann:

Much of this early history was supported by private foundations often in partnership with the federal government, but not as much as it has been since 2006 when the federal government has really stepped up through the Office of Family Assistance and it's now supporting all aspects of fatherhood. Their private foundations are probably working more on the local level now. In the early days as well, obviously Child Support Enforcement played a big role and still do. The Department of Labor funded quite a few efforts as did the Department of Education and Agriculture.

Nigel Vann:

They were all involved actually in the Young Unwed Fathers Project. These reports here are reports on those early projects, except for the Partners of Fragile Families. All the findings are summarized in the two publications at the bottom of the screen there. You can download from the downloadable resources section, a summary of somebody's early lessons and you can also download a full list of helpful resources that includes these studies as well as quite a few more.

Nigel Vann:

This is just a quick summary of some of those early lessons. The way I used to present this am I going back to the early 90s now. Some of the first presentations I gave on the Young Men with Fathers Pilot Project and the way I used to talk about this, which I think helps summarize this slide, so I don't have to read everything on the slide, but I used to talk about the fact, and I remember this is also shortly after the movie, Field of Dreams came out with a buil [inaudible 00:11:58] people would come and I said about fatherhood work. They will come, but it takes time. They will stay if there's something real for them. But even then this work is not easy and you've got to be real. They're going to stay. But these dads, many of them face personal obstacles as a result of their life experiences.

Nigel Vann:

Many of the early programs were not particularly thought of friendly. They were not set up to help dads, particularly low income dads. And that's particularly true of partner agencies that have people tried to work with, like the local employment agencies were not used to working with fathers. They were more used to working with mothers who were there because of welfare and public policies. The main public policy was Charles Ballard trying to get dads to come in and pay child support and if they run out of code or putting them in jail in a lot of cases, that's why the year before I got involved in Maryland. Again because it there was in recognition by some local judges that they needed to help the guys rather than just treat them punitively. So we've been talking about this as a team as we prepared for this presentation and we think it makes sense to put these Schmidt's findings and break it down in some program areas.

Nigel Vann:

This is how we've done that. There are other ways this might be organized, but we think this helps provide a snapshot of what we've learned. It's certainly important to have staff who can relate to dads and gain their trust and respect. Because if you don't do that, you have no program. And it's important to have community partners who can help you spread the word in the community, make direct referrals, but also to provide services because the fatherhood program unless its housed in an organization that has all sorts of resources, cannot do everything.

Nigel Vann:

And even then you still meet problems in the community. So we're going to be talking about policy development a little bit as we move forward here. And it's certainly essential that you have effective outreaching recruitment mechanisms. Men typically do not think about asking for help. Certainly around fatherhood. And if you want me to come to a program as a man, you're going to have to show me what's possible and why I should be interested.

Nigel Vann:

And then you're going to have to talk to me in a certain way. In my experience, when she do get dad into a program, what keeps them there, is a combination of a respectful, trusting one on one relationship with one or more staff members. But I think even more so depends on the relationship that the men form with each other in the program. So they do get a true case support program and that's where an effective group facilitator really comes into play.

Nigel Vann:

An effective group facilitator who can help the men in the program look back on their own personal experiences, process their own journey, their own life experiences, own up when they haven't done everything that they might've done, but also reflect on how they got to be where they are. A lot of that is talking about your relationship with your own father and when you see a group of men get together and start doing that knocking share things. They've never shared with anybody else in their life. They've maybe not even let themselves be upfront about how they feel about the relationship they have with their father be that a positive one, a negative one, or anywhere in between.

Nigel Vann:

Once you get a group of men who really get to share that experience together, they will then hold each other accountable moving through the program, and it really just becomes what's been researched is that glue that can keep fathers involved in the program and help them move forward on their own personal journeys. Now I'm going to tell you to start [inaudible 00:16:09] to talk more about what we know about program content and outcomes and some of the more recent and ongoing research studies.

Nigel Vann:

Before I do that, I just want to pull up our first poll question. And we do this just to get a sense of who's in the room with us if you like. So we just like to know how long you've worked in the father's field, so any involvement in the father programs. Get services, management, research policy, any other way in which you may have done, helped in this field.

Nigel Vann:

So it looks like we've got that a fifth of you had been doing it between 10 and 20 years. So that's, that's very encouraging. And we've got a whole chunk of people in various ones before that. We've got just over 6% trained for 30 years and we've got 5% have you been doing some more than 30 years so again, very encouraging. So I'm not the only old dude on the line, I guess. Okay, well thank you very much for that. So with that, let me bring Mindy's introductory slide up here and I'll just very briefly introduce her.

Nigel Vann:

So Mindy is our research lead here. I have to announce she's also the director and a research scientist at Child Trends, where she leads the fatherhood and parenting programs. She's been part of our NRSC team for over five years now, and she helps with the full product development sites. She and I work with very closely together and she oversees the work of the shelter and staff on the development of various research projects and she's speaking to us today from upstate New York where she and her husband recently moved. So Mindy, the time is yours. Tell us what's going on in the research world.

Speaker 2:

Well great, thanks Nigel. Good afternoon everybody. It's really great to be part of the team presenting today and thinking about both programmatic efforts and research and evaluation, kind of lessons learned and future directions for the fatherhood field. Nigel provided a really nice summary of early program efforts and then sort of directly aligned with that work is a really robust body of research and evaluation. And there's been an impressive amount of research conducted over time in an effort to understand the nature of fathers, relationships with partners and children, the consolation of service needs that fathers have and overall to help to inform and improve programs for fathers.

Speaker 2:

And here on this slide we've listed some of the more recently completed projects and research studies that have been funded by the federal government. And then a few more. The next slide and you can see there's just a lot of impressive work being done and this is just at the federal level. So combined with this is other strong work being done at the state level and within individual organizations.

Speaker 2:

I'm not going to go into detail about every single one of these studies, but generally wanted to note a few things overall about the types of research evaluation being done. This work represents a mix of impact implementation and descriptive study. So I'll take you in different perspectives and to the research, different questions being answered by these different studies, but really exploring a range of questions that helped to build the evidence base for fatherhood programming. Just a couple of examples of some of the questions being asked on the first study here.

Speaker 2:

The appearance in children's together or pact evaluation, that is everything we completed experimental evaluation, so the RCT side, our vigorous evaluation design that Nigel mentioned focusing on the the [inaudible 00:20:26] fatherhood services specifically for low income fathers. Another study that has different goals and different questions is at the bottom of the slide.

Speaker 2:

The strengthening, the implementation of responsible fatherhood programs study. That's a more recently funded project and answers questions very much related to program implementation. So the goal for that work is to identify implementation challenges in fatherhood programming. To design and test solutions to those challenges in an innovative evaluation method and then to adapt and improve approaches based on those findings. So a very intentional focus on program implementation.

Speaker 2:

Other studies here look at different aspects of fatherhood programming in relation to the content of the programs being delivered. For example, asking questions about how fatherhood programs address things like intimate partner violence, work or parenting or healthy relationships more generally. And then also it's important to think about the fathers in the programs and different characteristics that fathers have. And some studies have been designed specifically for one the entering fathers. Other studies have been designed specifically for fathers of children involved in the child welfare system. So a very wide range of research questions asked and for different types of fathers and families.

Speaker 2:

For more information about these studies, there's several reports that have been been published. These provide background on the study's, findings from the study and then also some nice pieces on just the general state of fatherhood research and programming and priorities for research and future directions for research. And the [inaudible 00:22:29] contributed to this body of knowledge through the research products that the team has developed. And the focus is on synthesizing research and translating that more for a practice audience. And so the Clearing house has several research briefs focused on reading documentation and data in programs. Forging effective partnerships. And then also topics like recruitment and retention and really focusing on research based approaches in these different areas of implementation.

Speaker 2:

So Nigel introduced those key areas of programming that are important for serving fathers and many of the research studies that we've been discussing also focus on those areas. And so here we've included just a few examples of strategies or practices that have emerged through these researches and evaluation studies as important from fatherhood program implementation. So for example, training staff in trauma awareness and appropriate responses to find the trauma. Leveraging partnerships can really be important for providing a range of services to fathers as Nigel mentioned. And then in particular, if there are certain restrictions for what the fatherhood program can do with their funding, for example, then partnerships can help to to expand and provide access to fathers to services that may not be covered by some specific types of funding. And talking about reach in recruitment, Nigel mentioned the importance of just getting fathers in the door.

Speaker 2:

So thinking about ways to get others interested and aware of programs and the idea that once they're there and really see the value of the programs, they'll keep coming back. One important piece of that though is really being flexible, creative, and be able to respond to the context and the situation that fathers bringing in and not from the program. So really being able to adapt approaches and programming and being flexible with the dads are there to keep them interested in coming back. One thing to note about all of these different strategies is that they are drawn from a range of different types of research studies. Some of those are more descriptive, some focused on implementation, some on the

effectivity of the fatherhood programs in achieving that outcome. So we can't always say for sure which specific practices actually lead to a program being more successful or not.

Speaker 2:

But already I've seen some common themes across. Nigel and my takeaways and then you'll hear some similar things again from the rest of the speakers. And so there was a convergence from research and from being on the ground, working directly with fathers and some of these strategies and these provide a nice opportunity to think about testing some of these strategies through future research and evaluation. And we'll talk a little about future directions for that later.

Speaker 2:

I wanted to just reveal a few more strategies from some of these research studies. So looking at group facilitation example, the promising strategies include emphasizing in supporting fathers in their own personal development as part of workshops and then thinking about matching staff to participants. And so having staff with some more background. Here research tends to look at a lot of different types of characteristics of staff and facilitators.

Speaker 2:

For example, gender, race, ethnicity, but also facilitative experiences. So kind of thinking about having facilitators with shared experiences or similar circumstances that the fathers have to really help relate to the fathers. Also skills and many of these are teachable, but it's important to think about other types of skills that successful facilitators mainly involve training on some of these things. So things like the ability to relate to others more generally and apply that to the fathers that the staff are working with.

Mindy:

They said when the staff are working with really having the knowledge of one's community, services available in the community, and the ability to connect fathers to services and opportunities, and then overall just being a good role model. So kind of demonstrating that behavior, those skills and practices that you're wanting the fathers to model, and so being a representative for fathers. And then in terms of program content, this is a place where evaluation research can formally test whether participating in a fatherhood program can result in specific outcomes for fathers. And we've listed a few key outcomes here that are examined in studies.

Mindy:

The PEC evaluation is an example that looked at your trained behaviors, engagement with children, employment and through an experimental evaluation found that the fatherhood programs in that

evaluation compared to usual services available in the community, did improve fathers' nurturing behaviors, fathers' engagement with children in age-appropriate activities. I thought that was an important distinction in terms of how that study measured engagement and also increased the length of time fathers were continuously employed, while there were no impacts on earnings but on continuous employment.

Mindy:

Another example from experimental evaluation, this determined evaluation of the child support non-custodial appearance employment demonstration that found that participation in the demonstration did increase non-custodial parent satisfaction with child support services, and that's among other positive outcomes. But that one stood out just in terms of the goal of that demonstration project.

Mindy:

So that's a quick summary of some takeaways from [inaudible 00:29:03] evaluation where he focused on the various aspects of program instrumentation that Nigel contributes.

Nigel:

Well thanks very much, Mindy. We'll be hearing again from Mindy in a few more minutes. Before we bring James up I'd just like to have our second poll question. Can we pull that up, Enzo? Enzo is the behind the scenes magician, who can just make things happen like that. So in terms of these program areas that we've broken it down into, I know this is not an easy question, but would you just take a stab at telling us which of these components you think is most important for the success of responsible fatherhood programs? Feel free to check 'other' and write in that chat box that is not on this screen or as we go through the presentation, I certainly encourage you to use that chat box and if you've learned something specific in your world that we haven't addressed or you'd like to highlight, even if we have addressed it, then feel free to tell us that in there. We do collect that information and review what you put in the chat box. Right now it looks like we're pretty much across the board here.

Nigel:

Outreach and recruitment is leading the way. Oh no, I'm sorry, I'm not reading this right. Staff hiring trainers [inaudible 00:30:30] is killing us so you are unanimous, almost that staff hiring training and support is the most important factor. Without staff, we can't do the work. Okay, well thank you. We will be talking more about that. We were hearing about that from Kenny, but now it's my honor to bring up Mr. James Worthy who is our Outreach Lead here at the Clearinghouse. I've known James since the early '90s when he was working as the Director of Male Involvement at St. Bernardine's, a headstart in Baltimore and they were doing some really innovative things. I remember meeting this young chaplain and being quite impressed with him and he's continued to impress me ever since. He went on from that position to work with the [inaudible 00:31:15] and families and served awful lot of fathers in Baltimore

and now shares his expertise around the country. We're going to hear from James now. Share your expertise, James.

James Worthy, NRFC Outreach Lead:

Hey, thank you so much, Nigel. Can you hear me clearly?

Nigel:

You're coming through loud and clear.

James Worthy, NRFC Outreach Lead:

Awesome. Awesome. Well, I'm so excited to be here. I just want to give a quick overview of the whole outreach portion of fatherhood. And as we look at it, I really start this when we saw a major change in the family structure back in the late mid '70s, late '70s where we started to see fathers removed or leaving the household. If you start to look back from the early '60s there was a change in fatherhood immediacy, the issue of getting the dad came out of really an attempt to get dads not to abandon children financially. We had this whole movement that came out of [inaudible 00:32:28] The driving force was to get fathers to support their children almost in a mass abandonment movement. And you know, when you looked at social service roles, they were starting to increase when support to women and children were starting to put more tax dollars into households and it really became a child support issue.

James Worthy, NRFC Outreach Lead:

Where are the dads? Get them to pay, get them to pay, get them to pay. And out of that movement, people like Charles Valor, who still really start to see there are some things that are, are different about what's going on. It wasn't so much abandonment for everyone. It was some absenteeism. There were barriers that were promoting the absence of fathers, whether that be incarceration, coming out of Vietnam, whether that be substance abuse, all of those things that really came out of that change in our communities, in our country in the late '60s, early 70's and the movement of responsible fatherhood started to say, hey, everyone's not abandoning. We need to encourage dads, not so much from a punitive but encourage and support fathers who have been maybe forced out or have left because of circumstances. And that's where we started to look at assisting in removing barriers with an understanding of what was driving the family structure change.

James Worthy, NRFC Outreach Lead:

So with that being said, you saw all of those programs start to pop up in the option to really try to help dads. And it was at that point because there was so much distrust in our community, we had to start to

work on shifting paradigm. We had to move from a punitive to a support mechanism. We had to really get to the point that we're not looking for just abandonment, but this absentee. And there was a huge movement that we had to fight against that was called the deadbeat dad. Many of us, if we've been around any time we remember the billboards, we remember the articles in the newspaper and magazines really depicting dads who had left the family as deadbeats and the study, the program that were early in start to say, hey, maybe not deadbeat, but dead broke.

James Worthy, NRFC Outreach Lead:

And there's two sides of the story. And what became glaringly obvious is that the large majority of fathers' absence wasn't because they were deadbeats. It was barriers, it was issues, it was things that were driving them away from their families. And so we had to look at both sides of the story and start to really collect the information to see what it was that was really affecting our families on a national level. We had to get away from just collecting money to encouraging dads. So these programs, the earlier programs start to say, hey, let's see if we can help fathers remove some of the barriers, support them in their own development so that they can be there for their children. And some of the early successes that we learned worked was meeting dads where they were, and not just physically like location-wise, but mentally and even emotionally.

James Worthy, NRFC Outreach Lead:

We have to start to deal with the man who we were hoping to be a father. And that's where a lot of the understanding of developing rapport and inviting people, inviting men to participate. That's where that came from. Really starting to look at as we go out and we see a dad, we find people who need help, we've got to invite them. And one of the major pieces that just came glaringly out of this work was we had to provide services that basically answered the question, what's in it for me? Because here's where we started to see if a dad was dealing with incarceration, dealing with unemployment, dealing with substance abuse, dealing with some of the hurdles, some of the barriers of life, then we had to get something to help support that man and getting those barriers removed so that they could be ready to be there for their children.

James Worthy, NRFC Outreach Lead:

And that meant that the programming, the services had to be flexible and adaptable. Unlike the rigid you pay or you go away. We've had to really start to look at how do we flexibly support this person and also make sure that the things that the collections were being done because the children still needed financial support, that never went away. The children still needed the dad to do the work of being a provider to the child even while they develop the skill to be the nurturer and that parent unit. So we started to really recruit dads.

James Worthy, NRFC Outreach Lead:

The early programs and now moving into the programs that are on the ground today. They're recruiting dads with a holistic end in mind, so we're recruiting people with retention in mind, meaning as we start to invite you, we're talking about the end results and with all of that we found out, there is a model much like any business cycle, there's a model of how the recruitment process starts and this is huge now today because programs look at it, they understand that they got to go out and market their program and that's really getting widespread distribution of information about what's available, about what the intent of it is to bring awareness to the general population because we had, from the early days, you had to change the general population's perception of what dad was all about and as we got that audience to start to listen, then we had to reach out, communicate directly with the general public.

James Worthy, NRFC Outreach Lead:

That's where we were able to define the people who needed and wanted these support services. We start to find out who were the people who needed it, who were the people who could support it and what organizations could be a referral source to really drive the outreach process. And when we got those things in place, we understood that now we had to present the benefits of participating in these services. And that's really where you had to let the potential prospect or participant know exactly what areas of support, whether it's employment, whether it's substance abuse recovery, whether it's education, whether it's parenting, what are the things there for that person to develop. And we had to invite and customize that type of programming, which immediately now gave us the ability to enroll the people who needed these services.

James Worthy, NRFC Outreach Lead:

And on the ground, now you started to see over the last, I'll say 20 years, a number of programs in communities all over the country that are rooted now, they're there. And every single day they're running enrollment programs. They're getting people started in these services. And it's amazing because what we're doing based on this lesson, and you see it today on TV, you see it on social media, you see it on the marketing material is done with intent. The messaging is done with intent, intent to get dads actively knowing and it's such a major difference today than when I got started in this field better than 25 years ago.

James Worthy, NRFC Outreach Lead:

It now is a movement to get radio, print, TV, mass marketing, using outlets where dads are, you hear all the time at barber shops and sporting events and now it's really attacking the mass marketing of a better message for fathers to get the support they need and with the social media that has come out, you won't believe what you see right there on the slide, the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse. Really the repository of a lot of the information and the how-to's through our Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit. We designed a national hotline for people to call in, fathers or family members, to get the help that dads need and want.

James Worthy, NRFC Outreach Lead:

And I'll tell you it's amazing because now we've understood that when you get the mass media out there, every one of your service agencies or service points have to create a father-friendly environment. We just understand now that dads and moms communicate differently. They gravitate towards things differently based on intent of them being there. So we're adapting a lot of our traditional services and locations to really make sure that dad is included. That literature, semantics, print, it's all asking dad to be involved and then we've got a trained staff. This is where I love what's happening with a national movement, with the hotlines for dads, with databases and programs for dads. There's a national support system to train and support our staff to really do this work. And that's today, if you really look at the programs that are out there, that have kind of put a root in the ground.

James Worthy, NRFC Outreach Lead:

The average one that's really getting a movement in their communities now have been around anywhere from 10 to 20 years. It really has changed the thought patterns of what dads are and what dads need to be successful. I'll tell you, when we talk about it now that we got these here, now that we're here today, the next step is building the partnerships and the program stability. I'm going to step back and turn it over to my partner, Mr. Patrick Patterson, or back to Nigel, to really talk to you about how these programs that are out there have to look for sustainability in the future. So, Nigel, I'll throw it back to you and I hope I didn't take too long. Hello? Nigel, are you there?

Nigel:

Oh, thank you very much, James. I was yammering away on mute.

James Worthy, NRFC Outreach Lead:

No problem. No problem.

Nigel:

Okay. I was congratulating you on your presentation. You did well on time. I told you, you could have an extra minute or two. It's my honor now to introduce my next esteemed colleague, Patrick Patterson. Patrick Patterson is our program manager here at the Clearinghouse. He's doing so many things out there in the fatherhood arena. It boggles my mind every time he tells me about the next new thing he's doing, and it's a good thing he's still a young man although it's over 20 years since I met him when he was a really young man back in the late '90s working in South Carolina and he became part of our national training team at the National Partnership for Community Leadership, NPCL. He's still one of the [inaudible 00:44:32] trainers in his work out there. So Patrick, the time is yours.

Patrick Patterson, NRFC Project Manager:

Thank you. Thank you. Can you hear me, Nigel?

Nigel:

Yeah.

Patrick Patterson, NRFC Project Manager:

Okay. Good afternoon, everybody. Good morning. If you're on the West coast, just want to say thank you so much for the opportunity. I have the distinct pleasure of being the project manager for the Fatherhood Clearinghouse, but also a chance to share something I'm really passionate about. For the next few minutes, I want to talk about two things: one is partnerships and the second is program sustainability. I'd like to speak in respect to things that we've done in the Clearinghouse and then I'll ask some kind of context of things that I've done over the last 20 plus years on the partnership front. Next slide, if you will.

Patrick Patterson, NRFC Project Manager:

You'll see that the Clearinghouse has partnered with a number of national entities. The Ad Council is one of our major media partners, but we've also had success with the Chicago Bulls, the NFL players association, Major League Baseball, NASCAR. You may have seen our ads on TV but also on billboards across the country with Despicable Me 2, and then Kung Fu Panda, just to name a few of our partnerships that we've had the last several years.

Patrick Patterson, NRFC Project Manager:

The last two years we've been host of an amazing opportunity at the Super Bowl where we had a chance to talk with fathers who are professional athletes currently or previous, and the thing that really boggled my mind is that most folks don't see the connection. But if you're on the line and you're doing fatherhood work, you're doing healthy marriage work, you're doing youth work, re-entry work, mentoring work. As much as we believe that we need those corporations and those entities, they need us. And I think the thing that we have to figure out in a quick and short order is what's the value that we bring to these organizations? I'm always amazed when I will follow Kenny Braswell or James Worthy or Nigel Van or Eugene [Snayberg 00:46:33] or Joshua DuBois and I'll see them connecting with larger entities that seem not connected to the fatherhood or marriage or re-entry work, but they are because they are also trying to improve our community.

Patrick Patterson, NRFC Project Manager:

So next slide. I want to just kind of talk about some of the key elements of partnerships, and as a backdrop for some of you guys, if you are paying attention to federal websites or grants.gov you probably saw yesterday that the federal fatherhood healthy marriage and now youth focus grant were forecasted, there was an announcement yesterday made, it's not the actual RP but you'll see the language that speaks to what these proposals, these RPs may include when they are released. There's the estimated timeline, there's the estimated budget. If you don't have that information you can follow back up with us after the webinar. But one of the things I want to bring attention to is in each of those documents, it speaks to partners. There was a day and time where an organization used to fund singularly [Abi Mulhern 00:20:39] and they would just give money to Eric [Basseri 00:47:43] and they would say, go do great work and we'll look forward to seeing the outcomes when you're finished.

Patrick Patterson, NRFC Project Manager:

Today, most funders have limited dollars with increased need, and so what they ask for is that people who are applying for grants or funding, that they form partnerships. And so here's some of the key ingredients that we believe are core to working strong partnerships. I'm going to start left to right. I'm going to start with trust and mutual respect. There has to be a mutual respect for what I bring and what you bring to the partnership. I have seen several formations of partnerships and the ones that work best is when there's a mutual appreciation for the value of a partner. You may be only a referral point, you may just be providing food. You may be providing jobs, you may be providing training but there has to be a value add, which important as the second one, if you're going left to right a shared vision for how to deliver quality product, service or product.

Patrick Patterson, NRFC Project Manager:

It is so important. I won't have time today to talk about it, but that you have a plan, a logic model that showcases how you both plan to get to the end zone. I'm a sports guy. What is our play, what are we, what play are we running to get us into the end zone or to score baskets. We each need to have a role in making it happen, but it has to be a shared vision with respect to what we're trying to do. We're trying to get more kids out of poverty and trying to get more fathers employed. We're trying to get more co-parents to visit, sharing parenting time. We have to have a shared vision around quality service or product. The third one is a jointly defined win-win for you and your partners. What's in it for you and what's in it for me? This also includes the conversation around budgets.

Patrick Patterson, NRFC Project Manager:

I know in this space because there's a lot of heavy bleeding heart folk who love to do the work and it's just purely passion-driven but there has to be a conversation with respect to budget and finances and there has to be a win-win. If I am delivering groups for your program or you're doing transportation, there should be some financial benefit to my organization that benefits us beyond finances. It also should be something that advances both of our causes. And so there has to be a clear win-win when you think about the formation of strong partnerships. The fourth, and this is critical, guys. Open a regular

communication. A long time ago, a long time ago when I was [inaudible 00:50:09], one of my favorite mentors used to say to me, in the absence of communication, people generally assume nothing is happening. They don't assume that if I haven't heard from you, oh wow, he or she is out recruiting the earth, they assume he or she is doing nothing.

Patrick Patterson, NRFC Project Manager:

One of the things that we do here at the Clearinghouse, very prideful about this, is we try to ensure that there is open and regular communication. Sometimes it's weekly, sometimes it's on the phone, sometimes it's in a report. Sometimes it's using technology. Sometimes it's using systems that provide communication, but there has to be open and regular communication. I have seen too many groups formed with huge momentum and then when one thing goes not according to the plan, they disband communications and then there's a breakdown in their relationship. You have to communicate, you have in all relationships, but particularly in the formation of partnerships you have to communicate. It's very, very, very important. And then fifth but not last is defined roles and performance expectations in writing. As a trained social worker, long time ago I learned if it's not written down, it never happened.

Patrick Patterson, NRFC Project Manager:

And so when you think about partnerships, MOUs, memorandum of understanding, teaming agreements, those things should be developed upfront. I'm a big fan of documenting things at the very start of the conversation versus in reparations where you're trying to fix something. All of these agreements can be expanded and edited, but in the beginning it's really important to say, hey, partner, I'm excited about this relationship we have, but I'd like to at least get some things on paper. Let's use your template or my template, or let's share a template that we both can use and try to find out what do we both need in an agreement that speaks to what you'll do, what we'll do, how long we'll do it. What are the terms? I know folks who have an indefinite agreement. There needs to be some kind of closure where you review and assess the effectiveness of the partnership.

Patrick Patterson, NRFC Project Manager:

There is nothing worse than being in a relationship that is not going well, but you just have to stay in it because you never did say when is the end date. In these partnerships, you have to have defined roles and performance expectations. You should not agree to partner with someone who's going to do recruitment for you and there not be a number, a hundred fathers, a hundred parents. There has to be some measurable outcome that you use to determine whether this is going well or whether it needs to be enhanced in some way, form or fashion. So there's more there. But one of the things that I put at the center of this is just clarity. Focused outcomes. I believe that if you focus on your outcomes, the income will come, the outcomes drive everything. So this is really important for partnerships. I'm going to switch quickly to my last slide, which is really a topic that I'm really, really, really passionate about, is program sustainability.

Patrick Patterson, NRFC Project Manager:

Over the course of my career I've had a chance to write and when more than \$50 million in grants in all sorts of fashions. It is one of the things I know people struggle with. And so over the years we've found that giving people the tools is really what helps folks feel competent. But, where I grew up in South Carolina, they would say it takes money to buy land. And for you guys, if you're doing this good work that's as big as your heart is, it takes resources to do the work. And so here are some lessons that we've learned that are really, really, really important. Not on the slide, but I would just give you guys as a backdrop. Most funders, most funders, when they think about applications, there's one large question and it's phrased differently. I'm just going to translate right to the meat of the matter. Here's the question that most funders want to know when you send them an application or request for funding or request for support. Is what you're doing nice to do or necessary? There's a difference there. Nice to do...

Patrick:

There's a difference there. 'Nice to do' is an ice cream truck that rides through a neighborhood. That's pretty nice. 'Necessary' is a physical facility that is a safe Haven for kids to save them from maybe, gun violence, could be after school activities, it could be academic enrichment, 'nice to do' or 'necessary', if your proposal has flowery, bit of ease and really gives people a sense of, Oh this is what acute, it won't get considered as strongly, so you want to look at what makes your program necessary, what's the need that you are trying to meet that gives the funder that the urgency to fund you so that you can serve more people. It's really important that as you're thinking about this next round of grants, this next round of funding that you may pursue, whether that'd be federal, whether it be foundational or corporate that you look at answering that question, is what we're offering really something that's nice or that isn't necessary, is it saving lives?

Patrick:

Is it saving time? Is it saving resources? Very important, here are four lessons. Before you apply, you have to research the funders prior to contact, and there're several ways. There was a day and time you had to drive to DC or drive to Philadelphia, drive to Florida to meet a funder. Today, all time of night you can go on the world wide web and find out what their priorities are. In a lot of cases, I worked for a foundation some years ago, one of the things that never happens, that foundation always ask, is that you call. Research them, make a phone call. My name is Patrick Patterson. I am in Tallahassee. I'm definitely interested in applying for your grants, but I'd love to just hearing more about what you guys have as priorities. I've been on your website. I see these are your three things, but can I get more? Can you share more?

Patrick:

Open the conversation up so it should build that relationship. You see the big word relationship there. The second one, a lesson is, you have to have a target. There has to be a target that drives your

fundraising and there has to be a subsequent plan to get you there. There's nothing worse than having this enormous target with no plan to get there. It's really important that you spend time with somebody who can help you think about your fundraising target and your plan to get you there and multiple targets, only federal grants. But I'm here to tell you there are billions. That's what the B of dollars that are out there for organizations like yours, that are corporate, that are community based, that are university led, that would fund and partner with you. So you want think about your fundraising target and your plan.

Patrick:

Third is: fundraising, sustainability is not a job for one person. I do a lot of conversation with folks who hired a grant writer and they think the grant writer has this magic pen and it can do it by themselves. It has to be part of the system in the agency. So if you have hire a grant writer for this next season of grants, please surround them with the support, whether it be an intern, a budget person, an accountant, making sure they have what they need to write a strong application, but this is not a job for one person. If you are making that a one person job please consider adding supports around them. And here's the last thing I'll share. One of my favorite rules is the 50 percent versus zero rule. And they're mathematicians I know who on this webinar, one of the questions that I will ask you is, if you apply for a grant, what are your odds?

Patrick:

50 50. Most of us understand the 'why' as to why we're doing the work. The why factor. I'm driven by why. I want to see fathers connected to their children and families. So when I write, when I think about these guys are counting on me, these kids are counting on me, so I have to apply. You guys have to apply. Your odds are 50 50.

Patrick:

Here's the second question. If you don't apply for the grant, what are your odds? That's the zero rule. So in these cases were most folks, and here's a simple fact, most folks don't apply because they're afraid of not getting funded. But your mind, your mind gets you to your funding more so than anything you write. When I write, I think about the picture with the big check and Wells Fargo. When I think about seeing a busload of fathers going to an event with their children, I don't think, what if we don't get funded, I think what if we do get funded and so you have to think and have a team of folks around you that believe that what you're writing is going to help sustain your organization.

Patrick:

I am so excited about the folks who are on the line and also what's to come next and just want to close up by saying, everything that you do is connected to funding so you can't have this beautiful home and

nothing on the inside. You have to think about what are the resources at the floor? [inaudible 00:59:08]
With that, I'll turn to go to Nigel.

Nigel:

Okay. Thank you very much Patrick. And so for the next word we get to hear from our fierce lead, Kenneth Braswell, he's our project director, he's got 30 years experience managing, leading Fatherhood and community programs besides leading the clearing house he's also the CEO of fathers inc and he previously led the New York state father initiative. Like Patrick, he's involved in many, many aspects of Fatherhood work and he also makes me feel tired thinking about everything he does, but it's been a true pleasure to be working under his leadership for these last nine years. So please can you share some wisdom with the group?

Kenneth Braswell:

Thank you so much Nigel and thank you to everyone who's on the line who have taken out time today to spend with the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse and here, some of what we've learned, I heard Nigel say at the beginning of this that there was over 100 years of experience, I'm not exactly sure how I feel about that and so it is as a contributor to the work, I'll take my little small percentage of that hundred, I'm not trying to claim that total 100 but it did kind of send shock waves through my body when I heard that number.

Kenneth Braswell:

The other thing, and I'm listening to Patrick in his presentation and I don't often disagree with Patrick, but there is one thing he said that I disagree with and he used the analogy of the ice cream truck being necessary and I would say that in Atlanta when you have 78 straight days of 90 degree weather, a ice cream truck is necessary and so, depending on where you are in the country, you might want to put that in your grant and it might attract fathers to your program to have an ice cream truck and so thank you for that.

Kenneth Braswell:

I'm going to talk a little bit about the development of the father that spills from my own lens and how I've seen this over the past 15 years of specifically doing responsible Fatherhood work or more generally, in the 30 years of doing community service work at a time that I didn't necessarily call the work that I did fatherhood work. I spent a lot of those 15 years also working with dads and working with family. And I've described the field a couple of days ago to Nigel as a quilt. And I said that over the last 30 years or so of the Responsible Fatherhood work that has grown and diversified, and I remember when I came into this work back in the early two thousands tail end of 1990s, I'm somewhat cutting my teeth so to say with some of the giants of the Responsible Fatherhood field, Dr. Ron Mincey and Jeff

Johnson and Jerry Tahoe and Robert Johnson and Joe Jones and others and Charles Ballot within the National Leadership group.

Kenneth Braswell:

And really doing that work and being able to sit back and hear the wisdom that they brought to the table at that point and becoming their colleague. I never thought back then that I would actually be their colleague, I thought that I would always be trailing them in the greatness that they are and then taking on the work in the state of New York and overseeing the National Responsible Fatherhood work that we were doing in the state of New York for those five years where I got a chance to work very closely with both Dr. Ron Mincey and Elaine Sorenson of the Urban Institute at the time, and got to always be able to lean on their wisdom, their expertise, their experience and their advice with respect to how I should as someone who wanted to engage in this work, oversee this work, and to be able to put the right lens and perspective on the work that we were doing.

Kenneth Braswell:

And so at the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse when we took this work over 10 years ago, I have always seen this body of work as the thread of that quilt and how we function each and every day is to ensure that all threads connect all the blotches of the quilt that are necessary to do the work. And we've been able to touch many of those blocks in this quilt and be able to remain connected to them, and the quilt continues to get even bigger. And so I'm excited by all of the folks on the line, I'm particularly interested in the ones that are on the webinar that were here more than 30 years and those 20 year veterans that have been around and laboring in this work for so long and have so much expertise with respect to this work. And so I'm going to go to the next line.

Kenneth Braswell:

So program leadership has always been important to me with respect to understanding where we were, where we are and where we want to go. And one of the things that I've seen throughout my career in this space and also overseeing both Father's Incorporated and the Clearinghouse, is that leadership has become extremely important. And so when it comes to staff members, key staff members, the passion through which they embody this work and how they champion this work moving forward, I think that my previous colleague, James [inaudible], Nigel and Patrick did a great job in kind of laying out the processes and the policies and some of the hard level things that we must know in doing this work. But then there's this other element of the passion that we bring to the work and the desire that we bring to the work and the need to have great outcomes and to do great work and to improve the wellbeing of lives and our community.

Kenneth Braswell:

And a lot of those things that we bring to this work as a passion, those things are important. But the other piece that's important to know about, is that in this space of program leadership or program leadership, is that we got to be mindful that that passion permeates through the entire organization and through the entire body of work. Because unfortunately what I've seen in my space, including my New York work, and that is when the champions leave the space, so to does the work. And that was very disheartening to me to see what happened to that body of work solely because the individuals that were driving the work left the work. And I'm talking about Robin Door, who took a chance with me in bringing me into the state of New York to do this work. David Hansell came in after him and really kind of helped me really understand this work from a governmental point of view and then myself who then went on to do other things and then to see what happened.

Kenneth Braswell:

If you remember back in the early days of the Fatherhood space, there were several state wide networks and organizations moving Responsible Fatherhood still, and all of those efforts were led by a champion who did less to do something different, to do something more progressive, to change jobs or whatever the case may be, but when those individuals moved on, the work left as a result, and for program leadership, we should be thinking about not only the development of the programs to which we're trying to serve dads and their families, but also the infrastructure that holds that in place as well. Next slide.

Kenneth Braswell:

And so there's a key element to kind of understand where we are in the space and it's something that I've been really talking about and I want to just kind of lay this out in a couple of minutes so you really understand where you are in this space. And so there is a distinct difference between Fatherhood organization and Fatherhood program, that then attaches itself back to what I've just previously talked about.

Kenneth Braswell:

When you look across the spectrum of social work and you can look across the spectrum of work that's done in this country, in the Fatherhood space, there are very few Fatherhood organizations. What do I mean by Fatherhood organization? I mean organizations that are legally structured, that are primarily led through their mission, that are funded to do the very specific work of Responsible Fatherhood, right? And then there are Fatherhood programs. There are programs that are within larger organizations that may not necessarily have fatherhood as a primary function of the agency that tend to come and go as it relates to the level of funding within that particular agency, which is why we've seen so much of the turnover over the last 20 years of Responsible Fatherhood work.

Kenneth Braswell:

And part of what we have to begin to do is to begin to successfully integrate the Responsible Fatherhood work into the normalcy of the larger spectrum of social work. And if we don't begin to start thinking about what that looks like, talking to college and academia about creating curriculum then and pieces of work that are within schools of social work that are beginning to train up social workers, how to work specifically with dads and talking to teaching institutions and talking to them about cultivating their students to want to go into the field of social work at Nels and those kinds of things.

Kenneth Braswell:

And so if we don't begin to distinguish those two things, the Fatherhood organizations and the Fatherhood programs, we could very quickly not have any more Fatherhood organizations and still haven't built the necessary infrastructure within the social work and the Fatherhood space and other disciplines of Fatherhood programs to sustain a body of work that so many of us have put our efforts, our passion and our work into for the last 30 years to sustain itself. And that could be a whole webinar in and of itself. Take it to the next grain guys.

Kenneth Braswell:

And so again, as we come back and we begin to talk about this program leadership, it is extremely important to go back to what I was talking about before, as you build either your Fatherhood organizations, or your Fatherhood programs, to really understand that one on one interaction and that case management piece and what I like to call it is the relational piece, right? How do you relate to the client? How do you relate to the dad? Does your atmosphere relate to the dad? Does your staff relate to the dad? Does your process relate to the dad? Does the space that, or does the work that you're trying to accomplish relate to the dad? I think it's the biggest issue with respect to retention of fathers in our space. Getting them to come into your space and staying into our space because oftentimes they walk into those places and they do not bond a relationship with either the organization, the staff that are running it, the vision of the organization, and they come and go.

Kenneth Braswell:

I think one of the more important things I saw on the chat that people are talking about is recruitment and retention. I think one of the areas to which we fail our fathers in this space that I've seen over the last 15 years of my work is this word consistency, right? We have not been consistent with our dads. We have not been consistent with the work, we have not been consistent with the messages and so it's very difficult for guys to want to walk into your space if they don't know whether or not you're going to be there next week. They don't know whether or not the program is going to exist in a year. They don't know whether or not the outcomes are actually going to serve them in the areas of their need. And so there's this area of consistency that we really have to kind of work on, particularly within the facilitation of our workshop and the providing of our services. Last grain.

Kenneth Braswell:

And so staff training and support becomes extremely critical in this space. Our staff, they have to be trained and consistently trained. These webinars are important. I implore you every time the Clearinghouse does a webinar, anybody else for that matter that does a webinar around Responsible Fatherhood work, glean from that expertise. Reading. If you're not reading what you love, you're not advancing in the area that you want to excel. And so reading, writing, creating your own content, creating what you've learned, everything that we read doesn't have to be evidence based as long as it's evidence informed. If you can show that you're doing great work, if you can prove that you're doing great work, then share that with others, understanding that everything doesn't work for every body.

Kenneth Braswell:

Right? And so that there is a need for the diversity of the work that we do around the country because our dads are as diverse as the need. And so when you're looking at dads in rural areas, urban areas, mountain areas, Northern areas, Southern areas, Western areas, cultural areas, all of those individuals need something that is designed and coupled for them to be able to see their own understanding of this notion of responsible fatherhood. And so I think I'm at my time now. Absolutely. I could have gone on in several of the different spaces, but I think I'm going to leave it there and turn it back over to you Nigel.

Nigel:

Thank you very much Kenny. Yeah, we'll give you a few more minutes in a minute. We've got a few questions here. I'm just going to ask Mindy to respond to one of them. And then I think I'm going to come back to the team to get their thoughts on the road ahead and then we'll answer as many more questions as we can before we get done. So please do keep sending your questions in. So Mindy, there's the first question that came in after your presentation that was asking if you could talk a little bit about best practices for engaging staff from other organizations to work with fathers in your own program. Not your program, the persons' of course but,

Mindy:

Sure, yeah. And there's a couple of things that come to mind most immediately. I think importantly, thinking about identifying some shared goals across organization for fathers and so your programs, they're doing some set of services, another program might be doing other services, but kind of having conversations and coming to an understanding of the shared commitment to fathers and families and shared goals, I think can really help set the stage from our collaboration and get staff from other organizations to feel buy in and committed to supporting the fathers in your program. Other strategies that have been discussed, and some of the studies that we talked about are finding ways to sort of bring those staff to your organization. So whether it's shared space for your program and then other services for fathers or even just some kind of temporary visits that the staff can do to come to your site. And again, that I think helps with a shared understanding and really seeing the vision that your program has for working with others.

Mindy:

Cross training is something else that's important. So thinking about not just what that other program can do for you and your father's, but what can you do for that program too, so that means going in and training their staff on something that's sort of unique to what you bring to your program and to fathers and then also having staff come in from that partner organization to train your staff.

Mindy:

I think those are some initial thoughts and they all can be pointed to that meaningful collaboration and providing opportunities to really work together in a meaningful way. It's not somewhat just kind of regular check ins, so not just a one time training but regular check ins with teams. I think it really helps to facilitate collaboration and growing together.

Nigel:

Okay. Well thank you Mindy. So I'm going to flip it back to you Kenny, if I can. We have got this cute picture of the road ahead here. So we did talk about this webinar as understanding the past to improve the future. So we just want to take a little bit of a peek into what we think may lay ahead and then we'll come back and answer a few more. So Kenny, if you'd like to go over what you got on this slide?

Kenneth Braswell:

Absolutely. I won't go through all of them. I mean there's a couple of them that I do want to highlight and I actually have two that I want to drop in here that's not on the slide that I've thought about this morning. That first one, there's no need to reinvent the wheel. Much of what we're doing out here, someone else has done. That's why the network is so important and that's why we have to remain in the space together so that we can learn from each other so that we can share our successes for each other and our lessons learned to each other. The wheel will eventually evolve on its own as it has over the last 30 to 40 years, but we definitely don't need to create a sameness of the things that we're already doing. The second thing that this whole notion of new blood in the Fatherhood field, I think that, and we've, and I've heard several people talk about this over the course of Monterey, the jewels and the treasurer.

Kenneth Braswell:

We've been all within our own spaces and so we're working with dads and we're looking for individuals to kind of pick up this work. We have to begin to start thinking about this notion of peer to peer learning and peer to peer teaching and peer to peer volunteering and bringing some of those dads who show aptitude and a passion for this work, to be able to bring them back into your organizations and cultivate them to be leaders and facilitators and thought leaders in the space of work that we're trying to accomplish. And funding is always an issue. Funding and consistent funding. I think that we have to lay

that out very well and being consistent and going after funds that don't necessarily have the word fatherhood in it.

Kenneth Braswell:

Going at the funds that are speaking about family, that are speaking about parenting, that are speaking about education, housing, substance abuse, domestic violence, whatever the subject matters are. You have the ability to apply for those grants. The cohort that you're working with just happens to be fathers but just because fatherhood is not in the title of the grant doesn't mean that the grant is not for you. And then the two things that I want to drop in that I didn't think about before and one, connects back to my early start in this career and one kind of connects with where I am now, and that is a revisiting and looking at earned income tax credits for low income dads.

Kenneth Braswell:

That was something that we did in New York, I believe these Washington D C tried to do it on a smaller scale, the city of New York tried to do it, and we really have got to start thinking about how do we give low income dads income incentives with respect to child support and with respect to being able to compensate for those monies that other people are allowed to be able to adhere or consume tax credits for.

Kenneth Braswell:

And so I think that that needs to be lifted again, that conversation needs to be visited again so that we can talk about the importance of something that worked very well in the past and died on the vine, and we need to re lift that conversation. And then the last thing is this notion of generational concepts, right? That relates then to technology. And so if you are a program that are working with families, particularly young fathers, 16 to 24 years old, and you're still using the term millennial.

Kenny:

years old, and you're still using the term millennial, you are wrong. That age group are no longer millennials, they are what are called Generation Z-ers. They are very different from millennials, and they are different in this primary way. Millennials use technology as a tool. Generation Z-ers are actually integrated into a technology frame of thought, which means that everything that they do is through technology. And so while posters, while flyers on the tree, may have worked back in the early 2000s. Where letters and those kinds of things may have gotten you some space with respect to recruitment, if you're not integrating technology into not only the way that you're speaking to this cohort of dads, but also how you're integrating with this cohort of dads, you're going to lose your ability to be able to recruit young fathers into your program.

Kenny:

They speak, they understand, and they show up in the space of technology. And so the field itself, as we move forward, has to begin to think about how we're going to expand our ability to be able to incorporate technology in the way that we're able to speak to this younger cohort of dads in the same effective way that we've been able to speak to the older generation. And we are happy to say as the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, that we are going to be engaging in something that begins to move us in that space with our virtual collaborative community that will be launched in June. So I'll leave it there, I won't tell you more than that, and I'll turn it back over to Mike.

Nigel:

Thanks, Kenny. So now I'm going to just move this to Mindy's slot, so if you can just take a minute or two and highlight a few of these things here, Mindy?

Mindy:

Sure, yeah, and I can be brief here. I think the conversation today is kind of pointed to where there's opportunity for continued research and evaluation in millennial's, that implementation strategies that we're talking about today. Something that's not on the slide that I just thought about though is sort of thinking very thoughtfully about what capacity your organization has for research and evaluation. And so not sort of jumping to a big RCT if you're sorting out the infrastructure and readiness for that. And there's a lot of steps before that large scale rigorous evaluation to take, to really think about improving your programs through research and evaluation. So there's a lot of different options for the types of evaluation designs, that's sort of best for each situation.

Mindy:

And then just a couple other points from here in terms of thinking ahead. In addition to that sort of focus on rigorous research and evaluation on program implementation, I think continuing to focus on really understanding the strengths and also challenges that fathers and families face. That is kind of drawing on that for identifying and developing services, and so really understanding the factors that contributed to father's experiences, thinking about different types of fathers. Some fathers live with their children, some don't, some fathers are married, some are not, there are young fathers. There's a range of experiences that shapes fathers and fatherhood and different fathers mean different strengths as well to their families, and programs are really leveraging and building on their strengths as well.

Mindy:

And then just one final point is really thinking about how to build the capacity of programs to conduct research and use data for program improvement purposes. And really kind of monitoring program activities and informing program improvement on a sort of continuous basis, which I know came up in

some of them the chats. So very important to build the capacity of programs to participate in research and use data for program improvement purposes.

Nigel:

Solid point Mindy that we have to sort of...from the program level, you have to look at what your capacity is to do and kind of thorough research and programs by and large need help to do that beyond just getting information that can help the programs. So in terms of moving the field ahead, it's more close to the research community in many ways. So James, just a few thoughts quickly on the road ahead in terms of technology. Kenny said [inaudible 01:25:55]

James:

Absolutely. And Kenny hit it right on the head. As we move into the road ahead, the reach of technology, the use of technology is going to have to be integrated in everything we do. Whether it be social media, whether it be mobile apps, all of those things because that movement is already being seen. When you're able to go and see that Facebook pages or now 200-300,000 fathers following them. You look at educational programs for dads being email and mobile app delivered. It is a huge change in how communication, how things work. So this movement is going to continue to grow. It's going to be an international movement and the use of technology and the ability for us as practitioners and people doing this work to be able to use the strategies that have been proven, but to take those strategies into use with technology is where we'll be moving.

James:

So with that being said, I'll leave it there and just share with people to visit some of the pages out there like Fatherhood.gov on Facebook or our Fatherhood.gov page on Twitter and all of those areas because that's where the movement is going and recruiting and talking with and serving that.

Nigel:

Okay. Thank you very much James. So Patrick, I'll just give you a minute or two to reflect on the future in terms of the funding side.

Patrick:

Yeah, I said a lot of it earlier, but two things I'll say, just really think beyond your normal avenues for funding. I speak about corporate funding because I've experienced it, but also know that in every community there are agencies that want to fund the work that you guys are doing. Beyond cash, I've also encouraged people to think about income. I've seen people say cash for income. I like to think cash and income. Last year we did a huge event in South Carolina. We had a restaurant donate \$10,000

worth of food, hot food for our fathers and men that were there. That could have been cash out of my pocket, but that wasn't any kind of donation. So I just ask that people think beyond cash.

Patrick:

The last thing is use technology, there are so many ways. You see funders, individual donors and you're fundraising this, so many other ways that you can leverage what you're doing by using technology and so I'll close with that. Just saying, go get it man. Go get it. You have to apply, go get it.

Nigel:

Okay, thank you Patrick. [inaudible 01:28:53] have an ice cream truck there, right?

Patrick:

Yes, yes.

Nigel:

I'm skipping over the other side of mine, I'll bring it back up in a minute. I don't want to take too much time here because I do want to go to Q&A. I did just want to put this slide up for a minute. Quick note on what works for effective group facilitation and take the opportunity to encourage you to download if you haven't already the tip card on facilitation. You have two tip cards in the downloadable resources. One is tips for practice in his own facilitation, and one is tips for practice on recruitment. So his slide here is just a few closing thoughts for me in terms of the overall presentation. I'm not going to talk about it. I'll leave this on the screen for a minute.

Nigel:

And now I'm just going to move into our Q&A and ask a few questions on some of our presenters here. So Patrick do you think if I can come back to you for the first one-

Patrick:

Sure.

Nigel:

And this a question about ways to partner with local battered women's shelters as well as other programs involved in prevention work and recovery therapy. Any thoughts on that source?

Patrick:

Absolutely. Just really quickly. Those are extremely important partners. I believe 20 years ago my first presentation with the domestic violence group in Pennsylvania. I think I lost the legs and it chewed me to pieces because I wasn't sure about the connection between what they wanted versus what I wanted. Often we see them separating families, truth of the matter is they want the same thing we want, which is the safety and family permanency for our families. And so I always encourage folks before you go public, have a one-on-one meeting with them to kind of establish what the common ground between you and a BV or women's shelter. I believe in my heart because I've experienced it, they want the same thing that you want in your fatherhood program. But as far as that the last thing I'll say is, have a BV protocol that advises your staff, that also includes that local resource to your program. I'll stop there.

Nigel:

Okay, exciting. Kenny, a couple questions for you. Somebody asked "How can the program expect to progress, if they can't keep a designated establishment?" And another question to follow up on that, "How do we stay consistent with our staff training?"

Kenny:

How do I stay what with our staff training?

Nigel:

Yeah. Well, answer the first question. In terms of, how can the program expect to progress, if they can't keep a designated establishment?

Kenny:

Partnership, we talk a lot in the beginning about partnership. And partnership is designed to compensate for the things that you either do not have the ability to obtain yourself or you have weaknesses in. And so I know that we're in this space sometimes there we want to do it all on our own and we don't want to share the headline with anybody else or tagline with anybody else. But sometimes partnerships to be great, in terms of just evolution and growth, right. And so just because you partnered with something or something or someone in the beginning, doesn't mean that you have to be permanently be attached to them. And so look for instance, what we've done here in Atlanta in our direct services is we've partnered with the YMCA here in Atlanta and we used their facilities. And because we bring them service into the facilities, I don't have to worry about facilities.

Kenny:

We partnered with another organization called University For Parents that provide curriculum for low income families in Atlanta. Two things I don't have to worry about, I don't have to worry about location because the location is already set and I don't have to worry about recruitment because they do their own recruitment. And so I think that one of the best ways to maintain that establishment is to begin to look for partners that can compensate for the things that you're going to need for your own longterm sustainability.

Nigel:

I gotta say, I'm going to skip the second question I started asking you Kenny. Because I realized that it actually sort of blends into a series of questions that we've had in terms of work in rural areas, where it's more difficult to educate fathers and communities, one person pointed out. And so the number of questions really, but let me see here. What are some keys to help motivate nonprofits in the communities to help fathers and also some ways to connect with fathers themselves? So if I could just ask one or two of you just to maybe reflect a little bit on how we do this work in rural communities and the general sense.

Kenny:

Ask James to answer first if he's still on.

James:

Absolutely. Absolutely. And I'll address, can you hear me clearly?

Nigel:

Yep.

James:

[inaudible 01:34:20]. Great, great, great. One of the things that we view in, and I'll talk on rural Oklahoma. There is a very distinct message and way to work in rural population. Because the area is spread out, it does not mean there's not a sense of community. It may not be easy to pull together. So one of the things that we've seen in some of the rural populations is to actually be able to work in a home visit model almost, working with dads in the area that they are. And that then brings up a whole different level. I know worked out and in Montana where working with the head starts, where they would do their home visits and they may only get one or two home visits in a day because of the vast

amount of real estate they had to travel. But they were also intentionally on each one of those looking to bring dads, get dads involved in the process.

James:

And I want to say and [inaudible 01:35:26] speaks to this all the time when he's training, is you have to involve a father by allowing that father to be an educator of you and their child. And what do I mean by that? You can't always tell a day or tell someone what they need to do, this is how it should be, this is. You have to ask their guardian, you have to ask them to be a part of it. So in a national, in a rural area, you may not touch as many people in one sitting, but you do have to go to the people in those areas. And I'll throw it to someone else if they have anything else they'd like to share.

Nigel:

Do you want to add anything Patrick?

Patrick:

No, I think he captured it. I think in the rural spaces you've got to use what you understand locally. I have one phrase that drives all of my work and processes and it's literally those who are closest to the problem, are closer to the solution. And so any program that's trying to work with families that hasn't spoken to the families, you're missing it. And so I've always learned to engage them routinely, repeatedly. Finding out where they like to have service, what days, what times. Once you get those answers, that drives and gives you a blueprint for what works the best versus the kind of white horse, white collar mentality, when you come in and you're projecting what you think works.

Nigel:

Okay, and I see that Kenny's just posted something in the chat box there. Yeah, there was a question about the grant opportunities that Patrick had mentioned, so I think that's what that is Kenny, right? That's the [inaudible 01:37:07] so you can see more of that. And Kenny's actually having some grass cut out at his place so I'm not going to go to him immediately to talk but-

Patrick:

[crosstalk 01:37:19] to go to grant.gov and type in fatherhood or marriage or youth. It's not the RFP, not the actual RFP, but there is like a preview of those. They should still be up, if it's not, we have copies but it's a forecast, but grants.gov. In the first box, type in those search words and you'll find some previews [crosstalk 01:37:42]

Nigel:

Yeah. I'm sorry Patrick. I'm just saying, Kenny just put that in the chat box as well so everybody can see it now. There's a question about if we're going to have another Friend In The Fire Summit, does anyone know that? I don't think there's any immediate plans, right?

Patrick:

Not right now, No.

Nigel:

And then there's a question about, someone would look to see a pool of fatherhood consultants and trainers that they could access to ensure they're on track? You can certainly email the father or call the (877)4/4 11 number. They can refer you to people in your communities. But there's not that one pool there yet. And that's one of the things Kenny was talking about with the idea of stretching and directing the national practitioner's network for fathers and families.

Nigel:

One more quick question and there's not trying to get everybody to respond to this, but if someone would like to answer this. It's a question from a headstart program and there's a lot of women's staff. This comes up a lot. Do you think that having only women's staff can be a barrier in reaching fathers or are a lot of women's staff? This person says, "I don't think men would want to hear from a woman and a male perspective is needed." You want to field that James?

James:

I will definitely field that. Can you hear me?

Nigel:

Yep.

James:

Great. Being though I've started my entire career in a head start center. And I'll be very honest, my center had three men that worked there, myself, the custodian and one gentleman in the kitchen. And the leader of our male involvement movement at that place who hired me was actually a female, she was the director.

James:

So there's a couple of things to that. I do believe if properly trained, the ability to reach out, outreach and recruit men can come from either men or women. It does make a difference to have a co-facilitators or male facilitators so that you can give men a space of comfort. But there are always going to be times where men will reveal something to a woman in a situation before they'll reveal it to a man. So I don't think it hinders, okay. It however does require training and it does require the evaluation of people's implicit bias towards other gender. But I don't think it stops you from doing the work. And then it encourages you to look at your staff and make sure that you're bringing staff in, male staff, that is capable of doing the work. But again, it does not stop you from doing the work.

Nigel:

That's changed. You know what I mean? It's just being a man does not fortify you do this work.

James:

Absolutely.

Patrick:

Just being a man at the same age or the same background as the guy you're working with doesn't qualify you. I've seen some terrible group facilitation for instance, but I've seen some wonderful stuff by women. Particularly with one lady who always comes to my mind, she had these scars, kept a pagan in prison and they, they ate on the authentic me words, you know, I went in there and said, well, these big guys and this little gal and boy she had been right there.

Nigel:

So I appreciate everybody staying with us here. I think we got the most of your questions, but if any came in that we didn't, we will post a written response to those. I want to give each of my colleagues a chance for a quick final thoughts and then we will let you all go.

Nigel:

So James, you were on the line, so just very quickly one to two sentences with a final talk for the group here.

James:

And my last sentence is thank you. Use the responsible fatherhood tool kit to support you and growing your work.

Nigel:

Thank you, Mindy?

Mindy:

Yeah, just get excited about all the different strategies discussed today and research and evaluation [inaudible 01:42:05]. Focus on those topics, I'm excited to see what comes from all of this. Good luck.

Nigel:

Okay, Patrick?

Patrick:

Just thank you. Thank you Nigel for a great job facilitating. Thank you for all those who stayed with us throughout the entire webinar and make it happen. You have to apply.

Nigel:

And I'll just say again what a pleasure it is to have been able to share time here as a group. I've been involved in this longer than anybody else on the team here but only barely. Some days I'll get frustrated because I think we still facing a lot of the same problems we were back then. Kenny mentioned the income earned income tax credits. I remember Ron Mincy talking about that back in, oh the first time I met him, which was...I was facilitating a group discussion and that must've been 92 maybe. And so the things like that, that we haven't progressed on, but we progressed on a lot of other things. And I do see positives moving ahead. So I'm going to give Kenny the last word and then we will wrap this up and you'll get an evaluation form pop up to tell us what you think about today and any other information you want to give us. Kenny? They finish cutting your grass Kenny or they have, or you?

Kenny:

Oh yeah, I'm here. So I just want to take a minute. This is Atlanta, it's February and they're literally outside cutting grass right now and so.

Nigel:

[inaudible 01:43:40].

Kenny:

I want to thank everyone for coming out today and supporting us through this webinar and make sure that you continue to stay connected to the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse. I still get up each and every morning excited about this work. Obviously there are things that can frustrate you and things that could serve as barriers, but they all turned into challenges for me that I gladly step into each and every day trying to find the solution for. And so my lasting word is continue to let the passion drive you and let's learn together.

Nigel:

Okay, well thank you Kenny. Thank you everybody. For those of you who stayed on the line, it looks like most people did. So I wish you a good day and hope to see you through our Twitter chat next Tuesday and our next webinar, April 22nd. And please respond to the survey and let us know what you think. Good afternoon everybody. You should stay on the line if you want to.