



# Social Worker Training Curriculum: Engaging the Non-Resident Father

**2010**

Author

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Curriculum Funded by the National Quality  
Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the  
Child Welfare System



NATIONAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CENTER  
ON NON-RESIDENT FATHERS AND THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM





## Introduction



The National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System (QIC-NRF) is a collaborative effort among the American Humane Association, the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law and the National Fatherhood Initiative, and funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children’s Bureau.

The one-day Social Worker Training Curriculum: Engaging the Non-Resident Father was designed to provide participants with knowledge to support a practice shift toward engaging non-resident fathers in child welfare cases involving their children. The need to engage fathers initially resulted from the federal Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSRs) and the “What About the Dads?” report, which identified a lack of meaningful engagement of fathers by child welfare systems. This curriculum was funded by the QIC-NRF, which was designed to develop knowledge and research that determine how children in the child welfare system are impacted by the involvement of their fathers. Historically, child welfare has been challenged in identifying paternal family resources. This limits potential access to resources such as placement opportunities and emotional and financial support, and also undermines the overall well-being of the children involved.

In an effort to facilitate a practice shift in how social workers engage fathers, this curriculum was developed to help participants recognize their own biases and presumptions about men and fathers; understand the benefits and overcome the barriers to engaging non-resident fathers; and, in developing collaborative partnerships with non-resident fathers, better comprehend the cultural needs of men. In this curriculum, participants will operate from the assumption that the father of the child has been identified and located. This curriculum will build from that point as social workers learn engagement strategies designed to encourage partnerships with fathers to promote positive outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being for children.

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**QIC-NRF Research Sites**

- The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), a division of the Department of Social and Health Services for the state of Washington, Region IV (King County)
- El Paso County Department of Human Services (Colorado)
- Fathers and Families Center and Indiana Department of Child Services (Marion County)
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) (Tarrant County)

Special thanks to the Texas site partners who reviewed and provided feedback on this curriculum, and to Fernando Mederos with the Fatherhood Initiative at the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families for his valuable input and generosity in providing handouts on Tips for Workers Working With Fathers.

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Thank you,  
American Humane Association



## Social Worker Training Curriculum: Engaging the Non-Resident Father

### TIME

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The one-day curriculum is a seven-and-a-half-hour training, including one 15-minute break, one 10-minute break and one 60-minute lunch.\* The training will start at 9:00 a.m. and conclude no later than 4:30 p.m.

(\*Note: If a Father's Panel is arranged for the training, it will be conducted during the 60-minute lunch break. Site coordinators for the training should make arrangements for lunch to be brought in or for participants to bring their own.)

### MATERIALS FOR TRAINING

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- Trainer's binder
- PowerPoint slides 1-36
- LCD
- Flip-chart stand and flip-chart paper
- Markers
- Video clip slides (saved as PowerPoint slides)
- Speakers
- TV and VCR
- Manipulatives (e.g., Legos, Play-Doh) for tables
- Packets for participants
- Sign-in sheets
- Evaluations
- "Framing the Language" scenario cards
- Triad role-play cue cards

## PREPARATION ACTIVITIES FOR TRAINING

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**Pre-Training Walkabout Activity:** This activity is recommended only if there is a pre-training breakfast or something that brings participants together prior to the start of training. Write the four discussion questions for the “Walkabout” activity on flip-chart paper and post them on the walls around the room prior to participants’ arrival.

**Section 1.10:** Write “Parking Lot” on a piece of flip-chart paper and post it in the room where all participants will be able to view it.

**Section 2.1:** Post “Engagement Strategies” posters around the room.

**Section 3:** Trainer will need to determine which exercise will be used — Values Voting or Father of the Year. For the Values Voting exercise: Post two pieces of flip-chart paper at opposite ends of the room, with AGREE written on one and DISAGREE written on the other.

**Lunch:** Coordinate a “Fathers’ Panel” through local fatherhood organizations to occur during the lunch hour. Preparation should include discussing the fathers’ expectations, questions and concerns, as well as issues related to confidentiality. Fathers should also be aware of the amount of time for the panel to speak and whom the training audience will consist of.

**Section 6.3:** Cue video clip slide for *Britain’s Got Talent*.

**Section 7:** Cue video clip slide for the *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*; write the “Table Talk” questions on two pieces of flip-chart paper.

**Section 9.1:** Review trainer role play in the Trainer Notes of this section. For Step 2 of this activity, trainer should write the instructions A through D on flip-chart paper.

## **PARTICIPANT TRAINING PACKET CONTENTS**

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- PowerPoint slides printed as handouts; three per page
- Handouts for Sections 1 through 11 printed on colored paper
- Handout 1-1: Social Work Engagement Training Agenda
- Handout 1-2: Social Work Training Competencies & Objectives
- Handout 1-3: Children's Division Projects
- Handout 2-1: Effective Engagement Approaches With Non-Resident Fathers
- Handout 3-1: Father of the Year Candidates (this may not be used if this exercise is not conducted)
- Handout 4-1: Father-Friendly Check-Up
- Handout 5-1: Engaging Non-Resident Fathers: Benefits & Barriers
- Handout 6-1: What's In It For...
- Handout 7-1: The Socialization of Men
- Handout 7-2: Male Help-Seeking Behaviors
- Handout 8-1: Developing the Relationship
- Handout 8-2: Tips for Transforming Conflict Into Partnerships
- Handout 8-3: Tips for Workers Working With Father's Who Are Angry
- Handout 8-4: Tips for Workers Working With Fathers: Co-Parenting When Mom and Dad Don't Live Together and Are in Conflict
- Handout 8-5: Tips for Workers Working With Fathers Who Are Culturally Different
- Handout 10-1: Case Scenarios
- Handout 10-2: Observer Worksheet
- Handout 11-1: Non-Resident Father Resources

*(No handouts for Section 9)*



TIME	DAY ONE	PAGE
9:00 to 9:45 a.m.	Welcome, Introductions and Father Engagement Training Orientation	12
9:45 to 10:00 a.m.	Engaging Non-Resident Fathers	20
10:00 to 10:30 a.m.	Activity: Values on Fatherhood	24
10:30 to 10:45 a.m.	BREAK	27
10:45 to 11:15 a.m.	Brief Overview of the Father-Friendly Check-Up	28
11:15 to 11:30 a.m.	Value of Father Engagement: Benefits & Barriers	33
11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	LUNCH (Working Lunch With Fathers' Panel)	
12:30 to 1:00 p.m.	What's In It For...	37
1:00 to 1:45 p.m.	Culture of Manhood and Fatherhood	48
1:45 to 2:15 p.m.	Setting the Stage for Engagement	59
2:15 to 2:30 p.m.	BREAK	76
2:30 to 3:15 p.m.	Activity: Framing the Language for Engagement With Non-Resident Fathers	77
3:15 to 4:15 p.m. 10.	Activity: Moving to Solutions and Practice Implementation	82
4:15 to 4:30 p.m.	Wrap Up, Closing and Evaluations	90



## Training Competencies and Objectives

### COMPETENCY 1

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The participant knows the focus and goals of the QIC-NRF project as it connects to the purpose of father engagement training.

**Objective 1a.** The participant can describe the specific purpose and goals of the QIC-NRF project.

### COMPETENCY 2

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The participant knows the seven areas of assessment for child welfare agencies and organizations to consider in creating an environment that involves fathers and fosters healthy development of children. The participant is aware of how child welfare agencies or organizations can take active and positive approaches in creating a “father-friendly” environment.

**Objective 2b.** The participant can identify how the seven areas of assessment can be used to set goals and priorities that are unique to creating a “father-friendly” environment.

### COMPETENCY 3

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The participant knows the importance and value of father involvement for social workers, children and families in case practice.

**Objective 3a.** The participant can describe how the goals of child welfare case practice intersect with the value of engaging non-resident fathers in their cases.

**Objective 3b.** The participant can identify the benefits to children when involving non-resident fathers.

**Objective 3c.** The participant can describe the benefits to mothers when involving non-resident fathers.

## COMPETENCY 4

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The participant is aware of the importance of culture in understanding male socialization, perceptions and behaviors.

**Objective 4a.** The participant can explain how personal experience or history may influence cultural viewpoints and the development of male stereotypes.

**Objective 4b.** The participant can explain how personal assumptions made by social workers may impact the reactions of men and the engagement of fathers.

**Objective 4c.** The participant can identify ways in which men may seek help.

## COMPETENCY 5

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The participant knows common challenges to engaging non-resident fathers and how to overcome these challenges with the use of specific and relevant strategies.

**Objective 5a.** The participant can identify and use specific strategies to address challenges related to expressions of anger by non-resident fathers.

**Objective 5b.** The participant can identify and use specific strategies to address challenges related to parental conflict that obstruct efforts to engage non-resident fathers.

**Objective 5c.** The participant can identify and use specific strategies to address challenges related to working with culturally different non-resident fathers and their families.

## COMPETENCY 6

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The participant understands the use of effective engagement strategies to involve non-resident fathers in the child protection case involving their child(ren).

**Objective 6a.** Participants can explain the most appropriate strategy to use given the dynamics of the case and the unique experiences of the non-resident father.

**Objective 6b.** Participants can craft questions or comments that demonstrate the ability to use engagement strategies, given the dynamics of each case and unique experiences of non-resident fathers.

**Objective 6c.** Participants can give relevant and useful feedback to other participants as they practice using the engagement strategies.



## Pre-Training “Walkabout” Activity

### Time

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**Activity Time:** 10-15 min.

**Running Time:** Activity completed prior to session starting

### Purpose/Rationale

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To gather participant expectations in an anonymous manner and refer to them throughout the training; to get participants moving and thinking about the subject matter prior to the start of the training.

### Preparation

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- Set up four flip charts with the bulleted questions.

### Materials

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- PowerPoint 1 — Welcome to QIC-NRF Social Worker One-Day Training: Engaging the Non-Resident Father
- Flip-chart paper
- Markers

### Handouts:

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None

**Display PowerPoint 1**, and as participants arrive and get settled into their seats, ask them to take a marker from their table, walk around the room and record their answers to the following questions posted on the flip-chart paper.

- What do you currently do well to engage non-resident fathers?
- What do you find most challenging about engaging non-resident fathers?
- What was your initial reaction when you heard about attending a training on father engagement?
- What question do you hope to have answered today?

PPT 1



The slide features a vertical strip on the left side containing a circular logo at the top and a photograph of a man holding a baby below. The main content area is light beige with dark blue text. The title is 'Welcome to QIC-NRF Social Worker Training: Engaging the Non-Resident Father'. Below the title is the logo for the National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System, followed by the text 'Presented by Michelle Howard, M.S., LPC, training and technical assistance specialist, American Humane Association ([michelleh@americanhumane.org](mailto:michelleh@americanhumane.org)), and Ron Clark, M.P.P., training and technical assistance for the National Fatherhood Initiative'.

**Welcome to**  
**QIC-NRF Social Worker**  
**Training: Engaging the**  
**Non-Resident Father**

 NATIONAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CENTER  
ON NON-RESIDENT FATHERS AND THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

Presented by Michelle Howard, M.S., LPC, training and technical assistance specialist, American Humane Association ([michelleh@americanhumane.org](mailto:michelleh@americanhumane.org)), and Ron Clark, M.P.P., training and technical assistance for the National Fatherhood Initiative



# 1. Welcome, Introductions and Father Engagement Training Orientation

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## Time

Activity Time: 45 min.      Running Time: 45 min.

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## Purpose/Rationale

To introduce the trainers and participants to one another. To introduce the agenda and learning expectations for the one-day training. To orient participants to American Humane's mission and goals and the goals of the QIC-NRF.

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## Preparation

- None

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## Materials

- PowerPoints 2-6
- Flip charts
- Markers
- Post-it notes

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## Handouts

- Handout 1-1: Training Agenda
- Handout 1-2: Competencies & Objectives
- Handout 1-3: American Humane's Children's Division Programs

### 1.1.

**Display PowerPoint 1**, welcome the participants and thank them for attending the training on Engaging the Non-Resident Father in child welfare.

Ask participants to introduce themselves by going around the room and providing their names and positions within their agencies. If time is short, conduct a scan of the room instead and ask participants to stand or raise their hands if they work within a specific area or discipline, such as social worker, social work supervisor, manager, community provider, fatherhood agency service provider or others.

PPT 1



### 1.2.

Introduce yourself as the trainer, providing your name, contact information and professional background as it relates to child welfare and working with non-resident fathers.

### 1.3.

Refer participants to **Handout 1-1: Training Agenda** and **Handout 1-2: Learning Competencies and Objectives** to set the stage for the one-day training. Let the participants know that this is the schedule for the day of training, and the competencies and objectives are directly related to the training content. There will be one 15-minute break, one 10-minute break and an hour-long lunch break. Explain that the toys and manipulatives on their tables are there for their use during the training,

as it helps some adult learners remain attentive. Let them know that if they would prefer to leave early, the lunch break could be shortened to 30 minutes (unless a Father's Panel is to present), but you will let the group decide collectively at the break. Tell participants that if a Father's Panel is present for the training, participants will be able to eat their lunches while engaging in a question-and-answer session with some fathers.

#### 1.4.

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Ask participants what they hope to gain from the training for the day. Note their expectations on flip-chart paper that can be referred to throughout the day to ensure meeting participant expectations. Inform participants immediately of any topics that will not be covered on the list and offer to meet with them during a break to discuss possible resources for the information sought.

Also, introduce participants to the concept of the Parking Lot and refer them to the flip-chart page taped on the wall that is marked as such. The Parking Lot is a way for the trainer to set the stage for dealing with difficult issues or to fend off potentially derailing topics or conversations. It helps the trainer avoid looking like the “bad guy” when trying to keep the discussion on track. Ensure that the trainer addresses all Parking Lot issues before the end of the training day.

#### 1.5.

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**Display PowerPoints 2 and 3** and explain to participants that the training will start by orienting participants to American Humane and the QIC-NRF project. Tell participants that American Humane was founded in 1877. It is the only national organization dedicated to protecting both children and animals. Through a network of child and animal protection agencies and individuals, American Humane provides national leadership in developing policies, legislation, curricula and training programs — and taking action — to protect children and animals from cruelty, abuse, neglect and exploitation. A number of those programs and initiatives are noted on the slide. Refer participants to **Handout 1-3: American Humane's Children's Division Programs**, which provides a more detailed list and description of American Humane's programs.

PPT 2



**Mission**

To create a more humane and compassionate world by ending abuse and neglect of children and animals



PPT 3



**American Humane's Children's Division Goals and Programs**

We develop programs, policies, training, research and evaluation, and cutting-edge initiatives to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect. We work to strengthen families and communities and enhance child protection systems at the state and county levels.

- **Fatherhood**
- **Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)**
- **Differential Response**
- **Chronic Neglect**
- **Safety & Risk Assessment**
- **Child Welfare & Migration**
- **Prevention**
- **Restorative Justice**



## 1.6.

**Display PowerPoint 4 and 5** and use the following talking points to guide a brief overview of the QIC-NRF project and direct participants to their materials for additional information on the QIC-NRF project.

The Children's Bureau funded the American Humane Association and its partners, the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law and the National Fatherhood Initiative, to create a Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers (QIC-NRF). The focus for the project came about as a result of the Federal Child and Family Services Reviews and the "What About the Dads?" report. Both indicate that very little meaningful interaction occurs between the child welfare system and fathers. Using this information as a foundation, the QIC-NRF was designed to promote knowledge of how to better engage non-resident fathers (fathers who do not live in the same homes as their children) with their children, in cases where those children are involved in the child welfare system. The purpose of this project is to determine, through research, the impact of non-resident father involvement on child welfare outcomes. Child welfare outcomes include child safety, permanence (lifelong relationships), and well-being. Included in the research is the examination of the relationship between children and non-resident fathers and/or paternal relatives. Throughout the five years of the project (October 2006 to September 2011), information obtained through the QIC-NRF will be distributed to the Children's Bureau, subgrantees of other Children's Bureau grants, child welfare agencies, private service providers, the courts and legal systems, and other stakeholders.

The dissemination of the information gained is essential for child welfare organizations, as most children involved in child welfare are not living with their fathers at the time they are removed from their homes. Once in foster care, these children may experience less contact with their non-resident fathers. Engaging the fathers of children in foster care is important not only for the potential benefit of the child-father relationship (when there are no safety and well-being concerns) but also for making placement and permanency decisions and gaining access to resources for the child. The QIC-NRF project seeks to answer: "How is overall child well-being impacted as a result of increased father and paternal relative involvement within the context of the public child welfare system?"

PPT 4



**NATIONAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CENTER**  
ON NON-RESIDENT FATHERS AND THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

- **Funded by the Children's Bureau Partners:**
  - American Humane Association
  - American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law
  - National Fatherhood Initiative
- Designed to promote knowledge development regarding the engagement of non-resident fathers and their children who are involved in the child welfare system

PPT 5



**Goals of the QIC-NRF Project**

- To promote and support a research-based and outcome-focused approach to inform best practices in engaging non-resident fathers and paternal family in the public child welfare system
- To promote and support a research-based and outcome-focused approach to determine the impact of father involvement on child safety, permanence and well-being
- To facilitate a collaborative information-sharing and problem-solving national network

## 1.7.

**Display PowerPoint 6** and deliver the following material about the “What About the Dads?” report:

In 2006, the Urban Institute, under contract with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, published its final report on child welfare agencies’ efforts to identify, locate and involve non-resident fathers in the child welfare process. The report, entitled “What About the Dads?”, reviewed 1,958 cases of children who were removed by child welfare agencies from homes in which their biological fathers did not reside. Telephone interviews with 1,222 child welfare agency social workers involved in these cases showed that:

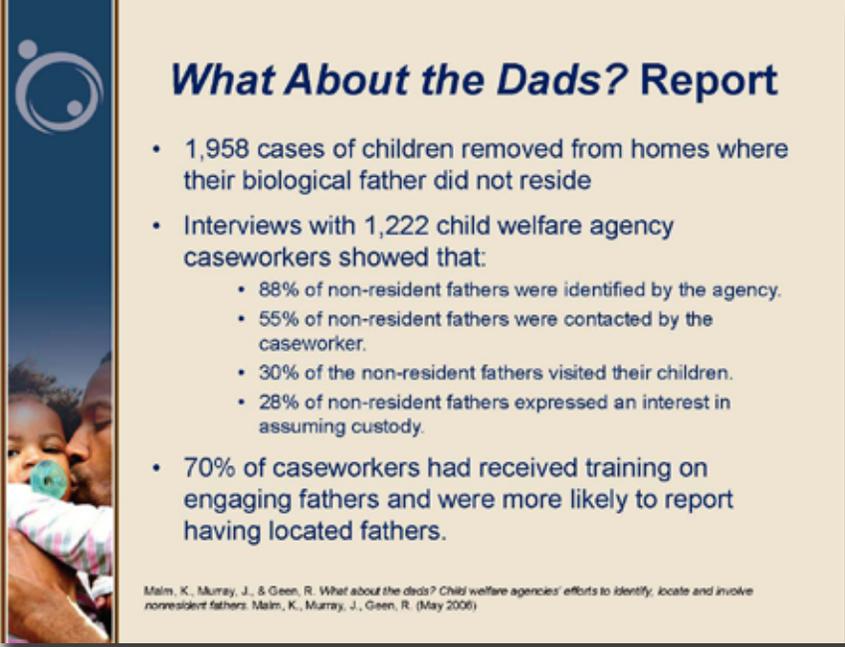
- 88 percent of non-resident fathers were identified by the child welfare agency;
- 55 percent of non-resident fathers were contacted by the caseworker;
- 30 percent of the non-resident fathers visited their child; and
- 28 percent of non-resident fathers expressed an interest in assuming custody of their child.

Despite these findings, the “What About the Dads?” report showed that 70 percent of caseworkers had received training on engaging fathers. Moreover, caseworkers who received training were more likely to report having located fathers. We have included the link to this report in the “Non-Resident Father Resources” in your handouts.

The QIC-NRF designed a specialized curriculum for a 20-week, facilitated peer-support group for non-resident fathers to help them better understand the child welfare system and their role within it. It also was designed to help them explore their important role as a father to their children. Another important feature of the curriculum is that it helps facilitate increased engagement of the child welfare system with non-resident dads early on and create productive partnerships with previously unconnected fathers. It is being used and tested in four pilot sites.

Identifying and locating non-resident fathers is the first step toward engaging them. The culture of child welfare agencies has several barriers to effective identification and location. The most pressing barriers include the endemic structural barrier created by workers who have huge caseloads, which creates pressure on them to deal with the “nuts and bolts” of managing cases, the lack of standards or guidelines for what constitutes a diligent effort to identify and locate non-resident fathers, and the biased view among some workers that engaging non-resident fathers will result in more pain than gain.

PPT 6



**What About the Dads? Report**

- 1,958 cases of children removed from homes where their biological father did not reside
- Interviews with 1,222 child welfare agency caseworkers showed that:
  - 88% of non-resident fathers were identified by the agency.
  - 55% of non-resident fathers were contacted by the caseworker.
  - 30% of the non-resident fathers visited their children.
  - 28% of non-resident fathers expressed an interest in assuming custody.
- 70% of caseworkers had received training on engaging fathers and were more likely to report having located fathers.

Malm, K., Murray, J., & Geen, R. What about the dads? Child welfare agencies' efforts to identify, locate and involve nonresident fathers. Malm, K., Murray, J., Geen, R. (May 2006)

### 1.8.

Explain to participants that this overview of the QIC-NRF project will support the purpose of the training today. Providing training to social workers on how to identify, locate and engage fathers is a best practice and produces better outcomes for the children and teens involved in the child welfare system. The next step in the training is to begin reviewing some of those strategies and, to support their use, developing an increased awareness of the culture of men and fathers.



## 2. Engaging Non-Resident Fathers

### Time

Activity Time: 15 min.

Running Time: 1 hour

### Purpose/Rationale

To introduce participants to strategies useful for engaging non-resident fathers in the child welfare cases involving their children. Introducing these early, and supplementing them with postings on the wall, will aid in the transfer of learning. These strategies will be referred to throughout the training.

### Preparation

- Post the Engagement Strategies wall posters around the room prior to the start of training materials:
- Engagement Strategies wall posters

### Handouts

- Handout 2-1: Father Engagement Strategies

#### 2.1.

Orient participants to the Strategies for Engaging Non-Resident Fathers by asking participants to take note of the engagement strategies listed on the posters around the room.

#### 2.2.

Refer participants to **Handout 2.1: Father Engagement Strategies**, which references the same strategies, and explain that the handout provides suggestions as to when these strategies might be useful. Briefly review the strategies posted and note to participants that these strategies will be discussed throughout the training session.

Some of the strategies noted are not necessarily specific to fathers and men, but should be viewed through the cultural lens held by some men and some fathers.

Engagement Strategy	This strategy might be useful when...
<p>Start from the assumption that the non-resident father wants to be involved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father has been absent for a period of time but demonstrates interest in the child’s well-being.</li> <li>• The father has not returned your calls; consider that there may be some underlying reasons that you are unaware of.</li> <li>• The mother or someone from the maternal family tells you that the father doesn’t want to be involved; however, this has not been directly confirmed.</li> </ul>
<p>Facilitate the restoration of the father in the life of the child by co-creating goals based on the father’s strengths, not his deficits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father feels as though he doesn’t have anything to offer his child.</li> <li>• The father has been absent for a period of time and doesn’t know how to re-engage in a relationship with his child.</li> <li>• The father is struggling with joblessness, financial issues or multiple demands, or is caring for a new family.</li> </ul>
<p>Treat each case on an individual basis, not based on experiences with other fathers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have your own personal struggles with fathers or “father figures” in your life.</li> <li>• You have multiple cases in which the fathers are absent and refusing to engage. When this is true, it is important to take a step back and examine how other cases are influencing the decisions in the current case.</li> </ul>
<p>Suspend judgments and listen to all sides. There are two sides to every story. Give the non-resident father an opportunity to give his side.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have heard a lot of negative things about the father from the mother, maternal family members or even other workers the case was assigned to.</li> <li>• You have your own personal struggles with fathers or “father figures” in your life.</li> <li>• Allegations about the father have been made but not substantiated...weigh out all of the information.</li> <li>• The father has been absent from the child’s life.</li> </ul>
<p>Make room for expressions of anger. This emotion in men is socialized as “acceptable.” It may be the only one they are comfortable expressing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You detect hostility from the father; acknowledging it may help defuse it.</li> <li>• The father has not been kept informed about his child by the mother or others.</li> <li>• Anger is the only emotion the father feels secure expressing, as it keeps him from feeling vulnerable to others.</li> </ul>

Engagement Strategy	This strategy might be useful when...
<p>Help the non-resident father identify his tangible and non-tangible assets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It appears that the father is struggling with his identity as a father.</li> <li>• The father doesn't believe he has anything to offer his child.</li> <li>• The father is struggling with joblessness or financial issues, and/or is juggling multiple demands.</li> </ul>
<p>Remind the father that he is a role model to his children. Boys learn about manhood from their fathers, and girls get a sense of what to expect from their fathers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father isn't fully aware of how his presence in his child's life can benefit his child.</li> <li>• It would be helpful for the father to consider what type of messages he wants to send to his child through either his involvement or lack of involvement.</li> </ul>
<p>Acknowledge your power as a caseworker but empower the father to use his assets and his often-hidden power to keep his child safe by remaining engaged and involved. Remember, some men struggle and "present" differently when feeling helpless and hopeless.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father feels disempowered based on his previous and current life circumstances and the additional perceived "intrusion" of child welfare.</li> <li>• The father feels that the mother has all the power and he can't do anything to the change that; encourage him to look at what he can offer that may be different from what the mother can offer.</li> <li>• The father needs to understand the importance of his involvement to help keep his child safe and promote his or her well-being; let the father know about the benefits of involvement.</li> </ul>
<p>Recognize and acknowledge the previous experiences the father may have had with child welfare workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father was removed from his parents and placed in foster care.</li> <li>• The father had a bad experience with his caseworker, judge, probation officer, attorney, etc.</li> <li>• The father has had indirect experience or knowledge of child welfare processes, fostering distrust of system personnel.</li> </ul>
<p>Be clear and transparent about the reasons for the agency's involvement, the father's role throughout the process and agency expectations. Suspicion may be present and he may think he is being sought only to obtain child support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father doesn't trust the system or those who represent the system.</li> <li>• The father's experience has suggested that he is only needed for the money he can provide.</li> <li>• The father fears he is unable to pay child support because of his own financial challenges.</li> <li>• The father feels shame for his inability to financially provide for his children.</li> </ul>

<b>Engagement Strategy</b>	<b>This strategy might be useful when...</b>
Remind the father of how important he is in the life of his children, how there are some things only he can provide and that his children will carry what he does with them forever.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is important for the father to hear specifics about how he can positively impact his child's life; it is not enough to talk in general terms; the father needs to hear how his presence can benefit the child. Share some of the benefits identified in this training.</li><li>• The father needs to consider how he would like his child to remember him 10 to 15 years from now.</li></ul>



### **TRAINER NOTE**

Explain to participants that engagement strategies are being introduced at this time so that the strategies can be woven throughout the discussion during the training day, and to highlight opportunities for their use in certain case situations. Introducing the strategies will foster transfer of learning and retention.



## 3. Activity: Values on Fatherhood

### Time

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**Activity Time:** 30 min.

**Running Time:** 1 hr., 30 min.

### Purpose/Rationale

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Participants will become more aware of their personal beliefs regarding men and fathers and their “role” in society. This activity allows participants to reflect on their views on parenting and father-child interactions, which will help highlight areas of adaptive growth (changes in values and beliefs) and realizations as participants move through the curriculum and prepare to engage non-resident fathers in child welfare.

### Preparation

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- Trainer needs to determine which activity will be used: “Value Voting” (3.2) or “Father of the Year” (3.3 – 3.4) based on available time.

### Materials

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- Flip-chart paper
- Markers

### Handouts

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- Handout 3-1: Father of the Year (if this activity is conducted)

### 3.1.

---

Remind participants that working in the field of child welfare requires dealing with very sensitive issues inherent in the culture and dynamics of the families served. Each family is unique and brings varying perspectives, which may be very different from those held by child welfare staff personally. It is important that we develop an awareness of the personal values held, including perspectives held about fathers. Uncovering the lens through which

child welfare social workers and other staff view fathers will help social workers understand how personal values impact their ability to engage each father in his child's case. Explain to participants that the next exercise is designed to help uncover some of the perspectives held by child welfare staff.

### 3.2.

Explain to participants that the following exercise, Value Voting (30 min.), will require some personal disclosure of their beliefs and values related to men and fathers. Explain that they should discuss only what is comfortable for them. The exercise is designed to highlight the varying perspectives of the role of men and fathers, and how these perspectives relate to and impact the engagement of fathers in child welfare.

1. Write in the center of one flip-chart paper "AGREE" and on another "DISAGREE." Post the two pieces of paper on the wall on opposite sides of the room, preferably in an open area.
2. Ask participants to gather in the center of the room in an open area if possible.
3. Explain to participants that you will read several stories or statements and they are to decide whether they "AGREE" or "DISAGREE" with the statement or story.
4. After reading a statement, ask 1 or 2 participants to share why they "agree" or "disagree" with the statement. Do this with each statement that is read.
  - *"Men should pay for the first date."*
  - *"Mothers are more nurturing than fathers."*
  - *"Fathers are more suited to disciplining children than mothers."*
  - *"John believes it his responsibility to work long hours to provide for his children and their future, though he doesn't get to spend much time with his children. On the other hand, Stephen chose to give up a high-paying job to spend more time with his children, though he does struggle financially to meet his family's needs." If you align with John, stand by the paper that says "agree"; if you align with Stephen, stand by the paper that says "disagree."*
  - *Story: "One Friday evening, a husband cooks a wonderful gourmet meal for his wife. He loves her very much and wanted to do something really special for her. She comes home and he surprises her with a candlelit dinner for two. After the first bite of the meal, she says, [ tell participants to think of the worst thing imaginable one could say.] "He then runs upstairs crying. On Monday, a co-worker of his notices that he is visibly upset. This man has issues." If you agree that this man has issues stand by the paper that says "agree." If you disagree, stand by the paper that says "disagree."*

5. After reading the final statements, ask participants to take their seats and ask for any final thoughts, comments or observations based on the exercise.
6. Explain to participants that this exercise is designed to uncover the values and perceptions people hold about fathers and men. As participants move through the rest of the training, participants will continue to have the opportunity to reflect on their values and perceptions and how these influence their motivation and ability to engage fathers.



### **TRAINER NOTE**

The statements/stories noted in the value voting exercise are presented as options for the trainer to read. Not all statements need to be read. The trainer can select which statements s/he would prefer to read based on available time.

When asking participants why they “agree” or “disagree”, the trainer should try to vary comments made by participants to include men, women, older workers, younger workers and workers of different ethnicities or races, if possible.

### **3.3.**

Tell participants that this exercise, Father of the Year (30 to 40 min.), is designed to examine perspectives about the father’s role in the family and with the children. Participants will become aware of the varying beliefs some hold and how those beliefs could potentially impact engagement of fathers in the child welfare system.

### **3.4.**

Break participants into four or five groups. (Refer participants to Handout 3-1: Father of the Year for this exercise.)

1. Instruct participants to discuss the three fathers described in the handout and vote on their choice for “Father of the Year.” Each father presents with certain assets and liabilities.
2. Tell participants that they should also discuss how their “Father of the Year” was selected by identifying the attribute(s) that made that father stand out.
3. Allow participants 10 minutes to review and discuss the three fathers and to vote.
4. Participants should select someone from their group to present their choice for “Father of the Year” and discuss why he should be the “Father of the Year” (allow five minutes per group for this step).

5. Allow five minutes to debrief this activity using the following as a guide:
- How does this activity highlight our values about men and fathers?
  - Were differences of opinion noted in your groups based on age, gender or race and ethnicity?
  - How will this activity help you as you work to engage fathers in the cases involving their children?



### **TRAINERS NOTE**

Each of the exercises in this section seeks to help participants examine the lens through which they view men and their roles as fathers, which will also help illuminate the values participants associate with men and fathers. Trainers may want to start this activity by acknowledging the possible discomfort with expressing values in a large group setting; however, this exercise does not entail passing judgments on the values expressed. Instead, it is a learning and awareness opportunity. Ask participants to keep that in mind as you move through the activities and also the training throughout the day.

If the “Father of the Year” exercise is not used, inform participants that they may want to use this exercise back in their units with co-workers or staff as a way to introduce the need to examine social workers’ values when engaging fathers. Briefly review the exercise’s instructions with participants.

## **15-Minute Break**

Running Time: 1 hr., 45 min.



## 4. Brief Overview of the Father-Friendly Check-Up

### Time

---

Activity Time: 30 min.

Running Time: 2 hrs., 15 min.

### Purpose/Rationale

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To lead participants in understanding how child welfare agencies and organizations can take an active, positive approach in creating an environment that involves non-resident fathers and fosters the healthy development of children in seven areas of assessment. Participants will have an opportunity to assess their agency using one of the categories in the Father-Friendly Check-Up Tool and think about what they personally can do to broaden their practice of engaging non-resident fathers.

### Preparation

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- None

### Materials

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- PowerPoint 7

### Handouts

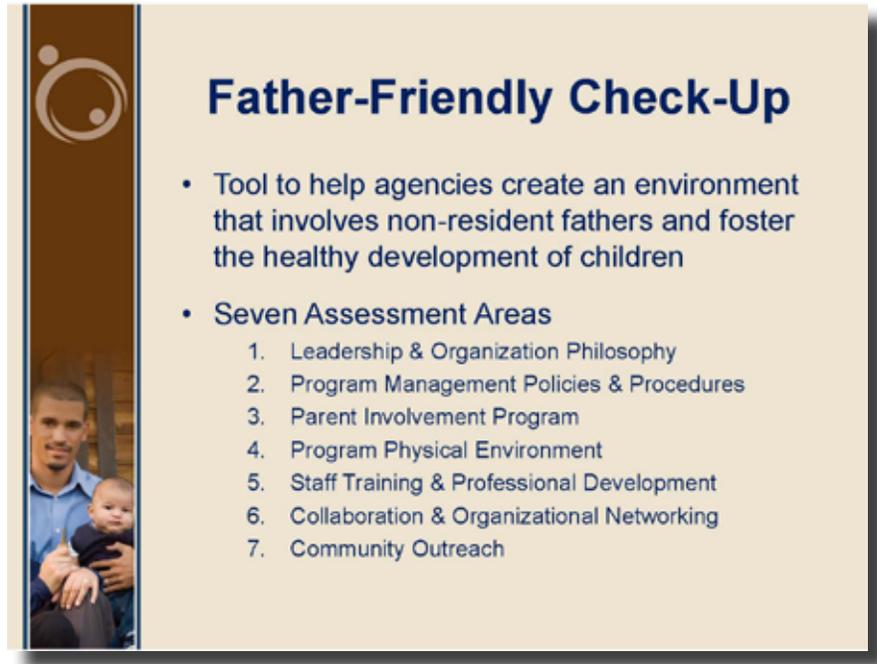
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- Handout 4-1: Father-Friendly Check-Up

#### 4.1.

**Display PowerPoint 7** and describe the Father-Friendly Check-Up Tool using the following to guide the discussion.

PPT 7



#### 4.2.

Explain to participants that today more American children are growing up in homes without their biological father than at any other point in American history. Trends such as divorce and remarriage, as well as more births outside of marriage, result in a diminishing role of fathers in the daily lives of their children. Involving non-resident fathers in the lives of their children becomes an even greater challenge when these children are involved in the public child welfare system. This is especially true in cases where the child has been removed from the home and placed in a non-relative or stranger's care. Reunifying children with their birth families, as quickly as possible, without jeopardizing the children's safety, is the first priority. However, identifying family resources, especially non-resident fathers and paternal relatives, continues to be a challenge for the child welfare system.

So the QIC NRF developed the Father-Friendly Check-Up, a tool to help child welfare agencies assess the degree to which their organizations' operations encourage father involvement in the activities and programs offered.

### 4.3.

Ask the participants to turn to **Handout 4-1: Father-Friendly Check-Up** in their training packets.

### 4.4.

Explain to participants that the Father-Friendly Check-Up was developed as a tool to help agencies take an active and positive approach in creating an environment that involves non-resident fathers and fosters the healthy development of children. The assessment consists of seven categories that agencies can use to determine if their organization is “father-friendly” and make the necessary changes to follow best practice.

**The seven categories are:**

#### 1. Leadership and organization philosophy

Assesses how well your organization is doing in establishing the expectation that workers and staff will engage fathers, encouraging healthy father-child relationships, providing adequate funding and staff to effectively serve non-resident fathers, and providing supportive tools, information, policies and programs that help them in their fathering roles.

#### 2. Program management policies and procedures

Assesses whether agency policies and procedures establish clear expectations around identifying, locating and contacting fathers; utilize a parent locator service; and ensure that fathers are consistently treated in a gender-responsive, non-accusatory, non-blaming manner.

#### 3. Parent-involvement program

Assesses whether approaches and programs used with non-resident fathers are intended to promote meaningful and sustained father engagement; include a strengths-based approach to working with non-resident fathers; periodically survey fathers to determine their needs, concerns and interests; and ensure staff mirror the fathers served in culture, race, language and age.

#### 4. Program physical environment

Assesses whether the organization’s physical environment offers materials directed toward fathers; uses father-related images; and offers family restrooms or diaper decks in the men’s restrooms.

### **5. Staff training and professional development**

Assesses agency staff and their openness to constructive criticism regarding personal biases; whether they are comfortable with differences in parenting styles typical of fathers and mothers; whether they avoid language that is divisive and stereotypical; and whether they seek out fathers in decision-making situations involving the important aspects of children's lives.

### **6. Collaboration and organizational networking**

Assesses the organization's promotion of education of courts; its development of good working relationships with child support enforcement offices; and its use of legal systems to better engage fathers.

### **7. Community outreach**

Assesses the organization's efforts to reach out to the "community at large"; participate in network coalitions of organizations and leaders that promote responsible fatherhood; and use responsible fatherhood in the community as a preventive measure to reduce the negative outcomes for children.

After completing the assessment, each category is scored with suggestions on improvement. The score is then used to set goals and identify priorities that are unique to an organization's way of serving children and families.

#### **4.5.**

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Describe the following Father-Friendly Check-Up activity to participants using the following as a guide:

1. Divide participants into small groups (four or five per group) and assign a subtopic for assessment.
2. Have the small groups assess where their agencies stand in terms of the assigned subtopic. Each participant should rate his or her agency individually then discuss the results within their small groups. Let the participants know that they will need to assign a recorder and a reporter in each of their groups to report findings to the larger group (allow 15 minutes to complete the small-group discussions).
3. Large-group report-out (10 min). Ask participants for any thoughts, comments, surprises, confirmations of how their agencies are doing, and what they will take away from this exercise and work into their own practice.



## TRAINER NOTE

Option:

- Ask for a consensus from the group as to which categories they would like to go through to assess their agencies.
- Remind participants that this is not an exercise that is placing labels on agencies as “bad” or “good” at non-resident father engagement, but an opportunity to take a moment to reflect on areas of strengths and areas for continued growth and development.
- For those areas that were “not true” for their organization, remind participants that they can use that area to set specific target goals to work on.
- Integrate responses to the questions noted on the flip charts for the walkabout activity (if conducted during the pre-training session).



## 5. Value of Father Engagement: Benefits and Barriers

### Time

Activity Time: 15 min.

Running Time: 2 hrs., 30 min.

### Purpose/Rationale

To help workers examine potential thoughts, concerns, values and beliefs that they may personally bring to their work and their view of the fathers in their cases. To identify and discuss with participants the value of father involvement for social workers, children and families. Participants will be able to realign perspectives to incorporate strengths and utilize those strengths in engagement and planning for children involved in child welfare.

### Preparation:

- None

### Materials:

- Flip-chart paper
- Markers

### Handouts:

- Handout 5-1: Engaging Non-Resident Fathers: Benefits & Barriers

### 5.1.

Inform participants that now that they have had an opportunity to reflect on perceptions regarding fathers and their roles, the focus will shift to looking more specifically at fathers involved in child welfare by brainstorming some benefits and barriers to father engagement.

## 5.2.

Tell participants that they will now do some brainstorming about benefits and barriers to engaging the non-resident fathers in their cases. Remind participants that brainstorming is their uncensored and immediate response to a topic. There are no right or wrong answers in brainstorming. Responses may not be particularly popular, but may be common among fellow brainstormers.

**1. Trainer: Write the following at the top of the flip chart: Barriers/Challenges to Father Engagement/Involvement.**

Ask participants to shout out responses to record on the flip chart. State to participants, “I think it is challenging to engage fathers in their child’s case because...” Ask participants to “truthfully disclose” the challenges that get in the way so that this exercise is as realistic as can be for them. Some participants may be reluctant to identify their challenges, as it may not appear “politically correct” or popular to do so.

**2. Next, on another flip-chart page, write at the top of the flip chart: Benefits to Father Engagement/Involvement.**

Ask participants to shout out responses to record on the flip chart. State to participants, “I think it is important to involve fathers in their child’s case because...”

**3. After the above have been identified, ask participants, “By show of hands, do you believe the benefits identified outweigh the barriers?”**

Encourage a discussion for about five minutes. Tell participants about the statistic in #4 below from the “What About the Dads?” Report:

**4. In the “What About the Dads?” Report, many workers noted that working with fathers can be difficult.**

The vast majority of social workers agreed that fathers need assistance with their parenting skills (82 percent) and 44 percent noted that working with non-resident fathers makes a case more complicated. However, only 6 percent of social workers reported that working with non-resident fathers is more trouble than it’s worth. What makes it ‘worth’ it is the positive outcomes children enjoy when their fathers have a safe and healthy presence in their lives.

**5. Post the flip charts in the training room** (Inform participants that Handout 5-1: Engaging Non-Resident Fathers: Benefits & Barriers provides a more complete list of the benefits and barriers, as well).



## TRAINERS NOTE

This brainstorming activity seeks to solicit “real-world” barriers to father engagement experienced by training participants. Trainers can use the information disclosed by participants to highlight the use of specific strategies that may work with the barriers identified.

Noted are some benefits to feed into the discussion regarding father involvement:

- Infants of highly involved fathers are more cognitively competent at 6 months
- School-aged children have better quantitative and verbal skills
- Children of involved fathers are more likely to enjoy school, have better attitudes toward school, participate in extracurricular activities, and graduate
- Children are more likely to be securely attached to their fathers, are better able to handle strange situations and are more resilient in the face of stressful situations
- Father warmth and nurturance significantly predicts children’s moral maturity, and is associated with more pro-social and positive moral behavior in boys and girls (Mosely & Thompson, 1995)
- Promotion of healthy child development
- Higher academic achievement among children
- Better emotional and social development among children
- Ties into expectations of family involvement evaluated by CFSR
- Creates opportunity to have more eyes on the child
- Helps meet reasonable and diligent efforts
- Broadens circle of others by including paternal relatives who can be utilized in permanency planning
- More informal supports in a constrained system
- Accelerates the process of termination when termination is necessary, as the search for the father has already been conducted
- Important in the adoption process
- Facilitates concurrent planning – more than one goal
- Financial contributions help promote higher academic achievement



## TRAINER NOTE

Noted are some barriers to feed into the discussion regarding father involvement:

- Professional and systemic bias
- Reluctance to involve a father who has caused harm
- Issues related to gender bias influencing the caseworker and also the non-resident father
- Hesitance by worker to reach out for fear of mother's hostility
- Mother's gate-keeping – blocking access
- History of incarceration, child or sex abuse, unknown whereabouts, homelessness
- Maltreatment by males in the household could reinforce concerns with males overall
- Inadequate financial resources
- Domestic violence
- Father unaware he is the father
- Heavy caseloads of workers inhibiting identifying, locating and engaging fathers
- Father's lack of confidence in parenting skills
- Opinion of the child
- Mother's hesitance or refusal to notify the caseworker of the father's whereabouts
- Social worker's belief that father has little commitment to the child or children
- Not considered an appropriate placement
- Lack of guidance and training
- Multiple fathers, one mother; potential separation of the children

## Lunch Break

Running Time: 1 hr.



## 6. What's In It For...

### Time

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Activity Time: 30 min.

Running Time: 4 hrs., 0 min.

### Purpose/Rationale

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To identify and discuss the value of father involvement for social workers, children and families. Participants will be able to realign perspectives to incorporate strengths and utilize those strengths in engagement and planning for children involved in child welfare.

### Preparation

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- Cue *Britain's Got Talent* video clip from YouTube

### Materials

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- PowerPoints 8-15
- Flip-chart paper
- Markers

### Handouts

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- Handout 6-1: What's In It For...

#### 6.1.

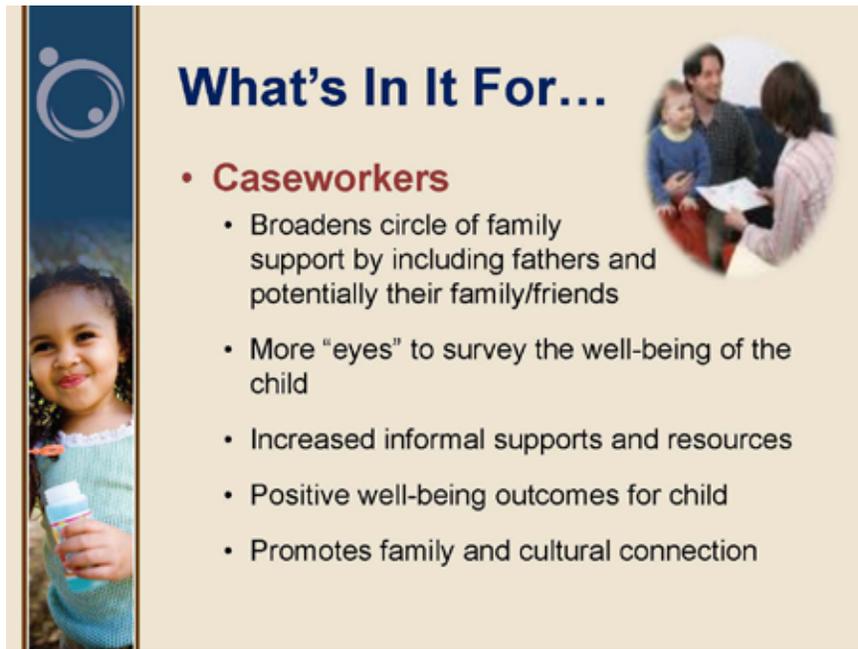
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Explain to participants that they should continue to reflect on their responses from the brainstorming activity as the next discussion begins: What's In It For Me. Explain that highlighting some of the benefits identified with engaging the non-resident father will help challenge and realign perceptions about fathers and enhance efforts to engage non-resident fathers.

## 6.2.

Tell participants that a discussion of benefits begins with the social worker, as the social worker is the first line of contact with the non-resident father and the person setting the stage for how engagement will begin. Remind participants that in child welfare there are many avenues from which to approach case management. Many of these approaches are based on good intentions, but the realities of the job and the workloads carried by social workers often inhibit the use of best practices. **Display PowerPoint 8 and 9.** Direct participants to **Handout 6-1: What's In It For...** and present the following material.

PPT 8

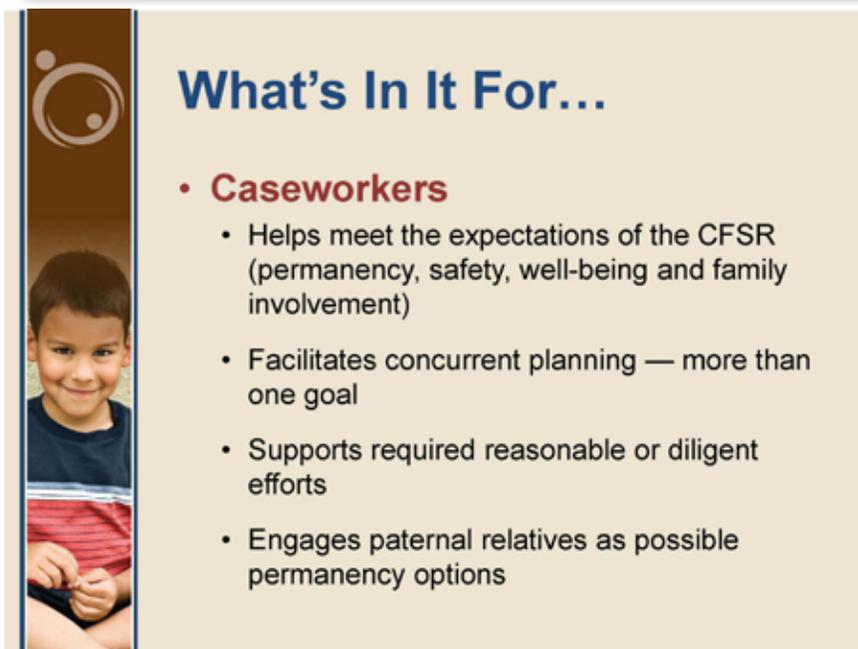


The slide features a vertical sidebar on the left with a blue background, containing a white circular logo and a photograph of a young girl in a green sweater holding a blue water bottle. The main content area has a light beige background with the title 'What's In It For...' in blue. Below the title is a red bullet point for 'Caseworkers' followed by five black bullet points. A circular inset image on the right shows a family of four (mother, father, and two children) looking at a document together.

### What's In It For...

- **Caseworkers**
  - Broadens circle of family support by including fathers and potentially their family/friends
  - More "eyes" to survey the well-being of the child
  - Increased informal supports and resources
  - Positive well-being outcomes for child
  - Promotes family and cultural connection

PPT 9



The slide features a vertical sidebar on the left with a brown background, containing a white circular logo and a photograph of a young boy in a blue shirt. The main content area has a light beige background with the title 'What's In It For...' in blue. Below the title is a red bullet point for 'Caseworkers' followed by four black bullet points.

### What's In It For...

- **Caseworkers**
  - Helps meet the expectations of the CFSR (permanency, safety, well-being and family involvement)
  - Facilitates concurrent planning — more than one goal
  - Supports required reasonable or diligent efforts
  - Engages paternal relatives as possible permanency options

### 6.3.

State to participants, “Many of you may be familiar with the concept ‘WIIFM,’ also known as ‘what’s in it for me?’ Explain that this may sound like a self-serving concept, but it is nonetheless true. Generally speaking, everyone wants to know what the benefits are to them before taking action on something. Questions naturally arise, such as, ‘How is this going to affect me?’, ‘Will this cause more work?’ and ‘Will this make my job easier?’ To promote active engagement of fathers, social workers should know what is in it for them to both increase their motivation to engage fathers and access the potential benefits for both children and fathers.

### 6.4.

**Display PowerPoint 8 and 9** and use the following to discuss: What’s In It For Caseworkers

So how will the efforts put forth to engage non-resident fathers “pay off” for workers? First, think about the basic goals in child welfare: SAFETY, PERMANENCY and WELL-BEING. Safety and well-being can be increased when there are more eyes on the child. If the father and paternal relatives are involved, there is an increased opportunity to access the physical, financial and emotional resources and support of the father and his family. In addition, having greater access to the father and paternal family members increases placement and permanency options for the child. With the reduced amount of time child welfare agencies have to make permanency decisions for children in care, involving non-resident fathers early on has become increasingly important.

Second, female social workers can seek more opportunities to collaborate with male social workers in their offices to help engage non-resident fathers. As workers seek to engage fathers, it is important to be cognizant of the gender dynamics that may impede the ability of the worker to fully engage. Using male workers within the system can help foster positive engagement and reduce the inclination to react negatively to the father’s possible resistance. Identifying strategies to work with resistance, such as bringing male colleagues into the initial engagement process, can provide a successful launch for the workers’ ongoing relationship development, thus improving collaborative opportunities.

Third, employing family involvement strategies can make locating, identifying and engaging non-resident fathers in the child welfare process less cumbersome. For instance, family group conferencing is a process that promotes the family’s leadership in making decisions regarding the safety and well-being of their child, and promotes purposeful engagement of the father and his family. One study conducted in 2003 reported that for 57 family group conferences for which relationship data

were available, an average of five maternal and three paternal relatives partook in the decision-making forum. According to their analysis, “This level of paternal participation contrasted sharply with previous studies showing very few fathers involved in case planning, even for family-centered, family preservation services. Involving family members in the child protection case process can provide many benefits to the child, including healthy cognitive, social and emotional developmental, an increase in placement options, an increase in knowledge about the child and his or her family, and an increase in opportunities for the child to remain connected with the father and other family members.

Regardless of which strategy is used to foster engagement of the non-resident father, nothing can replace a worker’s motivation to engage the father. When that motivation is present, workers will be more likely to actively increase their knowledge and understanding of fathers and incorporate any new learning into practice. As workers do this, they will foster opportunities for children to receive the benefits of having their fathers involved in their cases.

### 6.5.

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Inform participants that the focus of the discussion of benefits of father engagement will now shift to mothers and the child’s other family members. The attitude of the mother and/or other family members is a common barrier to successful engagement of the father; however, engagement of the father is a primary and significant benefit to mothers when considering the positive outcomes for their children, as long as physical and emotional safety are not issues. After wading through the emotional entanglements and challenges life and fathers may present, mothers want what is best for their children. Recent history has supported the idea that some children without active and involved fathers can have very healthy and successful lives. However, there are many more children, as the research shows, who suffer detrimental outcomes due to having an inactive or absent father.

### 6.6.

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**Display PowerPoint 10** using the following to guide the discussion:

**Some additional benefits to mothers in maintaining father involvement include:**

- Additional support from the father and the paternal family...they don’t have to do it alone. Single parenting is a challenging endeavor, so having additional support can help the mother, which, in turn, helps the children and family system as a whole.

- A greater sense of commitment to family, which can be modeled for the children. Children learn from their parents, and the messages received are important to their physical and emotional development all the way into adulthood. Fostering a commitment to family provides children with a template for the importance of family that can be carried forward as the children continue to develop. The mother's desire for what is best for the child includes upholding this commitment.
- Mothers demonstrate more competence as parents, as evidenced by a demonstration of more patience, flexibility and emotional responsiveness to their children. When mothers are less overwhelmed, they are able to provide the best of themselves to their children.
- Co-parenting will send more consistent messages about what's right and what's wrong. Consistency for children is critical to their development, as it helps them make sense of the world in which they live and decipher between what they should be doing in their world and what they should not.

These factors tend to produce positive developmental outcomes for children and enhance the relationship between the mother and the child.

PPT 10



## What's In It For...

- **Mothers & Families**
  - Overall positive outcomes for children's well-being
  - Additional support from father & paternal family
  - Commitment to family modeled for children
  - Increase in mother's patience, flexibility and emotional responsiveness toward child
  - Successful co-parenting sends consistent messages to child about right and wrong

**6.7.**

---

Explain to participants that the next focus of discussion is identifying “What’s In It For Children?”

**6.8.**

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Explain that before moving into the discussion, participants will watch a short video to further their understanding of the consequences for children growing up without fathers. **(Trainer should cue the video clip slide #1 on Video Clip PPT.)**

**6.9.**

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After the first video clip is complete, tell participants that they will now watch a contrasting video that provides a positive visual of a father/son relationship. Explain that this clip comes from *Britain’s Got Talent*. The video clip will last about 7 min. **(Trainer should cue the video clip slide #2 on Video Clip PPT.)**

**6.10.**

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At the conclusion of the *Britain’s Got Talent* clip, **display PowerPoint 11** and use the following to guide the discussion:

Children will benefit from the emotional, financial and physical support a healthy father can provide. Children benefit from an increased richness of care when the father is present. Fathers can provide nurturance of the child’s emotional and cognitive development by providing additional security, both emotionally and financially; supporting their exploration of the world while setting appropriate limits; and developing meaningful, positive connections and memories through playful interactions (Evans & Fogarty, 2008).

Also important is giving children the opportunity to develop connections with their paternal family members, which provides opportunities to expand their cultural identity, family knowledge (such as medical history) and family supports (Evans & Fogarty, 2008).

PPT 11



The image shows a PowerPoint slide with a light beige background and a dark brown vertical bar on the left. The bar contains a circular logo with three dots and a photograph of a smiling man with a young girl on his shoulders. The slide title is 'What's In It For...' in blue. The content is a bulleted list:

- **Children**
  - Fathers provide unique support
    - Emotional
    - Financial
    - Physical
  - Involvement of paternal kin
    - Expanded cultural & family ties
    - Knowledge of family medical history

### 6.11.

**Display PowerPoint 12** and deliver the following information:

The QIC-NRF initiative is guided by several principles, some of which emphasize the benefits of father involvement to children. These principles include:

- Children's well-being improves when fathers contribute.
- Children deserve to have parents as partners in raising them, even when they do not live in the same household.
- Children deserve to have access to their father's family, support system, community and informal resources.
- Children benefit from having an increased number of family and support persons involved who can ensure their safety, emotional well-being and connection to all caring adults.

(Ferguson, 2009)

PPT 12



## What's In It For...

- **Children**
  - Significantly more likely to exhibit healthy self-esteem & pro-social behavior
  - Better educational outcomes
  - More friendships & fewer behavioral concerns
  - Both parents act as partners in raising them
  - Increased family support that can ensure safety, emotional well-being & connection to caring adults

Evans, G. D., & Fogarty, K. (2006). *The hidden benefits of being an involved father*. Retrieved May 21, 2009, from <http://ndis.ihs.uill.edu/HE137>  
Ferguson, G. (2009). *Questions about kids: Do dads really make a difference?* Center for Early Education and Development (CEED), College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota. Retrieved May 21, 2009, from <http://cehd.umn.edu/cehd/publications/questionsaboutkids/dadenglish.pdf>

6.12.

**Display PowerPoint 13** and ask for a volunteer to read the quote “Children whose biological fathers are absent are on average 2-3 times more likely to be poor; to use drugs; to experience educational, health, emotional and behavioral problems; to be victims of child abuse and to engage in more criminal behavior than their peers who live with their married biological parents (or adoptive parents).” (Horn & Sylvester, 2002)

PPT 13



## What's In It For...

- **Children**

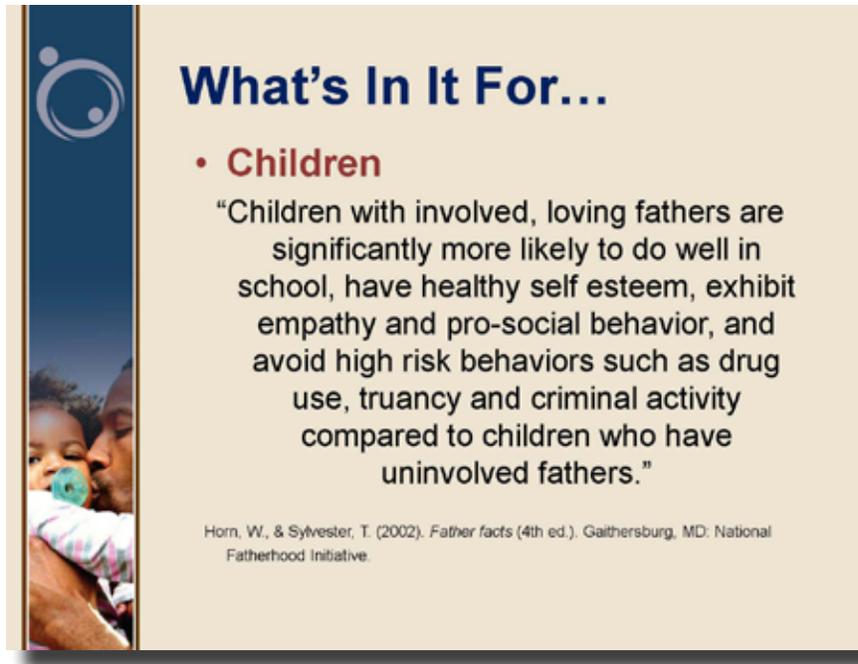
“Children whose biological fathers are absent are on average 2-3 times more likely to be poor; to use drugs; to experience educational, health, emotional and behavioral problems; to be victims of child abuse; and to engage in more criminal behavior than their peers who live with their married biological parents (or adoptive parents).”

Horn, W., & Sylvester, T. (2002). *Father facts* (4th ed.). Gaithersburg, MD: National Fatherhood Initiative.

### 6.13.

**Display PowerPoint 14** and ask for another volunteer to read this quote: “Children with involved, loving fathers are significantly more likely to do well in school, have healthy self esteem, exhibit empathy and pro-social behavior, and avoid high risk behaviors such as drug use, truancy and criminal activity compared to children who have uninvolved fathers” (Horn & Sylvester, 2002). Explain that this quote provides a contrast to the previous quote.

PPT 14



### 6.14.

**Display PowerPoint 15** and ask for another volunteer or read this quote: “Children with involved, caring fathers have better educational outcomes. A number of studies suggest that fathers who are involved, nurturing and playful with their infants have children with higher IQs, as well as better linguistic and cognitive capacities” (Rosenburg, 2006). This quote provides an additional contrast to the potential consequences of a father’s absence from his child’s life.

PPT 15



## What's In It For...

- **Children**

“Children with involved, caring fathers have better educational outcomes. A number of studies suggest that fathers who are involved, nurturing and playful with their infants have children with higher IQs, as well as better linguistic and cognitive capacities.”

—Rosenberg, J. (2006). *Fathers and their impact on children's well-being*. Child Welfare Information Gateway.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f10kdcd-Gig>

### 6.15.

Explain to participants that the research data on father involvement creates a picture which does not support the often stereotypical role of fathers as absent physically and/or emotionally, just the financial provider or just the disciplinarian. Many fathers can, and all should, provide financially for their children; however, that should not be, nor is it, their only role. Fathers historically seek to protect their families, their children. They want to keep them from harm and provide a loving and nurturing environment in which to grow and learn how to negotiate the world they live in. Research supports that children with active and involved fathers tend to do better academically, develop more friendships due to better social skills and have fewer behavioral concerns and/or mental health issues. Research also supports that children who have active and involved fathers also appear more self-assured and self-confident. Fathers are role models for children, both boys and girls, as they move through their young lives.

The data reveal that children living apart from their fathers are at an increased risk of suffering negative outcomes. One study found that children living with single parents are at a higher risk of experiencing physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect than children living with two biological parents (Goldman Salus, Wolcott, & Kennedy, 2003). Another study, after controlling for various variables, revealed that boys who grew up outside of intact marriages were, on average, more than twice as likely as other boys to end up in jail (Harper & McLanahan, 2004).

Although studies have not clearly identified why outcomes for child growing up with an inactive father are so poor, studies do support the fact that fathers play a critical role in the overall development and well-being of their child. All children should be afforded the right to having their father involved in their life when it is safe to do so. They have a right to remain connected and receive the best outcomes that can be gained (Evans & Fogarty, 2008; Center for Early Education and Development, College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota, 2009).

### **6.16.**

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Indicate to participants that at this point, they may be more appreciative of the information on the positive outcomes for children when a father or “father figure” is involved, but may be maintaining some skepticism relative to the father’s encounters in the child welfare system. It’s important to be realistic about what workers deal with in actual practice and the potential negative outcomes children may suffer if they have an unhealthy father involved in their lives. For instance, many cases that are referred to child protective services involve domestic violence. Studies show that up to 40% of child abuse cases also report domestic violence in the home (UNICEF, 2006).

There are many legitimate issues that give social workers pause in considering whether and how to engage fathers. These include:

- Domestic violence
- Violent criminal behavior
- Chronic and severe substance abuse
- Severe physically and emotionally abusive and neglectful behavior

These issues, among others, may challenge the worker’s ability to safely engage the father. The primary indicator to assess whether to engage the father relates to SAFETY for the child and for the worker. Explain to participants that later in the day they will have the opportunity to discuss common barriers that workers may encounter in their cases that may make engagement difficult, if not impossible. Encourage participants to keep an open mind and remind them of the need to view each case on its own merits.



## 7. Culture of Manhood and Fatherhood

### Time

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Activity Time: 50 min.

Running Time: 4 hrs., 50 min.

### Purpose/Rationale

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To identify general strategies that are important to employ when engaging men/fathers.

### Preparation

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- Cue the *Fresh Prince* clip
- Prepare a flip chart with the Table Talk questions

### Materials

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- PowerPoints 16-22
- Flip chart
- Markers

### Handouts

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- 7-1: The Socialization of Men
- 7-2: Male Help-Seeking Behaviors

## 7.1.

Explain to participants that to set the stage for the practice opportunities to use the engagement strategies, there are a few considerations that are important for social workers to be aware of. The information presented in this section of the training is designed to provide men's perspectives and help create a lens through which child welfare workers can understand and develop approaches to engage fathers. Identifying masculine role socializing dynamics will help social workers increase their understanding of men and the challenges they have in seeking help. Based upon what is known about masculine socialization and male help-seeking behaviors, strategies to engage non-resident fathers need to be tailored to meet their cultural needs.

## 7.2.

Explain to participants that the clip they are about to see depicts the interaction between a father and son, demonstrating the "Father Wound" and the "Father Bond." The "Father Wound" references the impact of the absence of a father in a child's life and the harm inflicted juxtaposed with the desire and hope of a relationship with an absentee father. Provide an opportunity for discussion in the large group for about five minutes after showing the clip. **(Trainer should cue video clip slide #3 on Video Clip PPT.)**

### TRAINER NOTE

*Questions to facilitate the discussion of the video with participants:*

1. What unstated values were demonstrated by Will's father?
  - Money
  - He's the "big man," doing things, going places
2. What possible underlying reasons would his father resist taking Will with him?
  - Fear of failing as a father
  - Feeling inadequate as a father
  - Not wanting to be responsible for anyone but himself
3. Will talked about what he achieved without his father in his life; what did this section of the video show simultaneously?
  - Father wound: injury to the masculine soul because a child never felt loved by his or her father
  - Father Bond: the connection and link of trust between a child and his or her father
4. What did you see in the video that relates to the culture of manhood and fatherhood?
  - A "real man" stays and takes care of his family. If he doesn't, he is inferior.
  - It's better to show anger than hurt, as hurt is a demonstration of weakness.
  - Men struggle to remain infallible, unharmed; no crying allowed.

### 7.3.

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Inform participants that they will now have an opportunity to discuss, in groups, their thoughts regarding the culture of manhood and fatherhood by engaging in some Table Talk. Provide a few minutes for participants to discuss the two key questions noted on the flip chart (which was prepared earlier). Remind participants that this is an opportunity for sharing, self discovery and learning.

1. Divide participants into four groups. Assign discussion point #1 to two groups and discussion point #2 to the other two groups.
2. **Discussion point #1:** “What are your thoughts about how men are socialized and how that affects the development of men and fathers?”
3. **Discussion point #2:** “What does your experience tell you about how men go about seeking help?”
4. The Table Talk will occur for five to six minutes in each group.
5. The trainer will bring groups back to the large group and select highlights of the small group discussions for five minutes per discussion point. Trainer will use the following material to enhance points discussed and review material that was not covered in the large-group discussion.

### 7.4.

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**Display PowerPoint 16** and explain that understanding the gender role socialization associated with traditional and highly ingrained masculine roles will help social workers increase their depth of knowledge of the reasons why fathers often respond and behave differently than mothers. These deeply ingrained perceptions of the role of a man exist in everyone, as everyone has been touched either positively or negatively by a father or “father figure” in their life. Developing an understanding of masculine role socialization can help workers build a bridge to engaging and relating to fathers in a more sensitive and strength-focused way. It is also important for practitioners to understand how men learn. If this is understood, social workers can adapt interventions and efforts to engage fathers in a way that will better meet each father’s cultural needs and learning style.

PPT 16

## Understanding the Socialization of Men

Socially constructed ideas cultivate:

- Emotional conflict
- Behavioral problems
- Emotional pain, often resulting in an emotional trauma causing men to present as:
  - Stoic
  - Firm
  - Detached emotionally

Men have traditionally found it difficult to acknowledge their feelings and the effect they have on their lives and the lives of family members.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I017\\_Rox0XF&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I017_Rox0XF&feature=related)

Link retrieved by American Humane June 10, 2009

Men internalize the socially constructed ideas of what it means to be a man, often producing an internal conflict when they cannot live up to the role identities prescribed for them. This conflict produces emotional conflict, behavioral problems and emotional pain, often resulting in an emotional trauma causing men to present as stoic, firm, detached and emotionally uninvolved (Shears & Furman, 2008). Men may also become self-destructive in their efforts to prove their “manliness,” alienating them further from approved- behaviors in society. The consequence of this conflict or emotional trauma can manifest in the father’s relationship with his children. The achievement of the ideal masculinity has an even stronger impact on fathers in marginalized or minority groups.

Not only do minority men have to deal with the challenges of what it means to be a man in today’s society, minority men must also work harder to overcome the obstacles placed in their path simply due to their race and ethnicity. The result is a double bind in which men of color find themselves attempting to fulfill a patriarchal ideal established by white middle-class men, while struggling to negate the image of deviant, violent, drug dealer or abuser, irresponsible, deadbeat and absent. Social workers need to be mindful of extra burdens placed upon minority fathers as they attempt to engage them. The perceptions social workers carry about men in general, and about minority men in particular, can have an immense impact on their ability to engage fathers.

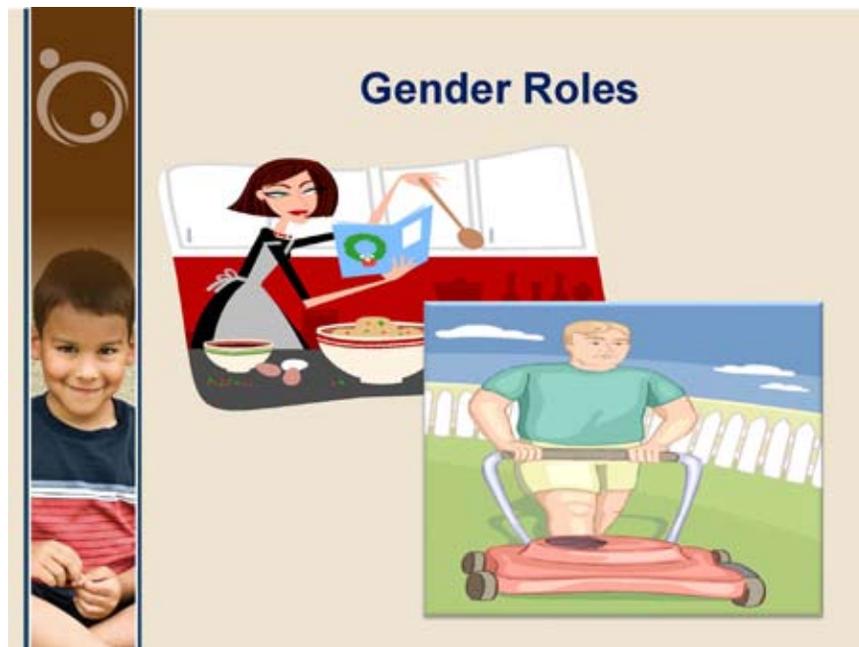
So what should be done when these negative thoughts and perceptions are a part of the social worker’s experience? Social workers must treat each father they meet as an individual, and not generalized about them based upon their race or ethnicity. Treating

each father as an individual fosters fairness and sensitivity to the father's needs. Being aware of one's own issues about fathers is also very important, as workers are likely to carry those issues into the professional relationship with the father.

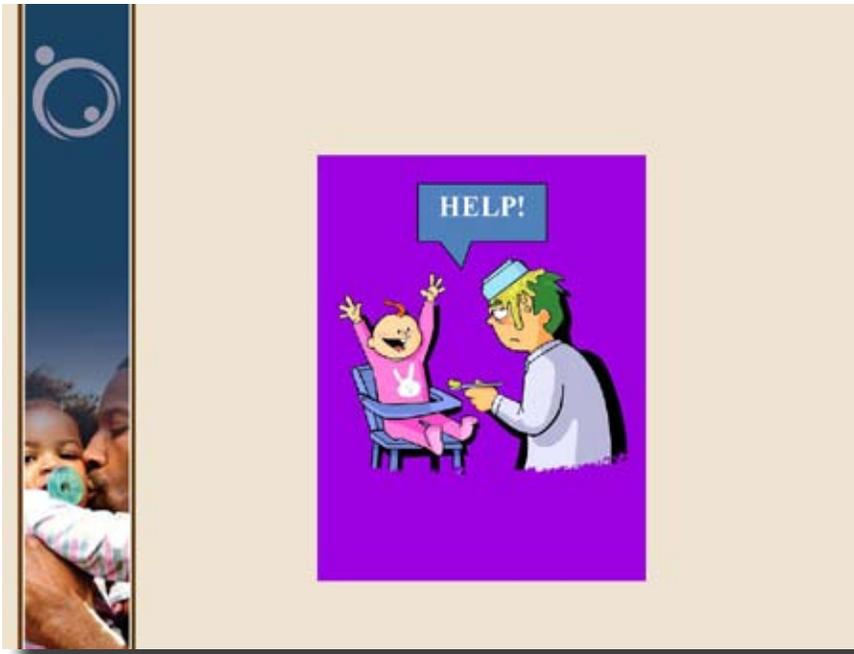
### 7.5.

**Display PowerPoints 17, 18 and 19** and indicate that these pictures provide a visual highlighting commonly-held views within our culture today of the role of a man or a father. Ask participants, "What do you see depicted in the pictures that is reflective of gender roles?" Also, refer participants to **Handout 7-1: The Socialization of Men**, which provides some examples of lyrics that highlight some perspectives of men reflected in pop music today.

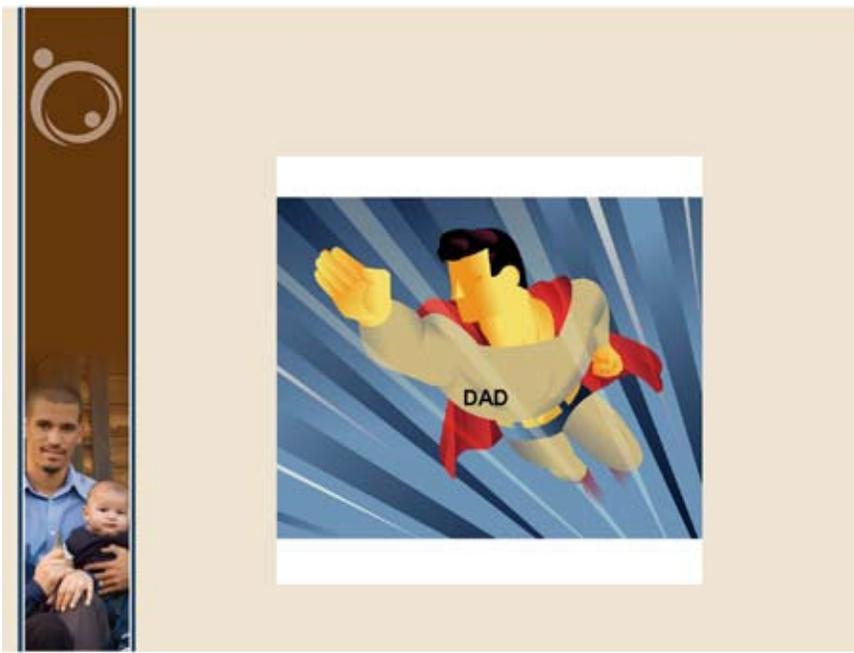
PPT 17



PPT 18



PPT 19



## 7.6

**Display PowerPoint 20** and state that the culture of manhood and fatherhood was constructed through various societal factors that influence the development of manhood and fatherhood.

PPT 20



**Societal Factors That Influence the Development of Manhood & Fatherhood**

- Discouraging the expression of emotions — “real men don’t cry”
- Anger is an acceptable male emotion
- Dominant, disconnected and dangerous
- Being physically strong
- Ambition and competition
- Good occupational functioning
- Athletic ability
- Economic success
- Sexual conquests

**DANGER**  
Extreme Manliness  
Not for the faint of testosterone

The section was adapted from Shears, J. & Furman, R., Working with fathers: A review of the literature. University of North Carolina-Charlotte, and Hoffarth, S. L. (2001, February). Racial/ethnic differences in father involvement in two-parent families: Culture, context, or economy. Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan. Retrieved May 21, 2009, from <http://oest.psc.isr.umich.edu/pub/papers/oes019-01.pdf>

- **Discouraging the expression of emotions – “real men don’t cry”**  
Crying demonstrates weakness and vulnerability when society dictates that men need to be strong and invulnerable to hurt and pain. They are viewed as the caretakers, not those who need to be taken care of.
- **Anger is an acceptable male emotion**  
Anger is seen as true masculine behavior. It has been said that men have lots of testosterone so they can’t help being aggressive. Gender-stereotypical norms support this idea, in that girls are encouraged to resolve their conflicts peacefully while boys are encouraged to retaliate and stand up for themselves.
- **Dominant, disconnected and dangerous**  
Men are expected to take on a socially dominant position and naturally assume positions that align with this role. These attributes relate to the ideal that men are invulnerable and are supposed to demonstrate strength and aggression.
- **Being physically strong**  
Historically, men have been considered the providers for their families, the hunters of food and the protector for their families. Each role requires a certain amount of physical strength to be successful in meeting its obligations.

- **Ambition and competition; good occupational functioning; athletic ability**  
Each of these attributes ascribed to men stems from society's perception of men as more focused on accomplishments obtained through external skills and ability. The emphasis for men is more on what they do versus who they are. Men may accept competition as something that has always been a part of their lives and is therefore perceived as natural and healthy.
- **Sexual conquests**  
A constructed role, which dictates that the proof of manhood is proven through sexual conquests.

### 7.7.

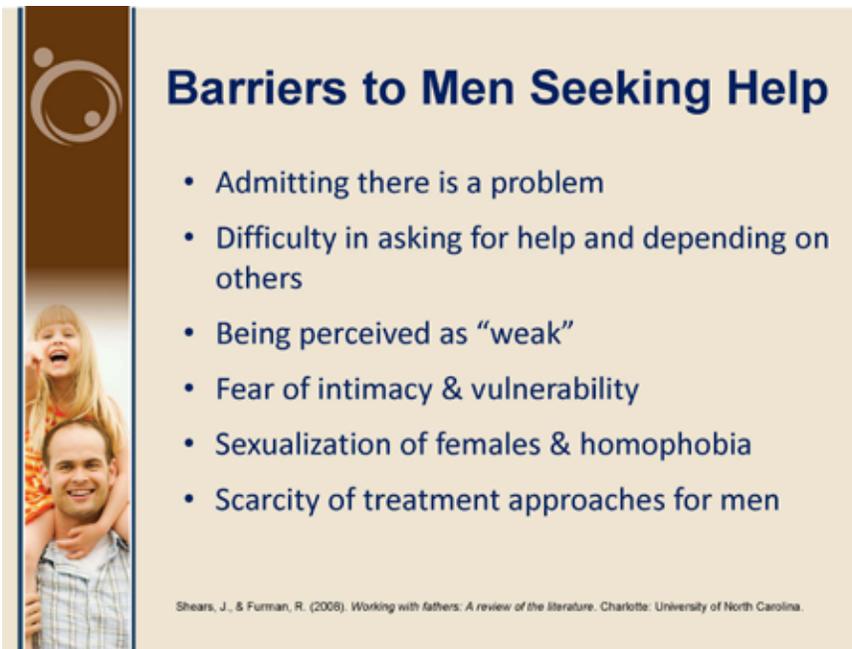
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Tell participants that the research literature suggests that men are less likely to seek help than women. Many of the gender socialization issues just discussed help explain why this is. Men are “supposed” to be calm and in control of every situation and their feelings; men are supposed to be able to solve problems and make everything right for their families. Seeking help is perceived as a weakness, an inability to live up to the prescribed socialization for men. This gender ideal isolates men, keeping them from seeking assistance. If forced to seek assistance by some external entity, such as court systems or child protective systems, men may resist the efforts of service providers and take on an impenetrable façade, making it difficult to encourage change. Because of this, approaches to engage men should be based on the premise of treating them as a culturally different group. That requires understanding their interpersonal methods of processing and communicating with others and meeting them where they are. In addition, it's important to be aware of how child welfare has historically ignored fathers while actively engaging mothers in the cases involving their children. The culture of child welfare has predominately focused on the mother as the nurturer and caregiver, while the father is viewed centrally as the financial provider. Because of this history, it is important that workers remain actively attentive and open to creative strategies to engage non-resident fathers in the cases involving their children. The ideals of male and female roles are founded on the way both men and women have been socialized in society, which also impacts how they may seek and receive help.

### 7.8.

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**Display PowerPoint 21** and refer participants to **Handout 7-2: Barriers to Men Seeking Help**.



**Barriers to Men Seeking Help**

- Admitting there is a problem
- Difficulty in asking for help and depending on others
- Being perceived as “weak”
- Fear of intimacy & vulnerability
- Sexualization of females & homophobia
- Scarcity of treatment approaches for men

Shears, J., & Furman, R. (2008). Working with fathers: A review of the literature. Charlotte: University of North Carolina.

## 7.9.

Explain to participants that men experience a number of barriers in seeking help, which are noted on the slide. Review the following barriers with participants:

1. **Difficulty admitting that there is a problem.** This stems from difficulty accepting weakness.
2. **Difficulty in asking for help and intolerance of depending on others.** This stems from the strong valuation of autonomy and independence.
3. **Difficulty in accepting, identifying and processing the more tender or “soft” emotions.** In our culture, it’s not acceptable to be perceived as weak.
4. **A fear of intimacy and vulnerability.** Displaying intimacy or vulnerability is also viewed as a weakness.
5. **Sexualization of female helpers and homophobic feelings that block opening up to male helpers.** Often, men feel they have to be stronger than women, that they cannot demonstrate weakness in front of a woman. Some relationships men have with women are infused with themes of power, dominance and control, and enmeshed with issues of sexuality. When some men feel their power and/or dominance is threatened they seek to sexualize the woman in the perceived position of power by using sexual power through flirtation or through domination, or through demeaning or belittling comments (Gillon, 2007).
6. **A scarcity of treatments that are sensitive to men’s needs and dilemmas.**

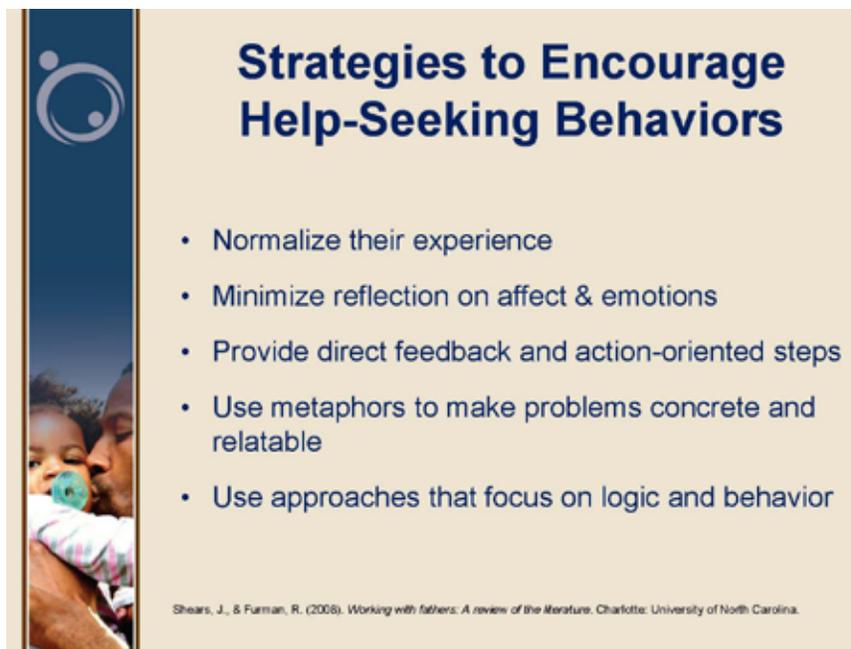
## 7.10.

Explain to participants that the common reasons why some men do not seek help are generally agreed upon; however, there is greater difficulty in understanding what can be done to ameliorate these difficulties and increase the likelihood that men will seek help. However, based upon what is known about men's socialization, gender and cultural needs, there are a few strategies that can prove helpful in encouraging men to seek help.

## 7.11.

**Display PowerPoint 22** and use the following to guide the discussion:

PPT 22



1. **Normalize their experience.** Men do not want to be perceived as abnormal. This can best be done by another man, as they may share a general understanding of what it's like to be a man in society. Many fatherhood groups help do this very well.
2. **Minimize efforts to have men reflect on affect and emotions.** Instead of asking men, "How do you feel?" ask, "What is it like for you?"
3. **Provide direct feedback** that will assist them in becoming better problem solvers and decision makers, while ensuring that the feedback provides action-oriented steps the father can take.
4. **Use metaphors to help men visualize their situation in a concrete, relatable way.** Metaphors allow men to see problem solving as connected to an action, and allows fathers to separate problems from themselves and gain a sense of objectivity.

- 5. Use approaches that focus on logic and behavior**, such as cognitive behavioral therapies that seek to connect thoughts, feelings and behaviors and redirect them into actions the father can take. These approaches would center on developing goals, collecting information, challenging negative thought processes and focusing on the here and now.

(This section was adapted from: Shears, J., & Furman, R. *Working with fathers: A review of the literature*. Charlotte, NC: University of North Carolina- Charlotte.)

## 7.12

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Inform participants that another strategy recommended by men from various fatherhood programs is to leverage the positive aspects of masculinity and recognize the strength of what is inherently viewed as a socially constructed norm for men. It is suggested that engaging the man or the father based upon what he perceives as important to him — regardless if it has been attributed to him by society or not — leverages the positive attributes of masculinity. For example, if a father believes it is his duty to provide for his family, to be the caretaker, help him by guiding him with ideas, supports, resources or services that will aid him in meeting this goal. Do not attempt to dissuade him from that norm; instead, support his belief and offer assistance that will help him become successful.



## 8. Setting the Stage for Engagement

### Time

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**Activity Time:** 30 min.

**Running Time:** 5 hrs., 20 min.

### Purpose/Rationale

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To identify and discuss with participants the additional tools and strategies useful to preparing to engage fathers. These tools and strategies are useful in good social work practice no matter the gender of the client. This section will also review challenging situations that social workers may encounter and some strategies specific to navigating through those challenges.

### Preparation

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- None

### Materials

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- PowerPoints 23-32
- Flip-chart paper
- Markers

### Handouts

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- 8-1: Developing the Relationship
- 8-2: Tips: Transforming Conflict Into Partnerships
- 8-3: Tips: Working With Fathers Who Are Angry
- 8-4: Tips: Co-Parenting When Mom and Dad Don't Live Together
- 8-5: Tips: Working With Fathers Who Are Culturally Diverse
- 2-1: Effective Engagement Strategies

## 8.1.

Inform participants that using the information discussed on the culture of fathers and men and help-seeking behaviors of men will help inform engagement practices with the non-resident father. The social worker–client relationship is central to interventions and engagement that promote positive case resolutions. Creating a relationship with the client that fosters respect, authenticity and growth is based on several key principles. Appalachian Family Innovations developed the six principles of partnership as a new perspective on how we engage clients, create strengths-based relationships with clients and promote change. Embracing these principles, along with others, is important in developing a positive working relationship with the non-resident father. **Display PowerPoint 23** and refer participants to **Handout 8-1: Developing the Relationship**.

PPT 23



The image shows a PowerPoint slide with a light beige background and a dark brown vertical bar on the left. The slide title is 'Developing the Relationship' in a large, bold, dark blue font. Below the title, the subtitle 'Principles of Partnership' is written in a smaller, reddish-brown font. A bulleted list of six principles follows in a dark blue font. At the bottom of the slide, there is a small line of text in a very small font. On the left side of the slide, there is a small photograph of a man in a blue shirt holding a baby.

### Developing the Relationship

#### Principles of Partnership

- Everyone desires respect
- Partners share power
- Everyone has strengths
- Everyone needs to be heard
- Judgments can wait
- Partnership is a process

Appalachian Family Innovations. (2003). *Partners in change: A new perspective on child protective services* (curriculum). Morganton, NC: Author.

## 8.2.

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Review the following principles of partnership with participants.

### 1. Principles: Everyone desires respect

This principle is based on the idea that all people have worth, and recognizes everyone's right to self determination — to make their own decisions about their lives. Acceptance of this principle leads one to treat clients with respect and to honor their opinions and world view. True partnership is impossible without mutual respect.

In addition, equality in the relationship is important. Be aware of actions that are not supportive of treating the client with impartiality and a sense of fairness that requires not generalizing and lumping all fathers into one group.

### 2. Principle: Partners share power

This principle is based on the premise that power differentials create obstacles to partnership. Since society confers power upon the helper, it is the helper's responsibility to create a partnership with clients, especially those who appear hostile, resistant, etc. Clients do not owe us their cooperation; we must earn it.

One way of doing this is recognizing that it is important to both give and receive. Social workers are "receiving" a lot of personal and often uncomfortable information about the client. Try to level the field a bit by "giving" a bit of information through the sharing of stories that are humanizing and normalizing. Appropriate self-disclosure is a very powerful tool in building worker-client relationships.

### 3. Principle: Everyone has strengths

This principle recognizes that all people have many resources, past successes, abilities, talents, dreams, etc. that provide the raw material for solutions and future success. As "helpers" we become involved with people because of their problems; these problems then become a filter that obscures our ability to see strengths. Acceptance of this principle doesn't mean that one ignores or minimizes problems; it means that one works hard to identify strengths as well as problems so that the helper and the client have a more balanced, accurate and hopeful picture.

Though it may be difficult, try to visualize how the father may view the social worker. Broadening your perspective can be done by asking, "What would it be like to be him right now?", "How might I feel?", "How might I respond?", etc. In this way, you can seek to reframe what may present as a negative into a strength.

**4. Principle: Everyone needs to be heard**

This principle is based on Covey’s “seek first to understand,” and is accomplished primarily through empathic listening. While empathic listening looks very much like active or reflective listening, what differentiates it is the listener’s motivation. Active and reflective listening are techniques that are often used to manage or manipulate someone’s behavior so that the listener can advance his own agenda. Empathic listening is motivated by the listener’s desire to truly understand someone’s point of view — to enter someone’s frame of reference — without a personal agenda. When one feels heard and understood, defensiveness and resistance are unnecessary, and solutions can be sought.

Let go of the “expert role.” Try to establish some mutual ground between the role of the worker and who the worker is personally. Use statements such as: “none of us is perfect,” “Yeah, I recall when...,” “I struggle too as a single parent.”

**5. Principle: Judgments can wait**

This principle recognizes that once a judgment is made, one’s tendency is to stop gathering new information or to interpret in light of the prior judgment. Therefore, since a helper’s judgments can have an immense impact on a client’s life, it is only fair to delay judgment as long as possible, then to hold it lightly, while remaining open to new information and willing to change one’s mind. Acceptance of this principle does not mean that decisions regarding safety cannot be made quickly; it simply requires that ultimate judgments be very well considered.

**6. Principle: Partnership is a process**

This principle recognizes that each of the six principles is part of a greater whole. While each has merit on its own, all are necessary for partnership. Each principle supports and strengthens the others. In addition, this principle acknowledges that putting the principles into practice consistently is hard. Acceptance of the principles is not enough; it requires intention and attention to practice the principles.

**8.3.**

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**Display PowerPoint 24** and discuss the following:

Though not one of the principles, a desire to develop a positive and authentic relationship with the client requires remaining sensitive to the cultural and gender differences between the worker and the client. Listen and take the time to get to know the father and how his experiences have shaped who his is today. The

worker should remain attentive to verbal and non-verbal responses that could be interpreted through a lens based on his gender and ethnic culture. Check things out; ask questions if there is a sense that the father has become offended. This is both a learning opportunity for the worker and a chance to show respect for the father's culture, and it stems from a genuine desire to create a healthy working relationship.

(Source for the Principles of Partnership: Appalachian Family Innovations. (2003). *Partners in change: A new perspective on child protective services* (curriculum). Morganton, NC: Author.)

Relationships that seek to influence and promote growth must be built on a foundation of mutual respect, honesty and commitment. The growth that occurs can be and often is a mutually beneficial learning experience. As the caseworker grows and learns, each future relationship will benefit from the previous experiences he or she has had. Social workers bring who they are and all of their experiences into the room. Who they are is a very powerful tool to achieve quality engagement with the client.

PPT 24



## Developing the Relationship

A desire to develop a positive and authentic relationship with your client requires that you remain sensitive to the **CULTURAL** and **GENDER** differences.

- Take the time to get to know them and how their experiences have shaped who they are today.
- Remain attentive to your verbal and non-verbal responses and how they may be interpreted from their cultural lens.
- Check things out and ask questions.

#### 8.4.

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Explain to participants that thus far much of the conversation has centered on the culture of manhood and fatherhood, and how each impacts how fathers are engaged. The variance in culture is not the only challenge social workers will encounter while engaging fathers in the cases involving their children. There are unique situations that social workers will likely encounter in practice, which are considered to be some of the primary barriers to successful involvement and engagement of the non-resident father. These include: expressions of anger, domestic violence, parental conflict and culturally different families. These are, of course, unique and complicated situations that make engagement of the non-resident father a very difficult undertaking.

However, efforts can be made to actively engage these fathers despite some of these issues, as long as safety is not compromised. It's important for social workers to adopt an attitude that embraces the engagement of non-resident fathers as an ongoing and required case practice. Practitioners should consider being attentive to what they are not doing to engage non-resident fathers, and work to do more.

#### 8.5.

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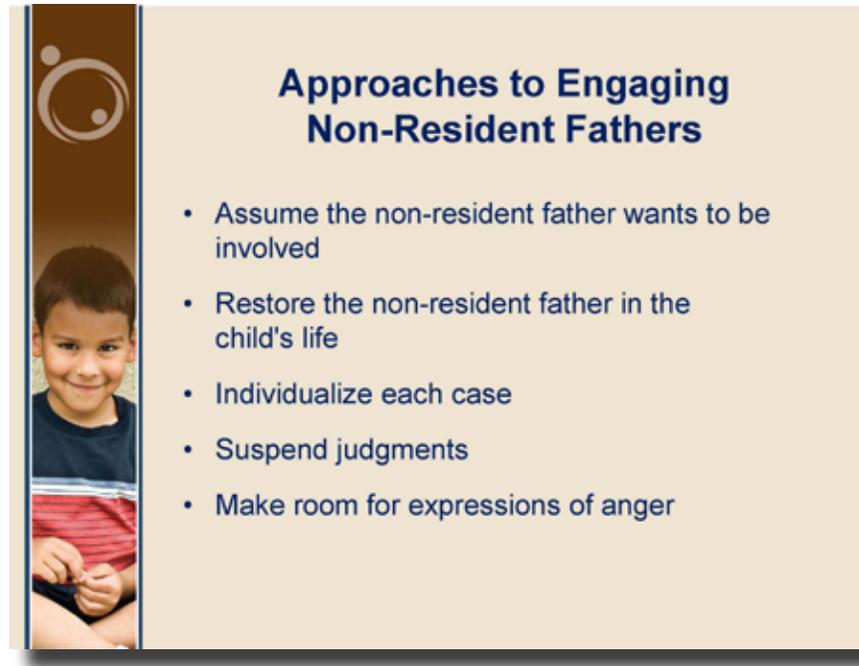
Explain to participants that none of these challenging situations reflect the population of all non-resident fathers involved in child welfare. As with many individuals and situations, each situation is unique in and of itself, and it bears reminding that each person and each situation should be assessed separately, rather than by applying generalities.

#### 8.6.

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Discuss with the participants the relevance of conflict in situations where anger is expressed or parental conflict is present. Noted experts in the area of conflict Joyce Hocker and William Wilmot (1995) define conflict as “the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals.” The key word is PERCEIVED. Perception is important, as it is what people start with during their initial interactions with others. This information has been included in the training because it provides valuable information on how to address the conflict that inhibits engagement of the non-resident father and transform the conflict into a partnership. **Display PowerPoint 25** and direct participants to **Handout 8-2: Tips for Transforming Conflict Into Partnerships**. The first step in preparing for challenging situations is to understand where conflict stems from.

PPT 25



**Approaches to Engaging Non-Resident Fathers**

- Assume the non-resident father wants to be involved
- Restore the non-resident father in the child's life
- Individualize each case
- Suspend judgments
- Make room for expressions of anger

Conflict stems from the following assumptions:

- Moralism is the cause of conflict (right vs. wrong).
- Conflict escalates because of the absence of communication, trust and relationships.
- Passion (strongest feelings surfacing) sustains conflict.
- Shame is a powerful stimulant for conflict.
- Problem with conflict is our difficulty in responding to it. We are challenged to find a way to address it.
- Conflict forces most of us beyond our comfortable limits.

Conflicts are usually decided in three ways: (1) by power — who had more; (2) by rights — determining who is right; and (3) by interest — reconciling of the underlying interests of both parties.

**Ask participants for examples, as time allows.**

**8.6.**

**Display PowerPoints 26 and 27** and deliver the following:

PPT 26



## Approaches to Engaging Non-Resident Fathers

- Seek first to understand
- Recognize and acknowledge previous experience with child welfare
- Transparency regarding agency's involvement and the non-resident father's role in the case process
- Acknowledge the power in your position along with empowering the non-resident father

PPT 27



## Approaches to Engaging Non-Resident Fathers

- Identify the non-resident father's strengths
- Increase his understanding of how important he is to his child
- Encourage opportunities for change, particularly if he is the person that caused the harm

Explain to participants the next couple of slides provide some helpful tips to transform conflicts into partnerships:

- Transformation takes place when the parties encounter the one question that separates them, when parties recognize each other's usefulness.
- Collaboration can resolve conflict by reconstructing the way people connect with one another — which helps chart the future. Collaboration implies a relationship. Collaboration can become a source of power.
- Physical and emotional safety must exist. If partnerships are going to be built, safety is essential. It is important then to establish some agreements about how you will relate to one another. Worker safety first and always must be the primary focus when addressing potentially conflict-laden situations
- Focus on future planning, not past events (“What will we do now?”).
- Conflicts do not need to be “resolved” in order to move forward by finding common ground.
- Everyone has a part; each is “responsible” and “powerful.” Responsibility and power are like two sides of the same coin — you can't have one without the other. If we are going to ask the father to have responsibility, then he will also need to have power.
- There must be sustained efforts to bridge apparent incompatibility of positions.
- Flexibility (in behaviors, courses of action, responses, etc.) is important.
- Three keys: Vision, Balanced Power, and Relational Thinking
  - To have vision is to have a common goal.
  - Abstain from the exercise of power, and work toward shared power, which is dynamic and entails making the best of all resources in the interest of the whole.
  - Learn to pay attention to the needs of others in the name of a common goal.

Tell participants to keep these strategies in mind as challenges continue to be discussed and to think about how they might transform potentially contentious situations into advantages in partnering with fathers.

## 8.7.

**Display PowerPoint 28** and explain to participants that three common challenges will be discussed along with the strategies to address these challenges. These are: expressions of anger, co-parenting and parental conflict, and culturally different families. Explain that though domestic violence is a very common challenge and a significant issue in child welfare, fathers with a past or present history of domestic violence are excluded from this project; therefore, they are not included in the presentation for this training.

PPT 28



## Approaches to Engaging Non-Resident Fathers

- Ask the non-resident father, “How would you like your child to remember you 10 to 15 years from now?”
- Remind the non-resident father that he is a role model for his child
- Explain agency expectations for the non-resident father

### 1. Expressions of Anger

It is natural for people to get angry. It's not likely that anyone can say that they have never been angry. To reframe how anger the perception many hold about anger, it is helpful to ask questions that get to the root cause of the anger, such as: “What is the anger really about” and “What does it stem from?” Non-resident fathers may feel judged, and that their every move is being evaluated from the perspective of a “bad dad,” and that they've come up short in some respect. The best course is to accept fathers' anger. Listen to what the father has to say, because everyone wants to be heard. The social worker doesn't have to agree with what he is saying, but offer an empathetic genuine ear so he can feel that he has been heard. Much of the discomfort that arises when another gets angry has more to do with the listener than the person expressing the anger (unless it is unsafe). How anger is expressed can make the “fight or flight” response set in. In this sense, “flight” may not be leaving the situation, but more of an attempt to disengage from the anxiety caused by the expression of anger. Social workers can use the anger as an opportunity to gain a fuller understanding of fathers' concerns.

Ask participants to turn to **Handout 8-3: Tips for Workers Working With Dads Who Are Angry**, and review some of the tips on how to handle expressions of anger.

## 2. Parental Conflict

Mothers are often the gatekeepers for their children, blocking the father's access to his child. This may be occurring for many reasons, some of them valid. Mothers may feel that they are the only one taking on the joy and burdens of parenthood and resent the father for it. They may fail to see the father's strengths and benefits to the child due to their own emotional state. The reasons are many and can affect the level of involvement a non-resident father ultimately will have in a child welfare case. Whatever picture the mother paints of the father is likely the first impression the caseworker will have, making it increasingly important for the worker to "suspend judgments" and get to know the father on his own merits, rather than based on the mother's opinion. In addition, the mother's reluctance to have the father involved may create a hesitance in the worker to reach out to the father and have him involved in the process. This reluctance may stem from efforts to maintain a working relationship with the mother or a belief in the mother's negative proclamations about the father. Whatever the case may be, it is important for the social worker to manage these challenges in order to engage the father. Direct participants to **Handout 8-4: Tips for Workers Working With Dads: Co-Parenting When Mom and Dad Don't Live Together and Are in Conflict**, and review a few points with the participants.

## 3. Culturally Different Families

Involvement of fathers may be even more difficult when non-resident fathers and the social worker are of different genders, races or ethnicity. In particular, social workers have reported a fear based on stereotypical perceptions of African American men. These social workers may hesitate to engage non-resident fathers of African American or Hispanic heritage despite the higher rates of shared child care responsibility than white fathers. Since parenting occurs within and interacts with cultural contexts, the socialization of children and childrearing practices may likely differ from white families. Minority parents raising their children may do so in a way that helps them navigate the racial and ethnic barriers experienced in society. In a study on the differences in parenting styles based on race and ethnicity, it was found that African American fathers may demonstrate less warmth with their children, but monitor them more, and that Hispanic fathers have consistently shown to demonstrate more warmth in parenting and exert less control over their children in the context of using shared kin responsibility (Hofferth, 2001). What also cannot be ignored is the fact that there is a greater likelihood that minority fathers will have been in the child welfare system at some point in their childhoods than Caucasian fathers. This is based on the rates of disproportionality that exist for African American, Native American and Hispanic children in the United States. Many

Native Alaskan fathers have found it difficult to parent effectively due to their own history of growing up in foster care or government boarding schools, resulting in fewer models for healthy family relationships that they can learn from (Berg, 2005). Direct participants to **Handout 8-5: Tips for Workers Working With Fathers Who Are Culturally Different**, and review a few of the tips noted on the handout.

#### 8.4.

**Display PowerPoint 29** and remind participants that over the course of the day, they have been in full view of strategies useful to engaging non-resident fathers. Many of these strategies have been used throughout the day. Trainer, take a few minutes to review the strategies again in preparation for the next activity, in which the participants will have a chance to use these strategies. Remind participants that these strategies are noted in **Handout 2-1: Effective Engagement Approaches With Non-Resident Fathers**, which was reviewed earlier in the day.

PPT 29



The image shows a PowerPoint slide with a light beige background and a dark brown vertical bar on the left. The title 'Transforming Conflict Into Partnerships' is centered at the top in a dark blue font. Below the title is a bulleted list of factors causing conflict. On the left side of the slide, there is a photograph of a man smiling with a young girl sitting on his shoulders, also smiling. The slide is framed with a dark border.

### Transforming Conflict Into Partnerships

- Conflict forces us beyond comfortable limits, and stems from:
  - Moralism
  - Absence of communication, trust & relationships
  - Passions
  - Shame
  - Challenge in our response to conflict
  - Power, rights & interests

### 8.5.

Inform participants that child welfare practitioners have a tendency to work less with non-resident fathers than with mothers. This training was developed as a step toward changing that. Many social workers have indicated a need for training on how to engage non-resident fathers in the case planning for the child. The literature describes several methods useful to social workers in engaging non-resident fathers. As these strategies are reviewed, recognize that each one must be used from the perspective of men and fathers.

### 8.6.

Review the following engagement strategies with participants:

- Start from the assumption that the father wants to be involved, and assist the father in developing a plan to make that happen. Too often, we start from the assumption that the father doesn't want to be involved and will be difficult to engage because traditional culture states that men are the providers and disconnected from their children, and women are the caretakers and nurturers of their children. Many of us may have been unconsciously socialized in adhering to these stereotypes, thus making the assumption that the father doesn't want to be involved. Changing this initial viewpoint can be a useful first step in your engagement.
- Facilitate the restoration of the father in the life of the child by co-creating goals based on his strengths, not his deficits. The traditional culture of manhood encourages admiring men for their physical strength, occupational status, economic gains and competitive spirit. If the father you are speaking with falls short in some way based upon what he and/or the social worker believes, it can present a barrier to successfully identifying his strengths. Remove those traditional cultural ideals and build in opportunities for success in the case planning by developing short-term goals that are achievable and that foster a feeling of accomplishment.
- Work on a case-by-case basis. Let each father speak for himself. The father may make the assumption that the social worker is assessing him through the lens of "dead beat," "absent," "no good" (to use that nomenclature) father. He may present as defensive because of this. Therefore, it is important to ensure that he is aware that you see him for who he is.
- Suspend judgments. You will hear negative things about the father, likely even before you have met him. There are two sides to every story, and the child is depending upon you to hear and evaluate both sides.
- Make room for expressions of anger. Anger is one of the few acceptable emotions for men and may be the only one they are comfortable expressing. There is a difference between expressions of anger, which are quite natural, and threatening behavior. We will discuss more about this in a little bit.

## 8.7.

**Display PowerPoint 30** and review the following:

PPT 30



The image shows a PowerPoint slide with a light beige background and a dark blue vertical bar on the left. The title 'Transforming Conflict Into Partnerships' is in large, bold, dark blue font. Below the title is a bulleted list of 'Helpful Tips' in dark blue font. The tips include: 'Ensuring physical and emotional safety is essential', 'Focus on future planning', 'Don't seek to resolve; seek to find common ground to move forward', 'Shared responsibility and power', 'Sustaining the effort to bridge incompatibility', and 'Flexibility in behaviors & course of action'. On the left side of the slide, there is a small photograph of a man and a woman kissing a baby.

### Transforming Conflict Into Partnerships

- **Helpful Tips:**
  - Ensuring physical and emotional safety is essential
  - Focus on future planning
  - Don't seek to resolve; seek to find common ground to move forward
  - Shared responsibility and power
  - Sustaining the effort to bridge incompatibility
  - Flexibility in behaviors & course of action

Seek to understand the father by practicing empathetic listening that is motivated by the desire to truly understand his point of view and his frame of reference, while suspending personal judgments.

A key part of empathetic listening is developing an understanding of who the father is; what his strengths and challenges are; what his hopes are for his future and his child's future. Carl Rogers, an influential American psychologist and one of the founders of the humanistic approach to psychotherapy — person-centered therapy — described three basic tenants: congruence, unconditional positive regard and empathy. This approach creates a platform from which the social worker can build trust and foster support for the father to be involved in the case. Each of these three basic tenets is defined below:

**Congruence** is the consistency that exists between thoughts and behaviors. It describes the existence of “genuineness” on the part of the social worker. If the father is being interviewed and the worker states to him, “I believe you are a great father,” yet the worker is thinking, “He will never be able to take care of his kids,” the worker is lacking congruence and it may interfere with his or her ability to truly listen and learn the father's strengths.

**Unconditional positive regard** refers to the social worker maintaining “regard” or kindness for the father despite his particular choices or characteristics. For example, if the father discloses to the worker a history of marijuana use, the social worker should remain respectful, kind and thoughtful toward the father to demonstrate unconditional positive regard regardless of his past use of marijuana.

**Empathy** reflects a profound interest in the father’s world view and feelings. As the social worker listens to him, he or she should think of the father as the only father on his or her caseload at that time.

Keeping these tenets in mind, the social worker sets the stage to both listen and learn from the father. Once the father has created an opportunity to be engaged by the social worker by agreeing to meet, it is then up to the worker to use that opportunity to learn who the father is, listen for his needs and help him develop some goals to remain involved in his child’s. If the father gets the sense that the social worker is genuinely listening for the purpose of understanding him rather than to exploit what is “wrong” with him, this will increase the opportunity for successful and useful engagement. What will emerge from listening are the values, beliefs, attitudes, perspectives and needs of the father.

## 8.8.

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Inform participants that an important aspect of engaging non-resident fathers is using a strengths-based approach and building a strengths-based relationship with non-resident fathers. Review the following action steps social workers can take with participants:

- Recognize and acknowledge the previous experiences the father may have had with child welfare. The worker should be cautious about trying to correct his assessment or explain his experience away. Seek to use his experience as a pivotal point to impact the course of his child’s life.
- Be clear and transparent about the reasons for the agency’s involvement and the father’s role throughout the process. Suspicion may be present and he may think he is only being sought for child support. Seek and support open feedback to ensure active, two-way communication and understanding between the social worker and the father.
- Acknowledge the social worker’s power, but remind the father of his own power to use his assets to keep his child safe. This can best be accomplished by remaining engaged and involved. Remember that men often struggle with feelings of helplessness and hopelessness so if they can “do” something to make a difference this may help them recognize their own power in the situation.

## 8.9.

**Display PowerPoint 31** and review the following:

PPT 31



The slide features a vertical image on the left showing a young boy smiling. The main content is on a light beige background with a dark brown header area containing a circular logo with three dots.

### Transforming Conflict Into Partnerships

- **Three keys:** *Vision, Balanced Power, and Relational Thinking*
  - To have vision is to have a common goal
  - Abstain from the exercise of power, and work toward shared power, which is dynamic — makes the best of all resources in the interest of the whole
  - Learn to pay attention to the needs of others for the common goal

- Help the non-resident father identify his assets. Use family and friends and other men who know the father to identify his strengths and how those strengths might be used to stay involved and relevant in the life of his child.
- Remind the father of how important he is in the life of the child, how there some things only he can provide and that his child will carry what he does with him or her forever.
- If he has been the person who has caused harm or been neglectful in some manner, encourage the opportunity to change. Let him know that he is not the sum of his mistakes and he has an opportunity to do something different at any point in his life; however, his children need him now.

## 8.10.

**Display PowerPoint 32** and review the following:

PPT 32



## Common Challenges to Non-Resident Father Engagement

- Expressions of anger
- Co-parenting and parental conflict
- Cultural attentiveness

- Ask the father how he wants his children to remember him 10-15 years from now. Even men who have been toxic to their families have positive visions about what they would like to mean to their children. It's a good "doorway" for non-defensive self reflection. You can ask: "How would you like your children to remember you?" If he describes a positive vision of how he would like his children to remember him, the social worker can ask: "What can you do to make that happen?" and "How can I help you with that?"
- Remind the father that he is a role model to his child. Boys learn about manhood from their fathers, and girls get a sense of what to expect from men from their fathers.
- Clearly and directly explain the expectations of the agency. Acknowledge that some of the expectations may seem unfair and unreasonable. Ask for any suggestions he may have to make it easier to meet those expectations, but do not promise any help that cannot be delivered.

Remind participants that some of these strategies may not appear necessarily specific to fathers and reflect good social work practice in general; however, the delineation of difference is identified through the cultural lens of a man and/or a father.

**Ask for thoughts, comments or questions. Proceed to the next activity if time allows.**

### **TRAINER NOTE**

Review this section briefly, as these strategies were already reviewed in Section 2.1. This review serves as a reminder for the upcoming exercises and also promotes transfer of learning.

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## **10-Minute Break**

Running Time: 5 hr., 30 min.

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## 9. Framing the Language for Engagement With Non-Resident Fathers

### Time

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Activity: 50 min.

Running Time: 6 hrs., 20 min.

### Purpose/Rationale

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To allow participants the opportunity to put into practice the strategies described, and formulate language that embraces the engagement strategies.

### Preparation

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- In step #2 of this activity, trainer should prepare a flip chart with the instructions A through D

### Materials

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- “Framing the Language” Scenarios Cards

### Handouts

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- 2-1: Father Engagement Strategies

#### 9.1.

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Let participants know that they will be engaging in an activity that will give them an opportunity to practice developing the language of engagement. Several strategies have been discussed to help social workers engage non-resident fathers. Tell participants that they will have the opportunity to practice developing the language (i.e., “what they would say”) while using the strategies as a guide to formulate questions, responses, comments, etc., when engaging non-resident fathers. To begin this activity, the trainer will do some behavior modeling so that participants know what engagement with fathers “looks like” when done in a way that facilitates healthy and positive engagement.

## 9.2.

State to participants, “Engagement should enhance the non-resident father’s involvement and promote ownership and collaboration. When these engagement strategies are used, the participants should stay focused on the collaboration/partnership aspect and not slip into a fact- or fault-finding focus. Workers should also be careful not to become prescriptive or uniform in how they approach and respond to fathers. This will require attentive listening to ensure understanding of the father’s unique needs and interests.”

## 9.3.

Refer participants to **Handout 2-1: Effective Engagement Approaches With Non-Resident Fathers** again for this exercise.

The trainer should conduct this activity in the following way:

1. Divide participants into five groups and pass out the scenario cards to each group.
2. Tell participants to assign a recorder and a reporter from each group.
3. Give each group 10 to 15 minutes to do the following:
  - A. Review the scenarios assigned to your group.
  - B. Identify the strengths noted based upon what you have read.
  - C. Identify the father’s needs...look beyond the surface.
  - D. Identify how to respond to the father’s concerns based on his strengths and needs.
4. Reconvene the large group and ask the reporter from each group to read their scenario and identify how they chose to respond to the father.
5. Allow 25 to 35 minutes to review responses and debrief.

### TRAINER NOTE

In preparation for this segment, trainers may want to role play the following example to show participants how to “develop the language”:

Trainer 1/Father: “I don’t see my son. I tried to be there when she was pregnant but it didn’t work out. I’m really not a bad person. I thought being a dad would be a great thing, but the more I tried to stay on track the more his mom would throw me off track. The longer I stayed away made it harder to ever try to get back into his life. Now he is almost 2 years old so I just left well enough alone.”

- Trainer 2/Caseworker: "It sounds like you may have some regret about your decision, is that true?"
- Trainer 1/Father: "Yeah, I would say that's true. But she's moved on and he doesn't even know me now."
- Trainer 2/Caseworker: "What I know is that no matter how much time has passed, you are very important in the life of your child. There are things that only you can give your son, things that he will carry with him forever. If you decided to continue to stay away, you will still be important to him because he will likely think of you and want to know who you are."
- Trainer 1/Father: "Why, when he doesn't know me to begin with?"
- Trainer 2/Caseworker: "Because you helped to create him and that may be a connection that will always be absent for him if he didn't have you in his life. Children deserve to remain connected to their fathers. They do better in their lives, in school and with friends when they have their father. Let me ask you this, why were you excited about becoming a father?"
- Trainer 1/Father: "Because it would give me the chance to give him what I didn't have when I was growing up. My father was there but he wasn't, understand what I mean. He drank a lot and didn't spend much time with us. He was kind of mean."
- Trainer 2/Caseworker: "That is a really great place to start. It sounds like you have a lot you would like to offer your son and you obviously care for him deeply. That is a great place to start. Let's think about how you would like your son to remember you 10 years from now. If someone asked him, 'What is your dad like?', what would you want him to be able to say?"



### TRAINER NOTE

In developing the language, participants should use the handout to identify what particular strategies would be important to highlight with their particular scenario. For example, if the caseworker is preparing a father who doesn't believe he has anything to offer his child, it would be important for the caseworker to focus on the principle that "everyone has strengths," and develop language that is inclusive of that principle.



## **TRAINER NOTE**

### **SCENARIO CARDS**

#### **Scenario 1 – Father states...**

I appreciate you all trying to help my kid and everything, but I don't have anything to offer them. I've been struggling to keep a job, all I can get right now is temp work and most times that isn't enough. I'm living with my brother and his wife because I got evicted from my own place. I wish I could be involved with my two kids but I just don't know. I feel like a failure (as a man).

#### **Scenario 2 – Father states...**

You met my baby's mom right? So, you know she's crazy. I can't fool around with her. I'll end up going to jail. She is always threatening to call the police on me. Yeah, we get into fights and sometimes it gets physical... she pushes me and I push her back off me. She throws stuff at me, screams at me and I end up leaving her alone for a few days to let her cool off. I love my baby girl and all, but I don't know. How can I be in her life if we are always arguing around her, that can't be good for a baby right?

#### **Scenario 3 – Father states...**

I know how the welfare works. I got placed in foster care when I was a kid. I don't trust you people to do anything for me or anything for my kid. I just want you out of our lives. I know his mom made a mistake and all leaving him alone for a time, but that can't be as bad as sending him to foster care. I know what it was like. You all are going to make us jump through a bunch of hoops and it still won't be good enough. You keep him in foster care with people that don't care about him and are there just to collect a paycheck, just like you. There isn't anything you can offer me other than letting my kid out of foster care.

#### **Scenario 4 – Father states...**

I really can't help you all out. I have two other children I have to take care of and I can't afford to be ordered to pay more child support. I'm barely making it now. I do love my kids, I want you to know that and I will do what I can for them but honestly, I am afraid of what might happen if I get involved in all this. I was put in jail once because I got behind in my child support. I nearly lost my job. I have a steady job now and I don't want to end up back in jail so I think it's best for me to say out of this.

**Scenario 5 – Father states...**

You don't understand how my family works. I got spankings when I was a kid and that's the best way I know how to teach a kid. Nowadays other people want to get involved in what is family business. I know it was the school that called you and they need to mind their own business, too. My son is 7 years old and when he does wrong he needs to get a whipping. I don't want him out there gang-banging, dealing drugs and all that. I need to teach him now. None of you people understand that. A few marks on his behind are better than a gunshot in his gut.

**Scenario 6 – Father states...**

I just recently learned that I had a child. She told me that she doesn't want, nor does she need me to be involved, in the baby's life. I have a very busy life with many work demands. I don't know that I am ready to start a family yet so I am trying to respect her desire and move forward with what I believe is best for me.

**Scenario 7 – Father states...**

I don't see my baby. My ex novias tío (girlfriend's uncle) don't like me too much. They told me to stay away from her and the criatura (baby). I don't like the hassle so I just stayed away. My hija (daughter), she seems to have enough people around her that can help her grow up. She doesn't need me.



## 10. Activity: Moving to Solutions and Practice Implementation

### Time

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Activity Time: 55 min.

Running Time: 7 hrs., 15 min.

### Purpose/Rationale

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Using the barriers discussed to identify specific and relevant strategies to foster successful engagement of non-resident fathers in the child welfare system. To offer participants an opportunity to use strategies developed in role play or simulation activities.

### Preparation

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- None

### Materials

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- PowerPoints 33-34
- Barriers scenarios
- Role play cards

### Handouts

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- 10 -1: Case Scenarios
- 10-2: Observer Worksheet

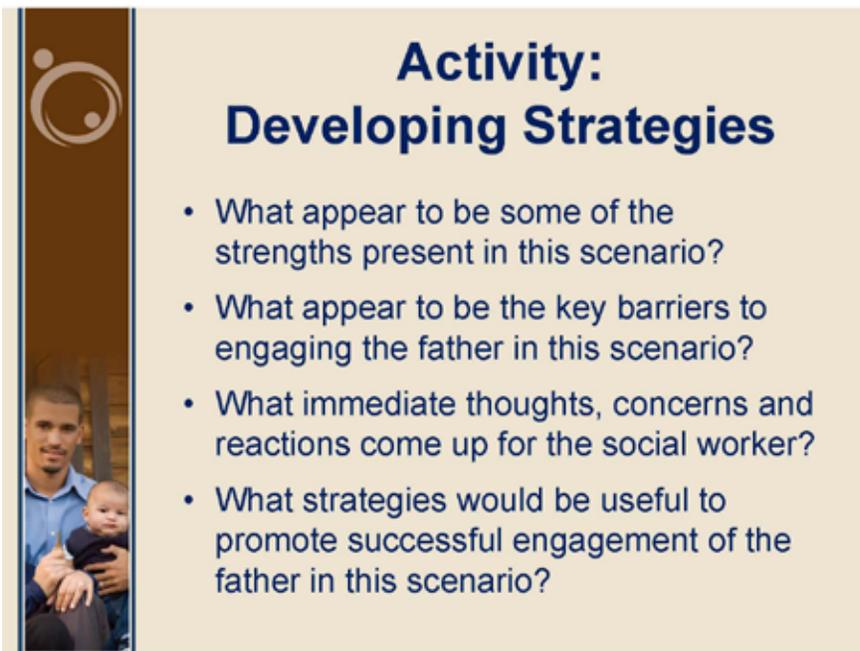
## 10.1.

In the next activity, social workers will practice skills as if they were meeting with the non-resident father. There are key factors that social workers should be aware of (based on the scenarios provided) and participants will want to walk into the meeting armed with these strategies that will foster successful engagement. Ask participants to recall the strategies used in the “Framing the Language” activity conducted earlier.

## 10.2.

Tell participants that as they review the case situations described in **Handout 10-1: Case Scenarios**, consider the questions noted on the PowerPoint (**display PowerPoint 33**). Tell participants to make some notes to guide them as they reflect on these questions individually. Also explain to participants that just as they are to have knowledge of a number of cases in actual practice, they should also be familiar with the four case scenarios as they will not know for certain which case scenario they will be role playing. (Give participants 5 to 10 minutes to review Handout 10-1: Case Scenarios and make notes...no more than 10 minutes.)

PPT 33



**Activity:**  
**Developing Strategies**

- What appear to be some of the strengths present in this scenario?
- What appear to be the key barriers to engaging the father in this scenario?
- What immediate thoughts, concerns and reactions come up for the social worker?
- What strategies would be useful to promote successful engagement of the father in this scenario?

The slide features a vertical decorative bar on the left side. The top portion of the bar contains a stylized circular logo with two dots. The bottom portion of the bar contains a photograph of a man in a blue shirt holding a baby.

1. What appear to be some of the strengths present in this scenario?
2. What appear to be the key barriers to engaging the father in this scenario?
3. What immediate thoughts, concerns and reactions come up for the social worker?
4. What strategies would be useful to promote successful engagement of the father in this scenario?

### 10.3.

**Display PowerPoint 34**, discuss the observer's role and refer participants to **Handout 10-2: Observer Worksheet** to use during the exercise.

PPT 34



The image shows a PowerPoint slide with a blue header and a light beige background. On the left side, there is a vertical strip with a blue background containing a white circular logo and a photograph of a man kissing a child on the cheek. The main content of the slide is as follows:

**Activity:  
Role Play Triads**

- Social Worker
- Non-Resident Father
- Observer – your role is to...
  - Note engagement strategies used
  - Provide feedback on what was effective and what were some challenges
  - Give any additional suggestions relative to your observations

### 10.4.

Describe the following instructions to participants for the Role Play Triads:

- Divide participants into groups of three. Explain that each participant will have the opportunity to play the role of the social worker, the father and the observer
- Hand out the “Role Play Cue Cards.” Be sure that each person in the triad has a different color cue card. Each color represents a different role.
- Ask participants playing the “father” to let the person playing the “worker” which case situation (1, 2, 3 or 4) they are role playing. The worker will NOT be aware of what is on the “father’s” cue card.

- Observer will take notes on the strategies used by the caseworker that appear to be effective in identifying strengths, mobilizing strengths, understanding the specific father's needs and engagement. Observers will also note strategies that impede the above.
- Each role play should be allotted eight minutes.
- Following each role play, triad members will have a five-minute debrief and identify a successful strategy on the observer worksheet (Handout 10-2).
- Repeat activity until each triad member has played each of the roles.
- At the end of the exercise, debrief with participant and identify strategies that worked well and seemed effective, those that did not seem very effective and areas requiring improvement.



### TRAINER NOTE

As a variation to this exercise, trainers may instruct triads to use only one role-play cue card, and to rotate roles after each 8-minute segment, while continuing the same role-play where the last role-play segment left off.



### TRAINER NOTE

#### **1. Little to no information on father and caseworker reluctance to involve father**

John and Vanessa are the parents to Ricky (1) and Gina (3). John and Vanessa were involved in a relationship for a little over four years and broke up almost two years ago, shortly after she got pregnant with Ricky. Vanessa has not seen or heard from John since he left. The children came to the attention of social services after Mom was unable to care for the children due to some mental health concerns. She contacted social services herself seeking help. As the caseworker begins to investigate the case, s/he is unable to obtain information on the father. Vanessa does not have any information as to John's whereabouts. The caseworker has struggled to locate John and has resisted doing so because s/he believes the father is nothing but a "deadbeat" anyway, and thinks it's unfair for him to be involved when he left his family. The caseworker has only taken real initiative in finding the father after pushed by the supervisor.

**Role 1-1**

John, you are being approached by the worker as s/he begins the investigation. You are presenting as resistant and affronted because you don't want to be involved. You do pretty well for yourself running your own small business and you really don't want to have to pay child support for kids that you don't believe are yours. You broke up with Vanessa due to her serial cheating behavior. A paternity test has never been completed. You have moved on and are in a good relationship and do not see how you can be of any use to the children, particularly because you haven't been in their lives.

**2. Mother's gatekeeping – blocking access**

George and Marie are the parents to Clint (2 years old). They broke up just after George found out Marie was pregnant with their son. George has not had any contact with Marie since they broke up. Their breakup was pretty bad, as Marie suspected Dad of using drugs and cheating on her. Marie is now involved with Thomas. Their relationship is going well and she plans to marry Thomas. Thomas is a good man and a very hard worker. She doesn't want George to have any access to Clint. She believes Thomas will be a better father to Clint than George would ever be. Thomas is open to treating Clint as his own child. George was contacted by CPS after Clint was found wandering around outside of the apartment Marie and Clint lived in. He learned that Marie left him sleeping at home while she went to the store.

**Role 2-1**

George is ambivalent about getting involved in the case. He heard about Marie beginning a relationship with Thomas and believes he is a good man. George doesn't have a job right now and is living with his parents. He believes that Clint would be better off with Thomas as his father.

**Role 2-2**

George presents as resistant to meeting with the worker but finally agrees. He is ashamed of his behavior toward his ex-girlfriend and his son, and does not know how to rectify it. It has been easier for him to ignore what he did and move on than try to address the situation. He loves his son, but knows he will have an uphill battle to make things right with his son and his mother.

### **3. Mother's gate-keeping – blocking access**

Cynthia's children, Emily (10) and Nicolas (7) were brought into care due to neglect. Cynthia has a history of depression and she goes on and off her medication, resulting in a depressed mood and making her unavailable to attend to the children. The children have missed a lot of school, at times walk to the grocery store to shop for food, cook for themselves and attend to other needs they have when their mother is depressed. As the worker, you have asked Cynthia for the name of the father to her children. She states to you that she doesn't know and if she did she wouldn't tell CPS because then he might try and take the kids away from her. You get the sense that Mom is not being truthful about not knowing the whereabouts of the children's father. The children seemed to have adapted to their mother's depression. They know the signs and have developed the ability to attend to their own needs along with their mother's. They love their mother very much and when she is not depressed, she is a great mom. They do a lot of fun things together such as going on picnics, movies and hanging out with each other at home just having fun. They don't mind doing what they have to when their mom is "sick." The children are very protective of their mother and don't talk to others about her "sick" days. When the worker asks the kids about their father, they simply state they don't know where he is and don't offer anything more. Based on the way the children reacted when asked about their father, the worker wonders if the children have been coached to say this so that no one becomes aware of the challenges the family experiences in the home.

#### **Role 3-1**

After Mom finally discloses the identity of the father and you are able to meet with him, Dave is upset that he has been kept in the dark about what his children having been living through. He travels a lot for his job so he doesn't see the children as often as he would like. The children have never given any indication that something was wrong. Dave faults himself for not paying closer attention. He is very angry with their mother and when he is being interviewed by the worker, he is considering seeking custody of the children.

#### **Role 3-2**

Through the social worker's diligent search effort, the father is located. He was unaware that he even had children. He had a short-term relationship with Cynthia, but was never advised that she was pregnant. He, of course, is caught off guard, stunned and unsure how to handle this new information. The children are in foster care and he feels torn between his responsibilities to his career, his current relationship and his new responsibility to children he didn't know he had.

#### **4. Caseworker lack of confidence in father's parenting skills**

The Jackson family came to the attention of social services based on reports that the children, Jarrell (5) and Samuel (2), had been left home unattended multiple times. Upon investigation, intake workers learned that Vera, the children's mother, was hooked on crack cocaine and had been leaving the children unsupervised. Jarrell often took care of himself and his younger brother, Samuel, when their mother was not home. Through the investigation, the intake worker learned that Jarrell's father, Charles, was involved in his life and though he is not Samuel's biological father, he treats Samuel like his own son. Charles visited with his children regularly. He would often make an effort to go see them at their maternal grandmother's when they were there because he and their mother didn't get along. Visitation was set up by CPS for both Vera and Charles three weeks after the children were placed in care. Vera has not attempted to visit with her children, but Charles has had two visits with the children so far. CPS has recommended an interactional evaluation to observe his interaction with the children and get a sense of his parenting abilities. The caseworker identified some concerns based on lack of joy at reunion and lack of structure during the visit, and inability of Dad to console Charles when he was crying. The caseworker does not want to recommend the children to father's custody until the results of the interactional come back and there are more visits observed.

##### **Role 4-1**

Charles had a sense that something was not right in the home the boys lived in with their mother. He has expressed frustration over what was occurring with the boys; however, he wasn't sure what he could do. He is barely making ends meet right now as a used car salesman. Charles believes that he has always been a good father to the boys, even to Samuel, though he isn't his biological son. He thinks the children enjoy their time with him. Now CPS is telling him that they need to observe him with the children before they will allow them to come home with him. He is growing increasingly frustrated with the situation, though he is trying to keep calm as CPS has the ability to keep him from seeing his children at all. He acknowledges that the first two visits seemed awkward, because he is uncomfortable with being viewed under a microscope, and the children seemed to react differently to him. At the time of the first visit, he had not seen them in three weeks.

##### **Role 4-2**

Charles loves his kids and wants them to be well taken care of, but he is unsure if he can do it. He is a used car salesman, doesn't make a lot of money and already

has another child on the way. He wants to get custody of Samuel, but thinks Jarrell might be better off in foster care. He is ambivalent about taking on the role of parenting Jarrell. Would it mean that he would be responsible for child support if Mom eventually got him back? What would it mean to the relationship he currently has with his girlfriend and their new baby? He loves Jarrell, but just isn't sure he wants to take custody of him.



## 10. Closing Activities

### Time

Activity Time: 15 minutes

Running Time: 7 hrs., 30 min.

### Purpose/Rationale

To encourage future use of what participants have learned over the course of the day.

### Preparation

- None

### Materials

- PowerPoints 35 and 36
- Flip-chart paper

### Handouts

- 11-1: Non-Resident Father Resources

#### 11.1.

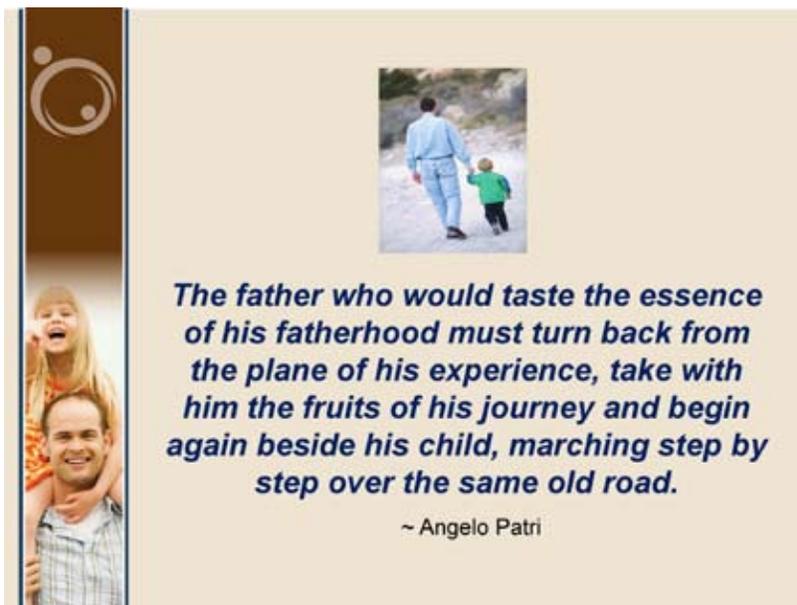
Display **PowerPoints 35 and 36** and ask participants to recall that throughout the day information related to values about fathers held by social workers, the challenges of engaging fathers and the number of benefits to engaging fathers have been discussed. They have also had an opportunity to further their understanding of the culture of men and fathers and how the variance in perspectives may either help or hinder their efforts to engage fathers. Finally, they have been able to put what they've learned throughout the day into practice. At this point, ask participants to take a few minutes to reflect on what they've gained from this training and how it might help increase their efforts and successes in engaging fathers in the cases involving their children.

PPT 35



***It doesn't matter who my father was;  
it matters who I remember he was.***  
~Anne Sexton

PPT 36



***The father who would taste the essence  
of his fatherhood must turn back from  
the plane of his experience, take with  
him the fruits of his journey and begin  
again beside his child, marching step by  
step over the same old road.***  
~ Angelo Patri

## 11.2

Divide participants into six groups. Each group will need one marker and one piece of flip-chart paper. Each group will write down their responses to the following:

1. Ask each table to develop a list identifying at least three areas of learning from the training and three things they will employ in practice within the next 30 days.
2. Allow five minutes for participants to develop their list.
3. Allow two minutes for report-outs from a few participants.
4. Ask for any final thoughts or questions and thank participants for their time and attention.
5. Have participants complete training evaluations.

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