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Office of Family Assistance

National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse



NRFC Webinar Series

Working with Young Fathers: Tips from the Field

Transcript

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Moderator:

- Nigel Vann, Product Lead, National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

Presenters:

- Johnny Wilson, Executive Director, Young Fathers of Santa Fe
- Haki Nkrumah, Founder and CEO, Young Fathers of Central Florida

Operator: Good day and welcome to the Office of Family Assistance National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse webinar entitled "Working with Young Fathers: Tips from the Field." As a reminder, today's conference is being recorded. At this time, I'd like to turn the conference over to Nigel Vann. Please go ahead, Sir.

Nigel Vann: Thank you very much and good morning and good afternoon everybody. Thank you very much for joining us. For those of you who may be joining us for the first time, I just want to let you know that we do provide these webinars on a bimonthly basis, and there's a bunch of other resources available. The idea is to maintain a learning community that you can contribute to and learn from. As always, we welcome and encourage your input and participation.

Just a few notes and reminders about the screen that you're seeing — well, this webinar is being recorded, so there'll be a recording of the webinar that you can listen to, a transcript, and all the presentation materials. They'll be posted on our website, www.fatherhood.gov, in the next few weeks, so you can check back and review this if you want to at that time. At the end of the webinar, there will be a Q & A session with the presenters, and if you have a specific question for the presenters, we ask you to put that in the box that you can see in the bottom right hand corner of your screen, which says "Ask a Question." We'll ask as many question at the — during the Q & A period as we can. If we don't get to all of them, we'll ask the presenters to send us some of those replies, and we'll post those on the website.

You'll also see on the left of your screen, and I see quite a few of you have already found that, there is the Chat box, and you can chat among yourselves there, introduce yourselves to each other, and we certainly encourage that. At the bottom of the screen, there's a section with Downloadable Resources. You can download the bios for each of our presenters there. There's also a list of helpful resources that you can download, and there's a lot of good information in there. In the bottom left corner, there's a number of websites, including websites for the Clearinghouse and the two presenters today.

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...This is just an overview slide of the Clearinghouse, and I know those of you who have been on before have seen this, so we just wanted to make sure you're aware of what we have. The work we do here at the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse is supported by funds from the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance. The resources are useful for fatherhood practitioners, fathers, researchers [and] policy makers.

You can find the materials at our website, www.fatherhood.gov. We've highlighted a couple of the links within the website. You can find our toolkit www.fatherhood.gov/toolkit [Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit], which we're going to say a bit more about in a minute. You can also find archives of all our webinars, www.fatherhood.gov/webinars. You can always send us an email at info@fatherhood.gov.

We particularly encourage you to make note of the phone number there 1-877-4DAD411 (877-432-3411). That's the number where there are professional mediators on that line. There are people who know about fatherhood programs around the country, so you can call with any questions. You can encourage fathers and mothers to call. I mean, it's particularly useful, if you have a father and mother who have some kind of issue that they would like someone to talk to about that. We can help with child support issues and all sorts of things, so it's a very useful resource, and we always encourage people to take note of that and share it with the fathers you work with. And you can join us via Facebook [<https://www.facebook.com/fatherhoodgov/>] and Twitter [twitter.com/fatherhoodgov] as well.

Also, I want to draw your attention to the bottom of the screen where we have a few emails: Kenneth Braswell [kenneth.braswell@gmail.com], who's the Project Director for the Clearinghouse; Patrick Patterson [patrick.patterson@icf.com], our Project Manager; and we also have a new representative at the Office of Family Assistance, John Allen [john.allen@acf.hhs.gov]. Unfortunately, John hasn't been able to join us this morning, but he will be here with us for future webinars.

What we're going to be talking about today, again, is working with young fathers. As part of that, we're going to give you an overview of the latest addition to our Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit called *Working with Young Fathers*.

And then we're going to have tips from two extremely experienced practitioners. They've both got 20 years or more experience working with fathers in one way or another. You can just see a small picture there, where you'll see Haki Nkrumah there in the white shirt, and he's the Founder and CEO of the Young Fathers of Central Florida based in Orlando, Florida. On the far right of that picture is Johnny Wilson. He's the Executive Director of the Young Fathers of Santa Fe here in New Mexico, which is where I'm stationed as well. You'll be hearing from both of them. They have a lot of tips and experience to share with you.

Again, you can download those resources from the helpful resources box. It includes resources that are also in that toolkit section. It actually doesn't — the list there, it just gives you a link to those, but it's also got some more recent resources that I think you might find particularly interesting, including a toolkit that's from the Office of Adolescent Health. There's also a spanking, brand new report from January of this year from the Center for the Study of Social Policy, and it's got some interesting stuff. And then, again, we're going to end the webinar with a Q & A session with the presenters, so do send your questions in for that. Again, this is just a reminder where you put your questions.

Let me move into talking more about what you've got in the toolkit here. If you haven't been to www.fatherhood.gov/toolkit, we certainly encourage you to. You can download any of the materials there. You can print out the toolkit as well. We don't

have any more hard copies of this, but it is there for you to delve into. It's been online since 2013. As the name implies, it really is a Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit: Resources From the Field.

Much of the content comes from conversations, interviews, [and] site visits that we've had with experienced practitioners over the years, people who have been there, done that for a good long while. The toolkit also draws on published research and many other resources. There's tips and suggestions from the field. There's links to relevant resources. There's activities that you can download. The activities have been excerpted from many of the leading fatherhood curricula, so if you're looking for a new activity to engage the dads you work with, you might well find something useful in there, so that's in the Activities section.

You can see in the brown buttons there. The first one is the Home button, and then you can click on About, Start, Build, Work. Activities is where you find the downloading activities. In the Work section, you'll see that's where we recently added this section on working with young fathers. The toolkit itself is intended as a living document, so we really do invite feedback and recommendations for the new content and resources that might be added to it. But the last one, as I said, is this one on the young fathers. We also recently added a section on working with incarcerated fathers, which was the topic of our last webinar in January.

One other thing I would note about this, given that we're going to be hearing from Johnny Wilson from the Young Fathers of Santa Fe. There's quite a few quotes in here from a former colleague of his, Barry McIntosh, who was the original Director there at the Young Fathers program in Santa Fe. And we've got several quotes from him that have stuck with me over the years, including — he said a couple of things like, "When you first meet a dad, you should be spending more time listening to him than talking to him." I.e., you've got hear what his needs are before you start telling him what you can do for him. When you do start talking about what your program might be able to do for them, Barry always used to say as well, "However much you want to help him, be very careful you don't over-promise." Don't promise anything that you can't deliver, that you're not sure you can deliver.

Another thing I'd like to point out here is, that I think you'll find this in the About section, we have a short section on the development of the responsible fatherhood field, which really goes back to the mid '70s and '80s. That's when the work was really starting to take root. It's interesting, I think, to note that a lot of that early work, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s — it was focused on teen fathers and younger fathers. I think that was partly an offshoot of work that was being done at the time to support young mothers and also to help reduce teen pregnancy rates.

There was a growing recognition that you just couldn't work with the girls. You really had to start working with the boys. But that was actually brought home to me when I first got involved in this work, which was in 1988, and one of the first publications I picked up was from the Children's Defense Fund, and it was titled "What about the Boys?" What are we doing for the boys? Since then, we've seen a real growth in the number of programs for fathers, but that there really were quite a few around at that time as well.

During the '90s, we saw more emphasis, I think, on helping older dads often with employment and child support issues, and that was obviously, because — that was often because there were public policy points you could make and arguments for funding, if you could help guys get a job and pay their child support.

Since 2006, the field has really benefited from increased federal support through the Office of Family Assistance providing funds for programs and initiatives, including, of course, the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse.

Back in those early days, in the '80s and '90s in particular, there was a growing number of small community-level initiatives that were just really grassroots affairs that were seeing the need to help young dads. The first job I had was managing a two-county

program for dads in Maryland, and I remember I started looking around to see who else was doing this work. And I was really surprised that there were a lot of these programs around the country, and then there were also a couple of national demonstrations that you can read about in this section of the Toolkit.

There was a teen fatherhood collaboration from 1983 to '85 that involved eight sites around the country. And then there was the Young Unwed Fathers Pilot Project in the early '90s. They had six sites. The teen fatherhood one had eight sites. But they both showed that contrary to a lot of stereotypes, young dads were more involved in their children's lives. It may have been obviously those are the kind of dads that would come to the program. But dads did want to be involved in the lives of their children, and then they would participate in programs if those programs were organized in a way that the dads felt welcomed and really felt that they could get something out of those programs.

Now, I was fortunate to work on that Young Unwed Fathers Pilot Project. I was a program officer for the sites in that project around the country, so that for me is really when I — well, since then become what I do. Without working on that project, I'm not quite sure where my life would have gone, but it was — as a result of that, I really felt that we could have some of the biggest impacts in this work by working with the younger dads while they're still in a good relationship with the mother of their children and before they begin to accrue a lot of child support debt.

It's really encouraging, actually, to see the — I think, although, there was perhaps a dip in the number of program working with the younger dads in the '90s and even the early '00s, but in the last five or 10 years, it just seems like there's an increased emphasis, again, on programs that are working with dads. There's a bit of an upsurge going on, I think. We're seeing programs like Healthy Start and other home visiting programs that are really reaching out more to the younger dads, to the first-time dads. We're going to hear more along those lines from Haki when he gives his presentation.

He's been providing a national teen and young fathers conference for I think five years now. He was telling me how he's seen a big increase in the number of programs that attend that conference, but also just other programs around the country that have been talking to him about their work. I just wanted to lay the ground work for what we're going to be talking about in a little bit there.

Now here's a closer look at what we have in this new Toolkit section on Working with Young Fathers. There's a section on the challenges that young fathers face, and we spoke about some of those in the announcement for this webinar, which included — we said while they face the same demands as all new fathers, young fathers in their teens and early 20s face additional challenges as they move from adolescence into adulthood. You're still figuring out who you are as a person and now you've got to figure out how you become a parent. It's hard enough at the best of times to figure that out, so trying to figure it out when you still have not made the full move to the adulthood, which is true for a lot of guys in their 20s, even going into their 30s sometimes I think. I became a father in my early 30s, and I'm not quite sure how I would have handled it if it was earlier.

A lot of these guys — they haven't finished high school. They may not be married or even been with the mother of their child, and they feel excluded from the father role either by some of the extended family. You hear about the gatekeeping on the mother's side of the family or institutions, such as schools and healthcare facilities that don't treat the fathers as though they really are the father of the child. Also, the employment situation — there's a lot of young guys, particularly minority guys that are faced with in today's economy. So it is a real challenge there, and there's a real need for programs to help them with those challenges and to help them stay involved, because unfortunately although research shows us that a lot of young fathers are involved and do want to be involved during those first few months and first few years, it does become increasingly hard for

them to stay involved. We need to provide these supports to help them do that. So I'm very encouraged that so many of you have joined us today to listen and participate in this conversation.

The other sections of the Toolkit, you can see there. I'm just going to give you a few of the top takeaways that come from this, but it certainly is important to talk about what works in terms of recruitment for younger dads, what you have to do differently when you're talking to younger dads, then if you're talking to older dads. How do you help them with these co-parenting issues that can be really confusing? How do you help them deal with child support? How do you help them focus on their education and training, particularly if they're seeing the need to get a job, so they can start paying child support? How do you talk to them about delaying subsequent pregnancies when it may not be in their best interest to have another child too soon? We've also got some spotlights for a few programs, including the Young Fathers of Santa Fe program.

There's a section in here where we offer a few short tips from veteran practitioners, and this is just a sample of those. It's very important to realize that when you're talking to these young guys and saying "Hey, we got a program to help you," be cognizant of the fact that they may have heard this from other people, and they may not trust you, if they've been let down by other adults in their lives. So you really want to have staff who can be real, who can be sincere and approachable and nonjudgmental when you're talking to these guys. I can remember being in programs where guys are talking about how many children they have by different mothers, and yet they're still in their teens, and you see staff rolling their eyes at that. You've got to be careful what kind of messages you send to men.

But you got to look for the right staff, and the earlier you can connect with dads, the better. If you can do it before the child's born, you can help them be there for that magic moment when the baby's born.

Here's just a few more tips. To connect with them, you've got to go where they are. You've got to get out in the community. You've got to go to the basketball court. You've got to go to the barber shop. You've got to go to places where you can talk to guys informally, just hear what's going on and then if you've got something that you can offer to help, then you can continue that conversation. You've also got to think about using social media. Although, just a couple of other words of caution on that front. We took a look at some of the latest research in terms of social media usage. Although the number of people on social media has obviously skyrocketed over the last years, but back in 2005, only 7 percent of adults, according to surveys were regularly involved with social media. Now, there's 65 percent of adults who regularly use social media. There's 90 percent of people at age 18 to 29 using social media, compared to 12 percent, back in '05.

But there are some income differentials, whereas there's a great number of people of higher income are using social media, only 56 percent of the lowest income people regularly engage in social media, and only 54 percent of people who have a high school diploma or less, apparently, engage with social media on a regular basis. You need to touch base with the guys you work with and make sure what kind of social media or communication platforms they may use, because not only do you want to use that to let people know what you do at your program, but once they're in the program, you need ways to stay in touch with them. If they miss a session, how do you reach out to them, so just — those are a few of the tips that we have had from people.

Also, practitioners talk about the real value of challenging young fathers to share their new knowledge and skills with others. It can really be useful, if you've got a new group of guys starting your program to, in that first introductory session, have some folks who have already been through the program to talk about how it impacted their lives, or to go out as you make presentations to other people in the community. It's not only a useful recruitment tool, but it's empowering for those young men to be sharing with others what they've learned, and it's really interesting to hear those sometimes.

Then, just to — at the end of the toolkit section, and this is true for all the sections of the toolkit, we summarize a few of the top takeaways that we've been discussing in the rest of the section. Again, it's important to have an understanding, caring staff, who can talk and relate to the younger guys. As you design programs, you have to be thinking about the services they need and how you're going to provide those, and recognize that you can't do all that within one program, so you need to have these community linkages. Again with the younger guys, we heard a lot of the practitioners talk about the fact that it can be a trap to think, Oh, if I become a father now, I've got to stop all my education, and I've got to get a job now. I've got to support these kids. Even if it's not paying child support, it's just supporting. You've got to buy those diapers. Someone's got to do that. So helping guys find a balance between getting themselves some income but continuing with their education, continuing with trainings, so they can improve their job skills.

We've also heard that teenage fathers, in particular, as opposed to maybe the guys in the younger 20s — when we're talking about young fathers, we're really talking about guys age 16 to 25, maybe 14 to 25. But some of those younger guys, some practitioners find that it's perhaps easier to have them in a separate group from some of the older guys. Although, you also hear from other folk, it's good to have them all together — let the young guys hear from guys who have been there, done that, some of the wiser heads. Absolutely think about what's going to work best for you.

It's also very important to work with other family members. A lot of times, the young couple aren't living together. They're still living with their parents, so you need the support of the parents. I mentioned the fact that you hear about the gatekeeping role that the maternal grandmother may play in some cases. You hear stories about maternal grandmothers who have been telling their daughter, "Don't do what I did," and now she's pregnant. And who do you blame? Do you blame her? Do you blame that young guy, or do you help embrace and support them both?

Fathers need some help in understanding the feelings of some of the grandparents, but they need help in figuring out how to talk to the grandparents. The more you can reach out to other extended family members and pull them into this co-parenting team to help the children and keep the focus on the kids, the better. We're going to be hearing about a few of these ideas from our presenters today.

Also, ways to help them think about spacing out those future pregnancies. There's a very good resource in the Resources section of the Toolkit that comes from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. There's some activities in there that you can use to work with teen, young couples to help them talk more about how to delay future pregnancies.

Let's see, what do we have here next? Yeah, we're going to bring Johnny up in a minute now just to talk about this, so I just want first to ask Nicole in the background here to bring up our first poll question. We've got a couple of poll questions that we're going to ask you to respond to. This is to help the presenters get a sense of who's listening and who they're talking to.

If you just look at what's on your screen: Which of the following best describes the age range of the fathers you're working with? You can check just one of these please. Do you only work with teen fathers? Do you only work with young fathers, generally age 16 to 25? Do you work with fathers of all ages? Do you work with fathers of all ages, but provide some separate programs or activities for teen dads, or next one, for younger dads? Do you work primarily with mothers, or are you not currently working directly with either of them?

I'll give you a little bit longer to respond to that. It looks like the vast majority of folk are working with fathers of all ages, which is certainly what we expected. Thank you very much for that. I see that there's about — there's slightly over 10 percent or around 10 percent that are working with the younger guys aged 16 to 25, so that's always very interesting to know.

Let me just tell you a few more things about Johnny. Again, you can download his bio and Haki's from the Resources section there. Johnny has actually been involved with the Young Fathers of Santa Fe program in various capacities. He was involved in starting the agency in 1999 and then served as a member of the advisory board until 2014 when he moved to being an employee providing direct services. And he assumed the role of Executive Director in January of 2015 when Barry McIntosh stepped down. Prior to this work, Johnny did a lot of other work with youth in various capacities, including some very interesting work with families of special needs children. He brings a wealth of experience. Let me hand it over to Johnny to share that experience. Johnny, the time is yours.

Johnny Wilson: Okay, thank you, Nigel. Hi, everybody. My name is Johnny Wilson, sitting here in Albuquerque, New Mexico where the Young Fathers of Santa Fe has actually expanded into central New Mexico, as it says here on our initial slide.

We started in '99. Actually, a precursor organization started in '99, and Santa Fe was one of the sites of this project, the New Mexico Young Fathers Project, and I was responsible for getting the Santa Fe site off the ground. That functioned until 2008, and the organization supporting that program had some troubles and that program was going away. Barry McIntosh at that time was in charge of the site, and he made sure that the transition from the New Mexico Young Fathers Project to the new organization he was beginning, Young Fathers of Santa Fe, was seamless for the participants.

We are, as I mentioned, we have expanded into central New Mexico, so we are about to change our name to Fathers New Mexico. We have four staff people, one of whom is still the founder who works with me on training for other organizations in the state that are wanting to serve fathers and some other support he provides. And then there's myself. I'm an ED [Executive Director]. I'm also doing direct service. Then we have two other case managers that provide direct service. I categorize our main services as providing group support for fathers we work with, individual case management for those dads, as well as training and support to help other organizations engage with fathers.

We meet and enroll most of our participants through high school-based programs that traditionally have been successful at serving young moms, but not so successful at reaching out to the dads. Our program is 100 percent voluntary, so even when we work with guys that might be referred by probation, parole, or something of that nature, we have a tacit understanding that if they decide they don't want to participate in our program, that's okay with us, and we're still available to them when and if they change their mind. We just want to be really clear with the guys that their engagement with us is voluntary.

What do our participants — what kind of characteristics do they have? We're in New Mexico, which is approximately a 50 percent Hispanic state. Most of our participants, about three quarters, are Hispanic. By the way, you might know that Hispanic teens — not first generation, not immigrant Hispanic teens, but first and second generation Hispanic teens — are more likely than most other ethnic and racial categories to give birth.

Often our participants come from families who are currently or have a history of receiving public assistance. Many of the fathers we work with do not have their biological father in their life, and also do not have a consistent male role model in their life who's present in a consistent way. Almost all of our participants are under 25 years and approximately 60 percent are under 18. They generally do not have recognized success in school. They have a lot of challenges in school. We have a small number who

have married or are living together with their baby's mom. That generally is not the case when we initially meet them or when their child is born, but happens within a couple years of the birth of their child.

"Things to keep in mind" — That's a section I've titled that way. That's meant to be directed towards the provider, the individual who's working with these young dads. Hopefully, that will become evident why here as we move on. Most young dads genuinely want to be involved in their children's lives. These guys have, as I mentioned earlier, a lot of them — experience growing without their dads or other significant male models. They have an intrinsic understanding of the need for positive male role models, and they want to be that. They also want to be the opposite, in some cases, of what they've experienced.

Some obstacles that prevent or limit their involvement include a generational fatherlessness. In other words, there is not a clear understanding of how to be involved, how to engage with their child, how to work on conflict with the others around the child. The lack of good male roles means the lack of information about how to be a good male role model.

There's also a substantial amount of social and institutional communication to the young father about children and family, and this communication can be discouraging. For example, most of us are well aware of "maternal and child" health resources. Please note the absence of paternal in that phrase. WIC is Women, Infants and Children. These programs may be available for fathers, but it isn't clear that they're available for fathers. That's relevant.

Other social discouragements — the assumption that mom will be present in acceptance, tacit or otherwise, but dad may or may not be present. Oftentimes, dads report going into daycare centers to pick up their kids and being treated with suspicion or asked a bunch of questions that maybe mom wouldn't be asked. Same type of thing happens in health facilities. I myself can talk about being a much older dad, how when I was the parent present at parent-teacher conferences, I got well-meaning appreciation — "wow, it's so great that you're a dad, and you're here." But there's also a message that that sends underneath that, like "We really don't expect you to be here. You're unusual."

Keep this in mind: absent fathers often experience deep and punishing longing for their children and a diminished self-esteem. It's interesting that fathers that are not present and active in their children's lives are often not as a healthy or successful as those fathers who live with their children.

Things to know about working with fathers — so again, as a provider, keep these things in mind. Young fathers are going to be far less capable, just as a developmental reality, of abstract thinking. They're going to be much more inclined to concrete thinking. This may have been one of the things that I hear from folks working with young dads is that they see a lack of empathy for the partners or their ex-partners, the baby's mom. And that's often expensed in phrases like, "what she did to me was wrong, so she is a...whatever."

That illustrates this developmental stage, which guys, young men, tend to be in longer than the young women. And it doesn't mean they don't have the capacity for empathy. It doesn't mean that they don't have the capacity for developing more ability around abstract thinking. It just means that they're not starting there, and that that's part of what we can do to provide support. In other words, for us, the providers, we need to not assume that that's the way they are in some permanent way, but that we need to support them to develop these other skills.

Working with younger dads, you really do need to approach things a little bit differently. You need to be prepared to revisit topics and to reinforce key points and ideas frequently, to come back to them. This is something I really recommend to us old folks, is to really be sensitive and aware of the language that we use.

Oftentimes, if we've worked with young people for a long time, we've developed, for example, a real anti-gang language. We all understand why we have that language and the problems we have with gang culture, but for some of these young men, it's multi-generation family involvement in gang activities, and there are some actual positive reinforcing activities that happen within these communities that we call "a gang." Gangs look different. I'm not saying that this is something we ought to aspire to. I'm saying do not disenfranchise this young man by essentially telling him that his upbringing in this culture is all wrong. There's a whole bunch of other ways that we need to be sensitive about language, but I'll just leave you with that point, is to be careful. Don't assume that you know what they mean, based on your experience with that word or phrase.

Establish an understanding of paternity establishment (that's establishing legal paternity) and of child support. It's really important for us to know the ins and outs of what our child support enforcement agency is doing. It's very important for us to know the various ways in which a young man can establish paternity in a legal way. They do not have legal rights to their child until that is established, and many of them, of course, do not establish paternity legally at the birth of their child. So we really need to be aware of that.

Be prepared to translate all the legal languages associated with these ideas, of course. Help them to see clearly how the system works. And they'll have myths. They'll have myths, or not even myths, but stories about how vicious child support enforcement can be, for example. And some of the stories may absolutely be true, but they're not applied to every guy. So helping them to see that engaging the system with a positive intention to pay child support generally results in a dialogue rather than child support enforcement attacking that. There's definitely a lot of work that we as a community could be doing with our child support enforcement agencies to help them to work better with fathers, but there's also work we can do with the fathers to help them work better with child support enforcement entities. By the way, a lot of entities are changing their name from "child support enforcement" to less aggressive sounding names, and that would be an excellent start for those folks.

We're going to move on to baseline program needs. I was talking about what each provider should be doing, and now I'm going to talk about what the programs need to include. And the key point here is to be really overtly welcoming of dads. Young moms, they get pregnant, and they know they're going to have to go through all this stuff, including giving birth, right? It's very intense. It's very real for them in a physical way. They tend to be much more inclined to engage programs that are out there and offered. Young men don't necessarily do that. And a lot of programs that would serve dads don't understand that they don't actually appear welcoming, so we really need to work on that as programming.

Always be prepared to meet the dads where they're at, whether they're gang involved, whether they're using substances, whether they appear ambivalent about engaging with the child, whether they're in conflict with mom. Meet them where they're at, ask them what their needs are, talk with them about how they're feeling with regards to their impending paternity or as a dad.

I definitely recommend coordinating with services that support moms. If possible, develop dialogue with the folks that are working with the moms that are providing case management. We all understand that confidentiality's important, and we can easily, in professional environments, articulate where those lines lie and still have conversations that support the whole family — these two parents, young parents, their child, as well as the extended families.

Support mothers to encourage father involvement. Working with these programs that work with moms, often I get invited to come in and talk about what fathering — what the advantages of having fathers around are, what the differences of parenting tends to be between moms and dads, and how valuable that is for the child. And really be attentive towards gatekeeping.

There's a lot of social communications to moms that support them to be gatekeepers to the child in often inappropriate ways, and so working with that tendency is important.

Consistently providing supportive tools for improvement — supportive tools for the young men: parenting classes, opportunities to mediate with mom when there's conflict, guidance with regards to education, openness about what the young man wants with regards to his education as well, vocational services and employment assistance.

To continue with the program needs, please recognize the fragility of fatherhood at all times. There's a lot of things that can happen that discourage and send the father into feelings of despair around his ability to father his child. That's going to increase his likelihood that he's going to back away or feel chased away, so recognize the fragility of fatherhood, and keep on that. Look at other males in the family and engage them as well. If they're in any way healthy participants in the family life, they can help to support this young man because we probably can't do it on our own. We're a small part of his life.

Allow for differences between moms and dads. Recognize that men have been trained throughout their lives and shown how not to express emotion, that the only safe emotion is anger. This is, of course, I'm putting it in an extreme way. It's much more subtle out there in the world, but we have to help them with the more subtle emotions. We have to help them learn how to express those emotions, how to talk about what happened before they got really mad at her, their parents, the teacher or whatever.

Men tend to be more action and solution-oriented, so those are good tools to use. If there's something broken on the playground, one of the ways to engage a guy might be to say, "Hey, this swing is broken. I can't figure out what's going on. Can you take a look at it?"

Or, "We're having a problem reaching some of the other young dads, and it's great that you're coming to group, but help us. What might help us reach out to some of these other guys that aren't showing up?" They may love to be engaged in that way and feel very productive as participants in the program if they're helping you to solve problems. Always remember that men bring unique gifts to their children.

Recruitment, engagement, and retention are what I'm going to cover next, starting with recruitment. Expect to be ignored. It will be a challenge for you to engage with these guys. Persist with respect, acknowledging their innate desire to parent. Look at all kinds of different ways to communicate with them — running into them in the hallway at the school or the program or whatever. Social media, as Nigel had mentioned. If you can get a text number that's great, but prepare for those phone numbers to change as well as the Facebook accounts, the Instagram accounts, and all those options. So keep as many vehicles for communicating with these young dads as you can. If you're not seeing them, it's okay to check in. Send a quick text, saying, "Hey, thinking about you, I hope you're doing good. I saw your son today," whatever.

Connect with the moms and talk with the moms. Build trust with the moms as a fatherhood practitioner, as well. Look and talk with the dads and help to identify issues that they may be struggling with, and tactfully offer support where you can provide it, again not overpromising. Reach out as early as possible. If you can catch these guys during pregnancy, that's awesome, but don't wait until their kid is here, and they're legally on the birth certificate. Reach out right away.

Once you know who they are and you have contact information, how do you engage them, how do you really get them invested in the supports that you can provide? We find that giving them a safe, confidential space to express their concerns, issues, and what they want. What "safe" means is that that they feel welcome — so the posters on the walls aren't all just about moms holding babies and breast feeding, but also represent dads. Also, that we are free from judgment. Now obviously, we're going to

assess the needs of our guys and that involves judgment, but the kind of judgment I'm referencing here is that kind where they feel like you're telling them they're not enough. You're telling them that they're screwing up. You're telling them that this is what they need to do. In fact, if you hear yourself saying, "You need to —" then you as a practitioner need to stop and rethink how you're communicating what you're communicating.

We find that offering groups for the young guys to get together and talk with each other — it's a facilitated group — and we emphasize these concepts of safety that I just talked about within this group. We ask them to come up at their own agreements as to what's appropriate. They almost always come up with the same kind of agreements, but this is a really great place for the guys to get the sense that they're not alone and develop a sense of community. They often begin to be very supportive of one another in their fathering.

Here's just another reference of creating a safe space: avoid the criticisms that undermine their tendencies and their feelings of being a father and a strong man. Respond to the needs that fathers express and react to what they say they need.

Retention is about consistently doing this, and things that really become important over time is their parental rights and how to access those rights. Learn the court system. Almost all family court situations can be done without an attorney, and if you can just provide them support and help them understand what it means to have their ex-partner served, what it means to go into family court mediation, and then take away some of the fear around these. Conflict mitigation is excellent to offer them.

Be really welcoming when they show up and show appreciation for them. These guys really love to be appreciated for what they're doing. Even if it's just showing up, it's a good start. Continue to acknowledge them, as they respond to their kids' needs and as they take action on the issues that you're discussing with them.

There's a set of touchstones that, even if a guy isn't responding or has drifted off, are good times to talk about reengaging: during pregnancy; birth; illness; when the child starts school or a daycare; a loss of childcare; developmental milestones, meaning walking, talking, adolescence. All of these times are really good times, or any major changes in circumstance, to reengage or to engage initially, if he never did engage in the first place.

As you move forward, it's all about respect, and part of respect is that you expect the men to be involved. You're expecting them to walk through the door, and you're welcoming when they get there, no blaming and shaming. View the young dads as essential, not a risk factor. Invite them in, invite them in again. Invite them in. And understand father's motivation. We have been sent this message our whole lives as men — if you're a dad, you're a provider and a protector — and maybe try to use those internal motivations that they almost for sure have to help to encourage them as they engage fatherhood.

Thanks for listening to me. I've taken too much time, and I'm going to just stop now.

Nigel Vann: That's fine, Johnny. Thanks very much. Yeah. No, I know you've got an awful lot to share, and we really appreciate it.

Yeah. I think that we'll hold off on our second poll question, just because did get started a bit late today as well. Let's hold off on our second poll question at this time. We'll ask that at the end here.

Let me move forward and introduce Haki Nkrumah. Again, he's the Founder and CEO of the Young Fathers of Central Florida in Orlando. He's been working for over 20 years with teen and young fathers. Prior to the Young Fathers of Florida program, he worked with the Jamaica Fathers Project in New York State. He's more recently been the Co-founder of the Young Fathers of Metro Atlanta. He's written three books, which you can read about in his bio. Apparently, they're not available online anywhere, so if you want one you're going to have to get in touch Haki directly.

Just one other thing that really struck me about Haki when he and I were chatting the other week: it says in his bio that he was in the military for four years. He served abroad in Korea after his young son was born, and he shared with me the other day that at that time, when his son first started walking, he was over in Korea, so he wasn't there to enjoy that moment. He pulled together a group of, I think he said, about 20 dads who were there in the military in Korea, and they started just meeting as dads to talk about the things they were dealing with. From that, he's gone on to do this fantastic work he's been doing now in Florida and around the country.

Haki, tell us all about it.

Haki Nkrumah: Good afternoon. Can you hear me well?

Nigel Vann: Yep, you sound good.

Haki Nkrumah: Okay. I'm going to run into our programs. First of all, I see that over 50 percent of the participants today work with fathers of all ages, so I'm going to try to keep —

Nigel Vann: You are a little bit faint, Haki. If you could maybe get the phone a bit closer or speak a bit louder.

Haki Nkrumah: Okay, can you hear me better now?

Nigel Vann: Yeah, I think that's good. Yeah.

Haki Nkrumah: Okay. Most of the people, it seems as though that's on the call today, work with fathers of all ages, but since they're on the call today, it tells me that they are interested in working with teen and young fathers, if their agencies might consider their programming important or teen and young fathers important. That's the direction that we're going to go in and while you're on this call today, I'm going to go in that direction, even though a lot that I say pertains to young fathers and older fathers as well.

We have a total of eight programs with Young Fathers of Central Florida. There's several programs that welcome fathers of all ages, so even though our program is designed and our programs are really geared towards teen and young fathers, we do work with older fathers as well.

Okay. I want to thank Johnny for that good presentation and Nigel. I don't want to repeat what you guys said, but it might overlap a little, so I'll start right into our programs.

Young Fathers of Central Florida started in May of 2006, so this May will be 11 years, and I've been doing this work for quite some time. It's very important to me, and all those who know me know that I've struggled each and every day to get teen and young fatherhood programs at the table with the other fatherhood programs, because we know that a vast majority of fatherhood programs in the country do not begin engaging fathers until the age of 26. We feel that that's giving too many young men 10 to 15 years to be absent and dysfunctional fathers, since we have fathers from age of 12, 13, all the way up to 24, but we design most of our programs for fathers 14 to 24.

Our Dad-to-Dad mentoring program is a program that matches an older father with a younger father for a one-year commitment. How often they meet is entirely up to the mentor and mentee, but all mentors do go through a 10-hour training

program. This program is specifically designed for those young fathers who unfortunately were not raised with a consistent father or father figure in their lives. This gives them the opportunity to see what responsible fatherhood is about up close and personal, not in a classroom, but up close and personal with a father who deals with issues that fathers deal with every day — the good, bad, and the ugly, the positive and the negative. They can see what responsible fatherhood is. So that's our Dad-to-Dad mentoring program.

We have our parent training and development, which is bi-weekly workshops on topics such as changing diapers, nutrition, shaken baby syndrome, SIDS, child proofing your home and disciplining your child, etc. This training is open to women, grandparents, or the caregivers. They all are welcome. When we first started this training and development, it was only for fathers, but we saw that statistics didn't show that you have a large percentage of young fathers who the child's mother lived with them. They cohabitate with them. Unfortunately, we don't want to deal with that issue, because we [don't] want to paint the narrative that teen and young fathers are sexual predators, that they're out in the community just slaying women. That's not the case.

Also, when we look at the large percentage of young fathers whose mother is one to two years older than them — in our Teen Fathers Academy program, we have 60 percent of our young fathers' mother is at least one year — their child's mother is one to two years older than them. So that defeats that narrative that these young fathers are out there that's irresponsible. We also think that they're all estranged, that none of these young men are actually with their baby's mother. A lot of times, they are with them. So we allow mothers to be a part of our training and development for our parenting training classes.

Father's support groups: we meet once a month in Orange County, Seminole County and Osceola County, which [are] some of the largest counties in Florida, besides Dade County in Miami area. We allow all fathers, grandfathers, and anyone that spends time with children, we allow them in the father's support groups, all ages. So this is one of the programs that I mentioned that is not age-sensitive 14 to 24.

We have our Teen Fathers Academy, which is a six-month training and development program for high school students, ages 14 to 19. We break this program up into spring semester and fall semester. By the way, all our programs have measurable outcomes. We use an evidence-based curriculum, and we do evaluations. For those people out there who are starting fatherhood programs or are presently doing them, I hope that you have measurable outcomes and that you are getting your program evaluated.

It's easy to get your program evaluated because we all live near universities. They have to be independent evaluations. You can't do the evaluations yourself. You should have it independently done, and most universities will be happy to do that without charging.

One program that's not mentioned on here, but which is a program that's very important to our organization, is our Gents to Gentlemen program. That's a character and etiquette development program for our 10 to 13-year-old boys. That's an eight-week program designed to help those young men to understand the importance of not being young fathers, so that's one of our prevention programs. It's called Gents to Gentlemen.

Any program that I mention here today — you can contact me if you're interested in initiating these programs in what you do. All you need to do is just call, and we will work with you on these programs.

Our next program, this program, our Young Fatherhood Institute, is an evidence-based program designed for colleges and universities. Our pilot program was initiated at Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach. We wanted to go to the college level, because we realized that there's a lot of young men who are at college who are fathers, but they have no services on the

college campuses. Most college campuses you go to couldn't even tell you how many fathers [are] on the campus. Half of them couldn't even tell you how many mothers are on the campus. When I went to some of these colleges, I said, "Look, don't your infirmaries [sic] take data on how many mothers are on campus?"

Oftentimes, you'll find a lot of resistance with these schools, because first of all, they want to act like there's no teen parents on their campus, but you can look at half of their football teams, and you can find plenty of fathers on those athletic teams, basketball [and] football. We ran into a lot of those issues, so it's important for you to stand fast with that and say that, "Look, we're here to help the young fathers. I don't care what sport they play, but we're here to help them and the mothers." Because there's one university we work with that there were mothers dropping out of school because their baby's father was an athlete, and they thought that they were going to be some NFL players. We told them the chances are that they're going to be an NFL player or NBA player is slim, so you need to get back in school and finish your degree. That's the Fatherhood Institute.

Then we have our Young Fathers Initiative in the county jails. We fought three years to get [an] initiative in the Orange County Jail, because we saw that there was a group of fathers that's locked up that don't get any services at all, and we wanted to get in there. We finally got in there, and we provide parent training in there. And the one thing about those individuals in the county jails — they're either going to prison, or they're going to be released. Either way, they have to understand that they have to be parents, period. Those that get released, they need to know where they can go for resources when they get out. Those that are sent to prison, well, we call it "parenting from prison." You've got to learn how to be ... a parent from the prison system. Just because you got locked up doesn't mean that you are not responsible as a father.

So we call it "parenting from prison." We help fathers understand that just because they're locked up, they need to still be parents. Last time I was at Coleman Penitentiary in Florida, there was a gentleman that said that, "Hey, I'm not a parent anymore. My daughter doesn't love me anymore."

I asked him, "How do you know that? Have you spoken to her? No." I asked him, "How long have you been locked up?" He said, "I've been locked up for 10 years."

I said, "How old was your child when you got locked up?" He said, "Two."

I asked him, was his child 12 or 2? He said, "Um — " He looked at me like it was a trick question.

Your child is 12. She's gone through milestones. She's done things that you need to be there as a parent no matter old it is. With the technology today, it's not like back in the day when we didn't have Skype. We didn't all these different ways to communicate. Find a way to communicate. We called it "parenting from prison."

And then, those individuals who get released, they need some resources. We also connect them with our mentoring program. Okay.

Then, we have our National Teen Fatherhood Conference. That conference we started, we just completed our fifth year. I'm glad that we had participants from throughout the country. On our line today, we have Fernando Rivera. I'm glad that Fernando is with us. I'm glad that Lisa Keysor and Marianne Carter from Brevard County, Florida is with us today. Leonardo Stroud from Georgia. We have Mark Himes from South Carolina, and Quan Fish from Michigan. All these people are doing excellent work,

and these people are those people in the country that's moving teen and young fatherhood forward, and I'm glad you're with us today.

But we had people from all over — Wisconsin, D.C., New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Maryland, Florida and New York. And the reason I started this conference was because we need to begin building a national coalition for teen and young fatherhood initiative[s]. I was listening to Nigel talk earlier, and I know most of the people who work with young fathers was shocked that he was talking about they [were] doing young fathers in the '80s and '90s, but it fell off. I come into contact with so many teen and young fatherhood programs today that think they're the only ones that's in existence. But they're not. There's quite a few out there, and that's what the conference is for, to build a national coalition so we can have a seat at the table when it comes to policy for fatherhood in this country, and we're not left out. We're not isolated anymore. That's what we're there for. That's what the conference is for, and I hope to see all of you on this call, if you can be there, be there next year at the conference.

I'll move forward.

Meeting service needs of fathers: you can read through this. I don't need to read through this. But wraparound services, we have to look at fatherhood, whether it's young fatherhood or [unintelligible] fatherhood in general, we have to look at in a holistic way, a holistic approach. That'll give us consistent participation, and that'll improve our retention. When you don't have fathers staying in your program, it's because you're not saying nothing. You're not doing nothing. You're just sitting there writing numbers down.

But if we look at it holistically — because most fathers and young fathers come to us with a lot of different issues, so we have to develop our wraparound services. We can't start trying to give area incentives in a world to fathers, "Oh, do you have any food?" We don't have any food. I ain't giving any food. Why? These are volunteer services. You guys are coming to us voluntarily, so we're not going to give you this and give you that just to appease you and make you happy to come to the program, because once that gravy train stops, they stop coming. Then people start whining and complaining about retention. "Oh, all our fathers are leaving." So a holistic approach is very, very important.

It's also critical that fathers and the young fathers — the reason why I've dedicated my life to teen and young fatherhood is because teen and young fathers are the ones continually having babies. That's a problem. A 45-year-old man is not continually having babies. Fifteen, 16, and 17 years old, they're doing it, a lot of them unconsciously, and we have to understand that that's where that focus is. That's why I get so excited when I hear people want to work with teen and young fathers, because that's a critical age group that we need to focus on.

Outreach and recruitment tips: what do I have to say? Conduct community assessments. Don't use national data all the time to do your work. You need to get local data from your municipality, your area, where you work. But it takes work, and people don't want to do work. They just want to grab national data.

Like one statistic, I had people say, "Oh, 75 percent of low-income fathers live within a 10-mile radius of their children." Okay. That's fine, but if you're Johnny in Santa Fe — Santa Fe I think has 65,000 people. Then if you're a practitioner in a co-op city in New York — co-op cities got 50,000 alone in one complex, so you can't develop a recruitment plan based on that national data to your local environment, your local situation.

You have to use your data, go out and get it. Do surveys. Do needs assessments. Canvass your communities. Go to midnight basketball. Go to the barbershops. Go to the salons. Yes, salons. I had a group of guys when I first started, I said "Meet me 6

o'clock at the salon." Why are we going to do that? Well, that's where we going to know where half the fathers in this community are, from that salon.

You have to get that data, and there's one site — I don't know if that you use — that I get a lot of demographics from. It's called zipskinny.com, zipskinny.com. [Warning: possible virus threat.] You can get any demographic you want for every ZIP code in this country. There's a new site called zipwho.com. You have to do your work. You have to do your research. Don't just look at this national data and use that and try to relate that to the work that you're doing. It's not going to happen.

I mean, we have counties here, for example, Lake County. All my fathers, 90 percent of my fathers are white there, who live in trailer parks. You look at on Parramore, Orange County. Most of our fathers are black there, and you've got 80 percent of them between the age of 14 and 19 are unemployed. They have a different need than my fathers in other counties, like Osceola. Osceola, there's a language barrier. 90 percent are Hispanics. We have a lot of language barriers and immigration issues. And then, we have Lake County. A lot of those guys there, they have employment issues and legal issues, because a lot of them sell meth, and that's just a fact. So, we have to use our own data.

Service delivery tips: start with priority planning. Everything's a priority. Develop action plans with timelines. Don't sit there with, we call them "happy-pappy programs." "Oh, do it when you want to. We'll complete this program when we want to." No, have time lines. Set up high expectations. When you set up low expectations for your program, that's what you're going get — low results.

Navigating key issues: establishing paternity. Johnny talked about that, and Nigel talked about that. Parental rights [are] important, because if you haven't established paternity, you have no parental rights. A father [doesn't] want to be in that situation, but you have to know that. You have to have those, because I'm telling you, having parental rights, it levels the playing field. Because there's no more "the mother issue," that she has control of this, that and the other. She doesn't.

Okay. I'm trying to run through, so I could get through in time.

Understanding handling child support: we know that if you start your own nonprofit, or you're working with young fathers, the first person you should collaborate with is child support.

Family planning, fatherhood and parenting responsibilities and financial literacy: the majority of money issues — in any relationship, the stress and arguments are usually surrounded by money, so you have to be financially literate. You have to be health-literate. You can't get a job smoking weed. If you're smoking weed, you know that they're going to drug test you, so you can't get a job. If you want to continue to do that, then you might as well not even try to look for a job. Therefore, you're not interested in being the best father you can be. Responsible fatherhood is the best form of pregnancy prevention.

Thank you.

Nigel Vann: Thank you very much, Haki. Yes, sorry. I was just unmuting myself there.

Haki Nkrumah: I hope you guys heard me well.

Nigel Vann: Yeah. That was great. In fact, you guys still had a few more minutes. You could have said a bit more. Let me ask you just to say a bit more about the paternity establishment.

Haki Nkrumah: [unintelligible] at 1:45. Say that again?

Nigel Vann: I said, let me ask you to say just a bit more about the paternity establishment, please, Haki?

Haki Nkrumah: Right, establishment of paternity —

Nigel Vann: How do you talk about that with a young guy, particularly if the guy — I mean, obviously, it's really important that he understands that he's not going to have parental rights, if he doesn't do that, but they think that it means they're going to automatically have to pay child support.

Haki Nkrumah: [unintelligible]. No, that's the card that a lot of young women play, because most young women, they get their playbook from other women that tell them what they need to do. That's what these young women do. They network, and they talk about it. Men don't talk about that. But establishing that paternity, we let them know that you can do this through being on the birth certificate or taking a DNA test. There's a lot of services that will pay for that for you.

But if you don't establish paternity, you can't even go — if your child gets sick at school, you can't even go up there and get your child out of school. Establishing your paternity is so very important, because it also lets the mother know what she says doesn't always — is not correct all the time. Because a lot of young women, unfortunately, we work with them, they actually think that they can get away with keeping their child from this man, because he got a new girlfriend, or he's late on child support. That's why we teach our men about child support to say, you can get anything modified, any order can be modified based on your economic situation. That's why it's important for organizations to teach the young men.

Do training and development to teach them about what roles and what rights they have. That's why we have family lawyers come in regularly in our training to help young men know what their rights are. Know that if you have a child support order or a visitation order that if you're supposed to pick your child up at a certain time or a certain date, and she doesn't do that, the sheriff will go get your child. They have to know their rights.

People also have to know what their state laws are, because in the state of Florida ... like Brother Quan Fish in Detroit, his laws there are different than in Florida. So we don't even use terms like "custodial parent" anymore. We don't use that — "visitation rights." None of that — that language is not even used in the state of Florida. So each state has to understand what their rights are. They need to understand not just the father's rights, but the mother's rights, because the mothers need to be educated also. They need to be told, "Young lady, you don't have the right to keep this child from this man. You don't have the right." Young mothers have to know that as well. That's the big issue.

That's why I get asked to speak more with young mothers groups, than young fathers groups, because a lot of them just don't know. Unfortunately, Nigel, a lot of young mothers don't know. Just like I said, they're getting their playbook from a scorned mother, who's telling her that she can keep her baby away from the father just because she wants to. That's why it's important to know what their parental rights are.

Nigel Vann: It's such an important conversation. I'm really glad you brought it up.

Haki Nkrumah: I hope I'm not breaking up too much.

Nigel Vann: I've heard the guys say they're having to wait to see other guys that are losing their kids for various reasons, because they hadn't established paternity. So it's really important to have that conversation up front, and I really like the fact that in Florida they're not using the words "custodial parents" and "visitation" as much. Even if you're in a state where that is still the legal language, I always encourage folks, when you're working with parents, talk about the "residential" and the "non-residential parent." You don't want to be talking about custody, because custody is about objects, right? Don't be talking about visitation, be talking about [unintelligible] time. Talk about the time that you get to have with your child.

Johnny, let me ask you a question. We've got about 10 minutes left here, and if there's questions that we haven't had time to answer, we will certainly post responses to those later. But I know Johnny, you've done work with — I think you're working with a group right now of expectant dads. Can you just talk a little bit about the kind of things you talk about with them?

Johnny Wilson: Sure. Well, of course, we help them to think about what being a pregnant mom entails. We talk about the struggles that moms endure. We talk about the value of going to doctor's visits, if she'll permit that, if they're in a relationship. We talk about preparation. Of course, I should say, we also ask them, "What are you feeling? What are your expectations? What's going to happen, do you think?"

There's as many different answers to those questions that there are guys in our program that have engaged with us prior to their baby being born. So obviously from each answer is a thread of discussion about what they might need or what we might want to provide to them by way of support during that time. But we definitely emphasize involvement, and if they're not with baby's mom to begin establishing a means for communicating about making decisions, asking politely to go, respectfully, to go to appointments. Maybe if phone calls or face-to-face is difficult for them, maybe looking at email or other forms of communication, again, so they can establish what hopefully will evolve into effective communication. Did I answer the question, Nigel?

Nigel Vann: Yeah. No, that was perfect, Johnny.

Here's one for both of you. Let me start with Haki, but we often hear that it takes a while to get a program off the ground. I've certainly seen programs where they're all excited, but then you just get one or two guys involved. So how long would you say a program should expect it to take before you can get a good group of guys going?

Haki Nkrumah: I say, if you do your research prior to it, you do your demographics, you do your needs assessments — because what some people fail to do is that they design a program based on what they think the community needs and not what the community actually needs. If the work is done prior to it, it shouldn't take any more than a year, because it's all about their prep work.

But there's a difference, Nigel, to starting your own 501(c)(3) than working within an agency that has a budget already, so the approach will be totally different. If you're starting your own 501(c)(3), then you have to really develop a fund development plan, which entails — because you're going to get a grant anytime in the immediate future, because most funders, they want to have at least two to three years' financial statements ... I consult people all the time, and I always find out what exactly what their intentions are. Is this a 501(c)(3) you're starting, or is it a part of an agency, like if you're with a Head Start or Healthy Start, or if you're with another agency that has a funding source?

It always depends, but if you go in and do your data, the research, and find out what the needs of the community are and see what resources — because one thing funders love [is] when you go into a community and you utilize what resources they

already have there. For example, like your recreation centers, which already have a basketball court. They have a computer lab. They have meeting rooms. Go in and use the facilities, the resources that's there, before you go asking for money. That's what a lot of organizations don't do, and that's what we try to help them to do. Develop a fund development plan, which includes everything from fundraising to grants to yearly giving campaigns, but a fund development plan where you can get numerous sources of revenue into your organization, so that's what we do. That's what we work with agencies across the country.

Nigel Vann: Okay. Sounds like good advice. Yeah. Johnny, anything to add in terms of the things you've done to really increase participation in the groups?

Johnny Wilson: Yes. Assuming, as Haki articulately pointed out, that you have the funding and the legal organizational structure in place, or that you're working within another organization, looking at it on a site-to-site basis: how are you going to make sure that a site works? Do the research that Haki referenced, so that you know with some degree of confidence that the, let's say school just as an example, is a school where actually there is a number of teen parents — the school doesn't try to get them to leave, and the school provides some resources.

Talk to the folks, the counselors, or if there is a teen parent program there, talk to the folks that are working with the moms, and begin a dialogue about how you're going to collaborate.... As the guy that wants to work with the dads, how am I going to learn where the dads are? The moms very often are at some point pregnant and pretty obviously moms or carrying the baby around. Dads may not [be]. Oftentimes, we're working with dads that are in a different school or not in school, etc., and more difficult to find and to get that initial contact.

So do that program research and talk to those other providers that are around that dad or are working with the mom and find out how cooperative they're going to be. Are they welcoming of a fatherhood component? Is there anxiety around a fatherhood component? Can you work with that anxiety, and really, how are you going to get your information on your guys? And then, like I said, talk with the moms. Once you're in, and you're beginning to work, start talking with the moms. Ask them how they're doing. Ask them how the baby's daddy is doing.

And begin getting contact information. Begin regularly making an effort to reach out to these guys. Again, don't be disappointed or discouraged when it doesn't work right away. It often takes time. And be okay with two guys involved regularly for a while. Let those guys start talking to their friends about how you weren't judgmental, and you were able to help them out with stuff and help them to understand about paternity, etc.

Nigel Vann: Yep. Okay. Great.... I think it's just really important as you say to be reaching out to any agency in the community that has contact with young men and encourage them to find out if they're a father. Because a lot of times, you have, say, an employment program or just a basketball program that's working with young men, but if they know if someone's a father, then they can be making a referral.

We've had quite a few questions about co-parenting, but we really don't have a lot of time to get into that. I'll ask the presenters to give us a bit of info on that that we can post. We did get a question asking about if there's a specific website that shows parenting rights for mothers and fathers in each state. I'm not aware of anything specifically like that. You could contact the 4DAD411 number that we shared at the beginning. Also, I believe in the section in the toolkit on child support, there's a link to — there's a map on the federal child support agency website, where you can click on each state, and it takes you to places where you may be able to find those things there.

Somebody asked, "How do we know who to contact locally, if you want someone to come and talk to a group with young dads?" I would say go to our state profiles. You can click the state profiles section on our website and you'll see where there are local programs are in your state. Again, you can call the 4DAD411 number, and they may be able to help connect you with somebody. Let me just bring up our final slide, which is the contact slide. Just a reminder that you can send us emails at info@fatherhood.gov. You have emails there for the presenters [Haki Nkrumah at umoja12@aol.com, Johnny Wilson at tokaprod@gmail.com]. You can go back to these slides. They'll be posted online in a few weeks, as I say, and we will post answer to any questions that we didn't get to.

We are now going to bring up a link to the survey that we ask you to complete and let us know what you thought about the presentations and other ideas that we may want to think about for future webinars. I know we're right on time, but I'm just give Haki and Johnny just an opportunity to leave us with one final thought, just one sentence guys. What would you leave the folks with us as a chief takeaway message? Johnny?

Johnny Wilson: This is Johnny, I'll just say that, having done this since '99, a lot of these guys that I've worked have inspired me, and really, really done fantastic jobs as parents.

Nigel Vann: Okay. Thank you. You get the final word, Haki.

Haki Nkrumah: Hey, since doing this since the early '90s, a few years earlier, I'm just glad that we're to this point, because it's like mentioned, a lot of people know this is my passion to get teen and young father organizations off the ground across the country and internationally, and I'm just — I'm so happy that we are at this point now.

Nigel Vann: Thank you and me too. Yeah. Absolutely. It's just so important I think. Again, we're heartened by the number of people who have joined for the webinar. I encourage to go to Haki's conference next year. Keep on doing this work, because the more we can engage with young dads and moms and help them work on their relationship, help them understand child development better, help them talk about waiting until they have that next child, then we don't have to see them in some of the fatherhood programs that Haki was talking about that are focused more on child support. Keep on doing the great work you're doing, everybody, and we'll see you at the next webinar. Thank you very much.

Haki Nkrumah: Thank you.

Nigel Vann: And the presenters, you can stay on the line just for a minute.

Operator: This does conclude today's conference. Thank you for your participation.