

JSI RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE

Moderator: Gilbert Chavez
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Operator: On behalf of JSI, hello and welcome to today's net conference, Best Practices for Teen Fatherhood Program. My name is (Erin) and I will be your event manager today.

Before we get started, I'd like to mention that today's net conference is being recorded and you are currently in a listen-only mode. Please notice on the side of your console a panel labeled Questions and Answers. If you don't see that tab, please look at the toolbar at the top of your console, click on Q&A, and this will open your question panel.

We encourage you to ask questions throughout the presentation. Just type your question in the text box and click Ask to get your question in queue.

We will also be breaking for questions, comments, and participation throughout the presentation. During these breaks, you can provide feedback over the phone by pressing star-1 on your telephone keypad.

Handouts from today's presentation are made available for download. To find these, please locate the icon in the upper right corner of your screen that looks like three pieces of paper.

Finally, if you experience any technical difficulties during today's event, please press star-0 on your telephone keypad and the operator will put you through to me for assistance.

Now without any further delay, I would like to turn today's program over to Megan Hiltner at JSI, who has a couple of housekeeping reminders for you about today's net conference.

Megan, the floor is yours.

Megan Hiltner: Thanks (Erin). Hi everyone. Thanks for taking time out of your busy schedules to be on the net conference today. We're really excited about.

I just wanted to remind everybody to please take some time at the end of the net conference to complete the evaluation survey at the end of the presentation. You'll be able to just click on the link directly and fill it out right after the - Gilbert's presentation. But you can also come back to it later. It will be available up to 24 hours after the presentation for you to complete.

If you would like to claim CEU credit, you will be asked to complete some information at the end of the survey to then request credit and we will then send you a certificate. So please take some time to do that. We'll also email out this link for the evaluation survey at the end of the presentation to all those who registered. So you'll have a couple of different ways to do complete the survey.

That's the only thing I wanted to remind you about at this moment, so I'm going to turn it over to Allison Roper at OAPP to introduce the speaker for today.

Allison?

Allison Roper: Thanks Megan. Thanks, everybody, for joining us. I know that we have had many, many net conferences already this year and we're really excited about the one that we're offering today.

I just wanted to reiterate that it is very important that you fill out the survey at the end of this net conference, for two reasons. One is it gives really good feedback for the presenter, for Gilbert Chavez today.

But in addition to that, you have the opportunity to help give us some additional ideas for our planning process for next year's calendar for our face-to-face trainings, as well as our net conferences. So please, please, please fill that out.

Today's net conference is Best Practices for Teen Fatherhood Programs. We're really excited to be able to talk about this subject. I know that with the grantees that I work with, this is always a topic of discussion in our reports, the end-of-year reports, and then also during site visits and on conference calls, how do we get the fathers out, how do we identify the dads, how do we best work with them. And think that we have a really good presenter for you today to help cover some of those topics.

I want to encourage everybody to use the question-and-answer session, which will be spaced throughout the presentation today, to share some of your ideas,

to ask questions, and to get some clarity. This is really an opportunity for you to learn from each other, as well as from Gilbert.

So as always, you have the option of writing in questions as well in the Q&A box at the top of your screen. But I do think it's important if you can buzz in that you ask a question verbally.

So I'm going to turn it over to Gilbert. But before I do, I wanted to tell you a little bit about him.

Gilbert works with the Office of the Attorney General down in Texas, my home state. And he's within the Office of Family Initiative down there. Right now he's responsible for developing, coordinating, and managing partnerships that - and projects, excuse me, that educate parenting and non-parenting teens, issues related to legal paternity, child support, and the benefits of healthy relationships, which would include marriages. He oversees the implementation of a couple of different projects right now, the expansion of the No Kidding project and a grant project that's entitled, "Strong Start - Stable Families."

Gilbert is no stranger to male involvement and teen fathers. He's been working in this field for many years and has worked a lot on fatherhood development and healthy relationships as well. Prior to moving over to the Office of the Attorney General, Gilbert was the coordinator for the East Austin Male Involvement Project, which was kind of coordinated through Lifeworks, which is one of our current grantees. And actually this project was funded through the Office of Population Affairs several years back.

So he worked on that project and helped develop this innovative project to teach male students about male responsibility in the prevention of school-age pregnancies, working with young boys.

So we're really excited to have Gilbert today share some of his experience and help create some dialogue with you.

So Gilbert, I'm going to turn it over to you.

Gilbert Chavez: Wonderful. Thank you.

Well, first let me start by saying that it's a great honor to be on the teleconference here with you today. I have worked in the male involvement and fatherhood arena for about the last ten years. And so I'm very familiar with the work, the important work that you do with young fathers.

It's very important not only to the individuals who are supported by your services, but also the children, you know, the children who benefit from the father's love, caring, and support to live in a healthy and successful environment and to create a successful life.

We are all too familiar with the statistics of being raised in a fatherless home - - 5 times more likely to commit crimes, 9 times more likely to drop out of school, 20 times more likely to end up in prison -- all kind of effects of the growing issue of fatherless homes.

And there's new evidence with the growing population of unmarried parenting that kind of point to this real need of involving fathers and creating programs and resources to really focus on how do we best serve fathers and encourage them to be involved in children's lives.

In today's conference, I really want to cover three points of working with dads. And these are my purposes for this teleconference. One is to provide an overview of the fatherhood field.

Many of you are working with fathers and are doing an excellent job, but to provide an overview is hopefully to provide a context for the work that you're doing and to be able to connect with others that are doing the same work.

In no way do I propose that I know everything that there is to know about outreach to fathers or what are the best methods or best practices of getting and educating fathers.

But I think that you all share in a part of the education process and making sure that we provide the best services to these young men. You know, there's cultural differences, there's age differences, there's all kinds of things, which we need to share with each other so that we can create better programs with our communities and with our fathers.

The other thing I want to do is really look at the research on father involvement, what is the real purpose of involving fathers in our services. Many of you are working with young families, programs that also target young moms. Traditionally these services have focused on young moms.

But what is the purpose and what are the advantages of also providing information, education, outreach, and support to the dads to be involved. And so we'll look at what some of the research shows on that and how a father's involvement not only supports the family and the women who are involved, but also the children.

And the last thing I want to do is really create some - and have a discussion about tips for creating greater connections with the fathers in your programs. Again, I have tips and things that we've learned along the way that I'm gladly share, both from my work in the East Austin Male Involvement program, which was a primary reproductive health program for the prevention of primary pregnancies, but also in my current work, which is working with young families and forming families and to, you know, looking at the resources that they need and the education and programs that we can provide to really encourage fathers' involvement, not only in child support.

Allison mentioned that I work for the attorney general's office. And in Texas, the attorney general's office is the agency responsible is the agency responsible for child support.

And that is a goal that we have in the state of Texas and my current work is how do we encourage fathers' involvement and then also in the support - the financial support of their children. But it goes much more beyond that. It's how we talk about dads. It's how we promote responsible fatherhood.

And so through this presentation, I hope that you have a better understanding of the work that's been done, the research that's out there, and then some hopeful - some helpful ideas and tips that might help you in your current program.

Now before I start, I really need to let you know that I have some biases coming into this presentation today. I worked with fathers directly for five years and for the last five years, more so in policy and creating programs.

But I believe that children need the care and support of the father just as much as the mother. I recognize many of the attendees that are on the conference

call and many of y'all may know my biography, but I have a 22-month-old child.

And being a father is a rewarding job and mothers are very important in the lives of children. But I do come into this work and in my life as a father noticing the fact that father's involvement in care and support of the child is just as important as the mom. So that's one of my biases.

The other is I believe children growing up with fathers generally suffer, that most learn to deal with it and do just fine. I know many and have a lot of respect for single parents, both single parents who are mothers and single parents who are fathers. Me and my wife raising a child, I often think how in the world would we cope if we were a single parent.

So I have the utmost respect for single parents and the job that they do. But I believe that children are best served when both parents are involved in a child's life.

That's not to mean that the couple has to be married and living in the same home. Many of the situations that we deal with, especially in child support, is where we're dealing with a noncustodial parent.

And in your work with young fathers, I would suspect that many of them are also in a situation where they may be a nonresident father. And so I will address some of the research and some of the lessons learned in regard to that population. But it's ultimately that fathers support their children regardless of the relationship with the other parent.

And my - and the last part of my biases really is that my main concern is not really the fathers. It's not the mothers. It's not the rights of the fathers or the

right of the mothers, but it's really the children and the fact that if we have two parents providing the emotional and financial support of the child that the child does better. And so the child wellbeing really drives my perspective in this conference, but also in the work that I do.

It's not new. Father involvement has been a focus of our presidents in the last three administrations. Here's a quote from Bill Clinton. "The single biggest social problem in our society may be the growing absence of fathers from their children's homes."

One thing that I want to point out from the Clinton administration, which really plays a major role in our work today, is the welfare reform of 1996. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act really changed the way that we provide financial assistance to single parents, but it also focused a tremendous desire and need for child support and how child support now intersects with the father involvement and the fatherhood field.

It played a - it really put a focus on that need of child support. We've come out of this era, the terminology deadbeat dad and is something that is kind of used in child support in talking about fathers who were not paying their child support.

What we've learned from the transition of welfare to work and this importance of child support and how we talk about dads is that many of the dads who we claimed to be deadbeat dads weren't necessarily those who were trying to avoid their obligations and trying to skirt their responsibilities.

It wasn't that they were deadbeat. It was that they were dead broke. And so it kind of leads into this - the traditional gender role of father is economic provider.

And so a fatherhood field actually was generated out of this change from welfare to work. But it also helped us see that our language matters. And if we continuously look at calling fathers who are not paying their child support as deadbeat, it may actually take away from those fathers who want to pay child support, but were unable to do so.

So many of the programs that we currently have also look at how do we help fathers who are noncustodial parents, those not living with the father, to find employment and be a productive financial supporter of their children and family.

From the Bush administration, we know that there was a big push for healthy marriage. And in that healthy marriage funding streams, we also received a number of different fundings that were for responsible fatherhood. And so he had proposed to put \$315 million into responsible fatherhood programs.

And one of the comments is here. "The research is clear. Fathers factor significantly in the lives of children. There is simply no substitute for the love and involvement and commitment of a responsible father."

And even to our current president, many of you, I mean, I'm sure all of you are aware of Barack Obama's biography and the fact that his father left the family when he was 2. But it provides a focus and an advocacy from the presidency level of this quote -- "Fathers are missing from too many lives and too many homes and the foundation of our families are weaker because of it."

As you know, you know, there's some other pressing issues in our country today and - but there is hope that we will receive additional fundings to again

support these important programs that are working with the young fathers and to make sure that they're involved in children's lives.

But this is probably the most important. Again, coming from a child who we know and his response upon returning from preschool -- "The other kids said I was lying when I told them I didn't have a daddy.

They said everyone has to have one. Can we get a daddy?" And this is James at age 3. James, now 14, still doesn't have a father's name on his birth certificate.

As I referenced in the change of - from welfare to work and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, there were some issues raised about this legal issue of fatherhood.

And it's something that we're really focused now in our work in Texas, talking about how do we educate and make sure people understand the legal rights and responsibilities of being a father.

There are some issues of unmarried parenting. Forty percent of all children born in America today will be born to unmarried parents. Much of the work that I do today is talking to high school students and young families about this legal issue, about the need to establish paternity for their child and what those legal rights and responsibilities are when you have a child and how that differs between families who have a child and are married and those families who have children and are not married.

And so if you are familiar with that, I applaud you. However, I also encourage you that there's a lot to be learned about the legal issues regarding fatherhood and I encourage you to connect with your state agencies to make sure that the

young men that you're working with understand the legal rights and legal responsibilities of becoming a parent.

Are there any questions at this point?

Operator: Again, if you would like to ask a question over the phone, please press star-1 on your telephone keypad. Or you may type in your question using the question-and-answer panel on your screen.

Woman: And I would also encourage folks at this time to maybe if you want to dial in and tell Gilbert a little bit about what you would like to get out of the call as well to make sure that the remainder of the call we can also help to tailor towards your needs, any specific questions you might have to make sure we get those answered while we're presenting.

Gilbert Chavez: If you think of questions along the way, please feel free to ask them. I encourage you. You know, I'm an interactive presenter. It's difficult for me in a teleconference where I can see your names and I recognize some of you that are out there, but not to be able to get that immediate feedback is sometimes difficult. So I encourage you if you have any questions or comments, please raise them.

At the end of this presentation, I also want to invite you to share some of the lessons learned or best practices that have worked for you. Again, I don't propose to know - have all of the answers or to know specifically what is going to work with your population.

But I think the best situation is where we can learn from each other. And so if you have a best practice that you would be willing to share with others on the

call, I would - once we're - I'm kind of done with the tips that I've created, I would encourage you to share those with others.

And so we'll have a time period after this presentation where you can do that. So if you have a piece of paper, write those down and have them ready for when we get done because, again, learning from each other is probably going to be the best option for seeing what works best in your community.

I want to give you kind of the background of the fatherhood field. You know, many of us who when I was working in the East Austin Male Involvement Project, we pretty much created it from scratch. You know, we started that program in 1999.

And it was a program, which was primarily looking at a low performing high school that had a high teen pregnancy rate. Most of our services were directed towards females.

And the Office of Population Affairs asked us, you know, what can we do to really target guys in preventing pregnancies and how do we need to change our messaging and our outreach and our education and specifically focus on reaching those young men?

And so I've been working in the field since 1999 and in different forms in this list that you see in front of you. And this is kind of a list that I came up with to kind of describe the differences of the fatherhood field and what these different programs offer and how they were developed to really kind of (gives) you some context of - and perspective of the work that you're doing.

Some of you may be working with young fathers. Some of you may be working in primary pregnancy prevention. But if we're working with young

dads and we're working with promoting responsible fatherhood, it may fit in one of these fields.

And so I kind of want to give a brief description of these to kind of give you some context of this developing fatherhood field and how it's evolved over time.

The first is male involvement programs. Again, the East Austin Male Involvement program, the one that I was involved with in 1999, was really a primary pregnancy prevention effort. It was helping young men avoid becoming fathers too soon.

It was really focused on outreach to adolescent males to take a part in pregnancy prevention, but also understanding the role of reproductive health and how they could promote their own male reproductive health.

It was a holistic approach to address a variety of at-risk behaviors. Developing assets was kind of a cornerstone of this - of the project to which I'm referring to, the East Austin Male Involvement Project, but it was looking at a variety of different at-risk factors, which may lead to pregnancy prevention.

So if a student drops out of high school, they're more likely to become a young parent (unintelligible) a lot of different aspects. But developmental assets was kind of a cornerstone to where we could not necessarily focus on those - the at-risk factors, but focus on those strength-based aspects where we could help develop certain assets in young men to help them make better choices in every aspect of their lives.

And so if you're not familiar with developmental assets, I encourage you to really look at this theoretical approach. It also is tied to resiliency factors and the research and resiliency.

But I'll provide a little bit more information about developing assets in young men a little bit later, but encourage you if you're not familiar with the development of assets to look into that approach and to see how you can look at the services you provide as a strength-based approach rather than looking at how do we address these at-risk factors.

The other part of the male involvement programs, which was also the connection to clinical services, how do we connect a nontraditional outreach approach and connect it to clinical services and look at how we get men to really look at their reproductive health.

In 1999 when I was first doing this work, I have a story about going into a family planning clinic, a Planned Parenthood clinic. And this is not an indictment on family planning clinics or Planned Parenthood clinics. But I went into a Planned Parenthood with my now wife. And I was doing this work working with young men.

And I asked the receptionist at the back what services do you have for young men? And - or for me? I was asking as a consumer what is it that this office could provide to help me in promoting and thinking about my own reproductive health.

I was told at that time that the services they could provide was for -- I'm sorry, I lost my train of thought -- vasectomy, that I could get a vasectomy, and that was what they offered a man at that office.

And it kind of really drove home the point that there really wasn't much known about how we provide services to young men, you know, information, brochures, packets, and just the environment that welcomes a young man into understanding their health needs, but also taking an active role in preventing pregnancies. And so that's just a short story of one of my early experiences and the difficulties in accessing services for men at that time.

Things have changed. You know, I'm very aware of our Texas programs, which are coordinated with Planned Parenthood, that offer male clinics, which are male-directed services for men.

And I think that times have changed and things are changed and we are now at a point where we do have this focus on getting men into the clinic, but also providing services to men. And an aspect to that is that it's not the same as providing services to women and we have to do it differently and we have to approach it differently.

And I think what this presentation provides you and what we've learned through other programs is that the information is out there and there are some tools that you can follow to help target young men.

Male involvement programs then kind of goes like I said from the welfare reform act into this father as economic provider. It primarily focuses on helping low income fathers find employment and meet their child support obligations.

Again, this really is the transition from looking at fathers as deadbeat dads to dead broke dads. How do we help them find employment? And it really focused on employment fathers, but it was a number of other issues, which

kind of arose through this child support issue. And it was their issue with access and visitation.

Fathers who, you know, are able to visit and maintain a relationship with their child are better payers. And many of the programs that we've operated show this over and over, that if we can address their access and visitation needs, then they are more willing and desiring of paying and meeting their obligations for child support.

When working with young fathers, this access and visitation may be a major point of their involvement with their child. And we'll address, you know, the specific barriers that young fathers have as compared to the universe of unmarried fathers or low income fathers.

And it also really acknowledged that employment is a barrier to family formation. Many of the couples have a desire to have an ongoing relationship and to have this relationship flourish, but employment can be a major barrier. And so this really kind of looked at not only the employment aspect, but introducing the fact that employment is and can be a barrier to family formation.

Fathers' rights groups, this is kind of information advocacy focused on child support, child custody, access and visitation issues. It really kind of draws attention to the legal issues that fathers have in regards to being parents and parenting their children.

It's - is - today in our Texas legislature, this also addresses the disestablishment issue. We're going to talk about - a little bit about the establishment of paternity, but there are disestablishment issues, which these fathers' rights groups have also brought up.

You know, if a father is found to be the legal father of the child, but then later finds out that he's not biologically the father of this child, what legal actions and what legal steps can be taken and what are the barriers, legal barriers, that are currently in place, which may not allow the father to a disestablishment of paternity.

Again, kind of back to my biases, I don't necessarily think that the disestablishment of paternity is a good thing for children. If a child has been calling a father role model Dad for two, three years, does it benefit the child to then say no, this isn't your dad.

So I have a bias about disestablishment, but I think that can be combated if we make sure that the unmarried fathers know their legal rights and responsibilities up front, that they're not surprised by any of the information or feel like they are roped into establishing paternity.

And so I'm going to talk a little bit about that. But there are - there is a role in fathers' rights groups, which talk about the legal issues of fatherhood, specifically with unmarried fathers and those fathers who may be seeking custody of their child.

Promoting fatherhood is really kind of a media campaign approach. There a large campaign and education programs that are focused on the need of a father being involved in a child's life.

I think that Obama's fatherhood speech very much fits into this promoting fatherhood arena. It's about how father's' involvement in child's lives are important. It's public information. It's social action. It's policy and how do we

change policy to make sure that fathers are seen on equal footing in the parenting role.

Two prime examples of this promoting fatherhood is the Promise Keepers and the Million Man March, two events which kind of focused the need of father involvement and the role of fathers in children's lives.

The last evolution of the fatherhood movement is what I really kind of say that the work that we're currently doing is really focused on is responsible fatherhood.

There are very valid aspects to each of the four previous fatherhood fields. And I think this responsible fatherhood really tries to combine those elements into targeted services primarily for low income fathers who are either nonresident, meaning that they're not living at - in the same house as the children, or they're fathers who are making an effort to support and be a part of this forming family.

Now forming family, you may not be familiar with this term forming family. It's something that we've used really to kind of focus on the strength-based aspects of a father's desire to be involved in a child's life.

Many of the studies that are out there use the terms fragile families. And there's a very important and popular study out there called the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, a study that we now have used to get a lot of information about the attitudes and behaviors and expectations of unmarried fathers in children's lives and in families' lives.

But the term fragile family kind of sends a message that these are families, which are really destined to break up at some point, that they're - they have a lot of barriers to becoming a healthy family.

And if you ask your clients and if you ask young people and young families, they would say that they have a lot of hope for their families and so calling them fragile may not be to the - our benefit. So we really call these now forming families.

And it really kind of acknowledges the individual contribution of a father on the impact of children. Many of the statistics that we mentioned - I mentioned previously is about these contributions on fathers. And the research shows and which we will go into here in the next slide the contributions that a father has on a child's life.

It's comprehensive interventions. It's not only the economic provider piece, but it's the emotional support that a father provides a child. You know, we are often tied into the traditional gender roles of being a father, but how do we look at fatherhood as being more holistic into the entire parenting paradigm?

I mean, parenting is much more than a paycheck. It's providing that emotional support, the guidance to the children, support of the family, all aspects, which may break down some of these traditional gender roles of being a father.

And it encourages active engagement in family roles regardless of relationship status with the other parent.

Being a father doesn't necessarily mean or have to mean being the husband. Many of your young parents, which we'll see through the research, will never

complete the family as being a married couple. They're going to be visiting fathers. So how do they work within that relationship to be an involved father?

It includes, I mean, it involves a lot of different skills, which are negotiating with the other parent, maintaining a decent relationship with the other parent regardless of the fact that you may no longer have a romantic relationship. So really kind of looking at those specific characteristics of families who are co-parenting and how do we educate young families on this co-parenting role and the skills needed to co-parent.

As you can imagine, in child support, there is a lot of conflict in the families. Child support, it probably gets in between the two most passionate things that people have -- their family and their money. And so there tends to be a lot of conflict in these families.

But if we're looking at what is really best for the child, then I think parents would understand that regardless of what their relationship is like, that it benefits the child if they work in a professional manner to work through some of the conflicts that they have to really provide a single front in how to parent their child.

So being on the same page, working professionally, having the disagreements that they might have outside of earshot of their child. And so there's a lot of different things where we can address fathers' involvement, which may not necessarily mean that you have to be the husband.

There's some characteristics. And we define responsible fatherhood as a responsible father waits to make a baby until he is prepared emotionally, economically to support his child; establishes legal paternity if and when he fathers a child, so acknowledging the legal rights and responsibilities that he

has as a father; actively shares with the child's mother in the continuing emotional and physical care of the child from pregnancy onwards. And so many of the programs that we have really target, you know, parenting skills once the child is a part of the family.

But what we're looking at in our research with the attorney general's office and emerging research in the field is how the fatherhood - the father's involvement even in the prenatal stage has an impact on outcomes for the baby and the child - I mean, the mom and the baby.

And so it's more - it's the first nine months of fatherhood. It's those nine months where the child not - is not yet there, but the father still has a role in providing support and care for the family.

It shares with the child's mother in the continuing financial support of the child from pregnancy onward, so, again, the financial aspect, the economic provider aspect, and has respect - respectful, nonviolent relationship with his child's mother. And it really kind of addresses the healthy relationship and the impact of that relationship on children.

So what kind of fatherhood field do you see yourself in? Are there any questions?

Operator: Again, if you would like to ask a question or provide feedback, please press star-1 on your telephone keypad. Or you may type it into the Q&A panel.

Woman: And while we're waiting for people to press star-1 so that they can ask a question, I do have a written question that came in, Gilbert.

Gilbert Chavez: (Good).

Woman: And this is from a CARE grantee down in Atlanta. What can you do to help dads who are doing the right thing, but the mother of the child is interfering?

Gilbert Chavez: That's a great question. And we hear that, especially in our - in addressing the legal aspects of fatherhood.

I think that the first aspect is making sure that the father has legal rights and responsibilities to the child, that he is acknowledged as the legal father.

I think the second is - and probably the hardest to sell to your client is that there is a benefit in having a formal support order, a formal guide to how the parenting relationship is going to occur.

Now traditionally the way that we talk about it in child support is that if we have a child support order, that it gives us a specific guideline for how the parenting relationship is going to occur.

And so a lot of the work that we do is talking to young dads, to say hey, you have these same rights and responsibilities to the child as the mom does. And so if you want to make sure - you need to make sure that you have established these rights.

And that primarily is opening up a child support case. Many times, young dads will avoid getting on a child support case, but it does provide them some benefits. And one of the primary benefits and it would be in address to your question is that it provides a formal parenting relationship between this couple.

Now in, you know, putting that into practice is a little bit different. When I'm working with young dads, I often talk about working on the relationship between those two parents because if it's a contentious relationship, regardless if we have this formal arrangement issued by the judge or not, in may still be a very bad situation for the child.

So really, kind of working with that other parent and saying what can we contribute, how can we work on this relationship, and what is really the focus of our issue, which is the child? And so how do we work together for the benefit of the child?

So in answer to your question, I really think it's two part. There are some legal steps, which could be taken to initiate a formal agreement and a formal relationship, parenting relationship.

But I think the - kind of the soft side of that is really about the couple working and looking at their relationship and what is in the best interest for the child, and kind of that being the focus rather than some of the conflict issues -- well, I don't like him because he has a new girlfriend, or that person got remarried or now they have another child.

So a lot of these personal issues come up, but if they focus on what is in the best interest of the child, I tend to think that they can work through some of those issues to come up with a co-parenting plan. Or something that they can - a negotiated agreement of what they can do really help work through those issues for the best interests of the child.

Woman: Yeah, and I want to add one other thing actually. I think that was good advice. And now we have another twist to that. What if it's the grandmother that's interfering, so the mother of the child's mother?

Gilbert Chavez: You know, I actually have a slide in this presentation, which kind of addresses some of the additional barriers for young fathers.

My experience is that grandparents are a barrier, a significant barrier, to the father's involvement. And, you know, as just a kind of a story aside, I asked my mother what would you think of the young man who, you know, your daughter comes in, she's 16-years-old, she tells you that she's pregnant.

What would you think of that young man? Would you want him involved in the child's life? And many of the grandparents' attitudes are that you know what? We don't want him involved. We would rather that that person just kind of go on. We'll take care of this ourselves.

And so I think the focus really -- and it's a part of my bias as well -- is that the focus needs to be on the child, what is going to be in the best interests of this child?

And so, again, there are some legal steps. Fathers, noncustodial parents, can open up a child support case on their own. It will mean that they have to pay child support.

It will mean that they will have some medical support issue. But it also gives them certain access and visitation rights, which they then can kind of use to kind of formalize what their parenting relationship's going to be.

So there is still some legal things that a father can do to make sure that his rights are established with that family.

Oftentimes they're not willing to do that. Oftentimes they're not willing to kind of open, you know, take those legal steps because it's going to mean that they're going to have to pay child support.

And so, you know, it's kind of making sure that they understand the complete options that are available to them, but also what that's going to mean as far as their financial responsibilities for that child.

And so, you know, it really is developing that one-on-one relationship with them and making sure that they're - they understand what their rights and responsibilities are and what that might mean if they do take those legal steps.

Hope that helps.

Woman: It does.

Did we have any other questions on the line?

Operator: I have no questions in queue.

Woman: Okay.

Gilbert, I'll let you move on.

Gilbert Chavez: Okay.

Woman: Thanks.

Gilbert Chavez: Well, now we're going to talk a little bit about the research. And so what we have done in this part is really opened it up to where you will be able to

participate and showing your knowledge about the importance of father involvement.

And so what I have in the next 15 slides or so are some poll questions. And it's really about what does the research say about the impact of father involvement.

Father involvement and research field in father involvement is really an emerging field of research. Most of the information that we have is coming out of the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study.

If you're not familiar with the study, I suggest that you look into kind of the study design and the information that's coming out of that study. It's an ongoing study, so we'll know more longitudinal information as we move forward with the study of these families.

I also have to acknowledge that there's not much specifically on teen dads, but there are some information. And as y'all brought up, there's some unique qualities to being a teen dad that other fathers don't necessarily have. And so we'll kind of address those as we go through.

But at this point, we're going to take some polls. And so this is kind of a quiz that we'll ask you to respond with your answer to what you think is the impact of fathers in these next questions. And so let me pull that up real quick.

What I'm going to do is I'm going to open it up. Polls are open. So your answer, which of the following has the greatest impact on whether a pregnant woman gets adequate and early prenatal care? Is it education, the support of the mother, the support of her partner, or income?

So go ahead and enter in...

Okay. It's going to be like popcorn. As soon as I see like there's only like one or two every second, I'm going to go ahead and close it. So I'm going to go ahead and close the poll and I'm going to show you.

Most thought that it's education. And education does have a significant impact on if a mom will get prenatal care. Education, the higher education that a mom has is a great predictor if they're going to get prenatal care. Income as well, income is an - is a factor. Income level is a factor if they get prenatal care.

But the study that I'm referencing comes out of the Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Neonatal Nursing. It actually showed that the support of her partner was the greatest impact on whether a pregnant woman gets adequate and early prenatal care.

I'm going to bring up a point about young parents. My experience with young parents is sometimes the new mom is hesitant of telling the grandmother that she's pregnant. Oftentimes the boyfriend, the teen dad, will know in place where the mother does not yet know.

And so this really kind of I think is also true for young parents that the partner, if the young man knows the importance of prenatal care that they can play an important role in making sure that that mom gets in to see physician and address the prenatal needs of that child early on.

And, again, if you have any questions, you can type them in and we can answer them as we go.

Next question -- what percentage of unmarried fathers provide financial support to the mother of their baby during her pregnancy?

The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, again, is a study done across major populations across the United States, showed that - and it was - this question in particular comes out of the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study.

It asked the moms and dads separately, so this isn't biased to the fact that both parents may be there when this question is asked, but it showed that 80% of the participants in this study were providing some financial support. And we're not talking about, you know, rides to the clinic, but actual support and - to the mom and for the family during this - during the pregnancy.

Next question -- what percentage of unmarried couples plan to put the father's name on the birth certificate?

Okay, it looks like most are getting this right. Eighty-three percent of couples who were asked in this study do plan to put the father's name on the birth certificate, 83%.

You know, during this presentation, I would often ask people, you know, well, why do you think this is so important for unmarried couples that this father's name gets on the birth certificate?

And I get several different responses. Some of the responses I get is well, if we get the father's name on the birth certificate, then there's a greater likelihood that they'll get on child support.

Well, putting the father's name on the birth certificate really doesn't - it absolutely doesn't initiate a child support obligation. And so it's not necessarily that.

I primarily think that couples want that child to know who that father is. They don't want that child to live their life with blank or unknown on the birth certificate. And so I think for couples, the father's name is a motivating factor for establishing paternity. It's the way that we get the father's name on the birth certificate.

And so the attitudes towards the father recognition on the birth certificate is significant for unmarried couples. And, again, studies show - or most recent number shows that 4 out of every 10 children born in the United States will be born to unmarried couples.

The other point to this is that for the father's name to get on the birth certificate, they have to take some legal steps. And so we're going to cover that just a little bit as we go through here, but I do want to bring that point up.

Infant mortality rates are how much higher for children without a father's name on the birth certificate than those with a dad's name? So does a dad's name on a birth certificate have an impact on infant mortality?

The study from Social Science and Medicine from 1999 shows that infant mortality with children without the father's name on the birth certificate is 2.3 times higher for children without the father's name on the birth certificate.

Now, you know, a name on a piece of paper really doesn't seem to have any significant impact. So there has to be other factors with these couples that do not have a father's name on the birth certificate. But the study did show that

there's a significant difference in those that had the father's name on the birth certificate and those that didn't. And so this really isn't - there - this really isn't a causality.

We're not looking at what is the cause. Is the cause not having the father's name on the birth certificate? There really is an indication that there is some significant differences in those families who chose to have the father's name in - on the birth certificate and those that didn't.

Next question -- children living with unmarried single parents are how much more likely to live in poverty than children living with both parents? Now this may be some statistic that you're very familiar with.

And most of you are right. It's (about) 5 times. Children living with unmarried single mothers are 5 times more likely to live in poverty. They're also 5 times more likely to commit crimes.

And so it does kind of indicate that a father's involvement has some significant impact to the wellbeing of not only the child, but of the family. And it only makes sense.

I mean, if we have two parents who are providing the financial support to the child, then they are greater - they have a greater chance of getting out of poverty and not having to live in poverty.

Again, single parents do an amazing job. I can't - I can only give respect to those who are in a situation where they are a single parent, just to the caring of a child, I can't imagine it because it - raising a 22-month-old, it taxes both me and my wife 100% and I have newfound respect for single parents. But there is some indication that they are impacted financially.

What percentage of unmarried fathers at the hospital for the birth of their child plan on being very involved in their child's life? So these are fathers who were at the hospital. They were there for the child being born.

It was a part of the Fragile Families studies and we asked them what do you - what is your expectation for being involved in this child's life? What percent do you think said that their expectation is to be very involved?

Allison Roper: And Gilbert, this is Allison. While everybody's...

Gilbert Chavez: (Yeah).

Allison Roper: ...answering this poll question, I just wanted to let you know that we have a little bit less than 30 minutes left.

Gilbert Chavez: (Okay).

Allison Roper: So I just wanted to make sure that we have enough time also to go into some detail on some of the best practices that you found.

Gilbert Chavez: Yes.

Allison Roper: And I would really like for grantees and I'm going to hopefully not have to call on individual grantees to speak up, but I'd really like for grantees to start talking about some of the best practices they found or some of their questions. This is a topic that I talk about with my grantees all the time because it's one that they have a lot of questions on. So I just wanted to let you know.

Thanks.

Gilbert Chavez: Perfect. Thank you for the update.

They actually plan - 99% plan on being very involved in the child's life. You know, if they're there for the child's birth, then, of course, you know, they have the expectation that they have a responsibility to helping raise the child and are really looking forward to being involved in the child's life.

When an unmarried father has a child, he automatically has which of these following legal rights and responsibilities? When an unmarried father has a child, do you think he has the right to access and visit the child?

Does he have the responsibility of financially supporting the child, the right to access medical records for the child, or that he has no legal rights automatically?

Actually when an unmarried father has a child, he does not have any automatic legal rights and responsibilities. Now there's a difference between legal and moral rights, but in regards to a father's rights, states recognize the mom as the legal parent. And until the father does something, which we call establishing paternity, has no legal rights.

Now once he establishes legal paternity, he does have legal rights. They are kind of given up to the parents to kind of establish on their own, but they must establish this paternity before they are able to - access and visitation or access to medical records, things like that.

So we can skip that one. Percentage of unmarried fathers have a legal -- this is a good one. What percentage of unmarried fathers have a legal obligation to pay child support during the first year of their child's life?

This might be surprising. Only 8% of fathers who are in an unmarried relationship will have a legal obligation to pay child support during the first year of their child's life.

Much of that goes to their expectations for the relationship. They want to have a healthy relationship. They have the attitude that they will be married at some point.

Unmarried fathers think that their chances of marrying the mom at - are at least 50/50. Eighty-eight percent of fathers think that their chances of marrying the mom are at least 50/50.

Now mom's attitudes -- and again, this comes from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study -- mom's attitudes are about 67%. So many times, attendees will say well, they have a much more realistic expectation of marriage.

Regardless of that fact, I think that there's a lot of hope here. There's a lot of hope between the couple that this relationship is going somewhere and there's hope that they will be able to have a relationship that even ends up in marriage.

So I think that there's a lot of hope here in talking about what their expectations are and how we may be able to support and achieve those expectations for a healthy relationship.

What percentage of unmarried fathers are still in a romantic relationship with the mother at the time of the child's birth? Eighty-two percent. Eighty-two percent of couples -- and this comes from the Fragile Families and Child

Wellbeing Study -- are still in a romantic relationship. And this is self-reported. Fifty percent are actually in a cohabitating relationship. Again, this doesn't necessarily always apply to teen parents.

And here's another question, which -- and I'm sorry I'm kind of rushing through these slides at this point, but baby's father, when pregnant women were asked whose opinion mattered most regarding infant feeding decisions, 79% in one study said the baby's father's attitude was most important, opinion mattered the most in their decision to breastfeed or not.

Another study showed -- I think it's the next one -- if the father was approving of the breastfeeding option or was approved of breastfeeding that the mom was 4 times more likely to -- excuse me, breastfeed than those partners who were indifferent to the fact if they breastfed or not.

What percentage of young - or of unmarried fathers see their young children 0 to 3 at least once a week?

And this, again, kind of goes to the attitude of the - in the relationship of the couple at the time, but 70% of unmarried fathers saw their chances - saw their children at least once a week. Again, 50% these couples are going to be cohabitating.

But by the age of 12, the study found that father weekly visitation fell to 22%. So really, the focus on this magic moment is what we call it, 0 to 3, is an important time that we focus our services and really look at getting fathers involved in child's life.

And a lot of the resources that we do in the child support organization that I work for in the Office of the Attorney General is building these onramps to father involvement.

And what we've found and it's kind of based on this research is using the expectations that fathers have for these parenting roles, their readiness and vision for fatherhood, you know, many of these young fathers have an expectation that may never be filled - fulfilled, but they do have this expectation of being a great father.

How do we build upon that vision to give them the skills and the education to make sure that they can be the best father that they can for that child, addressing the paternity rights and responsibilities for the father? So, again, addressing those legal issues about establishment of paternity, but also what their responsibilities are and really recognizing the personal experience of being a father.

You know, fathers - absent fathers have been a part of many, many generations. But, you know, we're seeing a significant client population who were raised without fathers.

And many of them, that is a motivating factor for them, their continued involvement. I don't want my child to live without a father because I know what that's like, and so recognizing their own personal experience of being a father and how we can provide them education and information that kind of helps build on what those expectations are.

As far as involving fathers in prenatal and parenting services, it's a family-focused approach. Getting back to the story with my 22-month-old, I basically went to every prenatal visit.

But in the first visit, the doctor was kind of talking to my wife and talking about what our jobs were and what we were doing or actually asking her what her job and what her job was doing. But when he turned to me, he said, you know, I don't care what you do.

And I was a little bit taken aback by that comment, but I wasn't surprised by that comment because the primary focus is the mom during that time. And it wasn't necessarily about me.

But it kind of is this pervasive attitude of that, you know, even we've kind of institutionalized this exclusion of men in pregnancy and in family formation. And so really, it's making that transition to again looking at the information and the outreach that we do, not specific to one gender.

And this goes as well to the fatherhood moment. We can't necessarily focus everything specifically on the father. It has to be family-focused. How do we look at this person, this father, in context of the family?

But we do also need materials specifically for men. And I'm going to give you some examples here in a second. But, again, educating and talking to young men may look different than educating and talking to young women.

Looking at nontraditional partnerships, many of you are working in community-based organizations. This bullet point is (targeted as) saying we need to work with community-based organizations. I think our community connection is actually what allows us to be flexible in our outreach. It allows us to try new things and develop these one-on-one relationships and better equipped to have mentoring programs.

But there is also a role in the clinical setting. Many of the clinical settings aren't very male-friendly, so really -- excuse me -- assessing our clinical spaces to make sure that they're male-friendly and male-accessible.

Establishment of paternity -- many of you I can go ahead and say need to really understand the laws in your state in regards to establishment of paternity, but not only you yourself understand the laws, but make sure that your moms and dads also understand the laws regarding unmarried parenting.

Not - most of the information that's given out is given out during the hospital. But what we need to do is make sure that this information about establishing paternity and the option for establishing paternity is done early and often. And so providing multiple opportunities to receive information about establishing paternity, the option for DNA testing, child support orders and what are some of those benefits of a legal foundation for the parenting relationship.

So to really kind of also connect with those legal agencies in your state, to address how do we talk to young men, and make sure that our young families understand those legal rights and responsibilities before they're presented the information at the hospital.

Again, as y'all kind of brought up, there are some additional barriers that we see with young fathers.

One is they may still be in school or they may be too young to be employed, or if they've had to drop out, their employment options are limited. And so employment and school tend to be a significant barrier for young fathers.

Another barrier is grandparents. Again, I kind of already gave you my story about how would a grandparent feel about the young man who got your 16-

year-old daughter pregnant. You know, how do we address those issues? How do we work not only with the young father, but looking at the entire team.

And the entire team is the mother, the father, the grandparents, the social services agencies -- how do we look at that team dynamics in supporting what is going to be in the best interests of that child. And so making sure that they have information on the importance of - and how we can focus on that child rather than our own personal feelings towards the other person.

The other significant barrier for young parents is the dynamics of the relationship. And so many a times, even the young parents, those still in high school or those still in community college, those between 16 and 25, they have a very dynamic relationship. They're together one week, not together the next week.

But I think you kind of roll that in to what is going to be how do we focus on what is going to be on the best interests of this child regardless of what our parenting relationship's going to be.

The other aspect of that -- and it's something that child support is kind of guilty of -- is that we will often tell a young mom that the reason why you need to get on child support is because this guy right here, he's going to leave next month, right?

But that doesn't really address their personal expectations for the relationship. They may think that they're going to be in love and live together forever. So by us telling them that, you know, they need to get on child support because this guy's going to leave is really not addressing their personal attitudes and values as to how the relationship is going to progress.

And so I'd like to leave you with thinking about how do we address the parents in context of the relationship. Their maturity level is different. And we have - they don't have low expectations for father involvement necessarily, but we have low expectations often for the young fathers to be involved in that child's life, specifically for those young parents.

Here are some tips. You know, I think all of you can print and download these tips for communicating with dads. I don't think I really need to go through them. I do encourage you to print out the handout that we've made available that address these tips.

But I kind of also wanted to address the attitudes of the practitioner. We should have high expectations for those young fathers and exude the belief that these men are valuable and capable of succeeding. Young men will often live up to the high or low expectations that we have for them.

Consciously envision a positive future for all young fathers. Assume that fathers want, need, and have responsibility for (an actively-involved parent).

Start when the young - start where the young man is, not where you think he should be or where stereotypes may lead you.

And so these are some of the attitudes that we bring into it because we often are working with our own history of how we see fathers. It may be based on the relationship that we have with an ex-husband or an ex-wife and we bring that with us or we were raised with an absent father and so we have the expectation that these fathers leave.

And so we need to do a little analysis of what our own opinions are of the role of the father and especially when we're communicating and talking with dads

and trying to help them realize their expectations and their role of being a father.

Are there any questions at this point? I'm going to go over some examples of some activities, but if there's any questions at this point (unintelligible) to ask them.

Operator: As a reminder, to ask a question over the phone, please press star-1 on your telephone keypad. Or you may type it in using the question-and-answer panel.

Allison Roper: And I do have a question that came up, Gilbert. And that is do you have any tips on how to effectively recruit teen dads? And, you know, you can have this great program and do a whole bunch of things, but if somebody's hesitant to come to your program, how do you go about and actively recruit them? And I would also encourage grantees to buzz in as well and see if you have anything to add to that.

Gilbert Chavez: Yeah, absolutely, this is the best opportunity to get the information from other grantees who are working with this issue.

Recruitment is the \$1 million question. What we did the male involvement project is really create a program, which was inviting, which was led in a lot of different ways by the young adolescents themselves. And so we created leadership roles for them. We had - made sure that they understood their place in this organization.

And so it was much more of a club rather than group services, you know, where we're putting out a sign, groups start today. You know, it was more of a club where they recruited other participants.

They contacted the young men and were really conduit to outreach. And so wherever possible, I think you use the participants that you currently have to do other outreach recruitment.

I think the other thing that you need to focus on is the nontraditional aspects of recruitment. One of our biggest recruiting efforts in the male involvement project was a basketball tournament.

And so we would invite all of these people to come to a basketball tournament. We would provide them information. They had to sign up, you know, for this level of participation or whatever. But it was just a way of combining what their interests were to how do we reach them with our message.

And so we often asked of the participants without ever having made an emotional deposit, you know, it's kind of the (cubbie) paradigm of making, you know, an emotional investment.

We have to make some kind of emotional investment for them to really be able to ask something of them. And so I'd also have you keep that in mind as well.

Anything else?

Allison Roper: I did have a couple other questions came in over the text box. One was what is your take on if it makes a difference on in who - which type of staffer working with teen fathers and that is male or female, does that make a difference in your experience?

Gilbert Chavez: I think initially it does help to have male-driven services where it's led by an experienced male. But I have to say that there does not mean that there is not a place for women to be doing this work. Absolutely I would have to - my experience says the exact opposite. There is a place.

And if you're in a situation where you can't find males to be facilitators in the group, look at your current participants. Your participants are males. And where can you ask them to take a lead in providing some of the mentorship roles or providing some of the outreach to other fathers?

And so absolutely there is a role for males and it does assist in some of that initial development, but that does not mean that there is not a role for females to be the leader of these activities, to run the programs, or anything like that.

Allison Roper: Thank you. And that's in - that's a really great idea about the - using your participants as mentors.

And then one other question came in. And it is do you see any differences between different races and how involved they are as fathers? Or does that not really play a part?

Gilbert Chavez: You know, I mean, if you look at the statistics on what racial ethnicity has a greater absence of fatherhood, I mean, it provides you some information. But it doesn't nearly necessarily match up with my experience.

When I'm talking with fathers of all different races, oftentimes their motivation for being involved is for the fact that they didn't have a father involved in their lives and there's no way that I'm going to let this child live without a father because I know what that's like. And so, you know, there

may be some racial differences, but I would ask you not to kind of fall into the stereotypes of if they're going to be involved or not.

I think what you need to look at is what are their personal expectations of being a father. And I think what you'll find is they have high hopes of being involved, of being a part of the family's life.

And what we need to do is not necessarily focus on why that's not going to happen, but how do we put in place those assets where they can actually achieve their goal of being an involved father.

Woman: Thank you.

Did we have any other questions on the line?

Operator: I have no questions in queue.

Woman: Okay.

Gilbert, I'll let you continue with your slides.

Gilbert Chavez: Okay. I just have a couple more slides and they're really just kind of examples.

I had an example of an activity, which would kind of go about helping you understand a little bit more about developmental assets, but kind of talking to your young fathers about developmental assets and how do we make sure that the children have the best opportunity of being healthy and successful in their life.

And so kind of researching developmental assets, and then discussing with your dads what they could do to help develop these assets in their children, so it really gives them a role in how they can make sure and have their children achieve success.

And so I think that's an example of an activity that you could use that would actually be sharing an aspect where you're learning, but also you're getting input from your fathers on how they could be involved and really capitalizing on their own expectations.

This example comes from the Healthy Families San Angelo group, which created a (cry chart). It's not specifically developed for fathers, but if you're familiar with how to fix cars, then you might understand this linear format where, you know, you're presented with a problem and, you know, you kind of have an output of a solution.

And if that doesn't work, kind of move to the next step, and so thinking and utilizing how men understand and learn and what might be used as a tool to help young men in this instance how to comfort a crying baby.

And then specifically for dads, you know, what can they do to help in the development of the child? You know, oftentimes we think of - or young men will think that - or fathers will think that their role is to teach the child how to fish, you know, teach them how to throw a ball.

But they have other roles that can be learned and practiced even with infants. And so here's an example of teaching your baby different sounds and kind of explaining what different sounds sound like and really engaging and getting them engaged with the development and learning of their child. So it's just

kind of an example of some of the father-specific activities that were developed.

So this is an opportunity I know and I've used most of the time, but what has worked for you? You know, I don't propose that working with fathers is a one-size-fit-all endeavor.

You know, we learn from each other and, you know, we have to adapt those things to really be effective in our own communities and with our own participants. You have your own personal communication and facilitation style, so how do you model the activities to meet your communication style?

And keep in mind the experience and vision of fatherhood in mind so - because your dads, they have their own personal vision and how do we help them achieve that.

And so, all right, open it up.

Operator: As a final reminder, if you'd like to ask a question over the phone, please press star-1 on your telephone keypad. Or you may type it in using the question-and-answer panel.

Allison Power: And while we're waiting for people to buzz in, one of the things that I'm walking away from, Gilbert, is something that we've been just kind of - you reemphasized for me what we've been working towards for the last several years.

And that is that fatherhood programs really need to be very intentional. They should not be programs that are just add-ons. I think that your comment about how you were addressed by the doctor in the doctor's office spoke to that as

well, you know, oh, it's just the dad here, but that fatherhood programs need to really fit the needs of the teen dad.

So the services may be somewhat different. The materials may be different than what you use for the teen moms. It's not a one-size-fits-all, even across communities of teen dads. And you really have to look at your own community and what the needs are for the teen dads that your working with.

Gilbert Chavez: I absolutely agree and would add to that wherever possible have them develop the materials. You know, use what they've learned and kind of help in making and developing the materials is only going to enrich the experience of learning, but also when you're sharing it with other fathers, you can let them know, hey, this was developed in our first group or in our, you know, from the fathers who were involved in this program, so.

Allison Roper: You've been a quiet group today. Does anybody have any comments or last-minute questions that they want to bring up?

I think most of the questions came in over the text box today.

Operator: I have no questions in queue.

Allison Roper: Okay.

Well, then, I want to say thank you so much, Gilbert. I think this was a great presentation. And we will have everything available, hopefully we'll have our (TA) resources page up on our Web site within the next week.

And I will send out all of the password information for that and we'll have Gilbert's presentation available up there as well so you can share it with other people.

So thanks everybody. And don't forget to fill out the survey. Okay, there it is on the screen.

Thank you so much.

Operator: Thanks, again, for joining us and all of your questions. At this time, you should see the survey on your screen. So if you could take a moment before you disconnect today to fill it out, we would certainly appreciate your feedback.

Thanks, again. You may now disconnect.

END