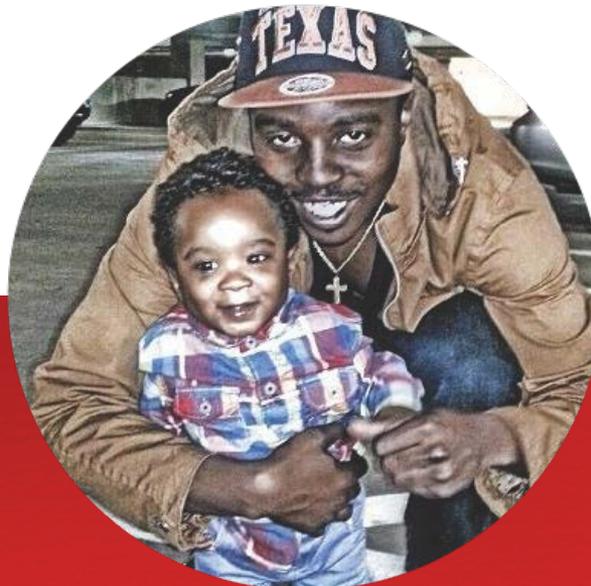


RECRUITING AND RETAINING FATHERS: STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING YOUNG MEN IN PARENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS



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Opening Doors: Engaging and Embracing Young Fathers
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AGENDA

- Introductions
- Review of Fatherhood Literature
- Unique Considerations & Needs of Young Fathers
- Best Practices for Working with Fathers
- Generations **REM Model** of Fatherhood Engagement
- Trauma-Informed Services
- Case Study: Healthy Generations Program
- Workshop Group Activity: PICK Analysis
- Discussion

OBJECTIVES

- Identify the opportunities associated with developing programs for teen fathers
- Describe common challenges to recruiting, retaining and engaging young fathers
- Identify strategies to recruiting, retaining and engaging young fathers, particularly diverse groups touching on considerations such as staff, program structure and program services, and incentives

SHARE OUT

- What are the needs of young fathers?
- How do the needs of young fathers differ from those of mothers?
- What has been challenging about getting dads involved in programs?
- What has worked in engaging fathers in programs?



FATHERHOOD RESEARCH

- Father involvement has long been an of interest of social service providers, researchers, and policymakers (Lamb, Pleck, & Charnov, 1987)
 - Interest in nonresidential fathers increased during 1970's-1980's
 - Research on young fathers increased following an increase in unmarried parenthood among young mothers
- Conceptualizations of father involvement have varied over time (Lamb, 2008)
 - Interaction
 - Availability
 - Responsibility
- Father involvement has been associated with positive child outcomes
 - Socio-emotional development & well-being (Day & Padilla-Walker, 2009; Goncy & van Dulmen, 2010)
 - Attachment security (Brown, Mangelsdorf, & Neff, 2012)
 - Prosocial behaviors (Day & Padilla-Walker, 2009)
 - Reduced risk of internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Day & Padilla-Walker, 2009)

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS OF YOUNG FATHERS

- Factors that place young men at risk for becoming fathers complicate fathering (Thornberry, 1997)
- Unsafe communities endanger young men and limit mobility (Roy, 2004)
- Fathers 2-3 years older than mothers, on average (Duberstein, Sonenstein, Ku, & Martinez, 1997)
- Coparenting Relationships
 - Dynamic nature of relationships (Arnett, 2004)
 - Dissolution of romantic relationships

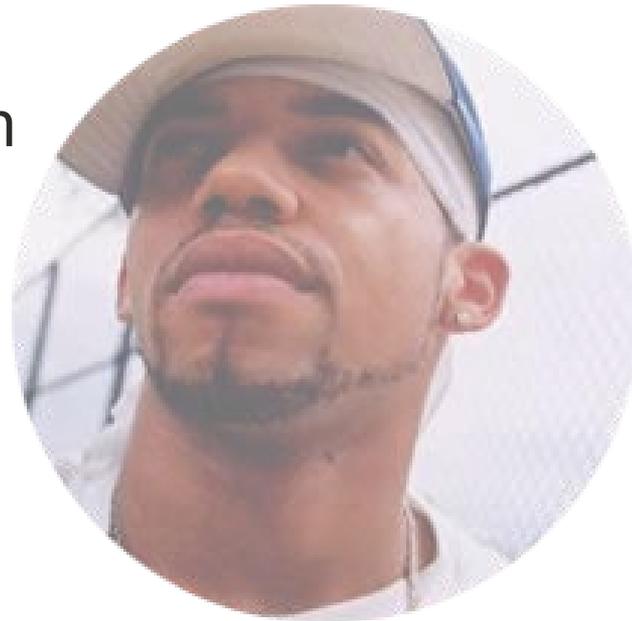
UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS OF YOUNG FATHERS

- Constrained economic prospects facing young men
 - Disproportionate disconnection among young, low-income men (Jekielek & Brown, 2005; Corcoran & Matsudaira, 2005)
 - The quality of the co-parenting relationship and paternal involvement has been associated with fathers' employment status
 - Young men who are disconnected from school and work are at higher risk for poverty, welfare receipt, and having children who are raised in single-parent households (Brown & Emig, 1999).
- Becoming a father may impel young men to “settle down,” find direction, and consider the needs of others (Palkovitz, 2002).



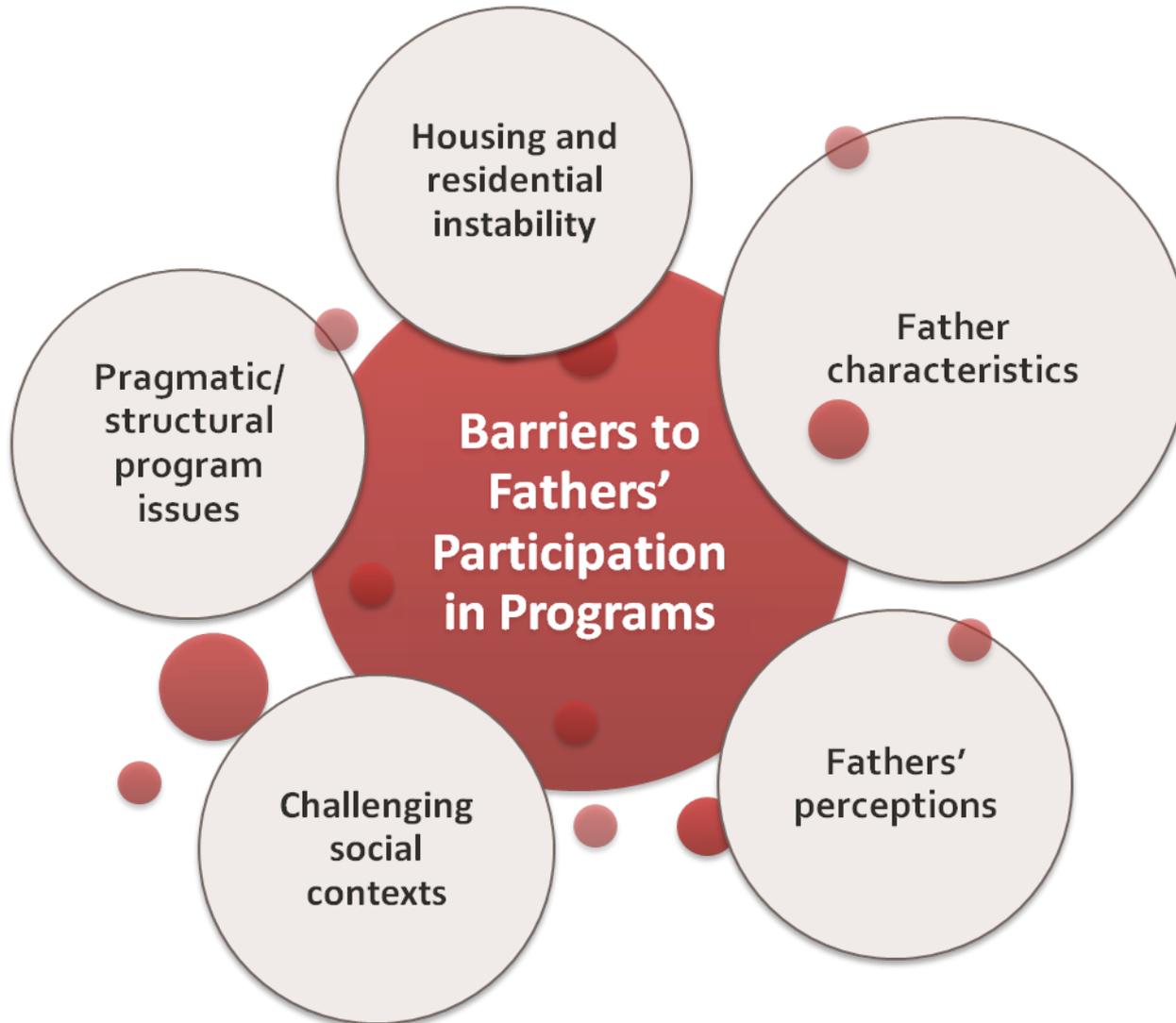
COMPONENTS OF FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS

- Parenting education
- Responsible decision-making
- Mentoring Relationships
- Mediation services
- Child support Education
- Conflict resolution
- Coping with stress
- Problem-solving skills
- Value Development
- Relationship education
- Peer support
- Parenting skills
- Job training opportunities



(Solomon-Fears, 2007)

BARRIERS TO FATHERS' PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS



BEST PRACTICES OF WORKING WITH FATHERS

- Culturally appropriate approaches
 - Targeted curricula
 - Methods
 - Materials
- Staff & stakeholder buy-in
- Quality and Adequate staffing
 - Knowledgeable and experienced staff
 - High staff-to-participant ratio
- Grounded in theory of change
- Multimodal opportunities for engagement
- Longitudinal and flexible enrollment
- Engaging in one-on-one relationships with fathers
- Use of an incentive to fathers and or their families
- Meet fathers where they are

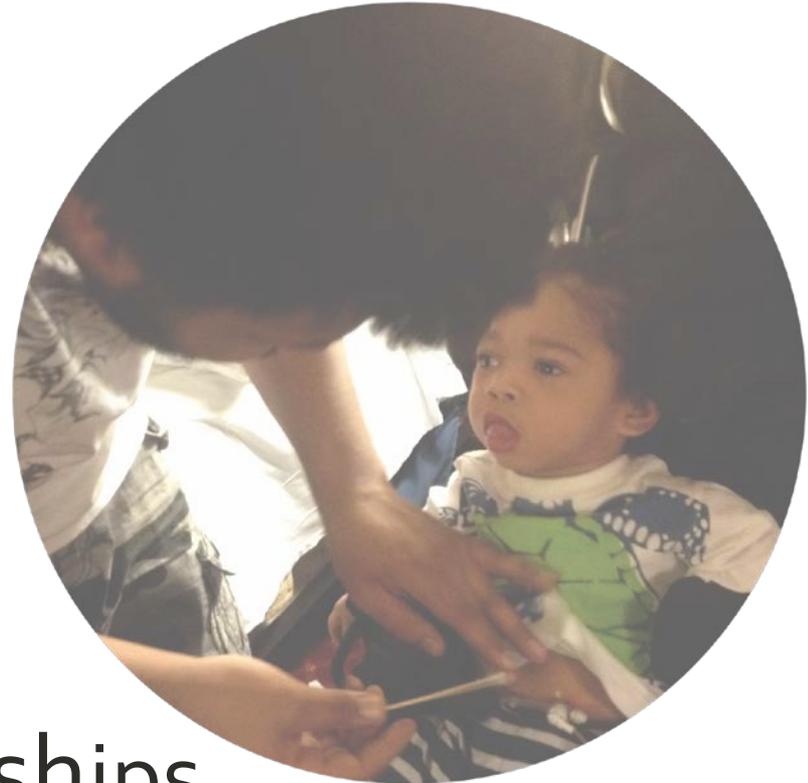


GENERATIONS YOUNG FATHERHOOD REM MODEL

Recruitment

Engagement

Maintaining Relationships



GENERATIONS REM MODEL

Recruitment

- School Strategies
 - “Natural gatekeepers”
 - Coaches
 - Young mothers
 - Custodial workers
 - Administrative staff/teachers

GENERATIONS REM MODEL

Recruitment

- School Strategies (cont.)
 - Advertisement/Marketing Strategies
 - Classroom announcements/presentations
 - Flyers
 - School-wide functions/Events
 - Existing fathers/mothers in the school
 - Related programs within school
 - “Hallway” recruitment

GENERATIONS REM MODEL

Recruitment

- Community Strategies

- Partnerships with recognized names and programs in the community
- Outreach at community/neighborhood events
- Provide/Collaborate with job readiness/employment services
- Visit local health clinics/Flyers
- Visit centers where parents enroll in public benefits
 - WIC Centers

GENERATIONS REM MODEL

Engagement

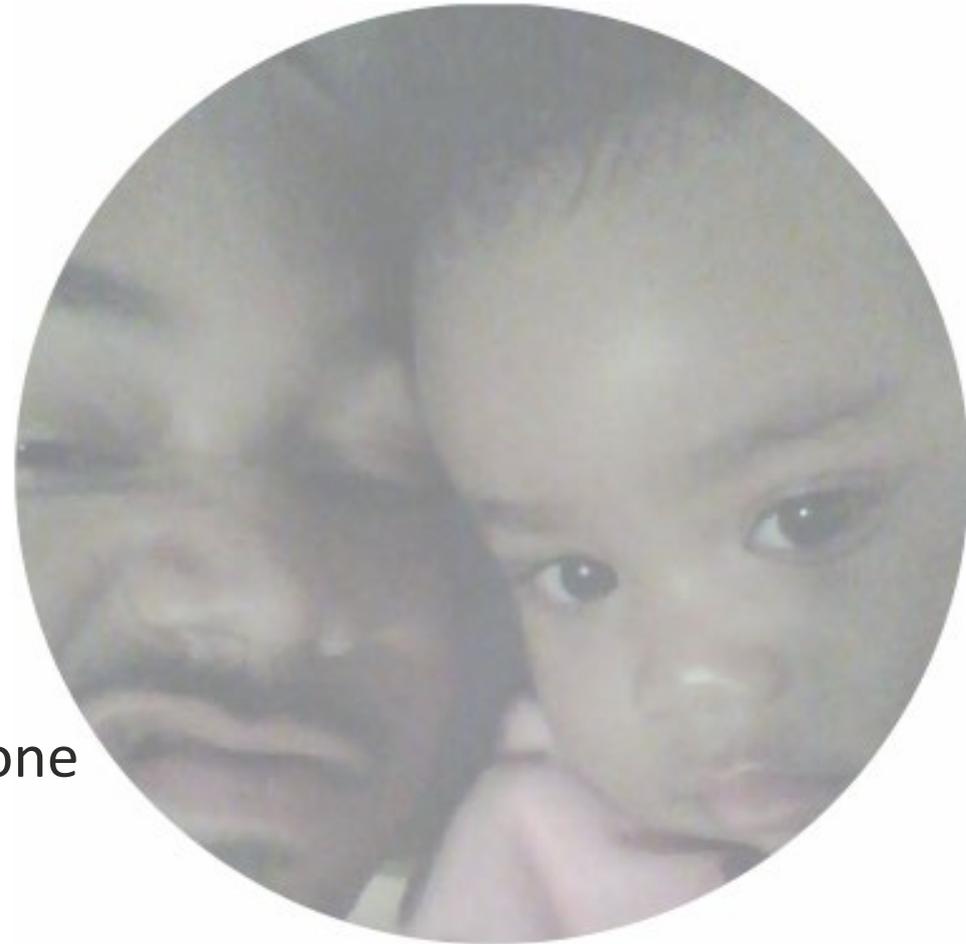
- School Strategies

- Provide young fatherhood groups
 - Connect to their concerns (i.e. co-parenting)
 - Relevant topics
 - Semi-structured
 - Incentives
 - Use media/current events to assist in delivery
 - Bring in outside speakers (i.e. Job Corps, program graduates)

GENERATIONS REM MODEL

Engagement

- School Strategies (cont.)
 - Employment Services
 - Job Readiness/Training
 - Ongoing jobs listings
 - Text Messaging/Email/Phone
 - Ongoing check-ins
 - Persistence



GENERATIONS REM MODEL

Engagement

- Community Strategies (cont.)
 - Provide or partner with employment services
 - Job-readiness services (i.e. resume, cover letter, etc.)
 - Job training programs (i.e. Goodwill Education and Career Services)
 - Educational/Family events or outings (i.e. Father's Day tie drive, family day picnic, community service day with child, museums)

GENERATIONS REM MODEL

Maintaining Relationships

- School strategies
 - Consistent and ongoing communication with key school personnel concerning young fathers
 - individual consultations
 - Attending extra-curricular school events
 - Use of texts/social media to maintain communication
 - Consistent presence/**SPACE**
 - Case management Services
 - i.e. housing, benefits, legal/employment services

GENERATIONS REM MODEL

Maintaining Relationships

- Community strategies

- Use of texts/social media to maintain communication with young fathers
- Provide ongoing listing of job resources/postings
- Conduct workshops centered on job readiness and other fatherhood topics
- Attempt to create working space in the target community
- Community outings/educational trips/conferences
- Case management Services
 - i.e. housing, benefits, legal/employment services

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

- **Safety** – providing safe physical/emotional space for young fathers to engage
- **Trustworthiness** – building trusting relationships
- **Choice** – conducting needs assessment to determine appropriate services for fathers
- **Collaboration** – working in partnership with young fathers
- **Empowerment** - encouraging skill-building and working to remove individual and systemic barriers.

(Harris & Fallot, 2001)

CASE STUDY: HEALTHY GENERATIONS FATHERHOOD PROGRAM

- Overview of Program
- Portrait of Fathers
- Needs Assessment
- **REM** Model applied to Generations Program

WORKSHOP ACTIVITY: PICK ANALYSIS GUIDELINES

1. Individual Component

- Brainstorm challenges your program experiences when attempting to engage fathers
- Pick **ONE (1)** challenge to present to small group

2. Small Group: Brainstorm

- Present challenge to small group
- Group members brainstorm ideas to address the challenge (write these ideas on post-it notes)

3. Small Group: PICK Chart Categorization of ideas

- Possible - Low payoff, easy to do
- Implement - High payoff, easy to do
- Challenge –High payoff, hard to do
- Kill – Low payoff, hard to do
- Repeat with each group member

SHARE OUT

- For Discussion
 - What strategies/ideas will implement immediately? (Implement)
 - What strategies/ideas will you need to develop strategic plans to realize? (Challenge)
 - What was most helpful about today's session? What could have been more helpful?
- Thoughts to consider as you depart:
 - What will you take from today's discussion?
 - Who will you contact to help you improve your father services?
 - People you met today at this conference
 - People/stakeholders/organizations in your community

THANK YOU!



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