

**Advancing opportunities
to engage fathers in
health pregnancy
outcomes for families**

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Context

- Research is being done looking at fathers' role in positive child outcomes
- There is a need to develop a more coordinated approach to this research
- It can lend important insights into program, their development, effectiveness, and ultimate success



Strategies for Engaging Fathers

Providing benefits to fathers

- What is in it for him?
- Give emotional and relationship management skills
- Incentives for fathers
- Employment
- Transportation
- Building his skills
- Asking what HE needs



Strategies for Engaging Fathers

Communication Strategies

- Labeling these issues to attract fathers
- Educating the community about the value of men in the lives of children
- Special outreach that reinforces mothers' support for the unique and complementary role of fathers
- Educating men about their role in positive child and family outcomes



Strategies for Engaging Fathers

Inter- and intrapersonal processes

- Giving him responsibility for his self care
- Balancing the request of men
- Involved practices that involve the men
- Begin from the perspective that fathers are assets
- Respect his personal “down-time” space
- Building rapport with the men where they reside



Strategies for Engaging Fathers

Inter- and intrapersonal processes

- Acknowledging the diversity of men
- Building a bridge between the men and.....
- Advancing the cultural ways of being for these men
- Considering the changing role of men and fathers
- Being with them in their space



Strategies for Engaging Fathers


Health-related interventions

- Building off of already established healthcare interventions focused on men
 - Leveraging changes in health laws to support the work
- Use of intermediaries to support health care and family health
- Ultrasounds
- Putting Mom's health/ pregnancy status on men's health screen



Strategies for Engaging Fathers Health-related interventions

- Putting Dad's health status on mom's health screen
- Training for health care advisors
- Capitalizing on the prenatal opportunity with fathers



Strategies for Engaging Fathers

Policy and practice strategies

- What are the policy issues that impact men and their involvement with family?
- Attention to the physical environment that serves families
- Barbershop interventions
- Where are we engaging men and for what
- Concrete strategies to support mothers during childbirth
- How do you articulate the issues within and outside of the systems supporting this work?



Increasing Community Awareness

Social and structural barriers

- **Letting go of Western paradigms and meanings**
- **Understanding the associated values**
- **Make an investment in community that extend beyond the research**
- **Build communities within the context of the men themselves**
- **Community as an incentive**



Increasing Community Awareness

Social and structural barriers

- Understanding that the time of the community is valuable too
- Expanding our conceptualization of community (i.e., internet community)
- Institutionalizing the knowledge learned at community level
- Demonstrate that father outcomes impact child and family outcomes



Increasing Community Awareness

Social and structural barriers

- Are there considerations for unique subpopulations (e.g., military men)
- What are the practical guidelines for scaling up
- Issues of sustainability



Increasing Community Awareness

Social and structural barriers

- Understanding clearly the “lane we are driving in” so as to not undermine the work
- Larger social values impacting the work
- Building a good evidence base
- Understanding where we are in the development of the field
- Policy issues at the community level



Creating new collaborations

Practical recommendations

- Clear conceptualization of what you want to do and how you want to get there
- Using CBPR informed approaches
- Seeking researcher-practitioner collaborations
- Building off of the experience of those ahead of us
 - Healthy Start
 - MA
 - Hospitals



Creating new collaborations

Practical recommendations

- More focus on engaging the voices of fathers directly
- Being explicit about how community partners use it in their work
- Products that come from the work are done in collaboration with community partners to ensure that they are useful to them too
- Engaging non-traditional partners (e.g. businesses)
- Public health impact of the work



Creating new collaborations

Practical recommendations

- What are the incentives for community organizations and businesses
- Looking at international examples
- Hybrid organizations developed to serve men in unique circumstances (e.g., formerly incarcerated)
- Understanding and engaging men in the places where men are



Creating new collaborations

Research related considerations

- Special emphasis study section for fatherhood applications
- Using mixed methods approaches in the work
- Building on the experience of established programs
- Considering unique context for the work
 - Schools
 - Child welfare system
- Unique funding opportunities to support this work



Thank you.....