

Tribal Community Corrections and Fatherhood: A Modern Approach to Reducing Recidivism and Creating Healthy Communities Transcript

Welcome to the webinar “Investing in Fatherhood to Reduce Reoffending, Recidivism, and Violence in Tribal Communities”. This webinar was developed in partnership with the Center for Families, Children, and the Courts, at the Judicial Council of California. Our presenter today is Kevin Poleyumptewa, with guest speakers Silas Darden and Vida Castaneda.

My name is Greg Brown, and I will be moderating today. First, I would like to introduce Silas Darden, Deputy Director for Policy at the Bureau of Justice Assistance, to provide an introduction for us today. Silas thank you for joining us, and the time is now yours.

Uh thank you for having me. Uh, hello everyone, my name is Silas Darden, Deputy Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance. On behalf of BJA, I would like to thank you for your interest in the resources the BJA provides through the Tribal community corrections capacity building training and technical assistance initiative. This initiative was developed to help tribal governments plan, develop, and, or enhance community corrections; with a focus on reducing offender risk over time and reducing crime committed by people under correctional supervision, with a particular focus on violent crime. BJA is pleased to partner with the National Criminal Justice Training Center at Fox Valley Technical College to offer this webinar as part of the training and technical assistance menu of services. BJA remains committed to continuing this provision of training and technical assistance to support criminal justice practitioners. During this training event you'll hear from seasoned subject matter experts, who are well versed in tribal justice and effective community supervision practices. And I do want to thank them in advance for their time and thoughtful presentations. We hope that you find this opportunity helpful as you continue to enhance your skill set. We rely heavily on input from Justice Practitioners like you, as we continue to assess the training and technical assistance needs of tribal communities. Therefore, we appreciate your feedback as we plan future online events. Thank you again and I hope you look forward to the presentations.

Thank you again Silas for that introduction. This project was supported by a grant awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this webinar are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice. So, with that we're going to try our first poll question.

The first poll question is which of the following best describes your role? Victim Services? Victim Advocate? Probation Community Corrections Law Enforcement? Child Advocacy Center Worker? Social Worker? Mental Health Worker? And then the final option is other? All right, 30 percent are judges or attorneys. 40 percent are social workers, mental health workers, or victim service providers. And about 30 percent are other.

I'm pleased to introduce you our presenter Kevin Poleyumptewa. Kevin is a project coordinator at the National Criminal Justice Center on providing training and technical assistance for several victim services programs. Prior to joining NCJTC, Kevin provided fatherhood and healthy relationships programming in communities, jails, and juvenile residential facilities.

Vida Castaneda is a senior analyst in the Tribal State Programs Unit with the Center for Families, Children, and Courts at the Judicial Council of California. Vida provides educational and technical assistance on the Indian Child Welfare Act and family violence issues that impact tribal communities. As well as staff, to the tribal court state court forum of California.

My name is Greg Brown, and I will be moderating today's webinar. I'm a program manager with the National Criminal Justice Training Center. I've worked in corrections for about 32 years, and I've provided training with NCJTC for over 15 years. My passion has been to pursue approaches that scientific, that are scientifically based in research, to help individuals rehabilitate and heal the harm caused by their criminal conduct.

So, the learning objectives for today's webinar include the following: we want to link fatherhood to evidence-based practices, we want to understand the importance of investing in fatherhood, we want to examine the benefits of fatherhood programs, we want to discuss examples of fatherhood program models, and then we want to identify potential system and provider issues.

So, with that we're going to have our second poll question.

So, the next poll question is do you currently have a fatherhood program in your community? Thirty-Three percent of the attendees today say yes. Seven percent say no. Fifty-Nine, Fifty-Nine percent are not sure. Vida, I'll now turn the time over to you to cover these next couple of slides.

Great, thank you so much Greg. I feel the information in this webinar will be quite valuable for our audience, as we navigate our part in helping families remain together and keeping that connection to fathers in a strong healthy way. Historically, and over time throughout the nation, there have been disruptions to our tribal communities that included family separations since first contact, that may still be impacting families in present day. California has a complex history interfacing, for the first time, primarily with European military, and religious communities, during the onset of the various explorations in the late 1700s. Migrating from Mexico to establish military forts, presidios, pueblos, and the mission system; and additional significant changes when California became a state within the United States during the mid-1800s. These historical points in time greatly impacted our families and communities. I would encourage you all to visit the resource page for this webinar that includes links to California history that describe information related to the explorations, mission system, gold rush, boarding schools, as well as laws and policies that impacted California Indians and tribal communities nationwide. Presently, here in California we have a large tribal population from both in-state and out-of-state tribes. We are home to over 100 federally recognized tribes and close a number of non-federally recognized tribes. Our current population ranges from small rural tribal communities, to large urban areas that were epicenters during the middle part of the 1900s, during the Relocation Era. These

historical points in time changed our families and communities through the years. To which, many of our culturally based programs and approaches to working with tribal families, address to heal, reunify, or strengthen existing family and tribal connection. As we listen to the information in today's webinar, I would like each and every one of you to really begin to identify how we can improve the ways in which we view fatherhood, and keeping families closely bonded together in the healthiest way possible. This year has certainly allowed for a great deal of creativity in navigating varied systems with the help of technology. And in, uh, hearing Kevin's presentation on this topic area earlier this year, I started thinking about the ways in which to improve our own units' resources for fathers. And, also thought about the examples of how I did so as a child welfare worker at the beginning of my own career.

Here in California, we have incorporated the Federal Law Indian Child Welfare Act, otherwise known as ICWA, into state law as well. For families that are within the ICWA realm of service within buried systems, we have a duty to provide something called "active efforts", which requires a step beyond just reasonable services for system involved families.

So, the federal definition describes "Active Efforts" as affirmative active thorough and timely efforts intended primarily to maintain or reunite, reunite an Indian child with his or her family. When an agency is involved in the child custody proceeding, Active Efforts must involve assisting the parent, or parents, or Indian custodian through the steps of a case plan, including accessing or developing the resources necessary to satisfy this case plan. To the maximum extent possible Active Efforts should be provided in a manner consistent with the prevailing social and cultural conditions, and way of life, of the Indian's child tribe. And should be conducted in partnership with Indian child and Indian child's parents, extended family members, Indian custodians, and tribe.

When I was a child welfare worker, and just in my own traditional tribal teachings of knowing the importance that father, fathers, have within the family and community, regardless of whether a father is closely connected, or estranged, or incarcerated, or whatever the situation may be, I saw families truly heal from providing culturally based services. Respecting that role within the family and community, and keeping the father incorporated within the family to either continue with, or re-establish a healthy connection. Active Efforts can be a mechanism for this healing for the father and the family. It is a way in which connection to culturally based services or making sure the parent has transportation to their therapy appointments, or even just the simple act of making sure the parent understands court processes, or if they have questions about their case plan. There are so many ways in which just simple caring outreach can provide a connection to which can lead to a sense of belonging or having a place that is important for the family. There are many ways in which we can provide these opportunities for connection and healing thank you. And I will now turn it over to Greg.

Thanks Vida, great information. So, what we do at the National Criminal Justice Training Center, in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, is really look at how do we look at what are best practices, evidence-based practices, for corrections and other social services

serving agencies, to help them understand what we know about helping people change behavior. So, when we look at evidence-based practices we want to look at what is it? And it's really the use of practices and strategies with clients that have been empirically tested and shown to reduce recidivism from the criminal justice world. And, so, those are meta-analysis or studies of studies that really have helped us hone in on how we help people change behavior. So, we have what we call the big four and then the big a Criminogenic Needs, or those dynamic risk factors that we know are connected to, um, people recidivating. So, I want to focus on just a couple of these which I believe that fatherhood programming, and developing a fatherhood program in your community, really touched on, and really are central to helping people change behavior. Obviously, one of those is family, and, or marital relationships. So, we want to look at families helping to improve family relationships. We want to reconnect people with their families, address the harm that's been caused through criminal conduct, and, and really help them be a part of their family, because we know how critical that is to changing behavior. The other piece that I want to focus on on this slide is anti-social companions. We know that who we hang out with significantly influences how we see the world, view the world, um, and can influence us in positive and negative directions. When we look at antisocial companions and helping people pull away from that, reconnecting them with their families, reconnecting them with their role as parents, and children, and aunts, and uncles, and cousins, and nephews, we know how powerful that can be in helping a person really change the trajectory of their criminal involvement.

The other that I want to focus on is this leisure and recreation and what we know about people who are chronically in the criminal justice system, those higher risk need offenders that we see, is really their lack of involvement in social and leisure activities. Focusing on fatherhood, focusing on their community, and reconnecting with their community. Focusing on their families are ways for us to help really make this an asset and a strength for them to build upon and to start making those changes in their lives.

So, what I want to touch on here, finally, is this is from these are the eight principle, guiding principles from the National Institute of Corrections. And the ones I want to focus on is we're really looking at ways that we can enhance intrinsic motivation for the people that we work with. Um at-risk families, people involved in the criminal justice system, all of those. And the way to enhance intrinsic motivation is to really connect with people on what's important to them. Often, we hear families, the problems that have been caused in families, distance from families, damage that's been caused to relationships, is a huge one. And, so, being able to enhance that intrinsic motivation around change and reconnecting them is really important. What you're going to hear from Kevin is not only is this just a fatherhood program and talking about that, but they're also learning skills within their fatherhood programming. Cognitive behavioral skills to help them problem solve and help them make better decisions, and then to model that for their children as well as other people in their lives. We're also looking at this the ability for us to increase positive reinforcement. Again, connecting them with their families. Um, helping them have success in those relationships where they may have struggled before or been separated from, for a variety of reasons. And then the final one is really engaging them in ongoing community support, and the

closest community that we all have is really our family connections. So, those are really important criminal, uh, perspectives to look at, in targets to look at in the criminal justice world.

The other thing that looking focusing on fatherhood, which is really often for our clients a very important piece of what they want to repair, what they want to improve upon, what they want to reconnect with, is really creating that relationship. And us as professionals really have a significant role to play in that. If you look at the role of the relationship with professionals, it's about 30 percent of this equation. Um, that Lambert came up with about helping people change behavior, and so if we can connect with them with the things that are important to them, and then build upon that related to those other criminogenic needs I talked about, we're really going to see some pretty dramatic changes in behavior in the community and reconnecting families.

So, finally I just want to say we've come a long way in learning and understanding what helps people change behavior. From really not knowing anything and nothing works back in the 70s, to this meta-analysis of studies, of studies of what does work. Um, and we've all in all of our systems from social services, and from mental health, from corrections, we've developed assessment tools that can help us really understand what's going on with the person, and most importantly what's going to help them in this journey of changing their lives and becoming more pro-social contributing members of our community. Um, so, with that I want to turn this over to Kevin, who has an exciting presentation for you on fatherhood. So, Kevin the time is now yours.

All right thank you Greg and thank you Vida, and I just want to say welcome to everybody that is here today, and I am grateful and honored to be here with you to share, uh, some of my experience and going to hopefully shed some light on the importance of fatherhood, and why we should be investing in it. And a little bit more about me, I am Hopi from the state of Arizona. I grew up on the Hopi reservation until I was about 16 years old. Left there and went to high school in nearby town called Flagstaff. And then went to college directly after that, and like many of our, unfortunately many of our native young people students, I, I think lasted about a year and a half in college and ended up dropping out and doing various jobs. And eventually went back to college and got my degree in psychology at the Cal State, uh, University of Long Beach. And so, my background primarily is in behavior health, but I've been a social worker my entire career. And it's been great. Working in the field of fatherhood has been probably the best experience I've had. It's definitely a continued passion of mine. I enjoyed working with the men and seeing the children and their parents' relationships evolve through this program. And so, it's been a wonderful thing. And so, I'm excited to share some of that information with you, and some of the, um, practice models that I've experienced and developed. And I've also been able to see in other communities throughout this country.

So, before we get into that, I'm going to share a little video with you that I think really speaks to what we'll be talking about today in the relationship of fathers within the community, and within the family, and more importantly in the relationship with their children. Before we get to that video, I do want to share a little story with you. And it'll help to kind of shed some light on

the idea behind what we're going to be talking about today. And really kind of get you to start to think maybe on a different level in terms of what fatherhood means, and what you may think it means right now.

So, growing up, as I mentioned, I grew up on the Hopi reservation. And my experience there as an adult now I really truly appreciate. As a child you don't necessarily appreciate the things that you're going through and having to experience. You know, when it comes to community, and ceremonial responsibilities, and obligations, it can be quite taxing on a young child at times. And one of those things was growing up in a, in a farming community; you know Hopi people are primarily farmers and that's what we do, we plant a lot of corn, melon, squash, beans, all those things. But with that, you know, we, we spent, well I spent, and my family spent all our summers out in the fields with our uncles and our grandfather. And that was frustrating because many of my friends didn't have to do that. They didn't have to go out into the field and work every weekend during the summertime, because their uncles maybe weren't involved, maybe they weren't there, their dads weren't there, whatever it might be, they got to stay home. They played basketball, they rode their bikes, they went on trips, they did all this stuff, and we were stuck out in the field. Um, you know, the entire summer working out in the hot sun, and uh digging our hands into the ground. And so, it wasn't the most exciting experience, but it was nice being around all our cousins and and working together. And so, in that process, you know, we're getting up at six in the morning on the weekends, hop in the back of the pickup truck, driving about 28 miles out to the field and starting our day. And we were out there all day, Saturday and Sunday, and we didn't have a choice in that. It was something that we had to do. And so, it was just part of our life. We never really questioned it. We just did what we were told. Um, so, you know, that whole process is, you know, you go out and probably late March early April when you start your early crops. You start planting. You put the seed, corn seeds in the ground, and you proceed to care for them throughout the rest of the summer. You plant other crops, as well, your melons later, beans later. And that experience of planting really is what I think, or where my philosophy behind the approach to fatherhood comes from. And the reason being is that when you put that seed into the ground, you start a process. Once that plant is seeded, eventually it starts to germinate, and it starts to break ground. At that point we are going out there into the field, and we are packing the sand around this little sprout with our, with our bare hands. And you know, sand is hot and there's thorns and stickers in the ground, and usually you get the poke under your fingernail, or on the tip of your finger, and it's painful. Not a great experience but once that is done, it gets a little taller. And then at that point we are, um, digging around this, the, the base of the corn to pull out any worms that might be trying to eat the roots. Because once the worms get to the roots it, you know, the corn stalk will, will, die. And so, we're pulling the worms out and, and, smashing them on the ground so they don't eat our crops. And, and then, that's a funny story.

You know my mom when she was little, they did the same thing as well. But my uncles were telling me that she used to save the worms in the big old Folgers cans, that some of you might be familiar with, and at lunchtime they'd go to the house for lunch. She'd get a little bit of gas, she'd

put it in there, and she'd listen to the worms pop as she burned them like popcorn. And so that was, that's just a funny story I, I enjoy sharing.

But you know so that process continues, and when it gets bigger, you know, you, you start to shift over to other things like melon, and beans. And when those start to sprout as well you're building a little shade out of bushes that you cut down, and a little wind breaker, because it does get windy out there, and if they're not secured then the sand will consume. It'll pile up over the, over your crops, and they may die, so. You know that whole thing, there's a lot of different things that take place. And one of the big things that we have to do on a weekly basis is to cut the weeds. So we're out there with, with the hose every weekend cutting the weeds by hand and this process continues throughout the summer. As the rains come, the winds come, the weeds grow, we have to continue to maintain our, maintain the area where the, where our corn is growing. So that the water is being soaked up by the roots of our crop and not being taken away by anything else, or our crop not being eaten by any of the animals out there.

So, it was a long process, and it wasn't until I got into college the second time when I began to realize the importance of that process. And looking back on it, I started to understand that that process is identical to raising children. Once that process is begun, once that seed is planted, we have to continue to care for that child, and nurture that child, and pray for that child through its entire life, and the moment that we stop doing that is when the world consumes it. Very similar to what happens to the crops out in the field. If we were to go a week or two without cutting the weeds down, those weeds would very quickly grow into our field and start soaking up all the moisture from the ground, so that our crops would not get the appropriate moisture that they need to flourish. And, so, that is when I really had and I guess, an aha moment, in that relationship and how a lot of our cultural practices, and ceremonies, and teachings can have, have a, have a huge place in what it means to be not only a native man, but a native father, and a community member. And it, there are so many different teachings within all the activities that we do. And so, I'd like you to keep that in mind as we go through this presentation today, and just some of the things that we experience in, within our own communities, or maybe some of those that you have experienced in our non-native communities as well. Because every culture has its own practices and ceremonies. Although some have been lost; may not be in practice anymore, but they're, they're there, and they were there for a reason. And that's part of what we'll be addressing today as well. So, as we get into the presentation here, I'm going to play a little video for you that will also help to drive that home a little bit more.

[VIDEO] Insert a microchip into the, into the shoulder. The rangers have to count these animals to protect them. Ten percent of the rhino population was being wiped out. 39 during the killing spree. Dead rhinos started turning up all over the park, and it clearly wasn't the work of poachers. The rhinos' horns hadn't been touched. The park rangers soon found themselves cast as cops conducting an investigation, and their first findings led them to believe that if they were to round up the usual suspects, they'd need a pretty large holding pen. That's because this is one of the prime suspects. A killer caught on home video terrorizing a group of tourists. It turned out that young male elephants were behind the murders of Pillingsburg's rhinos.

First, because you didn't want to believe it?

Yeah, you don't want to believe that an elephant is capable of killing a rhino.

Why would they do it? Well, like juvenile delinquents from urban jungles, they'd grown up without role models.

Difference is they don't have a father. Everyone needs a dad I think everyone needs a role model and the, these elephants that left the herd had no role model and uh no idea of how to what appropriate elephant behavior was...

there was no way to relocate these large adults, so a tough decision was made. Kill the adults save the children who were easy to transport to other parks.

I think it was a good idea

Doctor Heim Ebedees was the government veterinarian who approved the relocations back then.

Did it occur to you at the time that you were proposing this, this notion, that moving young elephants without their parents could be problematic?

I did think about that...

But the program created a whole generation of traumatized orphans. Thrown together without any adults to calm them down or teach them how to behave.

And the solution turned out to be the biggest big brother program in the world...

The rangers went looking for big daddies, role models, to keep the youngsters from mating at an early age when they can't handle those raging hormones.

The problem you had here was young bull elephants becoming increasingly violent, and your solution was to bring in some even bigger bull elephants?

It was like teenagers running on the loose. That's right, and all of a sudden dad comes home. Suddenly he's there and dad is very obvious to them, and in dad's presence we predicted they wouldn't try and assert themselves.

And now, was it, was it just dad size, or did dad's behavior influence them?

Dad's behavior as well.

As we can see I think we can probably all agree that this is what we can see in many of our, our communities today. We have a lot of youth that are lost and acting out. And we have many grown men who are partaking in that type of activity as well. And so, we have to look at, you know, the, the importance of, of, the male role model in these communities, and the families, and the impact that it has had over the, over the past decades. You know, what we see in society today. Um, so it's not necessarily primarily just the fathers that can help to rectify this, but really the, the, male behaviors, the older males. What are they doing? What are the children seeing? Those are the things that we have to take in, into consideration. And, you know, there's a lot of pressures that our, our children are growing up with as well. That are completely different than what we grew up with as youth, and so we have to also take that into consideration too.

So, we are going to move into some statistical information here. And delve into that a little bit here. So, this, uh, information here was gathered from the National, um, uh, National Fatherhood Initiative. They've been doing work in the field of fatherhood for, for, quite some time now, and have some really useful resources, and some really great guys that work there.

So, as you can see here, you know, there, we know men have a huge importance in our communities. And we will see through these statistics, and some of you may be aware of them already, just the impact that men have on the outcomes of, of, our children. Some of the, the, social ills that, that exists, can be linked to fatherlessness. Uh, that like, you know, dad not being in the home or inappropriate behavior of dad, can lead to a lot of things. And there's a lot of funding that goes into helping to treat those, uh, adverse outcomes. Whether that's the behavioral or mental health issues. There's money that is always going into that. So, we have to kind of start to consider okay why, why shouldn't we be investing in fatherhood? If these are related then, then why don't we invest more money in trying to help rectify some of that through the investing in fatherhood here?

But, um, so in this second slide, second picture here, it says 19 million children, which is more than one in four, live without their father in their home. You know, that, that is a huge, uh, impact in our communities. If we think about that a lot of these kids are growing up with, kids not uh, without their fathers in the home with maybe not positive role models in their life as well that's definitely going to have an impact on our families and our communities.

So, children living with their, without their father in the home are 47 percent more likely to live in poverty. And another statistic here says that 92 percent of parents in prison are fathers. Now that's a huge percentage. And it's not something that we always think about, you know, when we are working with men who have committed crimes, and you know, maybe have had a lifetime of crime. So, they are also parents as well, and the many children that they may leave behind will definitely be impacted by that. So, how do we as a system, as an organization, as a department, how do we change, how do we have an impact on that? What are some of the things that we can do? Those are some of the things that we'll be talking about today, is trying to think outside the box in terms, in terms of how we can re-define or change the focus of the programming that we have now. You know there's still a good majority of you that may not have the fatherhood

programs available in your community. So that is something that we need to look at, and focus on, and maybe build some collaborations to start to address.

Adolescent boys with absent fathers are more likely to engage in delinquency. And children raised in father absent home are more likely to experience behavioral problems. You know, there's a lot of things that go into that, and some of the other increased risks of children in fatherless homes. Also, are increased rates in suicide, you see an increase in teen pregnancy. School dropout is a huge factor in fatherless homes. And, you know, the children tend to have higher rates of incarceration and imprisonment as well. And we also see an increase in runaways and homelessness on our in our youth. There are large numbers of homeless youth in many of our cities now and in our native communities. We see that quite often as well. So, fatherlessness definitely does have a significant effect on childhood outcomes. Whether that be negative or positive, you know, these are the statistics based around dad not being there, or maybe inappropriate model, modeling for the kids. And, so, you know, there are definitely also some positive aspects when father, when dads are involved.

And some of those are, you know, you have an increased, um, emotional and social well-being for that child. They have, if there's a healthy relationship between the child and, and, the father, then the children tend to flourish in that type of relationship. There's a lot of skills that go into that and through these fatherhood programs, these are some of the things that we can teach the men. Um, you know, many of the men, you know, growing up on the streets, you know, and having a different lifestyle maybe have not necessarily been able to learn those types of skills. And how to create, and, and, foster and nourish healthy relationships with their children. And then boys over time have fewer behavioral problems, and girls have fewer psychological problems. Again, that goes along with that relationship. That healthy relationship. The health, healthy role modeling. In the, in the video we just saw the gentleman described not necessarily having the father involved, but more of a healthy male role model. And again, going back to our native communities, when we look at our people as Native Americans, we, many of our, our, our, tribes have a system in place whereas, uncles we also have the responsibility of playing that father role for the children in our family as well. So, it's not necessarily just fathering and raising or just raising our own children, but also raising the children in our family and in our community.

When we're looking at, um, uh, ceremonial perspective. In our different ceremonies, it's, it's, the men coming together, and sometimes it includes the women also, uh, the young girls, maybe. But in that situation with the men and the boys in a ceremonial setting, there is mentoring that's taking place there as well. And we have to be cognizant of what we are displaying in our own lives, because we know those relationships exist. And there are things that we have to pass down to the next generation in terms of our ceremony, so these things can continue to grow and continue to live.

And, so, there's a lot of, a lot of different ways as we'll see that men can play a role, and have a role, and have a responsibility. Um, and so that I think we need to start to look at in terms of our,

our jobs and the services that we provide. You know, what, where, where do I fit into this? How can I have an impact on this relationship, or on this individual? Being able to grow into being able to provide this type of relationship. As many of the men that I've worked with, you know, they, they, all want to be good fathers. Many of them however just don't know how. They, they, have an idea but they don't have the skill set, or maybe the courage. You know there's a lot of different variables that go into that, but so there's some education that has to take place there. And, but there's some also some history that needs to be worked on before that can happen. And so, in addition to these statistics here, you know, when there's a positive relationship between the child and the father, the children are Seventy-Five percent less likely to have teen birth. Eighty percent less likely to spend time in jail. And twice as likely to enter college. And they also can have an increased cognitive, competence, and empathy, and more of an internalized locus of control. So again fatherhood, father involvement has a significant impact on childhood outcomes.

So, our next poll question is are you familiar with fatherhood programs?

The results of the poll are Eighteen percent said yes, I'm familiar with the programs and what they provide. Fifty-Five percent said I've heard of them, but I'm not familiar with the benefits. And Twenty-Seven percent said no I have no prior knowledge of fatherhood programs.

Okay thanks Greg. And as we can see, you know, fatherhood although has been around for 25, 30, 40 years, it's, it's still relatively new in terms of the public awareness of it. And so, it is important. Something that has definitely been growing over the years. And we're seeing more and more activity. More, uh, organizations that are being created to address this issue. And so to answer that question, you know, what is a fatherhood program? And you know a fatherhood program is, is, many things. And really can be what you want it to be. What you need it to be. You know, there are many, many, many programs out there that are available. And a majority of them are available for women and children. You don't see a lot of programming out there that is specifically for men that is not having something to do with substance abuse or domestic violence. And so that is something that we really need to look at.

You know a fatherhood program um is someplace that is a safe environment for these men to come together to share an experience and to have a venue where they don't feel threatened, or they feel they're going to be judged. And again, going back to our, our cultural history. This is something that has been in place for our native men. It's been available. In a lot of times through ceremony, you know, we had meeting houses where the men would go and have their meetings. And they'd have time for, you know, to dialogue with other men and discuss, you know, community issues. And so that, those places now unfortunately have all but disappeared. And so there's a long history that we have to look at as well, we'll get into that in a little bit here, but what has happened to our, our communities, and our way of life that has affected the, the relationships that we have now. In this idea, or this, uh, thing of, uh, father, fatherlessness.

So, our, you know, fatherhood programs are a place also where we can provide education to the men. Again, we're talking about that knowledge and learning of how to be a man. How to be a father. What it means. What, why is it important.? Why am I as a father important? And some of the men don't understand that. They don't feel that they are important, and that's part of, again, that history and their experiences. So, I'm, helping them to understand that they not only have roles and responsibilities as fathers, but also as community members. We have a responsibility to our community as well. And you know part of what society has, has, taught us over time is that you know we have to fend for ourselves. So, I'm, I'm, focused on my family. Which, you know, there's nothing wrong with that at all. Because we have to take care of our children. We have to take care of our families, but what about our community? Because we are a part of a community. We exist in this community. So, what do I do as a father, as a man, to fulfill that responsibility and obligation to my community?

Hey Kevin, while I've got you. We have a pretty timely question that I'd like to ask you right now that's okay?

Yes.

So, when you talk about fatherless homes, does that include homes where parents are divorced but co-parent and maintain shared custody?

Yes. Yeah, it is. Uh and that is one of the things that has to be addressed when you were going into a couple slides here, we'll talk about that. The types of fathers that can be worked with. One of those is, um, displaced, or, you know, divorced fathers. There's an impact that can happen in that as well. If you know there's a situation where mom and dad are divorced, and dad just kind of, you know, is, is, out of the picture. And is only around, you know, during maybe, during his visitation. If he's visiting at all. And so that will definitely have an impact on the child as well or on the children. And so that's one thing that we have to look at, is, you know, how do we um work with both parents. For the benefit of the child, because ultimately that, for the work that we're doing is, in regards to, that what is in the best interest of the child? Well, the best interest of the child is for him to be able to have both parents. To have a healthy relationship with both of them despite what the relationship between mom and dad might look like.

So again, our fatherhood programs here, the place for us to empower the men, to teach them the skills that they might not necessarily have learned. To be able to foster and nurture healthy relationships with their children, and maybe with their partners. It's a place for us to educate men on the importance of the role that they play not only as fathers but as community members. And then, um, you know, we provide that, um, again safe place for them to come together as men. And we'll talk about some of the things that, that, take place in this fatherhood program. That really helps to enhance, and and foster that healthy relationship with other men as well. And how that can evolve into its own support system. And its, um, own, um, regulation of each other, I guess. You know there's a lot of things that come out of these programs that is really wonderful. But one of the important things also is that, you know, many of these fatherhood programs, uh,

do and should provide case management for these men also. To help them navigate the system. To help get them the resources that they eventually will want. And, you know, they're going to want new, um, assistance and new services based on their growth. And so, these are things that we have to look at as, as, a service provider that is hosting this uh fatherhood program for our men to be able to continue to grow. And know they do need assistance. And so, we have to look at that programmatically and systematically. Is how are we helping these men get to where they want to be, because ultimately these men, they want to be good fathers like I said. They just don't know how. You know, they've been lost. They're lost. And and they need to be able to find their way back, and sometimes they just need a little guidance to get to that point there.

And so, some of the other things that are involved with the fatherhood programs. Obviously, curriculums are a big thing. We have to have a curriculum. What does that look like? Well that really depends on your mission and goals again. It depends on your community. It depends on the setting that you're in. What is it that you want to look, or that you want to get out of this? What do you want your men to be able to achieve through participating in this program? You know we have a lot of parenting programs out there. But the parenting programs are there because, well for lack of better phrases, because the men have done something wrong. It's only, it can almost be a punitive type experience for them. You know, I did something wrong, so I have to take this parenting class I have to do this. Fatherhood program, it can be a little different um you know it's, it's, a supportive program there for them. Again, it's a place for men to come together. For men to be around other men to share an experience. To support one another. Now this doesn't mean that it's not something that can be used, not necessarily punitively, but as a way to reach an end. Whether it's reunification. Maybe it's probation. Or something like that. We'll talk a little bit more about those as well, and how those can be, um, how this type of program can be used to fulfill some of those requirements.

And then these fatherhood programs are obviously going to be providing cultural education. Looking into the individual as a Native American person. Looking into the individual, individual person if they're not native. You know, we all have history. We all have a culture that we come from. What does that look like? How do I tie back into that and change my life, and live my life according to what that is? According to what I am? According to who I am? Which is an important thing in order for us to be confident in ourselves. In order for us to continue to have a positive outlook on our lives. The future of our children. We have to know who we are. We have to know where we come from. And a big part of that is our cultural history. As individuals. So, we have to look at that. It cannot be overlooked.

And in these programs, you can provide role playing. And from my experience, this has been one of the most valuable tools in a fatherhood program. It is the opportunity for these men to engage in role-playing activity with one another. To practice those situations. To practice a dialogue. To practice the techniques that we're giving them. And that we want them to practice in their own homes. And the reason for the role-playing activities, again, is it's in a safe environment. It's a place for them to, you know, practice these skills, and get laughed at. But they're getting laughed at by their peers. It's, it's, it's all in fun and it's all in support. Where they don't get that anywhere

else. And so, this role playing is very helpful for these men. And so, they will have this experience. They'll have the shared experience. And then they're more likely to go home and try it in their own house. Whereas if we just told them. We gave them a sheet of paper and said these are the steps. Or we told them this is what you need to do and expect them to go into their house and do it, they're not going to do it. Because they may be afraid. They'll never admit it but they're, they're, scared. They don't want to do this. These are words I've never used. I've never talked, you know, I've never asked, you know, how does that make you feel? You know, well I feel this way. They don't know what I statements are. So, these are things that we have to be able to practice with them, so that they can be successful. Or at least have a higher chance of being successful when implementing these skills in their home. And so role-playing is great. I remember in our last presentation there was a question about the different generations. Should these role-playing activities be done by men who are roughly around the same age? And the answer to that is no. It doesn't have to be because you want to create that cross-genera, generation relationship. So, we've had, you know, men as old as 65 and older. 65, 75, in there. And I think our youngest at one point was 10 years old. And so, they're all in the same room together. They're all learning the same thing. And culturally that's how things took place. You know, if you were a man you were, you went to the meeting. Um, so, but being able to share in that experience together; there is a lot of laughter, there's a lot of fumbling, they make mistakes, and, you know, the, the, kids get to see the older men, you know, making mistakes. Um, you see the, the, younger, uh, younger, or the middle-aged man, you know, trying to act, or act out a role as a child, or maybe uh pretending to be somebody's wife. Uh pretending to be a daughter. And these types of role-playing activities can range anywhere from, you know, having the birds and bees talk, all the way to, you know, somebody having suicidal ideation. It really is up to the individual that is facilitating these, these, activities.

But one thing that we have to keep in mind is that in this process men are going to start to feel. They're starting to, they're going to start to wake up. And they will be confronted with and experience emotions that maybe they've never wanted to or had to deal with before. And so there has to be a therapeutic component to this as well. And that primarily will come, probably, from a collaboration with a behavioral health department, or a therapist, or somebody within social services that has counseling capability. But that needs to be processed also. We don't want to have these men start to experience these things and just leave them at that. They have, we want them to grow. So just something to keep in mind when you're doing these activities here.

And then these programs also can provide an opportunity for community involvement. Getting the men out into the community. Because many of the men honestly that are coming to these programs do have a history with law enforcement. With criminal behavior. They've got a criminal history. And so, they may be in this program as part of their probation requirement. As part of their reunification plan. And so, they don't have necessarily the best reputation in the community. And this can provide a positive avenue for them to get back out into the community, and have the community see them in a more positive light. Doing more things. Doing activities. Whether that be clothing drives. It may be volunteering at different events. It may be, um, sitting and being the representative at your fatherhood program booth at a community event. You know,

the men will become the best marketing tool for that program. And so, again, providing opportunity. Providing growth. All within a positive environment.

And then the most important thing, I think, in these programs is introspective activities that take place. Looking into ourselves understanding that we have pain. That we have things missing. That, you know, many men have a huge hole in their heart. Maybe because their father wasn't there. Maybe they never knew their dad, or they've experienced so much trauma in their lives that it's, it's, hard, and they can't, they can't break that, that, concrete that sits around their heart. And so we have to look at that, you know, who am I as an individual? And one of the activities that we that have been implemented is a wonderful tool, and works great, is the, the, letter to dad. And in that activity the men are provided roughly about 30 to 45 minutes to write a letter to their father. They are instructed to be honest. That, their father will never read this letter. And nobody else will read the letter unless they choose to send it to them. Obviously, they can do that, but nobody else is going to see the letter. So, it's an opportunity for them to really be honest. And it's an opportunity for them to praise their, their, father for the relationship that they had. The things that they taught them. It's an opportunity for them to ask all those questions that maybe they've never been able to, or too afraid to ask their father. It's an opportunity for them to, you know, cuss out their father if, if, they have a lot of anger towards that relationship. It's an opportunity for them to really just let it all out.

And so, they write the letter. And after that is completed, then we talk about the difficulty in that. Is it something that was easy? Was it, was it something that was hard to do? And for some it's easy. For some it's difficult, uh, some spend half the time just sitting there thinking about what to write. They don't know what to write. And so, once that discussion, and that's only, you know, 10 15-minute discussion if that, maybe. But what follows is a complete surprise to them because what they're not informed of is now that, now they have to stand up in front of the group and read that letter. And there is not a lot of success in men being able to get past the third or fourth sentence without starting to break down or get emotional. And that's when you can start to see change happen. Because now they, they, feel the pain. They're actually saying these words out in front of their, their, brothers. In front of other men. Which is a scary thing to begin with. To get up in front of a crowd and to speak at all. For a lot of people is terrifying. But to have to share this, and to share something so intimate, it really makes them vulnerable. But it really helps open up the eyes in them towards themselves, in how much pain they have inside, and what is missing. And so, following that, there obviously is going to have to be another discussion on that emotional impact. And that is done in a talking circle environment.

Talking about that experience. What was difficult? How, how did you tell, how did you, how did it make you feel, you know? And they really start to open up at that point, and start to address some of that and, and, the facilitator skills are very important in this part, and being able to help them process through that. And so, finishing up with that is a, letting the men know that they have written this letter to their father. And having them to start to think about their own children. And letting them know that eventually their children will have to write this letter too. What is that letter going to look like? And so from that day forth, they have the opportunity to begin to

write that letter for their children. Through their behavior. Through their relationships. And so that sort of introspective work is, is, very important in terms of helping men to really start to understand who they are, where they're at, and what they want.

And so the different types of fathers here that can be served are, and I know we just kind of jumped into that real quick, but I wanted to leave time for questions and answers at the end. So, moving forward here. The types of fathers that can be served are, you know, fathers that are in the house. Obviously, we want them to participate as well. We have non-custodial fathers, incarcerated fathers, low-income fathers, stepfathers, military fathers. There are numerous types of categories that fathers and men fit into. And so, you know, as a, as a program, as an organization, what are we going to focus on, you know, we're obviously going to be including most of these categories here. So, our programming should be developed around that. It should be able to provide services and resources to those types of fathers as well.

And some of the pillars of these, of these, uh, successful programs is you know of the individual as well as setting the foundation. Creating a positive self-confident concept. You know, how do I think about myself? If I don't have the best outlook of myself, how can I portray that to other people? How can I teach my children what I need to teach them? And how do I, and how is that affecting me in my relationship with my wife, or with my girlfriend, and the community in general. And then understanding parent-child relationships is important. Helping the men to understand that children go through different stages. You know, there are different behaviors that are associated with different ages. And there are different ways to discipline children at those different ages. Helping them to understand the difference between discipline and punishment is a, is a, whole lesson in itself. What it means to, to, discipline a child. The, the, time and the involvement that requires, versus punishing, which is really immediate gratification for the parent. And so being able to distinguish the two. How do we, how do we, do that? Helping the men to, to, really work on those skills and in creating, again, a healthy relationship with our children.

And then understanding adult relationships. These children were created out of some relationship between, you know, a man and a child. And so what does that relationship look like, and how does that affect our children? You know, sometimes unfortunately the children can be used as leverage. You know there's a tug of war between the child that they use the child as ammunition against the other parent. So, we have to educate them on, on, what that does to the, to the child and their future. So, these are all important things that are, that help to create a solid foundation for these individuals and our programs that are providing service.

And again, accountability as well, and responsibility. Being accountable for my actions. Taking responsibility for that. You know, understanding that the question, you know, the consequences that I have in my life, really are based on the choices that I make. I can't continue to blame society. I can't continue to blame law enforcement. I can't continue to blame the government. you know I have to take responsibility at some point for what I do. And how that contributes to the situation I'm currently in. Again, we're looking at, at, a self-awakening. And, you know, how do

I, how do I cope with these things. You know, because there are things that are out of my control but understanding that my reaction to those situations is entirely my choice. And really helping them move to another higher level of thinking. Um the father's importance and responsibility, again, to family and community. Not only do I have a responsibility to my family and to, to, protect them and to love them, but I also have a responsibility to my community. Again, going back to our, our, cultural upbringing, is you know, we all have a sense of community. We did. And many of our native communities now, if you see, you know, they, many of them are building up fences. This is my property. This is, this is, my little plot. It's not a communal way of thinking anymore. And so that's one thing that we have to start addressing is how do we fulfill that role as, as, a male in our community? Again, thinking about not just my children, but all the children. What am I doing to have an impact on their future? You know, how is my living impacting their future? And then the most important thing is the open-mindedness. Helping the men to learn to open up that mind and to accept new things, new skills, new information, new ideologies. Again, that history has a huge impact on the way that we interact with each other, with the world, with our relationships, with our children. You know, our history has such a strong hold on that behavior, that sometimes we need to find a way to, to, break that cycle. Whether that's through domestic violence. You know, those experiences; alcoholism, death, you know, there, there's a lot of things that contribute to that. How am I able to break through that as a man? To be able to accept and change the way that I interact with all these different relationships? In order for that to happen I've got to be able to open my mind. I've got to be able to change the way that I think. But I can't do that unless I'm in a trusted environment. Unless I trust somebody. And that is really what is, um, that begins to develop within these fatherhood programs over time. You know, you have programs that are, you know, 60, 90 days. The particular model that I worked in was a six-month program. It was once a week every Tuesday night that the men came together for two hours. And it was something that was definitely important and played a huge role in, in, that relationship between the participants of the program. So, but we'll talk about that in a couple more slides here, so.

The next question we have is does your organization have a collaborative network? Yes, we have a strong collaborative network, 42 percent of the audience. 29 percent say we have a collaborative network, but it is small. And then 29 percent also say no we struggle to build strong collaborative networks.

Okay great, and, in that you can see that there still is a lot of work that needs to be done. You know, some of you have great collaboration, strong collaborations, large collaborations. Other of you may not have such large ones. Maybe the community's smaller. Maybe there aren't resources within the community that are available. And so again, this is where that thinking outside the box starts to come into play. Is okay, how do we make this happen? These are certain things that we're going to need for our programs. And so, how do we create those things? And part of that is, you know, where, where, is our goal, our program going to be placed? You know, where or how should we, who should we reach out to, to, maybe start this? You know, maybe, I'm an attorney and I don't necessarily, I'm not going to start the program, but I would like to see one in my community. So, who can I approach with this idea of possibly, uh, creating this? And these

are some of the places where we can have these programs. You know, they can be a community-based program. Whether that's your behavioral health, social services, or even your health and human services. Or maybe it's just a community group that gets started by itself. Now we can have them in department of corrections. Which is a great place, because eventually these men are going to be reintegrated back into society. What does that look, how do we as a department, as a judicial system, how do we contribute to the success of that individual not recidivating back into the system? And part of that is, again, that education, the resources, that support.

And so, you know, we've seen men that have been very successful and have the most success when there is a re-entry program. If there's a fatherhood program within the department of corrections that they can transition out of once they're released into the community program. Then there's not a step that is missed. They have, they know, that, once they get out there's this community program that they're going to go to, to, continue to receive that support, and, and help from. And so that is a, is a, wonderful thing. You know, there's some great things that can happen, uh, in that department of corrections.

Again, high schools also. With the young, we have, we have teen parents in high school. We have children, you know, young teens that are sexually active. Those are things that, you know, people sometimes don't want to talk about but it's a reality. So, how do we try to break that cycle before? And, you know, the unfortunate side of it is some of those kids are going to engage in criminal behavior and eventually end up incarcerated, too. So, how do we start to try to defeat some of those numbers at an early age? We talked about re-entry already-Juvenile detention facilities. Some of those young men in there are already parents. And with the risky lifestyle that they have, more than likely they're going to be parents sooner than later. So, that is another great place for them to, for you, for these programs to exist. Because you're also not necessarily talking just about fatherhood, and you, it's, a lot of it is being a man. What our responsibilities are as men. And what it means to truly be a man. And, again, because looking at the statistics at the beginning, we know that, you know, the, the, men that have been incarcerated most likely didn't have that knowledge growing up. They didn't have that support. They didn't have that role model. So, helping them, the youth, that are in these detention facilities, to realize that it is not their fault that they're in the situation they're in. But what happens moving forward is, again, based on the decisions that they make. So, how do we do that? How do we get them to understand that? Well, you have to build a relationship first. And that's what these programs really are about, is building that relationship, building trust. Because many of the individuals that are attending these programs didn't have the best life growing up. Didn't live the best lifestyles and unfortunately grew up learning how to distrust people. Learning how to question people. And so, we have to be able to break through that barrier, through these programs, to help them to learn that it's okay to start to trust. It's okay to ask for help. It's okay to say I don't have all the answers, but I want to be able to learn more. And that's the transformation that takes place through these, build, building of relationships and trusts. And these programs can also be held in group homes.

And just some of the things that can happen also. When you're talking about, uh, the program in uh, DOC. There we, uh, the, the, program that I ran was at the Salt River Bureau of Maricopa

Union Community. Did that for a lot of years there. And within that we had a re-entry program within their Tribal Department of Corrections in collaboration with our community-based program. But the program that we started in there was started with dads. And it was a program that was started in the UK. And we, um, implemented it there into their Department of Corrections. And we went in once a month and recorded men reading children's Native American children's books. And we videotaped them. We did an audio recording of that. We took in our what, you know, some of our, our, fatherhood program shirts, so that they weren't in there in their DOC outfit, and they were in a regular t-shirt. But they were reading. And it was a great program because what we did with the material afterwards, is we sent our videos over to our I.T department. They added animation and sound effects to these things. And it was just wonderful. These DVD's that were made. And the DVD, and audio discs, were sent to their children. So that the kids could hear them reading to them whenever they wanted. They could download it onto their I-pod, onto their phone. They could put the video into their DVD player and watch dad read to them. You know, so things like this really, again, thinking outside the box in terms of what we can do. Who do I need to collaborate to make something like this happen? Because that means, that continuous relationship is important. You know, there are guys that you know, will not allow their children to visit them while they're in jail, because they don't want to see them like that. Maybe it's mom or the family. They don't want them to see the dad behind you know, the glass window. And so, um, this is a way for them to maintain that, that constant you know, consistent communication. And so, it was a great program there.

We also did the burritos for dads which was at the high school before school started in the mornings. We did that at the elementary school as well. Where we would go in and just have burritos. And, you know, the guys, as they're dropping their kids off would come in, uh, once a month, and you know have a burrito. And we share a little bit about the program and, you know, ask what some of the resources that they might be looking for. So, there's a lot of different things. But it's an opportunity to engage with the community, again, in a non-threatening environment.

And for the high schools, also, we have the Young Warriors Program. Um, and, then you have a young men's gathering. Where you do different outings with them. We did this with our youth that were in foster care. We took the teenagers out for a camping trip and brought in some cultural teachings. And then we also did some work with them. Um, so, again, some of the introspective work as well. We did some talking circles. But then we did fun stuff as well. Going out fishing. And, you know, just providing them that camaraderie, again, with some positive role modeling around it.

And then also, the big one for the fatherhood program, was annual cultural outing. Taking the men and their children out into one of the preserves. Where next to the river we spent three days out there just camping out, cooking, and just engaging with the men and their children. It was a fun time but there was also work that was done. They were handed out a sheet of paper. Topics ranging from school, to, uh, drug-alcohol abuse, to dating, that these men had to have a conversation with their children about. Because in the evening we sat around

the campfire and we talked about that. We, we, asked the men, you know, what are some, what are some of the things that you learned about your your child during these conversations. And we asked the children, also, to give us feedback in what they learned. And those conversations tended to get very emotional at times. Men learning things for the first time. Finding out what their children's feelings were. You know, the things that they were doing in their own lives that the children saw that they weren't aware of that the children asked them to change. You know, they didn't, they didn't like this behavior. There was things that they wanted them to stop doing. And so, it was really a great time for them to come together and have that dialogue. Again, in a non-threatening place. It wasn't, you know, okay son we're going to sit down, we're going to have a talk. You know, so it was a great place and opportunity for them to do that.

And, so, we want to also talk about potential system and, uh, barriers. you know, some of the things that get in the way. Um, to having a successful program, or even to being able to help men in general. Some of that can be systemic. Some of them can be, some of that can be departmental. You know, as, as, a department, when you walk into your front door, into your waiting area, what does that look like? Is it welcoming to men? Um, you know, if it is just primarily pictures of posters of men and children on the wall. Or are there positive pictures of men there as well working in the, you know, in the judicial system? It might not necessarily be something that you can do, but how, uh, engaging is that receptionist when that man walks in the door and walks up to that desk? How do they treat him? Um, you know, what are some of the things that we can do to change to make that behavior less, uh, threatening? To make it less combative? Those are simple things but can have a huge, uh, huge effect on it, you know.

For the fatherhood programs, the location is important as well. If you're living in this, or you have a small community, people may not want to go to your fatherhood program if it's held in the behavioral health building. Because now people are going to see my car parked out front. They're going to start spreading rumors and all this stuff. So, these are things that we have to take into consideration as well. Is the approach, behave, punitive or is it rehabilitative? You know, how what, what, does that mean, you know, what are we going to do? Um, in terms of making these men go. Because sometimes they have to be made to go. Not all men are willing to go to this type of program. So, they might need some encouragement. Whether, again, that's a probation requirement. Whether it's through reunification. Maybe it's a, um, an, uh, diversion program type thing. Where they have to go there instead of going to jail. You know, so there's a lot of different things that we can do to really help, again, address that recidivism for these men. To help that overall outcome for the, the, best, which is in the best interest of the child. Because, again, no child should be without their parents. So how, what can we do, and what are we doing to help facilitate that? You've, you know, that that ultimate outcome of the parents to having an, an, engaged father. To have a present father. So, that we don't see the situation with the elephants anymore. At least in our communities. How can we have that type of impact?

You know, what are my biases as a service provider? You know, sometimes it's me as, as a, as a caseworker, as a social worker. You know, and do, do, I have some biases in my own mind? Do I know this family? Do I know the family's history? And am I the one that is saying, that, oh

they're never going to change. They're always going to be that way. You know, and, and now I've just become the barrier. So those are the types of things that we really have to look at. We have to take a hard look at that. And, you know, understanding ourselves to be able to provide the best possible quality service that we can. Um, tribal council. Are they supportive of the program? If tribal council is supportive of your program, then there is so much more that you're able to do. If they're not and they're not aware of the program, what do I need to do to make them aware? So that, that, so we can get that support. So that we can win the support of the, of the council. And have more, uh, a, ability to, to, engage with our community as well. Um, again, go into that, uh, the uh, venue environment. What does it look like walking into, into, this building? Into the clinic? Into the behavioral health center? So, these are all things that we need to take into consideration.

And so, some of our potential outcomes here are, you know, some of these men they have never graduated from high school. And through the process of going through this program, through their growth, they realize their potential. They realize they're um,

[Phone rings] Sorry about that.

They realize their potential. They realize their willingness, and maybe start to under, realize that, you know, I'm a lot smarter than I thought I was. I can do this. And so, they want to go back into school. They get into apprenticeship programs. Maybe they finally seek employment. And are willing to maintain that employment. They are changing their behavior. Maybe they end up getting their reunification with their children. Maybe they get custody of their kids. You know, one of the, my, I think my favorite story here is the one that's next hear. The gentleman that was, would be considered a shot caller in one of the largest gangs in our community. And he came to our program about six months after he was released, and he probably did about seven years or so, came back out, and was struggling, came to the program. And eventually, through the program he gained custody of his youngest child. And about six months after that, almost a year, he got, he gained custody of his second child as well. He got a job. He enrolled in the Carpentry Apprenticeship Program. And was employed, and just really changed his life, and started to do some work, in, um, advocating against gang involvement with the youth. And so, these are things that, that, can potentially happen through this thing. A lot of them want to get their GED, so that they can move forward. Because they understand the importance of having a job and contributing to the well-being of their family. And working through those communication skills they've helped to build a healthier relationship with their partner. They've learned how to communicate, rather than just to argue. You know, give up on a relationship, because they don't know how to communicate. And so, these are things that have definitely helped a lot of them. And there's so much more that can come out of this. As I mentioned. You are creating a, really, family environment for these men, and giving them a different kind of support that they've never really had growing up. That wasn't a negative type of relationship. Don't get me wrong you can feel loved in a gang, but it's not healthy. And it doesn't help you. It's like going back to what Greg said in the beginning here is, tell me who you're with and I'll tell you who you are, right?

So, if you're, you're, sharing a lot of your time with men who have a common goal. A common positive goal. Eventually that's going to rub off on you. And you're going to grow from that. You're going to learn from that. And there's so much more that can come from these fatherhood programs. And, you know, I'd love to share a lot more with you, and go into more depth with you if you have any more questions. I know this was a very fast and kind of, high level overview, of what these things can be and what they can provide. The potential that they have and, more importantly, how important they are. In, in, helping not just these men, but we are looking in our traditional ways at seven generations down the road. The work that we do today is definitely going to have an impact on them. So, with that I thank you all for your time.

Thanks again to our presenters for this excellent presentation. And thank you to all of our attendees. So, thank you all for your time today. We hope that this was enjoyable and helpful to you in the difficult work that you do and have a wonderful day. Thank you.