Unit II: Culture and History

Session 2

Family Diversity and Adolescent Development

**Purpose**

The purpose of session two is for fathers and sons to understand the legacy of African American families and the unique development and changes associated with adolescence. Discussion topics include African American families in the United States, family diversity, and adolescent health and well-being.

**The primary focus of this session is to:**

* Explain the history and strengths of diverse African American families
* Discuss the various transitions that take place during adolescence

**The particular emphasis will be on:**

* Recognizing the various family arrangements among African Americans
* Discuss issues related to adolescent development and risk behaviors

**Knowledge – Attitudes - Skills Expected**

**At the end of session two participants will be able to:**

1. Identify issues related to the diverse nature of African American families
2. Recognize some strengths and challenges in rearing African American adolescent males in a diverse American society
3. Identify issues related to adolescent development and well-being

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| Activities  * Affirmation & Meditation * Warm-up: “Father Abraham Song” * Introduction to Journaling * Introduction to the Memory Book & Tips for Taking Pictures * Open Discussion and PowerPoint Presentations: * African American Family Diversity * Adolescent Development and Risky Behaviors |
| Homework Due  * “Let’s Get Acquainted” Exercise |
| Homework AssignedFather and Son Letters |
| Materials Needed  * **Father-Son Memory books**: Binders or scrapbooks that can contain pictures, poems, and other materials created by participants * **Project Camera**: Staff member to take pictures of fathers’ and sons’ interactions with each other and project staff * **Cameras for sons**: Disposable cameras for each father-son pair to use throughout the program * **Sons Journals:** to write reflections on experiences throughout the program. *Notebooks* may be more economical for this ongoing activity * **Facilitator script for PowerPoint slides** (“Adolescent Development” and “African American Families”) * **Flip chart/Markers or Chalkboard:** for “brainstorming” |

**Session Outline**

**(Total Time: 2 hours)**

Quick Overview of Today’s Session (5 minutes)

Check-In (10 minutes)

Activities (85 minutes)

* Affirmation & Meditation (10 minutes)
* Father Abraham Song (10 Minutes)
* Introduction to Journaling (10 minutes)
* Introduction of Memory Book Activity & Tips for Taking Pictures (25 minutes)
* Open Discussion and PowerPoint Presentations (30 minutes)
  + African American Family Diversity
  + Introduction to Adolescent Development and Risky Behaviors

Homework Assignments (5 minutes)

Closing Summary (5 minutes)

Check-Out (10 minutes)

**Quick Overview of Today’s Session**

In today’s session we will talk about the history and strength of African American families and adolescent development among African American males. We will also spend some time discussing the journal and memory book activities the sons will be working on throughout the program.

**Check-In**

But before we do any of that, let’s start with our procedure of Checking In. You may remember from last time that we set aside this time so that you can talk about anything that has been on your mind since our last meeting. You can also use this time to share any thoughts or reactions you may have about what’s going to happen today. We will also review the homework assignments here. Does anyone have anything they would like to share?

***Facilitator should allow enough time for fathers and sons to feel comfortable talking in the group. Reinforce the purpose of the Check-In time as being their time so that they can eventually feel ownership of the program. Ask sons if anyone wants to share from their Journal. (Collect homework)***

Activities

“Affirmation & Meditation”

Description

The Affirmation & Meditation is designed to allow participants to relax and get into a good mood for the session. The Affirmation & Meditation promotes self-respect, and helps participants reflect, and get ready to focus.

***This particular affirmation leads into a 5 minute (can be varied in time duration) meditation, or it can stand alone. It is to be repeated 5 times in unison following the session facilitator before closing eyes for the meditation.***

Please stand and form a circle, holding hands. All together:

I Know Me

I Accept Me

I Love Me

I Forgive Me

A Higher Power Lives Within Me

Please close your eyes for silent meditation.

***Participants will now close their eyes and meditate silently.***

***Coming out of the meditation, with eyes still closed, facilitator will begin to recite the following. Participants will join in. Repeat the following 3 times. On the third repetition, participants will open their eyes, and make eye contact with everyone in the circle.***

I am a unique and precious human being,

always doing the best I can,

always growing in wisdom and love.

Warm-Up: “Father Abraham Song”

Description

The Father Abraham song is designed to give participants a chance to be active and engaged in this session. This short icebreaker activity will promote a sense of energy and excitement for the group. It also provides a great transition to focus on activities.

***Facilitator asks all participants to rise to their feet and provides instructions for singing the song. Below is an example of lyrics to the song. See the resource section for session two for the entire lyrics.***

“Father Abraham has many sons…has many sons has Father Abraham! And you are one of them and so am I. So let’s just praise the Lord1.”

*Facilitator, after this introductory verse, will instruct participants to do an action, such as “look-up” or “look-down”, “stand-up” or “sit-down” Participants will then mimic the action and sing the stated verse over again and will continue to follow the facilitator’s instructions.*

Writing Your Thoughts – Keeping a Journal Activity (Sons)

Description

The purpose of keeping a journal is to assist sons in expressing their thoughts and feelings as they go through the program and beyond. Writing on a regular basis also provides an opportunity for sons to be creative and feel engaged throughout the program. Sharing their journal entries during the “Check-In” portion of each session is a good way to involve the sons in each session. But the journals are private so they do not have to share this information.

*Facilitator distributes journals to sons and gives instructions.*

To the sons: Keeping a journal will be one of the activities you will do in this program. We would like you to write anything you see, think, or feel is important about the program, your relationship with your father, or anything you feel you want to write. Keep in mind that you will be writing your personal thoughts in your journal and you can share them if you like during the meeting, but you don’t have to. Writing in the journal is a time for you to express your thoughts without feeling embarrassed or afraid. In addition to writing in your journal, you can express yourself in other ways like drawing a picture, writing a poem or a song, or whatever you would like to do.

Facilitator reads two examples of journal entries to participants. See resource section for session two for a complete text of examples of journal entries.

Memory Book Activity & Tips for Taking Pictures

The purpose of this activity is to encourage both fathers and sons to keep special pictures and other important information in a memory book. Participants will be able to include pictures and words of what they believe are important about a father and son relationship. The memory book gives fathers and sons evidence of growing relationship in this program.

Description

*Facilitator shows participants an example of a program memory book.*

Pictures are important for many reasons. They give us something wonderful to look at. They let us show things we can’t always say with words. They last a long time and they are personal to us. In other words, pictures can mean different things to different people.

***Facilitator informs participants that they can use other things to enhance or explain their pictures such as newspaper articles, CD or song lyrics, drawings, or any artwork that they have created. Let them know that they can use anything they think might show what they believe is important about the father and son relationship****.*

Keeping a memory book is an activity that will last the entire program. We are going to start this activity tonight by taking a picture of each family. We will also incorporate some time for you to work on your memory books in future sessions.

***Facilitator collects the project memory book and encourages families to participate in this activity throughout the program.***

Fathers and sons should create the family memory book **together**, but the sons are responsible for keeping it organized.Be sure to include pictures from magazines, drawings, and anything else you want to add that shows what it means to have a good relationship with each other or doing things that you both enjoy*.*

# Now let’s take a picture of each family. Your picture will be placed in the front cover of your memory book so that everyone will know whose book it is. This picture represents the beginning of your memories in this program. You will always be able to use it to show other people what you have accomplished.

***Facilitator reads, “Tips for Taking Pictures”. Distribute handouts from the handouts section at this time.***

**Tips for Taking Pictures**

When taking photos, keep in mind the following questions:

1. Who/What is in this picture?
   1. NOTE: You can only take pictures of your father/son or program staff.
2. Why is this person, place, or thing important to me?
3. What do I want my father (or my son) to learn from this picture?

All photos will be developed and screened by the program staff, then the photos will be given to you to include in your memory book. You will write down the answers to the three questions for each photo you choose. During the final session, you will present your memory book to our group and family guests so that everyone can see what you have created together.

Be creative! If you need help doing something, just let us know and we will help you. There is no limit to what you can do! We look forward to watching your memory book and your relationship grow over time.

##### African American Family Diversity

Description

The purpose of this discussion and PowerPoint presentation is to actively engage participants in a dialogue about how different types of African American families exist. Fathers and sons that do not live together is one family type.

***Facilitator begins to discuss the historical background of African American families. The PowerPoint presentation and script should be used to guide this discussion. Be sure to use a flip chart to write down participants’ answers to the questions.***

**Adolescent Development and Risky Behaviors**

Description

The purpose of this discussion and PowerPoint presentation is to actively engage participants in a discussion about issues regarding adolescent development and adolescent risky behaviors.

***Facilitator transitions into a discussion of adolescent development and risky health behaviors. The PowerPoint presentation and script should be used to guide this discussion.***

**Homework Assignments**

**Fathers and Sons Letters**

For this week’s homework assignment, you (fathers and sons) will write letters to your father or son saying anything that you would like each other to know about what you think of each other, how you would like your relationship to be by the end of the program, and any expectations you have for the future. Letters are due at the next session.

***Facilitator distributes the instructions for writing a letter to father or son.***

**Closing-Summary**

Facilitator provides a brief summary of what was covered in the session. Make sure to list all of the headings in the beginning outline and provide a brief description of what was covered in each. Also, make sure to include a brief description of what participants can expect in the next session. Include the date, time, location and purpose of the next session. Tell participants to come dressed to paint at the next session!

**Check-Out**

***Facilitator checks to see if there is anything the participants would like to share before ending the meeting. Thank them for coming and participating. Let them know that they can feel free to ask any questions. End on a positive note!***

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| **Reference**  Father Abraham Lyrics- [**http://www.kididdles.com/lyrics/f033.html**](http://www.kididdles.com/lyrics/f033.html) |

**Additional Resources**

1. Billingsley, A. (1992). Climbing Jacob's ladder: The enduring legacy of African American families. New York: Simon and Schuster.
2. Cobb, Nancy J. (1992). The Lifespan Approach. In N.J. Cobb, Adolescence: Continuity, Change, and Diversity. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, pp. 27-39.
3. Hill, R. (1972). The strengths of black families. New York, Emerson Hall.
4. Hill, R. (1987). The black family: building on strengths in R Woodson, ed. On the Road to Economic Freedom. Washington, D.C.: Regency Gateway, pp. 71-92.
5. Hill, R. (1993). "Dispelling myths and building on strengths: supporting African American families." The Family Resource Coalition's Report.
6. Muuss, Rolf E. (1996). Stanley Hall’s Biogenetic Psychology of Adolescents. In R.E. Muuss, Theories of Adolescence. (6th edition). New York: McGraw-Hill, pp. 15-17.
7. Steinberg, Laurence. (2002). Families. In L. Steinberg, Adolescence (6th edition). New York: McGraw Hill, pp. 125-158.