

Fatherhood Program Partner Staff Interview Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to talk to us. My name is [NAME] and this is [NAME], and we work for Child Trends, a research center in Washington, D.C. We're part of a team that is helping the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in the Administration for Children and Families to understand what kinds of services fatherhood programs offer on health romantic and coparenting relationships; how those services help fathers; and how those services might be better tailored to better meet the needs of fathers.

As part of this project, we are conducting interviews with fatherhood program facilitators, directors or other similar staff, and staff from organizations like yours who partner with fatherhood programs.

As we're talking today, please keep in mind there are no right or wrong answers to our questions. You're the expert and we want to hear your honest opinions – positive or negative. Honest feedback will help us the most. If there is a question you do not want to answer, please let us know and we will skip to the next question. Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to stop the interview at any time. However, your opinions are important to us, so we hope you will stay for the entire interview. This interview will last between about 90 minutes.

What you say here will be kept private, which means that your name will not be shared or associated with your opinions, and we will not share who participated in the interviews. Your responses will be combined with responses from others who are participating in these focus groups in published documents. Additionally, quotes from today may be included in published documents, but the quotes will not be attributed to you or your organization without your permission.

We will take notes and record the interview, so we can make sure that we don't miss important details. If you would like us to turn off the recorder at any point, please ask and we will do so. Only the study team will have access to the recordings. Once we capture all the information on paper, we will delete the recordings.

Have you had a chance to read the consent form [STAFF] sent by email? [WAIT FOR RESPONSE, THEN SAY]: This form covers much of what we just discussed about the goals for this study, how we will protect your privacy, and how we plan to use what we learn for our project. The consent form also has contact information for the study's Principal Investigator as well as the Institutional Review Board that is in charge of ensuring our study follows certain guidelines regarding participant rights. You can contact them with any comments or concerns about participating in this study.

Because this is a federally-funded project, I have to read a couple of sentences to you before we begin. *According to the Paperwork Reduction Act, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB number for the described information collection is 0970-0540 and the expiration date is 2/28/2021. If you have comments regarding this estimated interview length or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the interview length, please send them to*

Mindy Scott at Child Trends, 7315 Wisconsin Ave, Suite 1200W, Bethesda MD, 20814; Attn: OMB-PRA [NUMBER].

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

Do you agree to be recorded?

INTERVIEWEE ROLE AND BACKGROUND

To begin, we would like to hear a little about your background.

- 1) Please take a minute or two to share a little about your experience working with fathers.
- 2) Tell me about your position and role at [PARTNER ORGANIZATION].
 - a. [IF NOT ADDRESSED]: How long have you been in this position?

Great, now we would like to talk to you about [PARTNER ORGANIZATION].

- 3) Who does your organization primarily serve?
 - a. **Probe:** What kinds of services/activities does your organization provide?
 - b. **Probe:** What, if anything, does your organization do uniquely or differently for fathers compared to others you may serve? What services, if any, are particularly targeted towards fathers?

PARTNERSHIP WITH FATHERHOOD PROGRAM

Thank you! We would now like to hear more about your organization's partnership with [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM]...

- 4) Please describe the partnership [PARTNER ORGANIZATION] has with [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM].
 - a. **Probe:** How did the partnership begin?
 - b. **Probe:** How long has this partnership been in place?
 - c. **Probe:** Is this partnership formal or informal (i.e., is there a MOU established)?
 - d. **Probe:** On average, how much time do you spend working with this partner? How often do you communicate with the partner?
 - e. **Probe:** What works well about this partnership? Any success stories you would like to share?
 - f. **Probe:** What are some challenges of this partnership, if any? What are some lessons learned?

PARTNER ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Thank you so much. We are now hoping to learn more about how your organization addresses healthy relationships. Throughout this discussion, you'll hear us refer to both coparenting and romantic relationship services separately. When we say coparenting relationships, we mean a fathers' relationship with the mother(s) of his children or others who work with the father and share responsibility for raising

a child. When we say romantic relationships, we mean fathers' relationships with people they are dating, committed to, or married to. If we are speaking about both romantic and coparenting relationships, we will refer to these as healthy relationships.

- 5) How does your organization or curriculum define coparenting? *Note for interviewer: if they have trouble, you can ask the probe below or offer our definition: mother(s) of a father's child(ren) or others that play a significant role in helping to raise his children.*
 - a. Follow up: In your experience, who do fathers you work with typically coparent with?
 - b. Follow up: How common is it for fathers to have multiple coparents?

- 6) Does [ORGANIZATION NAME] consider romantic relationships and coparenting relationships as distinct? [IF NEEDED]: Say more about that.

- 7) Does [ORGANIZATION NAME] use specific curricula to provide healthy relationship services at [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM]?
 - a. [IF YES]: Can you tell me about the curricula?
 - i. **Probe**: Do the curricula distinguish between fathers' romantic relationships and their coparenting relationships?
 1. [IF COPARENTING CURRICULA ARE MENTIONED]: Who are included as coparents/partners/spouses in these curricula?
 - ii. Follow up: Do the [curricula mentioned] require or encourage the involvement of coparents/partners and/or spouses?
 1. [If YES]: Who are included as coparents/partners/spouses in these curricula?
 2. [If YES]: Please describe the coparents'/partners'/spouses' involvement in the curricula.

SERVICES OFFERED ADDRESSING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Now we are hoping to ask you a few questions about how fathers' healthy relationships - both coparenting and romantic relationships - are addressed through the services your organization provides both independently and through the partnership with [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM].

- 8) In what ways does [PARTNER ORGANIZATION] address fathers' healthy relationships?
 - a. Follow up: How often do these services occur and how long do they last?
 - i. Follow up: About how much of this time is spent addressing coparenting relationships?
 1. Follow up: How, if at all, is coparenting with multiple coparents or multiple children discussed in these services?
 - ii. Follow up: About how much of this time is spent addressing romantic relationships?

- 9) Are coparents/partners/spouses included in any of the services you mentioned?
 - a. [IF YES]: How are coparents/partners/spouses involved?
 - i. [IF COPARENTS ARE MENTIONED]: Who are included as coparents?

1. Follow up [IF NOT JUST THE CHILD'S MOTHER]: How do these services address coparenting relationships with caretakers who are not the child's biological mother?
 - b. [IF YES]: How often do coparents/partners/spouses attend?
 - i. [IF SPOUSES OR PARTNERS ARE MENTIONED]: Are these services mainly for fathers and the biological mothers of their children, new partners or both? What if a father is no longer romantically involved with the mother of their child/children?
 - ii. [IF NO]: Is there a reason [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM] does not include coparents, partners, or spouses? Probe by saying "Can you tell me more about that?"
 - c. Follow up: What does attendance or uptake of these services look like?
- 10) In what ways, have any changes or disruptions caused by the coronavirus affected or changed the healthy relationship services offered at [ORGANIZATION NAME]?
- a. Follow up: What changes have you made to your healthy relationship programming to respond to changes or disruptions caused by the coronavirus?
 - b. Follow up: Are you maintaining contact with fathers amidst these changes or disruptions? If so, how?
- 11) Thinking about the fathers in your program, what are the challenges, if any, that these fathers face in forming healthy romantic relationships and keeping them strong?
- a. **Probe** [IF NEEDED]: Are there any particular subsets of fathers (for example, fathers who are young, are justice involved, or who have children with more than one partner) who face additional or unique challenges in their romantic relationships? What are those challenges?
 - b. Follow up: What are some strengths that these fathers have related to forming and keeping romantic relationships strong?
 - c. Follow up: Have fathers mentioned any challenges or shifts in their romantic relationships related to changes or disruptions caused by the coronavirus? If so, can you tell me more about that?
 - i. **Probe** [IF NEEDED]: For example, have any fathers faced new challenges related to losing their job, having to isolate themselves from their romantic partner, or experiencing increased stress and anxiety?
 - ii. Follow up: How do you think fathers can use the skills they learned in [FATHERHOOD PROGRAMMING] to help navigate any challenges related to the changes or disruptions caused by the coronavirus?
- 12) What challenges, if any, do the fathers in your program face in keeping their coparenting relationships strong?
- a. **Probe** [IF NEEDED]: Are there any particular subsets of fathers (for example, fathers who are young, are justice involved, or who have children with more than one partner)

who face additional or unique challenges in their romantic relationships? What are those challenges?

- b. Follow up: What are some strengths that these fathers bring to their coparenting relationships?
- c. Follow-up: Are there any challenges that coparents face that are different from those you mentioned for fathers in your program?
- d. Follow up: Have fathers mentioned any challenges or shifts in their coparenting relationships related to changes or disruptions caused by the coronavirus? If so, can you tell me more about that?
 - i. **Probe** [IF NEEDED]: For example, have any fathers faced new challenges related to losing their job, having to isolate themselves from their children or coparents, or experiencing increased stress and anxiety?
 - ii. Follow up: How do you think fathers can use the skills or strategies they learned in [FATHERHOOD PROGRAMMING] to help navigate any of these challenges related to the changes or disruptions caused by to the coronavirus?

13) How, if at all, has your organization changed in terms of how you think about addressing healthy relationships with fathers due to your partnership with [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM]?

- a. Follow up: To what extent is addressing fathers' healthy relationships a priority for [PARTNER ORGANIZATION]? [IF PRIORITY] Please share some examples that show this.
- b. Follow up: What kind of support is there from the organization or leadership to address healthy relationships with fathers, if any?
- c. Follow up: Does your organization face any challenges or barriers to addressing healthy relationships with fathers?

CLOSING

And lastly, we would like to see if you have any further thoughts or recommendations.

15) Sometimes there are external factors that can affect people's coparenting and romantic relationships. We've already talked about how any changes or disruptions related to the coronavirus may have affected coparenting and romantic relationships of the fathers you serve. Can you think of any other external factors that impact their coparenting or romantic relationships, either positively or negatively?

- a. **Probe**: What about systems like social, legal, community, or school systems, or specific agencies like child protective services or child support?

16) How could [ORGANIZATION NAME]'s healthy relationship services be improved for fathers If you had all the money in the world to design your program and make services better for the fathers you serve, what would you do?

- a. Follow-up: What would be required for these changes to happen?

17) Is there anything that we didn't touch on today that you want us to know?

We really appreciate you taking the time to talk with us today, thank you.