Promoting Resiliency in At-Risk Youth: Promising Practices for Encouraging Healthy Relationships via Integration of Relationship Education into Services for Youth

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Operator: Please stand by, we are ready to begin. Good day, and welcome to the Promoting Resiliency in At Risk Youth, Promising Practices for Encouraging Healthy Relationships conference call. Today's conference is being recorded. At this time I would like to turn the conference over to Ms. Andrea Strahan, please go ahead ma'am.

Andrea Strahan: Thank you, so much, Ruth, and hello, everyone. I'd like to welcome you to the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families Webinar, entitled Promoting Resiliency in At Risk Youth, Promising Practices for Encouraging Healthy Relationships via Integration of Relationship Education into services for youth.

My name is Andrea Strahan, and I am part of the Resource Center team. I'd like to thank everyone for joining us today. Before we get started with the presentation there are a few housekeeping items I'd like to go over. Just to let everyone know we will be taking questions at the end of the presentation. But we encourage you to submit your questions that you have throughout the duration of the Webinar.

To do this, find the question-and-answer pane designated by the letters Q and A on the top left portion of your screen. You can click on that portion of the menu bar to open the pane, or you can open the pane and drag it off the menu bar to display as a standalone box. Type your question into the top box and then click the ask button. You'll receive an automatic reply thanking you for your question. This frees up your question and answer pane which allows you to ask another question if you choose.

This presentation, a transcript, and a frequently asked questions document will be posted to our Web site healthymarriagandfamilies.org, within about 10 business days. If at any time you would like to view the presentation full-screen please press the F5 button. You can hit the escape button or the F5 button again to return to normal view.

Our speakers today will be Robyn Cenizal, Project Director, National Resource Center for Healthy Marriages and Families, Ted Futris, Training and Technical Assistance with the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families, Debra Gilmore, Family Safety Expert with the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families, John Barner, Training and Technical Assistance for the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families, and Gilbert Chavez, Program Specialist with the Child Support Family Initiative for the Texas Office of the Attorney General.

So with that, I will go ahead and turn the call over to Robyn Cenizal, Project Director here at the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families, Robyn.
Robyn Cenizal: Thanks, Andrea, and welcome, everyone. Today's webinar goals objectives are for us describe promising practices for integrating healthy marriage and relationship education, into services that promote youth resiliency.

Also, to share strategies and examples in how to develop a plan of action for integrating these skills, and to describe how the National Resource Center can assist you with that integration process. At the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Family, our mission is connecting healthy marriage education skills and safety net services as an integrated approach to strengthening families.

The concept is to bring together these healthy marriage education skills, like communication, conflict resolution, and critical skills like parenting and financial literacy, to bring them together with the safety net service providers that we serve. So when you think about safety net service providers we are talking about, all of these services that come into play, to help families who are at risk, whether that be child welfare, child support, domestic violence, education, TANF.

All of those different services are the services that provide the safety net that support families in their efforts to maintain self-sufficiency, regain self-sufficiency, or just to sustain themselves. When you think about healthy marriage education skills, as I mentioned, these skills are communication skills, conflict resolution skills, interpersonal skills that transfer into the workplace and help families become more self-sufficient, as well as these critical skills, I mentioned, financial literacy and parenting.

These are skills that are very helpful in helping families to increase their coping mechanisms, to deal with the majors family stressers, which are often finances and parenting. So what does the Resource Center offer? We offer research that supports, promotes the integration of healthy marriage education skills.

We also offer resources, tips, and tools that you can use for your colleagues or share with the families that you serve. And training and technical assistance to support stakeholders like you as you work to implement integration strategies. The Resource Center has a lot to offer and I will come back to you later in today's program and talk more specifically about some of the resources that are available after you hear from our great speakers.

So with that I will turn it over to Ted.

Ted Futris: Thank you Robyn, and good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining us here today. I'd like to highlight a few, you know, start off with - there we go, a few reasons why promotion of marriage and relationship education among youth is important, particularly in facilitating youth resiliency.

Research clearly has shown that the skills that can be learned from healthy marriage relationship education can be particularly relative, and appropriate for adolescents who are beginning to explore adolescent relationships. Increasingly becoming more involved in dating relations. And this is part of figuring out who they are.
Relationships is a part of their identity as adolescents, and as future adults, healthy productive citizens. So these skills that they learn translate into multiple contexts. Whether it be peer relationship, parenting, parent-child relations, teacher relations, coworker relations. Also youth who are educated about healthy relationships are also more likely to have better relations with peers.

For example, research has shown that they learn conflict management strategies that are effective, reduces the likelihood that become involved in a physical confrontation and conflict with others. It also has shown that a parent/adolescent relationship actually become more positive as adolescents learn effective communication strategies and ways to handle disagreements.

So they’re functioning becomes better and in the long run, we hope that through these educational services that it will reduce the likelihood for need for other support services. There’s still lots of research that's needed to understand the efficacy of relationship education on youth.

But what currently exists is very promising in terms of immediate short term impact on changing the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. This type of education is very accurate and timely information for adolescents, in terms of developmentally where they are. But it also can increase the occurrence in negative youth behaviors.

For example, predominately percentage of first-time sexual experiences among adolescents are reported to be within the context of a romantic relationship. Upwards of 85% of teens who report having sex for the first time report that it’s with someone that they were romantically involved with. And many of them are having sex within the first three months of their relationship, or what they believe to be a boyfriend or girlfriend relationship.

So by educating youth on the process of developing relationships, the time it takes to develop relationships, we can potentially slow those behaviors down and reduce the likelihood that they engage in those types of negative behaviors.

We also see a high rate of teen dating violence, intimate partner violence, among adolescents. In learning those signs of what healthy versus unhealthy relations are, is very important as many adolescents aren't aware of some of those signs of unhealthy relationships because for many, they’re surrounded by unhealthily relationships. And that’s kind of the norm maybe, how their adult models communicate and manage conflicts.

So relationship education can help deter some of the negative behaviors. And relationship education has also been found very relevant for diverse use. It’s been found to be effective for social economically diverse use, racially diverse use, ethnically diverse use. So it cuts across the board in terms of its potential impact on adolescents, and their current and future relationships.

Now with the Center, one of the things we're working with, professional stakeholders like yourselves, is helping you identify kind of, where are you with regards to how you integrate relationship education, if you’re currently integrating. And provide you a service to help move you towards, ideally, full integration.
And I'll describe what these each are, and give you some examples here. But in general basic engagement of healthy marriage and relationship education with youth is providing them the literature, sharing those resources, putting posters and brochures and pamphlets out there, and make it accessible to youth, and as well their caregivers. That level to, involves partnerships that bring expertise to your agency, to the services that you provide. You might not have the capacity, the staff, the resources to provide the relationship education yourself. But you might know of community partners that can help you with that. And full integration really is a movement towards training your staff to offer relationship education as one of the services that you offer. And finding ways to integrate it into what you currently provide.

So, some examples, here, in terms of what integration looks like at these different levels. Level 1, for example, materials can be distributed and displayed for youth that schools through health classes, or made available at the nurses office, or in the guidance counselor's office. Through afterschool programs, in the community, such as recreation centers, detention centers can even provide some of these resources, as well as faith based organizations. They can be shared during face-to-face meeting with providers, or placed as handouts in waiting rooms of community health and mental health centers, teen centers for example. These could be posters, handouts, pamphlets on what healthy relationships look like. What intimate partner violence looks like and what these skills involve.

Level 2 would involve, you know, reaching out, engaging with community-based organizations that may already be offering healthy marriage education, or conducting teen groups. For example, the cooperative extension system, in many states, who offer 4-H programming, as well as family consumer science programming, many times those educators are trained and capable of providing relationship education. As well as healthy marriage grantees and school systems may be great partners, to consider as well. Formal and informal referrals would fall under level 2. Maybe you're not at the capacity to offer it yet, but you know of services available in the community that you can refer your teams to, to attend those workshops and programs. And partners may even be willing to come on-site and offer these workshops, if available space and time works out.

Level 3 is where you find ways to supplement existing, for example, supplement existing health classes, or sex education programs, with relationships skills to reinforce the connection between sexuality and relationships. Many times the sex education curriculum programs really do a great job of helping reinforce to teens the consequences of having sex and the emotional aspects of sex and the impact it has. But really many curriculums failed to cover the context in which sex happens, and helping teens understand everything else happening in the relationship, and is it really a healthy relationship? You might develop or complement local teen groups with a focus on healthy relationships.
Training professionals and volunteers can also utilize appropriate curriculum to develop programs or integrate relationship education into the services that you provide, at community centers as well as other mental and health clinics or centers. So depending on your resources and your capacity you might find yourself at one of these three levels.

What we hope is through this Webinar you'll hear an example of what integration can look like in a particular state, as well as some of the challenges and lessons learned in integrating relationship education to your services. And so with that I'm going to first, transition this over to Debra Gilmore who's going to talk about factoring in family safety at the different levels of integration as you move forward.

Debra Gilmore: Thanks, Ted. And we'll talk about the levels of integration in just a minute, but you are probably, if you're listening to this call and you're what we consider a stakeholder, you're probably very, very familiar already with these numbers that are up on your screen now, the high numbers of children living in poverty in the U.S., those victims of intimate partner violence.

And by the way, these are not crimes statistics, this is a survey that's going to be an ongoing survey by the Centers for Disease Control which is producing higher numbers than you might see in crimes statistics for intimate partner violence. And then back to administrative data to ((inaudible)) offers numbers on the number of children who were referred to child protective services annually.

And those of you in the field, absolutely know that most of those are for child neglect and not for child abuse. You also, I'm sure, know how these are correlated all with each other and all three also correlate to negative health and well-being outcomes. And part of why these numbers are so high is because they encompass a wide variety of problems and concerns.

It's not just the darkness that, you know, the real physical abuse and bruising, and broken bones, and things that we see that are often used to highlight these types of issues. It's really a wide variety of concerns. And some of those are situational, some of those might be triggered by a particular event, some of them are chronic, some involve substance abuse, mental illness, so they are a little more chronic issues. And of course some of those are immediately visible and some are not.

To me these numbers do two things. They not only show the enormous risk of working with a family who's impacted by some type of violence or maltreatment, no matter what you're doing. But they also show, because poverty is the highest among these numbers, that not every family who is living in poverty is also impacted by family violence or neglect. And I think that's important to remember in terms of being sure that we continue to treat all folks and individuals as individuals.

And this is really getting to the heart of the focus of this Webinar, and that is using dating as opposed to marital relationships. If you're like me, you see a graph and the first thing you do is kind of gloss over it and wait for someone to tell you what it is. And so I will do that. And please note that's me to, so I don't blame you.
But I thought a graph is the best way to kind of have a backdrop for what I'm going to talk about next, and that is what happens to you as a child, and what happens to you later all correlates with having or not having healthy relationships.

This is from a study by Dr. Murray Straus, if you're familiar with him you know that he has been, for literally decades, he's been one of the pioneers working on family violence, and has been among other things, the principal investigator for a longitudinal study that studies university students, and studied them across more than 30 countries. And so that's where the data that you're seeing comes from.

His studies showed that the more a person experiences neglect as a child, the higher the likelihood that that person will commit violence against the dating partner. And this graph was specifically university students who were neglected as children and have now indicated that they are perpetrating violence against their dating partner that they found that within the last 12 months of last year.

And so two things again, there's two things from this particular slide. One is, not only shown by his work, but it has been shown by multiple other studies, and that is that violence is much more prevalent in dating relationships than it is in marital ones. And so the women, hopefully its large enough type that you can see it, the women in this study, just noticed that the line is consistently higher than the men. And that is because the women in this study were just as likely, if not more likely, then the boys to report being the perpetrator of violence.

And again, that's been shown in not just this study, but multiple other studies. And that is different from adult relationships, in which there's mixed evidence of the extent to which women are perpetrators of intimate partner violence. And there's lots of reasons for that, which again goes back to what you're really talking about when you're talking about intimate partner violence and what it looks like.

I think those were the things that I wanted to highlight here, and let me move forward. This is really coming back to what Ted was talking about in the levels of integration. There's lots of ways that you can integrate talking about healthy relationships, and that you can address family safety within that context. So these are just a couple of ways that you can do that.

That first level that Ted talked about, basic engagement, could simply mean handing out pamphlets on healthy relationships that sometimes means that you are going for the negative in talking about signs of dating abuse. I always like to say that you should really show tips of what to do along with what not to do. I think the more concrete we can be about what good things can look like, the more helpful that can be for people who are just looking - we already know that what they're doing is maybe not what they are supposed to be doing but they don't know how to change it, then that's not the most helpful information.

In the final bullet here is the other piece I'm going to - in the very final bullet is really what I'm going to highlight as well, and that is solution building with students and youth that you are working with. And that's really, I imagine, that most of you on this call are probably mandated reporters, so you're already aware of having to do something at the
intervention level. And that's really just talking about another way that you are responding based on level of risk.

But healthy relationship education is really a prevention strategy. And integrating that within that response based on level of risk is a way that you can build solutions with the students, and help them to actually come up with their own ways of providing healthy ways, either to enhance a relationship that they're in, or to exit an unhealthy relationship.

And with that I'm going to turn it over to our special guest speaker, Gilbert Chavez, who's going to talk about giving you a very concrete example of how to integrate healthy marriage and relationship education.

**Gilbert Chavez:** Thank you. First, before I get started, I really want kind of send a warm thank you to the National Resource Center for Marriage and Families for inviting me to speak today in regards to a program which I'm very passionate about. It fits completely with the theme that we are discussing here today. And it's really nice to see that there is a coordinated effort to really get this information out to young people.

My name is Gilbert Chavez. I am the program manager for a group in the child support division in Texas called Family Initiatives. We do a multiple of things, but I managed a small group of three staff who really focus on youth, informing family, outreach and education. So making sure that those young people, and even young families who are trying to navigate their way into being what they see as a family, can understand some of the legal issues regarding parenting in the state of Texas, specifically.

But really, hopefully, to reach their aspirations of being responsible parents in the future. I really see what we do in the Family Initiative section as, and specifically in what I do with youth, and forming families, is kind of the prevention side of child support. You know, how can we help these young people decide when his going to be the best opportunity for them to be a parent with the most success of having good outcomes for their families.

And I'm sure many of you on the phone call are very aware of some of the statistics in the state of Texas, or even in the nation regarding out of wedlock birth, marriage, divorce. And what we try to do is really try to provide information and resources to young families in the state of Texas to hopefully avoid negative situations, or even negative outcomes in our child-support process.

So with that, I want to speak of one specific program that we have, and that is the P.A.P.A. program. And P.A.P.A. stands for parenting and paternity awareness. It is a 14 session curriculum that we developed for middle school and high school students in the state of Texas.

This is very much a child-support curriculum, but at the same time realizing the importance of having a discussion about healthy relationships, the cost of raising children, child development, the prevention of family violence, and dating violence, education about the child-support process and legal laws regarding becoming apparent in the state of Texas when they're not married, but also, the responsibilities of being a parent.
And so what we try to do is really, kind of get in front of the issue. You know, this is information which is, you know, immediately needed for teen parents, parents who are trying to navigate, you know, the financial and the emotional needs of children, and how they may interact with the child-support process. So that makes service an immediate need.

But we focus on making sure that this information gets out into the general public, and in the general high schools population, so that everyone attending the high school will have an opportunity to think about what it means to have a healthy family. To talk about marriage, and to talk about the other things which P.A.P.A. includes.

To kind of go over why this program was developed by the Attorney General's office, all you need really need to do is look at what are some of the statistics that we see. Nationwide we see over a 40% of all children born will be born to unmarried parents. And for the child support division, that has a direct legal issue for those families. And that is establishing paternity.

And so that is something that we want to make sure that young people, and also the general public, understand the processes for establishing paternity, but also the benefits of establishing paternity, and the need for creating that legal connection with the father and the child. Because in the state of Texas, as all states, when unmarried parents have a child the state only legally recognizes one legal parent, and for us to establish that legal connection to the father, they must first establish paternity.

And so that's a direct need for P.A.P.A. to go in and talk about what are some of those legal issues? How is this process completed? And why would couples need to consider establishing paternity when they have a child and they're not married?

I do presentations all over the state of Texas, not only to young people, adolescents, and young adults, but also to professionals and paraprofessionals. And it's amazing to me, I've been doing this work since 2004, it's amazing to me how much misinformation there is in regards to the rights, responsibilities, and realities of parenting, and what those legal issues are.

Our thought is, if we provide information before there is a significant need, or before that major breakup between that families, maybe we can intervene in a way where both parents will still understand the responsibilities they have for raising that child. But also, you know, better able to interact with the child-support system. And not feel that child-support is happening to them, but that they have some point to interact with the child-support system and have realistic expectations of what we can do.

So that's how it's connected to the child support system. More than anything we would love to just prevent negative child-support issues, which may include not getting in the child-support system to begin with. Because if the couple have a healthy marriage and have a two parent household where there raising that child then maybe there is never a need for child-support. And that's okay as well.

So this very much serves as a child support outreach in education, and a child-support program. But it has other benefits. But it also had some challenges. And so I kind of
want to talk about both of those. Some of those lessons learned, but also some of the challenges that we've seen.

The P.A.P.A. curriculum has been around in one form or another since about 1995. There was a need, and a request, from school districts to this child-support division to go out and to provide information to their teen parents. To talk about child-support, to talk about why there's a need to apply for our services, or, you know, the financial support that is provided through that child-support and how we can get that set up.

And so that's really the genesis of this program, and where it was really designed to kind of fill that gap for those teen parents. But as we moved forward, there are multiple classes in Texas high schools where they discuss parenting, parenting preparation, family consumer science. And the information that we were providing through the P.A.P.A. curriculum at that time talked about, you know, parenting, responsible parenting.

So it really filled that need for those teachers. And so we formalized a curriculum in 2004 that was originally 10 sessions. And this very much goes to the lesson that we've learned in the process, but in, at that time, what we would do is we would mail a three ring binder with, you know, 300+ pages of the curriculum to each school district.

And, you know, with instructions of how to use it, who they should give it to, and how it might be used. Years later when we were going back to see how it was being used we still found some of the curriculum in its wrapper, up on a shelf, and not being used. And so at about that time is when I came on with the child-support division.

But we really, at that point, took a look to see, how do we make this curriculum really used by those high school teachers? And so what we did at that point is that we did some revisions to include healthy relationships, child development, and some other components, and tied those components to the actual standards that were being taught in the classes, in the high school classes.

So it may have been family consumer science, or life skills, or some other class. But we would tie each of our sessions of the curriculum to that specific classroom, and say, okay, you could address these aspects of the curriculum through your class that they were teaching. And so that was beneficial. But it still needed that personal training with the teacher to really understand how it would be used with their students.

So we require training. Beginning in 2005 we provided the curriculum free of charge, to anybody who would want to attend the training. The training is six hours long. We would cover the major points of child-support, establishing paternity, we would review the activities and run the activities with them so that they would have a better understanding of how the P.A.P.A. curriculum would be used. And that was a great thing.

We found that it was putting it in a context where we provided the training. The teachers felt more comfortable with the child-support information, the paternity information, but also could visualize how they could see P.A.P.A. as a tool to complement the things that they were already teaching in the classroom.
So that was the major piece of getting the P.A.P.A. curriculum implemented. And then in 2007 legislation was accepted and passed that P.A.P.A. would be taught in every health high school class in the state of Texas.

And so where we were primarily going out to family consumer science classes, and community-based organizations, to give them this curriculum, and to discuss this curriculum, starting in 2007 every health class teacher in the state of Texas was immediately required to take our training, and to implement the P.A.P.A. curriculum within their health class.

And so where we were scrounging up to get 2000 educators a year through the P.A.P.A. trainings, we were immediately bombarded with trying to train close to 5000 teachers to implement the P.A.P.A. curriculum in a single year.

It was a big advancement in making sure that P.A.P.A. was taught in high school health classes. But also, it increased the students who would ever see the curriculum, because in primarily family consumer science classes, or life skills training classes they were primarily female. And so when it was advanced to the health classes we also see that many more young men would also receive this curriculum as part of their normal health classes. So that was a huge advancement in this curriculum.

As far as the lessons learned, providing in-person training was a big part of the adoption of the curriculum by the teachers so they better understood how to use the curriculum. One of the things in Texas high schools is to really make sure that people understand this is not a sex education curriculum. That really the P.A.P.A. curriculum is something that is about the responsibilities of parenting, and how do you sequence your life events so that you will be successful in the future, which includes going to school, graduating college, getting married, having a family.

So, talking about the success sequencing in a way that we are not really addressing sex education. So this absolutely could be seen as a complement to sex education but was more about how do we create positive families in the future, their futures of parenting. So making sure that that was clearly understood. Of course becoming a mandatory program within the high school health class was a major deal.

But also being run out of the child-support division, we were able to provide this training free to high schools without a charge. And that was a big issue as well. They didn't have to actually pay for this curriculum, and we would actually provide the training free of charge as well. So it was just an effort to make sure that they were being used within the high school health classes. And they clearly understood those messages which we were trying to present in the curriculum.

P.A.P.A. has been evaluated by the LBJ School of Public Affairs. I know that the National Resource Center has that evaluation available to anyone who might want to see that. You know, we spend less than $1 per student outreached in the state of Texas per year. We do revisions on the curriculum, especially with the law changes, and try to provide the best curriculum we can to health teachers. And so we are always looking at how we make our information better for the students and digestible by them.
And so it's created by public funds. We created the P.A.P.A. curriculum with 4D funds, which is child-support funds. And we do, and often, share it with other states. And so we work with, and will work with other child-support divisions, or human services divisions in other states if they are interested in the P.A.P.A. curriculum, to look at how their laws might need to be adapted to the P.A.P.A. curriculum.

But this is something that we freely hand over to other states to look at how they might be able to use that. As a quick pitch, if anyone is out there looking to adapt it, please give me a call. I would love to talk to you about how that might be done.

P.A.P.A. is something that I'm very passionate about. I think the information that we provide including the responsibilities of parenting, but also understanding the warning signs of relationship violence’s, is very important for young people. This provides an opportunity for them to look at their aspirations of being a parent in the future.

All I'd like to say is, if you want more information about the P.A.P.A. program you can find out via our Website, texasattorneygeneral.gov. And on the left-hand corner there is a P.A.P.A. section which you can look at our materials. If you have any specific questions for me regarding our collaboration with other states you can e-mail me directly. And I also encourage you to ask any questions that you might have that we might be able to answer today.

So I appreciate the opportunity to talk about the program. And I'll turn it back over to John.

John Barner: Thank you, so much, Gilbert. What I'll be reviewing today is just some of the lessons, challenges, and strategies for innovation that were shared during the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families Peer to Peer Network forum. And that was held in Washington DC on July 18 and 19 this year.

Our purpose for convening the Forum, was really for federal, regional, state, tribal, and county safety net stakeholders like yourselves, to share some of the challenges experienced and successful strategies employed to strengthen the integration of healthy marriage and relationship education and skills, into their existing service provisions.

And like we've seen with the great examples of the P.A.P.A. program, there is a lot going on for successful integration. There is a lot of moving pieces, a lot of things to be aware of. But each and every one of those pieces holds a remarkable chance for success for the wider stakeholder audience and the clients that you serve.

The first thing that I wanted to talk about is building effective partnerships. And one major challenge that the attendees of the Forum mentioned was maintaining effective communication, both within their agencies and between other agencies. Communication between agencies, between levels of government, can be a huge challenge, but it is also key to creating successful integration.

Success lies with establishing a type of network, whether formal or informal, that works for the needs of your agency and for your stakeholder group. Some of the things mentioned were just a weekly e-mail update for things that were going on within the
agencies, to staff members. Other people created a listserv on the internet, where people from other agencies could contribute.

One participant even mentioned just doing a quarterly newsletter. Something that simple really, really brought people together sharing ideas and establishing new partnerships that didn't exist before. Connecting with community organizations can be a huge asset that is also often untapped.

Connecting with schools, afterschool programs, community organizations, including faith-based organizations like the YMCA in the YWCA, nonprofit organizations, schools, childcare professionals in the community. They can provide resources, ideas, and connections that can make integration a success.

Including sharing some of the burden, as you see in the levels of integration that Robyn and Ted talked about, having someone to pass out flyers, maybe show a video in the waiting room, can really be the key component that gets the message out. And these last three bullets are really all about getting that message out, including families or individuals, especially teens that can serve as partners if they've successfully gone through a program, or can share a success story, can provide a valuable perspective.

Several of the stakeholder participants at the Forum mentioned that having families share information about a program, or about a particular type of marriage and relationship education, through word-of-mouth was a boon as far as recruiting other families and individuals. Agencies can also include these partners by placing them on advisory boards, or including them in their strategic planning process.

Teachers, as well, teachers can provide a wealth of feedback for the students in their classrooms and the families that they come in contact with. And can also provide a valuable piece of our reach, both inside and outside the classroom that will allow you to engage others in the community and really shore up support.

This type of information sharing can often make navigating a complex system, a partner agency, department, other people, examples like universities and cooperative extensions, as well as child welfare agencies, can really help that information gets spread out and not so much lost in the shuffle.

Information sharing strategies that some participants suggested, again, had a lot to do with incorporating technology whenever possible, so that people with busy schedules can still feel like they're in touch and in tune and making that connection with what is going on in their community.

Making the connection across services is really important to. Utilizing what's going on in the education system, as we saw in Gilbert's example of the P.A.P.A. program, when that program became mandatory they had full force of the education system to really get the message out. And that was a massive recruitment tool as far as getting, not only female participants, but also male participants.

Using systems like the child support system is a great way to make a connection for healthy marriage and relationship education to a vital class of people that need that information to carry on. And then of course the child welfare system is also another valuable tool. And that speaks to Debra's point about the developmental trajectory that
we see in that, when you're engaged and provide this information early enough, it can really make the difference for an entirely new generation of parents and couples.

And then, educating your supporters. When working with a large population it's vital to have the support of community leaders and government officials. Our stakeholders suggested educating directors of agencies, state legislates, the governor, the mayor, or other high level officials in order to try to receive their support, or make getting the support of those that they lead much easier. Putting a face to the cause can create that kind of connection and may lead to a very strong partnership.

This may require some work, phone calls, face-to-face conversations, and will certainly require more time, but may be worth it in the support received. Crafting that kind of message, that powerful message that's going to get you the support, requires a lot of developing relationships with peers and partners who can personalize that message.

And I've spoken already about engaging family members and participants in crafting the message, but also using strong resources for families, talking to the public, and making it more of an "our" program, or "our" initiative, or "our" curriculum, very much like the P.A.P.A. program, rather than "our" particular agencies program. It's something that belongs to the community. It's a community Resource, and community service.

Some effective strategies always present their own unique challenges, because incorporating healthy marriage and relationship education can often be difficult to do with an overburdened staff, or in the midst of providing another menu of service. And so having a clear strategic plan that breaks down the steps was highly valued strategy by our forum participants.

Making decisions, utilizing your available partners, and coming up with a plan that directly corresponds to, not only the circumstances within your community, but also what other partners may already be doing, is a key, key component. Other stakeholders identified that recruiting and retaining participants can be difficult, and identified several strategies to overcome those challenges.

They may be associated with creating activities or events that remove any preconceived stigma, focusing on the positive elements rather than trying to categorize a potentially violent or unhealthy relationship, by focusing on making things stronger, making family stronger.

Providing programs support that help families participate such as transportation, childcare, or a meal, can increase attendance and retention. And agencies may be able to talk to state officials about how participation in the program, or education people at the school board, how participation in a program might benefit families who are receiving some kind of assistance.

Addressing special circumstances, like safety, literacy, health and mental health issues, poverty level, homelessness, substance abuse are some of the things that you may encounter while trying to launch an integration effort in your community. Some providers may need to direct participants to resources that take care of immediate or basic needs, before attempting to enroll them into a program, or point them to a particular curriculum.
So keeping these special circumstances in mind is also very valuable challenge, but can also lead to that community level of integration and success. Adapting for diverse populations, it's important to know your audience, and know partners that can help with this. In aligning particular curriculum with community needs, stakeholders identified finding an ambassador, or a type of champion, to serve as an intermediary between agencies and the diverse families that they serve.

And then there is finding the right curriculum and facilitators. Several stakeholders at the Forum identified finding skilled facilitators to be both a challenge, and then when those facilitators were found and trained, a valuable key to success of the program. People who are comfortable, committed, passionate were some of the words that were used to describe facilitators.

Some found it in a small community staff had to be careful in choosing the facilitator because of the personal relationships and backgrounds that they may have had with participants. Where others said that having somebody who put a personal touch on that, was able to tell and share stories from their lives, was a valuable recruitment and retention tool.

For many agencies, facilitators and staff are spread throughout a state or region, and that can create several barriers. Budgets often times don't allow for too much in the way of travel. To overcome these kinds of obstacles the stakeholders addressed some key practices.

The first, and foremost, that coming up during the Forum was the use of technology, providing ongoing motivation for facilitators and participants, and offering training for special populations and groups. Those were all key, key components to getting facilitators motivated and ready to participate and recruit, and retain participants.

Before I turn it over to Robyn, I have two survey questions. These questions are very important for us. They help us improve the content that you see and hear in this Webinar series. So please take a few moments to address the question, I understand steps that my agency, school, and program can take in order to integrate relationship education into our services.

I give you a few minutes to vote. All right, we have one more question. We can move on to the second question. This is, I understand ways to overcome challenges and barriers, to integration of relationship education into my agency service delivery.

Okay, we'll hold this question up for about five more seconds, just to give everybody time to register their vote. All right, we'll move on.

Now that we've seen some background information and discussions around implementation, challenges to integration, and opportunities for collaboration and partnership, I'd like to turn it back over to Robyn, who will highlight tools and projects available through the Resource Center to support your integration efforts.

Robyn Cenizal: Thanks, John. So here we are, back with me again to talk more about the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriages and Families. And as you can see here, this is
our Web site and this is what it looks like when you go to the homepage. Very easy to navigate, we think it's very user-friendly. Almost a toolkit design, not to be designed to be too text heavy but make it easy for you to find the information you're looking for.

When you go to the Web site, if you look under success stories you'll see Utah has also had luck integrating relationship education skills into its school system. They use an “Adult Roles and Responsibilities” curriculum. So there's a lot of good information out there.

Again, as I mentioned, it's very toolkit, very user-friendly. As you can see here we've got things broken out by various topics - children and youth services - you'll find information under each of these topics, as well as a lot of information if you go into the library. I know that we talked about the different levels of integration.

We highlighted Gilbert and Texas, and we know that Texas is one of the rock stars in this work. And everybody is going to start exactly where Gilbert is, after he mentioned they started in 2004 with this project.

So we think about the levels of integration as opportunities for folks to kind of start where they are and find ways to integrate. And what the Resource Center does is provide you with all those different tools that you need in order to do that.

So for example, if you were to go into the library and look for documents related to youths, over 30 documents would pop up, one of which would be the P.A.P.A. curriculum case study. These tools can be used to help you learn what others have been doing so that you can take and implement some of this.

And thinking about those various levels, we also have basic fact sheets on child support, as Gilbert talked about, the importance of raising awareness of the rights and responsibilities associated with establishing paternity establishment, and parenting in general, this information might be helpful in terms of handouts to share with the families that you serve, the youths that you serve, and your colleague's to raise their awareness.

And we also heard Gilbert talk about partnerships with family and consumer science. One of the things that the Resource center can do is help you in terms of developing partnerships. We can connect you with family and consumer science folks who are connected to the cooperative extension system. We have a partnership with them, and can help you identify those folks within your own state.

We can also help connect you with Healthy Marriage grantees who might be working in your state. There are several in the state of Texas who are doing a lot of good work. That would be Level 2 as we talked about earlier. Level 2 would be developing partnerships through referrals.

We have tools on the Web site to help you identify appropriate partners and then define what kind of structure that partner might need to take in order to make fit. There are also some sample MOU's and other tools in order to help you manage that partnership effectively.

We also, when you think about Level 3, which is where the P.A.P.A. curriculum is, P.A.P.A. curriculum is a curriculum that is available, as Gilbert mentioned, but we are
also, at the Resource Center, working on a guide that will help you identify - I think there is approximately 31 curriculums that are free or low-cost under $300 - that you and your agency can actually integrate, if integration is what you think you'd like to do.

All of that is available through the Resource Center. As I mentioned, the Resource Center offers the Web site you just saw, a searchable library, stakeholder specific products, many products that are still in development are very specific to different stakeholder populations. We wanted to make sure that we were speaking your language, and help you understand how relationship education skills can support the family that you serve, and move them toward the goals of your agencies.

We are also working on a virtual learning center, which will go live after October. And there's additional training in technical assistance that's available that you will hear Ted talk about. So when you think about the Resource Center, there's a lot of expertise that goes behind the Resource Center.

We've heard today from John, from Ted, and from Debra, and myself. So that expertise covers all will wide range of things, research, program design, organizational development, all of these different areas, and on a variety of topics, everything from Healthy Marriage to family strengthening, to family safety, child welfare, workforce development, and so forth.

So I said that so that you would know that there is a tremendous amount of expertise behind the Resource Center. And in addition to those who are part of the staff, we also have a cadre of experts around the country that we can tap into for additional support for specific issues that we might need.

So with that, we are going to transition into another survey question. And then back to Ted who is going to talk more about the training and technical assistance. So on this survey question, I now know more about resources available from the National Resource Center and how these can assist in the integration of relationship education into my agency service delivery.

So with that, if you'll take the next 30 seconds and vote. And again, we will have a question-and-answer period after Ted's presentation on training and technical assistance. And I do hope that you'll hang around and give us an opportunity to answer some of those questions.

All right, with that I'm going to turn it over to Ted, and say thank you once again to our special guest Gilbert.

Ted Futris: Thank you, Robyn, wonderful. So as we start to bring this to a closing, just a reminder that there will be a Q&A here shortly as well. So Andrea will walk us through the steps of how to pose a question, here, shortly.

But you might find after this Webinar that you have questions that come up as you review the material and started thinking about integrating healthy marriage relationship education into your services. And think, wow, I'd love to get more help. And we'd love to hear from you.
The National Resource Center is here to provide you with training, technical assistance. And to do so you can visit the Web site and put in those requests. And the very last slide that will provide at the very end will provide the Web site and the e-mail address where you can request that technical assistance.

But in the upcoming year we will be offering several Webinars that will be very topic specific, and relevant to understanding how to work with youth, for example, the latest research that might be coming out, that might be of use in relevance to what you need, as well as Webinars that feature products and resources that are coming out from the National Resource Center, and how to use those resources.

So there will be a variety of Webinars to look for. And the best way to know when and what's being available through Webinars is to sign up for the National Resource Center listserv. And you can do that on our Web site. As well, we will be offering online training opportunities. We'll have a virtual training center, as Robyn mentioned. And we'll have modules that you can, or your staff, or your colleagues could watch at your own pace, and go through.

We will also be doing a series of regional, and/or state Integration Institute trainings. In fact, we are launching our first three Integration Institute trainings this September in North Carolina, Missouri, and Arizona, where we are trying to bring together stakeholders and agencies trying to address and integrate healthy marriage relationship education services, and working with those partners to find ways to do so.

And so if that's something that might be of interest to you, again, contact us so we can start the discussion and conversation, and hopefully move things forward to bringing this training to your state. As well, we will be providing individualized technical assistance throughout the year.

So as questions arise, whether it be with regards to choosing the right curriculum, finding someone to provide a training, you know, best practices, promising practices and effective strategies for engaging clients, and building partnerships, and resources needed, contact us. And ask, and we will either be able to provide you the answer or we will certainly point you in the right direction where you can get the answer.

So we look forward to working with you and your community, and your partners to integrate healthy marriage relationship education. And please, don't hesitate to contact us for technical assistance support.

So with that, I'd like to highlight, or move to a couple more poll questions. Again these poll questions are a means to help us understand what your initial thoughts are that this Webinar so that future Webinars, we can continuously enhance them.

So with this, are you likely to talk with others at your organization about the integration of relationship education into your current services, or role, at work? We have yes, possibly, not sure, or no. So already many of you have already responded. Let's take about five more seconds, and if you could quickly post your vote on their own move to the next one here shortly.
All right, next question please. Are you likely to use the National Resource Center for resources or training technical assistance in the future? Again, let's take about 10 seconds, here, and quickly put your response - yes, possibly, not sure, or no.

All right, and with that, I'm going to turn it over to Andrea, who's going to walk us through the question-and-answer.

Andrea Strahan: Thanks, Ted. And thank you, so much everyone, for your presentations today. At this time we'd like to transition to the question and answer period, and please stay tuned for a final survey question afterwards as well.

So we've had a few great questions submitted so far during the presentation. And I'm going to be posing them to the presenters over the next few minutes. I'd like to invite everyone to please feel free to continue to submit questions, too, during our question and answer period. And again, you can do that by using the question and answer function on your screen.

So our first question is for Gilbert. And the question is, do any organizations other than schools use the P.A.P.A. curriculum? And how much does it cost?

Gilbert Chavez: That's a really good question. As I said, when we started this out in 2004 we primarily did it through family consumer science classes. But we also have a number of community-based organizations which use the P.A.P.A. curriculum, Head Start organizations, nonprofit organizations working in communities, all of those we train and provide the curriculum to.

And we do that for any agency - we have a requirement of having at least 15 in attendance to really make it worth our while, within the state of Texas. Unfortunately, jokes don't work too well over Webinars. But we don't actually travel out of state to provide that training, but will work with other state agencies to make sure the legal information is up-to-date for whatever state you are interested in.

You can always review our P.A.P.A. curriculum, and we can send that to anybody who wants to see a review copy. Again, it's going to be specific legal information for the state of Texas so it may not transfer over well to other states child-support laws.

Andrea Strahan: Okay, great. And we have a couple follow-up questions for you as well. One of the first ones is, so who are the trainers that you're using to teach the curriculum?

Gilbert Chavez: Well, I actually - it's a train the trainer model, so I have a group of three P.A.P.A. trainers who go out and provide this training to the health teachers primarily, through a six-hour training that, when they leave, they have the curriculum, they have all the resources that we have available to them. And they've then go out and, as a part of their health day, when the teaching their health class, they would integrate the P.A.P.A. curriculum into their normal health studies.
Multiple classrooms use it. Like I said, the family consumer science and life skills classes continue to use the P.A.P.A. curriculum. But they are primarily done through teachers or nonprofit organizations and facilitators who have gone through our required P.A.P.A. training.

Andrea Strahan: Okay, great. And then our question we have is does the P.A.P.A. curriculum serve teens in the same sex relationships?

Gilbert Chavez: It's kind of silent in that. I mean, we talk about healthy relationships, we talk about marriage, but of course within the state of Texas that is specific to male/female relationships. So it's pretty much silent in the issue. It doesn't bring it up one way or the other.

Andrea Strahan: Okay, and then another follow-up question is, how in the beginning did you decide to use the P.A.P.A. curriculum instead of using another curriculum that is out there?

Gilbert Chavez: I mean, it's obviously quite selfish, but I mean we honestly see it as a child-support curriculum, so making sure that we do outreach and education, in regards to young people's knowledge and attitudes regarding legal issues of becoming a parent in the state of Texas. And so it serves our purpose. And we did look at other curriculums. And there are a lot of good relationship curriculums out there.

We hired healthy relationship curriculum writers to help us to design it. And so we just felt that if work wanting to provide this curriculum to everyone who wants it in the state of Texas, it had better be our own. And we were able to make sure that our information was included in a way that we wanted represented.

That really kind of is what's the genesis of what's in the curriculum, and kind of how it serves as a child-support outreach and education program prior to any problems arising to child-support and young families.

Andrea Strahan: Okay, great. And then our next question is for Robyn. And the question is just about wanting a little bit more information about how the Resource Center can help provide assistance or resources for choosing a curriculum.

Robyn Cenizal: Well, one way would be to visit the Resource Center Web site, and to see what's already out there. Another would be to send us an e-mail to the Resource Center and let us know specifically what you are interested in, and then we can kind of chase it down and get back to you.
Or there is a TA request, training and technical assistance request form, on the Resource Center Web site. If you have some specific ideas filling out the TA request form is probably the easiest way to make that happen.

**Andrea Strahan:** Okay, great. We have a couple more questions here. And so, the next one, Gilbert, is for you again, and it's from somebody wanting to have a general idea of what other states have adopted P.A.P.A. or have been thinking about it.

**Gilbert Chavez:** There's different levels of integration, or adoption of the P.A.P.A. curriculum. I know New York is looking at it. But it's pretty much citywide. Minnesota, Washington state, I have a list of about ten. I mean, it kind of varies depending on what stage they are in adopting the curriculum, or revising the curriculum. But if somebody wants specific information about the state I'd be glad to share contact with who maybe is in charge of doing that within a specific state.

**Andrea Strahan:** Okay, great. And then we just got another question about the P.A.P.A. curriculum. Somebody is asking if it's an evidence-based curriculum.

**Gilbert Chavez:** Well, there's different levels of evidence-based, research based type curriculum. This has not been rigorously evaluated. So I wouldn't want to say that in people's description of using evidence-based curriculum, but it has been evaluated by the LBJ School of Public Policy.

We've seen significant increases in knowledge and attitudes in regards to student's attitudes about parenting, when they want to become apparent, child-support laws, child-support guidelines, policies, things like that. And so we do have quite a bit of evidence that students participating in the curriculum are definitely getting something out of it.

But often times when we talk of evidence-based, as were using it as a definition of talking about rigorously evaluating curriculums, and P.A.P.A. has not been rigorously evaluated in the terms of being evidence-based curriculum.

**Andrea Strahan:** Okay great, thank you. And then our next question is for Robyn. And it asks if the Resource Center has handouts that can be used and distributed by programs.

**Robyn Cenizal:** Yes. Absolutely, there are quite a number of handouts. And they are topic specific so if you just go into the searchable library and indicate the topic that you are interested in, you should be able to find some of those handouts. Some of the handouts, for example, one that comes to mind is the importance of trust in relationships or a commitment in relationships.
There are also a series of fact sheets related to child support that are in there. The other thing that I would mention about resources that are available through the Resource Center Web site are that we really didn't try to reinvent the wheel. So if there are other resources on other sites that we think would be appropriate for stakeholders, we have links to those. So there are a lot of good tools and resources that you can get to through our Resource Center that don't necessarily live on our Resource center.

Andrea Strahan: Okay, wonderful. And then it looks like our final question for today is asking if we are familiar with Cooperative Extension (NERMEN) program at USDA? So Ted, maybe you could speak to that for a minute.

Ted Futris: Yes, the cooperative extension for those on the call who might not be familiar, each state has a land grant university system in Georgia, for example, the University of Georgia, in Texas that would be I believe that's Texas and Texas Tech might be there. Gilbert, correct me if I'm wrong.

Gilbert Chavez: It's my alma mater, yes, Texas A&M.

Ted Futris: And each land-grant university provides outreach through, it might be a college of Agriculture, could be a college of family consumer science or equivalent, but they provide support with 4-H programming, which is programs working with groups of youths to promote positive youth element, as well as family consumer science education where parenting education is offered, financial education, nutrition, as well as relationship education.

And each state varies in terms of the type of program and resources available, within that state. Nationally, there is a network known as the National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Network, which includes specialists such as myself that work in extension, that specialize in relationship and marriage education and work together to develop resources and educational tools that can be shared. And many of those resources are highlighted and featured on the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families Web site.

Andrea Strahan: Okay, great, thank you. And then we've also had questions about people wanting to know more about the Integration Institute, the events that are going to be held in Arizona, North Carolina, and Missouri. And then we've also had people asking about getting a copy of this PowerPoint from today's presentation.

So I just want to take the opportunity to remind everybody that all of that information will be available on our Web site. This presentation, a transcript, and a question and answer document will be posted to the Web site, as well as ways to get in touch with us about
upcoming events, and to look at the resources that Ted and Robyn have mentioned and request assistance in different ways.

So we are going to have one final survey question. And then we will post that information on how you can get in touch with us. So please stay tuned for a few more moments and then we'll have that information to you.

The final question today is, please rate your overall satisfaction with today's Webinar. And we're going to take just a few moments to do this. And again, all responses are anonymous. And if you're sitting with a couple of people then just take the general consensus in the room. But we appreciate your feedback because your answers to these questions help us continue to develop our resources and Webinars.

So we have a couple people answering. We'll take a couple more seconds here. All right, and then here is our contact information. And I'd like to thank everyone for joining have a great afternoon.

Operator: This concludes today's conference. Thank you for your participation, you may now disconnect.

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