

REAL FATHERS INITIATIVE

Mentor Group Discussion Guide for Less Literate Mentors*



*Adapted for less-literate mentors from the REAL Fathers Initiative Mentor Guide used in Amuru District, Karamoja. 2016-2018.



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Introduction to REAL Fathers Initiative

The Responsible, Engaged and Loving (REAL) Fathers Initiative was designed in 2013 through formative research and collaboration with communities in Northern Uganda. Originally developed and evaluated as a pilot program to prevent harsh discipline of young children and intimate partner violence, REAL engages young men as they enter into fatherhood. This transition point in their life is an opportunity to discuss and engage with different ideas, behaviors and to develop skills in their relationships. Men in the community are identified by fathers, their partners and community members to become mentors. Mentors participate in a training and mentor young fathers through home and group visits. Supplemented with a poster campaign to reinforce messages from the mentorship session and a community celebration, the program seeks sustained violence prevention in the home and improved family relationships.

The pilot program was implemented and evaluated in Amuru District, Northern Uganda from 2013 to 2015. Evidence for prevention of harsh discipline of children, improved parenting practices, reduced intimate partner violence and improved partner communication and participant's enthusiasm for the REAL Fathers activities led to the scale-up and adaptation of REAL. The adaptation and scale-up included implementation in other regions of Amuru District in Northern Uganda and adaptation of implementation materials for a different cultural community in the Nwoya and Nakapiripirit Districts in the Karamoja region of Uganda. The scale-up also included addition of a family planning module (home and group mentorship) to increase knowledge and demand for modern family planning, revisions to the guidelines for a lower literate community and integration in existing development programs (a livelihood program in Northern Uganda and early childhood development centers in Karamoja). Evaluation of the scale up (2016-2018) demonstrated sustained violence prevention and improved relationships as in the pilot.

Introduction to REAL Fathers Implementation Guidelines and Companion Documents

The REAL Fathers Mentor Discussion Guide is a core material associated with the REAL Fathers Initiative Implementation Guidelines. The guidelines and their core materials include:

- **REAL Fathers Implementation Guidelines for Adaptation and Use.** Guidance on how to prepare for, adapt and implement REAL Fathers.
- **REAL Fathers Mentor Training Curriculum.** Training curriculum for mentors
- **REAL Fathers Mentor Discussion Guide.** Session by session guide for mentors to use in home and group mentoring sessions. Examples of session by session posters are in this guide.
- **REAL Fathers Mentor Resource Sheets.** Brief guides that highlight main points from each session for mentors to use during mentoring sessions.
- **REAL Fathers Women’s Group Session.** These were added to REAL Fathers scale up to gain involvement and support by wives and to understand how they experience the project.

Introduction to this REAL Mentor Discussion Guide for Low Literate Populations

This Mentor Group Discussion Guide was designed for use with Low Literate Mentors. It was adapted from the original Mentor Group Discussion Guide which was designed for more literate mentors. When REAL Fathers was adapted for use by low literate mentors, several revisions were made to the original protocol, mentor curriculum and guide (Table 1).

More literate mentors	Less literate mentors
Mentor training completed in a one-time, 5-day workshop before implementation	Mentor training divided in two 5-day parts covering Themes 1-4 and 5-7
Mentors work independently and meet for group mentorship	Less literate mentors paired with more literate mentors to facilitate group meetings and increase support structures in the program
Conduct home mentorship firsts then group meetings	Conduct group meetings first then home mentorship to allow less literate mentor time to practice and remember material before home visit
Mentor visit protocol includes activities, text and questions for use in home visit.	Mentor visit protocol revised for simplicity and included key questions for mentors to use in home visit.
During training, mentors engage in reading and writing, use of flip charts and written aids to complete tasks.	During training, mentors talk through homework and tasks. Use of picture cards as prompts and rely on strong oral tradition.

Overview of this REAL Mentor Discussion Guide for Low Literate Populations

This Mentor Group Discussion Guide is designed to support fathers between the ages of 16 to 25 years who have young children between 1 and 3 years of age. This mentoring program aims to increase positive father-child interactions and to improve the relationship of the couple.

Each mentor will be assigned to approximately four fathers. Mentors will have up to 14 contacts with each young father:

- 7 home visits
- 7 group meetings

Through **home visits** mentors will provide young fathers the opportunity to reflect on and practice newly learned positive communication and relationship skills as well as specific ways to be supportive partners and caregivers. Along with their wives, they will also be encouraged to try out positive communication and discipline skills, and get more involved with child care.

Through **group meetings** with multiple mentors and young fathers, the mentors will reinforce new information and skills and help create social support for young fathers to make changes. Before each group meeting, the mentors should meet together to review the session and divide responsibilities on how they will work together to conduct this discussion.

There are 7 themes in the discussion guide:

1. Fatherhood
2. How to be a REAL Father
3. Family dreams
4. Loving my family
5. Communication
6. Family planning
7. Parenting

For each theme, there is one group meeting and one home visit. Every month, for seven months, the mentor will conduct one home visit and one group meeting on a theme. For example, the mentor will also work with other mentors in his group to organize a group meeting on fatherhood. In the first month, the mentor will conduct a home visit on fatherhood for each father he mentors.

Examples of posters are included in each session including the local language and English translation of the poster. Some of these posters were used in Northern Uganda and others were used in Karamoja.

In addition to the sessions outlined in this guide, the core material **Women's Group Session** describes how mentors should conduct a session with women. This session came after Theme 6 in our implementation and provided time for women to understand how men experienced the project.

INCEPTION VISIT

A. Group Meeting

1. Greeting

“Hello! I am a REAL Fathers mentor. My role is to teach, guide, and support young fathers to become more involved with their families and children”

2. Explain

“Your husbands will learn new parenting and communication skills. What are the benefits of a father who is more involved in parenting and the family?”

“Families in Uganda think it is good when fathers are involved in their children’s lives. This helps the children grow up healthy and educated.”

3. How often?

“There will be 7 group talks over the next 7 months. After each group talk, you will get a follow up visit from me at your home. The first 4 group talks and follow up visits are with the young fathers. The final 3 are for fathers and wives together.”

4. Consent

“Do you have any concerns? Do you agree to be involved?”

5. Assignment

“I have an assignment for you. Think through who in your extended family have a big say in your marriage. Share your involvement in REAL Fathers with one or two people. Watch their response.”

6. Next visit

Set a date and time for the first visit and share mobile phone numbers.

B. Home Visit

Ask the young fathers:

1. “Who in your family did you tell about your involvement with REAL Fathers?”
2. “How did they react?”

Remind the young father about the next session.

MENTOR THEME 1: Fatherhood

A. Group Meeting

Introduction

Introduce your colleague mentors and all of the young fathers.

“Fatherhood is important for men. Fatherhood has changed from the past in some ways. There are new and different challenges for families today. Young fathers need to learn new ways of being involved with their children and families.”

“In this group talk, we will share what this means. We will support each other to be the best fathers possible. This is for our children, families, and ourselves.”

Activities

Activity 1. Fatherhood Discussion

Explain: “Being a father is a very important role. Being a father to a young child is a special time. This is when your child learns about love, care, and values.”

Ask these questions **and listen** to the young father’s response.

1. “How did you feel when your child was born?”
2. “What animal would represent a father and why?”
3. “How is being a father today different from the past?”

Activity 2. Vision Exercise

Explain: “I will guide you through a vision exercise. A vision creates hope and a goal. A vision is the first step to a plan.”

Ask the father to listen. Ask 3 questions. Speak slowly. He can close his eyes if he wants. Read the questions again.

- “What hopes and dreams do you have for your child in the future?”
- “What do you want your child to say about you as a father when they grow up?”
- “To achieve these things, what type of father do you want to be?”

Give the father time to share his vision.

Explain: “Some men feel pressure to be like other men. They feel that there are a lot of expectations on how they should act as a father and a man. I am your mentor. I will not judge you. I know that you are a real man already. Fatherhood today requires new skills and a new way of thinking.”

Explain: “I will help you learn skills and make plans to achieve your goals.”

Activity 3. Look at the Community Poster

Ask the group to talk about what the image means. How do they feel when they look at it?

Homework & Group Promise

Ask fathers to share their visions for their family with their wives and ask her about her vision.

Ask the group to choose one new behavior from the poster they will all promise to try this month.

Make a group sign of this promise: like a fun handshake, noise, or saying.

Inform and remind fathers of the plan for individual visits in their homes.

1. Araakau Papa Nolosorokit



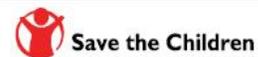
Araakau Papa

“Erae lokoku kaŋ papa ŋolo akire
Ŋuna etamete ŋikasikou aŋuna a
ŋipitesyo atapapa:
Itiyae ka agogoŋu

“Iyokiunit ŋidwe keŋ anakisitiya
ŋsiliŋa ka etame” .

“Eyakar alosikinet aŋuna |a ŋidwe keŋ
rwanu ka itiyae ka agogoŋu aryamun
ŋun” .

“Itatami ŋidwe emam aryenyankinit
toruwor ŋulu itatamuna ejok” .



Being a Father.
“My son is a REAL father!”

Elders’ thoughts of fathers’ behaviors:

“He works hard.”

“He cares for his children financially and emotionally.”

“He has a vision for his children’s future and works hard to achieve it.”

“He disciplines children without violence to teach his children well.”

B. Home Visit

Ask the young fathers:

- 1.** “What new behavior did you try from the poster?”
- 2.** “What was hard that we can help you improve?”

Remind the young father about the next session.

MENTOR THEME 2: How to be a REAL Father

A. Group Meeting

Introduction

“Being a father is very difficult but very rewarding role. Learning new skills can help us be the best fathers possible. An important skill is discipline. Discipline means setting rules and limits that help a child to behave well. Discipline is not the same as punishment. Punishment is to correct your child for doing something wrong.”

“A father’s involvement is good for the child, the family and the father. A father’s involvement includes communication and discipline. Some people think that with no physical discipline and punishment the child will be spoiled or become hopeless. But non-violent ways lead to respect. If you use actions and words, this will lead to respect. This will take time, but is good for you and your child.”

“Fathers may feel pressure from others to use physical discipline and punishment. Non-violent methods are not easy to keep doing. This group of fathers can support and encourage each other to try new and positive ways to keep their families healthy and strong. We are not perfect and we can always get a second chance to try and communicate and disciple in positive ways.”

Activities

Activity 1. Discussion

Explain: “Men are usually taught that fathers should provide material things, while mothers should be the ones to care for children.

Because of this, boys and new fathers are often denied the opportunity to learn the skills to be a REAL father. But fathers need to provide care to children as well. There are many ways to do this. We will learn some tips and tricks for you to be a REAL father and man.”

“Communication is both verbal and nonverbal. Communication with young children includes talking and teaching and also through nonverbal communication like holding

the child. Fathers have many responsibilities. Sometimes we feel pressures or feel tired and your child will sometimes anger you. When this happens you can learn to communicate better with your child.”

Show the fathers Resource Sheet #5, and ask them which methods they could try with their child.

Activity 2. Group Exercise

Put 3 sticks or rocks on the ground for 3 answers: “Agree”, “Disagree”, “Don’t know”

Explain: “I will read 5 statements. After each statement, stand next to ‘Agree’, ‘Disagree’ or ‘Don’t know’. Share your views.”

- Children learn best from being hit.
- Children who are not hit will be spoiled or become hopeless.
- Children will not remember later if they are hit when young.
- Teaching a child is the best gift a father can give.
- My friends will laugh if I play with my young child.

Explain: “All men want to be the best father they can be. Your friends will learn from you what it means to be a REAL father. They will be jealous because you have a happy home!”

Activity 3. Look at the community poster

Ask the group to talk about what the image means. How do they feel when they look at it?

Homework & Group Promise

Ask the fathers to practice communicating with their children regularly, and use positive discipline.

Ask the group to decide one new behavior from the poster they will all promise to try this month.

Make a group sign of this promise.

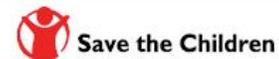
Inform and remind fathers of the plan for individual home visits.

2. Nuna emaikina iyeni ka epite nolo itiyaa anaraakau kire papa.



**“Erae papa kaṅ kire papa!”
Ebala ikoku:**

“Eketatami ayon papa kaṅ”
“Akayeni ayon papa kaṅ”
“Ekesirworiununui ayon papa kaṅ”
“Ikibolya ayon ka papa kaṅ”
“Akamina papa kaṅ ayon ka itiya ka agogonu anuna kaṅ”



“My dad is a REAL father!”

A child says:

“My father teaches me.”

“My father knows me.”

“My father comforts me.”

“My father plays with me.”

“My father loves and works hard for me.”

B. Home Visit

Ask the young fathers:

1. “What new behavior did you try from the poster?”
2. “What was hard that we can help you improve?”

Remind the young father about the next session.

MENTOR THEME 3. Family Dreams

A. Group Meeting

Introduction

“As fathers and men, we face many pressures. One way to feel better is to spend time with friends. Sometimes friends drink alcohol together. Drinking alcohol with friends can be fun. However, drinking too much and getting drunk can be a problem.”

“Men can feel stress build up. Sometimes we do not know how to deal with this stress. Some are not aware they feel this stress. If this happens, then little things can make us angry or we treat others in ways they would not like. We cannot control our feelings, but we can control how we show our feelings.”

“Today we will discuss ways we can stop drinking too much alcohol and stop violence by understanding our feelings and learning how to show them in a healthy way.”

Activities

Activity 1: Spinning

Ask: “What kind of father do you want to be? What do you want to achieve for your children, wife and family?”

Find a place 3 to 5 meters away. Use a stick to draw a straight line in the dirt.

Explain that one end of the line represents the fathers’ hopes and dreams for his family. This is his goal; the line is life’s journey to achieve this goal.

Tell the father to spin around quickly 2 times and then walk on the line towards the goal.

Next **tell** the father to close his eyes and spin around quickly 5 times. Tell him to walk in a line to the end goal and to try not to fall off of the line.

Ask: “How did that feel?”

Explain: “Each time you spin; it is like having another beer.”

Ask: “How is drinking too much alcohol like the second time? How does it affect you reaching your goals? What do you think a child sees and learns and feels when they see you drunk?”

Activity 2. Managing Pressures

Explain: “At times everyone feels pressures. People expect men and fathers to do many things without talking about our stress. Stress may build up and come out in ways we don’t want. These ways include drinking, anger, or fighting.”

Ask the father:

- “Do you find it easy to be a father?”
- Do you feel any pressures?
- “What do you do to handle the pressures?”

Ask each father to close his eyes. Read these questions:

- “Think of a recent time when you were angry at home?”
- “What were you thinking and feeling during this time?”

Ask a few fathers to share their feelings.

Explain: “All feelings are okay. Feelings are neither good nor bad. It is the way that we show our feelings that can cause problems. There are different ways we can manage the pressures and stress that are healthy. One good way is to play sports; playing games with your child can also be a way to feel better. Some men talk to a friends and laugh with family members, others write stories or fix something in the home. It depends on what you like. It is important to know when you feel too much pressure and decide how to manage it in a way that is good for you and your family.”

Activity 3. Look at the community poster

Ask the group to talk about what the image means. How do they feel when they look at it?

Activity 4. Distribute REAL Fathers reminder gifts (e.g., REAL Fathers key chains)

Congratulate young fathers for taking important steps for their children, their families, and themselves. It takes courage to make changes. They have shown their commitment to being loving and caring fathers and husbands.

Explain: “Sometimes keeping change over time is a challenge. They will face new challenges as a father every day. The reminder gift will help them remember the skills they have learned and practiced. They can feel proud every time they see it.

Homework & Group Promise

Ask the father to prepare what to say to friends to reduce alcohol intake, and practice ways to manage pressures.

Ask the group to decide one new behavior from the poster they will all promise to try this month.

Make a group sign of this promise.

Inform and remind fathers of the plan for individual visits in their homes.

Family Dreams Poster



**Kit ma amito ni ganga
obed kwede iyi anyim**

Lawota obedo wego kikome

*Kit kwo pa dano iyo ma
lurem neno kwede*

- En mato kongo iyo mupore
- En pe mato kongo oo ka ma en twero kelo gero
- En maro lutino ne, dok lutino ne maro dok woro en
- An apwonyo jami manyen ma aa kibot en iyo me doro ganga



“My friend is a REAL father!”

A friend says:

“He drinks responsibly.”

“He does not drink until he cannot control himself.”

“He loves his children, and his children love and respect him.”

“I learn from him about new ways of caring for my family.”

B. Home Visit

Ask the young father:

- 1.** “What new behavior did you try from the poster?”
- 2.** “What was hard that we can help you improve?”

Remind the young father about the next session.

MENTOR THEME 4: Loving My Family

A. Group Meeting

Introduction

“Husbands and wives are the central part of the family. It is not easy but it is important to put in effort to build a strong relationship and family. The husband can set an example for the relationship. Being loving and understanding can help your wife. Reacting badly or violently without asking questions or listening is bad for the family. Today we will talk about the challenges of a peaceful relationship. We will learn skills that you can try. It is never justified to use violence in your household. Communicating is the answer to a more peaceful home. Understanding when we are upset and what we can do when we are upset will help us stop violence.”

Activities

Activity 1. Exercise

Explain: “Some young fathers feel fear that being too nice means their wives will overpower them. But being too tough will cause the wives to mistrust them or even leave. This is difficult, especially if the man and wife are not talking with each other. Balancing the power should be our goal. This balance leads to peaceful families.”

Hold two jerry cans equally full of water and stand on one foot.

Ask: “Do you feel balanced?” Next, empty half the water from one jerry can and stand on one foot.

Ask: “How does this feel different?”

Explain: “Power and respect are like this. If the couple gives equal respect and has the same amount of power in the relationship, then the family can move forward. Being caring is part of a healthy relationship and household. It is not about who makes decisions. It is about making the home a happy place for you, your wife and your child.”

Activity 2. Practice

Explain: “Every couple has times when they do not agree. This is normal. Fighting, running away or being silent are not effective. Issues can be solved while still showing respect to each other.”

Focus on the issue. Discuss possible answers together. Make a decision that you both agree on. It may not be perfect but it should benefit both husband and wife. This is called ‘win-win’.

Forgive and forget and move forward. This is how your relationship will improve over time.

Explain: “It is also good for a child when a father maintains a peaceful relationship with the child’s mother. This is a model for the child for future relationships, and gives the child a stable foundation.”

Activity 3. Group Exercise

Put 3 sticks, rocks or marks on the ground for 3 answers: ‘Agree’, ‘Disagree’, ‘Don’t know’.

Explain: “I will read statements. After each statement, each father moves to a place to show that they ‘Agree’, ‘Disagree’ or ‘Don’t know’. After moving, some fathers in each section share their views.”

- I have to use violence when my wife does not greet me nicely. I have no choice.
- If I treat my wife nicely, she will overpower me.
- Violence is not the only way to be the head of the family.
- Violence in the household leads to fear and a weaker relationship.
- Children who see violence at home can fear their parent and or grow up to be violent.

Activity 4. Look at the community poster

Ask the group to talk about what the image means. How do they feel when they look at it?

Homework & Group Promise

Ask the father to practice showing love and respect for his wife and discuss family issues with his wife and make a decision together.

Ask the group to decide one new behavior from the poster they will all promise to try this month.

Make a group sign of this promise.

Inform and remind fathers about the visits in their homes and that wives are invited to the next group discussion.

4. Amina ekal kaŋ



Arae ayon kire papa

“Ikiyakar ayon akisimukekinet njina kikatakinet njunakitet, ido oruwor papa ka ekile njolo ayeni njuna etiyae”.

“Arae ayon ekile njolo apedorit akimor apolou alokal ka aberu kaŋ”.

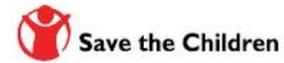
“Ayeni ayon atemar akitiya kaapei ka aberu kaŋ eyauni ajokis lokal kosi”.

“Ayeni ayon atemar akiŋarakinit aberu kaŋ, iŋarakini ekal kosi ka ayon”.

“Apedori ayon akitoodiun njuna eya neni kaŋ alorot a njolo ikinirari”.

“Etopoorit ayon aberu kaŋ, ido eketopoorit iŋes ayon”

“Ayaunit ayon akiboyi njina ajokan lore”.



“I am a REAL father!”

A young father says:

“I have the courage to try new things and become a responsible father and husband.”

“I am man enough to share power in the home with my wife.”

“I know that working together with my wife benefits our family.”

“I know that supporting my wife benefits our family, and me.”

“I can express my feelings in a constructive way.”

“I respect my wife and she respects me.”

B. Home Visit

Ask the young fathers:

1. “What new behavior did you try from the poster?”
2. “What was hard that we can help you improve?”

Remind the young father about the next session.

MENTOR THEME 5. Communication

A. Group Meeting with Wives

Introduction

“Mothers and fathers want happy, healthy and strong children. They have ideas about their children’s future. Sometimes husbands and wives have different ideas from each other. A husband and wife should talk about their family’s quality of life. They should talk about when their next child should come. They should talk about ways to stop pregnancy if they are not ready for another child. They should decide together on the number of children they want.”

Activities

Activity 1. Introductions

Ask the husband to introduce his wife to you and say 3 positive things about her. Ask the wife to introduce her husband to you and say 3 positive things about him.

Ask “How does it feel to have nice things said about you? How can you continue this on your own?”

Activity 2. Blind Communication

Explain: “The couple will practice communication by leading each other. One person will cover their eyes. The other person will direct them towards an object using only words. Then you can switch roles.”

Ask the couple these questions. Let both answer.

- What did your partner do well?
- What could they do better?
- What did you learn?

Ask “What is good communication compared to bad communication?”

Add these tips:

- Listen well.
- Do not interrupt while your partner is talking.
- Use open body language to show you are not defensive or angry.
- Show respect and acknowledge what your partner says even if you disagree.
- If you need time to think or be quiet, explain this and agree to continue the discussion later.
- Find a ‘win-win’ conclusion for both of you.

Activity 3. Broken Spear card

Ask “What does a broken spear mean?”

Explain: “I will give the husband and wife a broken spear card. The husband or wife can show the broken spear card when they need to stop and talk. For example, a husband returns home late and expects food. You can take out a broken spear card as a way to get you both talking about the situation.”

Show the broken spear card and clues on the other side:

1st Explain your feelings.

2nd Ask: What is the situation and why?

3rd Ask: What can we do to solve this together?

Help the couple through some questions.

- Where can they keep the broken spear card so that both the husband and wife can easily find it?
- When can they use the broken spear card?

- Agree on how each person will react if the other uses the broken spear card.
- Ask them to promise that they will never use violence against the other if they take out the broken spear card. They must have trust and not fear what happens if they talk.
- It is best not to use the broken spear card if one of them is drunk. Instead, wait until the following morning to use the broken spear card and talk.

Activity 4. Look at the community poster

Ask the group to talk about what the image means. How do they feel when they look at it?

Homework & Group Promise

Ask the couple to make relationship agreements and talk about issues before they become problems and use the yellow card when there is a need to stop and talk.

Ask the group to decide one new behavior from the poster they will all promise to try this month.

Make a group sign of this promise.

Inform and remind fathers about the visits in their homes and those wives are invited to the next group discussion.

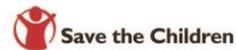
Communication Poster



Miyo Ngec

Cwara obedo wego kikome!

- En wora, an bene aworo en
- En jalo cawa me bedo kacel kweda ki lutino
- En nyuta mar kacel wa ki lutino wa bene
- En nywako tam kacel kweda
- En kom wego kikome
- En loko kweda wii atii ma pwod peya lok mo odoko lok madit
- En tiyo ki leb ma opore me kaka tic ki gero ikoma
- Wa julu lutino wa kacel
- Wa tiyo kacel wek otwa obed ki kuc'



“My husband is a REAL father!”

A young wife says:

“He respects me and I respect him.”

“He spends time with me and the children.”

“He shows care for me and the children.”

“He discusses important issues with me.”

“He is the best husband!”

“He talks with me about our issues before they become problems.”

“He uses soft words instead of violence with me.”

“We parent together.”

“We work as a team to have a peaceful home and family.”

B. Home Visit with Wives

Ask the young fathers:

1. “What new behavior did you try from the poster?”
2. “What was hard that we can help you improve?”

Remind the young father about the next session.

MENTOR THEME 6. Family Planning

A. Group Discussion with Wives

Introduction

“Family planning is often seen as a woman's problem, but raising a child is the responsibility of both parents and not only the mother. A couple can use a family planning method to space time before their next pregnancy or if they decide to stop having children. When a woman wants to use a family planning method it does not mean that she does not love or respect her husband. It is important that men learn the true reason for a woman’s decision to use family planning and understand why it is good for the family. Without agreement between a couple, arguments can arise. It is important to talk to a health worker about the different family planning options available for you. Couples that talk about planning for their family are showing responsibility and love for each other.”

Activities

Activity 1. Harvesting Maize

Explain: “We will talk about growing strong and healthy maize. Growing maize will symbolize growing families.”

Tell a story of two farmers living in the same village. Both farmers grow maize. They have the same amount of seeds. They planted the maize in their gardens. One farmer named Lokiru yielded big maize cobs. The other farmer named Lokolong grew maize with very thin plants and miserable maize cobs.

Show the couple the grains of maize you brought.

Ask the couple to make two rows of maize that are planted with the right amount of space between each grain. Then ask the couple to plant another two rows of maize that are planted very close together.

Discuss these questions:

- “From the story, which farmer would they prefer to learn from?”

- “Will the rows of maize grow differently?”
- “Why will they grow differently?”
- “What happens if maize is planted too early or too late?”

Explain: “Maize will not grow properly when is planted too close together. The maize will compete for nutrients in the soil and won’t be properly nourished. The maize will not grow as tall, not be as strong, and not produce big cobs of maize. Maize that is planted with the right spacing will grow tall, strong and be more abundant. The timing of planting maize is very important. Maize planted too early or too late in the season will not grow strong and healthy.”

Explain: “What you were discussing was how to harvest strong and abundant maize. We want to relate this to your families and to space the births of our children.”

Ask the couples:

- “How is planting maize related to how we plan our families?”
- “Like the space between maize grains, why is the spacing between children important?”
- “Like the timing of planting maize is important, why is the timing of our first birth important?”
- “Why don’t you want children close together or a lot of children?”
- “Who in your community can provide you factual information about child spacing?”

Encourage the couple to make links between the example of planting corn and family planning.

Explain: “There are many reasons why couples do not use family planning methods to space their children, even though they know spacing children will help their children grow healthy and strong.”

Ask the couples:

- “Who makes decisions about planning our families?”
- Who makes decisions about using family planning?
- “What is the influence of our family and elders on your decision about when to have children?”
- “How could a husband and wife decide together if they want to use family planning?”

Explain: “There are family planning methods available to you at the health center and through the Village Health Teams. There are also private clinics and pharmacies where family planning is available. I’ve heard from others using family planning that they are very safe to use and other people in their lives do not even know they are using them. It is a decision that a husband and wife can make, after sharing their vision of their family. Their vision can include how to space children so they grow big and strong, like the maize planted by Lokiru.”

- “What would you like your child to say about you in the future?”
- “How many children do you want to have?”
- “What kind of spouse / partner do you want to be?”
- “What is your spouse’s best characteristic, that you want your child to be as well?”

Activity 2. Look at the community poster

Show the group the poster.

Ask the group to talk about what the image means, and how they feel to look at it.

Homework and Group Discussion

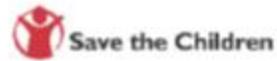
Ask the husband and wife to share with each other when they want their next child. How will they plan together so they do not get pregnant before this time?

Ask the couple to make a promise to each other about how they will space and limit their pregnancies. Do they know where they can find information on family planning services?

Congratulate the couple for working together to have a strong relationship and planning when to have children and how to care for them together.

Tell fathers about the visits in their homes and that, wives are invited to the next group discussion.

Family Planning Poster



“My client is a REAL father!”

A health worker says:

“He learns about contraception”

“He talks to his wife about spacing pregnancies”

“He talks to his wife about family planning”

B. Home Visit with Wives

Ask the young fathers and wives if they have been following their relationship agreements that were discussed at the last home visit -

- to talk about issues before they become problems and
- to use the broken spear card to stop heated moments and discuss.

Discuss how this went and what they will continue to do. If they did not try, encourage the couple to do it this week and report back to you.

Ask the young fathers and wives:

1. “What new behavior did you try from the poster?”
2. “What was hard that we can help you improve?”

Remind the young father about the next session.

MENTOR THEME 7: Parenting

A. Group meeting with Wives

Introduction

“Today, we will talk about the types of parents we all want to be. Mothers and fathers are both important as partners. Both can provide care. Each brings different ideas and skills to raise a child. Each can teach the child special things. A mother and father who raise the child together do the best.”

Activities

Activity 1: Interviews

Explain that first it is important to know each other well. This includes your hopes and expectations.

Ask the couple to interview each other using these questions you will read.

- “What do you want for your child in the future?”
- “What would you like your child to say about you in the future?”
- “How many children do you want to have?”
- “What kind of husband or wife do you want to be?”
- “What is your husband or wife’s best characteristic that you want your child to have as well?”

Ask, if after the interviews they heard anything similar or different? Ask them to discuss differences together to find a common agreement later.

Encourage the couple to continue asking each other questions and learning about each other.

Activity 2. Parenting commitment

Tell the husband and wife about parenting promises. This is a way of showing that you mean to be an involved and committed parent to the child. It can help show how the two parents will work together. For example, some parents agree that they will set certain rules for the child. Some parents agree that when one is having a bad day, the other parent will support. Some parents agree they will listen to the child and respect the child's ideas. Some parents agree they will not hit their children.

Ask the couple to talk and give 3 ways they want to parent and 3 rules for the children that they both agree on.

Activity 3. Discussion

Ask young fathers and their wives to share what it is to be a REAL father. What have they learnt from this?

Explain: "There will soon be a ceremony. Young fathers can share their experiences and what they have learned with the community. Elders, leaders, and families will be invited."

"It is good for the community to see how much you have learned. They will respect you as fathers and as husband and wife and give you needed support."

Remind the couples that everyone who has taken steps to be involved and positive parents will be congratulated. None of us is perfect. We all make mistakes and we can all improve. We can still be role models for others to make healthy and safe families and communities. We can promise to try new actions to improve our lives.

Activity 4. Look at community poster

Show the group the poster.

Explain that at the community celebration, we will ask some of you to make voluntary promises to be loving and caring husbands and fathers.

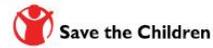
Ask for ideas about the ceremony and how the couples want to plan for this event. Who else in the community can they invite? Any special guests they can also recognize for being loving and caring husbands and fathers?

6. Akiikinet a ɲikauruunak ɲidwe



Photos: Courtesy of SCV Dickens Ojamuge

**“Atapapa ɲulu a kire oyautu lotuɲa yok daadan akigeno.”
Igirete atapapa ɲulu a kire ne:**



“REAL fathers bring our community hope.”

“A REAL father spends time with his wife and children.”

“A REAL father shares and listens to his wife and children.”

“A REAL father teaches his children.”

“A REAL father helps to care for his children.”

“A REAL father disciplines with love.”

“A REAL father continues to learn and get better.”

“A REAL father is loved and admired.”

REAL fathers, sign here:

B. Home Visit with Wives

Ask the young fathers and wives if they have been following their parenting commitments that were discussed at the last group visit -

- The three ways they want to parent and
- the three rules they agreed upon for their children

Discuss how this went and what they will continue to do. If they did not try, encourage the couple to do it this week and report back to you.

Ask the young fathers and wives:

1. “What new behavior did you try from the poster?”
2. “What was hard that we can help you improve?”

Remind the young father and wife that the next session is a community celebration.

COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

Preparation

Meet with the other mentors to look at this session and divide tasks. How will you work together to conduct this discussion?

Plan a ceremony that is meaningful to your community. Request a community and/or traditional leader to lead the ceremony. You could ask a music, dance, or drama troupe to perform. Ask a leader to talk about positive fatherhood and sign the pledge board along with young fathers.

Prepare the pledge board, and all supplies needed.

Invite wives and family members to the ceremony.

Introduction

“This is the final group meeting. It is a community celebration of young fathers. The young fathers can make a public promise and commitment to keep the changes they have adopted. They will continue to try to be REAL fathers. It is a time for the fathers to show the community what they have learned and get recognized by their families and community members for what they have changed.”

Ceremony

Show the final community poster.

Explain: “At this time of the ceremony, we want to give time to young fathers who want to commit to being a REAL father. This means they will be engaged and loving with their children. It means they will be loving and respectful to their wives.”

Invite young fathers to come up and **sign the pledge** board. Each young father can share their promises with the community about what they will do differently or keep doing. This will keep their child and family healthy and peaceful.

Mentors and leaders can also sign the pledge board to provide guidance to young fathers.

Congratulate the fathers, and the community.

Also, congratulate and recognize yourselves as mentors!