

Because We're Dads: Reaching and Mobilizing Father's to Promote Gender Equality

Focus Group Guide and Questions

To Programs/Preventionists

You are encouraged to use the father's video to introduce your community to the ideas of the roles that fathers can play in advancing gender equality and/or preventing gender-based violence. NYSCADV has additional resources available to assist you in describing this initiative and strategies and tools to engage fathers in these efforts.

The intent of this initiative is to support you to develop effective efforts to reach out to and mobilize the fathers in your community to help promote gender equality and/or prevent gender-based violence. Dads have a potentially powerful role in all aspects of addressing, responding to and preventing gender-based violence, and promoting gender equality. Like with any focus audience, there are specific tools, resources, materials and strategies that are most effective. Your efforts to reach fathers in your communities needs to be developed specifically for fathers. The video is a first step. It can be used by you to start a conversation with dads, and to begin identifying which fathers who might be interested in making further efforts.

The Because We're Dads organizers recommend that you identify and engage dads in your community to participate in a focus group about this initiative. The goal of this focus group is to collect, from the fathers in your community, some key information about the roles that they see for fathers, the supports that they see that father's might need to engage in those roles, and some input for you on how to best message an invitation to fathers. We encourage you to reach out to known fathers for this conversation. We encourage you to consider a goal of six (six) to eight (8) dads for this conversation, and suggest that you have 2 people to assist with the focus group: one who can focus on taking notes and capturing the "feel"; and the other who focuses on facilitating the conversation (NOTE: these two should meet as quickly as possible after the focus group to compare notes, and align what they noticed during the focus groups). The focus group should be scheduled for between an hour and an hour and a half, with a firm commitment to the end time. (That is, if you decide on an hour focus group, be very consistent with ending at an hour).

In addition to thanking the fathers who participate in some concrete way(s), you should be prepared to share with the fathers who participate whatever write-up you do to capture what was shared, as well as an invitation for them to join next steps as they emerge from your efforts.

Please also share the write up from any focus groups that you facilitate with Lorien Castelle at NYSCADV (lcastelle@nyscadv.org).

Suggested Intro to Fathers

We (Name of Program) are working with NYSCADV to develop efforts and resources to effectively reach out to and mobilize dads throughout New York to join our efforts to promote and achieve gender equality. We understand that gender inequality is one of the driving forces, and main results of gender-based violence (domestic and dating violence, sexual assault and rape, stalking, harassment). We also recognize that men are both also deeply impacted by gender inequality and have a significant (though as yet untapped) role to play in achieving gender equality in any community.

As dads, you are particularly impacted by gender inequality. As an example, few businesses or state laws provide for the same kind of parental leave and other parental leave opportunities for dads than they do for moms.

As dads, you also have a specific opportunity and a particularly crucial role to play. For most men, fathering creates a tremendous shift in their understanding and expression of who they are as men, and a different understanding of and relationship to the notions of gender equality. Most dads (both dads of daughters and dads of sons) experience a significant increase motivation to support gender equality as a result of becoming fathers. Not only do men who are fathers tend to believe and act differently, but you are also fathers – you have a role to play in bringing up your child(ren) into this world.

We're seeking input from "dad activists" to provide us feedback as we develop (both in our community, and state-wide) resources, tools and processes to reach out to, support, and mobilize dads on the ways that they can be more active, and effective in working towards gender equality. We'd like for you to spend an hour as a part of a focus group to

Suggested Questions

NOTE: you are encouraged to alter these questions to make them specified to your organization and community, as well as to meet the specific questions that you may have in terms of reaching out to and mobilizing the fathers in your community. Seven questions with 6 – 10 men is likely too many if you intend to have meaningful conversation with the men in the room with you. As such, we expect that you will prioritize three to five of these questions that will most help you to achieve your goals with this effort. Feel free to reach out to NYSCADV for any assistance in developing your own set of questions, and to clarify your process for the focus group.

We also encourage you to be flexible in the conversation. There will likely be questions that emerge for you as a result of the conversation amongst the participants. If those questions seem to provide you with more relevant answers then we encourage you to go with those questions rather than any pre-determined.

- 1) As you reflect back on being a father, what surprised/surprises you about the impact of being a dad on your understanding of or relationship to gender equality?
- 2) How has being a father impacted your activism/advocacy?
- 3) How would you suggest that we talk about father's roles in promoting gender equality?
- 4) What roles do you see that fathers can play in advancing efforts in our community and New York to achieve gender equality?
- 5) Which fathers do you suggest we focus on in our efforts?
- 6) What barriers do you see that might make it hard for fathers to be involved?
- 7) What supports do you suggest we create and offer to dads so that they can feel meaningfully and productively involved in efforts to promote gender equality?
- 8) What other thoughts do you have?