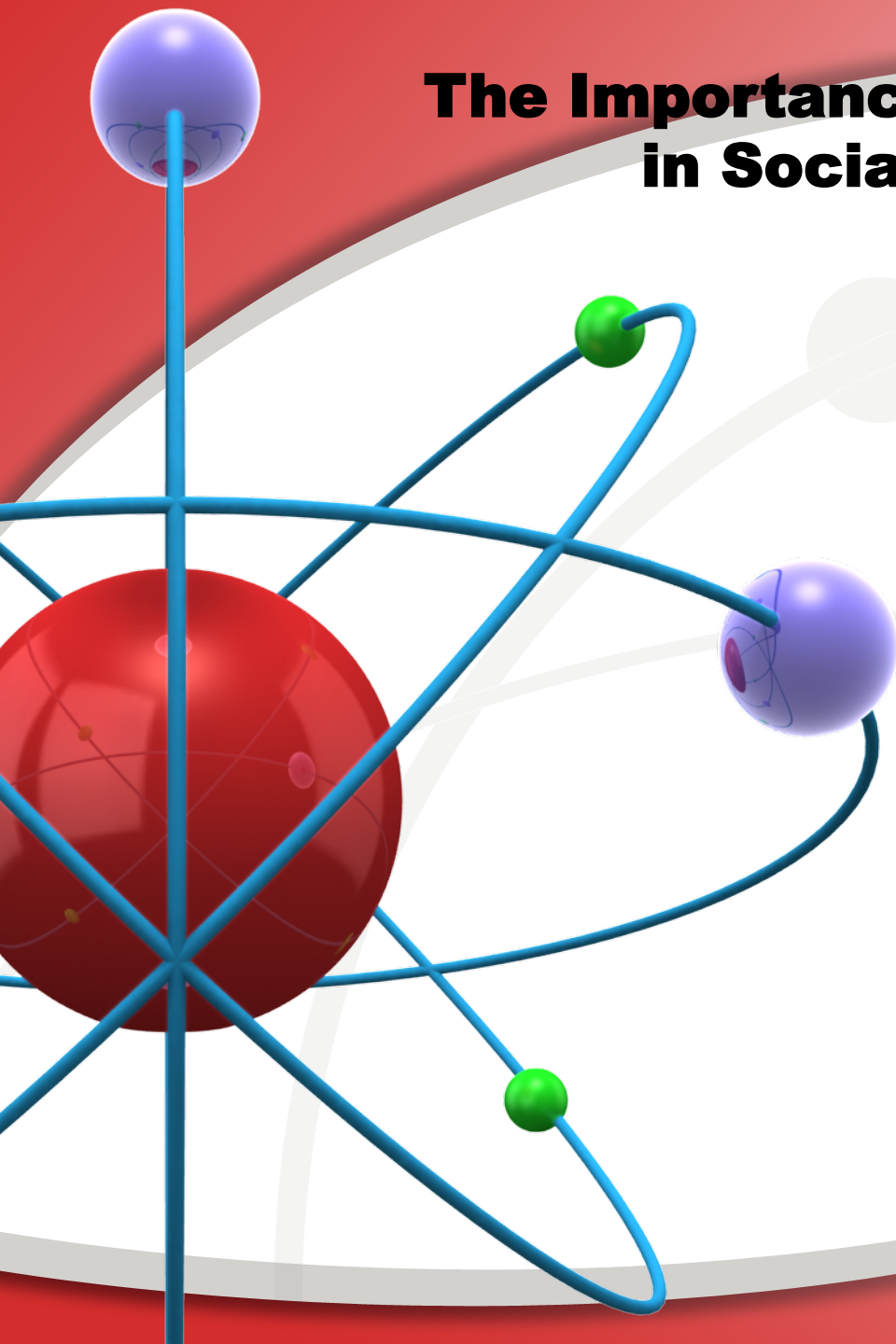


The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

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The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Research, Statistics & Data

According to 2011 U.S. Census Bureau data, over 24 million children live apart from their biological fathers.

❖ 33% of all children in America.

❖ 64% African American children

❖ 34% Hispanic children,

❖ 25% white children

In 1960, only 11% of children lived in father-absent homes.



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Research, Statistics & Data

Children who live absent their biological fathers are, on average, at least two to three times more likely to be:

- ❖ **Poor**
 - ❖ **Use drugs**
 - ❖ **Experience educational, health, emotional and behavioral problems**
 - ❖ **to be victims of child abuse, and**
 - ❖ **to engage in criminal behavior than their peers who live with their married, biological (or adoptive) parents**
- (
<http://www.fatherhood.org/media/fatherhood-statistics>).



The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Research, Statistics & Data

The research is clear that children do better in every measure of development when there is a responsibly involved father in their lives.

Christians in social work practice view the roles of fathers from a biblical perspective.

The research only confirms the importance of fathers as God intended to be to their children.

It also reveals the consequences in the lives of children, and the society we live in, when fathers are out of the position God created them to be in.



The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Research, Statistics & Data

Virtually every major social pathology has been linked to fatherlessness:

- ❖ **violent crime**
- ❖ **drug and alcohol abuse**
- ❖ **truancy**
- ❖ **teen pregnancy**
- ❖ **suicide**

—all correlate more strongly to fatherlessness than to any other single factor(Baskerville, 2002).



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Research, Statistics & Data

Research confirms that the most significant factor in the life of a child is not race or family income, but whether the father is at home . . . As significant as race and economics are in America, they do not compare to the destructive impact of fatherlessness in America.

(cont.)



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- ❖ **63% of youth that commit suicide are from fatherless homes**
- ❖ **90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes**
- ❖ **85% percent of all children that exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes**

(cont.)



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Research, Statistics & Data

- ❖ **80% of rapist with displaced anger come from fatherless homes**
- ❖ **71% percent of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes**
- ❖ **75% percent of all adolescent patients in chemical abuse centers come from fatherless homes**

(cont.)



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Research, Statistics & Data

- ❖ **70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions come from fatherless homes**
- ❖ **82% percent of all youths sitting in prisons grew up in fatherless homes**
- ❖ **82% percent of teenage girls who get pregnant come from fatherless homes. (Kunjufu, 2001, p. 157)**



The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Research, Statistics & Data

Mothers and fathers are equally important to the holistic development of their children.

But the research is clear, children do better in every measure of development when there is a responsibly involved father in their lives.



The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Research, Statistics & Data

For that reason, it is important that social workers, child welfare workers, child therapist, and fatherhood practitioners across the nation are made aware of the importance of engaging fathers in social work practice.



The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Research, Statistics & Data

He was either present or absent, responsibly or irresponsibly involved, or completely uninvolved.



The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Research, Statistics & Data

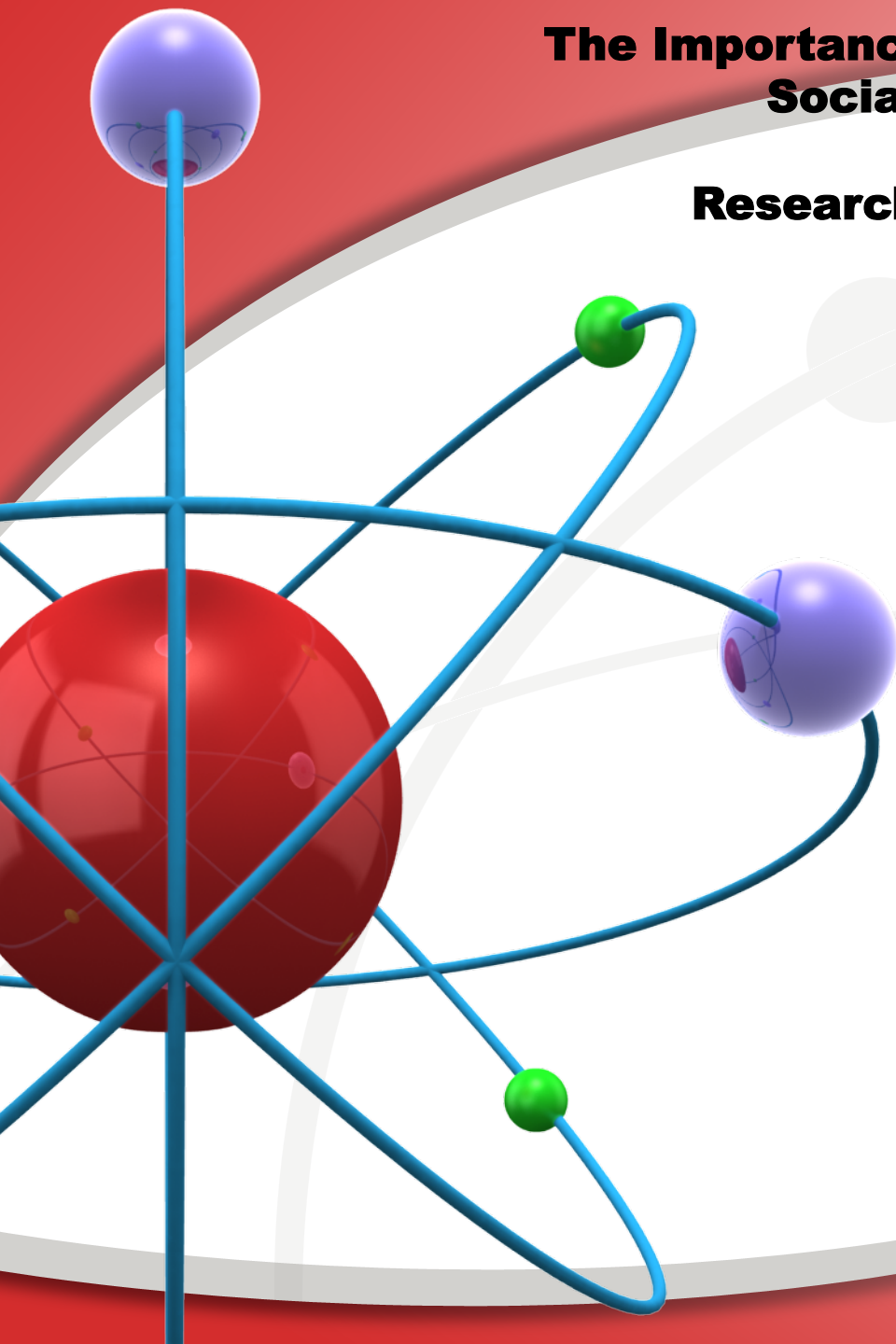
In either circumstance it is undeniably necessary to engage and solicit his involvement in the intervention plan of action, as long as he does not pose a threat to the safety of the child.

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Research, Statistics & Data

Child Abuse

Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study revealed that in many cases the absence of a biological father contributes to increased risk of child maltreatment. The results suggest that **Child Protective Services (CPS)** agencies have some justification in viewing the presence of a social father as increasing children's risk of abuse and neglect. It is believed that in families with a non-biological (social) father figure, there is a higher risk of abuse and neglect to children, despite the social father living in the household or only dating the mother.





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Crime

A study using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health explored the relationship between family structure and risk of violent acts in neighborhoods.

The results revealed that if the number of fathers is low in a neighborhood, then there is an increase in acts of teen violence.

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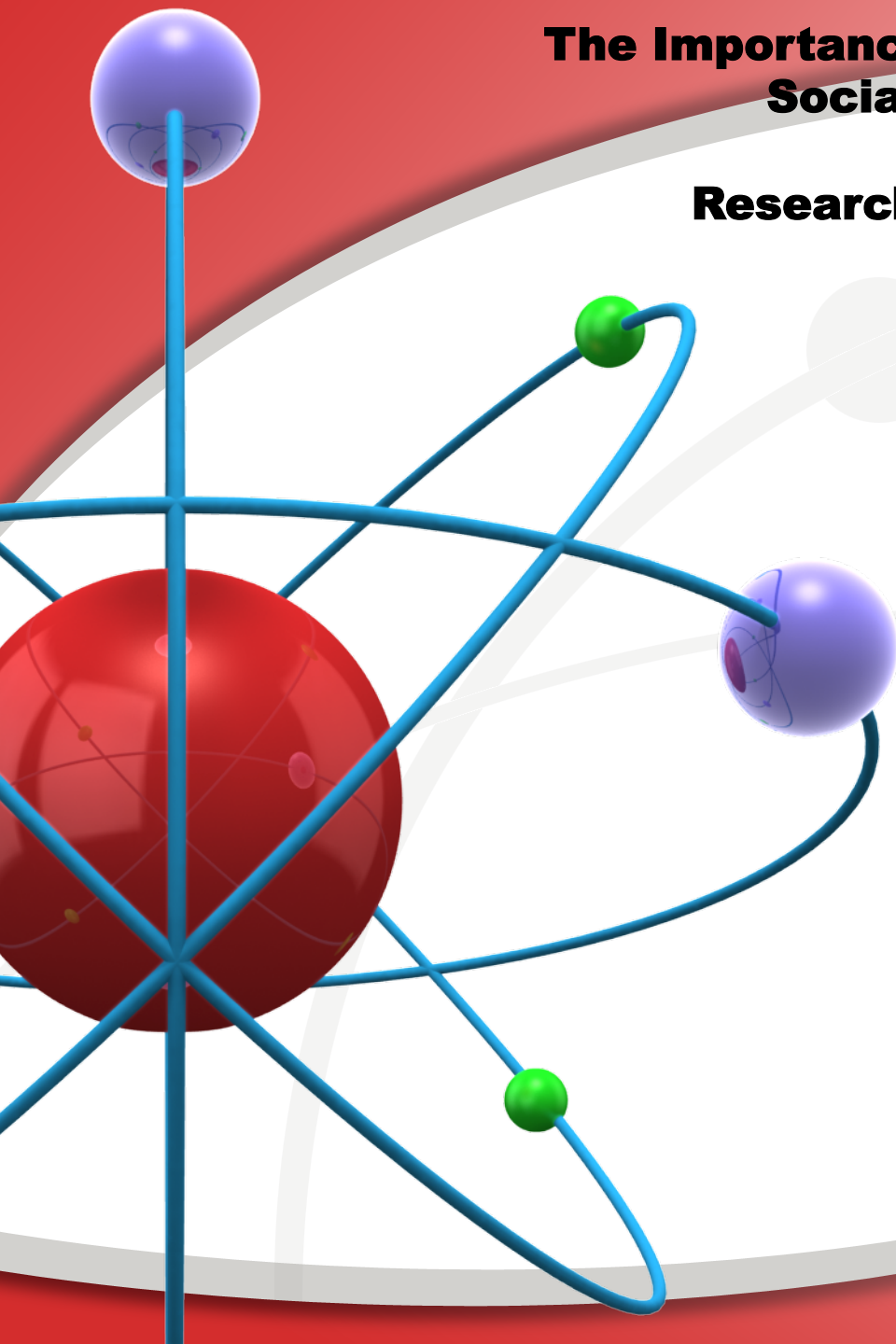
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Drug and Alcohol Use

The National Fatherhood Initiative, 2011 reported:

A study of 296 at-risk adolescents whose fathers were drug abusers revealed that paternal smoking and drug use lead to strained father-child relationships.

This weakened relationship led to greater adolescent maladjustment with family and friends and a higher risk for adolescent drug use and smoking. Fathers who smoke cigarettes were less likely to enforce antismoking rules for their children and had weaker bonds in terms of adolescent admiration and emulation.



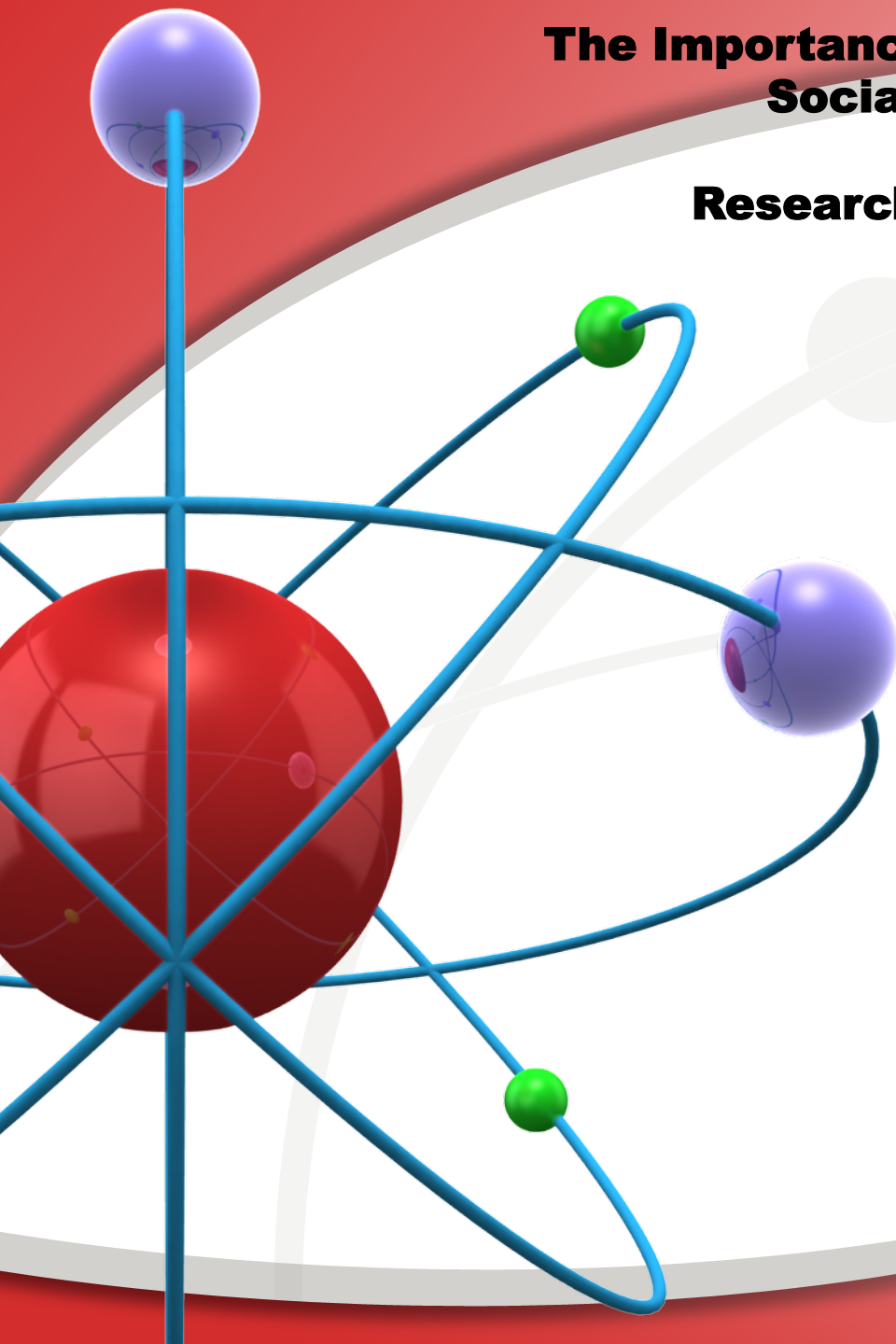
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Research, Statistics & Data

Education

Father involvement in schools is associated with the higher likelihood of a student getting mostly A's. This was true for fathers in biological parent families, for stepfathers, and for fathers heading single-parent families. Fatherless children are twice as likely to drop out of school. Having a father involved on a personal level with his child's schooling increases the likelihood of his child's achievement. When fathers assume a positive role in their child's education, students feel a positive impact. (

<http://www.fatherhood.org/fathers/how-to-be-a-dad/get-involved-in-your-childs-education>)

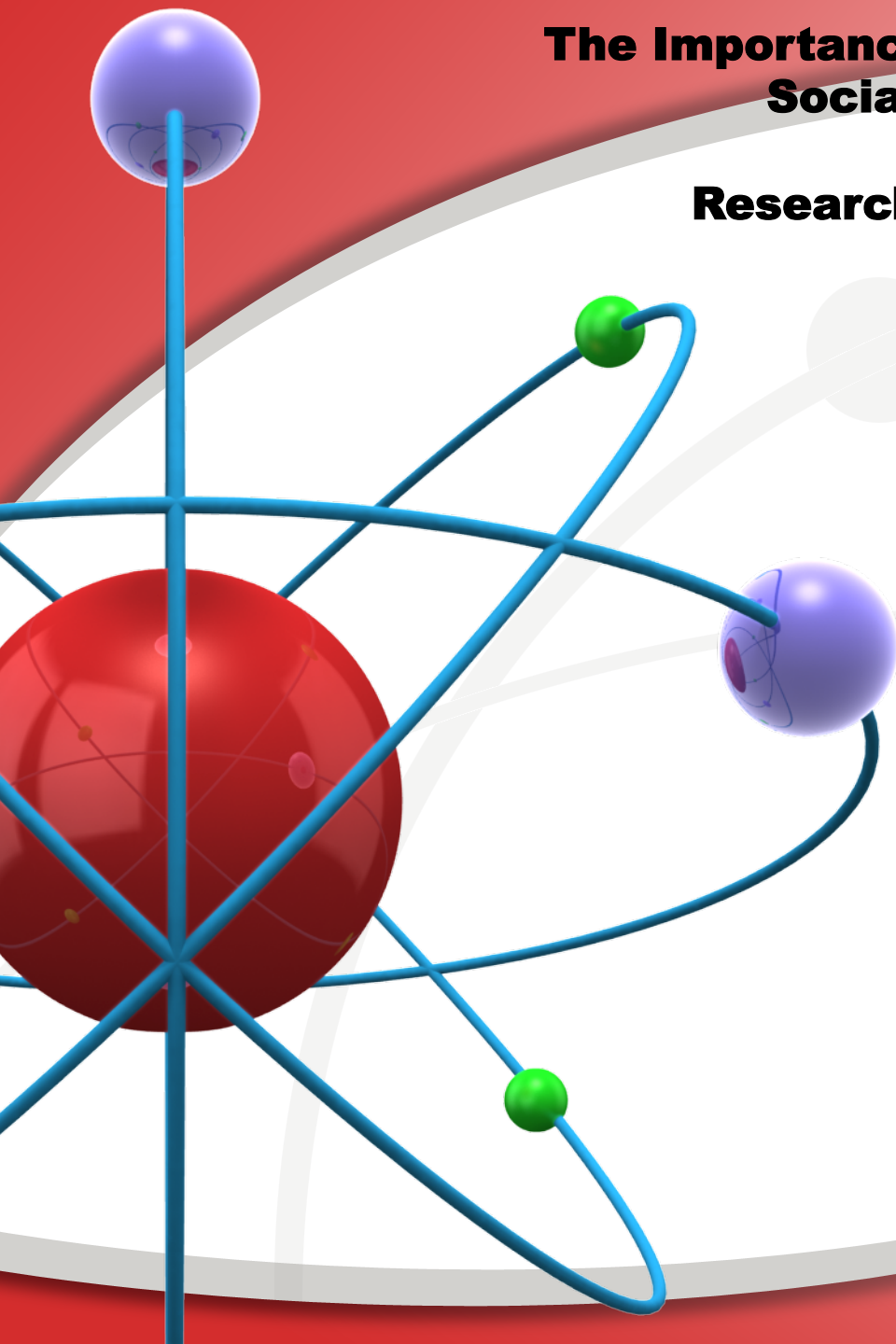


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Research, Statistics & Data

Emotional and Behavioral Problems

One study of school-aged children found that children with good relationships with their fathers were less likely to experience depression, to exhibit disruptive behavior, or to lie and were more likely to exhibit pro-social behavior. This same study found that boys with involved fathers had fewer school behavior problems and that girls had stronger self-esteem. (<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/chaptertwo.cfm>)





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Poverty

Children in father-absent homes are almost four times more likely to be poor. In 2011, 12% of children in married-couple families were living in poverty, compared to 44% of children in mother-only families (

<http://www.fatherhood.org/media/consequences-of-father-absence-statistics>).

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Teen Pregnancy and Sexuality

The National Fatherhood Initiative, 2011 reported:

In a phenomenological study of adolescent mothers' experiences of having become sexually active, it was revealed that teen mothers' experiences of living without a strong father figure were an important factor for having become sexually active. Based on the study findings, the inability to bond in satisfactory ways with a father or father figure may result in earlier onset of sexual activity and the higher risk of teen pregnancy.



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Research, Statistics & Data

The One Hundred Billion Dollar Man

The Federal Government spent at least \$99.8 billion providing assistance to father-absent families in 2006. \$99.8 billion is the amount the Federal government spent on thirteen means-tested benefit programs and on child support enforcement for single mothers. These programs include the Earned Income Tax Credit, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), child support enforcement, food and nutrition programs, housing programs, Medicaid, and the State Children's Health Insurance Plan (SCHIP) (<http://www.fatherhood.org/media/fatherhood-statistics/one-hundred-billion-dollar-man-download>).



The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Barriers and Challenges to Fathers Involvement

Historically fathers have had an adversarial relationship with social services.

The fatherhood crisis comes from

- ❖ **social and economic causes**
- ❖ **public policy**
- ❖ **political**

Extensive executive-branch agencies administer not only welfare, but child protection, child-support enforcement, and other quasi-police functions. Yet the linchpin of this machinery is the judiciary: the little-understood system of family courts, which have arisen during the last 40 years (Baskerville, 2002).

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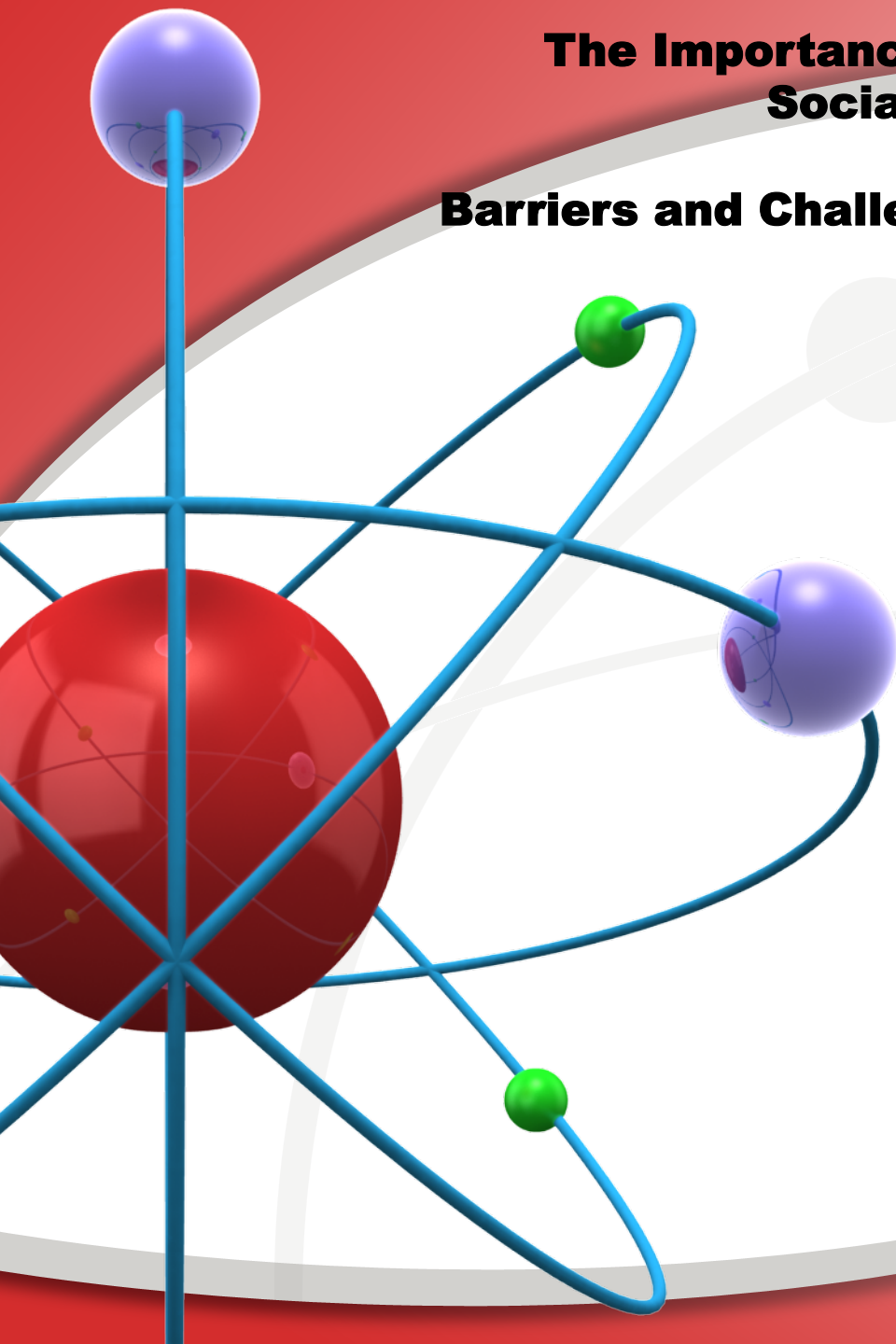
Barriers and Challenges to Fathers Involvement

Aid to Families and Dependent Children (AFDC), later replaced in 1996 with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) contributed to the disenfranchisement of fathers from the family.

❖ **Only very poor families composed of single mothers and their children qualified for AFDC.**

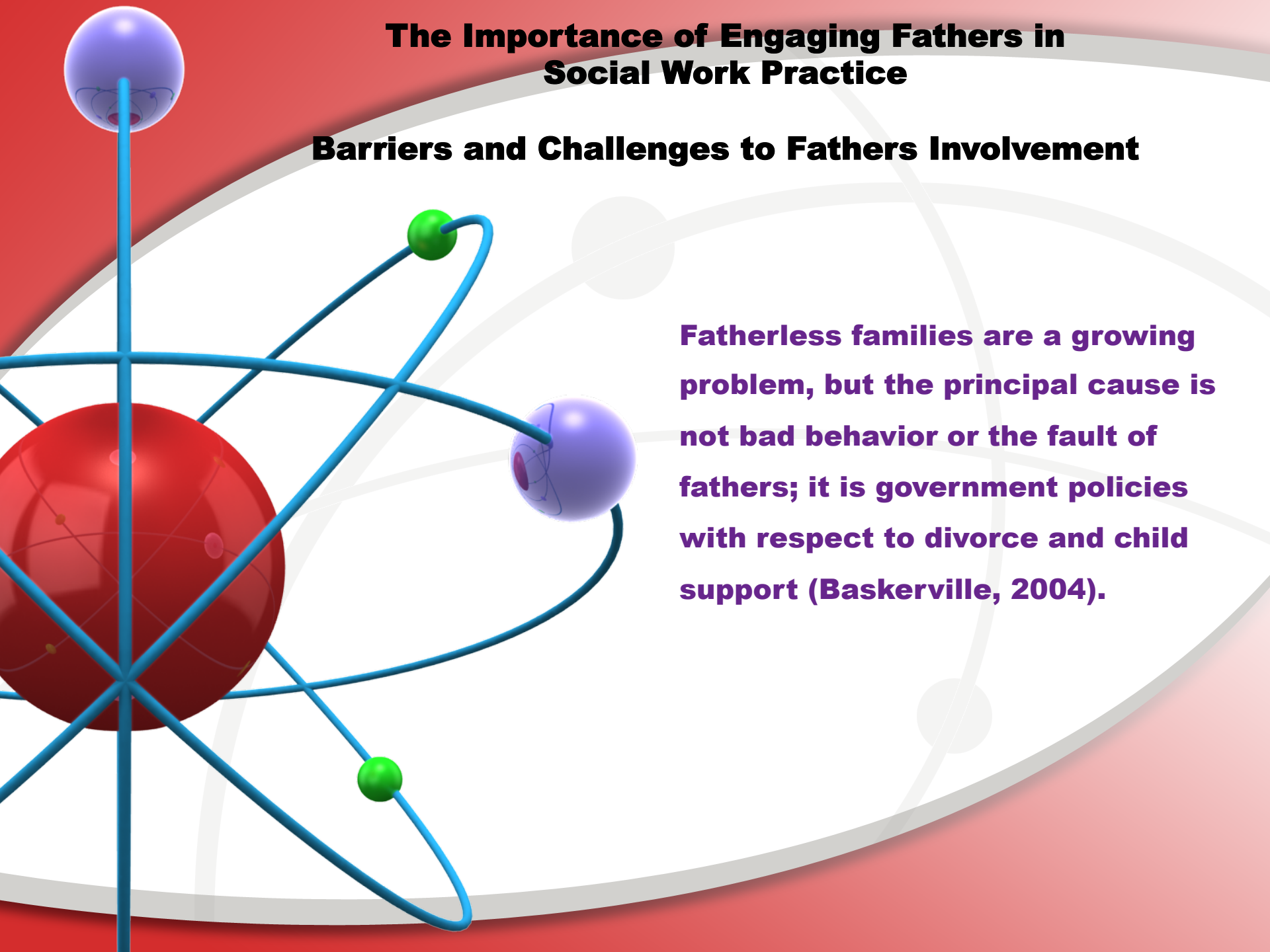
❖ **This program discouraged marriage and work.**

❖ **To be eligible for AFDC, no father lived in the home (Page, Larner, 1997, p. 21)**



The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Barriers and Challenges to Fathers Involvement



Fatherless families are a growing problem, but the principal cause is not bad behavior or the fault of fathers; it is government policies with respect to divorce and child support (Baskerville, 2004).

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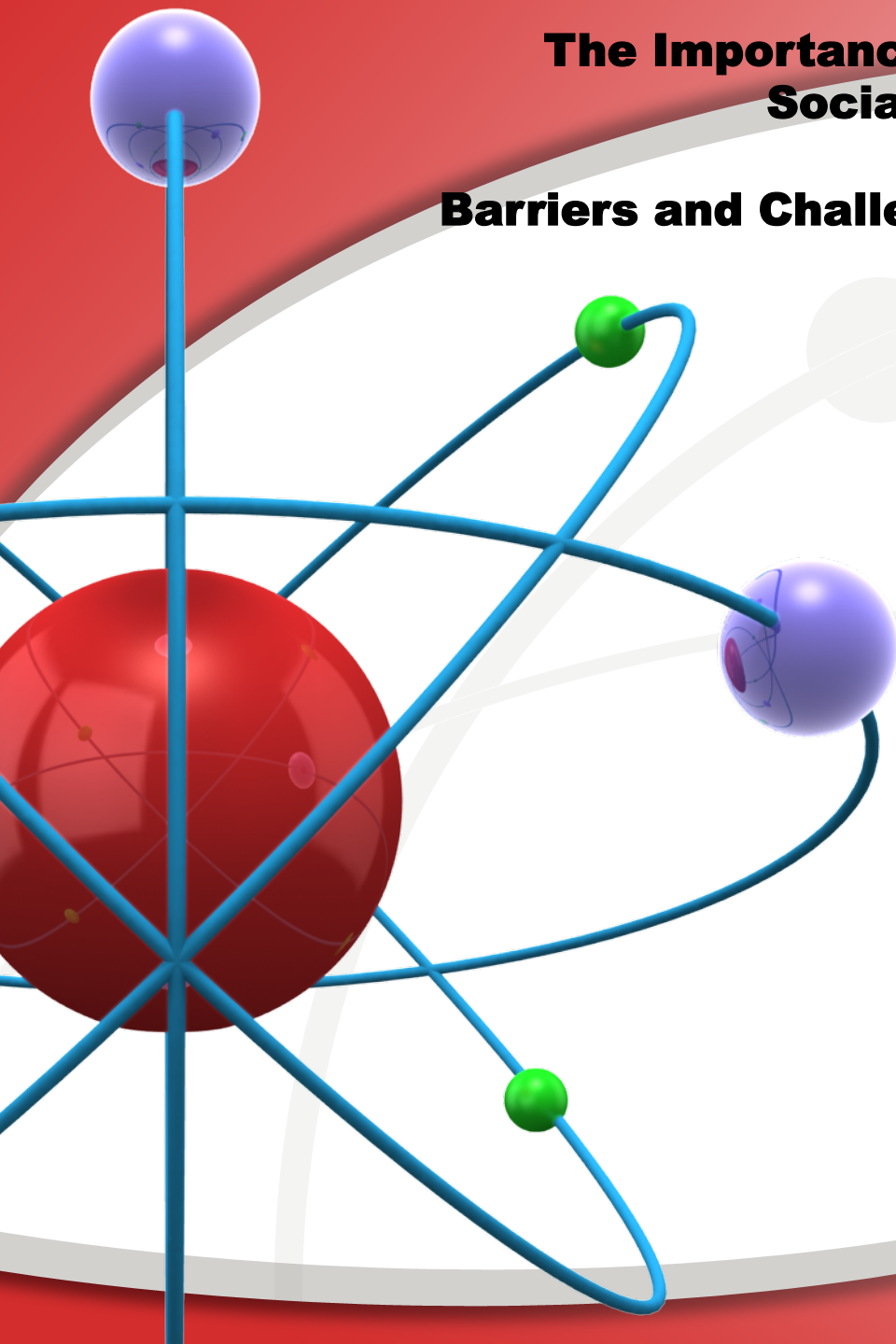
Barriers and Challenges to Fathers Involvement

There are responsible fathers out there that have gone through a divorce who are willing to pay their child support payments on time and are being victimized by mothers who deny them their visitations. Responsible fathers who understand and take responsibilities for their obligations should be rewarded, not punished. The system generally (in most cases) favors the mother and treats the father like a deadbeat dad. (

<http://www.child-support-laws-state-by-state.com/fathers-rights.html>).

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Barriers and Challenges to Fathers Involvement



Now, a new study finds that mothers do play an important role both in encouraging and curtailing fathers' involvement. And this maternal gatekeeping is a powerful force: Even fathers who wanted to be involved with their kids often drifted away in the face of persistent maternal criticism (Raeburn, 2008).



The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Barriers and Challenges to Fathers Involvement

Historically, child welfare is viewed as a practice that takes place between women (Davies, 2005; Scourfield, 2006).

With parenting viewed as a feminine responsibility, child welfare practice focuses primarily on mothers and largely ignores fathers (Walmsley, Brown, Callahan, Dominelli, & Strega, 2011).



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Barriers and Challenges to Fathers Involvement

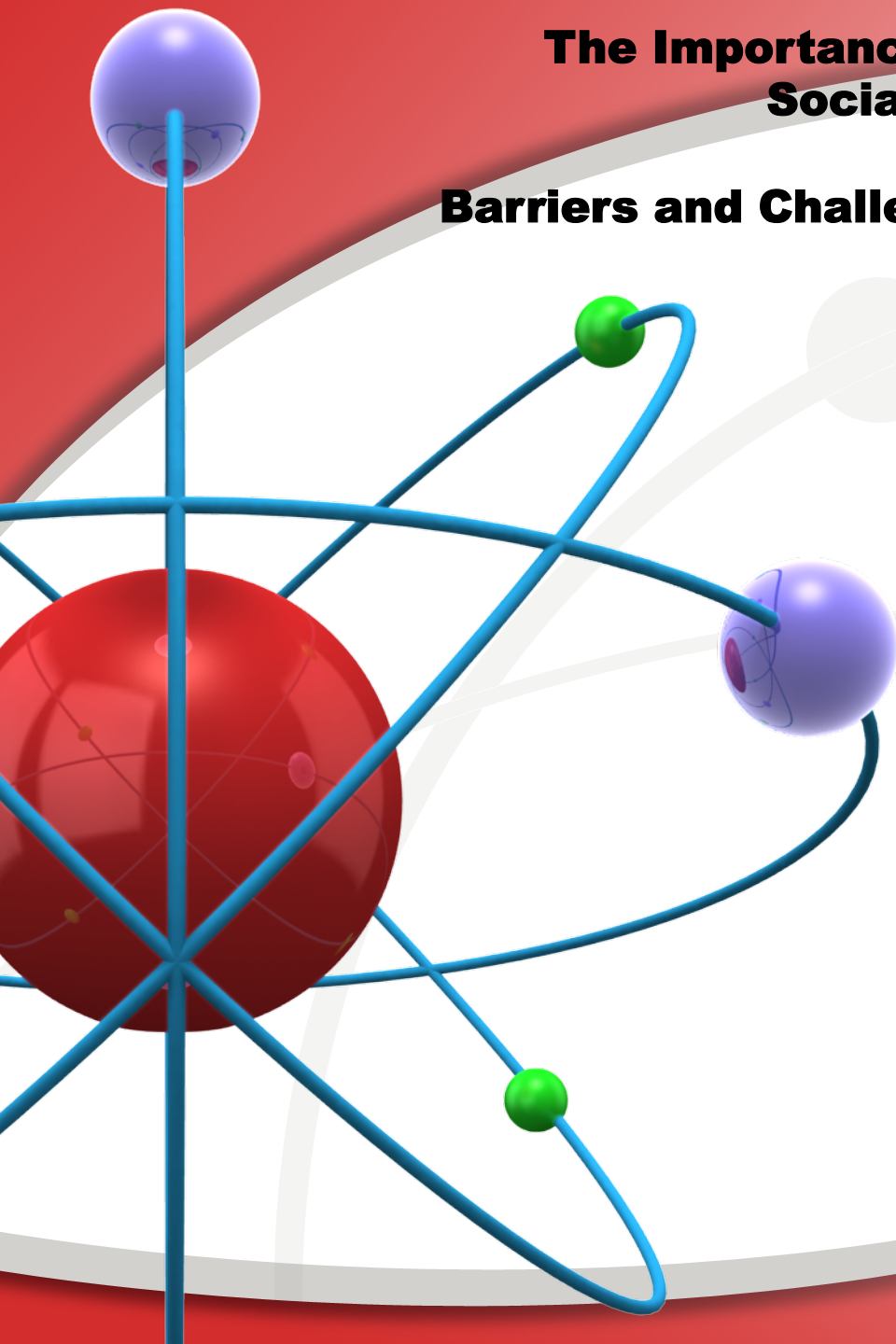
However, the safety of children could be bolstered by the recognition that men can—and often do—take on meaningful roles in the lives of children. Child welfare services that target families need to acknowledge that fathers play significant roles in the lives of their children and should seek out new ways to involve fathers in services (Walmsley et al., 2011) (as cited in Lee, Yelick, Brisebois, & Banks, 2011).

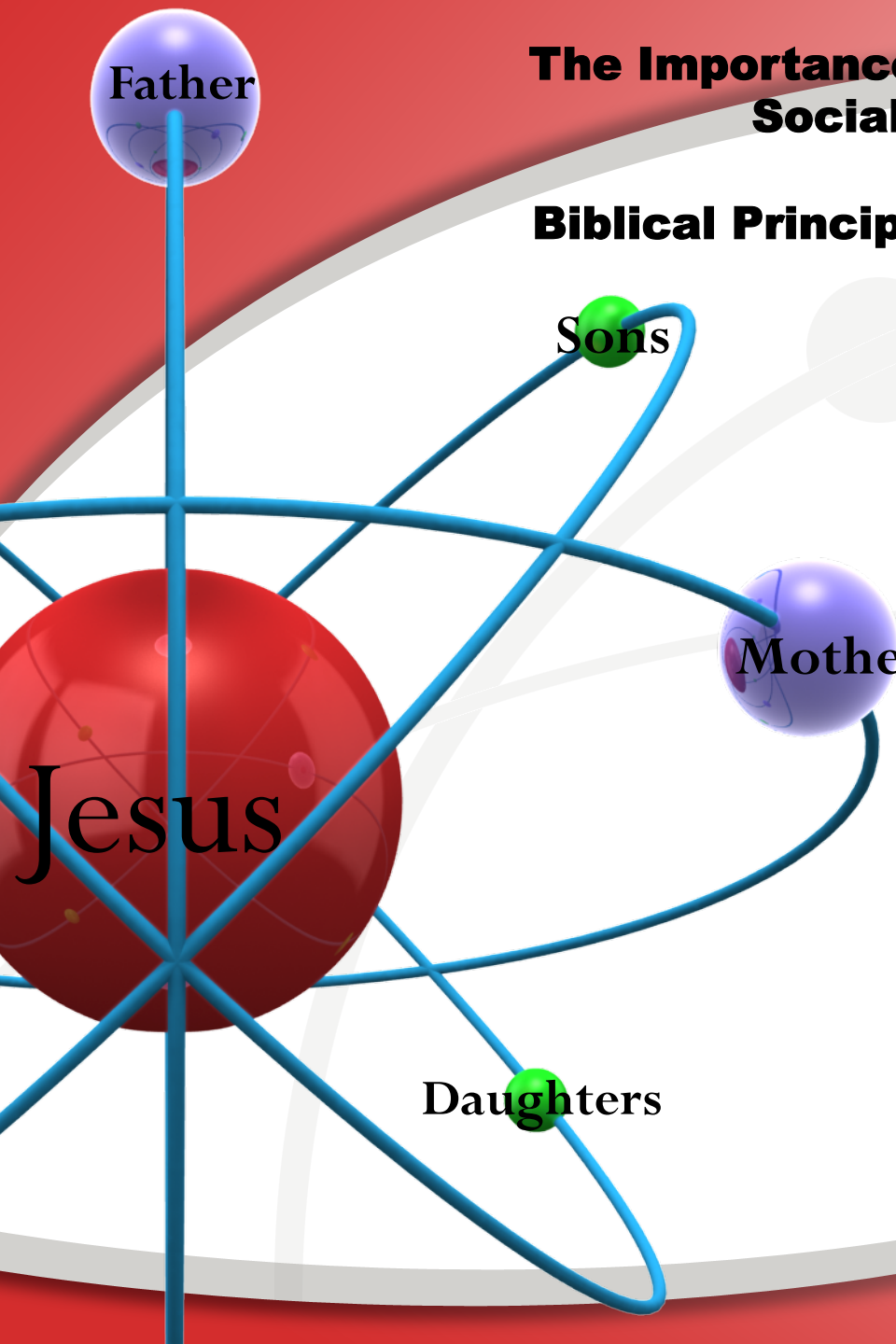
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Barriers and Challenges to Fathers Involvement

Sonenstien, Malm, & Billing, (2002) *Study of fathers' involvement in permanency planning and child welfare casework* reveals:

Fathers have, traditionally, not been as involved in child welfare case planning as mothers. Worker bias regarding father involvement appears to be the most widely researched barrier to fathers' participation in child welfare case planning. One study found that caseworkers did not pay attention to birth fathers to the degree that they did to birth mothers.





The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Biblical Principles for Engaging Fathers

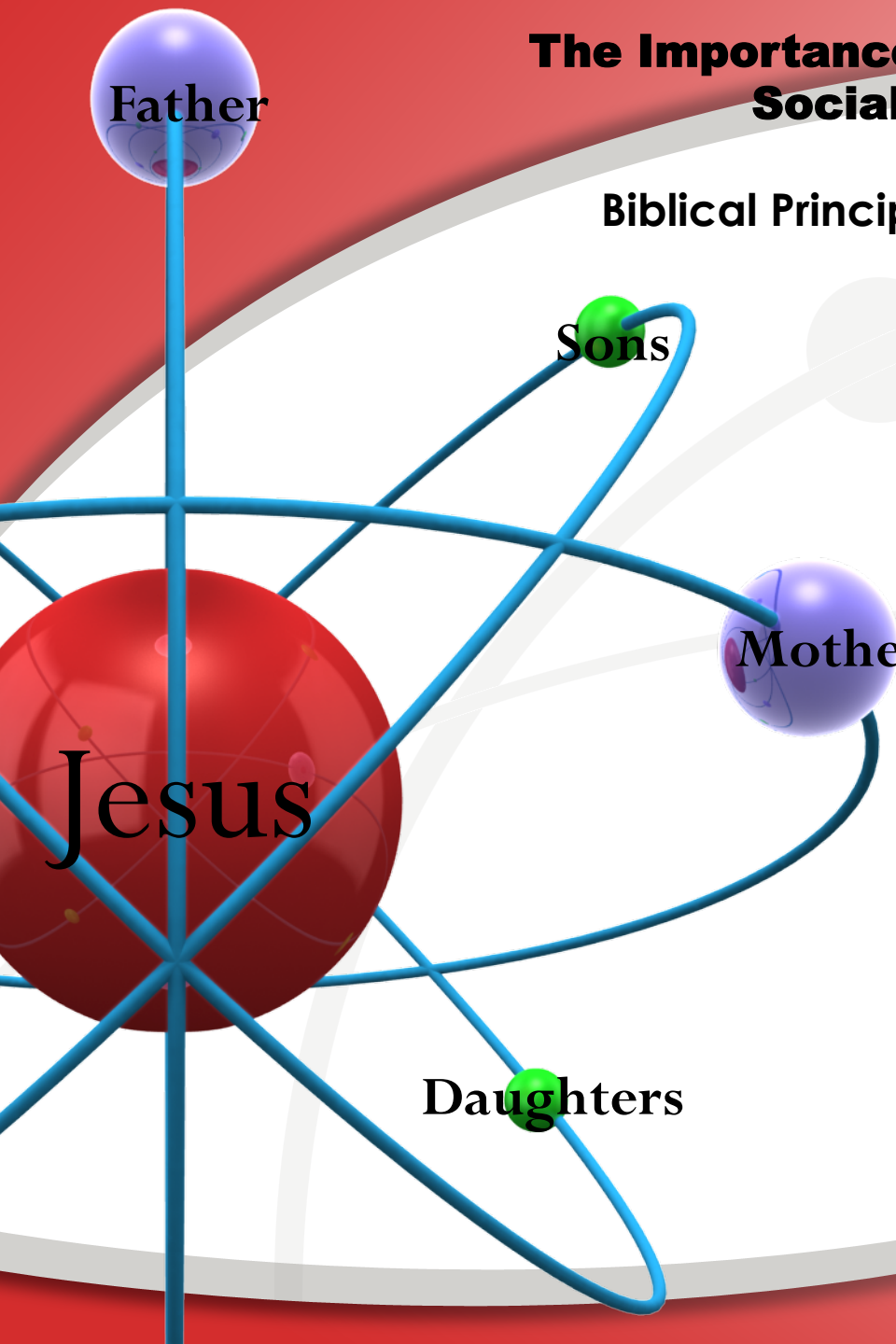
As Christian social work practitioners, we need to have a biblical bases for understanding the origins of a father's challenges to being responsibly involved in the life of his children.

The bible says in Matthew 12:43-45:

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Biblical Principles for Engaging Fathers



We must train fathers both in the natural and supernatural to be adequately able to sustain himself against the reoccurring attacks of his adversary. Ephesians 6: 10-12 says,

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.



Father

The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Biblical Principles for Engaging Fathers

Sons

Mother

Daughters

Jesus

The bible reveals God's original purpose, and meaning of fatherhood. The bible details the original blueprint for the purpose and design of all fathers by the Creator of all mankind, God the Father. God explains the purpose of fathers, the roles of fathers, and the root source or cause of father absence (being out of position).



Fathers

The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Biblical Principles for Engaging Fathers

Sons

Mothers

Daughters

Jesus

When I ask fathers why are they not involved in the lives of their children, the number one response is,

“I didn’t have a father in my life, so I do not know how to be a father to my children”.

Psalms 82:5 says, “They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course”.



Fathers

The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Biblical Principles for Engaging Fathers

Sons

How do you help fathers walk out of the darkness in their life?

As indicated in the scripture, the lack of knowledge and understanding about being a responsibly involved father can cause problems in their life and they will be a failure as a father.

Having the knowledge and understanding of their purpose as a father can lead them out of dark times and into their destiny as a father.

Jesus

Mothers

Daughters



Fathers

The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Biblical Principles for Engaging Fathers

How do they restore the foundations of the earth?

Mat. 4:16 says,

“The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up”.

1Cor.3:11 says, *“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ”.* Mal 4:6 says, *“And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse”.*

Sons

Mothers

Daughters

Jesus



Fathers

The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Biblical Principles for Engaging Fathers

As Christian social workers, it is our responsibility to guide fathers back into position, out of darkness and into the light. That light is the knowledge of and acceptance of Jesus Christ into their lives. Matthew 28:18-20 says, *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

Sons

Mothers

Daughters

Jesus



Fathers

The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Biblical Principles for Engaging Fathers

Sons

Mothers

Daughters

Jesus

Matthew 28:18-20 says,

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Fathers

The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Biblical Principles for Engaging Fathers

Sons

Mothers

Daughters

Jesus

The curse has been in effect for thousands of years. It did not just begin with dads today and their children, or with their father and his father, and his father before him. It is just not good enough to be as good a father as fathers were forty years ago, or even a hundred years ago. Exodus. 20:5 says,

“...for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me”.



Fathers

The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Biblical Principles for Engaging Fathers

Sons

God wants godly fathers to prepare their children for the Lord.

Luke 1:17 says,

Mothers

“And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord”.

Daughters

Jesus



Fathers

The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Biblical Principles for Engaging Fathers

What we see today in our society and in the behaviors of youth was prophesied in Isaiah about what will happen if men/fathers remain out of position.

Isaiah 3:4-5 says,

“I will make mere youths their officials; children will rule over them.” People will oppress each other—man against man, neighbor against neighbor. The young will rise up against the old, the nobody against the honored.

Isaiah 3:12 says, *Youths oppress my people, women rule over them. My people, your guides lead you astray; they turn you from the path.*

Sons

Mothers

Daughters

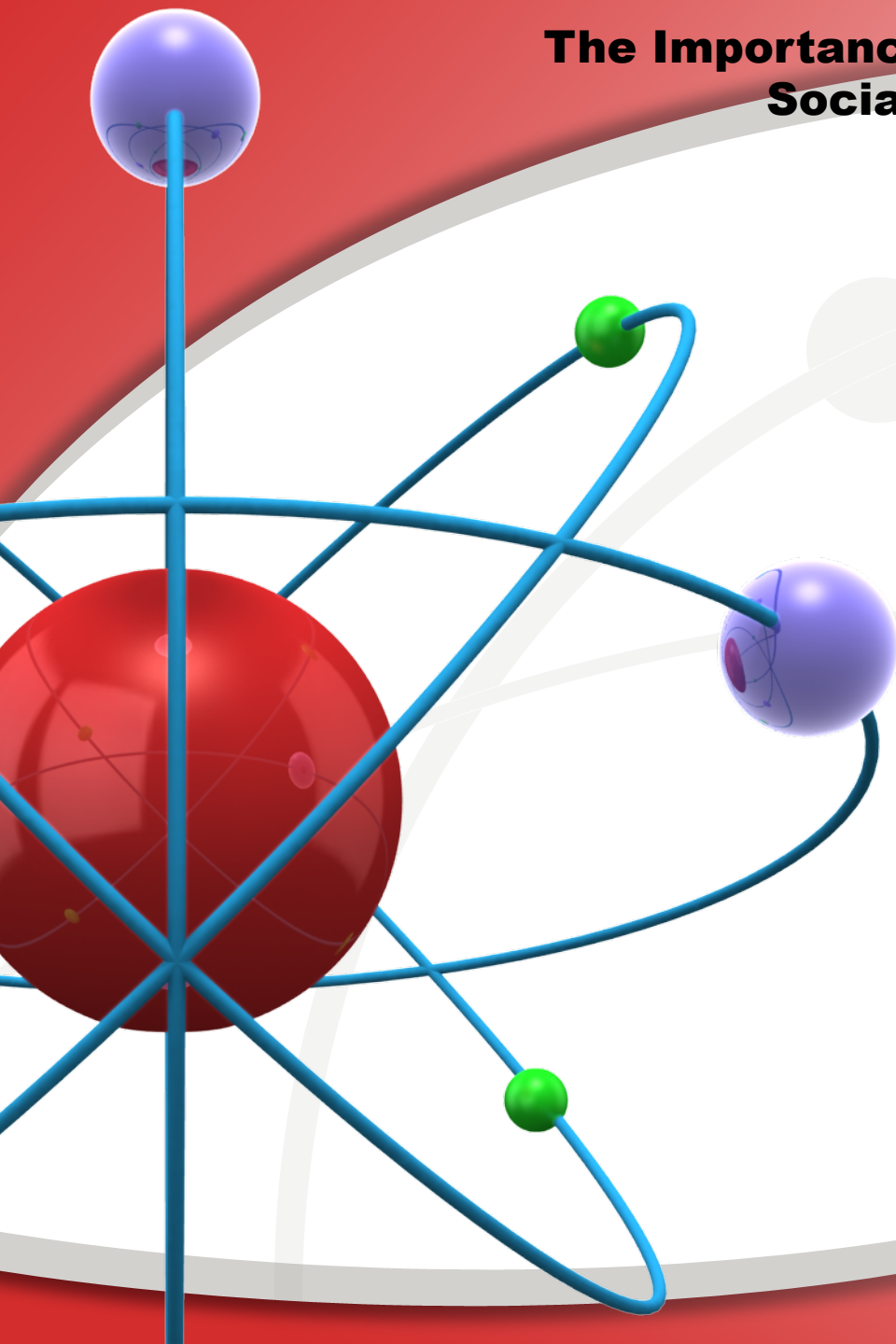
Jesus

The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Conclusion

The research presented provides empirical evidence on the importance of the roles fathers play on the holistic development of their children. Children can, and do, become productive adults growing up in single mother households. However, when children who live absent their biological fathers are, on average, at least two to three times more likely to be poor, to use drugs, to experience educational, health, emotional and behavioral problems, to be victims of child abuse, and to engage in criminal behavior than their peers who live with their married, biological (or adoptive) parents (

<http://www.fatherhood.org/media/fatherhood-statistics>), it becomes imperative that as social work practitioners we incorporate strategies to engage fathers when intervening in the lives of their children.





The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Conclusion

As Christian social work practitioners, it is imperative we understand the root source that causes fathers to be out of position in their children's lives (a demonic attack). It is equally important that we acknowledge a father's natural circumstances and be able to meet them where their natural needs are.

The Importance of Engaging Fathers in Social Work Practice

Conclusion

When you, first, help them navigate through their natural systemic barriers and challenges, they will be more responsive to efforts to engage the spiritual darkness in their lives.

Therefore, it is important that as Christian social work practitioners, you are grounded in your own faith in order to guide fathers out of darkness and into the Light that will reposition them in the lives of their children.

