



North American Association of Christians in Social Work
A Vital Christian Presence in Social Work

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CULTURAL RELEVANCE AND FAITH

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Cultural Relevancy & Faith: Parenting Skills Training Strategies for the 21st Century

PRESENTED BY

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Presentation Abstract

This workshop provides cross-cultural/faith-supported strategies for conducting parenting skills training with 21st century parents in a variety of settings (i.e. churches, in-home, child care centers, schools, community centers and residential facilities.) Examples are provided relative to outcome reviews and resource sharing which demonstrate lasting impacts.

Presentation Description

The 21st century calls for best practices that make use of the new and the old in helping parents meet today's challenges. This new "world order of family management and child rearing" calls for address of a number of issues in ways that are made relevant to parents to facilitate "real world" parenting for people of faith, needing faith or not faith oriented. The presenters discuss how Christian social workers can successfully facilitate and navigate teaching these skills in a way that does not violate their own faith code of living. The presenters discuss and show evidence as to how these skills can be delivered in various settings. Discussion utilizes evidence-based parenting skills curriculum supported by culturally relevant supplemental materials, resources and theoretical reference discussed with parents to aid understanding.

The presenters challenge workshop participants to think, work, train and facilitate "outside the box" to address 21st century parenting topics. The "out of the box" parenting topics (i.e. gangs,

media influences, ATOD, LGBT youth, family economics, sexuality, dating/marriage with children, faith walk of children/youth, "snitching," "dumbing down" to fit in, racial/gender orientation name calling for succeeding youth, sexting, cyberbullying, birth order, roles families play, parenting through homelessness, transitional needs for parents of children/youth in care, parenting in unchurched families, to name a few! These are all areas which can call into conflict or question our calling as Christians and as social workers. The presenters discuss their successes, challenges, problems and even in isolated cases their failures in walking workshop participants the pitfalls, valleys and mountain tops as faith walkers trying to make generational impacts through parents. They also review other expectations participants might encounter on the road to replication of the strategies presented.

Lastly, the presenters provide specific data and results that document lasting outcomes and evidence of qualitative parental impacts. The participants are able to follow along in the workshop through use of PowerPoint and handouts. Artistic interpretation of the parenting work done (and to be done) will also be woven throughout workshop through music, poetry, and cultural/biblical proverbs. The presentation shows how whether delivered in a community center or a church, the message remains the same and one that can resonate to provide practical skill-based parenting useful for parenting today's children and youth raised in church or raised in community within the 21st century. The world in which today's youth find themselves is small and circular compared to the world of yesterday.

Parenting Deliverables

Evidenced-based parenting skills curriculum is utilized in a 10 week series that is modified to incorporate the needs and strengths of families served. Sessions are delivered in English and Spanish as desired by the group at a literacy level that addresses multiple literacy needs. Delivery is also tailored to address individualized parenting needs, life experiences and ages of children being parented with much attention given to cultural, ethnic, gender specific and family strengthening needs of target parents and children. Of particular concern throughout the delivery is to assure that conducting parenting skills training is not morally and spiritually judgmental in imparting useful techniques, strategies that transcend communities, cultures, gender, neighborhoods and families. Suggestions are made for avoidance of techniques often interpreted as hostile, unrealistic or disinteresting for "real life" family development.

Parents are helped to understand implications of risk factors and protective factors within family settings that are known to predict later alcohol and other drug use, delinquency, violent

behavior, and other behavioral problems. The presenters feel this is essential for work with families of color. Helping parents and guardians strengthen family bonds, develop positive family management practices, and protect children in difficult but real life situations for the environments and circumstances they find themselves in become key to the parenting process.

Background on Agencies Providing Services

Village Keepers, Inc. operates what is known in the community as a community-based family prevention resource center, a concept gaining national prominence which offers a number of services designed to meet the needs of families in need. VKI services include but are not limited to an after school program, summer camp, Rites of Passage, youth leadership/service learning activities, GED, parenting skills classes, life skills (youth and adult), English as a Second Language (ESL), Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) and ATOD prevention education. All services are free of charge and delivered through sol source or partnership efforts at the center or in various communities and neighborhoods.

Now in its 13th year, Village Keepers, Inc. is a Georgia nonprofit organization and 501(c)(3) IRS designated entity incorporated February 5, 1997. Reminiscent of the African Proverb, *“It takes a village to raise a child,”* Village Keepers aspires to utilize diverse collective skills and resources to strengthen communities by changing conditions in the communities served. We work to assist our consumers to maximize the use of partnerships, resources, talents and commitment which provide solutions in preventing some of society’s major issues and problems.

Tapestry Youth Ministries offers programs and unique services to teen mothers, giving them the opportunity to break the cycle of life-long social service dependency by helping these bright young girls create a path toward self- sufficiency and family values. Tapestry’s Second Chance Homes (of which there are 2) provide a safe, structured and caring environment for teen mothers and their children. Tapestry Youth Ministries recently purchased a duplex to be used for a Transitional Living Program (TLP). This program will be designed to meet the needs of at-risk and homeless teen mothers 18-23 years of age with supportive services as they transition into adulthood. For each mother and child, Tapestry provides housing, case management, parent skills training, continuing education, mentoring and coaching, childcare services and independent living services.

Background on Target Populations

Village Keepers, Inc. serves a mostly low income, high risk community. Most of our participants come from southwest Atlanta, South Fulton County cities and unincorporated South Fulton County areas. The center itself is bordered by 3 public housing complexes (English speaking) and 2 mobile home communities (mostly Spanish speaking). Other residents of the surrounding community reside in low or fixed income single dwelling homes, the “working poor” with the remainder elderly/retired persons. Those served are mostly African American (70%), Mexican American (25%) and Caucasian (5%).

How those programs, services, benefits, etc. affect human health and welfare of the target population of families:

1. The agency enhances family and community support on behalf of children, youth and families, actively utilizing family development strategies.
2. A number of children were returned to parent custody from child protective custody or avoided being placed in foster care as a result of parent completion of parenting skills.
3. Efforts are based on the national “*family support center*” model, advanced by Family Support America and further conceptualized in the “Evidence-Based Principles for Substance Abuse Prevention, National Drug Control Policy in 2000.
4. Efforts demonstrate that to effectively support families, programs must recognize that families will be stronger when they are living in supportive communities and bring strengths to the table.
5. Efforts utilize diverse collective skills and resources of English speaking and bi-lingual staff, volunteers and interns to strengthen families by changing conditions in the communities that serve them.
6. Efforts maximize use of resources and talents (including those of residents/parents themselves) in providing solutions to family management opportunities.
7. Provides parenting skills training to across life spans and genders to include grandparents parenting grandchildren, single fathers, parental partners, and a growing population that often gets ignored.

Learning Outcomes

1. Articulate several innovative strategies designed to help parenting skills trainers deliver culturally relevant and topical content that addresses 21st century parenting needs.
2. Identify key challenges and problems facing families that can no longer be ignored or bypassed by people of faith in addressing the needs of parenting in the 21st century.
3. Describe the mutual benefits of agency and congregation partnerships in delivering non-traditional parenting skills content in non-traditional settings.
4. Provide social workers of faith with more understanding as to the how and why of integrating personal faith in social work practice when working in either a secular or faith environments to deliver parenting skills training to 21st century parents.
5. Provide social workers with list of supplemental materials and resources applicable to delivering relevant parenting skills training in the 21st century.

Short Bio Information: The presenters are aunt (Sheila Joyner-Pritchard) and niece (Danielle Joyner) who have utilized workshop strategy areas in their own family life.

Sheila Joyner-Pritchard, BSW, MSW, CPS is Founder, Executive Director/CEO and Certified Prevention Specialist for Village Keepers, Inc., a community-based family prevention resource center located in East Point, GA. She is also a candidate for LCSW re-licensure. Her expertise includes cultural, gender specific and faith-based strategies, work with mandated parents, parents/families of color, and parents/families residing in public housing and mobile home communities. She has served as Elder of Children's Ministry having figured prominently in establishing the children's ministry and parenting classes as part of her church's VBS.

Danielle Joyner, BSW, MSW, interned with United Way of Metro Atlanta and volunteered with Village Keepers, Inc. She previously worked in child welfare first as Advanced Case Manger and then as Services Supervisor for Fulton County (GA) Department of Family and Children Services. She has expertise in family centered and culturally sensitive practice, and evaluation of family situations that place children at risk of child abuse and neglect. She has worked in shelter, residential and group settings with teens and adults. She has actively utilized her faith in the field as an emerging 21st century social worker and recently became employed at Tapestry Youth Ministries as Case/House Manager of one its Second Chance Homes.