

# REAL FATHERS INITIATIVE

# Mentor Visit Protocol



Atiak, Amuru District  
Northern Uganda  
2013



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## **The REAL Fathers Initiative**

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# Introduction

This is a protocol for Mentors to use 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 approximately 4 fathers to mentor. Mentor will have 12 contacts with each young father:

- 6 home visits
- 6 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 in child care.

Through **group meetings** with all of the mentors and young fathers they mentor in a sub-parish, the mentors will reinforce the new information and skills, and help create social support for young fathers to make changes.

There are 6 themes in the protocol:

1. Fatherhood
2. Tips and tricks to being a REAL father
3. Family dreams
4. Loving my family
5. Communication
6. Parenting

For each theme there is one home visit and one group meeting. Every month for six months, the mentor will conduct one home visit and one group meeting on a theme. For example, in the first month, the mentor will conduct a home visit on fatherhood for each father he mentors. The mentor will also work with other mentors in the sub-parish to call a group meeting on fatherhood.

# Inception Visit

Before starting the home visits with fathers, visit the couple at home.

1. **Greet** the couple.
2. **Introduce yourself** as a REAL Father Mentor.
3. **Explain** that the husband has been selected to participate and learn to become a Responsible, Engaged and Loving (REAL) father. He will learn parenting skills, positive discipline skills and relationship skills.
4. **Ask** the couple what they think the benefits are of the father becoming more involved in parenting and the family.
5. **Add** that more and more families in Uganda and around the world have found that when fathers are more involved in parenting early in the children's lives, there are benefits for the child, the family and also the father himself. Positive father's involvement helps the children to grow up healthier and better educated.
6. **Explain** that you will visit the home 6 times, once a month for the next 6 months. For the first 4 visits, you will work with the husband one-to-one, because much of this information and lifestyle will be new to the men. For the final two visits, you will talk with the husband and wife – as the couple.
7. **Explain** that in addition, once a month for 6 months, you will cooperate with other Mentors to host 6 group discussions with young fathers and the husband will be asked to attend the group discussions.
8. **Clarify expectations.** The young father will learn new skills and ideas. Wives and husbands will try out new skills together. Most importantly, the husband will therefore participate in 6 home visits and 6 group meetings with young fathers. The wife will be asked to participate in the last 2 home visits, and the final group meeting.
9. **Clarify your role as a mentor.** My role is to teach, guide and support young fathers in becoming more involved with their families and children.
10. **Seek** agreement from the couple.
11. **Set** a date and time for the first visit and exchange mobile phone numbers.

# 1. FATHERHOOD

## Purpose

Reflect on what the young father wants for his children and what kind of father he wants to be.

The first home visit with the young father will set the stage for all future visits and discussions. The objective of this visit is to guide the young father through a reflection on what he wants for his children and what kind of father he wants to be, in order to help him reach these goals. You will also relate his reflections to the young father's ideas of what it means to be a man in their community, in order to help him think critically about fatherhood today, and what kind of father he would like to be and what kind of family life he wants to create.

# 1. Home Visit

## Preparation

Review the plan in advance.

## Time

45 to 60 minutes

## Introduction

“A father is one of the most important persons in a child’s life. A father can love, teach and raise their child in very positive ways. A father offers priceless love for their child. Most young fathers today know this, and want to be a responsible, engaged and loving father to their child.

Sometimes we as fathers get busy with other activities, or do not know how to act in certain situations. We often do not have models of responsible, engaged and loving fathers to learn from daily. For this reason, I will be your mentor through this journey and this important stage in your life.

Just like no two children are the same, no two fathers are the same either. Everyone has their own personalities and styles. It is up to you to decide how you want to be as a father. As your mentor, I will guide you through a series of activities and discussions to help you learn and plan how to be a father. It is your family and your future. I will guide you to make your own choices on how you want to live.”

## Activity

### 1. *Fatherhood Discussion*

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

- What animal would represent a father? Why?
- Is there a father whom you admire now, or one you admired when you were young? Why?
- Do you think that fatherhood today is different than in the past? How is it different?
- What does it mean to you to be a father?
- How did you feel when your child was born?

### 2. *Visioning Exercise*

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

**Ask** the father to listen as you ask 5 questions, slowly. He can close his eyes as he listens, if he would like to. Tell the father you are going to read the questions again and then allow him to create a vision in his head for his future.

- In the future, how big do you want your family to be?
- What would you want people in the community to say about your family?
- 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?

**Allow** the father time to answer or share his vision about what type of father he wants to be.

**Explain:** “Some men feel pressure to be like other men, both peers and like elders. They feel that there are a lot of expectations on how they should act as fathers and a man. As your mentor, I will not judge you, and will not expect you to prove that you are a real man. I know that you are a real man already. The point is that fatherhood today requires new skills and a new way of thinking.”

**Explain:** “I will help you learn skills and make plans to achieve you vision in the coming visits.”

## Homework

**Ask** the father to do an assignment between now and the next home visit. Encourage him to share his vision with his wife. Also, he could ask her to talk about her own vision, and listen to her response.

## Wrap-up

**Congratulate** the father for taking an important step for himself and his family.

**Ask** the father if he has any questions for you, and try to answer or find a way to bring the answers later.

**Agree** on a time for the 2<sup>nd</sup> home visit in the next month.

**Inform** the father of the plan for the group discussion with other fathers and mentors.

# 1. REAL Father's Group

## Preparation

Meet with the other mentors to review the session and divide responsibilities on how they will work together to conduct this discussion.

Prepare the space and materials needed for a Wang-oo.

## Time

60 minutes

## Introduction

"Being a father is one of the most important roles you have in life. Being a father to young child is a special opportunity and time. Childhood is when your child learns about love, care, values.

We know that fatherhood is a central role for men. But we also recognize that 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.

During this group discussion, we are coming together as fathers to share what this means, and how we can support each other to be the fathers that we want to be, for our children, families and ourselves."

## Activity

### 1. *Wang-oo Discussion*

**Ask** fathers to talk about what it means to be a REAL father today.

**Ask** one or more fathers to share their vision of fatherhood discussed during their mentor home visit.

**Ask** fathers to share what they have thought or realized since their mentor home visit and vision. Have they had any new insights or ideas about fatherhood?

**Ask** fathers to raise any questions about fatherhood. Encourage idea and experience sharing.

### 2. *Reflect on the community message board image*

**Show** the group the poster that will be placed in the community this month. (see poster below)

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

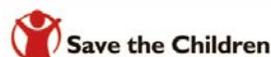


## Bedo Wego

### Woda tye Wego Kikome

*Kit kwo pa dano iyo ma jo ma otegi neno kwede*

- En tiyo matek
- En gwoko lutino ne dok maro gi bene
- En tye ki neno pi lutino ne pi kare me anyim dok tiyo matek me neno ni anyim gi obedo maber.
- En pwonyo lutino ne labongo gero dok I yoo ma opore



### *Being a Father* "My son is a REAL father!"

#### Elders' perspectives 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 "

## Group Commitment

**Ask** young fathers what they will do to become the fathers they want to be?

**Ask** the group what they will do *to support each other* to become the fathers you want to be?

**Ask** the group to decide together one new behavior they will all commit to trying this month.

Make a group sign of commitment, such as hands together in a circle, or a special handshake. One person may write down the commitments stated.

**Summarize** the commitment.

## 2. TIPS & TRICKS TO BEING A REAL FATHER

### Purpose

To learn and practice child communication and positive (nonviolent) discipline skills.

## 2. Home Visit

### Preparation

Review Resource Sheets #1, #5, #6, and #7.

Gather 10 stones when you get to the fathers home.

### Time

60 minutes

### Homework Review

**Ask** the father if he tried homework, to share his vision of fatherhood with this wife, and listen to her vision. If he tried, ask how it went and discuss any challenges. If he did not try, encourage the father to do it this week.

### Introduction

“A father’s involvement in child care benefits the child, the family and the father himself. Father’s involvement includes communication and discipline. Communication and positive discipline creates strong bonds between the child and father.

These are not always easy to do in a positive way. Sometimes when a father is feeling tired or stressed, or around his friends, he may not act the way he would like. Learning new skills, preparing in advance, and practicing can help us be the father we want to be. Remember that we are not perfect and we can always get a second chance to try and communicate and disciple in positive ways.”

### Activity

#### 1. Discussion

**Ask** the father how he can show care to their children.

**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 can, and 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.”

**Ask:** “How can fathers communicate with a young child.”

**Explain:** “Communication can mean many things: verbal and nonverbal. Communication with young children includes talking and teaching, as well as nonverbal communication like holding the child.

As fathers, we have many responsibilities. We often feel pressures, feel tired, and our child will sometimes irritate you. You might not pay attention to your child or speak to your child in a hurtful way, without that intention. But you can learn to communicate better with your child.”

**Give** the father Resource Sheet #5, and ask him which methods he could try with his child.

**Explain:** "In addition to communication, another important skill is children's discipline. Discipline means setting rules and limits that help a child to behave well. The aim of discipline is to teach or guide in order to improve a child's behavior in the future. Discipline is not the same as punishment. Punishment aims to correct for doing something wrong.

Some people worry that if they do not use physical ways to discipline or correct, the children will become spoiled or hopeless. Actually, lifelong respect from children comes from showing respect to your children. Choosing a non-violent way of disciplining, where children know how you expect them to behave, and correct through actions and words instead of beating, is what truly leads to respect. This takes more time and effort, but it will enhance the love and bonds between you and your child."

**Ask:** "How can a young child be disciplined in an effective way, without violence?"

**Mark** 2 circles on the ground with a stick: one for fear and one for respect. Give the father 10 small stones.

**Explain:** "I will read different methods of discipline and punishment. After reading each one, think about whether that method creates fear or respect from the child, throw a stone into one of the circles (for fear or respect).

- Model what you want the child to do
- Hit with a stick
- Talk to the child about your expectations and rules
- Shout at the child
- Take the child away from the situation
- Beat the child
- Call the child bad words or names
- Threaten to beat the child
- Take away the toy or the chance to play
- Praise the child for what you want to reinforce

**Explain** that it is useful to praise your child. Praise of what the child does well has many benefits. It is a way to guide behavior. It also helps the child feel confident that you love and care for the child. **Ask** the father to think of things he can say to praise the child.

**Give** the father Resource Sheet #7 (Kind and Assuring Words Children Need to Hear from their Fathers) and review it together. I am so proud of you!

- Well done!
- I like how you put the sticks / toys in that way
- You are beautiful/handsome
- You are intelligent/brave/creative
- You are kind and thoughtful
- Thank you for helping
- I believe in you
- You can do it!
- I will always be there for you, no matter what
- You are special
- I'm glad that you are my son/daughter
- I appreciate you so much
- The day you were born was one of the best days of my life

## Homework

**Ask** the father to do an assignment between now and the next home visit: practice communicating with his child regularly, and use positive discipline.

## Wrap-up

**Ask** the father how he feels about these tips and tricks to being a father.

**Agree** on a time for the 3<sup>rd</sup> home visit in the next month.

**Inform** the father of the plan for the group discussion with other fathers and mentors.

## 2. REAL Father's Group

### Preparation

Meet with the other mentors to review the session and divide responsibilities on how they will work together to conduct this discussion.

### Time

60 minutes

### Introduction

"Being a father is one of the most difficult, but rewarding, roles in life. Although it is a difficult job, there are things we can do that make it easier. Know that there is no perfect father. You and your child will make mistakes – and learn from them, every day.

During our Mentor home visits, fathers learned about ways that they can communicate with young children and discipline young children peacefully and effectively. These methods may not be easy to maintain, and fathers may feel pressure from others to resort to old ways. This group of fathers can support and encourage each other to try new, positive ways to keep their family healthy and strong."

### Activity

#### 1. Group Exercise

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

**Explain:** "I will read some statements. After each statement, move to a location to show that they "Agree", "Disagree" or "Don't know". After moving, share your views."

- Children learn best from being hit.
- Young children who cannot talk yet benefit when their parents talk with them.
- Children who are not hit will be spoiled or hopeless.
- Teaching a child is the best gift a father can give.
- Children will not remember later if they are hit when young.
- My friends will laugh if I play with my young child.

#### 2. Discussion

**Read** this statement: "You are not being judged. You are being admired."

**Ask** the group:

- (1) What they think this means,
- (2) Who would be admiring you?
- (3) Why would they admire the way you interact with your 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.
- Your neighbors will see how your children respect and love you because of your caring actions.
- Other fathers will be jealous of how you have managed to be happy in your home.

3. Reflect on the community message board image

**Show** the group the poster below.

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



**Yoo ki diro me bedo wego kikome**

**Babaa na tye wego Kikome**

*Kit kwo pa dano iyo ma lutino neno kwede*

- Babaa na pwonyo an
- Babaa na ngeyo an maber
- Babaa na kweyo cwinya
- Babaa na tuku kweda
- Babaa na maro an (dok tiyo matek) pi an

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**“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”

## Group Commitment

**Ask** young fathers specifically what they will do that will lead to:

- Be more involved in child care
- Communicate regularly with child
- Have a firm, but peaceful, reaction if the child does something wrong

Then **ask** the group what they will do to support each other to:

- Be more involved in child care
- Communicate regularly with child
- Have a firm, but peaceful, reaction if the child does something wrong

**Ask** the group to decide together one new behavior they will all commit to trying this month.

Make a group sign of commitment, such as hands together in a circle, or a special handshake. One person may write down.

**Summarize** the commitment.

# 3. FAMILY DREAMS

## Purpose

To reflect on how alcohol abuse would be an obstacle to achieving their goals and discuss options to manage pressures that lead to alcohol abuse.

# 3. Home Visit

## Preparation

Review the plan in advance.

## Time

60 minutes

## Homework Review

**Ask** the father if he tried homework, to communicate with his child and use positive discipline. If he tried, ask how it went and discuss any challenges. If he did not try, encourage the father to do it this week.

## Introduction

“As fathers and men, we face many pressures. One of the ways that men relieve the pressures is to spend time with other men, their friends, sometimes drinking alcohol. Drinking alcohol can be a good way to enjoy time with friends. But drinking too much and getting drunk causes other problems.

Men can feel pressures build up and sometime not know how to deal with the stress and emotions that come with these pressures. Today we will reflect on alcohol abuse, and learn ways to manage stress and pressures in a healthy way.”

## Activity

### 1. Spinning

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

**Pick** a point across the compound 3 to 5 meters away. Use a stick to draw a straight line in the dirt. **Explain** that the end point of the line represents his goal for his family and all of his hopes and dreams for the family and the line represents life’s journey while trying to achieve these goals.

**Instruct** the father to spin around quickly 2 times and then walk on a straight line toward the point, trying not to step off of the line.

Next **instruct** the father to close his eyes and spin around quickly 5 times and then walk in a straight line toward the end point, trying not to fall off of the line.

**Ask:** “How did that feel?” **Explain:** “Each time you spin, imagine it was like having another round of beer.”

**Ask** the father to compare how drinking too much alcohol is like the second time, and how it affects his ability to reach his goal for his family. **Explain** that even if he does not get drunk, he may have friends who do or feel pressure in the future to do this.

**Ask:** “What do you think a child sees, learns and feels when they see you drunk?”

**Ask:** "What other situations may derail you from achieving your goal for his family? How could you be prepared for these challenges?"

## 2. *Managing Pressures*

**Explain** that at times everyone feels pressures. As men and fathers, we are expected to do many things and provide for the family, without talking about the pressures or showing our stress. As a result, these may build up and then come out in ways we don't want, such as drinking too much, anger or fighting.

**Ask** the father:

- Do you find it easy to be a father?
- Do you feel any pressures?
- Does the pressure feel too high sometimes?
- What do you do to handle the pressures?

**Explain:** "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 friend and laugh with friends or family members, or write stories or music. Others fix something around the home. It depends on what you like. What is important is to recognize when you feel too much pressure, and decide how to manage it in a way that is good for you and your family."

## Homework

**Ask** the father to do an assignment between now and the next home visit: prepare what to say to friends to reduce alcohol intake, and practice ways to manage pressures.

## Wrap-up

**Ask** the father how he feels about this discussion, and if he has any questions.

**Agree** on a time for the 4<sup>th</sup> home visit in the next month.

**Inform** the father of the plan for the group discussion with other fathers and mentors.

# 3. REAL Father's Group

## Preparation

Meet with the other mentors to review the session and divide responsibilities on how they will work together to conduct this discussion.

## Time

60 minutes

## Introduction

"Many men feel stress because of the pressures on them to provide for their family. Some are not even aware that they feel this pressure, and then little things can make them react strongly, or treat others in ways they would not like. We cannot control our feelings, but we can control how we express our feelings.

Today we will discuss ways we can avoid drinking too much alcohol and violence by recognizing feeling and learning how to express feelings in a healthy way."

## Activity

### 1. Discussion

**Ask** each father to close his eyes and listen as you ask questions and think of their answers. Read one question at a time and give fathers time to think about a response before reading the next question.

- Think of a recent situation when you were angry.
- What were you thinking and feeling during this situation? Try to remember what you were feeling in your body when angry.

**Explain** that when we feel angry, we react immediately with shouting, throwing something or hitting. Sometimes we can be silent and sad. Usually these reactions can cause hurt to others and ourselves, and we may react differently if we had time to stop and think first.

**Ask** participants to sit in pairs. Discuss:

- What are some consequences when a father reacts immediately with violence?
- Is a father still respected if he does not react immediately with violence?
- What else could a father do when angry?

**Request** that a few pairs share their solutions.

Then **Ask** for them to share their answers to the following questions:

- I feel pressure because \_\_\_\_\_
- When I feel too much pressure, I \_\_\_\_\_
- To feel better about pressures, I \_\_\_\_\_
- I can support friends who feel too much pressure by \_\_\_\_\_

**Request** few fathers to share what they discussed, especially what they can do to help each other.

**Explain:** “All feelings are okay. Feelings are neither good nor bad. It is the way that we show and handle our feelings that can cause problems. As boys, many men were taught to be tough and not show their feelings. When we feel sad, we are encouraged not to talk about it. Also as men we are expected to show our strength through physical reactions. Very often by not talking, the feelings build up until they are expressed through shouting, violence, or drinking too much alcohol.

This can affect our children, our families and ourselves. When we express ourselves and manage pressures through other ways, such as being active, talking or writing, or even playing with children, we can be REAL fathers who stop, think and then react.

As fathers, we need to support each other to have the courage and strength to try new ways of acting.”

## 2. Reflect on the community message board image

**Show** the group the poster below.

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



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

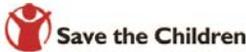
**Lawota obedo wego kikome**

*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

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Georgetown University

 **Save the Children**

**“My friend is a REAL father!”**

**A friend says:**

“He drinks responsibly”

“He does not drink to the point where 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”

## Group Commitment

**Ask** young fathers specifically what they will do to drink responsibly and manage pressures.

Then **ask** the group what they will do to support each other to:

- (1) Relieve stress in active and healthy ways,
- (2) Achieve their life goals,
- (3) Drink responsibly,
- (4) Continue making changes to be REAL fathers.

**Ask** the group to decide together one new behavior they will all commit to trying this month.

Make a group sign of commitment, such as hands together in a circle, or a special handshake. One person may write down the commitments stated.

**Summarize** the commitment.

# 4. LOVING MY FAMILY

## Purpose

To give the father the skills he needs to build and maintain a mutually respectful relationship with his wife.

# 4. Home Visit

## Preparation

Review the plan in advance.

## Time

60 minutes

## Homework Review

**Ask** the father if he tried homework to speak up to friends to reduce alcohol intake, and practice ways to manage pressures. If he tried, ask how it went and discuss any challenges. If he did not try, encourage the father to do it this week.

## Introduction

“Husbands and wives are the central pillar of the family. It is not always easy, but it is important to put in effort as a couple to understand each other and build a strong relationship and family. You, as the husband, can set the tone for the relationship. Being loving and understanding can help your wife to act this way too. In the same way, reacting negatively or violently without asking questions or listening can give the whole household this character. Today we will discuss some challenges in maintaining a harmonious relationship and skills that you can try.”

## Activity

### 1. Discussion

**Explain** that in traditional Acholi culture, wives do caring things for the husband such as foot rubs at the end of a long day. Continued courtship helps to keep the relationship strong so that discussions can go smoothly, and situations can be addressed well.

**Ask:** “What can you do to show care and love to your wife.” Discuss any concerns he may have.”

**Add:** “Some young fathers express fear that being kind allows their wives to overpower them.”

**Explain** that being caring is part of setting a tone for the relationship and household. It is not about who makes decisions. It is about making the home a happy place through small actions to each other which make you both happy and also make your child happy.

### 2. Exercise

**Explain** that some young fathers have expressed fear that being too nice will allow their wives to 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 trust, harmony and productive families.

**Hold** two jerry cans equally full of water and stand on one foot. **Ask:** "Do you feel balanced?" Next, dump out half of the water from one of the jerry cans only and stand on one foot. **Ask:** "How does this feel different?"

**Explain** that power and respect are like this. If the couple equally respects each other and has the same amount of power in the relationship, the family can move forward and develop in great ways.

### 3. Practice

**Explain** that every couple experience times when they do not agree on something, even after sharing their ideas. This is normal. How couples resolve issues are important. Fighting, fleeing (avoiding) or freezing (being silent) are not effective. Issues can be solved while still showing respect to each other.

To do this, focus on the issue, discuss possible solutions together, and make a decision based on the solution that is mutually agreeable and benefits both the husband and wife. It may not be perfect for either person, but it should benefit both. This is called, 'win-win'. Then, forgive and forget and move forward. This is how your relationship will improve over time.

**Read** this scenario: *In one home, the husband wants to save his money for a bicycle so that he can get to the market earlier in the day. The wife understands the importance of saving, but wants to buy new school uniforms for the children.*

- Ask:**
- (1) What would be the consequence if the husband uses all his power and make a decision to buy the bicycle on his own?
  - (2) How can a husband and wife work together to come to a "win-win" solution?

**Explain:** "It is also good for a child when a father maintains a harmonious relationship with the child's mother. This is a model for the child for future relationships, and gives the child a stable foundation."

## Homework

**Ask** the father to do an assignment between now and the next home visit: practice showing love and respect for your wife and discuss family issues with his wife and make a decision together.

## Wrap-up

**Ask** the father how he feels after the discussion and if he has any questions.

**Agree** on a time for the 5<sup>th</sup> home visit in the next month.

**Inform** the father of the plan for the group discussion with other fathers and mentors.

# 4. REAL Father's Group

## Preparation

Meet with the other mentors to review the session and divide responsibilities on how they will work together to conduct this discussion.

## Time

60 minutes

## Introduction

"It is never justified to use violence in your household. Communicating is the key to a more peaceful home. Understanding when we are upset and what we can do when we are upset will help us avoid violence in the heat of the moment."

## Activity

### 1. Group Exercise

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

**Explain** that you will read some statements. After each statement, each father moves to a location to show that they "Agree", "Disagree" or "Don't know". After moving, several fathers in each section share their views.

- Using violence to maintain power over a wife is fair.
- Violence in the household is misuse of one's power.
- Violence is the only way to keep my status in the family.
- I have no choice but to use violence when my wife does not greet me nicely.
- If I treat my wife nicely, she will overpower me.
- Violence is not the only way to maintain status as 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 work hard only when the parent is there, or grow up to be violent themselves.

### 2. Reflect on the community message board image

**Show** the group the poster below.

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



## Maro joo Ganga

### An atye wego kikome

- Atye ki tek cwiny me temo timo jami manyen. Man weko an atye wego matir
- An Laco kikome ma atiyo jami ducu kacel ki min ota
- Angeyo ni tic kacel ki min ota weko gang waa bedo matek
- Angeyo ni konyo min ota konyo gang wa, wa ki an
- An anyutu tam ma ki miti na iyo ma opore
- An aworo dako na ki en bene woro an
- An akello ber bedo ki yom cwiny i ganga

“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”

## Group Commitment

**Ask** young fathers specifically what they will do and to show respect and care for their wife.

Then **ask** the group how they will support each other to continue having the courage to trying new things and ways of being a father and husband?

**Ask** the group to decide together one new behavior they will all commit to trying this month.

**Make** a group sign of commitment, such as hands together in a circle, or a special handshake. One person may write down the commitments stated.

**Summarize** the commitment.

# 5. COMMUNICATION

## Purpose

To help the couple learn and practice communication and dialogue.

# 5. Home Visit

## Preparation

Find a time when both the husband and wife will be available. Review the plan in advance.

## Time

60 to 90 minutes

## Homework Review

**Ask** the father if he tried homework to show love and respect to his wife. If he tried, ask how it went and what he will continue to do. If he did not try, encourage the father to try different ways this week.

## Introduction

“Communication is very important. The way we communicate determines the way the other person responds and reacts. When we communicate in a careful and polite manner and listen to each other, even if you are not in agreement with each and every point, it leads to understanding and a mutually agreed conclusion.

Communication is the key to a successful and harmonious relationship that can last over time. That is why we will focus on communication in our first couple home visits.”

## Activity

### 1. *Introductions*

**Ask** the husband to introduce his wife to you and state 3 positive characteristics about her. Then ask the wife to introduce her husband to you and state 3 positive characteristics about him.

**Ask** how it feels to have nice things said about them, and how they can continue to do this on their own.

### 2. *Blind Communication*

**Explain** that the couple will practice communication by leading each other. Ask one person to cover their eyes, with a scarf or their hands. The other person directs them towards an object using only words. After this, they can switch roles.

**Ask** the couple the following questions, and let both answer.

- How did you feel with the communication from your partner?
- What did they do well?
- What could have been better?
- How can the lessons from this exercise be used in your daily life?

**Ask** the couple what they think good communication is compared to bad communication within a couple.

**Add**, the following tips:

- Listen well
- Do not interrupt while your spouse is talking
- Remember that communication is also through what we do and how we react. When your spouse is talking, use open body language to show you are not defensive or angry
- Show respect and acknowledge what your spouse says, regardless of whether or not you agree
- If you need time to think or be quiet, explain this and agree to continue the discussion later
- Find a mutually beneficial conclusion for both the husband and wife

### 3. *Yellow card*

**Ask** the couple if they know what a yellow card means in football.

**Explain** that you will be providing them with a yellow card for themselves. Either person can take out the yellow card when they feel there is a need to stop and talk, kind of like taking a time out or a warning...just like in football. For example, a husband returns home late and expects food, you can take out a yellow card as a way to get you both talking about the situation.

**Introduce** the yellow card and dialogue cues on the reverse side:

1<sup>st</sup> Explain your feelings.

2<sup>nd</sup> Ask: What is the situation and why?

3<sup>rd</sup> Ask: What can we do to solve this together?

**Guide** the couple through some questions.

- Where they could keep the yellow card so that both the husband and wife can easily find it?
- When they might use the yellow card?
- Agree on how each person will react if the other uses the yellow card.
- Ask them to promise that they will never use violence against the other if they take out a yellow card. They must have trust and not fear what happens if they talk about a situation.
- It is best not to use the yellow cards if one of them is drunk. Instead, wait until the following morning to use the yellow card and talk.

## Homework

**Ask** the couple to do an assignment between now and the next home visit: Make relationships agreements and discuss issues before they become problems and use the yellow card when there is a need to stop and talk.

## Next Steps

**Ask** the couple how they feel after this discussion.

**Agree** on a time for the 6<sup>th</sup> and final home visit in the next month.

**Inform** the father of the plan for the father's group.

# 5. REAL Father's Group

## Preparation

Meet with the other mentors to review the session and divide responsibilities on how they will work together to conduct this discussion.

Prepare the space and materials needed for a Wang-oo.

## Time

60 minutes

## Introduction

"This group discussion is an opportunity for young fathers to share their experiences to date, resolve any questions or concerns and encourage each other to continue making changes."

## Activity

### 1. Wang-oo Discussion

**Ask** young fathers to share their experiences and any changes they have made as a father and husband. Ask for challenges they have faced, and solutions they have discovered to the challenges.

**Encourage** other young fathers to share their own experiences and solutions.

### 2. Distribution of reminder gifts (REAL Fathers Key Chain)

**Congratulate** young fathers for taking important steps for their children, their families and themselves. It takes courage to make changes, and they have demonstrated their commitment to being a loving and caring father and husband.

**Explain** that sometimes maintaining change over time is a challenge. Also, their children are growing up and they will face new and different challenges as a father every day. The reminder gift is intended to help them remember the skills they have learned and practiced. Each time they see it, they can feel proud of what they have done and the fathers they are becoming.

**Ask** young fathers how they can support each other to maintain changes and continue to develop positive fatherhood and relationship skills.

### 3. Reflect on the community message board image

**Show** the group the poster below.

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



## 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"

## Group Commitment

**Ask** young fathers specifically what they will do and when to improve communication and peaceful reactions with wives.

Then **ask** the group what they will do to support each other to improve communication and peaceful reactions with wives?

**Ask** the group to decide together one new behavior they will all commit to trying this month.

Make a group sign of commitment, such as hands together in a circle, or a special handshake. One person may write down the commitments stated.

**Summarize** the commitment.

# 6. PARENTING

## Purpose

To help the couple discuss and agree on parenting goals, styles and commitments.

# 6. Home Visit

## Preparation

Review the plan in advance.

## Time

60 to 90 minutes

## Homework Review

**Ask** the couple if they tried their homework: to make relationship agreements and to use the yellow card to stop heated moments and discuss. If they tried, ask how it went and what they will continue to do. If they did not try, encourage couple to do it this week and report back to you.

## Introduction

“Mothers and fathers are both important as partners. Both can provide care, but each brings different perspectives and skills to raising a child. Each can teach the child special things. A mother and father who raise the child together -- parent together -- do the best. When they work together, and agree on parenting rules for themselves, they act consistently and create a stable environment for the child.”

## Activity

### 1. Interviews

**Explain** that first, before agreeing on parenting rules for the family, it is important to know each other well, including your hopes and expectations.

**Ask** the couple to interview each other using the questions you will read (from below). One person starts by pretending to be a radio presenter who conducts an interview of the spouse. After some minutes, they switch roles.

- 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 spouse do you want to be?
- What is your spouse’s best characteristic, that you want your child to be as well?

**Ask** after the interviews if they heard any points of similarity or difference? 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.

### 2. Parenting commitment

**Introduce** the idea of parenting commitments. This is a way of confirming the intention to be an involved and committed parent to the child. It can also help to clarify how the two parents agree to 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 hard time, 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 discuss some minutes together and propose 3 ways that they want to parent and 3 rules for the children they agree upon.

## Homework

**Ask** the couple to continue working together to complete their parenting commitment after more discussions together. Explain that they may need to adjust as the child grows up.

## Next Steps

**Ask** if the couple feels about these new methods, and if they have any questions.

**Congratulate** the couple for working together to have a strong relationship and be caring and commitment parents.

**Inform** the couple of the next activity which will be a meeting with young fathers and their wives prior to a community ceremony for the fathers.

# 6. REAL Father's Group I

## Preparation

Meet with the other mentors to review the session and divide responsibilities on how they will work together to conduct this discussion. Invite the young fathers and their wives.

## Time

60 minutes

## Introduction

"This group discussion is an opportunity to prepare for the community ceremony for young fathers."

## Activity

### 1. Discussion

**Ask** young fathers and their wives (together or in separate groups) to share what it means to be a REAL father, now that they have completed the program.

**Explain** that there will be ceremony soon to share this, and their experiences, with the community. Elders, leaders, and families will be invited. At this time, fathers can share their view and experiences related to what they have learned, how they have changed, and what they commit to continue. This will be in the form of making a pledge on the community message board. This will be voluntary; only fathers who wish to speak up should do so. Wives can also share their experiences, if they want to do so.

The reason is that it is good for the community to learn about how much you have learned so that they respect you as fathers and couples and give you needed support. It can also help other fathers who have not yet participated to learn how to be REAL fathers.

**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 can improve. Even those of us who are not perfect can be role models for others and contribute to healthy and safe families and communities. We can also commit to doing new actions to improve our lives.

**Show** the group the poster below. Explain that at the community celebration, we will ask some of you to make voluntary commitments 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?

## Wege kikome kelo gen ikin gangi wa



*Ka yin wego kikome, ket cingi kany:*

- ✓ Wego kikome kwanyo cawa me bedo kacel ki min ot-te kacel ki lutino
- ✓ Wego kikome nywako tam dok winyo lok pa dako ne ki pa lutino ne bene
- ✓ Wego kikome pwonyo lutino ne labongo gero
- ✓ Wego kikome miyo cwak me gwoko lutino ne
- ✓ Wego kikome pwonyo lutino ne ki maa
- ✓ Wego kikome mede ki nongo ngec ka doko dano maber kare ki kare
- ✓ Lacoo kikome ki maro dok dano gomo en



**“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: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. REAL Father's Group II

### Preparation

Meet with the other mentors to review the session and divide responsibilities on how they will 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. Consider asking a music, dance and drama troupe to perform. Requesting a leader to talk about positive fatherhood and sign the pledge board along with young fathers.

Prepare the pledge board, and all supplies needed.

Be sure to invite wives and family members to the ceremony.

### Introduction

The final group meeting is a community celebration of the young fathers. During the ceremony, the young fathers can make a public pledge and commitment to maintain the changes they have adopted, and continue trying to be REAL fathers. It is an opportunity 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

**Reveal** the final community poster.

Explain that at this time of the ceremony, we want to give some time to those who want to commit to begin a REAL father: meaning, they will be engaged and loving with their children, but also loving and respectful to their wives.

Invite young fathers to come up and **sign the pledge** board. Each young father can share their commitments with the community about what they will do differently or changes they have already made and will continue to do, to keep their child and family healthy and in harmony.

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!*