



BRAVE

REAL Fathers: Mentor Guide



Save the Children®

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This curriculum was adapted from its initial version by Deborah Almond (Save the Children US), and Cassie Biggs (Save the Children US), Mercy Phiri, Hellina Mwimba, and Ndamyo Msofi (Save the Children International Malawi) of Apetsani Mwayi Atsikana Aphunzire (AMAA). It was further adapted by Ramadhan Kirunda of Fidelitas Scientific Execution Facility (Fidelitas) in Uganda to address Climate Change, Mental Health and Income generation.

The original version was prepared by Lisa Sherburne, Brad Kerner, Dickens Ojamuge, Denis Eluk, and Benon Orach of Save the Children under the Responsible Engaged and Loving (REAL) Fathers Initiative in Uganda.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. VISION FOR MY FAMILY.....	5
Purpose.....	5
2. MY DAUGHTERS AND SONS	12
Purpose.....	12
3. IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION.....	20
Purpose.....	20
4. OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO COMPLETE EDUCATION	28
Purpose	28
5. INCOME GENERATION FOR FAMILY DREAMS.....	38
Purpose	38
6. LOVING MY FAMILY.....	52
Purpose.....	52
7. PARENTING ADOLESCENTS.....	60
Purpose.....	60
8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS	67
Purpose	67
9. LOVING AND CONSERVING MY ENVIRONMENT.....	104
Purpose	104
10. COMMUNITY BUILDING AND FATHER – DAUGHTER SPORTS CELEBRATIONS	115
Purpose	115

INTRODUCTION

This guide is to help Mentors support fathers, uncles, and father figures who have daughters, sons, or nieces and nephews aged 9-19 through the REAL Father program.

Who Are REAL Fathers?

REAL stands for **Responsible, Engaged and Loving**. REAL Fathers are fathers, uncles, and father figures, such as grandads and step dads, who take part in the program. REAL Fathers have daughters, nieces, sons, and nephews aged 9-19 years who will be referred to as young people.

What Is The REAL Fathers Program?

REAL Fathers is a mentoring program that aims to create a more supportive relationship between fathers and their children by increasing positive interactions within the family. The activities and discussions in this guide help the family to communicate and to prioritize education.

You are a REAL Fathers **Mentor**. You will be assigned 10-15 REAL Fathers and their wives to mentor. There may be more than one REAL Father per family taking part, depending on the context. Over a 6 - 10 months of active mentorship, you will have 12 - 20 contacts with them. For the 7 modules (home visits and group meetings), wives will also be asked to participate:

- 3 group meetings with just REAL Fathers eligible for enrolment on similar themes
- 4 group meetings with REAL Fathers and their wives
- 3 home visits with REAL Fathers and their wives
- 1 final community celebration

Each month you will conduct one home visit and one group meeting on a theme.

Before the sessions start you will conduct an inception visit to introduce yourself to the families that you will be supporting and talk about what they can expect.

INTRODUCTION

Group Meetings

Through group meetings with other Mentors, REAL Fathers and their wives in the community, you will help REAL Fathers:

- Understand the importance of education and ways to help adolescents stay in school
- Try out positive communication and discipline skills
- Get more involved in their daughters' and sons' lives

Home Visits

Through **home visits**, you will provide REAL Fathers and their wives the opportunity to think about and practice new positive communication and relationship skills. You will help REAL Fathers and their wives reinforce the new information and skills.

There are 10 themes in the protocol:

1. Vision for my family,
2. My Daughters and Sons,
3. Importance of Education
4. Overcoming obstacles to complete education,
5. Income generation for family dreams,
6. Loving my family,
7. Parenting Adolescents,
8. Adolescent mental health, healing and wellness,
9. Loving and conserving my environment
10. Community Building and Father-Daughter sports celebrations

How to Use This Manual

What you say is written in *italics*. Instructions are written in normal text and are not read out loud. There are different symbols to help you remember parts of the guide.



Time



Activity



Group commitment

INCEPTION VISIT

Where possible, the whole family should be invited to take part in the Inception Visit.

1. Greeting

"Hello! I am a REAL Fathers Mentor. My role is to teach, guide, and support REAL Fathers to become more involved with their families and children."

2. Explain

"You will learn new parenting, family care, gender transformation, income generation, and communication skills. You will discover the benefits of a REAL Father who is more involved in parenting and the family and of having an adolescent who stays in school. Families in Uganda and Mozambique think it is good when fathers are involved in their children's lives. This helps the children grow up healthy and educated."

3. How often?

"We will cover 10 themes over the next 6 – 10 months, one - two themes per month. Each month there will be a group meeting followed by a visit from me at your home. The first 3 group meetings and follow up visits can be with REAL Fathers alone – but couples are encouraged. The rest are mandatory for REAL Fathers and wives together."

4. My role as a mentor.

"My role is to guide, support, and role-model positive fatherhood while facilitating community transformation and educational reconnection.."

5. Consent

*"Do you have any concerns?
Do you agree to be involved?"*

6. Group Meeting

Share contact information so that you can communicate the time of the first group meeting.



1. VISION FOR MY FAMILY

Purpose

To reflect on what a REAL Father wants for his adolescent and on what kind of father he wants to be. To recognize that being a father to a young child is different to being a father to an adolescent.

1. VISION FOR MY FAMILY

GROUP MEETING

Preparation

Meet with the other Mentors to review the session and decide how to conduct this discussion.

Prepare the space and review **Resource Sheet #1**.

Time

90 minutes



Participants

REAL Fathers

Introduction

Being a father is a special time as you are one of the most important people in your child's life. During childhood and adolescence is when your daughters and sons learn about love, respect, and values. You are a role model for your child.

Sometimes, fathers get busy with other activities or do not know how to act in certain situations. Your children have changed from when they were little, they now have different needs. Being a father is hard. No one is perfect and others face challenges too. We are your Mentors and are here to help you!

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. In this group meeting, we will share what this means. We will support each other to be the best father possible for our children, families and ourselves.

1. VISION FOR MY FAMILY

Activities

1. Fatherhood Discussion

Ask these questions and **listen** to the response.



- *What does it mean to you to be a father?*
- *What animal would represent a father? Why?*
- *Is there a father whom you admire now, or one you admired when you were young? Why?*
- *How did you feel when your first child was born?*

Imagine that the animal you chose has babies.

- *What do the baby animals need?*
- *How do their needs change as they grow older?*
- *Do you think that fatherhood today is different from when you first became a father? How is it different?*

2. Times Change

Explain: *When your children were young, do you remember what they found fun and who they used to play with? As time has gone by, you may have seen their friendship circles change. Your relationship with them may have changed too.*

Ask REAL Fathers the following questions. **Listen** to their answers.

- *In what ways do your daughters and sons look different now from when they were younger?*
- *Do they behave differently from when they were younger? How?*
- *Has your relationship with your daughters changed in recent months or years? In what way?*
- *What about your relationship with your sons?*

1. VISION FOR MY FAMILY

Explain: *Your daughters and sons are growing up and changing, but you are still their father! You are their father no matter what happens.*

3. 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 toward a plan.*

Ask REAL Fathers to listen. Ask 5 questions. Speak slowly. Leave a few seconds between each question so they can really think about the answer. They can close their eyes if they want. Read the questions again.

1. *What do you think people in the community say about your family?*
2. *What do you want people to say about your family?*
3. *What do you want your children to say about you?*
4. *What hopes and dreams do you have for your daughters and sons?*
5. *How are you helping them to achieve these hopes and dreams?*

Explain: *These are your hopes and dreams, but your family is made up of more than one person! What about the hopes and dreams of your daughters and sons?*

Ask REAL Fathers these questions and give them time to answer.

1. *What do you think your daughter's vision for the future is?*
2. *What do you think your son's vision is?*
3. *What about your wife? Do you know her vision for herself and for the family?*

Explain: *The only way to know your daughter's, son's and wife's vision is to ask them. The family's vision changes as they grow older. Maybe you talk often to your daughters and sons, but maybe this is difficult. As your Mentors, we can help you start talking to your family.*

1. VISION FOR MY FAMILY

4. Tips on Being a REAL Father

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

*Each of you have a booklet called Resource Sheets: Tips on Being a REAL Father. Turn to **Resource Sheet #1**. Let's practice talking to our families.*

5. Reflect on Poster

Show the group the poster.

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

1. VISION FOR MY FAMILY

Homework & Group Promise



Ask REAL Fathers to begin talking to their families.

Ask them to share their vision for their family with their wives and adolescents and ask about their visions too.

Ask the group to promise to try the conversation starters and questions from **Resource Sheet #1** this month.

Come up with a unique and exciting cheer or pick a powerful word from the day as a group sign of commitment.

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

1. VISION FOR MY FAMILY

HOME VISIT

Time

45 minutes

Participants

REAL Fathers

Activity

Ask REAL Fathers:

1. *What did you try from Resource Sheet #1?*
2. *How did it go?*
3. *What was hard that I can help you improve?*

Remind REAL Fathers about the next group meeting.





2. MY DAUGHTERS AND SONS

Purpose

To understand adolescence and learn about the differences and similarities between daughters and sons.

2. MY DAUGHTERS AND SONS

GROUP MEETING

Preparation

Meet with the other Mentors to review the session and decide how to conduct this discussion.

Prepare the space and review **Resource Sheet #2**.

Time

90 minutes



Participants

REAL Fathers

Introduction

Your daughters and sons are making the journey from childhood to adulthood. It can be a confusing time in their life. This is a journey we have all taken, but it is still hard to walk in our child's shoes and remember what it was like.

During adolescence, girls and boys go through physical and emotional changes. These changes affect how they look, feel, and behave. They experience a growing feeling of independence. These changes are a natural part of life and no reason to feel ashamed or scared. They are beginning to feel different pressures from their family, friends, and community telling them how to act and what is expected of them.

Last time, we talked about the vision you have for your family. Your homework was to share your vision and to hear about the hopes and dreams of your daughters, sons and wives. This meeting, we will try to understand the lives of our daughters and sons better so that we can help them achieve their visions.

2. MY DAUGHTERS AND SONS

Activities

1. The Journey from Childhood to Adulthood

Explain: *The journey from childhood to adulthood is one we have all taken, but it is sometimes hard to remember what it felt like.*



Draw a line on the ground with a stick. The line represents life and each step along the line represents 5 years of life.

Ask a REAL Fathers to stand at one end of the line and imagine themselves as a baby. **Ask** them this question. Other REAL Fathers can join in with their answers.

- *What did you need when you were a baby?*

Ask REAL Fathers to take 1 step along the line. **Ask** them to imagine themselves when they were 5 years old. **Ask** these questions.

- *Do you have any memories from when you were 5 years old? What are they?*
- *Did you have any worries then?*

Ask REAL Fathers to take another step along the line. **Ask** them to think back to when they were 9 years old. **Ask** these questions.

- *What were your favorite activities when you were 9 years old?*
- *Who were your friends?*
- *Did you go to school?*

Ask REAL Fathers to take one more step along the line. Now they are 15 years old. **Ask** these questions:

2. MY DAUGHTERS AND SONS

- *What are the differences between you as a 15 year old and you as a 9 year old?*
- *What are your worries now?*

Explain: *It's easy to forget the early years of your life. Thinking back, you can remember the joys and worries of your childhood. By imagining yourself in your child's position, you can better understand the challenges they face.*

2. Equal but Different

Explain: *When they were younger, your daughters and sons may have been allowed to do the same kinds of activities. As they grow up, there may be restrictions placed on them by the family and community on what they are allowed to do. Your daughters and sons are equal to each other, but face different challenges and expectations.*

Ask REAL Fathers to select 2 locations (for example, 2 trees) about 10 meters apart.

Explain: *One location is called "TRUE" and the other is called "FALSE". The spot in the middle of the two locations is called "DON'T KNOW".*

I am going to read out some statements. I want you to run to the location that agrees with the statement. For example, if I say "I am a father," you run to the "TRUE" location because you are all fathers.

After each statement, **ask** 1 or 2 REAL Fathers why they ran to that location.

- *I want both my daughter and son to finish secondary school.*
- *My daughter and son have the same amount of time to do homework.*
- *My daughter feels safe when she walks to and from school.*
- *When it is time for harvesting, my son should help me in the field.*
- *My daughter must learn how to look after the family and home.*
- *It's my daughter's fault if she gets pregnant while still at school.*

2. MY DAUGHTERS AND SONS

Explain: *Just as men feel pressure to be like other men, your daughters and sons feel pressure too. They face different barriers to achieving their vision.*

Daughters are expected to be close to their mother but not their father. They are expected to be polite and obedient at all times. They may feel pressure from family to marry before they finish school, or they may be harassed by boys and men when travelling to and from school. Sons are expected to be strong and hard working. They may feel pressure to drop out of school to work or because they can't pay the school fees.

Both face pressure, however girls are often more vulnerable to dangers than boys. Girls face more barriers to achieving their dreams. They may not know who to talk to about the pressures they feel.

You are in a special position as a REAL Father. You can encourage them to learn more by not stopping them from reading books or listening to radio shows about these changes. If it is more comfortable, you can speak to a trusted relative or elder and encourage them to talk to your daughter. You can support your daughters and sons through these confusing times.

3. Tips on Being a REAL Father

Explain: *A REAL Father listens to and supports his adolescent children, but it is not easy. Before understanding how you can support them, you must first learn more about the barriers they face from them.*

*Turn to **Resource Sheet #2**. Let's practice how to ask our daughters and sons about the challenges they face.*

2. MY DAUGHTERS AND SONS

4. Reflect on Poster

Show the group the poster.

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



"My Father Listens to Me"

A daughter says:

"My father asks me what my challenges are."

"My father understands that my challenges are different to my brother's."

"My father asks how he can support me."

"My father is strong and respected."

2. MY DAUGHTERS AND SONS

Homework & Group Promise

Ask REAL Fathers to talk to their daughters and sons.



Ask them to find out what their adolescent children's challenges and barriers are.

Ask the group to ask the questions given in **Resource Sheet #2** this month.

Come up with a unique and exciting cheer or pick a powerful word from the day as a group sign of commitment.

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

2. MY DAUGHTERS AND SONS

HOME VISIT

Time

45 minutes

Participants

REAL Fathers

Activity

Ask REAL Fathers:

1. *What did you try from Resource Sheet #2?*
2. *How did it go?*
3. *What was hard that I can help you improve?*

Remind REAL Fathers about the next group meeting.





3. IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Purpose

To understand the importance of education and be able to communicate this to his family.

3. IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

GROUP MEETING

Preparation

Meet with the other Mentors to review the session and decide how to conduct this discussion.

Prepare the space and review **Resource Sheet #3** and **#4**.

Time

90 minutes

Participants

REAL Fathers



Introduction

Think back to our first group meeting. Do you remember the 'Vision for My Family' exercise? Today we will talk about why education should be part of that vision and how you can communicate this to your family.

Education is important for both girls and boys. It creates opportunity and increases earnings. It improves health. Education gives your daughters and sons knowledge of the world around them and changes it into something better. It develops a perspective of looking at life. It helps build opinions and self-esteem.

Just as the year has seasons, so do our lives. There is a time for play, school, work, marriage and parenthood. If that time is rushed it can have bad consequences for both daughters and sons. If your child is forced to leave school early this puts them at risk because their future is less secure.

3. IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

A REAL Father can be proud of his educated family!

Activities

1. Journey of Respect

Ask REAL Fathers to select 2 locations (for example, 2 trees) about 10 metres apart.



Explain: *One location is called “STATEMENT 1” and the other is called “STATEMENT 2”.*

Explain: *I am going to read out some statements. I want you to run to the location that agrees with the statement.*

Who is more respected?

Statement 1: The father who encourages his daughter to do her homework?

Statement 2: The father who makes his daughter wash his clothes instead of doing homework?

Statement 1: The father who speaks to his wife to make sure his daughter does not have too many chores?

Statement 2: The father who thinks that his daughter’s chores are not his problem?

Statement 1: The father who refuses to allow his daughter to get married before she is ready?

Statement 2: The father who says nothing when his family chooses an older man to marry his young daughter?

Statement 1: The father who makes sure his adolescent children have enough money for school fees?

Statement 2: The father who spends money on himself?

3. IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Statement 1: The father who makes sure that his daughter gets to and from school safely?

Statement 2: The father who does not care how his daughter gets to and from school?

After each statement, **ask** 1 or 2 REAL Fathers why they ran to that location.

Explain: *You will notice that nearly all of the statements were about daughters instead of sons. This is because girls have different kinds of barriers to staying in school. A REAL Father shows interest in these barriers and acts to protect his adolescent children from them.*

2. Showing You Care... Loudly!

Explain: *A REAL Father prioritizes education for his adolescent children, but there are times when this is not enough. Your wife and other family members also have a say in your child's future and may not feel the same. They may have other priorities or not understand the importance of education.*

A REAL Father is able to communicate to his family the importance of education for his daughters' and sons' future with his actions and words.

Ask REAL Fathers the following questions:

- *How do you know when someone cares about you?*
- *If a father wants the best for his children but does not do or say anything, is he showing that he cares "silently" or "loudly"?*
- *If a father wants the best for his children and speaks up for them to his family and community, is he showing that he cares "silently" or "loudly"?*

Ask REAL Fathers to identify if the following situations show they care "silently" or "loudly".

3. IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

- *A father sees that his daughter has no time to do her homework because she has too many chores. He speaks to his wife and asks her to share the chores more fairly. Is this “silent” or “loud” caring?*
- *A father hears that his daughter’s uncle plans to find her a husband before she finishes school. He does not want this for his daughter because he wants her to get a good education for a better future, but he says nothing. Is this “silent” or “loud” caring?*
- *A father hears that his adolescent children have stopped going to school because they have no money for fees, books, or uniforms. He could spend the money he has on other things, but decides to prioritize education and send his children back to school. Is this “silent” or “loud” caring?*

Explain: *It’s not always easy to care “loudly”. It involves defending your vision for your family when others may not agree. Even when family or community members don’t understand at first, the decision to prioritize education will bring you respect in the long run.*

3. Tips on Being a REAL Father

Explain: *A REAL Father cares “loudly” about his daughters’ and sons’ education. You should not feel embarrassed to communicate this to your family.*

*Turn to **Resource Sheet #3** and **#4**. Let’s practice how to talk to our families about the importance of education and how to support our children in school.*

3. IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

4. Reflect on Poster

Show the group the poster.

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



“Education is a Priority for My Family”

A father says:

“My vision is for my daughters and sons to finish their education.”

“Education helps give my adolescent child better opportunities in life.”

“Even when it is hard, I speak up for what I believe in.”

“My family and friends respect me because I want the best for my family.”



Save the Children.

3. IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Homework & Group Promise

Ask REAL Fathers to talk to their family about prioritizing education.



Ask them to find ways to care “loudly” about keeping their adolescent children in school.

Ask the group have the conversation outlined in **Resource Sheet #3** this month. Ask them to try helping their children with their homework using **Resource Sheet #4**.

Come up with a unique and exciting cheer or pick a powerful word from the day as a group sign of commitment.

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

3. IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

HOME VISIT

Time

45 minutes

Participants

REAL Fathers

Activity

Ask REAL Fathers:

1. *What did you try from Resource Sheet #3 and #4?*
2. *How did it go?*
3. *What was hard that I can help you improve?*

Remind REAL Fathers about the next group meeting and ask **them** to invite their wives.





4. OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO COMPLETE EDUCATION

Purpose

To understand the obstacles that stop young people from completing education and discuss ideas to overcome those obstacles.

4. OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO COMPLETE EDUCATION

GROUP MEETING

Preparation

Meet with the other Mentors to review the session and decide how to conduct this discussion.

Prepare the space and materials and review **Resource Sheets #5, #6, and #7**.

Time

60 to 90 minutes



Participants

REAL Fathers, wives and a health worker

Introduction

Prioritizing education is the first step to providing a better future for your daughters and sons. Even when your family agrees that a vision for the future should include education, it is not always easy to follow through. There are many obstacles that stop young people from completing their education.

Last month, we learnt that both girls and boys face bad consequences if they drop out of school. However, there are reasons why this happens. Perhaps they do not receive enough financial support and cannot afford the school fees or uniform anymore. They may have medical problems, such as HIV, that cause them to miss classes and fall behind. Girls have many obstacles in front of them. Their journey to school may be too dangerous. She may become pregnant or be forced to marry too young, and have to drop out of school.

4. OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO COMPLETE EDUCATION

As parents, it is your role to be aware of these obstacles and to discuss them with your family and children. Together, we will talk about ways to overcome these obstacles

4. OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO COMPLETE EDUCATION

Activities

1. Healthy is Happy

Explain: *We all know that good health is an important part of happiness, no matter what your age. If your daughter or son does not have good health, this will affect their ability to attend or do well in school. Helping young people to take care of their health can be hard, but you are not alone.*

There are many different health issues that affect young people's lives. Some are illness that are clear to see and easy to talk about. Others are much harder to talk about. Sexual and reproductive health is an example of an issue that is not easy to discuss with family.

Ask REAL Fathers and their wives to close their eyes and imagine being 14 years old again. **Ask** them the following questions and tell them to answer by raising their hand. Everyone should keep their eyes closed.

- *Who here would feel comfortable asking their father or mother for help if they were sick with malaria?*
- *Who here would feel comfortable asking a family member for advice on HIV?*
- *Of the women, who here would feel comfortable asking their mother about starting their menstruation for the first time?*
- *Who here would feel comfortable asking their father about a fever?*
- *Of the women, who here would feel comfortable asking their father about pregnancy?*

Explain: *All of us go to different people for advice on different problems. This is natural and doesn't mean that we don't respect the opinions of those we did not go to. Perhaps it is the mother, or female family members who talk to daughters about health issues. Perhaps other male relatives talk to sons about health issues. That is ok, your children should talk to whoever they feel most comfortable. The most important thing is that they receive the correct information so that they are able to make good choices.*

4. OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO COMPLETE EDUCATION

Everyone has the right to health information. This includes sexual and reproductive health information. If you are worried about your daughters or sons becoming parents at this age or getting STIs or HIV, they must have access to information that will prevent this. Allowing your children to receive this information does not mean that you are encouraging them to have sex. It means that you are recognizing their rights as young people to understand and want to protect them from the consequences of unprotected sex.

*The person who provides sexual and reproductive health information to adolescents can use **Resource Sheet #5** to help them share the right information. They should send young people to a health worker if they need services or if they are not sure of the right answer.*

A health worker has joined us today to share with us how our adolescents can access services.

2. Married Too Soon

Explain: *There is a right time for everything. Just as there is a time to grow and a time to harvest, there is a time to go to school, to marry, and to have children. Girls and boys have different expectations put on them as they grow up. One of the obstacles that girls face is the possibility of early marriage. This is marriage before the legal age of 18. There are many reasons why this might happen, but the consequences for young girls are serious.*

Ask: *What are the dangers of harvesting crops too soon?*

Explain: *If the crops are harvested before they are ready, there is a risk that they will not be ready to eat or sell. In the same way, if a girl marries before she is ready, there is a risk she will drop out of school, become pregnant, or suffer complications during child birth.*

Ask REAL Fathers and their wives to select 2 locations (for example, 2 trees) about 10 meters apart.

4. OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO COMPLETE EDUCATION

Explain: One location is called “TRUE” and the other is called “FALSE”. The spot in the middle of the two locations is called “DON’T KNOW”. I am going to read out some statements. I want you to run to the location that agrees with the statement.

- A girl is ready for marriage when she begins menstruation

ANSWER: False! Girls should not marry before aged 18, the legal age of marriage in Uganda. Menstruation is a sign that girls are physically able to become pregnant, but she is not ready for marriage.

- A girl who marries early is more likely to drop out of school

ANSWER: True! Girls who marry early often drop out of school and are unable to complete their education.

- A girl should finish her education before marrying

ANSWER: True! If she completes her education this gives her more opportunities in future.

- A girl who marries young is more likely to become a young mother

ANSWER: True! Young wives are more likely to become young mothers.

- A young mother receives all the medical care she needs.

ANSWER: False! Young mothers have less access to medical care.

- Girls with higher levels of education are less likely to marry as children.

ANSWER: True! Prioritizing education is important.

Explain: As parents, it is your role to protect your daughters from dangers she may face. Early marriage is one of these dangers. Early marriage causes girls to drop out of school and more likely to become pregnant before they are ready. If they become pregnant, they are more likely to experience problems during childbirth. Both the girl’s and the babies’ lives are at risk.

4. OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO COMPLETE EDUCATION

Keeping your daughter in school is a good way to protect her from early marriage, and ensure that both her and your future grandchildren are safe and healthy.

3. Saving for the Future

Explain: *Another reason why it can be hard to keep young people in school is a lack of money in the household to pay for school expenses. Some parents believe early marriage is a solution to this, but they are wrong. Instead, it puts girls in danger.*

Ask REAL fathers and wives the following questions and give them time to answer.

- *What do you do with crops once they have been harvested?*
- *How do you make sure you have enough food to eat until the next harvest?*

Explain: *In the same way you put crops aside to make sure you and your family have enough to eat, you can also put a small amount of money aside to make sure you can provide for your children. You can also put some sacks of maize aside to sell when school fees are due. Saving is not easy, but it allows you to plan for your future and the future of your children.*

4. Tips to Being a REAL father

Explain: *We will help you with all of these obstacles, but you will need to involve the family to come up with a plan that works for you. **Resource Sheet #5** gives some accurate sexual and reproductive health information that your children need to know. You may not be the person to tell them about it, but the information must be available to those who do talk to them about these kinds of health issues.*

Resource Sheet #6 gives you information on where you and your daughters and sons can go if you are sick or have questions.

Resource Sheet #7 gives advice on how to save money.

4. OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO COMPLETE EDUCATION

5. Reflect on Poster

Show the group the poster.

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



"Saving Money Helps Keep My Children in School"

A father says:

"If my child is sick, they need to seek healthcare."

"My daughters and sons have a right to sexual and reproductive health information."

"Saving money helps me keep my children in school."

"The time for marriage and grandchildren is after my daughter has finished school."



4. OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO COMPLETE EDUCATION

Homework & Group Promise

Ask REAL Fathers and their wives to talk to their families about overcoming obstacles to completing education.



Ask the group to read **Resource Sheets #5** and **#6**, decide who else needs this information so that young people receive sexual and reproductive health information and services.

Ask the group to read **Resource Sheet #7** and think of ways that they can save money so that their children stay in school.

Come up with a unique and exciting cheer or pick a powerful word from the day as a group sign of commitment.

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

4. OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO COMPLETE EDUCATION

HOME VISIT

Time

45 minutes



Participants

REAL Fathers and wives


Activity

Ask REAL Fathers and wives:



1. *What did you try from Resource Sheets #5, #6 and #7?*
2. *How did it go?*
3. *What was hard that I can help you improve?*

Remind REAL Fathers and their wives about the next group meeting



5. INCOME GENERATION FOR FAMILY DREAMS

Purpose

To give the skills needed to build and maintain a mutually respectful relationship between a REAL father and his family, and to develop practical income-generating abilities that support family goals.

5. INCOME GENERATION FOR FAMILY DREAMS

GROUP MEETING

Preparation

Meet with the other Mentors to review the session and decide how to conduct this discussion.

Prepare the space and review **Resource Sheet #8, #9 and #10.**

Time

90 minutes



Participants

REAL Fathers and wives

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. Your children will see this and understand what it means to live in a loving and caring home. You, as the husband, can set the tone for the relationship. Being loving and understanding can help your wife to act this way too.

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 discuss some challenges in maintaining a harmonious relationship and skills that you can try. We will reflect on alcohol abuse, and learn ways to manage stress and pressures in a healthy way. We will also explore practical ways to generate income for your family's needs and dreams.

5. INCOME GENERATION FOR FAMILY DREAMS

Activities

1. Feeling Anger

Ask REAL Fathers and their wives to close their eyes and listen as you ask questions. Give them 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: *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 you react immediately with violence?*
- *Is a father still respected if he does not react immediately with violence?*
- *What else can you do when you are angry?*

Ask a few couples to share their solutions.

Explain: *When you feel angry, it's important to communicate in a non-violent way. You can begin by explaining how you feel. For example, "I feel pressure because it is hard to provide for my family."*

Ask REAL Fathers and wives to share their answers to the following questions:

- *I feel pressure because _____*
- *When I feel too much pressure, I _____*

5. INCOME GENERATION FOR FAMILY DREAMS

- To feel better about pressures, I _____
- I can support friends who feel too much pressure by _____

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. By not talking, the feelings build up until they are expressed through shouting, violence, or drinking too much alcohol.

2. Spinning

Explain: 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: What kind of father do you want to be and what do you want to achieve for your adolescents, 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. Ask wives to stand at the end of the line.

Explain: The end point of the line represents your goal and all of your hopes and dreams for your family. The line represents life's journey while trying to achieve these goals. Your wife is at the end of this line.

Ask REAL Fathers to spin around quickly 2 times and then walk on a straight line toward their wives, trying not to step off of the line.

Ask REAL Fathers to close their 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.

5. INCOME GENERATION FOR FAMILY DREAMS

Explain: *Each time you spin, imagine it was like having another round of beer. Drinking too much alcohol is like the second time you span around.*

Ask REAL Fathers and their wives the following questions. Give each time to speak.

- *How did that feel?*
- *How is drinking too much alcohol like the second time?*
- *How does drinking too much alcohol affect your ability to reach your goal for your family?*
- *What do you think a child sees, learns and feels when they see a parent drunk?*
- *What other situations may derail you from achieving your goal for his family?*
- *How could you be prepared for these challenges?*

Explain: *There are different ways we can manage pressures and stress that are healthy. Some men play sports, play with their children, 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. It is important to communicate how you feel, especially to you wife and family. As parents, we need to support each other to have the courage and strength to try new ways of acting.”*

3. Blind Communication

Explain: *You 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.

5. INCOME GENERATION FOR FAMILY DREAMS

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

- *How did you feel about the communication from your partner?*
- *What did they do well?*
- *What could have been better?*
- *What do you think good communication is compared to bad communication within a couple?*
- *How can the lessons from this exercise be used in your daily life?*

4. Building Family Dreams Through Income Generation

Explain: A REAL Father not only communicates well with his family but also works to provide for their needs and dreams. Many fathers feel pressure because they worry about school fees, food, clothing, and other family needs. Today we will discuss practical ways to start earning income using what you already have at home.

Ask REAL Fathers and wives to form small groups of 3-4 couples. Discuss together:

1. What are your biggest family expenses?
2. What resources do you already have? (Land, skills, time, materials)
3. What small income activities have you seen others do successfully?

Ask a few groups to share their answers.

Explain: You don't need much money to start earning income. You can begin with what you have. Let's look at practical activities that REAL Fathers in Uganda have started successfully.

5. INCOME GENERATION FOR FAMILY DREAMS

Income Generating Activities You Can Start Today

Share these examples with the group and discuss each one:

1. Backyard Garden Farming

Many fathers have small pieces of land near their homes that are not being used. You can start a kitchen garden to grow vegetables like tomatoes, onions, nakati, sukuma wiki, and eggplant.

- Start small with what you can manage
- Use compost from home waste instead of buying fertilizer
- Plant what grows fast so you can sell quickly
- Your wife and children can help water in the evening
- Sell to neighbors or at the local market
- Save money by eating some vegetables at home

Activity: Ask fathers to draw their home compound on paper and identify one unused space where they could start a small garden this week.

2. Poultry Keeping

Starting with 5-10 local chickens requires little investment. Chickens can feed on kitchen waste and food scraps.

- Local chickens are hardy and rarely get sick
- They reproduce quickly
- Eggs provide food for children and income
- After 6 months, you can sell mature chickens
- Children can help collect eggs and feed chickens
- Save egg money in a special tin for school fees

Ask: Who here already keeps chickens? What advice can you share?

5. INCOME GENERATION FOR FAMILY DREAMS

3. Small Livestock - Goats and Pigs

If you have space, consider starting with one or two goats. Goats eat grass and don't need expensive food. One pig can multiply quickly and provide good income.

- Goats can graze on family land or roadsides
- A female goat gives birth twice a year
- Pig keeping requires more attention but brings faster profit
- Children learn responsibility by helping to care for animals
- Sell offspring to pay school fees or buy supplies

4. Charcoal Alternative - Briquette Making

Many fathers spend money on charcoal. You can make fuel briquettes from waste paper, dry grass, and agricultural waste.

- Collect waste materials that cost nothing
- Mix with clay soil and water
- Form into balls or blocks and dry in sun
- Use at home or sell to neighbors
- Reduces cutting of trees
- Saves money spent on charcoal

5. Repair and Making Services

Use skills you already have to earn income:

- Soap making
- Bicycle repair
- Shoe repair
- Sharpening tools (pangas, axes, knives)
- Making charcoal stoves
- Plaiting hair (for wives)
- Light candle making

Ask: What skills do you as a couple have that others would pay for?

5. INCOME GENERATION FOR FAMILY DREAMS

6. Value Addition Activities

Take raw materials and add value:

- Plant or buy fresh cassava, peel and dry it, sell dried cassava
- Make peanut butter from groundnuts
- Dry fish or meat for preservation and sale
- Make liquid soap from simple ingredients
- Process silver fish into powder for sauce

7. Trading Activities

Buy in bulk and sell in smaller quantities:

- Buy a sack of rice, repackage into kilos and sell
- Buy sugar in bulk, sell in smaller portions
- Buy bar soap, cut and sell pieces
- Transport goods from town to village on market days

Those are just some of the common activities that are often overlooked. You could have even more activities that you could do to earn money. Do not sit on your God given skill and ability.

The Family Savings Plan

Explain: Starting a business is important, but saving money is just as important. A REAL Father plans for his children's future.

Ask couples to sit together. Give them paper and discuss:

- *How much could you save each week from your income activity?*
- *Where will you keep this money safely?*
- *Who will manage the savings? (Suggest both parents together)*
- *What are you saving for? (School fees, emergencies, business growth)*

5. INCOME GENERATION FOR FAMILY DREAMS

Share the Savings Box idea:

Create a simple savings system at home:

Find a strong tin or box with a lock

- Both parents keep keys
- Every day or every week, put money in the box, even if it's small (1000, 2000, 5000 shillings)
- Write down each deposit on paper kept inside
- Don't remove money except for the agreed purpose
- Count together once a month
- Celebrate your progress as a couple

Explain: Some REAL Fathers start with 10,000 shillings per week. After one year, that's 520,000 shillings. That can pay for school fees, school supplies, uniform, or start another income project.

Small money becomes big when you save consistently.

Planning Your First Income Activity

Ask each couple to work together and complete this planning exercise:

- *What income activity will we start this month?*
- *What do we already have that we can use?*
- *What do we need to buy or borrow? How much will it cost?*
- *Who will do what? (Share responsibilities)*
- *When will we start?*
- *How much do we hope to earn in the first month?*
- *How much will we save from this income?*

Explain: The key to success is to start small, start now, and work together as a couple. Do not wait until you have "enough money" to start. Use what you have today.

Ask a few couples to share their plans with the group.

5. INCOME GENERATION FOR FAMILY DREAMS

The REAL Father's Promise for Intentional Income Generation

Ask REAL Fathers to stand and repeat after you:

- *"I promise to work hard for my family.*
- *I will use my hands, my head, and my heart.*
- *I will start small but think big.*
- *I will save money for my children's education.*
- *I will work with my wife as a team.*
- *I will not waste money on too much alcohol.*
- *I will be a REAL Father who provides."*

Managing Money Without Conflict

Explain: Money can cause fights between husbands and wives. A REAL Father manages money openly with his wife.

Discuss these principles:

- Talk to your wife about all income and expenses
- Make big spending decisions together
- Let your wife know before you spend money
- Ask your wife's advice about the business
- Share the money you earn fairly
- Don't hide money from each other
- Praise each other's contributions
- Protect family money from friends who want to borrow

Ask: What challenges do couples face when discussing money? How can these be solved?

Tips on Being a REAL Father and Parent

Explain: A REAL Father finds ways to deal with pressures and stress without harming his family. You should not feel embarrassed to communicate with your family. Turn to **Resource Sheets #8, #9 and #10**. Let's practice how to talk to communicate with our wives to create a loving and caring home.

5. INCOME GENERATION FOR FAMILY DREAMS

Reflect on Poster

Show the group the poster.

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



"My Husband Communicates With Me"

A wife says:

"My husband communicates with me when he feels pressures or stress."

"My husband does not get drunk with his friends."

"My husband talks to me in a kind way."

"Me and my husband solve problems together."



Save the Children.

5. INCOME GENERATION FOR FAMILY DREAMS

Homework & Group Promise

Ask REAL Fathers and their wives to talk to each other when they feel pressures and stress.



Ask them to find ways to communicate that don't involve alcohol, shouting or violence.

Ask the group to practice using the yellow card explained in **Resource Sheet #8** and to use **Resource Sheets #9** and **#10** to help them to communicate.

Come up with a unique and exciting cheer or pick a powerful word from the day as a group sign of commitment.

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

5. INCOME GENERATION FOR FAMILY DREAMS

HOME VISIT

Time

45 minutes



Participants

REAL Fathers and wives

Activity

Ask REAL Fathers and wives:



1. *What did you try from the Resource Sheets #8, #9 and #10?*
2. *How did it go?*
3. *What was hard that I can help you improve?*

Remind REAL Fathers and their wives about the next group meeting



6. LOVING MY FAMILY

Purpose

To learn and practice adolescent communication and positive (non-violent) discipline skills.

6. LOVING MY FAMILY

GROUP MEETING

Preparation

Meet with the other Mentors to review the session and decide how to conduct this discussion.

Prepare the space and review **Resource Sheets #11** and **#12**.

Time

90 minutes



Participants

REAL Fathers and wives

Introduction

Being a parent is one of the most difficult, but rewarding, roles in life. A parent's involvement in his daughter and son's life benefits them, the family, and the parents themselves. Parent's involvement includes communication and discipline. Communication and positive discipline creates strong bonds between the young person and parent.

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

Although being a parent is a difficult job, there are things we can do that make it easier. Know that there is no perfect parent. You and your child will make mistakes and learn from them, every day. This group of parents can support and encourage each other to try new, positive ways to keep their family healthy and strong.

6. LOVING MY FAMILY

Activities

1. Discipline without Violence

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 for children as well. There are many ways to do this.*

Ask: *How can parents communicate with young people?*

Explain: *Communication can mean many things: verbal and nonverbal. Communication with young people includes talking and teaching, as well as nonverbal communication like smiling and open body language.*

As parents, we have many responsibilities. We often feel pressures, feel tired, and our children will sometimes be disobedient or rude. You might not pay attention to your daughter or son, or you may speak to them in a hurtful way, without that intention. But you can learn to communicate better.

In addition to communication, another important skill is discipline. Discipline means setting rules and limits that help a young person to behave well. The aim of discipline is to teach or guide in order to improve a young person'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, their daughter or son 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 young people 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.

6. LOVING MY FAMILY

Ask: *How can an adolescent 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 your child, throw a stone into one of the circles (for fear or respect).*

Ask a few parents to share why they chose each circle.

- *Hit with a stick*
- *Talk to your child about your expectations and rules*
- *Shout at your child*
- *Beat your child*
- *Call your child bad words or names*
- *Threaten to beat your child*
- *Throw your child out of the house*
- *Praise your child for their good behaviour*

2. Discipline with Love

Explain: *Many parents discipline with love and are effective in teaching their child what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. They never suggest they dislike their child even when they dislike their child's behavior. They are patient, and do not expect everything to change overnight.*

This assumes that:

- *Children want to behave well, but need help in understanding how to do so.*
- *Children learn more through cooperation and recognition for what they do well than through punishment.*
- *When children feel good, they tend to behave well. When they feel bad, they may behave badly.*

6. LOVING MY FAMILY

Ask: *How can you show discipline through love?*

Give REAL Fathers and their wives time to think about the question and give their answers. Examples include:

- Praising your child for good behavior
- Explaining to your child when their behavior is bad without shouting
- Never calling your child names, even when you are frustrated
- Never using physical punishment
- Grounding your child when their behavior is bad
- Knowing where your child is at night

3. You Are Not Being Judged

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

Ask the group:

1. *What do you think this means?*
2. *Who would be admiring you?*
3. *Why would they admire the way you interact with your child?*

Explain: *Everyone wants to be the best parent they can be. Your friends and family will learn from you what it means to be a REAL Father and mother. Your neighbors will see how your children respect and love you because of your caring actions. Other parents will be jealous of how you have managed to be happy in your home.*

4. Tips to Being a REAL Parent

Explain: *It is important to communicate with your sons and daughters to have a good relationship. It's not possible to set rules and limits without talking to your child.*

*Turn to **Resource Sheets #11 and #12.** Let's learn what happens when parents use violent discipline and see examples of kind words that children need to hear from their parents*

6. LOVING MY FAMILY

4. Reflect on Poster

Show the group the poster.

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



"I Respect How He Disciplines His Children"

A friend says:

"He shows respect to his children, so they respect him."

"He does not hit or use violence towards his children."

"He asks his children how they are and knows about their lives."

"He knows where his children are at night."



Save the Children.

6. LOVING MY FAMILY

Homework & Group Promise

Ask REAL Fathers and their wives to talk to each other about how they discipline their children.



Ask them to find ways to discipline their children with love, and never with violence.

Ask the group to read **Resource Sheet #11** and practice saying kind words to their children using **Resource Sheet #12**.

Come up with a unique and exciting cheer or pick a powerful word from the day as a group sign of commitment.

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

6. LOVING MY FAMILY

HOME VISIT

Time

45 minutes

Participants

REAL Fathers and wives

Activity

Ask REAL Fathers and wives:

1. *What did you try from Resource Sheets #11 and #12?*
2. *How did it go?*
3. *What was hard that I can help you improve?*

Remind REAL Fathers and their wives about the next group meeting.





7. PARENTING ADOLESCENTS

Purpose

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

7. PARENTING ADOLESCENTS

GROUP MEETING

Preparation

Meet with the other Mentors to review the session and decide how to conduct this discussion.

Prepare the space and materials and review **Resource Sheet #13**.

Time

60 to 90 minutes



Participants

REAL Fathers, wives

Introduction

Fathers and mothers are both important as parents. Both can provide care, but each brings different perspectives and skills to raising a child. Each can teach the child special things. A father and mother who raise the child together and 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.

Over the past few months, you have developed a vision for your family, listened to their visions, learnt the differences between your daughters and sons, understood the importance of education, learnt how to overcome obstacles to finish school, and learnt about communication and positive discipline. You have done great work!

In our final group meeting, we will agree on parenting rules for the family to help you achieve your vision.

7. PARENTING ADOLESCENTS

Activities

1. Interviews

Explain: *Before agreeing on parenting rules for the family, it is important to know each other well, including your hopes and expectations. Seven months ago, REAL Fathers thought about their vision and learnt the vision of their families. Since then, we have talked about many other things to help you prioritize your children's education. Let's make sure REAL Fathers and wives are in agreement with each other about the visions.*

Ask the couple to interview each other using the questions 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 our daughter's future?*
- *What do you want for our son's future?*
- *What would you like our child to say about you in the future?*
- *What kind of spouse do you want to be?*
- *When would you like our daughter to get married?*
- *For how long should our children stay in school?*
- *Who can our daughter talk to if she needs sexual and reproductive health information?*
- *Who can our son talk to if he needs sexual and reproductive health information?*

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

Explain: *Parenting commitments are 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*

7. PARENTING ADOLESCENTS

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 propose 3 parenting commitments.

3. Discussion

Ask REAL 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: *There will be ceremony soon to share what you feel a REAL Father is, and your 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 for the ceremony is that it is good for the community to see 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.

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.

7. PARENTING ADOLESCENTS

4. Reflect on the Poster

Show the group the poster below.

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



“We Will Parent Our Children Together”

A father says:

“Me and my wife are committed to parenting together.”

“Me and my wife agree on parenting rules for our children.”

“Me and my wife prioritise education for our children.”

“Me and my wife talk to each other about our children’s lives.”



7. PARENTING ADOLESCENTS

Explain: *The next session is 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?

Homework & Group Promise

Ask REAL Fathers and their wives to talk to each other about parenting commitments.



Ask them to think of ways that they can achieve the family's vision.

Ask the group to read **Resource Sheet #13** and decide on parenting commitments they will all promise to try this month.

Come up with a unique and exciting cheer or pick a powerful word from the day as a group sign of commitment.

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

7. PARENTING ADOLESCENTS

HOME VISIT

Time

45 minutes

Participants

REAL Fathers and wives

Activity

Ask REAL Fathers and wives:

1. *What did you try from Resource Sheet #13?*
2. *How did it go?*
3. *What was hard that I can help you improve?*

Remind REAL Fathers and their wives about the Community Celebration.



8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Purpose

To understand the importance of mental health and emotional wellbeing for the whole family, recognize signs of trauma in adolescents, acknowledge the harm fathers may have caused, learn practical ways to repair relationships and support healing from difficult experiences, and promote psychological wellness for both adolescents and parents.

GROUP MEETING

Image

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Preparation

Meet with the other Mentors to review the session and decide how to conduct this discussion.

Show Image Prepare the space and review **Resource Sheet**.

Invite a counselor, mental health worker, or trained social worker to attend part of the session if possible. Prepare stories or case examples that are relevant to your community. Create a safe, non-judgmental atmosphere where fathers can be honest about past mistakes.

Time

120 minutes

Show Image

Participants

REAL Fathers and wives

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Introduction

Just as our bodies need care when they are sick, our minds and hearts also need care when we are hurt or troubled. Mental health and emotional wellbeing are as important as physical health. When our daughters, sons, or wives are struggling emotionally, it affects the whole family. A wound you cannot see can hurt just as much as a wound you can see.

Many young people in Uganda carry hidden wounds. Some have experienced sexual violence or defilement. Others have faced forced marriage or found themselves with unwanted pregnancies. Some have lost parents to illness or accidents and feel alone in the world. Others have experienced physical abuse at home, at school, or in the community. Some have been rejected by their families or communities because of pregnancy or HIV status. These experiences leave deep emotional scars that do not heal on their own.

But today we must talk about a difficult truth: Sometimes, we fathers are the cause of our children's pain and trauma.

Maybe you arranged for your daughter to marry before she was ready because you needed the bride price or thought it was tradition. Maybe you pulled your daughter from school because you believed girls do not need education. Maybe you beat your children so severely that they fear you. Maybe you drank alcohol and became violent at home. Maybe you rejected your daughter when she became pregnant. Maybe you favored your sons over your daughters and made your daughters feel worthless.

This is hard to admit. It takes great courage to look at how we have harmed those we love. But acknowledging this truth is the first step toward healing - both for our children and for ourselves as fathers.

The good news is this: It is never too late to change. You can become part of the solution, even if you were part of the problem.

A father who caused harm can become a father who brings healing. A father who destroyed can become a father who rebuilds. Today, we will learn how to recognize the harm we may have caused, take responsibility for it, repair relationships with our children, support their healing, and change ourselves to become REAL fathers who protect rather than harm.

Perhaps you, as parents, also carry your own wounds from your childhood or past experiences. Maybe you were beaten as a child and learned that this is how fathers discipline. Maybe you were forced to marry young and believe this is normal. Maybe you experienced trauma that you never healed from, and now it affects how you treat your family. Your own healing is connected to your children's healing. When parents heal and change, they can help their children heal.

A family that talks openly about feelings, acknowledges past harm, takes responsibility for change, supports each other's mental health, and works together toward healing is a strong family.

Today we will learn about mental health, recognize signs of emotional distress we may have caused, understand trauma and how adolescents heal, discover how fathers who caused harm can become agents of healing, learn practical steps to repair damaged relationships, and promote wellness in your family.

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Activities

Understanding Mental Health and Wellness

Explain: Mental health is about how we think, feel, and cope with life. Good mental health means we can handle normal stress, maintain relationships, work or study productively, and feel hope for the future. Poor mental health affects everything - school performance, relationships, physical health, and future opportunities.

Mental health is not just the absence of problems. It is also about wellness - feeling connected to others, having purpose, managing emotions, and growing as a person. We want our children to be mentally well, not just to survive but to thrive.

Ask REAL Fathers and their wives: *"What are signs that a young person has good mental health and wellness?"*

Write down their answers. Add these if not mentioned:

- Can express feelings in healthy ways
- Has friendships and feels connected
- Can concentrate in school
- Sleeps and eats normally
- Feels hopeful about the future
- Can handle disappointments
- Enjoys activities and laughter
- Feels loved and valued
- Can ask for help when needed
- Has dreams and works toward them

Explain: Now think about a young person who is struggling mentally or emotionally. They may show the opposite signs - isolation, poor school performance, hopelessness, inability to enjoy life.

As parents, we must ask ourselves honestly: **Did our actions contribute to this suffering?**

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

The Mirror of Truth: Looking at Harm We May Have Caused

Explain: Before we can help our children heal, we must be honest about harm we may have caused. This is the hardest part of being a REAL Father - looking in the mirror and seeing not just our good intentions, but also our harmful actions.

I am going to tell you some stories. These may be uncomfortable to hear because you may recognize yourself in them. That discomfort is important - it means your conscience is speaking. Listen to it.

Story 1 - Peter's Story (Forced Marriage): *Peter has a 16-year-old daughter named Agnes. When an older man offered a good bride price for Agnes, Peter accepted. He told himself he was helping his daughter find security and helping his family financially. Agnes begged to finish school first, but Peter said, "You are old enough. This is our tradition. You should be grateful."*

Agnes was forced to marry. Within months, she was pregnant and experiencing complications. She could not return to school. She became depressed, withdrawn, and told her mother she wished she was dead. She blamed her father for destroying her future. She stopped speaking to him entirely.

Peter got his bride price, but he lost his daughter's trust, love, and respect. He destroyed her mental health and her future.

Story 2 - Joseph's Story (Physical Violence): *Joseph believed that severe beatings were the only way to discipline children. When his 14-year-old son David struggled in school, Joseph beat him with a stick. When his 15-year-old daughter Rose came home late from the market, he beat her severely.*

His children began to fear him. They would hide when they heard him coming. David stopped talking to his father about school problems because he feared beatings. Rose started sneaking out at night to avoid being home. Both children developed anxiety. David started wetting his bed again, even at his age, from the stress. Rose told her teacher, "I hate my father. I wish he would die."

Joseph wanted obedient children, but his violence created fearful, traumatized children who could not trust him.

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Story 3 - William's Story (Denying Education): *William believed that educating daughters was a waste of money. When his 13-year-old daughter Mary finished Primary 7, he refused to pay for her to continue to secondary school. He said, "Girls just get married anyway. Why waste school fees?" He gave all the school fees money to his sons.*

Mary watched her brothers go to school while she stayed home doing chores. She felt worthless and unwanted. She believed her father did not value her. Within a year, Mary became pregnant - she saw no future worth protecting. She felt her father had already declared her worthless.

William saved school fees, but he caused his daughter to give up on herself and her future.

Story 4 - Stephen's Story (Rejecting a Pregnant Daughter): *Stephen's 15-year-old daughter Sophia became pregnant. Stephen was furious and ashamed. He called her terrible names - "prostitute," "disgrace," "useless girl." He threw her out of the house, saying, "You are no longer my daughter. You have shamed this family."*

Sophia had nowhere to go. She moved between relatives who did not want her. She felt abandoned and worthless. She developed severe depression. She could not return to school because her father refused to support her. She attempted suicide.

Stephen's rejection nearly killed his daughter. His shame was more important to him than her life.

Ask participants to sit silently for a moment and reflect.

Then ask: *"Have you seen these situations in your community? Have you yourself done any of these things?"*

Explain: If you recognize yourself in any of these stories, you are not alone. Many fathers have done these things. Our communities have taught us that these actions are acceptable or even expected. But now we know better. **These actions cause deep trauma to our children. They damage mental health. They destroy trust and relationships. They steal our children's futures.**

The question now is: **What will you do with this knowledge? Will you continue to harm, or will you choose to change and heal?**

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Understanding the Trauma We Cause

Explain: When fathers harm their children through forced marriage, violence, denying education, rejection, or favoritism, it causes trauma. This trauma may be even deeper than trauma from strangers because it comes from the person who should protect them most – **THEIR FATHER.**

Let me explain what happens in a child's heart and mind when their father harms them:

- **Loss of safety:** Children are supposed to feel safest with their parents. When a father beats them severely or forces them into marriage, they lose their sense of safety in the world. They think, "If even my father hurts me, no one is safe."
- **Loss of self-worth:** Children learn their value from how their parents treat them. When a father says, "You are not worth educating" or "You are a disgrace," the child believes it. They think, "I must be worthless if my own father does not value me."
- **Loss of trust:** When a father betrays a child's trust by forcing marriage, using violence, or abandoning them, the child may struggle to trust anyone for years or for life. They think, "My father betrayed me. How can I trust anyone?"
- **Loss of hope:** When a father destroys a child's opportunities through denial of education or rejection, the child loses hope for the future. They think, "Even my father gave up on me. I have no future."
- **Emotional damage:** The child may develop depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, anger problems, and inability to form healthy relationships, self-destructive behaviors, or even thoughts of suicide.

These wounds can last a lifetime if not healed.

Ask: *"If you have caused this kind of harm to your child, how do you feel knowing the damage it has done?"*

Allow fathers to express feelings like guilt, shame, regret, or defensiveness. **Acknowledge** all feelings without judgment.

Explain: Feeling guilt or shame about past actions is appropriate. It means you have a conscience. But guilt alone changes nothing. **Guilt must lead to action - to apology, repair, and change.** That is what we are learning today.

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

The REAL Father's journey: from perpetrator to healer

Explain: If you have harmed your child, you can't undo what you did. However, you can change the story from here forward. You can move from being the source of trauma to being an agent of healing. This journey has clear steps. It is not easy, but it is possible.

Practice the journey: Draw a path on the ground with stones representing different stages of the father's transformation.

Stage 1: Acknowledgment and acceptance

Place the first stone. **Explain:** The first step is the hardest: **admitting that you caused harm.** This means:

- Acknowledging to yourself what you did
- Accepting that it was wrong, regardless of your intentions or cultural practices
- Recognizing the pain you caused
- Stopping any justifications or excuses

Example: *Peter must say to himself, "I forced my daughter to marry against her will. This was wrong. I did not protect her - I harmed her. My financial need does not justify what I did. She is suffering because of my decision."*

Common obstacles at this stage:

- Denial: "It wasn't that bad" or "I didn't mean harm"
- Justification: "I did it for good reasons" or "That's how we do things here"
- Blame-shifting: "She should have obeyed" or "The community pressured me"
- Pride: "I cannot admit I was wrong"

Ask: *"What makes it hard for fathers to admit they caused harm?"*

Explain: Admitting harm feels like failure. Actually, **denial is failure. Acknowledgment is strength.** It takes a strong man to say, "I was wrong." A weak man defends his mistakes. A strong man corrects them.

Your mentor's role: Your mentor can help you acknowledge harm in a safe space where you will not be shamed but supported to change.

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Stage 2: Genuine repentance and taking responsibility

Place the second stone. **Explain:** After acknowledging harm, you must take full responsibility for it. This means:

- Truly feeling remorse for the pain caused
- Not making excuses or conditions ("I'm sorry, but you...")
- Understanding that consequences exist even for unintentional harm
- Committing to change, not just feeling bad

Example: *Joseph must say, "I beat my children severely, and this traumatized them. Even though I believed I was disciplining them, I was actually harming them. I take full responsibility for their fear and pain. There is no excuse for what I did."*

This is not just words. Your heart must genuinely grieve the pain you caused. If you only say sorry to look good but do not truly feel remorse, your child will know, and it will not heal the relationship.

Ask: *"How can you tell if someone's apology is genuine?"*

Responses might include: They do not make excuses, their actions change, they are patient with rebuilding trust, they listen to the hurt they caused.

Stage 3: Making a direct apology

Place the third stone. **Explain:** You must apologize directly to the child you harmed. This apology must be:

- Specific about what you did wrong
- Without excuses or justifications
- Acknowledging the pain you caused
- Asking for forgiveness without demanding it
- Accompanied by a commitment to change

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Example of a good apology:

Agnes's father Peter might say: "Agnes, I need to talk to you about something important. When I arranged for you to marry before you were ready, I was wrong. I know I told you it was tradition and for your good, but the truth is I put money and pressure from others above your wellbeing. I forced you into a situation that caused you pain, took away your education, and harmed your health and happiness. I see now how much you are suffering, and I caused that suffering. I am deeply sorry. I do not expect you to forgive me immediately. I have broken your trust, and I need to earn it back. I want to try to make things better, if you will allow me. I am committed to changing and never doing this again to you or your sisters."

Example of a bad apology:

"I'm sorry you feel upset about the marriage, but I was just following our culture. You should respect that I did what I thought was best."

Ask: *"What is the difference between these two apologies?"*

The good apology takes full responsibility. The bad apology makes excuses and blames the child's feelings.

Practical steps for the apology:

- Choose a private, safe time to talk
- Sit at the same level as your child (do not stand over them)
- Speak calmly and respectfully
- Allow them to respond with anger or tears without defending yourself
- Do not expect immediate forgiveness
- Do not require them to say "I forgive you" or "It's okay"
- Follow up the apology with changed actions

Important: Some children may not be ready to hear your apology. If your daughter refuses to speak to you, respect that. You can write her a letter, give it to her mother to pass on, and wait. You cannot force reconciliation.

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Stage 4: Making amends through action

Place the fourth stone. **Explain:** Words must be followed by actions. **Amends means trying to repair the damage you caused.** This might mean:

For forced marriage:

- If possible and safe, support your daughter to leave the marriage if she wishes
- Pay for her to return to school
- Provide for her needs
- Speak to the community about why forced marriage is harmful
- Ensure you never force marriage on other daughters
- Support her healing through counseling

For violent discipline:

- Completely stop all physical violence immediately
- Learn and practice non-violent discipline
- Allow your children to express anger about past violence without punishment
- If need be, attend more REAL Fathers parenting mentorship sessions
- Create a safe home where children do not fear you but RESPECT & LOVE you!
- Apologize every time you slip back into violence and recommit to change

For denying education:

- Find a way to send your daughter back to school, even if it requires sacrifice
- Provide her with school fees, supplies, and support
- Publicly acknowledge her right and ability to learn
- Tell her regularly that she is intelligent and capable
- Help her catch up if she missed school time
- Treat daughters and sons equally in educational opportunity

For rejecting a pregnant daughter:

- Welcome her back home immediately
- Help her access antenatal care and safe delivery
- Make a plan for her to return to school after giving birth
- Help with childcare so she can complete education
- Defend her against community stigma
- Tell her repeatedly that she is still loved and valued

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

- Help her plan a future, with both her child and her own goals

Example: *William, who denied his daughter Mary education, must now find money for her school fees. This might mean selling a goat, working extra, or cutting other expenses. He must prioritize her education even though she is now a young mother. He must tell her, "I was wrong to say you were not worth educating. You are intelligent and capable. I will help you return to school."*

Ask: *"Why is action more important than just saying sorry?"*

Explain: Children learn from what we do, not just what we say. If you apologize but do not change your behavior, your apology is meaningless. **Changed behavior is proof of changed heart.**

Stage 5: Consistent change and rebuilding trust

Place the fifth stone. **Explain:** Rebuilding trust takes time - often months or years. Your child will watch to see if your change is real or just temporary. You must:

- Consistently demonstrate new behavior
- Be patient when your child is still angry or distant
- Accept that rebuilding takes time
- Never say, "I apologized already, why are you still upset?"
- Keep your promises, especially small ones
- Show through daily actions that you are different now

Example: *Joseph must demonstrate every day that he will not beat his children. At first, David and Rose will still fear him. When he raises his voice, they will flinch. He must be patient, gentle, and consistent for many months before they begin to trust that he has truly changed.*

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Building trust brick by brick:

- Keep every small promise (if you say you will walk her to school, do it)
- Show interest in her life (ask about school, friends, her feelings)
- Respect her boundaries (if she needs space, give it)
- Defend her to others (speak well of her in the community)
- Show pride in her (celebrate her achievements)
- Be physically present (attend school meetings, help with homework)
- Show affection appropriately (greet her warmly, pat her shoulder)
- Listen without judgment (when she talks, truly listen)

Stage 6: Becoming an advocate for change

Place the sixth stone. **Explain:** The final stage of transformation is when you use your experience to prevent other fathers from making the same mistakes. This means:

- Speaking out against harmful practices in your community
- Sharing your story of change with other men
- Defending other girls from forced marriage or denied education
- Modeling positive fatherhood for younger men
- Supporting community programs that protect children

Example: *Peter, who forced his daughter into marriage, now speaks at community meetings against child marriage. He says, "I made this mistake with my daughter, and I regret it deeply. I am trying to repair the damage, but I cannot give her back the years I stole. Do not make my mistake. Keep your daughters in school. Let them marry when they are ready."*

This transforms your harm into healing for others. Your mistake becomes a lesson that protects other children.

Ask: *"How would it feel to move from being someone who caused harm to someone who prevents harm to others?"*

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Practical Skills for fathers in transformation

Explain: Let me give you specific skills to help you through this transformation journey.

Skill 1: Self-reflection and self-awareness

You must regularly examine your own behavior. Ask yourself:

- How do I treat my daughters compared to my sons?
- When I discipline, am I controlled or do I lose control?
- Do my children seem afraid of me?
- Do I listen to my children or only give commands?
- Do I respect my wife and model good relationships?
- When I am stressed, how do I handle it?
- Am I repeating harmful patterns from my own childhood?

Practice: Every evening for one week, sit quietly and ask yourself these questions honestly. Write down or think about your answers.

Skill 2: Accepting guidance from mentors and others

Pride prevents change. Humility enables it. You must:

- Listen when your mentor points out harmful behavior
- Accept that others (including women) may have wisdom you need
- Be willing to learn new ways of fathering
- Ask for help when you struggle
- Join support groups with other men working to change
- Not become defensive when confronted with truth

Practice with your mentor:

Ask fathers to work in pairs. One plays the mentor, one plays the father. The mentor says: *"I noticed that you shouted at your daughter and called her stupid this week. This is harmful to her mental health and self-esteem. Can we talk about other ways to express frustration?"*

The father practices receiving this feedback without becoming defensive. The father might respond: *"You are right. I lost my temper. I need help learning how to discipline without attacking her character. What should I do differently?"*

Switch roles and practice again.

Skill 3: Managing anger and stress without harming others

Many fathers harm their children when stressed or angry. You must learn to manage these feelings differently:

When you feel anger rising:

- STOP: Remove yourself from the situation before you act
- BREATHE: Take several deep breaths to calm your body
- THINK: Ask yourself, "Will this action help or harm my relationship with my child?"
- CHOOSE: Select a non-violent response

Healthy ways to handle stress:

- Talk to your wife, a friend, or mentor about your feelings
- Do physical work or exercise to release tension
- Take a walk to cool down before addressing problems
- Pray or meditate
- Identify the real source of stress (often not your child)

Practice: Think of a recent time you became angry at your child. Walk through the STOP-BREATHE-THINK-CHOOSE steps and identify what you could have done differently.

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Skill 4: Active listening

Most fathers give commands but do not listen. Your child needs you to truly hear them.

Active listening means:

- Stopping what you are doing and giving full attention
- Making eye contact
- Not interrupting
- Asking questions to understand better
- Reflecting back what you heard ("So you feel...")
- Not immediately giving solutions or lectures
- Validating feelings even if you disagree with actions

Practice: Ask fathers to pair up. One speaks for 2 minutes about a concern. The other practices active listening - no advice, no interrupting, just listening and reflecting back what they heard. Then switch.

Skill 5: Giving specific, genuine praise

Children who have been harmed need to hear specific praise to rebuild self-worth.

Not helpful: "You're a good girl." **Helpful:** "I noticed you helped your younger sister with her homework. That shows you are caring and patient."

Not helpful: "You're smart." **Helpful:** "You scored well on that exam because you studied hard. Your effort paid off."

Practice giving specific praise to your child every day this week.

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Skill 6: Making and keeping small promises

Trust is rebuilt through kept promises, especially small ones.

Start with small, achievable promises:

- "I will walk you to school tomorrow" - and do it
- "I will help you with homework on Tuesday" - and do it
- "I will not shout at you this week" - and keep that commitment

Do not make big promises you cannot keep. Keep every small promise faithfully.

Skill 7: Repairing after mistakes

You will make mistakes as you change. The key is to repair quickly.

When you mess up:

- Acknowledge it immediately ("I just shouted at you. That was wrong.")
- Apologize specifically ("I'm sorry for raising my voice and calling you careless.")
- State what you will do differently ("Next time I'm frustrated, I will take a breath before speaking.")
- Follow through with changed behavior

This teaches your child that people can make mistakes and repair them, which is itself a valuable life skill.

Re-Integration: Bringing your daughter back home and to school

Explain: For fathers whose daughters have left home due to forced marriage, pregnancy, or rejection, or who have left school, re-integration is a critical process. Let me give you practical steps.

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Scenario: Your daughter is in a forced marriage and wants to come home

Step 1: Open communication. Send someone she trusts (perhaps her mother or aunt) to ask if she wants to leave the marriage and return home. Do not assume. Let her make this choice.

Step 2: Ensure safety. If she wants to return:

- Speak to local leaders about dissolving the marriage
- Work with police if the husband is violent or refuses
- Prepare a safe home for her to return to
- Address any threats from the husband or his family

Step 3: Warm welcome. When she comes home:

- Greet her with love and relief, not shame
- Have a small family gathering to welcome her back
- Tell her clearly: "This is your home. You belong here. We love you."
- Do not criticize her marriage or the time she was away

Step 4: Address immediate needs

- Medical care if she is pregnant or was harmed
- Counseling for trauma
- Rest and recovery time
- Assessment of where she is emotionally

Step 5: Plan for her Education

- Contact her former school or find a new school
- If she has a child, arrange childcare (you and your wife can help)
- Get school supplies and uniform
- If she missed significant time, consider a catch-up program
- Meet with teachers to explain the situation and request support

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Step 6: Ongoing support

- Walk her to school for the first weeks if she is nervous
- Help with childcare daily
- Help with homework
- Attend parent meetings
- Monitor her wellbeing
- Celebrate every success

Example: *Agnes left her forced marriage after one year. Peter did all these steps. For the first month, Agnes was quiet and depressed. Peter was patient. He told her every day, "I'm glad you're home. I love you." He cared for her baby while she studied. After three months, Agnes began to smile again. After six months, she was thriving in school. After one year, she told her father, "Thank you for letting me come back. Thank you for helping me return to school. I can see you are trying to change." This was the beginning of healing in their relationship.*

Scenario: Your daughter became pregnant and you rejected her

Step 1: Reverse your rejection immediately. Go to wherever she is staying. Tell her: "I was wrong to send you away. Please come home. You are my daughter always. I love you. I want to support you and your baby."

Step 2: Public acknowledgment. If you rejected her publicly or allowed community shame, you must publicly acknowledge your wrong and your support for her.

- Speak up at community meetings
- Defend her against gossip
- Make it clear she has your full support

Step 3: Prenatal and postnatal care

- Take her to antenatal appointments
- Ensure safe delivery at a health facility
- Provide for her nutritional needs
- Help with the baby after birth

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Step 4: Education plan

- Many girls can continue school during pregnancy if they choose
- After delivery, give her time to recover (usually 3 - 6 months)
- Then help her return to school with a childcare plan
- Some schools have young mother programs - find these

Step 5: Future planning. Work with her to create a plan for her future:

- What are her educational goals?
- What career does she want?
- How will childcare work long-term?
- How can the baby's father contribute (if appropriate)?

Example: *Sophia's father Stephen found her living with a relative after he rejected her. He went to her and said, "I was wrong to throw you out. Please come home. I will support you and help you return to school after the baby comes." Sophia was hesitant at first, but she returned. Stephen cared for the baby each morning so Sophia could attend school. He told neighbors, "My daughter is continuing her education. I'm proud of her." Slowly, Sophia began to trust him again.*

Scenario: You denied your daughter education and now want to send her to school

Step 1: Acknowledge your wrongdoing. Tell your daughter clearly: "I was wrong to say you did not need education. You are intelligent and capable. I want to support you to go to back to school now."

Step 2: Address practical barriers

- Find school fees (sell an asset if necessary, adjust family budget, seek sponsors)
- Get uniform and supplies
- If she has a child, arrange childcare
- If she is married, discuss with her husband if she wants to continue marriage

Step 3: Assess Educational level

- What level did she last complete?
- Can she re-enter at that level or does she need a catch-up program?
- Some programs help over-age students complete education

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Step 4: Address emotional barriers. Your daughter may believe she is too old, too behind, or not smart enough. You must counter these beliefs:

- Tell her regularly she is capable
- Help her with homework
- Celebrate her progress
- Be patient if she struggles at first

Step 5: Long-term commitment Commit to supporting her education through secondary school and beyond if possible. Do not stop after one term.

Example: *William finally enrolled Mary in school two years after denying her education. She was now a young mother, but she was determined. William sold two goats to pay her school fees. He helped care for her baby every afternoon so she could study. He told her, "I stole two years from you by keeping you home. I cannot give those years back, but I will make sure you complete your education now." Mary struggled at first but eventually excelled. When she graduated, she told her father, "Thank you for changing your mind. You gave me back my future."*

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Creating a healing environment at home

Explain: As you work to repair relationships with individual children, you must also create an environment where healing can happen. This means changing the atmosphere of your home.

A healing home has:

1. Safety - Physical and Emotional

- No violence of any kind
- No threats or intimidation
- No harsh punishment
- No name-calling or character attacks
- Predictable routines
- Fair rules applied consistently

2. Open communication

- Regular family conversations
- Permission to express all feelings
- Parents who listen without judgment
- Safe times to bring up problems

3. Expressed love and affection

- Regular verbal expressions of love
- Appropriate physical affection
- Quality time together
- Specific praise and encouragement

4. Fairness and equality

- Sons and daughters treated with equal value
- Resources distributed based on need, not gender
- Equal educational opportunity
- Equal say in family decisions appropriate to age

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

5. Parental partnership

- Mother and father work together
- Respectful relationship between parents
- Unified approach to parenting
- Support for each other

6. Connection to support

- Access to counseling when needed
- Connection to supportive extended family
- Relationships with positive mentors
- Involvement in community support systems

Practice: Ask each father to identify one specific change they will make this week to create a more healing environment at home.

The Mother's role when the father has caused harm

Explain to wives: When your husband has harmed your children, you face a difficult position. You may feel caught between your husband and your children. You may have your own anger or hurt about what he did. However, you can play a crucial role in healing.

Your roles:

1. Protecting your children. If your husband is still causing active harm, you must protect your children, even if this means seeking outside help. Your first duty is to the safety of your children.

2. Supporting your children's healing

- Be the safe parent they can talk to
- Believe them about the harm they experienced
- Do not minimize or excuse what your husband did
- Help them access counseling or support
- Provide daily emotional support

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

3. Supporting your Husband's change (if he is genuinely changing)

- Encourage his efforts to change
- Point out when he is doing better
- Provide feedback when he slips back into old patterns
- Attend counseling or parenting programs together
- Hold him accountable to his commitments

4. Not forcing reconciliation Do not pressure your children to forgive their father before they are ready. Do not say things like "He's your father, you must respect him" or "He said sorry, so forget it now." Allow the relationship to heal at its own pace.

5. Managing your own feelings You may have your own anger, disappointment, or hurt about your husband's actions. You may need counseling yourself. Seek support for yourself so you can be strong for your children.

Important: If your husband is not truly changing - if he apologizes but continues harmful behavior, if he blames others instead of taking responsibility, if he becomes violent when confronted - you must prioritize protecting your children over preserving the marriage. A father who refuses to change continues to harm.

Signs of genuine change vs. false change

Explain: Not all change is real. Some fathers appear to change temporarily to look good or avoid consequences, but then return to harmful behavior. It is important to recognize the difference between genuine transformation and false change.

Signs of Genuine Change:

- **Consistency over time:** The change lasts for months, not just days or weeks
- **Change without audience:** He behaves well even when no one is watching
- **Accepts accountability:** He welcomes feedback and correction from mentors, wife, and even children
- **No excuses:** He does not blame others or circumstances for his past behavior
- **Emotional authenticity:** He shows genuine remorse, not just performs apologies
- **Changed daily habits:** His routine behaviors reflect new values (how he speaks, how he spends money, how he spends time)

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

- **Prioritizes children's needs:** He makes sacrifices to support children's wellbeing and education
- **Stays committed when it's hard:** He does not give up when children are still angry or when change requires sacrifice
- **Seeks help:** He attends mentoring sessions, counseling, or support groups consistently
- **Patience with trust-building:** He understands healing takes time and does not demand immediate forgiveness

Signs of False Change:

- **Temporary improvement:** Good behavior lasts only a few weeks, then reverts to old patterns
- **Performative change:** He only behaves well when others are watching
- **Defensive when questioned:** He becomes angry if wife or mentor points out problems
- **Conditional apologies:** "I'm sorry, BUT you..." or "I apologized, so you must forgive me now"
- **Blames others:** "I only did it because..." or "The community pressured me" or "You provoked me"
- **Demands immediate reconciliation:** "I said sorry, why are you still upset?"
- **No sacrifice:** He will not make difficult changes (like selling assets for school fees)
- **Quits when challenged:** He stops attending mentoring when confronted with uncomfortable truths
- **Returns to harmful behavior under stress:** When stressed, immediately reverts to violence, rejection, or harsh treatment
- **Focuses on his own redemption:** More concerned with being seen as "changed" than with children's actual healing

Ask wives: *"What signs would show you that your husband's change is real and lasting?"*

Ask fathers: *"How can you demonstrate to your family that your change is genuine and not just for show?"*

Explain: If you are genuinely changing, be patient. Your family needs time to trust that the change is real. If you are only pretending to change, know that your children will see through it eventually, and you will lose their trust forever.

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Understanding the trauma we carry: Fathers healing themselves

Explain: Many fathers who harm their children are also carrying unhealed wounds from their own childhood. Perhaps your father beat you severely, and you learned this is how fathers discipline. Perhaps you were denied education and grew up believing girls do not need school. Perhaps you experienced violence or trauma that you never processed.

This does not excuse harm you caused, but it helps explain it. And more importantly, it means you also need healing.

Ask fathers to reflect silently:

- Were you beaten as a child?
- Did you witness violence between your parents?
- Were you abandoned or rejected?
- Did you experience trauma or abuse?
- Did you grow up with harmful beliefs about men, women, or children?
- Do you use alcohol or violence to cope with painful feelings?

Explain: If you answered yes to any of these, you are carrying wounds that affect how you father your children. **You cannot give your children the healing you never received yourself.** But you can start your own healing journey now.

Fathers need healing too:

1. Acknowledge your own pain It is not weakness to admit you were hurt. It takes strength to face your own trauma.

2. Seek help for yourself Counseling is not just for children. Fathers can benefit from talking to trained counselors about their own experiences and struggles.

3. Join men's support groups Other fathers who are working to change can understand your struggles and support you. You do not have to do this alone.

4. Address alcohol or substance use If you use alcohol to cope with pain or stress, this prevents healing and causes harm to your family. Seek help for alcohol problems.

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

5. Learn new patterns You must consciously choose to break cycles of harm. Just because your father beat you does not mean you must beat your children. You can choose differently.

6. Practice self-compassion Be patient with yourself as you change. You will make mistakes. The key is to acknowledge them and keep trying.

Example: *Joseph realized that his father beat him severely, and his grandfather beat his father. For three generations, fathers taught sons that violence is how you control children. Joseph decided, "This stops with me. I will not pass this violence to my children. I will break this cycle." He joined a men's group and learned non-violent discipline. When he was tempted to hit his children, he remembered his own childhood pain and chose differently. It was hard, but he succeeded in breaking the cycle.*

Ask: *"What harmful patterns from your own childhood do you need to break so you do not pass them to your children?"*

Practical Steps for Common Situations

Explain: Let me give you very practical guidance for specific situations you may face.

Situation 1: Your daughter will not speak to you after you forced her to marry

What to do:

- Write her a letter apologizing and asking if you can talk
- Respect if she says no at first
- Work through her mother or another trusted person
- Show changed behavior toward her siblings (so she sees you are different now)
- Support her practically (school fees, medical care) even if she is not speaking to you
- Be patient - it may take months or years
- Continue reaching out gently without pressure
- Never say, "I'm your father, you must respect me" - you must earn respect back

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

What NOT to do:

- Force conversation or contact
- Demand respect or forgiveness
- Blame her for being angry
- Give up after a few attempts
- Tell others she is disrespectful for not forgiving you

Situation 2: Your children fear you because of past violence

What to do:

- Stop all violence immediately and permanently
- Apologize to each child individually
- Explain that you are learning new ways to discipline
- Be predictable and calm in your behavior
- Lower your voice when speaking
- Ask permission before touching them (until they are comfortable)
- Spend positive time together doing activities they enjoy
- Show gentleness consistently for many months
- Attend anger management or parenting training
- Let them express anger about past beatings without defending yourself

What NOT to do:

- Say "I only hit you a little" or "It wasn't that bad"
- Justify violence as "discipline" or "tradition"
- Expect them to stop fearing you immediately
- Show frustration that they are still afraid
- Return to violence when stressed

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Situation 3: Your pregnant daughter is living elsewhere after you rejected her

What to do:

- Go to her immediately with your wife
- Apologize sincerely for rejecting her
- Tell her you want her to come home
- Ask what she needs from you
- Provide for her medical care immediately
- Make concrete plans to support her and the baby
- Welcome her home warmly
- Show love and support consistently
- Help her return to school after delivery
- Defend her against community stigma

What NOT to do:

- Wait for her to come to you
- Send only your wife to bring her back
- Apologize but not change your behavior
- Bring her home but treat her with coldness
- Shame her about the pregnancy
- Make her feel like a burden
- Refuse to help with the baby

Situation 4: You denied your daughter education and she is now several years behind

What to do:

- Find out what level she reached
- Research options: regular school, accelerated programs, adult education
- Commit to paying fees for as long as needed
- Help her overcome feelings of being "too old" or "too behind"
- Provide tutoring or homework help
- Celebrate every success
- Tell her regularly she is intelligent and capable
- Support her if she has a child (provide childcare)

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

- Model valuing education by discussing what she learns

What NOT to do:

- Make empty promises about school
- Pay for only one term then stop
- Criticize her if she struggles academically
- Compare her to siblings who continued school
- Give up if she does not excel immediately
- Make her education conditional on her behavior

Situation 5: You cannot afford school fees after committing to educate your daughter

What to do:

- Be honest with her about financial challenges
- Work together to find solutions: scholarships, sponsors, cheaper schools, bursaries
- Make visible sacrifices (sell an asset, cut other expenses)
- Approach community leaders or NGOs for help
- Consider parents' associations at school for payment plans
- Never give up - keep trying to find a way
- Prioritize education above other expenses

What NOT to do:

- Use financial problems as an excuse to give up
- Spend money on alcohol or non-essentials while claiming you cannot afford school
- Favor sons' education over daughters' when money is tight
- Pull her from school without exhausting all options
- Make her feel guilty about the cost

When Professional Help Is Needed

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Explain: Parents, sometimes love and good intentions are not enough. Sometimes your child needs professional help from a counselor, social worker, or mental health professional. Knowing when to seek this help is a sign of wisdom, not weakness.

Seek professional help when your child:

- Talks about wanting to die or hurt themselves
- Has attempted suicide or self-harm
- Shows severe depression lasting more than a month (cannot eat, sleep, or function)
- Has flashbacks, nightmares, or panic attacks regularly
- Cannot attend school or function normally in daily life
- Uses alcohol or drugs to cope
- Shows extreme fear or anxiety that does not improve
- Has experienced severe trauma (defilement, severe abuse, witnessing violence)
- Shows no improvement despite your efforts to help
- Is violent toward others or themselves
- Becomes withdrawn and stops communicating entirely

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Turn to **Resource Sheet #14**. This gives you detailed guidance on supporting your family's mental health, recognizing signs of distress, understanding the healing process after harm, practical steps for common trauma situations, how to transform from perpetrator to healer, how to care for your own mental health, and where to find professional help in Uganda.

Reflect on Poster

Show the group a poster showing a father and daughter walking together toward a school, with the sun rising behind them, symbolizing new beginnings and hope. Or a poster showing a father, mother, and children sitting together peacefully, with expressions of connection and healing.

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

Possible guided reflections:

- The sun rising represents new beginnings - it's never too late to change
- Walking together shows the journey of healing is done together, not alone
- The school represents restored hope and future opportunities
- The peaceful family scene shows that healing and harmony are possible
- The connection between family members shows that broken relationships can be repaired

Homework & Group Promise

Ask REAL Fathers to honestly reflect this month on harm they may have caused their children.

Ask them to identify one specific harm they need to take responsibility for and apologize for.

Ask fathers who have caused harm to follow the steps from Stage 1 (Acknowledgment) and Stage 2 (Genuine Repentance) this month, preparing for Stage 3 (Direct Apology)

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

next month.

Ask all fathers to observe their children for signs of emotional distress and create opportunities for their children to talk about their feelings in a safe way.

Ask the group to use **Resource Sheet #14** to guide conversations about mental health and emotions with their families.

Ask each couple to discuss together:

- Whether they have caused harm to their children that needs repair
- How they can make their home emotionally safer for their children
- Whether any of their children show signs of needing professional help
- How they can support each other's mental health as parents
- What one specific action they will take this month to promote family wellness or begin the healing process

Ask fathers to commit to meeting with their mentor regularly to be held accountable for change.

Ask the group to commit to seeking professional help if their child shows signs of serious distress, and to never use violence as discipline, as this harms mental health.

Ask fathers who have denied daughters education to commit to a concrete plan to return them to school.

Come up with a unique and exciting cheer or pick a powerful word from the day as a group sign of commitment.

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

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

HOME VISIT

Show Image

Time

60 minutes

Show Image

Participants

REAL Fathers and wives

Show Image

Activity

Observe the family atmosphere during the visit. Note:

- Do children seem afraid or comfortable with their father?
- How does the father speak to his children?
- Is there evidence of recent change in behavior?
- Are there signs of emotional distress in children?
- How do family members interact with each other?

Ask REAL Fathers and wives:

1. *What did you try from Resource Sheet #14?*
2. *How did it go?*
3. *Did you reflect on harm you may have caused? What did you realize?*
4. *Have you begun the process of acknowledgment and apology? What happened?*
5. *Did you observe any signs of emotional distress in your children? What did you notice?*
6. *Were you able to have any conversations about feelings with your children? How did they respond?*

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

7. *What was hard that I can help you improve?*
8. *How are you and your spouse supporting each other's mental health?*
9. *Do you need help connecting your family to counseling or mental health services?*
10. *For fathers working on reintegration: How is the process of welcoming your daughter back or returning her to school?*

Provide specific, honest feedback:

- *"I notice your children still seem afraid of you. This shows you need to continue working on being gentler and more consistent."*
- *"I see that you are making effort. Keep going. Change takes time."*
- *"Your daughter needs professional counseling for the trauma she experienced. Let me help you connect to services."*
- *"I'm concerned about [specific behavior]. Let's talk about how to address this."*

Provide specific information about local counseling services, helplines, or support groups if the family needs professional help. Write down contact information and locations.

For fathers who have caused harm:

- Hold them accountable gently but firmly
- Acknowledge any progress while pointing out areas still needing work
- Help them prepare for difficult conversations with their children
- Role-play the apology if the father is nervous
- Encourage them when they feel discouraged
- Remind them that healing takes time and consistency

For wives:

- Ask how she is coping with the situation
- Provide support for her own emotional needs
- Help her understand her role in the healing process
- Address any safety concerns if father is still harmful
- Connect her to support if she needs counseling

8. ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH, HEALING AND WELLNESS

Encourage parents by acknowledging the effort they are making. Say: *"You are doing important and difficult work by caring for your family's mental health and working to repair harm. This takes great courage and love. I am proud of you for trying."*

Remind REAL Fathers and their wives that healing takes time and patience. Encourage them to continue creating safe spaces for emotional conversations and to be patient with themselves as they learn these new skills.

Address any immediate concerns:

- If you observe signs of serious distress in children or parents, help connect them to services immediately
- If there is ongoing violence or harm in the home, work with appropriate authorities and protection services
- If a father is not genuinely changing but only pretending, address this directly and consider involving other support structures
- If a child needs immediate protection, take action according to child protection protocols

Next steps: Agree on specific, concrete actions the father will take before your next visit:

- *"Before I return, you will have the apology conversation with your daughter."*
- *"You will visit the school and enroll your daughter by next week or month."*
- *"You will attend another REAL Fathers mentorship session on mental health and healing meeting this month."*
- *"You will practice non-violent discipline for the whole month and not beat your children even once."*

9. LOVING AND CONSERVING MY ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

To understand the connection between environmental stewardship and family wellbeing, and learn practical actions to protect natural resources that support children's education and future opportunities.

9. LOVING AND CONSERVING MY ENVIRONMENT

GROUP MEETING

Preparation

Meet with the other Mentors to review the session and decide how to conduct this discussion.

Prepare the space and review **Resource Sheet #14** and **#15**.

Time

90 minutes

Participants

REAL Fathers and wives

9. LOVING AND CONSERVING MY ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

Just as a REAL Father protects and provides for his family, the environment protects and provides for all of us. The land, water, trees, and air give us food, shelter, clean water, and firewood for cooking.

When we care for the environment, we are caring for our children's future. A healthy environment means healthy crops, clean water for drinking, firewood for cooking, and materials for building homes. It means our children can go to school without getting sick from dirty water or spending hours collecting water and firewood.

But when the environment is damaged - when trees are cut down, soil erodes, water sources dry up - our families suffer. Food becomes scarce, girls spend more time collecting water instead of studying, and illnesses increase. This affects our ability to keep our children in school.

A REAL Father understands that loving his family means loving the environment that sustains them. Today we will learn simple, practical actions that every family can do to protect our natural resources.

9. LOVING AND CONSERVING MY ENVIRONMENT

Activities

The Firewood journey

Explain: Let's talk about something we use every day - firewood or charcoal for cooking. How much time does your family spend collecting firewood each week?

Ask REAL Fathers and their wives:

- *Who in your family collects firewood?*
- *How far do they walk to find firewood?*
- *How has this changed over the years?*
- *What happens when children spend hours collecting firewood instead of doing homework?*

Explain: Trees are disappearing faster than they can grow back. This means our daughters and sons must walk further and further to find firewood, taking time away from school and putting them at risk.

Ask two volunteers to demonstrate: *One person walks 5 steps to collect "firewood" (represented by sticks). Then ask them to walk 20 steps for the same firewood.*

Ask the volunteers:

- *How did the longer journey feel?*
- *If you were a child, what would this mean for your schoolwork?*

Explain: But there is good news! A simple clay stove can save half the firewood you use. This means:

- Less time collecting firewood
- More time for children to study
- More money saved (if you buy charcoal)
- Less smoke in your home, which is better for your family's health
- Fewer trees cut down

Ask if anyone has used an energy-saving stove. Let them share their experience.

9. LOVING AND CONSERVING MY ENVIRONMENT

The Water Path

Explain: Clean water is life. But many families must walk long distances to fetch water, and often the water is not clean.



Draw two paths on the ground with a stick - one short (5 steps) and one long (15 steps).

Explain: This short path represents a home with rainwater harvesting. This long path represents walking to a distant water source.

Ask wives to walk the long path carrying a container on their head.

Ask them:

- *How many times per day does your family need to make this journey?*
- *How much time does this take away from other activities?*
- *Is the water always clean when you reach the source?*

9. LOVING AND CONSERVING MY ENVIRONMENT

Explain: Rainwater harvesting is simple. You need a tank or large container and a way to collect water from your roof when it rains. This rainwater is:

- Clean and safe for drinking, cooking, and washing
- Free - no need to pay for water
- Right at your home - saving hours of time
- Available during dry seasons if you save enough

Ask: If a daughter does not spend 2 hours per day collecting water, what could she do instead?

Responses might include: Study, help younger siblings with homework, rest, do lighter chores.

The waste that feeds

Explain: Many families throw away things that can help their gardens grow. Vegetable peelings, fruit waste, dried leaves - these are not rubbish. They are food for your soil!

Place two piles of items on the ground: One pile with food scraps/plant waste, another with plastic bottles and containers.

Ask REAL Fathers and their wives:

- *Which pile can feed your garden?*
- *Which pile will never disappear from the earth?*

Explain: Composting is simple:

1. Dig a pit in your compound
2. Put in vegetable scraps, fruit peels, dried leaves, and animal manure
3. Cover with soil
4. After a few months, you have rich fertilizer for your garden

This means:

- Better crops without buying expensive fertilizer
- Less waste in your compound
- Healthier vegetables for your family
- Money saved for school fees

9. LOVING AND CONSERVING MY ENVIRONMENT

Explain: For plastic and other waste that cannot compost:

- Reuse containers for storage
- Avoid buying single-use plastics when possible
- Never burn plastic - it creates poison smoke
- Bury non-burnable waste away from water sources

Three trees challenge

Explain: Every family should plant at least 30 - 100 trees each year depending on the size of land they have. But which trees?

Ask REAL Fathers and their wives to name trees they know. Write or remember three types:

1. **A fruit tree** (like mango, avocado, or papaya) - gives food and income
2. **A fast-growing tree** (like eucalyptus) - gives firewood in a few years
3. **A tree for building** (like pine or bamboo) - provides materials for homes and prevents erosion

Explain: Bamboo is especially good because:

- It grows very fast
- Its roots hold soil in place and stop erosion
- It can be used for building and making things to sell
- It grows near water sources and protects them

Ask: Where on your land would be the best place to plant each type of tree?

Explain: Plant trees:

- Around your compound for shade and fruit
- Near water sources to protect them
- On slopes to prevent soil from washing away
- In spaces where nothing else grows

Note: Protect young trees by building small fences around them so animals cannot damage them.

9. LOVING AND CONSERVING MY ENVIRONMENT

Journey of respect: Environmental actions

Ask REAL Fathers and their wives to select 2 locations about 10 metres apart.

Explain: One location is "MORE RESPECTED" and the other is "LESS RESPECTED".

I am going to read about two fathers. Run to the location that shows which father is more respected.

Father 1: Uses an energy-saving clay stove that uses less/half the firewood

Father 2: Uses a traditional stove that wastes firewood and fills the house with smoke

Father 1: Has a rainwater tank so his daughter/son does not walk 2 hours per day for water

Father 2: Does not think water collection is his problem to his daughter or son

Father 1: Makes compost from kitchen waste to grow vegetables

Father 2: Buys expensive fertilizer and throws away useful kitchen waste

Father 1: Plants three trees every year, including fruit trees for his children

Father 2: Cuts down trees but never plants new ones

Father 1: Uses local building materials like bamboo that grow nearby

Father 2: Buys expensive materials from far away

Father 1: Buys vegetables from local farmers

Father 2: Only buys food that has traveled from distant places

After each comparison, ask 1 or 2 participants why they chose that location.

Explain: Small actions create big changes. These are not expensive or difficult things. They are smart choices that save money, save time, and protect your children's future.

9. LOVING AND CONSERVING MY ENVIRONMENT

Tips on being a REAL Father

Explain: A REAL Father takes practical action to protect the environment because he knows this protects his family. You do not need to do everything at once. Start with one or two actions this month.

Turn to **Resource Sheet**.

Let us learn simple environmental actions and how to teach our children to care for the earth.

Reflect on Poster

Show the group the poster.

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



9. LOVING AND CONSERVING MY ENVIRONMENT

Homework & Group Promise

Ask REAL Fathers and their wives to choose at least ONE environmental action to start this month.

Ask them to select from these options:

- Start using an energy-saving clay stove
- Begin collecting rainwater (even in a simple container)
- Create a compost pit for kitchen waste
- Plant three trees (one fruit, one for firewood, one for building/erosion control)
- Buy food from local farmers instead of distant sources

Ask the group to involve their children in these actions using ideas from **Resource Sheets**.

Come up with a unique and exciting cheer or pick a powerful word from the day as a group sign of commitment.

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

HOME VISIT

Time

45 minutes

Participants

REAL Fathers and wives

Activity

Ask REAL Fathers and wives:

1. *Which environmental action did you choose to start?*
2. *What have you done so far?*
3. *Did you involve your children? How?*
4. *What challenges did you face?*
5. *What help do you need to continue?*

Remind REAL Fathers and their wives about the next group meeting.

10. COMMUNITY BUILDING AND FATHER – DAUGHTER SPORTS CELEBRATIONS

Purpose

To publicly celebrate and reinforce fathers' commitments to positive fatherhood while strengthening father-daughter bonds, supporting girls' education, and building community unity through inclusive sports activities.

10. COMMUNITY BUILDING AND FATHER – DAUGHTER SPORTS CELEBRATIONS

GROUP MEETING

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 or traditional leader to lead the ceremony. Consider asking a music, dance and drama troupe to perform. Request a leader to talk about positive fatherhood and sign the pledge board along with young fathers.

Prepare the pledge board, and all supplies needed.

Sports Activities Preparation (2 Weeks Before Event):

- Form a Sports Planning Committee with 2-3 mentors and volunteers
- Identify sports venues: school grounds or community fields
- Gather basic equipment: 2-3 footballs, volleyballs, netballs, draft boards, cones for goals
- Recruit 2 referees/coordinators per sport from teachers or community volunteers
- Create team registration lists at schools and villages
- Prepare participation certificates for all participants
- Arrange water stations and first aid kit
- Communicate with schools about reconnecting out-of-school girls through sports
- Be sure to invite wives and family members to the ceremony.

Time

3 – 4 Hours

Participants

REAL Fathers, wives, adolescent girls and boys (in-school and out-of-school), extended family, community elders, teachers, village leaders



10. COMMUNITY BUILDING AND FATHER – DAUGHTER SPORTS CELEBRATIONS

Introduction

Explain: The final group meeting is a Community Celebration of REAL Fathers and their wives. During the ceremony, REAL Fathers can make a public pledge and commitment to maintain the changes they have made, 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.

After the ceremony, we will celebrate together through sports activities. These activities are designed to strengthen father-daughter relationships, help out-of-school girls reconnect with their friends and see the value of education through play, and build unity across villages and schools.

SPORTS ACTIVITIES

Selecting teams and sports guide

Step 1: Register Participants (1 Week Before)

Set up registration at community centers, schools, and through village leaders.

Four Categories:

1. **Adolescent girls inter-village teams** (build new friendships)
2. **Adolescent girls inter-school teams** (build school pride)
3. **Out-of-school vs in-school adolescent girls** (reconnection games to attract girls back to education)
4. **Father-daughter pairs/teams** (strengthen relationships)

Record: Name, Age, Village/School (or out-of-school), Sport preference

Step 2: Select 3-4 Sports

Choose based on available space, equipment, and registrations:

Available Sports:

- Volleyball (6-8 players per team)
- Football/Soccer (7-9 players per team)
- Athletics (relay races, sack races, three-legged races)
- Draft board (individual or pairs)

Recommended Combinations:

- Volleyball + Football + Athletics + Draft board, OR
- Football + Athletics + Draft board

10. COMMUNITY BUILDING AND FATHER – DAUGHTER SPORTS CELEBRATIONS

Step 3: Form Balanced Teams

- Mix skill levels within each team
- For reconnection games: Create mixed teams with both in-school and out-of-school girls playing together
- For father-daughter activities: Pair fathers with their daughters or create small mixed teams of 3-4 pairs
- Ensure everyone gets playing time through rotation

SCHEDULE TEMPLATE (3 Hours)

Run 2-3 activities simultaneously on different fields:

Hour 1:

- Field 1: Adolescent girls inter-village volleyball (40 min)
- Field 2: Father-daughter three-legged races (30 min)

Area 3: Draft board tournament begins (ongoing)

Hour 2:

- Field 1: Out-of-school vs in-school reconnection netball game (40 min)
- Field 2: Father-daughter football friendly match (40 min)

Hour 3:

- Field 1: Adolescent girls inter-school volleyball or netball (40 min)
- Field 2: Father-daughter relay races (30 min)

Closing ceremony with certificates (30 min)

Each activity lasts 30-40 minutes with 5-10 minute breaks between games.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Referees/Coordinators (1-2 per sport)	Mentors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain simplified rules before each game• Keep time and score• Ensure safety and fair play• Encourage positive behavior• Identifies the best father – daughter team, best father, son and best daughter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Circulate among activities• Encourage father-daughter interaction• Observe out-of-school girls for follow-up• Ensure inclusive participation

10. COMMUNITY BUILDING AND FATHER – DAUGHTER SPORTS CELEBRATIONS

1. VOLLEYBALL (40 minutes)

Setup: Court 18m x 9m, net at 2.24m (lower for younger players), teams of 6-8

Format:

- Two 15-minute halves or play to 25 points
- Simple rally scoring
- Rotate players every 10 minutes so everyone plays

Categories: Inter-village girls teams, father-daughter mixed teams

Father-Daughter Tips: Fathers help daughters with technique, focus on fun over strict rules

2. FOOTBALL (40 minutes)

Setup: Half-field 50m x 30m, teams of 7-9, two 15-minute halves

Format:

- Simplified community rules
- Rolling substitutions
- Celebrate teamwork and good passes

Categories: Inter-school girls/boys matches, father-daughter friendly matches

Father-Daughter Tips: Fathers play as goalkeepers only or use non-dominant foot to keep play balanced

3. ATHLETICS (30-40 minutes)

Events:

- Relay races (4 x 50m): Father-daughter teams, inter-village girls teams
- Three-legged races (30m): Father-daughter pairs, adolescent girl pairs
- Sack races (30m): Individual, age groups 10-14 and 15-19 years

Format:

- Run heats with 4-6 participants
- Top 2 advance to finals
- Everyone receives participation recognition

Father-Daughter Focus: Emphasize communication, teamwork, and laughing together

10. COMMUNITY BUILDING AND FATHER – DAUGHTER SPORTS CELEBRATIONS

4. DRAFT BOARD (30 minutes per match)

Setup: 4-6 boards in shaded area with seating

Format:

- Tournament bracket: single elimination or round-robin
- 15-minute time limit per game
- Individual or father-daughter pairs (alternate moves)

Tips: Perfect for participants wanting a break from active sports; encourages strategic thinking

RECONNECTION GAMES: BRINGING GIRLS BACK TO SCHOOL

Purpose: Use sports to help out-of-school girls reconnect with education by reducing stigma, building friendships with in-school girls, and showing them they belong in the school community.

Pre-Game Preparation (10 minutes):

1. **Ice-Breaker Circle:** Mix in-school and out-of-school girls together
2. Each girl shares: Name, favorite activity, one thing they're good at
3. **Mentor explains:** *"Today we play together as one team. It doesn't matter if you're currently in school or not - you all belong here, you all have talents, and you all deserve education and opportunities."*

Game Format (40 minutes):

Create mixed teams where in-school and out-of-school girls play together, NOT against each other. This is critical - they should be teammates, not opponents.

- Team A: 4 in-school girls + 4 out-of-school girls
- Team B: 4 in-school girls + 4 out-of-school girls

Recommended Sports: Netball, volleyball, or football - team sports that require cooperation

During the Game:

- Referees encourage in-school girls to pass to out-of-school teammates
- Celebrate when teammates help each other succeed
- Pause to highlight good teamwork between mixed pairs
- Teachers and mentors should cheer for all girls equally

10. COMMUNITY BUILDING AND FATHER – DAUGHTER SPORTS CELEBRATIONS

After the Game (10 minutes):

1. **Gather teams together** in a circle
2. **Ask reflection questions:**
 - "What did you enjoy about playing together?"
 - "Did you make a new friend today?"
 - "What talents did you see in your teammates?"
3. **Teacher/Mentor speaks directly to out-of-school girls:** *"You played so well today! You showed you can learn, work with others, and succeed. These same talents can help you in school. Your friends here miss you and want to see you back in class. Education will open doors for your future. We want to help you return."*
4. **In-school girls invited to encourage their out-of-school friends:** *"Tell your friend one reason why you'd like to see her back in school."*
5. **Provide information:**
 - Mentors share details about re-enrollment support
 - Distribute information sheets about returning to school
 - Collect contact information from interested out-of-school girls
 - Connect them with teachers or mentors for follow-up

Follow-Up Actions:

- Within 1 week: Mentors visit homes of out-of-school girls who showed interest
- Facilitate peer support: In-school girls become buddies to returning girls
- Address barriers: School fees, uniforms, materials, family concerns
- Track which girls return to school after the event

Key Message: Sports show out-of-school girls they are welcome, capable, and valued in the school community. The joy and belonging they feel during games can motivate them to return to education.

10. COMMUNITY BUILDING AND FATHER – DAUGHTER SPORTS CELEBRATIONS

FATHER-DAUGHTER ACTIVITIES

Strengthen Father – daughter bonds through shared fun and active play

Recommended Activities:

1. Three-legged races (requires communication)
2. Mixed volleyball (fathers teach technique)
3. Draft board pairs (strategic thinking together)
4. Relay races (cheering for each other)
5. Friendly football (fathers in supportive roles)

Guidelines for Fathers:

- Encourage, don't criticize
- Celebrate effort and improvement
- Let daughters lead decisions
- Show enthusiasm and energy
- Use sports to teach life lessons: teamwork, perseverance, fair play, respecting others

After Activities: Fathers publicly share what they learned or enjoyed about playing with their daughters

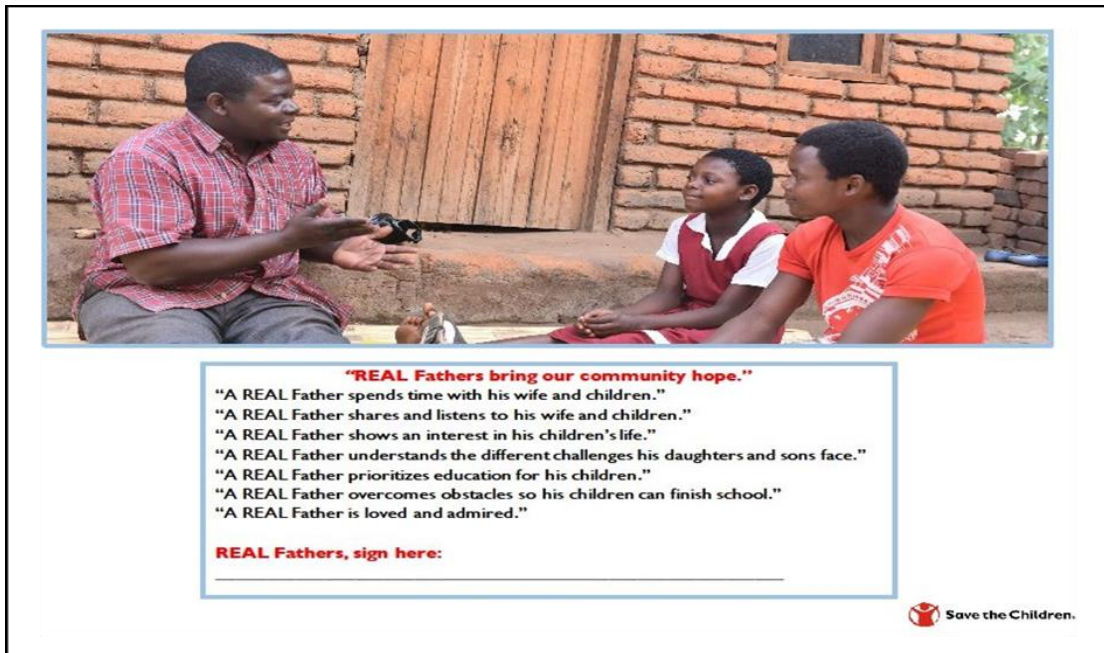
CLOSING CEREMONY (30 minutes)

Gather all participants together:

1. **Recognize all participants:** Each team stands to receive applause
2. **Present certificates:** Every participant receives a certificate of participation
3. **Special recognitions:**
 - Best father-daughter team (for participation and bonding)
 - Reconnection champion (girl who encouraged others across boundaries)
 - Community spirit award (most supportive participant)
4. **Closing remarks from community elder and government representative:**
 - Celebrate community unity and support for girls' education
 - Welcome out-of-school girls and express hope to see them return to school
 - Thank REAL Fathers for their commitment
5. **Group photo** of all participants
6. **Refreshments:** Share light snacks and drinks

10. COMMUNITY BUILDING AND FATHER – DAUGHTER SPORTS CELEBRATIONS

Reveal the final community poster.



Explain: At this time of the ceremony, we want to give some time to those who want to commit to being a REAL father. This means they will be engaged and loving with their wives, and also take an active part in their children's lives. They will prioritize their children's education to give them the best opportunities in life.

Invite fathers to come up and **sign the pledge** board. Each 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 in education and their family in harmony.

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

Congratulations! Through this celebration, REAL Fathers have demonstrate their commitment by playing with their children, families strengthen bonds through shared joy, and out-of-school girls see they belong in the learning community. This is how communities transform - together, through play, support, and commitment to every child's future.