



***A Legacy of
Connecting and Belonging***

March 19 - 21, 2025
Mystic Marriott Hotel and Spa
625 North Road
Groton, Connecticut

The 25th Annual NEFC

A Legacy of Connecting and Belonging

This year's conference theme is legacy. Legacy is the long-lasting impact of events, actions, etc. that took place in the past, or of a person's life. As the NEFC celebrates our 25th anniversary we look back with pride at what we've accomplished through fellowship and the sharing of information across our region, and we look ahead with excitement at the role we can still play to ensure a legacy of supporting fathers and families in our systems, agencies and as individual professionals.

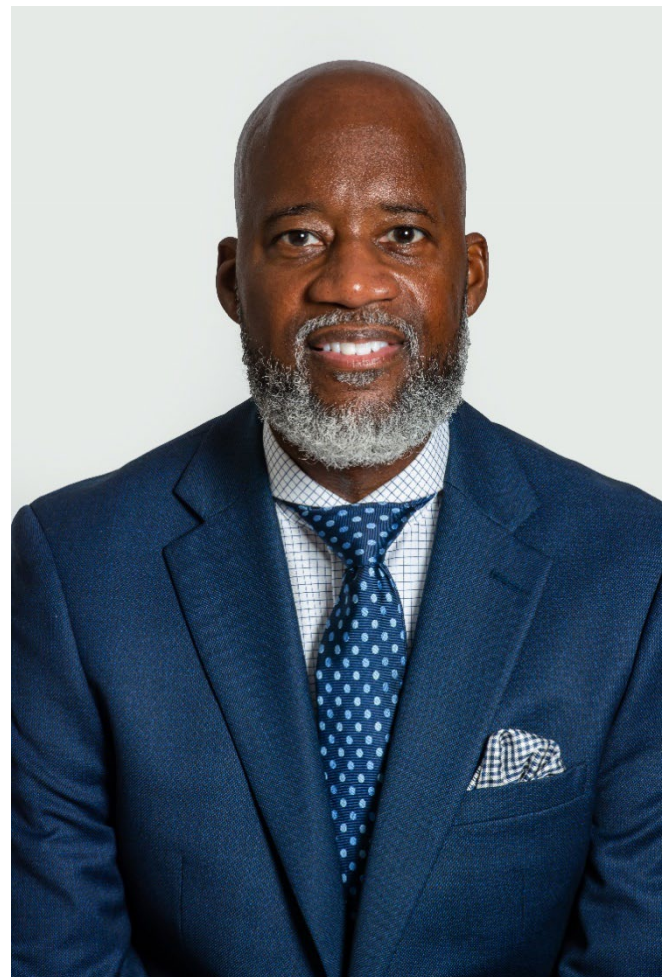
We are excited to invite dads, family service providers, social workers, health professionals, educators, program directors, state and federal representatives, father advocates and other stakeholders to participate in two and a half days of learning and sharing. The best formula for raising healthy, happy children is parents working together to meet their needs. The conference features a diverse array of talented speakers and presenters who will inspire and challenge us. We encourage you to share this brochure with colleagues and friends. We look forward to seeing you in March!

SPECIAL CONFERENCE FEATURES

Keynote Speaker: Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Abdul-Rahmaan I. Muhammad

Abdul-Rahmaan I. Muhammad is the Executive Director and Founder of My People Clinical Services. The driving philosophy of My People Clinical Services is derived from the agency's mission statement: "To enable My People to help Your People so that Our People will succeed". Muhammad also leads the non-profit arm of the agency, My People Community Services. Muhammad is a skilled speaker, program developer, and trainer. He currently serves as one of the Tri-Chairs for the Statewide Fatherhood Engagement Leadership Team and has been providing fatherhood engagement, inclusion and equity training statewide for the CT Department of Children and Families. Over the past couple years, Muhammad developed The Manhood Tree Program, which is comprised of initiatives that focus on the six "hoods": neighborhood, boyhood, young adulthood, brotherhood, fatherhood and manhood. Muhammad received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Tougaloo College and his Master of Social Work degree from Clark-Atlanta University. He is a brother of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, and member of The National Association of Black Social Workers.



SPECIAL CONFERENCE FEATURES

Topic-specific Roundtables: Wednesday, March 19, 2025

During the afternoon of Day One, representatives from the New England states will provide state-specific information and answer questions about topics such as child support, custody, re-entry, employment and child welfare.

Networking Hour: Wednesday, March 19, 2025

The NEFC regards fellowship as a critical part of the conference experience. From 4:30-5:30pm, enjoy snacks and beverages together with other conference attendees and presenters from New England and beyond in the Mystic Ballroom.

Keynote Speaker: Thursday, March 20, 2025

Scott Semple

Scott Semple was appointed Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Correction in March 2015. Scott joined the Connecticut Department of Correction (CTDOC) as a front-line Correction Officer in 1988 at the high security Cheshire Correctional Institution. During his tenure, he served the agency in numerous administrative capacities, to include pre-service training coordinator, external and legislative affairs, and warden of the state's only correctional facility dedicated for men requiring comprehensive treatment services for significant mental illness. As Commissioner, Scott successfully implemented several performance-based and progressive correctional practices designed to support both staff and incarcerated people. Most notably, they include the Emerging Adult Units known as the TRUE Unit (located in Cheshire) and the WORTH Unit (located in Niantic). He also repurposed an existing correctional facility and other specific housing units for specialized populations to provide a therapeutic environment designed to support community reintegration.



Scott implemented numerous agency-wide staff wellness initiatives to support, respond and improve policies evolving around the complex and unique needs associated with the health and welfare of correctional professionals and their families. On January 1, 2019, after more than 30 years of service to the CTDOC, Scott retired from public service. He now provides professional consult through Semple Consulting, LLC on various criminal justice and correctional related endeavors. Specifically, Scott serves as a Senior Expert for Falcon Inc., a well-respected consulting entity for correctional and community services.

SPECIAL CONFERENCE FEATURES

Keynote Speaker: Friday, March 21, 2025

Jeanine K. Fitzgerald

Jeanine draws on more than 45 years of professional experience to empower those who work with and love children to achieve more with those who are “at risk.” With experience as a certified teacher and mental health professional she understands the promise of every child, as well as the diversity of their needs. As a speaker, consultant and master trainer, Jeanine has worked with thousands of children, professionals and parents across the country. The settings have been varied and include keynote presentations for the Child Welfare League of America, New England Association for the Education of Young Children, Northeast Montessori Institute, Vermont Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, Children’s Trust Fund, Texas State Association for School Psychologists, and Family Child Care Association of New York State. She is recognized on the federal level as an approved trainer in the fields of education, disabilities and mental health. Jeanine is the owner and executive director of Fitzgerald Community School in Northborough, Massachusetts. This is a nature-based, project immersion preschool through grade 6, independent educational community.



Dads’ Stories

Dads from across New England will talk about their involvement with, and commitment to, their children ... a wonderful opportunity to hear directly from dads!

Resource Hall

In the NEFC Resource Hall, shop the selection of books on fathering and family development as well as children’s books with dad-friendly themes as well as free information and materials about programs and services offered by agencies throughout New England and at the national level.

Door Prizes

Throughout the two and a half days, attendees will have the opportunity to win cool stuff!

A Note About Attire

The temperature throughout the hotel may vary, the NEFC suggests wearing layers.

Explore the Area

Information will be available about local options for dining and entertainment to help you enjoy the Groton/Mystic area.



Hotel Room Reservations

The Conference will take place at the beautiful **Mystic Marriott Hotel and Spa**, located at 625 North Road, Groton, Connecticut.



A block of rooms has been reserved for March 18 - 21 under the name "New England Fathering Conference."

NEFC room rates are \$119.00/night + 15% tax.

Conference attendees are responsible for booking their own room reservations.

Please contact the hotel directly at **1-860-446-2600** to make your reservations by phone. **Be sure to mention that you would like a room under the "New England Fathering Conference" block.**

Room reservations can also be made online by clicking the link provided on the New England Fathering Conference (NEFC) website: www.nefatheringconference.org

The deadline for room reservations at the NEFC rate is Friday, February 18, 2025.



Conference Registration

PLEASE REGISTER ONLINE AT www.nefatheringconference.org

ALL ATTENDEES MUST REGISTER ONLINE

PAYMENT MUST BE MADE BY CREDIT CARD AT TIME OF REGISTRATION

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 18, 2025 BY 5:00PM

ALL FEES ARE NONREFUNDABLE

REGISTRATION CATEGORIES

Agency Staff:	A person attending on behalf of their federal/state/nonprofit/for-profit agency
Individual:	A person attending who is not representing a particular agency
Student:	A person currently enrolled as a college, graduate or postgraduate student. <i>A current .edu email address must be provided at time of registration, and a valid student photo ID is required at check-in.</i>
Program Dad:	A person currently participating in a parenting/fatherhood program. Attendance is sponsored by the agency offering the program, all fees paid by the agency.

REGISTRATION FEES

- Each registration fee paid provides a ticket for one person for the full event
- Tickets may not be shared by multiple individuals
- Fee includes breakfast and lunch on full event days, and breakfast on final day
- All fees must be paid online at time of registration.

Agency Staff: \$450.00

Individual: \$450.00

Student: \$225.00

NOTE: *In order to get this rate, a student must enter a valid .edu address at time of registration, and show a valid student ID at event check-in.*

Program Dad: \$100.00

*The agency sponsoring attendance for their Program Dads must pay the fees and Program Dads must be accompanied by staff from the sponsoring agency to take advantage of this discounted rate. **This rate will be offered to up to 75 registered Program Dads***

REPLACING A REGISTRANT

An agency may replace the person assigned to a particular ticket if that person is no longer able to attend. However, the replacement attendee must be in the same registration category as defined above, or a category with a higher fee. No refunds or partial refunds will be given.



Conference Registration

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 18, 2025 BY 5:00PM

ALL FEES ARE NONREFUNDABLE

NEED APPROVAL FROM YOUR AGENCY TO ATTEND?

If you are an individual registering and attending in your professional role as an agency staff, you must note during registration your agency has approved for you to attend. **The NEFC Planning Committee will not reimburse individuals who pay with their personal credit card that have not confirmed with their agency that they are approved to attend.**

NEED TO REGISTER A GROUP OF STAFF AND/OR PROGRAM DADS?

An agency representative may register up to 10 individuals under each Eventbrite order. To help with those who are coordinating registration of a group, the NEFC Planning Committee has created a form outlining the required information for each person to be registered. The form is available on the NEFC website. You can download this form and collect information from each staff and/or program dad, so you have everything you need when you enter the Eventbrite system to complete your group registration and pay by credit card.

www.nefatheringconference.org

CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS (CECs) FOR LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS:

An application for Continuing Education Credit Hours (CECs) has been submitted for approval through the CT Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW/CT). **There is an additional non-refundable fee of \$25.00 if you wish to receive CECs. When you begin the registration process by choosing your ticket type, if you wish to receive CECs please choose the "NASW CEC Fee" option to add the fee to the order. You must also check the CEC box when entering attendee details in the order form and enter your professional license number.**

Payment for CECs must be made at the time of registration.

Questions about Registration?

Answers to *Frequently Asked Questions* are available on the NEFC website or contact Diana DiTunno at diana.ditunno@ct.gov

ACCESSABILITY/ACCOMMODATIONS:

The NEFC Planning Committee will do our best to fulfill requests for reasonable accommodations. Please note individual needs (accessibility requirements, etc.) when you register.

If you require an interpreter for the hearing impaired, please send email to info@nefatheringconference.org by Friday, January 17, 2025. NEFC may not be able to fulfill requests made after this date.



Conference Schedule At-A-Glance

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

5:00pm – 7:00pm Early Check-in

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

7:30am Check-in/Breakfast
8:15am Welcome/Acknowledgements
8:45am Opening Remarks
9:15am **Keynote Speaker: Abdul-Rahmaan I. Muhammad**
10:00am Questions/Discussion
10:15am *Find Your Workshop!*
10:30am **Session A Workshops**
12:30pm Lunch
1:45pm **Dads' Stories**
2:15pm *Find Your Roundtable!*
2:30pm **Systems Roundtables by Topic**
4:30pm Day One Ends

Networking Hour

From 4:30-5:30pm, enjoy snacks and beverages together with other conference attendees and presenters in the Mystic Ballroom.

Thursday, March 20, 2025

7:30am Check-in/Breakfast
8:00am Welcome/Acknowledgements
8:15am Opening Remarks
8:45am **Dads' Stories**
9:15am **Keynote Speaker: Scott Semple**
10:00am Questions/Discussion
10:15am *Find Your Workshop!*
10:30am **Session B Workshops**
12:30pm Lunch
1:45pm **Dads' Stories**
2:15pm *Find Your Workshop!*
2:30pm **Session C Workshops**
4:30pm Day Two Ends

Friday, March 21, 2025

7:30am Check-in/Breakfast
8:00am Welcome/Acknowledgements
8:15am **Keynote Speaker: Jeanine Fitzgerald**
9:00am Questions/Discussion
9:15am *Find Your Workshop!*
9:30am **Workshops Session D**
11:30am Conference Ends



Workshops & Roundtables

NEFC asks presenters to tell us their target audience in case people are having a hard time choosing and want to attend a session that is focused on their work or parental role or both! Presenters choose from: direct service providers, supervisors, or fathers/family men. The target audience is listed under “who should attend” for each workshop below. Workshops are subject to change.

NOTE: the following is for informational purposes only; no pre-selection of workshops is required or available.

Workshops: Session A

Wednesday, March 19, 2025 10:30am – 12:30pm

TITLE: *The Fatherhood Manologues Workshop*

DESCRIPTION: The **Fatherhood Manologues Workshop** invites participants to explore the joys, challenges, and lessons of being a father or being fathered. After hearing facilitators share their powerful Fatherhood Manologues, participants have 20 minutes to write their own. The workshop fosters connection, reflection, and transformative storytelling through the sharing of heartfelt experiences.

PRESENTER: Abdul Rahmann Muhammad

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

TITLE: *Understanding Gender and Sexual Identity*

DESCRIPTION: This workshop will provide an opportunity for fathers to discuss and understand basic vocabulary related to gender and sexual identity. We will have a discussion on gender roles and its potential impact on young people. Providers will obtain information and tools to support fathers.

PRESENTER: Carmen Negrón

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: FATHERS/FAMILY MEN

TITLE: *Improving Engagement through Human Centered Design*

DESCRIPTION: Human-Centered Design (HCD) is a framework to actualize opportunities for the wellbeing of children and families. This interactive session focuses on the application of HCD to explore the role of father engagement and ways by which child welfare organizations can improve engagement with fathers.

PRESENTER: Christiane Petrin Lambert and Gokul Mandayam

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

TITLE: *Fathering with Insight: Understanding Cannabis*

DESCRIPTION: This workshop focuses on building knowledge about cannabis and its impact on youth, parenting and family dynamics. Participants will gain insights into cannabis trends, recognize potency risks associated with use, and learn techniques to build confidence in guiding children toward healthy choices.

PRESENTER: Denique Weidema-Lewis and Tom Fulton

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL



Workshops: Session A (cont.)

Wednesday, March 19, 2025 10:30am – 12:30pm

TITLE: *Fatherhood and Postpartum Depression*

DESCRIPTION: This workshop will analyze this transition and share some strategies clinicians, family members, and providers can use to engage fathers with tools to navigate services, family challenges, and societal expectations.

PRESENTER: Albert Pless

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

TITLE: *Why Dads Reading to Kids Matters Most!*

DESCRIPTION: Research shows that active father involvement in reading enhances children's sense of support and engagement. This workshop equips dads with fun reading activities to connect with their kids while boosting academic achievement and strengthening emotional bonds.

PRESENTER: Malik Champlain

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

TITLE: *Community Healing for Families with Trauma*

DESCRIPTION: A trauma-informed approach designed to help families and communities affected by trauma; identify our experiences, challenges and develop the skills that lead to healing. If we could habitually offer support to each other and a shared environment for healing, could cycles of trauma be prevented?

PRESENTER: Tara Register Curry

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: FATHERS/FAMILY MEN

TITLE: *A Tree Cannot Stand Without Roots*

DESCRIPTION: African American fathers often struggle in silence without acknowledging the challenges they face. This workshop is designed to delve deeper into the mental health and wellness of African American fathers by exploring traumatic and institutional barriers that hinder healing to bridge cultural restoration.

PRESENTER: Dr. Nakia Black

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

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Systems Roundtables

Wednesday, March 19, 2025 2:30pm – 4:30pm

Conference attendees will be given the opportunity to hear information from professionals from the various systems that interact with dads and their families during topic-specific sessions.

Representatives from the New England States will discuss ways they are working to better support fathers in systems such as child support; family court; corrections; employment and child welfare.

Attendees will have time in the session to hear about two topics of their choice and have the opportunity to ask questions to support their work with fathers.



Workshops: Session B

Thursday, March 20, 2025 10:30am – 12:30pm

TITLE: *A Community Conversation about Gambling*

DESCRIPTION: Problem Gambling isn't a topic discussed in homes, schools, or in the community as often as it should. This interactive workshop is designed to increase participants' education and awareness of what is considered gambling, potential risks and warning signs, and equip participants to leave with strategies and resources.

PRESENTER: Jeremy Wampler and Fiorigio Fetta

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

TITLE: *Letter Writing: Leaving a Legacy*

DESCRIPTION: Men in society face restrictions that prevent open emotional expression be it expressing love or seeking forgiveness. This workshop will help men discover how to leave legacies by communicating effectively through letter writing.

PRESENTER: Troy Ellison and Kwasi Ntem-Mensah

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: FATHERS/FAMILY MEN

TITLE: *The Journey: Engaging Young Dads 16-24 Years Old*

DESCRIPTION: Consider the scenario of a sixteen-year-old father juggling high school and the news of impending fatherhood. To address this phenomenon the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (NRFC) has created a new tool to engage young fathers 16 to 24 years old.

PRESENTER: Dr. David C. Miller

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: PROVIDERS

TITLE: *Fathers and Domestic Violence*

DESCRIPTION: In this workshop you will learn the distorted beliefs and characteristics of men who use violence at home. You will learn practice implications when assessing fathers and the risks to their children. Participants will take away engagement skills that support fathers in stopping domestic violence.

PRESENTER: Jeffrey Trahant

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: PROVIDERS

TITLE: *Pathways to Economic Mobility for Fathers*

DESCRIPTION: Leaders from state government and non-profits share how they are building pathways to education, opportunity, & economic mobility for fathers, grandfathers & caregivers. This interactive session includes small group strategy discussions, large group idea mining & people with lived experience stories.

PRESENTER: Melvette Hill and Donna Thompson-Bennett

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL



Workshops: Session B (continued)

Thursday, March 20, 2025 10:30am – 12:30pm

TITLE: *Men's Mental Health: Taking Care of Self*

DESCRIPTION: What is mental health wellness? How does stigma affect men's mental health? The workshop will explore this & more through conversation & activities designed to engage men in their own wellness journey.

PRESENTER: Beverly Costa-Ciavola

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

TITLE: *Successful Reentry: Reconnecting To Family*

DESCRIPTION: Behind most incarcerated individuals is a family that is critical to encouraging positive change on the inside and supporting them as they prepare for life on the outside. This workshop will explore how individuals who have stronger family relationships are less likely to recidivate.

PRESENTER: John O'Neil and Daniel "Mathematics" Revallion

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

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Workshops: Session C

Thursday, March 20, 2025 2:30 – 4:30pm

TITLE: *25 Years Engaging Dads: Best Practices from the NRFC*

DESCRIPTION: This workshop will showcase new "#dadication" resources and best practices for engaging fathers. It aims to help fathers succeed by addressing their personal and family needs. Strategies come from the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, a US Department of Health & Human Services initiative.

PRESENTER: James Worthy and Eugene Schneeberg

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

TITLE: *Parents Living Apart - Brainstorming Conflict*

DESCRIPTION: Parent Help case managers will explore the dynamics of unhealthy, chronic parental conflict. The participants will then work in groups, reviewing several scenarios involving confrontations and brainstorming ways that each situation might move from unproductive to healthy approaches to the conflict.

PRESENTER: Shari Doherty and Aaron Ivchenko

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: FATHERS/FAMILY MEN

TITLE: *Health Benefits of Marriage for Men*

DESCRIPTION: The workshop will give an overview of marriage and its benefits for men and fathers.

PRESENTER: Stanley Bernard

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL



Workshops: Session C (continued)
Thursday, March 20, 2025 2:30 – 4:30pm

TITLE: *A 6th Cents to Healing the Trauma of Money*

DESCRIPTION: The ****6th CENT\$ Series**** explores how emotional and psychological factors influence financial decisions, often overlooked in typical financial literacy programs. It represents a "sixth sense" for intuitive money management with purpose. The series aims to heal financial trauma with practical skills.

PRESENTER: Curtis Chambers and Larry Lisenby

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

TITLE: *Tools to Support Father-Teen Talk About Sex*

DESCRIPTION: An interactive workshop will address process and findings from a needs' assessment for a program to promote fathers' talk with their teens about sex, how we used this data to develop a program to support father-teen communication, and how organizations can engage fathers in program development.

PRESENTER: Jennifer M. Grossman and Michelle Sullivan

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: PROVIDERS

TITLE: *Engaging Fathers to Address Emotion Dysregulation*

DESCRIPTION: This workshop will provide an overview of the impact of trauma on nervous system and how it can impact engagement in therapeutic and educational services. Demonstration and interactive activities will be used to increase skills related to motivational interviewing and emotional regulation.

PRESENTER: Carla S. Stover

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

TITLE: *Enhancing Father Engagement*

DESCRIPTION: This workshop provides skills to effectively engage fathers in home visits and their children's lives. Learn the importance of father involvement, identify barriers, and discover strategies to foster meaningful connections through cultural competency and practical engagement methods.

PRESENTER: Nick Corsi

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: PROVIDERS

TITLE: *Fatherhood: A Catalyst for Change*

DESCRIPTION: Participants will gain insight, parenting skills and a deeper understanding of themselves and their family members by examining male socialization and its effects on their relationships in order to create deeper, healthier connections between parents, coparents and children.

PRESENTER: Eric Marsh Sr.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL



Workshops: Session D

Friday, March 21, 2025 9:30am – 11:30am

TITLE: *Parenting Those Who Have Experienced Loss*

DESCRIPTION: When separation and loss happen, many things change in life. Tension is high and pain is felt. To transform the pain and regain joy requires finding ways to persist against the odds. The process is called transformational coping. This session examines the journey beyond the fear, grief and anger and how a parent can respond to their child, so the child becomes stronger from the adversity.

PRESENTER: Jeanine Fitzgerald

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

TITLE: *Trauma and the Trajectory of Your Fathering Legacy*

DESCRIPTION: What do you want to pass on? Think of physical attributes, financial assets, and personal belief systems. This workshop explores generational wealth and curses. Participants will focus on their own lives, take responsibility for how loved ones remember them, and leave with a plan and homework.

PRESENTER: Haji Shearer

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

TITLE: *Fatherhood Meets Substance Use Prevention*

DESCRIPTION: The Fatherhood Prevention Initiative is Connecticut's pilot program that unites substance use prevention and fatherhood. Agencies provide prevention education along with the 24/7 Dad curriculum. The workshop will dive in depth about the initiative, the activities and the successes seen locally.

PRESENTER: Kendra Epps and Aristede Hill

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

TITLE: *Caring Dads: A Collaborative Approach to Domestic Violence*

DESCRIPTION: This interactive workshop will seek to candidly examine the often-overlooked generational trauma underlying the behavior of perpetrators of domestic violence. The focus will be the introduction of the Caring Dads Program, a 17-week evidence-based intervention designed for groups of 10-15 fathers.

PRESENTER: Judge Lia Stuhlsatz and John Reis

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

TITLE: *The Impact of Language*

DESCRIPTION: In this workshop, participants will explore how types of racial discrimination, and specifically those enacted through generalized statements, impact the lives of fathers and families of color and provide strategies to approach, address, and intervene when such acts are present.

PRESENTER: Shaneka Hernandez

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: PROVIDERS



Workshops: Session D (continued)
Friday, March 21, 2025 9:30 –11:30Am

TITLE: *SMART Recovery: Tools For Fathers And Families*

DESCRIPTION: Participants will learn about SMART Recovery, which is the leading, evidence-informed approach to overcoming addictive behaviors and leading a balanced life. Attendees will learn practical tools and peer recovery resources that can support fathers, youth, and families in managing behavioral changes.

PRESENTER: Pamela Mulready

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

TITLE: *Motivational Interviewing to Engage Teen Fathers*

DESCRIPTION: This workshop will explore the use of Motivational Interviewing (MI) to engage teen fathers. MI can assist them in improving and maintaining connections with their children. This workshop will include an overview of MI and interactive activities to practice skills.

PRESENTER: Jessica Nash and Mary Clair-Michaud

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: PROVIDERS

TITLE: *Fatherhood Advocacy and Collaboration*

DESCRIPTION: Participants will learn about the importance of fathers as advocates for their children and families, and how to effectively engage in advocacy efforts within their communities.

PRESENTER: Sal Hanaif and Da'ee McKnight

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: ALL

*** *WORKSHOPS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE* ***