

A photograph of a man and a young girl sitting outdoors against a brick wall. The man, wearing a red and white plaid shirt, is holding a yellow piece of paper and looking at it with a smile. The girl, wearing a red dress over a white shirt, is also smiling and looking at the paper. The photo is framed by a dark green circular border.

Let Girls Thrive (LeGIT)

REAL Fathers: Mentor Guide



Save the Children®

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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 4-5 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 7 month period, you will have 15 contacts with each REAL Father. In the last 4 home visits and group meetings, wives will also be asked to participate:

- 3 group meetings with just REAL Fathers
- 4 group meetings with REAL Fathers and their wives
- 3 home visits with just REAL Fathers
- 4 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 family 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 7 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. Family Dreams
6. Loving My Family
7. Parenting

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

INTRODUCTION



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 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 Malawi 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 7 themes over the next 7 months – 1 theme 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 are with REAL Fathers. The final 4 are for REAL Fathers and wives together."

4. My role as a mentor.

"My role is to teach, guide, and support you and your wives or sisters to become more involved with your families and children."

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.

INCEPTION VISIT



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



"My Son is a REAL Father"

Elders' perspectives of fathers' behavior:

"He works hard."

"He cares for his children financially and emotionally."

"He has a vision for his children's future and works hard to achieve it."

"He talks to his family and listens to them."

"He knows what his family's vision for their future is."



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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."



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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.”



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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 Malawi. 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 *is a 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

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. FAMILY DREAMS

Purpose

To give the skills needed to build and maintain a mutually respectful relationship between a REAL father and his family.

5. 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

5. FAMILY DREAMS

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.

5. 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. 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. 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 spin 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.

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

5. FAMILY DREAMS

- *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. Tips on Being a REAL 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. FAMILY DREAMS

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.



"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."

5. 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. 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,

6. LOVING MY FAMILY

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.*

6. LOVING MY FAMILY

- *When children feel good, they tend to behave well. When they feel bad, they may behave badly.*

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.*

6. LOVING MY FAMILY

*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

Purpose

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

7. PARENTING

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

7. PARENTING

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

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

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

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

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. REAL FATHERS COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

Purpose

To prepare for and make community pledges to be REAL Fathers.

8. REAL FATHERS COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

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.

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



Time

60 to 90 minutes

Participants

REAL Fathers, wives, adolescents, extended family, community elders

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.*

8. REAL FATHERS COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

8. REAL FATHERS COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

Ceremony

Reveal the final community poster.



“REAL Fathers bring our community hope.”

- “A REAL Father spends time with his wife and children.”
- “A REAL Father shares and listens to his wife and children.”
- “A REAL Father shows an interest in his children’s life.”
- “A REAL Father understands the different challenges his daughters and sons face.”
- “A REAL Father prioritizes education for his children.”
- “A REAL Father overcomes obstacles so his children can finish school.”
- “A REAL Father is loved and admired.”

REAL Fathers, sign here:

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.*

8. REAL FATHERS COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

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.

Congratulate the fathers, and the community.

Also, congratulate and recognize yourselves as mentors!
