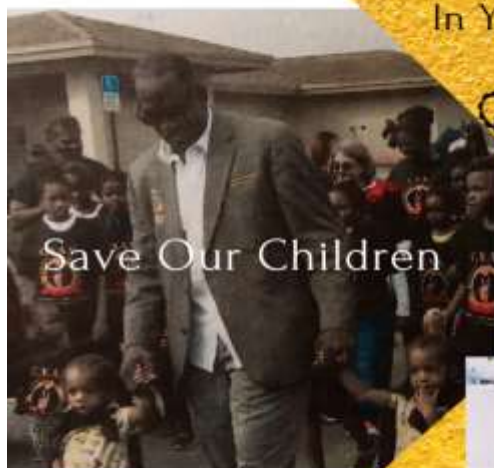


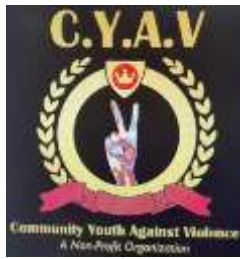


Getting To Know Each Other At The Dinner Table

A Program to Develop A Dialogue
To Understand And Have
Awareness In What Goes On
In Your Child's Life



Program Written & Produced by
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GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER AT THE DINNER TABLE

Family Therapy and Counseling

THE ISSUE

According to a study by Pew Research Center, family life is changing. Two-parent households are on the decline in the United States as divorce, remarriage and cohabitation are on the rise.

The circumstances surrounding parenthood have changed. While in the early 1960s, babies typically arrived within a marriage; today four-in-ten births occur to women who are single or living with a non-marital partner. At the same time that family structures have transformed, so has the role of mothers in the workplace – and in the home. As more moms have entered the labor force, more have become breadwinners – in many cases, primary breadwinners – in their families.

The share of children living in a two-parent household is at the lowest point in more than half a century: 69% are in this type of family arrangement today, compared with 73% in 2000 and 87% in 1960. And even children living with two parents are more likely to be experiencing a variety of family arrangements due to increases in divorce, remarriage, and cohabitation. Today, 62% of children live with two married parents – an all-time low. Some 15% are living with parents in a remarriage and 7% are living with parents who are cohabiting. Children living with one parent stands at 26%, when compared to just 9% in 1960.

Roughly eight-in-ten (78%) white children are living with two parents, including about half (52%) with parents who are both in their first marriage and 19% with two parents in a remarriage; 6% have parents who are cohabiting. About one-in-five (19%) white children are living with a single parent.

Among Hispanic children, two-thirds live with two parents. All told, 43% live with two parents in their first marriage, while 12% are living with parents in a remarriage, and 11% are living with parents who are cohabiting. Some 29% of Hispanic children live with a single parent.

The living arrangements of Black children stand in stark contrast to the other major racial and ethnic groups. The majority – 54% – are living with a single parent. Just 38% are living with two parents, including 22% who are living with two parents who are both in their first marriage. Some 9% are living with remarried parents, and 7% are residing with parents who are cohabiting. Black children and those with less educated parents less likely to be living in two-parent households.

Back in the day, community living was a given. Dating back thousands of years to somewhat recently, people lived in communities for safety, socialization, and shared resources. From the earliest days of humanity our brains have been programmed to live in close proximity to others, to share food and tools, to protect each other, and to exchange ideas.

But the past century has drastically changed the concept of community. Families no longer co-habitat as intergenerational as they once did, especially as the appeal of the nuclear family began to increase. The move from rural living to urban lifestyles to suburbia and then back to city-life has meant that extended families often fracture and live further and further apart. We are often caught up in the reality of constant “busy-ness” that we don’t take the time to get to know our neighbors. And social media has redefined “connection” and “friendship,” leaving us staring at screens more than engaging with the people around us.

In Miami Dade County, it’s not just the family dynamics that has changed, it’s the diversity in cultures, race and ethnicity that impact our neighborhoods. Neighbors no longer look out for each other; neighbors don’t really get to know each other, because people don’t plant to stay long anymore. Racial profiling has caused unfounded fear, indifference, and theories that are not factual. We no longer see family and friends in the neighborhood park with children riding their bikes, while the adults are grilling and playing cards. No, the park now is the place to exchange drug deals.

These changes in family structure and the diversity in our neighborhoods have affected our children the most. Many children have become latch key kids, taking care of their younger siblings, or finding themselves home alone. Dinner does not consist of the family sitting down to discuss their days, their triumphs, or concerns. The television or some other electronic device is the stand-in parent, and the microwave has become the family chef. Oftentimes, the only interaction might be “good morning” for some children as young as ten years old.

There are success stories from one parent households that require recognition. There are many physicians, lawyers, public officials, educators, etc. who were raised by one parent and went on to lead successful and productive lives. However, the reality is the pendulum swings both ways, and there have been too many children who did not beat the odds, and, even as adults with their own children, continued the cycle.

We understand the child is only as strong as the parent(s). One of the biggest challenges is the lack of communication in the home. We will attempt to fill this void by orchestrating more structured time together. The hustle and bustle of the day prohibits many families from getting together at the dinner table to share a meal and spend quality time together. We strongly believe that “Meeting at the Table” will benefit the entire family.

SCOPE OF SERVICE

For this proposal, areas of focus will be:
Community and Family Support Services

A. Family Education

- Family Support Services
- Mindfulness Workshops

The days of families meeting at the dinner table at the end of the day has also diminished substantially. Even in a two-parent home, economic and lifestyle changes, finds both parents outside of the home to meet the demands of providing the necessities.

“Getting to Know Each Other at the Dinner Table” is designed to provide a catalyst for family bonding and strengthening, and to assist in improving

the communication, solving family problems, understanding, and handling special family situations, and creating a better functioning home environment.

Participation in the program will require total family buy-in, which might not be immediately received, but if those involved are committed to positive change, success is imminent.

Families will be identified through referrals, i.e., other agencies, family courts, juvenile services, schools, and even the parent. An assigned case manager will meet with the family as a whole, and individually. If the need for wrap around services are identified, the participant(s) will be connected with the proper resource.

PHASE I

A “Family Success Plan” will be created, and all parties involved will sign and agree to the terms. Part of the terms of agreement will be rules, used to create boundaries and structure. Every family is unique; therefore, the “plan” will be designed with input from everyone in the family. Although not scripted, some of the table rules might be:

- Respecting each other
- Speaking for resolution, not to point finger or blame
- Allow each other to speak
- Not to judge a family’s feelings as “stupid”
- Really listen
- Try not to act defensively

Setting boundaries are essential to healthy relationships and are good mental health practice. Parent(s) will be encouraged to know their role as the head of the household, recognize red flag behavior, and steps to rectify such behavior with a win-win outcome.

Families will meet once per week for six sessions at a designated time, with the counselor/family therapist at the dinner table. The therapist will serve as the facilitator, or the “ear,” using skills that will guide a conversation to a productive finish.

At the halfway point (3 sessions), an assessment will be made to determine progress. The assessment will entail thoughts from each family member and their personal evaluation of the dinner table meetings.

PHASE II

The following three sessions will concentrate on the progress and change in those areas identified in Phase I as needing attention, and any additional concerns presented.

CONTINUING SERVICES

Following the six week family sessions, Parenting Support Zoom Workshops will be available to parents bi-weekly. Professionals skilled in family counseling will facilitate the workshops. Topics are chosen to address issues that are common and some uncommon that present challenges to families.

Zoom Training Workshops for youth are already offered bi-weekly. Families participating in “Getting to Know Each Other at the Dinner Table” will be encouraged to participate in the Parenting Support Zoom Workshops and Zoom Training Workshops for the youth. Youth who attend Zoom Training Workshops receive 5.0 Community Service Hours, a mandate for graduation. Zoom Training Workshops provide a non-judgmental platform to address such topics as: Community-related activities, Gun Violence Prevention and Awareness, Setting Goals, Positive Peer Leadership, Gender Stereotyping, Safe Dating, Listening and Communication, Beware of Media Exploitation, Gang Awareness, etc. Many parents “zoom” in with their children and have expressed gratitude for providing a safe environment that allows youth to express themselves.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

It is expected that families who participate in “Getting to Know Each Other at the Dinner Table” will become the new family “norm”, long after the six-week sessions. When they do meet at the table, quality time will be spent with effective communication, elevating each other, and providing assurance they have each other’s back, no matter the circumstance. They will know that if one family member is affected, the entire family is affected. There will be an understanding that, although we are all different, each of us has a function as a family member. Even with the difference, the commonality is the love families should have for one another.

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Community Youth Against Violence has a long-standing relationship with Miami-Dade schools through Affiliate Agreements; specifically with the principals and activity directors. With the benefit of another grantor, we also serve youth assigned to JSD and DJJ. Currently, more than 1,400 youth have attended our Zoom Training Workshops. Referrals will be accepted from our already established partnerships and, of course, any family referred to us will be accepted and assessed.