

California Baptist University

The National Fatherhood League: Increasing Father Involvement in the Black American  
Community

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## Chapter 1: Executive Summary

*Background:* Father absence is a worldwide phenomenon associated with poor academic performance, negative social skills, poor mental health, delinquency behavior, incarceration, and substance abuse in children. In America, 46.3% of Black American children live without their fathers and are at greater risk for social problems and developmental difficulties. On the contrary, actively involved Black American fathers who discipline their children by setting limits and boundaries have socially and emotionally stable children who can form meaningful relationships with others and remain steadfast in challenging situations. Furthermore, the Bible calls for individuals to take up the fatherless cause. Thus, it is essential to increase father involvement in the Black American community to ensure children's positive growth and development. Researchers have developed effective interventions and fatherhood programs that increase a father's involvement with his children. However, Black American men's participation in these effective programs is significantly low. Therefore, it is imperative to discover practical ways to increase the participation of Black American men in effective fatherhood programs to increase father involvement in the Black American community.

*Community Engagement Efforts:* A qualitative thematic analysis examined the research question of what mission, elements, and outcomes an effective fatherhood program encompasses for Black American men's increased participation. This project engaged the Black American male community by utilizing focus group meetings and transcribed and analyzed the focus groups using the latest Nvivo software, where the respondents' views emerged four major themes leading to sub-themes followed by initial codes. The study's results informed a social innovation to increase father involvement in the Black American community.

*Conceptual Model:* Albert Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory guided and informed this study in creating a fatherhood coalition culturally tailored to Black men that aids in increasing a father's involvement with their children. *Social Innovation:* Theoretically, this research has led to the proposal of a social innovation called The National Fatherhood League (TNFL), a non-profit fraternity organization geared toward increasing father involvement in families and the community and promoting the development of men individually. A critical component of TNFL is its structured nine-month mentoring program that initiates members into the fraternity. During the nine-month mentoring program, mentees develop two fatherhood goals and one personal goal to ensure the mission and vision of TNFL are met. *Evaluation:* To evaluate the effectiveness of The National Fatherhood League, a quantitative study using surveys will investigate the impact The National Fatherhood League has on its members and analyze if TNFL services increase father involvement. *Conclusion:* The researcher summarizes the data collection results and discusses implications and future research of TNFL.

**Keywords:** *father involvement, fatherhood programs, Black American, increase father involvement, the national fatherhood league*

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## **Chapter 2: Father Absence**

### **Introduction**

Father absence is a worldwide phenomenon. Research was conducted in 21 countries globally, including America, and father absence was identified as one of the most significant problems (Freeks, 2017). In America, a father's absence is problematic at the societal and individual levels. At the societal level, the direct taxpayer cost of a father's absence through federal government spending is estimated at \$99.8 billion in a fiscal year (Nock & Einolf, 2008). Health care for father-absent households cost \$24.2 billion, about 4.7 percent of the \$516 billion the federal government spent on Medicare and Medicaid, and single mother benefits programs amounted to \$50.0 billion, about one-fifth of the \$250 billion the federal government spent on safety net programs (Nock & Einolf, 2008). Lastly, \$99.8 billion was spent directly on assistance to single-mother households amounting to nearly four percent of the total federal budget of \$2.7 trillion (Nock & Einolf, 2008). The absence of a father costs taxpayers more to raise families without fathers than it does for families with fathers present in the home. At the individual level, father-absent children pay the price indirectly for the absence of fathers. Father absence is associated with poor academic performance, negative social skills, poor mental health, delinquency behavior, incarceration, and substance abuse in children (Cabrera et al., 2018; Freeks, 2017; McLanahan et al., 2013). What follows is the examination of the indirectly associated outcomes of a father's absence.

### **Academic Performance**

The learning in the early years of a child's life, up through elementary school, middle school, and high school, is vastly impacted by the engagement a child has with their father (Ladd, H.F., 2012). When fathers are involved in their children's academics, they experience

more success in school by achieving higher grades and promoting to the next grade (Frank et al., 2014). However, 71% of children who do not finish school comes from fatherless homes (Freeks, 2017), which impacts the positive life outcomes such as professional environments, financial security, and family stability derived from education (Hout, 2012). This is evidence that children who experience absent fathers miss the critical benefits of education, including developing the tools necessary for success.

### **Social Skills**

Social skills are essential to a child's development, influenced by the quantity and quality of a father's involvement across all development stages (Wilson & Prior, 2010). Individuals with actively involved fathers are likelier to have solid and lasting relationships during childhood because a high level of father involvement correlates with higher sociability levels (Pruett et al., 2017). Research shows that when fathers rough play with their children, it is associated with developing their children's social skills and regulatory behaviors (Cabrera et al., 2018). Furthermore, actively involved fathers who discipline their children by setting limits and boundaries have socially and emotionally stable children who can develop meaningful relationships with others and remain steadfast in challenging situations (Pruett et al., 2017).

### **Mental Health & Delinquency Behavior**

Mental health helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. However, when a father is not emotionally invested in a relationship with their child, it, in turn, becomes difficult for the child to develop appropriate emotional reactions, such as stress management (Crowe et al., 2019). Consequently, nearly two-thirds of suicides come from fatherless homes (Freeks, 2017). Moreover, Poor father-child relationships have been correlated to delinquent behaviors and aggression, thus heightening the likelihood of engagement in risky

behaviors (Frank et al., 2014) such as smoking (McLanahan et al., 2013), addictions, and crime (Kofler-Westergren et al., 2010). Freeks (2017) reports that 70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions, 85% of children with behavioral problems, and three-fourths of juvenile prisoners and juveniles charged with homicide grew up in a fatherless home. On the contrary, a father who is actively involved increases their child's chance of leading law-abiding and productive lives and can prevent delinquency so that their child does not face its consequences (Freeks 2017).

### **Black Americans**

In America, half of the children may experience a father's absence (Markowitz & Ryan, 2016); however, Black American children are eleven times more likely to be born into a single-family home and experience a father's absence (Ellis et al., 2014). Currently, 46.3% of Black American children live without their fathers (Bureau, 2021). Black American children who experience a father's absence are at greater risk for social problems and developmental difficulties (Harris, 2002). They have a greater chance of experiencing teenage pregnancy, unemployment, and welfare dependency (Harris, 2002; Freek, 2017). Cabrera & Tamis-Lemonda (2013) report that Black American children who did not live with a father in their homes experienced poor self-attitudes and difficulty in peer relationships compared to children whose fathers were present in the home.

On the contrary, Pruett et al. (2017) reported that actively involved Black American fathers who discipline their children by setting limits and boundaries have socially and emotionally stable children who can form meaningful relationships with others and remain steadfast in challenging situations. In addition, Black American children who experienced father involvement achieved higher grades, were promoted to the next grade, and had less disciplinary action in school (Harris, 2002). However, the proportion of Black American children living in

father-absent homes has increased significantly, positioning them at risk for social problems, growth, and developmental difficulties (Thomas et al., 2007).

## **Historical Context**

### **Slavery**

Although the Black American community disproportionally holds the highest father absence rate (Ellis et al., 2014), father absence in the Black American community can be traced to several historical contexts, such as slavery, economic disadvantages, discriminatory policies, and incarceration (Lu et al., 2010; Ruggles, 1994, St. Vil et al., 2019). Upon the arrival of Africans in the United States, what the western world notes as the nuclear family, was immediately dismantled. The enslaver became the head of the African family, and enslaved men could not fulfill their patriarchal nuclear family roles as husbands, providers, protectors, and fathers (St. Vil et al., 2019). In addition, slavery created laws and social norms that broke the bonds between fathers and children while simultaneously forcing fathers to live in fear with the threat that their children and spouse could be beaten, raped, killed, or sold at any time (Lu et al., 2010; St. Vil et al., 2019). The systemic policies of slavery forcibly and arbitrarily separated African American families and constantly changed their unions as they were established and broken. Ultimately, slavery destroyed about one in three first marriages among enslaved people and separated as many as one in five slave children from both parents (Pargas, 2009).

### **Economic Disadvantages**

Black American families experienced economic disadvantages as the residential finance industry and neighborhood organizations engaged in covert and overt practices to create racially segregated, inferior, and higher-cost housing (Mendenhall, 2010). These practices often included redlining and blockbusting the economic system, where homeowners loan corporations created



racial maps of American cities and assigned risk levels to each neighborhood. European American neighborhoods were marked as blue areas and ranked with the most desirable and lowest risk for mortgage loan lending. In contrast, Black American communities were marked as red areas, ranked with the highest creditworthiness risk, and discriminated against in receiving mortgage home loans (Mendenhall, 2010).

In addition, blockbusting was used to persuade European American homeowners to sell their property and homes short to Black Americans (Mendenhall, 2010). The strategic measures of redlining and blockbusting of the economic system created low and high-opportunity neighborhoods, which impacted Black American men from providing safe, stable, and diverse opportunities for their families. The inadequate employment opportunities for Black American men in the inner cities made it challenging for men to find employment and provide for their families (Ruggles, 1994). Employment opportunities in Black American communities were strategically removed (Lu et al., 2010), thus, creating poverty and the increased need for government assistance for financial support.

### **Discriminatory Policies and Incarceration**

The government assistance social welfare policies, such as the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), disqualified married couples from receiving assistance because the policy solely favored single-parent households (Lu et al., 2010). The policy ultimately forced fathers to remove themselves so that their families may qualify for financial assistance, which correspondingly contributed to the absence of fathers. These economic disadvantages contributed to the increased crime and violence within the community, which led to the rise in the incarceration of young Black American men beginning in the 1980s, primarily driven by the "war on crimes" and "war on drugs" that also deterred family formation in many inner-city

communities (Lu et al., 2010). Hence, the incarceration of Black American men left mothers to raise a generation of fatherless children (Lu et al., 2010; Nunn, 2002; St. Vil et al., 2019). These unfortunate disadvantaged positions of Black Americans are not the consequence of father absence but rather the cause.

### **Social Work and Father Involvement**

Child welfare work aims to uphold the social work grand challenge of ensuring individual and family wellbeing (Grand Challenges for Social Work, 2020) and intervenes in family life when deemed necessary. In addition, the Bible compels individuals to take up the fatherless cause (King James Version, 2017, Isaiah 1:17). Therefore, social workers must promote the importance of Black fathers to increase father involvement in the Black American community. An involved father is defined as a man's positive, wide-ranging, active participation in their children's lives (Marsiglio et al., 2000). It is illustrated as a direct interaction between a father and child; his accessibility to his child when needed; his responsibility to provide resources for his child; and his ability to provide a support network for his child as they grow up to contribute to society (Evans & Fogarty, 2019). Hence, Social Workers should begin to assist Black fathers in developing strategies to increase their involvement with their children, thus fostering healthy physical, emotional, and social development (Lu et al., 2010).

### **Current Methods Addressing Father Absence**

The literature unveils increased interest in developing fatherhood programs and interventions to support the relationship between fathers and their children. Considering Black Americans disproportionately hold the highest father absence rate (Ellis et al., 2014), this researcher conducted a systematic literature review to identify existing fatherhood programs with Black Americans in the sample and examined how effective they were in increasing father

involvement (King, 2021). After an exhaustive systematic search of the literature, five studies were included in the systematic review and described outcomes of fatherhood intervention programs that included Black Americans in the sample (Chacko et al., 2017; Cowan et al., 2009; Doherty et al., 2006; Rienks et al., 2011; Caldwell et al., 2013).

The five articles received medium to high-quality scores, suggesting the study provided a solid evidence base. According to the systematic literature review, interventions and fatherhood programs effectively increase a father's involvement (King, 2021). Several conclusions were made regarding the fatherhood intervention's efficacy and potential effects. One conclusion assessed was that the target populations varied regarding the proportion of Black American men included in the study. Black American men in the samples were significantly low in four out of five of the interventions (Chacko et al., 2017; Cowan et al., 2009; Doherty et al., 2006; Rienks et al., 2011), and only one of the five interventions were strictly Black American men in the sample (Caldwell et al., 2013). In addition. The reviewed articles did not address the reasons for the lack of Black American men included in the studies. This conclusion was of concern because if the Black American community disproportionately holds the highest father absence rate and there are existing fatherhood programs and interventions that are effective in increasing a father's involvement, then it is imperative to discover solutions to increase the participation of Black American men in fatherhood programs to increase father involvement in the Black American community.

### **Chapter 3: Community Engagement**

Community engagement can be characterized as working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by a particular interest or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of people (CTSA, 2011). In order to create positive change, community engagement values partnership, establishes rapport with stakeholders and community members and improves communication (CTSA, 2011). The following section will discuss this project's community engagement strategy, a biblically informed evidence-based leadership style, the methodology, stakeholder meetings, and results of the community engagement efforts to increase the participation of Black American men in fatherhood programs.

#### **Community Engagement through a Christian Worldview**

In order to discover solutions to increase the participation of Black American men in fatherhood programs, this project used the best practices in social work, which was to engage the community of Black men because they hold the answers on what would increase their participation in fatherhood programs. To effectively lead the community of Black men, this project led from a biblical framework referencing the leadership style of Nehemiah (King James Version, 2017, Nehemiah 3). In the Bible, Nehemiah was a Jewish leader who supervised the rebuilding of the Jerusalem wall (King James Version, 2017, Nehemiah 3). Nehemiah's leadership style defined community engagement from his example of how he encountered a problem, asked questions about it, engaged his people, and moved forward with a plan (CTSA, 2011). In addition, Nehemiah's heart for his people and the planning and organization that followed are reflected in the characteristic of cultural humility, such as love, listening, and compassion (Chavez, 2012). Nehemiah exemplified these characteristics as he undertook his effort to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. This project replicated the leadership style and community engagement

approach of Nehemiah by observing the gap between black American men's participation in fatherhood programs, asking and engaging Black men with compassion, love, and a listening ear as to what would increase the participation of Black men in fatherhood programs, and utilized their ideas to inform an innovative solution.

### **Community Engagement Continuum**

This project also used the evidenced-based five-point Community Engagement Continuum: outreach, consult, involve, collaborate, and shared leadership (CTSA, 2011). Black American men aged 18 and older were outreached via social media platforms and asked to participate in a focus group meeting (FGM) concerning fatherhood programs. The focus groups were led using a democratic leadership style (Bhatti et al., 2012), inviting all participants to contribute their opinions to the discussion. During the FGM, participants were consulted on the effects of father absence and the gap between black men's participation in existing fatherhood programs that effectively increase a father's involvement. The participants were involved in the focus groups where they collaborated in discussion on what they believed would increase the participation of Black American men in fatherhood programs. Furthermore, during the focus groups, this researcher shared leadership by allowing other black men to facilitate the focus groups while this researcher remained silent and listened.

### **Methodology**

The research question that guided this project is what mission, elements, and outcomes an effective fatherhood program encompasses for the increased participation of Black American men. The information obtained in this research was used to improve the quality of programming offered by the social innovation to inform its practices. The community engagement efforts led to a Quality Improvement initiative that did not require Institutional Review Board approval due

to the information gathered from the community, not including personal information or experiences.

### **Procedure**

Participants were recruited to participate in focus groups through social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram). For inclusion in the study, participants had to be over eighteen years old and identify as Black American males. The focus groups were conducted using a zoom video conference, and all participants consented to be video and audio recorded. Before each focus group, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and reminded that their feedback would improve the quality of programming offered by the social innovation to inform its practices. The focus groups lasted one to one and a half hours.

### **Participants**

The sample consisted of 19 (100%) Black American male participants. Participants were between the ages of 18 and 65 years old or older, with the majority of the participants (47.4 %) between the ages of 35-45. Of the 19 participants, the highest level of education was High School (21.1%), Some College (26.3%), College (47.4%), and others (5.3%). One of the participants resided in Texas, and 18 of the participants resided in California. The marital status of the participants consisted of (63.2%) married, (26.3%) single, (5.3%) separated, and never married. Fourteen (73.7%) of the participants lived with their children, three (15.8%) of the participants lived without their children, and two (10.5%) of the participants did not have any children. The number of children each participant had ranged from one child to over eight children, with the majority of participants (63.2%) having one to three children. Of the 19 participants (73.7%) were not in a fatherhood program, and (26.3%) were a part of a fatherhood program.

### **Focus Groups**

Focus groups elicit information in a way that allows researchers to discover why an issue is salient and what is salient about it. As a result, the gap between what individuals say and what they do can be better understood (Lankshear, 1993). This researcher facilitated four separate focus groups with three to six participants in each group. Through the focus groups, participants answered the four following questions: (1) What do you feel a fatherhood program's mission should include increasing the participation of Black American men in fatherhood programs (2)What do you feel a fatherhood program's elements(components/basics/features), should include increasing the participation of Black American men in fatherhood programs (3) What should be the desired outcome or what should a fatherhood program accomplish for the increase the participation of Black American men (4) Is there anything else you feel would be helpful to increase the participation of Black American men in fatherhood programs.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Participants completed a brief demographic survey via Google Surveys describing their characteristics. They then engaged in a focus group meeting (FGM) interview with the facilitator, which was then transcribed using Nvivo software to begin the thematic analysis to discover the emerging themes of the Participant's feedback.

### **Data Analysis**

The qualitative thematic research analysis was made using Braun & Clarke's (2021) thematic analysis approach and the latest Nvivo software. A codebook was generated during the data analysis, followed by the summary tables through the Nvivo software. The respondents' views emerged four major themes leading to sub-themes followed by initial codes.

## Results

The study's objective was to see the common themes Black American men discuss that will increase participation in fatherhood programs. The analysis of the study emerged with the following four major themes of the study which informed an innovative solution: (1) Fatherhood program missions to increase the participation of Black American men, (2) Basic features to increase the participation of black American men, (3) Desired outcomes to increase the participation of Black American men, and (4) Suggestions to increase participation of Black American men.

### **Theme 1: The fatherhood program's mission is to increase the participation of Black American men**

The first central theme of the study depicted the information on what a fatherhood program mission should include to increase the participation of Black American men. The first central theme consisted of the following sub-themes: (1) Engaging a diverse group of Black American men, (2) Strengthening Brotherhood, (3) Strengthening Community and Relationships, and (4) Developing Leadership and Creating a Positive Influence

#### **01. Engaging a diverse group of Black American men**

The first emerging sub-theme of the study discussed engaging a diverse group of Black American men that consisted of the following two initial codes: (1) Different backgrounds acceptable, and (2) a wide variety of black men with firm foundations.

One of the participants from the second focus group discussion (FGD2) mentioned that men from different backgrounds would come together, and the mission must allow everyone to feel accepted and equal. The Participant stated:



*"... different backgrounds come together...everyone is accepted, and you do not have to feel uncomfortable, but pretty much the same."*

A participant from FGD3 suggested that the mission should bring everyone's background together. The Participant stated:

*"so many different backgrounds. Some you know came from happy two-parent homes others of us, you know, did not have that experience, so something to bring us together."*

## **02. Strengthening Brotherhood**

The second sub-theme of the study depicted from the data analysis was about strengthening Brotherhood. The second sub-theme was identified, followed by the initial codes: (1) To create community brotherhood and (2) Empowering the Brotherhood. One Participant from FGD1 suggested that the mission should include creating a brotherhood because Brotherhood is empowering. The Participant added to the comment that Brotherhood is the most needed in the mission statement. The Participant stated:

*"that brotherhood is gonna be the strongest words you got... empowering the brotherhood, so brotherhood needs to be in the mission statement for sure."*

## **03. Strengthening Community and Relationships**

The third sub-theme of the study identified that a fatherhood program's mission should strengthen community and relationships. The data analysis identified the following initial codes: (1) Building strong foundations, (2) Importance of coming together, (3) Strengthening the bond between fathers and children (4) Working on bonds through sports. Participants from FGD2 suggested that the mission should include a good structure and strong foundation and incorporate the importance of men coming together and ensuring they care for their children well. FGD1 and

FGD3 discussed that the mission should strengthen fathers' and children's bonds. One Participant stated,

*"to include um strengthening the bond between fathers black fathers and their children there are so many things that create the bond between children and oftentimes in situations where there's unmarried parents or divorced parents children and fathers aren't in the home together um you have to work a lot more harder to keep that bond strong and find ways to continue strengthening that bond between you know father and son father and daughter and then it has to vary because your relationship with your daughters are going to be different than your relationship with your sons."*

Participants from FGD3 mentioned that bonds could also be developed and strengthened through sports between both sons and daughters.

#### **04. Developing Leadership and Creating a Positive Influence**

The fourth sub-theme of the study identified from the data analysis reviewed developing leadership and creating a positive influence. This theme was depicted along with the following initial codes: (1) Credible leadership, (2) Positive influence of presence in young man's life, and (3) Creating change. Participant from FGD4 discussed having credible leadership by commenting that.

*"Having dealt with many organizations over the years, oftentimes the actual leadership tends to be suspects so first of all you want credible leadership at the top, and they have to make you feel comfortable."*

Participants from FGD2 discussed a positive role model being needed to share positive growth and create change using simple steps. Participants from FGD4 also discussed that the mission

should include having someone as a positive influence and presence in a man's life. A participant stated:

*"To create change some simple step to be followed like small steps if somebody will do something for a week and they see the results they will probably continue to do it so just a small step would be enough to attract someone."*

(See Appendix A: Table: 1. Mission to increase the participation of Black American men)

## **Theme 2: Basic features to increase the participation of Black American men**

The second central theme of the study identified from the data analysis discussed the basic features that increase the participation of Black American men. The following two sub-themes were identified (1) Effective program design and (2) Making a better society, followed by their initial codes.

### **0.1 Effective Program Design**

The first sub-theme of the second central theme was about effective program design, which is the main initial code to describe the basic features to increase the participation of black American men. The following initial codes were depicted from the data analysis under the first sub-theme of the second central theme: (1) Consistent place for meeting, (2) Focusing on communication, (3) Love for sports, (4) Comfortability, (5) The program has to be fun, and (6) Time Management. Participants from FGD2 discussed having a consistent location to gather. The Participant stated:

*"there would need to be a consistent place for there to be a consistent place for meetings to be at it just looks more professional, and it will keep people if it is just a consistent thing, so it just looks more firm in its foundation so just not bouncing around too much"*

*having a good place to stay other components just being organized because that is gonna obviously make it more professional seem more professional as well."*

The second theme revealed from the data analysis was the focus on communication. Participants from (FGD4) noted:

*"the importance of communication is always considered a key role to make a perfect program design and the communication should cover all aspects of what it entails to be a great father and man."*

### **0.2 Making a better society**

The sub-theme of the second central theme identified from the data analysis was about making society better. This theme was depicted along with the following initial codes: (1) Become an asset to society, (2) Concept of fraternity, (3) Understand how to parent, and (4) Willingness to adjust. The analysis of this theme indicated a need to improve society. One Participant from FGD2 indicated that it is essential for fathers to teach their children how to become an asset to society instead of being a liability. The Participant stated,

*"I feel like is important to teach the youth of how to be an asset to society versus the liability because a lot of times we just take...but learn how to contribute back...you know when they say reach one teach one."*

Another basic feature identified from (FGD1) was the concept of fraternity. The Participant mentioned,

*"Fraternities do business, and they have a great time while doing this and have fun. They address different hot topics that keep all the men engaged where they are looking forward to doing it."*

One Participant from FGD1 discussed that they think men should take a parenting class. The Participant stated:

*"parenting training is needed to assist their parenting because no one can be the perfect parent, and sometimes you just do not know what you're doing."*

*(See Appendix B: Table: 2. Basic features to increase the participation of Black American men)*

### **Theme 3: Desired Outcomes to Increase the Participation**

The third central theme of the study discussed the desired outcomes to increase the participation of Black American men in fatherhood programs. Desired outcomes that were identified from the analysis included (1) parenting facilitation, (2) Guidance and Help, and (3) Creating transformative citizens

#### **0.1 Parenting facilitation**

The first sub-theme of the third central theme was about parenting facilitation. Furthermore, this theme depicted the following initial code: (1) Coparenting. Participants from FGD1 explained that the program should teach co-parenting skills so men can have a relationship with their children when they are no longer with their mothers. A participant added that,

*"being a part of your child's life is often hard when you do not have the best relationship with their mother, so teaching coparenting skills will be helpful so you can be a part of your child's life."*

#### **0.2 Guidance and Help**

The second sub-theme of the third central theme identified from the data analysis was guidance and help, followed by the initial codes: (1) Guidance and (2) Helping men parent.

A participant from FGD2 mentioned that they believe the programs should guide men and develop them as leaders. The Participants also added that the program should teach men how to help other men parent. The Participant stated,

*"now teaching men to help other men with their kids is the number one goal; there's a scripture that actually talks about turning the hearts of the fathers."*

### **0.3 Creating transformative citizens**

The third sub-theme of the third central theme was identified in the form of making transformative citizens. The following initial codes were identified: (1) Information on how to get money, (2) Productive citizens, and (3) Recognize the power of legacy.

One Participant from the FGD2 explained the importance of financial literacy. The Participant stated,

*"it is very important to spread the knowledge and information on how to get money for real and how to like work for yourself and build your own business so that someone can have financial freedom and just teach financial literacy to all the men just uplift people that's how someone uplifts people just spreading more knowledge and wisdom."*

Another participant from the group discussed how it would be necessary for the program to teach being a productive citizen. The participants stated:

*"I mean grown men and productive citizens in a society where they're productive, and they're actually leaders not following what the streets are putting out there."*

A participant from FGD1 discussed men realizing and recognizing the power of their legacy. The Participant stated

*"a lot of men they run away because they don't understand their legacy so teaching men to realize and recognize their legacy's power will be beneficial."*

(See Appendix C: Table: 3. Desired outcomes to increase the participation of Black American men)

#### **Theme 4: Suggestions to Increase Participation**

The final central theme of the study depicted from the data analysis is the suggestions to increase the participation of Black American men in fatherhood programs. The following sub-themes were identified from the data analysis in the form of suggestions: (1) Focus on networking, (2) Knowledge sharing in a comfortable space, and (3) Integrity and goal focus.

##### **0.1 Focus on Networking**

The suggestions to increase participation emerged from the data analysis were to focus on networking, followed by the initial codes: (1) Need more black men to teach, (2) Networking is necessary, (3) Social Events, (4) Team building activities.

A participant from FGD2 explained the need for more black men to teach and help other black men positively. The Participant stated:

*"you know that's what we all need, and that's what most people are looking for; just like \*\*\* said, he didn't have any father to teach him that, so you know you need more black men in a group like this that's positive can teach him and help him show him what a father is now his whole life is gonna change he looks at life differently instead of seeing all that bad stuff well."*

A participant from the same group, FGD2, mentioned that networking and enjoying oneself with a brotherhood are necessary components of a fatherhood program. The Participant stated:

*"I feel like fun is definitely a necessary component... people want to have a good time, so adding that on top of the networking the sharing of knowledge the brotherhood and all that just having a good time together."*

Another participant from FGD2 commented on the program needing to include social events.

The Participant stated:

*"you know, physical type thing to get together and actually do something together even just like a simple competition doesn't necessarily have to be physical right... a flag football tournament have a BBQ... people have to enjoy themselves."*

Participants from the same FGD2 also suggested that team-building activities should be included to further members' interactions.

### **0.2 Knowledge sharing in a comfortable space**

Another suggestion to increase participation was to have the ability to share knowledge in a comfortable space, followed by the initial codes: (1) Place to be comfortable and celebrate and (2) Resources.

A participant from FGD3 indicated that there should be a comfortable place to celebrate each other. The Participant suggested:

*"... a place to be comfortable to be celebrated, you know to pat each other on the back."*

Another suggestion to increase participation was to provide resources. One Participant stated:

*"I'll go back to resources... provide what's needed, you know, because you know men typically don't ask for help; you know we'll go without before we ask for it, so yeah, resources."*

### **0.3 Integrity and Goal Focus**

The third sub-theme of the final central theme came up in the form of integrity and goal focus as a suggestion to increase participation, followed by the initial code: (1) Integrity.

The initial codes and suggestion to increase participation was to focus on teaching men about maintaining integrity. The Participant stated:



*"it goes for integrity just instilling integrity because integrity is when you do things where people are not looking, and that's when your character really shows... because a lot of times you have people that could be leaders in groups or for instance say it's a pastor and he's preaching on the pulpit, and then you see him at the bar you like hold on what about that so, therefore, some integrity is something that is really important to do it to make sure that you're doing it for yourself to deal with or for your future or for your kids and 'produce that in that level of integrity and character building."*

*(See Appendix D: Table: 4. Suggestions to increase the participation of Black American men)*

### **Stakeholders**

Identifying stakeholders who understood the importance of family and fathers was essential in this project's community engagement efforts. This project met with four stakeholders, and one of four is the Father Engagement Coordinator for the Inland Empire Father Involvement Coalition, who shared his views on father involvement. He stated that he understands that positively involved fathers may not be the answer to everything, but it plays a role in each complicated life factor. He suggested that institutions should become more accommodating to fathers, for example, hosting meetings after hours so fathers may attend and changing the marketing on flyers to assemble them to represent both men and women. He shared that to sustain commitment from members of his program; he conducts monthly zoom meetings accommodating to his member's working schedules. This idea of the stakeholder using zoom for meetings also informed this project's social innovative solution. In addition, this researcher met with three additional stakeholders: Knotts Family Agency, The Life Church, and Couples Inc., and discussed with each of these stakeholders this project's community engagement efforts which informed an innovative solution. These stakeholders received this project well, and they

are willing to allow this researcher to pilot the innovative solution with members of their organizations.

### **Conclusion**

This project's community engagement efforts established rapport with community members and stakeholders to understand what would increase the participation of Black men in fatherhood programs. In summary, the participants in the focus group meetings reported that the mission of a fatherhood program had to be inclusive and empower a diversity of black men, strengthen the Brotherhood of black men and the father-child relationship, and create a positive influence in the community and society. In addition, the participants reported that the fatherhood program must be fun, comfortable, involve sporting events, cookouts, and social events, teach men how to be an asset to society, be a concept of a fraternity, provide mentoring, and help men with their parenting skills. Lastly, the participants reported that the program's outcome had to help men with co-parenting, understand how to be mentors, provide financial literacy skills, teach men how to be productive citizens, and recognize the power of their legacy. Their thoughts and ideas were informative on what a fatherhood program should encompass for increased participation in fatherhood programs. Thus, the results from the community engagement efforts informed this researcher's social innovation that seeks to increase father involvement in the Black American community.

## **Chapter 4: Conceptual Model**

### **Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical framework serves as the structure and support for the rationale of research (Sontag, 1996; Rudasill et al., 2017) and provides a foundational basis (Grant, 2014). A theoretical framework that supported and guided this project is Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura in 1977. The theory suggests that humans learn through imitation, observation, and modeling (Bandura, 1977). Furthermore, Bandura suggests that for observable behavior to be learned, four conditions are necessary: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. This section will review social learning theory and how it informs the importance of father involvement and models an innovative solution to increase father involvement.

### **Social Learning Theory**

In 1977, Albert Bandura developed Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) to further progress and build upon the behaviorist work of psychologist B. F. Skinner, whose work focused on how the environment and reinforcement affect behavior. Albert Bandura experimented with whether social behaviors could be learned by observation and imitation. His historical "Bobo" inflatable doll experiment, which included children observing an adult punching an inflatable doll and, subsequently, the children imitated the behaviors (Hollis, 2019), supported his hypothesis that humans learn through observation, imitation, and modeling (Bandura, 1977). Thus, it is essential to increase father involvement and for fathers to model positive behaviors because their children will imitate their behaviors. Children modeling and imitating their father's positive behaviors will lead to more successful children in society because positive role models are used to encourage desirable behaviors and facilitate social change (Morgenroth et al., 2015).

### **Conceptual Model of Social Learning Theory**

Albert Bandura's social learning theory also provides a valuable framework for considering how men can learn to increase their father involvement. Bandura believed that learning occurs in social settings through observation and involves a cognitive process where learners internalize and make sense of what they see to reproduce the behavior themselves (McCullough Chavis, 2011). He emphasized that four cognitive conditions were necessary to learn an observed behavior: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, a conceptual model of social learning theory that will increase father involvement in the Black American community is to create a coalition for men that is culturally tailored and informed by Black men. In this coalition, men will focus their *attention* on services offered by the coalition that continuously supports them and provides fatherhood development skills. Fathers will then *retain* the fatherhood development skills learned from the services offered by the coalition and then *reproduce* the retained parenting development skills learned from the services offered by the coalition with their children. Lastly, fathers will be *motivated* to continue reproducing the parenting skills learned from the services because of the continuous support of the coalition.

*(See Appendix E: Conceptual Model of Social Learning Theory)*

### **Conclusion**

Social learning theory is a theoretical framework that guided this project, informed the importance of father involvement, and modeled an innovative solution to increase father involvement. Suppose the proposed conceptual model of a coalition culturally tailored to Black men that provides programs and resources to assist in increasing a father's involvement is executed. In that case, men will learn and imitate the behaviors. If Black men were amongst a coalition whose values and actions are centered on fatherhood, more children would have

positively involved fathers, and fewer black children would be at risk of father absence. The coalition can bring the desired change of increasing father involvement in the Black American Community. Furthermore, the Black American community will benefit from fewer Black American children experiencing father absence, more black children having more positive interactions with their fathers, and more supported Black men in their fatherhood abilities.

## **Chapter 5: Social Innovation**

### **The National Fatherhood League**

The National Fatherhood League (TNFL) is a fatherhood fraternity servicing the Inland Empire geared towards increasing father involvement in families and the community. The National Fatherhood League creates an avenue for men to further their development in fatherhood and as individuals. This project's community engagement efforts informed TNFL's mission, vision, objective, and services. The mission statement is that The National Fatherhood League Fraternity develops leaders and promotes fatherhood and brotherhood while providing service and advocacy for our community. The vision of TNFL is for every child to grow up with a positively involved father or father figure. The National Fatherhood League's objective is to assist men with the tools to become successfully involved fathers and individuals. The National Fatherhood League targets Black American men ages 18 and up in various economic statuses to increase the awareness of the adverse effects of a father's absence and encourage fathers to increase their involvement in their children's lives. TNFL is open to all races and does not discriminate. However, the culture and identity of TNFL are informed from the Black American man's perspective, and the culture and identity will not be altered.

#### **Justification for Innovation**

The National Fatherhood League was created as a fraternity based on the literature and community engagement feedback. Although there are existing fatherhood programs, the literature disclosed that Black men are less likely to participate in these programs. On the contrary, research suggests that Black American men join fraternities as meaningful outlets through which one gains cultural connection, support, and bonds between men centered on commitments (Chambers, 2014). The commitment from members of TNFL will be to increase

their father involvement in the lives of their families and communities. In addition, fraternities are a brotherhood where values are instilled, and men are encouraged to openly express their emotions and pledge their allegiance for a lifetime (McGuire et al., 2018).

### **Organization Design**

The National Fatherhood League offers several services: father-centered parenting training, mentoring programs, conferences, employment readiness program, social events, and acts of service. However, to be a part of The National Fatherhood League and benefit from its services, individuals must complete TNFL's nine-month mentoring program, which initiates mentees as members of TNFL Fraternity. The primary function of The National Fatherhood League's nine-month mentoring program is to promote mentees' development in specific fatherhood and personal goals. Mentors and mentees will work together to help the mentee successfully meet their goals.

TNFL's nine-month Mentoring Program seeks to accomplish the following: (1) provide knowledge and skills on how to be a successful, positive father and father figure, (2) provide guidance and skills on how to be a successful male and navigate through life, and (3) develop relationships to establish a strong brotherhood. The National Fatherhood League Mentoring Program provides quality service to develop, maintain, and improve fatherhood and individual success. TNFL Mentoring Program is one of the organization's tools to further the advancement of men and their father-child relationship. It encourages a strategy that will guide mentees to produce tangible results for accomplishing TNFL's mission. The National Fatherhood League's Mentoring Program is a direct response to this project's community engagement efforts, with all 19 participants of the focus group meetings suggesting that a fatherhood program should include a mentoring program.

**Mentoring Activities**

With efforts to support mentees' fatherhood and individual development, mentees will use an Individual Development Plan (IDP) form and develop three goals for the IDP that they desire to work towards during the nine months. Two goals will be related to fatherhood, and one goal will be related to what they aspire to be as a man. Mentors are committed to providing guidance, motivation, emotional support, and role modeling that assist mentees in utilizing the form and achieving their goals. Mentors are trained to mentor through TNFL's two-day mentoring program and are encouraged to provide additional activities during the nine months with their mentees.

**Mentoring Outcomes**

Although it will be ideal for mentees to meet all three goals during the nine-month mentoring program, mentees are required to meet their first fatherhood goal to complete the program and be initiated into The National Fatherhood League. Upon the completion of the mentoring program, mentees will be invited to an exclusive initiation ceremony for only TNFL members. During the first portion of the initiation ceremony, mentees will share a presentation of their accomplishments and goals met during the mentoring program. In the second portion of the initiation ceremony, mentees will be asked if they agree, align, and will uphold the fraternity's mission, vision, and objective. If they agree, they will pledge their allegiance to increase their father involvement and be initiated into TNFL. Upon initiation, mentees will become members, receive exclusive paraphernalia, have access to all services offered by TNFL, and can apply to become a mentor and recruit new mentees. Recruitment for TNFL will be done through word of mouth, community events, hospitals, Obyn offices, and social media, including TNFL's website and Instagram.



TNFL currently has two different types of mentoring for a member to become a mentor, one that initiates members into TNFL and the other mentors' youth in the community through TNFL's act of service program. However, TNFL members who are non-fathers will be ineligible to become a mentor for the nine-month initiation mentoring program because they do not have the direct experience of being a father. However, they are eligible and encouraged to share their personal development with members of TNFL to strengthen the brotherhood and are eligible to become mentors through TNFL's acts of services program, where they can mentor youth in the community.

### **Community Engagement and Social Innovation Model (CESI)**

The National Fatherhood Fraternity was developed by following the steps in the Community Engagement and Social Innovation (CESI) Model: observe, identify, integrate, engage, assess, innovate, evaluate, and disseminate. This researcher *observed* the social problem of father absence and how a father's absence negatively impacts children, families, and society. This researcher then *identified* Black Americans disproportionately holding the highest father-absent rate. Next, this researcher *integrated* faith into the social problem of a father's absence, highlighting that the word of God calls individuals to take up the fatherless cause. This researcher then *engaged* with Black American men to *assess* their perspectives on how to increase the participation of Black American men in fatherhood programs. The community engagement efforts informed the mission, vision, objective, and services offered by the social *innovation* named The National Fatherhood League. The following chapters will discuss the last two steps of the CESI Model: evaluate and disseminate.

### **Christian Worldview**

Fathers are an essential piece of the family. The word father in Hebrew is 'Abba,' meaning source, sustainer, nourisher, supporter, the foundation of that which comes out (Bible Study Tools, 2022). From this Hebrew definition, it is evident that God created fathers to be the source and foundation of the family. However, the historical context, such as slavery, economic disadvantages, discriminatory policies, and incarceration, strategically removed the Black father from their families, ultimately removing the Black family's foundation. The bible says if the foundation is destroyed, what can the righteous do (King James Version, 2017, Psalms 11:3)? Therefore, The National Fatherhood League will ensure the father's foundation is restored in the Black family unit and assist them in increasing their father's involvement, so their children grow up in discipline and instruction of the Lord (King James Version, 2017, Ephesians 6:4).

### **Ethical Considerations and Possible Negative Consequences**

Of primary concern of ethical considerations is the potential for breaches in confidentiality by The National Fatherhood League's mentoring program. In order to combat this, mentors will receive training in the purpose and need for confidentiality. The concept will continually be reinforced when a mentor is paired with a mentee, and mentors and mentees will sign a confidentiality agreement. If mentees are concerned about breaches in confidentiality, their concerns will be investigated and treated with the utmost importance. If it has been found that a mentor has breached confidentiality, they may receive consequences ranging up to dismissal from the fraternity. In addition, The National Fatherhood League Fraternity will adhere to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the National Council of Nonprofits code of ethics. The National Fatherhood League will adopt a policy that prevents sharing sensitive, confidential data without adhering to the proper methods.

With any research and innovative idea, there is a possibility of negative outcomes. Regarding TNFL, potentially, there could be negative pushback from society. Society may see a coalition of Black men as a threat as they did the Black Panther Party, whose objective was to provide for their community because the government failed to meet the needs of the people (Harris, 2000). In addition, there can be possible negative pushback from the Divine Nine, the existing black fraternities and sororities. TNFL will be stepping into their fraternity territory and may not be received well. Therefore, TNFL will attempt to partner with the Divine Nine and always distinguish itself as a fatherhood fraternity, not a collegiate fraternity.

### **Conclusion**

The National Fatherhood League fraternity is an innovative solution to increase father involvement in the Black American community. Currently, there is a diversity of existing fatherhood programs that are helpful to fathers that offer parenting training and resources. Although these programs exist, The National Fatherhood League differs because it is a fatherhood fraternity geared toward Black American men and informed by Black American men. Not only does TNFL offer services, but a lifetime brotherhood that will bond members who join with exclusive incentives such as paraphernalia, a call and response chant, hand gestures representing TNFL, and Line strolling (dancing). In addition, all members will go through a nine-month mentoring program that initiates members into TNFL to have access to these opportunities. During the nine months, mentees will accomplish a fatherhood goal that achieves the objective of TNFL of being a positively involved father. In addition, The National Fatherhood League ensures the foundation, which is the father, is restored in the Black family unit, increasing his father's involvement for his children to grow up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (King James Version, 2017, Ephesians 6:4).

**Innovation**

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## Chapter 6: Evaluation

Worthen (1994) suggests that program evaluation can play either a formative purpose which helps improve a program or a summative purpose which is deciding whether a program should be continued. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of The National Fatherhood League, the research question that will guide the evaluation is, do services offered by the National Fatherhood League increase a father's involvement with his children? Williams (2021) reported that quantitative research produces objective data that can be communicated through statistics and numbers. Therefore, a quantitative study will investigate The National Fatherhood League's impact on its member.

The study will be conducted a year after The National Fatherhood League Fraternity initiates its first members. The number of participants The National Fatherhood League expects to study will be the 19 community members who participated in the focus group meetings. These participants advised their willingness to join The National Fatherhood League. The purpose of the study will be to examine if the services offered by The National Fatherhood League increased a father's involvement with their children. The evaluation will explore the hypothesis that if men utilize the knowledge and skills gained from services offered by TNFL, they will increase their father's involvement with their children.

To evaluate program effectiveness, this researcher will administer a pre-survey to members of TNFL once initiated into the fraternity and a post-survey to members of TNFL after they have been in TNFL for a year to analyze if TNFL services increase father involvement. The survey will evaluate members' pre/post levels of father involvement due to receiving services from TNFL. Surveys will be administered through Google Forum, a system that analyzes data and provides the results. Surveys will be emailed to participants through the Google Forum.

Once the participants complete and submit the surveys, the results will be emailed to this researcher for analysis. The survey will not require formal institutional review board (IRB) approval. However, this researcher will retake the "Research Ethics and Compliance Training" through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program).

Additionally, the researcher will conduct appropriate due diligence measures to ensure that every step of the evaluation, including the development of the survey questions, analysis of the outcomes, benefits and risks, voluntary participation procedures, data collection and security standards, and other participant safeguards are thoughtfully approached to protect the participants in the study. In order to maintain the confidentiality of the participants, no identifiable information will be requested in the study instrument. The National Fatherhood League fraternity has optimism that men will utilize the knowledge and skills they gained from the organization and increase their father involvement with their children.

### **Revenue Strategy**

For the first year, TNFL board of directors and Executive Director will volunteer in their positions. During the second year, TNFL will need a minimum of \$1,090,000.00 to begin paying the Board of Directors, Executive Director, and staff along with day-to-day operations fees such as insurance, lawyers, internet, supplies, printing, and staff training and development, and events. TNFL will receive funding through contracts, grants, sponsorships, donations, and fundraising for organization revenue. During year one, TNFL will apply for grants through riverside county purchasing, the community foundation, government grants, and various other agencies that supply grants. TNFL will put on fundraising events for revenue and charge admission fees to conferences and social events.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

Father absence is a worldwide phenomenon associated with poor academic performance, negative social skills, poor mental health, delinquency behavior, incarceration, and substance abuse in children (Cabrera et al., 2018; Freeks, 2017; McLanahan et al., 2013). In America, 46.3% of Black American children live without their fathers and are at greater risk for social problems and developmental difficulties (Bureau, 2021). On the contrary, actively involved Black American fathers who discipline their children by setting limits and boundaries have socially and emotionally stable children who can form meaningful relationships with others and remain steadfast in challenging situations (Pruett et al., 2017). Furthermore, the Bible calls for individuals to take up the cause of the fatherless (King James Version, 2017, Isaiah 1:17). Thus, it is essential to increase father involvement in the Black American community to ensure children's positive growth and development.

Researchers have developed effective interventions and fatherhood programs that increase a father's involvement with his children. However, Black American men's participation in these effective programs is significantly low. Therefore, it was imperative to discover practical ways to increase the participation of Black American men in effective fatherhood programs to increase father involvement in the Black American community. A qualitative thematic analysis examined the research question of what mission, elements, and outcomes an effective fatherhood program encompasses for the increased participation of Black American men. This project engaged the Black American male community by utilizing focus group meetings. The respondents' views emerged four major themes leading to sub-themes followed by initial codes using NVIVO Software.

In summary, the data collection results revealed that the mission of a fatherhood program had to be inclusive and empower a diversity of black men, strengthen the brotherhood of black men and the father-child relationship, and create a positive influence in the community and society. In addition, the participants reported that the fatherhood program must be fun, comfortable, involve sporting events, cookouts, social events, teach men how to be an asset to society, be a concept of a fraternity, provide mentoring, and help men with their parenting skills. Lastly, the participants reported that the program's outcome had to help men with co-parenting, understand how to be mentors, provide financial literacy skills, teach men how to be productive citizens, and recognize the power of their legacy. The data collection results informed the mission, vision, objective, and services The National Fatherhood League offers.

Albert Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory guided and informed this project on the importance of increasing father involvement and modeled an innovative solution to increase father involvement. Theoretically, this research has led to the proposal of a social innovation called The National Fatherhood League (TNFL), a non-profit fraternity organization geared toward increasing father involvement in families and the community and promoting the development of men individually. A critical component of TNFL is its structured nine-month mentoring program that initiates members into the fraternity. During the nine-month mentoring program, mentees develop two fatherhood goals and one personal goal to ensure the mission of TNFL is met. To evaluate the effectiveness of The National Fatherhood League, a quantitative study using pre and post-test surveys will investigate the impact The National Fatherhood League has on its members and analyze if TNFL services increase a father's involvement.

### **Implications**



The National Fatherhood League Fraternity is intended to increase father involvement in the Black American community so that every Black American child grows up with a positively involved father or father figure. Allen (1995) reports that society often looks down on the Black American family and generates negative stereotypes. For this reason, The National Fatherhood League Fraternity aims to strengthen the Black American family unit, disrupt society's perception, and challenge the Black American family stereotypes. In addition, TNFL seeks to empower the Black American male who has often been emasculated in society (Beal, 2008) and restore him as the head of the household, consequently disrupting the system intended to dismantle the Black American nuclear family.

### **Future Implications for Policy Change**

The future implication for The National Fatherhood League will be to lend itself as an advocacy organization to advance and shift the culture at the policy level. An involved father is involved in all aspects of their children's lives, and participants from the focus groups discussed how they often miss out on their children's school-related activities because they cannot miss work. Therefore, The National Fatherhood League can advance policy by advocating with local employers to help them understand the importance of father involvement and how they could support healthy families by providing strategies for fathers to be present at school events. In America, policies allow US citizens to vote on election day without using their paid time off. Hence, TNFL can advocate for employers to follow these same policies and allow fathers to attend their children's school-related activities to increase father involvement.

### **Limitations**

The conclusions based on this project have significant limitations. First, the sample size of 19 participants was small, which increases the likelihood that not all perspectives of Black

men were captured. Second, participants lived in two out of the 50 states of America; therefore, the study may not be utterly generalizable because it does not compliment the different cultures of Black American men from the remaining 48 states. Third, The National Fatherhood League is a new approach to increasing a father's involvement and has not yet been implemented; therefore, it is unsure if the organization will increase a father's involvement until it can be evaluated.

### **Future Research**

The research of this project informed The National Fatherhood League. However, The National Fatherhood League has not been fully implemented, and therefore, TNFL will need to gather data to see if the organization is effective at increasing a father's involvement. If the data reveals increased father involvement, this project can serve as an example to expand upon the services of existing fatherhood programs and agencies. Existing fatherhood programs and agencies can replicate this study by conducting more community-based research to attract more Black men to attend their programs. Participants from this project's focus groups suggested that fatherhood programs should be fun for the members to have a good time. Therefore, these existing fatherhood programs should engage black American men and discover what "fun" looks like and how to incorporate their suggestions into their programs. In addition, future research of TNFL will look into adding child support guidance and legal representation for mediation for men when navigating challenges with the mother and/or wife of their child/children. Furthermore, TNFL will research how to partner with child welfare settings as this could be useful for court-recommended services for members of TNFL and develop a service plan to report child abuse.

### **Plans for Execution**

In order to execute the plans of TNFL, there will be seven phases. *Phase One*: The National Fatherhood Leagues Board of Directors provides direction and oversight over the organization's activities, finances, officers, and legal compliance. Therefore, to launch the National Fatherhood League, this researcher will collaborate with the Board of Directors to fully develop the other services offered by TNFL. *Phase Two* entails piloting TNFL's nine-month mentoring program. Piloting the mentoring program is critical to ensure the program is adequate to get the buy-in of community members and potential donors and sponsors. The participants in this project's focus group meetings advised their willingness to participate in the piloting of the program. In addition, several stakeholders, such as The Life Church, Knotts Family Agency, and Couples. Inc has agreed to allow TNFL Mentoring Program to be piloted by members of their organization with the use of their facility.

*Phase three* of the National Fatherhood League execution entails applying for grants to fund the organization and rent or buy a building as a stable meeting place. Participants of the focus group suggested that a stable place for members to escape is vital. Funds will also be allocated towards the salary of board members, the Executive Director, and staff, such as a Program Manager overseeing all six of TNFL's services and Program Coordinators supervising one of the services. Funds will also be allocated to legal and accounting relations, supplies and printing, staff training development, events, and advertisement. Phase three also entails bringing on volunteers to assist in the operation of TNFL. *Phase four* of the execution of The National Fatherhood League entails building up a following. The National Fatherhood League will begin advertising through its social media platforms (Instagram) and launch its official website. This researcher will also attend community and faith-based events to begin networking and form a base for future donors, volunteers, members, and board members.

*Phase five* entails the full operation of The National Fatherhood League in the community. During this phase, TNFL will recruit members and operate all six services with members. The organization will be evaluated after its full operation to ensure that its services meet TNFL's mission and vision. *Phase six* entails the National Fatherhood League starting its second chapter of the fraternity in San Bernardino County to further the dissemination of The National Fatherhood League. If the funds are unavailable for a new building, TNFL will partner with educational institutions, churches, and community centers to use as a space for TNFL meetings in San Bernardino County. *Phase seven* is the ultimate goal of TNFL, which is to disseminate chapters of TNFL throughout all counties of the United States of America. The first Black Greek fraternity was founded in 1906 (O'Malley, 2019). It continues to sustain and disseminate its mission today due to its members' commitment to pass on the mission and values of the fraternity to each new generation. The National Fatherhood League hopes to have the same commitment from its members to disseminate TNFL for years to come throughout the country and create a systemic change.

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**Appendix A: Table 1 Mission to Increase the participation of Black American men**

Representative Statements form Interviews	Initial Codes	Themes
<p>you see different backgrounds come together and let you know that everyone is acceptable, and you don't have to feel uncomfortable pretty much the same (FGD2)</p> <p>there was so many different backgrounds some you know came from happy two parent homes other of us you know didn't have that experience so something to bring us together (FGD3)</p>	<p>Different backgrounds are acceptable</p>	<p>01. Engaging diverse group of Black American man</p>
<p>I think they have to see a versatile and wide variety group of black men who all have like their own strong foundations and like their firm and their self and their own personal abilities so just a strong different group of men and then just being giving and generous (FGD2)</p>	<p>Wide variety of black men who have strong foundations</p>	
<p>That brotherhood is gonna be the strongest words you got...empowering the brotherhood, so brotherhood needs to be in the mission statement for sure</p>	<p>Empowering the brotherhood</p>	<p>02. Strengthening brotherhood</p>
<p>I think just you know shared experiences love for their kids wanting to create community brotherhood yeah and just that that family bond is what would bring men together (FGD3)</p>	<p>To create community brotherhood</p>	

Representative Statements form Interviews	Initial Codes	Themes
<p>they said in a good structure and a strong foundation because a lot of times us in the black community we have things but we don't follow through with it wholeheartedly (FGD2)</p>	<p>building strong foundation</p>	
<p>to incorporate the importance of again those men coming together and then also making sure that there's something in there that says hey we're like we're making sure that the kids are you know getting taken care (FGD1)</p>	<p>Importance of coming together</p>	
<p>to include um strengthening the bond between fathers black fathers and their children there's so many things that create the bond between children and oftentimes in situations where there's unmarried parents or divorced parents children and fathers aren't in the home together um you have to work a lot more harder to keep that bond strong</p> <p>ways to continue strengthening that bond between you know father and son father and daughter and then and then it has to very because your relationship with your daughters are going to be different than your relationship with your sons (FGD3)</p>	<p>Strengthen the bond between fathers and children</p>	<p>03. Strengthening community body and relationships</p>
<p>I believe that one is a sports for some reason we all sports so sports a variation of full as well as (FGD2)</p> <p>I've always tried to you know do the sports</p>	<p>Work on bond through sports</p>	

Representative Statements form Interviews	Initial Codes	Themes
<p>and things with their boys we've kind of heavily played on the ground add thing and so there may be some songs that felt left out so I think we have to work on the bond as a whole you know how can a father how can we increase that bond between father and son father and daughter (FGD3)</p>		
<p>I saw him proud of autumn should be credible having dealt with many organizations over the years oftentimes the actual leadership is tends to be suspects so first of all I'm kinda be brief with this you want credible leadership at the top</p>		
<p>what we said earlier leadership is very important one thing that first came to mind when you read the question it was just about getting the participation of you know and for me that's appealing to you know to everyone all the men in this in this group</p>	<p>Credible leadership</p>	<p>04. Developing leadership and creating a positive influence</p>
<p>I feel is the main of course leadership is great but if you're not comfortable it said leadership you know it it doesn't it doesn't help so I really feel with client said they were comfortable it is the main thing new did you meet it one more time you meet it (FGD4)</p>		

Representative Statements form Interviews	Initial Codes	Themes
<p>I would say it's a definitely include being a positive influence and presence in a young man's life absolutely I guess that that really the best thing that I could think of right now I'm there they're saying have a positive like be a positive role model there's a lot of times kids look at what you did right and they want and if and if you show a positive role model then they they'll follow that positive grow month (FGD2)</p>	<p>Positive influence of presence in young man's life</p>	
<p>some simple steps to create change like immediate change small steps you know if somebody will do something for a week and they see the results they'll probably continue to do it so you know just a small you know for me like to attract you know me and I feel like others focal point will be some bullet points (FGD4)</p>	<p>To create change</p>	



**Appendix B: Table 2 Basic features to Increase the participation of Black American men**

Representative Statements form Interviews	Initial Codes	Themes
<p>there would need to be a consistent place for there to be a consistent place for meetings to be at and things as such like just for it just looks more professional and it will keep people if it's just a consistent thing so it just looks more firm in its foundation so just not bouncing around too much having a good place to stay other components just being organized because that's gonna obviously make it more professional seem more professional as well (FGD2)</p>	<p>Consistent place for meeting</p>	<p>01. Effective program design</p>
<p>the importance of that you know communication is always key so you know maybe some stuff really focusing on communication</p>	<p>Focusing on communication</p>	
<p>we do have so in our communication we you know to cover all you know who are who are we trying to reach we want to make sure (FGD4)</p>		

Representative Statements form Interviews	Initial Codes	Themes
<p>yeah going to sporting events I don't know stuff like that that's what I kind of well I'll let that because that's what the track that's what attracts a man you know what I mean what are they doing not just are we about to go and have these serious conversations all the time (FGD1)</p>		
<p>I think with like men in particular black man a lot of us have love for sports that came later in life for me also something to help a many heal (FGD3)</p>	<p>Love for sports</p>	
<p>I think would help drive it you know you talk about sports and talk about those types of engagement and activities I think that would help get both sides involved you know from the adult aspect to the children aspect integrating sports entertainment (FGD4)</p>		
<p>I think we have to make it comfortable for every walk of life to come in and even I mean with for homeless guys a dad and he's out there on the street wanting to reunite with his kids you know how can this guy be welcomed into the group (FGD3)</p>	<p>Make it comfortable for every walk</p>	

Representative Statements form Interviews	Initial Codes	Themes
<p>I think that you gotta make the program fun so I think that the program has to be fun almost like you said a fraternity so whether it be zoom gatherings or in person gatherings kind of like you're dealing with men (FGD1)</p>	<p>Program has to be fun</p>	
<p>I feel like is important is to teach up the youth of how to be an asset to society versus the liability because a lot of times we just take and we think we trying to get this and everything but learn how to contribute back to bill like you know when they say reach one teach (FGD2)</p>	<p>become an asset to society</p>	
<p>the kind of the concept of fraternity anyway we do business but we have a great time while doing so having fun while actually taking care of or addressing different hot topics I think would be something that keeps all the men engaged where they're looking forward to it (FGD1)</p>	<p>Concept of fraternity</p>	<p>02. Making a better society</p>
<p>I think it gets easier after you know a court group of men understand the power of what's being done right take a parenting class to help them because you ain't gonna be a good parent with that baby come you're not gonna be the perfect parent but (FGD1)</p>	<p>Understand the power</p>	

Representative Statements form Interviews	Initial Codes	Themes
willing to you know make the adjustment so definitely capturing the audience like gentlemen we're saying like hey you know yeah we're gonna put these events together you know in order to get to get us all in the same place (FGD1)	Willing to make an adjustment	

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**Appendix C: Table 3 Desired outcomes to Increase the participation of Black American men**

Representative Statements form Interviews	Initial Codes	Themes
<p>you know yes men are more comfortable sharing certain things with men but there are some things that men won't share with another man that they will share with a woman right especially when it has to do with emotional hurt you know you know some men are more comfortable sharing that with a woman (FGD3)</p>	<p>Men are more comfortable sharing a few things</p>	<p>01. Parenting facilitation</p>
<p>being a part of your child's life is often hard when you do not have the best relationship with their mother, so teaching coparenting skills will be helpful so you can be a part of your child's life. (FGD1)</p>	<p>Co-Parenting</p>	
<p>I believe the programs should really guide them and develop of who the basically leaders are at The Pioneers and everything for them to mimic them and to produce and (FGD2)</p>	<p>Guidance</p>	<p>02. Guidance and help</p>
<p>now teaching men to help other men with their kids is the number one goal; there's a scripture that actually talks about turning the hearts of the fathers (FGD1)</p>	<p>Helping new members</p>	

Representative Statements form Interviews	Initial Codes	Themes
<p>I think is very important is just spreading the knowledge and information on how to get money for real and how to like work for yourself and build your own business so that you can have financial freedom and just teach financial literacy to all the men just uplift people that's how you uplift people just spreading more knowledge and wisdom (FGD2)</p>	<p>Information on how to get money for real</p>	
<p>I mean grown men and productive citizens in society where they're productive and they're actually leaders not following what the streets are putting out there (FGD2)</p>	<p>Productive citizens</p>	<p>04. Making transformative citizens</p>
<p>that is the common goal here because once a man realizes and recognizes the power of his legacy a lot of these men they run away or they're not there because they don't understand that's their legacy you did some men they chasing other in that your legacy is in your children and getting them to you know understand that and the impact that they're going to have on that every man (FGD1)</p>	<p>Recognize the power of legacy</p>	

**Appendix D: Table 4 Suggestion to increase the participation of Black American men**

Representative Statements form Interviews	Initial Codes	Themes
<p>that's what we all need, that's what most people are looking for just like ** said he didn't have any father to teach him that so you know you need more black men in a group like this that's positive can teach him and help him show him what a father is now his whole life is gonna change he looks at life differently and seeing all that bad stuff well (FGD2)</p>	<p>Need more black people to teach them</p>	
<p>they're with us once it's I feel like fun is definitely a necessary component of just people want to have a good time so adding that on top of the networking the sharing of knowledge the brotherhood and all that just having a good time together (FGD2)</p>	<p>Networking is necessary</p>	<p>01. Focus on networking</p>
<p>you know physical type thing to get together and actually do something together even just like a simple competition doesn't necessarily have to be physical right I was gonna say that we should have to be rich like people have to enjoy themselves (FGD2)</p>	<p>Physical type thing to get together</p>	
<p>I feel like team building activities with the definitely help out like things that would make everybody all have to come together and include themselves and interact</p>	<p>Team building activities</p>	

Representative Statements form Interviews	Initial Codes	Themes
<p>(FGD2)</p> <hr/> <p>Oh yeah there's a place at a place to be comfortable to be celebrated you know to pat each other on the back and right one another um um I'll go back to resources I think is you know as long as we can provide what's needed you know because you know men typically ask for help you know right will go without before we ask for it yeah</p> <p>(FGD3)</p>	<p>Place to be comfortable &amp; celebrate</p>	<p>02.</p>
<p>where you're just talking spreading knowledge and then yeah have a flag football tournament have a BBQ me out and then like more black people you know we get out like it's just little things like that I bought down to like one word that I like was a symbol building it's I believe it's important because we it's like groups that I've been to I know it's one group it was separated itself from every other group that</p> <p>(FGD2)</p>	<p>Spreading knowledge</p>	<p>Knowledge sharing at comfortable space</p>
<p>people you keep your focus on what the goals are 'cause oftentimes again everything from just click this Ness and somebody becoming dominant the kind of support and goal is to reach out and to improve the community then let's stay focused on that</p>	<p>Focus on goals</p>	<p>Integrity and goal focus</p>



Representative Statements form Interviews	Initial Codes	Themes
<p>and not have somebody be dominant (FGD4)</p>		
<p>you know actually help you become a better father at the end of the day you know the better person I am you know the better David I am the better dad I can be and so you're still trying to heal the man again from all the things that we've had to you know go through just helping build the man resources to build men to become better fathers (FGD3)</p>	<p>Help you become a better father</p>	
<p>it goes for integrity just instilling integrity because integrity is when you do things where people are not looking at and that's when your character really is so really there's still integrity because a lot of times we you have people that could be leaders in groups or for instance say it's a pastor and he's preaching on the pulpit and then you see him at the bar you like hold on what about that so therefore some integrity is something that is really important to do it to make sure that you're doing it for yourself to deal with or for your future or for your kids</p> <p>produce that in that level of integrity and</p>	<p>Integrity</p>	

Representative Statements form Interviews	Initial Codes	Themes
character building I think is definitely spot on it can I can I interject real quick sure absolutely I I just wanna share a story (FGD2)		
<hr/> I would say be helpful pretty much what what ** just said teach them how to be you know to make money and do it legally no that's just I feel like no jail now that's how I feel (FGD2)	Making money	

**Appendix E: Social Learning Theory Model Diagram**

