

Engaging Fathers for Healthy Youth Development

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AGENDA

Introductions

The importance of fathers to their children - Jeff

What is the experience for fathers in the system - Jeff

Putting a framework around fatherlessness- George

A positive process of engaging fathers - George

The importance of fathers

*Let's hear from
you*



- **What roles do fathers play in the lives of children?**
 - **What do fathers give their children?**
 - **What do children need most from fathers?**
- **What happens when fathers are not involved?**
 - **What happens when families break up?**



DADS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE!

Children who grow up with INVOLVED fathers are:

39%

MORE LIKELY TO
EARN MOSTLY A'S
IN SCHOOL

45%

LESS LIKELY
TO REPEAT
A GRADE

60%

LESS LIKELY TO BE
SUSPENDED OR
EXPELLED FROM
SCHOOL

2X

AS LIKELY TO GO TO COLLEGE
AND FIND STABLE
EMPLOYMENT AFTER
HIGH SCHOOL

75%

LESS LIKELY
TO HAVE A
TEEN BIRTH

80%

LESS LIKELY TO
SPEND TIME
IN JAIL

Fatherhood a positive experience and central to dads' identity

% saying parenting is extremely important to their identity



% saying parenting is rewarding all of the time



% saying parenting is enjoyable all of the time



Source: Pew Research Center survey of parents with children under 18, Sept.15-Oct.13, 2015

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Let's put ourselves in the shoes of single fathers

What do single fathers see around them in the system?

Let's hear from you



How do we avoid the trap?



THE SYSTEM

Let's put ourselves in the shoes of fathers

*Let's hear from
you!*



What are fathers experiencing when you come in contact with them?

What are some of the issues fathers face in the system?

What is the human experience for single fathers? (Generally)

Embarrassed

Frustrated over the chaos and turmoil

Disappointed, self-doubt

Overwhelmed and beaten down

Financial struggles

Struggling with dysfunctions within the family

Personal issues, mental health, substance addiction

What is the human experience for single fathers? (Separated Families)

Hurting over the loss of the family, marriage, relationship

Often clinging to the hope of reconciliation

Often struggling with the mother over the care and management of their children

Heartbroken over being forced away from their children

Disempowered as the system interjects itself on the situation

Often discouraged over attorneys

Practical aspects – finances, being displaced, starting over

What is the human experience for fathers?



What do fathers see around them in the system?

The collegial nature of the human services community

Providers are predominantly female staffed

If it isn't broke, don't fix it

Err on the side of caution

Lack of definition

Inconsistencies and moving the goalposts (General/case plans)

Lack of communication

Fathers view the system as?

Having biases

Being imbalanced

Inequity – custody and their rights as a parent

Inequity – how they are viewed and treated

Institutional barriers that work against them

RESULT - DISENFRANCHISEMENT

How does what fathers see in the system impact?

*Let's hear from
you*





The Missing Link

Crisis in Fatherhood

Fathers Involved Now



The Importance of Fathers

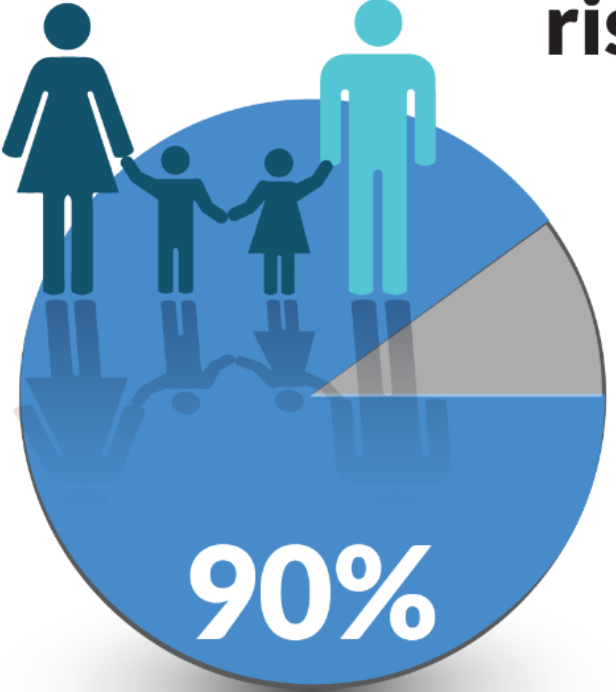
Building Next Generation Men



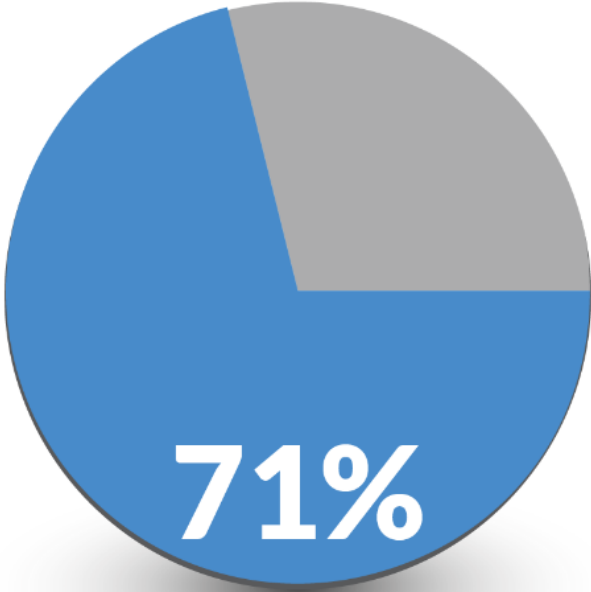
Father absence is considered by many to be the major social problem in our society today.

24 million children, 1 out of 3, live without their biological father in the home.

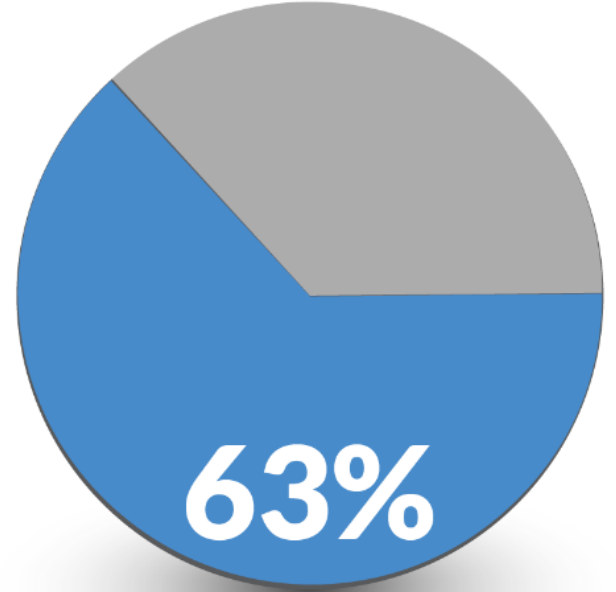
Children growing up **without fathers** face greater risks and account for:




Of Homeless & Runaway Youth



Of High School Dropouts



Of Youth Suicides



Just the Facts

Children raised in a father-absent home are more likely to experience behavioral problems.

SOURCE: Osborne, C., & McLanahan, S. (2007). Partnership Instability and child well-being. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 69, 1065-1083..

National
Fatherhood
Initiative®

FATHER FACTS
SEVENTH EDITION



Just the Facts

Children living in female-headed homes with no spouse present have a poverty rate of **47.6%** - over four times the rate for children living in married couple families.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2012)

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Just the Facts

Individuals from father
absent homes are

279%

more likely to carry
guns and deal drugs
than peers living
with their fathers.

SOURCE: Allen, A. N., & Lo, C. C. (2012). Drugs, guns, and disadvantaged youths: Co-occurring behavior and the code of the street. *Crime & Delinquency*, 58(6), 932-953.

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Just the Facts

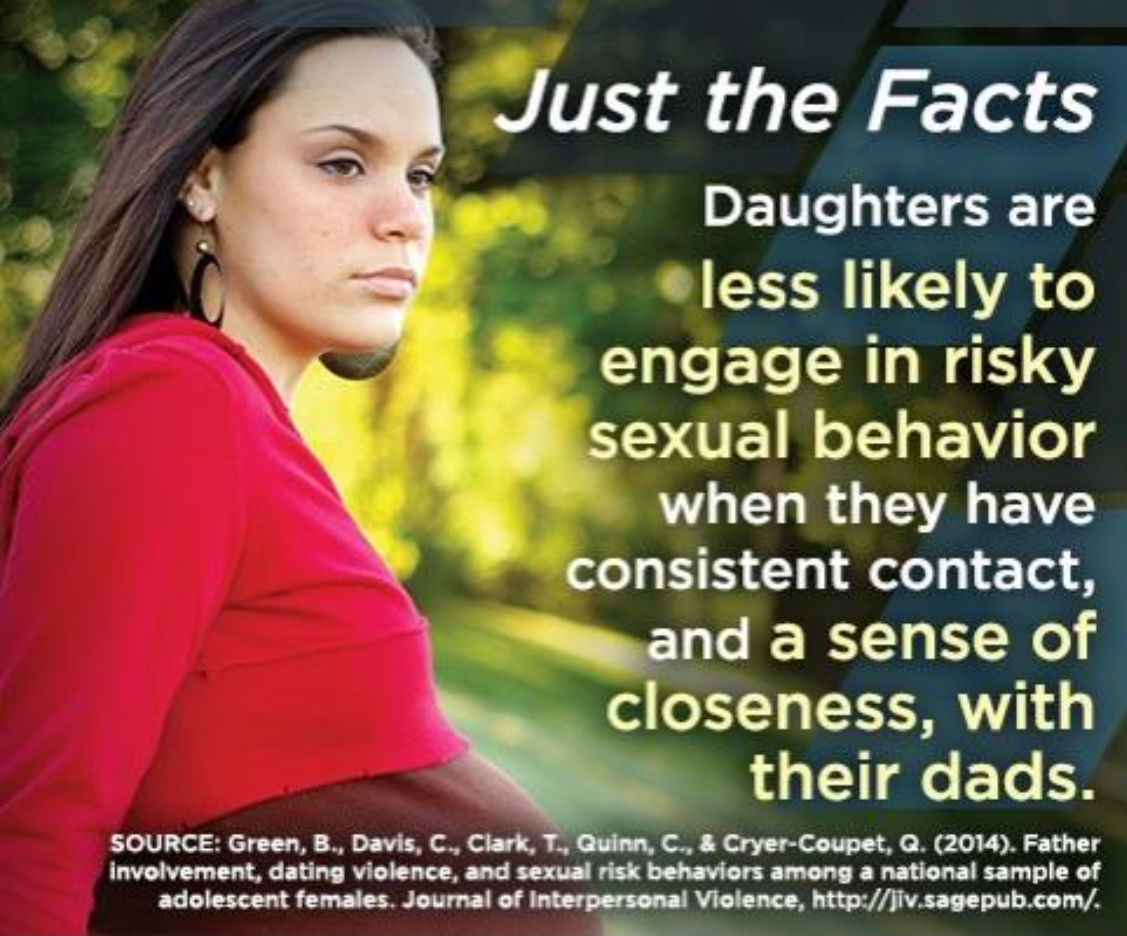
Adolescent boys
with absent
fathers are more
likely to engage
in delinquency
than those with
fathers who are
present.

SOURCE: from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. Cobb-Clark, D. A., & Tekin, E. (2014).

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Just the Facts

Daughters are
less likely to
engage in risky
sexual behavior
when they have
consistent contact,
and a sense of
closeness, with
their dads.

SOURCE: Green, B., Davis, C., Clark, T., Quinn, C., & Cryer-Coupet, Q. (2014). Father Involvement, dating violence, and sexual risk behaviors among a national sample of adolescent females. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, <http://jiv.sagepub.com/>.

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Just the Facts

92%
of parents
in prison
are fathers.

SOURCE: Glaze, L.E., & Maruschak, L.M. (2010).

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To support and partner with families rearing children who have emotional and mental health needs in order to improve their quality of life.

As family members we have negotiated the human service systems on a personal level.

This experience allows us to offer a wealth of information and support to the families engaged in AFN programs and activities.

Why is a strategic framework for men in their roles as fathers required?

- Engaging men as fathers both in working towards **providing safety for children and service provision can be difficult**, particularly for those men **who contend with issues of identity, social and economic inclusion**.
- Being able to **better support men at all stages of the family life cycle** will lead to **greater opportunities** for children and families.

Six Key Factors for a Strategic Framework

1. Organizations that operate from a child-centered and family inclusive philosophy.

- Focusing on **improving the engagement** of men in service provision could lead to **better outcomes** for children and **greater entry points** into their lives.

2. Men as fathers represent a significant customer base of the organization and funded non government services.

- An **improved awareness** of the needs and expectations of fathers, particularly in relation to best providing for the care, **protection and wellbeing** of their children, will facilitate more **responsive service provision**.

3. Men as fathers are good for children and families.

- Men in their role as fathers who are **positively involved** in their children's lives **create greater opportunities and outcomes** for those children as well as benefiting their own **psychological and emotional wellbeing**.

- 4. The changing roles, expectations and aspirations of men as fathers.**
 - Changes in the **composition and structure** of families require a commensurate change in the way organizations **understands and supports families**.
- 5. Changing policy, research and program development trends.**
 - The development of the framework **ensures** that organizations remains **progressive in its services and strategies**.
- 6. Establishing male positive and father inclusive practices within a gender equity framework.**
 - **Valuing the unique and important** contribution of fathers to family and community life **underpins the framework**.
 - **Engaging fathers in a greater proportion** of child care and domestic life **promotes greater gender equity** to mothers both **within and outside the family**.

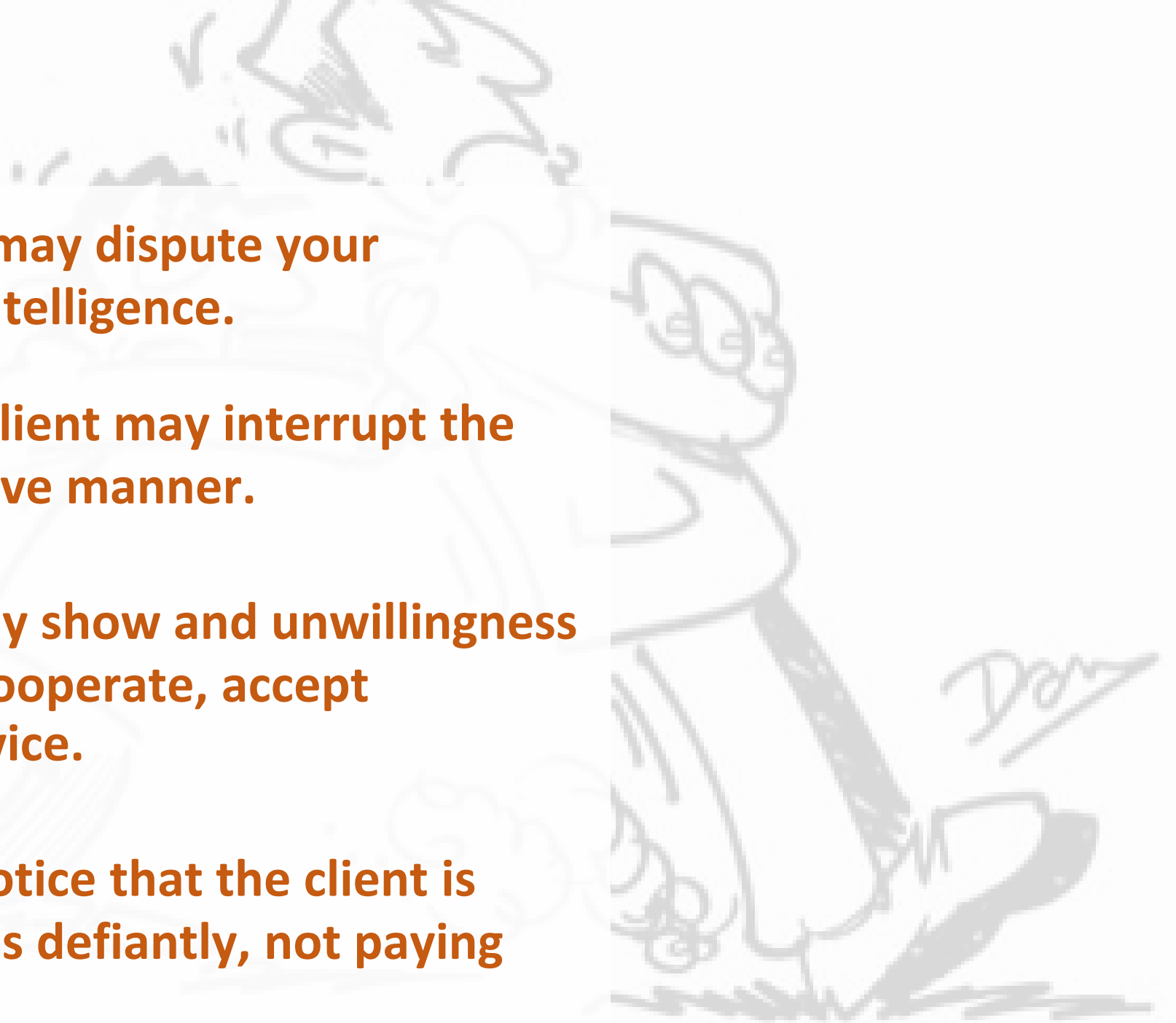
Barriers

- Difficulty **identifying** and locating fathers
- **Gatekeeping** by mothers
- **Lack of interest** by fathers
- Lack of **paternity establishment**
- **Lack of resources** and **services** to refer fathers to
- Difficulty **knowing how** to get fathers more involved
- **System Biases** - Legal, Child welfare and Economics
- **Lack of clear policy** on **when** and **how** to involve dads
- **Stereotypes** about fathers



Types of Resistance

- **Arguing** – The client may dispute your accuracy, integrity and intelligence.
- **Interruption** – The client may interrupt the conversation in a defensive manner.
- **Denial** - The client may show an unwillingness to recognize problems, cooperate, accept responsibility or take advice.
- **Ignoring** – You will notice that the client is obviously, and sometimes defiantly, not paying attention to you.





Things We Must Change

Recommended Services

- Individual Coaching
- Job Training
- Financial Literacy
- Health and Wellness Workshops
- Parent-Child Enrichment Activities
- Legal Workshops and Consultations
- Employment Assistance
- Housing Assistance



Tips for Working with Fathers

Start where the father is not where you think he should be, or where stereotypes may lead you.

Be patient and willing to hang in there, as most fathers in the system **will experience ups and downs throughout** the process.

Ask explorative questions in a **non-threatening** manner.



More Tips

- **Never** be **judgmental**. Recognize your **biases** and **manage** them.
- **Be respectful** and **understand cultural definitions** of masculinity.
- **Demonstrate genuine** and **ongoing caring**.
- **Do not make false promises**.





When Working With Fathers

Assume that men can be reached, look for ways to meet specific needs and be prepared to follow-up.

Engaging & Recruiting



**We're looking for a few good men
to step up and strengthen the chain**

Developing Your Toolkit

RESOURCES

Through Fathers Toolkit Binder

Peer to Peer Support

Employment Services

One-on-One Support

Legal Concerns

Housing & Education

Support Groups



Networking & Collaboration

Our degree of success has been based partly on our networking with agencies, programs, schools, churches, military, courts and other entities that have involvement with fathers. Its important that you utilize every opportunity to network. Networking provides opportunities for us to form collaborations on projects such as:



Father Daughter Dinner Dance
Speakers Bureau
Bring your Father to School Day
Sports Event
Picnics

How Do We Keep Dads Involved & Engaged

Education and Participation

Train 24/7 Dads and Nurturing Fathers – Emphasis every day fathering skills
Agents Of Transformation (AOT) – Empowerment and Advocacy
Nurturing Parenting – Emphasis on how to be nurturing

Consulting Page

Activities – Father & Child Tailgate Party, Baseball Game, Arena Football, the Circus, Harlem Globetrotters
Family Enrichment – Mental Health Expo, Live Laugh & Lifesavers, Annual Cookout, Amusement Parks

Support Groups

Our agency offers 12 difference support groups around South Western PA. Of these groups five are specialized support groups for men.



Fathers Involved Now

AFN Central

Crafton Heights

Mercy Behavior Health

Natrona Heights

Allegheny County Jail

Stages to Engagement

Engagement

```
graph TD; Engagement[Engagement] --> Planning[Planning]; Planning --> Implementation[Implementation]; Implementation --> Transition[Transition]; Transition --> Follow-up[Follow-up];
```

Planning

Implementation

Transition

Follow-up

Engagement

30 Day



Initial Contact

Relationship Building

Utilize Personal Touch

Caring Attitude

Start Joint Planning

Initiate Paperwork

Planning

30-60 Day



Fathers Support Plan (FSP)

Guide

Coach

Support

Cheer On

Implementation

60 Day +



**Implement
Concrete Goals**

Action Steps

Support

Transition Phase



**Connect to Natural
Setting**

**Document the
Outcome**

Follow-Up

30/60/90

**Did
We
Make
a
Difference ?**



Transition Phase



**Connect to Natural
Setting**

**Document the
Outcome**