THE FUNDAMENTALS OF FATHERHOOD

YOUR COACHING NETWORK



8

MODULE

ON WHOM CAN I RELY?



Stress can come from a number of places, but it's important to manage it in a healthy way. Fathers can manage stress well by relying on **themselves**, on their **partner** and on their support **network**.

Directions: Coaches from the clip listed **five** truths for their coaching networks. In the space below each term, define it in your own words. Think: *Which comments relate to me the most?*

1. Your spouse is key for perspective.

2. You need other people.

3. You need people who know and understand you.

4. You are never an island.

5. Pick people for your inner circle who share your values.

SELF-RELIANCE

Directions: Think about where stress comes from in your life. **Check** the boxes that apply to you.

- ☐ Work-related stressors
- ☐ Family finances
- ☐ Personal physical health
- ☐ Physical health of family
- ☐ Personal mental health
- ☐ Mental health of family
- ☐ Personal safety
- ☐ Safety of family
- ☐ Drug/alcohol use/abuse
- ☐ Concern about a child
- ☐ Relationship with partner
- ☐ Self-confidence stressors
- ☐
- ☐

When you finish checking your stressor boxes, **circle** the top one or two areas that cause you the most stress. Write a couple of sentences describing the stress you feel from the different areas in your life. Does the stress feel unmanageable? Does it feel unavoidable?

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Directions: As a group, brainstorm some **positive** and **negative** coping strategies to stressors in your life. Write down a couple strategies, positive and negative, that resonate with you.

Find two colors of highlighters, markers or colored pencils. With one color, highlight or circle the positive coping methods **you** may be able to use in your daily life. With the other color, highlight or circle the positive coping methods **your children** may be able to use. Is there any overlap?

What sorts of stressors are your children facing?

Do men and children stress about the same things?



Depending on my support system

"We are all meant to support one another, encourage one another. We all have struggles."

- Coach Chuck Hepola

COACH WITH A PARTNER

Whether or not you are married to the mother of the children, she is a crucial part of the coaching team. It doesn't matter if you don't live in the same home, if you can never seem to get along, or if you only see each other a few times a year—good fathers ought to have **positive** relationships with the mothers of their children whenever possible.

Directions: Below is a list of statements about women. Indicate by **checkmark** how often you think it.

	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
I'll never understand women.				
Women are too emotional/dramatic.				
Women are best suited for nurturing roles.				
Women enter a relationship wanting to be taken care of.				
I don't know how to act around women.				
Women are only surface-level.				
Women are confusing.				
Women worry about things that don't matter.				
I can't communicate with women the same way I communicate with men.				

COMMUNICATION STYLES

Directions: With one color, highlight or circle the communication methods that describe yourself and other **men** in your life. With the other color, highlight or circle the communication methods that describe the **women** in your life. If a communication method applies to both the men and women in your life, circle/highlight the trait with **both** colors.

Strives for intimacy in conversation	Avoids appearance of superiority	Enjoys competition
Asks questions and listens to others	Finds multitasking difficult	Goal-oriented
Uses more facial expressions	Aims to fix problems; resolution-oriented	Sees things in black and white
Communicates meaning through tone and pitch	Compelled to give advice and solve issues	Bonds through playful criticism/poking fun
Uses eye contact	Doesn't like asking for help	Wants to feel supported
Conversations tend to end abruptly	Uses logical arguments	Feels awkward expressing feelings
Adaptive to different environments	Speaks up quickly with their opinion	Uses fact-based arguments

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

A dad's support network is one of the most important tools he has. He may need help in a variety of circumstances, including **tangible** help (e.g. babysitting, asking for money, getting a ride), **emotional** support (e.g. advice or a shoulder to lean on), or help in **emergencies**.

Who can I turn to?

Directions: Put yourself in the shoes of the men in the following scenarios. Consider the **support network** you listed above and write down the person or people you'd go to for help. You may use a name from your list more than once.

Darnell is worried his daughter, Imani, is showing evidence of developmental delay. By the time babies are nine months old, they make babbling noises and point at things, but Imani doesn't do either even though she just had her first birthday. Darnell has tried to bring up these concerns with his wife, Alexis, but he gets the impression she does not want to admit there might be something wrong. It's a very touchy subject for Alexis, so Darnell must look somewhere else for help.

If you were in Darnell's situation, who could you call?

Sebastian is worried his 16-year-old daughter, Lilly, is drifting toward high-risk behavior. She hangs out with a "bad crowd," and is often away from home. Things got worse when she started dating Trevor, who Sebastian thinks is a bad influence. Recently, Lilly has often been angry and difficult to be around. Sebastian finds it difficult to approach Lilly about the subject because she shuts down the conversation when he tries to bring it up, so he needs to go somewhere else for help.

If you were in Sebastian's situation, who could you call?

Emanuel's girlfriend, Claire, is pregnant. Emanuel is thrilled, but he can't escape the fear he will not be a good dad. Emanuel's own father fought with alcoholism, and he was not a very good dad. Emanuel knows alcoholism runs in his family, and he's worried that maybe he drinks too much. Will he pass on alcoholism to his baby? Emanuel feels guilty bringing up his fears with Claire because she already faces a great deal of stress during pregnancy. He wants to find help from someone other than Claire.

If you were in Emanuel's situation, who could you call?

ASKING FOR HELP

It can be difficult to ask for help because of the unease that comes with surrendering control to another person. Many people fear asking for help could imply that they are weak, incompetent or naïve. We fear being rejected or being made a fool.

Finding constructive ways to ask for help can make the task more manageable. Listed in the table on page 6 are several approaches to asking for help. Indicate by checkmark which ones you could use in your daily life.

In the space for Network Takeaways, reflect on the methods for asking for help and answer one or more of the questions below:



How can I use my strengths to employ self-reliance techniques?

How does my own stress impact the team's performance?

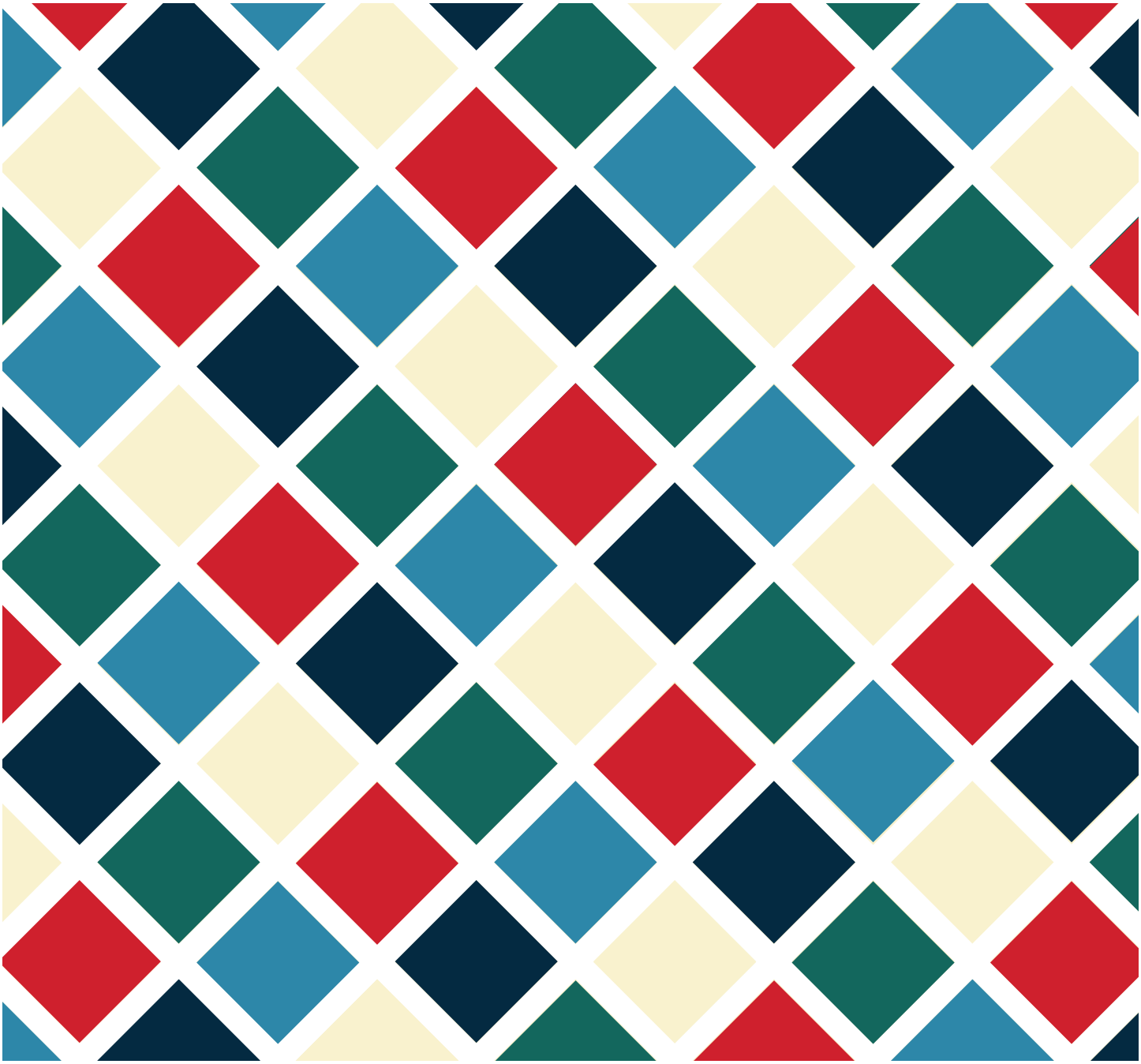
How can men and women reach each other?

What are the features of my communication style?

Do I find myself uncomfortable asking for help? Why or why not?

Use the space below for your Network Takeaways.

	I could never use this method	I am willing to try	I am eager to try	I already use this method
Be specific and speak plainly about what you need.				
Demonstrate you've already tried to solve a problem.				
Offer help to others and practice generosity.				
Express appreciation of another's time.				
Ask for help in person, not over text or email.				
Express gratitude.				
Seek collaboration and work together.				
Write a script so you can express yourself clearly.				
Be honest in describing the workload and commitment.				
Avoid making requests sound like demands.				
Saying, "Can you help me?"				



YOUNGBLOOD

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