

Dimensions of Social Medicine within Trauma-informed Care and Fatherhood

Jocelyn Galindo, Whitman College, jgalindo@princeton.edu

Critical Background

UIH Family Partners focuses on:

- Mainly serves unemployed, non-custodial fathers in Trenton
 - Hard to reach & engage; difficult but promising
- programs that promote becoming better fathers, gaining *self-sufficiency* with interventions to start healing from “injury”
- Recognizes role of **trauma** and **systemic barriers** as men do not seek help to avoid internalization of trauma
 - **Poverty, sexual abuse, absent family, addiction**
- Stresses importance of fathers to create strong families (UIH)
- No healing (mental health) = passing down trauma intergenerationally
- “being the ideal father has no color, no age, no boundary...”

Research Questions

How is the concept of **social medicine** used to understand the **dimensions of cultural (health) care** that UIH Family Partners provides for these fathers? Should the **strict paradigm** of PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) diagnosis and **market based medicine** be considered in this context?

Field Site

Visited Boot Camp Daddy Training on April 19th

Classes emphasize the importance of conversations about *trauma and its role in mental health*

Trauma arising from systematic oppression, discrimination, significant hardships unique to fathers’ situations; not just from a single event

Concept that men who participate are broken; UIH seeking to help them put the pieces together with **trauma informed care**

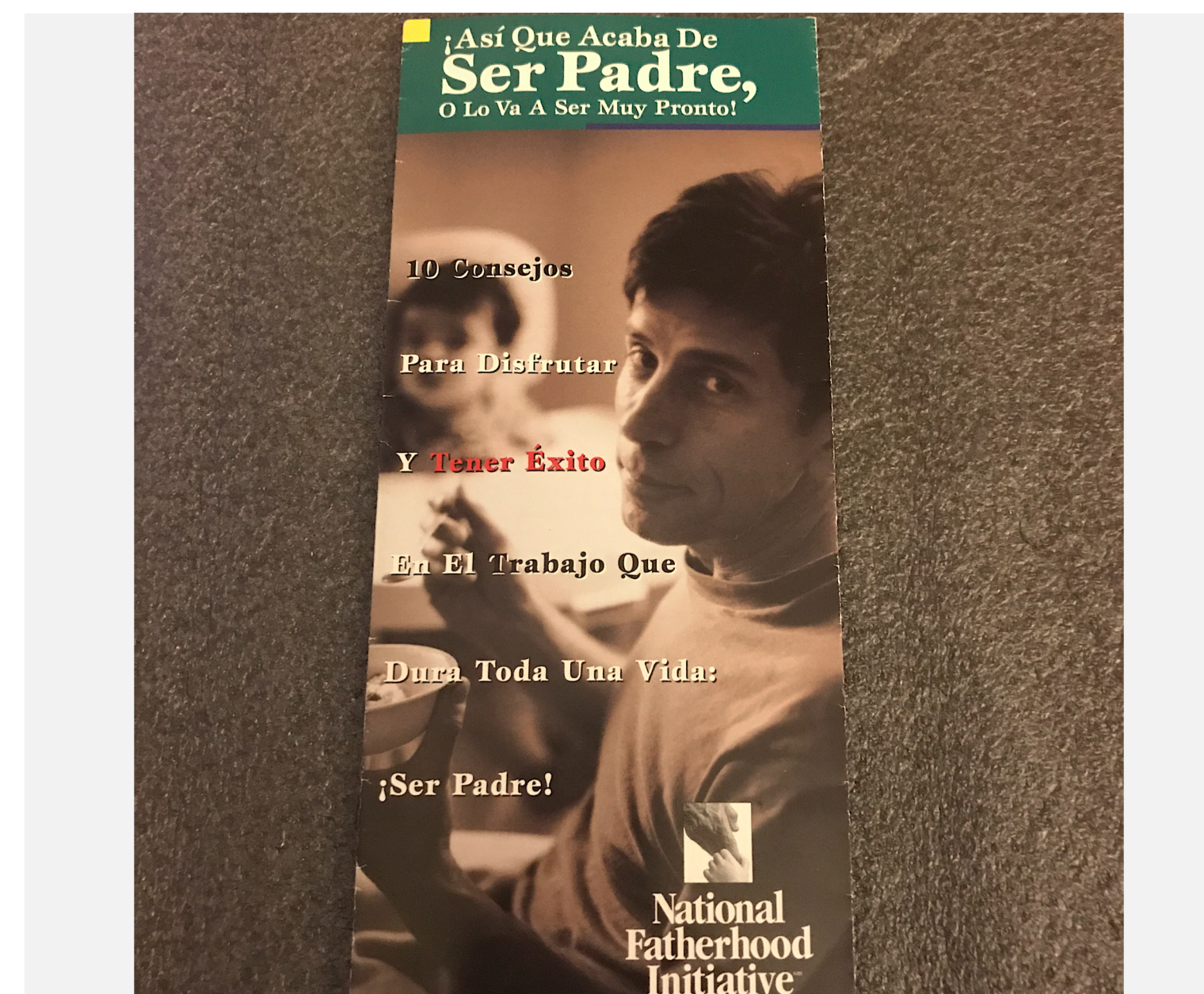
In this context, fathers participated in a discussion about the role of fathers in the trajectory of children (health, emotional capability); conversation naturally brought up **fathers’ experience and perceptions** about discipline, neglect, intellectual development, and how *systems* set up men to be inadequate parents

Men in Boot Camp agree with the general notion of “no treatment, no healing”; having to deal with trauma in order to be an engaged father

“How do we get the intervention to that level of healing?”



Slogan found in UIH website; organization’s vision in relation to how it’s interpreting its services.



Pamphlet found at UIH Family Partner’s site after the visit; demonstrates its availability to fathers from different social markers and usage of cultural notions

Insights and Discussion

- **social medicine** and **structural violence** as coined by Paul Farmer -> to see intricacies of viewing trauma as a social determinant of health
- Using cultural notions and values within Black populations as a form to **resist re-traumatization** (National Latino Network).
- The trauma that they face is more intricate and specific to their experience than the diagnoses of PTSD allows for
- The recognition of “trauma” came in a decade before characterizing PTSD as a mental disorder in 1980 (Healing the Hurt).
- distinction must be drawn as PTSD is formulated in medicalization/the *theory of trauma from systemic oppression and discrimination* brings attention to social medicine; to not combine the two concepts
- trauma informed care as a way of **healing the self** since trauma is something that is persistent and current in these men; it is not caused by a *one singular event* as PTSD would suggest (NIMH)
- Social medicine is needed in this context for fathers to recognize what *they can and can’t change* about their surroundings
- social medicine explains why there are social and economic barriers to care and how to **foster interventions in order to heal** and that lead populations to a healthier society
- Market based medicine often *denigrates* these specific populations, which in turn would not be flexible for the fathers and their trajectory into fatherhood as it would not specifically address the social conditions that impact their mental health
- a shift: psychological trauma is not being seen as deficient in moral character, but *framing these fathers as being injured and in need of healing*
- Society and market based medicine (often working hand in hand) creates standard that these specific populations are not fit for fatherhood in general (**deficiency**)
- These stories are in smaller scale of social medicine; suffering due to systematic neglect (justice system, etc.) & historical lines
- Implication of humanizing trauma and how unfair economic arrangement working against these men can change
- Looking further into moral and immoral behaviors that the traditional market based medicine paradigm presents

Acknowledgments

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References

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