

CULTURE'S IMPACT ON FATHERING

Quick Confidence Builds are brief activities that practitioners can use when working with dads in face-to-face or virtual group-based or one-on-one settings. (The group-based version is described first.) These activities help build fathering confidence, a vital factor influencing dads' involvement in their children's lives.

Dads only need pen and paper to write down information when instructed. The practitioner needs only something to record on when instructed, such as a flip chart or whiteboard when working with dads face-to-face or a virtual whiteboard or chat when working with them virtually. Estimated times include reflection, discussion, and facilitator feedback. The exact timing will depend on many factors, such as facilitator experience and skill, the size of a group, how comfortable dads are in sharing their experiences and ideas, and their commitment to growing in their fathering.



Source: The activities are inspired by *The 24:7 Dad: 12 Habits of Confident Fathers* by NFI President Christopher A. Brown. Visit confidentfathers.com to learn more about the book released on June 2, 2026!

Quick Confidence Build: How Has Culture Affected My Fathering?

Time: 20-25 minutes (group-based); 10-15 minutes (one-on-one)

The Goal: Help dads recognize how culture has shaped their fathering so they can embrace its positive influences and counteract its negative ones.

Why This Matters: Dads are often unaware of how cultural norms around fathering affect their ability to fulfill this role. When they're unaware of the negative effects of culture, they don't address the beliefs and attitudes that contribute to poor fathering. Greater awareness of culture's influence brings these effects into the light, allowing dads to challenge long-held beliefs and attitudes that are detrimental to good fathering. When dads become aware of culture's influence, they can challenge beliefs and attitudes that hurt their fathering—and replace them with ones that build confidence.

The Activity (Group-Based)

Step 1: How Culture Impacts Fathering (5 minutes)

(Write "Culture's Fathering Impact" on a flip chart or whiteboard.)

SAY: Culture includes the values, beliefs, rules, and traditions we learn from our families, communities, and life experiences.

ASK: How has the culture you grew up in affected your fathering?

(Record their responses. Listen for positive and negative impacts that you can refer to in the subsequent steps.)

SAY: Every culture has its norms—rules, messages, and expectations—that guide fathers in how to fulfill that role. Those norms affect how fathers relate to their children and their children's mother or other co-parent.

ASK: What's one rule, message, or expectation your culture has for how a father fulfills that role?

(Record their responses. Listen for norms that have positive and negative impacts that you can refer to in the subsequent steps.)

Step 2: My Culture's Positive Impact (5 minutes)

(If any dads mentioned positive impacts of their cultures in Step 1, use one or two of them to transition to this step. For example, point to the impact[s] on the list and which dad[s] mentioned them. Then use the Option 1 question below. If no one mentioned a positive impact, use Option 2.)

(Option 1) ASK: Can anyone think of other ways that your culture had a positive impact on your fathering?

(Option 2) SAY: No one mentioned a positive impact of culture on their fathering.

ASK: Can anyone think of a positive impact that your culture had on your fathering?

(Whether you used Option 1 or 2, record their responses. You're helping them appreciate how culture can positively impact fathering. If there's more than one culture represented in the group, you might hear the same or similar positive impacts of different cultures.)

Step 3: My Culture's Negative Impact (5 minutes)

(If the dads mentioned any negative impacts of their cultures in Step 1, use one or two of them to transition to this step. For example, point to the impact[s] on the list and which dad[s] mentioned them. Then use the Option 1 question below. If no one mentioned a negative impact, use Option 2.)

(Option 1) ASK: Can anyone think of other ways your culture negatively impacted your fathering?

(Option 2) SAY: No one mentioned a negative impact of culture on their fathering.

ASK: Can anyone think of a negative impact that your culture had on your fathering?

(Whether you used Option 1 or 2, record their responses. You're helping raise their awareness of how culture can negatively impact fathering. If there's more than one culture represented in the group, you might hear the same or similar negative impacts of different cultures.)

Step 4: Counteracting the Negative Impact (5 minutes)

SAY: Work on your own for the next three minutes to identify one way that your culture has negatively impacted your fathering and how you'll counteract or change that impact. Write down the rule, message, or expectation you learned, how it negatively impacted your fathering, and what you'll do to counteract it.

(Have as many share what they wrote down as you have the time.)

Step 5: Wrap Up (1 minute)

SAY: Being aware of culture's negative impacts on fathering is critical to increasing confidence as a father. If your culture had more than one negative impact, choose one negative impact to work on this week, and start there.

The Activity (One-on-One)

Step 1: How Culture Impacts Fathering (3 minutes)

(Write "Culture's Fathering Impact" on a flip chart or whiteboard.)

SAY: Culture includes the values, beliefs, rules, and traditions we learn from our families, communities, and life experiences.

ASK: How has the culture you grew up in affected your fathering?

(Record his responses. Listen for positive and negative impacts that you can refer to in the subsequent steps.)

SAY: Every culture has its norms—rules, messages, and expectations—that guide fathers in how to fulfill that role. Those norms affect how fathers relate to their children and their children's mother or other co-parent.

ASK: What's one rule, message, or expectation your culture has for how a father fulfills that role?

(Record his responses. Listen for norms that have positive and negative impacts that you can refer to in the subsequent steps.)

Step 2: My Culture's Positive Impact (2 minutes)

(If he mentioned any positive impacts of his culture in Step 1, use one or two of them to transition to this step. For example, point to the impact[s] on the list. Then use the Option 1 question below. If he didn't mention a positive impact, use Option 2.)

(Option 1) ASK: Can you think of other ways your culture positively impacted your fathering?

(Option 2) SAY: You didn't mention a positive impact of culture on your fathering.

ASK: Can you think of a positive impact that your culture had on your fathering?

(Whether you used Option 1 or 2, record his responses. You're helping him appreciate how culture can positively impact fathering.)

Step 3: My Culture's Negative Impact (2 minutes)

(If he mentioned any negative impacts of his culture in Step 1, use one or two of them to transition to this step. For example, point to the impact[s] on the. Then use the Option 1 question below. If he didn't mention a negative impact, use Option 2.)

(Option 1) ASK: Can you think of other ways your culture negatively impacted your fathering?

(Option 2) SAY: You didn't mention a negative impact of culture on your fathering.

ASK: Can you think of a negative impact that your culture had on your fathering?

(Whether you used Option 1 or 2, record his responses. You're helping raise his awareness of how culture can negatively impact fathering.)

Step 4: Counteracting the Negative Impact (4 minutes)

SAY: Work on your own for the next three minutes to identify one way that your culture has negatively impacted your fathering and how you'll counteract or change that impact. Write down the rule, message, or expectation you learned, how it negatively impacted your fathering, and what you'll do to counteract it. Then share it with me.

Step 5: Wrap Up (1 minute)

SAY: Being aware of culture's negative impacts on fathering is critical to increasing confidence as a father. If your culture had more than one negative impact, choose one negative impact to work on this week, and start there.