



The Osiris Group

THE HEALTH GROUP

PROVIDING HOME BASED CLINICAL SERVICES

- Behavior Management
- Individual Counseling
- Family Counseling
- Group Counseling
- Psychological Testing
- Case Consultations
- Staff Development
- Cultural Research

FAMILIES Do Matter
WILD AM 1090 Radio
 Join Us Live
 Sunday's at 1:00 pm

Approved by NHP-Mass Health to provide (FST) Family Stabilization Team services for families in Metropolitan Boston, and for the following organizations:

- DMH
- DSS
- Chapter 766 Schools
- Group Homes
- Residential Homes
- Hospital Emergency Referrals

The OG Perspective

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Just Not Obligated

By Larry Higginbottom



For the past six years, I have been blessed at The Osiris Group to assist children and families experiencing difficulties in homes. In that time, I have personally witnessed fathers who have completely walked away from the obligation to provide financial, physical, emotional or psychological support to their children. These fathers have an air about them that reads: *I'm not obligated to doing anything for these children.* Even though these men helped to conceive the children they still do feel obligated. What is more unsettling about this picture is that, as an example, these children may reside in Mattapan and the bio-dad lives in Roxbury. These dads behave as if their children and the mother who gave birth to them never existed. They just are not obligated.

I want to be very clear here, I am not referring to fathers who have issues with employment, addiction, criminal histories or who are personally destitute. The men I'm referring to have jobs, or are enrolled in vocational or college programs. Many of these men are even re-involved with women who have children, or have started a new family by fathering children with their new mate. Still, despite these facts, they do not feel remotely obligated to the well-being of children they helped to conceive...who happen to live up the street...Why is this? What are the consequences from such behavior on the chil-

dren, the mothers, and our community?

The most common response when asked why there is no level of support or assistance to the mother of their child(ren) is intimacy, or lack thereof. Once the sexual involvement is gone, many of these fathers have stated that the responsibility belongs to the new man she is currently sleeping with to take care of her and "her children". In other words, it is not their business. However childish or selfish of a viewpoint, this is the reality. I believe that much of the violence, depression and other hazards which many of these women experience is the total absence of the fathers to provide some level of support and assistance to the family.

This past July I took inventory of the number of families The Osiris Group were providing services to. I calculated one hundred families were being serviced between the Department of Social Services and Neighborhood Health Plan (one of the mass-health carriers). The most telling feature, there were six biological dads who resided at home with all of their chil-

dren. All of the other homes had multi-fathers and interestingly enough, the child to mother ratio was four to one (4:1). Is it any wonder that these single moms are crying out for help? Is it any wonder that they are over-extended? Many mothers are working forty hours per week (or more) and remain obligated to go to the school when the children are misbehaving, to appear in court, to go to sport activities and after-school programs, setting boundaries, enforcing home rules, giving love and emotional support, giving hope and encouragement to their dreams, and supporting the family on one income, generally insufficient income at that. It is no surprise why many of these mothers suffer from depression or worse.

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Larry Higginbottom
CEO/Founder
The Osiris Group

“When fathers develop the ‘I am not obligated’ perspective, the entire community loses.”

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Just Not Obligated (cont.)

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The other sad news is that the children will also suffer from having insufficient contact with their father. Fathers who are present help male children to understand what it means to be a man. Fathers teach their sons how to regulate their emotions, how to deal with disappointment, rejection and anger. Equally important, they teach boys about goal setting, leader-

ship and responsibility. Of course these elements are very important to their self-development and future ambition.

When fathers are absent from their daughter's life, the young women grow up never knowing how to judge and rate future suitors or how men are supposed to treat them. When a young girl grows in homes where their mother has had many male suitors or inappropriate relationships with partners, it can have an enormous effect on

these young girls own belief they too are not worthy of a good relationship, a man of commitment and devotion.

When fathers develop the “I am not obligated” perspective, the entire community loses.



Lessons Learned, I Hope by Harry Harding, Family Mentor—The OG



I do not think it is a coincidence that if you ask many of our young (in particular adolescent) black men about their career interests, consistently the number one and number two choices will be *athlete* or *rapper*. I am not saying these are not legitimate career interests. A dream is a dream and I cannot knock anyone's dreams. Still, the reality remains that becoming a successful athlete or rapper is a remote possibility, at best. But that is another article for another day. I found it very interesting (and also disappointing) to review in recent news the legal troubles of various entertainment superstars, many of which are of course, athletes and rappers. Michael Vick, the ridiculously talented former quarterback of the Atlanta Falcons, is without question the most notorious of the legally challenged. Michael Vick has

lost privileges of a 2004 contract that would have paid him \$130 million over 10 years because of his involvement in an illegal dog fighting venture. \$130,000,000. That is not only set for life money, that is money that could have lasted for generations. Had he invested wisely, it is not unreasonable to believe that Michael Vick would have been one of the most wealthy and powerful athletes ever. At the time Michael Vick's contract was the most lucrative in NFL history. Not only does Michael Vick lose the historic contract, he has also lost endorsement deals worth millions more. Before all is said and done, Vick will not only suffer financially but he may have to do prison time, losing prime years of his athletic life. As a football fan this disappoints me but as a Mentor, it is even more disturbing. Knowing that so many of our young men look up to entertainers like Vick, it is hard not to wonder how the news of his legal trouble will translate. I have already heard from one young man

who thinks Michael Vick is being targeted because he is black. I am sure the young man is not alone with that opinion. The truth is that is 100% untrue and I do not mind being the voice of reason in this case. There are likely plenty of examples in history of black men who are taken advantage of, mistreated, misrepresented or in extreme cases, falsely accused of crimes and falsely convicted of crimes. That much, we can agree on...however, in Michael Vick's case there is no evidence that this is some grand conspiracy to ruin his reputation. Vick made the choice to involve himself with an illegal activity. The key word here is illegal...it is irrelevant whether or not we as a community agree that dog fighting is a heinous crime. The facts remain that Vick should have known better. With so much to lose (\$130,000,000) why associate yourself with anyone or anything that can jeopardize that? To me there are only three explanations: ignorance, stupidity or both. (continued on next page)

“Shut That Kid Up!” by Ray Velasquez, Family Mentor —The Osiris Group



Wow...What a statement. Have you ever found yourself in this position at some point in your life? In working with the Osiris Group, being in the trenches with our families, it is not uncommon to hear a parent say these words or something similar.

I have recently started working with a young man who undoubtedly has heard these words and much more. We have to be careful in the manner in which we speak to children, especially at the earliest stages of life/development. The young man, whom I will refer to as Jose, just became a teenager. His story is about emotional detachment and the pain he has suffered. As a result, Jose has begun to act out. He has become aggressive with his siblings, aggressive to his mom, has slowly become a menace to teachers as well as in the community. What happened to Jose? To those around him and the casual observer, Jose is a

normal young kid. His story is much deeper.

Jose endured years of abuse, physically and mentally, by the people who were most trusted by his mother. Young Jose was being tortured.

Young Jose cried more than most children when he was little. After years of beatings and being locked in closets, Jose started to become numb and cried less and less. It escalated to the point of creating a huge emotional disconnect. So much so that hurting others or himself causes him to feel no guilt or contrition. When young Jose cried he was told and forced to be quiet. He was conditioned to not show emotion when he was scared or in pain.

Jose was recently removed from his home. The courts ordered him to be held in a locked facility because of the danger he poses to himself and others. Since his detainment he has been receiving intensive therapy and has become medication compliant. Three weeks have passed and this 13 year old boy, who has never been away from home has shown no emotion. He has not cried or lost sleep while being detained...not

even the first night. Grown men and hardcore criminals alike go to prison and from the time they leave the courtroom they begin to cry. Yet here is this 13 year old boy who is not a criminal and he shows no emotion. That is pretty scary. I have been meeting with Jose for the past month, two times per week. We have been able to discuss some very sensitive topics. He has been expressive at times and very quiet others times. The one thing I can say for sure is that he has had time to process all that has gone on.

Today we go to court and Jose is eager to get out of lockup for the day. As the proceedings go on, Jose just sits through it making no eye contact with anyone...his mother, me, no one. He just waited for his fate. Suddenly it hit him...he came to the realization he is going back to the dark place he now calls home. To the amazement of everyone in the courtroom, Jose starts to cry. A deep wail of emotion. I began to look around the room and noticed that the probation officer, Jose's attorney, his mother, even the judge lowered her head and could not look at him anymore. It was a breakthrough in his path to recovery. I visited with Jose the following day and we discussed plans to

have him moved to a place with no bars where he could walk around freely and I could take him off grounds. We also spent time talking about his outburst of emotion in the courtroom the previous day. I asked Jose if he felt that anyone cared or listened to his cries. Quickly, he answered that no one cared and that no one listened. I told him that I cared and that I listened and I shared with him my observations of everyone's reaction in the courtroom. He stared at me with amazement and shortly after he began to cry again. He thanked me for being there and for listening to him. I share this story to help people understand the power of words and the effects of our actions. This case is extreme and I purposely omitted the graphic nature of the abuse and the graphic details of Jose's actions. It is a fact that children like Jose, if not helped early, become the most heinous criminals known to exist. Ask yourself if it is worth it to say, "Shut that kid up!" I have learned at the Osiris Group that partnering with our families, sharing our own experiences and sending messages of hope provides our families with the comfort to share their stories and to deal with their own demons. In short period of time, we plant the seeds of change.

Lessons Learned, I Hope by Harry Harding, Family Mentor—The Osiris Group

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Recently, another popular entertainer from the Atlanta area was arrested.

Rapper, T.I. has been accused of acquiring firearms illegally and is currently under house arrest pending a future court appearance. T.I. presents another

illustration of a successful black man who may potentially lose a profitable career as well as his freedom due to a careless decision. It remains to be seen whether or not T.I. or Michael Vick will escape the hands of the law and salvage their respective professions. My hope is that the young men out there see that even a giant can fall from grace. Even fame and fortune can save oneself from a poor decision. Every decision we make has consequences. Street credibility and allegiances to "thug life" should never outweigh the security of yourself

and your family. Michael Vick has a 130,000,000 reasons to believe that now.



<http://www.osirisgroup.org>

Inspirational Words of the Month

“Talent is a gift that brings with it an obligation to serve the world, and not ourselves, for it is not of our making. To use for our exclusive what is not ours is theft...A selfish man is a thief.”

- Jose Marti

The Osiris Group

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Questions or comments
about The Osiris Group?

Send email to:
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Larry Higginbottom
CEO/Founder
The Osiris Group

The Osiris Group has a current membership which consists of Family Clinicians and Family Mentors who are able to service more than one hundred (100) families per month. Osiris Group members specialize in reunification and stabilization of the family unit. Mentors and Clinicians coach children and parents techniques in behavior modeling, advocacy and support, seeking community linkage, relationship building, social skills, job searching and other self-development methods that enhance whole life skills. Our flexible team can structure its schedule to accommodate each family. All team members reside within the communities served and can respond immediately to a family in crisis. We have an open referral process, encouraging recommendations from social workers, group and residential homes. Coverage options range from Sunday to Sunday for three months to year-round comprehensive services. Have questions? Contact us today!

Members Honor Osiris Group Founders

On October 19th the founders of the Osiris Group, Larry Higginbottom, his wife Deborah, and their daughter, Karia were presented with a special award. The award was offered to the Higginbottom family by the Mentors and Clinicians who comprise the membership of the Osiris Group. 2007 marks the inaugural year that the “Commitment to Community Award” was granted by the Osiris Group membership; honoring the Higginbottoms as the very first recipients. The award read as follows:

The members of the Osiris Group present the 2007 Commitment to Community Award to the Higginbottom family for their unrelenting dedication to serving the families of Boston and beyond and their selfless approach to uplifting and empowering the Black and Latino community. May God continue to bless your lives as you seek to share your blessings with others.

Collectively the members of the Osiris Group wanted to show their appreciation for the founder’s vision and give thanks for their continued social efforts. “Larry and Deborah work really hard,” said Elizabeth Divens, a Family Clinician, “This was just a way for the members to let them know that we notice.”

Larry and Deborah were surprised by the kind gesture. The founders were thankful and remained humble in their acceptance. “We know how good the work is that all of you do,” Deborah said before the membership. “It is the work that you do that keeps us moving along. Larry and I really appreciate that.” Mr. Higginbottom added, “When I go to bed at night, I sleep well because I know all of you are out there taking care of the Osiris Group. I don’t worry because I know we are all about quality. You all do quality work. I thank you for the award but

as long as you do quality work, really the thanks goes to you.”



Larry Higginbottom
Deborah Higginbottom

Recipients of the
2007
Commitment to Community
Award

The OG Perspective

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