



## **Video Transcript: Ask Me Anything: Parent and Caregiver Engagement**

**LaToya (00:00):** If you want parents to attend your events, you have to make it fun for them. Ask Me Anything: Parent and Caregiver Engagement. Hi, I'm LaToya Dixon from Delta Health Alliance, and today I'm going to let the RHNTC ask me anything about parent and caregiver engagement.

**LaToya (00:18):** What does a typical day look like for you when you're focused on parent and caregiver engagement? A typical day would be of us having a meeting with our community advisory group, which we call our CAG group. And this group consists of parents, it also consists of youth, and other stakeholders in our community. We have a roundtable discussion. We ask for ideas and suggestions on what would cause parents to come out to these events. Once we go through the process of narrowing down those suggestions, then we take action. We provide tasks and assignments and deadlines on when these things will get done, and then we start to execute the plan.

**LaToya (00:55):** What keeps you committed to positive youth development? I became a parent at the age of 18. I got pregnant my senior year in high school, I was 17, and the only thing I was told was don't have sex. I knew not to have sex, but I still ended up doing it out of curiosity, out of pressure, and it only took that one time, and now I have a lifetime commitment. So because I have a personal experience, because I connect, because I understand where teenagers are, where young adults are, where youth are, and I understand the fact that you can have questions, but no one is there to answer. I am committed to making sure that someone is always there to answer the questions they have. Tell us about the first time you really felt like you made a meaningful connection with a parent or caregiver through your project.

**LaToya (01:44):** When a parent came to me after one of our events and asked us, can you give me some more advice on how to talk to my child who was having some problems identifying sexually? I asked the parent to kind of explain to me what that meant because she said it just like that, so she said "my child identifies as A-B-C-D-E," and so I need to know how to have these conversations with my child, because my husband is not in agreement with what my child has chosen to identify as. When we have these events, we have these conversations in these events, we provide information, we quiz the parents on what we teach the children, and so just by this parent observing what we were doing in that particular parent engagement event, made them come back and ask me further questions on how I can help them communicate with their child, so I knew then we had something and it was working.

**LaToya (02:36):** What is the best advice you've ever received about parent and caregiver engagement? One would be to listen. Listen to the parent's needs because they do have needs as well, and oftentimes we want to provide all of the information, but it's important to listen. Two would be—be intentional about implementing their suggestions. Sometimes we say that we want to hear your suggestions, but we don't implement them because we think what we have in our mind is going to work, and that is the best practice. Implement their ideas and don't let it go to waste. Three, have fun doing it. If you don't enjoy talking, if you don't enjoy providing the things that's needed for your parents that will, you know, eventually help the community, help the youth that we are serving, they'll pick up on that as well. So if you're not showing some type of enthusiasm, some type of joy, some type of excitement about what you're doing and what you're offering, the parent won't be as excited to receive. So make sure that you're having fun doing it. This video was created by the Reproductive Health National Training Center, RHNTC.