

[Free Marketing Materials] The Road ‘You Medical’ Traveled to a Successful 24/7 Dad® Program



Posted: 10/30/2018

By Melissa Steward

Talk about turning nothing into something. When Brandon Gregory joined You Medical 2 years ago, they didn't have much of a fatherhood program. A few men met informally here and there, but generally, programs in the center focused on moms.

Imagine my surprise when I received one of the most attractive, yet simple, emails announcing You Medical's upcoming 24/7 Dad® Group with two well-designed and useful pieces of marketing collateral attached. I recently spoke with Brandon to hear how they got to this point at You Medical, and how they experimented to find success.

[Links to free marketing materials and samples at the end of this document.]



Brandon had a challenging road ahead of him when he joined the **You Medical** pregnancy help center. He wasn't experienced running fatherhood programs, heck he was only a father of 2 months himself – yet his passion to help dads drove him in the right direction.

Initially, he simply met with the dads that came through the center to help them through the process of the pregnancy, whether it was planned or unplanned. When he started looking for something

“reproduceable” that he could use to train the dads, he happened across NFI’s [24/7 Dad® program](#) sitting on a shelf in the center. Eventually, “a few guys meeting occasionally” turned into a group of guys meeting on Thursday nights for 24/7 Dad®.

To recruit dads beyond the ones already visiting the center, You Medical partnered with their local health department, and offered 24/7 Dad® sporadically alongside teen pregnancy classes in their local high school. They also worked hard to network with local organizations and churches to recruit dads.

But they still faced challenges. Brandon was running the 24/7 Dad® sessions as an open group, which meant dads could come and go as they wished. He quickly learned that it hindered his ability to keep the dads coming back through all 12 sessions. He also faced a lack of commitment and poor attendance when he offered sessions around the Holidays.

But Brandon and his team never gave up. They realized that they needed to create consistency in hosting the program, find a way to steadily recruit dads, and get them to join the group on the start date — and keep them for more than just a few weeks.

To take their program to the next level, Brandon used what I call it the STOP – START approach.

He STOPPED:

- Having an open group where dads could come and go in the group as they pleased.
- Getting a “verbal only” commitment that any given dad would attend (see below for the really cool way he requires registration).
- Beginning a group with less than 3 dads committed for the program.
- Scheduling sessions around the Holidays.
- Forgetting to give the dads a reason to stick around for the long haul.
- Expecting his community partners to simply remember that You Medical had something for dads after telling them about it once or twice.

He STARTED:

- **Using the [Eventbrite](#) event management tool for each new round of 24/7 Dad®** – Brandon requires that interested dads register for the program. This helps to make their commitment more formal (the registration is free and so is the use of Eventbrite when you don’t charge for an event). And, because something that is “free” doesn’t

carry the same “value” in a person’s mind as something that costs something, he positions the program as having scholarships available for the dads (because, as we can all agree, someone is actually paying for the program to be there for the dad!).

- **Offering regular Spring and Fall groups so that he could consistently recruit from outside sources** – the community has come to rely on You Medical to have offerings for fathers. He has a defined start and end date for the 12 sessions.
- **Having a celebration at session 6 to create small wins along the way and reward the dads for their commitment** – Brandon gives them a small token of gratitude, usually something donated from a local partner like driving gloves or a paracord key chain with their logo.
- **Having a graduation celebration at session 12 to honor the dads’ dedication and celebrate their accomplishment** – Brandon gives them the 24/7 Dad® certificate of completion, and depending on the group size and budget available, sometimes the group goes out to dinner for the celebration.
- **Keeping in touch with a list of contacts in his community** – Brandon emails them as a group before every round of 24/7 Dad® is set to begin to encourage them to invite dads and hang his poster inviting them.
- **Using professional-looking marketing materials to promote the program** – Brandon attaches an easy to print 11x17 poster to his announcement email that his community contacts can post in their own facilities announcing the next round of 24/7 Dad® at You Medical. Brandon shared that recently, a dad was sitting in a WIC office and saw one of the You Medical poster and was motivated to call to learn more and register. Let good marketing materials do the work for you!

Of, course, Brandon can’t do all of this alone. He’s got some awesome volunteers that provide one-on-one coaching to the guys in the center, and are currently training to help run their 24/7 Dad® group (the 24/7 Dad® sessions running right now are actually being facilitated by two volunteers!) You Medical is also hoping to have a couple of the fathers currently attending 24/7 Dad® transition to volunteering with the program in the next year or so.

In closing, everyone who chooses to serve fathers will take a different course. But the things Brandon and the You Medical team learned and implemented can be used by anyone wanting to be successful in serving fathers.

Free Marketing Materials and Samples

Brandon and You Medical gave NFI permission to share the marketing pieces they use to inspire you to create something similar for your program. They (and we!) hope you can find success serving fathers in your organization and community.

24/7 Dad® Calendar:

Brandon says, “I like to provide the guys with the dates of the group upfront so that they can make plans to be there. It works nicely coupled with the Fatherhood pledge and other relevant information. I give them one piece of paper with everything that they need to know included.

This way, they are never ambushed and they always know what is coming up next week, especially helpful for planning to have holidays off. The publisher file itself can be a challenge to work with because calendars are tricky, but it has been a helpful tool.”

- [Download the You Medical Sample Calendar Document as PDF](#)
- [Download the You Medical Sample Calendar Document as a Microsoft Publisher File](#)

24/7 Dad® Poster (11x17 and printable on your average office printer):

“Our marketing director, Esther Orozco, made this poster for us using copyright free pictures and our group information. I email these to organizations that work with dads to remind them to refer dads to us. For the group we’re kicking off this week we had a dad who was sitting in our WIC office, saw this poster, and called me to sign up for a group. We also get referrals from CPS, the jail, 211, and the drug court.”

- [Sample You Medical Poster for Community Partners to Post](#)

Eventbrite:

“As long as you don’t charge to get a ticket, this is an easy, free option for the first night of the group. This allows me to see who is at least committed enough to click a link and reserve a seat. This also gives me an idea of how many people will be at the group so that I can plan the handbooks, the amount of coffee, and how many copies I need.”

- [See the previous You Medical 24/7 Dad® Event on Eventbrite here by clicking "View Details" at the top of the page.](#)
- [Learn how to use Eventbrite for your events here.](#)

24/7 Dad® Announcement Email:

“For each new round of 24/7 Dad, I send out an email to my contacts. It includes an update on the latest session (if applicable), an announcement about the next group, start date, brief

description of the commitment, link to the Eventbrite registration page, and contact information for questions.”

- **[See the You Medical Announcement Email Sample](#)**