

FAMILY REUNION INSTITUTE'S

STICKY REUNION SITUATION

DRESS CODE VIOLATION

April 2019

The Situation:

We know family reunions don't have a dress code, but we need help with getting family members to dress more appropriately, particularly the males with the waist of their pants hung low (even with a belt), and showing too much underwear and backside. Besides it being somewhat offensive, disrespectful and rude, reunion attendees don't want to see all that; they can't comfortably participate in sports activities; and we have grown tired of hearing "*my bad*" when they're asked to pull their pants up. How can we address this without offending them to the degree that we're offended?

The Fix:



Doug Harris

I suggest that at the very beginning of the reunion, a private Men's Council Meeting be held. During this meeting the more mature men (30s and up) sit down and talk to the younger men and boys. Among the things discussed should be the fact that many (especially family elders) believe wearing "saggy" pants is a gross sign of disrespect. Some have said saggy pants originated in prisons where belts were taken from prisoners as a safety precaution. Others say the pants were a signal in prison environments that a man was open to anal intercourse with another man. Still others theorize it was developed by thugs to hide weapons. At least two state legislatures have introduced legislation against wearing pants below the buttocks, though neither was successful. In any case, young people need to be aware of these issues, and the statements they make by showing their underwear.

I suggest an age minimum for the younger men and boys of 12 or 14, so discussions could be held about controversial or mature topics. The agenda could include discussions about respect for women, responsibilities and characteristics of real manhood, career choices, sexual issues—and in the case of black and brown family reunions, how to behave when stopped by the police. Adjustments re: age restrictions could be made if there was a need or desire to include younger boys.

Such a meeting would have myriad benefits. In most families there are boys without a male figure in the home. This meeting would help establish relationships that would go beyond the reunion. Bonding, mentoring, counseling, comradery and all kinds of other good things could result. The meeting should end with a vote on whether to make the Men's Council a tradition at each reunion. I predict a host of "Yeas."