Entitled menchildren in the National Football League spark renewed attention to the epidemic of domestic violence and child abuse. Brave young women speaking truth to power demand action to halt sexual assaults on college campuses. Pioneering profeminist men from around the world gather in India to engage men and boys to promote gender equality.

In the ongoing effort to transform manhood, the pace has been accelerating. From the White House to the 50-yard line, from Kolkata to Cape Town, the call for men to change, to be allies with women in the work of ending gender-based violence and redefining manhood, is growing louder. From the Obama administration’s ItsOnUs campaign to the Emma Watson–supported United Nations’ HeForShe, opportunities are also growing for men to add our voices to the global conversation about men and masculinities. By the time summer ended, I was feeling the need to slow down, to reflect on what’s been unfolding on the dizzying, windy road to gender justice.

I got my wish to decelerate on the weekend of the autumn equinox. I had been invited to participate in a weekend gathering at the Omega Institute, whose women’s leadership conference for the first time in its 12-year history included men (www.eomega.org/workshops/conferences/women-and-power).

“Women and Men: The Next Conversation” drew hundreds from across North America and beyond on a quest to better understand contemporary efforts at fostering gender equality. And, not long afterward, I would be en route to India, as a delegate to the second MenEngage global symposium, “Men and Boys for Gender Justice” (www.menengagedilli2014.net/). With active chapters on every continent, several hundred MenEngage delegates, and other men and women allies from some dozens of countries, would spend four days learning from one another and strengthening the ties in the global movement to engage men and boys to promote gender equality.

At the “next conversation” gathering in upstate New York, Voice Male contributing editor Michael Kimmel was among the dozen and a half presenters, who ranged from Diana Nyad, the inspiring long-distance swimmer, to Kevin Rudd, former prime minister of Australia. Poet and actor Carlos Andrés Gómez, and Tony Porter, cofounder of the national antiviolence organization A Call to Men, were among the soloists in the chorus of men’s voices, as was Zach Wahls, the 23-year-old son of two mothers who shared his stirring testimony before an Iowa legislative committee that three years ago was considering overturning the state’s affirming gay marriage law. (His article “An Ambassador for Men” begins on page 10.)

One afternoon I attended a break out session on gender reconciliation. In a meeting room magically transformed into a sacred community sanctuary, skilled and sensitive facilitators Rev. Cynthia Brix and Will Keepin of Gender Reconciliation International—working with gifted staff from the U.S., South Africa, and Colombia—created a safe space where participants could examine gender injustice and healing.

A row of men faced two rows of women. The men sat in silent witness as woman after woman stood up, identifying herself as a survivor of sexual violence. Asked later to speak about our experience as witnesses, the men expressed deep sorrow, frustration, and anger at what had happened to them. We were sad and uncomfortable sitting with women’s reality, undeniable as it was. For their part, the women were gracious and understanding, seeing in our eyes how pained we were. (There was also an opportunity for men to share about and support male survivors of sexual abuse.)

For me, it has always been the mix of on-the-ground activism on behalf of gender justice with personal growth toward gender reconciliation that offers a way forward, a resonant expression of the women’s movement’s decades-old adage, “the personal is political.” Indeed, campaigns to recruit men to challenge violence against women may be ultimately more successful if men feel connected to their own personal understanding of gender injustice.

That connect-the-dots kind of thinking is reflected in the work of Australian researcher and activist Wynne Russell. In a workshop she was scheduled to conduct at the symposium in New Delhi, Russell planned to describe a heretofore-underacknowledged population of potential gender justice activists—male survivors of sexual abuse. “All male survivors of sexual violence,” Russell says, “have the potential to be natural allies in the global quest both to end violence against women and girls and to work for gender justice.” (See her moving article, “Male Sexual Violence Survivors: Newest Activists for Gender Justice?” on page 18).

What will be the next conversation between women and men? A series of ongoing conversations. Omega’s weekend in upstate New York was one such gathering; the MenEngage convocation in New Delhi another. Next March, the Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities is hosting its inaugural conference in New York. Today, there are national, regional, statewide, municipal, and kitchen table conversations, too; they’re happening in cities and towns around the world. Men and boys on every continent are deconstructing the “man box” that seeks to constrain us. Some are taking the walls down one at a time; others are working to knock down the whole structure.

Whatever the approach, the aim is the same: to transform our ideas about boyhood and manhood, fatherhood and brotherhood. Long before the Omega conversation began, and long after the MenEngage Delhi symposium ended, a decentralized global recruitment program to recast masculinity has been at work. It’s lacked a tagline. Perhaps now is the right moment to appropriate the 200-year-old U.S. Marines marketing slogan: “We’re looking for a few good men.” Will you join us?

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The Global MenEngage Alliance generously supported production of the Indian edition of this issue of Voice Male.
Engaging Men in Europe

MenEngage Europe is one of a number of regional networks of global MenEngage, the network of more than 600 non-governmental organizations in more than 100 countries working to advance gender justice. Recently, we met in Zagreb with more than 40 people from 16 countries attending. In addition to Croatia, MenEngage Europe members came from Spain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, Albania, United Kingdom, Serbia, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Portugal, Kosovo, and the Netherlands. Representatives from the pioneering organization, White Ribbon UK, and the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality of the Republic of Croatia also attended. Over three days of meetings, we presented best practices for working to involve men in caring for children, drawing on a United Nations report on the role of fathers in achieving gender equality. We reserved the last day to plan our future activities. To learn more about MenEngage Europe, go to: http://menengage.org/events/menengage-europe-regional-membership-meeting-capacity-building-training-men-caringfor/

Natko Geres
Zagreb, Croatia

Letters may be sent via email to www.voicemalemagazine.org or mailed to Editors: Voice Male, PO Box 1246, Amherst, MA 01004
**IT’S ON US** TO STOP SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Earlier this fall, the Obama administration launched the “It’s On Us” initiative, an awareness campaign to help put an end to sexual assault on college campuses.

It’s On Us asks men, women, everyone across America, to personally commit to be part of the solution to ending campus sexual assault. “An estimated one in five women has been sexually assaulted during her college years—one in five,” President Obama noted. “Of those assaults, only 12 percent are reported, and of those reported assaults, only a fraction of the offenders are punished.”

To work so hard to make it through the college gates only to be assaulted is “an affront to our basic humanity,” Mr. Obama said. “It insults our most basic values...[W]e’re a people who believe every child deserves an education... free from fear of intimidation or violence. It is on all of us to reject the quiet tolerance of sexual assault and to refuse to accept what’s unacceptable.”

The campaign, which features considerable involvement from Vice President Biden, has taken these steps to prevent campus sexual assault:

- Sending guidance to every school district, college, and university that receives federal funding on their legal obligations to prevent and respond to sexual assault
- Creating a White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault to work with colleges and universities on developing best practices on how to respond and prevent sexual assault
- Reviewing existing laws to make sure they adequately protect victims of sexual assault

It’s On Us recommends that everyone, whether victim or survivor, or someone who wants to help someone who is, visit natalone.gov for resources and information. The NCAA, Big Ten conference, MTV, VH1, and other organizations have already made a personal commitment to help stop sexual assault. To join them in taking the pledge, go to ItsOnUs.org. To reach the National Sexual Assault Hotline call 800-656-HOPE.

**WEBSITE ON CAMPUS ACCOUNTABILITY**

A group of independent advocates, students, academics and parents committed to women’s equality, autonomy and voice to redress sex/gender-based harassment and violence on campus has launched a new website on campus accountability.

Its purpose is to ensure all forms of sex/gender-based violence are addressed under the new framework.

[continued on page 6]
the best legal standards and that schools are held accountable when they respond in a manner inconsistent with state constitutional and civil rights statutes, and federal civil rights laws such as Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. To learn more, go to http://www.campusaccountability.org/about-us.html.

THE OTHER VDAY

World Vasectomy Day set a goal to inspire 250 doctors in 30 countries to perform 1,500 vasectomies in 24 hours. WVDay, held on November 7, is still compiling results.

“In helping to shoulder responsibility for family planning, men become heroes to their partners, to their families and to our future,” says World Vasectomy Day’s Jonathan Stack, an Emmy Award–winning and two-time Academy Award–nominee documentary filmmaker. Stack cofounded the organization with urologist Doug Stein, M.D., who has performed over 1,000 vasectomies for the first World Vasectomy Day, which was headquartered in Australia.

For more, go to www.worldvasectomypeday.org.

“GOOD NEW BOYS?”

During a speech before the United Nations, Iceland’s foreign minister Gunnar Bragi announced recently his country and Suriname are convening a conference early next year to talk about gender equality.

Unlike many such gatherings, only men and boys are invited to attend.

Saying his country wanted to do its part to “promote gender equality,” Bragi announced that Iceland and Suriname will convene a “Barbershop” conference in January 2015 where men will discuss gender equality with other men, with a special focus on addressing violence against women.

“The best legal standards and that schools are held accountable when they respond in a manner inconsistent with state constitutional and civil rights statutes, and federal civil rights laws such as Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. To learn more, go to http://www.campusaccountability.org/about-us.html.

THE ANTI-Sексизм BRIGADE OF PERU

For an alliance of anti-violence activists in Peru, November 25 means it’s time to take to the streets. Not for a demonstration on the International Day Against Violence Against Women, but to take the social pulse of Peruvian society.

The Peruvian Network of Masculinities assembles on that day as Brigada Anti-Machista (the Anti-Sексизм Brigade), to raise awareness about “invisible” sexism in everyday life, especially in public spaces. Their social experiment, in collaboration with Panorama, a Lima television news magazine, examines how male violence against women is seen as commonplace (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1AnWoZpdhY).

Especially targeting men, they staged scenes of violence against women before mixed crowds moving through Lima’s streets to survey men’s opinions, perceptions and attitudes after observing the dramatized violence. What were the men’s beliefs about sexist violence against women? And, more important, would these men take action against that violence?

What Brigada Anti-Machista found was:

• There’s a strong belief that when a couple is having a heated discussion, even if it turns violent, it is a “private” matter, and nobody should “interfere.”

• Many men say women are to blame when they are victims of violence because they didn’t choose the “right” man or they “permitted” the violence to occur.

• The only “real” violence is physical violence.

• In the context of a couple’s relationship, violence is not “their problem” and that they shouldn’t intervene unless there’s a risk of murder.

Brigada Anti-Machista’s conclusion? Social tolerance, indifference, and men’s complicity are the strongest mechanisms to explain alarming numbers of murders and violence against women in Peru.

—Jaikel H. Rodriguez Bayona
HeForShe campaign (www.heforshe.org), he did more than just listen to the remarks that "have traveled round the world (w w w. y o u t u b e. c o m/ watch?v=Q0Dg226G2Z8)." Moved by Watson’s invitation to men—"Gender equality is your issue, too"—he wrote a letter to the editor of The Daily Telegraph in London. Annoyed with his male peers’ reactions to the speech, the young man from Hertfordshire. It was argued for an end to gender stereotypes. "The definition of feminism," he wrote, is "a person who believes in the social, political and economic equality of the sexes." It’s pretty simple really…if you believe in those things, then you’re a feminist." The teenage boy’s display of solidarity and commitment to defend Watson’s sentiments are a testament to the resurgent feminist movement among men.

**BOYS FOR FEMINISM**

When Ed Holtom, a 15-year-old boy from the English countryside, watched Emma Watson’s United Nations speech on gender equality where she endorsed the HeForShe campaign (www.heforshe.org), he did more than just listen to the remarks that have traveled ‘round the world (w w w. y o u t u b e. c o m/ watch?v=Q0Dg226G2Z8)." Moved by Watson’s invitation to men—“Gender equality is your issue, too”—he wrote a letter to the editor of The Daily Telegraph in London. Annoyed with his male peers’ reactions to the speech, the young man from Hertfordshire. It was argued for an end to gender stereotypes. "The definition of feminism," he wrote, is "a person who believes in the social, political and economic equality of the sexes." It’s pretty simple really…if you believe in those things, then you’re a feminist.” The teenage boy’s display of solidarity and commitment to defend Watson’s sentiments are a testament to the resurgent feminist movement among men.

**Fatherless by Suicide**

Fatherless by Suicide is a collaborative storytelling project by and for sons whose fathers died by suicide.

It was conceived of by Chris Michael, whose father took his life. He is traveling around the United States by motorcycle conducting interviews with similarly affected men.

"I believe stories are how we understand our world, our place in it and how we can enhance it. Surviving the suicide of your father is a tough world to inherit, and this project works to help address that challenge." Michael intends to use the portfolio he amasses of audio interviews, portraits and audio documentary to help reduce the shame and stigma around suicide, and improve society’s ability to better support the millions of people who live in the wake of it.

“I lost my father to suicide when I was three years old,” Michael says. “I spent the next three decades avoiding the topic and my own emotions around father loss.” He says he has long hungered to meet other men who lost their fathers to suicide to learn how they navigated their path to adulthood, healing and, for those who became parents, being fathers.

Michael says while the project is an effort for him to learn from similarly affected men, his larger goal is to share their lessons and insights with others, “particularly young men and women who recently lost their fathers.” Since August, Michaels began riding his motorcycle from New York City to San Francisco to conduct interviews with men representing a wide swath of the country’s geographic and cultural diversity. He plans to edit the audio interviews and “weave them into a series featuring stories and insights from collaborators on their journey to define their manhood, find healing and, perhaps, embrace fatherhood.” He is also photographing those who agree to have their portraits included in the project, and will combine audio excerpts of their stories online to help inspire others to add to the story.

Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States.

To learn more go to www.fatherlessbysuicide.com.
By their nature, worldviews are difficult to change, writes Allan Johnson, author of *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy*, a new edition of which came out this fall. “We tend not to be aware they even exist or how complex they are. Expose one part to scrutiny and doubt and you cannot help but bring others into question, from who you think you are to childhood heroes to feeling safe to national identity and pride.”

“When I consider why it is so hard to change a worldview—whether someone else’s or my own—I find that it depends on how it came to be there, what authority is behind it, and how ‘centrally located’ or interconnected it is in relation to the rest. My worldview, for example, includes the belief that nothing can travel faster than the speed of light. That bit of reality got added in when I read about it somewhere. I don’t remember where or when it was, but I do know I adopted this piece of information because the source was identified as science and, as with gravity, my worldview includes a general trust in what scientists claim as true, knowing all the while that it can change as new evidence comes to light. Adding this to my worldview happened in a particular moment in a particular way and from a particular source, and I could have decided against it or withheld judgment for one reason or another, as I sometimes do.

“What I take to be real about the speed of light is a simple and isolated piece of my and many other people’s worldview. It is not connected to other beliefs that matter to me and has little effect on my life, so I don’t really care whether it’s true and would not hesitate to give it up if scientists came out and said it was no longer so.”

It is a very different matter with something like the patriarchal definition of manhood that is acquired without our knowing it, being almost literally in the air we breathe from the moment we are born, repeated and affirmed over the years in stories and images and what people say and do. As it becomes embedded in an expanding web of belief, values, experience, and feeling, it acquires so many connections to other parts of our worldview that it can seem to originate from everywhere at once and to have been for all time, giving it an authority far more wide and deep than any particular source. Instead of being the belief of a person or a group or even a society, it appears as something beyond the reach of mere evidence or opinion or time and place, not a belief at all but intuitively true, undeniable, obvious, the way things are, what everybody knows, ordained by God, an immutable fact.

“So it is that the core principles of male dominance, male identification, male centeredness, and the masculine obsession with control come to be embedded in and indispensable to contemporary worldviews, providing generation after generation with a lens through which to perceive, interpret, and shape what is taken to be real.”

The idea that women and men are inherently different is one piece of this complex constellation of belief. Unlike adopting an idea about the speed of light, we do not decide one day that from now on we are going to believe that men and women are inherently different. To the extent that we believe it, it is because we grew up knowing it to be so, a knowing connected to ideas not only about how women and men differ but how they should not be the same. Men, for example, are still widely considered in the United States to be most desirable to the extent that they are aggressive, forceful, independent, and competitive, while women are valued for being yielding, emotional, and focused on relationships. Such views lost some adherents during the tumultuous 1970s and 1980s but since then have remained remarkably widespread and resistant to change. This is in spite of the strides women have made toward gaining access to positions of power and influence, although such progress slowed to a crawl more than twenty years ago.

“At the heart of the patriarchal worldview is the male-identified obsession with control that shapes every major social institution, and it is here that we also find the cultural mythology about men’s violence. This mythology is especially resistant to change because
the emotional, cultural, and political investment runs so deep and across so many generations, and without our even knowing that’s what it is. Its deepest and most sacrosanct expression is to be found not in the daily depiction of heroic men with guns in television shows and films and video games and the news but in parks and village greens in every town and city in America. It is embodied in the monuments, statues, and cemeteries erected to honor the loss of men who have died in war beneath the weight of other men’s violence. There are women who have lost their lives as well, but the place of these monuments in the national mythology is not about women or womanhood.

Nor is it simply about the individual men who have died and will continue to die as long as patriarchy continues. On a deeper and more powerful level it is about violence itself and the national mythology of manhood that gives it meaning and purpose. These men’s sacrifice happened only through their participation in war, a patriarchal institution whose sole aim is victory through campaigns of mass killing, for which these men were trained as part of a role they were encouraged to accept from an early age. Whatever the reason given for a particular war, the fact of their deaths is the result of their being unable to kill other men before being killed themselves. And those other men were only trying to avoid being killed themselves, with the ones who failed memorialized in towns and cities in nations around the world.

Obscured by the noble words, the historical accounts, the patriotic displays, and beneath the grief of those who suffer loss, war memorials are monuments to men’s violence and the patriarchal mythology of nationalism, manhood, and control that makes it happen.

Some will object that this does not distinguish “good” violence from “bad,” that it does not allow for the difference between what it takes to win a war and what Adam Lanza did on that morning in Newtown, including the taking of his own life. And I suspect they would not state their objections as a simple issue of fact but with some emotion, as in “How dare you?”

What makes the juxtaposition of war memorials and Adam Lanza so difficult, so objectionable and disturbing, is that it forces us to confront a deep ambivalence arising from the patriarchal worldview of men’s violence and the version of manhood that embodies it.

On one side of this ambivalence is a profound identification with manhood and the exercise of manly control, including the use of “heroic” violence. This includes the man who stands alone against impossible odds, the only one who can save us from certain doom. Or the enraged hero or coolly detached professional “just doing his job” who believes he is paying out revenge or enacting justice or combating evil or breaking through the enemy line in defense of national honor, pride, and freedom, acting from what he believes not only to be right but his right as a man in a society identified with men and manhood.

On the other side of our ambivalence is the man, also enraged or calmly professional, also believing in his claim to the use of violence in setting right what he believes to be wrong or unfair or not his just deserts or a threat to what he considers his own, the man who beats the woman who has dared to defy him one more time, or blows up a building as an act of political protest, or takes revenge on those who have deprived him of a living or issued the restraining order or ruled against him in court or caused injury to his honor and dignity.

Or there is the man who feels so broken or tormented or humiliated by what he has done in the name of manhood, or failed to do, that he turns the violence on himself.

Put the one side of our ambivalence in your left hand and the other in your right and hold them up and ask what truly separates them in that moment when a man—whether he be the president of the United States or an unemployed factory worker—exercises what he has been taught to believe is his manly right to control, to decide when violence is called for and not, in that moment when he gives expression to the forceful, independent, aggressive manhood that is so widely expected and admired in a patriarchal world.

The point is not that the two sides of our ambivalence are the same. They are not. The point—as history and the daily news make so painfully clear—is that we cannot have the one without the other. The only way to see this is to bring the two together and allow ourselves to feel the depth of the ambivalence.

We cannot celebrate and idolize a male-identified obsession with control without also elevating, privileging, and celebrating men’s violence as an instrument and expression of it. And in a culture that associates the idea of manhood with ideals of autonomy and independence that authorize “real men” to decide when and how to enact their manhood, we do not get to pick and choose the results before the damage has already been done.

The act of stepping back to examine the dominant worldview in any society is both necessary for change and full of risk. Even when we manage to do it, as many have in the past and continue to do today, the way forward is a difficult road.

The reason for this lies in the nature of worldviews themselves, the core of which originates outside and prior to the individual. That core is a legacy passed down across so many generations that it can appear to have no origin at all but to have always been so. Because of this, it is easy to feel that we lack authority as individuals to call into question what appears to be reality itself. This is especially powerful because even those who disagree with the dominant worldview tend to assume that most other people do not. And so, to a lack of authority we must add feelings of ostracism, exclusion, isolation, and alienation that can be particularly painful and demobilizing. It is not surprising, then, that in the face of this, so many people may not see what is right in front of them or realize what they are looking at.

None of this makes change impossible, but it does call on us to begin the journey with an awareness of what we are up against and what it will take to sustain ourselves as we set out to discover how to make a difference.

Voice Male contributing editor Allan G. Johnson is a nonfiction author, novelist, and sociologist who has devoted most of his working life to understanding the human condition, especially in relation to issues of social justice rooted in gender, race, and social class. His books include The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy, from which this article is excerpted, and Privilege, Power, and Difference (both in new editions). His novel, The First Thing and the Last, was excerpted in the Summer 2010 issue.
Many people first encountered Zach Wahls in 2011, when as a 19-year-old college student his stirring testimony at a public hearing before the Iowa House Judiciary Committee on a proposed constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage in his state was the most viewed video on YouTube that year. (See sidebar or go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSQQK2Vu99Q).

I’m straight and white; in many ways a stereotypically masculine bro-dude guy from Iowa—with one wrinkle: I have lesbian parents. Over the last three and a half years, I’ve advocated for the interests of children and families like mine who have been raised by same-sex parents. My activism’s included promoting every adult’s freedom to marry, fighting workplace discrimination targeting gay people, and advocating for equality in the Boy Scouts of America. (In stereotypically bro-dude-from-Iowa fashion, I am an Eagle Scout.) The time I’ve spent traveling and advocating has been the educational experience of a lifetime.

As I’ve answered a myriad of questions posed to me as a straight man being raised by two women, I’ve found myself examining aspects of my life that might have gone uninspected if I hadn’t spoken truth to power about my loving home and family. I’ve been particularly taken aback by the insidious effects straight men’s homophobia has on gay men, on women, even on other straight men—an utter, unmistakable fear that pervades the lives of so many American men today. It’s why, I believe, feminists and LGBTQ rights advocates have to work together.

I’ve spoken to students and community members at more than 150 colleges across the United States, from a dozen to hundreds. When attendance isn’t mandatory my audiences are almost always overwhelmingly female. I chalk this up to the fact that women are 25 percent more likely than men to say they have a close friend or family member who is gay. At these talks, men typically make up at most a fifth of the audience. During such gatherings, maybe one or two men will say something during the Q&A, and one guy might come up after the lecture to chat further. However, when attendance is mandatory (for class, for extra credit, or a special program), the gender composition of the audience is much more balanced, and I hear from many men during and after the talk.

Sadly, a lot of men who support gay rights in private are hesitant to be seen at a public lecture for fear of being perceived as gay. “It’s not that I have a problem with gay people, I just don’t want anyone to think I’m gay,” is the usual line of reasoning such men offer. It also explains why you don’t see nearly as many straight guys at Pride parades and marches as polling about support for marriage equality suggests there should be. This phenomenon is also at the root of “Pause,” and “No homo,” said after something that may be taken as gay or endorsing homosexuality. (“Pause” is a phrase used in many urban communities of color to express an air of awkwardness after a pseudo-homosexual phrase is uttered. This is commonly followed by the phrase “No homo” to make clear the speaker is not gay.)

When guys do show up in force to my lectures, there are almost always questions about my upbringing—who taught me how to throw a baseball (my mom Jackie) or took me camping (my mom Terry, before she got sick) or taught me how to shave (the dad of one of my best friends). I have come to see this fascination with my upbringing as a desire to connect to it and to humanize me as someone with whom they can relate. By drawing parallels to their own childhoods and lives, guys who otherwise might have deni-
grated same-sex parenting can see that the differences are not so great—realizations they could only achieve by overcoming their fear to show up in the first place.

To be clear, I’m not talking about the kind of fear we experience when our safety is being threatened or, say, when a relationship is in peril. In order of magnitude this “fear” isn’t nearly as strong, and that’s part of what makes it so insidious: it’s fear that is often not even recognized as fear, wrapped as it is in bigotry.

It’s that same fear that makes a bro-dude wonder whether or not he should check out a lecture by a gay rights activist like me—one with whom he more likely than not has an enormous amount in common. And, it’s the same fear that prevents him from forming meaningful, emotionally vulnerable friendships with other men. It’s the reason why odds are good in 15 years his closest male friends will be the husbands of his wife’s best friends. Think I’m kidding? More than three-quarters of the time, a man’s closest confidant will be a woman, precisely wife’s best friends. Think I’m kidding? More than three-quarters of the time, a man’s closest confidant will be a woman, precisely a person who will affirm his need for emotional connection rather than judge it, validate his vulnerability rather than criticize him for wanting it.

What I didn’t understand until recently is just how tied up this fear—read homophobia—is with society’s rampant sexism. “[M]en are pressed—from the time they’re very young—to disassociate from everything feminine,” Lisa Wade wrote in Slate in December 2013. “This imperative is incredibly limiting for them. Paradoxically, it makes men feel good because of a social agreement that masculine things are better than feminine things, but it’s not the same thing as freedom. It’s restrictive and dehumanizing. It’s oppression all dressed up as awesomeness. And it is part of why men have a hard time being friends.”

While not identical issues, the casual homophobia that so many men still express is directly connected to deeply ingrained behavior to disassociate from the feminine. “No homo” isn’t just homophobic and doesn’t just hurt LGBTQ people. It deprives men of the chance to meaningfully connect with and confide in other men—and that’s not good for anyone.

I hope it’s getting better. As I travel and speak out, I see more than glimmers of progress. Over the summer, I had the chance to form a great peer group with some awesome new guy friends when we came together in a scholarship program. Most of us have gone separate ways, spread out all over the world now, but we keep in regular touch via GroupMe, a texting app that allows our group to easily communicate. We talk almost daily. While our topics, which largely consist of politics, fantasy football teams, current events, and our relationships with women, can’t be described as “emotionally meaningful”—at 140 characters and devoid of face-to-face interaction, how could they be?—the conversations are definitely the start of building a foundation for long-term fraternity. And you have to start somewhere.

What I didn’t understand until recently is just how tied up this fear—read homophobia—is with society’s rampant sexism.

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The Courage of Love

Good evening Mr. Chairman.

My name is Zach Wahls. I’m a sixth-generation Iowan and an engineering student at the University of Iowa, and I was raised by two women. My biological mother Terry told her parents that she was pregnant, that the artificial insemination had worked, and they wouldn’t even acknowledge it. It actually wasn’t until I was born and they succumbed to my infantile cuteness that they broke down and told her that they were thrilled to have another grandson. Unfortunately, neither of them would live to see her marry her partner Jackie of fifteen years when they wed in 2009. My younger sister and only sibling was born in 1994. We actually have the same anonymous donor, so we’re full siblings, which is really cool for me. I guess the point is that my family really isn’t so different from any other Iowa family.

When I’m home, we go to church together. We eat dinner; we go on vacations. But, we have our hard times too; we get in fights. My mom, Terry, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2000. It is a devastating disease that put her in a wheelchair, so we’ve had our struggles. But we’re Iowans. We don’t expect anyone to solve our problems for us. We’ll fight our own battles. We just hope for equal and fair treatment for our government.

Being a student at the University of Iowa, the topic of same sex marriage comes up quite frequently in class discussions. The question always comes down to, “Can gays even raise kids?” And the conversation gets quiet for a moment, because most people don’t really have an answer. And then I raise my hand and say, “Well actually, I was raised by a gay couple, and I’m doing pretty well.” I score in the 99th percentile on the ACT. I’m an Eagle Scout. I own and operate my own small business. If I was your son, Mr. Chairman, I believe I’d make you very proud. I’m not so different from any of your children. My family really isn’t so different from yours. After all, your family doesn’t derive its sense of worth from being told by the state, “You’re married, congratulations!” The sense of family comes from the commitment we make to each other to work through the hard times so we can enjoy the good ones. It comes from the love that binds us. That’s what makes a family.

So what you’re voting for here is not to change us. It’s not to change our families, it’s to change how the law views us, how the law treats us. You are voting for the first time in the history of our state to codify discrimination into our constitution, a constitution that but for the proposed amendment is the least amended constitution in the United States of America. You are telling Iowans, “Some among you are second-class citizens who do not have the right to marry the person you love.” So will this vote affect my family? Would it affect yours? In the next two hours, I’m sure we’re going to hear a lot of testimony about how damaging having gay parents is on kids. But not once have I ever been confronted by an individual who realized independently I was raised by a gay couple. And you know why? Because the sexual orientation of my parents has had zero impact on the content of my character. Thank you.

Transcript of Zach Wahls’ 2011 testimony in defense of gay marriage before the Iowa House Judiciary Committee
A Celebration of Black and Latino Males

By Hector Toledo, Raekwon Wheeler, and Tynayko Melendez

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

At a daylong summit on healthy masculinity for men and boys in western Massachusetts, three newly graduated high school students read their award-winning essays addressing the question, “What Can Institutions, Society, and I Do to Positively Influence the Plight of Black and Latino Males?” The oratory competition they’d entered was sponsored by Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. Since its founding in 1906, Alpha Phi has supplied voice and vision to the struggle of African Americans and people of color around the world. What follows are excerpts from the remarks of Hector Toledo (1st place), Raekwon Wheeler (2nd place), and Tynayko Melendez (3rd place). Each received a portion of $5,000 in scholarship funds to attend college.

What Does It Mean to Be Brown?

By Hector Toledo

What does it mean to be brown? Does it mean being a part of the 40 percent of Americans who live below the poverty line? Does it mean having a one in three chance of seeing the inside of a jail cell? No; it does not.

Did you know that it costs over $167,000 to keep an inmate in prison per year and only $39,000 to send a student to Harvard University annually? I want to be that Harvard student. With the previous percentage in mind what does that say about the systems that are in place and their priorities? It tells me that those systems would much rather remain in a status quo by sending men of color to prison rather than to college.

As a son of a man of color I have heard the stories of coming to this country with not only bright smiles and brown skin but a different language too. Stories about prejudices found not only on the factory floor but in the boardroom...

Growing up in an urban environment, with brown skin and a Hispanic name, I have had plenty of opportunities to see and experience the disadvantages that American men of color have to face... For me it starts in a school system where students of color...
are routinely subjected to lower expectations by a teaching staff that doesn’t look like them. There is a disconnection between them because of a difference in life experiences that does not allow the teachers to empathize with the students of color—which leads them either to have lower expectations of the students or to assume that the negative stereotypes about them are true. In my observations and readings I have found that 55 percent of men of color do not graduate from high school.

I have a story to share about my friend Luis, who unfortunately became [part of] this statistic. Luis was one of my best friends at the start of high school and he had a dream of owning a theater-studio in Springfield (Massachusetts) where he could teach children the skills of acting and public speaking because he knew how important those skills are for the community. But junior year rolls around and Luis comes to me to tell me that his grades were slipping and he was getting worried about his future. I told him not to worry; I would help him find a tutor so that he could stay on the path to getting his diploma. Then on the first day of senior year Luis is nowhere to be found and so I call him to make sure everything is all right, and he sadly informs me that he had to drop out of high school because he was not going to have enough credits to graduate and he had taken another path of education to get his GED. The last time I heard from Luis was about three months ago where he informed me that he was going down to Florida to live with his aunt because she had a “job” for him to do. I think of situations like the one my friend Luis got caught in and it makes me think about what the community can do or what solutions I can come up with to try to prevent things like this from happening. I think of things like college essay writing competitions where scholarship money is the prize, SAT prep classes in every high school so that our students can be better prepared for the exam, or even college application classes ensuring that students will get all of the proper support that is needed…

Students entering their freshman year are not prepared for the academic rigor… resulting in a disproportionate number of students of color dropping out of high school. We can prevent this from occurring by having a better connection between teachers and parents.

Hector Toledo

The question I now pose is: “What can our institutions, society, and I do to ensure that black and Latino males can have a better future?”

If we don’t challenge young men of color in high school with college prep courses, how do we expect them to flourish in college?

Raekwon Wheeler

Growing up, I was told that education is the key to success; that no matter my socioeconomic status, if I worked hard and simply applied myself, I could accomplish anything. I never challenged this; however, I find it difficult to believe that Black and Latino males will be able to succeed if they are not sufficiently challenged in school. Indeed, one of the best ways for schools to challenge Black and Latino males is by enrolling them in advanced placement classes. According to the Annual Advance Placement report to the nation, 80 percent of Black and Latino students who could have done well in an advance placement course did not even take one! That’s four out of five Black students, and two out of every three Latino students who did not have access to advance placement courses despite being qualified for enrollment. That’s one less doctor, one less lawyer, one less teacher; indeed, one less president who can aspire to offer solutions to our world’s most pressing issues…

NBC News reported that America reached an education milestone. For the first time the nation has a high school graduation rate of more than 80 percent, in large part due to achievements among African American and Latino students. From 2006 to 2012, there was a 15 percent increase in Hispanic graduation rates and a 9 percent increase among Black students; this is not enough. Despite decreasing the race gap in college enrollment, 80 percent of Black and Latino students who did not have access to advance placement courses despite being qualified for enrollment. That’s one less doctor, one less lawyer, one less teacher; indeed, one less president who can aspire to offer solutions to our world’s most pressing issues…

Students entering their freshman year are not prepared for the academic rigor… resulting in a disproportionate number of students of color dropping out of high school. We can prevent this from occurring by having a better connection between teachers and parents.

Hector Toledo
these bachelor degrees conferred to Blacks and Latinos, approximately 60 percent were obtained by females.

There are many factors which impact these statistics, but what these numbers are telling us is that our young men of color are not prepared for the challenges of college. This is not surprising. If we don’t challenge young men of color in high school with college prep courses, how do we expect them to flourish in college?

As a society, we can change this. We can begin by having the voice of our communities heard in our local government and on Capitol Hill. We need to demand that our tax dollars go to bettering the resources provided to young men of color. We need to build relationships between school systems and the successful men of color in their communities, possibly through internships... We need to demand that our school systems are not teaching to the test, but teaching students how to think for themselves...

I plan on furthering my development when I enroll at Trinity College and pursue my interest in political science. I want to turn my passion for government into a means of positively enacting change in my community through the advancement of Black and Latino males. I want to be someone who takes...the lessons learned in the classroom and life to help struggling young men of color realize their potential.

To remedy the plight of Black and Latino males...I need to become my brother’s keeper. That way when the next thirty pairs of eyes, or even more, are staring at me, I will not be alone.

The Blurry Image of Black and Latino Males

By Tynayko Melendez

The image of Black and Latino males has become blurred over the years. Sometimes, I can’t even go into a store without being stared at. Why is that? Is it because of my skin color? Is it because of the way I might be dressed? Even when this may be the case, how am I able to rise above potential stereotypes and prejudices others may have? I believe it is due to my upbringing and the way I present myself that I am able to overlook these things. I was taught to respect others and not to stare.

To some people, Black and Latino males like myself are cast into a light where they are expected to steal; expected to pull out a gun when they reach in their pockets for a bag of Skittles; expected to have a dim outlook for their futures; expected to be monsters. But I am here to tell you today that I am none of those things.

By having a job and providing money for myself, I simply show my community that I am doing something with my life. I am becoming a responsible and independent individual.

By going to church I demonstrate my care for that faith community and for the rest of my community. Being a leader in school and in church positively impacts the students and youth who go to these institutions... Working hard with an eye towards college and beyond has been a longstanding goal for me.

I have been fortunate throughout high school to participate in Upward Bound. This program, and others like it, is designed to help Black and Latino males get to college. The problem is not every school...has Upward Bound and that negatively impacts these students. Take my older brother, for example, who attended...a school...situated in a high poverty area. [Even though] he ultimately graduated from high school, and was able to get himself to a community college, I was shocked to hear that he had never previously heard of the FAFSA (the Free Application for Federal Student Aid) or even the SATs. He wasn’t ready for the real world just yet.

What he needed was increased exposure and comprehensive college preparation. Not only at schools like [his], but all of our schools ought to be teaching students more about college if they want successful individuals as an outcome.

[Many] schools do not have scholarship information easily accessible to students. I thought about my brother and how he must have struggled throughout high school, not knowing what he wanted in life or how he would get to where he thought he wanted to be. Then I thought of other Black and Latino brothers and how they might feel as well...

I decided to write a letter to the superintendent of schools, Daniel Warwick, informing him that not all schools in Springfield [Mass.] were receiving the same information and resources. I encouraged him to implement a plan whereby students could access scholarship information on the school system’s website. A week later I received a response. The superintendent agreed and his director of student support services said, in part: “This will ensure that all college bound...students have access to scholarship opportunities online... We [will] provide opportunities for the 2014–2015 school year to make this information available to all students...” This was a proud moment for me personally, but more so I found happiness in finding a solution to a problem for the betterment of my peers. Yo soy el guardián de mi hermano! I am my brother’s keeper!

Each of us is charged with encouraging and uplifting each other. Many Black and Latino males are not prepared enough during high school to take courses at the college level. This could be a deterrent for many in their efforts to learn more about college, let alone matriculate. To help alleviate this problem, parents should talk to their children about college as early as possible...

Parental involvement, especially in high school, portrays to the student the importance of education and that parents care about the growth and development of their sons and daughters.

Involved parents afford students the moral support they need... Our families as well as our institutions must do more to push the importance of education. Just like I have done with my brother, we all need to be our brothers’ keeper by supporting them on their educational journey. Education is what will bring our brothers out of the struggle that they are in and into prosperity.

If you want the world to know something it starts with you. Speak up and advocate for yourself because you never know what might happen. I want to show the world that if I can do it, so can others. We can all be whatever we want. I want to serve as an example to the young men who will come after me to show that they can achieve their own personal, educational and professional goals as well. Yo soy el guardián de mi hermano! I am my Brother’s Keeper!

Thanks to Alpha Phi Alpha director of education Ronn Johnson for his assistance. A longtime human services advocate, Johnson is president and chief executive officer of Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services, Inc., in Springfield, Massachusetts.
not long ago we were having dinner with friends when the topic turned to the premise of our new book, Mascupathy: Understanding and Healing the Malaise of American Manhood. The turmoil in most men’s lives is a product of a socialized disorder we had dubbed mascupathy, where traits such as aggression and invulnerability are exaggerated, and those of openness and empathy are repressed.

Not everyone at the table agreed. Michael said flatly that the turmoil of men’s lives was all about sex. Randy responded that it was all about male socialization: the lessons of the man-pact—the ancient code that defines what’s masculine—that’s enforced by the “man-pack,” the unorganized but immensely powerful alliance to which virtually all men knowingly or unwittingly belong. Charlie weighed in that although narcissism and sex may be drivers, they’re not the paramount factors in men’s lives that lead them to intimidate each other, distance themselves from their partners, drink, and work too much. For Charlie, it came down to one core observation: men are lost.

The men around the table spent the next couple hours in a wide-ranging conversation, eventually agreeing on five traits that lead to the turmoil that so often typifies men’s lives.

1. **Lost.** In this time of seismic change in gender roles, men’s struggles have intensified as women increasingly take their rightful place in the world. Many men are unable to meet the challenges this new day presents, in part because traditional masculine behaviors have become both less acceptable and less functional, and men are no longer unquestioningly ruling the roost. While some traditional gender roles remain entrenched, many of the ancient entitlements men have enjoyed are being challenged. The result: many men feel bewildered and fearful. Lost and depressed, they isolate themselves and become more insular and estranged.

2. **Shamed.** The age-old man-pact has established expectations for men that are impossible to meet. Men often feel they’re not strong enough, smart enough, or confident enough. They wear a mask that says, “Everything’s okay,” while harboring deep feelings of inadequacy and unworthiness. Their shame becomes overt depression—withdrawal, sadness, and lethargy—but can also result in what psychotherapist Terry Real calls covert depression—anger, assault, indignation, and violence.

3. **Traumatized.** Men live with unseen trauma similar to PTSD, harboring a reservoir of both conscious and hidden fears. In our work with men over several decades, more than anything else what we’ve seen is most men view the world as a deeply unsafe place. Virtually all men have endured repeated psychic injury. Boys who are victims often turn into bullies themselves, not only trying to minimize the trauma but also glamorizing it as a way to toughen up.

The most serious impact of male trauma results from men’s failure to resolve their emotional pain and grief. They transfer their pain onto unsuspecting and innocent partners and children. And since many men have not addressed their own pain, they have little capacity for empathy.

4. **Lonely.** Most men are deeply lonely. Many are often out of touch with their loneliness, experiencing it as irritation. And, even if they have identified it, they try not to show it. Loneliness is perceived as an admission of needing others, a trait better suited for teenage girls and old people, not “real men.” Even men who surround themselves with other people often have superficial relationships, and their fundamental need for intimacy goes unmet. Men’s unmet need for connection makes them seek out non-relational sex, a form of pseudo-intimacy which ends, and then their loneliness returns like a runaway train.

5. **Avoiding femininity.** Despite progress in redefining our notion of manhood, much of male socialization still focuses primarily on training boys to be aggressive and violent. Displays of femininity open men to ridicule, ostracization, and humiliation. Anything girly is to be avoided. In fact, the most serious insults between men are not name-calling about physical weakness or being sensitive, but the taunts: “girl,” “bitch,” “sissy.” The use of words castigating femininity not only instructs men in their behavior; it also exposes deep-rooted misogyny in many men.

Like our dinner conversation that night, the list could have gone on longer. Our discussion had not only served to remind us of men’s struggles but it also reinforced what we had learned from years working as psychologists: there is hope for men. We have seen countless times their broken sense of self repaired in men’s therapy groups.

Cure them of the shame of not feeling man enough diminishes when men are in the company of other men who refuse to engage in oneupsmanship. Men’s therapy groups help males overcome unhealthy traits and develop a stronger sense of self, incorporating five new traits: self-awareness, authenticity, compassion, intimacy and egalitarianism. When men learn how to incorporate these traits—21st-century rules of masculinity—they can help strengthen the new man-pack and join the larger social movement in which they can lead healthier lives for themselves and their families.

Charlie Donaldson is co-author (with Randy Flood) of Mascupathy: Understanding and Healing the Malaise of American Manhood. He is presently working on a new book, Reinvention Therapy, a treatment protocol for male substance abusers that incorporates resocialization from conventional masculinity as part of the recovery plan.

Randy Flood is co-director of the Institute for Prevention and Treatment of Mascupathy. Interviewed recently for his expertise about men and masculinity by the Christian Science Monitor, and Minneapolis Star Tribune, among other media outlets, he is developing a curriculum on boys, bullying and masculinity for schools in greater Grand Rapids, Michigan.
Engaging men and boys as allies in gender equality has become the buzz phrase in development circles. Donors are asking for it. The UN is talking about it. Emma Watson caused UN Women’s website to crash from the sheer volume of hits when she endorsed its new He-for-She campaign. And yet, 20 years after the Beijing conference on women, and five years since the first global MenEngage symposium, we run the risk that our once revolutionary cause becomes the next toothless fad.

As cofounder and cochair of the global alliance MenEngage, now some 600 NGOs strong, I often hear this observation: You must be pleased with how much attention the issue of engaging men is getting. Let’s hold our enthusiasm in check. We should celebrate only when we see true and sustainable progress toward gender equality and social justice. Until then, MenEngage must be Men EnRaged.

Let’s start with violence. Global data confirms that about a third of the world’s women have experienced violence from a male partner. We have little evidence—with the possible exception of the U.S. and Norway—that any country has been able to reduce its overall rates of men’s violence against women. There are challenges with measuring violence, to be sure, but it’s far too early to claim that we have made real progress in reducing the daily threat to women and girls.

Men too are victims of violence in gendered ways. There are an estimated 55,000 direct conflict deaths and more than 400,000 deaths by intentional homicide annually—more than 80 percent of those murdered are men. In addition, there are 800,000 deaths from suicides each year; about two-thirds of those are also men. And we know which men commit suicide: men who are socially isolated, who feel they can’t reach out for help, whose sense of identity was lost when they lost their livelihoods. Men stuck in the gender box.

Let’s look at other social indicators. In education, there are notable improvements: 90 percent of girls are now enrolled in primary school, as are 92 percent of boys. The numbers get worse at the secondary level, with 63 percent enrollment for girls and 66 percent for boys. These figures represent sizable gains compared to 20 years ago.

But then let’s consider what girls and boys too often face in school: sexual harassment, sexual abuse, homophobic bullying, and cultures of competition instead of a culture of cooperation and connection. We can celebrate when our schools are safe places not just to be but where all girls and boys can thrive.

In reproductive and sexual health, we have similarly seen limited advances, if at all. In 2005, women represented 75 percent of global contraceptive users and men 25 percent. By 2014, women represented 73 percent. Hardly numbers to celebrate and proclaim equality; indeed, that change does not even pass the confidence interval. Why does it matter? Well, last time I checked, reproduction involves women and men. Anything less than 50-50 in terms of contraceptive use cannot be called equality.

In the workplace, the challenges are just as daunting. Globally, 77 percent of men participate in the paid workforce, compared to just 50 percent of women—a proportion that has remained virtually unchanged for 25 years. Even when women are in the workplace, they earn on average 18 percent less than men for the same work. Some may
As we approach 20 years since Beijing and five years since the first MenEngage Symposium in Rio, I am not pleased that “engaging men” is trending on Twitter. Of course, I applaud He for She and its desire to get a billion men to support gender equality. But let’s be real: social media and online activism are tools, not ends in themselves. Activism is an attempt to make a change. To our women partners: it is sometimes a challenge to think that men need to be involved in the cause of gender equality. But we must be thoughtful enough to understand that men are implicated in gender inequalities, sometimes as obstacles, sometimes as victims—sometimes both at the same time. The patriarchy of poor men, as Naomi Hossain reminds us, is not the patriarchy of rich men. Boys dropping out of school is not cause for celebration. It is possible and necessary to talk about men's gender-related health problems and vulnerabilities while simultaneously recognizing the inequalities women face. We can talk about male victims of sexual violence—in conflict, or in homes and schools—and not lose sight of the violence women experience. Indeed, the root causes are often the same. Our vulnerabilities as men create vulnerabilities for women and vice versa.

Celebrate 20 years since Beijing? Celebrate “engaging men”? Not this week. Not yet. Not until we move beyond binary thinking; us-versus-them thinking. There can be no progress until we affirm as women and men that gender equality requires understanding the complex relationships in which women live.

Other times, we stare the gender binary in the face but do nothing to change it. Take the case of women’s income contributions to their families. Study after study confirms that income in a woman’s hands is more likely to be spent on her family, and to benefit children, compared to income in a man’s hand. But rather than trying to change this reality, we too often fall back on saying: “We must promote more women’s economic empowerment.” Of course we must invest in women’s income. But why are not more of us also enraged by men’s lack of contributions to their households? Why are we not funding and evaluating approaches to encourage— and when necessary, obligate—men to pay for the children they have and cajoling them every single day to be equal investors in the well-being of those children? Shame on us for not being imaginative enough to believe this simple truth: men can change. Shame on us, as well, for ignoring the potential (not just the obligation) men have to care for and contribute to maintaining their households and raising their children.

Our efforts to end gender-based violence run into similar barriers and show the same short-term thinking. Let’s start with language. When we say “gender-based violence” or “violence against women” we mostly mean men’s use of violence against women and girls. We need to, as Jackson Katz cogently reminds us, call it that. Doing so doesn’t take the focus off the harm women face. Rather, it makes us look at who uses the violence, why they use it, and what must happen to stop them from using it. At the same time, we must understand which women experience violence and why.

I applaud HeforShe and its desire to get a billion men to support gender equality. But social media and online activism are tools, not ends in themselves. After we’ve clicked our “likes,” we have to head to the streets.

We should also be outraged by our lack of rigor in our well-intended violence prevention efforts. Sure, it is laudable—and high time—that men are also outraged by some men’s use of violence against women. But let’s be smart enough to know that just raising our voices and clicking on a website or carrying a poster once a year is not enough. There is a rapidly expanding research base in what works in preventing men’s violence against women. We must use that research to scale up effective efforts and not simply roll out ineffective, poorly thought-out programming. Our activism and our science can and must be interrogated.

As we approach 20 years since Beijing and five years since the first MenEngage Symposium in Rio, I am not pleased that “engaging men” is trending on Twitter. Of course, I applaud He for She and its desire to get a billion men to support gender equality. But let’s be real: social media and online activism are tools, not ends in themselves. If we want to oust corrupt regimes and overcome structures of inequality, let’s remember that after we’ve clicked our likes, we have to head to the streets, roll out the training, implement the plans, collect the data, make the arguments, and live and measure the change.

Where do we go from here? To my brothers working to engage men in gender equality: Let’s get over ourselves. Michael Kimmel reminded us at the symposium in Rio that we too often suffer from “premature self-congratulation.” It’s easy to think the cause of gender equality didn’t exist until we came along and to ignore that women have experienced and led during these last 20 years (and well before). Humility and partnership go a long way.

To our women partners: it is sometimes a challenge to think that men need to be involved in the cause of gender equality. But we must be thoughtful enough to understand that men are implicated in gender inequalities, sometimes as obstacles, sometimes as victims—sometimes both at the same time. The patriarchy of poor men, as Naomi Hossain reminds us, is not the patriarchy of rich men. Boys dropping out of school is not cause for celebration. It is possible and necessary to talk about men’s gender-related health problems and vulnerabilities while simultaneously recognizing the inequalities women face. We can talk about male victims of sexual violence—in conflict, or in homes and schools—and not lose sight of the violence women experience. Indeed, the root causes are often the same. Our vulnerabilities as men create vulnerabilities for women and vice versa.

Celebrate 20 years since Beijing? Celebrate “engaging men”? Not this week. Not yet. Not until we move beyond binary thinking; us-versus-them thinking. There can be no progress until we affirm as women and men that gender equality requires understanding women and men. To say that, we must look both at the structural and the individual. To say that, we must use the best evidence available, and employ it in our activism. To say that we want to end patriarchy in the lives of women and in the lives of men. Anything else will be an incomplete revolution.

Gary Barker is founder and international director of Promundo-DC, the U.S. office of Instituto Promundo, a Brazilian NGO, based in Rio de Janeiro, that works locally, nationally and internationally to promote gender equity and to reduce violence against children, women and youth. He is also cofounder of the global alliance MenEngage, hundreds of NGOs around the world working with men and boys to promote gender equality. This article is an edited version of remarks he prepared for the MenEngage symposium in New Delhi in November.
Male Sexual Violence Survivors: Newest Activists for Gender Justice?

By Wynne Russell

Nearly 40 years after the first World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975, the figures on sexual and intimate partner violence against women and girls remain staggering. Recent figures found that 35 percent of women worldwide have experienced either intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.

But sexual violence in particular does not affect women and girls alone. Although badly underreported, sexual violence against men and boys is increasingly recognized as pervasive. In peacetime Western societies, males still make up an estimated 5 to 10 percent of adult sexual assault victims, and an estimated 17 percent of boys have experienced childhood sexual abuse.

My research and advocacy, however, has particularly focused on male-directed sexual violence in high-conflict zones. In the last decade alone, sexual violence—including rape, sexual torture and mutilation, reproductive violence, sexual humiliation, forced incest and forced rape, and sexual enslavement—against men and boys has been reported in 26 conflicts across the world. Such violence is overwhelmingly (although not exclusively) perpetrated by men and occurs as torture, as part of initiation and integration into military and paramilitary forces, and as a strategy of war designed to terrify and demoralize populations and destroy family and community cohesion.

All male survivors of sexual violence, I have come to believe, have the potential to be natural allies in the global quest both to end violence against women and girls and to work for gender justice. Male survivors have shared the fear and pain; the confusion, shame and guilt; the depression and post-traumatic stress; and the silencing and social stigma faced by female survivors. They know sexual violence for what it is: not “uncontrollable lust,” but an exercise in power and humiliation.

Particularly in conflict zones, male sexual violence survivors also have had a glimpse into the oppression women and girls experience—the consequences of deep narratives of heterosexual male dominance that underlie violence against women and girls around the globe. Most conflict-related sexual violence is a mechanism by which male survivors’ framing of sexual violence against them as “torture,” rather than “rape.”

Attackers also will use their victims to attack the masculine identity of other men, for instance forcing men to rape women in front of their husbands. Meanwhile, forcing combatants to rape as an indoctrination exercise is one of the many ways in which aggressors attack nonviolent masculine identities. As one man in the DRC forced to rape a civilian under threat of being beaten to death told a medical examiner, “Even though I was a militia man, I had no desire to take a woman by force.”

Male-directed sexual violence in conflicts is what was dubbed a moment of “fatal peril” for male-role authority. Men can respond to such attacks by trying to regain the male-role authoritarian image through greater violence and control, including against women and girls. But as my interviews at torture care centers worldwide have shown, they can also respond by regaining agency in more
positive ways—by embracing narratives of masculinity that focus on gentle strength. Moving from personal strength to advocacy on behalf of others is a potential next step by which men may contribute to their own healing while at the same time freeing themselves from the ideology that has led to their own experience of violence—and for many (particularly those forced to rape), contributing to their own reintegration into their communities.

But are such notions realistic? To find out, I have started conversations with therapists, program directors, researchers and advocates working with and on behalf of male survivors—as well as a few generous and courageous survivors themselves—asking them for their thoughts on opportunities for engaging male survivors in the quest for gender justice. These conversations are at an early stage, but a few points have already emerged.

• While responding positively to the concept, the majority has noted that such engagement probably should be initiated outside the therapeutic process. Partnerships with profeminist organizations may therefore be the best way forward.
• As long as sexual violence is associated with social stigma and loss of masculinity, male survivors may be unwilling to take any steps that risk their experiences being exposed in the community...Initiatives to engage male survivors must therefore be willing to accept, before major social change occurs, that male survivors may not be willing to publicly acknowledge the shared nature of their and women’s/girls’ experience, and should work to create safe spaces for engaging male survivors.
• In the absence of support for the male experience of sexual violence, male survivors may not be able or ready to reach out to supporting women/girls. Profeminist organizations should advocate for better programs and therapeutic options for male survivors, for expanded awareness, and campaigns to make it more acceptable for men to speak out. Additionally, better data collection is imperative.

Despite all these caveats, the longer-term prospects for engaging male survivors of sexual violence as allies in the quest for gender justice seem good. Organizations attempting to involve men in preventing violence against women have already found that encouraging men to discuss their own experiences of violence helps them understand the impact of women’s experiences of violence, and to renounce such violence. It remains to bring male survivors into this encouraging picture.

Wynne Russell is a longtime Australian policy researcher and social justice advocate on conflict-related sexual violence against men and boys. She was invited to present expanded findings from ideas discussed in this article at the MenEngage Global Symposium in New Delhi in November. To learn more and to dialogue

**How common is sexual violence against men and boys in conflict zones?**

Until recently, there has been little statistical information on levels of sexual violence against males during conflicts—largely because men and boys are often reluctant to report such violence, but also due to a lack of awareness on the part of humanitarian workers and researchers. However, new studies on conflict-related sexual violence paint a disturbing picture.

• In Liberia, 32.6 percent of a large-scale study’s former male combatants had experienced sexual violence, mostly at the hands of soldiers or rebels.
• In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), 23.6 percent of the men in the study had experienced sexual violence during their lives; 64.5 percent in the country’s civil wars. Meanwhile, surveys of male torture survivors, both from conflict zones and repressive states, have consistently shown high levels of sexual violence in detention, frequently well over 50 percent and, in some cases—Bosnia, for instance—more than 80 percent.

When the World Health Organization (WHO) published its global and regional estimates of the prevalence of violence against women in 2013, the numbers were grim. The findings suggest that on average one in three women will experience physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner. This is even more likely, the WHO reported, in the developing regions such as Africa (36.6 percent), Middle East and Mediterranean (37 percent) and South East Asia (37.7 percent). In addition, it is estimated that 38 percent of all murders of women globally are committed by the victim’s intimate partner. In South Africa the figure stands at a staggering 56 percent.

Despite the statistics, in the ongoing struggle to prevent violence against women, there has been a steady increase in prevention and intervention models. They have been developed to use predominantly with women and girls who are victims of violence or are at risk of becoming victims. These programs often include raising community awareness, psycho-educational workshops, educational materials, media campaigns, counseling, shelter facilities, and access to justice services, among other strategies. The common denominator among nearly all of these interventions has been that they are one-sided in their target audience.

A SHIFT IN FOCUS

In various parts of the world there is growing awareness that in order to break the cycle of violence, men should also be involved in gender-based violence interventions. Many women, both survivors of intimate partner violence and those who provide services to women, suggest that intimate partner violence cannot be eliminated if the focus on the intervention is aimed only at women.

Very few women in violent relationships leave their partners; they simply want the violence to stop. And, while an increasing number of men seek assistance to change their behavior, there are not enough change programs for men who use intimate partner violence.

MOSAIC, a South African training, service and healing center for women and girls who are victims of violence or are at risk of becoming victims, was established in 1993 in response to the increasing prevalence of domestic violence experienced by women in Cape Town and surrounding towns. The majority of services offered were aimed at healing and empowering female victims of violence. Since 1999, MOSAIC has offered assistance to victims of domestic and/or intimate partner violence when they approach the courts to apply for a protection order against the perpetrator.

MOSAIC noticed the increasing number of cases that were neither being adjudicated nor withdrawn. This was especially evident in cases of intimate partner violence. In response, since 2010 MOSAIC has partnered with a research institute to explore the attrition rates of domestic violence cases in the courts. The findings made clear the need to change the way in which intimate partner violence programs were being conceptualized. The research found that more than two thirds of the respondents who did not follow through with their orders said a reduction in or absence of violence was the reason for not returning to the court to ask to have the protection order implemented.

MALE TOOLKIT

In Cape Town, the Male Toolkit program had successes, challenges and unforeseen positive outcomes experienced by the men, their partners, their children and the entire family unit. Embedded within a set of strategies that work to engage men as caregiving partners and fathers, the counseling program addresses social and cultural norms in society around manhood, behavior change interventions, and institutional changes, all part of MenCare+: Engaging Men, a four-country initiative being implemented over three years in Brazil, Indonesia, Rwanda and South Africa. MenCare+, a collaboration between Rutgers WPF and Promundo-US, the program was created to engage men ages 15–35 as partners in maternal and child health and sexual and reproductive health and rights. The program is supported with funds from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

MOSAIC began implementing the Male Counseling Program as part of MenCare+ in early 2013. The male clients are referred through various channels, most commonly at the request of the intimate partner, but also through MenCare+ activities, partner organizations, magistrate courts and former male clients who
successfully completed the program. Designed as an individual behavior change intervention for men who use violence, the toolkit’s aim is to ensure gender equitable relationships. The partner is included in the program as a participant in joint sessions and in a monitoring and accountability role.

In the first 18 months more than 300 men enrolled in the program. At the outset, MOSAIC could not have foreseen the holistic impact piloting this intervention strategy would have on the lives of their clients. Most males entered the program denying they needed assistance. As a result, they were very resistant to change. It can often take three or four individual sessions (or longer) before the client is ready to commit to the behavior change process. It is only then that the stages of change can be seen. As Veronica Libbie, a MOSAIC counselor, put it, “[A]t first he was very resistant, but after the third session, Edwin (not his real name) started to let down his defenses and began to embrace the change.”

The “light bulb moment” counselors most often refer to is when the client realizes the abuse is not “normal.” This is especially true in the case of non-physical forms of abuse. The second most common realization is the impact past experiences and relationships have on the current intimate relationship, as well as the quality of family life.

The positive impacts on a couple’s relationship are seen in an overall increase in gender equality; increase in division of care work; improved communication, appropriate (acceptable) expressions of anger (including using anger management techniques). Additionally, children previously too scared to come close to their fathers, were now able to interact with both parents in a positive and non-fearful way. The program has been making a major contribution to breaking the intergenerational cycle of violence.

“For ten years of my married life,” a client we’ll call Brian, reported, “I was doing things a certain way, but when I joined the program, I was taught there’s a different way of doing things. So I had to either accept or reject that. The difficult part was to put what I was learning into practice.”

While the outcomes are undeniably encouraging, the journey to get there continues to be challenging, especially since what’s being taught often goes against everything that the client knows and believes. The process is a strain for the man’s partner, who often has to relearn how to trust her partner again. “In the beginning I wasn’t sure whether I could trust him or believe that the changes were here to stay,” reported a partner named Betty (not her real name), “but I am so glad we stuck with it because here we are, in a much happier marriage and a better family.”

Counseling, it’s important to note, is not a quick-fix solution for relationship problems. At the end of the process the relationship will not necessarily be fully healed. While the ultimate aim of the program is to achieve equitable relationships, sometimes the outcome is the dissolution of the relationship, at times through divorce. While many presumed outcomes are being borne out through counseling, unforeseen positive outcomes, ones that have organically unfolded over time, have sparked interest and are areas for further research.

**MALE PEER SUPPORT GROUPS**

As male clients completed the structured individual and couple sessions, there was an increasing need expressed for additional support. In response a male peer support group was established. The support group is made up of men who have completed at least 80 percent of the program. The group was initially facilitated by a MOSAIC counselor but is now facilitated by the participants and supervised by the counselor.

Although the group began as an extension of the Male Counseling Toolkit, it has developed into a new social support system, with members playing an active role in each other’s lives, as well as acting as mentors to new members. The men are also deciding on a strategy to expand its reach through establishing home- and community-based peer support groups open to all men. An additional group has started for the female partners of the men in the program, and this has been a great platform for sharing of experiences and support. MOSAIC sees this initiative as a positive move toward broadening the network of care for men.

**MALE CLIENTS AS PROGRAM ADVOCATES**

Clients who have completed the program have sought out opportunities to speak about the male counseling program and the effect that it has had on them as individuals, as partners, and as fathers. As one participant shared: “If you haven’t shared it then you haven’t completed it—because when something is positive and valuable, you want to share it!”

It is clear there must be a shift in the way issues of gender-based violence and gender inequality are addressed. Interventions must be inclusive so that the systemic roots of power and inequality can be reformed and reimagined. It is only through holistic and all-encompassing interventions that focus on engaging men and boys—alongside women and girls—that society will be able to halt the intergenerational cycle of violence.

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I moved to Swaziland in 2010, making a deliberate disconnect from the quiet cloisters of Cambridge University and full of boyish enthusiasm for a country I had never visited and a culture I knew nothing about. The region did not disappoint my naive fantasies of the African wild, and in the last years I have survived close-calls with fire, flood, break-in, break-up and a brace of car accidents. But hiking in South Africa last year, friends and I were suddenly introduced to the true extent of southern Africa’s dangers and I realized, as if I had never known it, that they are not those of Mother Nature. In the most unequal country on the planet, where the central banking district and slum roll into one another, where the education segregates as much as any law once did, and where the “rainbow nation’s” pot of gold is reserved for the few, it is hardly surprising that the most dangerous things in South Africa are men.

After a monster 23km hike, the final leg of three, we jumped into sleeping bags in our shared chalet with quiet anticipation of a straight-eight. About four hours later, halfway through the night, each of us woke to a balacava-ed figure, the finger of one hand raised to the hole where their lips should have been and the other around the trigger of a gun. God knows how they got in.

Being a notoriously active dreamer, I rolled out of bed and the situation only really hit me when the floor did. Our hands and feet were tied behind our backs and my bootlaces bit into my wrists. Lying there, bound and blindfolded, my trousers around my ankles, my friends and I shared a moment of joint realization. This is it. Men like this don’t leave witnesses to later haunt them in courts of law.

Maybe it was my ego, naïveté, or the marvel that is the human mind’s capacity to block out unsavory experiences, but the next hour was spent, cheek to concrete, in hazy contemplation rather than blind panic. Occasionally my irrational meditation would be interrupted by a brief word from my captors as to the whereabouts of my car keys or the value of my iPod, but otherwise, in the confusion, I had time to think. Family and friends, my girlfriend, the guilt of having organized the trip all shoved and pushed for attention behind my closed eyes.

Eventually, and miraculously, after repeated shushing sounds made hastily into the dark, there was peace in our ransacked chalet. Only the faint sound of my little 1.3 litre Opel Corsa, struggling to life under the weight of five men and four people’s worldly possessions, confirmed they had, in fact, left us alive.

Later, talking the experience through with a psychologist, I realized that there was not a single positive I could draw from the experience. Try as I might, there was nothing to learn, no new wide-eyed appreciation of life, no epiphany. Life was good to me before and would continue to be so afterward. It was a void, a nothing; a desperate act, made by desperate men who lost life’s lottery and responded violently to the injustice and indifference of it all.

And here’s the irony: everyone kept telling us how lucky we were. South Africa is the rape capital of the world, with over a third of men in its capital region Gauteng anonymously admitting to the crime. Hijacking, armed robbery and subsequent murder are commonplace, and all who can afford it live behind bars and barriers and barbed wire.

Back in Swaziland, five months to the day from that awful attack, a man comes at me with a knife and a knowing smile on his face. I know this man though and he offers me the handle, not the point. He is here to give, not to take. Mduzzi Beethoven Dlamini, or MBD: writer, restaurateur and my friend is dressed traditionally, in Lihiya, and has invited me and some friends to his house to bestow upon me a Swazi name.

The knife, as I was shortly to discover, was to be used on his gift to me. Leading me by the hand, Mduzzi ushered us toward the corner of his garden where, tethered to a tree, lay a small, unsuspecting goat.

I knew what this meant. It meant slaughter: a great honor, a recognition of manhood and, for anyone who has grown up in a sterilized Western environment, a distant myth. Animals, for me, even with my culinary upbringing, were frozen and packaged and tasty. Or else fresh and served with chips, and tasty. Not hairy and smelly and...
breathing. Mduduzi was smiling as he measured my reaction. There was no malice in his face, just an enjoyment in sharing Swazi custom with a white Englishman, rather than the other way around.

_Breathe_. I told myself. _Just breathe_.

The time was approaching. I’m the kind of person who reaches for a cap and a piece of paper when I see a spider in the house. I didn’t know if I was going to be able to do it and had visions of a half-dead, crying goat trotting after me around the small garden.

Make it quick, do it right.

It didn’t make a sound and died in seconds with, I am now convinced, as close to dignity as any living thing may muster to such a fate. Afterward, having learned how to skin and gut the animal and having cleaned it, we lit fires and I took a knife to the pink carcass, cutting at the joints so that it could fit into the giant cast-iron pot that appeared for the meat. Goat, onions and stock bubbling away, Mduduzi and the assembly warmly and solemnly gave me the name Sibonelo Hlope and embraced me as _bhuti lamncane_, their little brother. And standing there to the smiles of well-wishers, rabbit-skin around my waist, rolling my new name over my tongue, I felt a little of the pride of being a strong, unapologetic African man.

With the justifiable focus of the last two decades on women’s education, employment and empowerment in the region, men are often left to ill-education, unemployment and social threat. In patriarchal societies such as these, where a majority of politicians, most of the school drop-outs and nearly all of the violent criminals are male, we cannot ignore them on the journey toward more equal communities and fairer societies. You can tell a woman not to allow herself to be abused, yet without educating the men, both as perpetrators and as lawmakers, abuse will continue.

This is the philosophy of Kwakha Indvodza, a male mentoring project that friends and I founded in 2012. Kwakha Indvodza which means “building a man” mentors over 80 youths from the Mahlanya and Mbuluzi areas of Swaziland, teaching them skills, positive attitude and the value of hard work and community service. The boys involved in the project and countless others in Swaziland all have begun their lives without regular interaction with a positive male role model. Swaziland has one of the youngest demographics in the world: nearly 60 percent of the population are under 25 and the median age is just 20. One in 10 children has lost both parents and one in three lives without a male. The parenting generation, particularly fathers, who should be there to guide these young men, are lost to us or struggling under the sheer weight of responsibility.

Kwakha Indvodza offers a positive “third space” away from the home and the school where, every week, these young men meet several of our wide variety of volunteer male mentors, who give their time and energy to promoting positive masculinity. We paint schools and organize Community Fun Days; we teach about drink and drugs, sexual health and basic first aid; we cook for the needy. Kwakha Indvodza’s only male mentoring project, has been running nearly two years now and the results have been extraordinary. Male mentoring, complementing the focus on the girl-child, presents a whole new, unexplored avenue of community development. Our boys pursue the Renaissance man’s values of respect, dignity and honor and no longer see themselves as having lost any lottery.

“Our culture is powerful, but it needs to be dragged out from under the rock and polished,” says Dolores, a venerable, bombastic Swazi woman and perhaps my future godmother-in-law. This is no truer than with African masculinity and the masculine ideal, which is increasingly challenging to define in any society. Our views on gender and gender expectations, along with race, have formed one of the biggest and most defining social shifts in the last 50 years of global progress. However, these prejudices are ones with which most cultures still battle. Southern Africa has been the frontline of one of these conflicts in the past. It has been 20 years since the fall of Apartheid, but this part of the world may once again become the vanguard in this century’s fight for understanding and equality. Here, in a country whose national newspaper claims to have identified only “324 gay men” among its 1.2 million people, we need to readdress our own visions and expectations of masculinity and allow the traditional to be challenged, as well as revered, to be questioned and yet respected. Only then will we stop giving out losing lottery tickets to violent boys and asking them to become good men. Only then will tomorrow’s girl (and boy) child be truly empowered.

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hey arrive one by one; fathers, mothers and childcare workers. They’ve been invited by leaders of the Stella Maris Municipal Daycare to talk about paternity and caregiving with an NGO that at that moment wasn’t very well known to them: Instituto Promundo.

Cleber Leonardo Ramos, 35, is one of the fathers who accepts the invitation. Like all participants, he is a resident of Vila Joaniza, one of 700 favelas in Rio de Janeiro that share the same challenges every day: precarious sanitation conditions, violence related to drug trafficking, police raids, and limited access to several basic services, among other struggles. The community is a portrait of both local and national public policies of abandonment. This fact is clear after taking a quick walk through the narrow streets and alleys蛇形 through the community.

Cleber is the stepfather of two girls; one is 10-years-old and the other a baby. He arrives with other dads also invited to the meeting. A combination of suspicion and curiosity is palpable in the air.

I introduce myself as the meeting facilitator and begin by asking the men if they believe fatherhood and caregiving are a part of their daily lives. The question is a visceral way of beginning a dialogue—understanding what they think about fathering and finding out if they are likely to be easily moved by discussing it. After a short silence, one man finally dares to speak, and then everybody wants to talk at the same time—a cacophony of sound, the rush of voices sharing all kinds of examples. Some talk about education, some about health, discipline, prejudice, or gender inequality. A new group was born that evening. The meeting, which was designed as an introduction, is my first memory of the group of the dads and moms of Vila Joaniza; it continued to meet periodically on weekends over the next eight months.

A couple of months earlier, Promundo and partner NGOs Cultura Salud in Chile, and Puntos de Encuentro in Nicaragua, had completed developing a new methodology on paternity and caregiving. It’s a manual for the practice of paternity and caregiving that offers advice for health professionals on how to engage fathers through health services, especially prenatal and postpartum appointments. It includes examples of exercises to do during group sessions of fathers and couples—something that can be done in parallel with prenatal appointments and also in the communities. Finally, the manual features recommendations for activities community activists can try to spread positive messages and provide advice to a broader public.

Program content and the methods used were influenced by research that revealed extremely high rates of violence against pregnant women. Another study conducted by Promundo, the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES), discovered that men who grew up in homes where male caregivers shared household labor and caregiving tasks with females tended to repeat such equitable behavior in adult life. Additionally, the study showed that 80 percent of the fathers interviewed confirmed they had attended at least one prenatal appointment. So it seemed right to intervene, to mobilize the community and health partners, working as a strategic entry point to promote both individual change, and community and institutional behaviors and practices. In Vila Joaniza, we started testing the methodology of Program P, “A Manual for Engaging Men in Fatherhood, Caregiving, and Maternal and Child Health,” a resource developed as part of the global MenCare campaign.

As meetings became more frequent participants felt more comfortable to share their stories. In one session about sexual health and reproductive rights, sexual violence came up as a topic. A female participant felt safe enough to share her story of having been raped; it had quite an impact on the group. A powerful silence took over the room as Maria told her story. When she had finished, something had changed. Fewer men showed up at the next meetings; Cleber was one of them. When he finally did return, Cleber said he had been “really upset with the situation and had felt helpless.” He had recognized that what happened was not just Maria’s problem, but everyone’s problem and he felt as if the group should do something about it. He believed it was possible to find ways to deal with such situations. Cleber had understood that experiences with violence, prejudice and absence of rights (some of which he previously hadn’t recognized as rights) don’t just
affect him individually; they affect the whole community. He began to understand how they perpetuate sexist culture.

He bore the brunt of negative comments aimed at him as a stepfather working to support other men’s children, his two stepdaughters. Even though he shared domestic labor with his wife, he had limited participation in the hygiene of the girls. Because distrust and fear of sexual violence are pervasive feelings in the community, he believed men were not supposed to bathe children. This is why men like Cleber believe they should keep their distance.

Even though this point of view is shared by a majority of Brazilians, bathing children is considered an important responsibility for men to take on; at least, a skill to learn so they know how to do it. That awareness had quite an impact on the group.

Today, Cleber is not afraid of bathing his stepdaughters. He also shared that several men who didn’t attend the meetings had heard stories told by women members of the group. They took ideas discussed in the group home with them and put them into practice. Cleber shared the story of Gabriela, one of the women in the group. She talked about the change in her sex life as a result of the discussions. As her husband started to share household labor with her, she would feel less tired and in a better mood at the end of the day, which in turn, made her feel more interested sexually. In addition, she reported her husband stopped talking abusively with their children and started enjoying the free time he had with them more.

Not long ago, the group decided to take their discussions beyond their meetings in the little daycare and to launch a campaign to engage men in the community. They chose to begin on October 12. Posters promoting positive paternity messages were posted by group members in places with the most visibility in the community—the Residents Association, at moto taxi stops, and the daycare itself, among other places.

The group also organized a visit to the Family Health Clinic in the neighborhood. Their plan was to persuade the director to take the campaign into the health center. Among their efforts are encouraging fathers to attend prenatal appointments, including adapting the space so it feels friendlier and more welcoming to men.

In parallel with the Vila Joaniza experience, Promundo has developed research and interventions on paternity and caregiving in other spaces. For almost two years it has organized local and national meetings with partner NGOs and government representatives. Both in 2013 and this year, it organized two workshops on paternity, caregiving and health services, one local and one national and that featured representatives from the Ministry of Health and the Rio de Janeiro municipal government. These activities were part of the MenCare+ project, which aims to stimulate health institutions to promote paternity and caregiving practices. This support was requested by health professionals who didn’t know where to start, even though they understand that positively engaging men results in improving the population’s quality of life. Program P was introduced as the model.

All the directors of health units in Rio de Janeiro were notified and the municipal government and Promundo were scheduled to offer trainings. Hopefully, before long we will have more stories of success to share.

What about Cleber? His wife recently found out she is pregnant. They still don’t know if it’s a boy or a girl, but he already told us he will be a different dad. He invited us for lunch in his house next week. He wants to cook and show us how he takes care of his family.

Translated from the Portuguese by Sebastián Torterola

Marco Aurélio Martins is a psychologist and deputy director of the Brazilian NGO Instituto Promundo. He is also the coordinator of the MenCare Campaign, MenCare+ and the MenEngage Network focal point in Brazil.
The word “contagion” literally means transmitting a disease from one person to another through close contact. I am using this term deliberately to reflect my understanding of violence and how it is spread. This understanding has been developed based on my experience with Cure Violence, a U.S. NGO working on issues of violence in the United States and globally.

The Cure Violence model employs a public health approach. Cure Violence considers all forms of violence—psychological, emotional, physical, and sexual—as a kind of contagious disease or epidemic. The organization believes that violence could be effectively prevented and controlled if the same approach to confront an epidemic was adopted in communities disproportionately affected by violence. The model suggests that in societies where violence is normalized by regular exposure, experience, glorification, promotion and desensitization, it is likely people will become less immune to violence and hence more receptive to its infection.

When I look at both the history and current situation of my native Pakistan, the above approach not only seems a convenient analogy but also an effective and innovative approach to address and prevent violence.

Pakistan has been exposed to megascale violence since it was founded in 1947.

**CONSIDER THESE EVENTS:**
- Creation of Pakistan, Mass Migration (Hijrat) and War of 1947–1948
- War of 1965
- War of 1971
- USSR-Afghan War (1979–1989)
- Taliban: the new rulers of Afghanistan
- Kargil War
- Fall of Taliban regime and the rise of global “war on terror”

The current terrorism and instability in Pakistani society is not merely the result of Pakistan’s participation and so-called “cooperation” with the United States in the “war on terror” (since 9/11), but rather the logical outcome of society’s continued experience of violence and exposure to it. It is because of my country’s history of using violence at home—and in the region—that a new culture arose where violence became a social norm, a mindset shared by both the state and society at large.

This deadly epidemic can only be contained and reversed if the same approach to combating epidemics is applied. Cure Violence designed a three-pronged strategy in which all components are intended to be implemented simultaneously.

**INTERRUPTING VIOLENCE**

The first component is interrupting violence. It calls for detecting potential conflicts and high-risk individuals in communities and in areas with a high ratio of violence. It advocates interrupting the violence before it happens. Such a strategy works best with individuals and groups most likely to perpetrate violence at any time for varied reasons and purposes. To reach out to such individuals and communities, we need credible messengers among them who can serve as “violence interrupters” (VIs). VIs need to be trained to detect high-risk individuals, map ongoing and potential conflicts and, most important, understand how to mediate potential conflicts by convincing high-risk individuals and groups in the community that violence is not a solution to conflict.

In the case of Pakistan, violence interrupters could include ex-jihadis, clerics and activists of different religious, ethnic, and political groups—all who may have perpe-
trated or condoned violence in the past and now are living peaceful or at least neutral lives. Others may be identified among former dacoits and runaway criminals living in tribal areas out of reach of the police. These kinds of people will need specialized trainings, behavior change programs, counseling, and, of course, being cleared of all charges of perpetrating violence. It is precisely because of their pasts that they might be seen as more “credible messengers” than NGO field workers and government workers doing outreach to militants. Nevertheless, violence interrupters need to be monitored, supervised, and receive rigorous training on a regular basis so that they might positively influence others (rather than relapsing into violence when exposed to it in the field.)

**Preventing Further Spread and Transmission**

Just as healthy people are advised to stay away from a patient suffering from a contagious disease, the second component is preventing people and communities from being exposed to violence. Individuals and communities involved in violence should be kept away from people and areas not affected. It also calls for stopping both the perpetrator from committing further violence and the victim’s family, friends and relatives from retaliating in an act of revenge. Success is only possible with the help of the community. To prevent retaliation, violence interrupters must know how to mediate between the two fighting groups at the scene of an incident and immediately after the conflict.

**Changing Community Norms**

The final component is building resilience and increasing community immunity—read resistance—to violence. Such a strategy needs ambitious and targeted efforts by the government, media and civil society to change community norms and behavior about violence and its use.

We are not limited to stories and paradigms of violence. We have a history of leaders who believed in the possibility of peace. Leadership messages from the struggles and autobiographies of peacemakers and political leaders like Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and most important the holy saints of Indo-Pak like Rahman Baba, Syed Mir Anwar Shah of Tirah, Baba Bulleh Shah, Sachal Sar Mast, Shah Abdul Lateef, Moin Ud Din Chishti—whose only message was love, peace and tolerance—should be reflected in the content of school and college curricula more than hadiths (Prophet’s sayings) and Ayahs (verses of the Holy Quran) about Jihad and Qital (killing).

Committing acts of violence is a learned behavior. Perpetrators are not inherently bad people. They have been living in a society where violence has become the norm. The Cure Violence approach suggests communities and regions which share boundaries with conflict areas, and countries or communities are more vulnerable to be infected by epidemics of violence. Cure Violence offers a holistic approach to building community allies working for deep and sustainable change.

Zaheer Abbas Maseed is a civil society activist from Pakistan. Currently pursuing a leadership program at the McCain Institute for International Leadership, he works with Cure Violence in their Safe Streets Program overseen by the Health Department of Baltimore, Maryland. He belongs to Waziristan, the tribal area of Pakistan. A version of this article appears on the McCain Institute’s blog, http://cureviolence.org/post/combating-the-contagion-of-violence-in-pakistan/.

Yet challenging community norms that tolerate violence is exactly what Zaheer intends to do. During his training in Baltimore, Zaheer has learned to treat violence as a type of sickness, one that must be tackled through community-based public health intervention rather than individual incarceration. Zaheer has also piloted a series of training programs on gender, masculinities and violence with the staff at Baltimore’s Safe Streets Program. “These projects are necessary,” he says, “because at the same time we dismantle cycles of violence we must also address cycles of violent masculinities.”

Drawing on his work with MenEngage Pakistan—where he helped organize the first symposium in Pakistan to address the mainstreaming of masculinity studies into academia—Zaheer hopes to spark honest dialogue among men. Such an effort would create a platform for ex-warriors to share the consequences of violence, holding themselves and other men accountable to challenge violent masculinities.

**Zaheer Abbas Maseed**

When he served as coordinator of MenEngage Pakistan from 2011 to 2013, Zaheer Abbas Maseed cultivated his passions for eliminating violence and studying masculinities. Now partnering with Cure Violence, Zaheer is working to adapt their models of community-based intervention to dismantle systematic violence back home in Pakistan.

“Back in my school days, when there was a fight among my peers, I would be tasked to look after the bags during the conflict,” Zaheer jokes with a stifled grin. “I wasn’t too strong so they wouldn’t have trusted me to protect myself.”

Tongue in cheek, Zaheer notes that such violence may seem innocuous before it is understood as a pattern and even a way of life. After all, not only were boys exposed to violence at a young age, but they are also expected to participate, beyond the schoolyard and as members of their communities.

What was it like for Zaheer to grow up in rural Pakistan, where intertribal conflicts have claimed the lives of his classmates and the near-destruction of his village? In a word: suffocating. “Boys admired the combatants,” Zaheer recalls. It seemed inevitable that one day, at the ages of 15 or 16, they too would be expected to fight. This enormous pressure carved a narrow pathway for manhood, leaving boys little option other than resorting to using weapons as their fathers had before them.

It is in this way, Zaheer says, that we can observe the intersection between violence and gender. “It’s a man’s job to protect,” he explains. “If there’s some outside group coming into your area with intent to harm your family members or your property and business, you have to be ready to push back and retaliate.” While men are expected and rewarded for perpetuating violence, women are taught to obediently accept the status quo, despite their stake in ending the conflict. Zaheer laments the minimal role women are permitted to play in their communities, a generational silence maintained through child marriages and educational inequalities. Both men and women have to buck age-old customs to break free of their respective roles.

_The above content is adapted from a fall 2014 issue of the *McCain Institute Review*._
One of the reasons I was drawn to feminism was because its concern is not only with gender equality, but also with changes in all social structures that discriminate against people based on race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, age, nationality, ability and others. In the end, we are dealing with the same mindset of “power over” in which some think they are superior and therefore entitled to privileges, denied to “the others.” Many have internalized these beliefs, which are constantly reproduced by social institutions.

It is not a coincidence that the feminist women in Nicaragua, who in the early 1990s engaged me and other men in the feminist struggle, were former activists of the Sandinista revolution of the 1980s. They were committed to social justice and the human rights of the poor in my country: the peasants, the indigenous people, urban workers in unsafe jobs, and they opposed external, imperialistic powers. They understand that gender equality can develop only as part of a new social order and that for that to happen men needed to play a part. Oppression on the basis of gender is more damaging to the majority of women, but the majority of men are also oppressed, if not by gender then by other unequal systems of power. It is in all of our best interests to join with women and with people from other genders to transform the status quo.

But we have a challenge here. Even when we join together—as is already happening to an extent in MenEngage and in other places—there are power issues within our movements and coalitions that we must name and confront. The exercise of positive and constructive power is still rare compared to the historical and pervasive use of negative power as a means to control others. Most of us grew up influenced by negative models of leadership. That is why one essential component of our work as profeminist male leaders is to constantly reflect on our personal practices. How are we exerting power within our organizations and with the communities with whom we work? How about in our families? Are we promoting gender equality in our speeches and in our writing, but retaining male privilege in our offices and homes?

I started reflecting on these questions during my participation as youth in the Sandinista movement in the late ’80s and early ’90s when I became disillusioned with the way many male leaders were using their power within the movement. They were reproducing the same model of domination that they were seemingly trying to change. Many were too busy trying to change the big social structures—fighting the “big battles”—that they neglected to remain vigilant of their own day-to-day patterns of domination, both in how they related to others and expended public resources.

One of the reasons why the MenEngage Alliance was created as a coalition of organizations working to engage men and boys in gender equality was precisely to support each other to increase our capacity to live our values in practice. We want to set high standards of feminist work to effectively contribute to the transformation of men and boys as allies both promoting gender equality and advocating for advancing a women’s rights agenda.

Our alliance is made of more than 600 organizations grouped in six regional networks across the globe which exchange experiences working with men and boys, including sharing lessons learned, and educational materials, and coordinating joint advocacy campaigns on specific issues. They include: men’s support for sexual and reproductive health and rights, preventing violence against women and children, and engaging men as involved, nonviolent fathers and caregivers.

In our work in Africa, MenEngage partners carried out capacity building activities in Kenya, Sierra Leone and Rwanda with parliamentarians, government representatives and uniformed personnel to strengthen their commitment to ending violence against women. All signed a pledge to work to find an end to this violence. It is especially strategic that we reach out and educate men to serve in political bodies. However, because of sexism many of these men disregard women’s voices. As a consequence, men who consider ourselves allies to women must support women’s leadership, including speaking directly to these men, encouraging them to listen to women.

In Latin America, the MenEngage regional network recently organized online discussions, augmented by the participation of leaders and others from more than 15 countries. We discussed how men can support women’s access to sexual and reproductive health services, including advocating for women’s right to safe and legal abortion, and why it is important for men to assume greater responsibility in the area of contraception. These are low-cost initiatives, taking advantage of new technologies in communication which can be very powerful. (I still remember the moving testimony of a Mexican man who supported his partner going through a difficult pregnancy and then an abortion.)

In South Asia, our partners, in coordination with the International Association of Women in Radio and Television, are organizing a traveling film festival featuring 50 films selected to promote discussions and dialogue on issues of men, masculinities and gender equality. These films, and an accompanying facilitator guide, will be sent to all MenEngage networks around the world.

In order to promote changes in men and boys at different levels, from the intimate—digging in to men’s hearts and minds, and interpersonal relations men have with those in their families, workplaces, communities—we must address the most collective level of transforming social norms, laws and the institutional practices that shape men’s lives. Working at different levels requires a diversity of strategies. Power operates everywhere and men’s patriarchal power needs to be challenged, as do the institutional practices that perpetuate patriarchy. Men’s positive and constructive power needs to be supported and each of us has a role to play in supporting men’s transformation.

Oswaldo Montoya, the outgoing global coordinator of MenEngage, shared his vision for engaging men and boys at the Nordic Forum: “New Actions on Women’s Rights” in Malmö, Sweden, in June. This article is an edited version of his remarks.
The Center for Gender and Social Transformation (CGST) based at BRAC Institute of Governance and Development, at BRAC University in Dhaka, Bangladesh, organized a unique photo exhibit, “Caring Men Images,” this past summer at the Dhaka Art Center. The exhibition offers a vision of men that is not commonly seen—men engaged in looking after their family members by providing childcare and care to the elderly and disabled. The photos on display were generated from a competition among 21 professional and amateur Bangladeshi photographers and included 97 images and two video stories.

—Sohela Nozeen

Thanks to Maryfa Akter Mimi

A Happy Family
Photo by Md. Rashedur Rahman

Rashedur captured the story of a pharmacist who takes care of his children and his wife (who works as a school teacher) and enjoys fatherhood immensely.

Many Faces of Love
Photo by A J Ghani

From a series of photos by A J Ghani from areas in North Bengal afflicted by extreme poverty. These show how men and women work together both at home and outside in areas affected by river erosion to build a life together. It shows men performing tasks which normally Bangladeshi men do not perform—especially in rural areas—helping their wives and encouraging women to take leisure time.

In My Father’s Shoes
Photo by Rahul Kumar Das

It is a part of a series where Rahul captured his relationship with his elderly father who is paralyzed. His story was about how he has come to play the role of the father and take care of his father, as his father had of him when Rahul was a child.
Despite advances in gender justice in recent decades, the consequences of gender norms are still relevant in the job market, in violence rates, in the division of household labor and childcare, and in health, to name a few. Women still receive approximately 70 percent of the income earned by men. A comparative study—the International Men and Gender Equality Survey—( IMAGES) which focuses on women and men and was coordinated by Instituto Promundo and the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)—revealed that in Brazil 44 percent of men say that their female partners do more household labor than they do. Male participation in taking care of children is also inferior; just 42 percent of men change their children’s diapers, and only 37 percent bathe them. The study also found that nearly a quarter of women (24 percent) were victims of some kind of domestic violence.

Aiming to reduce these social consequences, Instituto Promundo works in developing methodologies for gender transformation, mainly involving men. Such methodologies are based on two models. One focuses on promoting behaviors and attitudes that are alternative to traditional expressions of masculinities, and that rely on a “positive” perspective demonstrating the “advantages” of becoming a “transformed man.” In the same way masculinities are socially formed by spreading masculine models, it’s important to offer alternatives that foster transformations that lead to equity. It’s a model aimed at sensitizing men to the benefits of being a man “who dialogues,” “who is flexible,” “who assumes his role in the care of his children,” “who shares decisions” and “who establishes relationships based on respect.” This strategy is inspired by the concept of social marketing, which instead of just informing people about the consequences of certain behaviors, looks to communicate “certain behaviors and lifestyles that are more attractive for a certain public, emphasizing their advantages and disadvantages.”

Another model of achieving gender transformation is through campaigns aimed at deconstructing gender boxes as a way to promote respect for diversity. The “Sem Vergonha” or “Shameless” campaign, a part of the Mais Pai+ Brasil project, advocates for men’s engagement in paternity and caregiving, and is based on this second perspective. Mais Pai+ believes that promoting paternal caregiving must involve young adults reflecting about gender norms and discussing their responsibility in reproductive health. The project has developed several actions targeting this population, including developing group educational activities and collectively creating a campaign to communicate each group’s thoughts to their peers.

The “Shameless” campaign was created by nine boys and three girls after four months of group discussions. The tagline of the campaign, “Vergonha pra quê?” (“Why be embarrassed?”), arose from questioning gender norms that often undermine communication about adolescent sexuality, create prejudice, and fail to encourage using condoms. The group observed various so-called deficiencies from which adolescents suffer, including not having pretty enough bodies to attract partners, being mistaken as homosexuals, or not feeling free enough to express their sexual orientation; assuming an active sexuality (in the case of women), and relating to women with more sexual experience (in the case of men). All of these factors appeared as interfering with the normal delivery of condoms in health centers. “Embarrassed” was the most repeated word to express how the adolescents felt about behaviors outside traditional gender norms. As a result, four verbs were chosen to guide the campaign: “Previna-se, sem vergonha!” “Dialogue, sem vergonha!” “Curtia, sem vergonha” and “Seja você, sem vergonha” (“Be preventative, don’t be embarrassed!” “Dialogue, don’t be embarrassed!” “Have fun, don’t be embarrassed!” and “Be yourself, don’t be embarrassed.”)

The work created by the students includes a website (http:// campanhasemvergonha.org.br) and a Facebook page (https://Facebook.com/CampanhaSemVergonha?ref=hl) where adolescents can share information about gender, sexuality and health. Also, informative primers and murals are available in schools; T-shirts and pins were distributed and four videos scripted and interpreted by the adolescents, which humorously address the subjects of the campaign.

The campaign was launched in 2013 in 10 public schools and reached some 3,000 students. In 2014, students from three schools—Escola Estadual Julia Kubitschek, Escola Estadual João Alfredo and Escola Estadual Ignácio Azevedo do Amaral—who called themselves “Os Sem Vergonha” (“The Shameless”), also participated in workshops on gender and sexuality. They promoted extending the campaign in their schools, something they demanded and that was supported by their professors. They also helped launch the campaign in six more schools at the invitation of the state secretary of education. “I learned to listen to everybody’s opinions, what boys think and what girls think,” said Carolina Chagas, 16, student of the Escola Estadual João Alfredo, who participated in the workshops in 2014. Added Guilherme Ferreira, one of the adolescents who participated in the workshop to create the campaign, “I’m not used to talking about sex and this exchange was very fruitful. It’s important to be able to communicate. It’s really cool to see a project that started really small, and was borne out of our ideas, become something so big.”

Translated from Portuguese by Sebastian Tortonella

Vanessa Fonseca is program coordinator for Instituto Promundo. Since 2003, the organization has been working to promote gender equity with young men and women to produce educational materials and campaigns the aim of which is to transform masculinities. The Shameless campaign’s creative process was coordinated by Vanessa and Leticia Serafim, communications coordinator, with participation from Mohara Valle and Môrula.
The Trials of Being Female in Public

By Laura M. Lippman

I first noticed this phenomenon when I was 39 (still brunette) and unburdening myself in a restaurant to a dear friend who happens to be a man. I guess, from afar, we appeared to be a couple. Toward the end of the meal, an older man walked over and handed my friend a note, then scuttled away. It said something like this: “The average woman speaks 40,000 words a day, the average man only 4,000.” I am unsure of the ratio or the exact numbers, but one was really big and the other was relatively small. I wanted to run after the man and use up a few more of my apportioned words. But such encounters almost always leave me in mode d’escalier, mouth gaping like a fish to the extent that another man will inevitably say: “Hey, close your mouth.”

Once, just once, I had a rejoinder. A man interrupted my writing at a local coffee house to ask how my “little book” was doing. (The same man also recommended a book on menopause to me despite the fact that it was not something I yet required.) Now, as it happens, I have written 20 books, and this particular little book, my twelfth, was the first to hit the New York Times bestseller list. So I told him that:

“Don’t break your arm patting yourself on your back,” his friend said to me.

I have thought a lot—a lot—about why men of my father’s age harbor this strong need to correct/scold/instruct me. It does not feel paternalistic to me, not in the least bit, despite the usual age gap of 30 years or so. It feels hostile, like the first scene in some really bad rom-com. We are meeting cute, despite the lack of a question mark. I attend a book-signing after an 18-hour day, in which I have arisen at 5 a.m. to catch a flight and done three different events. When I return to my hotel room, I find a plaintive e-mail from someone who attended the evening talk: “Do you know you don’t look like your author photo? Do you think that’s fair?”

There were only eight people at the signing and I’m pretty sure I know who my correspondent is—and that he didn’t buy one of my books. Is that fair?

Ah, but there I go again. I am the guilty one. Guilty of being Female in Public. My body, my behavior, my posture, my words—they belong to others, who will judge whether they are suitable or not.

I first noticed this phenomenon when I was 39 (still brunette) and unburdening myself in a restaurant to a dear friend who happens to be a man. I guess, from afar, we appeared to be a couple. Toward the end of the meal, an older man walked over and handed my friend a note, then scuttled away. It said something like this: “The average woman speaks 40,000 words a day, the average man only 4,000.” I am unsure of the ratio or the exact numbers, but one was really big and the other was relatively small. I wanted to run after the man and use up a few more of my apportioned words. But such encounters almost always leave me in mode d’escalier, mouth gaping like a fish to the extent that another man will inevitably say: “Hey, close your mouth.”

I try to see myself as these men see me, this strange woman so in need of correction/scolding/instruction. I am tall, broad-shouldered, and seemingly confident. I have biceps significant enough that a male colleague once jokingly suggested that it would be a kindness to the men on our writing workshop faculty if I stopped wearing sleeveless tops in the group photos. If you are an 85-year-old widower, I am, in my humble estimation, like a trophy wife. And by trophy wife, I mean I look like someone who can lift you on and off the toilet, should it come to that. Except I am not available for toilet duty and perhaps they discern that? My heart belongs to one man. Only he will have the pleasure of my biceps into old age, although, given that he is a little younger than I am, I probably won’t be much use to him by then.

Of course, the ultimate moment of being Female in Public comes when a woman, deep in thought, is told by a strange man to smile. (And this happens only to women.) Gentlemen, let’s get this straight. There is no part of my body that belongs to you, not even my facial expression. Stop trying to stake out territory there, whether by legislation or verbal imperative. Plus, it never produces the desired effect.

Ah well, it’s not as bad as being called sir, which happens to me almost as frequently. Once, just once, I stood my ground. “I’m a woman,” I said feebly. “Look at me. I’m a woman.” The man just shrugged. I guess I should be grateful he didn’t advise me to smile.

Laura Lippman is creator of the Tess Monaghan detective series. She teaches writing at Goucher College outside of Baltimore, where she lives and works. This column appeared first in Media.com, https://medium.com/@LauraMLippman/female-in-public-6956990589e8.
### Resources for Changing Men

A wide-ranging (but by no means exhaustive) listing of organizations engaged in pro-feminist men’s work. Know of an organization that should be listed here? E-mail relevant information to us at info@voicemalemagazine.org.

#### For Young Men

**Advocates for Youth**
Helps young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health
www.advocatesforyouth.org

**Amplify Your Voice**
A youth-driven community working for social change. www.amplifyyourvoice.org

**Boys to Men**
Initiation weekends and follow-up mentoring for boys 12-17 to guide them on their journey to manhood
www.boystonemag.org

**The Brotherhood/Sister Sol**
Provides comprehensive, holistic and long-term support and rites of passage programming to youth ages 8-22
www.brotherhood-sistersol.org

**Y Teen Magazine**
A magazine written by New York City teens that helps marginalized youth reach their full potential through reading and writing
www.yteenmag.org

#### On Masculinity

**American Men’s Studies Association**
Advancing the critical study of men and masculinities
www.mensstudies.org

**Engaging Men**
A public resource for anyone committed to gender justice and overcoming violence against women
engagingmen.net

**ManKind Project**
New Warrior training weekends
www.mkp.org

**Masculinidades**
Pro-feminist blog about the anthropology of masculinity. In Spanish
http://masculinidades.wordpress.com/

**Menstuff: The National Men’s Resource**
National clearinghouse of information and resources for men
www.mensstuff.org

**The Men’s Story Project**
Resources for creating public dialogue about masculinities through local storytelling and arts
www.menstorryproject.org

**XYZ**
www.xyonline.net
Profeminist men’s web links (over 500 links): www.xyonline.net/misc/pflaq.html
Profeminist men’s politics, frequently asked questions: www.xyonline.net/misc/profem.html
Homophobia and masculinities among young men: www.xyonline.net/misc/homophobia.html

**FOR MEN OF COLOR**
100 Black Men of America, Inc.
Chapters around the U.S. working on youth development and economic empowerment in the African American community
www.100blackmen.org

**Concerned Black Men**
A national organization providing mentors and programs that fill the void of positive black role models and provide opportunities for academic and career enrichment
www.cbmnational.org

**Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community**
Working to enhance society’s understanding of and ability to end violence in the African-American community
www.idvac.org

**National Compadres Network**
Reinforcing the positive involvement of Latino males in their lives, families, communities, and society
www.nationalcompadresnetwork.com

### For Fathers

**Dad Man**
Consulting, training, speaking about fathers and father figures as a vital family resource
www.thedadman.com

**Dads and Daughters**
A blog of thoughts and reflections on father-daughter relationships by Joe Kelly
dadsanddaughters.blogspot.com

**Fathers with Divorce and Custody Concerns**
Looking for a lawyer? Call your state bar association lawyer referral agency. Useful websites include:
www.dadsrights.org (not www.dadsrights.com)
www.divorce.com
www.divorcecentral.com
www.collaborativealternatives.com
www.collaborativedivorce.com

**Fathers and Family Law: Myths & Facts**
Debunking common myths regarding fathering and family law and providing facts directly from the research
http://www.theлизlibrary.org/site/index/site-index-frame.html?sid=hthttp://www.theлизlibrary.org/liz/017.htm

**Feminist Fathers**
Resources for dads seeking to raise fully realized human beings with a mindfulness to how gender socialization affects parenting and children
http://feministfatherhood.com/

**National Fatherhood Initiative**
Organization improve the well-being of children through the promotion of responsible, engaged fatherhood
www.fatherhood.org

**National Latino Fatherhood & Family Institute**
Addresses the needs of Latino communities by focusing on positive Latino identity while addressing issues faced by Latino fathers, families, and communities
www.nlfii.org

**MEN AND FEMINISM**

**Finally, A Feminism 101 Blog**
An information resource, for both feminists and those questioning feminism
finallyfeminism101.wordpress.com

**Guy’s Guide to Feminism**
Website companion to a book by Michael Kimmel and Michael Kaufman which illustrates how supporting feminism enriches men’s lives
http://guysguidetofeminism.com/

**National Organization of Men Against Sexism (NOMAS)**
Pro-feminist, gay-affirmative, anti-racist activist organization supporting positive changes for men
www.nomas.org

### Men’s Health

**American Journal of Men’s Health**
A peer-reviewed quarterly resource for information regarding men’s health and illness
jmh.sagepub.com

**Malecare**
Volunteer men’s cancer support group and advocacy national nonprofit organization providing resources in multiple languages
malecare.org

**Men’s Health Network**
National organization promoting men’s health
www.menshealthnetwork.org

**Prostate Health Guide**
Offers a guide to the prostate and various conditions that can affect men’s health
www.prostatehealthguide.com

### World Health Organization HIV/AIDS
Provides evidence-based, technical support for comprehensive and sustainable responses to HIV/AIDS
www.who.int/hiv/en/

### Male Survivors of Sexual Assault

**1in6**
Provides resources for male sexual abuse survivors and their family members, friends, and partners
www.1in6.org

### Black Sexual Abuse Survivors

A national online support system for African-Americans
www.blacksurvivors.org/home.html

### Giving and Receiving Guidance & Hope

A page of brief stories written by men who were sexually abused.
www.jmhopper.com/hope/

### MaleSurvivor

National organization overcoming sexual victimization of boys and men
www.malesurvivor.org

### Men Thriving

A peer-resource offered to male survivors.
www.menthriver.org/forum/

### Overcoming Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault

**1in4: The Men’s Program**
Offers workshops that educate men in women’s recovery and lowers men’s rape myth acceptance and self-reported likelihood of raping
www.1in4.org/1in4menprogram.php

**A Call to Men**
Trainings and conferences on ending violence against women
www.acalltomen.org

### EMERGE

Counseling and education to stop domestic violence; comprehensive battered’s services
www.emergevd.com

### Futures Without Violence

Working to end violence against women globally; programs for boys, men and fathers - www.futureswithoutviolence.org

### Gloucester Men Against Domestic Abuse

Gloucester, Mass. volunteer advocacy group of men’s voices against domestic abuse and sexual assault
www.strongmenontobully.com
Resources for Changing Men

Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)
Works to combat homophobia and discrimination in television, film, music and all media outlets
www.glaad.org

Gay Men’s Domestic Violence Project
Provides crisis intervention, support and resources for victims and survivors of domestic abuse
gmdpv.org/gmipv

Hear My Voice
Educates and engages young people in the LGBTQ community to create safe and healthy relationships, and connect victims of dating abuse to help and legal services.
hearmyvoice.breachthecycle.org

Human Rights Campaign
Largest GLBT political group in the country
www.hrc.org

Interpride
Clearinghouse for information on pride events worldwide
www.interpride.net

Intersex Society of North America
Devoted to systemic change to end shame, secrecy, and unwanted genital surgeries for people born with an anatomy that someone decided is not standard for male or female
www.isna.org

National Resource Center on LGBT Aging
Resource center aimed at improving the quality of service and supports offered to LGBT older adults
www.lgbtageningcenter.org

Oasis Magazine
A writing community for queer and questioning youth
www.oasisjournals.com/magazine

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
Promotes the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ persons and their parents, friends, and families
www.pflag.org

Straight Spouse Network
Provides personal, confidential support and information to heterosexual spouses/partners, current or former, of GLBT individuals
www.straightspouse.org/home.php

Survivor Project
A non-profit organization dedicated to addressing the needs of intersex and trans* survivors of domestic and sexual violence
www.survivorproject.org

Transgender Resources
Dedicated to educating those unfamiliar with or curious to learn more about the transgender community
www.glaad.org/transgender

Men’s Resource Centers
Austin Men’s Center – Austin, TX
Provides counseling, psychotherapy, and classes helping men with their lives, relationships, health, and careers
austinmenscenter.com

Lake Champlain Men’s Resource Center – Burlington, VT
Center with groups and services challenging men’s violence on both individual and societal levels
www.lcmrc.net

Males Advocating for Change – Worcester, MA
Center with groups and services supporting men and challenging men’s violence
http://www.malesadvocatingchange.org/

Men’s Resource Center for Change – Amherst, MA
Model men’s center offering support groups for men and consulting with individuals and groups on a range of issues related to men and masculinities.
www.mrforchange.org

Men’s Resource Center of West Michigan – West Michigan
Consultations and training in helping men develop their full humanity, create respectful and loving relationships, and caring and safe communities
www.menscenter.org

Redwood Men’s Center – Santa Rosa, CA
A mythopoetic gathering dedicated to filling the need for men to come together in community healing
www.redwoodmen.org

Saskatoon Men’s Center – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Pro-feminist, male-positive, gay-affirmative center dedicated to offering a safe environment where men may explore their true nature and improve their health
www.saskatoonmenscenter.com

Twin Cities Men’s Center – Minneapolis, MN
Provides resources for men seeking to grow in mind, body, and spirit and advocates for healthy family and community relationships
www.tcm.org

Healthy Dating
Sexual Assault Prevention
www.canikissyou.com

Men Against Sexual Violence (MASV)
Men working in the struggle to end sexual violence – www.menagainstsexualviolence.org

Men Against Violence
Yahoo email list
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ma-vol

Men Can Stop Rape
Washington, D.C.-based national advocacy and training organization mobilizing male youth to prevent violence against women
www.mencanstoprape.org

Mending the Sacred Hoop
Works to end violence against Native American women and to strengthen the voice and vision of Native peoples
www.mshoop.com

MenEngage Alliance
An international alliance promoting boys’ and men’s support for gender equality
www.menengage.org

Men’s Initiative for Jane Doe, Inc.
Statewide Massachusetts effort coordinating men’s anti-violence activities
www.mijd.org

Men’s Nonviolence Project
Texas Council on Family Violence
http://www.tcfv.org/education/mnp.html

Men Stopping Violence
Atlanta-based organization working to end violence against women, focusing on stopping battering, and ending rape and incest
www.menstoppingviolence.org

Mentors in Violence Prevention
Gender violence prevention education and training by Jackson Katz
www.mvprevent.org

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Provides a coordinated community response to domestic violence
www.ncadv.org

National Resource Center on Violence Against Women
An online collection of searchable materials and resources on domestic violence, sexual violence, and related issues
www.vawnet.org

National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)
A national information and resource hub relating to all aspects of sexual violence
www.nsvrc.org

PreventConnect
Uses online media to build community among people engaged in efforts to prevent sexual assault and relationship violence
http://preventconnect.org/

Promundo
Brazilian NGO seeking to promote gender equality and end violence against women, children, and youth
www.promundo.org.br/en

Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN)
A national anti-sexual assault organization
www.rainn.org

Sexual Violence Prevention 101
Sexual assault and domestic violence prevention workshops by Todd Denny
http://www.olywa.net/tddeny/

Stop Porn Culture
A group for those willing to question and fight against pornography and porn culture
stoppornculture.org/home/

Students Active For Ending Rape
Organization dedicated to fighting sexual violence and rape culture by empowering student-led campaigns to reform college sexual assault policies
www.safercampus.org

V Day
Global movement to end violence against women and girls, including V-men, male activists in the movement
www.vday.org

White Ribbon Campaign
International men’s campaign decrying violence against women
www.whiteribbon.ca

LGBTQIA Resources

Ambiente Joven
An advocacy project and LGBTQ community for Spanish-speaking LGBTQ youth
www.ambientejoven.org

Beyond Masculinity
Collection of essays by queer men on gender and politics
http://beyondmasculinity.com

COLAGE
National movement of people with one or more lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer parent working toward social justice through youth empowerment, leadership development, education, and advocacy
www.colage.org

Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)
Works to combat homophobia and discrimination in television, film, music and all media outlets
www.glaad.org

Gay Men’s Domestic Violence Project
Provides crisis intervention, support and resources for victims and survivors of domestic abuse
gmdvp.org/gmdvp

Hear My Voice
Educates and engages young people in the LGBTQ community to create safe and healthy relationships, and connect victims of dating abuse to help and legal services.
hearmyvoice.breachthecycle.org

Human Rights Campaign
Largest GLBT political group in the country
www.hrc.org

Interpride
Clearinghouse for information on pride events worldwide
www.interpride.net

Intersex Society of North America
Devoted to systemic change to end shame, secrecy, and unwanted genital surgeries for people born with an anatomy that someone decided is not standard for male or female
www.isna.org

Lake Champlain Men’s Resource Center – Burlington, VT
Center with groups and services challenging men’s violence on both individual and societal levels
www.lcmrc.net

Men’s Resource Center for Change – Amherst, MA
Model men’s center offering support groups for men and consulting with individuals and groups on a range of issues related to men and masculinities.
www.mrforchange.org

Men’s Resource Center of West Michigan – West Michigan
Consultations and training in helping men develop their full humanity, create respectful and loving relationships, and caring and safe communities
www.menscenter.org

Redwood Men’s Center – Santa Rosa, CA
A mythopoetic gathering dedicated to filling the need for men to come together in community healing
www.redwoodmen.org

Saskatoon Men’s Center – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Pro-feminist, male-positive, gay-affirmative center dedicated to offering a safe environment where men may explore their true nature and improve their health
www.saskatoonmenscenter.com

Twin Cities Men’s Center – Minneapolis, MN
Provides resources for men seeking to grow in mind, body, and spirit and advocates for healthy family and community relationships
www.tcm.org
Nonviolent Men: The Silent Majority That Needs to Make Some Noise

By Rob Okun

“Women want a men’s movement. We are literally dying for it.”
—Gloria Steinem

It’s way past time to put on the pads, guys. We’ve got to put our shoulders to the wheel of change if we’re going to stop domestic and sexual violence. Are you ready to suit up for the big game? Except, of course, it ain’t no game; the lives of our daughters and sisters, wives and mothers are on the line.

No need to recount the abominable behavior of any particular football player here. And, it’s not necessary to replay all the fumbles by the National Football League commissioner or team owners who are only consistent about one thing: putting profits ahead of both the safety of women and holding their players accountable to behave responsibly. (The NFL’s decision to consult with longtime domestic violence prevention professionals while laudable, falls short of all that needs to be done. Why, for example, haven’t they contracted with the two-decades old Mentors in Violence Prevention program (MVP) to conduct long-term training?)

Revelations of men abusing women aren’t news—sadly, they’re everyday occurrences. Why does it take abusive celebrities or pro athletes beating their wives or fiancés—or children—to grab our attention?

Since the vast majority of men don’t act violently toward those they love, why are so many men part of a new deafeningly silent majority? Many of us are not even bystanders; we’re AWOL. Too many of us say we don’t even know any men who speak out against “man box” that seeks to constrain boys. Football players aren’t born to beat their wives or children. No men are born to be violent. But until we make changes in how we raise our sons and grandsons, domestic violence prevention training?)

The good news is that for nearly two generations a growing number of men of all races and ethnicities in the US and around the world have followed the lead of women working to prevent domestic and sexual violence, and to redefine and transform traditional ideas about manhood, fatherhood, and brotherhood. We’ve been called all kinds of names, but many of us describe ourselves as members of the profeminist or anti-sexist men’s movement.

Profeminist men hold the simple “radical” belief that gender and sexual equality are fundamental democratic goals and that women and men should each have the same rights and opportunities. Although marginalized and largely absent from the national conversation about gender in the mainstream media, modern-day profeminist men have been engaged in a sweeping critique of conventional manhood since the 1970s.

Even as media reports lag far behind, a progressive transformation of men’s lives is under way. Men’s involvement in anti-sexist activism grew out of a sense of justness and fairness heightened by men’s involvement in the civil rights and antiwar movements of the 1960s. (Sexism was, sadly, widespread in both movements.). Still, for many, those feelings easily carried over to women’s call for liberation, itself nothing less than a social justice imperative of obvious historical importance.

Despite the modest number of men involved, chinks in the armor of conventional manhood are visible, and, as our numbers grow, the chinks grow larger, threatening to crack open. Since the late 1970s, profeminist men’s work has spread globally. Its roots are deep. (The global MenEngage Alliance of which Voice Male is a North American member, is today a network of 600 organizations on every continent around the world).

In the struggle to replace traditional expressions of manhood with a profeminist vision, there’s a simultaneous cultural truth at play as we fishtail along the slippery road of gender justice. We live in a time of stark differences. Pro football players and other male celebrities who have perpetrated interpersonal violence continue to enjoy lucrative careers while men like Jason Collins, the National Basketball Association player who announced he was gay in 2013, are opening door for other gay athletes to come out—like NFL rookie Michael Sam.

As “man’s man” sports figures, Collins and Sam stand in stark contrast to domestic abusers. Their willingness to take the national stage helped unlock the stage door for younger males—gay young men, of course, but many, many others—hungry for a way out of the “man box” that seeks to constrain boys. Football players aren’t born to beat their wives or children. No men are born to do that. But until we make changes in how we raise our sons and grandsons, domestic violence in our homes and sexual assaults on campuses (and elsewhere) will be men’s legacy.

Brothers, it’s the fourth quarter, the clock is ticking, and there are no more time outs. What are we waiting for?

A version of Voice Male editor Rob Okun’s commentary appeared on the Ms. magazine blog in September.
Voice Male is a superb, groundbreaking publication offering a powerful way to engage men in working towards gender justice and to encourage younger men to learn new ways to become a man. Every individual and institution interested in gender equality and violence prevention should subscribe and spread the word!

—Judy Norsigian, coauthor and executive director, Our Bodies, Ourselves

“Rob Okun’s brave book chronicles a movement of men standing with women in the struggle to end violence against women and reveals an emerging new man culture where men are reclaiming their tears and their hearts.”
—Eve Ensler, playwright of The Vagina Monologues, founder of Vday

“A very worthwhile introduction to the profeminist movement among men. It will reward both casual readers and serious students of the subject.”
—Library Journal

“Readers interested in gender issues will appreciate the strength of the individual articles and the book’s powerful message.”
—Publishers Weekly

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