The Magazine for Changing Men

Voice Male

The Blind Spots of Masculinity

Fall 2019

The New Men of India
Will Men Speak Up in the Face of #MeToo?
Put Gender at Center of Gun Debate
UK Boys on Becoming Men
A Bright Light in Dark Times

There is a struggle under way between light and shadow along the continuum of contemporary masculinity. At one end—the light—is the integrated healthy life of men like my friend and colleague Steve Trudel, a gifted counselor and social worker who was relational, engaged and loving. On the other end—the shadow in every sense—are men suffering from *mascupathy*—a disorder where traits such as aggression and invulnerability are exaggerated, and those of openness and empathy are repressed.

For three decades Steve facilitated groups for men acting abusively in their relationships. Year after year he worked with these men with such empathy, wisdom and steadfastness that if there were an Oscar for group facilitation, a shelf in his living room would have held more than one. He was 69 when he died in early August.

Steve was among the first men to recognize that engaging with abusive men was essential to curb domestic violence. In the early 1980s he went to San Francisco to learn how the Men Overcoming Violence (MOVE) program there ran batterer intervention groups. He brought home to the Men's Resource Center in western Massachusetts a belief that it was possible for men to change.

Steve was the kind of man we champion in the pages of *Voice Male*: kind, compassionate and creative—a master gardener, chef, and a singer whose voice—both in the choruses in which he was a member, and the Saturday night music parties he so loved—was rich, deep, and pure. He stirred hearts, possessing the rare capacity to both hold the suffering of others and steer those in pain toward the light.

While I was writing this column, there had been another mass shooting—seven people murdered and 25 wounded in Midland and Odessa, Texas. Elsewhere in the magazine is an op-ed I wrote in the aftermath of the El Paso, Tex., and Dayton, Ohio, shootings (see page 15). It was the latest in a dozen versions I've written over the years; take your pick: Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook, Orlando, Las Vegas... Central to all of them is what is central—but maddeningly mostly ignored—in all mass shootings: the gender of the murderer. They are virtually always male and usually white. While I can't know for sure if any of those killers might have been helped by counseling, I wish they could have been in a group with Steve.

Of course, not all men are so damaged that they believe the only way to deal with their hurt is to hurt themselves and/or others. Nevertheless, it is also true that men do hurt—ourselves and others—regularly: from abusing substances to abusing those we purport to cherish; from ignoring our health to ignoring our families. Too often, our identities are relational, engaged and loving. On the other end, they are relational, engaged and loving. While Steve would have dismissed the idea of being described as embodying a “new vision of manhood,” it’s irrefutable that his life offers much for us to contemplate, especially today when, as Thoreau said, “Most men lead lives of quiet desperation.” While we now know he did not add, “…and die with their song still inside them,” that might have been something Steve would have said—before inviting a circle of men to join with him to sing.

Steve Trudel 1950 - 2019

Steve worked the room like a master actor holding an audience spellbound. He knew when to use humor, when to employ compassionate confrontation, and always was on the lookout for a teachable moment. I watched more than once as the light bulb switched on for men in the group: flannel-shirted mechanics and white-collar managers; farmers in boots and professors in sandals.

It is estimated Steve worked with more than a thousand men and held nearly every position in the Men's Resource Center's batterers' program, Moving Forward. Near the end of his career, he served as the liaison for the female partners or ex-partners of men in the program, a position that heretofore had been exclusively held by a female staff member. That the women had no issue with a man as the program's support person speaks volumes about Steve. He was not just any man. In gaining the trust of these brave women, he set a standard for all men who would be allies to women survivors. This is what is possible for manhood.

Today, when the glimmer of men’s consciousness brightens and dims like the sun and moon moving in and out from behind the clouds, we need more men to connect more dots—from recognizing their privilege (and being open about the challenge of relinquishing even some of it) to honestly acknowledging and accepting the implications of #MeToo (where men struggle to know how to respond to the truth of women’s experience). Progress toward the transformation of manhood may not be celebrated, but it is happening—painstakingly, slowly, steadily. Steve Trudel's life was a powerful example.

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Profeminist Men: More than “Soldiers” for Gender Justice

Alan Berkowitz is spot on in suggesting the next right step in the profeminist men’s movement (“What’s the Best Way for Men to Be Profeminist? For Starters, Be Vulnerable and Humble”, Spring 2019). I think many in the first generation profeminist men’s movement operated with predominately a male paradigm—recruiting and mobilizing conscientious male “soldiers” to fight against gender violence (even as they acknowledged women’s vision and leadership). Nevertheless, many in the army of men were hierarchical and seemed not to express the vulnerability and humility Berkowitz suggests is necessary to be a balanced profeminist. The male paradigm many employed had men standing shoulder to shoulder to seek out the enemy—the bad guys—rather than taking time to “circle up” and do the hard inner work of healing ourselves. The humility and vulnerability of men processing their feelings may not have been explicitly disrespected, but in many arenas it certainly was marginalized because “real soldiers” man up and just get the gender justice job done. Berkowitz’s article is long overdue and I look forward to contributing to its message.

Berkowitz’s article is long overdue and I look forward to contributing to its message. An article that particularly resonated with me is “To Heal My Wounds, I Work with Men and Boys,” by Diederik Prakke (Spring 2019). Reading his story made me think about two very important men in my life: my dad and my brother. My dad grew up with the ideals that men and boys don’t cry, which passed down to my brother. Although he has experienced a lot of loss and trauma, I have never seen my dad shed a tear, or show any signs of vulnerability for that matter. It’s alarming and heartbreaking because I can only imagine how internalizing these feelings has affected him...and my brother. It makes me fearful also, because my brother has two little boys, and although I teach them what I’ve learned regarding masculinity, I’m afraid they’ll strive to be “real soldiers” man up instead of being vulnerable and humble.

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Dismantling Patriarchy with Meditation

I was looking around the Internet for articles on patriarchy and the mother wound in men, and came across your magazine. I found the quality of some of the articles very high, especially the one on how men can be truly and helpfully profeminist (“What’s the Best Way for Men to Be Profeminist? For Starters, Be Vulnerable and Humble”, Spring 2019), and one on the mother wound (“Mother Wound as Missing Link in Understanding Misogyny,” Spring 2018). By the way, I generally am very reluctant to subscribe to magazines. Astronomy and Scientific American are about as far as I go. As I teach meditation professionally, might you be interested in using meditation to dismantle the patriarchy from the ground up?

Randy Flood, Director
Men’s Resource Center of
West Michigan
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Healing Wounds

Thank you for providing the space where men can share their important stories. An article that particularly resonated with me is “To Heal My Wounds, I Work with Men and Boys,” by Diederik Prakke (Spring 2019). Reading his story made me think about two very important men in my life: my dad and my brother. My dad grew up with the ideals that men and boys don’t cry, which passed down to my brother. Although he has experienced a lot of loss and trauma, I have never seen my dad shed a tear, or show any signs of vulnerability for that matter. It’s alarming and heartbreaking because I can only imagine how internalizing these feelings has affected him...and my brother. It makes me fearful also, because my brother has two little boys, and although I teach them what I’ve learned regarding masculinity, I’m afraid they’ll strive to be like the male figures in their life. On a different note, I think it’s super important that Prakke discussed his wounds and practicing self-awareness. I think that self-awareness is important to making change.

Melanie Diaz
Long Beach, Calif.

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Challenging the Taboo: Child Forced Marriage

Patriarchal control of adolescent girls’ sexuality is a key driver in a horrific ongoing assault on girls: Child/Early and Forced Marriages/Unions (CEFMU). A new report presents findings from a review of 23 organizations working at the intersection of child marriage and sexuality.

The report, “Tackling the Taboo: Sexuality and Gender-Transformative Programs to End Child, Early and Forced Marriage and Unions,” is intended as a learning tool for practitioners, a guide for future research opportunities, a call to action for funders, and an advocacy tool for engaging in dialogue with policymakers and other leaders. It includes three case studies, featuring the work of grassroots organizations working in politically and culturally conservative contexts: Trust for Indigenous Culture and Health in Kenya, International Centre for Reproductive Health and Sexual Rights in Nigeria, and The YP Foundation in India.

In places where patriarchal gender norms are strictly enforced, people, especially girls and women, are constrained in their freedom to express their sexuality, according to the working group that produced the report. Control of the female body is an important focal point of patriarchy, they said—both contributing to and reinforced within CEFMUs. Child marriage is an example of how women’s and girls’ life choices—down to the most intimate: if, whom, and when to marry—are taken from them and controlled by others. For the full report go to https://girlsnotbrides.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Tackling-the-Taboo_Full_English.pdf.

“Mansplaining” Hotline for Women (Really!)

Women who have things mansplained to them in the workplace can now report it to a dedicated hotline. Unionen, Sweden’s largest union, began encouraging members to call it back in 2016 when male colleagues were giving women unsolicited lectures on things they already understand. Unionen, which represents 600,000 private sector workers, said it launched the hotline as part of a campaign to highlight and stamp out the insidious and damaging practice.

A study by the American Psychological Association said mansplaining happens when men “tend to overestimate their intelligence to a much greater extent than women.” The union defined it as when “a man explains something to a woman without being asked, particularly something which she might already know more about than the man.”

The hotline advises upset and frustrated callers on what action they could take, including to help them move on. Since there are no set answers, the people staffing the line each employ their own best thinking based on their own experiences. Unsurprisingly, the initiative unleashed a flood of negative comments on Unionen’s Facebook page, particularly from men.

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*Deceased
Fatherhood is not a partisan issue.

In August, Trevor Mallard, Speaker of the House of Representatives in New Zealand’s Parliament, cradled and fed the one-month old son of fellow lawmaker Tamati Coffey and his husband, Tim Smith, while presiding over a legislative debate. No word yet on the political leanings of the infant.

HIV Statistics High for Men of Color

Since the AIDS epidemic exploded three decades ago, new HIV infection rates have fallen across the U.S. Yet for African American men, infection rates remain stubbornly high—and, among Latino men, the rates are nudging upward. In a new paper released in July, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention pinpoints an important factor: Minority men are far less likely than whites to know about or use a powerful drug combination that can keep them from getting infected. That’s despite research that shows from 2014 to 2017, awareness of the drug combination, pre-exposure prophylaxis, also known as PrEP, increased in 20 urban areas, from 60 percent to 90 percent. At the same time, the percentage of people taking the drug combination increased from 6 to 35 percent, according to the paper. “Despite this progress, PrEP use among (men who have sex with other men), especially among black and Hispanic MSM, remains low,” according to the paper. “Continued efforts to improve (PrEP) coverage are needed to reach the goal of 90 percent reduction in HIV incidence by 2030.” Moreover, while overall infection rates have plunged since the 1980s, and steadily decreased among whites since 2010, progress has stalled among black men, while among Latinos “new infections (are) beginning to rise, particularly among ... gay and bisexual men,” according to the CDC.

Traumatized Boys and Gender Equality

Boys in poor urban areas around the world are suffering even more than girls from violence, abuse and neglect, groundbreaking international recently published research suggests. The studies suggest an adequate focus on helping boys is critical to achieving gender equality in the longer term. “This is the first global study to investigate how a cluster of traumatic childhood experiences—‘Adverse Childhood Experiences’ (ACE), work together to cause specific health issues in early adolescence, with terrible lifelong consequences,” said Dr. Robert Blum, lead researcher for the global study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health.

“While we found young girls often suffer significantly, contrary to common belief, boys reported even greater exposure to violence and neglect, which makes them more likely to be violent in return,” Dr. Blum said. A study from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health looked at childhood traumas suffered by 1,284 adolescents ages 10 to 14 in more than a dozen low-income urban settings in the U.S., China, the U.K., Egypt and Bolivia. Overall, 46 percent of young adolescents reported experiencing violence; 38 percent said they suffered emotional neglect and 29 percent experienced physical neglect. Girls tend to show higher levels of depression than boys. However, boys were more likely to report being victims of physical neglect, sexual abuse and violence. While higher levels of trauma lead both boys and girls to engage in more violent behaviors, boys are more likely to become violent.

Young Men at Highest Homicide Risk

A new United Nations study reports that young men account for more than half of all homicide victims in scores of countries; globally those aged 15 and 29 are at the highest risk. The study by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) revealed that some 464,000 people across the world were victims of homicidal violence in 2017—more than five times the number killed in armed conflict over the same period. The study found that while girls and boys aged nine and under are more or less equally represented in homicide victim numbers, in all other age groups, males make up more than 50 percent of the toll, according to data from 41 countries. In all regions, the likelihood of boys becoming victims of homicide increases with age; globally those between 15 and 29 are at the highest risk of homicide. In the Americas, the victim rate among 18- and 19-year-olds is estimated at 46 per 100,000, far higher than for their peers in other regions. Firearms are also involved “far more often” in homicides in the Americas than elsewhere, another report, the Global Study on Homicide 2019, maintained. “High levels of violence are strongly associated with young males, both as perpetrators and victims,” the report said. “So violence prevention programs should focus on providing support to young men to prevent them from being lured into a subculture of... gangs (and) drug dealing.”

African American Men Mistrust Medical World

Mistrust of health care providers, fueled by painful experiences with racism, makes African American men more likely to delay routine screenings and doctor’s appointments, according to a new study in
Men @ Work

the journal Behavioral Medicine by the Health Disparities Institute (HDI) at the University of Connecticut. The result has potentially serious implications for their overall health.

“Medical mistrust is significantly contributing to delays in African American men utilizing the health care system,” says Dr. Wizdom Powell, the study’s lead author, who is HDI director and associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the UConn School of Medicine. The new study reports that “medical mistrust”—defined as a suspicion or lack of trust in medical organizations—is associated with delays in African American men’s routine health visits, blood pressure, and cholesterol screenings. It also found that men who report experiencing frequent everyday racism had higher odds of delaying screenings and routine health care visits. Also, those who perceived racism in health care had more medical mistrust with significantly reduced rates of preventive health care utilization. “We must address medical mistrust and racism in and outside of health care institutions to increase lifesaving preventive health screenings among the high-risk population of African American men,” says Powell.

Weight Loss Improves Men’s Mental Health

The Australian-based internationally renowned research program SHED-IT (Self-Help, Exercise and Diet using Information Technology) has been redesigned with a renewed focus on helping men lift their mood, not just lose weight.

Previous study outcomes showed that men shed an average of 10 to 20 pounds during the program while also decreasing their waist size and improving blood pressure, body fat percentage and quality of life. The program is based at the University of Newcastle in New South Wales, Australia.

Follow-up investigations also revealed a crucial outcome: benefits were maintained long-term. Now called SHED-IT Recharge, the new trial planned to recruit 120 men to receive new strategies to feel mentally well along with employing existing resources to teach men how to lose weight, become more active and improve their diet.

“SHED-IT was designed from the outset to engage and appeal to blokes, who are far outnumbered by women in weight loss,” said lead researcher Dr. Myles Young of the Hunter Medical Research Institute’s Cardiovascular Research Program, adding that it was important to create a program specifically targeted at men.

“While SHED-IT doesn’t include any face-to-face contact, our three-year results are comparable to studies where men attended up to 30 sessions with a trained health professional,” according to Dr. Young.

Of 200 participants in the previous SHED-IT trial, 20 per cent reported worrying levels of depressive symptoms before the program. Afterward, the men lost weight, improved their lifestyle behaviors, and symptoms had substantially reduced, Dr. Young reported.

To contact the program, write recharge@newcastle.edu.au.

Canada Funding to Engage Men and Boys

The Canadian government is providing more than half a million dollars to encourage men and boys to advocate for gender equality.

Minister of Gender Equality Maryam Monsef announced the new funding in Calgary at the end of August, where she also released a report intended to develop a gender equality strategy that includes men and boys in the conversation.

The report, based on roundtable discussions across the country, resulted in funding four projects:

• Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters will receive $212,000 to promote sports figures as role models to increase awareness of gender-based violence. That organization will work with the Canadian Football League leading up to the Grey Cup.

• Catalyst Canada, a non-profit that helps support women in the workplace, will receive $100,000 to promote workplace inclusion and support men as disruptors of workplace sexism.

• FOXY, a non-profit that focuses on sexual health and empowered decision making, will receive $125,000 to engage young Indigenous men and boys on gender equality in the Northwest Territories.

• Next Gen Men at the University of Calgary will receive $125,000 to build networks for profeminist male leaders to engage on gender equality issues.

Michael Kehler, a professor of masculinities studies at the University of Calgary, says gender equality needs to be an ongoing initiative that involves everyone. The Canadian government committed $1.8 million over two years in 2018 to engage men and boys in addressing inequality.

Invisibility of Male Privilege

It wasn’t until 1965 that married women in France no longer had to obtain their husband’s consent to work.

In Australia, married women could not apply for passports without their husband’s permission until 1983.

In Britain, marital rape was not illegal until 1991.
Fathering
Fatherly Evolution
By Tom H. Hastings

Sometimes the personal overrides the burning political—just before it doubles back to connect. For me, I reflect on the day not long ago when my late father would have turned 94. He was a mentor, a teacher, a counselor, and a friend. He taught me values that I continue to strive to uphold: integrity, honesty, fairness to all, courage, unbiased respect for all, care for the environment; care for and engagement in the community, grace, and generosity. In fact, in those rare moments I reach beyond my normal slothful greedy self, I can see him, literally, in my minds-eye, in my heartseye.

He was a member of that “greatest generation,” barely making it to high school graduation in the early 1940s before rushing to enlist in the Navy and shipped to the Philippines “for the duration.” So many never returned, so I am a lucky one—to even exist. He said almost nothing about his war experiences, but his lifetime peace activism spoke volumes.

Thomas John Hastings became a psychologist and both practiced and taught. He had a private practice and he was chair of his college counseling degree program at Metropolitan Junior College in downtown Minneapolis. His pro bono work was all at the VA in Minneapolis and he did a lot of it. Like all the peace vets I’ve ever known, his attitude was hate war, despise the chickenhawk politicians who drag us into most of them, and love the veterans.

Of course today’s polarized conceptually monochromatic political factions cannot abide nuanced thinking like that, so my dad would be even more out of touch.

He was friend to Israeli Jew and Palestinian, and not in a superficial sense, but in deeper contexts he tried to help me understand, rooted in the long European persecution of Jews that culminated in the sincere attempt by Nazis to hunt and kill every last Jewish man, woman, and child; and anchored as well in understanding Palestinian history on that land and persecution in 1948 as hundreds of their villages were destroyed to make way for Israel.

As a young radical of 17, I railed for Palestinian rights. He calmly told me much of what I didn’t know about the Hitler Final Solution and said (this is a 51-year-old memory, clear as a bell), “Jews needed someplace to park their asses.” From a World War II combat veteran (who, by the way, never expressed hatred for Japanese or Germans), this helped me, his son, to accept context I had not personally experienced and that my high school had never taught me.

His additions to my knowledge and understanding were always in the “yes, and” format, never in the “well, but.” This seems small, but it marks a distinct difference between parenting that can alienate and that can deepen understanding. Of course, I only see this in retrospect, but he got it at the time.

It was tough to get my father interested in any political candidate and he never joined a political party. He taught me to be wary of talk and to check out action as speaking loudest. That does tend to give pause to potential excitement about any candidate for office, though he seemed to vote maybe half third party and half Democratic Party for most of his life. Never Republican. Ever. He had respect for virtually all people but despised the pro-corporate, anti-environment, and often unjust actions taken by most elected Republicans. I pretty much agreed with him and was grateful for his tutelage.

I became interested at one point in his path of becoming radicalized toward peace and justice but in his retention of friendships from his former world. It led me to ask some others who had gone through radical changes, members of his generation, how it worked out for them. I asked that of Daniel Ellsberg in 1982 and he said that he had lost every single friend from before his decision to release the Pentagon Papers. I asked that of Robert Aldridge, design team leader for generations of submarine-launched ballistic missiles for Lockheed before his radical peace conversion (thanks to his daughter confronting him) and his answer was similar. My father did not have the public-facing struggle that they did, although he faced some serious consequences at one point for his war tax resistance. My father retained all his friends. This was a lesson to me and remains important in my remembrance of him and his life lessons.

He read voraciously, at least one paper a day, some magazines every week and month, and perhaps one book a week, on average. I appreciate his triangulation of evidence—he’d fact check when curious or surprised, a trait I try to emulate. When I was a boy, he personally brought me to the local library each and every week. That discipline was, in hindsight, crucial to my development. He tried to get me addicted to learning and to the public library system. I looked forward to that every week and, to be blunt, I failed to do that with my own sons, a regret I carry.

My father never once held any ambitions to be wealthy, and gave away a lot. I saw him do that and I hope I learned. I will never forget him talking to a young man “camping” (homeless) on a California beach. My dad listened to him for at least 10 minutes, gave him a $10 bill, and the guy asked me, “Is your father a minister?” This was not an infrequent question. Are ministers normally the only ones who listen and are generous? Can we do better than to ghettoize these characteristics to the “people of the cloth”?

One wonders what some fathers teach their sons. “Here’s how you screw the next guy.” “Beating someone is the best satisfaction you can get.” “Lying to get ahead is the way of the world.” “Dirty tricks are normal. Do them better than anyone else.” “Women are on this earth for men’s pleasure. Use ‘em.” “Get ahead and stay ahead. Never stop accumulating.”

The difference is painful and is on buck-naked display at the highest levels right now. I can hear my father as I listen to the daily news: “Cripes! Who raised him?”

Dr. Tom H. Hastings is director of PeaceVoice, which syndicates columns from progressive writers nationally. He serves also on occasion as an expert witness for the defense in court. (www.peacevoice.info/).
In 2018, Human Rights Campaign (HRC) advocates tracked at least 26 deaths of transgender people in the U.S. due to fatal violence, the majority of whom were transgender women of color. These victims were killed by acquaintances, partners and strangers, some of whom have been arrested and charged, while others have yet to be identified. Some of these cases involve clear anti-transgender bias. In others, the transgender victim’s status may have put them at risk in other ways, such as forcing them into unemployment, poverty, homelessness and/or survival sex work.

While the details of these cases differ, it is clear that fatal violence disproportionately affects transgender women of color, and that the intersections of racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia conspire to deprive them of employment, housing, healthcare and other necessities, barriers that make them vulnerable.

HRC Foundation’s report, “Dismantling a Culture of Violence,” demonstrates how anti-transgender stigma, denial of opportunity and increased risk factors compound to create a culture of violence—and provides clear ways that each of us can directly make an impact to make our society a safer place for transgender people.

As is too often the case in the reporting of anti-transgender violence, many of these victims are misgendered in local police statements and media reports, which can delay our awareness of deadly incidents. In the pursuit of greater accuracy and respect for transgender and gender expansive people in both life and death, HRC offers guidelines for journalists and others who report on transgender people.

Sadly, by the summer of 2019 at least 11 transgender people have been fatally shot or killed by other violent means. The Human Rights Campaign continues to work toward justice and equality for transgender people. Here is a list of those who have been killed in the first half of this year:

- Dana Martin, 31, a black transgender woman, was fatally shot in Montgomery, Alabama, on January 6. Reports stated that she was found in a roadside ditch in her vehicle and pronounced dead at the scene.
- Jazsoline Ware, a black transgender woman, was found dead in her Memphis apartment in March. Her death is being investigated as a homicide, according to The Advocate.
- Ashanti Carmon, 27, a black transgender woman, was fatally shot in Prince George’s County, Maryland, on March 30. Few details are yet known about the crime, and the investigation is ongoing.
- Claire Legato, 21, a black transgender woman, was fatally shot in Cleveland on April 15. Local media reports that Legato was shot in the head after an argument broke out between her mother and the suspect. She was taken to a nearby hospital and died from her injuries on May 14.
- Muhlaysia Booker, 23, a black transgender woman, was fatally shot in Dallas on May 18. Local media reported that Booker was found dead, lying facedown with a gunshot wound near a golf course in east Dallas. In April, Booker was viciously attacked in what Dallas mayor Mike Rawlings described as “mob violence.”
- Michelle “Tamika” Washington, 40, a Black transgender woman, was fatally shot in Philadelphia on May 19. Police responded to reports of shots fired in North Philadelphia’s Franklinville neighborhood, according to the Philadelphia Gay News. Washington, who was also known by the name Tamika, was found with several gunshot wounds and transported to Temple University Hospital, where she was pronounced dead.
- Paris Cameron, 20, a black transgender woman, was among three people killed in a horrific anti-LGBTQ shooting in a home in Detroit on May 25, according to local reports. Alunte Davis, 21, and Timothy Blancher, 20, two gay men, were found dead at the scene and Cameron was taken to the hospital, where she died from her injuries. Two other victims were also shot but survived. “This case illustrates the mortal danger faced by members of Detroit’s LGBTQ community, including transgender women of color,” Fair Michigan president Alanna Maguire said.
- Chynal Lindsey, 26, a black transgender woman, was found dead in White Rock Lake, Dallas, with signs of “homicidal violence” on June 1, according to police. The Dallas Police Department has reached out to federal law enforcement to aid in the investigation.
- Chanel Scurlock, 23, a black transgender woman, was found fatally shot in Lumberton, North Carolina, on June 6. Few details are yet public about the crime, but police told a local news outlet they have “great leads” in their investigation.
- Zoe Spears, 23, a black transgender woman, was found lying in the street with signs of trauma near Eastern Avenue in Fairmount Heights, Maryland, and later pronounced dead on June 13, according to local reports. While officials have not yet released her name, transgender advocate Ruby Corado, the founder and executive director of Casa Ruby, identified Spears as the victim.
- Brooklyn Lindsey, 32, a black transgender woman, was found dead on the front porch of an abandoned home in Kansas City, Missouri, on June 25, according to local news reports. The Kansas City Star notes that her death is currently being investigated as a homicide.

Additionally, HRC is deeply concerned about the deaths of Johana “Joña” Medina and Layleen Polanco, whose stories it continues to closely follow. Medina, 25, died at a hospital in El Paso, Texas, just hours after being released from ICE custody. She suffered severe health complications that went untreated while she was in detention, according to Diversidad Sin Fronteras. Her exact cause of death is not yet known. Polanco was found dead in a cell at Riker’s Island on June 7. Her exact cause of death is also as of yet unknown.

Will Men Speak Up in the Face of #MeToo?

By Jackson Katz

I t is much too early to draw any definitive conclusions about the long-term effects of a movement as potentially world-changing as #MeToo, but it is definitely not too soon to make some real-time observations about the topic, and to ask some relevant questions. For example, have the same factors that catalyzed women's activism around issues of gender violence, including #MeToo, also prompted a new level of introspection among men about their role in perpetuating sexism, and the role they could play moving forward in helping to break the pattern? If so, will this new introspection lead to personal, institutional and/or political action?

It’s easy to be cynical about how men will respond to the tectonic cultural shifts in the gender order we’re now witnessing, especially considering how few men have historically been involved—at least publicly—in any kind of sustained anti-sexist activism. But that might not be the right metric to determine the potential for men’s increasing involvement in these issues. In fact, change may well manifest itself as a shift in consciousness whose effects will be felt over decades, alongside cultural and institutional changes carried out by people, including men, with this new sensibility. Some of the most profound change will surely be generational. Early survey research into men's and young men's attitudes and behaviors post-#MeToo is encouraging. One study in the United Kingdom conducted one year after #MeToo exploded found that 58 percent of men aged 18–35 agreed that “In the last 12 months I have been more likely to challenge behavior or comments I think are inappropriate,” while only 24 percent of men over 55 concurred.

A fascinating study published in 2018 in the Psychology of Men and Masculinity journal examined men’s reactions to #MeToo through a qualitative examination of responses to #HowIWillChange, a “hashtag activist” Twitter campaign initiated by Benjamin Law, a journalist from Australia. The study’s authors found that men’s responses to #HowIWillChange clustered into three general categories: 1) Men who wanted to be part of actively dismantling rape culture; 2) men who were “indignantly resistant” to social change; and 3) men who expressed “hostile resistance” to social change.

In the first category were men who wanted to examine their own participation in the culture of “toxic masculinity,” teach the next generation, listen to women, call out other men’s sexist behaviors, and promote egalitarianism. The second category included men who did not deny that women face mistreatment in society, but insisted that they should not be held responsible or called to action for violence or disrespect which they do not believe they have committed. They were the kind of men who identified with #NotAllMen, even if they didn’t use that specific hashtag. A characteristic tweet from this category is “#HowIWillChange, I won’t because I’m not a rapist, never have been, never will be. All rapists should be castrated, but not all men are rapists.” The third category of men were much more angry and aggressive in their responses. They used language that questioned and attacked the masculinity of men who supported #HowIWillChange, calling them cucks, SJWs*, beta males and virtue-signalers (*Social Justice Warriors). Some of these men also responded to the hashtag with aggressively and overtly sexist and degrading comments about women and women’s sexuality, denying the existence of rape culture. Others used #HowIWillChange to make racist and ethnocentric statements that mirrored some of the things Donald Trump said and stood for in his 2016 presidential campaign, including the idea that dark-skinned men from foreign cultures, whether from south of the border or from Muslim countries, were the ones truly responsible for rape culture. This study suggests that men’s reactions to

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*Source: “Beyond the Kind of Research I Discussed Above, There Are Other Factors, But I Prefer a More Benign Explanation,” by Jackson Katz, Psychology of Men and Masculinity, 11:2, 2018.
I'm convinced that some of men's reluctance to speak out is motivated less by guilt than by genuine uncertainty about what role men can and should play—and anxiety about the difficulties of “getting it right.”

#MeToo are far from monolithic, and provides reasons to be simultaneously optimistic and wary about how far we still have to go.

In my work and travels over the past couple of years, I've often been asked by women to comment on men's response to #MeToo, and to provide some explanation for why so many men have chosen to remain silent. Sometimes I detect in the inquiry itself an underlying judgment, as if some women believe that men's reticence to engage this issue somehow derives from their own guilty behavior, or is an indication of their reluctance to betray their fellow men. I can't say for sure when and if those are relevant factors, but I prefer a more benign explanation.

I think many men know that #MeToo is long overdue, and they support its goals—at least in theory. But they're not sure what to say, or do. The subject of gender and power was already fraught, but the increased spotlight on men's abusive behaviors—especially in the sexual realm—upped the ante. A lot of men are understandably reluctant to wade into those choppy waters. I'm convinced that some of this reluctance is motivated less by guilt than by genuine uncertainty about what role men can and should play in all of this—and anxiety about the difficulties of “getting it right.” For men, is the main lesson of #MeToo that they should step back and listen to women? To be sure, listening is itself an action, and men can learn a lot by simply pausing to hear what women are saying about their lives, including their experiences of men's violence and their omnipresent fear of it.

But once they've listened, what's next? If you're a man, are you a good ally if you listen well but don't take any discernible action beyond that?

Beyond the kind of research I discussed above, there are some indications that Donald Trump's election in 2016 and the #MeToo tsunami a year later have awakened something in a lot of men that over time could result in substantive social change. There is little doubt that the visibility of men speaking out about sexism and misogyny has increased. Anecdotal evidence abounds. Since #MeToo broke in the fall of 2017, for example, I've been interviewed more and my work has been profiled in media more than in the previous 10 years combined. Then there's the hundreds of thousands of men who attended the Women's Marches on January 21, 2017, the day after Donald Trump's inauguration, on the single biggest day of protest in the history of the United States. There's no official tally available that breaks down the protesters by gender, but at the march I attended in Los Angeles with my teenage son, I was startled and inspired by the number of men present. At the time, I estimated that men comprised as much as 20 per cent of the marchers. Even more impressively, they were a dramatically diverse group—a multiracial, multiethnic, and intergenerational gathering of men determined to make a statement of solidarity with women and girls in their struggle to be treated with respect and dignity. And all of this was eight months before #MeToo.

In the time since the #MeToo movement took hold, many of us in the domestic violence/sexual assault fields have noted an even more marked increase in men's engagement with gender violence prevention efforts on college campuses and in communities in the U.S. and around the world. One Sweden-based organization I've worked with for many years, Men for Gender Equality, reported that in the months after #MeToo, their membership increased by 300 percent.

There are even indications that the #MeToo-inspired idea of men questioning traditional notions of what it means to be a man has begun to permeate media culture in the form of advertising and music. In early 2019, Gillette rolled out an ad campaign that played with its classic slogan “The Best a Man Can Get” with a widely viewed (and controversial) video with scenes of bullying and sexual harassment and news accounts of sexual violence underneath a narrative voiceover that asked “Is this the best a man can get? Is it? We can’t hide from it, it’s been going on far too long. We can’t laugh it off, making the same old excuses. But something finally changed. And there will be no going back. Because we...We believe in the best in men. To say the right thing. To act the right way. Some already are, in ways big and small. But some is not enough. Because the boys watching today will be the men of tomorrow.” Also in early 2019, in an article entitled “The New Angry Young Men: Rockers Who Rail Against ‘Toxic Masculinity,” The New York Times reported on a new wave of heterosexual male musical artists writing and performing songs about suicide, depression and other harmful effects men experience as a direct result of the emotional and relational limitations imposed upon them by traditional definitions of manhood. (Both stories were featured in the Spring issue of this magazine.)

Despite these and other inspirational examples, it remains to be seen whether such signs of increased awareness and interest from men will result in their taking a lead on these issues and participating more actively in gender violence.
Since #MeToo went viral, millions of women and men have stepped forward to say, “This happened to me.” This shift has been seismic and reflects how far society has come. In the past few decades, in small and large ways, survivors of sexual abuse have shattered the silence that for so long surrounded sexual abuse.

Society needs to do more than simply say, “I believe you.” We have known for decades that we can't just arrest and prosecute our way to safer communities. We need to do more. We need a movement that will encourage anyone who has caused the harm to take responsibility for what they have done. It is important to step directly into the controversy, to not shy away from the complexity of this issue.

There are many men who, if given the opportunity to take reparative accountability for past actions, would be willing to acknowledge the harm they'd caused.

Ana Maria Archila Gualy, the survivor who famously confronted then-Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Arizona) in an elevator doorway shortly after the hearing for Supreme Court associate justice nominee Brett Kavanaugh, offered one clear pathway for a deeper response. She said: “The way that justice works is that you recognize harm, you take responsibility for it and then you begin to repair it.” She went on to say that Sen. Flake was wrong to vote for a man who “is unwilling to take responsibility for his own actions, unwilling to hold the harm he has done to one woman, actually three, and repair it.”

As of this writing, there are few examples of anyone publicly recognizing the harm their behavior caused and taking responsibility for that harm. Many continue to deny what they have done, even when the evidence pointing to them is overwhelming. In fact, most public apologies fall short; the people who have caused the harm don't recognize the harm they have done, don't listen to the person they harmed, and haven't taken full responsibility for it. Consider actor Kevin Spacey saying “If I did behave as he described...” and describing the behaviors as mutual. Or writer-radio host Garrison Keillor saying that his suggestive fantasies were simply “romantic writing,” deflecting their impact. Chef Mario Batali actually included a recipe for pizza dough cinnamon rolls in his apology!

Reflecting on the public figures who have done everything possible to avoid taking responsibility, Ashley Judd said: “We still wait for an accused who can and will embody what the #MeToo movement and our society needs and wants: someone who can navigate the duality of having aggressed and address their abuse of power with culpability and integrity.”

We have seen that, at least in less visible cases, the people who took responsibility have been harassed and shamed for their efforts. Examples abound of people facing the harm that they have caused and the impact of what they have done. The authors have worked with a man in his sixties, Kevin, who raped a young woman when he was in college. After listening to #MeToo allegations growing ever more prevalent in the media, he felt compelled to speak out.
He believed there were many men like him who, if given the opportunity to take reparative accountability for past actions, would be willing to acknowledge the harm they’d caused. He published an op-ed in *Huffington Post* challenging other men to “take responsibility for ourselves as sexual victimizers of women so that an honest dialogue can emerge about how to change the conditions and conditioning that led us to do these things.” While some responses were encouraging and supportive, his writing caused a rift within his family; he was cut off from some friends and lost work in a storm of social media criticism.

What would it take for society to be able to create the space for people to step forward and take responsibility for their mistakes, to be held accountable for the harm they caused, and to be allowed to “begin to repair it”?

The authors, along with Alissa Ackerman, offered a workshop at the 2018 conference of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA) called “Accountability and Responsibility in the Era of #MeToo.” We shared our work, exploring what accountability could look like in the #MeToo era. ATSA works with adults and adolescents who have been accused and convicted of some form of sexual abuse, sexual harassment or sexual assault. We chose to use a restorative justice (RJ) frame with these professionals to address this issue.

According to the criminologist Howard Zehr, considered the grandfather of restorative justice, RJ “is basically common sense…. When a wrong has been done, it needs to be named and acknowledged. Those who have been harmed need to be able to grieve their losses, to be able to tell their stories, to have their questions answered; that is, to have the harms and needs caused by the offense addressed. They—and we—need to have those who have done wrong accept their responsibility and take steps to repair the harm to the extent it is possible.”

Using the RJ circle process, we asked workshop attendees to look at responsibility and authentic accountability at three levels:

1. **At the personal level:** When you are determining whether or not you believe someone you care about has taken full responsibility for a harm they have done, what do you look for in the apology?
   - Genuine remorse
   - Body language
   - Word choice
   - Taking responsibility and not making excuses
   - Choosing to act differently (Walk the talk)
   - Being able to observe changing behavior over time and whether it is consistent with the apology
   - Willingness to come back to the conversation over and over again if necessary
   - Importance of being consistent when discussing the issues

   Participants also noted that there are different levels of accountability depending upon the cognitive understanding of the adult, adolescent or child who committed the harm. On the personal level, some acknowledged that the feelings behind this question would depend upon whether it was their own child who was harmed or someone they know, or they know the person who caused the harm. Each of these conditions might also affect our own responsibility to hold someone accountable for their actions.

2. **At the clinical level:** When you are determining whether or not you believe a client (or someone you are advocating for) has taken full responsibility for a harm they have done, what do you look for?
   - A clear understanding of the feelings of others
   - Recognize that the conversations, the insights and the changes are genuine
   - If there is an apology, it is from the heart and authentic, not scripted based upon what is expected of the person in treatment
   - Being able to observe changes in all aspects of their lives
   - Confirmation from others that both their words and their actions are changing for the better.

3. **At the society level:** When you are determining whether or not you believe a public figure has taken full responsibility for a harm they have done, what do you look for?
The themes that emerged in the circle for the public person’s apology included ones already identified and the items below:

- Ability to articulate harm from the perspective of those who were harmed
- Ensure that the focus of the apology is on others and not an excuse trying to explain their own behaviors
- Humility about their lives and being able to convey a sense of integrity
- Timing (not too soon or too late)
- Word choice was raised to a new level for a public figure as well as their actions (e.g., words that could minimize the impact of simply saying “my victims” rather than the person/friend/child I harmed)
- Ability to articulate a range of other behaviors and taking responsibility for those
- Not victim blaming

The group identified that a key difference in the public domain is that one can’t slowly build relationships based upon trust—an essential element of this work. The groups also noted that at least to date very few public figures have tried to take full responsibility for their actions, and for those who tried, none has been received well by the public.

We have seen people take full responsibility in a less public arena where it was well received. After conversations with others, Kevin met with Alissa Ackerman to join in a process she has called “Vicarious Restorative Justice” highlighted in a special VICE report on HBO (www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTj-QCOm4p8).

Together, they decided to use her model of bringing individuals who are survivors of sexual violence together with men who committed sexual violence to share the impact of the trauma. Four survivors came together with Kevin to speak about the impact that sexual abuse had on their lives. Through this process, each spoke about how they have been able to come to terms with this history in a deeper way; for Kevin, he was better able to come to terms with his past actions and the harm he caused. In part through this process, Kevin has committed to using his professional expertise to coauthor a book, talk about what happened and how they came to work together.

Both of these cases used the principles of restorative justice that allowed the survivor—the person harmed—to speak about the lifelong impact of what happened to them. In both cases, these conversations captured a relational approach with the survivors, the support of people and (in some cases) their families, and took away much of the isolation those involved were experiencing.

It is true that in our righteous anger society tends to focus on cases where the celebrity is clearly wrong and is fully punished for what they have done. We can all name many of these individuals—including Jerry Sandusky, Bill Cosby, Larry Nassar, and, of course, the late Jeffrey Epstein. We are also starting to see celebrities who have been accused of sexual assault begin to reenter their professions, provoking questions such as: How much is enough time? What is enough accountability? And what is enough remorse to signal that it is permissible for you to reenter society?

Understandably, the initial response to these cases is retribution, not redemption. When we learn of the horror, the full extent of what happened, we often have more of an appetite for vengeance. It may, in part, be a reaction to the helplessness we feel in hearing such horrific stories. A question: What if we could also channel our reaction into creating a space for someone to step forward to acknowledge, to take responsibility for what they have done? For years, victims hesitated to speak out publicly for fear of being judged, shamed, or worse. Why would we expect a different reaction from a person who is trying to take responsibility for perpetrating the harm? How society responds initially can set the stage for a healing process. Society has begun to create a space for survivors to step forward through the growing #MeToo movement. Now we have another opportunity: can society create space for individuals to come forward to be held accountable for what they have done and to take full responsibility for their actions? Opening the space for people to say, “I did this and take responsibility for my actions” may not be the answer to sexual violence, but it offers a piece of healing for at least some survivors in some situations. If this does offer a path to healing and community safety, we would be negligent to ignore what this opportunity has to offer us all of us.

Consultant Joan Tabachnick is a fellow at the Department of Justice SMART Office focusing on preventing the perpetration of sexually harmful behaviors, particularly on children, adolescents and young adults. Over 25 years, she has developed prevention materials and programs for national, state, and local organizations. www.joantabachnick.com. Cordelia Anderson operated a national prevention training and consulting enterprise based in Minnesota for four decades promoting healthy development and preventing harmful behaviors. She has conducted more than 2700 trainings across the country and abroad on topics including preventing child sexual abuse/exploitation, the impact of pornography, and restorative practices.
Now Will We Put Gender at the Center of Gun Debate?

By Rob Okun

Voice Male editor Rob Okun says he has written versions of the commentary below more than 10 times over the years. After Sandy Hook, Virginia Tech, Northern Illinois, Aurora, Colo., Roseburg, Ore., Oak Creek, Wisc., Santa Barbara, Sutherland Springs, Tex., Las Vegas, and Orlando. The locations change, but the outline of the events remains the same. He continues to urge legislators at the local, state, and national level to move the gender of the shooter from the margins of the debate to the center of the national conversation about gun violence and masculinity. In the op-ed below first published before the shootings in Midland and Odessa, Texas but after El Paso and Dayton, Ohio—(published through the Peace Voice news syndicate) —he says that “Addressing mass shootings without making gender central to the debate is like expecting a three-legged stool to stand on two legs.”

The killing spree August 31 in Midland and Odessa, Texas, just weeks after the El Paso and Dayton shootings at the beginning of that month brought the number of mass shootings in the first 233 days of the year to 251. In the United States of Ammunition, that’s more than one a day. What’s going on? To paraphrase James Carville, “It’s the masculinity, people.”

It’s infuriating to me that because it’s so obvious who did the shooting the media, politicians, and pundits rarely cite the most significant common denominator of virtually every mass murder in the U.S.—the shooter’s gender! Patrick Crusius, the 21-year-old Texan charged with the El Paso murders, is an avowed white supremacist. The slain Dayton killer, Connor Betts, had previously compiled a “rape list” of females he wanted to sexually assault. West Texas shooter Seth Ator felt aggrieved; that life was unfair. All are (white) poster boys of toxic masculinity.

Any hope we’ll end the madness must begin by acknowledging that it’s almost always men shooting. Until we make gender central to our efforts to prevent mass shootings, we are on a fool’s errand. I have been repeating this message for 20 years, since Columbine. Before Tree of Life, Thousand Oaks, Parkland, Sutherland Springs, and Las Vegas, there was Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook, Aurora. All male shooters; usually white supremacists.

Let’s also acknowledge what’s not being examined—how we socialize boys and how little attention we give disaffected men. Think about the loner, the male outcast in high school. (Connor Betts’s ex-girlfriend told MSNBC that the Dayton killer had “no support system.”) Because we know how alienated nearly all perpetrators are, that gender is not central to the national conversation reveals a blindness of the highest order. Ignoring this fact just escalates the danger.

Don’t get me wrong. Increase gun regulations—the tougher, the better. Step up pressure to shutter the NRA. Support the Giffords Law Center, Guns Down America, Everytown for Gun Safety, and the Brady campaign. Have at it.

National Study on Boys’ Socialization

We need a nationwide uprising. Demand Congress authorize the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to study how we socialize males, beginning in preschool. Imagine if from age three on we followed males not just to identify troubled boys—but also and more importantly—to better develop curricula to cultivate their emotional intelligence and enhance their sense of connection. A pilot program could be rolled out next spring through Head Start.

What role could the authentic media play? How about a Frontlines investigation on manhood and violence? Or, a John Oliver Last Week Tonight special. Newspapers in the cities where shootings have occurred could collaborate to produce a multipart nation-wide series on “Men, Masculinity, and Mass Shootings.” The networks and cable news could do specials, too. Since the #MeToo movement began the media’s been pretty successful connecting the dots between toxic masculinity and sexual assault. Why the blind spot around mass shooters?

For years I’ve been part of a global movement of antisexist men working in 700 NGOs in 70 countries committed to transforming masculinity. From preventing violence against women and girls to advocating for women’s reproductive health and rights; from campaigns championing involved fatherhood to raising healthy boys. Reader know Voice Male, has been chronicling these efforts for years.

So ask yourself: why does virtually no one think about gender when considering mass shootings? Or, for that matter, when contemplating how to best protect people of color, LGBTQIA folks, Muslims and Jews when we are attacked? Because we assume the perpetrators will be men, usually white. If women had been the shooters in Texas or Ohio, that’s all we’d be talking about, right? (Ditto if the shooters were persons of color.)

It is the masculinity, people. Addressing mass shootings without making gender central to the debate is like expecting a three-legged stool to stand on two legs. Challenging weak or no gun laws and pointing out how secondary mental health challenges are not enough. We must keep the focus on masculinity.

If you agree, do more than lobby your elected representatives. Blast social media; wake up your faith communities, your schools. Demand media coverage, too. To honor the memories of the murdered, and to comfort the wounded and their families, it’s the least we can do.

Rob Okun is the editor of Voice Male.
For the longest time, women have been solely responsible for ensuring their own safety in public. Clutch your keys at night while walking down a dark alley; take a self-defense class to feel safer; avoid wearing skimpy clothes in sketchy areas. Such advice abounds from all corners of a woman's world: family, friends, strangers on the Internet, even the government. Basically, the message is: Since you are the only affected party in this culture of violence, the onus is on you to fix it.

This message is reinforced by the type of solutions offered by various social institutions. For example:

- Under the Nirbhaya Fund Scheme created by the Indian government, 7,800 women of the Kangazha village in Kottayam between 10 and 60 were trained in self-defense.

Empowered women are not promoted to another planet. They still have to navigate the patriarchal framework of society.

- There is now a pan-India phone number, 112, part of the Women's Safety Initiative of the Emergency Response Support System. Women can either dial the number—available in 16 states or union territories—or in case of an emergency press the panic button on the 112 India mobile app.

- In the private sector, emergency response initiatives such as the Watch Over You app (https://watchoveryou.in/) have a special women's safety feature, which claims to be “a personal guardian angel that oversees women when they travel or feel threatened.”

- India's popular bus service, BEST, received a 100 million rupees grant from the government (about US $1.5 million) to operate women-only buses to enhance female passenger safety. There also are women-only police stations and squads doing sensitization and protection (even though questions exist whether they are the most effective methods of ending gender-based violence).

- Notice a pattern? Every single “solution” is targeted at changing the habits of women. There is no denying these initiatives will help some women, but for systemic, societal change, “we need to do something more long-term,” said Anand Pawar, executive director of Samyak, a Pune-based resource center that builds awareness of gender issues and challenges toxic masculinity. “Technology cannot be the solution to patriarchal control,” he said. (http://samyakindia.org/)

One solution would be to shift responsibility for ensuring women's safety away from women. Samyak has accomplished this in part by challenging men's risk-taking behavior—road rage, exercising control over women's bodies, reckless sexual encounters—hallmarks of toxic masculinity's tropes of aggression and competitiveness, Pawar noted. “In many of our workshops, men said that those who do not beat their wives are ‘lesser’ men. This

Resources for Change

In addition to Samyak, other grassroots organizations doing similar work include Men's Action to Stop Violence Against Women (MASVAW, http://chsj.org/masvaw.html), a coalition of male activists in the state of Uttar Pradesh. MASVAW’s efforts build awareness among men about domestic violence and mobilize men to protest such violence and support survivors. Another NGO, Men Against Violence and Abuse (MAVA, http://mavaindia.org/), active for more than 25 years, organized a traveling film festival in 2018 that tackled gender discrimination and promoted the concept of gender in a pluralistic, nonbinary way across the country.
toxic definition of manhood pushes men to these behaviors. Men have created the definition of manhood, and they kept it so ‘high’ that now they are just trying to reach it but cannot.”

All these behaviors also pose a risk to men’s well being, Pawar said. They risk sabotaging their relationships and health, even their lives. Samyak workshops explain the detrimental consequences of these behaviors—for men and those around them. Men need to recognize that “the dominant idea of manhood is not the only idea of manhood,” Pawar said. As he sees things, it has never been enough to just empower women. In South Asia, “we need to understand that empowered women are not promoted to another planet.” They still have to navigate the patriarchal framework of society. To flip the narrative, Samyak teaches men how to live with independent women and addresses men’s anxieties and insecurities surrounding gender equality and privilege.

Samyak emphasizes creating non-threatening environments that promote equality. “If your pedagogy is not creating a threat for men, many of them do come forward and express their desire to change,” he said. “We help men understand their privileges and the losses they might incur because of their urge to maintain those privileges.”

Samyak promotes gender sensitivity through workshops, graphic design classes, film festivals curated around gender issues, and awareness campaigns targeted at young boys, adolescents and grown men. Its 20 gender trainers discuss gender constructs and how toxic masculinity controls mobility, resources and people, including members of the queer community. Pawar noted that Samyak also reaches out to fathers, especially encouraging emotional connections with their sons and educating them about the danger of patriarchal control of the household.

Nivas Varape is a good example. Varape, 45, had never given a second thought to his daughter’s higher education until he attended a Samyak workshop. Since then, he has made arrangements to educate her further, he said, with a hint of pride in his voice.

As Samyak’s Pawar noted, “A lot of men might have learned the language [about feminism] but they didn’t learn about the power relations. There is usually symbolic but not real lasting change. We train men to reflect on their notion of masculinity and their experiences with power and privilege, rather than going out and patronizing women.”

“Manhood is about talking to women, listening to women. We shouldn’t feel we have to fix everything. It is about controlling anger. Feeling like I can do whatever I want when I’m angry, that is not manhood,” Jethe said.

After years of Samyak trainings, Jethe now conducts his own workshops. A recent initiative centered around visiting schools to ensure that teachers weren’t assigning stereotypically gendered activities and duties to students. He also talks to young boys about contraception and how women are unfairly burdened with the responsibility for birth control. “A lot of youth want to change, but nobody is talking to them,” Jethe noted, stressing the need to repeat the same narrative until the point is fully understood.

“The issue is not about men and women,” he said. “It is about right and wrong. If only a woman talks about equality, then people will discredit her and say ‘Oh, she’s just talking about herself.’ If a man starts talking about it, then they’ll say ‘Oh, a man is talking. Let’s listen to him.’ Since that’s the case, we might as well say something worthwhile.”

—Rajvi Desai
Men’s Health
Poor Body Image Taking a Toll on Men’s Mental Health
By Glen Jankowski

In recent years, more and more men say they are feeling ashamed of their appearance. This “body dissatisfaction” isn’t something just affecting young men either—it’s reported extensively across a range of age groups. And, it’s harmful; research shows it can lead to depression, steroid abuse and even suicide.

More commonly, though, it coincides with punishing gym routines, overly strict dieting, and repetitive anxious thoughts—all of which can add up to a severe impact on daily functioning. Indeed, this pressure for men to look “perfect” is one of the reasons why there’s been a rise in the number of men using makeup. (See theconversation.com/why-more-men-are-wearing-makeup-than-ever-before-88347.)

I have spent eight years researching male body dissatisfaction. For my Ph.D., I carried out focus groups with male university students, to explore the relationship between their appearance and their well being. Men in the groups told me that, for them, body dissatisfaction meant spending money on clothes they would never wear. They felt too self-conscious of their bodies and that certain clothing exacerbated “problem areas.” They even spoke about not wanting to have sex as they felt ashamed about how they looked naked. For some men, their body dissatisfaction had also led to avoiding activities they used to enjoy. One participant explained, “I used to be on a swimming team and now I don’t dare go into the pool.”

For these men, effective support is needed to combat male body dissatisfaction, but it’s seriously hard to find. For example, just 3 percent of studies published in a leading international eating disorders journal actually attempted to prevent eating disorders. Similarly, there aren’t many existing programs to reduce male body dissatisfaction. And the ones that do exist tend to have limited benefits. This is in part because such programs tend to either blame the individual or blame other people.

These programs assume that if a man can change his behavior or his thinking and stop “internalizing” appearance pressures—and consuming appearance focused media, such as magazines and social media posts—then his body dissatisfaction should reduce. But as Harvard University professor Bryn Austin writes, this “limited” and even “unethical” assumption places “the burden solely on individuals while leaving toxic environments and societal bad actors unchallenged.”

There is also a tendency to blame women for male body dissatisfaction. (See glenjankowski.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/jankowski2019.pdf.) Mothers are chastised for callously modeling unhealthy food behaviors to their children. Women generally are blamed for holding men to appearance standards they themselves could not meet, a dubious assessment at best. But not only is this unfair to women—who have to deal with their own severe body dissatisfaction and bear stricter, more frequent appearance pressures than men—but it’s also unfair to men, as it ignores the real cause.

It’s unsurprising men are feeling this way given that my research has shown how most images in popular magazines, dating and (of course) pornography websites are of muscular, lean young men—who pretty much always have a full head of hair. So anyone who doesn’t fit this notion of “attractiveness” is going to feel like they’re not good enough (eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/3002/). Men are now feeling dissatisfied not only with their muscles, but also with their hairline, wrinkles and body fat—and a heavy cultural and commercial promotion of unrealistic appearance standards is to blame. One of the most compelling examples of this phenomenon is the way toy manufacturers have added muscle and reduced the body fat of successive editions of action dolls over the years, including GI Joe.

There has also been a rise in the marketing of protein shakes, cosmetic surgery, waxing products, makeup and cellulite creams, all aimed directly at men. Psychotherapist and writer Susie Orbach has written extensively about why people feel dissatisfied with their physical appearance. She has described how “businesses mine our bodies for profits.” Or, in other words, they promote appearance insecurity to sell products. It is this fact that must be tackled if both men’s and women’s body dissatisfaction is to be reduced.

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I spent the first half of my life trying to be a “normal” guy. That project didn’t go so well. The good news is that in the second half of my life I gave up trying, and things got better.

What led me to change course? An unexpected interaction with radical feminist writings that offered a critique of patriarchy, followed by the opportunity to meet radical feminists living in a patriarchal society who were working to advance the radical feminist critique of pornography and of men’s sexual exploitation of women in patriarchy.

A quick aside: Yes, I realize that I just used the phrases “radical feminism” and “patriarchy” three times each in one sentence. That’s part of my job, and probably the most important part, to be a guy who repeats those terms—the problem (patriarchy) and liberatory response (radical feminism)—until they no longer scare people off. That is the inescapable irony of being me. I leverage my presumed authority as a man to suggest that this presumed authority is a big problem.

My embrace of radical feminism was neither quick nor easy. Like most men in the United States, I was trained to think that radical feminists were angry man-haters and that whatever those feminist women had in mind, it likely wouldn’t turn out well for me. But eventually I embraced that unexpected encounter with feminism and feminists, which is the story I want to tell today.

Half a life ago, at the age of 30, I left my job at a newspaper to pursue a Ph.D., looking for the credential that would allow me to teach in a university. I was changing my career, but I didn’t expect graduate school to change me. I certainly wasn’t looking to upend my life, challenge my most basic sense of self, lose some of what I thought were my best friends, and teeter on the edge of an emotional breakdown for the better part of a decade. But that’s what happened to me as I embraced the unexpected gift of radical feminism, and I suggest others should do the same. I don’t have specific rules for how to do this, but I am certain that if you do it seriously, it will be difficult for you, too, and that struggle will take the rest of your life to resolve.

Sales Pitch to Men

This is my sales pitch for men: embrace a radical feminist critique of institutionalized male dominance, particularly the critique of men’s sexual exploitation of women. If you take radical feminism seriously, it will be a rough ride that never ends. But the payoff is not just that you will contribute to making a better world—your life will get better as well. By rejecting the failed project of trying to be “a real man,” we create the possibility—not the guarantee, but the possibility—of a richer, more meaningful life.

I offer my own story as evidence. I was born and raised in the American Midwest, the third of four kids in a conventional (that is, highly dysfunctional) family. Growing up I was short, skinny, and effeminate, bookish with no discernible athletic ability. By college, I was starting to outgrow that misfit profile and had begun my quest for normality. Though I started later than most guys, eventually I dated, had sex with women, told stupid sexist
Like most men, I was trained to think that radical feminists were angry haters and whatever they had in mind, it wouldn’t turn out well for me.
means leaving the comfort zone within which men can achieve quick and easy orgasms, but it creates the space in which a new intimacy and sexuality can flourish.

Let me describe in detail what a non-pornographic sexuality looks like... Don't worry, just kidding. I'm not going to subject you to that, partly because it would not be appropriate here, but more importantly because there is no recipe for healthy non-patriarchal sexuality. Instead of description, let me offer a metaphor. A lot of talk about sexuality in contemporary culture is in terms of heat: Is the sex you're having hot? Hot sex, we're told, is the best sex. That got me thinking about a phrase to describe arguments that are intense but don't really advance our understanding—lots of blustering and shouting but not much listening or learning. We say that such a debate "produced more heat than light."

What if our sexual activity—our embodied connections to another person—were less about heat and more about light? What if instead of desperately seeking hot sex, we searched for a way to produce light when we touch? What if such touch were about finding a way to create light between people so that we could see ourselves and each other better? If the goal is knowing ourselves and each other like that, then what we need is not really heat but light to illuminate the path. How do we touch and talk to each other to shine that light?

There is no intimacy instruction manual to tell us how to generate that light, but I know that in my own life, the possibility opened up only after I had embraced radical feminism and started the long, difficult, and never-ending work of dismantling my pornographic imagination. My capacity for joy has expanded in the second half of my life, along with my experience of grief.

Men's Struggle to Be Fully Human

The masculinity of competition, conquest, confrontation, and control can be efficient in seeking pleasure of a certain kind, but it knows little of joy. Patriarchal masculinity teaches us to control our pain, but it can block us from experiencing the grief that is part of a full life. Chasing pleasure and controlling pain is patriarchal. Opening ourselves up to joy and grief is to be fully human.

Men's struggle to become fully human is important, not only for us but for women. Remember the argument from justice? Our task is to end men's violence and to end men's sexual exploitation of women, both of which are rooted in men's claim to own or control women. Men cannot simply say to the world, "Hey, I'm a normal guy, and half a life in resistance. The second half of my life has not been without disappointment and despair—as I said, embracing radical feminism doesn't magically make life easy. But even at my lowest points in these past 30 years, I would never have chosen to go back to "normal." I have never regretted that decision, in part because I believe in the pursuit of justice but also because my life is better now because of the relationships radical feminism has made possible.

The more I talked to men, the more convinced I became that almost all men at some point in their lives don't feel man enough. Even the men I thought were the "real men" were scared.

The most important of these relationships was with Jim Koplin, the anarchist-influenced radical feminist and anti-imperialist I met 30 years ago. It was Jim who helped me understand what was possible for men through radical feminism. He was the first man with whom I felt truly safe, the first man in front of whom I was truly vulnerable, the first man to whom I could say, "I love you." He was the man who made it possible for me to stop lying to myself, both about who I was and about the intolerable cruelty of the world. And none of that would have been possible without his commitment to radical feminism.

One of the first things Jim gave me to read was a speech that Andrea Dworkin had given to a men's group, called "I Want a Twenty-Four-Hour Truce During Which There Is No Rape." That was her response to the common question feminists face, "What do women want from men?" Just give us one day of rest, she said, "one day in which no new bodies are piled up, one day in which no new agony is added to the old." That will not happen until men take seriously feminism, which is also the vehicle for saving ourselves. Dworkin said it bluntly:

"We do not want to do the work of helping you to believe in your humanity. We cannot do it anymore. We have always tried. We have been repaid with systematic exploitation and systematic abuse. You are going to have to do this yourselves from now on and you know it."

My friend Jim knew it, and he helped me understand it, and we helped each other try to live it. Jim's deep capacity for both joy and grief made him one of the most fully human men I have ever known. Since his death, I talk about Jim as often as I can, to acknowledge the lifeline he provided for me and encourage us to provide that for each other.

In some ways, letting go of normal makes day-to-day life harder, but it also makes life more meaningful, in a way captured by the writer James Baldwin:

"I think the inability to love is the central problem, because the inability masks a certain terror, and that terror is the terror of being touched. And, if you can't be touched, you can't be changed. And, if you can't be changed, you can't be alive."

That's why I repeat, over and over, to as many men as will listen: We are told that feminism is a threat, and in some sense that is accurate. Feminism is a threat to our ability to hang on to normal guyness. But once we let go of the patriarchal pathology of normal, we can more easily embrace touch, change, love, and live. When we let go of normal, we can see that feminism—especially the most radical feminism we are trained to fear the most—is not a threat but a great gift to men.

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It’s unlikely that Don McPherson, an All–American college quarterback who also played for the Philadelphia Eagles and Houston Oilers in the NFL and in the Canadian Football League, knew that his shining athletic career would merely be the prelude to his most impressive act of leadership—his life’s work helping men and boys find the courage and skills to become healthier and more well-rounded human beings. He’s been working to transform manhood and masculinity for the past three decades.

Jackson Katz met Don in 1994 when he arrived at Northeastern University’s Center for the Study of Sport in Society in Boston. “Don had been hired to co-direct another program at the Center,” recalled Katz, the writer-activist and Voice Male advisory board member. “We began just talking at the office and sometimes after work. I was then running the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) program that I’d started the year before. It was the first large-scale gender violence prevention program in college athletics. Don had attended some presentations and workshops that Byron Hurt (like Don, a former college quarterback) and I conducted. I think I could see from those first times talking with Don about feminism—and masculinities and the intersections of race and gender—that he was exceptionally thoughtful, curious, and open about all of these issues.

“I was especially impressed because of his background,” Katz said. “Before he arrived at the Center he was clearly committed to using sport as a vehicle for working with young people on social issues. But in those early days I had no idea he would become such a passionate and committed activist-educator on the issues of men’s violence against women and others related to masculinity and violence.”

What follows is an excerpt from Don’s new book, You Throw Like a Girl: The Blind Spot of Masculinity.

“I aspire to live my life in the new toughness of masculinity—deliberate, intentional, loving, caring, egalitarian, and nonviolent. All the things my father was but was incapable of articulating. I believe it’s time for us as men to expand the definition of what it means to be men, understand the complexities of our gender, and learn to be loving, caring, and whole as we raise the next generation of boys to be loving, caring, and whole.”

The Socialization of Boys

When I first began this work, shortly after retiring from football at age twenty-nine, I probed my life for lessons that instilled in me what it means to be a man. None of what I found was positive or affirming. What I unearthed was shaming language, bravado, and stoic posturing. That’s when I arrived at the quintessential insult to boys: “You throw like a girl.” It succinctly illustrates the foundation of men’s violence against women: the belief that girls and women are “less than” and the unspoken suppression of boys’ emotional wholeness.

The more I asked the question, “What does it mean to be a man?” the more salient and important that insult became in confronting misogyny and sexism’s direct link to violence against women. In fact, it led to a deeper, inescapable truth that we do not raise boys to be men, we raise them not to be women—or gay men.

In examining this profound truth over recent decades, I am troubled to have found that we raise boys expecting them to devalue girls; it’s an absolute requirement of being male. Eventually, “You throw like a girl” became more than a framework for my lectures and led to critical follow-up questions: How do we raise boys to be whole men without degrading our daughters in the process? How do we change the narrative about what it means to be a man? How do we get men to understand that being a “real man” and a “whole man” are not mutually exclusive identities?
It is important to note that I write as a cisgender heterosexual man aimed at reaching other cis heterosexual men. This focus is not meant to exclude nonconforming individuals but to identify and examine the trenchant dogma of masculinity that leads to men’s violence against women, and the impact this narrow understanding of masculinity has on the healthy development of boys.

Throughout this book I use the word “masculinity,” even though it is too often used inaccurately as a monolithic term for the characteristics of men. More broadly, “masculinities” account for the differences between and among men, yet we must acknowledge that we do not deliberately nurture boys as whole beings who are impacted by and possess a wide array of gendered qualities. Instead, we give them rigid commands and demand they conform to a strict set of behaviors and beliefs, which comprise what I call the mandate, performance, promise and lie of masculinity. Together, these four tenets, which I explore in this book, constitute the dogma of masculinity—the expectations of male behavior and how it can earn for men the privileges of a patriarchal culture. Men are expected to categorically accept this privilege without understanding how or why it’s achieved. How do men understand privilege they have not earned? If male privilege comes at the expense of women, is it truly privilege (and does it belong to men?) or is it more accurately defined as oppression?

Men as Allies

I’ve realized the key to drawing men into a sustained dialogue lies in adopting a more aspirational approach to discussing masculinity. We need to be for positive outcomes, not simply against bad things that have occurred.

There are many negative terms to describe masculinity ("privileged," “hegemonic,” “toxic,” “violent”) as well as ways to address it. (We must “redefine manhood,” “confront toxic masculinity,” “challenge patriarchy and male privilege.”) None of these constructions are positive and they only condemn the fundamental way in which men’s identity is formed and lived. Furthermore, this language might only exacerbate men’s defensiveness on gender issues.

I believe we need to engage men in a new set of terms that are aspirational and more accurately representative of the wholeness of men. Our approach needs to be deliberate and intentional. We can no longer allow good guys to be defined by the nobility of emotional abstinence or those who do not consciously harm others. We must be aspirational and courageous as we raise future generations of boys to be emotionally whole and fully actualized men. If we do this honestly and courageously, we will find the depths of our humanity: vulnerability, fear, insecurity, and love. We will discover that we care deeply, fear viscerally, and love irrationally. But we will also see very clearly how we deliberately and systematically stifle this truth simply to uphold something we have never truly acknowledged or questioned: how masculinity is governed by the dogma of patriarchy.

Although understanding masculinity has increasingly become a part of the work to end men’s violence against women, it continues to lack the priority I believe is necessary for sustainable cultural change. That work is informed and directed by the experiences of women who have survived men’s violence and those who advocate for all women and their rights to safety and equity. Men are enlisted by women with a set of priorities strictly aimed at eradicating the culture and behaviors of men that harm women’s lives. Underlying this strategy is an appeal to men’s sense of duty and protection of women. I refer to this as “protective patriarchy”: a noble sense of male identity that comes from our prescribed roles as protectors and providers.

As men working in the “prevention” field, we often refer to our role as “allies” to women who need to remain accountable to women. We are allies because our charge is defined by the experience of women and it is at the behest and beseeching of women. Therefore, our role is in support of their work and their perspective. While we ultimately endeavor to engage men, this dynamic, in many ways, distances us from men. Since men don’t voluntarily come to this discussion, there is an inherent loss of accountability to and solidarity with them. Male “allies” are challenged to remain steadfast and unwavering in the protection and advancement of women’s lives and rights while finding solidarity in a cultural environment in which those rights are regularly violated. This is where accountability to women can cloud men’s authenticity: sensing the urgent imperative to confront violence, we seize upon the rare moments to engage men but ignore their complexity. We want men to use their protective “instincts” while ignoring the fact that protective patriarchy is not instinctual but rather a product of a set of learned behaviors that narrowly define masculinity. To sincerely and authentically engage men, we must have an honest conversation about masculinity.

Accountability vs. Chivalry

Most men will quickly and readily agree that violence against women is wrong and that something should be done to stop it. Some men will only assume such a stance to appear politically correct or to offer up a predictable, vigilante-style bravado. Other men are truly sincere and act out of a sense of deep caring or hurt from having witnessed firsthand some form of violence against a loved one. However, what men do not always want to deal with is a solution that demands scrutiny of their own behavior and privilege, even in the context of doing what they know is right. So when the topic turns from the problem they can “see” in others to the
Joel is 16. I’ve asked him to define masculinity as he sees it, just as I’ve been asking a similar thing of 16- and 17-year-olds like him all over the United Kingdom. What is going on in their heads right now, these boys on the cusp? What do they believe, and what do they doubt, about the mantle of adulthood they’ll soon inherit? What do they think makes a man a man, at a time when there are big questions being asked about gender identity and gender privilege?

Joel says, “My granddad was a coal miner for 20 years. So in his mind, masculinity is a very stereotypical “man’s man” thing: the guy coming home from work for his meat and two veg, a muscular, massive man. It depends who you ask, but I think, more and more, that idea’s dropped away.” What’s come up in place of the old certainties, Joel thinks, is a wildfire of confusion. “Because when you’re little, you think of being masculine as being big, butch, strong. You think of a man as someone who wants to help the people around him and, to an extent, protect.” Then you realize, Joel continues, “there’s a thin line between protecting and being overbearing. That line is often crossed. You hear a phrase like ‘toxic masculinity’ get thrown about. And it all gets... complicated.”

Some months ago, I began canvassing the views of about 30 boys Joel’s age—encouraging them to speak freely, from Brighton to Birmingham, Cardiff to Canvey Island, sometimes on the condition of anonymity—and certain preoccupations recur. In school they’re stressed (“Exam pressure. School pressure, obviously”) and outside the school gates they’re edgily aware of peer-on-peer violence, or at least the scent of it in the air. They like gaming, Netflix, partying, coupling, the Premier League, “watching useless videos for hours.” They’re irritated by early waking, overtly suspicious of security guards; being perceived as wasteful by adults who watch them watching those “useless” videos. They find YouTube relaxing, okay?

A Wildfire of Confusion

Some of these young men were responding to a readers’ call-out about identity published on the Guardian’s website. Others came via contacts in youth groups and schools; a few I met while researching other articles. When we spoke they would chat in lucid bursts and then stall, drop into ums, awkwardness, silence. I found them confounding and fascinating in equal measure. On masculinity, male identity and what being manly is, they would contradict each other; sometimes they’d take extreme positions, sometimes admit total bafflement. As Joel put it, this has all gotten complicated.

What makes a man a man? Jesiah in Croydon believes it’s the internal things, “the values you stand by, doing what you believe to be right.” Dylan in Canterbury thinks it’s a matter of “not changing who you are to please people.” Hamish in Lanarkshire said, “You stand up for yourself, but you also stand up for others.” To Sonny in Birmingham, “You’re no more or less a man by being strong or brave.” Matt in Manchester said, “It’s mainly about fitness and strength.” Corrin in London added, “Strength definitely plays a part.” And to Evian in London, “The stereotype’s been put in our heads that we’re supposed to be strong, not meant to allow any emotions, but I don’t agree with that.”

Some of the young men I speak to feel their way into answers by considering how they’re different from previous generations. They’ve also got a keen idea what the millennial generation and people my age (mid-thirties) think. After all, they’re picking a route through our residue. They’re about to take over our messy bedrooms.

“My dad is quite tolerant, still quite masculine,” says Clement in Northumberland. “I’m still not totally open about everything with him, because there’s that traditional barrier of masculinity.” Discreetly, among friends, Clement has been experimenting with makeup, wearing jewelry. “If it’s interesting to me, I should be able to do it without being called something, put in a box.” Clement says he feels masculine and feminine at the same time, “A healthy medium... But I think many boys are stuck, unsure.”

Ty from King’s Lynn is having a cheeky smoke outside school when we talk on the phone. I ask him what he thinks makes a man a man. “Have certain morals? Forgive and forget things? Around this area, the feeling of a lot of people my age is that to be a man, you have to be able to fight.” Ty likes to skateboard, smoke weed, “sometimes a bit of graffiti.” A year ago he hung around with a
different crowd, “selling drugs, having fights, things like that.” Then he got beaten up one night, which shook him. Then he got beaten up a second time, “and I thought, ‘What am I doing with myself? All this, to boost the vision I’m manly?”’

I speak to a young man in southeast England whom we’ll call Mark. He’s been stealing bikes for some time. He got caught once, and was released the next morning. He sounds convincing when he says he’ll stop as soon as he turns 18. We’re chatting over Instagram one day when I ask him: what else will he need to do to become a man? Mark writes: “Don’t know,” and after a few seconds adds: “I’m still a kid.” Then he changes his mind about that second part and deletes it, so all that’s left is the blank.

Before speaking to them, I wonder if any will question the premise of my opening question: what makes a man a man? Samuel, who lives near Derby, does. “Being mixed-race makes identity quite a complicated thing for me,” he says. “You almost find that identifying as any one thing can be a way of discriminating against yourself.” Samuel has an older sibling who is trans, and he says this “makes it easier to see that identity can be forced on people. That people are who they are and not how they are.”

**Man Up? You Don’t Say “Woman Up”**

This is something that nags at Dylan in Canterbury, too. He groans when I ask him about the phrase “Man up.” Some of his male teachers say it, and Dylan finds it “degrading... You don’t say: ‘Woman up.’ It doesn’t make sense.” Others come at it differently. Matias in London, a keen footballer, will hear his coach shout “Man up!” from the sidelines and find motivation in this “harsh encouragement.” Evan uses the phrase with his friends. “When someone’s upset or lonely, yeah, sometimes I do say that. But when you think about it, it’s like saying men aren’t meant to show emotions. And I think differently.”

Evan and Matias are a little younger than the others I speak to. Neither is a big talker; they stick to the point. But they’re self-aware and sharp, and while they can see that for others masculinity has become a complicated thing, they don’t find it all that complicated themselves. Matias wants to become a man in a traditional mold, protecting, providing. Evan hopes to be like his grandfather, “who worked as a carpenter, 24/7, nonstop for 50 years. He was dedicated. He grew a family.”

They both agree—everyone agrees—that young men are no good at talking about their emotions with each other. Sonny in Birmingham says, “It’s not really acceptable to say you’re vulnerable or lonely.” Reece in London remarks, “Yeah, that’s off the table.” When a young man we’ll call Chris, in north Wales, worries inordinately about what others make of him, such worries remain private. Max in Bradford sympathizes. “Most people’s response to being told [something like that] is a blank, confused stare,” he says. There’s “a definite stigma” around discussing your inner life, says Matthew in Brighton. Samuel in Derby goes further noting, “I suspect quite a lot of my peers have a mental illness of some description, just they’re unwilling to admit it in case it makes them appear less masculine.”

Sonny in Birmingham and Samuel in Derby have never met, but they share a kind of preternaturally wise, fringe-dwellers’ perspective. Independently, they describe a style of arms-race humor they reckon is common among their peers. Outrage piled on outrage, no subject off-limits so long as it’s framed as a joke—rape, race, the Holocaust. I ask others about this and Clement, who has noticed it, too, has a go at explaining. “If you’re gay, or Jewish, or black, that gets kind of picked up on and joked about—not in a way that’s malicious, or that they mean to be malicious, but definitely in a way that feels like there’s no limit. They have to top the last thing, do something bigger or better, increase the scale till the scale’s massive.”

I tell a few of these interviewees that when I was their age, my friends and I laughed about outrageous things that now make me wince. Maybe this has always been a schoolboy thing? Samuel’s not having it. You didn’t have social media, he says. Nor this nagging, heightened habit of “emulating and exaggerating, emulating and exaggerating. My generation depends on popularity. The pressure they put on themselves for more popularity is higher than any other generation’s experience.”

Dylan, who is gay, has a good-side, bad-side view of social media. For every supportive voice you might hear only because of access to Twitter, there’s the homophobic lobbing insults. Before I started talking to the boys, I believed they had caught a historical bad break when it came to social media—an industry helping itself to every sort of choice, enjoying unregulated excess through their most pliable years. Jesiah in Croydon brushes this off as lazy thinking. Social media’s just the part of youth culture most visible to older generations, he says. He thinks that people my age fixate on it disproportionately.

**Masculinity via Instagram and Snapchat**

Jesiah may be right. I still wince, hearing from Sonny or Ty or Clement about the closed-loop masculinity that gets impressed on them via their screens—“Making visual,” as Sonny puts it, “what a really large group of people think you must be.” In King’s Lynn, outside school, Ty explains what masculinity looks like as it comes at him via his Instagram and Snapchat feeds. The choice is a stark one “between being a hard man or a fuckboy. The hard men post pictures with their big jackets and balaclavas and knives,
trying to boost their reputations. And the fuckboys look in the mirror with their shirts off.”

I ask Ty to explain fuckboys. What’s the deal with the toplessness? Come on, says Ty, “It’s to get girls.” He’s feeling burned just now, he says. A girlfriend has cheated on him or, if I understand Ty correctly, a girlfriend has cheated on him more times than he has cheated on her. “I believe that women aren’t of equal status to men,” Ty goes on to say. “They’re actually above men at the moment. They act above, I mean. To get a girlfriend, you have to try a lot harder than 10 or 15 years ago, when people were getting on that everyone was equal. Now they’ve sort of risen above it because the people [feminists] who were originally saying let’s have equal rights, they didn’t have anything to say anymore, so they kept pushing it and pushing it.”

Jesiah is clear-headed and at ease about feminism. “I’ve got two younger sisters. I see what the older sister goes through, especially as a black woman, only trying to get what she’s worked for and deserves. I don’t feel threatened by it; I welcome it. But I know people at school who feel extremely threatened.” Clement says, “You see a pushback against feminism, yeah.” There’s unease, Corrin says. “Some of my friends are, like, scared to get girlfriends because of the whole #MeToo thing. What if, in 10 years, the girl comes back and makes trouble?”

“It is completely right that society makes an effort to get women involved in the STEM subjects, in history, in politics,” Joel says. “Because for so long women have been excluded from these sorts of things. But it leaves, um, a gap. In my opinion, and from what I’ve heard from others, there’s nothing—no voice of that for young men. There’s no person saying: ‘You can be this, you can be that.’ Do you understand what I’m saying?”

So many young men tell me something along these lines that, yeah, I think I do start to understand what Joel’s saying. I’ve tried to let them speak for themselves in this article—not to overinterpret, or patronize, or apologize for them; only to ask their views and pay attention to their answers. A lot of them feel threatened. The most engaged know they’re part of a historical steering correction; some, like Jesiah, have the perspective and personal experience to appreciate this as a necessary correction. Others admit more selfish feelings.

One young man describes a visit to a bookshop. “And the first thing you see? 100 Female Inventors or whatever. Or Michelle Obama’s book saying, ‘Have high hopes for yourselves, girls.’ I guess there’s this idea that young men will already have high hopes for themselves?” But Clement in Northumberland thinks those of his peers who expect otherwise are unrealistic: “If anyone tried to do a similar thing, a male-empowerment thing, it would be seen as empowering sexism and the whole lad culture.”

Still, Clement says, he can see signs of trouble brewing. “There’s been a reversal. The attitudes towards women that were acceptable 30 or 40 years ago are now, like, the worst thing you can say. I feel like that’s left a lot of young men in the dark. Because they hear their fathers and grandfathers repeat these attitudes, and they don’t know how to react. They’re faced with women who are stronger and more confident. It’s confusing. It scares them.”

Some Guys Are Angry, Disenfranchised

“I think it’s a serious problem,” Joel says. “A lot of young men are becoming angry and disenfranchised. You know the rise of the far right that’s gone on in recent years? I think that’s partly
Masculinity Beyond “Pulp Fiction”

When I was the age of the lads I interviewed, my sense of what it would mean to be a man came first through my family and friends. In that, I was lucky. But an idea of masculinity also trickled down via illicit VHS viewings of Trainspotting and Tarantino movies, beery images of rock concerts at Knebworth, news of England fans lobbing patio furniture around Europe. What I knew about the stab-bings and the killings, people are quick to blame social media, as if it’s the root cause of all these problems. I personally believe it’s that young men aren’t being listened to. They don’t have a voice—even down to Brexit—in what’s going on. The legal age to vote should be lowered, because we know what we want. Being young and having no say in your future is completely mad. We’re seeing everything go by us. So yeah, I think that contributes to some of the anger out there, the hate.

Some say they feel ignored and generalized-about when it suits the wider world. At the same time, they feel they’ll be held to obscure account for wrongs that happened in the world when they were children, when they were babies, when they hadn’t been thought of at all. So that now, some young men get the impres-sion they’re seen as a bit gross, a bit distasteful, as problems-in-waiting. William in London sums it up: “We’re seen as mindless testo drones.” Or, Matt in Manchester, “We’re seen as manipulative and sex-obsessed.”

“I think a lot of mainstream politicians are afraid to really touch on masculinity,” Joel says. “In case of maybe saying the wrong thing. And I can understand that. It’s a very difficult thing to talk on, even now, even to you. But I think there does need to be a place to be able to say that masculinity’s a good thing. That masculinity can be admirable. Otherwise we’re just, sort of... just...”


All photographs from “Sixteen,” a portrait of British boys and girls by 15 photographers, a group project that was on show at Format19 international photography festival in Derby, UK, in Spring 2019, formatfestival.com.

A freelance writer for the British newspapers the Guardian and the Observer, Tom Lamont has been on assignment interviewing young men across the UK about masculinity, #MeToo, role models and coming of age now. A version of this article first appeared in The Guardian.
Drawing on their decades of U.S. and global research on gender equity, Plan International USA (Plan), an international organization that advances girls’ equality and children’s rights, and Promundo, a global leader in engaging men and boys in promoting gender equality and preventing violence, are offering concrete tips to help parents talk to their sons about healthy masculinity and self-expression. Because raising caring, respectful boys is of great interest and a major concern for many parents, the two organizations joined together to create “Nine Tips for Parents: Raising Sons to Embrace Healthy, Positive Masculinity.” In unprecedented ways, gender equality, power, cultural norms, harassment, and gender expectations are being discussed openly throughout the U.S. While women and girls are speaking out and being encouraged to challenge traditional gender stereotypes, the messages boys and men receive have largely remained the same. For parents who are wondering exactly how they can raise boys to be connected, respectful men, the recommendations below—based on extensive national and global evidence—can help provide practical guidance.

What follows are Plan and Promundo’s nine tips:

1. **Encourage personal expression when it comes to toys.** Introduce boys to a range of toys, games, and activities, including those that might be traditionally thought of as “for girls,” as well as gender-neutral toys. It’s also a good idea to avoid toys that reinforce harmful stereotypes for any gender. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Plan’s recent study of adolescents’ views on gender equality found that children who play with more gender-neutral toys (in addition to having conversations about gender equality) grow up to be more interested in changing the status quo and in creating a more equal world.

2. **Use play and imagination as a way to define positive values and qualities.** When role playing—from stuffed animals to imaginary friends—use language and create scenarios that introduce a full range of healthy emotions and respectful dialogue. Ask your son things like, “Are they sad? How do you know? How can we help?” Highlight that being able to express a wide range of emotions, including being compassionate, caring, and collaborative, is positive for both boys and girls. Promundo’s research has discovered that young men 18 to 24 years old exhibit relatively high rates of empathy, with 86 percent agreeing, “I get a strong urge to help when I see someone who is upset.” Let’s make sure that we encourage the expression of this empathy from an early age, and continue to reinforce it even as peer groups may sometimes tell our sons that empathy is not “manly.”

3. **Challenge harmful stereotypes when it comes to outfits and expression.** One of the best ways to encourage boys to be their authentic selves and break free from gender stereotypes is to allow them to experiment with fashion and self-expression that isn’t typically advertised to boys. For example, clothing or accessories targeted to girls, long hair or nail polish, rainbow colors, and so forth. According to Promundo’s research on “The Man Box” (see p. 20, *Voice Male*, Spring 2018), 72 percent of young men 18 to 30 years old in the U.S. say that they have been told that “a real man” behaves a certain way, at some point in their lives. When boys believe in stereotypes around what it means to be a man, it can lead to harmful consequences for us all. Let’s help boys realize that their self-expression doesn’t need to fit into a box.

4. **Be clear about consent.** Let your boys know that they have to ask for permission to touch others, and that they also have the right to say no if they don’t want to be touched. When it comes to hugging or kissing family members being picked up, make sure your son respects when others say “no” and feels supported and respected when he does. Promundo’s Man Box study found that
young men who believed in rigid ideas about manhood were more likely to harass—online and physically.

Help your son question those norms and understand consent. We'll all benefit when we change these norms: a follow-up costing study finds that if we got rid of harmful masculine norms altogether, we could reduce sexual violence among men 18 to 30 in the U.S. by at least 69 percent, every year, not to mention save the U.S. economy $631 million.

5. Find books, TV shows, and media that have good role models. Read books or choose television shows and media that break free of gender norms, showing boys and other male figures (adults, animals)—as well as girls and women—whose interests, jobs, and emotional expression challenge gender norms, and model values of respect and equality. Common Sense Media has a recommended list of movies featuring role models for boys (commonsensemedia.org/lists/movies-with-incredible-role-models-for-boys).

6. Speak up when you hear disrespectful comments. When raising a child, it’s not only you in the picture. Other family members and people who interact with your son also have a large influence. If grandparents, cousins, or family friends say something problematic, be sure to speak up in that moment and have a conversation about your values (for example, you could say, “We believe it's important to treat everyone with respect”). One of the most startling findings from Plan’s survey is that almost half of adolescent boys hear their fathers or male family members make inappropriate jokes and comments about women. This is a reminder that boys are hearing a lot of messages at home that could be giving them the wrong impression about what it means to “be a man.” Help to actively counter that narrative.

7. Identify positive role models. Identify role models in the family, the community, the media, or entertainment who model positive, healthy, respectful ways to be a boy and a man. This could be someone who stays at home to support a female partner at work, someone who sticks up for his daughter’s right to be whomsoever she wants to be, who has vulnerable, open conversations with his friends and family. Use these role models as a springboard for discussions about healthy masculinity and expressing the full range of emotions.

8. Talk the talk. Help boys feel supported and that they won’t be judged for asking you their questions or sharing their concerns. Say, “I love you. You can always talk to me, even when you’re upset, hurt, or confused.” Make sure to stay away from language that can discourage boys' healthy emotions, such as “boys don’t cry.”

Encourage boys to connect and empathize with others, to consider the consequences of their actions, to build healthy relationships, and to express their emotions in healthy ways, rather than ignoring or repressing them. Promundo’s The Man Box research finds that most young men in the U.S. are more likely to report providing emotional support to others than they are to report being emotionally vulnerable or seeking help themselves. When they do ask for help from their parents, many more go to their mothers (25 percent) than their fathers (7 percent). As a parent, make sure you’re keeping lines of communication open.

9. Walk the walk. Challenge your own perceptions of gender roles, and model the behaviors you want to encourage. If you feel that boys really should or shouldn’t do a certain thing because they are a boy, ask yourself why. The best way to show your son how to grow up to be a respectful, healthy, connected person is to model those qualities yourself, and in how you relate to others, including the child’s other parent. Promundo’s research from more than 30 countries found that if children see their parents sharing care work more equally—and particularly if boys see their fathers doing their full share—they tend to do the same as adults. Actions speak louder than words.

Countering current stereotypes and longstanding cultural notions of what it means to be a boy or how girls should behave will take concerted effort, not just from individual families but within schools, corporate boardrooms, government institutions, and the media. Having these conversations—and reinforcing them consistently, and with actions—can be a crucial first step.

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RESOURCES

plan4girls.org/
promundoglobal.org/resources/bullying-crisis/
promundoglobal.org/resources/man-box-study-young-manus-uk-mexico/
plan4girls.org/#startfactsheets
promundoglobal.org/resources/state-worlds-fathers-time-action/

Plan International USA is an independent development and humanitarian organization that advances children’s rights and equality for girls. Plan believes in the power and potential of every child. Working together with children, young people, supporters, and partners, Plan strives for a just world, tackling the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children. For more information, please visit PlanUSA.org.

Promundo is a global leader in promoting gender equality and preventing violence by engaging men and boys in partnership with women and girls. It works with men and boys to transform harmful gender norms and unequal power dynamics as a critical part of the solution to achieve gender equality. Since 1997, Promundo’s initiatives—in collaboration with partners in more than 45 countries—have reached nearly 10 million people through programs and training, campaigns and community engagement. For more information, visit promundoglobal.org.
Last March and April, students in Prof. Shira Tarrant’s class on masculinities at California State University/Long Beach, received a copy of Voice Male. Although they had a choice of other assignments to write response papers about, nearly all of the two dozen students shared their thoughts not just about particular articles but also about the magazine itself. What follows are edited excerpts of their submissions.

I admire your magazine. One of the articles that caught my attention was “To Heal My Wounds, I Work with Men and Boys” by Diederik Prakke. Whenever I read about young boys and the pressure they feel to mask their emotions, my heart breaks. This article teaches young boys to be vulnerable and shows expressing emotions as a strength. It is important to teach young boys that it is okay to be wounded but most importantly it is okay to admit you are wounded and learn to heal. These are life tools that boys are deprived of and need to be taught. I love that at the end of your magazine you include two pages of resources for men who want to change: young men, LGBTQIA, and more. Resources for men are rarely talked about and rarely brought up, so that this magazine makes resources accessible is much appreciated.

Etati Sanchez

“Why I Insist on a Woman’s Right to Vote” by Frederick Douglass was inspirational…. This speech may have been from the past, but many of the things he said are still relevant today. He understood how important it was for women to speak out for themselves… [and] that men should just get out of [women’s] way and “give her the fullest opportunity to exercise all the powers inherent to her individual personality.” What I got from that is that men should support and spread the word, but shouldn’t interfere too much. Women will do the talking while men should listen, and hopefully change for the better…. [T]he fight is ongoing. Women are still fighting for equality…. There are more and more men supporting this revolution but drastic changes need to be made. Supporting a movement that counteracts sexism is important; that is why this speech is so significant and should never be forgotten. Thank you for including this speech in your magazine.

David Nguyen

Regarding the poem, “The Silence Is Broken” by Anne Eastman Yeomans about Christine Blasey Ford. Repeatedly we have seen women denied opportunities they deserve, shunned, not supported, abused. It surprised me that so many people didn’t believe her. I was sexually assaulted, but was informed not to go through with the charges and not take my case to court. Being only 11, I was told that the defense team would see to it that I “made it up” or “dreamt it” and that I didn’t know what I was talking about. My family also has a history of sexual assault. Hearing about what happened to Ms. Blasey Ford was devastating and happens too often—where the woman isn’t believed and is left to feel like she ruined the man’s life for speaking up. And of course, there are cases of abuse men and transgender people face. Why I say all of this is to thank you. Thank you for allowing poems like this to come to light, to showcase them in hopes that more people can understand these deeply rooted issues that remain so prevalent in our society.

Alexandra Spooner
I applaud you on the powerful and influential articles that are in *Voice Male*, including "Deferring to Men" by Linda Stein. While looking her up I discovered she’s a renowned feminist artist, educator, performer, and writer. Stein's article inspired me because it focused on men and women being treated differently on the basis of gender. This is typically a difficult topic for most people to discuss because it makes them feel uncomfortable. People don’t want to be judged, don’t want to be seen as a feminist, don’t want people to think they’re controlling. If more people read Stein’s article—and others in *Voice Male*—people would understand that we need feminism, we need more people to talk about it, we need more people to be aware of the inequality and injustice in the world.

*Shirley Wubben*

In Rus Funk’s article, “Men: Are We Willing to Examine Pornography’s Impact?” I appreciated the attention he paid to the role pornography plays in gender inequality and gender-based violence.... In creating a program that emphasizes a nonjudgmental approach to men examining pornography’s impact, rather than being shamed or ridiculed, the “What’s Wrong with This Picture” program encourages men to critically think about their own pornography viewing. Perhaps it will be empowering since many men are not able to unpack the harmful impacts of pornography on their own. I understand that not all men will stop watching pornography, but would that be considered the ultimate goal? If we change the type of pornography men view to depictions of realistic sexual encounters, might that impact men’s objectification of women? Might it include frank discussions about consent and mutual pleasure?

*Stephanie Alarcon*

The article “Capturing the Boggart of Patriarchy” by Rimjhim Jain provided a great analogy for the emergence of patriarchy. Progress in the women's rights movement is often met with backlash, resulting in setbacks. I believe this is partly due to mass media’s portrayal of feminist activists. It is very rare to see clips of a rally or protest featuring a calm discussion or peaceful protest because it doesn’t increase views or provide shock value. This negative portrayal of feminists partially forces the progress of women’s rights backward and decreases the likelihood of others (including men) joining the movement. I believe that the development of more magazines or websites like *Voice Male* has a great chance of changing the stigma associated with gender equality and increases the likelihood of men joining the movement, because it features the actual beliefs of activists compared to the tainted versions we see in mass media. Your magazine is making a difference, dispensing valuable opinions, studies, and personal stories to a wide audience.

*Amanda Barrett*

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**BLACK MEN ARE PRECIOUS**

Black men, black friends having strokes.
Black men younger than me.
Good men with bad hearts.
Men who did not follow
their fathers into factories or the post-office.
Black men who went off to college
and pulled themselves up by degrees.
Men who did not sink into despair
but lifted their families into new homes.
Black men who survived the bullets, streets and police. Black men who saw the horizon and the stars. They marched as if Garvey held out his hand not to Ethiopia but to our hearts. Black hearts now failing for unknown reasons. Why? Why do we die so young? Why are we not like our grandfathers sitting on the porch rocking away the years? Why are we not the black men returning from the wars and lifting our girlfriends up into wives again? Why do we date this early death? After all the exercise and pills, after the changing diet why is there such a cruel hunger that appears and takes our years? Black men, my friends resting in their open coffins waiting for someone to sing “Precious Lord” and take their hand. Black hands closing with so much love still left to give.

- E. Ethelbert Miller

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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? Email relevant information to us at info@voiceofmademagazine.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.boys2men.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

Men As Peacemakers
Engages individuals/communities in strategies to prevent violence against women and children.
menaspeacemakers.org

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

On Masculinity
A Men’s Project
Extensive database of resources related to Men and Boys in N. America seeking gender justice and a more just world.
www.ameproject.com/

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

ManKind Project
New Warrior training weekends
www.mkp.org

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

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

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

XY
www.xyonline.net
Pro-feminist men’s web links (over 500 links): www.xyonline.net/links.shtml
Pro-feminist men’s politics, frequently asked questions: www.xyonline.net/misc/fqa.html
Pro-feminist e-mail list: 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

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.nlfifi.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

International Society for Men’s Health
Prevention campaigns and health initiatives promoting men’s health
www.ismh.org

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
1in6.org

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

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

Men Thriving
A peer-resource offered to male survivors by male survivors.
www.menthriving.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.oneinfourusa.org/themensprogram.php

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

CONNECT
Works with New York City communities to prevent interpersonal violence and promote gender justice.
www.connectnyc.org

EMERGE
Counseling and education to stop domestic violence; comprehensive batterers’ services
www.emergedv.com

Futures Without Violence
Working to end violence against women globally; programs for boys, men and fathers - www.futureswithoutviolence.org

Healthy Dating
Sexual Assault Prevention
www.canikissyou.com

Hollaback
A movement to end street harassment powered by a network of local activists around the world. Uses smartphones to document, map, and share incidents of street harassment
www.hollaback.org

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

Men Against Violence
Yahoo email list
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/menagainstviolence
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

MVP Strategies
Gender violence prevention education and training
www.mvpstrat.com

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.nsvrc.org

National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC)
A national information and resource hub relating to all aspects of sexual violence
www.nssvrc.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 Research Initiative
Works to raise awareness of sexual violence and promotes research on sexual violence as a public health issue
http://www.svr.org/about.htm

Stop Porn Culture
A group for those willing to question and fight against pornography and porn culture
stoppormculture/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

GLBTQ Domestic Violence Project
Resources for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer men and women who are survivors of sexual or domestic violence through direct services, education, and advocacy
http://www.glbtqdvp.org

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.breakthesterecycle.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

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
National progressive political and advocacy group
www.ngltf.org

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

Oasis Magazine
A writing community for queer and questioning youth
www.oasisjournal.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
Former, of GLBT individuals sexual spouses/partners, current or former, of GLBT persons and their parents, friends, and families
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 Centers

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

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 of Philadelphia
Workshops to help men address anger management, domestic violence, and intimacy issues
http://www.themensresourcecenter.org

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

MERGE for Equality (Men Embracing their Role in Gender Equality) – Northampton, MA
Advances the beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors that allow men and boys to be their authentic selves and embrace their role in ensuring gender equality. Works with individuals, groups, and communities across the globe in alliance with girls, women, and all marginalized people
www.mergerequality.org

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

Portland Men’s Resource Center – Portland, OR
Counseling for men, women, teens, couples and families on domestic violence and anger management, and explorations of gender and sexism
http://www.portlandmrc.com

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

Saskatoon Men’s Center – Saskatchewan
Pro-feminist, male-positive, gay-affirmative center dedicated to offering a safe environment where men may explore their true natures 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.tcmc.org
problem they ignore in themselves, they become rigid and reticent. In other words, when they have to be accountable to themselves as opposed to chivalrous to women, men feel incriminated. The pushback is immediate. This is the blind spot of masculinity: the defense of narrowly defined masculinity that keeps us from exploring and living a more whole, complete version of ourselves. How do we move beyond the protective patriarchy that brings them to the discussion to a more fulfilling conversation about the wholeness of masculinity?

To authentically and truthfully process this question, we must first consider the way in which men are taught to care for girls and women. In other words, to truly be accountable to women and confront the core elements of misogyny and sexism, we must relinquish the mythical intent of chivalry—the protection of women. This would strip away the notion that women need the violent, obstinate, and overbearing qualities of male power and privilege for their protection and purpose. We must do this not because women implore us to do so, but because we truly care about the healthy wholeness of boys and men.

The Pivot

The approach must focus on helping men become better men. In most life endeavors, we work and train to attain excellence, not just success in the moment; in sports and academics, we work toward excellence, not the prevention of failure. Moreover, we do not train for victory by a discernible margin but by mastery of a discipline or performance. We must apply the same vigor for excellence when considering the ideology of masculinity.

That is why I believe there must be a “pivot,” a shift in the conversation from what women have asked men to do and toward a more trenchant, robust, and sustained conversation among men about the aspirational and essential values of masculinity. This must occur devoid of assertions of culpability for violence against women and focus intensely and intently on nurturing purposeful, healthy, and whole masculinity. We should be asking more what boys and men can become and asking less about what they should or shouldn’t do.


Will Men Speak Up?

[continued from page 11]

prevention initiatives once the intensity of the present cultural moment subsides. Also, for all the optimistic talk about a renewed sense of anti-sexist commitment on the part of men in response to #MeToo, the movement has produced a predictable backlash, with many people—men and women—maintaining that it’s gone too far, and that men as a group are being unfairly attacked. The backlash gathered momentum in the wake of the Brett Kavanaugh–Christine Blasey Ford testimonies, as Republican partisans and conservative commentators sought to portray Kavanaugh not only as the victim of a decades-old, uncorroborated account of attempted rape, but also as a symbol of how women’s newfound empowerment and refusal to be silenced could be used to smear good men and drive a further wedge between the sexes. As the sexual literacy educator Natasha Singh wrote on the day of the hearing: “I am concerned that by making his appeal to the masses, Kavanaugh may have unleashed reactive male rage. He may have modeled for countless boys and men the art of deflection, defensiveness, and victimhood. For many men, perhaps Kavanaugh now represents their worst fears: a loss of entitlement. Loss of power. Loss of privileges. And—drum roll, please—loss of impunity for sexual violence. And if that’s the case—then we have our work cut out for us.”

Of course, Brett Kavanaugh’s Supreme Court nomination and ultimately his confirmation were themselves made possible by the fact that Donald Trump was elected president in 2016 with an overwhelming majority of the white male vote. The 2016 presidential contest between Trump and former secretary of state Hillary Clinton was about more than competing ideological visions of governance. It was also in many ways a symbolic struggle about American identity and cultural change—change that included both the increasing ethnic and racial diversity of this country but also (white) men’s anxiety and resentment toward women’s increasing social and political assertiveness. Trump won the election with the biggest gender gap in presidential history, setting the stage for a renewed period of feminist activism and eventually #MeToo, which gave voice to women’s experience of men’s harassment, abuse and violence. All of this underscores the central argument of this book: that the epidemic of “violence against women” says more about the men committing it, and about the old order that for so long has produced and protected them, than it could ever say about women.

Voice Male contributing editor Jackson Katz directs MVP Strategies, which works with educational, military, athletic, and other institutions to train a new generation of leaders to challenge violence against women. This article is an excerpt from the revised and updated edition of his book The Macho Paradox: Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help, © 2019 Jackson Katz (Sourcebooks).
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 former 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

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