New Mexico Healthy Masculinities Toolkit

Tools to Initiate Community Conversations that Explore Gender, Reimagine Masculinities, and Build Healthy Relationships

Table of Contents
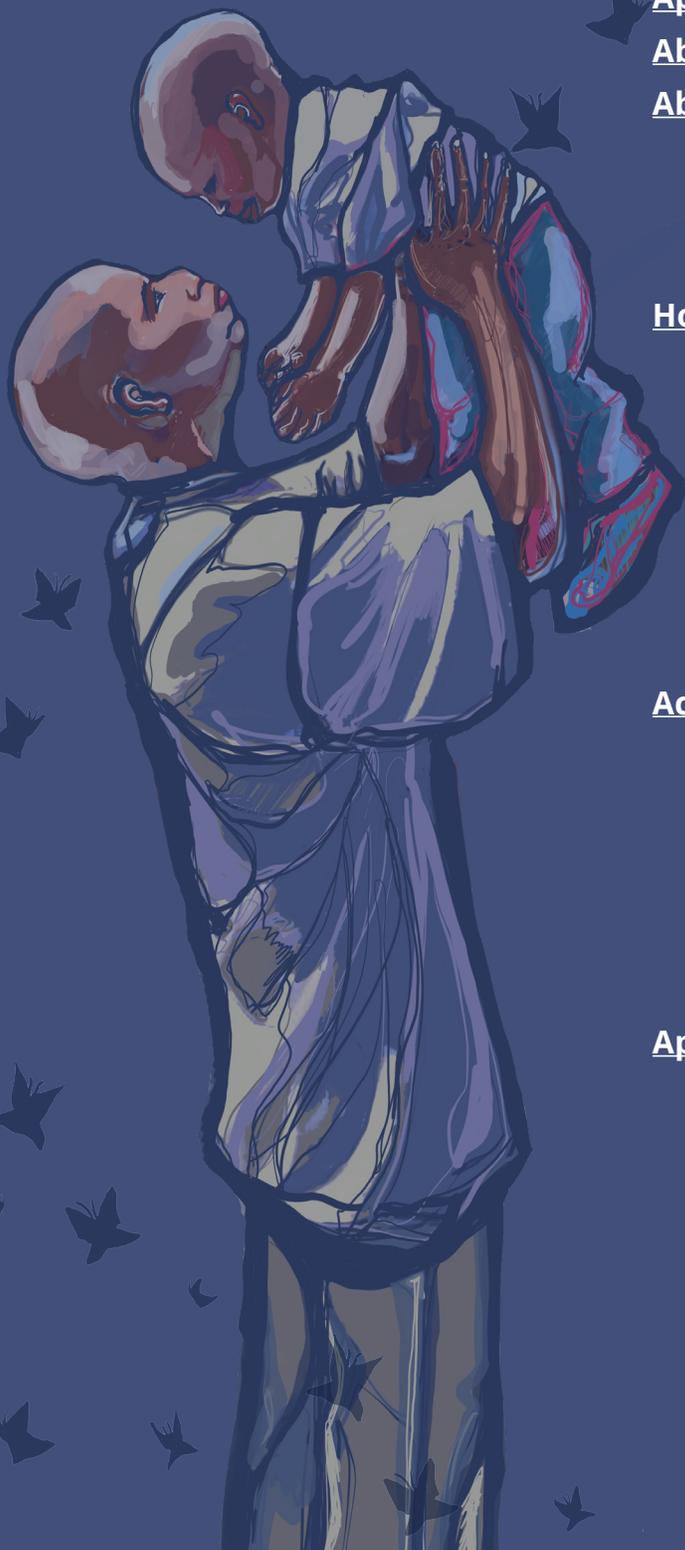
Appreciations and Acknowledgments

We appreciate local and national groups engaged in work around healthy masculinities.
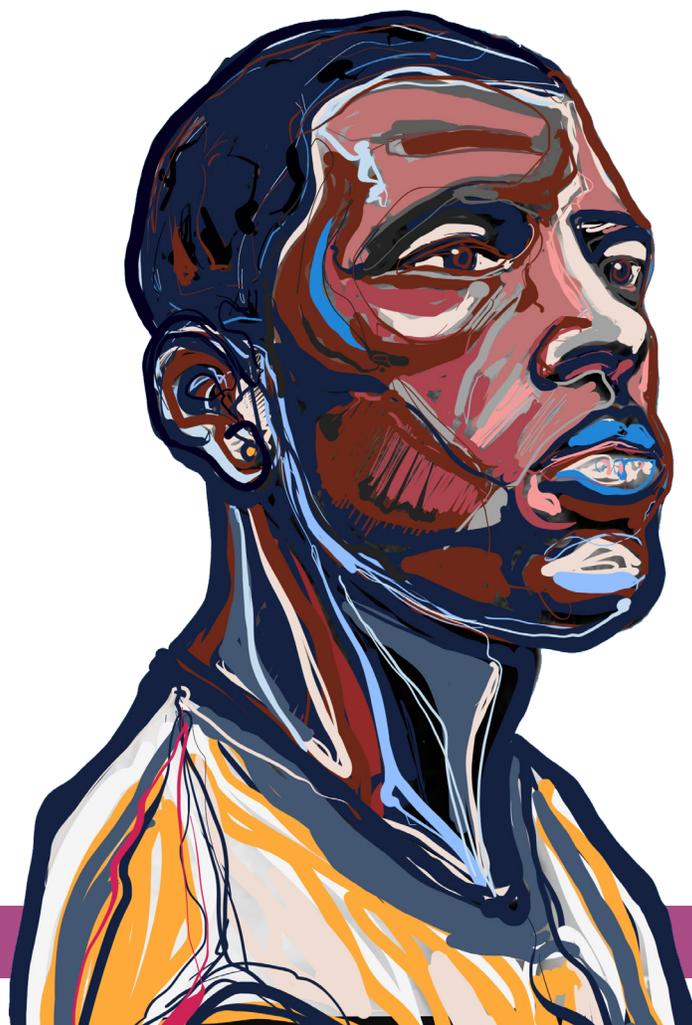
About the Collaborative

The New Mexico Healthy Masculinities Collaborative is a multi-gendered and inter-generational group of organizations and individuals from diverse racial and geographic communities across New Mexico. It was formed in 2018 to identify programs across the state that engaged men and boys, along with masculine of center[1], trans, and gender nonconforming communities, and to review existing resources and curricula focused on masculinities. The analysis and work of the Collaborative is deeply intersectional, and it has always held space for the various complex facets of our identities that intersect with gender. Furthermore, because the Collaborative has never been solely a space for self-identified men to engage with each other, we have had to pay attention to the gender dynamics within our own group. This has led to courageous, vulnerable, and difficult conversations and opportunities for us to practice accountability with each other in relation to healthy masculinities. This has also meant that we have to live our values together as a community of practice that is seeking to reimagine masculinity and heal patriarchal gender wounds. A key reflection for members of the collaborative has been that we are the work.

Collaborative partners include:

NewMexicoWomen.Org

Tewa Women United

Transgender Resource Center

New Mexico Health Equity Partnership

Together for Brothers

The Collaborative aims to develop educational and communication resources to help the public reimagine masculinities and raise awareness around the concept of healthy masculinities. This toolkit is the result of our work over a two-year period. It is important to note that this two-year period began in February 2020 and this work largely occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Collaborative was unable to meet in person for two years and this toolkit was developed virtually, which has had impacts on the outcome. We look forward to continuing the process of editing and refining this toolkit collectively as we return to meeting in person. Team members of our Collaborative also attended several trainings in preparation for creating this toolkit, including workshops offered to the right. ➡

Members of the Collaborative use different terms related to healthy masculinities in different ways. Learn more about our ongoing discussions and definitions here.

Workshops:

A Call to Men

Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective—Masculinity and Mental Health Training

Men Can Stop Rape - Healthy Masculinity Training Institute

Together for Brothers

Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico

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1 Masculine of Center in its evolving definition, recognizes the cultural breadth and depth of identity for lesbian/queer womyn and gender non-conforming/trans people who tilt toward the masculine side of the gender spectrum. Van Bailey, "Brown Bois," TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly 1, no. 1–2 (January 2014): 45–47, https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-2399560.

About This Toolkit

The Healthy Masculinities Toolkit is a collection of readings, workshops, and exercises aimed at helping audiences reimagine masculinities, raise awareness about the concept of healthy masculinities, and provide skills and resources that promote self-awareness, healthy relationships, and thriving communities.

It is designed to act as a guide for facilitators to frame and engage in conversations and activities around healthy masculinities. It is important to note that this toolkit is a living document, co-created and co-authored by many people in a community of practice. We welcome feedback and intend to update the toolkit periodically in response to community input and wisdom. Feedback can be submitted at www.masculinitiesnm.org.

While we use "healthy" and "toxic" as a way to express the nuances and multiplicities of masculinity, we acknowledge that the perfectly "healthy masculine" person does not exist, nor does a completely "toxic masculine" person. We are all complicated, and each of us can can hold and express multiple identities. We are all in a process of learning and unlearning these behaviors and norms. This toolkit offers us the opportunity to become more aware of our conditioned behaviors in order to disrupt the harmful impacts of patriarchy.

The toolkit is intended to help catalyze, facilitate, and continue conversations about healthy masculinities. We know that it may take generations to truly heal from the harms of patriarchy.

This toolkit is not framed to heal individual or collective trauma; however, it may lead to transformations and understandings that contribute to such healing.

Learning Outcomes

The toolkit activities are intended to support the following learning outcomes:

- Create shared values and establish a shared vision to inform and guide the work of individuals and groups around healthy masculinities;

- Define and explain terms around gender and masculinities;

- Create shared understandings of dominant and counternarratives about healthy masculinities;

- Understand affirmative consent;

- Understand how individual assets support healthy relationships and healthy masculinities;

- Locate and understand one's own experience in relationship to gender, gender expression, and sexual orientation; and

- Identify some specific behaviors and actions to which individuals and groups can commit in an effort to disrupt toxic masculinities and build healthy masculinities.

The learning initiated through the toolkit's activities will be layered and cyclical. Because both learning and healing are non-linear, our relationship to and expressions of healthy masculinities will change over time. Remember, this is a long-term conversation and effort for individuals and communities. You may not leave with all your questions resolved. You may also finish with new questions.

Who Is This Toolkit for?

In short, *everyone!* However, we designed this toolkit as a guide for those who serve as facilitators to frame and engage in conversations and activities around healthy masculinities with youth and adults. This curriculum has been used with middle school students as young as 12 years old, but the content can be adapted for other youth in your community. Communities should decide which age groups they want to include.

Patriarchy[2] remains embedded in our society as a system that works in conjunction with structural racism[3] and capitalism to benefit and value men more than women and other genders. Because most of us were born into and raised in such a society, we are all conditioned to embody, normalize, and perpetuate patriarchy and its harmful effects. To counter the dominant narrative of patriarchy and the toxic forms of masculinity that result from it, the purpose of our work is to:

• Unlearn the unhealthy and unproductive embodiments of masculinity we have been taught;
• Commit to practices that redistribute modes of power, such as resources and authority;
• Recognize our shared experience and resources;
• Counter normative binary gender roles, myths, and expectations; and
• Open pathways to heal from toxic masculine modes of self-protection.[4]

The Collaborative recognizes the diversity of our communities and the ways in which we embody and understand healthy masculinities. We encourage those who use this toolkit to adapt its content to the cultural context and needs of the participants.

With a collective approach in mind, the activities are designed for group work. Activities in this toolkit may be particularly relevant to nonprofit and community organizations that work with self-identified men and boys, that work on early childhood education, violence prevention, or in any related sector; public sector and elected officials at all levels of local government, specifically State Departments of Health, Early Childhood, Education, and Children, Youth & Families; private sector and professional interest groups. However, as mentioned above, groups of all genders may benefit from the activities in this toolkit.

2 Patriarchy is characterized by current and historic unequal power relations between men, women, transgender, and gender non-conforming people whereby self-identified women, trans, and gender non-conforming people are systematically disadvantaged and oppressed. This is particularly noticeable in government, business, and other institutions, where men dominate and hold most of the positions of power. Patriarchy is also upheld and expressed by high rates of male violence against women, trans, and gender non-conforming people. Patriarchy also negatively affects men through harmful and limited gender roles and social norms. NewMexicoWomen.Org, "Gender Justice at the Heart of New Mexico's Pandemic Recovery" (New Mexico, 2020).

3 Structural racism is a sweeping system in which public policies, institutional norms, cultural symbols, social practices, and interpersonal relations work to maintain and perpetuate racial inequities that systematically privilege white people over people of color. Racism is a feature of all the institutions and social structures in which we exist, sometimes in ways that have become so normal they are almost invisible. NewMexicoWomen.Org, "Gender Justice at the Heart of New Mexico's Pandemic Recovery" (New Mexico, 2020).

4 Masculine modes of self-protection refers to defensive masculine expressions such as a "tough front" which have served a protective purpose for men and boys on the receiving end of structural oppression, violence, and other trauma. However, at the same time, these modes often further oppress women and LGBTQ+ people. Chris Haywood and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill. Education and masculinities: Social, Cultural and Global Transformations. (Routledge, 2013.); Joan Z. Spade and Catherine G. Valentine. The Kaleidoscope of Gender: Prisms, Patterns, and Possibilities (4th ed.). (Los Angeles, Calif: Sage Publications, 2014).

Why Is the Healthy Masculinities Toolkit Important for New Mexico's Communities?

New Mexico, like every state in the United States, has been shaped by a complex history of patriarchy and colonization.[5] For example, New Mexico has undergone colonization by three distinct governments: Spain, Mexico, and the United States. This led to the dispossession and genocide of Indigenous peoples, the kidnapping and enslavement of Indigenous peoples from other countries, control over the roles and bodies of women, and the establishment of laws and structures that systematically disadvantage non-white males and all other genders. While colonization and patriarchy are mostly associated with white men, here in New Mexico, we must acknowledge the impact of this layered colonial history because it continues to complicate our lives and conversations around race, gender, and patriarchy. It is critical to acknowledge the complicity of white women, Hispanic and Indigenous men, and others of any race or gender who identify with or benefit from patriarchy and/or whiteness[6] in seeking power and dominance.

Communities in New Mexico continue to experience the impacts and ongoing dynamics of white supremacy and patriarchy. These impacts and ongoing dynamics include:

For a free, 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week service that provides suicidal persons or those around them with support, call the New Mexico Crisis Line at **1-855-NMCRISIS (662-7474)**, the national Suicide Prevention Hotline at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**, or the Trans Lifeline at **1-877- 565-8860.**

- High rates of missing and murdered Indigenous women and people;

- High rates of violence perpetrated by men: one in three women and one in four men will experience some form of intimate partner violence;[7]

- Due to heteronormative[8] gender beliefs, nearly half of transgender people will experience sexual assault in their lifetime, largely perpetrated by men, with higher rates for transgender people of color;

- Women disproportionately bearing the burden of both childcare and household management, as well as the emotional labor of childrearing and maintaining familial relationships;

- High rates of state sanctioned violence[9] against women of color, children, non-binary people, and men and boys of color;

- High rates of poverty and extreme poverty that primarily impact Indigenous people, people of color, and women and girls;

5 Colonization can be defined as a form of invasion, dispossession, and subjugation of a people. The result is the dispossession of vast amounts of lands from the original inhabitants. This dispossession is often legalized after the fact and upheld through institutionalized inequality. The colonizer–colonized relationship is by nature unequal. It benefits the colonizer at the expense of the colonized. Interaction Institute for Social Change, "Fundamentals of Facilitation for Racial Justice Work." www.interactioninstitute.org.

6 The category of **"White people"** is a socially constructed identity, typically based on skin color. Whereas, **"whiteness"** is a racial discourse defined by a lack of willingness to name and engage with racism, a naturalizing of whiteness as the norm from which all other races are de-fined and compared, and a minimization of the legacy of racism. This analysis is from the following two sources: Zeus Leonardo, "The Souls of White Folk: Critical Pedagogy, Whiteness Studies, and Globalization Discourse,", Race Ethnicity and Education 5, no. 2 (2002): pp. 29–50, DOI: 10.1080/13613320120117180. Edward Taylor et al., "Chapter Three: Education Policy as an Act of White Supremacy", Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016).

7 "National Statistic Domestic Violence Fact Sheet," National Coalition Against Domestic Violence https://ncadv.org/STATISTICS

8 Heteronormative is of, relating to, or based on the attitude that heterosexuality is the only normal and natural expression of sexuality." Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Heteronormative. Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. "heteronormative." Accessed January 19, 2022, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/heteronormative.

9 A modern-day manifestation with deep historical roots of government serving as a principal contributor to the persistence and reproduction of racism, as it has since the founding of the nation, illustrating state power to carry out a violence agenda targeting communities of color covering centuries." Melvin Delgado, "State-Sanctioned Violence Definition, Parameters, and Conceptual Foundation." Oxford Scholarship Online (Oxford University Press). Accessed January 19, 2022, https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/oso/9780190058463.001.0001/oso-9780190058463-chapter-2.

- Punitive "justice" systems that criminalize poverty, substance use disorders, and behavioral health issues, primarily harming communities of color;

- Economic dependence on the extraction of natural resources and national labs rooted in maintaining the military industrial complex[10] with harmful impacts on the health of local communities, the environment, traditional land-based lifeways, and sacred Indigenous lands;

- Lack of investment in children and future generations;

- Increasing gentrification and the growing displacement of multi-generational and lower income communities due to the renting and purchasing of local properties by those moving to New Mexico from higher-income economies or those who live outside of New Mexico, with little policy protection for local communities from being housing cost burdened; and

- Gendered social norms that result in men being conditioned to repress their emotions, with men nearly four times more likely to die by suicide than women.[11] In NM, which had the highest national suicide rate in 2018, three-quarters of those who committed suicide were male.[12]

While most of these issues have deeply entrenched structural and systemic origins, they are sustained and reproduced by the behaviors and dynamics of patriarchy and white supremacy.

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10 A military-industrial complex, network of individuals and institutions involved in the production of weapons and military technologies. The military-industrial complex in a country typically attempts to marshal political support for continued or increased military spending by the national government. "Military-Industrial Complex." (Encyclopædia Britannica Inc.) Accessed January 19, 2022, https://www.britannica.com/topic/military-industrial-complex.

11 "Suicide Statistics," American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, September 9, 2021), https://afsp.org/suicide-statistics/.

12 New Mexico suicide deaths increase in 2020. Accessed January 19, 2022, https://www.nmhealth.org/news/information/2021/12/?view=1739.

How to Use This Toolkit

We invite you and your team to experiment with the different activities, including trying the same activity more than once. You can spend a day moving through the activities. You also could incorporate some of the activities into other anti-oppression training such as anti-racism or community organizing training. You can use this toolkit to launch, support, or complement longer-term efforts. While there are no prescriptive times required, we stated the amount of time we found helpful for the activities to help facilitators and groups plan. We suggest that you and your team go over the prereadings and review the general facilitator notes before leading any activities.

Prereadings on Toxic vs. Healthy Masculinities

We recommend that all facilitators and participants read this prereading section before engaging in group activities (see Appendix A below for a printable participant handout). In addition, Together for Brothers created a Literature Review where you can find more resources.

Why refer to "masculinities" in the plural?

Masculinity can be described as a hierarchy with one idealized type of masculinity and man at the top and all other identities below. Within the dominant narrative, "ideal" masculinity is cisgendered, heterosexual, white, able-bodied, and wealthy—with men of color, trans and gay men, disabled men, poor and working-class men, women, and all other genders positioned as inferior. This form of idealized heterosexual masculinity is usually expressed in opposition to femininity and queerness. This hierarchy of ideal masculinity is also called hegemonic masculinity.[13] It helps us understand that there are many masculinities present in society, but one specific version of masculinity is idealized, and therefore, more valued. For this reason, we use the plural when referring to toxic and healthy masculinities to acknowledge the range of ways masculinities can be expressed.

What are toxic masculinities?

Toxic masculinities include harmful behaviors and actions that are rooted in domination, violence, competition, and limited forms of acceptable emotionality. For example, toxic masculinities in society are often expressed through aggression, violence, homophobia, transphobia, and hypersexuality—often, but not always, in a heterosexual context. From notions of "manning up" and "boys don't cry," to school shootings, domestic violence, and colonization, toxic masculinities operate at various levels to erode the mental, physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual health, safety, and well-being of our communities. While often considered a form of "male behavior," it is important to understand that people all along the gender spectrum are both capable of perpetuating toxic masculinities, and can be on the receiving end of said behaviors. All people are responsible for countering toxic masculinities.

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13 Chris Haywood and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill. Education and masculinities: Social, Cultural and Global Transformations. (Routledge, 2013.); Joan Z. Spade and Catherine G. Valentine. The Kaleidoscope of Gender: Prisms, Patterns, and Possibilities (4th ed.). (Los Angeles, Calif: Sage Publications, 2014).

Where do toxic masculinities come from?

Toxic masculinities are outputs of patriarchy, a system that is characterized by current and historic unequal power relations between genders, wherein women, trans, and gender non-conforming and non-binary[14] people are systematically ' disadvantaged and oppressed by men and in relation to men. Patriarchy also creates and reproduces the gender binary.[15] In this way, patriarchy's dominant narrative underscores, amplifies, and uplifts the voices, experiences, and contributions of cisgender, heterosexual men, and it diminishes those of self-identified women, trans, and gender non-conforming people. Central to this narrative is the structure of the gender binary—with "socially masculinized" traits and behaviors celebrated and normalized, while "socially feminized" traits and behaviors are classified as distinct from, and "inferior" to, men and masculinity.[16]

At the same time, patriarchy is inextricably connected to structural racism. Both work to create a system in which people of color experience disproportionate impacts of interpersonal and state violence. For example, the rate of sexual assault on Indigenous women is more than three times as much as for non-Indigenous women. Men and boys of color are criminalized in most structures and systems at rates significantly higher than white men and boys. In the context of men and boys of color from marginalized and oppressed communities, there can be defensive forms of masculine expressions, such as putting on a "tough front." These often serve as a means of protection for men and boys of color who tend to be on the receiving end of structural oppression and violence. However, these expressions of masculinity can simultaneously contribute to the oppression of women and LGBTQ+ people.

It is also important to note the connections between toxic masculinities, the economy, and education. For example, in education, we are taught to value the more "masculine traits," such as competition, performance, achieving above others, and cultivating intellectual distance from things through a lack of emotional connection. These behaviors are then connected to and rewarded by an economy and workplaces that are rooted in competition over compassion and profit over wellbeing and empathy. Patriarchy is also inextricably connected to the extractive and harmful economic relations that underpin capitalism. This patriarchal economic system privileges financial profit over people and our land, water, and environment, and it promotes U.S. imperialism[17] and war as for-profit enterprises. It provides billions of tax dollars to corporations annually, while millions of people are left hungry and unhoused. Ultimately, our extractive economic system is supported and upheld by patriarchy and toxic masculinities.

For further reading on patriarchy and its impacts on society see, Understanding Patriarchy by bell hooks. To explore international case studies that unpack the dynamics of patriarchy and how it can show up in our lives, visit Case Studies on Patriarchy by JASS.

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14 Terms used by some people who experience their gender as falling outside the categories of man and woman. Folks who do not identify with conventional expressions of femininity and masculinity may also self-identify with these terms. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nonbinary

15 Refers to the systems of beliefs, structure, policies, and practices based on the assumption that there are exactly/only two genders. This is constraining and limiting for individuals who do not exist within a binary. "Gender Binary Definition & Meaning," Dictionary.com (Dictionary.com). Accessed January 20, 2022, https://www.dictionary.com/browse/gender-binary.

16 We refer to "socially masculinized" and "socially feminized" traits to affirm that no behavior or trait is inherently tied to a gender experience or expression—but rather is aligned with a particular experience through social conditioning, to bolster patriarchy and those who benefit from it.

17 Imperialism describes state policy, practice, or advocacy of extending power and dominion, especially by direct territorial acquisition or by gaining political and economic control of other areas. "Imperialism," (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.). Accessed January 19, 2022, https://www.britannica.com/topic/imperialism.

What are healthy masculinities and where do they come from?

Healthy masculinities begin with recognizing, acknowledging, and putting in check one's power, privilege, and position of dominance in any given situation–whether in a family, relationship, workplace, government, or even in a conversation. This is important for men (trans and cis) in relationships with women and other genders and in any context where those in power are in relationship with those who have less power. It also requires reflecting on the layers and intersections of one's power and identity. For example, one could be a cis-man[18] of color and have gender privilege while experiencing racial oppression; one could be a white woman and have race privilege while experiencing gender oppression; or one could have authority over another person in a place of work.

Healthy masculinities center on connection, compassion, emotional awareness, humility, respect, and collaboration while creating space for courageous vulnerability. They are explicitly nonviolent. Communities that promote healthy masculinities value those who care for, heal, nurture, and educate others more than those who exploit or hoard resources for personal gain. Healthy masculinities also center on individual and collective accountability. While people may harm or be harmed by others, we all have the ability to change and have a responsibility to shift our behavior. As the author, bell hooks, described, "Patriarchal masculinity insists that real men must prove their manhood by idealizing aloneness and disconnection. Feminist masculinity tells men that they become more real through the act of connecting with others, through building community."[19]

Healthy masculinities are the result of intentional work to understand one's privilege and power, to learn how toxic masculinities play out in our families, relationships, communities, society, and world, and to practice behaviors and support efforts that counter domination and violence. We live in a culture that promotes toxic masculinities and sometimes necessitates complicity with them or even adopting toxic behavior as a protective measure against threats or harm. Because of this reality, healthy masculinities are ongoing, conscious practices of redistributing power, allowing oneself to be vulnerable, leading with compassion and curiosity, being accountable to and loving oneself and others, and healing wounds that disrupt our ability to be present, loving, and joyful.

> "We rely on systems and behaviors that are not accountable and have done harm to us—we often don't know another way of being. At the core of healthy masculinity is the courage to take responsibility for ourselves and be accountable to each other."
> -Fatima van Hattum, NewMexicoWomen.Org

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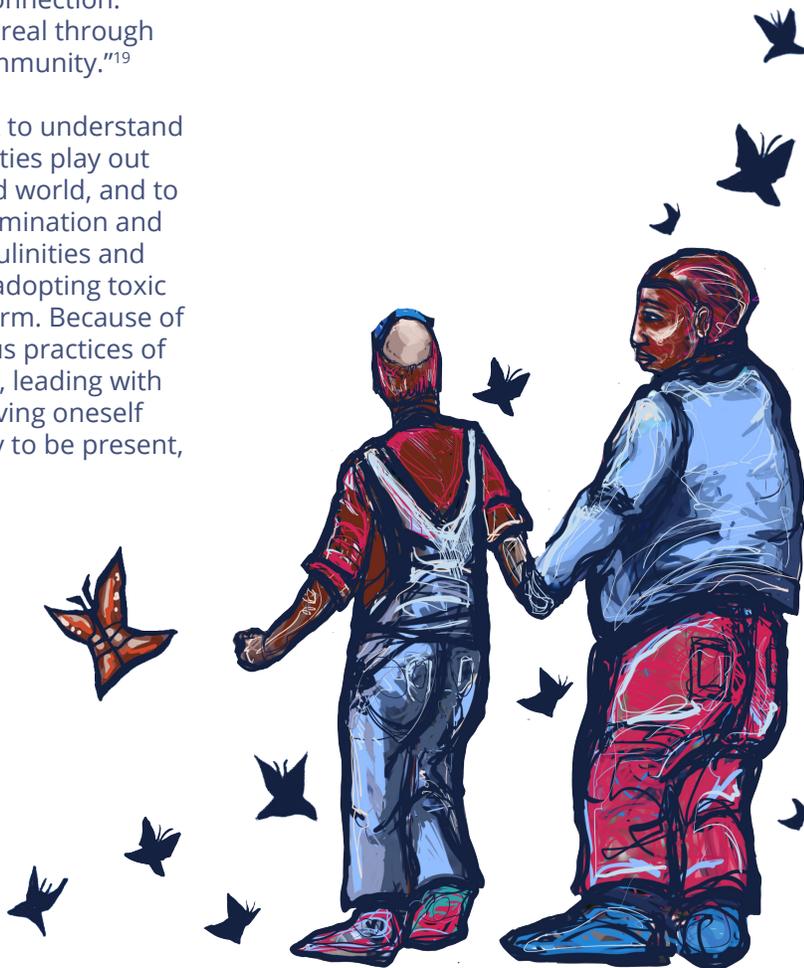
18 Cis man describes an adult who was designated male at birth and whose gender identity is male.

19 bell hooks, The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love. New York: Washington Square Press, 2005. p.121

General Facilitator Notes

- In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, for in-person training, facilitators and organizers should refer to local and national public health guidelines and seek to uphold an ethic of community care.

- Facilitators are encouraged to share one or two questions before the gathering, and to invite people to reflect in advance of the meeting. Examples include:

  - How do you define masculinities?
  - How do you or have you experienced masculinities?
  - How do you talk about mental, physical, emotional and spiritual wellness in relation to healthy masculinities in your community?
  - What stigmas exist in your culture and/or family or community that may discourage you from acting when it comes to healthy masculinities?
  - What resources exist in your culture and/or family that can invite vulnerability and courage with healthy masculinities work and practices?

- In terms of sequencing the activities, it can be helpful to start with "Creating a Container for This Work," followed by "Getting Clear about Values and Vision" to establish clarity for how groups will engage in this work. Then use the remaining activities as they are listed in the toolkit, as much as your time and process allows.

- We encourage you to move at the "pace of trust" with this work. Do not rush through facilitation or plan too many activities. It is important for people to feel that they have enough space when engaging in new concepts, to develop trust as a group, and to be able to explore topics that can have an emotional charge, such as one's relationship to gender.

- We encourage facilitators to build in "pauses" and suggest that the group take "collective breaths" in between and as needed during activities. Different practices that can help a group reset between activities include:

  - Laughter;
  - Movement;
  - Breathing; and
  - Song.

- Facilitators should check in and pause as needed if difficult material comes up:

  - Ask how people are feeling and doing; and
  - Remind participants to drink water—hydration is important when doing emotional work.

- If possible, invite an "emotional support" person, such as a counselor or skilled healing practitioner, to be available for anyone who may experience traumatic triggers or may need to process affiliated grief. This is encouraged, as some experiences around this topic may be emotional and can be triggering or re-traumatizing for participants. Moreover, through this process of learning, re-learning, and unlearning, participants may experience grief around what they feel they have "lost" or "not fully experienced" as their authentic selves because of internalized toxic masculinities. The Youth Mental Health First Aid training through the National Council for Mental Wellbeing is an excellent training resource for facilitators to cultivate skills in support of mental health crises.

> "Patriarchy both creates the rage in boys and then contains it for later use, making it a resource to exploit later on as boys become men. As a national product, this rage can be garnered to further imperialism, hatred, and oppression of women and men globally. This rage is needed if boys are to become men willing to travel around the world to fight wars without ever demanding that other ways of solving conflict be found."
>
> -bell hooks

Setting the Physical Container

- Have group members sit in a circle, and provide comfortable seating for all bodies.

- Establish a set time for each activity to allow participants to remain present.

- Provide snacks and beverages for the group.

- Build in sufficient time for bio-breaks.

- Inform participants about where to use the restroom and where they can move away for quiet and re-centering, etc.

- Bring beauty into the space. Beauty and a sense of abundance (e.g., enough food and drink) help our nervous systems to relax. Small items, such as potted plants or an altar/self-care station/ grounding table that participants build together, contribute to creating a beautiful space.

- Invite participants to bring self-care items for use as needed, such as essential oils, affirmation cards, culturally appropriate/ sustainably harvested smudge sticks, and sprays.

> "Patriarchy as a system has denied males access to full emotional well-being, which is not the same as feeling rewarded, successful, or powerful because of one's capacity to assert control over others. To truly address male pain and male crisis we must as a nation be willing to expose the harsh reality that patriarchy had damaged men in the past and continues to damage them in the present. If patriarchy were truly rewarding to men, the violence and addiction in family life that is so all-pervasive would not exist."
> -bell hooks

## Resources for Virtual/Remote Facilitation

- This toolkit and its activities can be modified for online virtual and remote use. For support and guidance on how best to adapt them, please refer to:

  - National Equity Project Virtual Facilitation Guidelines & Resources
  - Facilitating Remote Workshops

Activities

Creating a Container

Note:
This portion of the toolkit can be used to set up a group and the space for any of the activities in this toolkit. It is also a valuable way to establish group resonance for a full day or weekend training.

Learning Outcomes:
Participants build trust and openness toward learning and engaging around healthy masculinities within their group. A space is created for vulnerable, courageous, and open engagement with the toolkit and its activities. Participants become aware of mind, body, and spirit and learn to observe how their bodies are responding to and move through discomfort in the work. They step fully into the learning experience around healthy masculinities. Participants bring their full attention to the present moment and build sacred space together.

Recommended amount of time:
30 - 60 minutes depending on the size of the group (for establishing the circle).

Materials:
Food, beverages, and intentional items brought by participants.

Instructions

Establishing the Circle

🐦 Offer a land acknowledgement to honor the Indigenous communities on whose land you live and work.[20]

🐦 Bring the group into their bodies with a brief body-based practice such as guided breathing, gentle and accessible movement and stretching, a quick body scan, bilateral tapping over the heart,[21] and acknowledging and naming various things for which we are grateful (we recommend the Sacred Container Activity outlined below).

🐦 Have group members introduce themselves, including their name, gender pronouns,[22] and their response to a check-in question that brings people into the room and begins to connect and create trust within the group. A few options for a check-in question are:

- What is the story or a story about your name?
- What is on top of your heart at this moment?
- What is something you are grateful for?
- What is a question or curiosity you are bringing to the training?

- What is one intention you are holding for this time together?
- Who are you doing this work for?
- Share a story about one person in your community or an experience that represents healthy masculinities to you.

🐦 Establish agreements: The facilitator invites group members to co-create community agreements. As an alternative, the facilitator can offer agreements with an invitation to add what feels needed (this may be better if time is limited). See Appendix B for sample agreements.

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20 Learn more about land acknowledgements at https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/ and https://www.teen-vogue.com/story/indigenous-land-acknowledgement-explained.

21 Learn more about regulatory and harmonizing body therapy practices at http://www.heartbraintrust.com/brain_harmonize

22 "Referring to people by the pronouns they determine for themselves is basic to human dignity. Being referred to by the wrong pronouns particularly affects transgender and gender non-conforming people." https://pronounsday.org/

Sacred Container Activity

(Provided by Tewa Women United)

Facilitators lead participants in a guided meditation and body scan with the seven energy centers rooted in following:

1. Balance in the crown of the head;
2. Prayer in the lower forehead;
3. Consensus in the throat;
4. Love in the heart;
5. Appreciation in the solar plexus;
6. Allies in the lower abdomen (2 inches below belly button); and
7. Land acknowledgement in the base of your spine.

The facilitator checks in to ensure that the group feels comfortable participating in a guided meditation together. Below is a script for the facilitator to guide the meditation.

Guided Meditation

The facilitator asks participants to close their eyes if they are comfortable, or find somewhere in the room to set their gaze. The facilitator then uses the following script.

Bring awareness to the body by breathing in and out slowly. Notice your feet touching Mother Earth.

Starting at the top of your head, bring your attention to the top of your head; breathe into the part of your body closest to the sky. Your crown energy center—where we carry the seeds of ancestral wisdom. Imagine the cosmos pouring into your crown at the roof of your body, star by star, and imagine yourself carrying the energy of the stars in your palms. Your right palm holds the masculine and your left carries the feminine. This is the universal balance.

Now, bring your attention to the middle of your forehead and shine your energetic light to your third eye/lower forehead energy center. Take in a deep breath, with the belief that you are guided by your ancestors at this moment. With your inner sight, call in your prayers for this time together and for the awakening of the work we are here to do.

As you take another breath in and out, feel the base of your throat, and bring your energy to your throat with the sound vibration of your humming. Our voice is our strongest ally. Ask yourself, what brought me here today? Do I feel safe? Am I sitting in this sacred space of my own volition? Bring awareness to the base of your throat again, and feel the warmth of your divinity passing from your palm to your throat.

Move your attention down your spine. Breathe in the warmth of the sun, glowing through your skin and your cells and moving through your bloodstream and allowing the sunlight to glisten in your heart energy center. Feel the warmth that embraces your body when you imagine the love you give and receive, many times over. Feel the energy of the people in this space with you, and energetically communicate with one another through heart space. Send them the warmth of a smile. Even though our eyes are closed, they may still feel it.

Now bring awareness to just below your rib cage to your solar plexus. With your right hand, gently place your index, middle, and ring fingers on the hollow at the top of your stomach between your ribs. Create some pressure and make small clockwise circles and breathe through the complexities of your nervous system; breathe in and out with each circular motion. Imagine the people at the forefront of this work, including yourself and those who led this work before us in this all-encompassing social justice movement.

Now, let's place our hands right below our belly button and call in our generational fire and the strength of our matriarchy to our lower abdomen energy center. Breathe in the seeds of our community visions. Imagine weaving a belt around your waist with different threads of community and allies. How does it feel? Who are your allies in this work?

Bring your attention and breath down to the tip of your spine. Imagine loose earth moving through your fingers, and feel the strength and depth of your lower spine energy center. Imagine the energy moving through your legs down through your feet, planting your roots into the Earth. As you begin this work of reimagining masculinities, imagine the ancestors who planted their roots here before you. Whose land do you stand on? (Facilitator should name the original Indigenous peoples whose land they are on.) Take a moment to give land acknowledgement and reciprocity.

The facilitator invites participants to open their eyes when they are ready.

Getting Clear about Values and Vision

Learning Outcome:
Participants have shared agreement and alignment around the core values and vision that inform and guide their group's or organization's healthy masculinities efforts.

Instructions

Ask each participant to generate five values that will be helpful in guiding engagement with the toolkit. You can find lists of core values[23] online for people to reference and review, if helpful. For example, the Collaborative used the values shared in Appendix C.[24] We welcome you to borrow anything useful as a starting point.

Each participant writes their five values on a post-it. Split the group into smaller groups of 2–4 people (depending on the full group size) to share individual values, and agree on 3–5 values that can represent the group. (Give them the option to share on flip charts/Jamboard/shared screen.)

The group comes back together, and the facilitator organizes and connects values that are similar. The group reviews where there are commonalities and differences. The group distills the values to identify 3–5 shared values to hold them together as a collective during activities.

The facilitator then leads a conversation in response to the prompt:

- What is possible for this group if we live into our shared values as we work on healthy masculinities?

If this group intends to continue working longer term around healthy masculinities, it may be helpful for the facilitator to summarize responses into a rough high-level statement that can serve as a vision for the work.

If there is time, please ask the group to identify:

- What would these values be like as behaviors?

- What behaviors would help put these values into practice?

This allows the group to ground the values into ways of being in a community of practice together.

Recommended amount of time:
30–60 minutes depending upon group size and amount of time available.

Materials:
Flip chart, post-its/paper, pens/markers (if working in person); computers, internet access, Jamboard, or a way to share a screen (if working virtually).

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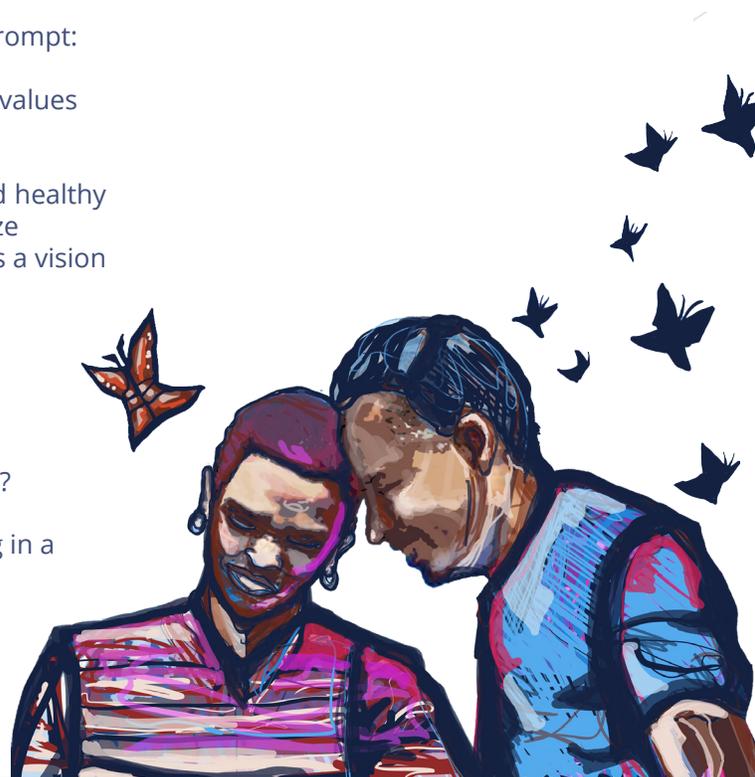
23 Brene Brown, "List of Values – Dare to Lead." Accessed January 19, 2022, https://daretolead.brenebrown.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Values.pdf.

24 Our group used Brene Brown's Values Light the Way exercise to create shared agreement around our values. Brene Brown, "Dare to Lead Read-along Workbook." Accessed January 19, 2022, https://daretolead.brenebrown.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/DTL-Read-Along-Workbook-v2.pdf.

Gendered Me

(Provided by the Transgender Resource Center of NM and NewMexicoWomen.Org)

Learning Outcomes:
Participants understand the terminology and definitions around gender and locate their own experience in relationship to gender, gender expression, and sexual orientation. Heteronormative, binary, and patriarchal understandings of gender and sexuality that produce unhealthy forms of masculinity are disrupted.

Instructions

Facilitator hands out "Where Do I Fit" printed pages or distributes PDFs electronically if the session is virtual (see Appendix D for the handout). Each participant needs a hard copy and markers, crayons, or other art supplies.

Recommended amount of time:
20–60 minutes depending on group size and amount of time available.

Materials:
Printed copies of the "Where Do I Fit" image (see below and Appendix D for the handout) and art supplies (e.g., markers, crayons, colored pencils).

Where do I fit?

My Gender

Both

Gender Expression

Gender

Sex Designated at Birth

Woman/Female

Man/Male

Neither

My Sexual Orientation

Both

Feminine

The Other Person's Gender Expression

Masculine

Neither

TGRC NM

Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico
(505) 200-9086 • www.tgrcnm.org
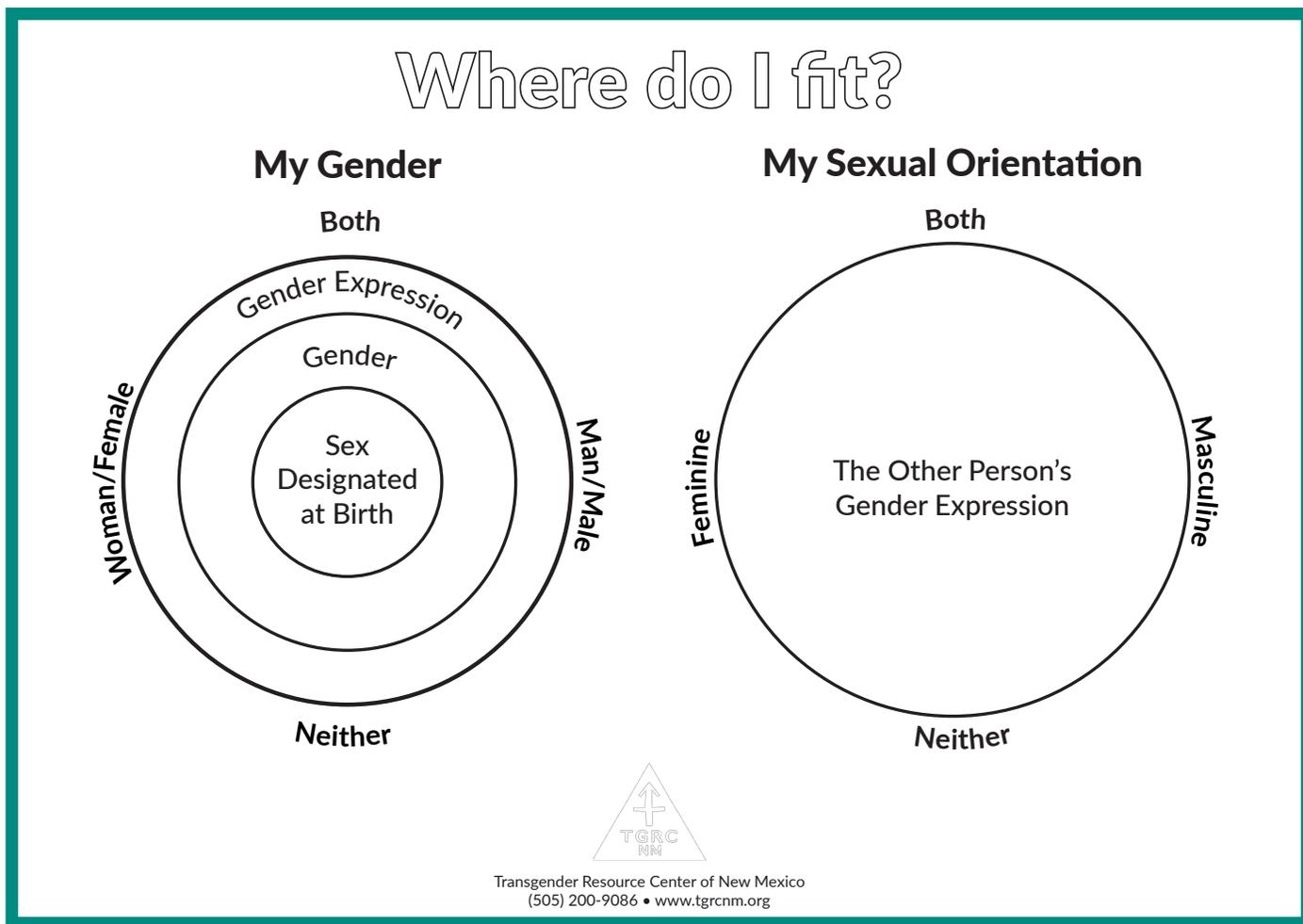
Facilitator begins by going over the following definitions (see Appendix E for the handout). Facilitator can begin by asking participants to share their understanding of these terms before reviewing and clarifying their meanings:

Designated Sex at Birth:

The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex, usually labeled as a result of their external anatomy.

Biological Sex:

A person's sex is actually a combination of bodily characteristics, such as chromosomes, internal and external reproductive organs, and hormones.

Gender:

A person's internal, deeply held sense of their gender. Many people have a gender of man or woman (or boy or girl) that matches the sex they were designated at birth. These individuals are termed cisgender. For many people, their gender does not fit neatly into one of those two choices. For transgender people, their internal gender identity does not match the sex they were designated at birth. Gender non-conforming individuals may identify as both, or neither, of the typically assigned genders of "man" and "woman." Gender can be fluid and is not always visible to others.

Gender Expression/Presentation:

One's manner of presenting their gender through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, and more. Some individuals may express their gender through what society has deemed feminine expression, others may express it through what society has deemed masculine expression, and many may express elements of both.

Gender Non-Conforming/Gender Non-Binary:

Terms used by some people who experience their gender as falling outside the categories of men and women. Folks who do not identify with conventional expressions of femininity and masculinity may also self-identify with these terms. Not all gender non-conforming people identify as transgender, and not all transgender people are gender non-conforming.

Transgender:

An umbrella term for people whose gender differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were-designated at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms—including but not limited to transgender. Use the descriptive term used by the person. Many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to bring their bodies into alignment with their gender identities. Some patients undergo surgery as well. However, not all transgender people can or will take those actions, and a transgender identity is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures.

Cisgender:

A term used to describe people whose gender matches the sex they were designated at birth. This means, for example, that a person designated female at birth identifies their gender as a "girl" or "woman." "Cis-" is a Latin prefix meaning "on the same side as," so it is an antonym of "trans-."

Sexual Orientation:

This refers to the person or gender to whom someone is sexually attracted. This may or may not overlap with romantic and emotional attraction.

The facilitator asks participants to use the markers, crayons, or colored pencils to mark their locations in each of the circles, My Gender and My Sexual Orientation in the handout. Participants may also color the circles and letters or decorate any part of the page. For this activity, the facilitator also needs to explain that, when we talk about sexual orientation and attraction, we are talking about the other person's gender expression, as we are not able to determine either their designated sex or gender.

Then the facilitator leads a discussion, giving participants the option to share their "dots" on the circles and reflect on the results. Participants should not be "voluntold" to share, as this may expose identities that participants do not feel safe sharing.

Notes for Discussion

We are not born knowing how to be a gender (e.g., knowing how to be a boy). How we learn our gender is called gender socialization.[25] Gender socialization is not something simply "done" to us, but rather something we learn, create, react and respond to, choose, construct, and do over a lifetime. Gender is also built into the institutions, organizations, and objects around us. For example, gender is ingrained in everything from job roles and wages to deodorants and shoes. While none of these things are actually related to a specific gender, they make gender seem "real" and give it tangible meaning and consequences in the world. It is important to understand that "Research shows that the behavior of people, no matter who they are, depends on time and place, context and situation—not on fixed sex/gender/sexuality differences."[26]

Potential discussion questions

- Is there anything new or surprising for you in these definitions or in this activity?

- Our society often combines sex designated at birth with both gender and gender expression. How does this affect our identities and experiences?

- What are some examples of gender socialization that you can think of? What impacts do they have on individuals and society?

- How do you feel after completing this activity?

25 Joan Z. Spade and Catherine G. Valentine. The Kaleidoscope of Gender: Prisms, Patterns, and Possibilities (4th ed.). (Los Angeles, Calif: Sage Publications, 2014),159.

26 Joan Z. Spade and Catherine G. Valentine. The Kaleidoscope of Gender: Prisms, Patterns, and Possibilities (4th ed.). (Los Angeles, Calif: Sage Publications, 2014)., 5.

Exploring Dominant and Counter Narratives (The "Man Box")

(Provided by Together for Brothers)

Learning Outcomes:
Participants understand dominant and counternarratives about healthy masculinities and have clarity around the terms and definitions. Participants begin to reimagine masculinities through exploring counternarratives.

Recommended amount of time:
60–90 minutes.

Materials:
Paper and pencils or markers (optional: color pencils and color markers).

Instructions
Ask participants to make a circle in the room. All participants and facilitators should be able to see and hear each other. A good circle establishes community agreements (see the activities "Creating a Container for This Work" and "Getting Clear about Values and Vision"). If following a break, or if the group is in need, re-group participants with a movement or stretching activity, a song, breathing, or a fun ice breaker question.

Dominant narrative

Begin by defining masculinities as "qualities or attributes regarded as characteristic of men." See also, "What are healthy masculinities and where do they come from?" section above at the beginning of the toolkit (and in Appendix A)

What is the dominant narrative?
The facilitator explains that the dominant story is the narrative we most often hear or see in our communities. Ask participants:

🕊 What is the dominant story of being a "man"?

🕊 How does our culture inform our dominant story of "manhood"?

Facilitator explains the dominant story as the "masculine gender role (men) as needing to be sexually aggressive, unemotional, and violent." This is often referred to as an expression of toxic masculinities.

Ask participants to define in their own words "toxic masculinities." The facilitator can explain that toxic masculinities are grounded in gender binaries, male and female. They refer to traditional cultural masculine norms that can be harmful to men, women, trans and gender non-conforming people, and society overall. They also limit and create expectations for men and boys to conform to the "Man Box." In this discussion, the facilitator and participants may decide to discuss how traditional cultural experiences of gender have been eroded or reoriented by the effects of colonization (e.g., in the U.S., how some Indigenous perceptions of gender and gender expression were forcefully undermined by white supremacist colonization and binary perceptions of gender).
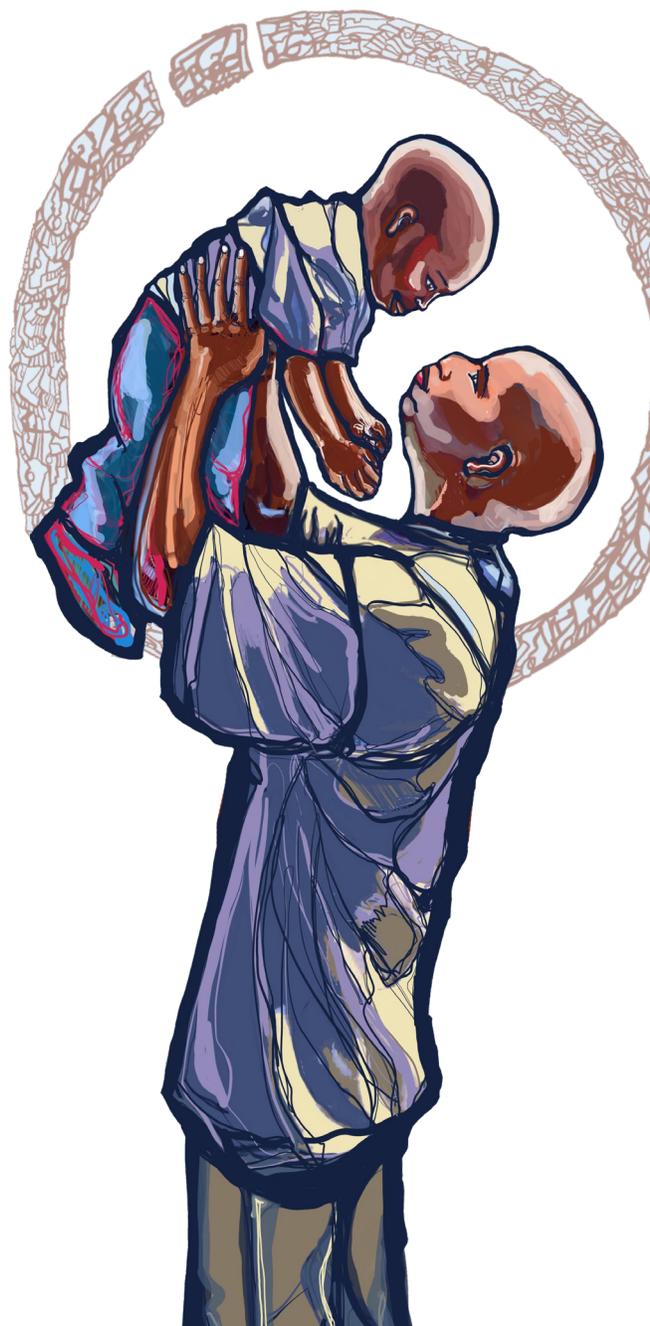
Man Box Activity

Instructions:

The facilitator asks participants to take out a piece of paper and pencil, and then ask participants to draw a box. Facilitator will explain this as the "Man Box," and ask that everyone take a couple of minutes to dig deep and reflect on their own about what they have learned through personal and cultural experiences about the "dominant story" of masculinities. While participants do this, the facilitator can explain that this can be informed through experiences with or observations of family, friends, culture, media (movies, music, etc.), and institutions, including government, schools, and jobs/employment.

- What were the words or phrases we heard about being a man?

- What were we told to be?

- How did we see men treat others?

Remind participants that these attributes feed the idea that men should be sexually aggressive, unemotional, and violent (the dominant story). It may be helpful for the facilitator to name gender as not binary, and it is important to identify qualities that have been assigned to these binaries so that we can disrupt them.

Break/Breath:

At this time, the facilitator can give a small break or take a moment to take three breaths together to ease individuals back into the group.

Share Backs and Reflections:

The facilitator asks the group to share back what they wrote down in the "Man Box" and records this where others can see (e.g., on a flip chart). The group should begin to see a pattern of men being portrayed as somehow dominant (e.g., men don't cry, are aggressive, don't need or seek help, are "strong," are "protectors"). Explain that the "Man Box"/toxic masculinities are rooted in power and control.

Once the group responses have been recorded, the facilitator can ask participants:

- How does this dominant story/ "Man Box" impact men and our communities?

- What can happen to young and older men and boys when they don't fit within this box?

- What might they be called, or how might they be treated?

Wrap up:

After hearing responses, the facilitator can explain that oftentimes men are forced back into this "Man Box" through social pressure or verbal or physical violence. They can even be chastised by or ostracized from their community. This is why it is important for the community and men to support one another and build a strong counternarrative.

Counternarrative

What is the counterstory?

The facilitator explains the counterstory as the experiences of healthy masculinities that we want to highlight from our communities. It can also be the stories and examples we strive to be. The facilitator asks participants:

- What would be the counterstory to being a "Man Box" man?

Facilitator explains that we are **reimagining "masculinities"** with stories that lift up assets and symbols that represent men and masculine people in a caring, compassionate, peaceful, and emotionally expressive light. The facilitator highlights that there are multiple ways to "be a man." This includes sharing what we love about ourselves and allowing our full selves to be shared and honored. We often refer to this as "healthy masculinities," which include understanding and practicing being caring, compassionate, peaceful, and emotionally expressive and supporting healthy relationships.

Counterstory example:

Facilitator has participants watch the StoryCorps video, "My Father, the Gentle Giant" This StoryCorps video is about a grandson asking his father questions about his grandfather, an Indigenous tribal leader for the Caddo Nation in Oklahoma. The video represents a counterstory example. After watching the video, the facilitator can ask the participants:

- What are the counterstories of masculinity present in the video?

- What are the ways the grandfather taught his son counterstories of masculinities?

- What do masculinities look like in this video?

Let's talk rainbows:

Gender and sex are different and can be connected (see Gendered Me activity above for full exploration of this topic). Sex is designated at birth and includes males, females, and intersex people. Gender is like race, a social construction, and includes a spectrum of many identities. The facilitator may use the Rainbow Unicorn graphic by Trans Student Educational Resources (TSER) below to explain this difference and discuss gender fluidity (see Appendix F for a handout).

The Gender Unicorn — Graphic by: TSER (Trans Student Educational Resources)

Gender Identity: Female/Woman/Girl, Male/Man/Boy, Other Gender(s)
Gender Expression: Feminine, Masculine, Other
Sex Assigned at Birth: Female, Male, Other/Intersex
Physically Attracted to: Women, Men, Other Gender(s)
Emotionally Attracted to: Women, Men, Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to: www.transstudent.org/gender
Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

Art-Making Activity

Instructions:

The facilitator asks participants to take a few minutes to draw or write on a piece of paper how they reimagine masculinities.

- What would our communities and our relationships look like?

- What would they feel like?

- What are the things we would see and hear about men and boys in our communities?

- What are the things we would see and hear about other genders in our communities?

Share Backs/Reflection:

Ask participants to come back in a larger group and share what they made for their counterstory and any reflections about the activity. Remind participants that without a solid foundation of community support, folks who live in masculinity often get pushed back into the "Man Box." It's important that we continue to collectively lift up and support each other in centering on these assets and stories for men to be healthy and accountable.

> "Patriarchal masculinity insists that real men must prove their manhood by idealizing aloneness and disconnection. Feminist masculinity tells men that they become more real through the act of connecting with others, through building community."
>
> -bell hooks

Healthy Relationships and Consent

(Provided by Together for Brothers)

Learning outcomes:
Participants understand affirmative consent, its importance, and how consent is connected to healthy masculinities. Participants understand how individual assets support healthy relationships and healthy masculinities.

Review:
"Man Box" and toxic masculinities: Socially constructed attitudes that describe the masculine gender role as sexually aggressive, unemotional, and violent.

Instructions

Ask participants:

🕊 What is the first thing you think of when you hear the word "relationships"?

Explain that we hold relationships in various forms in our lives. This may include family relationships, work relationships, friendships, acquaintanceships, romantic relationships, and relationships with ourselves. Ask participants:

🕊 Do all relationships look the same?

🕊 How do they differ?

Red Flags Activity

Ask participants to share their responses to the question:

🕊 What makes relationships difficult or uncomfortable? (Unhealthy) (The facilitator can write answers where they are visible.)

Reflection Activity

Ask participants to take five minutes and use a notebook or piece of paper to write down two positive relationships they have or have had in their lives. Write at least one quality or characteristic of that relationship that made it a positive experience. What made them positive experiences? (The facilitator can write answers where visible.)

Healthy relationships are transformational and not transactional (where you give something in order to get something back). They also are based upon mutual respect. Further, as mentioned above, they take various forms and are expressed in multiple contexts, such as with and through family, as well as community, romance, school, and work.

Recommended amount of time:
60 minutes.

Materials:
Paper and pens, pencils, or markers.

How do we commit to healthy relationships?
Remind participants that just as we have external relationships, we also have our internal relationships with ourselves. Your goals, interests, relationships, skills, and values are part of that. They're what you love about yourself and make you valuable. Everyone has assets.

Individual Assets Activity

Instructions:
Ask participants to take out a notebook or piece of paper. Ask them to take some time to explore their individual assets. These can be their goals, networks, interests, skills, and values. They can draw or write about them.

Share out:
Have participants share their assets with the group. Explain that by maintaining a healthy relationship with ourselves, we will be better able to create healthy relationships with others. For the self-identified men in the group, it's important that they value and commit to healthy masculinities and shift out of the "Man Box."

Affirmative Consent
(No is No)

(PowerPoint accessible here)

Begin by defining consent: consent is giving permission to do something—an agreement for something to happen. After understanding the definition of consent, help participants learn what "affirmative consent" is, particularly in the context of sexual activities:

> *Affirmative consent must be informed, voluntary, and active. This means that, through the demonstration of clear words and actions, a person has indicated permission to engage in mutually agreed-upon sexual activity. The person who wants to initiate sexual contact must receive clear permission from the other person before engaging in any sexual activity.*

The person who wants to initiate sexual contact must receive clear permission from the other person before engaging in any sexual activity—and that consent must be ongoing throughout the sexual encounter. The facilitator explains that consent goes beyond sexual activity; it's also part of how we interact with one another in different kinds of relationships and situations.

Importance of Affirmative Consent

If affirmative consent is present, it can prevent harmful outcomes and build trust in your relationship. Affirmative consent prevents sexual assault, sexual abuse, rape, sexWual harassment, or any further harm, and it can promote relationships that are safe, healthy, responsible, comfortable, and respectful.

Let's Practice It (Scenarios)

Assign scenarios to small groups. Ask participants to read the scenario assigned to them and discuss how they would approach this situation. (Sample scenarios are below.) The facilitator will convey that, as scenarios are processed, participants are encouraged to take care of themselves—such as taking a moment away to process or breathe—because scenarios can trigger past trauma.

Scenario 1:

Jonathan and Ahmad are classmates in science class. Jonathan is someone who usually doesn't like hugs. Jonathan prefers handshakes or fist bumps. On the other hand, Ahmad loves to hug others. They decided to spend lunch together to get to know each other. When lunch came to an end, it was time to say goodbye. How should they say goodbye?

Scenario 2:

Andrés and his mother, Maria, are arriving at a family party. Maria tells Andrés not to act rudely, but greet their uncles and grandmother with hugs. When they arrive, Maria begins to greet her brothers. Feeling uncomfortable, Andrés distances themselves from their mother and refuses to greet their uncles with a hug. How can Maria and Andrés work to resolve this conflict?

Scenario 3:

Amir and Jorge are on their first date at a restaurant. During the date, they have been talking and getting to know each other. As the date ends, Jorge accompanies Amir to his car. Jorge, wanting to say goodbye to Amir, approaches him to give him a kiss on the cheek. Amir backs away from Jorge. How could Jorge have asked Amir for that intimate physicality before trying to make a move?

Call to Action and Ongoing Practice

Learning outcomes:
Participants and the group as a whole identify several specific behaviors to which they can commit to disrupt toxic masculinities and build healthy masculinities. Participants begin establishing a practice and plan for ongoing accountability around healthy masculinities work.

Recommended amount of time:
15–30 minutes (depending on group size).

Materials:
Marker, flip chart, journals, and pens for each participant

Instructions

Invite each person in the group to spend a couple of minutes writing down one key takeaway from their time together (a learning, insight, feeling, etc.) and 1–2 actions they can take to carry the work forward through: changed behavior, sharing with their community, or further exploration of the content in the above activities (see sample list of follow-up actions below).

After everyone has written down their takeaways and follow-up actions, invite each person in the group to close the circle by naming their one takeaway and sharing one step they will take to carry their healthy masculinities work forward. The facilitator can write the actions on a flip chart, or note them down to share with the group in a reminder email. This list can serve as a resource to which the group can refer after their time together has ended.

Sample follow-up actions and behaviors to advance healthy masculinities

- Revisit this toolkit, the prereadings, shared resources, and other teachings to continue learning and practicing healthy masculinities.

- Share your learning from this toolkit with your communities. Share the toolkit with your communities. Engage in dialogue with your communities about how you reimagine healthy masculinities and invite others to do the same.

- Bring your values and vision around healthy masculinities to your personal and professional relationships and interactions.

- Use respectful terminology around gender and sexuality.

- Challenge the "Man Box."

- Offer counternarratives when you hear/see/feel a dominant and potentially harmful narrative perpetuated.

- Practice affirmative consent.

- Stay curious about how your individual assets support healthy relationships.

- Live into and embody your vision of healthy masculinities through ongoing reflection on your behaviors and practices.

Appendices

Appendix A. Prereadings

Toxic vs. Healthy Masculinities

Why refer to "masculinities" in the plural?

Masculinity can be described as a hierarchy with one idealized type of masculinity and man at the top and all other identities below. Within the dominant narrative, "ideal" masculinity is cisgendered, heterosexual, white, able-bodied, and wealthy—with men of color, trans and gay men, disabled men, poor and working-class men, women, and all other genders positioned as inferior. This form of idealized heterosexual masculinity is usually expressed in opposition to femininity and queerness. This hierarchy of ideal masculinity is also called hegemonic masculinity.[27] It helps us understand that there are many masculinities present in society, but one specific version of masculinity is idealized, and therefore, more valued. For this reason, we use the plural when referring to toxic and healthy masculinities to acknowledge the range of ways masculinity can be expressed.

What are toxic masculinities?

Toxic masculinities include harmful behaviors and actions that are rooted in domination, violence, competition, and limited forms of acceptable emotionality. For example, toxic masculinities in society are often expressed through aggression, violence, homophobia, transphobia, and hypersexuality— often, but not always, in a heterosexual context. From notions of "manning up" and "boys don't cry," to school shootings, domestic violence, and colonization, toxic masculinities operate at various levels to erode the mental, physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual health, safety, and well-being of our communities. While often considered a form of "male behavior," it is important to understand that people all along the gender spectrum are both capable of perpetuating toxic masculinities, and can be on the receiving end of said behaviors. All people are responsible for countering toxic masculinities.

Where do toxic masculinities come from?

Toxic masculinities are outputs of patriarchy, a system that is characterized by current and historic unequal power relations between genders, wherein women, trans, and gender non-conforming and non-binary[28] people are systematically disadvantaged and oppressed by men and in relation to men. Patriarchy also creates and reproduces the gender binary.[29] In this way, patriarchy's dominant narrative underscores, amplifies, and uplifts the voices, experiences, and contributions of cisgender, heterosexual men, and it diminishes those of self-identified women, trans, and gender non-conforming people. Central to this narrative is the structure of the gender binary—with "socially masculinized" traits and behaviors celebrated and normalized, while "socially feminized" traits and behaviors are classified as distinct from, and "inferior" to, men and masculinity.[30]

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27 Chris Haywood and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill. Education and masculinities: Social, Cultural and Global Transformations. (Routledge, 2013.); Joan Z. Spade and Catherine G. Valentine. The Kaleidoscope of Gender: Prisms, Patterns, and Possibilities (4th ed.). (Los Angeles, Calif: Sage Publications, 2014).

28 Terms used by some people who experience their gender as falling outside the categories of man and woman. Folks who do not identify with conventional expressions of femininity and masculinity may also self-identify with these terms. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nonbinary

29 Refers to the systems of beliefs, structure, policies, and practices based on the assumption that there are exactly/only two genders. This is constraining and limiting for individuals who do not exist within a binary. "Gender Binary Definition & Meaning," Dictionary.com (Dictionary.com). Accessed January 20, 2022, https://www.dictionary.com/browse/gender-binary.

30 We refer to "socially masculinized" and "socially feminized" traits to affirm that no behavior or trait is inherently tied to a gender experience or expression—but rather is aligned with a particular experience through social conditioning, to bolster patriarchy and those who benefit from it.

At the same time, patriarchy is inextricably connected to structural racism. Both work to create a system in which people of color experience disproportionate impacts of interpersonal and state violence. For example, the rate of sexual assault on Indigenous women is more than three times as much as for non-Indigenous women. Men and boys of color are criminalized in most structures and systems at rates significantly higher than white men and boys. In the context of men and boys of color from marginalized and oppressed communities, there can be defensive forms of masculine expressions, such as putting on a "tough front." These often serve as a means of protection for men and boys of color who tend to be on the receiving end of structural oppression and violence. However, these expressions of masculinity can simultaneously contribute to the oppression of women and LGBTQ+ people.

It is also important to note the connections between toxic masculinity, the economy, and education. For example, in education, we are taught to value the more "masculine traits," such as competition, performance, achieving above others, and cultivating intellectual distance from things through a lack of emotional connection. These behaviors are then connected to and rewarded by an economy and workplaces that are rooted in competition over compassion and profit over wellbeing and empathy. Patriarchy is also inextricably connected to the extractive and harmful economic relations that underpin capitalism. This patriarchal economic system privileges financial profit over people and our land, water, and environment, and it promotes U.S. imperialism[31] and war as for-profit enterprises. It provides billions of tax dollars to corporations annually, while millions of people are left hungry and unhoused. Ultimately, our extractive economic system is supported and upheld by patriarchy and toxic masculinity.

For further reading on patriarchy and its impacts on society see, Understanding Patriarchy by bell hooks. To explore international case studies that unpack the dynamics of patriarchy and how it can show up in our lives, visit Case Studies on Patriarchy by JASS.

31 Imperialism describes state policy, practice, or advocacy of extending power and dominion, especially by direct territorial acquisition or by gaining political and economic control of other areas. "Imperialism," (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.). Accessed January 19, 2022, https://www.britannica.com/topic/imperialism.

What are healthy masculinities and where do they come from?

Healthy masculinities begin with recognizing, acknowledging, and putting in check one's power, privilege, and position of dominance in any given situation–whether in a family, relationship, workplace, government, or even in a conversation. This is important for men (trans and cis) in relationships with women and other genders and in any context where those in power are in relationship with those who have less power. It also requires reflecting on the layers and intersections of one's power and identity. For example, one could be a cis-man[32] of color and have gender privilege while experiencing racial oppression; one could be a white woman and have race privilege while experiencing gender oppression; or one could have authority over another person in a place of work.

Healthy masculinities center on connection, compassion, emotional awareness, humility, respect, and collaboration while creating space for courageous vulnerability. They are explicitly nonviolent. Communities that promote healthy masculinities value those who care for, heal, nurture, and educate others more than those who exploit or hoard resources for personal gain. Healthy masculinities also center on individual and collective accountability. While people may harm or be harmed by others, we all have the ability to change and have a responsibility to shift our behavior. As the author, bell hooks, described, "Patriarchal masculinity insists that real men must prove their manhood by idealizing aloneness and disconnection. Feminist masculinity tells men that they become more real through the act of connecting with others, through building community."[33]

Healthy masculinities are the result of intentional work to understand one's privilege and power, to learn how toxic masculinities play out in our families, relationships, communities, society, and world, and to practice behaviors and support efforts that counter domination and violence. We live in a culture that promotes toxic masculinities and sometimes necessitates complicity with them or even adopting toxic behavior as a protective measure against threats or harm. Because of this reality, healthy masculinities are ongoing, conscious practices of redistributing power, allowing oneself to be vulnerable, leading with compassion and curiosity, being accountable to and loving oneself and others, and healing wounds that disrupt our ability to be present, loving, and joyful.

> "Patriarchy both creates the rage in boys and then contains it for later use, making it a resource to exploit later on as boys become men. As a national product, this rage can be garnered to further imperialism, hatred, and oppression of women and men globally. This rage is needed if boys are to become men willing to travel around the world to fight wars without ever demanding that other ways of solving conflict be found."
>
> -bell hooks

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32 Cis man describes an adult who was designated male at birth and whose gender identity is male.

33 bell hooks, The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love. New York: Washington Square Press, 2005. p.121

Appendix B. Community Agreements

The following are examples of shared and/or co-created agreements that can be helpful for building trust in a group:

General Agreements

- Speak and listen (shift up, shift back or make space, take space): People participate differently in every group, and we ask participants who are talking more than others to spend more time listening, and those who are sharing less to take space for themselves to speak. Be mindful of your respective privileges (e.g., race, ability, language/speaking proficiency) and your tendency as an extrovert or introvert in group spaces.

- Practice active listening: Be fully present, attentive to, understanding of and willing to build on what is being shared.

- Practice curiosity.

- Consider the opinions and experiences of others.

- Practice confidentiality: Ensure that we honor the confidentiality of anyone's story shared, heard, or read during the training.

- Be aware of potential trauma: Some topics discussed in the training around gender and masculinities may be triggering or upsetting for participants.

- Consider the difference between intent and impact. It is important to prioritize the impact of words and actions over the intent behind them, recognizing that while one may have good intentions behind a word or act, the way that word or act is felt and experienced is more important than the intent behind it.

- Self-care/tend to your needs: Everyone is invited to take care of themselves throughout. the training. If you need to pause during an activity and have a refreshment, bio-break or take space as needed, please let the group know and do what you need to do.

- Share responsibility for meaningful time together. Tolerate ambiguity, lean into discomfort, and bring a spirit of experimentation and creativity to your engagement.

- Honor complexity and the fact that as individuals we do not know everything.

- Messiness is allowed, and we approach this space with the spirit where you might make mistakes and "get caught learning."

Agreements that can be added to support online environments:

- Names and gender pronouns: Include names and gender pronouns in your Zoom titles so we can respectfully engage with one another.

- Muting/unmuting: To create a supportive online learning environment, we ask that folks mute themselves when not speaking and participate from a dedicated, quiet space (if available).

- Video on/off: For participants to be fully present, we ask them to have their videos on. However, that is not a requirement, and it is completely acceptable to turn off the video, particularly if the participant does not have video capability on their computer or in cases where they need to process or take a moment for themselves.

- See the note about the self-care agreement above.

Appendix C. Shared Values of the NM Healthy Masculinities Collaborative[34]

Love:

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. explains that justice is really love in calculation, meaning love is the root of justice.

Courage:

It takes courage to check pride, make space, and acknowledge both our interconnectedness and our own smallness in the world. Courage helps us live all these values into being, and all these values cultivate courage.

**K'e and Seegi Ma Vi Yi and Comadrazga:**

K'e and Seegi Ma Vi Yi are Diné and Tewa terms that mean loving, caring, responsibility for self, earth and others. And the relationship to spirituality, community, and connection to the earth. Comadrazga is a Spanish term referring to reciprocal relationship, kinship, and care.

Presence:

You can't really have love, courage, or belonging if you are not present. Full body presence is required to listen and be non-judgmental. Sometimes we just need to be present to the work in front of us and then the vision emerges.

"To truly address male pain and male crisis we must as a nation be willing to expose the harsh reality that patriarchy had damaged men in the past and continues to damage them in the present. If patriarchy were truly rewarding to men, the violence and addiction in family life that is so all-pervasive would not exist."

-bell hooks

Appendix D. "Where Do I Fit?" Handout

Where do I fit?

My Gender

Both

Gender Expression

Gender

Sex Designated at Birth

Woman/Female

Man/Male

Neither

My Sexual Orientation

Both

The Other Person's Gender Expression

Feminine

Masculine

Neither

TGRC NM

Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico
(505) 200-9086 • www.tgrcnm.org
5600 Domingo Rd NE • Albuquerque, NM 87108
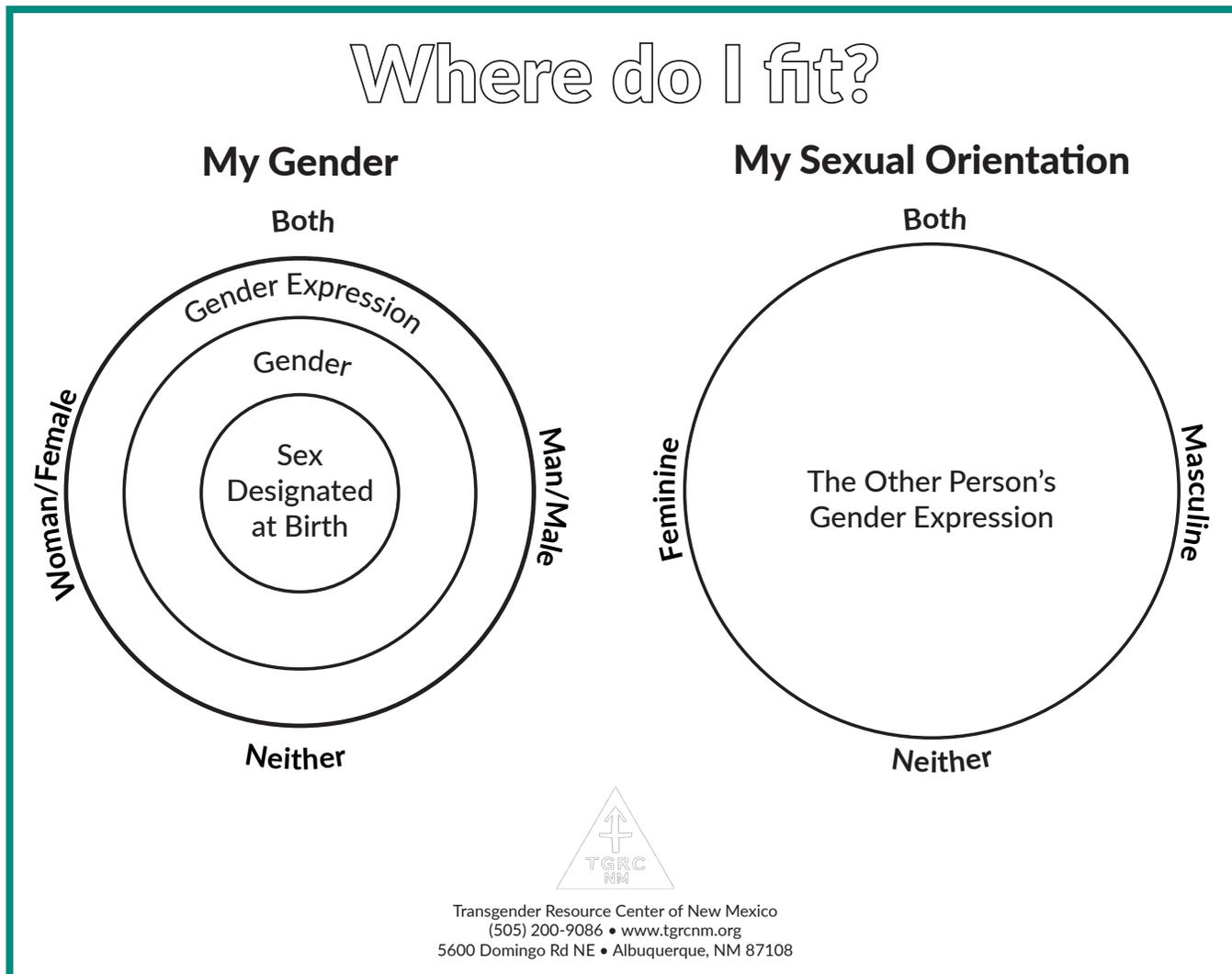
Appendix E. Definitions for "Gendered Me" Activity

Designated Sex at Birth:
The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex, usually labeled as a result of their external anatomy.

Biological Sex:
A person's sex is actually a combination of bodily characteristics, such as chromosomes, internal and external reproductive organs, and hormones.

Gender:
A person's internal, deeply held sense of their gender. Many people have a gender of man or woman (or boy or girl) that matches the sex they were designated at birth. These individuals are termed cisgender. For many people, their gender does not fit neatly into one of those two choices. For transgender people, their internal gender identity does not match the sex they were designated at birth. Gender non-conforming individuals may identify as both, or neither, of the typically assigned genders of "man" and "woman." Gender can be fluid and is not always visible to others.

Gender Expression/Presentation:
One's manner of presenting their gender through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, and more. Some individuals may express their gender through what society has deemed feminine expression, others may express it through what society has deemed masculine expression, and many may express elements of both.

Gender Non-Conforming/Gender Non-Binary:
Terms used by some people who experience their gender as falling outside the categories of men and women. Folks who do not identify with conventional expressions of femininity and masculinity may also self-identify with these terms. Not all gender non-conforming people identify as transgender, and not all transgender people are gender non-conforming.

Transgender:
An umbrella term for people whose gender differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were designated at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms—including but not limited to transgender. Use the descriptive term used by the person. Many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to bring their bodies into alignment with their gender identities. Some patients undergo surgery as well. However, not all transgender people can or will take those actions, and a transgender identity is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures. with their gender identities. Some patients undergo surgery as well. However, not all transgender people can or will take those actions, and a transgender identity is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures.

Cisgender:
A term used to describe people whose gender matches the sex they were designated at birth. This means, for example, that a person designated female at birth identifies their gender as a "girl" or "woman." "Cis-" is a Latin prefix meaning "on the same side as," so it is an antonym of "trans-."

Sexual Orientation:
This refers to the person or gender to whom someone is sexually attracted. This may or may not overlap with romantic and emotional attraction. We can identify as any gender and be sexually attracted to any genderdependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures.

Appendix F. Rainbow Unicorn Graphic by TSER

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources

🌈 Gender Identity

Female/Woman/Girl
Male/Man/Boy
Other Gender(s)

🟢 Gender Expression

Feminine
Masculine
Other

Sex Assigned at Birth

Female   Male   Other/Intersex

🧡 Physically Attracted to

Women
Men
Other Gender(s)

❤️ Emotionally Attracted to

Women
Men
Other Gender(s)
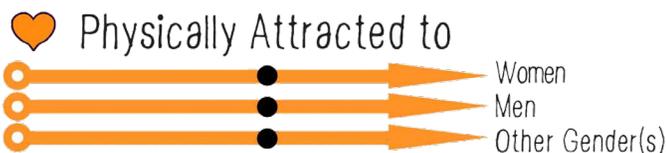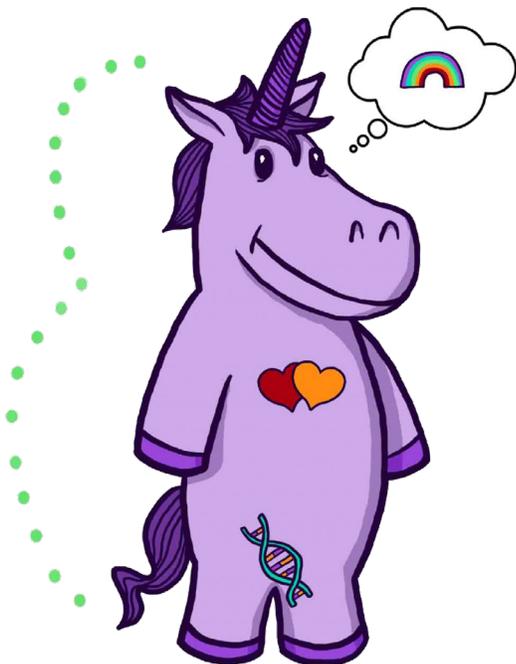
To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

Appendix G. Additional Resources

Glossary
Populated by definitions and nuances group members use.

Additional Resources from the NM Healthy Masculinities Collaborative:

🕊 Healthy Masculinities Literature Review

🕊 Inventory of New Mexico Organizations Supporting Healthy Masculinities

🕊 T4B Handouts and resources:

- Healthy Masculinity Handout 2.0
- Healthy Masculinity 1.0
- Healthy Masculinities Workshop Slides
- Healthy Masculinities Handout
- Yes is Yes, No is No
- Healthy Relationship Handout

Other Toolkits and Resources:

🕊 Toolkits: Programmes on gender norms and masculinities

🕊 #MeToo Movement - Masculinity, Male Privilege & Consent Toolkit (PDF)

🕊 Curriculum for Fostering Healthier Masculinities -Foundation for Jewish Camp (PDF)

🕊 Healthy Manhood – A Call to Men

🕊 The Revolutionary Love Learning Hub

🕊 Everyday Feminism

🕊 Zine Making

🕊 Healing Together