



# CONVERSATIONS ABOUT MASCULINITY: HOW MENTORS CAN SUPPORT YOUNG MEN OF COLOR

“We Need to Prove How Strong We Are All of the Time”

2019

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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MENTOR is the unifying champion for quality youth mentoring in the United States. MENTOR's mission is to close the mentoring gap and ensure our nation's young people have the support they need through quality mentoring relationships to succeed at home, school, and ultimately, work. MENTOR develops and delivers best practices, training, research, and tools for the mentoring field.



For resources and additional content please see our website:  
<https://www.mentoring.org/masculinity>

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## FOREWORD: LISTENING TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Photo: JPMC: The Fellowship Initiative

***My brothers, Fellows, and I are comfortable with each other. We don't hide stuff from each other. Being together is making us more open minded. I don't need to be a specific way just because I'm a man. I can be who I want to be. Being with a group of different kinds of men shows us different ways to be masculine.<sup>1</sup>***

Young people's experiences, capacity for contribution, desire for guidance, and ability to grow make them essential in the conversation about how to foster cultures that support positive masculinity and gender expression. They deserve the first word.

This guide draws from conversations with young men of color from JP Morgan Chase's

The Fellowship Initiative. Through interviews, focus groups, and other exchanges, they shared their perspectives on gender and masculinity. You will find in their quotes and in the following content that masculinity is not monolithic. Exploration of masculinity requires a rejection of artificial separation from and marginalization of femininity and the development of a critical consciousness of self, others, and society. This guide draws from positive youth development and encourages inclusive and youth-centered approaches that are asset-based, creating a safe space that celebrates and supports all forms of diversity including but not limited to young men of color, young women of color, and LGBTQQ youth. Supporting young people in exploring gender and navigating difference is an essential part of preparing them for an increasingly complex, global, interconnected society and workforce.

Our understanding of gender is evolving, and how we understand masculinity is evolving with it. Our hope is that programs, practitioners, and mentors will use this guide to reflect on their experiences, biases, and assumptions to more effectively leverage their strengths and the power of mentoring to support young people.

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### THIS GUIDE IS FOR:

- ☐ Mentors
- ☐ Practitioners

### IT INCLUDES:

- ☐ Overview/  
Key Research
- ☐ Activities
- ☐ Glossary
- ☐ Resources

<sup>1</sup>TFI, High School Fellows, Focus Groups, July, 2018.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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“**No one is telling us that we are doing great.<sup>2</sup>”**

As young people look for support to explore questions about gender dynamics, mentors are often well positioned to engage in conversations about broadening perspectives on masculinity. These mentors include both adults formally in programs as volunteers and group discussion leaders or facilitators, in institutions like schools (teachers) and workplaces (supervisors) as well as informal mentors, such as family members and sports coaches embedded in communities. These mentors include adults across race, class, ability, faith, sexuality, and gender identities.

The purpose of this guide is to highlight strategies that programs and mentors of young men of color (YMOC) can use to support their development, social identity, and gender expression.

An essential experience of adolescence is the seeking of both a sense of belonging and a successful pathway into adulthood. YMOC, like all youth, desire a sense of purpose and grapple

with being their best and most authentic selves while navigating relationships with peers, cultural expectations of families and neighborhoods, and societal norms established in social systems from schools to sports teams to after-school programs and work places.

Historical, societal, and cultural gender expectations pervade all gender identities. In the words of

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**Young Men of Color references adolescent boys and young men ages 10-24. This guide is giving particular attention to high school aged youth (ages 14-18).**

**The content of this guide can be used to support conversations between mentors and youth of all backgrounds including women and girls who are deeply impacted by masculinity and often serve as mentors and allies to boys and men. Peers, whether young people or mentors, can also leverage this content to engage in dialogue with each other.**

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Dr. Torie Weiston-Serdan, author of *Critical Mentoring: A Practical Guide*,<sup>3</sup> gender expectations are the “water we drink and the air we breathe.” The work of exploring the impact of masculinity includes not only male and male-presenting youth but also LGBTQQ youth, gender non-conforming youth, androgynous youth, and young women of color, including those who take on attributes traditionally defined as masculine.

Navigating group membership—in particular maleness, manhood, and masculinity—lies at the root of this exploration. What does it mean to become a man? What does it mean to become an adult? Often a target of oppressive systems, young men of color face disproportionate risk<sup>4</sup> throughout their journey from adolescence to adulthood compared to young white men due to a range of factors including a long history of racial profiling and stereotypes.<sup>5</sup> The perception of young men of color as being older than they are often leads to disproportionately harsh

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<sup>2</sup>TFI, High School Fellows, Focus Groups, July, 2018.

<sup>3</sup>Weiston-Serdan, 2017

<sup>4</sup>Guide to Mentoring Boys and Young Men of Color, 2017

<sup>5</sup>White House Office of the Press Secretary, 2014



discipline practices from their classrooms<sup>6</sup> to the courtroom.<sup>7</sup> These factors heighten the importance of encouraging youth-centered and strength-based development of young men of color as concepts of masculinity are being redefined.

Society labels and marginalizes communities and individuals based on many aspects of their identity, including race and gender expression. This systematic marginalization leads to internalized assumptions about what behavior and traits are acceptable. As young men of color grow and develop, they look to peers and adults in their lives to process norms around appropriate and inappropriate behavior, healthy and unhealthy choices, and about what forms of identity expression, and specifically masculinity expression, are valid and valued. Gender identity intersects with many different identities such as: religion, race, sex, citizenship status, sexuality, and class. Though no singular resource can cover the depth and breadth of these intersections, this guide aims to provide practical steps rooted in research, promising practices, and the voices of young men of color.


**Under President Obama’s leadership, My Brother’s Keeper (MBK) Initiative was launched in February 2014, bringing national attention to the ways BYMOC are disproportionately represented in their exposure to several risk factors and challenges:**

“Data shows that boys and young men of color, regardless of socio-economic background, are disproportionately at risk throughout the journey from their youngest years to college and career. For instance, large disparities remain in reading proficiency, with 86 percent of Black boys and 82 percent of Hispanic boys reading below proficiency levels by the fourth grade – compared to 58 percent of White boys reading below proficiency levels. Additionally, the disproportionate number of Black and Hispanic young men who are unemployed or involved in the criminal justice system alone is a perilous drag on state budgets, and undermines family and community stability. These young men are more than six times as likely to be victims of murder than their White peers and account for almost half of the country’s murder victims each year” (“Fact Sheet”, 2014).


Our goal for mentors in the lives of young men of color is that they provide intentional support of relationships, programs, conversations, activities, and norms that encourage the expression of masculinity that serves:




**AUTHENTICITY:**  
YMOC expressing their own version of gender identity that meets their needs, strengths and realities and respecting that of others



**PRODUCTIVITY:**  
YMOC prioritizing positive daily decision making and goal setting over risk-taking behaviors and deficit-based perceptions



**RELATIONSHIPS:**  
YMOC expressing genuine support, allyship, and care for their peers (particularly those who do not conform to typical masculine roles/stereotypes) and supporters



**REFLECTION:**  
YMOC exploring flexible, nurturing, and inclusive definitions of masculinity that contribute to positive self-esteem, aspirations, learning, and experiences

<sup>6</sup>Rudd, 2014

<sup>7</sup>Phillip & Matthew, Di Leone, Marie Culotta & Ann Ditomasso 2014

## DEFINING MASCULINITY



***Our masculinity is built upon our fragility.<sup>8</sup>***

### CREATING GENDER

The social, systemic, and cultural conditions within which people are born shape gender. Examples of masculinity for young men of color come from diverse sources which include individuals of many different sex and gender backgrounds, both within and outside of families. A range of environmental factors also shape how young men of color develop their identity, sense of belonging, and ability to access opportunities. These environmental factors often promote hyper-masculinity<sup>9</sup>, exaggerated forms of stereotypical male behavior like physical strength, aggression, and sexuality with a prejudice

against women, femininity, and non-heteronormative expressions of gender. Culture determines the norms for each sex and gender, as well as the laws and policies that reflect those norms. For example, many nations have laws and norms that either stigmatize or restrict the rights of women or those that identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning (LGBTQQ). Thus, when talking to young men of color about sex, gender, and masculinity, it is useful to understand that:

- Sex, gender, and masculinity are shaped by law, history, and culture (as well as biology, genes, and physiology)
- Conceptions of gender, masculinity, and sex have changed over time and continue to change
- Gender is an aspect of human diversity, akin to religion and immigration status
- Religious beliefs (or lack thereof) often play a powerful role in how sex, gender, and masculinity are understood

### THE MASK YOU LIVE IN

<https://bit.ly/2W2NaDu>

This documentary follows boys and young men as they struggle to stay true to themselves while negotiating America's narrow definition of masculinity.

### All genders can benefit from masculine and feminine qualities. Some qualities rooted in femininity may include:

- A focus on intersectionality (we all have multiple identities) over the binary (I am this or that)
- Strategic collaboration over false sense of solo accomplishment
- Power in seeing multiple possibilities of expression over a “one way to be” mindset

**Understanding feminism is an important part of the conversation about masculinity and making sense of the social constructs that shape gender expression. One resource to explore feminism:**

<https://everydayfeminism.com/>

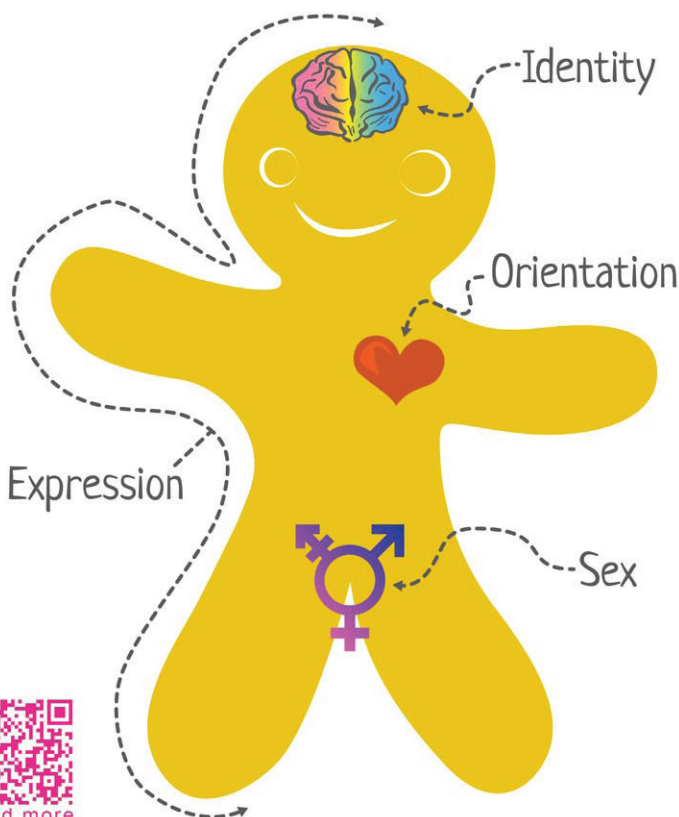
<sup>8</sup>TFI, High School Fellows, Focus Groups, July, 2018.

<sup>9</sup>Saez, Casado, & Wade, 2009



# The Genderbread Person

by [www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com](http://www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com)



Gender identity is how you, in your head, think about yourself. It's the chemistry that composes you (e.g., hormonal levels) and how you interpret what that means.



Gender expression is how you demonstrate your gender (based on traditional gender roles) through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact.



Biological sex refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones, and chromosomes. Female = vagina, ovaries, XX chromosomes; male = penis, testes, XY chromosomes; intersex = a combination of the two.



Sexual orientation is who you are physically, spiritually, and emotionally attracted to, based on their sex/gender in relation to your own.

**Gender is not binary (either/or). It is often both/and. Identification with one aspect of the spectrum does not prevent identification with other aspects of the spectrum. A resource: <https://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2012/03/the-genderbread-person-v2-0/>**

Understanding young men of color's relationship to family, home, and their culture provides additional context for how they have internalized what it means to be masculine and how they express that understanding. It is essential to understand their context and to collaborate with the relationships at home and in their neigh-

borhoods. Young men of color come from families and cultures with deep funds of knowledge, an education term that encourages researchers and teachers to build from the knowledge students already have by openly acknowledging diversity in language, culture, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and class backgrounds

as valuable points of reference. Mentors can leverage this concept by collaborating with families, creating space to discuss how masculinity is influenced by culture and relationships, and allowing young men of color to use knowledge from home and community to shape the dialogue.





Table 1 outlines the many environmental factors that shape the norms around masculinity. Table 2 is an overview of positive and negative expressions of masculinity. Mentors can start with these concepts of masculinity as they navigate their work with youth.

**Table 1: Influences on Masculinity**

While upbringing is the primary factor in determining how a person views gender and gender identity, the following influences are also important to consider.

Environmental Factors	Examples
Cultural - Determines norms for each sex and gender	Mythology, Religion, Science, Economy, Laws, Policies, Family Upbringing, Social Network, Media  Mass media is a powerful cultural factor, communicating dominant gender narratives through music, film, television, the internet, pornography, social media, and video games.
Social - Creates conditions within which norms of masculinity operate	Poverty, Urban Segregation, Race/Sex Hate Crimes, Inadequate School Resources, Inadequate Health Services, Hyper-Policing, Threat of Deportation in Undocumented Families, Inequitable Wages for Women, Mental Health/Trauma
Systemic - Influences notions of appropriate or inappropriate masculine expression	Socioeconomic Inequality, Classism, Ableism, Adultism, Systemic Racism and White Supremacy, Homophobia, Sexism, and Patriarchy

**In 2007 Dr. Luis Moll presented on funds of knowledge at the 3rd Annual Institute on Educational Leadership for Social Justice.**

“The students’ multiple identities, social backgrounds, and lived experiences are dynamic sources of ‘funds of knowledge’. A variety of community and household experiences as well as networks of friends, relatives, and community contacts for any economic assistance and social participation shape the strengths students bring into classrooms.”

**HIP HOP: BEYOND BEATS & RHYMES**

<https://to.pbs.org/2FZEd8W>

From the website:

“HIP-HOP: Beyond Beats and Rhymes goes beyond polarizing arguments to explore hip-hop’s most contested issues. How do limited perceptions of masculinity play into a culture of violence? What roles do misogyny and homophobia have in hip-hop culture—as well as in wider mainstream cultures? And are the media and music industries really to blame?”



**Table 2: Expressions of Masculinity Discussion questions for mentors and mentees:**

- Can patterns of toxic masculinity be maladaptive expressions of positive aspects of masculinity? How do you separate toxic masculinity from positive masculinity? How does a positive trait like ambition become a negative trait like being controlling?
- How can avoidance of intimacy be shaped into healthy self-reliance? Are there times when being “hard” is positive masculinity? When is it toxic? What about in relationships?
- How do we know our options for what to express in each situation we navigate? What are some of the insults used to make men and boys feel less “manly”? What’s an example of a situation where these insults are often used? Why do these insults feel so disrespectful?
- What factors get in the way of positive expressions of masculinity? Are there examples of situations where using positive masculinity went wrong? How can we think through communication so that it prevents harm, rather than use a toxic script that might create harm?

Themes	Options for expressing masculinity
Leadership	Ambitious, Responsible, Engaged, Confident, Upstanding, Assertive, Willful, Power-Hungry, Dominance, Controlling
Warrior Qualities	Courageous, Strong, Protector, Guardian, Brave, Reliable, Honorable, Hero, Aggressive, Ruthless, Invulnerable, Bully, Reckless
Passion	Resilient, Determined, Intense, Violent, “Hard”, Harassment
Provider Qualities	Family Provider, Mentorly, Avuncular, Collaborative, Gentlemanly, Fatherly, Chivalrous, Patriarchal, Lacking Transparency
Independence	Independent, Self-Reliant, Socially Isolated, Avoidant of Intimacy
Rationality	Logical, Strategic, Analytical, Heartless, Unemotional, Lacking Empathy
Emotional Availability	Empathetic, Compassionate, Authentic Sharing of Emotions, Vulnerable, Reflective, Self-Disclosing, Restrictive Emotionality and Empathy
Inclusivity	Inclusive, Open, Loving, Avoidance of “feminine”, Intolerant of Gender and Sex Diversity, Sexual Dominance

Masculinity (manhood, manliness) is a set of attributes, behaviors, and roles associated with boys and men. As a social construct, it is distinct from male biology and is defined by culture and historical context.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20140923045700/>

<http://www.who.int:80/gender/whatisgender/en>

“The construct of masculinity ideology reflects a social constructionist perspective on gender, which holds that there is no one “true” masculinity but rather there are many “masculinities” that vary according to the social context (Levant, Richmond, Majors, Inlan, Rossello, & Heesacker, 2003).<sup>10</sup>”

<sup>10</sup>Saez, Casado, & Wade, 2009



**From a TFI Fellow:**

***Men do not have anyone to push us. No one is telling us that we are doing great. And we internalize and externalize that. It shows up in different ways. This is why we have to be more masculine—like hyper masculinity—to show that we are strong. I experienced that and felt very insecure about my body because I do not have a lot of big muscles. I felt like I was not a manly man. I am not a manly man because when I went to my football coach to play, he looked at me and was like, “are you sure you want to play?” That broke my confidence; it shattered me. And this is why men overcompensate. We need to prove how strong we are all the time. This is why sometimes we are more aggressive towards women. We are trying to prove that we are strong men, manly men. And this is what is toxic that we do not have our own self-confidence so we overcompensate by being hyper masculine.”***



Photo: JPMC: The Fellowship Initiative

Definitions of masculinity are often limited to a set of male stereotypes or maladaptive attitudes. Hyper-masculinity is associated with a range of core concepts including toughness, dominance, winning, and the desire to show no weakness. Patterns of toxic forms of masculinity might include negativity toward sexual minorities, false myths of self-reliance, aggression, dominance, non-relational sexuality, and restrictive emotionality.<sup>11</sup> These themes combine

with gender scripts (narratives on how to perform one’s gender or sex) to generate a central message and a dominant culture where masculine means to express little to no vulnerability while protecting one’s group membership and status as “a real man”. Patterns of masculinity manifest differently in different communities, with a community’s dominant ideas of masculinity shaping the teaching and behavior of young men of color.

**Young men may not directly exhibit stereotypical masculine behavior but may project statements that indicate curiosity or struggles with diverse forms of masculinity expression.**

**Comments like “I know a kid at school who left the team to do theater” may signal opportunities for mentors to engage in dialogue.**

Mentors can engage without putting value on behaviors (celebrating a young man’s “masculine” traits or surprise at a young man’s vulnerability). Mentors can be ready to prompt with “what if” or “what do you think about” questions: What if our athletes discussed mental health alongside physical strength? What do you think about leaving a sports team for other hobbies?

<sup>11</sup>Yousaf, O Popat, Hunter, 2015



## RISKS OF HYPER-MASCULINITY

Hyper-masculinity is especially dangerous if it is institutionalized (for example, rape culture or sexual harassment that is tolerated or hidden in organizations). Young men who identify with and conform to masculinity in a strict and rigid way are at risk of a variety of health effects including depression, sexual risk, and other health-risk behavior.

Gender role strain (GRS)<sup>12</sup> describes psychological distress associated with failing to meet masculine ideals, difficulty maintaining normative masculine expression, and strain from the vigilance and commitment required to conform to masculine norms. Suppression of one's authentic gender and sexual identity and a false separation between femininity and masculinity create the impression, and in some cases the reality, that boys are limited in their options for expressing their gender. Young men of color may choose to disregard healthy behaviors not typically associated with masculinity such as empathy, compassion, the ability to ask for help from others and vigilance in monitoring one's own health care. Without interventions, hyper-masculinity in adolescence becomes hyper-masculinity in adulthood.



Photo: Lena Parker Duncan

### CHECKLIST: KEY THEMES TO CONSIDER WHEN DISCUSSING MASCULINITY

#### Toxic forms of masculinity are symptoms of:

**Patriarchy:** A system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it.

**Hetero-normative Culture:** Denoting or relating to a world view that promotes heterosexuality as the normal or preferred sexual orientation.

**White Supremacy:** The belief that white people are superior to those of all other races, especially the black race, and should therefore dominate society. Men of color may be labeled as toxic due to historical assumptions about men of color as especially violent, sexual and dangerous.

#### Acknowledgment (especially by men) of the negative impact and forms of hyper-masculinity

#### Masculinity is not inherently toxic and can be performed in ways that are beneficial to health, life success and societal advancement.

#### There is a way forward leveraging strategies like ally-ship, mentoring, self-reflection and group accountability.

<sup>12</sup>Fields, Bogart, Smith, Malebranche, Ellen, & Schuster, 2015



# LEVERAGING THE POWER OF MENTORING



“*I think it’s the interconnectedness, where we are all together.*”<sup>13</sup>”

Mentoring relationships are a positive source of support for young people. Young men of color benefit from role models who demonstrate choices and behaviors with positive outcomes.<sup>14</sup> Individual mentors are important in helping their mentees navigate the values and behaviors of masculinity. However, there are some mentoring practices that may be especially helpful both for programs and mentors. These practices maximize the value that mentors have in helping young men of color think about how they conduct themselves in accordance with their understanding of manhood.

**Dr. Noelle Hurd at the University of Virginia discusses power, privilege, and mentoring encouraging mentors to:**

- 1. Acknowledge race**
- 2. Create space for racial and ethnic identity development**
- 3. Advocating is not just helping youth navigate systems, but challenging the system together (activism)**
- 4. Be an ally**

<https://vimeo.com/83615320>

## GROUP MENTORING

One form of mentoring that has shown benefits for youth of color is group mentoring. Group mentoring is the practice of pairing one mentor with multiple mentees, who meet together as a group. Usually, group mentoring takes place in a public meeting spot like a school, gym, or other place where the mentees’ community gathers. Group mentoring provides growth and development for mentees while also offering peers or older youth a chance to build leadership skills and self-confidence. In this context the power of positive peer relationships can be leveraged to support identity development. These groups often emphasize collaborative activities and group tasks while enabling dialogue, discussion, and personal sharing around relevant topics. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s National Mentoring Resource Center conducted a review of group mentoring that showed that group mentoring programs can produce an array of positive behavioral and emotional outcomes. In addition

the group setting allows for relational processes such as group cohesion and strong group identity that may contribute to positive youth outcomes.<sup>15</sup>

Formal mentoring programs or institutions like schools leveraging structured mentoring of adolescent youth can leverage resources like the *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™* to develop and maintain a quality program that offers mentors (volunteers, staff and/or assigned facilitators) access to training support around managing the dynamics and personalities of the group and strategies to provide ongoing support of adults and youth in these contexts. Team group models have shown positive results in recruiting men of color to serve as mentors which can be a benefit for groups centered on young men of color. Group mentoring helps establish norms for healthy and productive behaviors and creates a space for youth to explore their identity and expression while supporting others.

<sup>13</sup>TFI, High School Fellows, Focus Groups, July, 2018.

<sup>14</sup>Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014

<sup>15</sup>MENTOR: The National Mentoring Resource Center, n.d.



## CRITICAL MENTORING

Critical mentoring<sup>16</sup> centers youth themselves, seeing them as experts of their own experience while creating an environment for authentic dialogue and assessment of social and cultural norms and systems. Critical mentoring practices also provide individual mentors and formal programs a lens for assessing how to engage young men of color.<sup>17</sup> It encourages adults to explore their own biases, emotional triggers, and limitations as well as strengths before entering into a conversation with a young person about a challenging topic. Creating a plan to manage your feelings in order to effectively support mentees is an important step and part of an ongoing reflection process for mentors. Mentoring relationships

### Guide to Boys and Young Men of Color:

“Critical consciousness is the ability to perceive and understand social, political, and economic oppression; to be able to deal with such issues; and to be ready to take action against oppressive elements of society. Beginning with an understanding of youth context, critical mentoring allows the mentoring relationship to focus on providing mentees with opportunities to reflect, discuss, as well as challenge systems of inequity.”

centered on understanding can also be effective for young men of color by creating opportunities for youth to reflect on, talk about, and challenge systems of inequity. The mentoring relationship becomes a vehicle for young people’s exploration of gender and its intersections with race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and the impacts of discrimination or privilege on their lives. This is especially important given the role systemic issues like white supremacy have in shaping the norms of masculinity in society.

## INFORMAL MENTORING

Besides mentors in formal programs, there are many adults working with youth who act as informal mentors, serving as confidants, trusted individuals or role models for young men of color in their community. These informal mentors can be found in schools, neighborhoods, local businesses and families and are important sources of support for young people. It is important for young men of color to have close relationships with adults in general and in particular with men who can express emotional vulnerability while maintaining a sense of security about their gender identity. Young men of color may want emotional connection and want to engage in relationships where it

is safe to express issues they may not bring into conversation with their social network due to concerns about vulnerable emotions or confidentiality.<sup>18</sup> Informal mentors support psychological outcomes for youth as they engage youth in fun activities, have personal conversations about topics like relationships with family and other adults, and offer emotional support. Adults in the lives of youth regardless of race, sex, gender, or class can model positive norms around masculinity giving young people more and diverse models and options as they explore their own identities and remove the shame and confusion that young people may face when they engage in activities and behaviors beyond those customarily associated with their gender.

## RE-FRAMING MASCULINITY THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

One of the most useful and productive ways to help young men of color think about masculinity is through the mentor-mentee relationship. Young people understand the importance of modeling and advocate for receiving feedback about their choices. When young people express themselves in ways that support their social and emotional health, contribute to the well-being of others, and support progress

<sup>16</sup>Weiston-Serdan, 2017

<sup>17</sup>Weiston-Serdan, 2017

<sup>18</sup>Spencer, 2007.



**Become sensitive to “manhood moments” when you and a young man you are with both observe something related to masculinity. For example, you and your mentee might see a father engaging with a child in the park, witness a fight between boys on the sports field, or hear a conversation between men about their work. Teach yourself to listen for a young man’s masculinity-related concerns when conversing one-on-one. In either case, gently work masculinity into the conversation by asking questions first. For example: “Do you think a lot of people expect men to do (be like) that? Why do you think guys do that kind of thing so much? Avoid declarations about “true” masculinity as you see it; emphasize dialogue.**

toward their goals, it is important that these behaviors are reinforced and supported, particularly with feedback acknowledging the positive impact of those choices. It is especially important to praise healthy behaviors that are non-typical expressions of masculinity, such as crying when emotional. Mentors can reinforce behaviors rooted in service, empathy, help-seeking, compassion, and affirmation of others by validating young men when observing them do something important that defies male stereotypes. The power of community matters, as masculinity is formed in community. Both individual relationships and group contexts can be leveraged to support healthy identity development for youth and adults, allowing for organic access to diverse forms of gender expression as well as feedback and space to debrief choices, behaviors, and norms. Table 3 examines options for reframing language around hyper-masculinity.

**Table 3: Reframing Language of Hyper-Masculinity**

Message	Modified	Reason
“Man Up/ Stop being a punk”	We got this! Let’s go! How can I help? Everyone fails or struggles. How are you feeling about things? Let’s figure out our comeback plan. What do you need?	Reframe toughness and resilience as universal attributes. Encourage YMOC to express concerns and vulnerability. Normalize failure and help-seeking behaviors.
“Do you have a girlfriend?”	Are you in a relationship? (Is it romantic? Does it bring you both joy?)	Validate by being inclusive in language around potential romantic partners.
“What’s your favorite sport/team? Do you like basketball?”	What are your interests?	Express curiosity about genuine interests which can include activities not typically associated with men. Aim to be inclusive over presumptuous.
“You need to be the man of the house”	What role do you play at home? How do you feel about it? What responsibilities do you take on?	Implies adult responsibility and gendered roles. Discuss with young men their responsibilities and how they are processing their roles at home or in their community.
“Stop acting like a girl”	How would you like to approach this? Are you hesitant to act or respond? What is needed to navigate this situation?	Focus on strategy and seeking options that support the goals of a situation.

## A WAY FORWARD: STRATEGIES AND TOOLS



**“ I do not need to be a specific way just because I am a man.”<sup>19</sup>”**

Masculinity is not inherently destructive, but young men need to bring a critical lens to its traditional forms and not be excluded or judged when they do not conform to them. Mentors can work with young men of color to identify patterns of masculinity that are toxic and self-perpetuating while supporting youth in acquiring and utilizing skills that nurture the development of others including active listening and skills for consoling. As young men of color develop, mentors should solicit contextual information about youths' experiences. Allow them to examine how they came to form their relationship

with gender norms, and how their history influences their attitude and behaviors. This is a positive way to support youth without outing or labeling their gender identity or expression. Adults in the lives of youth should also be aware of how they unconsciously perform and define their own gender behavior. Mentors risk unknowingly perpetuating hyper-conforming expectations. It is important for mentors to be observant, reflective, and strong listeners.

It must be acknowledged that hyper-masculinity has left a lasting legacy of pain. Adults and young people alike continue to live, learn,

and grow in a society plagued by distortions of power based on sex and gender. There is a need for more tools to explore the role and impact of gendered power. This is especially important as young people's ability to form positive, healthy relationships across identities is increasingly critical to their success and happiness in a global society that demands cultural fluency. The following is a set of action steps and strategies for mentors as well as programs to consider as they engage with youth about masculinity.



Photo: Lena Parker Duncan

<sup>19</sup>TFI, High School Fellows, Focus Groups, July, 2018.



# FOR MENTORS



## ASK YOURSELF THESE GUIDING REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. How do your attitudes about masculinity shape your speech and actions?
2. In your life, what parts of masculinity have been harmful? Which have been beneficial?
3. What expressions of masculinity were you encouraged to engage in or avoid?
4. Repeat these questions in thinking about femininity and sexual orientation.

## MODEL THESE BEHAVIORS



- Interrupt all forms of bullying or harassment, both physical and verbal.



- Practice and normalize discussing weakness, vulnerability and failure.



- Encourage asking for help and expressing care for others.



- Demonstrate how to disagree without using offensive comments or aggression.



- Share your authentic story on masculinity, maleness and manhood.



- Embrace all forms of diversity and note examples of allyship.



- Express a willingness to learn and evolve.

## ENGAGE YOUTH

- Build authentic relationships with people of diverse cultures, races, genders, sexualities and abilities.
- Discuss power and privilege. What advantages do you navigate given your gender identity?
- Strategize how to hold each other accountable in being an ally to girls, women, and individuals of all gender identities.
- Ask young men how they already are and can be an asset to their community.
- Ask your mentee probing questions to facilitate safe and open dialogue:
  - Can you share one thing that I should absolutely know about you?
  - When was the last time you cried and why?
  - Which one of your core values is most important to you and why?
  - What are some of your personal triggers? Pet peeves?
  - Who is your “go-to-person” when you’re facing personal challenges? What do they say or do to make you feel supported?
  - How can I best support you?

*How can I best support you?*



# FOR PROGRAMS



## ESTABLISH CLEAR BOUNDARIES, GUIDELINES AND NORMS

For programs, the monitoring and support of matches and mentoring groups is an appropriate time to establish and reinforce appropriate boundaries, important guidelines and norms informed by both youth and adults. Discussions of gender identity require clear norms in order to create an environment where each individual can express their authentic identity and navigate complex and complicated discussions with appropriate support.

- Start with the vision and mission. What is the goal of the group or relationship? What environment is sought?
- Establish BGN's collaboratively—everyone contributes and agrees to them.
- Define and agree on terms as needed. For example, define “brotherhood”, what does it look like for your group?
- Accountability is rooted in agreed upon norms—i.e. “We agreed not to use that language here.”
- Verbalize and review norms regularly at the start of each meeting.
- Suggested: Keep BGN's to a manageable number (3-12).
- Optional: Incorporate tradition or symbols.
  - Using a cushion as a mic for a “one mic” rule
  - Closing up with a prayer
- Define norms related to:
  - Language/Communication
  - Participation
  - Logistics
  - Conduct/Behavior
  - Core Values
  - Red Line Rules - Behaviors that will impact ability to participate in the group (i.e. Fighting)
- Sample questions to examine before group discussions on masculinity:
  - How will we address each other?
  - How are we expected to contribute? (i.e. Arriving on Time)
  - How will we define the parameters for confidentiality?  
Are guests allowed?
  - What logistics must everyone participate in? (i.e. Rotating facilitators, Clean Up/Set Up)
  - How will we navigate disagreement and conflict?
  - What resources are available in the event of triggers or traumas that arise?

## SAMPLE BOUNDARIES, GUIDELINES AND NORMS:

Express your personal opinions respectfully and constructively.

Disrupt disrespect. Agree on a word to use when you hear something hurtful or disrespectful to pause the discussion.

Give the benefit of the doubt. Don't go on the attack when you hear something you don't like. Ask the person to explain and work it out.

Step forward, step back—speak-up, but remember: others need airtime too!

Use both heart and mind. Support and praise others, express feelings, and apologize when out of line.



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## CREATE AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

- There is no one singular definition of what masculinity or gender identity “should” look like.
- Emphasize collaborative activities and group tasks to enable trust building, getting to know each other through dialogue and personal sharing.
- Focus on support, supervision, and monitoring best practices. Establish a clear process for checking in, seeking feedback, and handling problems as a group.
- Allow space for smiling and crying. Both are expressions of a range of emotions.
- Know creating culture is an ongoing process.

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## ENGAGE YOUTH PRO-ACTIVELY

- Acknowledge young men of color as sources of allyship and support for each other and important sources of feedback for programs.
- Youth stories and perspectives are essential to conversations about masculinity. Listen to understand rather than respond—let youth tell and own their story using their own words.
- Prioritize youth voice and agency from the beginning of programming.
- Plan your engagement activities with the goal of building trust. Trust and credibility are the basis for a productive mentoring relationship.
- Be open-minded and willing to think critically about your own perspective as a program.
- The themes of a mentoring relationship should flow from mutual respect:
  - Establish an underlying principal or set of values that can give mentoring context.
  - Examples of contextual principles or values are personal growth, preparation for a new stage of life, fellowship or an important long-term endeavor.
  - These contextual principals can frame the purpose and goals of activities and discussions.

***Positive masculinity involves demonstrating courage, empathy and understanding, having circles, engaging men in group conversations that encourage expression of emotions. Our culture doesn't make 'getting together' a normal thing for men, this only happens at the barbershop.”***

*- TFI Coordinator*



Photo: Felix Augustine



## ENGAGE EXPANDED NETWORKS

- Honor the role and importance of family and culture in shaping gender identity and masculinity norms.
- Engage pro-actively with the broader community that the young men come from and operate within.
- Encourage young men to share stories of and reflect on the voices that have shaped their experiences.
- Partner with parents/families in this process, because their involvement is critical.
  - Provide a range of workshops and meetings to inform, educate and engage parents and families (i.e. social emotional wellness, college prep, communication).
  - Invite parents and families to participate in or inform celebratory activities (i.e. as guest speakers, share culture/traditions) and take ownership.
  - Endorse an open door policy approach—strategize with parents during challenging moments as well as support and celebrate joyous occasions.
  - Dare to engage adults in meaningful conversations with youth by establishing community agreements and revisit them as needed. Encourage the use of “I” messages, non-judgment, and respectful expressions of needs, feeling and concerns.

## LEVERAGE POP CULTURE

- Media and public figures have an impact on shaping what masculinity looks and feels like. Media intersects with larger systems such as sexism and homophobia.
- Examples of media include video games, internet, film and the social media platforms of public figures.



- Incorporate and reference popular culture and make sense of its influence on conversations and expressions of masculinity.



## PREPARING MENTORS FOR DISCUSSIONS ON MASCULINITY

- Create a safe but brave and trusting space for both mentors and young people to share their experiences and emotions to each other.
- Create a sense of self-awareness amongst participants individually and collectively by encouraging participants to look out for one another/themselves and check-in with each other.
- Mentors must role-model and share the challenges they are dealing with so young people can see what emotional struggle looks like and how to address their issues openly.
- Ensure that support services are in place for youth when they open up either onsite or through referrals as a follow-up.
- Build from shared interests for a source of topics to foster non-threatening discussion and surface conversation about identity.
- Make time for self-reflection around the topic of masculinity and gender identity. What has shaped your relationship with masculinity?



# FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS AND MENTORING GROUP FACILITATORS

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If you are a member of the local community looking to bring young men together for conversations about masculinity or if you are a formal program looking to create mentoring groups or discussion circles, there are some resources available to support you in preparing the group and facilitator/discussion leader.

## SELF-REFLECTION ON GENDER ATTITUDES

- Does your group ever talk about what it means to be a man, either directly or indirectly? For example, differing expectations for men and boys versus girls and women? What are these conversations like? What guidance or insights do you provide?
- What are some of your beliefs about what it means to be “masculine”, and where do you think they came from? Have these beliefs changed from when you were a child, and if so, how?
- Do your expressions of masculinity depend on the social situation you are in? Are there times you feel a need to “man up”?
- Do your beliefs about masculinity shape the way you interact with your mentee or group (i.e. the activities you engage in and the conversations you have) and if so, how?
- What has your group taught you about masculinity?

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## SAMPLE GUIDING VALUES & PRACTICES

- Establish norms for dialogue as a group ahead of time including the importance of respect for the views and feelings of others.
- Practice and model the ability to tolerate distress, disagreement and discomfort to allow for personal growth and group connection.
- Both share and solicit stories from YMOC about the journey with masculinity regarding how both sides resist negative influences and navigate structural forces that influence you.
- Discuss historical and culturally-relevant stories of liberation and diverse forms of successful performing of masculinity on behalf of both personal goals and social benefit.
- Rather than work for a broad consensus on “positive masculinity”, seek to identify masculinity themes and expressions that, under certain conditions, can be beneficial to personal development without being harmful to others.
- Cultivate leadership, agency and responsibility by working collaboratively with emerging men rather than working with them as program recipients to be served and molded to a single standard.
- Promote brotherhood (inclusive of gender-sexuality diversity) and its qualities that are stigmatized in other settings, such as nurturing, empathy, heart-work and help-seeking/giving. These qualities are often denigrated in the “anti-feminine” heterosexist attitudes of toxic masculinity.
- Promote a commitment to support women’s rights and well-being and human rights in general. Identify and oppose a masculinity that oppresses women.



## SAMPLE DISCUSSION TOPICS & THEMES ON SEX, GENDER AND MASCULINITY

- The body and biology including genes, hormones, and morphology
- Expressions of gender and sexuality through attitudes and social behavior
- Sexuality, intimate attachments, sexual behavior or desire
- Psychological aspects of gender and sexuality
  - A person's gender and sex(ual) identity
  - Feelings of belonging and identification to a particular group
  - Labels and descriptions used for self-identification
- Social acceptance and validation (or lack of) by others including validation by those who claim a similar gender and sex(ual) identity
- Experiences of bigotry or discrimination by those who are in accord with (or enforce) dominant social norms of gender and sexuality
- Intersectionality between race and gender. Exploring the relationship between being a young man and a young man of color
- Sexual harassment and assault
- Intimate partner violence
- Empowerment and liberation
- Defining consent
- The ally and active bystander
- Vulnerability and shame
- Self and group reflection
- Healing and trauma
- Masculinity, femininity, and two-spirit
- Unconscious bias
- Conflict resolution and de-escalation

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE GROUP:

1. What beliefs do I have about what is “masculine” and what is “feminine”?
2. What behaviors, activities and traits do I associate with men? With women?
3. Do I know anyone who doesn't conform to expected gender roles or gender expression? How do I feel about them? What do I know about them?
4. What have been the strongest influences on my understanding of masculinity and femininity? Who in my life shaped my beliefs about gender roles and gender expression?
5. What factors have shaped my notions about the relationship men and boys have with girls, women and individuals of diverse gender and sexual identities?



Mural: Groundswell Lead Artist: Chris Soria, Groundswell Assistant Artist: José de Jesus Rodriguez, Youth Artists: The Fellowship Initiative, Class of 2021, Unbounded Steps, New York City ©2015

## CONCLUSION

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***We need to define when something is toxic and when it's healthy.<sup>20</sup>***

***When it comes to my life, I need both sides.<sup>21</sup>***

The intersection of identity with gender, sex, and race, among other identities, is a source of opportunity to be explored, not suppressed. This guide acknowledges that there is power in the whole self and that mentors must advocate on behalf of young people who seek holistic expression and work to create spaces with youth to be both safe and brave in exploring the positives and negatives that can exist with any form of identity expression. As a social construct, masculinity can force youth into roles that do not benefit their growth, their ability to advocate for others, or their ability to develop into healthy and productive contributors. Mentors are encouraged to have conversations about issues, topics and situations related to masculinity as they arise organically or programmatically with young men of color. Young people want to be guided and informed from a place of mutual respect, authentic curiosity, and genuine care. Adults play an important role in helping young people navigate choices and behaviors that are unhelpful, unhealthy, or uninformed and must continue that work even as they balance supporting diverse gender expression. Engage in dialogue with youth, promote trust and empathy through consistency, listen to understand, and create opportunities through activities to learn with and from young people. Masculinity can be expressed in diverse ways and work with femininity and a range of gender identities to create a holistic expression of self. The goal of this guide is to offer direction in building relationships and developing expressions of masculinity that are “willing and brave enough to defy negative norms and stereotypes<sup>22</sup>” and promote “respect and acceptance of others’ choices and differences.<sup>23</sup>”

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<sup>20, 21, 22, 23</sup> TFI, High School Fellows, Focus Groups, July, 2018.

# APPENDIX



## **GUIDING PILLARS REFLECTION LIST: QUESTIONS FOR MENTORS, YOUTH AND PROGRAMS**

### **Authenticity: YMOC expressing their own version of gender identity that meets their needs, strengths and realities and respecting that of others**

- How can I help YMOC (or my peers and mentors) reflect on their social networks and identity sources of support and positive role models?
- What is the story of my masculinity? Have I shared authentically and deeply?
- What forms of masculinity from home or from my peers most resonate with me? Which forms do not resonate and why?
- Outside of family or peers who or what influences my sense of masculinity? (These might include street organizations, media, religion, celebrities and more)

### **Productivity: YMOC prioritizing positive daily decision making and goal setting over risk-taking behaviors and deficit-based perceptions**

- How do I express care, share power, challenge growth, provide support, and/or expand possibilities for YMOC?
- How do I model empathy and vulnerability?
- Do I make time for self-care practices? (meditation, rest, wellness, mindfulness)
- How do I acknowledge when I cause harm? Do I work to make amends?
- Do I ask for help when I need it?

### **Relationships: YMOC expressing genuine support, allyship and care for their peers (particularly those who do not conform to typical masculine roles/stereotypes) and supporters**

- Do I connect with other adults or peers in the YMOC's circle or network?
- Have others asked me to be an ally?
- How do I connect with or treat others who express their gender identity differently than me?
- Do I have close relationships with individuals of a different gender expression than myself?

### **Reflection: YMOC exploring flexible, nurturing and inclusive definitions of masculinity that contribute to positive self-esteem, aspirations, learning and experiences**

- How do I model or express empathy and vulnerability?
- What is my relationship to vulnerability?
- What does it mean to me to be an ally or active bystander?
- When have I had to change my communication style (either dial up or dial down) regarding my masculinity/femininity?
- How has my masculinity/femininity impacted people's perception of me?
- How has my relationship with my masculinity/femininity impacted the way I present my physical appearance?





- ❑ What impact has “toxic masculinity” had in the lives of women I know?
- ❑ When have I witnessed women in my life or in general embody strength and leadership?
- ❑ What do I think young women, particularly young women of color, say they need from young men of color?
- ❑ If you had to describe to a younger sibling, cousin what it is like to be a young man of color, what would you say?
- ❑ Make a list of words or images that come up when you think of a queer man of color. How do these words or images relate to your own experience? How are they different from yours?

## UNPACKING MASCULINITY AND MANHOOD: GROUP DISCUSSION

There are at least five elements of Sex, Gender and Masculinity.

1. The body and the biology of male-female attributes; Genes, Hormones, Morphology
2. Expressions of Gender and sexuality through attitudes and social behavior
3. Sexuality, intimate attachments; sexual behavior or desire
4. Psychological aspects of gender and sexuality: a person’s gender and sex(ual) identity; the feelings of belonging and identification to a particular group and the label/description used and for self-identification
5. Social Acceptance and validation (or lack of) by others:
  - a. Validation by those who claim a similar gender and sex(ual) identity
  - b. Experiences of bigotry or discrimination by those who identify with (or enforce) dominant social norms of gender and sexuality.

**Group discussion:** You can start a conversation on masculinity by describing it as membership in the “men’s club”—to be a member in good standing you must follow the rules of manhood. Should there be rules? In your experience what are the rules? Do you see some as good and some as bad? What should the club do with people who want to be in the club but don’t conform (“gender non-conforming”)?

**Exercise:** After describing the five elements, allow participants to select the element they want to discuss (provide one or two questions for structure and give each group some newsprint paper to record their ideas). After a small-group discussion return to large group for a report-back.

## DEBRIEF SAFE SPACE EXERCISE

This exercise jump starts individual reflection and group discussion on how to create inclusive, safe spaces for both peer mentoring and mentoring relationships with mentors to flourish.

- Ask participants to reflect on a time when they felt excluded, disconnected, not welcome and potentially unsafe. Have them write down words or phrases that describe how they felt. Invite participants to share what they wrote down.
- Ask participants to reflect on a time when they felt included, engaged, and a part of a group. Then, have them write down words or phrases that describe how they felt. Invite participants to share what they wrote down.
- Debrief the group by discussing tactics / solutions for creating inclusive, safe spaces where we can be our most authentic self.
- Tools: Pens, Index Cards



## CONVERSATION STARTERS

### “Think - Pair - Share”

- What are some of your perspectives on masculinity?
- How have your experiences impacted your perspective (on masculinity)?
- How has your engagement with your family, school, or neighborhood shaped your perspectives on masculinity?
- What are some of the challenges that you have experienced or witnessed regarding masculinity?
- What are some positive aspects of masculinity that you have experienced or witnessed?
- Who are some women that you admire? What qualities do these women have that you admire most?

## LEVERAGING MEDIA REFLECTION

### Examine Media Messages, Images and Stories Explicitly

- What do you think about that - what this person just said/did?
  - How do you feel about that? [Explore emotions and sentiments]
  - So why do you think that is what's going on? [Explore interpretation]
  - What made you feel that way?
- Do you think this was the best or right way to do this? [Explores values]
- Do you think what he did has anything to do with being a man? Would you do anything differently? Are there things you think men are expected to do that don't make sense or are hurtful to others?



Art: TFI Fellows



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## THE ROLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

### Youth to youth accountability

- Mentors and other adults can be mindful of adultism in the way they relate and roll out programs with youth by reducing the likelihood of the adult becoming the ‘mediator’ or ‘enforcer’ of expectations.
- The sharing of stories and strategies that are youth led and youth created.
  - Ask YMOC to create a ‘manifesto’ or ‘community and accountability plan’ for the group together where they get to determine how to address each other in a respectful and inclusive manner, and how to support for each other as they undo and unlearn the harmful forms of masculinity. This living document is reviewed at every meeting and gets amended and added to as the youth develop their own understanding and practice.
- Fostering youth leadership: have young men of color attend events, conferences, camps and other exchanges where they listen to and work alongside women and gender non-conforming folks.
  - Prepare YMOC for these spaces and exchanges. Advise them on how to be best allies in these exchanges while still being finding with their own space and time to process their own questions and feelings.

### Young men of color to young women of color/gender non-conforming accountability

- Centering the voices and experiences of women and gender non-conforming people in their lives (for example family members, friends, and other youth participants).
  - How have these individuals experienced and navigated harm? More importantly how have they have been able to survive and thrive through being harmed by others for their sex and/or gender? How can we build alliances with these folks for all of our survival and thriving?
  - Get to know women and gender non-conforming individuals in all of who they are and seeing how knowledge exchange can emerge, instead of just focusing on the gender identity and expression of others. It’s important to give space to, but also take direction from them.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



## **Allyship**

Allyship and Anti-Oppression:  
Resource Guide  
<https://guides.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/c.php?g=285382&p=1904765>

On Being An Ally  
<http://lgbtq2stoolkit.learning-community.ca/being-an-ally/>

Critical Consciousness  
*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,  
Paulo Freire

Transwomen Collective  
<https://www.twocc.us/>

## **Facilitation and Group Discussion**

Analyzing Problems and Goals  
(2016). The Community Toolbox  
[http://ctb.ku.edu/en/analyzing-problems-and-goals#node\\_toolkits\\_full\\_group\\_outline](http://ctb.ku.edu/en/analyzing-problems-and-goals#node_toolkits_full_group_outline)

Safer Spaces  
<https://saferspacesnyc.wordpress.com/>

Techniques for Leading Group  
Discussions  
<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/group-facilitation/group-discussions/main>

## **Feminism**

Aaronette White, Ain't I a  
Feminist? African American  
Men Speak Out on Fatherhood,  
Friendship, Forgiveness and  
Freedom  
<http://www.sunypress.edu/p-4667-aint-i-a-feminist.aspx>

Darnell Moore, No Ashes in the  
Fire: Coming of Age Black and  
Free in America  
<https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/darnell-l-moore/no-ashes-in-the-fire/9781549168727/>

Everyday Feminism  
<https://everydayfeminism.com/tag/trans-gnc/>

Girls and Women of Color  
[www.blackwomensblueprint.org](http://www.blackwomensblueprint.org)

<http://www.latina.com/lifestyle/our-issues/latina-feminist-lessons>

<https://www.hamptoninstitution.org/latina-feminism.html#.XEn-03lxKg2x>

<http://blackfeminism.library.ucsb.edu/introduction.html>

<https://www.asianamfeminism.org/resources/>

Girls Inc.  
<https://girlsinc.org/>

“Man Enough” panel during bell  
hook’s 2014 residency at The  
New School  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-u3jyZ1c7s>

UN Women  
<http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>

## **For Programs**

*Critical Mentoring: A Practical  
Guide* Dr. Torie Weiston-Serdan

Developmental Relationships  
Framework - Search Institute-  
<https://www.search-institute.org/developmental-relationships/developmental-relationships-framework/>

Elements of Effective Practice  
For Mentoring  
<https://www.mentoring.org/program-resources/elements-of-effective-practice-for-mentoring/>

Webs of Support - Center for  
Promise, Boston University,  
America’s Promise Alliance  
[http://www.americaspromise.org/sites/default/files/d8/WebsSupport\\_ResearchBrief\\_v2.pdf](http://www.americaspromise.org/sites/default/files/d8/WebsSupport_ResearchBrief_v2.pdf)

## **For Young People**

Finding Mentors, Finding Success  
[http://youthbuildmentoringalliance.org/webfm\\_send/723](http://youthbuildmentoringalliance.org/webfm_send/723)

LGBTQ Youth and Legislation  
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-involved/trevor-advocacy/#sm.0001cvttnwphfeebxg-j2bin79lq98>

Youth Organizing  
<http://www.research2action.net/>

## **Gender Identity and Expression**

Gender Camp: Building Bridges  
Program @ The California Confer-  
ence for Equality and Justice  
<https://www.cacej.org/gender-justice-camp/>

Gender Spectrum  
<https://www.genderspectrum.org/quick-links/understanding-gender/>



Heteronormativity

<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/heteronormativity-gender-identity-sexual-orientation>

Intersex

<http://www.isna.org/faq/frequency>

NMRC Population Review:

Mentoring LGBTQ Youth

[http://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/images/PDF/LGBTQ\\_Population\\_Review.pdf](http://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/images/PDF/LGBTQ_Population_Review.pdf)

Sex? Sexual Orientation? Gender Identity? Gender Expression?

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/summer-2015/sex-sexual-orientation-gender-identity-gender-expression>

Sharing Pronouns

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/53e8c31ce4b09ae60ef3155f/t/5b635a33aa4a99f09dfcf66a/1533237811743/Shar-ing+Pronouns.pdf>

Tribal Resolutions and Codes to Support Two Spirit and LGBTQ Justice in Indian Country

<http://www.thetaskforce.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/TET3.0.pdf>

Understanding Sex and Gender

<http://open.lib.umn.edu/sociology/chapter/11-1-understanding-sex-and-gender/>

### **Implicit Bias**

Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity (n.d.) Understanding implicit bias. Retrieved from: <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/research/understanding-implicit-bias/>

MENTOR & My Brother's Keeper Alliance - Steve Vassor

<https://vimeo.com/151056271>

### **Masculinity**

"A Call To Men", Ted Talk, Tony Porter

[https://www.ted.com/talks/tony\\_porter\\_a\\_call\\_to\\_men?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/tony_porter_a_call_to_men?language=en)

APA Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Boys and Men

<https://www.apa.org/about/policy/boys-men-practice-guidelines.pdf>

Defining Masculinity and Its Power (Jason Wilson & Lewis Howes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1i60rhzfLCK>

Hip Hop

<http://www.pbs.org/independentslens/hiphop/issues.htm>

Heavy: An American Memoir

<https://www.newblackmaninexile.net/2017/04/in-heavy-american-memoir-kiese-laymon.html>

The Many Faces of Masculinity

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/brand-studio/harrys/the-many-faces-of-masculinity/?noredirect=on>

Redefining Masculinity

<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2012/06/masculinity.aspx>

The Difference Between Toxic Masculinity and Being A Man

<https://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/the-difference-between-toxic-masculinity-and-being-a-man-dg/>

The Representation Project

<http://therepresentationproject.org/>

Sexual Harassment in College

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/masculinut.php>

Toxic Masculinity

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/what-we-mean-when-we-say-toxic-masculinity>

Trauma

<https://medium.com/@ginwright/the-future-of-healing-shifting-from-trauma-informed-care-to-healing-centered-engagement-634f557ce69c>

What We Mean When We Say, "Toxic Masculinity"

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/what-we-mean-when-we-say-toxic-masculinity>

### **Mentoring**

Growth Mindset

<https://www.mentoring.org/growth-mindset-tool-kit/>

*LGBTQQ Supplement to the Elements of Effective Practice*  
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

Mentoring and Masculinity - Impact Webinar Series

<https://www.mentoring.org/program-resources/philanthropic-impact-webinar-series/#1504118728694-9b2f6350-f976>

Mentoring Boys and Young Men of Color

<https://www.mentoring.org/program-resources/mentor-resourc->





[es-and-publications/mentoring-boys-and-young-men-of-color/](#)

Mentoring for Black Male Youth  
[http://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/images/PDF/BlackMales\\_Population\\_Review.pdf](http://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/images/PDF/BlackMales_Population_Review.pdf)

Mentoring for First-Generation Immigrant and Refugee Youth  
[http://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/images/PDF/ImmigrantRefugeeYouth\\_Population\\_Review.pdf](http://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/images/PDF/ImmigrantRefugeeYouth_Population_Review.pdf)

The Power of Relationships  
<https://www.mentoring.org/program-resources/mentor-resources-and-publications/the-power-of-relationships/>

Understanding Adulthood  
[http://www.nuatc.org/articles/pdf/understanding\\_adulthood.pdf](http://www.nuatc.org/articles/pdf/understanding_adulthood.pdf)

Young People's Perspectives on the Outcomes and Availability of Mentoring  
[https://www.mentoring.org/new-site/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/The\\_Mentoring\\_Effect\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](https://www.mentoring.org/new-site/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/The_Mentoring_Effect_Full_Report.pdf)

Youth-Adult Partnerships in Work with Youth: An Overview  
<https://jyd.pitt.edu/ojs/jyd/article/view/171204FA003>

### **Sex and Gender Terminology**

Glossary of Terms  
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>

### **Social Movements**

Initiative on Gender Justice & Opportunity  
<https://www.law.georgetown.edu/poverty-inequality-center/gender-justice-and-opportunity/>

Me Too  
<https://metoomvmt.org/>

*The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* Michelle Alexander

### **Websites**

Faces of Masculinity  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/brand-connect/harrys/the-many-faces-of-masculinity/>

Hip Hop  
<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/hiphop/issues.htm>

Internet  
[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/unmaking-of-an-incel\\_us\\_5b11a9aee4b0d5e89e1fb519?ncid=engmodushp-mg00000006](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/unmaking-of-an-incel_us_5b11a9aee4b0d5e89e1fb519?ncid=engmodushp-mg00000006)

Systemic Oppression  
<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/lgbtq.html>

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/criminal-justice-facts/>

The Fellowship Initiative  
<https://www.jporganchase.com/corporate/About-JPMC/the-fellowship-initiative.htm>

The Representation Project  
<http://therepresentationproject.org/>

Trauma  
<https://medium.com/@ginwright/the-future-of-healing-shifting-from-trauma-informed-care-to-healing-centered-engagement-634f557ce69c>

Violence  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/21/opinion/boys-violence-shootings-guns.html>

Washington Post - The Many Faces of Masculinity  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/brand-studio/harrys/the-many-faces-of-masculinity/?noredirect=on>

# GLOSSARY



**Active bystander** (noun): A person who, when witnessing instances of conflict or problem behavior, actively participates in resolving the situation in a positive way.

**Accountability** (noun): Responsibility for one's thoughts, actions, behaviors, and beliefs.

**Adulthood** (noun): Reliance on or deference to a particular person because they are an adult. This can occur intentionally or unintentionally, and should be avoided in situations where you want to encourage youth leadership or responsibility.

**Advocate** (noun): A person who promotes a certain person or cause.

**Agency** (noun): The ability to act in one's own interest.

**Androgyny** (noun): a gender expression that has both masculine and feminine elements; can be fluid or more static.

**Androgyne** (noun): non-binary gender identity that is a combination or flux between or in relation to masculine and feminine.

**Allyship** (noun): The practice of supporting people of marginalized identities regardless of whether or not you share that identity.

**Asset** (noun): A useful or practical tool for accomplishing a goal.

**Attachment** (noun): A strong connection or bond between two or more people or things.

**Authenticity** (noun): The quality of being honest, accurate, or real.

**Bias** (noun): Internalized, deeply-held beliefs which affect our world view. Conscious bias is a bias which you are aware you hold, unconscious bias is a bias which you are unaware of, but which can still affect your perceptions.

**Bigotry** (noun): A mindset which confers inferiority or superiority to certain people or groups based on stereotypes, prejudice, or other forms of inaccurate or irrelevant information.

**Boundaries** (noun): Limits on what is acceptable or unacceptable in a given situation. Boundaries can be set by you, or be imposed on explicit rules (e.g. dress codes) or by implicit social convention (e.g. "boys don't wear pink").

**Bullying** (noun): The intentional use of power or privilege to antagonize, harass, or control someone with less power or privilege.

**Consent** (noun): Explicit approval.

**Contextual** (adjective): Something which depends on another thing in order to make sense or be meaningful or effective.

**Citizenship status** (noun): A person's legal status as it relates to their place of residence.

**Credibility** (noun): A person or thing's trustworthiness, believability, or authority in subject.

**Debrief** (noun): A discussion or summarization of, or a reflection on, an event, incident, or meeting.

**Diversity** (noun): The quality, especially within a group of people, of containing a plurality of different people, things, or identities.

**Empowerment** (noun): The process of a group being given or gaining power and control within their society.

**Facilitation** (noun): The act of overseeing or guiding an event, meeting, or program.

**Femininity** (noun): Behavior and norms which are associated with biologically-female or female-identifying persons.

**Fragility** (noun): The state of being easily breakable; for a person, the state of being easily or quickly manipulated to emotional extremes.

**Gender** (noun): Gender is the public perception of a person's biological sex. Unlike biological sex, gender is an imposed construct of society, and may vary between cultures. In the United States, gender is predominantly viewed as a male-female binary.

**Gender expression** (noun): A person's response to their self-knowledge of their gender.



**Gender fluidity** (noun): The state of not explicitly or regularly identifying with or corresponding to any single norm for gender expression.

**Gender non-conforming** (noun): The state of not identifying with the dominant gender norms within one's society.

**Gender role** (noun): The behaviors associated with one's gender.

**Gender Scripts** (noun): The attitudes associated with one's gender.

**Guidelines** (noun): A set of written rules or instructions that govern an activity.

**Harassment** (noun): Unwanted and persistent annoying, hateful, or inappropriate actions directed by one person or group against another person or group.

**Help-seeking** (noun): An action or activity carried out by someone who perceives themselves as needing personal, psychological, or affective assistance or health or social services, with the purpose of meeting this need in a positive way.<sup>23</sup>

**Heteronormativity** (noun): A system or frame of mind in which heterosexuality is considered the norm or expectation.

**Heterosexist** (noun): Attitudes or behaviors caused by heteronormativity.

**Holistic** (adjective): All-encompassing or comprehensive.

**Homophobia** (noun): Fear of homosexuals or homosexuality.

**Hyper-masculinity** (noun): The practice of enacting masculinity-associated behaviors to an extreme degree, usually resulting in negative outcomes.

**Inclusive** (adjective): The quality of being welcoming or attractive to people regardless of sex, race, age, disability, color, creed, national origin, religion.

**Internalization** (noun): The act of adopting attitudes, behaviors, or opinions from outside sources.

**Interconnectedness** (noun): The idea that all people and systems rely on one another to function.

**Intersectionality** (noun): The interaction between different social justice causes. The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

**Liberation** (noun): The process of removing constraints imposed by traditional society upon oppressed classes of people; total removal of constraints from all people. This is the end goal of all equity-based practices.

**Maladaptive** (adjective): Intentionally acquired but to harmful effect.

**Maleness** (noun): The set of qualities which are traditionally associated with male-presenting individuals in a given society.

**Male-presenting** (noun): A public appearance which corresponds with traditionally-masculine behavior.

**Manhood** (noun): The status of being considered a man.

**Marginalization** (noun): Exclusion of or discrimination against a set of group based on a shared quality of that group.

**Masculinity** (noun): The qualities which determine manhood.

**Misogyny** (noun): Negative attitudes or behaviors towards women based on internalized biases.

**Morphology** (noun): The physical attributes of a person's body, especially as they relate to that person's gender.

**Mythology** (noun): Specific stories or legends which justify or explain a specific world view to the people who have adopted that world view.

**Mythos** (noun): Generalized ideas which inform a world view; mythos, unlike mythology, don't rely on specific characters or events to communicate their ideas and hence are more pervasive and have more longevity.

**Non-judgement** (noun): The practice of not judging individuals; assessing actions, not actors.

<sup>23</sup>World Health Organization, 2007



**Norms** (noun): The predominant set of rules or beliefs (implicit or explicit) which govern how a culture behave.

**Oppression** (noun): Institutional prejudice or abuse of a person or group.

**Patriarchy** (noun): A societal system where men hold the greatest degree of power.

**Perpetual** (adjective): Without an end.

**Prejudice** (noun): A negative pre-conception not based in fact.

**Presumptuous** (adjective): Based on preconceived assumptions.

**Principles** (noun): Strongly-held beliefs that inform one's daily behavior, regardless of the situation.

**Privilege** (noun): Elevated status or advantage based on conditions other than merit.

**Reflection** (noun): The act of thinking about oneself.

**Sexism** (noun): discrimination based on presented sexual identity.

**Sexuality** (noun): A person's sexual preferences or feelings about sex.

**Sexual Harassment** (noun): Unwanted and persistent annoying, hateful, or inappropriate actions motivated by an individual's sexuality.

**Sexual orientation** (noun): A way of describing a person based off of the gender or genders to which a person is emotionally or sexually attracted.

**Shame** (noun): Embarrassment or guilty feelings related to a perceived personal failure.

**Social construct** (noun): A rule or practice (implicit or explicit) which is based on societal preference rather than need or necessity.

**Stereotype** (noun): A behavior which is commonly attached to a certain group or type of people.

**Structural** (adjective): Integral to something; part of a structure or construct and as a result, difficult or impossible to displace.

**Systemic** (adjective): Occurring as part of a system of practice.

**Toxic** (adjective): Harmful, especially when maintained, kept, or held over a long period of time.

**Trauma** (noun): An extremely physically or psychologically distressing experience.

**Triggers** (noun): Triggers are actions, words, phrases, or subject matter which may trigger strong psychological or emotional responses from a person. Because triggers are often a product of trauma, it is often helpful to preface discussions of commonly-experienced traumatic events with a warning, which is known as a trigger warning.

**Two Spirit** (noun): An English-language term for a person, who, in Native American culture, embodies aspects of both male and female genders. The word "Two Spirit" attempts to incorporate and honor the hundreds of ancient, respectful, Native Language terms that have long been used in tribal societies to denote people who traditionally have special roles within tribal communities, cultures, and ceremonial life. "Two Spirit indicates an ability to see the world from both male and female perspectives and to bridge the world of male and female. The concept of balance is important in our traditional views, and balance can be between people, or groups, or within a particular person.<sup>24</sup>"

**Validation** (noun): Approval or affirmation, especially for a choice made or action taken.

**Vigilance** (noun): Awareness, especially of things which may not be immediately apparent or visible.

**Vulnerability** (noun): Emotional or physical exposure risk; often viewed as a sign of trust or confidence.

**White supremacy** (noun): The belief that people with "white" skin or heritage are inherently superior.

<sup>24</sup> Edmo & Ridings, 2017

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<sup>26</sup> A collaboration between the Western States Center, Center for American Progress, National Congress of American Indians, Center for Native American Youth at Aspen Institute, National Center for Transgender Equality, National LGBTQ Taskforce, National Center for Lesbian Rights, Movement Advancement Project, Transgender Law Center, Family Equality Council, Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, Human Rights Campaign, PFLAG National, PFLAG Phoenix Native American Chapter, Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Elders, Native American Program of Legal Aid Services of Oregon, Basic Rights Oregon, and Lewis & Clark College.



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