

# Enhancing practice with boys and men: Addressing masculinity in social work practice



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# Some Numbers

3 women are murdered each day by their partners or former partners

Every minute 20 women will be the victim of intimate partner violence

10 million children will witness domestic violence this year

Women will lose 8 million days of paid work this year as a result of domestic violence

A woman is beaten about every 9 seconds in the United States

93% of Intimate Partner Violence deaths are female

1 in 5 female students will be victims of sexual assault while in college

# APA GUIDELINES for Psychological Practice with Boys and Men

AUGUST 2018



**When does masculinity become unhealthy or harmful?**

# Rejection of the Feminine

Ideas of being seen as weak by others begins early

“We raise boys to become men whose very identity is based on rejecting the feminine and then we are surprised when they disrespect women”

Caroline

Heldman





**FEMININE**



**MASCULINE**

# Masculinity and Mental Health in Boys

What's behind the behavior

Boys much more likely to manifest their emotions through externalizing behaviors (anger, violence, suicide, substance abuse)

Boys much more likely to use and abuse substances

# Trauma and Masculinity

Gender socialization and trauma response

Hyperarousal symptoms

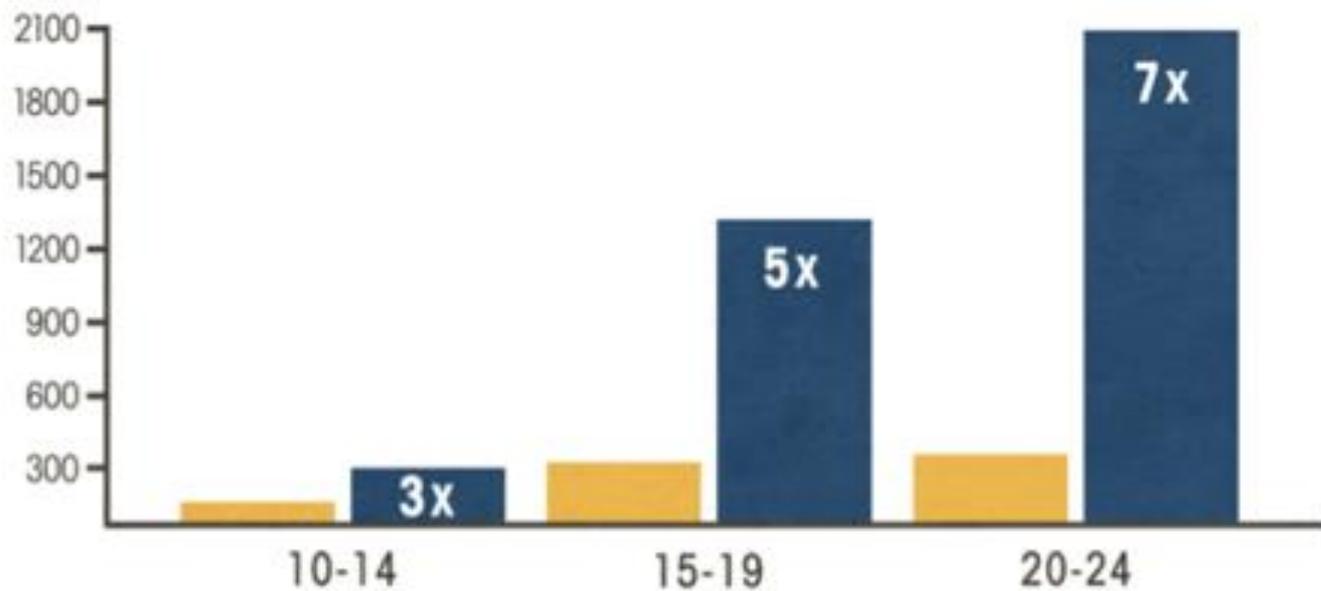
Shame and blame

Reporting and seeking help



# SUICIDE RATE

## GIRLS VS BOYS



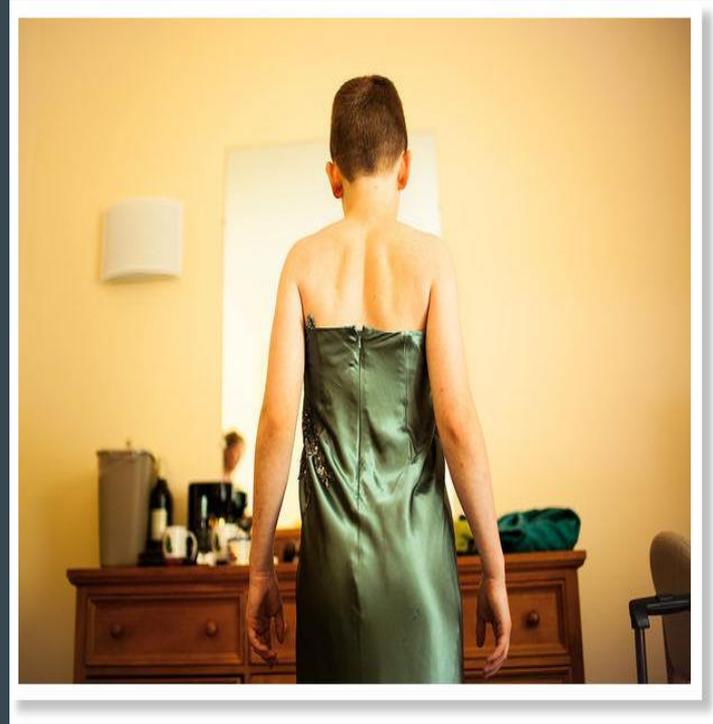
**Fewer than half of boys with mental health  
problems will seek help**

**3 boys will die by suicide every day (2nd  
leading cause of death in boyhood)**

# Masculine non-conformity and risk

Not conforming to gender norms can be very risky for boys and men

Adult males with low levels of gender conformity in childhood are 3.5 times more likely to have PTSD and 3 times as likely to report childhood sexual victimization.



# Masculine conformity and predatory behaviors

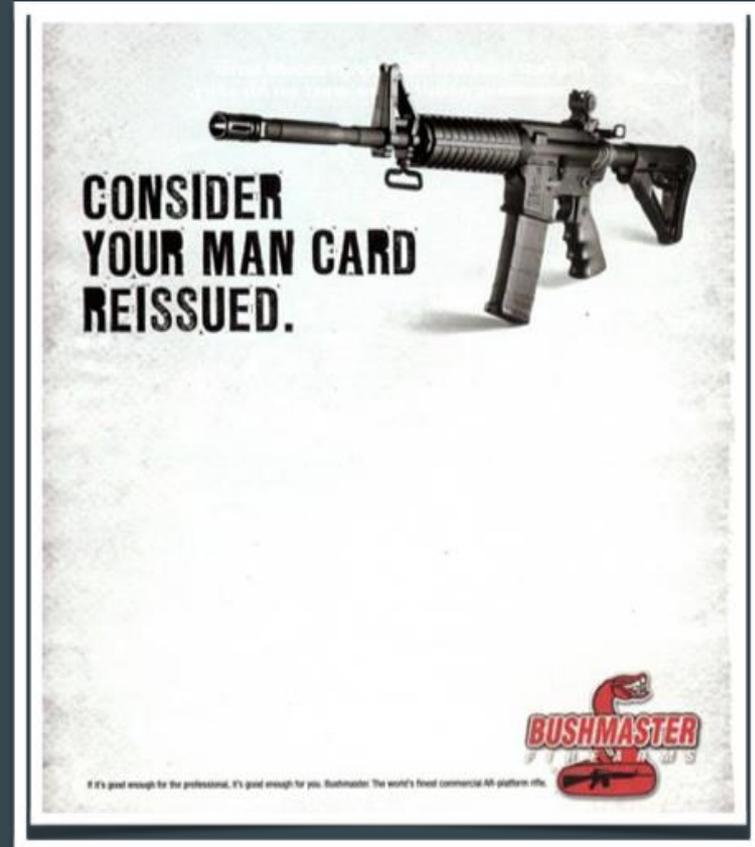
Predatory behaviors (IPV, CSA, CPA, sexual assault, sexual harassment) all associated with high levels of masculine conformity

# Masculinity is linked to violence

Externalizing Pain

Aggrieved Entitlement

Boys and men are often socialized to deal with problems using violence



# Masculinity and Mass Violence

94% of mass shooters are male

97% of school shooters are male

Most are under the age of 30

# Masculine Conformity and Mental Illness in Men

Young men with higher rates of masculine conformity (sexual promiscuity, competitiveness, power/control, risk taking) report higher rates of

Depression

Suicidal Ideation

Anxiety

Loneliness

# Boys and Media

The average 18 year old has seen over 200,000 acts of violence and 40,000 murders on screens

34% of pre-teen boys receive unsolicited pornography

93% of boys have seen porn online

21% of boys (under 16) watch porn daily

18% of boys have watched rape online

# Cont.

Pornography becomes the social norm

Pornography becomes a source of sexual education

Pornography exposure increases sexual aggression by 22% and beliefs in rape myths by 31%

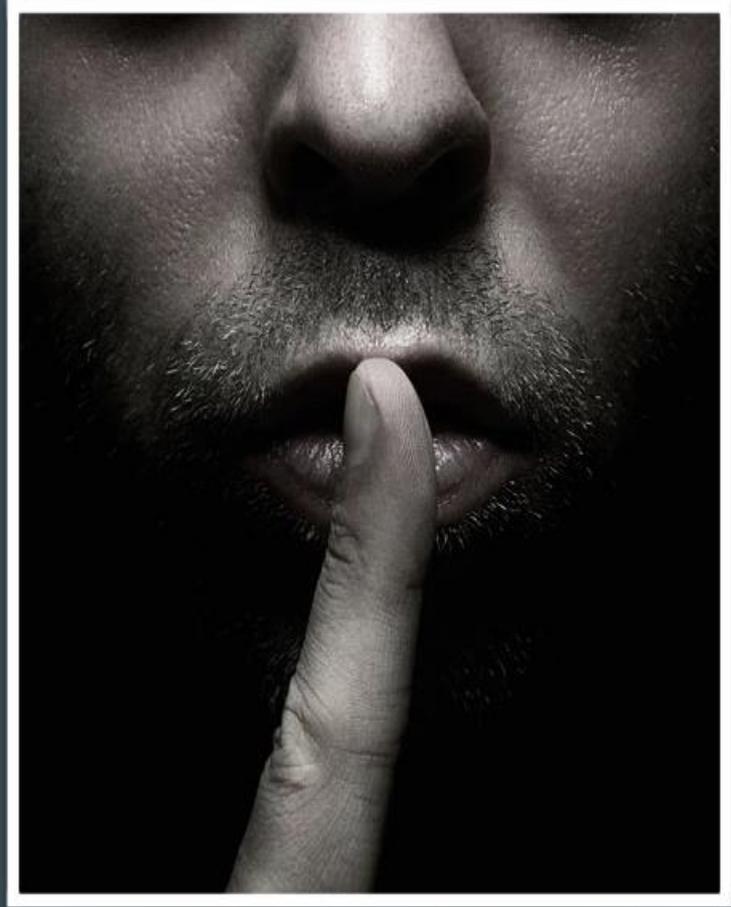
# The Boy Code of Silence

Never rat out the brotherhood

Silence is closely tied to status

Head and heart are at odds

The choice of whether or not to speak  
up is rooted in privilege



# Engaging Conversations with boys and men

**Talk about the pressures, challenges, and complexities of boyhood and manhood**

**Help give boys and men the language for their  
inner experiences**

**Recognize that emotions like fear, sadness,  
and vulnerability often manifest as external  
behaviors**

**Acknowledge that unhealthy forms of  
masculinity can hurt boys and men too**

**Provide a space to discuss those things that  
society has feminized**

**Help them to further engage their moral  
compass when navigating whether or not  
speak up**

**Help them to recognize that their own status  
should never outweigh the safety or humanity  
of someone else**

**Enhance their understanding of issues of  
power and privilege**

**Recognize the intersections of race, class,  
sexual orientation and masculinity**