

NELSON MANDELA  
UNIVERSITY

# *Singamadoda?*

Redefining Positive Masculinity



TRANSFORMATION OFFICE INITIATIVE, IN COLLABORATION WITH EMTHONJENI STUDENT WELLNESS

**“Loving justice over manhood is not only a worthy pursuit, it is the future.”**

**– John Stoltenberg**

---

“Choosing loyalty to manhood over selfhood leads inevitably to injustice... loving justice more than manhood...loving relocates personal identity in selfhood—relationally, reciprocally, realistically.”

## Foreword by Dr Levendal, Director Transformation Office

Our society has been plagued by gender-based violence (GBV) for decades. By GBV I am not only referring to the sexual, emotional, psychological, economic, cultural, structural violences perpetrated against mainly women and girls, but also including the ongoing violences being perpetuated against individuals who do not prescribe to the hegemonic normative feminine/masculine gender identities.

Silence and complacency have seen these terrible violations becoming more frequent and almost normalised in our communities. The majority of individuals affected by these incidents are girls and females, with males being the primary perpetrators. This fact in no way minimises the fact that GBV occurs across all gender identities, irrespective of their socio-economic status, level of education, religious beliefs, or any of the numerous factors impacting the identity of any individual.

Most interventions relating to GBV education, advocacy and awareness are geared towards equipping females to dealing with the daily challenges they will need to navigate. Despite much having been written about toxic masculinity with its associated behaviours, attitudes and abusive masculine traits aimed at exercising dominance over girls and women, there have not been many initiatives specifically designed and implemented to engage individuals identifying as males about their understanding of masculinity and the impact of that understanding on the ones they interact with.

As a University, it is part of our mandate to critically engage with challenges in our communities. GBV is no exception. Several cases are reported annually. Through the provision of the Singamadada? Redefining Positive Masculinity, we aim to provide a facilitated non-judgemental space to deeply engage with this issue and collectively synthesise possibilities of being without impeding the dignity of others, thereby co-creating a socially inclusive future and gender-equitable relationships.

Ruby-Ann Levendal

Director Transformation Office

## Acknowledgements

Them bani Stephen Gqiba, Director, Doxa Youth Programs & Family Care, who has been collaborating with the Transformation Office, on this project, providing valuable insights into the refinement of this manual and program for implementation within the higher education sector.

## Background

*“Nelson Mandela University (...) is committed to uphold the principles enshrined in Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), which promotes the rights of all people of South Africa and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. The University strives to create an environment where all employees and students can safely pursue their studies, work, business transactions and social interactions, free from sexual harassment and sexual offences. Sexual harassment and sexual offences constitute very serious offences, which will result in disciplinary action, and will not be tolerated within the University.”<sup>1</sup>*

Sexual harassment, assault, and other forms of GBV remain one of the primary barriers to the achievement of gender equality and the enjoyment of freedom for millions within South Africans, and globally. This program is a part of the Nelson Mandela University anti-GBV campaign and is aligned with the universities Integrated Policy for the Promotion of Equality and the Prevention and Protection against Unfair Discrimination and Policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Offences. Our University celebrates diversity, social justice and equality. As such, GBV challenges are not only the concern of women and girls, but all citizens, irrespective of their gender-identity. This intervention aims to inspire participants to promote healthy masculinities, gender-equitable relationships, gender equity and the achievement of equality. As such, the University strives to create an environment where everyone can safely pursue their studies, work, business, and social interactions, free from these and other forms of violence and discrimination.<sup>2</sup>

GBV tends to occur when people do not conform to the hegemonic hetero-normative notions of gender roles and expectations. To force conformity, violence, coercion, abuse and discrimination may be employed to force conformity, to punish, or to affirm dominance and control. When speaking about gender expectations, we mean the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours about what it means to be a man, or a woman, in our society, which are acquired through years of constant socialization in families, schools, government, media, social networks, work, and other areas of life. (Carter, 2014) Historically, this socialization has disadvantaged women by restricting their roles to keep them within the home and limiting their economic empowerment and decision-making power in the home and larger community. (Sexual Violence Research Initiative, n.d.)

This unequal power structure, known as patriarchy, is a primary driver of GBV, with the normalization of beliefs about male superiority and proclivity to violence being the main contributors. (Sexual Violence Research Initiative, n.d.) In this regard, it has been widely reported that South Africa has abnormally high incidences of rape, intimate-partner violence, violence against women and girls, and violence against LGBTQIA Peoples, and that these are most often committed by men. (Barker, 2018)

Even though GBV is disproportionately committed by men against women, it is often addressed through interventions for female students (sexual harassment awareness, counselling after a GBV

<sup>1</sup> Preamble of the Nelson Mandela University Institutional Regulatory Code (IRC): [701.08 Sexual Harassment and Sexual Offences Policy](#)

<sup>2</sup> Nelson Mandela University Institutional Regulatory Code (IRC): [701.10 Promotion of Equality and the Prevention and Protection against Unfair Discrimination](#) (new) read with the sexual harassment and sexual violences

incident, education about what to do when a GBV incident happens, self-defence classes, etc. There is therefore a need for interventions aimed at men and boys, that can explore and challenge, the toxic, socially constructed ways of being and performing manhood. Patriarchy and toxic masculinity are damaging to everybody, including men themselves. In this regard, men often suffer intense psychological, emotional, and even physical harm due to the exhausting and dangerous demands placed on them by a patriarchal society, with them often being most violent to themselves and each other. (Clowes, 2013)<sup>3</sup>

As such, it is important that we challenge the idea that men are supposed to act in a certain way, according to certain definitions, or characterizations that define them as dominating and violent. We need to strive towards finding more positive – healthier, kinder, more empathetic, introspective, equality-orientated, and more human notions of masculinity.

*“South Africa needs to build a more equitable, non-sexist, non-racial, democratic and prosperous society, where opportunity is not defined by race, gender, class or religion. This process includes implementing redress, promoting economic and social inclusion, social cohesion, active citizenry, and broad-based leadership.”*

The Nelson Mandela University Transformation Office, in partnership with **Doxa Youth Programs & Family Care**, collaborated on the refining of the **Singamadoda: [re]Defining Positive Masculinity Program**.

### What is ‘Singamadoda? Redefining Positive Masculinity’

The Constitution of South Africa promotes the principles of human dignity, equality, fairness and social inclusion. However, gender inequality and the associated violences continue to undermine our democracy, inhibit development, and disrupt the lives of our citizens in dreadful ways. Factors associated with men’s use of violence against were rigid gender attitudes, work stress, experiences of violence in childhood, and alcohol use<sup>4</sup>. In another study on intimate partner violence they found that violence perpetration was largely driven by factors related to gender inequality, the enactment of harmful masculinities, and childhood experiences of violence<sup>5</sup>. Further research has shown that programs that were “gender transformative”, that is those that sought to transform gender roles and promote more gender-equitable relationships between men and women - were more likely to be effective than programs that were merely “gender sensitive” or “gender neutral”<sup>6</sup>. relive

<sup>4</sup> See also (Safety and Violence Initiative, 2019) and (Hooks, 2004)

Barker, Gary. 2011. *Evolving Men: Initial Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)*. Washington, DC: International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and Instituto Promundo.

<sup>5</sup> Fulu, E., X. Warner, S. Miedema, R. Jewkes, T. Roselli, and J. Lang. 2013. *Why Do Some Men Use Violence against Women and How Can We Prevent It? Quantitative Findings from the United Nations Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok, Thailand: UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, and UNV.

<sup>6</sup> WHO (World Health Organization). 2007. *Engaging Men and Boys in Changing Gender-based Inequity in Health Evidence from Programme Interventions*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization. Accessed October 30, 2014. [http://www.who.int/gender/documents/Engaging\\_men\\_boys.pdf](http://www.who.int/gender/documents/Engaging_men_boys.pdf).

## Explore

Explore concepts of positive masculinity and ways to be a healthy man

## Challenge

Challenge gender roles and stereotypes

## Celebrate

Celebrate diversity and learn from others different from ourselves

## Develop

Develop connection and support among peers

## Practice

Practice empathy and develop emotional empathy

## Explore

Explore what a healthy relationship looks like, how to practice consent, and how to be a good friend

### The key features associated with successful interventions include:

- Use positive and affirmative messages;
- Encourage men to reflect on the costs of hegemonic masculinity to men and women;
- Being evidence-based and theoretically informed, with the use of formative research, begin with or develop a theory of change, and carry out ongoing monitoring and evaluation;
- Recognize that men are not homogenous and develop interventions that reflect men's different life experiences;
- Use an ecological approach that recognizes the range of factors shaping gender roles and relations; and
- Use a range of social change strategies - community education, community mobilization, media, policy development, and advocacy for implementation.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Peacock, Dean and Barker, Gary. Working with Men and Boys to Prevent Gender-Based Violence: Principles, Lessons Learned, and Ways Forward. Men and Masculinities. 2014, Vol. 17(5) 578-599

Research has shown that interventions focusing on men and boys are successful in attitudinal changes relating to gender and violence, generally, as well as their use of violence against female partners, in particular. 'Singamadoda? Redefining Positive Masculinity' therefore is a gender transformative program, focused on individuals identifying as masculine, aimed at fostering a non-judgemental reflective space to engage in facilitated dialogue, exchanges of ideas and challenging our ways of thinking about gender and gender-equitable relationships between men and women. It is a humanizing intervention which seeks to create an environment in which participants can freely share their thoughts, hopes, fears, regrets, experiences, while being open to listen, unlearn, relearn and rethink their own insights relating to their identity, while holding each other accountable and steering each other toward a healthier and enriched understanding of gender-equitable relationships and the advancement of gender equality within our broader society.

## Objectives

- Explore my identity and the factors influencing my understanding of manhood.
- Challenge gender roles and stereotypes.
- Critically reflect on masculinity and its link to inequality and violence
- Examine healthy alternatives in (re)defining positive masculinity
- Commit to positive masculinity through advancing the principles of human dignity, equality, and fairness.

## Evidence-based approach and Methodology:

Singamadoda Open Circle Dialogues is targeted at boys and men between the ages of 16 – 35 years. The Programme uses culturally relevant approaches based on core principles found in evidence based positive masculinity programmes from around the world.

*These core principles include:*

- This program is foregrounded on the promotion of equality as a positive duty on all participants, facilitators, employees, and students, alongside the actions needed to be taken for the prevention of unfair discrimination.
- The elimination of unfair discrimination. It is founded on the recognition that in addition to economic status and class, underlying challenges of gender; GBV, sexual orientation (including experiences of gender-variant persons) and other forms of discrimination based on gender, constitute the most extreme forms of intersectional triple oppression and unfair discrimination. This intervention seeks to address toxic masculinity and its role in GBV.

- Recognising the enormous psychological, emotional, and experiential benefit for men, and especially young boys, through challenging Patriarchy, Toxic Masculinity and GBV.
- Provision of healthy alternatives in (re)defining positive masculinity: we do not appeal to idealized notions of 'the', 'real', 'good', 'strong' men. We are all human, they is, they should be, no prescribed script on how to be/perform your manhood or humanness.
- Commitment to enacting positive masculinity within all our relationships - whether in intimate relationships and/or our families and broader communities.

## Key Programme Activities

- Singamadoda Open Circle Dialogues is run over 4 sessions, online, for a group of men.
- The group should not exceed 10 -12 people at a time.
- The group meet weekly with 2 facilitators to work together to better understand themselves, masculinity, and the role it plays in perpetuating gender inequality.
- The Programme uses illustrations, role play, and discussion that have been specially developed to deliver the core lessons of each session.
- At the end of each session, participants are given home practice activities. These activities help participants to remember and strengthen the skills they learned during that session.
- Singamadoda? Redefining positive masculinity ends with making a pledge as a group and talking about ways for continuing to work together in future against GBV and promoting gender equity.

# Overview

## Welcome

- ✓ A warm welcome is important to make the participants feel comfortable. Greet the entire group warmly at the beginning of each session.
- ✓ Praise them for making the effort to come to the Programme.

## Circle share

Ask the participants how they feel.

Facilitators should model (meaning show the participants by doing it first) describing their emotion and where they feel it in their body. For example, "I am tired. I feel it my shoulders, which are heavy' or '*I am happy. I feel it in my heart.*'

## Tips for Facilitators

- To provide for the best possible experience for everyone involved, an online facilitator's main goal should be to make the eLearning environment comfortable and conducive to active participation.
- The tone of the discussion should be relaxed, engaging, and informative. In addition, the setting itself should be one in which all participants feel free to ask questions, share experiences, and collaborate to get the most out of the program.
- Be lively. Try your best to keep everyone involved and interested— engaging various participants, acting things out, and using different tones of voice. Such confidence from the facilitators makes it easier for participants to feel comfortable as they perform role plays or play games.
- Encourage nonverbal communication: It can be useful to encourage participants to use gestures and the chat feature, such as smiling and nodding to show that you understand a point and raising your hand or simply typing in the chat to ask a question.
- Be respectful when working with co-facilitators. Avoid correcting or interrupting your partner when he or she is facilitating and be conscious of your body language and facial expressions while other trainers are facilitating. You are always on stage. Also, when one facilitator is guiding the group, other trainers should sit down—too many trainers at the front of the room can be distracting.
- For sensitive topics, it may be best to separate into smaller groups to encourage better participation. It is important, however, for them to come back together and present their ideas to each other. This sharing of information and attempting to work together comfortably is essential to the program.

- Summarize the points on a flip chart, blackboard, or a separate screen if possible.
- Make these summarized points visible/available to the participants, so that they can refer to them throughout the day or session.
- Pay attention to the scheduling of your sessions. Sessions near the end of the day or after meals should be lively to keep people awake. One session should move logically into another session. (when more than one session is done a day)
- Monitor how your group is feeling. Have an alternative way to teach the same subject, and change styles as needed.
- Collect resources on the day's subject and create a resource table at the back of the room for participants to peruse during breaks. Invite participants to make a list of ways in which they can serve as a resource for each other.

## LEADERSHIP SKILLS THAT CAN BE LEARNED THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN THE SINGAMADODA OPEN CIRCLE DIALOGUES

### **Creative thinking**

The ability or power used to produce original thoughts and ideas based upon reasoning and judgment.

### **Critical thinking**

The ability to acquire information, analyse and evaluate it, and reach a conclusion or answer by using logic and reasoning skills.

### **Communication**

The successful transmission of information through a common system of symbols, signs, behaviour, speech, writing, or signals.

### **Decision Making**

The act of examining several possible behaviours and selecting from them the one most likely to accomplish the individual's or group's intention. Cognitive processes such as reasoning, planning, and judgment are involved.

### **Ethics**

Conforming to an established set of principles or accepted professional standards of conduct.



## **Evaluation**

---

1. The collection and processing of information and data in order to determine how well a design meets the requirements and to provide direction for improvements. 2. A process used to analyse, evaluate, and appraise, a participant achievement, growth, and performance using formal and informal techniques.

## **Organization**

---

The act or process of organizing or being organized. Good organization will not only ensure success of a program, but without it, the success can be limited or fail to materialize at all.

## **Problem Solving**

---

The process of understanding a problem, devising a plan, carrying out the plan, and evaluating the plan to solve a problem or meet a need or want.

## **Self-esteem**

---

A confidence and satisfaction in oneself and trusting one's ability and instincts.

## **Teamwork**

---

The process that allows individuals to pool their strengths to arrive at better solutions to problems, with all involved subordinating personal prominence to the efficiency of the whole.

## Session 1

### Identity: Who Am I?

#### Overview

*“It is true that masses of men have not even begun to look at the ways that patriarchy keeps them from knowing themselves, from being in touch with their feelings, from loving. To know love, men must be able to let go of the will to dominate. They must be able to choose life over death. They must be willing to change.” (Hooks, 2004)*

The harsh reality is that, despite the overwhelming benefits patriarchy may afford men in terms, of access, material success, or power and control within the home and broader society, men suffer untold physical, psychological, and emotional suffering due to the rigid and gendered roles, prescribed to them by a patriarchal society. (Clowes, 2013)

From an early age, boys are taught to devalue and undermine their emotional well-being and vital parts of their humanity. (Hooks, 2004) They are taught they are, or will be, men, not women, as such they must suppress all parts of themselves deemed feminine, weaker. Their emotions, including fear, sadness, compassion, and empathy are all to be suppressed with anger often seen as the only justifiable emotion that a man may visibly display. (Hooks, 2004)

This damaging behaviour, and the script of patriarchy are taught and reinforced through violent policing from family structures, peer groups, schooling systems, cultural settings, and religious practice. (Barker, 2018) For example, young boys will be shamed by their friends, older siblings and even parents, if they are found playing with dolls, being timid, crying or displaying behaviour deemed too girly. In schools, boys maybe disproportionality rewarded for the achievements in sports, and displaying physical prowess, with acts of aggression or bullying often being downplayed and maybe even being expected.

As such, society tends to raise angry, and emotionally detached men who feel they must assert their manhood – dominance and control at every turn. (Safety and Violence Initiative, 2019) The result of this being that men on average, tend to live riskier and more dangerous lives, filled with regular displays of violence and aggression, leading to higher rates of homicide and imprisonment amongst men, and poorer mental health – and thus men are more prone to suicide, alcohol and drug abuse. (Horowitz, 1997: 75).

The struggles men face are often overlooked, mostly hidden, and at the best of times discussed in secret between friends. As such, there is a deep need for men to explore themselves, and their vulnerabilities in an affirming space.

This session is the crux of the Singamadoda? Redefining positive masculinity program.

In this session men explore the self, get to know each other, and reflect on their personal, social and group identities. The purpose of the session is to encourage men to introspect and view vulnerability as strength instead of weakness. It also teaches men to learn how to support one another without judging. The session might be emotional and tense. The facilitator must allow it to flow to encourage expression of emotions.



## Time

1 hour, 30 minutes

## Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

1. Reflect on the self, and factors that influence their identity.
2. Better know, other members in the group and make peer connections.
3. Have a better understanding of themselves in relation to others.



## Materials

Laptop/Device with stable internet connection

Attendance register

Training Manual

Session Video



## Preparation

Technology Check – join the session early and make sure your connection is solid, your sound works, and that all the tools you will be using are in order.

Go through all the material that you will be using for the session.

Make sure you are familiar with the activities, games, and role plays that you will use.



## SESSION STRUCTURE

- a) Start by introducing yourself and explaining the purpose of the meeting.
- b) Play 5min long Video – It will explain the Singamadoda Program and its objectives, in addition to explaining the theoretical framework for the day's session.
- c) Provide an overview of this session's objectives.
- d) In session it is important to create a space that is welcoming and safe. Let the group know that this is not a man bashing session, but a space for reflection, and un(re)learning.
- e) Start with activity 1 – where participants introduce themselves.
- f) After this proceed with Energizers and main activities

## Delivery

### I. Getting to know you (15 min)

- Each participant should share their names, surnames and where they stay. They can also share their clan names if they choose.
- After this, ask the participants to share, features or characteristics about themselves which identify them as being from a particular clan or area. e.g., gents from Greytown are known for being....
- Reflect on the role of our environments and upbringing in shaping who we are (allow 2 or 3 participants to share their views)

**\*Note 1;** this activity is important to build trust. As the facilitator, you should start, and set the tone by being genuine and honest.

### II. Main Activity 1: "On the spot" (15 min)

- Each participant must write a short sentence about themselves that is incomplete, in the chat function. e.g., 'I love it when...'
- As the facilitator, randomly assign a sentence to any participant (other than the one who wrote the sentence), who will have 2 seconds to complete the sentence that they have been assigned.
- Do that until everyone finishes a sentence.

## Energiser: "HA" (5min)

- Everyone must stand up and unmute their mics.
- First person must laugh only once using "ha",
  - second one must laugh twice, "ha ha",
  - third person must laugh "ha ha ha".

This must continue until everyone laughs. Good luck if you manage to finish this. LOL

## III. Main Activity 2: "If you knew me" (20 min)

- Group must sit down take a breath and start. Write three words on a piece of paper or share screen (if you use paper, make sure it clear and everyone can see the words).
- The words should be.
  - REGRET
  - FEAR
  - HOPE
- Each person must choose one word and share with the group, he must start by saying "if you knew me, you'll know that I regret..."
- Each person chooses to share their regrets, hopes or fears.
- Briefly reflect on what we have learned about each other.

*After the session, all participants must come and put their hands (virtual hands), in team like fashion. They must all declare:*

**"I'M WITH YOU BRO"**

### Homework

Reflect on your 3 key influences, in terms of your personal understanding of masculinity – being or performing manhood, and consider whether this influence, was something positive or negative.

\*This will be shared at the start of the next session.

## Session 2

### My Beliefs & Their limits

#### Overview

Our beliefs are at the core of how we think, act, and engage with the world and people around us.

Unfortunately, many of our beliefs are encoded in us at an early age through rigid socialisation about what it means to be man, and how a 'real' man should act. From how we should construct our identities, to how we think about sex or love, it seems there is a predetermined script based on patriarchal values and limiting beliefs about Gender. (Hooks, 2004)

Our beliefs are limiting, when they stifle our potential for growth, empathy, and the recognition of our full humanity. They are dangerous when they perpetuate rape culture and other forms of violence. (Barker, 2018)

For these reasons, it is important to examine our beliefs, their limitations, and what informs them. Building on this, one may find that, at times, there is a rooftop that halts us from changing even though they have a desire to. People can be reluctant to change due to various reasons. This session is also aimed at helping participants examine the underlying reasons why you may be the case for them.

You need to ask yourself what is my limiting belief stopping me from doing? Is my belief doing more harm than good? If I had a new belief or could change a limiting belief would this help me move forward? Would I be happier? Would I feel I have more choices?



## Time

1 hour, 30 minutes

## Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

1. Critically evaluate beliefs linked to gender norms.
2. Identify personal limiting and underlying beliefs.
3. Understanding the impact of my beliefs on advancing or impeding gender equality.
4. Differentiate between good and bad male characteristics.



## Materials

Laptop/Device with stable internet connection  
Attendance register  
Training Manual  
Session Video



## Preparation

Technology Check – join the session early and make sure your connection is solid, your sound works, and that all the tools you will be using are in order.

Go through all the material that you will be using for the session.

Make sure you are familiar with the activities, games, and role plays that you will use.



# Delivery

## SESSION STRUCTURE

### Part 1: Welcome and reflection by facilitator and then video (15min)

- a) Welcome everyone back to the group. Revisit the previous week's session and review homework assignment #1 from Session 1.
- b) Provide an overview of the day's objectives.
- c) Play Recorded video on beliefs (5 min)

### Part 2 – Main Activity 1: “Qualities of a good man” (20 minutes)

- Split the participants into small groups of 3.
- Ask each group to name 3 characteristics of what they consider a 'good man' and a 'bad man', and the reasons why they think so? (Give about 5 – 7 min in a break away session)
- After the breakaway session, allow each group to share their thoughts, and for other participants to engage with these characteristics.

## DISCUSSION POINTS

***\*These discussions points are just guidelines as the discussion should flow naturally from the responses and engagement of the participants.***

- a. Did everyone in your group agree with the characteristics chosen by the group members?
- b. Where there any characteristic that one group or participant thought was 'good' and other groups/participants thought was bad?
- c. During discussions, did you consider role models/examples linked to your chosen characteristic?
- d. What role, if any, do you think gender stereotypes in the characteristics you selected?



## Energizer 1: Places (5min) \* This energizer is just a guide, if you have any other games to get people going, feel free.

- **Select a participant to name a place, city/country.**
- The next participant has 3 seconds to name another place, starting with the last letter of the place name previous participants.
- E.g., participant 1 says Durban, participant must use the letter 'n' i.e., Nelspruit.

## Main Activity 2 (30 MINUTES)

- Write a list of things that you believe, or have been taught to believe, you 'should or shouldn't be able to do because you are a man.
  - Participants should write these on a piece of paper or on their screen (without sharing).
  - Give about 10 min for this.
- Select one of these beliefs and ask yourself,
  - Why do you believe this statement?
  - What evidence supports this?
  - Have I ever suffered harm(hurt/disappointment/sadness) or caused harm to others because of this belief?
  - What are possible alternatives to this line of thinking?

\*Write down your answers on a piece of paper.

**\* 10 min**

**\*Note:** To change a belief that may be limiting or harmful, question it, and challenge the evidence that backs up your limiting beliefs, look for the generalisations, check to see what is missing – essentially create doubt in your belief.

### **\*Homework – Beliefs of**

1. Do my beliefs about manhood promote equality or impede it?  
Why do you think this is so?
2. Identify 5 beliefs that you think are common amongst people known to be abusers.

## Session 3

# Masculinity and violence

## Overview

In the last session we explored - beliefs, how they can be limiting and how to think about them critically. We also briefly touched on the link between gender norms, and their link to violence. In this session, we examine this link in more depth, as we look at the connection between masculine norms and violence to ourselves and to others.

Violence is rather complex phenomenon, that cannot be easily defined, or explained away, simply in terms of causes. (Safety and Violence Initiative, 2019) But According to the world health organization, violence entails the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation. (World Health Organization, 2002)

Violence can be self-directed, directed against others or structural in nature. High levels of violence and crime in regions such as South Africa are often the symptoms of underlying social, economic, and political challenges such as social inequality, rapid urbanisation, poverty, unemployment, and institutional limitations. (Safety and Violence Initiative, 2019)

In this regard, South Africa's history of colonialism, and apartheid means that violence is something we must contend with daily. From the spatial inequality, degradation, and material deprivation that characterize township life, to domestic abuse, gang violence or sexual assault. South Africa has a lot of work to do to lessen the occurrence of violence and its impact.

To do this well, it is important to understand the intersectional causes violence in society and its gendered nature. Over the years, sociologist have found that violence – murder, rape, intimate partner violence or gang related committed against women, children, or men, is predominately committed by men (Barker, 2018). Globally, men are also more likely to suffer from addiction, suicide, or be the victim of homicide. (Clowes, 2013) (Jewkes)

While it is tempting to explain the above findings, through biology and its assumption that men are naturally more violent; this is too simplistic. Violence involves complex web of intersecting elements, including biology alongside social conditions, life circumstances, childhood experiences, political economy, gender attitudes, and more. (Barker, 2018)

In terms gender attitudes, it has been found that dominate beliefs about the performance of manhood and what it means to be man are the some of the driving forces behind the violence described above. (Safety and Violence Initiative, 2019).

In short society has entrenched the idea that sexual violence, and the violence committed by men, is a normal and inevitable part of life. From childhood, boys are often taught and expected to act in ways characterized by high levels of aggression, withdrawal, sexual activity denial-avoidance and low concern for the needs of others. (Hooks, 2004)

Toughness, dominance, and the willingness to resort to violence to resolve interpersonal conflicts, are central characteristics of masculine identity. Masculinity is often internalised during adolescence, which causes boys to engage in more delinquent behaviour than girls. (Safety and Violence Initiative, 2019) (Clowes, 2013) This kind of behaviour is often necessary to affirm one's manhood or risk being considered less masculine.

Everyone has a breaking point. For men, this breaking point, too often leads to violence. This session is aimed at helping participants identify those breaking points and equip them to find ways that are nonviolent in dealing with their breaking points.



## Time

1 hour, 30 minutes

## Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand gendered-roles and their connection to violence.
2. Identify our personal triggers to violence.
3. How to resolve conflict in a non-violent manner.
4. Good communication skills.



## Materials

Laptop/Device with stable internet connection

Attendance register

Training Manual

Session Video



## Preparation

Technology Check – join the session early and make sure your connection is solid, your sound works, and that all the tools you will be using are in order.

Go through all the material that you will be using for the session.

Make sure you are familiar with the activities, games, and role plays that you will use.



# Delivery

## Part 1 – Welcome and Check-in (10 minutes)

- a. Welcome everyone back to the group.
- b. Revisit the previous week's session and review homework assignment Session 4.
- c. Provide an overview of the day's objectives.
- d. **Play Recorded video on masculinity and violence (5min)**

## Activity 1 – Build & Lead it (30 – 45 minutes)

- Divide the participants into break away groups of 3.
- Inform the groups that they are to imagine they are the editors of a new magazine entitled Build and Lead It. The feature of the upcoming issue is "Masculinity and Violence".
- Give participants 15 minutes to develop titles for five to seven articles they will write for the magazine (based on the theme). They must be pertinent to the topic and the whole group must agree on the titles.
- Have the groups present their titles with a brief description of the articles.

**\*15min on discussion**

## Activity 2 – What would you do? (20 min)

- Each participant must have a pen and paper or a place to write on.
- Each participants must write down 4 words, in English or isiXhosa, to describe their feelings (emotional state) in the following 3 scenarios.
- Give about 8 - 10 minutes for participants to capture their responses.
- Discuss

## Scenarios

1. Your best friend tells you that he is bisexual and has had a crush on you for a while, he tells you that he knows you are not interested in him, but he just wanted you to know.
2. You girlfriend of many years tells you that she had sex with a friend of yours and is now pregnant.
3. You are in the club and you accidentally step on someone's shoe, you turn around to apologize but the person pushes aggressively, swears at you and, asks 'what are you gonna do about it?'

While people write down how they would feel in such situations, ask them to also consider how they think they would react. Use this a further discussion point when people give feedback.

**\*On your screen, share the handout linked below. It will assist in providing a vocabulary to express emotion. See link below.**

<https://www.nonviolentcommunication.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Feelings-vs-Evaluations.pdf>

### Homework

#### My Breaking Point

The group must discuss about their past. They must share about a point in their life where they lost themselves and became violent.

- What caused it?
- What did they do?
- Was there another alternative to violence at the time?

## Session 3

# Creating New Normal

## Overview

In the last session we looked at the relationship between our performance of manhood and violence. While this was important to do, we must remember that violence is not inherent to manhood – men are not naturally violent and not only men commit violence. (Barker, 2018)

All over the world, and right here at home, men are kind, thoughtful and helpful. Many continue to resist and have worked hard against a culture that tells them they that to be a man, one must be violent, unfeeling, and dominating,

With that said, the rate at which violence against women, children and the LGBTQI community continue to occur mean that there is not enough of these men and there are not enough alternatives to toxic, masculinity. This is something we must change. We need to create a new normal.

In terms of what this new normal will look like, that is not something can or want to define for you. It must be something we work together to shape and fulfil.

We know that for positive masculinity to be a true alternative, it must be based on interdependence, communication, empathy and the respect and recognition of the full humanity of women, children, and each other.

*“Empathy to oneself and others lies in a realm that has remained devalued and unexplored—the domain of women.... Both the roots of [his] pain and his entitlement to run from it, inflicting it instead, on those he most cares for, lie at the heart of patriarchy—the masculine code into which all boys are inducted.”* (Hooks, 2004)

In this session, we seek to break from this system, to defining positive masculinity and to commit to establishing this new normal.



## Time

1 hour, 30 minutes

## Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

1. Recognise the daily challenges faced by women in South Africa.
2. Understand the principles of human dignity, equality and fairness reflected in our Constitution
3. Commit to positive masculinity through advancing the principles of human dignity, equality and fairness reflected in our Constitution.



## Materials

Laptop/Device with stable internet connection

Attendance register

Training Manual

Session Video



## Preparation

Technology Check – join the session early and make sure your connection is solid, your sound works, and that all the tools you will be using are in order.

Go through all the material that you will be using for the session.

Make sure you are familiar with the activities, games, and role plays that you will use.



# Delivery

## Part 1 – Welcome and Check-in (5 minutes)

- a. Welcome everyone back to the group.
- b. Revisit the previous week's session and review homework assignment.
- c. Provide an overview of the day's objectives.
- d. **5 min video (Creating a new normal)**

## Activity 1: In Her Shoes (30 min)

To live freely, is to live a life without fear, coercion, violence, or discrimination.

- Split the participants into breakaway groups of 3.
- In each group, participants should imagine they are a black woman in South Africa, then make a list of the all the things they would /may not be able to do if they were a woman. e.g jogging alone at night
- Give 5 – 7 min for groups to complete their list, then return to main session for group discussion for about 5-7 min, each group shares their list and reason?
- After the discussion, return to breakaway groups, and make a list of all the things/characteristics/habits that e.g., woman need to survive i.e., not get harassed, raped, assaulted, kidnapped. So, for example 'holding your keys' in your hand.
- Discuss

## DISCUSSION POINTS

- What does living freely mean to you?
- In terms of the definition above and your own, can you live freely?
- Do women live freely?
- What are your thoughts when you look at the 1st and then the 2nd list?
- Have you ever told/taught a women/girl any of the things listed in your 2nd list?
- Have your practiced any of the things in the 2nd list?
- Why do you think this is so?

## Activity 2: Right or Wrong (15 minutes)

You are in your first of year of university but have gone home for the holidays. While walking with your long-time friend, who is a woman, you see some of your older brother's popular friends. After you pass them, you hear them swearing at young girl because, she did not respond when they said hello. You recognize this girl, as one the people who are attending your old high school. Your brother's friends look at you in a knowing way. You nod slightly at them and continue walking home.

Have participants evaluate the story and record how they would behave in this situation. Discuss with them how age might make a difference in a person's reaction to this scenario. How might they handle the situation if they were in high school or university?

### DISCUSSION POINTS

- What do you think is the 'right thing to do in this situation?
- What do you think might be the difficulty in acting this way?
- How do you think we might over this?
- Why might our sense of right and wrong change over time?
- What are a few reasons that some people are more confident than others in their sense of right and wrong?
- Describe a scenario in which you "stood up" for someone else? How did it make you feel? How do you think it made the other person feel?
- Has anyone ever "stood up" for you? Describe the situation.

## II. The Pledge (20 minutes)

### Personal work

Give each participant a sample a pledge by men against Gender Based Violence, from the sample they must each write their own pledge, which will be applicable to them.

### Group Work

Participants must the discuss as a group, what is it that they can do as allies against Gender Based Violence.

The idea must be practical and cost effective.

**Change the World**

[mandela.ac.za](http://mandela.ac.za)

