

## Toxic Masculinity Breakdown Handout

### Toxic Masculinity

- Toxic masculinity is a narrow and repressive description of manhood, designating manhood as defined by violence, sex, status and aggression. It's the cultural ideal of manliness, where strength is everything while emotions are a weakness; where sex and brutality are yardsticks by which men are measured, while supposedly "feminine" traits — which can range from emotional vulnerability to simply not being hypersexual — are the means by which your status as "man" can be taken away. - [The Good Men Project](#)
- It is crucial, however, that students understand some key ideas: Talking about toxic masculinity is not about vilifying boys, men or any of the particular qualities society has deemed "masculine." Rather, it is an opportunity to begin to reconstruct a more positive model of masculinity that makes room for the many different ways to be a boy or man and allows all individuals to feel secure in their masculine identity. - [Boys to Men \(NYT article\)](#)

### Toxic Masculinity in the school

- 7.1 percent of boys drop out of school, compared to 5.1 for girls.
- Girls average a 5% lead over boys in degree attainment.
- Boys are more likely to be subjected to physical types of bullying
- Boys are disproportionately suspended and expelled from school.

[National Center for Educational Statistics](#)

- Refusal to seek help
- Homophobia
- Misogyny

[Bustle](#)

### Positive Masculinity

- Kiselica and Englar-Carlson (2010), lay out their framework for Positive Psychology/Positive Masculinity. This framework is a strength based approach, focusing first on the positive aspects of masculinity when working with men and boys. Examples include; Male ways of caring (generally action oriented), use of humor, and self-reliance.
- While there are aspects of masculinity that hold some level of positives within them, there are others that do not. Positive masculinity is a great starting point and useful as a strengths based approach. But it needs to be paired with something that better challenges the toxic aspects of masculinity.

### Authentic Masculinity

- “This masculinity is individually defined and allows each person who identifies as a man to decide what is really authentic and genuine for him about his masculinity.” - [Keith Edwards](#)
- This ideology targets the cognitive dissonance that boys and men can feel when they don’t live up to the expectations set for them by seeking to change those very expectations.
- “Maleness” is defined by the individual and is not set by the society around him.
- Creates a more inclusive and comprehensive definition of “masculinity”.

### Breaking down Toxic Masculinity put into Action

- Toxic masculinity is a deeply ingrained social construct, yet it is a construct all the same. This means that we can deconstruct it, break it down. Like all social constructs, dismantling it is easier said than done.
- Making this change requires a continual effort to challenge the messages society sends to our students. Call out toxic behaviors and ideas. Praise and model authenticity.
- In the school, provide professional development opportunities around this topic, discuss masculinity and its impact on students. Get your teachers involved in making cultural changes.
- In groups and individuals, discuss their experiences as males. Use the Frayer model to talk about masculinity. Challenge what the messages they have received about being a man. Discuss authenticity and the freedom that it allows.

### Resources and References

- Kiselica, M., Englar-Carlson, M., Gelso, Charles J., Wade, Jay C., & Good, Glenn E. (2010). IDENTIFYING, AFFIRMING, AND BUILDING UPON MALE STRENGTHS: THE POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY/POSITIVE MASCULINITY MODEL OF PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH BOYS AND MEN. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 47(3), 276-287.
- NCES - <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/index.asp?faq=FFOption3#>
- The Good Men Project- <https://goodmenproject.com/>
- *Boys to Men: Teaching and Learning About Masculinity in an Age of Change* - <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/12/learning/lesson-plans/boys-to-men-teaching-and-learning-about-masculinity-in-an-age-of-change.html>
- Toxic Masculinity Examples - [http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Toxic\\_masculinity](http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Toxic_masculinity)
- 6 Harmful Effects of Toxic Masculinity - <https://www.bustle.com/articles/143644-6-harmful-effects-of-toxic-masculinity>
- Keith Edwards - <http://www.keithedwards.com/2017/09/28/authentic-masculinity/>

# Frayer Model



