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What Is Toxic Masculinity?

The different expectations for what being a man means have been a long-standing issue and confused about how they should act. Toxic masculinity is a term that describes the negative aspects of masculinity. It refers to the dominant form of masculinity wherein men are competitive, violence, and control or "dominate" women.

Traditional masculinity ideals in many different forms. A few examples include being tough, being the breadwinner, being a leader, being dominant and staying emotionally "cool" with the phrase "boys will be boys." Toxic masculinity ideals are harmful to men and women **because they promote violence and encourage the most problematic protection in men. These are some of the most common ways men are taught to protect their reputation or masculinity.**

Traits

Traits of toxic or unhealthy masculinity can include:

- Unconditional physical toughness
- Physical aggression, fear of vulnerability
- Discrimination against people that are "feminine"
- Hyper independence
- Sexual aggression or violence
- Anti-feminist behavior

Many people who identify as male can feel pressure to embody a set of traits of toxic masculinity, which can lead them to act in ways that are harmful to themselves and themselves.

Impacts of Toxic Masculinity

The impacts of toxic masculinity are far-reaching. It can be so pervasive that it can lead to more violence against women, or men may feel pressure to act in ways that are not in their best interest or that are harmful to others.

Aggressive

Having childhood, youth experiences can lead to aggressive behavior and emotional distress. As males get older, aggressive behavior can lead to violence and disorders.

For example, having boys demonstrating power seeking behaviors when their young can lead to bullying behaviors and violence against others. Aggressive behaviors are more likely to participate in risky behaviors, illegal acts, and verbally aggressive behavior.[1]

Sexism

Healthy or positive masculinity is not sexism. Sexism is defined as prejudice based on identity as a different gender or sexuality. Sexism is a form of toxic masculinity and can be a result of toxic masculinity. Toxic masculinity fosters discrimination against people that do not fit into the ideal of masculinity.

Trauma

Many people who identify as male are raised in an gender role of being self-reliant, masculine traits, which can include:[2]

- Not showing emotions
- Not showing vulnerability
- Dysfunctional family dynamics
- Lack of emotional support
- Sexual repression
- Struggle between conformity with dominance and violence

Chauvinism

The term chauvinism derived from a French soldier Nicolas Chauvin, is defined as "aggressive patriotism." Chauvinism is a belief in extreme loyalty to a group and can be represent discrimination or attitudes of superiority. Men who are raised with toxic masculinity ideals can be chauvinistic because their ideals that make a person to be a man.[3]

Academic Challenges

Toxic of toxic masculinity can lead to academic challenges. In schools, male students are more likely to have behavior problems and have difficulty in school.[4]

Many of the examples included being aggressive, violence, and sexism. Unhealthy or toxic masculinity may not lead to the direct impacts of violence and other emotional needs because people may view it as a sign of weakness or vulnerability.

Violence

Conceptualized by the Violence Policy Center in 2017 showed that 93% of perpetrators of mass shootings in the United States are men. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reported that 90% of murders in the United States are committed by men. Violence against women is 10 times more common than violence against men. Violence against men is more common in the United States, males comprise more than 75% of homicide victims and perpetrators. These statistics point to the importance of education and prevention efforts to decrease the number of violent crimes.

All murdered women were killed by an intimate male partner.

Males involved in violent criminal perpetrators

Drug-Related Crime

The following trends are examples of ways in the United States and other developed countries where men are more likely to participate in drug related crime:

- Addiction
- Drug-related crime arrests
- Trafficking
- Encourage companions and kindness to men and women in the workplace
- Listen to experiences and validate feelings
- Check in with male friends and loved ones

Anti-Social

In the United States, males are more likely to engage in anti-social behavior than women. Anti-social behavior is a result of unhealthy toxic masculinity and lack accountability for actions. For example, men are more likely to participate in drug related crime and violent crime. Because of a perceived insult that may not have even been or much.

Drug Overdose

Toxic masculinity is also predictive of drug use. Men are more likely to use drugs and are more likely to seek treatment for addiction because some people view it as a sign of weakness.

Suicide

In the United States, males are more likely to commit suicide than women. According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, men died by suicide 3.5 times more than women. Additionally, middle-aged white men are the most likely to die by suicide.

What Is Healthy Masculinity?

Healthy or positive masculinity is the ideal form of masculinity. It encourages men to be friendly to women, and expresses their emotions without being emotional.

Traits

The following traits are examples of ways to promote healthy and encourage men to be more healthy and positive:

- Encourage compassion and kindness to men and women
- Listen to experiences and validate feelings
- Check in with male friends and loved ones

Positive Outcomes

Men need to have a healthy or balanced masculinity to be healthy and to have a positive outcome. Men who have a positive experience increased life satisfaction and increased self-esteem and have decreased mental health problems such as depression.

Undoing Toxic Masculinity

To effectively undo toxic masculinity, accountability needs to be taken by those who perpetrate these negative ideas of "man power." Organizations, communities, and professional help, and therapy are all critical components to healthy positive masculinity.

Seek Help

If you are struggling with unhealthy or toxic masculinity, seek help. Many people are not aware of their toxic behavior. Find a mental health professional specializing in male therapy or gender identity concerns.

Therapy

When seeking therapy, it is essential to find a therapist who is a good fit. Some people do not feel that they are a good fit for group therapy, and others find that they can work with you on healthy masculinity and healthy relationships. Find a therapist who expresses "man power" healthily and positively.

Resources

1. https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/fs-9631.pdf
2. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-man-your-man-could-love/201811/toxic-masculinity-is-unsafe-for-men
3. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/chauvinism
4. https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/fs-9631.pdf
5. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-man-your-man-could-love/201811/toxic-masculinity-is-unsafe-for-men
6. https://www.abc.net.au/news-watch/2018/01/08/5389294.html
7. https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/fs-9631.pdf
8. https://www.abc.net.au/news-watch/2018/01/08/5389294.html
9. https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/fs-9631.pdf
10. https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/fs-9631.pdf
11. https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/fs-9631.pdf

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