

HEALTHY MASCULINITY

INFORMATION SHEET

www.MenCanStopRape.org

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ACTION PROJECT

What is healthy masculinity?

In 2012, Men Can Stop Rape (MCSR) led a group of national nonprofits in starting the Healthy Masculinity Action Project (HMAP), a multi-year initiative designed to raise the national visibility of healthy masculinity and build the next generation of men who role model strength without violence. The goal of primary

prevention according to HMAP is to replace the harmful attitudes, assumptions, and behaviors connected to a "less than" perspective that is part of unhealthy masculinity with prosocial healthy masculinity norms. MCSR describes those prosocial norms in the following way:

#1: Recognizing unhealthy aspects of masculinity that are harmful to the self and others:

It is important for men and boys to identify and understand attitudes that reinforce negative beliefs and perceptions of unhealthy masculine behaviors like:

- Committing physically and emotionally harmful actions
- Repressing and hiding emotions
- Viewing and treating others as "less than"

#2: Empathizing with the self and others:

Building empathy for oneself and others is vital for men and boys to develop emotional health and compassion. We view moving men towards empathy and emotional intelligence as profound acts of moral and communal responsibility.

#3: Supporting gender equity and other forms of equity:

Unhealthy masculinity is harmful when it leads boys and men to see girls and women as "less than" males. Once we understand how it harms others, we're more inclined to treat all members of a community equally and with respect.

#4: Replacing harmful risky and violent masculine attitudes and behaviors with emotionally intelligent attitudes and behaviors that respect the self and others:

Unhealthy masculinity sometimes requires men and boys to prove their manhood by engaging in behaviors that are self-destructive and harmful to others. Healthy masculinity encourages men and boys to take better care of themselves and to treat others with compassion and consideration.

#5: Learning and using emotional and social skills to constructively challenge unhealthy masculine attitudes and behaviors expressed by others:

Practicing healthy masculinity requires boys and men to develop social and emotional tools to challenge unhealthy masculinity, especially as active bystanders. Men and boys show their strength by constructively addressing the problematic actions of others associated with unhealthy masculinity.

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Learn more about our youth development programs, public education materials, and trainings for professionals.