

Why the Fathers of Tomorrow Need Our Attention Today

Male Socialization

A Roundtable Meeting on Male Socialization

Home
About Us
Projects
Advocacy
Calendar
Services For Fathers
Links
Contact Us
Join Us

A growing body of evidence points to the important benefits of a strong father-child relationship. Among these benefits are higher levels of school performance and increases in healthy behaviors. Children who lack a positive relationship with a father or father-figure demonstrate higher levels of teen pregnancy, increased juvenile delinquency, and lower academic achievement.

This link between father-involvement and child-wellbeing elevates the importance of educating and socializing boys to become competent fathers. Therefore, in February 2005, the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network (MFFN) hosted a roundtable meeting to explore the societal influences that prepare boys for manhood and fatherhood. In particular, the meeting explored the role of Minnesota's university faculty/staff and researchers.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES: [Available here in PDF.](#)

READING LIST: [Click here for a bibliography of articles, chapters and essays on male socialization.](#)

TALKING POINTS FROM ROUNDTABLE: [Select comments of presentations, summarized here.](#)

Goals of Roundtable: This meeting provided a structured environment to:

- Engage faculty/staff from higher education and research institutions in examining issues related to Minnesota 's diverse communities of fathers and families;
- Explore the complexities of male socialization in preparing boys to become fathers and family men;
- Review the current research and theory around child development and the influence of male socialization on families and fathers;
- Review "signature practices" that are being used around the nation for promoting positive male socialization in schools and social service agencies;
- Develop initial action steps for participants to promote positive male socialization in their daily work;
- Identify and promote the father-friendly attitudes and values required to train a new generation of family service professionals.

MFFN's work on male socialization has been supported by the Otto Bremer Foundation.

BACKGROUND READING ON MALE SOCIALIZATION

The following list of publications was compiled for attendees of the February 2005 Roundtable on Male Socialization as background material. Please contact MFFN for further details about acquiring copies of these materials:

The challenge of raising emotionally healthy boys
May, R. Wisconsin Medical Journal, 2002. Free download [here](#).

Masculinities: Cultural influences on men's ways of being
Kilmartin, C. Chapter 6 in *The Masculine Self* . Boston: McGraw Hill, 2000.

Literature and positive male archetypes
Brozo, W. Chapter 2 in *To be a boy, to be a reader*. 2002.

Needed now more than ever: The authentic male
Klaus, T. In *NOAPPP Network* , 1999. Purchase a copy [here](#).

Canadian boys: Growing up male
In *Transition Magazine*. Ottawa: Vanier Institute of the Family, 2003. Free download [here](#).

Australian Education Union ...Inquiry into the education of boys
Southbank , Australia : AEU, 2000. Free download [here](#).

From shame-based masculinity to holistic manhood
Obsatz, M. St. Paul, MN, 2005. Free download [here](#).

Building a "big tent" approach to ending men's violence
Katz, J. Building Partners Initiative. United States Department of Justice. 2003. Free download [here](#).

ROUNDTABLE ON MALE SOCIALIZATION: PARTICIPANT READING LIST

The following publications were referenced by attendees at the February 2005 Roundtable on Male Socialization. The diversity of topics reflects the background, interests, passions, and academic studies of many participants. Some documents may be out of print. Please contact MFFN for further details about acquiring copies of these materials.

Boys to men: emotional miseducation
Murray, B., In *APA Monitor Online* , 1999. Free download [here](#).

It's good to be a man!

Boynton, P. In *Transitions: Journal of Men's Perspectives*, 1991. Free download [here](#).

He turns boys into men

Marx, J. *Parade Magazine*. August 29, 2004. Free download [here](#).

White men challenging racism: 35 personal stories

Thompson, C., Schaefer, E., and Brod, H. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Purchase online [here](#).

Pedagogy of the oppressed

Freire, P. New York: Continuum Books, 1993. Download Chapter 1 [here](#).

A framework for establishing social work relationships across racial / ethnic lines

Velasquez, J., Vigil M., Benavides, E. Contact the author, Eustolio Benavides, at eustolio.benavides@metrostate.edu.

The construction of Caribbean masculinity: Towards a research agenda – A symposium

Lewis, L. St. Augustine: The University of the West Indies Centre for Gender & Development Studies, 1996.

That's enough! A twelve-minute video about the relationship between bullying and school shootings.

Obsatz, M. St. Paul, MN. Purchase online [here](#).

Laugh and live: Reclaiming our sense of humor

Hutchinson, L. St. Cloud, MN: North Star Press of St. Cloud, 2004. Visit the author's website [here](#).

Masculinity and men's mental health

Brooks, G. In *Journal of American College Health*, 2001. Contact the author at Gary_Brooks@Baylor.edu.

Popular child-rearing books: Where is daddy?

Fleming, L. and Tobin, D. In *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 2005. Contact the author at fleming006@gannon.edu.

Sex differences in emotion: A critical review of the literature and implications for counseling psychology

Wester, S., Vogel, D., Pressly, P., and Heesacker, M. In *The Counseling Psychologist*, 2002. Contact the author, Stephen Wester, at SRWester@uwm.edu.

Demystifying men's emotional behavior: New directions and implications for counseling and research

Wong, Y. and Rochlen A. In *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, 2004. Contact the author, Y. Joel Wong, at joelwong@mail.utexas.edu.

SELECT NOTES TAKEN DURING PRESENTATIONS ON FEBRUARY 25, 2005

Dr. Harry Brod: Addressed the intersection of male socialization and fathering

- We must learn to "picture positive fathering". What do we expect fathering to look like?
- Fathering is historically different from mothering. Biological differences may be less obvious.
- Good fathers are wanted: 1) to pass on good masculinity, and 2) to avoid continuing bad masculinity.
- Crying is a way to heal the hurt. Stopping crying doesn't stop the hurt; it stops the healing. So, men who don't cry can't begin healing.
- Parents need to appreciate the intelligence of their children. Do not only correct children, but recognize their growth and knowledge.
- The goal of good parenting is to identify goals of self monitoring.
- Traditional male socialization has tolerated violence. Therefore, violence may be considered over-conformance to an unhealthy societal standard of masculinity (not deviance or non-conformance). Therefore, one way to prevent violence is to stop unhealthy socialization of boys.

Dr. Glen Palm: Addressed male socialization in the early years

- Dads learn with their kids during the early years of parenting (two generations of learners can learn together).
- Even during early childhood years, parents should talk to their kids about gendered messages they see on TV or in the media.
- Early childhood years are a prime time for children to learn gender identity and emotional expression. Don't miss these opportunities for positive socialization.
- Oftentimes, our 21 st Century culture can be seen socializing boys for a 19 th Century lifestyle (we no longer live in a single-wage earner society of nuclear families). Male socialization must adapt to the realities of the 21 st Century.
- When teaching men about emotional expression, many adult men respond better to the term "EQ" (emotional intelligence) rather than "emotions". EQ sounds more masculine for men who have been socialized to shun emotional expression.
- Dads cannot teach EQ to their children without first looking inward at themselves.
- Book clubs for dads and kids are a good way to teach literacy, connections, and content.

Lowell Johnson: Addressed male socialization in elementary school

- Children in elementary school need adult male role models who can show positive masculinity.
- It is hard for male teachers in elementary schools because they may feel isolated in the profession and because society does not consider elementary education to be a "masculine" profession.
- We need a public service announcement to help promote the image that real men raise children. Real men teach children.
- Schools and communities need to offer more opportunities for dads and kids to interact in a structured environment.

Ramon Serrano: Addressed male socialization in adolescence

- Schools have traditionally been used as a way to promote a culture: "colonizing sites".
- Children can help to educate parents to break their taboos about showing affection.
- Often, younger generations are the ones to help teach healthy masculinity to older generations. For example, younger generations often perceive a clearer distinction between "discipline" and "punishment".
- Literature is a good way to promote education across generations. Book talks can help to break taboos.
- An effective intergenerational activity: Bring a group of students to a nursing home to engage in intergenerational storytelling. Afterwards, students can re-write the stories in the form of poems, rap songs, etc.
- It is important for teachers to talk *with* students; don't talk *to* students.
- Explore the writings of Henry Giroux who talks about "border crossers" and male / female roles.

Jan Hayne: Addressed male socialization in middle school / high school

- Dads Make a Difference (DMAD) is an effective tool for teaching middle school and high school students about the responsibilities and roles of fatherhood.
- DMAD uses an effective strategy of youth mentors whereby older students teach younger students lessons about parenting and prevention.
- DMAD has been used effectively in urban, suburban and rural schools. Student-mentors are able to cater their message and refine it for younger students who view them as role models.

Dr. Gar Kellom: Addressed male socialization in college

- Colleges need to teach gender awareness (especially men's or women's colleges).
- Men's Studies is not offered on most college campuses.
- At St. John's University, the male students find that they are able to "drop the mask" in the evening after women leave the campus.
- Men's spirituality groups are a growing phenomenon that help college students grow in their spiritual expression and self confidence.
- We need to talk more about gender in new and open ways.
- Men look for more pedagogy of open dialogue and less pedagogy of instruction.
- Colleges must help men to identify and grow into healthy relationships.
- It truly does take a village to raise a healthy man.

"Building Quality Programs for Minnesota's Fathers."

© Minnesota Fathers & Families Network 2008 except where noted, All Rights Reserved
design by Webartisan.biz