

**NEXT
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MEN**

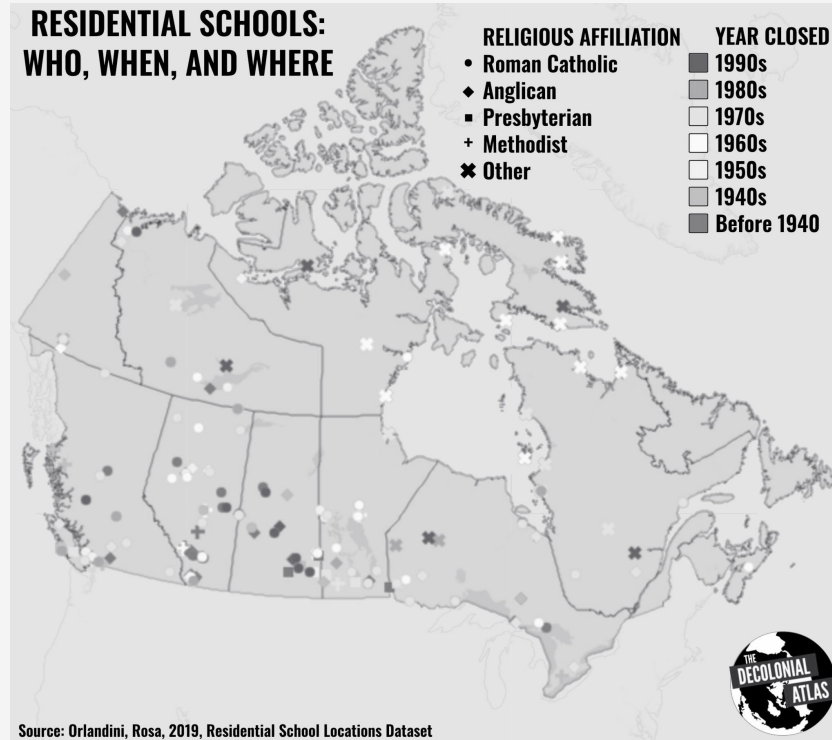


HOW TO SUPPORT BOYS' MENTAL HEALTH

Canadian Forces Morale
and Welfare Services

WE ARE TREATY PEOPLE

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The Decolonial Atlas. (2021, October 6). *Canada's residential schools: Who, when, and where.*

<https://decolonialatlas.wordpress.com/2021/10/06/canadas-residential-schools-who-when-and-where/>

AGENDA

RISK FACTORS

Explore the risk factors related to toughness and independence

01

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY/MASCULINITY

Identify positive role models who talk about mental health in an accessible way

02

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Understand the protective significance of boys' close peer relationships

03

BOYS' FRIENDSHIPS

Explore how your school culture can support authenticity and trust

04

THE MASK YOU LIVE IN

Engage youth in an experiential activity about the feelings we keep hidden

05

ABOUT ME

- Next Gen Men's Youth Program Lead
- Background in youth program management, outdoor experiential education, and mental health skills facilitation
- Must have coffee





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DISCUSSION

NOTHING IS HYPOTHETICAL

In the chat, send the initials of a masculine identifying youth in your life that you are thinking about today.

YOUR ANCHOR

Think about how their identity/experiences intersect with pressures around what it means to be a man.

AND WHY

THE MAN BOX



SELF-SUFFICIENCY

"A real man should be able to handle his own."



ACTING TOUGH

"Boys don't cry."



PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS

"Look good, feel good, wheel good."



AGGRESSION & CONTROL

"Never back down."



RIGID GENDER ROLES

"The man is the breadwinner."



HETEROSEXUALITY & HOMOPHOBIA

"No homo."



HYPERSEXUALITY

"What's your body count?"

THE MAN BOX



SELF-SUFFICIENCY

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"What's your body count?"




**A GUY SHOULD NEVER DEPEND ON
SOMEONE ELSE TO HELP HIM.**

At what age does a boy start experiencing
pressure to be **independent**?



BOYS DON'T CRY.

At what age does a boy start experiencing pressure to **not show emotion**?



WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, THE TOUGH GET GOING.

At what age does a boy start experiencing
pressure to **be tough**?



**“OUR FINDINGS SUPPORT THE CLAIM
THAT MEN’S MASCULINITY IDEALS ARE A
SIGNIFICANT BARRIER TO THEIR
PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP-SEEKING.”**

— Yousaf et al.

BOYS' MENTAL HEALTH

INTERNALIZED PRESSURES OF MASCULINITY



33%

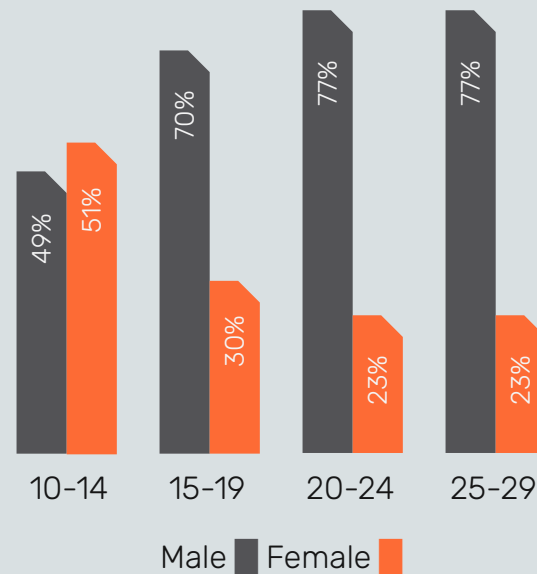
One third of boys think society expects them to suck it up when they feel sad or scared



72%

Three quarters of parents of boys think boys feel uncomfortable sharing when they feel weak

SUICIDE RATES BY SEX 2000-2020





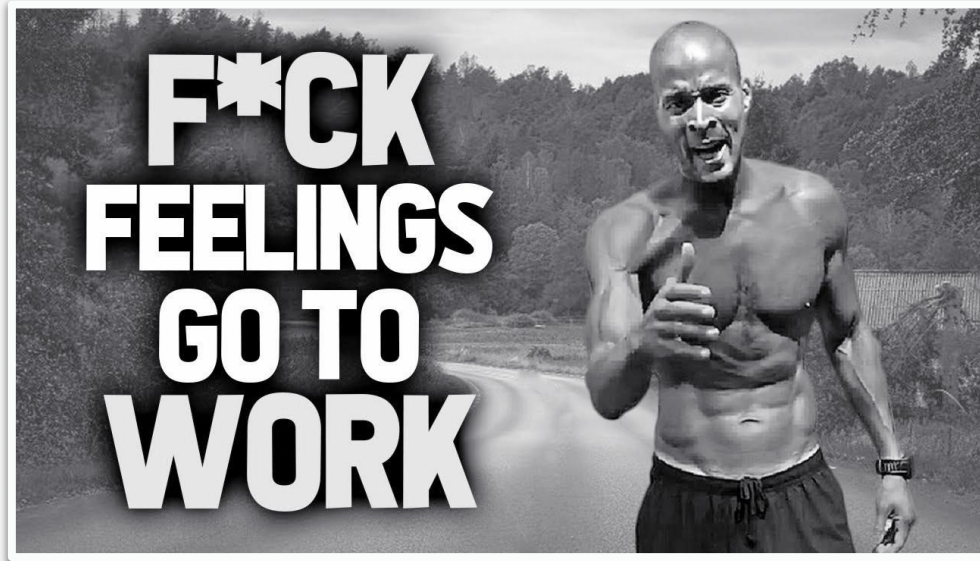
WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT 'MEN'S MENTAL
HEALTH', WHAT ONLINE INFLUENCERS COME
TO MIND? WHAT KIND OF MESSAGES DO
THEY PROMOTE?



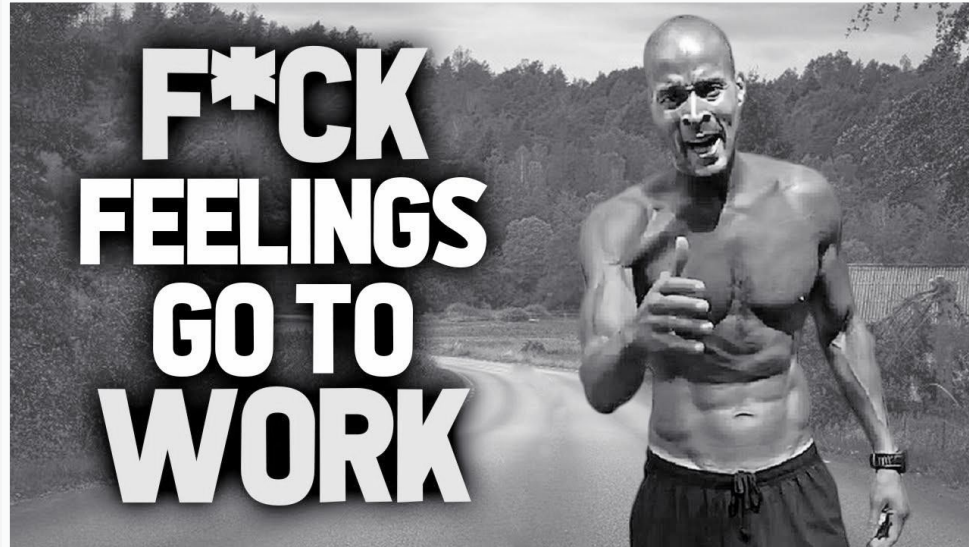
1. What is the main purpose of this video?
2. What is the main purpose of this video?

1. What is the main purpose of this video?


1. What is the main purpose of this video?



WHY MIGHT THIS MESSAGE **RESONATE** WITH TEENAGE BOYS?



HOW MIGHT IT **HARM** TEENAGE BOYS?



**“WE CAN ACCENTUATE POSITIVE
ASPECTS OF THE MALE SOCIALIZATION
PROCESS, TO HELP BOYS AND MEN
LEARN AND EMBRACE HEALTHY AND
CONSTRUCTIVE ASPECTS OF
MASCULINITY.”**

— Mark Kiselica & Matt
Englar-Carlson

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BEAST MODE

Dwayne Johnson (The Rock)

'Crying constantly': Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson reveals teen depression battle

Hollywood star tells of sinking into witnessing mother's attempted suicide



Dwayne Johnson Opens Up About His Battle With Depression: 'I Was Devastated'

By ARIANA BROCKINGTON



Dwayne Johnson ✓
@TheRock

Follow



Got tons of responses to this. Thank you. We all go thru the sludge/shit and depression never discriminates. Took me a long time to realize it but the key is to not be afraid to open up. Especially us dudes have a tendency to keep it in. You're not alone

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A composite image featuring basketball player Demar DeRozan. On the left, he is shown in a red Chicago Bulls jersey, jumping to shoot a basketball. On the right, a close-up portrait of him in a white Bulls jersey is shown. The background is a blurred crowd in a basketball arena.

DEMAR DEROZAN MIDRANGE MASTER

DeMar DeRozan opens up about his battles with depression

From NBA media reports

Feb 26, 2018 9:33 AM ET



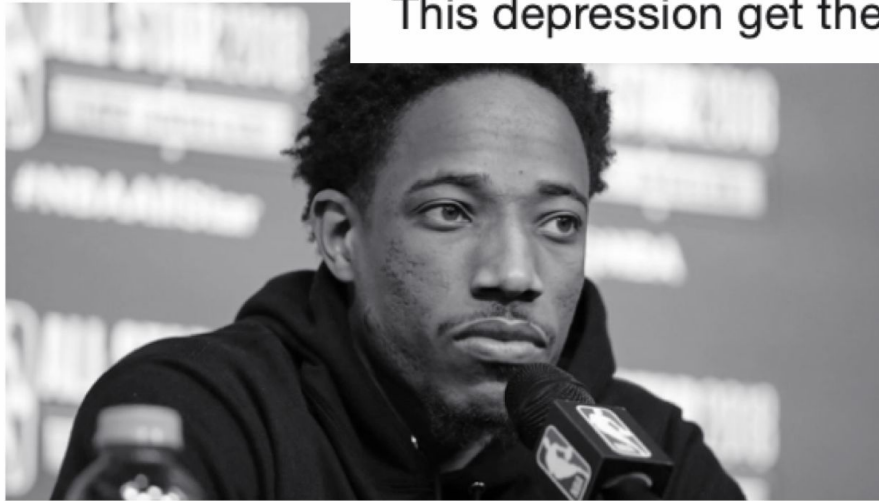
DeMar DeRozan ✓

@DeMar_DeRozan

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This depression get the best of me...



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Raptors' DeRozan hopes honest talk on depression helps others







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FIGURE 30: Mental Health: depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation

Percentage of respondents who report experience at some point in the last two weeks

	Man Box	Little interest or pleasure in doing things	Feeling down depressed or hopeless	Having thoughts of suicide
Australia	Stuck in the Man Box	87%*	81%*	64% 
	2	83%*	71%*	36%*
	3	79%*	65%*	21%*
	4	75%*	67%*	19%*
	Free of the Man Box	76%*	70%*	27%* 


* represents statistically significant relationships at $p < .05$

FIGURE 10: Percentage of respondents who report having a friend with whom they feel comfortable talking about a personal, emotional issue

Man Box		Percentage of respondents who report having a friend with whom they feel comfortable talking about a personal, emotional issue
Australia	In	62%*
	Out	76%*

FIGURE 11: Percentage of respondents who report often or very often in the last month

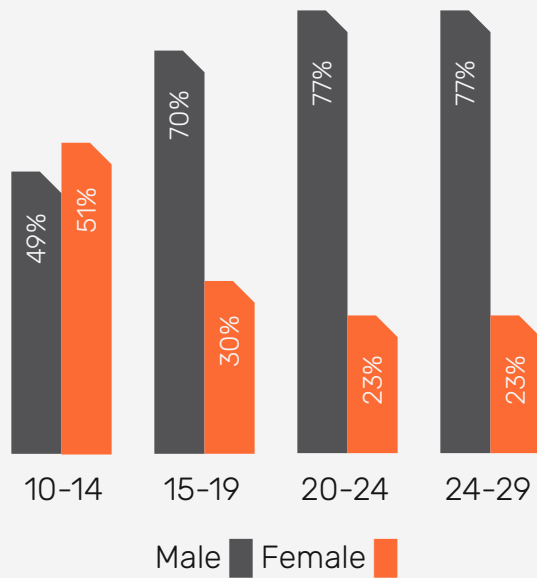
Man Box		You willingly provided emotional support to someone going through a difficult time	You felt comfortable crying in front of a male friend	You talked with a friend about something deeply emotional you were going through
Australia	In	59%	36%*	47%*
	Out	61%	21%*	41%*



**“IT WAS ONLY WHEN COMBINED WITH
HAVING A CLOSE FRIENDSHIP THAT A
BOY’S RESISTANCE TO MASCULINE
NORMS COULD BE PROTECTIVE.”**

— Judy Chu

SUICIDE RATES BY SEX 2000-2020





DISCUSSION

PEER RELATIONSHIPS

How are boys' friendships most often represented in mainstream culture?

CULTURE

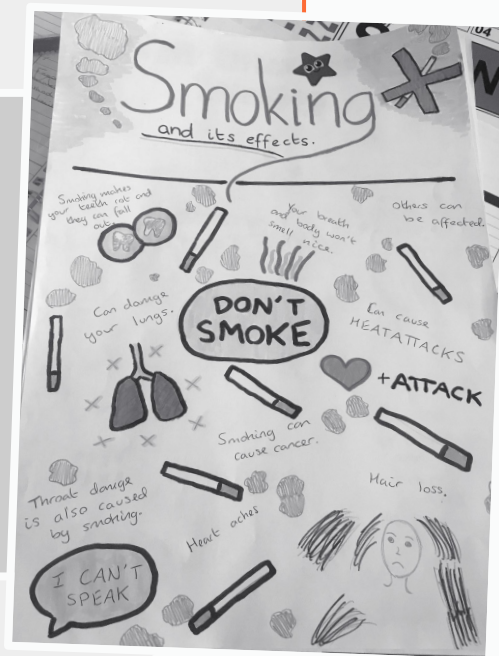
What impact might that have on the ways we think about their relationships?

ASSUMPTIONS



**“SMOKING WAS THE ONLY [HEALTH]
RISK FACTOR COMPARABLE IN
STRENGTH TO LACK OF
FRIENDSHIP SUPPORT.”**

— Niobe Way



IN YOUR WORK: YOUTH CULTURE



SO WHAT?

What structures, practices, and norms within your work environments or the communities you engage with might be **limiting the depth** of boys' close friendships?

NOW WHAT?

How can you promote **healthy** and **supportive** peer relationships within the environments or communities you work in?

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Core Session 4: The Mask You Live In Background

QUOTE

"Research shows that male infants are more expressive than female infants. However, as a boy ages, his expression becomes more reserved. Because 'The Boy Code'—society's demand that boys suppress or cover up their emotions—masculinity' to hide their shame, vulnerability, and sadness. The inability to show emotion is a loss of touch with them." — William

GOALS

- Create a safe space to reflect on and share experiences
- Explore the choices we make about our emotions and feelings that we show on the outside

MATERIALS

- Laptop
- Projector
- Speaker
- A double-sided Mask Handout for each participant (see [Additional Resources](#))
- A writing utensil for each participant

SET UP

- Print and cut out one double-sided mask for each participant
- Arrange a group of chairs into a circle

WRITE ON THE BOARD

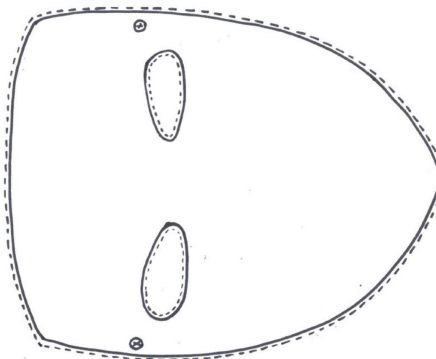
"Everyone is going through something"

NOTES

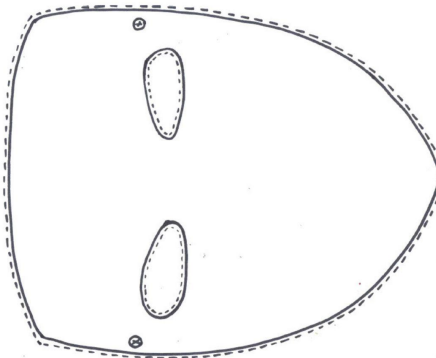
- Depending on where this session takes place, participants may be more or less comfortable with sharing their experiences out of the comfort zone while still maintaining their experience.

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Write the things that you easily let people see about you. What feelings do you show when you're walking down the hallway at school?



Write down the parts of yourself that you easily let people see. What feelings do you show when you're walking down the hallway at school?



BOYS' MENTAL HEALTH



PROMOTE BOYS'
STRENGTHS

BOYS' MENTAL HEALTH



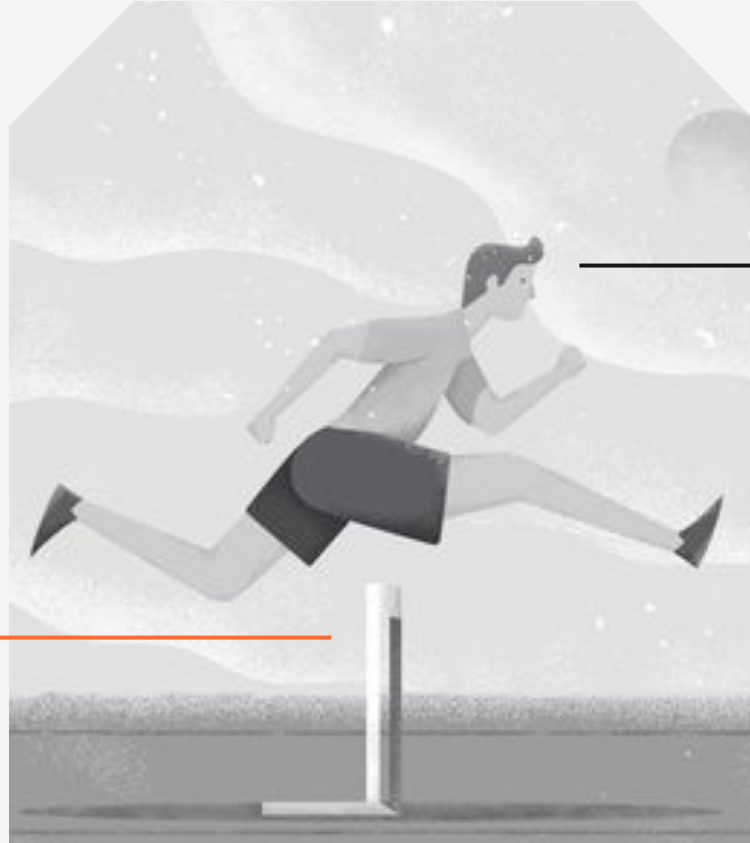
PROMOTE BOYS' STRENGTHS

We can develop and support boys' resilience to mental health struggles by using strengths-based psychology to affirm qualities of manhood that are both traditional and positive.

This has to be done alongside expanding the way we think about masculinity.

BOYS' MENTAL HEALTH

CHALLENGE THE
CULTURE



PROMOTE BOYS' STRENGTHS

We can develop and support boys' resilience to mental health struggles by using strengths-based psychology to affirm qualities of manhood that are both traditional and positive.

This has to be done alongside expanding the way we think about masculinity.

BOYS' MENTAL HEALTH

CHALLENGE THE CULTURE

We can help boys overcome barriers to mental health by giving them opportunities to identify and resist cultural norms of masculinity that don't support their wellbeing.

This has to be done alongside helping them maintain close friendships.



PROMOTE BOYS' STRENGTHS

We can develop and support boys' resilience to mental health struggles by using strengths-based psychology to affirm qualities of manhood that are both traditional and positive.

This has to be done alongside expanding the way we think about masculinity.

REFERENCES

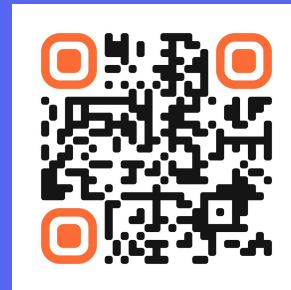
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NGM ALLIANCE YOUTH DISCORD SERVER

Since 2020, Next Gen Men has been running NGM Alliance, an online community for **boys and nonbinary youth** in middle school and high school.



nextgenmen.ca/alliance



Saw more than **190K messages** sent by youth last school year.



Promising practice for **mental health** and gender-based **violence prevention**.



Hosts an average of **68 collective hours** on voice channels each week.



Because of vigilant moderation, **zero** incidents of cyberbullying or online exploitation.



jack.org
young leaders revolutionizing mental health



Women and Gender
Equality Canada



betterhelp



Get in touch
youth@nextgenmen.ca
@nextgenmen

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