NEXT GEN MANUAL

A PROGRAM GUIDE FOR ENGAGING BOYS IN POSITIVE MASCULINITY



UPDATED 2024

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"Never underestimate the power of listening to boys, knowing them, and standing by while they navigate the rough waters of boyhood. Behind every boy who avoids being swept away in the current is someone who holds him—and believes in his ability to hold his own."

— Michael Reichert



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This guide provides the tools and resources to create, facilitate and evaluate a gender-transformative boys program. It is intended to be used in a range of communities, and may be adapted to be responsive to the cultural and logistical context of those spaces.

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Introduction

Introduction
Next Gen Men + You

We know that, today, our social conceptions of what it means to be a man often leads boys and men towards persistent negative outcomes. From sexual assault to mental health, violence against others or against themselves, statistics point to a critical problem, if not a crisis.

We also know that boys aren't broken, and we know that the future of masculinity is in their hands. That's why we champion hope at Next Gen Men—because when we create the space for new maps to manhood, they lead the way. Every time.

THIS IS THE VISION OF THE YOUTH PROGRAM

Next Gen Men's youth programming is about building youth who are empathetic, accountable and courageous; who are emotionally capable, committed to gender equality and role models for their peers; able to develop supportive friendships, handle crises with resilience and positively affect their communities.

THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN

While Next Gen Men is a leading voice on engaging boys and young men on topics of gender, there is only one expert on the youth in your community: you.

With this guide, you have an opportunity to deeply connect with and mentor the boys in your community. This work will make a difference that will ripple throughout their lives as they grow into the young men you know they can be.

Let's get started.



RAISING NEXT GEN MEN ONLINE COURSE

This self-paced course accredited by the Coaching Association of Canada will help you increase your capacity to form strong connections with boys and engage them in topics like gender norms, mental health and healthy relationships.

Visit nextgenmen.ca/courses to get started.

Introduction
About This Guide

The Next Gen Manual is the centrepiece for Next Gen Men's initiative to train, equip and empower educators to be champions of gender-transformative boys programs within their own communities. It is best accompanied by the Raising Next Gen Men online course (nextgenmen.ca/raising-next-gen-men), Talking Tools card decks (nextgenmen.ca/cards), and ongoing support from Next Gen Men through our educator trainings (nextgenmen.ca/mentors).

This guide contains all of the materials that a facilitator needs—from posters to session outlines to printable handouts, it is intended to make you feel ready to get started with the youth program that you've been dreaming of.

The guide is divided into three sections: Core Sessions, Additional Sessions, and an Appendix with additional resources. We recommend that you centre your program with the core sessions, and choose the additional sessions that resonate most with your community.

Sessions are designed to be used with masculine-identifying youth in Grades 7-9. (When we say 'masculine-identifying youth,' we are referring to cisgender boys, trans boys, genderfluid or nonbinary youth—any young person who has a relationship to masculinity past, present, or future. This program guide is written with gender neutral language.)

We expect and encourage facilitators to adapt sessions to meet the logistical and cultural characteristics of their environment.

HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

- **Browse the entire curriculum** before getting started in order to familiarize yourself with the themes and activities.
- **Consider going through the topics you've chosen** in your first session with the group in order to give them a chance to consent and/or give you feedback on what they're most interested in talking about.
- Use the overview of each session to **ensure that you have all materials** that you need and that you have any handouts printed.
- **Prepare your space in advance** by clearing away the furniture, arranging a group of chairs into a circle, and setting up any session-specific materials.
- **Choose a warm up activity** before each session (see Appendix 2).
- **Consider using a 'talking piece'** for the group check-in. Avoid interruptions or digressions as much as possible—both for time efficiency and to ensure that this is an opportunity for participants to be seen and heard.

WARM-UP

The warm-up activity is a 5-10 min physical activity that provides participants with an opportunity to shake off the boredom of school, re-energize for the session, and begin connecting and interacting in a positive way.

CHECK-IN

If the warm-up is about getting their energy in the room, the check-in is about getting their minds and hearts as well. This is an opportunity for participants to check-in with the group and express how they are feeling. One person speaks at a time. Respect and listening are critical.

INTRODUCTION

The introduction is usually a discussion designed to get participants thinking about the theme. As the facilitator, you may choose to also include personal stories or relevant media that help introduce participants to the session.

ACTIVITY

Since the introduction and discussion usually involve sitting relatively still, the activity is an experiential exploration of the theme. Activities may be competitive, team-building, arts-based, fun or challenging depending on the session and depending on the group.

DISCUSSION

The discussion is a debrief of the activity. Discussions may follow the 'what, so what, now what' model of experiential education, the 'behaviour, values/beliefs, costs/benefits, new values, commitments' transformative conversation model of Partners for Youth Empowerment, or just be an organic follow-up to the activity itself. Through careful questions and thoughtful reflection, participants share responses and feelings, explore issues and make connections.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion usually includes a meaningful send-off from the facilitator. Each session is concluded with an appreciation circle in which participants deepen their relationships with each other, and get closure in a final moment of togetherness, gratitude and respect.

Introduction
Facilitation Tips

The following tips are valuable practices as you facilitate opportunities for youth participants to explore masculinity and address gender-based violence. See Appendix 1 for more.

PROMOTE HONEST AND OPEN DISCUSSION

This program relies on participants to think and share honestly about their feelings, beliefs and experiences. Role model the tone for the group, and validate participants for being open and thoughtful.

Avoid shutting down ideas and language that might be considered inappropriate in other settings—instead, use these comments as an opportunity to explore participants' experiences with masculinity.

Ensure that if participants do use inappropriate language, it is in order to discuss cultural beliefs related to masculinity rather than in reference to each other or to other young people in your community—for example, "Guys say the word fag a lot in the locker room," instead of, "He's a fag."

CHALLENGE HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA

Remember that homophobic language has a significant impact on all young people—regardless of their sexuality—because it's used to enforce the boundaries of the Man Box and target those who don't measure up. Ensure that participants feel safe to be themselves by disallowing homophobic language during your program sessions.

BE SENSITIVE TO PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Keep in mind that some participants may have had personal experiences as a victim or witness to severe bullying, domestic violence, abusive relationships or sexual assault. Provide care before and after delving into these topics. Remind the group that you are a source of support if they need someone to talk to, or if they need help finding mental health resources.

If a participant discloses that they are in an unsafe situation either at home or in a relationship, respond with compassion and follow the reporting policies within your school or organization.

RESPOND TO DEFENSIVENESS WITH CURIOSITY

During this program, you may touch on topics relating to boys' perspectives on gender equality, such as victim blaming, the wage gap, or sexual violence. Remember that when boys and young men push back on these topics, they provide you with an invaluable opportunity to understand their perspective, and to help them revisit deeply held beliefs about masculinity.

Unless they are directly targeting someone in the group, avoid shutting down participants for sharing problematic beliefs. Instead, engage them in reflection by asking them genuine questions and inviting their peers to join the conversation.

SUPPORT PEER LEARNING

Keep in mind that you are acting as a facilitator, not a teacher—you are there to hold space, not lecture. Trust that participants can support and teach each other in new and meaningful ways if you provide them with opportunities to be open and vulnerable with each other.

REMIND PARTICIPANTS ABOUT THE BIGGER PICTURE

This program is built on the belief that boys and young men can be leaders of change in the face of cycles of violence. Speak honestly with the group about the realities of male-led violence, and refer to personal stories, examples within your own community, or statistics to help them remember why talking about things like mental health and healthy relationships matter.

BE TRANSPARENT ABOUT YOUR OWN IMPERFECTION

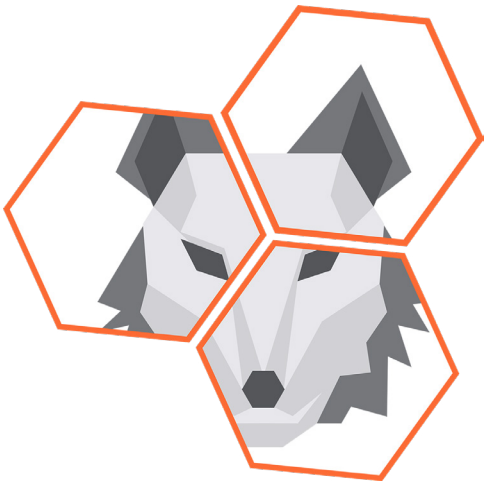
Keep in mind that everyone has been affected by society's gender roles. Remember that young people don't expect you to be perfect. By role modelling the ability to make mistakes, share your feelings and unpack what you have previously believed about manhood and masculinity, you make it easier for your participants to do the same.

NEXT GEN MENTORS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our trainings focus on relevant intersections of masculinity in education—topics like mental well-being, anti-feminist influencers, and consent—and are available both through in-person facilitation and cost-effective online sessions.

Visit nextgenmen.ca/mentors to learn more.





NGM ALLIANCE DISCORD SERVER

We facilitate an online community for boys and nonbinary youth in middle school and high school to connect, hang out together, and find support. The participants in your programs are welcome to join this community of like-minded peers.

Find out more at nextgenmen.ca/alliance.

Core Sessions

Core Session 1: Introduction & Group Norms
Background

QUOTE

"Boys are not mere robots, reflexively donning the badges of boyhood. They make choices, trying on one thing or another, from options that are limited, sometimes severely limited, and often foreign to their own values. They calculate and search for openings; the chance to be themselves. When contexts are harsh and masculine norms rigid and unyielding, with gangs of boys policing the group norm and ready to jump on one another, boys feel alone, overmatched, and hopeless. But in quality relationships, equality, authenticity, and love blossom as boys grow into their visions for themselves as men." — Michael Reichert, *How to Raise a Boy: The Power of Connection to Build Good Men*

GOALS

- Begin forming individual relationships with the boys and a community of trust, authenticity and respect
- Introduce the structure of the sessions, including warm-ups, check-ins and group norms

MATERIALS

- Chart paper and markers
- Tape
- Pre-program evaluation tools

SET UP

- Print evaluation resources (see Appendix 3)
- Arrange a group of chairs into a circle

WRITE ON THE BOARD

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." — Margaret Mead, cultural anthropologist

NOTES

- If participants are filling out evaluations independently, have them find a space to work where they can have focus and privacy.
- Consider reading the questions out loud to help participants who don't enjoy reading as much, and to help the whole group stay on track.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Ontario

Grades 7-8	
Identification and Management of Emotions (A1.1)	Apply skills that help them identify and manage emotions as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to improve their ability to express their own feelings and understand and respond to the feelings of others
Healthy Relationships (A1.4)	Apply skills that help them build relationships, develop empathy, and communicate with others as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support healthy relationships, a sense of belonging, and respect for diversity
Self-Awareness and Self Identity (A1.5)	Apply skills that help them develop self-awareness and self-confidence as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support the development of a sense of identity and a sense of belonging
Grade 9 (PPL10)	
Personal Skills (1.1)	Use self-awareness and self-monitoring skills to help them understand their strengths and needs, recognize sources of stress, take responsibility for their actions, and monitor their own progress as they participate in physical activities, develop movement competence, and acquire knowledge and skills related to healthy living
Critical and Creative Thinking (1.5)	Use a range of critical and creative thinking skills and processes to assist them in making connections, planning and setting goals, analysing and solving problems, making decisions, and evaluating their choices in connection with learning in health and physical education

British Columbia

Healthy and Active Living	Identify and apply strategies to pursue personal healthy-living goals (Grades 7-10)

Social and Community Health	Describe and apply strategies for developing and maintaining healthy relationships (Grades 5-7)
	Explore strategies for promoting the health and well-being of the school and community (Grades 6-7)
	Propose strategies for developing and maintaining healthy relationships (Grades 8-9)
	Create strategies for promoting the health and well-being of the school and community (Grades 8-9)
Mental Well-being	Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others (Grades 5-8)

Core Session 1: Introduction & Group Norms
Outline

WARM-UP
5-10 min

Lead participants in a warm-up activity (see Appendix 2). Consider one of the activities tagged with #getting-to-know-you to encourage participants to start making connections with each other.

CHECK-IN
10-15 min

Introduce the concept of a check-in:

- Explain to the group that every session will begin with a circle check-in, and that it's a chance for them to share how they're doing, and for each of them to be seen by the group and have their voices heard.
- Introduce an object that will act as the group's 'talking piece.' You may choose to share that talking pieces originated in Indigenous cultures on the northwest coast of North America, where they were used and continue to be used to allow each person to present and share their sacred point of view. State the expectation that they treat the talking piece—and, in turn, the speaker—with respect.

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant respond to the following questions:

- What was the high and low of your week?
- What are you hoping to get out of this group?

INTRODUCTION
5-10 min

Welcome participants to your program:

- Explain to the group that the program is meant to be a space for them to talk about things like gender stereotypes, mental health, emotions, friendships and relationships.
- Briefly share your motivation to facilitate the program, and your excitement to deepen your relationship with the group.

Introduce the goals of the program, including getting a participant to share a reason why each goal might matter to a young adolescent:

- Build supportive friendships and practice empathy
- Explore concepts of masculinity

- Develop understanding about mental health
- Learn about gender equality
- Have fun!

ACTIVITY
15-20 min

Introduce the concept of the Respect Agreement:

- Explain to participants that in other contexts—like in class or on a sports team—they usually know what the rules are and what is expected of them, and they know what the consequences are for breaking those rules or not meeting those expectations.
- Explain that this program is a unique space in which participants have opportunities to explore and talk about topics that they wouldn't otherwise, which means that it's even more important that the group has clear expectations for how to act towards each other—and it also means that participants themselves have a say in the kind of group they want to be.

Ask participants to think about their check-ins and about the goals of the program and think about the following questions:

- How do you want to be treated in this space?
- What kinds of group norms will make it possible for you to fully explore these topics and be vulnerable in what you share?

The way young people answer these questions is often rather broad, so consider using the Respect Agreement framework by asking them to specifically respond to the following questions:

- What does respect between participants look like?
- What does it look like to respect the facilitator?
- What does it look like for the facilitator to respect participants?
- What does respect for the space look like?

Record their answers on a piece of chart paper (see example in Core Session 1 Additional Resources).

Once they've finished discussing, discuss with the group any consequences they can expect for not following the group norms. These may include things like being told to take a walk in order to take a breather from a heated moment, or being removed from the program in order to maintain the integrity of the space.

DISCUSSION
15-20 min

Introduce the pre-program evaluation:

- Explain the importance of pre-program evaluation is that it helps you understand what impact the program has had at the end of your time together.
- Emphasize the importance of honesty and independent responses.

Facilitate the evaluation in the manner you've decided for your group.

CONCLUSION
5-10 min

Introduce the concept of an appreciation circle:

- Explain that every session will end with an affirmations circle, in which participants each share something that another participant did for them either during the session or during the week, and how it made them feel.

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant share an appreciation for someone else.

Core Session 1
Additional Resources

Respect Agreement

Students Respecting Students	Students Respecting the Facilitator
Facilitator Respecting Students	Everyone Respecting the Space

Core Session 2: The Man Box
Background

QUOTE

"Particular ways of being a boy and man are dominant, while others are stigmatised, punished, or silenced. These dominant constructions of gender shape boys' and men's lives. Boys and young men may conform to the dominant form of masculinity, or they may resist it or fail its expectations, but all live in its shadow. Conforming to the Man Box exacts a real cost, both among young men themselves and for the women and men around them. There is an urgent and powerful need to promote change in dominant norms of masculinity." — The Men's Project, *The Man Box*

GOALS

- Continue settling in with group norms so that participants know the behaviour expected of them and start to feel that they are in a safe space
- Discuss gender roles, stereotypes and expectations around what it means to 'be a man,' and identify where those messages come from
- Assess the impact of individuals challenging gender roles and stereotypes on societal change

MATERIALS

- A piece of chart paper entitled 'The Man Box'
- Markers
- Tape
- One foldable mat per 8 participants

SET UP

- Arrange a group of chairs into a circle

WRITE ON THE BOARD

"Change the world by being yourself." — Amy Poehler, actor and comedian

NOTES

- The Man Box activity can be adjusted to examine pressures and expectations that are placed on girls and women, as well as boys and men. This activity isn't meant to reinforce the gender binary but rather to discuss the pressures of that binary on young people and the expectations that come from existing in it.
- Next Gen Men originally developed this session when working with middle school students. Session F is designed to replace Core Session 2 for high school groups that are ready to discuss masculinity on a deeper level than just stereotypes.
- You can revisit the Man Box lesson in the Raising Next Gen Men online course at nextgenmen.ca/raising-next-gen-men to learn about the origins of the concept and the research that has taken shape alongside it.
- Consider saving 'The Man Box' chart paper afterwards to use in future sessions.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Ontario

Grades 7-8	
Healthy Relationships (A1.4)	Apply skills that help them build relationships, develop empathy, and communicate with others as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support healthy relationships, a sense of belonging, and respect for diversity
Human Development and Sexual Health (D1.5)	Demonstrate an understanding of gender identity

British Columbia

Healthy and Active Living	Identify factors that influence health messages from a variety of sources, and analyze their influence on behaviour (Grades 8-9)
Social and Community Health	Analyze strategies for responding to discrimination, stereotyping, and bullying (Grades 9-10)
Mental Well-being	Explore and describe the impact of transition and change on identities (Grades 7-8)
	Explore and describe factors that shape personal identities, including social and cultural factors (Grades 9-10)

Core Session 2: The Man Box
Outline

WARM-UP
5-10 min

Lead participants in a warm-up activity (see Appendix 2). Consider one of the activities tagged with #getting-to-know-you to encourage participants to continue making connections with each other.

CHECK-IN
10-15 min

Remind the group about the significance of the talking piece and the expectation that each participant is listened to. Go around the circle and have each participant respond to the following questions:

- What was the high and low of your week?
- What do you like best about being a boy?
- What is hardest about being a boy?

Review the group norms that you created in Session 1. Ask if there is anything they would like to add, adjust or clarify.

INTRODUCTION
15-20 min

Introduce the idea of the Man Box:

- Draw a large square on the piece of chart paper labelled with 'The Man Box.'
- Explain that in our society, there are a lot of expectations for what it means to be a 'real man'—there are certain ways that you are supposed to act, and ways that you are not.
- Clarify that the Man Box is a visualisation of these gender stereotypes, not what we necessarily believe ourselves.

Fill in the inside and outside of the Man Box on the chart paper by getting participants to discuss:

- How are guys expected to look and dress?
- What toys and activities are boys supposed to play with and participate in? What's not allowed?
- What feelings and emotions are boys supposed to have? What's not allowed?
- How are guys supposed to act in video games or sports?
- How are guys supposed to act in dating and relationships?

- Are there any additional pressures or expectations particularly focused on boys who look like you?

Ask the group how many of them were surprised by what was generally put inside and outside the Man Box. Point out that none of them were ever explicitly handed any rules about how to be a man, and yet they all know what's expected of them. Add a list of sources of cultural messages at the bottom of the chart paper by discussing:

- Who teaches you what it means to be a guy?
- Where do we see representations of manhood around us?



ACTIVITY
10-15 min

Put the foldable mat on the floor and have participants remove their shoes. Give participants the following instructions:

- The entire group needs to fit on the mat.
- When you finish arranging yourselves, you can't be touching the floor or any surrounding furniture.
- Each time you succeed, the mat will be folded in half.

Lead participants through the activity, ensuring that they stay safe and that the mat is carefully folded, until they can't fit anymore. If there are multiple groups, you might choose to make it a competition.



DISCUSSION
10-15 min

Debrief how the mat activity relates to the Man Box by asking participants:

- Did you succeed? What happened in the end?
- Does every person—or every part of every person—fit in the Man Box? How might the mat activity relate to the Man Box?
- What happens to boys who don't fit into the Man Box?
- What is something you might try doing if the Man Box didn't exist?



CONCLUSION
5-10 min

Explain to the group that the Man Box isn't a visualisation of what is good or bad, or toxic and non-toxic. For example, there are many reasons why strength is valuable, and there are times when it's important to be tough. Encourage them to think about the Man Box in terms of the parts of themselves that don't fit into the typical stereotypes about how to be a 'real man,' and why those parts of themselves matter.

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant share an appreciation for someone else.

Core Session 2
Additional Resources

The Man Box

Pink	Athletic	Anger	Feeling scared
Makeup	Short hair	Dominant	Weak
Dolls	Sports	Confident	Quiet
Dancing	Playfighting	Asking girls out	Being gay
Crying	No emotions	Paying for stuff	Being nervous

Parents

Peers

Advertisements

Social media

Movies

Boys Will Be Boys Will Be Broken

By Lisa Duggan

I am a boy.

I have all the feelings girls do.

When I fall down, I hurt.

When my friends exclude me, I'm sad.

When it thunders, I'm scared.

When I'm hurt, I want to cry.

When I'm lonely, I want to be connected.

When I'm scared, I want to ask for help.

I want to talk about how I feel.

I want to be loved and accepted.

But boys don't do that.

You told me not to do that.

You called me a cry-baby, a pussy, a sissy, a momma's boy.

You told me to suck it up.

You told me to 'man up.'

You told me to 'hit that ass.'

You didn't give me words for my feelings; you told me not to have any feelings.

You sent me into burning buildings.

Core Session 3: The Influence of Influencers
Background

QUOTE

"Lost in much of the ensuing public conversation were the boys themselves—the richness of their experiences, the texture of their lives. This was to be expected of those who were simply using boys as a foil with which to critique feminism. In fact, the pundits appeared relatively uninterested in boys' welfare; they were simply the latest weapon against the feminists." — Michael Kimmel, *Adolescent Boys: Exploring Diverse Cultures of Boyhood*

GOALS

- Engage in critical analysis towards Andrew Tate's message(s) about what it means to be a man
- Challenge Andrew Tate's dominance by reclaiming power through art

MATERIALS

- 'The Man Box' chart paper
- A piece of chart paper entitled 'Positive' and another piece of chart paper entitled 'Harmful'
- Markers
- Enough laptops, tablets, or personal devices for each participant or pair of participants to be able to work on a virtual art project
- Wifi

SET UP

- Arrange a group of chairs into a circle
- Have a set of laptops and/or other devices available

WRITE ON THE BOARD

"The masculine perspective you have to understand is that life is war." — Andrew Tate, influencer

NOTES

- This session was developed in response to the dominance of Andrew Tate in schools, and in particular among young adolescent boys, during the 2022-2023 school year. We made three strategic choices with this in mind. Firstly, we decided to largely avoid using quotations or audio/video clips from Andrew Tate himself. He's had more than enough airtime, and what really matters is how young people respond to him. Secondly, we decided to use an arts-based approach in order to engage youth in creative exploration rather than the passive consumption that characterizes platforms like TikTok. **Lastly, this session isn't designed as a lecture.** Most boys and young men are well-aware of what adults like teachers think of Andrew Tate; what they need is an opportunity to be empowered to think differently themselves.
- While Andrew Tate has now diminished in popularity since then, there is no shortage of other anti-feminist influencers filling that space. Ask your students what influencers similar to Andrew Tate are most present within their social media feeds, and adjust the session accordingly.
- Consider spending some time researching Andrew Tate before leading this lesson by reading resources such as The Man Cave's report, *Who is Andrew Tate and why do young men relate to him?* at nextgenmen.ca/library/who-is-andrew-tate-and-why-do-young-men-relate-to-him and Re:masculine's guide, *Talking to Teens About Andrew Tate: Guidance for Parents & Teachers*, at nextgenmen.ca/library/talking-to-teens-about-andrew-tate-guidance-for-parents-teachers. You don't need to be an expert on his content—and you should approach this session with genuine curiosity towards youth participants' views—but you should also be equipped to push their thinking and share your own.
- If you would like your participants to generate their own art, consider familiarizing yourself with the generative AI art platform OpenArt at openart.ai/promptbook. Artificial intelligence can produce strange art outputs without guiding keywords. Spend some time experimenting with your own prompts (we've used OpenArt Creative with keywords: "andrew tate, six pack, bald, sunglasses, confident, realistic, 4k, hyper realistic," for example; as well as: "working out, six pack, sunglasses, bald, hd quality, UHD, 8k, hyper realism") so that you can help guide students ideas.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Ontario

Grades 7-8	
Healthy Relationships (A1.4)	Apply skills that help them build relationships, develop empathy, and communicate with others as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support healthy relationships, a sense of belonging, and respect for diversity
Personal Safety and Injury Prevention (D3.2)	Analyse the impact of violent behaviours, including bullying (online or in-person), violence in intimate and sexual relationships, and gender-based violence
Human Development and Sexual Health (D3.3)	Analyse the attractions and benefits associated with being in a healthy relationship (e.g., support, understanding, camaraderie, pleasure), as well as the benefits, risks, and drawbacks, for themselves and others, of relationships involving different degrees of sexual intimacy
Mental Health Literacy (D3.4)	Explain how word choices and societal views about mental health and mental illness can affect people and perpetuate stigma, and identify actions that can counteract that stigma
Grade 9 (PPL10)	
Critical and Creative Thinking (1.5)	Use a range of critical and creative thinking skills and processes to assist them in making connections, planning and setting goals, analysing and solving problems, making decisions, and evaluating their choices in connection with learning in health and physical education
Personal Safety and Injury Prevention (C1.2)	Demonstrate an understanding of the benefits and risks of using electronic communication technologies
Human Development and Sexual Health (C2.2)	Demonstrate an understanding of the skills and strategies needed to build healthy social relationships and intimate relationships
Personal Safety and Injury Prevention (C3.2)	Identify warning signs and symptoms that could be related to mental health concerns and describe a variety of strategies for coping with or responding to mental health concerns affecting oneself or others

British Columbia

Healthy and Active Living	Identify factors that influence healthy choices and explain their potential health effects (Grades 7-8)
	Reflect on outcomes of personal healthy living goals and assess strategies used (Grades 7-9)
	Identify factors that influence health messages from a variety of sources, and analyze their influence on behaviour (Grades 8-9)
Social and Community Health	Describe and apply strategies for developing and maintaining healthy relationships (Grades 5-7)
	Propose strategies for avoiding and/or responding to potentially unsafe, abusive, or exploitive situations (Grades 8-9)
Mental Well-Being	Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others (Grades 5-8)
	Explore and describe factors that shape personal identities, including social and cultural factors (Grades 9-10)

Core Session 3: The Influence of Influencers
Outline

WARM-UP
5-10 min

Lead participants in a warm-up activity (see Appendix 2). Consider one of the activities tagged with #high-energy to burn some energy before settling in for a discussion and art project.

CHECK-IN
5-10 min

Remind the group about the significance of the talking piece and the expectation that each participant is listened to. Go around the circle and have each participant respond to the following questions:

- What was the high and low of your week?
- What do you know about influencers like Andrew Tate?

Review the group norms that you created in Session 1. Ask if there is anything they would like to add, adjust or clarify.

INTRODUCTION
10-15 min

Begin by telling participants that most teachers probably think Andrew Tate and others like him should have no role in boys' lives because he's a bad influence. Invite a few youth to share their thoughts by asking:

- Do you think Andrew Tate is as simple as that? Why or why not?
- How has Andrew Tate been presented in your social media feeds?

Fill in both pieces of chart paper by getting participants to brainstorm:

- What are the positive aspects of Andew Tate's message(s) for boys and young men?
- What are the negative aspects in some of his content?

Finally, engage participants in a discussion about whether it is actually possible to separate the positive messages from the negative messages, or whether they are inherently intertwined. Start by asking for a volunteer to propose a connection between a positive aspect and a negative aspect, invite them to explain their thoughts; and then have the group discuss the connection (see Core Session 3 Additional Resources).

Suggest to the group that being able to recognize the inherent connections between the positive and negative aspects of Andrew Tate's messages is perhaps even more valuable than just deciding he's entirely a bad influence: within all of his ideas, even the ones that are ostensibly about promoting the well-being of boys and men, is the same Man Box blueprint for manhood that participants discussed the previous week. Since we know that the Man Box leads to a limited set of stereotypes that doesn't actually reflect all that we believe or all that we want to be, we should question the underlying assumptions within his messages.

ACTIVITY
15-20 min

Acknowledge that this can be confusing when it is all hypothetical. Explain to the group that you're going to do a fast-paced art project that invites them to culture jam Andrew Tate using artificial intelligence—and they get to choose what their message is.

Introduce the activity:

- Share that culture jamming is a term that originated in the 1980s to refer to taking someone else's message, subverting it and making it your own.
- Discuss the difference between art (i.e. meant to express, challenge, etc.) and memes (i.e. meant to entertain, amuse, etc.).
- Share a couple of examples, either from your own experimentation with OpenArt or from Next Gen Men's collection at nextgenmen.ca/andrew-tate.

Give participants the following instructions:

- Use OpenArt's AI at openart.ai/create to prompt an artistic representation of Andrew Tate, or choose one of the images at nextgenmen.ca/andrew-tate/download. Once you're happy with an image, upscale it and download it to your device.
- Come up with a slogan that challenges one of the sexist connections we discussed. Take your time and make a piece of art that has meaning, rather than a quick meme.
- Use the Google Docs template at nextgenmen.ca/andrew-tate/create to layer your slogan on top of the image and format it in large, white, centred, all-caps text.

Support participants through the art project, ensuring they are staying on task and remaining committed to the goal of challenging, rather than reinforcing, Andrew Tate's messages.

DISCUSSION
15-20 min

Once they have all finished, invite participants to share their art pieces with each other. Consider printing them and putting them up somewhere for others to view.

Debrief the experience of engaging in the art project by asking participants to respond to some of the following questions:

- Was there anything you liked or disliked about using AI to represent Andrew Tate?
- Was it difficult or easy to come up with a slogan that was the opposite of what Andrew Tate would say? Why do you think that is?
- Why is it important to challenge the assumption that to be a man means to fit into the Man Box?

CONCLUSION
5-10 min

Explain to the group that approaching social media content with a critical lens (e.g. by asking questions like: What is this influencer trying to sell me? How does it benefit them? How does it benefit me? What are the underlying assumptions within their message? Is their content funny at the expense of someone who doesn't have the opportunity to defend themselves?) is an important, and often underdeveloped skill. Explain that many adults also don't practice this skill, and that's why Andrew Tate has so many supporters or opponents, and fewer people saying something more nuanced like, "I'm critical of the underlying assumptions within his messages about what it means to be a man, and here's why." Encourage them to continue to think critically about the influence of influencers on their beliefs and behaviours—and to view themselves as their own experts on the kinds of young men they will be, rather than a distant figure with a dozen Bugattis and criminal charges.

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant share an appreciation for someone else.

ANDREW TATE WOULD HATE THIS ART PROJECT

Share your students' art at youth@nextgenmen.ca. Visit nextgenmen.ca/andrew-tate to see others and amplify the project.



Core Session 3
Additional Resources

Positive	Harmful
Being confident	Not taking mental health seriously
Athletic	Sexist
Self-discipline	Exploiting people for personal gain
Saying what you think	Violence towards women
Making money	Everything is a fight

Men can't back down

You can't ever have an off day

Women are property

Core Session 4: The Mask You Live In
Background

QUOTE

"Research shows that male infants are more emotionally expressive than female infants. However, as a boy ages, his emotional expressiveness decreases. Why? Because 'The Boy Code'—society's definition of what it means to be a boy—demands that boys suppress or cover up their emotions. As a result, boys develop a 'mask of masculinity' to hide their shame, vulnerability and the other feelings they cannot express publicly. The inability to show true emotions hardens a boy until, ultimately, he loses touch with them." — William Pollack, *Journal of Boyhood Studies*

GOALS

- Create a safe space to reflect on and share more vulnerable parts of ourselves
- Explore the choices we make about the parts of our identities, interests and feelings that we show on the outside, and those that we keep hidden on the inside

MATERIALS

- Laptop
- Projector
- Speaker
- A double-sided Mask Handout for each participant (see Core Session 4 Additional Resources)
- A writing utensil for each participant

SET UP

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

WRITE ON THE BOARD

"Everyone is going through something that we can't see." — Kevin Love, NBA player

NOTES

- Depending on where this session fits into your program, participants may feel more or less comfortable with sharing their vulnerability. Find a way to encourage them to step out of the comfort zone while still honouring that that may be a challenging thing to experience.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Ontario

Grades 7-8	
Self-Awareness and Sense of Identity (A1.5)	Apply skills that help them develop self-awareness and self-confidence as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support the development of a sense of identity and a sense of belonging
Mental Health Literacy (D3.4)	Explain how word choices and societal views about mental health and mental illness can affect people and perpetuate stigma, and identify actions that can counteract that stigma
Grade 9 (PPL10)	
Personal Skills (1.1)	Use self-awareness and self-monitoring skills to help them understand their strengths and needs, recognize sources of stress, take responsibility for their actions, and monitor their own progress as they participate in physical activities, develop movement competence, and acquire knowledge and skills related to healthy living
Personal Safety and Injury Prevention (C3.2)	Identify warning signs and symptoms that could be related to mental health concerns and describe a variety of strategies for coping with or responding to mental health concerns affecting oneself or others

British Columbia

Healthy and Active Living	Reflect on outcomes of personal healthy living goals and assess strategies used (Grades 7-9)
Mental Well-Being	Explore the impact of transition and change on identities (Grade 8)
	Explore and describe factors that shape personal identities, including social and cultural factors (Grades 9-10)

Core Session 4: The Mask You Live In

Outline

WARM-UP
5-10 min

Lead participants in a warm-up activity (see Appendix 2). Consider one of the activities tagged with #getting-to-know-you to prepare participants to reflect on the parts of themselves that they share, and the parts of themselves that they don't.

CHECK-IN
10-15 min

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant respond to the following questions:

- What was the high and low of your week?
- When did you first learn that something was a 'girl' thing or a 'boy' thing?

INTRODUCTION
10-15 min

Play the video *Boys Will Be Boys* at nextgenmen.ca/blog/boys-will-be-boys. Discuss the poem by asking participants to respond to some of the following questions:

- Did any part of the poem stand out to you?
- Do you think there was a difference between what the boy said he was expected to feel and act, and how he actually felt?
- What else did you notice?

ACTIVITY
10-15 min

Introduce the activity:

- Ask the group if they've ever changed something about themselves or the feelings they were letting show in order to avoid getting targeted by others.
- Normalize that part of navigating society's expectations of masculinity is making choices about how much of ourselves we show in different contexts.
- Explain that you're going to do an activity about what you show on the outside and what you keep hidden.
- Get participants to sit comfortably in their own space where they won't be distracted by others.
- Hand out the Mask Handout to each participant and ask them to complete their mask in silence.

DISCUSSION
15-20 min

Ask participants to gather back together, and go around the circle sharing at least one thing they wrote on the outside of the mask, and one thing they wrote on the inside. Encourage participants to share as much as they can.

Debrief the experience by asking participants to respond to some of the following questions:

- How did it feel to share your mask?
- How did it feel to listen to someone else's mask?
- Did you notice any similarities between your mask and the rest of the group?
- How did this activity change the way you think about the other people in the room?
- What do we get by only showing our masks? What does it cost us?
- What is the importance of friendships where you can just be yourself?
- Is there anything you are thinking about doing differently as a result of this experience?

CONCLUSION
5-10 min

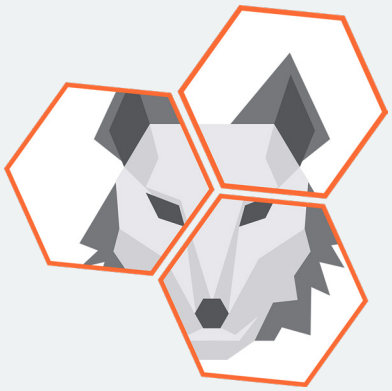
Point out to the group that it is normal to not feel like they can share every part of themselves with every other person. Explain that in a research study on health and well-being, smoking cigarettes was the only health risk factor comparable in strength to a lack of friendship support. Point out that having people with whom you can let down your guard, be yourself and share your true feelings is an extremely important source of support throughout your life—and it is worth thinking about how they can find that for themselves, and offer that safe space to others.

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant share an appreciation for someone else.

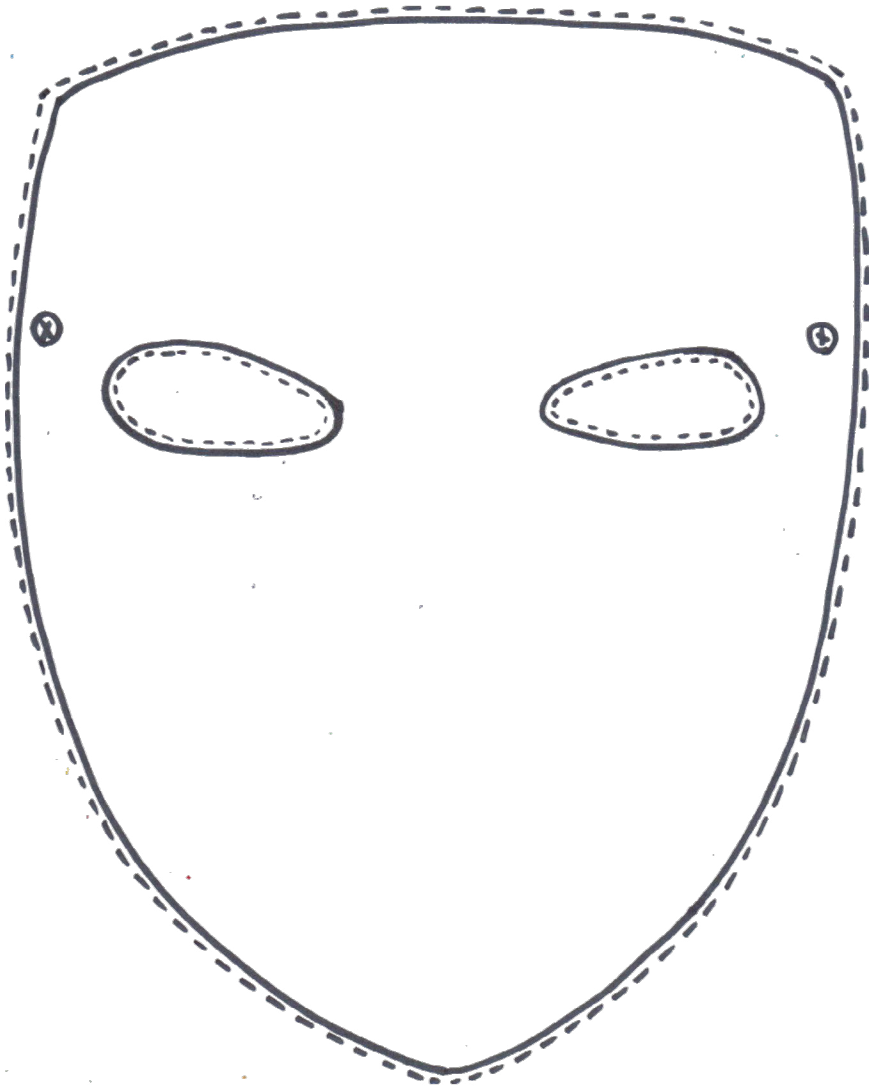
NGM ALLIANCE DISCORD SERVER

Since 2020, Next Gen Men has been running a positive, supportive and inclusive Discord server for boys and nonbinary youth in middle school and high school. The participants in your programs are welcome to join this active community.

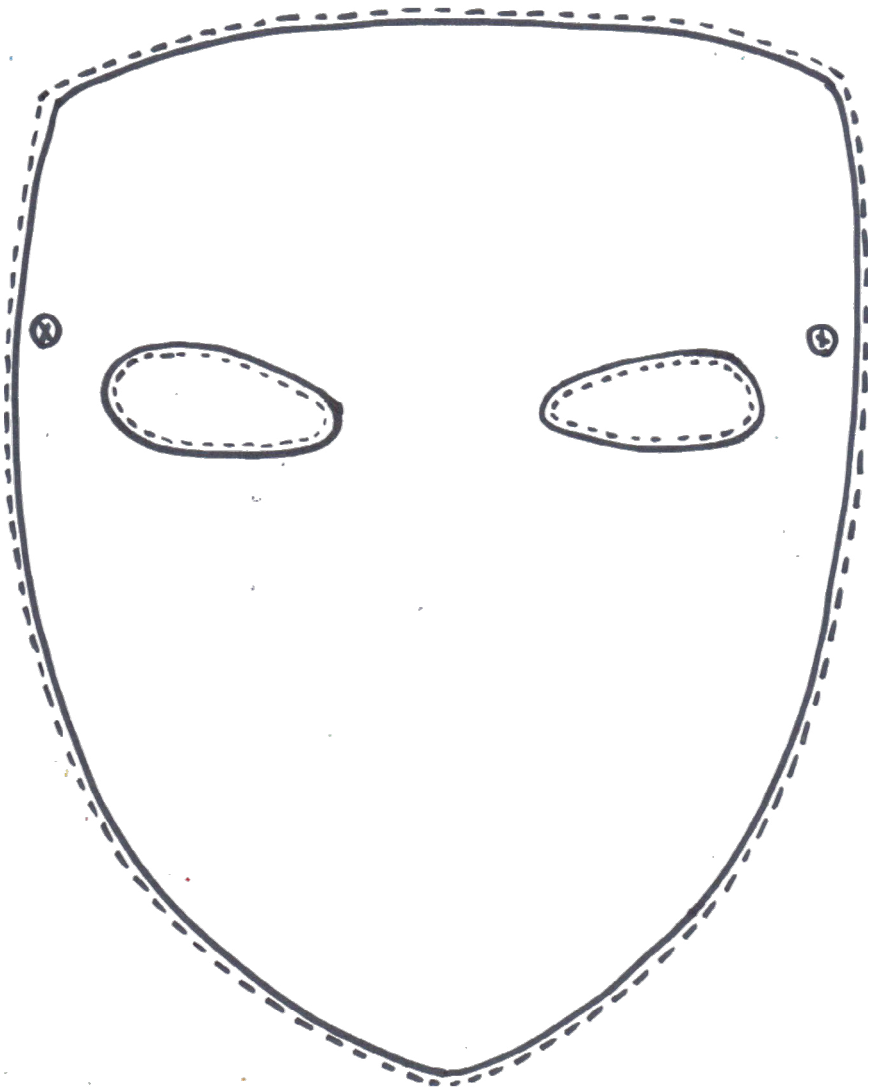
They can join directly at nextgenmen.ca/discord.



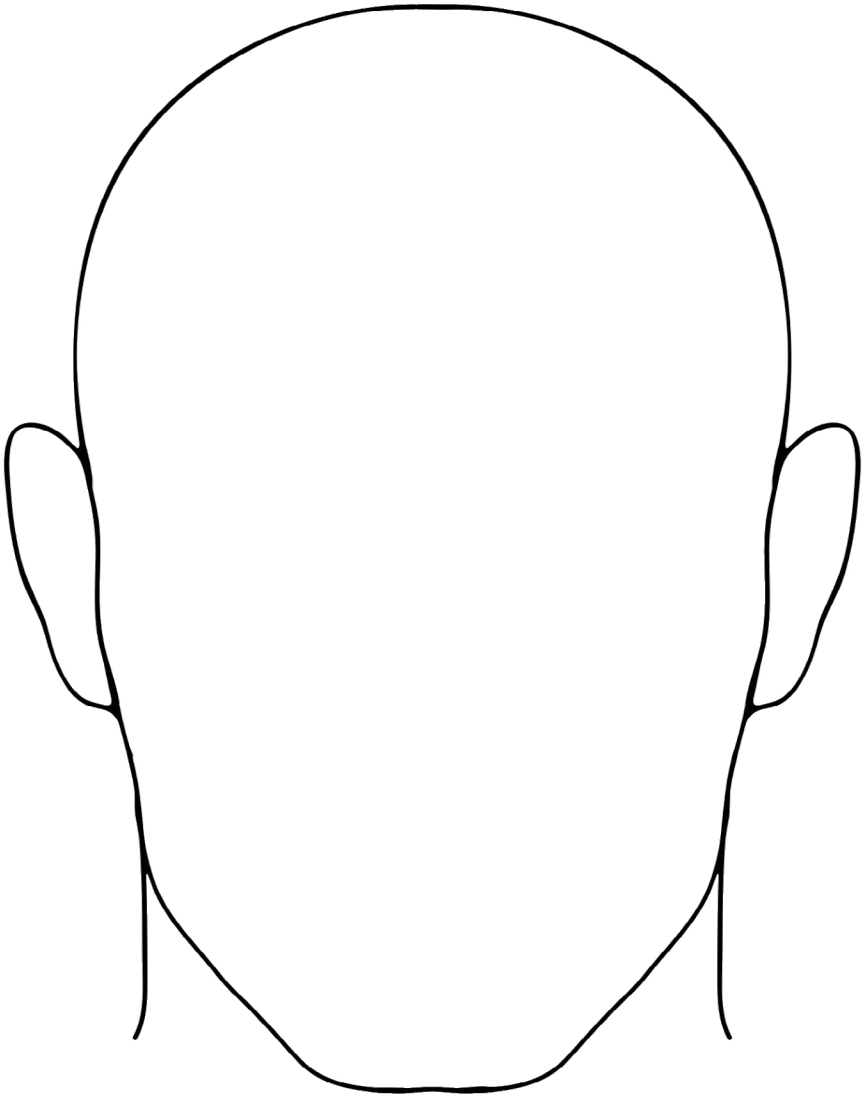
Write down the parts of yourself that you easily let people see. What feelings do you show when you're walking down the hallway at school?



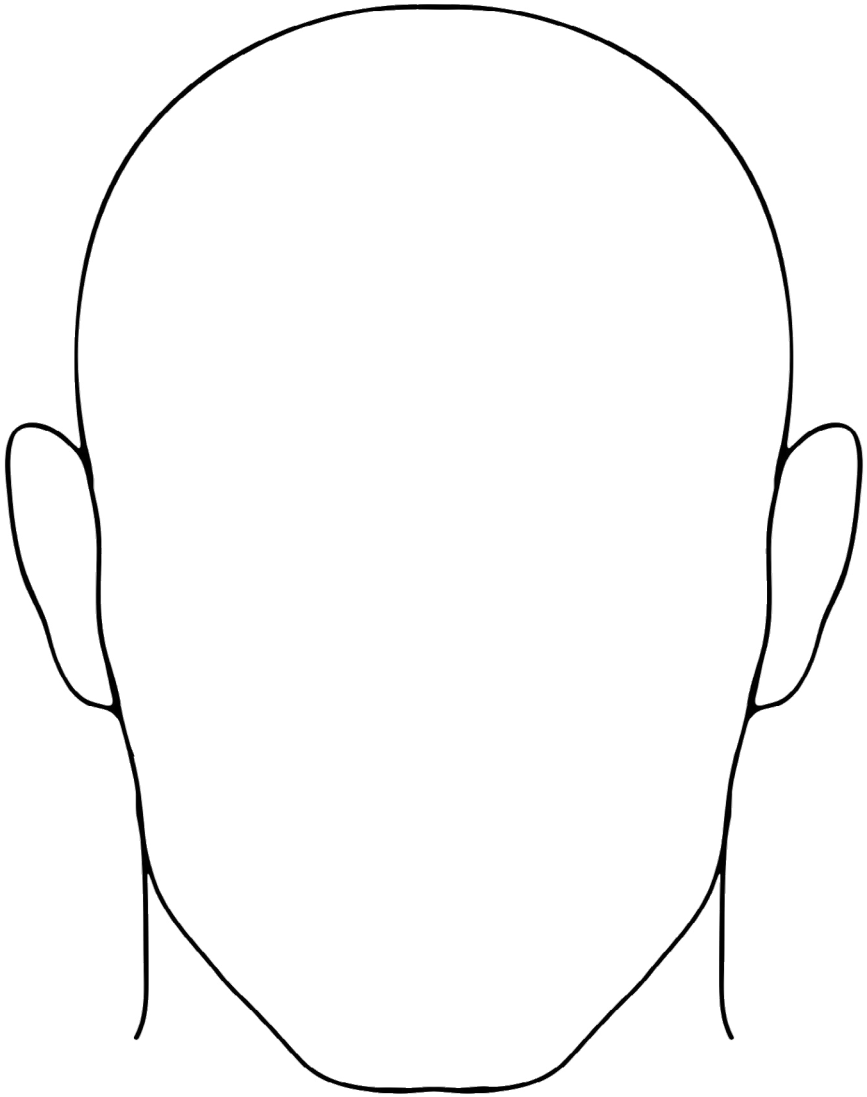
Write the things that you easily let people see about you. What feelings do you show when you're walking down the hallway at school?



Write down the parts of yourself that you keep hidden on the inside. What do you feel that you wouldn't show to most of your peers?



Write down the parts of yourself that you keep hidden on the inside. What do you feel that you wouldn't show to most of your peers?



Core Session 5: Pyramid of Gender-Based Violence
Background

QUOTE

"Guys will often go to great lengths to convince themselves they don't need to intervene in a troubling situation, whether it's some version of so-called locker room talk, sexual harassment, or potential assault. They rationalize. They minimize. They become passive. They convince themselves they can't actually make a difference. They laugh. They join in to avoid becoming victims themselves. Stepping up is hard and risky, especially if you are less socially powerful: strength of character can paradoxically be mocked as weak. Boys are just trying to survive, according to educator Charis Denison, to feel 'safe, seen, and significant.' And, if they can do that through displays of dominance and aggression, then of course that's what they're going to do." — Peggy Orenstein, *Boys & Sex: Young Men on Hookups, Love, Porn, Consent, and Navigating the New Masculinity*

GOALS

- Explore what sexism and misogyny look like on a societal level
- Discuss hierarchies around gender and other groups/characteristics and their impact around discrimination, oppression and opportunity
- Identify ways to practice advocacy and allyship when experiencing or witnessing gender-based violence.

MATERIALS

- 'The Man Box' chart paper
- Tape
- Boxes with the following phrases written one per box (see Core Session 5 Additional Resources):

    Sexist phrases
    Rape Jokes
    Locker Room Banter
    Catcalling
    Victim Blaming
    Non-Consensual Pics/Vids
    Threatening
    Sexual assault
    Drugging
    Rape

SET UP

- Gather 10 cardboard boxes of roughly equal size (empty soda cans work as an easier-to-find alternative)
- Label each box with one of the phrases
- Use tape on the floor or wall to mark out a number line from 0 to 100 in increments of 10
- Arrange a group of chairs into a circle

WRITE ON THE BOARD

"What you do makes a difference. You have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." — Jane Goodall, researcher and primatologist

NOTES

- As you guide the class through this session, it's important to inform students in advance that the discussion will involve sensitive topics, including sexual assault, abuse, and rape. Some students may have personal experiences with these issues, while others may be hearing about them for the first time.
- Please remind students to be mindful of their emotions during the session. If any student feels overwhelmed and needs to step away or take a break, encourage them to let you know. Additionally, it's important to highlight the mental health services available to students, both at the beginning and end of the session, so they know where to seek support if needed.
- Consider acknowledging that while men are the primary perpetrators of gender-based violence, boys and men can and do experience sexual violence. Even though the statistics used in this session are related to violence against women, justice is not a zero-sum game. Boys should know they are allowed to have boundaries as well.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Ontario

Grades 7-8	
Healthy Relationships (A1.4)	Apply skills that help them build relationships, develop empathy, and communicate with others as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support healthy relationships, a sense of belonging, and respect for diversity
Personal Safety and Injury Prevention (D1.2)	Identify situations that could lead to injury or death and describe behaviours that can help to reduce risk

Personal Safety and Injury Prevention (D3.2)	Analyse the impact of violent behaviours, including bullying violence in intimate and sexual relationships, and gender-based violence or racially based violence, on the person being targeted, the perpetrator, and bystanders, and describe the role of support services in preventing violence
Human Development and Sexual Health (D1.4)	Identify and explain factors that can affect an individual's decisions about sexual activity and identify sources of support regarding sexual health
Grade 9 (PPL10)	
Critical and Creative Thinking (1.5)	Use a range of critical and creative thinking skills and processes to assist them in making connections, planning and setting goals, analysing and solving problems, making decisions, and evaluating their choices in connection with learning in health and physical education Note: While this learning outcome is rather broad, we see a connection to learning how to act proactively to peer pressure in social situations.
Personal Safety and Injury Prevention (C1.2)	Demonstrate an understanding of the benefits and risks of using electronic communication technologies and describe strategies that they can apply to ensure their safety while using these technologies
Human Development and Sexual Health (C2.2)	Demonstrate an understanding of the skills and strategies needed to build healthy social relationships and intimate relationships
Human Development and Sexual Health (C2.3)	Apply their knowledge of sexual health and safety, including a strong understanding of the concept of consent and sexual limits, and their decision-making skills to think in advance about their sexual health and sexuality

British Columbia

Healthy and Active Living	Assess and communicate health informatiovn for various health issues (Grade 7)
	Identify factors that influence health messages from a variety of sources, and analyze their influence on behaviour (Grades 8-9)

Social and Community Health	Identify and describe strategies for avoiding and/or responding to potentially unsafe, abusive, or exploitive situations (Grades 5-7)
	Describe and apply strategies for developing and maintaining healthy relationships (Grades 5-7)
	Create strategies for promoting the health and well-being of the school and community (Grades 8-9)
Mental Well-Being	Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others (Grades 5-8)
	Describe and assess strategies for managing problems related to mental well-being and substance use, for others (Grades 5-8)
	Create and assess strategies for managing physical, emotional, and social changes during puberty and adolescence (Grades 7-8)
	Explore and describe factors that shape personal identities, including social and cultural factors (Grades 9-10)

Core Session 5: Pyramid of Gender-Based Violence
Outline

WARM-UP
5-10 min

Lead participants in a warm-up activity (see Appendix 2). Consider one of the activities tagged with #performative to encourage participants to practice taking risks to speak up in front of others.

CHECK-IN
10-15 min

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant respond to the following questions:

- What was the high and low of your week?
- Who is a female role model in your life?

INTRODUCTION
10-15 min

Refer to 'The Man Box' chart paper. Explore the connections between masculinity and sexism by getting participants to discuss:

- What are common insults you might hear directed at boys who don't fit into the Man Box?
- What do these insults have in common?
- What does this say about the way society views girls and women?

Draw the group's attention to the number line from 0 to 100. Let them know you're going to read a statistics-based question and they should walk to where they think the answer is on the number line.

Read some of the following questions, giving them time to move and share a few of their predictions before telling them the answer:

- What percentage of professional athletes are women? (40%)
- What percentage of sports media coverage goes to female sports? (15%)
- Out of the 100 most profitable films in 2021, how many of them featured a woman of colour as the main character? (11)
- What percentage of the representatives in Parliament are women? (30%)
- What percentage of women in Canada will experience physical sexual violence in their lifetime? (35%)
- What percentage of the time is the accused perpetrator of sexual violence male? (96%)

- What percentage of sexual assaults experienced by women lead to an offender being convicted? (Less than 1%)
- What percentage of sexual violence accusations are false? (2-8%)

Debrief the activity by asking participants:

- Were you surprised by any of the answers?
- Which answer did you find most surprising?
- How does it feel to learn about these facts?



ACTIVITY
15-20 min

Introduce the activity:

- Acknowledge that since you're not in control of things like sports media coverage or the justice system, it can be hard to know what to do about sexism on a societal level.
- Point out that while gender norms and stereotypes have consequences for people of all genders, for this session you will be focusing on sexual violence.
- Explain that you are going to work together to create a visualization of rape culture, a term for a society in which sexual violence happens too often.
- Point out the boxes and explain that participants are going to take turns adding boxes to build a pyramid, with the most serious forms of sexual violence on the top.

Go through each of the boxes and make sure participants know what they all mean by getting a volunteer to offer a definition for each term.

Facilitate participants in taking turns placing the boxes into a pyramid by coming to group consensus about where different boxes belong.



DISCUSSION
10-15 min

Once participants have finished building the pyramid, debrief its structure and significance by asking participants to respond to some of the following questions:

- What do you notice about the pyramid?
- What do the things at the bottom of the pyramid have in common with each other?
- How might the bottom of the pyramid be connected to the top?
- Why might it matter to interrupt or challenge the things at the bottom of the pyramid?
- What might that actually look like?

CONCLUSION
5-10 min

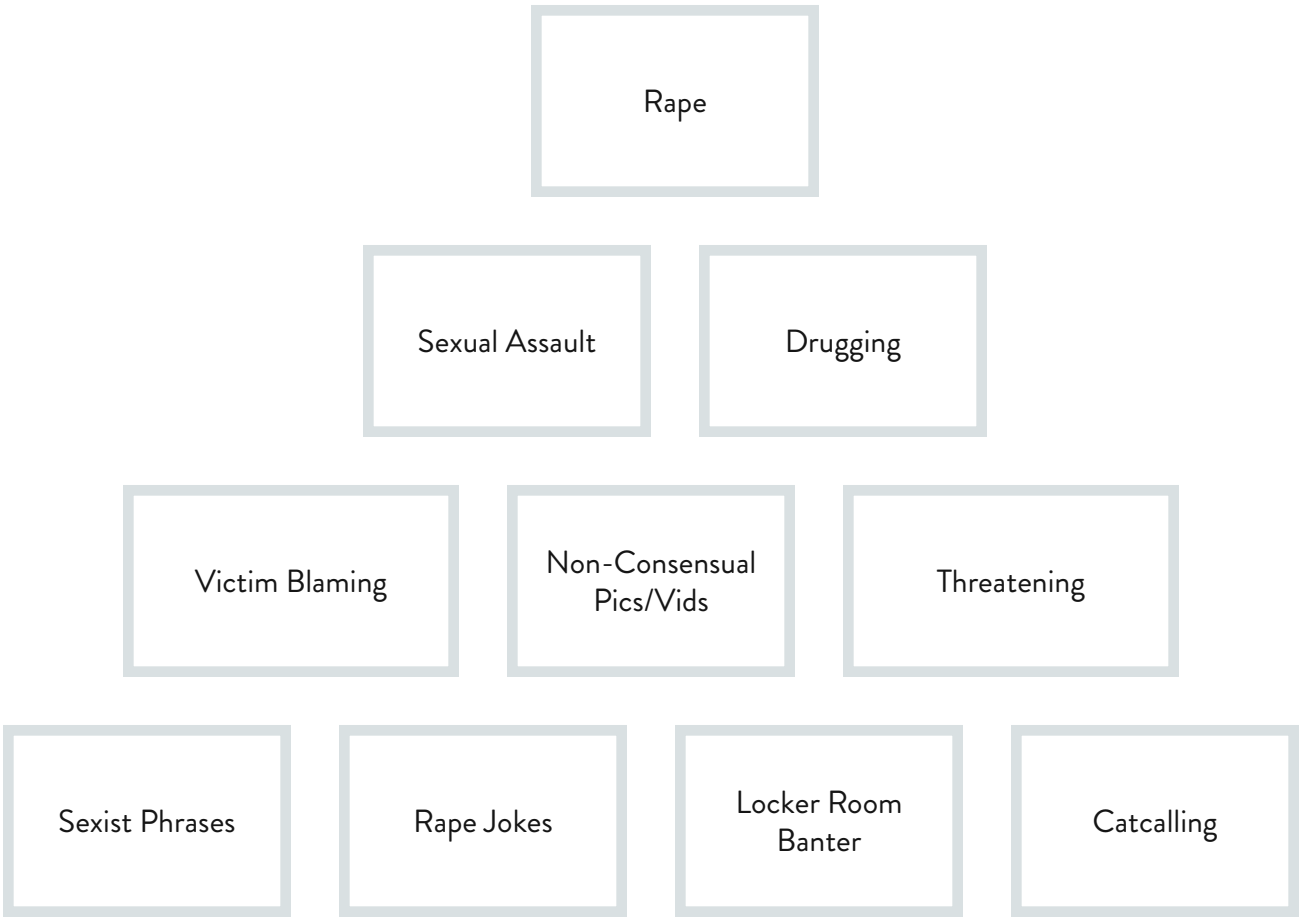
Point out to the group that they may never be in charge of things like sports media coverage or the justice system, and you hope they won't ever be in a situation where they are involved in sexual harassment or assault. Explain that they probably already have—and in the future they definitely will—witness things like sexist phrases, rape jokes, objectification and one-upsmanship almost every day. Empower them to see this as an opportunity to be a leader for change by explaining that if every young person commits to challenging the small actions, beliefs and behaviours that normalize violence, the whole system will come tumbling down.

Have a volunteer pull out a box from the bottom of the pyramid to symbolize taking action. Continue with as many boxes as it takes to get the pyramid to fall down.

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant share an appreciation for someone else.

Core Session 5
Additional Resources

Example Rape Culture Pyramid



Sexist Phrases

Rape Jokes

Locker Room Banter

Catcalling

Victim Blaming

Non-Consensual Pics/Vids

Threatening

Drugging

Sexual Assault

Rape

Core Session 6: Closure
Background

QUOTE

"Relationships can crucially influence whether a boy internalizes or resists societal expectations and assumptions. While boys are exposed to cultural constructions of masculinity that manifest in other people's views of boys in general and of them in particular, there are differences in how, as individuals, they struggle to define themselves and choose to incorporate other people's views into their self-concept. Although boys' different patterns of response may be partly explained by individual differences, what stood out in the boys' narratives were relational differences, particularly in their experiences of self-in-relationship. That is, beyond having access to relationships, boys' experiences of being validated and valued in relationships appear to be key to boys' resistance and resilience." — Judy Chu, *Adolescent Boys: Exploring Diverse Cultures of Boyhood*

GOALS

- Affirm qualities of positive masculinity within each participant
- Celebrate the time we've spent together and provide closure for the experience

MATERIALS

- Laptop
- Projector
- Speaker
- 42 Boys Will Be ___ wall cards (see Core Session 6 Additional Resources)
- Enough half-sized blank cue cards for each participant to have as many cards as there are participants (for example, 10 participants would need a total of 100 cards so that participants could have 10 cards each)
- Pencil crayons
- Post-program evaluation tools

SET UP

- Cut blank cue cards in half
- Print the Boys Will Be ___ wall cards and space them out along the walls
- Connect the computer to a projector and speaker
- Arrange a group of chairs into a circle

WRITE ON THE BOARD

"No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man." — Heraclitus, Greek philosopher

NOTES

- If participants are filling out evaluations independently, have them find a space to work where they can have focus and privacy.
- Consider reading the questions out loud to help participants who don't read as easily, and to help the whole group stay on track.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Ontario

Grades 7-8	
Positive Motivation and Perseverance (A1.3)	Apply skills that help them develop habits of mind that support positive motivation and perseverance as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to promote a sense of optimism and hope
Healthy Relationships (A1.4)	Apply skills that help them build relationships, develop empathy, and communicate with others as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support healthy relationships, a sense of belonging, and respect for diversity
Grade 9 (PPL10)	
Interpersonal Skills (1.4)	Apply relationship and social skills as they participate in physical activities, develop movement competence, and acquire knowledge and skills related to healthy living to help them interact positively with others, build healthy relationships, and become effective group or team members
Human Development and Sexual Health (C2.2)	Demonstrate an understanding of the skills and strategies needed to build healthy social relationships and intimate relationships

British Columbia

Healthy and Active Living	Propose healthy choices that support lifelong health and well-being (Grade 9)

Social and Community Health	Describe and apply strategies for developing and maintaining healthy relationships (Grades 5-7)
	Explore strategies for promoting the health and well-being of the school and community (Grades 6-7)
Mental Well-Being	Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others (Grades 5-8)

Core Session 6: Closure
Outline

WARM-UP
5-10 min

Lead participants in a warm-up activity (see Appendix 2). Consider one of the activities tagged with #with-partners to encourage participants to recognize the relationships they've built.

CHECK-IN
10-15 min

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant respond to the following questions:

- What was the high and low of your week?
- What is something you're proud of lately?

INTRODUCTION
10-15 min

Play the video *A Man Like You* at nextgenmen.ca/blog/a-man-like-you. Discuss the story and its meaning by asking participants to respond to some of the following questions:

- What do you think the story was about?
- Do you agree with the idea that there is no one way to be a man?
- What is something that matters to you that is not part of the stereotype about boys and men?
- What might make it hard to break stereotypes and be yourself?
- How can you support each other in being the kind of young men you want to be?

ACTIVITY
25-30 min

Draw the group's attention to the affirmation cards posted around the room and give them a few minutes to walk around and familiarize themselves with the words.

Read some of the following questions, giving them time to move to their answer and share a few of their responses:

- Which quality is most masculine?
- Which quality matters most in a friend?
- Which characteristic is easiest to be?
- Which characteristic is hardest to be?

Have participants take a single blank half-sized cue card and a selection of pencil crayons. Ask them to move to and sit at their answer to the following question:

- Which quality do you most want to be?

Play the music in the playlist at nextgenmen.ca/blog/a-man-like-you and give participants some time to copy down the word and its accompanying affirmation.

Bring the group together in a circle and give them the following instructions:

- Each participant is going to take a turn sitting in the centre of the circle for two minutes.
- The person in the centre finishes colouring their own card, while the rest of the group writes down a compliment, affirmation or statement of appreciation for the participant in the centre.
- The affirmation cards on the walls can provide inspiration if you are trying to think of what to say.
- At the end of each round, the cards will be collected and set aside to be made into a booklet that each participant can take with them at the end of the program.

Continue playing music and facilitate the beginning of each round. Participate by writing affirmations for each participant yourself. At the end of each round, go around the circle and gather the affirmation cards and set them aside.

Continue until all participants have gone into the centre of the circle.



DISCUSSION
20-25 min

Introduce the post-program evaluation:

- Explain that the importance of post-program evaluation is that it helps you understand what impact the program has had, which parts of the program were best and which parts of the program could be improved.
- Emphasize the importance of honesty and individual responses.

Facilitate the evaluation in the manner you've decided for your group.

While participants are filling in their evaluations, organize and staple the affirmation cards into a booklet for each participant.

CONCLUSION
5-10 min

Point out to the group that this particular group of people in this particular space will never happen again. Explain that you might see each other again, but it won't be exactly the same, which means that it's worth taking a moment to recognize and appreciate how they have grown and connected throughout their time together.

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant share one word that represents what they will remember and appreciate about the group once they have departed.

As each participant contributes, give them their affirmation booklet.



BOYS WILL BE ____ AFFIRMATIONS DECK

This deck is designed to acknowledge, nurture and celebrate boys' fullest expression of themselves, with 42 qualities and affirmations that boys need to hear. Used in all kinds of ways. One of our favourite things we've ever designed.

Get it at shop.nextgenmen.ca/boys-will-be.

Core Session 6
Additional Resources

Boys Will Be ____ Affirmations Card Deck

Buy the deck (including a downloadable PDF for printing 8.5x11 cards) at shop.next-genmen.ca/products/boys-will-be.



Additional Sessions

Session A: Mental Health 101
Background

QUOTE

"In a world where suicide is the biggest killer of men under 50, accounting for one in four deaths among that demographic, we need to work harder to frame mental health in schools in a way boys will relate to." — Natasha Devon, *Boys and mental health: How do you solve the problem of "banter"?*

GOALS

- Discuss what we know about mental health and well-being
- Explore how mental health struggles can affect our perceptions of ourselves

MATERIALS

- Chart paper and markers

SET UP

- Arrange a group of chairs into a circle

WRITE ON THE BOARD

"Happiness can be found even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light." — Albus Dumbledore, *Harry Potter* character

NOTES

- This session is designed with students who are new to the topic of mental health in mind, but it is a simple and effective learning experience for all students.

Session A: Mental Health 101

Outline

WARM-UP
10-15 min

Lead participants in a warm-up activity (see Appendix 2). Consider one of the activities tagged with #competitive to burn some energy since the activity this session mostly involves group discussions.

CHECK-IN
10-15 min

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant respond to the following questions:

- What was the high and low of your week?
- What was a memorable injury that you have experienced?

INTRODUCTION
10-15 min

Begin by asking participants to raise their hands:

- If they've gotten a bruise and didn't know where it came from
- If they've received stitches
- If they've broken a bone
- If they've gotten a concussion
- If physical health is something that applies to them

Point out that everyone has stories about their physical health, and that physical well-being has a degree of clarity to it—we can often easily see or feel how serious something is and know what we need to do about it.

Ask participants to raise their hands if they have mental health.

Start exploring the differences between physical and mental health by getting participants to discuss:

- Does everyone have mental health?
- How would you define mental health?
- Do you think there is a difference in the way we think and talk about physical health and mental health?

Explain to the group that mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being, and can affect how we think, feel and act; how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices in our lives.

ACTIVITY
10-15 min

Introduce the activity:

- Draw a large outline of a person on a piece of chart paper.
- Explain that each of us has strengths, unique qualities and positive character traits.
- Ask a few participants to write down something good about themselves that they know is true inside the outline of the person.

Point out that sometimes, we face adversity that can affect our social and emotional well-being and make us feel down about ourselves.

Completely overwrite the positive character traits on the chart paper by getting participants to discuss:

- What is a situation in which you might feel stressed out, anxious, inadequate or like a failure?
- What are some of the negative words other people might call you in that situation?
- What are some of the negative words you might call yourself?

Write down their words on top of the outline of the person and on top of each other (see Session A Additional Resources). Keep going until the positive character traits are illegible.

DISCUSSION
10-15 min

Once participants have finished brainstorming the negative language they might hear in the midst of adversity, debrief the impact of mental health struggles by asking some of the following questions:

- What happened to those good things that you knew to be true about yourselves?
- What impact might that have on you?
- Why might it be hard to overcome struggles with mental health when you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed?
- How can you avoid getting buried by negativity?

CONCLUSION
5-10 min

Explain to the group that mental health is something that we all have, and we all need to take care of. Point out that mental health struggles can be more difficult to cope with than physical injuries because they are less visible and harder to talk about, and they can easily affect the way we view ourselves and our self-worth. Encourage participants to realize that no matter what they are going through, there are people who care about them and their mental well-being.

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant share an appreciation for someone else.

Session A
Additional Resources

Example Outline of a Person





Session B: The Web of Support
Background

QUOTE

"The boys' desires were almost always clear. They wanted the intimacy that they had when they were younger. They wanted to be able to share their thoughts and feelings with their friends so that they would not feel alone. They knew, just as they knew during early and middle adolescence, that being able to share their secrets and having intimate friendships was critical to their mental health. Yet they also knew that their desires for intimacy with other boys were risky and made them sound gay, girlish, and immature. So they 'covered the sun with their hands' and claimed that their loss was inevitable or that they didn't care, didn't feel, or didn't need anybody." — Niobe Way, *Deep Secrets: Boys' Friendships and the Crisis of Connection*

GOALS

- Identify sources of mental health struggles
- Discuss healthy and unhealthy ways to deal with mental health struggles
- Share strategies and tools for individual and peer support
- Learn about services and supports in the community for mental health and well-being
- De-stigmatize and normalize mental health and mental illness, dealing with stress and asking for help, particularly for boys and young men

MATERIALS

- Chart paper and markers
- A piece of chart paper entitled 'Web of Support' with the following questions written down:

  What can you do by yourself or with a friend to feel better?
  Who can you ask for help when you are feeling down?
  What organizations or resources are around that can help?
  How can you notice if a friend is struggling?
  What could you say to initiate a conversation on mental health?

- A collection of 2-5 pieces of rope per participant, about 2 metres long
- An inflated balloon or light but large ball

SET UP

- Write down the questions on the 'Web of Support' chart paper

- Blow up a balloon or find a large, light ball
- Print the mental health handout (see Session B Additional Resources)
- Arrange a group of chairs into a circle

WRITE ON THE BOARD

"I found that with depression, one of the most important things you can realize is that you're not alone." — Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson, actor

NOTES

- Participants can be so distracted by the web that they forget to listen carefully to the input of mental health strategies. Ensure that they are paying attention to both.
- The Web of Support activity can be made more challenging by adapting it into a team-building initiative in which they are working together to lift a ball off of a ground using rope (see Session B Additional Resources).

Session B: The Web of Support

Outline

WARM-UP
5-10 min

Lead participants in a warm-up activity (see Appendix 2). Consider one of the activities tagged with #team-building to connect as a team since the activity this session involves working together.

CHECK-IN
5-10 min

Remind the group about the significance of the talking piece and the expectation that each participant is listened to. Go around the circle and have each participant respond to the following questions:

- What was the high and low of your week?
- What word comes to mind when you think of mental health?

INTRODUCTION
10-15 min

Start by asking participants to respond to the following questions:

- Do you think young people can struggle with mental health?
- What mental health problems do people experience at your age?

Create a 3x3 table on a piece of chart paper. Choose a couple of their answers to be the rows of the table, and label the columns as 'Less Serious' and 'More Serious' (see example in Session B Additional Resources).

Ask the group how they would define the word 'emotion.' Explain that the etymology of emotion is from Latin *emovere* which derives from *e* meaning 'out' and *movere* meaning 'motion,' and that one way to think about mental health is as sensations that move through our bodies and express themselves in different ways.

Draw the group's attention to the chart paper and get them to fill in the kinds of physical, mental and emotional feelings that would characterize each of those mental health struggles by asking:

- What might _____ feel like in your body?
- What might your mind be telling you?
- What might you be feeling emotionally?

ACTIVITY
15-20 min

Introduce the activity:

- Get participants to stand in a circle.
- Draw a sad face on the inflated balloon and give it a name.
- Ask a volunteer to explain the phrase 'rock bottom.' Explain that the balloon represents a young person and the floor represents them being at the rock bottom of their mental health, where they feel really down on themselves and don't know what to do.
- Challenge the group to keep the balloon from reaching 'rock bottom' by creating a web.

Give participants the following instructions:

- You are going to connect your rope to a person across the circle from you, gradually creating a web.
- Each time you connect your rope, you have to give a new strategy for what to do about one of the feelings that you brainstormed on the 'Web of Support' chart paper.
- Once everyone thinks you have a strong enough web, the balloon will be tossed on top.

Lead participants through the activity, ensuring they are listening to each other's responses and not being overly repetitive. Jot down their strategies in a separate list.

DISCUSSION
15-20 min

Ask the participants to carefully set the string on the ground so it's easier to untangle and wrap up.

Debrief the importance of healthy coping mechanisms for mental health by asking participants to respond to some of the following questions:

- Did you succeed? How did you succeed or why did you fail?
- How does this activity relate to real life?
- What if someone had just one strategy in real life—one person you could talk to, or one coping mechanism—would that be enough? Why or why not?
- Look at the chart paper with all of the feelings that we brainstormed. Does every strategy in the Web of Support work for every feeling?
- Are some strategies in the Web of Support easier to do than others? Why or why not?

- When you think about people with different intersecting identities, such as 2SLGBTQ+ youth, youth who don't have internet access or youth who are deaf, what structural barriers to accessing support come to mind?
- Which strategy do you think you are most likely to use next time you are struggling with something?

CONCLUSION
5-10 min

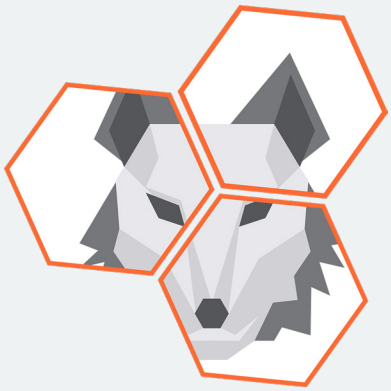
Explain to the group that feelings are constantly moving through us, but sometimes they can be difficult to cope with. Point out that by being part of a family, community or group like Next Gen Men, they belong to a web of support that can be a source of support when things are hard. Encourage them to ask for help rather than try to be independent by pointing out that if they had a friend who was struggling, they would want that friend to tell them rather than stay silent.

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant share an appreciation for someone else.

NGM ALLIANCE DISCORD SERVER

Since 2020, Next Gen Men has been running a positive, supportive and inclusive Discord server for boys and nonbinary youth in middle school and high school. The participants in your programs are welcome to join this active community.

They can join directly at nextgenmen.ca/discord.



Session B
Additional Resources

Example Empty Table

	Less Serious	More Serious
Stress		
Depression		

Example Completed Table

	Less Serious	More Serious
Stress	Butterflies in stomach "I can't screw up" Nervousness	Can't sleep "I can't do this" Inadequacy
Depression	No energy "This sucks" Sadness	Self-harm "I don't matter" Suicidality

Web of Support Adaptation

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

- Basketball or soccer ball instead of a balloon
- At least four 4-metre pieces of rope instead of yarn
- Tape to mark a circle about 3 metres in diameter

OUTLINE

Place the ball in the centre of the circle and the rope on the perimeter.

Introduce the activity:

- Ask a volunteer to explain the phrase 'rock bottom.' Explain that the ball represents a young person and the floor represents them being at the rock bottom of their mental health, where they feel really down on themselves and don't know what to do.
- Challenge the group to lift the ball from rock bottom by creating a Web of Support.

Give participants the following instructions:

- Only the rope can touch the floor inside the circle.
- You can't touch the ball with your hands.
- The ball can't touch the floor.

Let them work through the initiative.

Debrief the importance of healthy coping mechanisms for mental health by asking participants to respond to some of the following questions:

- Did you succeed? How did you succeed or why did you fail?
- How does this activity relate to real life?
- If the ball on the floor represents low mental health, what might the rope represent?
- How can we as boys and young men support ourselves or be sources of support to others?

Mental Health Handout

10 THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

- **Value yourself:** Treat yourself with kindness and respect, and avoid self-criticism. Make time for your hobbies and favorite projects, or try something new.
- **Take care of your body:** Taking care of yourself physically can improve mental health. Eat nutritious meals, drink plenty of water, exercise, and get enough sleep.
- **Surround yourself with good people:** People with strong family or social connections are generally healthier than those who don't have a support network. Make plans with supportive family members and friends, or seek out activities where you can meet new people, such as a club or support group.
- **Offer yourself:** Volunteer your time and energy to help others. You'll feel good about doing something meaningful to help someone in need, and it's a great way to meet new people.
- **Learn how to deal with stress:** Try different strategies to cope with stress. Exercise, take a walk, play with your pet, listen to music or write in a journal. This might also be the time to open up to friends, family or trusted adults about what is stressing you out.
- **Quiet your mind:** Try meditating, mindfulness or prayer. Relaxation exercises can improve your state of mind and outlook on life.
- **Set realistic goals:** Aim high, but be realistic and don't over-schedule. You'll enjoy a sense of accomplishment and self-worth as you progress toward your goals.
- **Break up the monotony:** Although our routines make us more efficient and enhance our feelings of security and safety, a little change of pace can perk up a tedious or difficult school schedule.
- **Avoid alcohol and other drugs:** Avoid using substances to cope with your mental health. Sometimes, people use alcohol and other drugs to self-medicate but they can make you feel even worse in the long run.
- **Get help when you need it:** Seeking help is a sign of strength—not a weakness. It's important to remember that resources like therapy can make a big difference.

HELPLINES FOR CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT

- Kids Help Phone kidshelpphone.ca: Available 24/7
- YouthLine youthline.ca: Non-crisis support for LGBTQ+ youth
- Trans Lifeline translifeline.org: Crisis response line for trans people
- Black Youth Helpline blackyouth.ca: Phone helpline for Black youth
- Hope For Wellness hopeforwellness.ca: Counselling for Indigenous youth
- Naseeha naseeha.org: Confidential support for young Muslims
- Good2Talk good2talk.ca: Support for post-secondary students

Session C: The Maze
Background

QUOTE

"Pride and stoicism knot together in many boys, reinforcing each other. Not only is it difficult for these boys to express themselves; they take a certain pride in not doing so, in keeping their mouths shut. In psychological distress, they are like the captain of the Titanic, standing on the bridge gallantly going down with their ship. They want to look strong and brave. The difference is, of course, that most boys aren't on a sinking ship. They're just struggling with being young, with having high expectations of themselves, with wanting to please their parents, and with not knowing themselves very well." — Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson, *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys*

GOALS

- Explore what makes it hard to ask for help
- De-stigmatize and normalize asking for help with mental health challenges, particularly for boys and young men who may be less likely to participate in help-seeking behaviour

MATERIALS

- A piece of chart paper entitled 'Maze Rules' with the following rules written down:
  You can't speak.
  You can't take off your blindfold.
  You can't let go of the rope.
  If you want to ask for help, raise your hand.
- A smaller piece of paper entitled 'Congratulations' that says: "The way out of the maze is to raise your hand. Stay silent and watch."
- A blindfold for each participant
- A piece of lightweight rope at least 60 metres long
- Computer or phone
- Speaker

SET UP

- Arrange a group of chairs into a circle

- Prepare to set up the maze by moving large furniture out of the way and making sure you have at least 10 chairs or other medium-sized anchor points (see Session C Additional Resources)

WRITE ON THE BOARD

"Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. I do that every day. Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness, it's a sign of strength." — Barack Obama, former U.S. president

NOTES

- The Maze activity can benefit from participants going in circles for a significant length of time as this will demonstrate just how long we are willing to struggle alone without asking for help. Aim for 40-45 minutes from when the first participant enters the maze to when you transition to the debrief.
- Consider giving participants who are still in the maze a five-minute warning when you are drawing close to the conclusion.

Session C: The Maze
Outline

WARM-UP
5-10 min

Lead participants in a warm-up activity (see Appendix 2). Consider one of the activities tagged with #high-energy since they are going to need to listen carefully to the instructions for the activity this session.

CHECK-IN
10-15 min

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant respond to the following questions:

- What was the high and low of your week?
- Who in this circle do you think would be best at finding their way out of a maze?

INTRODUCTION
10-15 min

Set expectations for the activity:

- Explain to the group that the activity they are about to do involves staying silent, wearing a blindfold, and following a maze constructed with rope.
- Point out that it is often one of Next Gen Men participants' favourite activities, but it is also one of the most easy to ruin if they don't take it seriously.
- Ask the group what they could do to make it not go well, and how they can work together to make sure it's a meaningful experience.

Introduce the activity:

- Hand out a blindfold to each participant but tell them not to put them on yet.
- Tell the group that when they put their blindfolds on, they are going to be transported into a maze. Compare the maze to the labyrinth in *The Maze Runner* or the Upside Down in *Stranger Things*. Explain that their goal is to find the way out, but there are rules they have to follow.

Use the chart paper entitled 'Maze Rules' to give participants the following instructions:

- You can't speak.
- You can't take off your blindfold.

- You can't let go of the rope.
- If you want to ask for help, raise your hand.

Tell participants they will know when they make it out of the maze. Check if they have any questions. Remind them to walk slowly in order to not run into each other or wreck the maze, and remind them of the expectations they set for how to make sure it's a meaningful experience.



ACTIVITY
35-40 min

Set up the maze:

- Get participants to move any major obstacles like tables to the sides of the room, and scatter medium-sized obstacles like chairs around the room.
- Have participants sit at the chairs and put their blindfolds on.
- Ask them to keep their blindfolds on and remain seated for five minutes while they are fully transported into the maze.
- Play instrumental music on a speaker and set up the maze around them (see Session C Additional Resources).

Once the maze is set up, let the group know they can stand up and start trying to find their way out of the maze.

Supervise the maze to make sure that participants are staying quiet and the rope is staying relatively taut. Watch for participants putting their hands up. Once they put their hand up, go to them and whisper for them to take off their blindfold. Show them the paper entitled 'Congratulations' and have them sit outside of the maze.



DISCUSSION
10-15 min

After you feel that enough time has elapsed, get participants to gather in a circle, even if some of them haven't succeeded in getting out of the maze.

Debrief the maze, and how it relates to mental health and asking for help, by asking participants to respond to some of the following questions:

- Put up your hand if you were able to get out of the maze. How did it work?
- How long do you think it took you to decide to ask for help?
- What kept you from asking for help?
- What do you get by not asking for help? What does it cost you?

- Do you think a blindfolded maze is the only time in your life when you're not going to be able to do something on your own? What are other times you might need to ask for help?
- Can you think of a time when you were facing emotional pain or a struggle with mental health and you kept it hidden? Why didn't you tell someone what was going on?
- What could you do instead?

CONCLUSION
5-10 min

Explain to the group that suicide—more than traffic accidents, drug use or cancer—is the most common cause of death for young adolescent boys. Point out that boys and young men die by suicide 4-5 times the rate of girls, and this is often because of the pressure boys face to stay silent about mental health struggles and not ask for help.

Tell the group that the practice of talking about mental health and getting support from loved ones is an important skill to build throughout adolescence, and that you are always there if they need someone to talk with.

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant share an appreciation for someone else.

RITE OF PASSAGE EXPEDITIONS PROJECT

Next Gen Men runs wilderness-based rite of passage programs with boys and nonbinary youth in Ontario and Alberta—where connection, reflection, challenge and adventure help youth build a strong foundation for their future.

Check out nextgenmen.ca/expeditions for details.

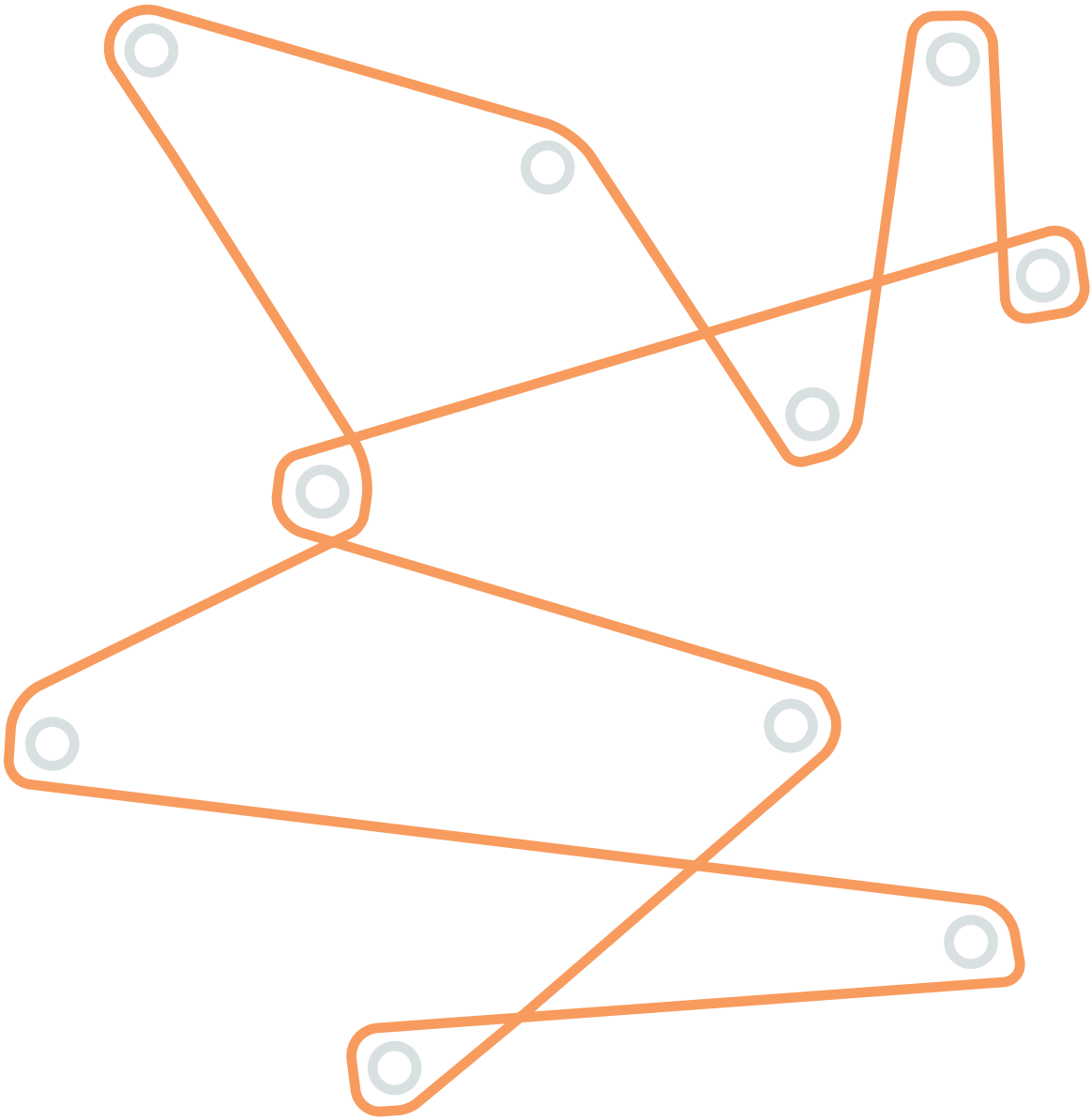


Session C
Additional Resources

Example Maze

The maze is essentially one big circle, but with enough corners and crossovers that it is relatively disorienting and initially unclear to participants that they are just going around in circles. Use chairs, desks and other medium-sized obstacles to act as anchor points for the rope.

Participants can briefly let go of the rope to navigate pass the crossovers.



Session D: Eli's Story & Standing Up to Bullying
Background

QUOTE

"We all have a role to play in dismantling the twin towers of homophobia and misogyny. But we are doing young men no favours when we allow masculinity to be dictated to them by the status quo. Because here's some news for you. The status quo might revere men as a class, but it destroys them as individuals. And it teaches them to destroy others in return." — Clementine Ford, *Boys Will Be Boys*

GOALS

- Define bullying and harassment and identify the role homophobia plays in interactions between boys
- Explore the ways that homophobia and bullying limit the way boys can express themselves
- Commit to intervening on homophobic language and bullying behaviours

MATERIALS

- 'The Man Box' chart paper
- A piece of chart paper entitled 'If You Don't Follow the Rules…'
- Markers
- Tape
- A printed Story Visualization Box for each participant (see Session D Additional Resources)
- Pencil crayons
- Computer or phone
- Speaker

SET UP

- Print and cut the Story Visualization Boxes
- Connect the computer to a speaker
- Arrange a group of chairs into a circle

WRITE ON THE BOARD

"The true measure of any community can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members." — Mahatma Gandhi, lawyer and activist

NOTES

- Consider allowing participants to use real derogatory language, such as 'pussy' or 'fag' when discussing the rules of the Man Box. With the right tone, this adds clarity, honesty and seriousness to the discussion.

Session D: Eli's Story & Standing Up to Bullying
Outline

WARM-UP
10-15 min

Lead participants in a warm-up activity (see Appendix 2). Consider one of the activities tagged with #competitive to burn some energy since the activity this session involves sitting still.

CHECK-IN
10-15 min

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant respond to the following questions:

- What was the high and low of your week?
- What kinds of things have you been bullied for, or have you seen other guys your age be bullied for?

INTRODUCTION
5-10 min

Refer to 'The Man Box' chart paper and ask participants what they remember from their discussion about gender stereotypes.

Fill in the 'If You Don't Follow the Rules...' chart paper by getting participants to discuss:

- What are examples of the names boys get called if they don't fit in the Man Box?

Ask participants to raise their hands:

- If they have heard any of those words before
- If they have been called any of those words
- If they have called someone else any of those words

Point out that bullying, peer pressure and homophobic language are all around us, and it can be helpful to take a moment to look at it critically and think about what we can do about them.

Introduce Eli's story:

- Let the group know that you will be listening to the story of an individual who hears this kind of language every day. Explain that it is a real story, from a boy named Eli who is 14 years old and transgender.
- Check to see if the group knows what it means to be transgender.
- Explain that in order to understand and discuss his story, you're going to be doing an art-based listening practice.

- Let the group know that Eli's story includes transphobia, bullying and physical assault.



ACTIVITY
10-15 min

Introduce the activity:

- Hand out a Story Visualization Box to each participant and invite them to choose a selection of pencil crayons.
- Get participants to sit comfortably in their own space where they won't be distracted by others.
- Tell the group that the context of the story is Eli talking about riding the school bus on his first day of high school, and how he gets targeted by older students.
- Explain that in order to practice active listening, you want them to freely draw within the empty boxes to create a visual representation of the feelings they hear. Let them know that the story is only a few minutes, so afterwards you will play some music while they continue making their art for a bit longer.

Play the video playlist at nextgenmen.ca/blog/elis-story, which includes both Eli's story and instrumental music.



DISCUSSION
15-20 min

Bring the group back together. Invite them to share their drawings together. Discuss the story and the role of bystanders in preventing or stopping violence by asking participants to respond to some of the following questions:

- What feelings did you hear from Eli as he described what happened?
- How might the other students on the bus have felt?
- What do you think would make someone scared or reluctant to stand up in a situation like that?
- What strategies can you think of to work around that fear or reluctance?
- What could you personally do to make a difference?



CONCLUSION
5-10 min

Point out to the group that these kinds of bullying and violence are most likely to happen in locker rooms, group chats and parties—places where adults are less present. Explain that that means that each of them has the responsibility of looking out for those who are vulnerable, and working together to create a safer space for everyone.

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant share an appreciation for someone else.

Session D

Additional Resources

Draw a visual representation of how you think Eli was feeling during his experience on the school bus.

Draw a visual representation of how you think the other kids on the school bus were feeling.

Session E: Chad's Story & Ending Hazing
Background

QUOTE

"To put it simply: *Every social encounter between men is potentially a fistfight.* You learn this in elementary school and never forget it. No wonder, as we age, that we ignore each other, let our friendships wither, cancel plans. And no wonder many of us have failed to see grabby men as a serious social problem for women, when an American boyhood consists of little else but unorganized combat drills, unwanted invasions of personal territory. It's all grabs, punches, towel flicks, fake homoerotic aggression, threats of unspecified but grim—and, as one ages—increasingly sexualized violence." — Phil Christman, *What Is It Like to Be a Man?*

GOALS

- Explore why hazing happens and its impact on boys and young men
- Discuss the pressure to not tell anyone about instances of hazing
- Commit to challenging hazing traditions to promote a safe and supportive peer culture

MATERIALS

- Computer or phone
- Speaker

SET UP

- Connect the computer to a speaker
- Arrange a group of chairs into a couple rows of a semicircle so there is an audience space and a stage space

WRITE ON THE BOARD

"Hazing is not breaking the rules. It is the rule itself." — Alexander Golts, Russian journalist

NOTES

- Consider allowing participants to use real derogatory language, such as 'pussy' or 'fag' when discussing the rules of the Man Box. With the right tone, this adds clarity, honesty and seriousness to the discussion.
- Alexander Golts is a journalist; the quote is commenting on the issue of hazing in the Russian military—the quote is taken a bit out of context, but it is still a thought-provoking one to unpack with young adolescent boys.

Session E: Chad's Story & Ending Hazing
Outline

WARM-UP
5-10 min

Lead participants in a warm-up activity (see Appendix 2). Consider the Slideshow activity to get participants familiar with making tableaus as a group.

CHECK-IN
10-15 min

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant respond to the following questions:

- What was the high and low of your week?
- What is your favourite sport and why?

INTRODUCTION
10-15 min

Start brainstorming the positive outcomes of being on a sports team or similar group by getting participants to discuss:

- What is one of your favourite memories from being part of a sports team?
- What do you remember feeling in that memory?

Explain that you're going to visually represent the feelings in their favourite memories by creating a tableau together. Check to see if participants know what a tableau is. Define it as a snapshot of a scene that participants create with their bodies, and give a couple of examples.

Designate half the group as actors and half the group as audience members.

Give the actors the following instructions:

- Two volunteers are going to start by creating a snapshot together.
- One at a time, each actor is going to join the tableau as a new character who adds to the overall feeling of the scene, while the existing actors stay in place.
- The goal of the actors is for the audience to be able to pick up what is going on in the snapshot, and what it feels like.

Let the two volunteers discuss their ideas and move around before giving them a countdown to becoming a frozen snapshot. Facilitate the other actors in joining the scene as well.

Once each of the actors have joined the tableau, ask the audience what feelings they can see being expressed in the scene.

Engage the full group in a discussion about sports and belonging by asking participants to respond to the following questions:

- What is the best part of being part of a sports team?
- What are the feelings you get from working together on a sports team?



ACTIVITY
15-20 min

Read Chad's story to the group (see Session D Additional Resources), pausing to engage participants in short discussions that help them actively listen and empathize with the story.

Explain that you are going to do the same tableau exercise in order to visually represent the feelings in Chad's story. Switch the roles so that the actors become audience members and the audience members become actors.

Repeat the following instructions:

- Two volunteers are going to start by creating a snapshot together.
- One at a time, each actor is going to join the tableau as a new character who adds to the overall feeling of the scene.
- The goal of the actors is for the audience to be able to pick up what is going on in the snapshot, and what it feels like.

Get two volunteers to start, then facilitate the other actors in joining the scene as well.

Once each of the actors have joined the tableau, ask the audience what feelings they can see being expressed in the scene.



DISCUSSION
10-15 min

Play the video at nextgenmen.ca/blog/chad-on-snitching, which is Chad himself explaining what happened afterwards and why communicating about something like hazing isn't snitching.

Discuss Chad's story and the significance of hazing by asking participants to respond to some of the following questions:

- Why do you think hazing happens?
- 92% of adolescents who experience or witness hazing don't report it. Why do you think that is?
- What are the risks of hazing?
- What could you do to interrupt cycles of hazing?

CONCLUSION
5-10 min

Explain to the group that the things we all look for in places like sports teams—things like togetherness, pride and trust—are things that can be built effectively in countless ways other than hazing, and can be easily ruined in a culture where older or more socially powerful group members take advantage of their younger peers. Consider telling a story from your personal experience. Tell the group that the sense of belonging you get from a team is not worth following along with its harmful traditions—a community that disrespects and exploits its more vulnerable members is not a community worth upholding.

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant share an appreciation for someone else.

Session E
Additional Resources

Chad's Story

This story happened to Chad when he was 14, the summer before he started at high school. Chad was on the small side for his age, but athletic and fast, and a rising player on his basketball team.

Ask the group: Are any of you on a sports team?

Near the end of the school year, Chad found out he had been selected to attend an elite basketball camp during the summer. He was a bit unsure about being with a bunch of guys he didn't know that well, and nervous that he wasn't going to be as good as the others, but mostly excited for the training.

Ask the group: How would you feel about being selected for a sports camp?

Chad started off the first night of camp by hanging out with a bunch of other guys his age, getting to know them and talking about basketball. That's when a group of older boys stormed into their cabin, dressed in all black, blaring music and shouting. "Get up, get up! Face the wall!"

Ask the group: How do you think you would have responded?

The younger boys were so startled they jumped and then started lining up, where one of the older boys started hitting them with a broom if they turned away from the wall.

Chad's heart felt like it was beating a million miles an hour. He hadn't come to basketball camp to be treated like this, but he was scared of becoming a target for the older boys if he spoke out. None of the guys he had been hanging out with were saying anything and he suddenly couldn't remember anyone's names.

Even though he was nervous, he decided he wasn't okay with this. He took a deep breath, pushed away from the wall, pushed past the guy with the broom, and ran out of the cabin. As he went down the steps, he could hear the voices of the older guys behind him. "Don't be like him! He's a pussy. Don't be a bitch like him!"

Ask the group: What do you think happened to Chad afterwards?

Session F: Positive Masculinity 201
Background

QUOTE

"To counteract the seductiveness of that appeal from the right, we need to offer them a better definition of strength: that true strength resides in respecting and lifting up others, not seeking to dominate them." — Jackson Katz

GOALS

- Engage in thoughtful discussion
- Explore norms and stereotypes around what it means to 'be a man'
- Unpack how those gender norms impact us and the people around us

MATERIALS

- A piece of chart paper entitled 'The Man Box'
- Markers
- Tape

SET UP

- Arrange a group of chairs into a circle

WRITE ON THE BOARD

"Resistance for survival ≠ resistance for liberation" — Paraphrased from Carlos Santos, masculinities researcher

NOTES

- This session is designed to replace Core Session 2 for groups that are ready to discuss masculinity on a deeper level than the stereotypes. Next Gen Men originally developed it when working with senior high school students.
- You can revisit the Man Box lesson in the Raising Next Gen Men online course to learn about the origins of the concept and the research that has taken shape alongside it.
- Consider saving 'The Man Box' chart paper afterwards to use in future sessions.

Session F: Positive Masculinity 201

Outline

WARM-UP
5-10 min

Lead participants in a warm-up activity (see Appendix 2). Consider one of the activities tagged with #getting-to-know-you to encourage participants to make connections with each other.

CHECK-IN
10-15 min

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant respond to the following questions:

- What was the high and low of your week?
- What do you like best about being a boy?
- What is hardest about being a boy?

INTRODUCTION
10-15 min

Introduce the idea of the Man Box:

- Draw a large square on the piece of chart paper labelled with 'The Man Box.'
- Explain that in our society, there are a lot of expectations for what it means to be a 'real man'—there are certain ways that you are supposed to act, and ways that you are not.
- Explain that the Man Box is a visualization of these gender stereotypes, not what we necessarily believe ourselves.

Fill in the inside and outside of the Man Box on the chart paper by getting participants to discuss:

- How are guys expected to look and dress?
- What toys and activities are boys supposed to play with and participate in? What's not allowed?
- What feelings and emotions are boys supposed to have? What's not allowed?
- How are guys supposed to act in video games or sports?
- How are guys supposed to act in dating and relationships?
- Are there any additional pressures or expectations particularly focused on boys who look like you?

Ask the group how many of them were surprised by what was generally put inside and outside the Man Box. Point out that none of them were ever explicitly handed any rules about how to be a man, and yet they all know what's expected of them. Add a list of sources of cultural messages to the bottom of the chart paper by getting participants to discuss:

- Who teaches you what it means to be a guy?
- Where do we see representations of manhood around us?



ACTIVITY
15-20 min

Circle or underline five of the answers that they came up with for the Man Box that you feel will be most relevant for further discussion (e.g. being tough, being dominant, not taking no for an answer). Spend a moment thinking of brief examples (e.g. for being tough: getting back up when you get injured, not asking for help on a school assignment, not showing your feelings).

Introduce the Line of Continuum activity:

- Explain that our peers, parents, teachers, TikTok's For You pages and society overall have really strong norms and stereotypes about what it means to be a man; and we're all pretty familiar with them. Point out that what we don't discuss as often is how those stereotypes impact us and the people around us.
- Explain that for each quality that you've underlined, you will ask participants to place themselves somewhere along the continuum between Harmful (point to one side of the space) and Positive (point to the other side of the space).

Tell the group the following guidelines:

- I'll read a prompt twice, then invite you to move. Once everyone has moved, I'll invite a few people to explain why they went where they went.
- This isn't about proving anything about masculinity—there are no right or wrong answers. The only wrong answer would be if you place yourself somewhere that you don't truly believe.
- It might be tempting to just follow wherever your peers go. Try to ignore where other people are moving—we don't want to know what the group thinks, we want to know what you think.

Lead participants through the activity:

- Read each prompt twice before letting participants move—this provides an opportunity for them to process.
- Try to highlight different voices, particularly those who position themselves differently than others.

DISCUSSION
10-15 min

Engage the group in a discussion about how the Man Box and Line of Continuum activities relate in real life by asking the following questions:

- What did you notice during the Line of Continuum? Where did most people position themselves?
- If qualities of masculinity can become either harmful or positive, what internal qualities might lead to positive behaviours?
- Whose expectations do you think research has shown matters most to adolescent boys: their teachers, their parents, or their peers?
- If qualities of masculinity can become either harmful or positive, how might peers' influence you towards positive behaviours?
- How do you ensure that your way of 'being a man' positively impacts yourself and others?

CONCLUSION
5-10 min

Explain to the group that the Man Box and the Line of Continuum aren't visualisations of what is good or bad, or toxic and non-toxic. Encourage them to continue thinking about their role in making positive, rather than harmful, outcomes for themselves, their peers, and the world around them.

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant share an appreciation for someone else.

Session G: A New Roadmap to Consent
Background

QUOTE

"If guys are supposed to deny their own violation, how can they feel compassion for a girl's? If they can't say no, how are they supposed to hear it?" — Peggy Orenstein, *Boys & Sex*

GOALS

- Develop a deeper understanding of the characteristics of consent in relationships
- Explore the ways we can either practice or compromise consent
- Discuss the stakes involved in consent for boys and young men in particular

MATERIALS

- Two pieces of chart paper entitled 'Consent is…' and 'Consent is not…'
- A blank piece of chart paper, or a whiteboard/chalkboard
- Markers
- Tape
- Laptop
- Projector
- Speaker

SET UP

- Arrange a group of chairs into a circle

WRITE ON THE BOARD

"Consent culture offers another way to interpret a 'no.'" — Marcia Baczynski and Erica Scott, consent educators

NOTES

- This session is meant to be an open and honest conversation about consent. Many boys feel like they get taught definitions and rules, as well as consequences and 'cancel culture,' but don't feel like they can question, say the wrong thing, or share their private uncertainties. Research shows that boys deeply desire opportunities to discuss the stakes that surround them as they grow into young men, and explore how to embed consent in their lives.

Session G: A New Roadmap to Consent

Outline

WARM-UP
5-10 min

Lead participants in a warm-up activity (see Appendix 2). Consider one of the activities tagged with #with-partners since they're going to be working together during this session.

CHECK-IN
10-15 min

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant respond to the following questions:

- What was the high and low of your week?
- Do you ever feel pressure to act a certain way in relationships?

INTRODUCTION
10-15 min

Start brainstorming the characteristics of consent in relationships by getting participants to discuss:

- What comes to mind when you think of consent?
- Where have you learned about what consent is or isn't?
- If you were to explain consent to someone younger than you, what would you say?
- What do you know about when consent is not possible?

Write their answers on the pieces of chart paper. Explain that often, educators get stuck on a simple definition of consent or with simple rules about what is not consensual, like a power imbalance or impairment from drugs or alcohol. Point out that this is kind of like giving the car keys to a teenager who just did their written test and telling them not to hit anyone while they're behind the wheel—sure, maybe they know the rules, but that doesn't mean they actually know how to drive.

Explain that just like driving, the way to learn about consent is to practice it and have honest discussions with others about communication, relationships, and the stakes we experience as boys and young men.

ACTIVITY
15-20 min

Using a blank chart paper, chalkboard, or whiteboard, instruct students to come up one by one and contribute a drawing. The prompt is to draw things they'd typically see at an intersection. Encourage contributions like traffic lights, stop signs, pedestrians, or cars, and offer suggestions if students need help generating ideas.

Once the drawing has enough detail, use it to introduce a discussion about consent. Let the students lead the conversation and explore the connections they make. If needed, you can prompt the discussion by bringing up your own observations or connections. For example, you might ask students to consider the meaning of traffic lights:

- A green light means 'go.' Do you still drive ahead without looking? What are 'green lights' in relationships?
- A yellow light means to slow down and prepare to stop, but a lot of drivers respond to yellow lights by speeding up and getting through an intersection as quickly as possible. Why might you need to slow down in relationships? How would you know?
- A red light means 'stop.' What might happen if someone runs a red light? What might this look like in relationships?
- Just as traffic lights guide us in moving safely, clear communication and self-awareness can help us navigate relationships and interactions in a healthy way.

DISCUSSION
10-15 min

Debrief their experiences and questions about consent by asking participants to respond to some of the following questions:

- What are the stakes involved for boys and young men in communicating about consent? What might make you hesitate to communicate about consent?
- What might be most difficult, challenging or confusing about communicating about consent in real life? Where are the grey areas about consent that you're still not sure about?
- Why might it be hard for girls to say no in real life? Why might it be hard for guys to say no in real life? How can we recognize when someone is comfortable or uncomfortable in a situation?
- Where do you already practice consent (or experience a lack of consent) outside of romantic relationships? Does that matter? Why or why not?

CONCLUSION
5-10 min

Play the *Boys Don't Cry* short film made by White Ribbon at boysdontcry.ca. Point out that it demonstrates the layers of non-consensual experiences and harm that exist in all of our lives.

Reiterate to the group that just like driving, consent takes practice and experience. It's completely normal for many teenagers to feel uncomfortable asking for consent or putting themselves out there. However, the stakes are high when it comes to consent—misunderstandings or a lack of clear communication can lead to discomfort, confusion, or even harm.

Explain that navigating consent requires more than just the courage to ask; it involves understanding the nuances of communication and being attuned to the feelings and responses of others. Just as they learned to check both ways before crossing the road, it's important for them to learn to assess situations and read both verbal and non-verbal cues in their relationships. Acknowledge that boys can and should have their own boundaries as well.

Add that this practice builds confidence and comfort over time. It's essential to remember that consent is not a one-time question; it's an ongoing conversation that requires mutual respect and understanding. Importantly, consent isn't limited to intimate relationships—it is active in all interactions, whether with friends, parents, or teachers.

Finally, explain to the group that things won't always be perfect. Messing up happens, and what matters most is that they do their best to respect the dignity of the people around them and take responsibility for making amends when they fall short. Invite the group to have further conversations with you or with each other about healthy relationships as they continue to go through these kinds of experiences.

Using the talking piece, go around the circle and have each participant share an appreciation for someone else.

Appendix

Appendix 1
Additional Facilitation Tips

What does positive masculinity look like in the classroom? How do you transform boys' problematic attitudes or behaviours into positive and accountable young men? Better still, how do you give them the space to discover who they are, or want to one day be?

As an educator and mentor, you know the stakes are high, and the challenges aren't small. At their current stage in life, the boys and youth you work with need social connection and positive mentorship in a crucial way. And yet, so much of what they learn about themselves and the world teaches them to push friends away, put on a fearless mask, and try to live within the confines of an unforgiving box.

Next Gen Men is a leading nonprofit organization known nationwide for empowering boys and young men on the topics that shape their lives: mental health, healthy relationships, and gender equity. In addition to working directly with youth, we support educators to engage with adolescent boys, help them challenge harmful norms of masculinity, and create a positive new vision for the kind of men they can grow up to be.

If that's you, you've come to the right place.

Have a vision for positive masculinity.

As an educator, you're often one of the first to witness toxicity in boys' peer groups. You know first-hand what it looks like when boys mess up or buy too deeply into societal expectations for them as young men. Sometimes it feels easier to think of masculinity in terms of what you're against—and sometimes things just feel hopeless.

That's why, in our experience, it's important to focus instead on what you're for. Spend time reflecting on characteristics of masculinity that empower boys to be their best selves, and choose the ones that resonate most with you. Use them as a touchstone throughout your work with boys. If you care about compassion, for example, point it out and validate it when you see it within your boys.

> "If the Man Box is sexist, toxic, ugly, and dangerous, then what should take its place? Boys and men cannot be what they cannot see. We need visible, public models of the forms of masculinities or selfhoods we desire." — The Men's Project

Don't pick up the rope.

Sometimes, it can feel like boys are trying their absolute hardest to provoke you. Sometimes, it can feel like the youth you work with are actively working against you.

There is no positive ending to treating a student as an adversary—even if you win, you've really lost. That's why the best way to stay grounded in the midst of situations that feel like a tug-of-war, is to avoid picking up the rope in the first place.

Head-on authority can be particularly detrimental with boys who find it hard to back down from a conflict. Reframe, refocus, and find ways to align with them instead. Give them alternatives instead of ultimatums. You can't be in a tug-of-war if you're on their side.

> **For example:** Your student comes to class with headphones on. Find out what kind of music he likes and play it at the start of class. Make it clear that you want to connect and share his interest, rather than simply demanding that he remove the headphones. This way, you've positioned yourself alongside him, rather than leading him to feel his identity or taste are under attack.

Avoid using shame as discipline.

Shame has a powerful regulatory presence in the lives of boys and young men. Boys are often shut down or mocked by their peers for not conforming to typical norms of boyhood. As a result, some boys become highly attuned to shame and do their best to avoid it—or at least avoid consequences for their actions. On the other side of the coin, there are boys who get shut down or punished by their teachers for conforming too well, which inevitably harms their learning relationship and binds them tighter to that stereotype.

In order to make your classroom a place where boys feel safe taking risks and making mistakes, don't embarrass them in front of their peers. Shame leads to resentment rather than learning.

Own your mistakes.

Even when you do your best, you will make mistakes, run out of patience or say the wrong thing. This is why it's important to closely observe your interpersonal rapport with students. According to psychologist Daniel Rogers, one of the key roles of the educator in a working alliance with a student is addressing the strains that arise in that relationship.

By acknowledging and making up for your mistakes, you can help your students stay connected and committed to learning. You also role model to boys and young men what it looks like to be vulnerable with others and accountable for their actions, and gain their respect by demonstrating that it's possible to mess up and still come out safe and intact on the other side.

> "A strong connection with a teacher can serve as a 'secure base,' protecting a child from adverse stresses and allowing the teacher to serve as both a role model and an inspiration. In relationships with teachers with whom they feel safe and secure, boys are more motivated to exercise emotional regulation, practising and improving the executive control of their behaviour. Once my research partner and I discovered how central relationships are in boys' learning, we concluded that it is less how a boy learns but for whom he will learn." — Michael Reichert

Understand homophobia.

It would be hard to understate the pervasive power of homophobia in boys' peer groups. Homophobic insults have a significant impact on all boys—regardless of their sexuality—because they're used to enforce the boundaries of the Man Box, and target those who don't measure up to a particular masculine ideal. Boys who are different get called gay, and that comes loaded with a lot of cultural meaning.

Help boys feel freer to be themselves by challenging homophobic language whenever you hear it. Even if it's a joke, it matters.

> "Becoming a fag has as much to do with failing at the masculine tasks of competence, heterosexual prowess, and strength or in any way revealing weakness or femininity as it does with a sexual identity." — CJ Pascoe

Recognize multiple masculinities.

When we ask teen boys what they would tell their younger selves, the most common answer is 'be yourself.' Young people are constantly pressured to fit in with their peers. As an educator, you have a unique opportunity to support boys' diversity.

Find ways to challenge stereotypes about masculinity. Honour your students for characteristics and interests that fall outside of the Man Box, and work to protect those parts of their identities from being shut down.

Another thing you can do: educate yourself about all the many aspects of students' identities. What do you know about how racialized students encounter masculinity? Queer students? Students experiencing poverty?

> **For example:** Enroll in Next Gen Men's online course, Raising Next Gen Men, to deepen your understanding of the Man Box and masculinities, and what they mean for working with boys.

Don't miss opportunities for impact.

It is never really too early to engage young people in questioning the status quo. As education researcher Amanda Keddie points out, young children's understandings of gender are far from innocent, harmless, natural or inevitable. Make a habit of engaging readily in conversations about gender and justice whenever they become relevant.

The curriculum sometimes pushes you to think about learning outcomes like they're boxes to be checked. Building boys' positive masculinity isn't as simple as that. It's a lifelong journey—and the sooner it starts, the better.

Embrace resistance as the site of transformation.

At some point in these conversations, boys are likely to push back. When they do, they give you an invaluable opportunity to understand their perspective, and to help them revisit deeply held beliefs about masculinity.

You can infer two main things from boys' resistance: they are listening, and they care. With these assets in mind, we see a lot of value in getting pushback within our conversations about meaningful topics. At Next Gen Men, we see resistance as something to be embraced, rather than avoided. Lean into it.

For example: A student cites an anti-feminist YouTuber as proof that the gender wage gap doesn't exist. Rather than shutting him down, work with him to explore different perspectives about gendered inequalities—including his, and including yours.

Empower boys as leaders.

A common characteristic of gender-based violence is that it happens in places with limited or no supervision—video games, meme accounts, pornography, parties, locker rooms and essentially anywhere else boys might find themselves. This means that our best chance at ending violence is empowering boys to see themselves not as the perpetrators of violence, but as the leaders of change.

Speak candidly with your boys about the realities of male-led violence. Work with them to develop strategies to feel confident in standing up for themselves and for others.

Keep learning.

As you continue to work with boys and young men, dedicate some time to read about boyhood and education. What should you be reading? One thing to avoid would be books about boys being 'hardwired' differently. Those authors steer towards gender essentialism—the 'boys will be boys' narrative that limits our young people.

Learn more: Check out our collection of resources at nextgenmen.ca/library for book recommendations.

What now? Print off this document and tuck it in your classroom desk to read again later. If you found anything particularly insightful, or have any questions, get in touch by emailing us at info@nextgenmen.ca. We'd love to hear from you. Otherwise be sure you're subscribed to our newsletter or follow us on social media at @nextgenmen.

Before you go...

As a token of appreciation for your commitment to your boys, we'd like to offer you 10% off our online course, Raising Next Gen Men!

Visit nextgenmen.ca/raising-next-gen-men and use the discount code POSITIVEMASC to get started.



10 Tips for Engaging Boys and Young Men in Gender Equity

Adapted from an article written by Jason Tan de Bibiana for NextGenMen.

1. Know your hook.



Finding out how to get boys and young men to take their first step 'in the door' to start learning about gender inequities is often the first challenge.

2. Create safe, inclusive spaces.

Establish group agreements on respect and confidentiality. It is crucial to foster a safe space for everyone to be included.

3. Get out of the classroom.



Using experiential activities encourages discussions. Critical reflection can have a lasting impact on the actions around gender inequity. Try a check-in circle and use role plays to explore issues.

4. Role model healthier masculinities.

As role models and mentors, it is important to demonstrate what we hope to inspire, such as vulnerability. If we are asking participants to share openly, we must be willing to do so ourselves.

5. Take your time.



Having multiple sessions spaced apart by a week or a few days allows participants to reflect on what they are learning and how they can apply it to their everyday lives.

6. Emphasize that gender equality is good for everyone.



Gender norms and stereotypes are harmful to people of all genders. Promote the idea that gender equity is good for everyone.

7. Challenge gender norms and stereotypes.

A gender transformative approach means challenging gender norms and stereotypes. Weave this focus into all kinds of games, activities & discussions.

8. Break through masks.



Everyone seeks acceptance and belonging. It is important to accept one's true identity and to let go of the masks that we wear.

9. Meet everyone where they're at.

Every person's willingness to learn about gender inequities is different. Find ways to offer more opportunities for different individuals, including those who are engaged and those who are resistant.

10. Build peer support.

It's not easy being the only person who is willing to stand up against bullying or violence. Encourage groups from different classrooms and communities to support each other.

Why boys and young men?

Boys and young men experience many advantages in our patriarchal societies, but, just like everyone, they are also negatively affected by restrictive gender roles and stereotypes. We need to continue to engage and involve boys and young men in gender equity.

SOURCE

Tan de Bibiana, J. (2017, March 12). 10 tips for engaging boys and young men. NextGenMen. https://www.nextgenmen.ca/read-more/10-tips-for-engaging-boys-and-young-men

Appendix 2
Warm-Up Activity Ideas

FLINCH

Stand in a circle with the group and ask for a volunteer to stand in the middle. Everyone else crosses their arms with their hands on their shoulders. The person in the middle throws a ball to a participant in the circle, or pretends to throw the ball. If they actually throw the ball to someone, that person has to catch it as long as it was a good throw. If they fail to catch it, they are eliminated. If the person in the middle of the circle only pretended to throw it, and the person to whom it was directed moves (or flinches), they are also eliminated.

#high-energy #competitive #elimination

KEEPER OF THE KEYS

Sit in a circle with the group and ask for a volunteer to sit in the middle. They are blindfolded and given a set of keys to guard. Everyone else takes turns trying to steal the keys by silently moving to the centre and taking the keys back to their spot. If the person in the middle thinks they can hear the thief approaching, they get three chances to correctly point at the thief's location.

#low-energy #competitive

GROUP COUNTING

Get the group to sit or lie down with their eyes closed. One at a time, participants count out loud. Only one person can say a number at any given time, and if two or more participants speak at the same time, the count restarts. The goal is for them to work together to count to 10.

#low-energy #team-building

GROUP JUGGLING

Stand in a circle with the group. Participants toss a soft ball or beanbag back and forth across the circle either in a specific sequence or in no particular order. Once they have become accustomed to the flow, introduce a second and third ball into play. See how many you can keep going at once.

#high-energy #team-building

HUMAN PRETZEL

Stand shoulder-to-shoulder in a circle. Get each participant to put their hands in the centre and grab any two hands that don't belong to the same person or a person next to them. Without letting go of each others' hands, everyone tries to untangle the knot.

#team-building #physically-close

MAGIC OBJECT

Stand in a circle with the group. Place a simple object in the centre of the circle. Without talking, participants take turns using the object as if it was something else, such as playing air guitar with a broom. Everyone else tries to guess the object.

#creative #performative

GUESS WHO?

Stand in a circle with the group. Ask for a volunteer to stand in the centre their eyes closed. The volunteer points at participants and gives them a prompt such as barking like a dog, or making the sound of waves on a beach. The more creative the prompts are, the better. If the person in the middle guesses correctly, they trade places.

#low-energy #competitive #performative

MIRROR

Get participants to divide into pairs, stand facing each other, and choose one person to lead and one person to follow. The leader makes slow and sustained movements, while the follower matches them as if they are a mirror. The goal is for them to feel completely in sync with one another. Once they have gotten the hang of it, have participants switch roles. Playing meditative music can help set a calm and focused tone.

#low-energy #physically-close #performative #partners

MINEFIELD

Fill a space with random obstacles, such as overturned chairs or books. Get participants to divide into pairs, and choose one person to walk and one person to guide. Blindfolded walkers walk through the minefield while following the verbal instructions of their guides.

#low-energy #with-partners

NINJA

Stand in a circle with the group. Everyone takes a jump outward and strikes a starting pose. One participant is chosen to start. Play goes around the circle, with each participant making one sudden movement either attacking another player or moving defensively before freezing in their new pose. If they move towards a particular player, that player is allowed to make a single movement to dodge the attack. If they successfully touch the arm of another player, that player loses their arm. Once a participant loses both arms, they are eliminated.

#high-energy #competitive #elimination

ONE-WORD-A-TIME STORY

Sit in a circle with the group. Participants go around the circle, saying one word at a time to build a story together. Encourage participants to make sense, go with what first comes to mind, and avoid building never-ending sentences.

#low-energy #team-building #creative

PASS THE CLAP

Stand in a circle with the group. Participants pass a clap around the circle by turning, making eye contact and clapping at the same time as the person next to them. Once they have gotten the hang of it, tell participants they can reverse the clap by remaining focused on the player who passed the clap, and clapping again, or introduce another clap at a different point in the circle.

#low-energy #team-building

SILENT SEAT EXCHANGE

Sit in a circle with the group. Participants make eye contact and make a silent agreement to stand up and exchange seats. Once they have gotten the hang of it, ask for a volunteer to remove their chair and go to the middle of the circle. All of the former rules apply, but now the participant in the middle tries to steal a seat in the midst of their exchange.

#high-energy #competitive #with-partners

SLIDESHOW

Divide the group into two teams. Tell an inventive story about a recent vacation as if you are presenting a slideshow. For example: “I’d like to show you a slideshow of my recent trip to the Amazon. Here we are in the jungle where we saw an enormous snake! CLICK!” For each click, participants form a picture of the scene and freeze in place.

#team-building #performative

SQUIRT

Stand in a circle with the group and ask for a volunteer to stand in the middle. The person in the middle clasps their hands together with their pointer fingers pointing out and point at a participant in the circle. The person they are pointing at ducks down, while the two participants on either side point at each other with hands clasped and yell, "Squirt!" The person who didn't say it quickly enough is eliminated. The participant who ducks gets eliminated if they don't duck in time.

#high-energy #competitive #elimination

TANKS

Fill a space with a number of soft balls or beanbags. Get participants to divide into pairs, and choose one person to be the tank and one person to be the navigator. The tanks are blindfolded within the space. The navigators use verbal instructions to guide their tank to find, pick up, aim and throw the ball at another tank. If a tank gets hit, they are eliminated. For multiple rounds, have participants switch roles, limit navigators' communication to a set of verbal instructions that they agree upon with their partner, or get them to come up with code sounds by disallowing language altogether.

#high-energy #competitive #with-partners #elimination

TWIZZLE, SWIZZLE

Agree on a set of commands such as stop, go, jump, clap; as well as specific actions for 'twizzle' and 'swizzle.' Get participants to walk around the room and call out different commands. Once they have gotten a hang of them, tell participants that the rules have now changed and each command means its opposite—stop means go and vice versa, twizzle means sizzle and vice versa, etc.

#high-energy #competitive

TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

Sit in a circle with the group. Ask for a volunteer to go first. They list two facts about themselves and one lie. Everyone else tries to decide which one is the lie. Take turns until everyone has had a turn to share.

#low-energy #getting-to-know-you

WHERE THE WEST WIND BLOWS

Sit in chairs in a circle. Ask for a volunteer to remove their chair and go to the middle of the circle. The person who is in the middle of the circle makes a true statement about themselves in the format: "The west wind blows if you _____." If the statement applies to any participants on the periphery of the circle, they leave their chair and quickly exchange spots with someone else who has left their chair. The last person to find a new spot becomes the participant in the middle of the circle.

#high-energy #getting-to-know-you

Appendix 3
Evaluation Resources

Next Gen Men has been committed to evaluating our youth programming since we first launched, and we encourage you to do the same.

We've included resources that you can use to understand the impact of your programming with boys and nonbinary youth, such as how their beliefs and ideologies about masculinity and gender roles change, or what skills and tools they gain to cope with stress and navigate other challenging situations. We also included resources to gather feedback on the process of your programming with boys and nonbinary youth, such as whether the structure and facilitation of the program has made participants feel welcome, safe, and respected.

We've also included resources with different types of questions, such as multiple choice surveys, open-ended questions, and arts-based activities.

Our hope is that you choose the resources that work best for your context.

NOTES

- A number of the evaluation resources have a space for each participant's 'ID.' We typically ensure the participants' answers are anonymous and confidential by asking them to come up with a fake name or ID that they will remember, which they use instead of their real name.
- If you choose to do an evaluation at the beginning and the end of the program, consider finding a way to record their fake IDs for them while still ensuring their confidentiality, as it is likely that participants will forget their fake ID by the end of the program.

Evaluation Resources

Multiple Choice Surveys

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

This survey consists of 16 multiple choice questions that explore engagement in the program, and whether the structure and facilitation of the program has made participants feel welcome, safe, and respected.

Participants can complete this survey at the end of the program, as well as part-way through the program.

HEALTHY CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS SURVEY

This survey consists of 6 multiple choice questions that explore social connection and support among friends, peers, and other people.

Participants can complete this survey at the beginning and the end of the program to assess how participants' perception of their social connection, support, and relationships has changed.

The Youth Engagement Survey and Healthy Close Relationships Survey were developed by the Students Commission of Canada, the leading organization of the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement and partner organization of PREVNet; they have been used to support evaluation and learning for youth programs across Canada. For more youth program surveys and tools from the Students Commission, see: studentscommission.ca/en/resources/public

MASCULINITY AND GENDER ROLE NORMS (MRNI-A-R) SURVEY

This survey consists of 29 multiple choice questions that explore beliefs and ideologies about masculinity and gender role norms. The 29 questions explore concepts of Emotionally Detached Dominance, Toughness, and Avoidance of Femininity.

Gender researchers have developed different surveys over the years to explore beliefs and ideologies about masculinity. We use Levant's Male Role Norms Inventory-Adolescent-revised survey at Next Gen Men because it has been specifically developed for use with adolescents.

For each question of this survey, participants should read the statement about masculinity and gender roles and indicate their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). A higher score indicates more agreement with traditional beliefs and ideologies about masculinity and gender role norms, and a lower score indicates less agreement with traditional role norms.

Participants can complete this survey at the beginning and the end of the program. You can compare overall scores, as well as specific questions, to assess how participants' beliefs and ideologies change.

For more information about the research behind the MRNI-A-r survey, see: drronaldlevant.com/mrni.html. The researcher and survey developer, Dr. Levant, has granted permission to use the survey to Next Gen Men and Next Gen Mentors facilitators.

Youth Engagement Survey

ID:

Your answers are confidential and your participation in this survey is voluntary. Not participating in the survey won't affect your participation in the program. You can choose not to participate at any time until you hand in your survey. You can choose not to answer any questions if you do not want to.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I feel safe when I'm in this program.							
2. This program makes me feel welcome.							
3. Bullying and aggression are not tolerated here.							
4. The people in this program treat me with respect.							
5. In this program, I get to make decisions about the things I want to do.							
6. I have a say in planning this program.							
7. In this program, I am encouraged to express my ideas and opinions.							
8. I am expected to voice my concerns when I have them.							
9. The program staff take my ideas seriously.							
10. In this program, it is clear that youth and staff respect each other.							
11. I learn a lot from staff in this program.							
12. Staff learn a lot from youth in this program.							
13. There is a good balance of power between youth and staff in this program.							
14. Youth and staff trust each other in this program.							
15. Youth and staff learn a lot from working together in this program.							
16. I met people with different backgrounds, experiences and opinions than mine.							

Healthy Close Relationships Survey

ID:

Your answers are confidential and your participation in this survey is voluntary. Not participating in the survey won't affect your participation in the program. You can choose not to participate at any time until you hand in your survey. You can choose not to answer any questions if you do not want to.

	Not At All	A Little Bit	Moderately	A Lot	Com-pletely
1. How well do you get along with other people and make friends?					
2. Do you have help or support from people when you need it?					
3. How aware are you of prejudices being expressed around you?					
4. How comfortable are you interacting with people who have different values and ideas than yourself?					
5. Do you get along with people your own age?					
6. How well do you feel connected to your friends and peers?					

Next Gen Men MRNI-A-r Survey

ID:

Your answers are confidential and your participation in this survey is voluntary. Not participating in the survey won't affect your participation in the program. You can choose not to participate at any time until you hand in your survey. You can choose not to answer any questions if you do not want to.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. If needed, a guy should stop being friends with someone to be more popular.							
2. Guys should do whatever it takes to be cool.							
3. A guy should prefer football to sewing.							
4. A guy should never depend on someone else to help him.							
5. Guys shouldn't cry, especially in front of others.							
6. When in a group of guys and girls, guys should always make the final decision.							
7. It is not ok for a guy to ask for help fixing a flat tire on his bike.							
8. Guys should never tell others if they're worried or afraid.							
9. A guy should win at any game he plays.							
10. Guys shouldn't ever show their feelings.							
11. A guy who can't make up his mind will not be respected.							
12. Guys should not be allowed to wear skirts.							
13. In a group of guys and girls, it is up to the guys to get things organized and moving ahead.							
14. It is too girlish for a guy to wear make-up.							
15. Sports like hockey and wrestling should only be played by boys.							
16. If someone else starts it, a guy should be allowed to use violence to defend himself.							
17. When the going gets tough, guys get tough.							

Next Gen Men MRNI-A-r Survey

ID:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
18. Chores like doing the laundry or cooking aren't for guys.							
19. It's important for a guy to be able to play it cool.							
20. Guys should not tell their friends they care about them.							
21. Guys should play with trucks rather than dolls.							
22. It's important to have the newest video game system.							
23. Guys shouldn't carry purses.							
24. Guys shouldn't show fear.							
25. When they're sad or upset, guys should just 'suck it up' and get over it.							
26. Boys should not throw baseballs 'like a girl.'							
27. If a guy is in pain, it's better for him to keep it to himself rather than to let people know.							
28. A guy with no interest in adventure is not very cool.							
29. It's important for guys to try hard to be the best.							
30. Guys should never compliment or flirt with another guy.							
31. A guy should not continue a friendship with another guy if he finds out that the other guy is gay.							
32. It is disappointing to learn that a famous athlete is gay.							

Evaluation Resources

Pre- and Post-Program Questionnaires

These are a pair of one-page questionnaires with a variety of question styles: multiple choice, open-ended written responses, and a drawing activity. The questions cover a range of content in the Core Sessions: beliefs and ideas about masculinity and gender role norms, coping with stress and other challenging situations, challenging sexism and homophobia.

Participants can complete these questionnaires at the beginning and the end of the program.

Reviewing responses at the beginning of the program can give you some clues about what experiences, perspectives, and beliefs your group is bringing to the program. Reviewing responses to this questionnaire at the end of the program can help you understand what your group learned and gained from the program.

Pre-Program Questionnaire

ID:

Have you ever been told to ‘man up’ or ‘act like a man’? **Yes / No**

What do these phrases mean? _____

Have you ever felt overwhelmed, stressed out or not yourself? **Yes / No**

Did you tell anyone about what was going on? **Yes / No**

What happened? _____

Have you ever heard sexist phrases, rape jokes, or slurs like fag or simp? **Yes / No**

What’s an example? _____

Did it bother you? **Yes / No**

Did you say something to challenge what you heard? **Yes / No**

Why or why not? _____

Do you think you have a role to play in defining positive masculinity? **Yes / No**

What does that mean to you? _____

Draw a picture representing what you think it means to be a man. Include 3-5 labels describing the characteristics and qualities of your drawing.

Post-Program Questionnaire

ID:

Have you ever been told to ‘man up’ or ‘act like a man’? **Yes / No**

What do these phrases mean? _____

Have you ever felt overwhelmed, stressed out or not yourself? **Yes / No**

Would you tell anyone what was going on next time it happens? **Yes / No**

What could you do to positively cope and get support? _____

Have you ever heard sexist phrases, rape jokes, or slurs like fag or simp? **Yes / No**

Would you say something to challenge what you heard? **Yes / No**

What would you do? _____

Do you think you have a role to play in defining positive masculinity? **Yes / No**

What does that mean to you? _____

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My experiences in these sessions have improved my self-confidence.							
My experiences in these sessions have increased my understanding of the roles of boys in society.							
My experiences in these sessions have increased my ability to express my feelings.							
My experiences in these sessions have increased the likelihood that I would ask for help with mental health.							
My experiences in these sessions have deepened my relationships with my peers.							

What were your favourite aspects of the Next Gen Men program?

How can the Next Gen Men program be improved?

Draw a picture representing what you think it means to be a man. Include 3-5 labels describing the characteristics and qualities of your drawing.

Arts-Based Reflection

Silhouette Graphic and Reflection Card

Written surveys and questionnaires are not the only way to gain insight about participants' experiences and learnings from the program, which is why we developed silhouette graphics and reflection cards. They are designed to be accessible for younger participants, programs without much spare time, or facilitators who want to avoid assessments that require significant amounts of reading and writing.

We have used the silhouette graphic with the following prompts:

- Write down the qualities that matter most to you after this program.
- Write a sentence about the kind of young man you want to be.
- Write a message to your younger self.
- Draw on top of the silhouette so that it represents who you are as a person.

The reflection card works most effectively with a facilitator leading participants through the prompts, asking them to reflect on the topic(s) of the program or session, think about what they want to do differently based on what they learned, and share an adjective that reflects something about themselves or their experience.

When I think about

_____

I want to _____

_____.

During this program,
I learned _____

_____

and I will make a
difference by _____

_____.

I am _____.

When I think about

_____

I want to _____

_____.

During this program,
I learned _____

_____

and I will make a
difference by _____

_____.

I am _____.

Evaluation Resources

Group Discussions

Surveys and questionnaires that are completed individually may allow participants to answer more honestly about sensitive topics like masculinity and gender role norms, particularly at the beginning of the program, because their individual answers won't be shared with their peers.

However, when trust has been built among participants and the facilitator, focus group-style discussions can be a very engaging and empowering way for participants to share their experiences and perspectives with the facilitator, and with each other. Group discussions can be an effective way to gather feedback and learn about the impact of the program.

Group discussions can cover the same concepts as any of the surveys and questionnaires (for masculinity and gender role norms, social connection and support, coping with stress), but questions should be asked in an open-ended way to elicit discussion, rather than yes-or-no questions.

Example questions:

- Why did you decide to participate in Next Gen Men?
- What were your favourite aspects of the Next Gen Men program?
- What is something new you learned from the Next Gen Men program? Did your understanding/beliefs about masculinity change? If so, how?
- What is something that you will do differently because of the Next Gen Men program? How has Next Gen Men changed the way you interact with your friends and with other people in your life?
- What were your least favourite aspects of the Next Gen Men program? How can it be improved for next time?
- Are there topics that you would like to learn more about? Different topics?
- What about the types of activities? Are there different types of activities that you would have liked more?
- What about how the program/group was structured?
- What is a message that you would like other boys and nonbinary youth to know?

Appendix 4
Permission Forms

You may be interested in sending home some information to introduce parents/guardians to Next Gen Men programming, gain parental permission or registration information. The following pages include:

- A permission form for schools in which they already have registration information
- A registration form for community groups that need to gather information like emergency contacts and allergies
- An information page on NGM Boys+ Club, Next Gen Men's Discord server for boys and nonbinary youth in Grades 7-9

Dear [School Name] Parents/Guardians,

We are very excited to be running a youth program inspired by Next Gen Men, a national leader on engaging youth on topics of gender. Their goals are to engage, educate, and empower young people to challenge society's stereotypes of masculinity, to develop skills in making positive and healthy choices, and to strengthen friendships and social support.

Each session, your child will participate in a blend of age-appropriate learning activities and engaging discussions about how narratives of gender impact themselves and others.

The program will run on [Day of the Week] for [#] sessions starting [Date].

You can find out more about the program by visiting nextgenmen.ca or reaching out to Next Gen Men's youth program at youth@nextgenmen.ca.

Please complete and return this form in order to indicate that you are aware of the program and give permission for your child to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

Child's Full Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

We look forward to having your child be a part of Next Gen Men this year!

Sincerely,

[Name]

Dear [Community Name] Parents/Guardians,

We are very excited to be running a youth program inspired by Next Gen Men, a national leader on engaging youth on topics of gender. Their goals are to engage, educate, and empower young people to challenge society's stereotypes of masculinity, to develop skills in making positive and healthy choices, and to strengthen friendships and social support.

Through their Next Gen Mentors program, we are able to facilitate their youth programming within our own school community. Each session, your child will participate in a blend of age-appropriate learning activities and engaging discussions about how narratives of gender impact themselves and others.

The program will run on [Day of the Week] for [#] sessions starting [Date].

You can find out more about the program by visiting nextgenmen.ca or reaching out to Next Gen Men's youth program at youth@nextgenmen.ca.

Please complete and return the sign-up and registration information for your child on the following pages, including the authorization and permissions at the very end. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

We look forward to having your child be a part of Next Gen Men this year!

Sincerely,

[Name]

CHILD INFORMATION

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

School: _____ Grade: ____

Teacher: _____

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Child's Health Number: _____

Is the child immunized as required by the Education Act?*

☐ Yes ☐ No *If no, please send a copy of exemption to _____.

Will the child need any medication while at the program? If yes, please explain:

_____

Please check if the child experiences any of the following:

☐ ADD/ADHD ☐ Autism ☐ Asthma
☐ Diabetes ☐ Mobility Problems
☐ Seizures ☐ Visual Impairment

Other: _____

Please check if the child is allergic to any of the following:

☐ Animals ☐ Bee Stings ☐ Peanuts
☐ Environment (e.g. dust, grass, pollen)
☐ Tree Nuts ☐ Food (list specific foods below)

Other: _____

Does the child have any other special needs or require additional assistance?

_____

Family Doctor:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

FAMILY INFORMATION

Parent/Guardian 1

Name: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Parent/Guardian 2

Name: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Who does child live with?

☐ Both Parents
☐ Parent/Guardian 1
☐ Parent/Guardian 2

Other: _____

If the parents/guardians listed above cannot be contacted in the case of an emergency, is there anyone else that can be contacted?

Name: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Is anyone else permitted to pick up the child from Next Gen Men's program? (Must be 16+)

Name: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Phone: _____

Does the child have permission to go home alone after Next Gen Men's program?

☐ Yes ☐ No Other: _____

CODE OF CONDUCT

- Children must be picked up by an adult over the age of 16 unless they have permission from a parent/guardian to go home alone.
- Staff may share and discuss the child's activities with the school.
- Staff are not responsible for lost or stolen items. No electronic devices are allowed in program.
- Staff have a legal obligation to report any suspected abuse.
- Staff may remove any child due to physical and/or verbal aggression towards staff or other children, or if the safety of a child and/or others is at risk.

☐ I agree to and understand the above.

LIABILITY WAIVER

I, the parent/guardian of the child named above give permission for such child to participate in the programs and services of _____, and consent to any necessary first aid or emergency medical treatment being given or provided for the child, waive any claims against _____, the sponsors of said programs, or any of representatives, employees or volunteers, in respect to any personal injury to such child or to any other person or any loss of or damage to property, arising in any way at, from or in connection with the programs and services of _____. I am providing this waiver on behalf of such child and on behalf of my spouse and any other family members or other persons who might be entitled to assert such a claim as well as on my own behalf.

☐ I agree to and understand the above.

MEDIA RELEASE

I hereby give _____and its partners and affiliates consent to use and reproduce my child's name/image for promotional purposes related to _____and/or external partners. My child's first name (unless otherwise authorized)/image may be published or used in newspapers, promotional videos, television commercials, program brochures, posters, online or otherwise displayed to the public or used for other educational/fundraising purposes, either in whole or in part by _____and/or external partners. I release _____from any and all claims, of any nature, based on these uses.

☐ I agree to and understand the above.

NEXT GEN MEN NEWS

I consent to receiving semi-regular updates from _____via email as it pertains to the organization, its programs, fundraising and/or educational initiatives, and/or external partners.

☐ I agree to and understand the above.

Parent/Guardian Signature:

_____

NGM Alliance

WHAT IS NGM ALLIANCE?

NGM Alliance is Next Gen Men's private Discord server for boys and nonbinary youth in middle school and high school to connect, hang out together, and find support. Since 2020, our goal has been to be the safest and most uplifting community for youth online.

Find out more (for parents/educators): nextgenmen.ca/alliance
Join the server (for youth): nextgenmen.ca/discord

WHAT IS DISCORD?

Discord is a free platform that lets people chat via text, voice, or video in real time. Lots of young people use apps like Instagram and Snapchat for one-on-one messaging, but Discord is the go-to space for larger groups to communicate together.

Servers on Discord have both text and voice channels. Text channels allow people to type messages to each other, while voice channels let people use the microphone and camera on their device to talk to each other.

HOW DO WE MAINTAIN SAFETY ON DISCORD?

Safety is our primary concern when it comes to Next Gen Men's youth programs. Here is what Next Gen Men is doing:

- Our Discord server is locked to the outside world. Permission to access the server is only extended to those whose identities we have verified.
- Our Discord server is moderated by Next Gen Men staff, who submit a vulnerable sector police check each year.
- Online video and audio sessions happen solely within our server.
- The Code of Conduct and Privacy Policy are explained when participants join the server, and we check in with participants with regard to peer relationships and cyberbullying.
- We have an anonymous reporting tool that allows participants to share issues or concerns about NGM staff with their supervisor.

Here is what parents/guardians can do:

- Discord has an array of privacy and safety settings designed to help parents/guardians work with their teens to build positive online behaviours. More information out more these features can be found on their blog: discord.com/blog/discord-family-center-stay-connected-with-your-teen
- We encourage parents to check in with their child about their experiences and relationships in NGM Alliance. If they have experienced anything that made them feel uncomfortable or unsafe, the NGM staff team can be reached at youth@nextgenmen.ca so we can take action to ensure all young people have a safe and enjoyable experience.

Appendix 5
Posters

You may be interested in putting up some posters to generate some interest among potential participants. The following options include:

- Two posters to promote an upcoming Next Gen Men program
- A poster to introduce youth to NGM Boys+ Club, Next Gen Men's Discord server for boys and nonbinary youth in Grades 7-9

BOYS WILL BE ~~BOYS~~.

YOU DECIDE.

Build stronger friendships with your peers, challenge the status quo and figure out the kind of young man you want to be. Join our upcoming Next Gen Men group.

For details, talk to:

EVER WANTED TO SAY SOMETHING BUT DIDN'T?

Build stronger friendships with your peers, challenge the status quo and figure out the kind of young man you want to be. Join our upcoming Next Gen Men group.

For details, talk to:

YOUTH DISCORD SERVER

Since 2020, Next Gen Men has been running NGM Alliance, a Discord server for **boys and nonbinary youth** in middle school and high school. **nextgenmen.ca/discord**

- ☑ Onboarding process to keep out strangers
- ☑ Weekly video games like Fortnite, Minecraft and Valorant, trivia nights, movie nights, D&D, and more
- ☑ Homework and mental health support

NEXT GEN MEN

For more info visit nextgenmen.ca/alliance or dm @nextgenmen on social media.

FORTNITE MINECRAFT VALORANT ROBLOX OVERWATCH D&D

YOUTH DISCORD SERVER

Since 2020, Next Gen Men has been running NGM Alliance, a Discord server for **boys and nonbinary youth** in middle school and high school. **nextgenmen.ca/discord**

- ☑ Onboarding process to keep out strangers
- ☑ Weekly video games like Fortnite, Minecraft and Valorant, trivia nights, movie nights, D&D, and more
- ☑ Homework and mental health support

NEXT GEN MEN

For more info visit nextgenmen.ca/alliance or dm @nextgenmen on social media.

nextgenmen.ca
info@nextgenmen.ca