

Real Talk: Engaging Young Men and Boys about Violence Against Women and Girls

Workbook/Discussion Guide



Written By:

The Rogers Park Young Women's Action Team

www.youngwomensactionteam.org

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Engaging Young Men as Allies Project

Learning from Poetry

The following are two poems that can be used as discussion starters with young men. One is written by a man and the other by a woman.

She's crying for many
by Benjamin Zephaniah

She is flesh of me flesh
I am bone of her bone
So please stop kicking her
Beg yu leave her alone,
She is not fighting back
Find de love dat yu lack
Dat's me sista yu beating upstairs.

I am feeling dem punches
I am feeling dem kicks
I see where yu mind is
I check yu as sick,
So yu are 'De Man',
Easy man, if yu can,
Dat's me sista yu beating upstairs.

She's screaming,
An it seems dat yu will not stop,
'Dis is domestic', (de words of a cop)
An yu keep repeating, 'Tell me where you've
been',
She's trying fe tell yu,
Yu not listening,
Downstairs me flat is shaking,
De lights are crazy swaying,
An I can hear loudly each word yu are saying,
I feel dat her body is touching me ceiling,
An I see de man from inside yu revealing.

She's crying fe many,
Dere's many de same,
An don't try fe tell me de Bible's to blame,
De colours yu fly outside , carry dem home,
It's cruel, you're unhealthy,
Yu should live alone,
Dat problem needs checking,
It seems yu fegetting,
Remember yu mudda
I am yu girlfriends bredda
Yu energy's wasted
Yu bitterness tasted,
An all dat yu stand fa as been demonstrated.

So now yu feel sexy,
Does dat turn yu on?
After yu cum tell me where ave yu gone?
Yu bed's only playing de riddim of one,
Music direct from de great Babylon,
Who carved de image an space you mus
fill?
Is she de enemy dat yu mus kill?
Do yu tell yu friends how yu get yu cheap
thrills?
Does yu mudda know dat yu acting so ill?

She is flesh of me flesh
I am bone of her bone,
I cannot help hearing,
I am downstairs alone,
Yu reap what yu sow,
How comes yu don't know
Dats OUR sister yu beating upstairs.

From the book – City Psalms, Bloodaxe
Books, 1992.

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about
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**In Response To A Brother's
Question About What He Should
Do When His Best Friend Beats Up
His Woman**

By Asha Bandele

Snatch him up by the back of his neck
Run him into his own fist
Twice
Tell him who the real enemy is
Show him
Make him swallow his own teeth
Do not help when they scratch the inside of
his throat
Tell him it was his fault u did this
Make his eyes swell up & pus so he looks
like a freak
Make him go to work like that and
Have to come up with excuses to his co-
workers & friends
Tell him the witeman made u do it
Tell him you're sorry
Tell him you love him
Tell him u didn't mean to then
Kick his ass again
Tell him it was his fault
Question him on why he's such a coward
Interrogate his ass
Make him beg for forgiveness
Watch him crawl
Put The Word Out In the Streets
THERE'S AN ENEMY IN OUR PRESENCE
THERE'S AN ENEMY IN OUR PRESENCE
IT DOES NOT THINK IT ONLY ATTACKS
IT MAKES WEAK-ASS EXCUSES
IT TAKES NO RESPONSIBILITY
IT PICKS ON PEOPLE SMALLER THAN
ITSELF
IT READS SHARAZAD ALI
IT WORSHIPS MILES DAVIS
IT DESTROYS BLKLIFE
IT LIES
IT LIES

And if he finally understands
Then go to him
Find out where it started
Search for burn marks beneath his flesh,
Peel back his pain,

Be a brother, a real good brother
Whisper Haki Madhubuti
Sonia Sanchez in his ear
Sing sweet honey songs
Let him cry
Let him sleep in your arms
Stand alone if you have to
This is the right thing to do
Let others babble hate
While u break centuries of vicious cycles
Face the contradictions
The bellies sliced open & jaws wired shut
The assholes torn &
The bloodied vaginas
This is what it looks like
Do not turn away now
Babies beat out of wombs
Spines curved
Uneven legs that no longer walk
Dead eyes that do not see tomorrow
Livers imprinted
with callused feet --

Face the contradiction,

That looks like u
That smells like u
That tastes like u
And push out the violence
Be unafraid to be a man
Who confronts men about women
Be unafraid to be a man
Who confronts big small mean
common nasty
Everyday men
About women
Be unafraid to be a man
Who confronts himself

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*Talking to Boys and Men about
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10 Things Men Can Do To End Violence Against Women

1. **Acknowledge** and understand how sexism, male dominance and male privilege lay the foundation for all forms of violence against women.
2. **Examine** and challenge our individual sexism and the role that we play in supporting men who are abusive.
3. **Recognize** and stop colluding with other men by getting out of our socially defined roles, and take a stance to end violence against women.
4. **Remember** that our silence is affirming. When we choose not to speak out against men's violence, we are supporting it.
5. **Educate** and re-educate our sons and other young men about our responsibility in ending men's violence against women.
6. **Challenge** our fear of being perceived as gay, which has been a tactic men created to discourage other men from getting involved in the movement to end sexism and violence against women.
7. **Accept** and own our responsibility that violence against women will not end until men become part of the solution to end it. We must take an active role in creating a cultural and social shift that no longer tolerates violence against women.
8. **Stop blaming** men's violence on mental illness, lack of anger management skills, chemical dependency, stress, etc... which only excuses men's violence. Violence against women is rooted in the historic oppression of women – sexism.
9. **Stop supporting** the notion that men's violence against women can end by providing treatment for individual men. Men's violence against women is an outgrowth of men's socialization.
10. **Accept** leadership from women. Violence against women will end only when we take direction from those who understand it most, women.

Source: A Call to Men, www.acalltomen.com

your thoughts . . .

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Activity for Young Men: Costs of Male Training BINGO

Use this activity with a group of young men. This activity works best with a group of at least 15 people. Make a copy of this activity and give one sheet to each person. Tell them to walk around the room and find a man who has experienced any of the following things. Explain that they should have that person sign his name in the box [no duplicate names]. The first person to complete the activity by having all of the boxes signed with twelve different names should call out: BINGO.

Find A Man Who...

Has ever worried he was not tough enough _____	Has ever exercised to make himself tougher _____	Has ever been called a wimp, queer, or fag? _____
Has ever been told to act like a man _____	Has ever been hit by an older man _____	Has ever been forced to fight _____
Was in a fight because he felt he had to prove he was a man _____	Has ever been deliberately physically injured by another person _____	Has ever been deliberately physically injured and hid the pain or kept it to himself _____
Has ever stopped himself from showing affection, hugging, or touching another man because of how it might look? _____	Has ever drunk alcohol or taken other drugs to cover his feelings or hide pain? _____	Has ever hurt another person physically or sexually? _____

your thoughts . . .

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Turning the world on its head...

Please read the following statements out loud:

1. Men are warned not to use alcohol to excess because of the danger that women will take sexual advantage of them.
2. Men often ask bouncers at bars or security guards at public events to walk them to their cars because they are at risk of women lurking in the dark to assault them.
3. Men are discouraged from walking by themselves after dark because of the danger of rape and sexual assault by women strangers.
4. Sororities are places men should avoid because of the culture of women's feminization that makes them more likely to assault a lone man when there are two or more women together.
5. Men have to be careful how they dress because they may provoke women to sexually assault them.

If at any point you found yourself laughing out loud, ask yourself why?

Source: *The White Ribbon Campaign* – www.whiteribbon.com

News of the Absurd...

Use these true life examples as discussion starters

In June 2004, Joyce Leslie, a clothing store geared toward junior girls, started selling shirts that said: "**You Can Beat Me, You Can Abuse Me, But Don't Touch My Hair or I'll Kill You.**" Anti-violence activists took action against the retailer and within two weeks the shirts were no longer being sold to pre-teen girls.

Questions:

1. What message was the shirt conveying?
2. Do you feel that this shirt was offensive? Why or why not?
3. Do you feel that anti-violence activists were right to take action against the store? Why or why not?

Spanish Woman Ruled Too Cute for Abuse! Latifa Daghdagh's husband was released after a Barcelona court ruled that Daghdagh (22) was too well dressed during the trial to be a domestic abuse victim. Judge Francisco Javier Pauli Collado cited her variety of outfits, makeup and jewelry, saying that her "physical appearance during the three-day hearing... does not coincide with the image of a woman who has suffered months of aggression." He added that her spirit just wasn't broken enough. Her testimony was "inconsistent with the fear and loss of all sense of initiative that characterizes beaten wives," the judge insisted.

Questions:

1. When you think of a victim of domestic abuse, what image comes to your mind?
2. What is your reaction to the judge's ruling?
3. If you were Latifa's lawyer, what would you say to the judge?

Source: *The Australian*, 2005.

Does mass media support male violence against women and girls?

The mass media plays a significant role in shaping the way we perceive and respond to violence against women in our society. While there is no causal relationship between media images and domestic/sexual violence, these images are nonetheless powerful and influential. **Powerlessness is the key to understanding the lure of media images.** Youth who feel misunderstood, who lack resources and access often turn to media for solace and for aspirational reasons. Much of the media presents several challenges to healthy gender identity development. This is underscored by the following realities:

1. The overrepresentation of women as sex objects. Sex is being shown as a commodity.
2. The overrepresentation of women as male adornments.
3. The overrepresentation of men as power brokers.
4. The growing relationship and association between the sex industry and popular culture.

Breaking down gender stereotypes is a way to stem interpersonal violence. Research shows that people who abuse their partners tend to subscribe to more traditional and rigid gender roles. **They are often very concerned with what it means to “act like a man” or to “act like a woman.”** Paul Kivel uses this finding in his violence prevention curriculum geared towards teens called “Making the Peace.” He helps educators highlight how gender stereotypes trap people in “boxes” that encourage violence.

For an interesting way to address gender stereotypes with young men, use the “**Boys Will Be Girls Will Be Boys**” **Coloring Book by JT Bunnell and Irit Reinheimer** as the basis for discussion.

your thoughts . . .

Media Analysis Activity: *Creating Alternatives to Mainstream Popular Culture*

1. What are the messages that you hear in the music you listen to? After the brainstorm, break the messages down into positive and negative categories.
2. Does the music we listen to represent what we believe? If not, then what can we do to create or support alternatives?

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Talking to Boys and Men about Men's Violence against Women: Selected Resources

Boys Will Be Men: Raising Our Sons for Courage, Caring and Community, by Paul Kivel (book). Gabriola Island, British Columbia, Canada: New Society Publishers, 1999. Available from most bookstores and internet booksellers.

Breaking Our Silence: Gloucester Men Speak Out Against Domestic Abuse. 2002. This short documentary gives insight into the activist efforts of a group of men in the town of Gloucester, MA. Available from Media Education Foundation, www.mediaed.org and costs \$19.99.

Can Men Take Responsibility for the Patriarchy?, by Allan G. Johnson (article). *Ms.* November/December, 1997, pp.60-63.

I am a Man: Black Masculinity in America (video). 1998. This documentary engages black men in a dialogue on black masculine identity in American Culture. This is a film by Byron Hurt. Available from www.mediaed.org and costs \$125 for non-profits.

Macho (video). 2000. This is a profile of Nicaragua's Men against Violence project. Available from Women Make Movies – www.wmm.com – Non-profits can purchase the film for \$89.

The Macho Paradox: Why Some Men Hurt Women and How All Men Can Help by Jackson Katz (book). 2006. Available from most bookstores and internet booksellers for \$16.95.

Making the Peace: A 15 Session Violence Prevention Curriculum for Young People by Paul Kivel & Allan Creighton. Hunter House Publishers, 1997. Available from most bookstores and internet booksellers for \$25.00.

More than a Few Good Men: Strategies for Inspiring Boys and Young Men to Be Allies in Anti-Sexist Education by Jackson Katz (monograph; Working Paper Series No 291). Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, 1998. Available from Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, www.wellesley.edu/WCW.

Reconstructing Masculinity in the Locker Room: the Mentors in Violence Prevention Project by Jackson Katz. (article). In *Harvard Educational Review*, 1995, 65 (2), pp. 163-174.

Tough Guise (video). Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation, 1999. Available from Media Education Foundation, www.mediaed.org.

What Are Little Boys Made Of?, by Michael Kimmel (article). *Ms.* October/November 1999, pp.81-91.

Working with Men and Boys to Prevent Gender-based Violence Toolkit – The Family Violence Prevention Fund has developed a useful toolkit. <http://toolkit.endabuse.org> or www.endabuse.org.

Wrestling with Manhood: Boys, Bullying, and Battering (video). Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation, 2002. Available from Media Education Foundation, www.mediaed.org

Organizations

Men Can Stop Rape – www.mencanstoprape.org

Men Stopping Violence – www.menstoppingviolence.org

Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) – www.sportinsociety.org

The National Organization for Men against Sexism – www.nomas.org

The White Ribbon Campaign – www.whiteribbon.com

Rogers Park Young Women's Action Team

WHO ARE WE?

The Rogers Park Young Women's Action Team (YWAT) grew out of the efforts of young women who expressed concern about the rampant street violence and harassment in their neighborhood in 2003. *This group of young women between the ages of 14-19 from the Rogers Park Community* is committed to researching issues of violence against women and girls, raising awareness of the problem, and working to reduce its prevalence and impact.

YWAT GOALS

1. To educate men and women about issues of violence and sexism.
2. To break down the barriers between men and women so that they can better understand each other, create alliances, and develop strategies for dealing with issues of violence and sexism.
3. To organize against violence by relying on consciousness-raising, community education and collective action.
4. To nurture leadership among young women.
5. To create a safe space for girls and young women to examine and explore issues in our lives and support each other as women.

CURRENT YWAT MEMBERS

Leadership Core Members

Shauniece Armstead, member since 2003
Shannon Bittner, member since 2003
Renee Braggs, member since 2004
Ronnett Lockett, member since 2003
Lillian Matamni, member since 2005
Daphnee Rene, member since 2003
Jonnae Taylor, member since 2003
Joyce Taylor, member since 2003
Emilya Whitis, member since 2003

2006 Associate Members

Shay Brown
Amber Burwell
Adeola Matamni
Chelsea Whitis

Primary Adult Ally

Mariame Kaba

MISSION STATEMENT

The YWAT is a youth-led, adult-supported social change project that empowers women to take action on issues that affect their lives (particularly issues of violence against girls and young women). The YWAT believes that girls and young women should be free from violence. We believe that through collective action, consciousness-raising, and organizing we can end violence against girls and young women.

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Talking to Boys and Men about Violence

