



Facilitation Guide

A Supplemental Resource to Maine Boys to Men's™
Reducing Sexism and Violence Program™ for Middle School
Version 1.0

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Who We Are

Maine Boys to Men (MB2M) engages communities to shift attitudes and actions to end male violence against self and others. Boys and men are bombarded by narrow, confusing, and often destructive messages about what masculinity is and isn't, contributing to a culture of self-harm, disrespect, and violence against others. Our unique set of experiential workshops, rooted in a broader view of masculinity, empowers all people to notice and intervene in potentially harmful situations long before they become violent.

Our approach is grounded by the belief that all boys have the potential to become emotionally healthy, respectful, non-violent men. While holding boys and men to a higher degree of individual accountability, we also put an appropriate level of focus on the environment— families, schools businesses, community organizations, and peer culture—as key elements of change in the lives of boys.

We provide a unifying experience and a path forward for individuals and communities who want to change our culture of harm and violence. Our powerful and interactive workshops inspire a variety of audiences including boys in middle school, all genders in high school, and adults in the community. We lead these experiential workshops using our Reducing Sexism and Violence Program: a nationally recognized set of youth-informed curricula that is based on extensive research, evidence-based practices, and data that demonstrate program impact.

Introduction

"At one mid-year session we had a fairly active group of seventh graders, one of whom was assigned a support staff. This student was fully engaged and spoke passionately about his personal experiences and reflections about the topics we presented. Following the session, the support staff shared that this was the most he had heard this student speak and share in a class the entire year."

— Maine Boys to Men Facilitator

Reducing Sexism and Violence Program for Middle School (RSVP-MS)

RSVP-MS is a leadership program that empowers participants to play a central role in ending gender-based harassment, abuse, and violence. This curriculum is a four-session violence prevention workshop for boys and male-identified middle school participants. We use real-life scenarios, supplemented by exercises and activities, to help participants challenge traditional gender roles and intervene as they recognize potentially harmful situations. RSVP-MS is based on over 20 years of experience, extensive research, and evidence-based practices. This curriculum is further informed through implementation: blending academic perspectives with youth voices, and continuously learning through “on the ground” work.

Our youth focused community-supported approach is recognized as one of the most comprehensive youth violence prevention strategies that starts with the healthy development of boys. It engages them as allies alongside girls, women, and non-binary folks and harnesses the passion for change that exists across communities.

How to Use This Guide

This guide summarizes techniques to inspire groups of male-identified youth to become active in ending gender-based violence. The RSVP-MS curriculum, when facilitated using these techniques, is a powerful program to create this engagement. This Guide is designed with flexibility in mind, to either be used in full, or as an indexed, modular resource that provides specific guidance for facilitators of RSVP-MS. The guide is used during the Maine Boys to Men Training Institute to prepare individuals to facilitate this program with groups of middle school aged participants. We've also taken the following steps to make this document easy to navigate electronically:

- The Table of Contents is linked and will jump to the section title links at the bottom of each
- Each section is linked in the document outline



Maine Boys to Men Youth Programs

Reducing Sexism and Violence Program for All Genders in High School (RSVP-HS)

RSVP-HS empowers participants to play a central role in confronting sexist attitudes and behaviors that are limiting and harmful to all people. This 12 hour workshop, delivered over two separate sessions, serves gender diverse groups of up to 40 high school participants. Participants deepen their understanding of how cultural definitions of gender can limit boys and devalue girls by normalizing sexist attitudes and harmful behaviors. The program moves quickly from awareness to skill building, teaching students to intervene as they recognize potentially harmful situations.

Youth Advisory Council

The Maine Boys to Men Youth Advisory Council is a group of youth ages 14-24 who provide intentional youth voice and presence. Youth Council members partner and collaborate with Maine Boys to Men in pursuit of its mission, program development, and delivery. Many community organizations seek out the Youth Council for their fresh perspective and inform policies and programs that affect youth. In the past, the Maine Boys to Men Youth Council has made a documentary, trained Maine students and teachers, attended conferences, and created a podcast. Our Youth Council changes the world.

Defining The Issue

RSVP-HS empowers participants to play a central role in confronting sexist attitudes and behaviors that are limiting and harmful to all people.

This 12 hour workshop, delivered over two separate sessions, serves gender diverse groups of up to 40 high school participants. Participants deepen their understanding of how cultural definitions of gender can limit boys and devalue girls by normalizing sexist attitudes and harmful behaviors. The program moves quickly from awareness to skill building, teaching students to intervene as they recognize potentially harmful situations.

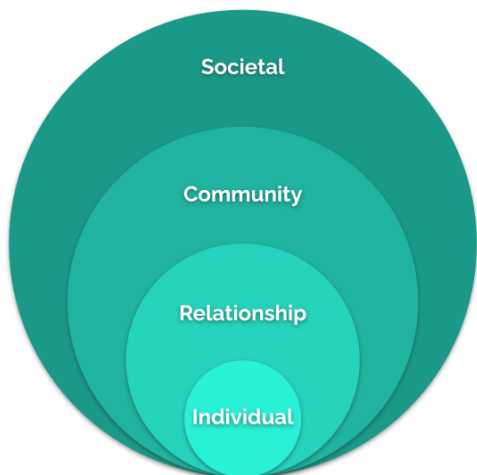
Boys and men are bombarded by narrow, confusing, and often destructive messages about what masculinity is and isn't, contributing to a culture of self-harm, disrespect, and violence against others. Some boys and men experience serious social consequences for expressing vulnerability or violating masculine norms early in development, which can result in a masculine identity that is closely linked to sexist attitudes. Limitations from these beliefs negatively impact the healthy development of boys, reducing their capacity to build healthy bonds with others and leading to increased violence against women, as well as gender- and sexually-diverse people.¹ Men's violence against women is a global epidemic.² We know that one in three women in the world will experience violence in her lifetime³ and that the majority of that violence is inflicted by men.⁴

Among young people, one in four girls and one in six boys will experience sexual violence, much of that before they reach eighteen years old.⁵ We also know that these statistics increase depending on the community:

Indigenous women, Black women, Asian/Pacific Islander women, and Latinas experience higher rates of interpersonal violence than White women⁶ and these experiences are compounded by racism, xenophobia, and colonialism. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender non-conforming, intersex, and queer youth⁷ and adults⁸ experience violence at rates much higher than heterosexual and cisgender youth and adults.

Rigid views of masculinity encourage boys and men to disconnect from their emotions, devalue authentic friendships, objectify and degrade women, and resolve conflicts through violence. Boys and men are hurting themselves and others at alarming rates. This is apparent in high rates of male suicide, self-harm, and high levels of reported harassment and violence against others.⁹

We know that to be successful, violence prevention strategies must intervene in multiple spheres of life (individual, family, neighborhood, community, policy) and begin early in human development. This concept is often referred to as the social-ecological model, illustrated below.



CDC The Delta Focus Program

Every boy has the potential to develop into an emotionally healthy, respectful, and non-violent man. Our Reducing Sexism and Violence Programs (RSVP) offer a unique set of curricula that aim to not only challenge the societal pressures of gender that are placed on youth, but also provide the tools needed to develop their whole selves. Program participants and community members are able to play a leadership role in shifting social norms and creating healthy, supportive communities. We see tremendous hope through our work with young people at the forefront of a much-needed cultural shift.

Why Middle School?

It is important to provide a developmental path through middle and high school that is paved with respect, authenticity, and safety. There is evidence that violence prevention efforts at the middle-school level can be effective prevention strategies, especially when they involve upstander intervention education.¹⁰

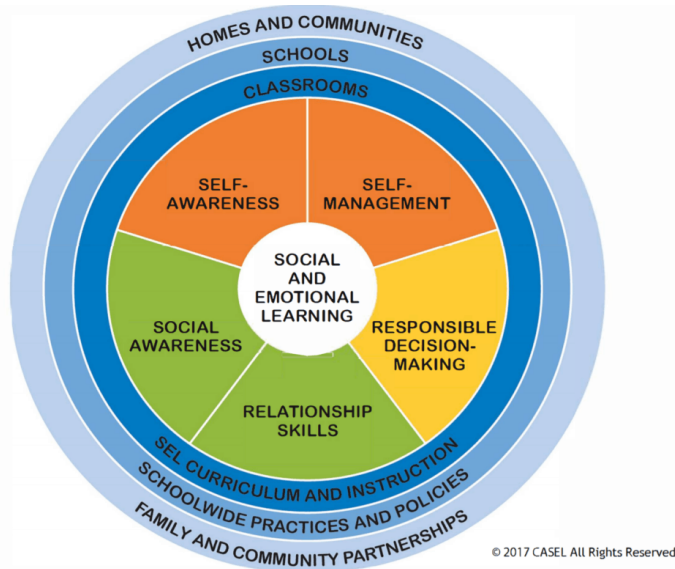
Middle school is a critical age to confront rigid and unhealthy views of masculinity and promote positive ones. In addition to fostering an awareness about gender stereotypes and their deleterious consequences on individuals, RSVP-MS provides educational activities and discussion that build a foundation for social and emotional skills-based learning.¹¹

Social Norms

Participants, particularly in early adolescence, develop attitudes and beliefs by responding to peers' observed and perceived social norms. Social norms theory suggests that middle school boys who hold beliefs that reflect dominant masculinity are more likely to engage in behaviors that may result in some of the previously mentioned consequences. Not only that, but they assume that others (i.e., their peers, siblings, and friends) share the same feelings. This results in a reduced likelihood of acting to prevent violence, thereby increasing the likelihood of gender-based violence in their community.¹² This is one reason why we work with boys and male-identified adolescents in groups as they are forming ideas about masculinity.

Middle school boys who participate in this program become aware of the generally healthy views that their peers hold beneath their performance of misperceived social norms. The boys then utilize their foundation of social and emotional learning to self-reflect, self-regulate, empathize, and deepen their connections with one another. Participants gain skills toward building healthier relationships, respecting others' boundaries, honoring consent, and intervening as active upstanders when they see signs of harassment or abuse. This creates a critical foundation at a pivotal point in adolescent development.

Core Principles



Social-Emotional Learning

The elements of social-emotional learning, as defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, are directly aligned with the tenets of healthy masculinity that Maine Boys to Men is working to build.¹³

Building the social-emotional capacities in boys builds a world where masculinity includes increased dignity and respect for self and others. Social-emotional learning competencies are especially useful to middle school participants and can lead to decreased anti-social behavior.¹⁴ Also, as participants increase their skills in emotional regulation and self-awareness, they become more willing to think critically about their own experiences and to participate in prevention efforts. This process also increases their capacity for empathy toward others and self.¹⁵

Upstander Education & Intervention

The upstander model of sexual violence prevention is widely accepted as an effective approach to primary prevention.¹⁶ Many prevention programs, including Maine Boys to Men, use this model for their community prevention programming with young people.¹⁷ Several components of RSVP-MS reflect the principles of upstander intervention theory to support boys in early adolescence in safely intervening when peers behave aggressively or disrespectfully towards each other or intimate partners.¹⁸

Note: Maine Boys to Men uses the term "upstander intervention." Upstander is defined as someone who recognizes when something is wrong and acts to make it right. When we stand up for what is right, and do our best to help support and protect someone who is being hurt, we are creating safer communities for all.



Intentions of the Curriculum

Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this curriculum is to build belonging, connection and engagement within a supportive community by elevating the leadership within each participant to stand up against harassment, violence, and abuse. Through these workshops we support participants in making the human connections necessary to build a thriving community.

The program examines ways that dominant cultural definitions of masculinity can encourage boys to detach emotionally, limit their aspirations, and normalize sexist attitudes and harmful behaviors. This program contributes to positive social and emotional development as a means to increasing social support and preventing harmful, disrespectful, and violent behaviors.

The program has traditionally served 7th and 8th grade boys and male-identified participants through four separate one-hour sessions. We recognize that you might opt for a different implementation. Our Train-the-Trainer approach allows for an appropriate level of flexibility for others to adapt this delivery method in ways that best fits the needs of their community. For example, a teacher who is trained to deliver this curriculum may choose to use this content during a student advisory period. In that case, the teacher may choose to spend several weeks on one topic that MB2M would only address for 30 minutes during any given module. These custom implementation approaches will be communicated to Maine Boys to Men and mutually agreed upon in writing, to help us understand how our curriculum is being used and how to support you as a facilitator.

Learning Objectives

RSVP for Middle School connects participants through a social and emotional learning framework aimed at primary prevention of gender-based violence. The program engages participants in learning about and discussing interpersonal biases, empathy, masculinity, healthy relationships, gender stereotypes, gender-based violence, consent, and upstander intervention.

Role of the Facilitators

Ask Open-ended Questions & Remain Flexible

Questions that begin with “how,” “why,” or “what” are often the best for facilitating discussion, rather than yes or no questions. Open-ended questions leave more space for critical thinking and for participants to share their unique experiences. They often contain less judgment than is implied in yes or no questions. Ask questions without expecting a particular response or answer – you might learn as much from a student as they learn from you. Since the goal is to spark dialogue, we want to use every tool we can to get participants into a conversation. At MB2M the focus is more on facilitating a conversation between boys and less on delivering or teaching concepts whenever possible.

It can be challenging as a facilitator to remain flexible enough to respond to what is happening in the room, but this is also a key part of the work. Being a dynamic presenter keeps participants engaged in the content. Meeting challenges with curiosity and openness encourages and models how to think critically, define our own beliefs, and how to handle conflict in a healthy way.

In order for the RSVP-MS curriculum to be most effective, it is important that facilitators do three things:

Maintain Positive Regard

Keep the relationships between facilitators and participants positive and warm, regardless of the challenges that may come up in the workshops.

Withhold Judgment

Allow space for participants to come to their own conclusions about the content and set up an environment in which participants can be honest about their experiences without feeling criticized.

Assume Best Intentions

Create a space in which individuals feel they can ask questions without having all the right language. Though feedback from participants may be challenging to hear at times, it is important that the real ideas and beliefs of the participants are shared and addressed openly.

Part of the power of the RSVP-MS curriculum is the facilitators' sharing and modeling of healthy vulnerability through storytelling. It is important that stories are told in a way that models healthy boundaries.

Storytelling & Boundaries

Stories that are long or contain graphic details aren't appropriate for this setting. Every story should move the group toward a greater understanding of the content, rather than being about the facilitator receiving personal feedback from the group about their story. Choose stories that are immediately relevant to the content and/or effectively illustrate a concept: this is part of making the curriculum come alive. Part of your training will be to think about and prepare your own stories. Stories shared should be prepared ahead of time and cleared with a peer-facilitator. If you do not have someone to review your story with prior to facilitation you are welcome to reach out to Maine Boys to Men for constructive feedback.



Self-Care Resources

The Importance of Self-Care

National Domestic Violence Hotline

Self-Care & Vicarious Trauma Resources

Violence Against Women Net

Beyond the Cliff

Laura van Dernoot Lipsky

Self-Care & Avoiding Burnout

"With everything that is out of our control every single day, one of the things that remains within our control at any given time is our ability to bring our exquisite quality of presence to what we are doing and how we are being. That presence, we know, can interrupt the systematic oppression that is causing so much harm, and can interrupt the trauma that is arising."

— Laura Van der Noot Lipsky

Facilitating a violence prevention curriculum can be emotionally challenging; be sure to take care of yourself in whatever ways work best for you. While facilitation techniques are important to master, it is also crucial to develop strategies of self-care and accessing outside support. Furthermore, modeling intentions of self-care is instructional for male youth and addresses a need to increase participation in help-seeking behaviors in men.¹⁹ Other ways to avoid burnout include creating confidential space to debrief workshops with your co-facilitator and/or with others in your life, and taking time to do things you find relaxing and restorative. Sometimes even just taking the time to ground or take several deep breaths, take a walk, or think of comforting sights, sounds, or smells can be helpful. The resources above and on page 12 offer a range of direct support as well as ideas for effective self-care practices.

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Working With Other Adult Participants

Before the Program

Teachers and school staff are crucial pillars of influence and support in the lives of middle school participants, particularly in the context of developing identity, self-esteem, and navigating peer relationships.²⁰

As MB2M facilitators, we place a high value on our relationships with educators and recognize that these relationships enable us to be successful in our prevention efforts.

During workshops adults who are not actively facilitating can positively contribute by modeling collaborative leadership and supporting students through challenging discussions. The ultimate goal is to have youth engaging authentically with the curriculum. The role of adults during program delivery is to support participants' learning. We also recognize that developing an understanding of the language we use in this work, the desired behavioral outcomes, and the strategies takes time. As a facilitator, we encourage you to direct peers, staff or educators to reading materials and to participate in MB2M's adult workshops.

Direct Support Resources

The following is a collection of violence prevention and intervention services that have the tools and skills to support survivors of gender-based violence.

Each program has a 24-hour helpline and website where anyone can access support and learn more about preventing and responding to gender-based violence in all its forms. We chose this collection of local and national resources to ensure that everyone accessing this curriculum has the ability to connect with someone caring, should they want or need that.



Text TEEN to 839863

Trained teen support BEFORE problems become a crisis



Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine

Helpline: 1-800-871-7741
sarssm.org



Text HOME to 741741 24/7

Support for anyone in crisis



National Suicide Prevention

Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
SuicidePreventionLifeLine.org



Text LOVEIS to 22522

Chat with someone about your relationship



Domestic Violence Resource

Helpline: 1-800-537-6066
ThroughTheseDoors.org

Setting Up The Space

Here are a few things we've learned about the process of setting up RSVP-MS workshops, which we think will be helpful as you begin facilitating.

Prep Work

In order for workshops to be most effective, we do prep work with adults in the school/community organization, parents/families, and with the participants prior to facilitating the workshop series.

For School/Organization Staff, We Provide:

- A copy of the RSVP-MS curriculum to be previewed,
- A program overview to be read to participants prior to the workshop,
- A letter template to be sent to parents by the school,
- A link to the pre and post surveys to be provided to students (labeled Before Survey and After Survey, respectively)
- Planning meetings with RSVP-MS facilitators as needed.

Preparing the Physical Space

The program should be held in a room that can fit approximately 20 participants sitting in chairs in a circle (without desks attached) and should remain in the same space throughout the four sessions, if possible. The school or community organization should also provide an LCD projector and screen, blank wall (or a white sheet which can be projected on), a whiteboard surface, and printed materials that the facilitator has sent ahead of time.

Facilitators will bring a flipchart, markers, LCD projector if the partner cannot provide one, a computer loaded with slides and videos, and a dongle or adapter (both HDMI & VGA).

We arrange the chairs in a circle with any desks pushed to the side out of the circle. This is a more egalitarian room set-up, and helps to equalize any power dynamics in the room among participants. It can also set a less formal tone, signaling that the workshops are group discussion-based, rather than being a more formal teaching style.²¹

Above All, Do This:

There are five key principles that we want every middle school participant to experience. If these are happening in the room, it is a successful program.

- 1) This work is fundamentally about giving participants permission to fully express their whole selves.
- 2) This work is also about planting the seeds of ideas, including modeling that there are many different ways that masculinity can be expressed.
- 3) Above all, it's important that participants can engage with the material at their own pace. We do not advocate for calling on participants individually or forcing participation. We like to use the term "challenge by choice."
- 4) Facilitators should always be modeling vulnerability that moves the group forward, but it's about the group, not the facilitator.
- 5) Keep the facilitation engaging; it's important that participants have a holistically positive experience with the material and the facilitators.

Establish Rapport

We love connecting with the young people in these workshops and have learned a lot about building rapport with youth.

From the first moments in the room, facilitators can begin helping participants to feel more comfortable in the space, with each other, and with the facilitators by drawing them out in conversation and/ or signaling that you are genuinely interested in them.

- **Be a tourist:** Look for openings to conversation with participants immediately. Notice posters in the school or unique attributes of the space. Ask participants questions about these things.
- **Laugh a little:** Making lighthearted jokes help begin to set participants at ease. Be cautious of using sarcasm, however.
- **Let youth lead:** Ask questions so participants can be the experts of their space. Where is the bathroom? How long are their class periods? What do they usually do during the workshop time? Allow participants to be the “tour guides” of their space.
- **Be needy:** Ask for help putting chairs in a circle and settling into the space. This offers ownership of the space and builds connection.
- **Two claps for the folks in the back:** observe and reflect things that quieter participants are interested in. Notice band t-shirts, style, books participants are carrying: anything that can help to spark a conversation.



Engaging Adults

During the Program

Other adult participants have a unique and powerful opportunity to support young people before, during, and after RSVP-MS. There is tremendous value to having an adult in the room who already has a relationship to students, and who can be available for support after the training. In addition, these adults can also act as a tangible reminder of the important work that students did together during the RSVP-MS program.

Working with adults in this setting is about collaborating to ensure that young people's voices are prioritized. Adult participation is welcome to the extent that it increases participants' learning. There are a number of ways that we set adults up for success during these workshops:

- Introduce them immediately and have some direct conversation upfront about roles and expectations



You Can Say Something Like:

"We're so glad to have you here supporting these participants today. The way we have found this curriculum to work most effectively is when adults who the participants know primarily play an observational role. There will be several points during the workshop where we will ask participants to share stories: you are welcome to share your own stories during those times, to the extent you are comfortable doing so. It's such a good opportunity to model respect and vulnerability. Thank you for the things you do every day to support these youth: we're grateful that you are here. It's powerful for these youth to see your interest and engagement with these topics."

- Acknowledge and practice empathy for providers/support staff as they work to support participants in what can be a challenging environment.
- Let staff know that all participants will have an opportunity to fully engage with topics and ideas that may be new to them and we don't want to limit their potential by categorizing them based on past behaviors.
- Let adults know that you will manage any challenging group dynamics but that you'd like to utilize their expertise with their participants by receiving support when participants are struggling to behave or engage appropriately.
- If adults have significant questions about the content or something else related to the program, offer to talk with them after they've observed the program that day.

Co-Facilitating

Maine Boys to Men's RSVP-MS is designed to be co-facilitated, in order to effectively care for not only the young people in the workshops but also the facilitators. Since the inception of RSVP for Middle School, it has been facilitated by two male-identified people at a time. Co-facilitation is a useful model for effectively delivering all of the content, managing the group, keeping track of time, and—quite honestly—having fun. It also helps to have two people balancing the need to follow the curriculum with the need to be responsive to what is happening in the room. The curriculum is designed for two facilitators, in case there are disclosures or challenging behavior that require one person to continue facilitating while the other supports individual participants. We do not recommend facilitating this content independently.

Handling Disclosures

The goal of the curriculum is for participants to feel comfortable enough to share about their personal experiences with masculinity, some of which may include experiences of trauma.²² The American Psychological Association defines trauma as an emotional response to a terrible event. The following are some of our guidelines for handling disclosures during the workshops.

- A disclosure does not require immediate response, in fact, it may be good to pause and respect the silence for a moment. Model and display empathy for the participant's experience. You can do this by thanking the participant for sharing their story and validating their experience/perspective. After someone discloses, it's important to acknowledge and celebrate the vulnerability they are showing.
- Always restate the importance of confidentiality when participants disclose experiences from their personal life. Restating the importance of confidentiality models respect and care for and among participants.
- It's also important to normalize the feelings that participants have during disclosures: it makes sense that they have significant emotions if they are telling a story that is hard for them. Thank them for sharing and reinforce that their feelings are normal and are actually an important part of being able to express their full selves.
- It is important for facilitators to know and follow the mandatory reporting procedures of the school or organization they are working with. It is important that these be reviewed by the facilitators prior to working with students. If a student discloses during a workshop the facilitator must follow up with the appropriate person connected to the school or organization immediately after the workshop. Depending on your role and the group you are working with you may be considered a mandatory reporter and should follow all guidelines connected to this important role. Safety is always a priority.

Addressing Challenging Behavior

At times there might be challenging behavior that facilitators need to address when working with participants. Here are some of our ideas about how to effectively manage some common situations.

- Sometimes young people will act out if they are uncomfortable with the content of the workshop, and it can be helpful to observe out loud that you think this may be happening with the group. It can normalize feelings of discomfort in a non-punitive way. You can say something like, "It seems like people might be having some feelings about this activity/ discussion, because I notice that there's a lot of side conversations/restlessness/etc. happening. Do others notice that too? What do you think we should do about it?" This will take time away from other activities, so you will need to be flexible in your expectations as a facilitator.
- As with handling disclosures, sometimes one-on-one check-ins with participants can help to address disruptive behavior.
- Personalizing the impact of behavior and/or language can also be useful. Acknowledging that harmful behavior or language hurts you or makes you uncomfortable can assist with illustrating intention versus impact: that sometimes even if we don't intend to be hurtful, we can still have a negative impact on someone else.
- It is important not to engage in power struggles with participants; if you are being challenged as a facilitator, respectfully respond and work to diffuse the situation, rather than responding in a way that escalates the exchange. It's important to acknowledge your intent directly. You can agree to disagree with participants and state that you would like to move on.
- Being able to "read the room" is also a key part of facilitation: based on your experiences with a group, you can gauge what types of activities the group can handle and what parts of the curriculum might need to shift.
- If a group is having lots of side conversations during large group discussions, you might have them pair up instead, in order to facilitate more attention being paid to individual participants' stories. Instead of asking a question to a whole group, ask participants to discuss the question with the person beside them. We call this "Pair Share" and it often creates more participation and discussion. After a few minutes of "Pair Share" you can ask the group if someone wants to share what was discussed in their pair.

Engaging Every Participant

The goal of the workshop series is to get every participant to engage with the material in whatever way is most meaningful for them.

- Celebrate participants who are sharing. This can be simply thanking participants who participate or asking follow-up questions to further engage them in the discussion.
- Appreciate and redirect participants who are dominating the conversation. You can say something like, "Thank you so much for your participation—you have been making some really important points. Let's see if we can get some other perspectives in the room, too: what other ideas are out there?"
- Silence is okay. It gives participants time to think and process. Having patience with the group and giving time for participants to answer questions helps give space to participants who might not speak up at first.
- If any participants are actively challenging the premise of the workshop, or voicing oppositional beliefs, it may be helpful to ask the participant if you can talk more in depth after the workshop is over. Knowing that they will have a special chance to voice their opinions afterward may help some participants to better participate in the workshop.

Managing the Group

Part of any group facilitation is managing group dynamics.

- The curriculum intentionally includes a mix of activities that involve moving around and discussion. Be sure to keep the pace of the workshop moving and engaging in order to keep the energy level up.
- Give attention to those participating in meaningful ways. This can encourage other participants to engage appropriately and can pull focus away from other participants who may not be as engaged in the content or with the facilitators.
- Shift strategies when necessary: large group discussion, pair shares, small group discussion, physical activities, and individual reflective writing are all tools for changing the energy or engagement level of the group.

Using Humor

Humor is a key element to any effective facilitation! When people are laughing, that usually means that they are engaged with the content. Humor is different from sarcasm; we don't advise using sarcasm with participants, as it can come across as hurtful or disrespectful. Joy is important in this work. Ultimately we want to increase participants' capacity to experience joy. With so much of the workshop content being emotionally taxing, it's vital to find moments of humor and joy that the group can experience together

Conclusion

We think a lot about hope at Maine Boys to Men: hope for the future, hope for the young people and adults we work with, hope for ourselves and our loved ones.

A big part of this hope is the work that we do through the Reducing Sexism & Violence Program for middle school aged youth. We find such tremendous promise in the eyes and hearts of the young people that we work with, and we are glad to share that with you as you implement this program. It is hard work, but it is meaningful work that builds a better world for all of us. Thank you for being a part of building that world.



Endnotes

- 1) American Psychological Association, Boys and Men Guidelines Group. (2018). APA guidelines for psychological practice with boys and men. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/about/policy/psychological-practice-boys-men-guidelines.pdf>
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- 8) <https://ncadv.org/blog/posts/domestic-violence-and-the-lgbtq-community>
- 9) <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/01/ce-corner.aspx>
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