

Maine Boys to Men

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

Seventh Grade Curriculum

Module 1

Module Time: 60 Minutes

Materials:

- Curriculum: Module 1
- AV Equipment / Adaptors
- Mod 1 Slide Show (7th Grade)
- Flipchart and markers
- Painters or Masking Tape
- Support and Safety Handout
- Pre-Participation Survey *(If applicable)*
- Dry Erase Markers *(If applicable)*

Objectives:

1. Establish rapport between the facilitators and program participants.
2. Identify the purpose of the program and provide overview of modules.
3. Describe strategies participants can use during program to self-regulate and cite available outside resources for emotional support if needed.
4. Define the concept of gender stereotypes and how stereotypes facilitate or limit our understanding of others.

Module 1 Overview

1.1 - Introduction	5 min
1.2 - Permission Slip	10 min
1.3 - Support and Safety	5 min
1.4 - Buying This For A Friend: Gender Roles	30 min
1.5 - Closing	10 min

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1.1 Introduction

Objectives:

1. Introduce yourselves, others present who are not student participants, and the MB2M organization.
2. Describe the purpose of the RSVP-MS program.
3. Review the goals for Module 1.

Required Time:
5 minutes

Materials

- Module 1 Slides #1-#4

1. Prior to the start of this module, facilitators should have the room set up to accommodate seating in a single large circle and technology needs, etc. Additionally, have flip chart sheets ready for “Buying this for a friend”.
2. **Display SLIDE 1: “Welcome!”**. Begin by introducing yourselves and any other adults present in the room, the organization, Maine Boys to Men, and the MS-RSVP program.
3. **Display SLIDE 2: “Why we’re here”**. Inform the participants that the purpose of these sessions is...

“...to build a connected, engaged, and supportive community by elevating the leadership within each of them to stand up against harassment, violence, and abuse. Through these sessions, participants will be supported in making the human connections necessary to build a thriving and safe community.”

4. **Display SLIDE 3: “Program Agenda”**. Review brief overview of entire program briefly stating this first week, Week 1, will be on safety and support and stereotypes, Week 2 on empathy and consent, Week 3 on gender roles and masculinity, and Week 4 a review and active bystander training.
5. **Display SLIDE 4: “Goals for Today”**. Read through the goals as below. Describe how today’s activities are intended to give participants an opportunity to reflect on their individual experiences, attitudes, and limits related to stereotypes and gender roles and to help participants build a better understanding of themselves and each other.
 - Improve participants’ understanding of what stereotypes are and their potential to impact how people interact.
 - Share the support resources available in school, in the community, and online.
 - Discuss how individuals learn about gender roles in our society.

1.2 Permission Slip

Objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Inform participants about the desired behaviors and roles in the room.2. Engage participants holistically in establishing group rapport, norms and goals for engaging with each other.	Required Time: 10 minutes
	Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Module 1 Slide #5

1. Engage students by hearing from each student to build rapport. Go around and have students say their names and answer some questions. Show a willingness to forge connection. Example of questions:
 - If you could make a new class for your school, what would it be on?
 - If you could fill a library with any one thing, what would it be?
 - What is one thing you would do on your ideal Saturday?
 - What is your favorite thing about ____ month/season?
2. Tell participants that everyone is going to sign a permission slip through a series of movements and guiding words. Model the movements during instruction, keep mood light and engage and be sure to have some fun with students. You don't want them to feel like you are wasting their time, so you want to set some guidelines that we feel will make for productive, interesting, safe and fun sessions together.
3. Preface the activity by saying:

"We're going to collectively sign a permission slip to access many different parts of ourselves and others as we explore some new ideas together. Please stand up and form a circle, finding a little bit of space to move your body."
4. **Display SLIDE 5:** "Permission to..."
5. Ask participants to start by either closing their eyes or looking down.
State that everyone's **head** represents permission to express themselves through the duration of the program.
6. Ask participants to bring their attention back to the group and to open their eyes, if closed. Have them find someone near them and give that person a high five or a quick wave with their right arm.
 - a. State that their **right arm** represents the need to take care of each other by listening, showing respect, and keeping participant's stories confidential.
 - b. Discuss with the group what confidentiality means before moving forward.
7. Shift participant's attention to think about how they can take care of themselves in a group like the one you've brought them in to.
 - a. Ask participants for some examples of what, if needed, they can do to regain their focus, deal with difficult emotions, or calm themselves down.
 - b. State that, for this activity, their **left arm** will represent their permission to take care of themselves during this program. Tell the group that they can show some love for

themselves with a left arm hug and that you will share some strategies for self-care later.

8. State that some of the topics and resulting conversations will be new and likely challenging at times, but that you would like them to step into those conversations with courage, so that they can gain new perspectives.
 - a. Ask everyone to step in with just their **right leg** to represent that they will try their best to step into some discomfort with courage as we go through this experience together.
9. Have participants step fully into the circle and shake their **left legs** in front of them or do something silly, like jumping around or a dance. Say to the group that their left leg will represent an important part of the program: having fun. Tell the group that you want them to have fun and that it is okay to be silly and laugh at times. Ask them to be mindful of when it is right to joke a little and when it is right to show the speaker respect by listening attentively.
10. Summarize the purpose of this activity was to give them all permission to courageously share themselves while also respecting confidentiality and each other's needs.
11. Have participants return to their seats before transitioning to the next activity.

1.3 Support and Safety

Objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define and provide examples of self-care strategies. 2. Provide participants with crisis and support resources. 	<div data-bbox="1066 306 1294 378" data-label="Text"> <p>Required Time: 5 minutes</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1109 413 1250 447" data-label="Section-Header"> <p>Materials</p> </div> <div data-bbox="972 459 1378 537" data-label="List-Group"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and Safety Handout • Module 1 Slides #6 - #10 </div>
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1. Pass out handout: Support and Safety Handout.
2. Ask if any participants would like to voluntarily share how they care of yourself when they are feeling uncomfortable, distracted, or overwhelmed without pressuring them. Facilitator should share a personal strategy they use.
3. After responses, if any, **display SLIDE 6: “Self-Care Strategies”** and read some off the self-care strategies they could use during this program as well as other times when needed. Model as necessary. Briefly ask them for their thoughts.
4. Acknowledge up front that some of what will be talked about during this program for middle schoolers can be challenging and hard to hear or think about. Inform participants that, if they experience feelings or reactions that they cannot tolerate or feel they need to talk about, feel free to approach the trainers to help them get connected with someone in the school that they would feel safe and be comfortable talking to.
5. Review the Support and Safety Handout with the participants. Specifically, highlight how to use a help-line and online/text resources. **Display SLIDES 7 - 10** during review.
6. Emphasize that what each person does for self-care may be different than another person. For some, taking a walk can be really helpful, while others may need to stop, rest, and take some breaths. There is no single method that works for every person in this room, so it is important that everyone try out and use strategies that work specifically for them.

1.4 Buying This For A Friend: Gender Roles

Objectives:

1. Introduce the topic of gender stereotypes and gender socialization through cultural messaging (e.g., advertising).
2. Discuss how social gender norms may affect how individuals act towards or think about one another.

Required Time:

30 minutes

Materials

- Module Slides #11 – #14
- Flip Chart
- Flip Chart Markers

1. **Pause** the slide show by muting the screen. Have students seated in a circle.
2. Using body language, tone and facial expression, make an effort to lighten the mood in the room and ask participants to think about a toy that they loved when they were in second or third grade, what it was, who gave it to them, how it was used, and how it made them feel to play with it. If necessary, facilitator can model by sharing thoughts on a toy of their own.
3. Have participants turn to one another and pair share, discussing with someone next to them what they thought about. After a moment, ask if anyone had any toys that created really strong memories when they were children and facilitate group sharing.
4. **Display SLIDE 11: “We’re Going to a Birthday Party”**. Ask participants to imagine an adult who is bringing them as a third grader to a birthday party and has given them the responsibility of buying the toy for their friend. Ask them how much money they need and settle on 30-50 dollars. Give them the toy **purchasing rules**: no real or virtual money, no gift cards, and no pocketing the cash.
5. Have students then count off by twos. Participants who got a **ONE** will be going to a birthday party for a boy in third grade. Those who got a **TWO** are going to a birthday party for a girl in third grade.
6. Ask participants to take a minute to decide what they would like to get for the person whose party they were assigned to attend.
7. Ask participants to then say what number they are and what gift they got, going around the circle. Write the responses for the boy and the girl in two columns on a sheet of flipchart paper.
8. Ask students if they see any trends in the two lists. Encourage input.
9. Describe how advertising for such toys differs for toys that are for boys or for girls. Describe what a word cloud is and how larger words are ones that are more frequently mentioned; the font and color doesn’t matter. Inform students they will be looking at word clouds that are based on a review of the words used in advertising for boys’ and girls’ toys.
10. **Display Slide 12: “Battle, Power, ...”**.
 - What words jump out at you? (everyone can shout out, no need to raise hands)

- Considering this is a world cloud composed of the words used for boys' toys, what themes can we draw from these words?" e.g., violent, aggressive, military, competition, dirty, independence.
- Based on all this, how are boys expected to engage in play?" e.g., aggressively, violently, competitively.

11. Then *display SLIDE 13: "Love, Fun, ..."*.

- What words jump out at you? (everyone can shout out, no need to raise hands)
- Considering this is a world cloud composed of the words used for girls' toys, what themes can we draw from these words?" e.g., collaboration, gentle, nonviolent, mothering/caretaking, and appearance.
- Based on all this, how are girls expected to engage in play?"
- Why are some of these things in the girls' word cloud and not the boys'?

12. Display SLIDE 14: "Battle, Love, ..." and facilitate open discussion covering the points below. This discussion is critical component of program and should encourage students to share their thoughts. Explain throughout that you are not saying that anything in either of the word clouds is bad; the goal is to understand the messaging in advertising.

- What words are in the word clouds?
 - First, ask how similar do the world clouds look side by side.
 - Ask if students can find any of the same words (there are a few, but note they are far and few between).
 - Ask an open ended question to encourage students to share their insights, for example, what do they notice about these two word clouds when they are displayed next to each other? (What messages do girls and boys get?)
- What might be the impact of these messages?
 - Ask about the impact these messages can have on boys and girls/men and women and how they interact.
 - Do these two word clouds paint complete pictures of all boys and all girls? (Do some boys enjoy some of the things in the girls word cloud? Do girls sometimes enjoy some of the things in the boys word cloud?)
 - Can these messages limit what a boy or girl might want to do or be?
 - How might a boy be treated if he is playing with dolls?
 - What might happen if a boy brought a girl toy for another boy? And vice versa?
- Other
 - Where do they see these messages in everyday life – encourage students to share specific examples (e.g., the different aisles in the toy store, commercials.)
 - Who benefits from these narrow and constricting messages (advertisers)?

1.5 Closing

Objectives:

1. Provide time for participants to offer their thoughts, reflections, and to ask questions.
2. Provide a space for anonymous questions/concerns to be expressed.

Required Time:
10 minutes

Materials

- Module 1 Slides #6 - #10

1. Begin by reminding participants of facilitators names and the purpose of the program. Build on the rapport established with the group over this session.
2. Note that some participants may be vulnerable during this program depending on what is talked about as a result of their own experiences (trauma histories, identities, social or behavioral challenges in school). Some may feel comfortable opening up about certain aspects of themselves and choose to share things that they have not shared openly before.
3. Stress to participants the importance of respecting both their own and each other's experiences and needs throughout this program by practicing confidentiality. Briefly review with participants the following while again **displaying Slides 6-10**.
 - Self-care strategies.
 - School resources if they need to talk to an adult (school counselors, social workers, specifically identified teachers).
 - Resources outside of school, with an emphasis on online tools reviewed earlier as provided in their [Support and Safety Handout](#).
4. Close the session by having participants stand up in a circle and indicate something that they will do to be good to themselves / take care of themselves during the rest of the day. For example, they may choose to do something new after facing a mentally or emotionally challenging issue. Mention that they also may leave the group just thinking about what people shared and considering whether that strategy may be effective for them. Facilitators should start the activity by modeling: sharing what they will do for self-care.