



GUNS, CRIME AND MASCULINITY

GUN CONTROL



DEFINITIONS

VIOLENCE

Violence is behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage or kill someone or something. (Source: Oxford Dictionary)

Violence can be someone physically or psychologically harming you, or having power over you. Violence is not just about injury or death. Violence can also deprive someone of material things or emotional support.

Violence can be divided into three broad categories:

- **self-directed violence** (i.e. suicide and self-harm)
- **interpersonal violence** (i.e. family and intimate partner violence or violence between family members and people who know each other intimately)
- **collective violence** (i.e. war)

Violent acts can be:

- physical
- sexual
- psychological
- emotional

Source: Wikipedia

PATRIARCHY

Patriarchy is a social system in which power is held by men, through the way we practice culture and customs that favour men and exclude women.

Source: dictionary.com

MASCULINITY

- is also called **boyhood**, **manliness**, or **manhood**
- is a set of characteristics, behaviours and roles generally associated with boys and men
- is mostly about how society expects men to behave

- is a set of behaviours that can be taken up by both men and women
- is associated with **courage**, **independence** and **assertiveness**
- differs for each person and is dependent on personality, family and culture

TOXIC MASCULINITY

- refers to the attitudes held by society that describe the masculine gender role as violent, unemotional or sexually aggressive
- is physically and emotionally harmful to people
- does not mean that men or boys are toxic or bad. It means that society's unfair expectations of men and boys can lead them to express themselves negatively
- rewards destructive habits and behaviours
- gets worse when men hide their feelings like grief, hurt, sadness, loneliness

Toxic masculinity includes:

- Arrogance
- Anger
- Aggression
- Dominance
- Superiority
- Risk-taking. This means taking actions that may have negative consequences.

Source 1: Toxic masculinity
2: Harmful effects of toxic masculinity

Remember

When we talk about the harmful effects of toxic masculinity, we are not criticising men - we are talking about the unfair standards society imposes on them.



TO GET YOU THINKING



Source: Feministing.com

? **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

What do these words make you feel?

If you were to think of an image of a person in the movies or in the media matching the words, who would that be?

Are these negative or positive words?

Who in your own lives and in your community is most likely to be like many of these words?

Source: Gun crime victimizes men the most

GUNS AND CRIME - MASCULINITY: MYTHS AND FACTS

MYTHS
Men are violent
Strength and power are the same thing
Empathy is weakness
Men are naturally more angry, aggressive and violent

FACTS
<p>Most men are not violent but most violent crimes are committed by men. Although more men die of gun violence than women, gun deaths are an overwhelmingly male-perpetrated crime – the victims of male-perpetuated crimes are male and female.</p>
<p>Strength refers to being physically, emotionally or mentally strong. Power is associated with the capacity to direct or influence the behaviour of others.</p>
<p>Empathy is being able to understand, recognise, sense and respond to other people’s emotions.</p>
<p>Anger is a human emotion. Everyone, regardless of their sex or gender, has the same capacity to get angry, act in violence or express themselves with negative behaviour.</p>

Men engage in sexual assault because they have a higher sex drive than women

Sexual assault is an act of violence and has to do with power. It is not motivated by the desire for sex.

Men will always turn to verbal aggression or physical violence in order to protect their loved ones

Physical violence is a choice, regardless of gender. Not all men deal with conflict through verbal or physical aggression.

Men should protect women

This kind of thinking reinforces the stereotype that women are weak and need physical protection from men who are considered stronger.

Vulnerability in men shows weakness

Vulnerability often requires courage. Societies must create space for young boys and men to be vulnerable and see strength in gentleness. There are many ways to be a man that are not violent.

Source 1: Talking about violence and masculinity
2 : Daily Maverick

DIFFERENT WAYS TO TALK ABOUT GUN CONTROL

These questions can help guide your radio shows and outreach.

They are angles to the bigger topic of guns, crime and masculinity

You have many examples of how to develop your outreaches and radio shows from previous guides. Use them to expand on some of the angles below.



What are the ways we can redefine manhood in our community? How would that affect levels of violence?



What are the ways young men can be strong, powerful and protect themselves without having a gun?



Do concepts of masculinity in South Africa contribute to men engaging in gender-based violence?



How do the ways we practise culture and customs promote toxic masculinity and violence? What role do women play in this?

Remember

Distributing power more equally is one of the ways we can disrupt toxic masculinity. Promoting more women into leadership positions is one way of distributing power.