



Workshop: Masculinity & Expressing Emotions

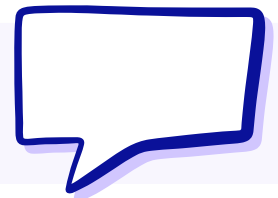
I SAMPLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES



LEARNERS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- ▶ Describe how expectations of men and restricting emotions are linked.
- ▶ Recognize moments when their feelings and communication skills are impacted by stereotypes about men expressing emotion.
- ▶ Demonstrate increased skills around empathy, emotional regulation, and communication.

II SAMPLE INTRODUCTION



“Today’s conversation is about men and emotions. What emotions are OK and which aren’t? Think back to when you were a kid. Have you ever had family or friends say “boys don’t cry?” As adults, it’s common to hear that the only time men cry is at funerals or when their sports teams win or lose. These pressures against expressing “softer” emotions, especially for men, still rings true today. We’re taught that guys should act strong and tough and not ask for help, even when they’ve gone through something difficult, like a breakup or serious illness. So, today, let’s talk more about which emotions are OK for men to express and why.”



III SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



- What emotions did you see the adult men around you express growing up (e.g., fathers, coaches)? Why are those the emotions they expressed?
- Are there particular emotions that you feel more comfortable expressing than others? Why do you think some are easier to experience than others?
- Have you ever felt uncomfortable seeing men express “too much” emotion (such as crying or excitement)?
- Think of a big challenge or loss in your life. Consider:
 - Were you able to tell your friends about it?
 - Did you feel supported?
 - Did you feel any pressure to show that you were “OK?”
- When you’re feeling down, what would you most like someone to say to you or how would you most like to be supported?
- How often do you stop and take a moment to understand how you feel emotionally and in your body?
- What can we do to help other men feel comfortable sharing emotions like sadness, grief, and anxiety? How do you usually cope with stress or frustration?



IV SAMPLE TALKING POINTS



- We learn what emotions are acceptable and which are not from friends, family, and media.
- It's OK if it feels difficult to say that we are hurt, sad, or if it is difficult to share our passions with friends.
- It's very strong and courageous to open up and show vulnerability. You opening up gives permission for others to do the same.
- Anger is often the only socially acceptable emotion that men are allowed to express due to it being associated with dominance and aggression, but often people forget that anger is just one emotion out of many that we can express.
- Anger is also considered a secondary emotion. Often, the root of anger lies in emotions such as sadness, disgust, fear. When you feel angry or agitated, pause and ask if you feel other emotions, too.
- The pressures against men expressing hurt and joy are the same pressures that lead many men to not seek help for mental health challenges or struggle to find lasting, fulfilling relationships.



IV SAMPLE TALKING POINTS (CONT.)

- Keeping our emotions in has serious consequences. For example:
 - 44% of all men had thoughts of suicide in the prior two weeks; younger men show the highest levels of depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation (“State of American Men, ”[Equimundo](#), 2023).
 - 65% of men aged 18 to 23 say that “no one really knows me well” (“State of American Men, ”[Equimundo](#), 2023).
- For our health and the health of our loved ones, it’s incredibly important that we’re able to identify what we’re feeling, why, and then communicate the full range of emotions.
- When listening to someone else share a struggle, your first instinct might be to jump to provide solutions. Consider what they would say they need and if just feeling heard is most important to them. Try active listening practices like nodding and asking clarifying questions.



V SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

**SCENARIO ROLE PLAY:
COMMUNICATION AROUND
EMOTION**

Provide a series of short scenarios. For each scenario, prompt participants to prepare how they would respond to their friends about the challenges they're experiencing. Role play each scenario in pairs and host a debrief discussion to prompt deeper reflection. Emphasize key skills and examples of how to support another.

Sample Scenarios:

1. Grief - Person 1 has just lost a loved one and is struggling with school.

Role Play: How can Person 2 provide support? What questions can they ask to show care?

2. Anger - Person 1 and Person 2 are playing a video game and Person 1 loses and becomes very angry, throws the remote and snaps at Person 2. Person 1 offers an apology.

Role Play: How can Person 2 respond in a way that seeks to understand why Person 2 reacted how he did?

3. Jealousy - Person 1 and Person 2 are friends. Person 1 has started dating someone Person 2 was really interested in.

Role Play: How can Person 2 communicate that he is upset and why?





VI SAMPLE ACTIVITIES (CONT.)



Print a body map for each participant and provide the group with crayons, colored pencils, markers. Explain that this activity will serve as an opportunity to learn how certain emotions show up in the body. Ask participants to close or lower their eyes. Provide prompts, one at a time. Ask the body mapping questions for each in order for participants to understand how they feel when asked about different scenarios. Then, discuss how to apply this exercise throughout their lives.

BODY MAPPING

Sample Prompts:

1. Think of a time you experienced anger.
2. Think of a time you experienced sadness.
3. Think of a time you experienced shame.
4. Think of a time you experienced fear.
5. Think of a time you experienced joy.

Body Mapping Questions:

1. Where did they feel [anger, sadness, shame, fear, joy] emerge in their body? If anger had a color while visiting that area of the body, what color is it? Does it have a texture? Is it rough, smooth, or spiky? Does it have a temperature? Is it warm, hot, or cold?
2. Have them open their eyes and draw the way they felt [anger, sadness, shame, fear, joy] manifest in their body on their body map.

Sample Discussion Questions:

1. Are there any similarities between any of the emotions? For example, feeling anger and fear in the chest.
2. Throughout life, how can we be aware of and process our emotions?



VII WORKSHOP RESOURCE LIBRARY



- **Video:** *Emotions: The Data Men Miss | Adam Dorsay | TEDxSantaClaraUniversity*
- **Video:** *PabsSanchez on Twitch & YT*
- **Article:** *New research shows men are just as emotional as women - The Hill*
- **Article:** *Emotions and Stigma: It's Okay for Men to Talk About Them - Framework Recovery*
- **Article:** *Emotional intelligence: why it matters and how to teach it | Teacher Network | The Guardian*
- **Article:** *The Anger Iceberg| The Gottman Institute*
- **Research:** *Promoting Gender Equality by Supporting Men's Emotional Flexibility - Croft, Atkinson, and May*