

Beyond Men and Masculinity discussion notes

Welcome to our discussion suggestions centered around the thought-provoking film "Beyond Men and Masculinity." In this session, we invite you to delve into the film's core themes and their relevance to our personal lives. Specifically, we will explore the profound impact of societal norms and expectations on boys and men, examining how they constrain the expression of emotions and shape our behavior.

Through engaging group discussions and introspective activities, we aim to foster an environment where participants can delve into their own experiences and raise awareness about the ways in which these societal expectations have influenced us individually and as a whole society. We will collectively examine the consequences these expectations have on our well-being as individuals, as well as on our relationships.

By actively participating in this discussion, we hope to ignite meaningful conversations that prompt us to critically assess the current state of gender norms, shed light on the potential harms they can cause, and explore avenues for change. Together, we will seek to identify what is needed to challenge and transform these restrictive expectations, paving the way for healthier expressions of masculinity and more fulfilling lives for everyone involved.,

Note to the facilitator:

As the facilitator, your role is crucial in guiding the discussion and ensuring that everyone feels respected and comfortable expressing their thoughts. As these discussions might be facilitated in mixed diverse gender affiliations and identities, we emphasize the importance of active listening, acknowledgement of different viewpoints and of creating an environment that encourages open dialogue and mutual understanding. Please keep in mind that this activity is designed to foster respectful conversations and empathy. As we explore the different perspectives on patriarchy, let us be mindful of the sensitivities involved and engage with one another in a supportive manner. Together, we can create a safe space where everyone's voice is heard and valued.

[Preparation: before watching the film](#)

- self-reflection: Before watching the film, take a moment to assess your comfort level in expressing your feelings on a scale of 1 to 5. Reflect on the emotions you find challenging to acknowledge or express openly.
- Take a moment to reflect on your thoughts and emotions as you prepare to watch the film titled "Beyond Men and Masculinity." Share with the group what comes to mind and how you feel about engaging with the content of this film. (This will support the facilitator in being aware of the sensitivities present in the room, allowing for a safe and inclusive space for discussion.)
- Defining Patriarchy: The facilitator will ask participants to brainstorm and contribute their thoughts and associations related to the concept of patriarchy. As ideas are

shared, the facilitator will write them on a board or use a word cloud tool to visually represent the various words and associations that arise. By actively participating in this activity, we can collectively uncover a range of perspectives and deepen our understanding of the complexities surrounding this topic.

- Take a moment and write down three themes the movie title “Beyond Men and Masculinity “ makes you think of. This will allow the facilitator to raise awareness on the biases that are held in the group about men and masculinity and is a great way to flush these points as a foundation for further discussion after watching the film
- The facilitator can encourage participants to engage actively with the film by inviting them to jot down points that resonate with them and those that they find challenging. This exercise will allow individuals to reflect on their personal reactions and insights while watching the film.

[Big Groups discussion](#)

The big group discussion can serve as both an introduction to the topic and a summary of the small group discussions. In a larger group discussion, we have the opportunity to check alignment and gain an overview of the spectrum of opinions and experiences present. The facilitator's focus lies in identifying common takeaways and embracing the diversity of perspectives within the group. This dynamic setting inspires and connects individuals, fostering a sense of collective exploration.

The following are suggested/optional enquiries to be explored in a big discussion group.

- The impact of the patriarchal system on boys' self-expression, behavior, self-perception, and relationships.
- Examples of how societal expectations and norms affect boys' emotional expression and behavior.
- What is the role of parents and educators in promoting healthy emotional expression for boys and what would be the benefits of boys being able to express a wider range of emotions and work with emotions effectively?
- After watching the film do you think there is such a thing as “toxic masculinity” and how does it influence o boy’s emotions and behaviors?
- Identifying advantages and privileges for men within the patriarchal paradigm.
- The impact of patriarchy on personal relationships with between boys, boys and girls, as well as in school and working environments.

- What did you learn about the concept of a "mean team" and its dynamics in boys' group? What is the role of the leader or "boss" in a mean team and what factors contribute to their power and influence? What makes individuals feel that they must conform to the leader's wishes?
- The importance of recognizing individual agency and the ability to make independent choices.
- Envisioning an environment without bullying or mean teams and describing what it would look like. Discussing the necessary steps for someone to step out of a mean team dynamic.

Suggested small Group reflections.

In small group discussions, every participant could share their thoughts and perspectives, fostering active listening and minimizing distractions. The intimate nature of these groups creates a safe space where individuals can be more vulnerable, allowing for deeper connections and meaningful exchanges. The facilitator can distribute large sheets of paper to each group, allowing them to jot down the key points that arise during their discussions. Later on, these points can be shared and discussed within the larger group setting.

The following are suggested/optional enquiries to be explored in a small discussion group.

- Share with the group the reflection note you wrote before watching the film. feeling(s) you struggle with and briefly explain why you find it difficult. This will help create a safe and open environment for honest discussions.
- Find together four personal examples of how societal expectations and norms affect your emotional expression and behavior.
- What was the role of your parents and educators in developing your emotional expression in the context of gender and what could have they done differently?
- Have you experienced or expressed toxic masculinity?
- How would you benefit if boys were able to express a wider range of emotions and work with emotions effectively?
- From your personal experience are there advantages and privileges for men within the patriarchal paradigm? What are they?
- Does the patriarchic system affect your personal relationships with boys and girls, if so, how?

- What are your personal experiences with “mean teams “and the roles played within them? (“Were you bullied or the one that bullied?”)
- What were your inner reactions and actions in the past when you became aware of someone being hurt by “mean team” behavior?