

HEALING TOGETHER

WHEN OUR RELATIONSHIPS ARE SAFE AND HEALTHY, SO ARE OUR COMMUNITIES.



PREVENTION OR INTERVENTION?

As you develop your approach, it is important to understand the different aspects of men's programs that focus on prevention, and those that focus on intervention. While both are aimed at preventing future acts of violence, programs traditionally labeled as "intervention" concentrate on working with men who have caused harm in the past and need to confront the harm they inflicted and address the root causes that led to their use of violence. Work labeled as "prevention" is more focused on teaching safe and healthy relationship skills and empowering bystanders to recognize and stop violence when appropriate.

Organizational Self-Assessment: Are We Ready to Engage Men in Intimate Partner Violence Prevention?

This self-assessment is for any community-based organization that is interested in creating a transformative program for men that focuses on preventing and interrupting intimate partner violence.

Along with other Healing Together tools, this guide aims to support organizations in shifting away from relying on criminal legal system interventions and towards healing-centered, restorative, non-punitive approaches to building safety and working with men to end cycles of violence.

Asking the below questions, both internally and externally with partners, will help your organization determine readiness and needs to move forward.

For the purposes of this guide, men's non-violence programs are aimed at preventing or disrupting intimate partner violence and community violence by creating spaces for growth and healing that help men:

- Build and maintain safe, healthy relationships;
- Examine the effects of violence on their family and community;
- Confront and accept responsibility for the harm they have caused or could cause in the future and understand what is at the root of their use of violence;
- Deconstruct patterns of thinking and behavior that are entrenched in systems of patriarchy and misogyny;
- Develop a sense of agency to become positive change agents of their own lives and reconnect with their true selves through the healing process;
- Teach practical skills for healthy relationships, resilience and coping with stress, de-escalating conflict, and constructive interpersonal communication;
- Re-connect with their culture, values, and healing practices;
- Address multiple forms of violence beyond the interpersonal, and examine the role of systemic and state violence, racial inequities, and intergenerational trauma in fueling cycles of violence.

Men's non-violence programs are an essential strategy in the suite of intervention and prevention programs to end intimate partner and family violence.

Many different types of organizations work with men on ending the use of violence, such as those serving youth, system-impacted people, and organizations that provide services to families and survivors. Men's non-violence programs are often offered as one component of a suite of supports that help individuals and families thrive.

Facilitators have to have a strong character. They have to care and be willing to hear about people's personal relationships.

- Men's Non-violence Program Participant

GREAT MEN'S NON-VIOLENCE PROGRAM FACILITATORS:

- Can establish trust with men;
- Have a critical race, class and gender analysis and can draw connections between interpersonal violence and structural violence;
- Facilitate in a way that honors and integrates culture & history;
- Believe in men's healing;
- Help men correlate their own experiences of harm to their use of violence;
- Meet men where they are in their healing process;
- Incorporate men's stories and realities into daily work;
- Model power sharing;
- Feel supported by staff;
- Are creative and flexible;
- Understand power differentials;
- Create a positive learning environment;
- Do not shame people;
- Understand the effects of various forms of trauma;
- Actively work to address their own gender biases;
- Feel comfortable talking about sex and sexuality.

Questions for your organization to consider when working with men who have caused harm or are at risk of engaging in violence with a partner:

1. How does our staff perceive men who have done harm? Organization-wide consensus that men who have caused harm are more than the worst thing they've ever done, have the capacity to change – and many survivors want their partners to change – is critical to creating a welcoming and safe space for men to begin a transformational healing process.

2. How does working with men fit into our organizational mission and theory of change? Organizations that view men as an integral stakeholder in ending intimate partner violence, patriarchy, and creating healthy communities are more likely to invest the time and energy necessary to meet men where they are and support them on their healing journey.

3. What are our guiding principles for engaging men? Having a set of principles for working with men who have caused harm can align your program with your organizational values. Principles that prioritize survivor safety, as well as men's healing, growth, and behavior change; and allow for flexibility, creativity are foundational to successful programs.

4. What internal programs and external partnerships could be leveraged to support the success of men in our program? Programs that address root causes of violence often uncover deep trauma and expose wounds that need tending. Access to the knowledge and tools to support men through this process is essential.

In addition, men trapped in cycles of violence may face other challenges as well. Problems related to literacy, mental health, employment, transportation, substance use, discrimination, and housing are just a few examples of potential barriers to healing and non-violence. Consider building relationships and partnerships with other providers in your community that can help your organization offer a holistic approach and meet the various needs that may arise.

5. Do we have the resources or assets to engage men? If not, are we committed to finding the resources? Identifying and securing funding for non-violence programs is often a barrier for organizations looking to serve men. Forming partnerships with public and private agencies as well as community leaders can help reduce costs and ensure programs are sustainable. Access to ongoing technical assistance and training will be critical in the first few years of the program and should be included in the budget planning process.

6. Have we updated our policies and procedures to be accountable to those most impacted? If bringing men, specifically men who have caused harm, into the space is new for your organization, it is best to update existing policies. Considerations include: intake procedures, participant criteria, participant agreements, staff training, crisis scenarios and protocols, and survivor-centered safety planning.

7. How do we define success? As an organization, determine how you will evaluate your program and what success looks like by asking those most impacted. Consider participant growth and feedback as primary metrics of success.

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