From men to Men

A methodological miniguide to promote non-violent masculinities

MÉDECINS DU MONDE

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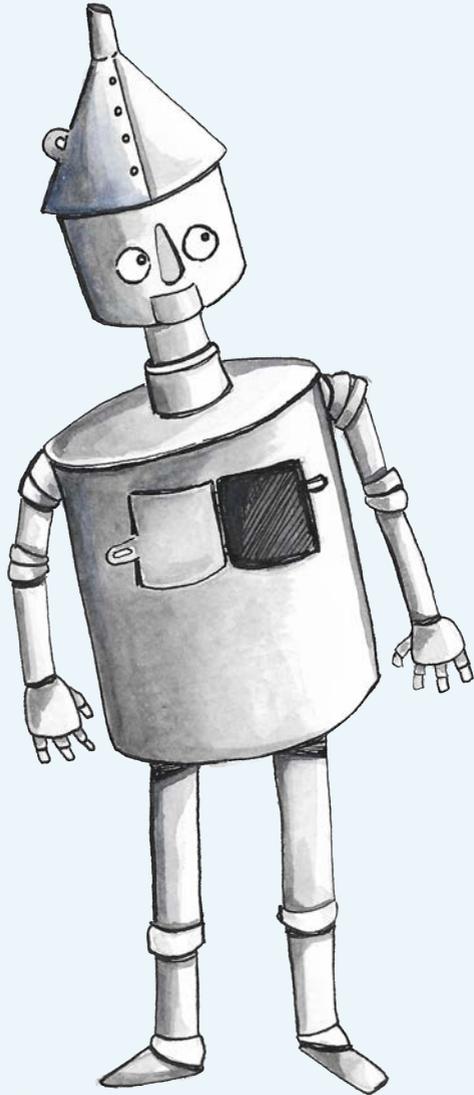
PRESENTATION

In a patriarchal society, relationships, social norms and language are established in a way that devalue[1] and subordinate[2] the feminine to the masculine. Daily practices of discrimination and violence towards women further reinforce these dynamics, where women often have less power, access to resources, and rights than men. This form of social organization is imposed from birth through the socialization of gender roles, leading individuals to unconsciously internalize and perpetuate this structure of inequality in their ways of thinking, acting, and feeling.

Despite being deeply rooted in the society, this structure can be transformed through public policies, collective social organization, as well as individual reflection and action. In this respect, Doctors of the World Switzerland – Mexico Mission has developed a series of initiatives to identify, prevent and respond to the diverse manifestations of gender-based violence (GBV). An example of such initiatives are educational and artistic programs in schools, neighborhoods, and institutions.

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1. Some examples encountered in daily life include sentences such as: "you hit like a girl", "don't act like a girl", among others.

2. Examples of this subordination manifest in women receiving less income than men, exerting less political participation, and being subject to beliefs that confine women to domestic roles with the sole responsibility of housework and caregiving.

What is the difference between the manual and the toolbox?

Doctors of the World Switzerland - Mexico Mission has created a methodological manual for implementing activities to promote non-violent masculinities through working directly with men. Based on this manual, and through a review of existing practices from several NGOs working on this subject, a toolbox has been developed to facilitate its use.

The toolbox consists of a theoretical miniguide, a methodological miniguide and a pre- and post-test evaluation form.

- The **theoretical miniguide** provides a review of the minimum knowledge requirements and good practices that should be mastered before implementing workshops on positive masculinity.

- The **methodological miniguide** sets out the methodological approach developed, as well as the logistical considerations for implementing the activities.

- The **pre and post-test evaluation form** is an exemplary test designed and ready to use to measure the knowledge acquired by participants following their attendance at the workshops.

This toolbox is designed for educators, professionals responsible for educational guidance in schools, workshop facilitators, as well as anyone interested in fostering spaces for reflection and action with groups of men from different contexts.

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WHAT IS THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH?

While there are multiple methodologies or approaches for conducting training and reflection activities in groups, we chose the following because they are participatory, experiential, critical and allow self-regulation within groups, i.e., the group itself sets the horizon to be reached. Our methodological approach is based on: narrative practices, popular education, community of inquiry, and psychoeducation.

What are narrative practices?

Narrative practices give a perspective for psychosocial, therapeutic and/or community work that considers individuals as experts in their own lives. Narrative practices assume that people consistently respond to problems or difficulties by employing a range of resources (skills, abilities, beliefs) that help us to reduce the influence of the difficulties that we inevitably face throughout life.

The term "narrative" refers to the emphasis placed on our life stories and the importance of how we tell those stories to ourselves, give them meaning, reconstruct and rewrite them.

Narrative practices encompass different ways of understanding our life stories and giving us back the authorship (placing ourselves in the driver's seat of our own lives), emphasizing the ability to rewrite our personal history in collaboration with our communities, from which we are inseparable. The narrative approach takes into account the events experienced, the context, the beliefs of each person. In this case, our aim is to explicate abstract concepts of mental processes and connect them to specific actions and patterns that can be easily identified in the behavior of each person.

What is popular education?

It is an educational model rooted in emancipatory practice, and in decolonizing, depatriarchalizing and democratizing political intent, in the pursue of horizontal participation. Among the techniques of **popular education,** we used in particular the Theater of the Oppressed (Boal, 2004), which optimized our methodology of work with men's bodies to identify the oppression suffered starting from the somatic level.

What is the community of inquiry?

We draw inspiration from Matthew Lipman (1980), the creator of Philosophy for Children, who defines the **community of inquiry** as a rigorous, democratic and reflective discussion developed over time with a group of students. Lipman also views people's reflection on a specific issue as a commitment to self-corrective exploration, to a process of searching for and rationally examining arguments, facts, criteria and principles.

What is psychoeducation?

In mental health care practice, **psychoeducation** consists in offering information to people experiencing suffering for them to develop and strengthen their abilities to face various situations in a more relevant way. In the context of non-violent masculinities, psychoeducation consists in offering information on violent male patterns, assisting men in identifying and acknowledging them, and accompanying them in the process of transforming these patterns.
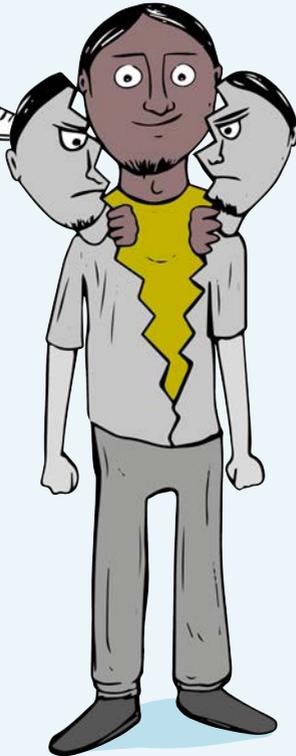
WHAT TOOLS DO I NEED TO CREATE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS?

What elements are necessary to generate learning environments?

Adequate planning of a course, workshop or space for reflection entails the establishment of a favorable learning environment. When talking of a favorable learning environment, we refer to the appropriate conditions for learning, which are composed of three dimensions:

- **The socio-affective dimension:** agreements, limits, care mechanisms, treatment and horizontal communication;

- **The cognitive dimension:** teaching material, appropriate resources, clear information, and technological supports;

- **The physical dimension:** environmental and physical conditions of comfort and safety.

What is a descriptive card?

The descriptive card[3] is a tool that allows a coherent and logical organization of activities and proper management of time and resources. The selection of activities for a workshop or training will depend on the objectives, the number of people and the time available.

The set of activities in a descriptive card represents a didactic sequence[4], i.e., a series of linked steps and activities designed to achieve a specific purpose.

Although there are several different models for a descriptive card, based on our experience, the following elements were included:

- **Workshop name.**

- **Objective of the workshop:** what the participants are expected to achieve in terms of learning.

- **Supporting concepts/reflection:** conceptual elements or key messages that the facilitator should keep in mind throughout the workshop.

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3. In general, the term "descriptive card" can be used to describe either an individual session or a longer teaching sequence. In the manual and the toolbox, each descriptive card represents an individual session with a specific objective. However, descriptive cards can also be assembled to form a longer teaching sequence.

4. A didactic sequence is a structured set of pedagogical activities organized in a specific order aimed at contributing to the achievement of a pedagogical objective. Each descriptive card represents a didactic sequence.

—DESCRIPTIVE CARD'S FORMAT—

Session number and
workshop name

Concepts /
supporting thoughts

SESSION 13

It's just a compliment[16]

Objective: Reflect on harassment towards women as a form of gender-based violence.

Thematic Axis: Relations with power.

Methodological Axis: Community of inquiry.

Time: 10 min (tuning in), 25 min (reading and joint reflection), 10 min (restitution and closure).

Materials: Depends on the chosen activity: copies of the book Solo es un piropo, (Maria Stoian, Océano, 2019), or projector and speaker.

Concepts/ Supporting Reflection: In the Mexican context, the compliment is often seen as a matter of gallantry and as a "harmless" expression. However, it is a form of violence against women (a precursor to sexual violence), as pointed out by Benalcázar, Cabrera and Ureña (2014): "It is a form of abuse of power that men have and constitutes an act of violence as it is a non-consensual action where men abuse the power of submission and objectification of women by commenting on their physical appearance or sexual connotations. It is a surprising invasion and violates women's right to move safely, calmly and freely through the streets [our translation]." The normalization of this type of violence leads to blaming the women who experience it, accusing them of being responsible for the way they dress or act, or for exaggerating when they decide to speak up or report.

ACTIVITY

Tuning in
1. Create a conducive environment for practicing listening for at least 10 minutes. This can be achieved through breathing exercises or some manual activity.

Reading and joint reflection
2. The group is asked to form a circle, then the facilitator reads two or three stories from the book Solo es un piropo, by Maria Stoian, that

16. It is suggested that this session be conducted when safe space has been established among the participants.

CHAPTER 3. WHAT ACTIVITIES CAN I DO?   111

COLORS:
TRAINING LINE

Observe

Question

Break

Activate

Masculinities
in sport

Objective,
thematic axe,
methodological axe,
time and materials

Activity

- **Questions:** Used as key elements to encourage inquiry and curiosity among the participants and to question their universe of meanings. They are incorporated and used in a cross-cutting way throughout the activities.

- **Linked axes:** the thematic axe(s) of the card, as well as the methodological axes used to design the session.

On the descriptive cards, other elements are included such as:

Activity: the name of the activity; detailed instructions to be given to the group, including the way in which the group has to be organized; and the questions to capture the experience.

Materials: required materials. Note that some of the materials may need to be adapted to the context or substituted with local alternatives that are more readily available or more appropriate for the activity.

Time: the approximate time it will take to carry out the activity.

What elements are necessary to establish a climate of trust and respect within the group?

Before initiating any educational or reflective process, it is necessary to create an environment of trust, respect, collaboration and commitment with the participants. This involves addressing the socio-affective and cognitive conditions to build a favorable learning environment.

Thematic axes covered by this toolbox

Self-knowledge: Emotional experience is rarely the priority in reflection or introspection. It is also normalized to live with stress, anxiety or depression, which are products of the reproduction of gender mandates of "having to be/having to do..." to define masculine identities.

Relations with power: Being a man within a patriarchal system implies, in itself, a burden of privileges of which we are not always aware. Making visible how we relate to power allows us to take a position to reduce structural inequalities suffered by other identities and minorities.

Parenting and affection: The way in which we construct the first emotional experiences is through parental bonds. In many countries, an absent father in caregiving, is very common: it could be said that in fact men "abandon" their children by renuncing their paternal responsability.

Social insecurity and quality of life: The state of wellbeing and access to a dignified life is sometimes the product of aspirations, but also of frustrations in the hegemonic masculinity model ("a man should always have money in his wallet" / "a man always has to bring home the bread").

Personal agency: The ability of men to take charge of their own existence, of their actions, thoughts and dreams along with the consequences they entail. To forge a feeling called "taking the wheel" of their own lives; in narrative practices referred to as re-authorship.

The framework includes the following elements:

- **Presentation and welcome:** At this moment, the facilitator greets the group, introduces him/herself, gives a few words of welcome, and thanks participants for their attendance.

- **Explanation of objectives:** It is necessary to present in a clear and concrete manner the scope of the workshop or course, i.e. what is expected to be achieved in terms of learning, changes, actions or results. Details of the activities to be carried out, the timelines and objectives can be provided as well.

- **Icebreaker and tuning activities:** It is recommended to integrate a fun activity, where participants can interact, get to know each other, play, relax and establish a climate of trust and comfort.

- **Identification of expectations:** Establish a space to learn what the participants expect from the process and define the scope of the process, i.e. what will be worked on or what can be adjusted or included. Also, communicate what is not part of the process and therefore will not be addressed.

- **Coexistence agreements:** For group work to be organized and for all participants to feel they are in a safe space, it is necessary to have coexistence rules and agreements, that is, simple and clear statements that express what is required for people to feel confident, comfortable and safe during the process. Ideally, coexistence agreements should be constructed collectively. However, if there is little time available for this action, the following can be considered:

ELEMENTS FOR COEXISTENCE AGREEMENTS

Aspects of communication: such as how to request the floor or characteristics of the participation, elements that facilitate active listening, addressing each other by name.

Aspects of self-care and violence prevention: specifying elements such as respect as a basic principle, caring for other people's bodies, and valuing differences, etc.

Aspects to minimize distractions: keeping phones on silent, avoiding parallel conversations, and setting aside specific moments to rest and for reviewing personal messages.

Aspects of confidentiality and privacy: establishing a code of trust based on the confidentiality of personal information shared during the work session.

Logistical aspects: break times can be established, schedules can be set, and the importance of punctuality can be made explicit.

How is a didactic sequence based on the narrative practices approach?

For this specific training process on non-violent masculinities, the didactic sequence involves witnessing, questioning, documenting and connecting.

Witness: The basis for starting the process of collective building of knowledge is to recognize what people already know about the topic – their experiences, beliefs or emotions. This also allows to identify myths or misconceptions that people may have about the topic. This process stimulates participation, motivates inquiry and encourages critical reflection.

Question: Once the group's knowledge, ideas or emotions regarding the topic have been collected, it is suggested to use participatory techniques, which allow approaching the topic from another perspective: e.g. experiencing the content through the body, experiencing hypothetical situations, generating alternative scenarios, and reflecting on unconscious ideas or behavior, among others.

Document: The most relevant moment of a workshop is not the triggering activity but the moment when people reflect on the ideas, emotions and/or thoughts generated by the activity (they theorize) and contrast them with their prior knowledge. This process allows generating new answers or modifying previous ones, adapting them to their context. Generally,

this process occurs through group discussions, individual conclusions and/or generative questions.

Connect: At this stage, collective conclusions can be drawn, integrating the visions and experiences of the participants in the activities. It also enables the resolution of concerns and the identification of what was significant. If necessary, additional information or key messages can be provided to reinforce the information or to offer an alternative perspective on the situation addressed.

What activities can I carry out?

The descriptive cards to be used can be chosen according to the available time (days - hours) and to the objectives you want to achieve. For the toolbox, **15 descriptive cards have been selected from the manual[5],** those that have a significant impact on men's groups and are also suitable for various contexts.

Each descriptive card has distinct colors, each defining a specific training objective:

- **LIGHT GREEN – OBSERVE:** This training line is recommended for groups with whom we will have an initial meeting and our objective is to initiate the identification

5. The descriptive cards were selected from workshops organized in various missions of Doctors of the World Switzerland: Benin, Cameroon and Mexico.

and reflection on how they have shaped their identity as men, and established connections with others.

- **LIGHT PINK – PROBLEMIZE:** Although all the sessions seek to question, this particular training line focuses on reflecting upon and questioning the gender mandates that define the expectation of being a "man", along with the privileges it entails in the social structure and the forms of violence they exert.

- **RED – BREAK:** In this training line, the goal is for participants to recognize the impact of violence on the construction of their identity as men, to acknowledge the fundamental discomfort it represents, and to identify patterns of behavior, emotions and thought that need transformation in order to adopt new forms of masculinity and to break away from others.

- **LIGHT BLUE – ACTIVATE:** This training line seeks to encourage participants to propose actions to transform their daily practices from a perspective of non-violent masculinities and to commit themselves to realize them.

- **DARK BLUE – MASCULINITIES IN SPORT:** In this training line, a set of activities is proposed to work with men who are involved in soccer (which is the work experience we had). It can be adapted to other contexts and sports that are generally masculinized. This training line also includes some introductory activities based on a playful and cooperative methodology.

In the *From men to Men* manual, a curriculum card has been developed that serves only as a guide (see pages 44, 45, 46), but you can use the descriptive cards according to the needs you identify in your group. Each descriptive card can be a

session on its own. Likewise, the descriptive cards can be linked to other cards, allowing you to create various "routes" to approach your sessions. The activity "Let Everyone Know" is suggested as a closing session.

WHAT OPERATIONAL AND LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT?

In order to create a suitable learning environment, the socio-affective, cognitive and physical dimensions must be considered. Some relevant aspects to be considered are described below[6].

What considerations should be made for space?

- The space should be well lit (preferably with natural light) and ventilated.

- Chairs should be comfortable and in good condition.

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6. In the *From men to Men* manual, recommendations regarding invitations are also provided. Considering that several elements are addressed in the *Best Practices* section of the theoretical mini-guide, they are not repeated here. See page 147 of the manual.

- The space should be spacious enough to arrange chairs for all participants in a semi-circle leaving plenty of space in the middle for experiential and participative activities.

- No more than 4 tables are required: one for the projector, one for the materials and 2 more in case any activity requires a support for writing, drawing, modelling, etc.

- There should be clean restrooms properly functioning and with running water both for toilet and the sink; equipped with enough toilet paper, hand soap and paper towels.

What considerations should be made for materials?

Although the materials available will depend on the financial resources allocated to the training, the following list includes the basic items considered necessary according to the experience of the team facilitating the course-workshop.

- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Flipchart
- ☐ Markers and whiteboard markers
- ☐ Reusable sheets or white sheets
- ☐ Post-its
- ☐ Pencils or pens
- ☐ Flipchart paper
- ☐ Projector and computer

- [ ] Speaker, electrical extension cables and multi-socket
- [ ] Adhesive tape
- [ ] Reusable badge holders or self-adhesive labels for participant's name

What considerations should be made for food?

Likewise, food provision during the training depends on financial resources; however, it is an important aspect to be considered as it improves participants' comfort and thus their experience of the training process.

- Ensure an accessible water dispenser or provide water bottles.

- If possible, offer coffee and/or tea.

- Opt for fruit instead of cookies or breads.

What considerations should be made for time?

- It is recommended that a workshop last a maximum of 6 hours or a minimum of 2 hours.

- For 6-hour sessions, it is essential to schedule a break for snacks.

- In any case, limit didactic sessions to a maximum of 2 hours and include short breaks or relaxation activities.

- Allocate a maximum of 30 minutes for refreshments and one hour for lunch.

- The facilitating team should be present in the space one hour before the session begins to set up the space and prepare the materials.

What considerations should be made regarding the participants?

- In a constructive and participatory process like the one proposed, aiming to stimulate extensive discussions and deep reflections and in order to make the most of participatory techniques, the goal is to have a group of no less than 15 participants and no more than 30.

- Men felt more secure in a space when granted freedom. We found that creating a safe environment for men to open up involves maintaining a non-judgmental attitude where they are accepted with their contradictions, where they can make jokes, talk loudly and express themselves freely, remain anonymous or choose not to participate in some activities if they do not resonate with them.

What considerations
should be made for security?

- It is essential to review safety measures and the venue's emergency protocols, including emergency exits and safe points.

- Keep a first aid kit stocked with essential medicines for headache, allergies, diarrhea, fever, and basic first aid supplies.

HOW TO EVALUATE THE TRAINING PROCESS?

Initiatives of this kind should be accompanied by evaluation strategies. Those allow the collection of relevant information for improvement cycles, serve as a form of accountability to funding entities as well as to the participants themselves, and contribute to knowledge production.

What elements are important for evaluating the training process?

Within the training process, we assess knowledge of the topics covered during the sessions before and after the workshop. These data allow us to identify the acceptance and appropriation of the topics, and thus, to make relevant adjustments during implementation. Additionally, testimonials can be gathered during the training process to capture perceptions and experiences in relation to the thematic content. The following instruments are used for this purpose:

ATTENDANCE LISTS

These lists are intended to identify attendees. This information serves to:

- Keep a quick count of the number of people attending the workshop.

- Prepare the certificates.

> *Recommendations*
>
> - *This should be done at the beginning of the workshop, including the setup of the registration table prior to participants' arrival.*
>
> - *Use this moment to provide badges or labels which allow participants to be identified with the names they prefer.*

PRE AND POST TESTS

Participants take two knowledge tests on the topics covered in the workshop. The objectives are:

- The first test aims to identify participants' prior knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding the topics addressed in the workshop.

- The second test's purpose is to identify the knowledge acquired by participants, as well as changes in attitude and potential changes in practices.

- Both tests are identical, which allows to measure/quantify the impact of the sessions.

The tests need to collect information on:

- Participants' identification data, such as their gender, employment status, ethnicity, and whether they speak any indigenous language.

- Specific content questions.

For the toolbox, a pre- and post-evaluation model is included. Depending on the chosen descriptive cards, additional questions may be added, and some may be removed if others seem more relevant.

Recommendations

- *When choosing the test's design, multiple-choice answers have the advantage of simplifying the answers and facilitating systematization. The disadvantages are that the information may be superficial and that participants may answer randomly.*

- *On the other hand, open-ended responses allow for a more comprehensive understanding of users' percep-*

> *tions and experiences. The main disadvantage is that they require more work to analyze the answers.*
>
> • *In the implementation, paper-based tests can facilitate the response for older people or those with less familiarity with technological means. It also ensures that participants complete the tests. The disadvantage is that analysis is laborious and might pose challenges due to attendees' handwriting.*
>
> • *On the other hand, testing with online resources, such as Google Forms, allows the activity to take place after the workshop, improving time management and facilitating analysis. The disadvantage is that one has to make sure that all participants have access to electronic devices and the Internet. Moreover, it is difficult to follow up the completion, leading to potential loss of information.*

SYSTEMATIZATION

Systematization is based on the thematic content and the descriptive card. Information is captured in templates containing targeted questions to facilitate and focus the collection of information. Photographs of the training process are also part of the systematization. The goal of systematization is:

• To have detailed information on the processes.

Recommendations

- *At the beginning of the training process, inform the participants about the collection of information, including testimonials and photos. Mention that the information will be used for reporting purposes. You can also request permission for photos to be shared on social networks or other project media or official publications.*

- *Create capture templates based on the descriptive card, this facilitates the collection and analysis of the information.*

- *You can also mark the most relevant stories in the capture template throughout the duration of the workshop to have the stories already identified for final reporting.*

- *For systematization, find a place in the room or workshop venue from which the whole group can be seen and heard.*

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