

A scenic landscape featuring a large, snow-capped mountain peak in the background. The foreground consists of a calm lake reflecting the sky and the mountain. A dense forest of green trees lines the shore of the lake. The sky is a clear, light blue.

**TRYING IT OUT**

**GO MPASS**



# 1 CROSS THE LINE

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Ask everyone to gather on one side of the room/line and face toward the center. Explain that you will call out specific questions. Ask those to whom each question applies to walk to the other side of the room/line then turn to face where they just came from. Remind everyone that there is no pressure to cross the room/line if they don't feel comfortable, even if the statement applies to them. They get to decide what they feel comfortable sharing and not sharing.

## QUESTIONS FOR THE GROUP

- Who has visited another country?
- Who prefers day to night?
- Who prefers winter to summer?
- Who identifies as a person of color?
- Who knows very little about their cultural heritage?
- Who knows a lot about their cultural heritage?

- Who is the oldest in their family?
- Who is the youngest in their family?
- Who is an only child?
- Who participates in subsistence activities?
- Who sometimes has low self-confidence?
- Who sometimes feels lonely?
- Who has ever been in a fight to prove you were tough?
- Whose parents are divorced?
- Who has a step-parent?
- Who has experienced the effects of alcoholism in their family?
- Who has had a friend or family member who has experienced dating violence?
- Who has at least one adult they can trust?
- Anyone who has not yet crossed the room/line?

**KNOWING WHO YOU ARE**





## 2 IF YOU REALLY KNEW ME

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For this exercise, go around the circle and have participants share who they really are. Remind participants that they only need to share what they feel comfortable sharing with the group, to be respectful and not to share with others outside of this group what is said. Let them know that you are going to go around the circle a few times and each time encourage them to share on a deeper level.

As the facilitator you will start each round with a new prompt.

1st round: **If you really knew me....**

2nd round: **If you really, really knew me....**

3rd round: **If you really, really, really knew me...**

This exercise can be done multiple times and after different points. The more comfortable the group gets with one another, the more personal details they will be willing to share. Part of showing people who they really are comes from trusting people.

# KNOWING WHO YOU ARE



# 3 CIRCLES OF ME

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For this activity, have participants write their names in a middle circle and then write adjectives that represent them in outer circles that connect to the middle circle. These should be identifiers or descriptors that are important in defining themselves. This can include anything: Alaska Native, male, son, athlete, geek, silly, likes to sleep or any descriptor with which they identify.

After participants have filled in their circles, have each respond to the following prompts:

- Share a story about a time you felt included or respected in relation to one of the descriptors used to define yourself.
- Share a story about a time you felt excluded or disrespected in relation to one of the descriptors used to define yourself.

Have them name a stereotype associated with one of the groups with which they identify that is not consistent with who they are. Have them fill in the following sentence:

I am a(n) \_\_\_\_\_

but I am NOT a(n) \_\_\_\_\_

For example, if one of the identifiers was “athlete” and a stereotype was “all athletes are dumb bullies with bad grades,” a sentence could be: **“I am an athlete, but I am NOT a bully.”**

*\*\*adapted from Office of Human Relations: University of Maryland, College Park*

# KNOWING WHO YOU ARE



# 1 RECOGNIZING EMOTIONS

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Go through the list of emotions listed on the back of this card and ask the youth to help describe each emotion. Finish the exercise by asking these questions:

- Which of these emotions do you experience on a regular basis?
- Which of these emotions do you not experience? Why?

AMUSED  
ANGRY  
ANNOYED  
ANXIOUS  
ASHAMED  
CALM  
CONFUSED  
CONTENT  
DISAPPOINTED

DISGUSTED  
EMBARRASSED  
FEARFUL  
FLUSTERED  
FOOLISH  
FRUSTRATED  
GRATEFUL  
HURT  
IRRITATED

JEALOUS  
LONELY  
LOVED  
NERVOUS  
OVERWHELMED  
PROUD  
SELF-ASSURED  
TENSE  
THANKFUL

# KNOWING YOUR EMOTIONS

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## 2 STICKS AND STONES

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Have each person gather sticks and stones (or something that can represent them). For each item they collect, have them mention a situation where it was hard for them to express their feelings or emotions. After the discussion, have each person gather their sticks and stones and release them into the woods, water, etc.

You could also use the sticks and stones to discuss the names that bullies may use to put others down. Have each person put a negative term forward for each stick and stone. Have them talk about what this does to them as young men and how this prevents them from being whole people. As they release their sticks and stones, discuss how they can make a commitment to allow each other to be whole people and to fully express themselves.

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## KNOWING YOUR EMOTIONS





### 3 STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS ROUNDABOUT

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Have each person in the group identify an emotion. Using that emotion, have them share whether they think expressing that emotion is a strength or a weakness. Then have them discuss a way people might express that emotion. Does the entire group see this as a strength or a weakness?

As the facilitator, make sure that the group understands that acting out, hitting, yelling, etc. are demonstrating more of a weakness as opposed to talking about feelings, crying, etc.

**KNOWING YOUR EMOTIONS**

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# 4 FEELINGS ROUNDUP

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This activity can be done daily, in any setting and at both the beginning and end of your time together. The idea is to create an atmosphere where feelings are expressed. Encourage young men to really think about a variety of feelings.

Ask the young men to think about how they feel today. Remind them to think about things that happened to them the day before or conversations from earlier in the day. Then either have each person say how they are feeling out loud to the group or give each student an index card and a marker and have them write down one word that describes how they are feeling. Each person then shares his index card with the group.

Lead a discussion about how feelings can impact actions or conversations. Focus on the fact that everyone brings different feelings and beliefs to a situation—and those feelings can create or dissuade conflict.

**KNOWING YOUR EMOTIONS**

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# 1 RESPECT AND DISRESPECT

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## Respect

Think: Ask the young men to think about what respect means to them.

Pair: Have the young men pair up and answer the following:

- What does respect sound like?
  - What type of things do you hear when people respect one another? What do they say to each other? How do they respond to conflict?
- What does respect look like?
  - What types of things do you see when people respect one another? How do they treat one another?
- What does respect feel like?
  - What type of things do you feel in spaces where people respect one another?

Share: Have them share what they talked about to the entire group.

# Disrespect

Think: Ask the young men to think about what disrespect means to them.

Pair: Have the young men pair up and answer the following:

- What does disrespect sound like?
  - What type of things do you hear when people don't respect one another? What do they say to each other? How do they respond to conflict?
- What does disrespect look like?
  - What types of things do you see when people don't respect one another? How do they treat one another?
- What does it feel like?
  - What type of things do you feel when people don't respect one another?

Share: Have them share what they talked about to the entire group.

## RESPECT FOR SELF



## 2 INNER SELF PORTRAIT



Oftentimes what people see on the outside is not who we really are on the inside. This activity will give the young men a chance to explore who they really are through collecting a series of pictures and words and making a collage. Also encourage the young men to draw their own pictures within the collage.

Inform the youth that they will be putting together a photo collage to explore their innermost thoughts, feelings, life experiences, cultures, hobbies and anything else that represents them as a whole person. Let them know it can be a combination of the person they were in the past, the person they are today as well as the person they hope to be later in life. Remind the young men that we are constantly learning and growing through our experiences, relationships and interactions with our environment and those around us.

Explain that each youth will present their inner self portrait to the group, so they should only put things on their portrait that they are comfortable sharing. However, encourage them to think about the things that are not on their collage that they are not willing to share as these are important to our growth as individuals.

**They should be able to answer the following questions once they are finished:**

- Why did you pick some of the objects you picked?
- What are the things you are most proud of on your collage? Why?
- Was it difficult for you to find things that represent you? What were they?
- What are the things you put on your collage that you would like to work on changing? What could you do to begin making those changes?
- Were there things you put on the collage that are not obvious to the people around you? What were they and why?

**RESPECT FOR SELF**





# 3 MY BALANCE

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**Emotional Health:** expressing one's thoughts, feelings and emotions; feelings of belonging, having compassion and caring for others; and healthy relationships with others.

**Mental Health:** coherent thinking processes; personal development and growth; and personal responsibility for health decisions and the healing process.

**Spiritual Health:** the need for meaning and purpose in one's life; values and beliefs; personal identity; self-awareness; spiritual awareness; and religion and culture.

**Physical Health:** caring for your body; physical development and growth; healthy lifestyle; nutrition; physical activity; and healthy environment.

After this explanation, split the participants into four groups (if the size of the group permits) and assign each group an aspect of health. Give about five minutes to allow each group to brainstorm a list of things they do to maintain their health and wellness for their particular topic area. Make sure that each person in the group gives at least one example. Then, have each group share their list with the entire group.

- Which aspects of health are the most nurtured? Why?
- Which aspects of health could be improved? Why?
- In what ways do these aspects of health connect with one another?
- Why is it important for us to be aware of and balance each aspect of health?
- What is one thing you could start doing to connect and balance each aspect?

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## RESPECT FOR SELF



# 4 BUILDING OURSELVES UP

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Listed on the back of this card are examples of positive self-affirmations. Ask the young men to either share out loud or to themselves one positive self-affirmation. You can share this list with the young men to get them started but try and encourage them to come up with their own.

## RELATIONSHIPS

- I know who I am and what I like in personal relationships.
- I can attract positive and healthy people.
- I am caring, smart, supportive, loyal and fun.
- I feel comfortable around other people.
- I participate and bring good things to my relationships.
- I am able to communicate and open up to my partner, family or friends.

## SELF-ESTEEM

- I am able to positively influence my own life.
- I am able to forgive myself when I make mistakes.
- I am a person of worth.
- I am able to take risks and live fear free.
- I have love and compassion for myself.
- I deserve good things, happiness and love.

# RESPECT FOR SELF

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# 1 PERSONAL SPACE



Number the young men counting off by two. Now have no. 1's line up in a straight line shoulder to shoulder and have the no. 2's line up directly across and face the no. 1's with about 10 feet in between. Now instruct the no. 1's to stand still and remind them they are not allowed to move or speak. Now instruct the no. 2's to walk toward the person directly across from them and to stop once no. 1's feel like they are at a distance that reaches their personal space.

*Remind the no. 2's that they must keep walking even if they are outside of their comfort zone and that they must stop when told, even if they would be comfortable moving closer.*

**Make a note of how close people are. Have them return to their original positions.**

Now ask the no. 2's to stand still and tell them that the no. 1's are now going to walk towards them, but this time they get tell the person to stop when they are as close as they feel comfortable.

*Remind the no. 1's that they must keep walking even if they are outside of their comfort zone and that they must stop when told, even if they would be comfortable moving closer.*

### **Follow Up Questions:**

- Was there a difference in where the person stopped based on who was in control of the distance?
- Would this look differently if it was a close friend? A teacher? A stranger? Why?
- How did you feel when you were unable to tell the other person to stop?
- How did it feel to have someone tell you to stop when you got too close?
- How would the other person know what you are comfortable with if you did not tell them?
- What is the one way to make sure someone knows what your boundaries are?

# **RESPECT FOR OTHERS**

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## 2 BOUNDARIES

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**Healthy Boundaries:** knowing, understanding and communicating your limits and being able to make healthy compromises.

**Rigid Boundaries:** unhealthy boundaries that are inflexible and you put up walls between you and other people.

**Collapsed Boundaries:** unhealthy boundaries where you do not have set personal limits.

**Pick an example below and ask participants to identify the corresponding boundary.**

- You are willing to say “no” to let others know they are stepping on your toes; you are also willing to say yes. **(H)**
- You believe “I must have deserved it” when treated badly. **(C)**
- You have the ability to make requests and to seek alternatives when others say no to you. **(H)**

- You have the inability to identify your own wants, needs and feelings. **(R)**
- You expect shared responsibility for relationships. **(H)**
- You do not tolerate disrespect or abuse. **(H)**
- You are apt to say no if a request is going to involve close interaction. **(R)**
- You do not have a sense of yourself. **(C)**
- You avoid closeness because you fear either abandonment or rejection. **(R)**
- You share too much personal information too soon. **(C)**
- You have a strong sense of identity and self-respect. **(H)**
- You have a high tolerance for abuse and for being treated with disrespect. **(C)**
- You do anything to avoid conflict. **(C)**
- You have a very strong defense to protect yourself from getting too close to people. You may pick fights for instance, or stay too busy you have no time for one-on-one relationships. **(R)**

## RESPECT FOR OTHERS

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# 3 POSITIVE FOCUS

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Have the young men get into a circle. Invite one person into the center of the circle. Focusing on each person one at a time, have each person around the circle say one thing they like or appreciate about the person in the middle. Continue this until everyone has had a chance in the center of the circle.

While your teen's self-esteem shouldn't rest on the opinions of others, it can be a boost to know that he is appreciated, and it is important to tell people that you appreciate them.

**RESPECT FOR OTHERS**

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# 1 MISINTERPRETED MESSAGES

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Give one sheet of paper to each person. Explain that you want them to follow the directions you are about to give without asking questions of you or their neighbors. They will be working individually.

Give the following directions quickly without clarifying exactly what you mean:

1. Fold the paper in half and tear off a top corner.
2. Fold it in half again and tear off a top corner.
3. Fold it in half again and tear off the left corner.
4. Rotate the paper to the right three times and tear off a bottom corner.
5. Fold it in half again and tear off the middle piece.

Instruct the group to unfold their papers and compare their snowflakes with those around them. They will find that their snowflakes may or may not match others.

## DISCUSSION

- Why is it that even though everyone received the same directions, not everyone had the same outcome? What would have changed if you could have asked questions?
- Have you ever told someone one thing, only to have the person hear and do something different? What happened and how did you deal with it?
- If you are the leader of a group, what steps can you take to make sure that others clearly understand what you're trying to tell them?
- How can you improve your communication skills when it becomes obvious that others are seeing things differently than you intended?

# COMMUNICATION

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## 2 ACTIVE LISTENING

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Have the young men get into groups of two. Once in pairs, have each partner take a turn sharing a story while the other listens using the following guidelines. After they share their stories, have them reflect on how these guidelines can help with everyday communication.

**Pay Attention:** Give the speaker your undivided attention and acknowledge the message. Put aside distracting thoughts, do not mentally prepare a rebuttal, avoid being distracted by environmental factors and “listen” to the speaker’s body language.

**Show That You’re Listening:** Use your own body language and gestures to convey your attention, smile and use other facial expressions, note your posture to make sure it is inviting and encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments.

**Provide Feedback:** Reflect what has been said by paraphrasing, ask questions to clarify certain points and summarize the speaker's comments periodically.

**Defer Judgment:** Allow the speaker to finish each point before asking questions and don't interrupt with counter arguments.

**Respond Appropriately:** Be candid, open and honest in your response, assert your opinions respectfully and treat the other person in a way that you think they would want to be treated.

# COMMUNICATION

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# 3 I-STATEMENTS

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Let the participants know to use an I-statement when they need to let others know how they are feeling strongly about a certain issue. Explain how people often underestimate how hurt, angry or put out they are, so it's useful to say exactly what they are feeling with I-statements.

## **Step 1: State your own feeling**

Ex: I feel...

## **Step 2: State the behavior without addressing the individual**

Ex: When...

## **Step 3: Describe how it affects you**

Ex. Because...

## **Step 4: Suggest a solution**

Ex: Can we...

**Example Scenario:** You show up late for class and the teacher says something in front of the class about it.

**Example Response:** I feel embarrassed when I am criticized for being late because I had a good reason for being late. From now on can we talk about it in private rather than in front of the class?

Have your participants practice using I-statements for the following scenarios, ask them about situations they have experienced in which they were upset or come up with their own scenarios.

- You just found out that a friend of yours was spreading rumors about you.
- You found out that your friend is having a party this weekend and didn't tell you about it.

# COMMUNICATION

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# 1 WHAT COLOR IS CONFLICT?

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Cut up a large quantity of 4" x 4" construction paper squares in a wide variety of colors. Be sure to have plenty of red, black, brown and gray. If you do not have paper available, brainstorm as a group all of the colors you can think of so that the young men have a range of colors in their minds for the activity.

Ask each young man to choose a color or group of colors that he thinks represents conflict.

## DISCUSSION:

Either in the large group or in smaller groups of three or four, have participants discuss the following:

- What colors did you choose and why did you choose them?
- Does every conflict you have represent the colors you picked?
- How does the color change based on the type of conflict?
- Do these colors change as you work your way through the conflict? How might they change as you think more about the conflict and have time to process what happened?
- Does the color of the conflict change based on who the conflict is with?

(If you split up into smaller groups, come back together at the end and have volunteers share with the whole group which colors they chose and why.)

# CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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## 2 I REPRESENT CONFLICT

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Place yourself in the middle of the room and say, “Imagine that I represent conflict. Think about how you usually react when you experience a conflict personally or witness a conflict happening nearby. Then place yourself, in relation to me, somewhere in the room in a way that indicates your first response to conflict or disagreement. Think about your body position, the direction that you’re facing and the distance from conflict.”

Once students have found a position relative to you in the room, ask individuals to explain why they are standing where they are.

- What type of conflict were you thinking about?
- Was it you experiencing conflict or witnessing conflict?
- Who was the conflict with? How would your position change if it was with a parent, friend, teacher, classmate or stranger?

You might also want to ask, “If this represents your first reaction, what might your second reaction be after thinking about the conflict?”

- Why is it important to think about the conflict before you react?
- What are some of the things you should think about?

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**CONFLICT RESOLUTION**



# 3 WEB OF CONFLICT

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Write the word “conflict” in the center of the board or paper and circle it. Ask the young men for their associations with the word. Record their ideas on the board using a web format. The words students associate with conflict are written at the end of lines radiating from the circle. Related ideas can be grouped together.

Discuss the web by asking:

- What do you notice about the web?
- Are there any generalizations we might make about our associations with the word conflict?
- Are most of our associations with conflict negative or positive? Why?
- What are some examples of conflict?

Explain that many people equate conflict with violence.

*(You may want to write conflict = violence on the board to make this point.)*

Ask the young men: What is the difference between conflict and violence? Point out that violence and conflict are not the same thing because most conflicts do not lead to violence. *(When a distinction has been made, you can change the equation on the board to  $\text{conflict} \neq \text{violence}$ .)*

Have the young men brainstorm a list of things that are positive about conflict. Some examples of positive aspects of conflict are:

- Shaping our thinking so that we have new ideas.
- Bringing us closer to another person once we've worked it out.

Explain that conflict is a part of life and that we all experience conflicts at home, work, in school and on the street. In fact, conflict is often beneficial. Having conflicts with other people may be uncomfortable, but trying to solve them can shake up our thinking and often leads to new ways of looking at things.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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# 1 MAN BOX

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## **1. Discuss “act like a man” messages.**

- What are some of the messages boys are given when they are told to act like a man?
- Where do these messages come from? Who is the messenger?
- When do we first receive these messages?
- Do the messages differ if they come from a man or a woman?

## **2. Draw a box around the messages—this is the gender box.**

## **3. Discuss behaviors, roles and norms that lie outside the box.**

- What is missing when we try to describe men? List the behaviors and roles that participants name outside the lines of the box.
- Ask participants to describe men they know and ask them if these men fit into the box.

#### **4. Ask the group the following questions:**

- What does it cost individual men to live inside the box?
- What does it cost the community?
- Are there any costs for moving beyond the box?
- What happens to men who do not conform to the messages inside the box?

#### **5. Discuss the opportunities for men and boys to move beyond the box:**

- Ask for examples of men in their own lives who do not conform to the messages inside the box and how they are able to move beyond these messages.
- Circle the positive qualities listed in the box and ask participants to redefine them in ways that do not include dominance and control.

*\*\*adapted from the Oakland' Men's Project*

# **BECOMING MEN**

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## 2 GENDER STEREOTYPES

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Instruct the participants to identify the list of jobs as a job for either men or women based on their initial thought. Everyone who identifies a job for women should stand up.

Construction Worker

Veterinarian

Pharmacist

Flight Attendant

Nurse

Cashier

Secretary

Computer Tech

Engineer

Commercial Fisherman

Mechanic

Plumber

Elementary Teacher

Dental Assistant

Librarian

Hair Stylist

Artist

Bank Teller

Fireman

News Reporter

Pilot

## DISCUSSION

- What did you notice as we went through the list of jobs?
- Was it easy to decide whether or not to stand?
- What are the stereotypes about female and male roles in the workforce?
- How are these stereotypes harmful?
- Do you think both men and women can work any of the jobs listed? Why or why not?

**BECOMING MEN**

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# 3 MASCULINITIES

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Ask the young men to think about the men in their lives they consider great men and great role models. Let them know they will have three minutes to think about one man they would like to talk about with the group. Split the young men into groups of three and have them each share their story and ask them to explain why they respect and admire that person. Have each group report back to the larger group. Once all groups have shared, ask the following questions:

- What did these men have in common that made them good men?
- How were these men different from one another?
- Is it possible for two men to be role models even if they are different from one another? If not, why? If so, how?

## DEBRIEF

Explain that being a man can look very different from person to person and from culture to culture and that being different doesn't automatically mean that they are wrong or bad. Encourage youth to take the time to explore these differences and use them not only to learn about other people but also about themselves.

# BECOMING MEN

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