

# MEN OF HONOR

## Becoming Non-Violent Leaders

THE COUNCIL FOR BOYS AND YOUNG MEN 20-SESSION CURRICULUM



THE COUNCIL FOR BOYS AND YOUNG MEN® IS A STRENGTHS-BASED GROUP MODEL DEVELOPED BY ONE CIRCLE FOUNDATION THAT EMPOWERS YOUNG MEN TO FIND BELONGING, BUILD ASSETS AND DE-CONSTRUCT HARMFUL MASCULINITY BELIEFS ON THEIR JOURNEY TOWARD BECOMING RESPECTFUL LEADERS AND CONNECTED ALLIES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

**IN THE MEN OF HONOR® CURRICULUM, YOUNG MEN 13 YEARS AND UP DEVELOP PERSONALLY MEANINGFUL DEFINITIONS OF MANHOOD BUILT ON RESPECTFUL AND NON-VIOLENT BEHAVIORS.**

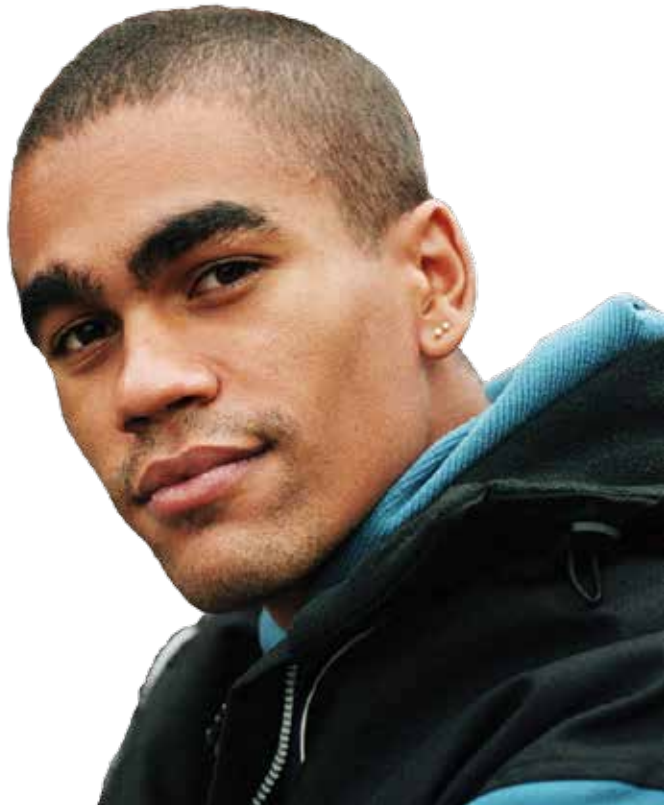
Rigid beliefs about masculinity have been linked to public health risks for adolescent males in areas such as: *school dropout, mental health, fighting and violence, substance abuse, risky sexual and reproductive health behaviors, homophobia, and intimate partner violence.*

The purpose of the Men of Honor curriculum is to improve young men's lives by addressing and reducing key public health and safety risks influenced by rigid male gender norms.<sup>1, 2, 3, 4</sup>

Some youth have learned to believe that aggression and dominance are defining characteristics of manhood and have adopted aggressive behaviors in part to maintain a sense of worth as young men. While there are some defining beliefs about manhood that promote positive values such as responsibility, other beliefs cause harm. For instance, boys are often shamed for their emotions causing them to dismiss or ignore them and thereby lose access to their capacity for empathy, and to leave it undeveloped. This loss of access increases the risk of harm for boys, young men, and those around them.

The Men of Honor curriculum allows adult facilitators who implement The Council for Boys and Young Men group model to guide young men to

explore messages about manhood that directly relate to public health and safety. Challenging activities and discussions that are culturally relevant and trauma responsive promote analysis of the dominant messages in our society that promote harmful beliefs (*e.g. act tough, be strong, don't show feelings*) and provide young men an opportunity to de-construct and re-build a new set of rules about being men that are personally meaningful and respectful.



**CURRICULUM FORMAT:** The Men of Honor curriculum is provided in two sets of ten sessions each (20 sessions total.) In order to optimize the full benefit of this curriculum, we recommend the program be provided as a whole as the sessions build upon each other to more fully develop the concepts, skills, and experiences toward becoming “men of honor.”<sup>25</sup> With each set is a master copy of a *Men of Honor Journal* so that participants can document concepts, principles and behaviors that are individually motivating for application in their daily lives.

## SET ONE Outline

1	<b>CREATING OUR COUNCIL</b>	Creating Group Agreements, Team building with Group Juggle
2	<b>DEVELOPING OUR COUNCIL</b>	Trust Building, Definitions of Manhood
3	<b>EXAMINING MASCULINITY IN THE MEDIA</b>	Masculinity in the Media Analysis, Applying Men of Honor Concepts
4	<b>EXPLORING EMOTIONS – PART 1</b>	Circle of Cooperation (Physical Challenge), Emotions Identification Chart
5	<b>EXPLORING EMOTIONS – PART 2</b>	Human vs. Man Box Emotions; Hat Chat Storytelling
6	<b>BECOMING NONVIOLENT LEADERS – PART 1</b>	Examining the “Man Up!” Message; Video Trailer: The Mask You Live In
7	<b>BECOMING NONVIOLENT LEADERS – PART 2</b>	Discussing and Promoting Non-Violent Leadership, Creating Men of Honor Journal Masks
8	<b>ENGAGING IN EDUCATION – PART 1</b>	Group Goal Setting Activity
9	<b>ENGAGING IN EDUCATION – PART 2</b>	Academy of Hazards Board Game
10	<b>GOING FORWARD AS MEN OF HONOR</b>	Acknowledgments, Celebration
*	<b>OPTIONAL SESSION</b>	Resume Builder

## SET TWO Outline

1	<b>RENEWING OUR COUNCIL</b>	Council Agreements, Review & Renew Purpose
2	<b>RESPECTING WOMEN AND GIRLS</b>	Examination of Gender Norms, Defining Respectful Relationships and Ally Behaviors
3	<b>RESPECTING INTIMATE PARTNERS</b>	Gender Box Stories, Examining Myths, Building Respectful Norms
4	<b>CHALLENGING HOMOPHOBIA / BECOMING ALLIES – PART 1</b>	Fact or Fiction Activity, Stories of Two Athletes Breaking Barriers/ Respecting Diversity
5	<b>CHALLENGING HOMOPHOBIA / BECOMING ALLIES – PART 2</b>	LGBT Definitions and Terms, YouTube Video: LGBT Youth Speak, Examining Homophobia, Building Empathy
6	<b>FORMING HEALTHY AND SAFE SEXUAL PRACTICES – PART 1</b>	Card Game with Guided Conversation
7	<b>FORMING HEALTHY AND SAFE SEXUAL PRACTICES – PART 2</b>	PSA’s (Public Service Announcements)
8	<b>DIGGING IN TO SUBSTANCE USE – PART 1</b>	Jeopardy Game
9	<b>DIGGING IN TO SUBSTANCE USE – PART 2</b>	Motivational Interviewing – Self and Group
10	<b>COMPLETING OUR MEN OF HONOR PROGRAM</b>	Ceremony, Certificates, Meal Celebration

# Pilot Testimonials

The program was piloted by two facilitators – one as a Case Worker serving youth in a secure detention setting in Connecticut, and the other as a therapist in Northern California working with young men referred by parents, schools and juvenile services. Below are their testimonials and some personal comments from the young men themselves.



## ANDRE ALEXANDER

CASE MANAGER, BRAVE PROGRAM, COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN ACTION, HAMDEN, CT

*“I’ll never give up, I’ll never give in, I’ll never let a rain of doubt slip in, and if I fall I’ll never fail, I’ll just get up and try again.”*

(Lyrics by Brian McKnight)

Reviewing the [young men’s] journals of Men of Honor, I feel as though I’m calling to a brotherhood upon a brotherhood. There are many voices, so many thoughts – from personal testimonies, poems, and conversation. One of the poems that we used is by Antwan Fisher “Who Will Cry for the Little Boy?” Antwan stated he cries for the little boy. In the Men of Honor, I had to learn to cry for the brotherhood. So many of our youth are hurt, they feel disappointed, and forgotten. My tears have paved the way through each session and each session offered another testimony. Here are some of the young men’s voices from their journals:

**“I will reach out to someone that I think is understanding.” • “I want to give up being angry at the world and learn to forgive.” • “A young man can change by following the law and rules of society, and by following God.”\* • “It’s okay for men to cry because we are human.” • “I want to give up my trust issues.” • “I’m tired of being on the street, and hanging out with the wrong people.” • “I want to do positive things and make my family proud.”**

\*The curriculum is secular but participants are welcome to express their beliefs within a respectful atmosphere.



## URIAH GUILFORD, LMFT

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“The Men of Honor Curriculum is an exciting addition to The Council for Boys and Young Men series. The topics are incredibly relevant and relatable to the issues that young men are dealing with. My High School group found it easy to engage with the material and it provided opportunities for rich discussions. I am eagerly looking forward to facilitating my next group with this new curriculum.”

Men of Honor was written by Beth Hossfeld, LMFT, and Mac Petty. Edited by Giovanna Taormina.

<sup>1</sup> National Council on Gender (2009). Gender Norms: A Key To Improving Life Outcomes in At-Risk Populations: An Overview Report. [www.truechild.org](http://www.truechild.org): Washington DC

<sup>2</sup> Sabo, D. (1999). Understanding Men’s Health: A Relational and Gender Sensitive Approach, Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, working Paper Series, No.99.14: Boston, MA

<sup>3</sup> Möller-Leimkühler, A. (2002). Barriers to help-seeking by men: a review of sociocultural and clinical literature with particular reference to depression. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 71(1-3), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Möller-Leimkühler, A. (2003). The gender gap in suicide and premature death or: why are men so vulnerable? *European Archives of Psychiatry & Clinical Neuroscience*, 253(1), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Some organizations run programs with lengths shorter than 20 sessions and may choose to select the sessions most applicable to the youth in their program. For programs that choose to utilize Set 2 only, we have inserted a CORE session to be implemented in the second meeting. It is essential to include this session in order for the young men to develop a foundational understanding of the Men of Honor concept that runs throughout the program.