

Attachment 1: Focus group discussion guide

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Focus group discussion guide [*italicized sections are only for internal purposes*] *Welcome, ground rules, and introductions (10-15 minutes)*

Welcome. Thank you all for coming. My name is [*name of facilitator*] and I will be moderating today's focus group.

The main reason we are having this discussion today is to help us better understand how parents raise their sons to become healthy, safe and happy men. The information you share with us today will help us create future products or materials to help parents of young sons, like posters, a website, or videos and other tools. Throughout the discussion we will ask questions about what it means to be a man today in the U.S. and how to raise boys to be good men. We ask that you provide your honest opinions and feedback.

I am going to review the document "Consent to Participate in Focus Group Session", which you all should have. Please tell me if you do not have this document and we will get you another one.

(Go through informed consent document and notetaker collects signed consent forms from everyone.)

There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions we ask today. You are the expert on your own experiences and interpretations, and your thoughts and opinions are greatly valued and appreciated. We are looking for your individual insights, not group consensus. As such, we ask that you be honest about issues of concern and importance to you during our discussion today.

Are there any questions? *Pause to address any questions or issues participants may have.*

For Latino/a groups: Please feel free to speak in either English or Spanish. We will ask the questions in English and will show videos in English, but please feel free to respond in Spanish if you prefer.

Definitions: For the purposes of our discussion today, "community" refers to friends, family, neighborhood, or other groups of people you identify with and share values with. It can be a social community or a geographic one. Whichever group or groups you identify with the most.

Introductions: please tell us how many children you have and the ages of your children.

Activity 1: Defining Masculinity (15-20 minutes)

Facilitator or note-taker passes out the handout titled "The media tells me an "ideal man" is".

Facilitator: One of the main topics for today’s discussion is what it means to be a man in the U.S. Let’s start with an activity to help us begin thinking and talking about this idea. I am going to pass out a list of words for you to review.

I would like everyone to take a second and think about the media. When I say “media”, I mean television shows, movies, YouTube, music, magazines, the news – that sort of thing.

1. Thinking about what you have seen or heard from the media, which of these words describe what you think of as an “ideal man” based on what you see in the media? Please put a star next to five words that you think best describe how the media portrays an “ideal man”. Feel free to write in additional words at the bottom of the list if these options don’t capture your thoughts.
 - a. Can you share one or two of the words that you starred?
 - b. Probe: Why did you choose those? (*Potentially probe if people look like they need to be warmed up. However, do not want to spend too much time on this as we will collect handouts at end of FGD.*)
 - c. (*If participants do not share additional words*) These words might feel a little research-y. What are some more common ways of saying these things? (*Write up words on white board.*)
2. What does the media tell us about characteristics that an “ideal man” should not be? (*Facilitator writes words on white board.*)
3. When we think of an ideal man—as portrayed in the media, what celebrity or famous person comes to mind? (*Go around the room and get a list of celebrities.*)
 - a. (*If participants do not explain why they said that celebrity*): Why did you choose that person? What about them that makes them an “ideal man”?
 - i. Probe: We’ve been talking about what the media suggests is an ideal man. How well does the media’s portrayal of the “ideal man” reflect **your community’s** ideas about what a man should be? What about what a man should not be? It could be the same or different.
 - ii. Probe: How well do these ideas or portrayals of men in the media reflect **your own** opinions and perceptions of what it means to be an “ideal man”? Are there ideas you agree or disagree with?
4. (*Facilitator or note-taker: hand out the second list of words of what you want and do not want for your son.*) Now I would like you all to think about your sons and what you want for your sons as they grow up to become men. Looking at the same list of words you reviewed before, please put a star next to five words that you would most like to describe your son when he’s older.
 - a. Can you share one or two of the characteristics/words that you starred?

- i. Probe: Why did you choose those? (*Potentially probe if people look like they need to be warmed up. However, do not want to spend too much time on this as we will collect handouts at end of FGD.*)

5. Were there any words that stood out to you as characteristics that would **not** be important to you in what you want for your son? Or that you would **not** want your sons to be like? (*Facilitator writes words on white board.*)

6. (*After everyone has finished*): Can everyone please look at your two lists of what the media says an ideal man should be (the first sheet you completed) and what you would like your son to be like? Looking at these lists, which of the words did you star on both sheets?
 - a. Probe: Which words reflect what you want for your son, and also reflect what the media says is an “ideal man”?
 - b. Probe: Which words describe what you want for your son, but maybe are not part of what the media says is an “ideal man”? (*Facilitator -> hold up lists to physically show what you are talking about. Make use of an example list to help participants understand.*)

7. Raising boys today can be tough. There are a lot of influences on them, some of which can be hard to protect them from. What aspects of raising boys today make you most concerned?
 - a. *Facilitator - ideas to probe for:* violence or suicide, drug or alcohol use, access to media online, smartphone use, video games, mental health, getting a good education or a good job when they get older, or teaching them healthy behaviors.

Activity 2: Commercial (10-15 minutes)

Facilitator: Thank you all for participating. I am now going to show you a commercial that some of you may have already seen and then I’ll ask you about your opinions and perceptions of the commercial. (*Show Gillette commercial – 1:48 version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koPmuEyP3a0>.*)

1. What are your initial reactions to this commercial?
 - a. Probe: Which parts stood out to you? Why?

2. What do you think the message is?
 - a. Probe: What was the main take-home point?
 - b. Probe: What do you think it’s telling us to do or believe?

3. The commercial ends with this statement “The actions we take today will be seen by the men of tomorrow”? Do you agree with the message?
 - a. Probe: Why or why not?
 - b. Probe: When thinking of “the actions we take” – what actions are you thinking about?

4. This commercial was originally aired during the Super Bowl and it led to a lot of different reactions. Some people really liked it and other people did not.
 - a. Why do you think some people did NOT like this commercial?
 - i. Probe: What about this commercial did people not like? What ideas or scenes made people dislike it?
 - ii. Probe: Does anyone here know someone who saw this commercial and did not like it? Why did they not like it?
5. Do you think this commercial reflects real issues in the U.S.?
 - a. Probe: Do you think this commercial reflects something that is genuinely a problem?
 - b. Probe: What about within your immediate community? How are these issues the same among your friends, family, and neighbors? What is different in your community?
6. Thinking about what is acceptable for men to do or say, what do you think has changed since we were children?

Activity 3: The Mask You Live In (25-30 minutes)

Facilitator: Now I am going to play another clip. This is a trailer for a recent documentary on being a man in the U.S. (Show *Mask You Live In* trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hc45-ptHMxo>.)

1. What are your reactions to this trailer?
 - a. Probe: What surprised you the most?
 - b. Probe: What upset you the most?
 - c. Probe: What did you disagree with?
2. The trailer begins and ends with a list of words and phrases that boys might hear. Which of those words or phrases stood out to you the most?
 - a. Probe: Which have you heard or said?
 - i. Probe: (*All groups*): Can you give me a personal example?
 - b. Probe: (*In fathers groups*): Have you had any of those things said to you? Who said it to you? What were the circumstances?
 - c. Probe: The *words* people use when conveying these ideas to boys might change over time or could be different in different communities. Are there other messages like these—maybe using different words-- that you have heard frequently in your community that weren't included in the clip? (*Write up messages on whiteboard.*)

3. Why do you think people communicate these ideas, or messages, to boys?
4. Based on the trailer, what do you think the point of the movie is?
 - a. Probe: What does it mean to wear a mask?
 - b. Probe: Can you provide examples in your life?
5. How do you think these ideas about “being a man” affect boys? (*Write consequences up on whiteboard.*)
 - a. Probe: What are the long-term consequences for boys and men?
 - b. Probe: How about for their future families (e.g., wives, children) and communities (e.g., colleagues, friends)?
6. What do you think young boys need from their parents, families, or communities in order to be resilient, or protected, against messages that might be harmful?
 - a. Probe: For example, in your community, what kind of support, help, or skills would they need? What can be done to help boys deal with these ideas?
 - b. Probe: Can you give me an example?

Activity 4: Conclusion

Going back to the purpose of today’s conversation: we’re looking for your attitudes, preferences, and experiences to help us create new information and communication materials to help parents raise healthy and happy boys.

1. Thinking along those lines, what kinds of information or support do parents need to help protect their sons from potentially harmful messages about what it means to “be a man”?
 - a. Probe: What would help parents start a conversation on this topic? With their sons, partners, family members, etc.
2. What other people besides parents should know more about this topic?
 - a. Probe (if people have a hard time thinking of other people): You might think about other people in your family, or people who your kids interact with through school or sports or their friends.
 - b. Probe: What kind of information do they need?
 - c. Probe: Would you feel comfortable talking to them about this topic (i.e., how communicating these ideas to boys might be harmful to them)?
 - d. Probe: If not, what would make that conversation hard?

Let’s think back to the Gillette commercial. Gillette made the commercial to bring attention to the ways we act in front of and talk to boys; and they wanted to encourage people, especially men, to think about how those actions and words affect boys.

Optional: Replay video for participants if needed.

Like we talked about, some people really did not like this commercial. They said it only showed negative stereotypes about men and most men do not behave that way.

3. What are better ways of talking about this topic?
 - a. Probe: What is more motivating for parents? For dads? For moms?
4. What other ideas do you have about messages and materials that can help start a conversation about this topic?

Conclusion

(5-10 minutes)

1. Ask for any additional ideas from participants
2. Ask participants if they have any questions at this point
3. Thank participants for their time and ideas
4. Tell them to take a handout of available resources if they want to learn more about this topic (Handout 3)
5. Distribute incentives
6. Provide departure instructions

FGD handout 1:

The media tells me an “ideal man” is...			
	Aggressive		Leader
	Breadwinner or provider		Player
	Compassionate		Protector
	Dominant		Rich
	Family man		Sensitive
	Fearless		Strong
	Funny		Competitive
	Ready for a fight		Winner
	Handsome		Hard-working
	Happy		Smart
	In control		Confident
	Kind		

FGD handout 2:

I want my son to be...			
	Aggressive		Leader
	Breadwinner or provider		Player
	Compassionate		Protector
	Dominant		Rich
	Family man		Sensitive
	Fearless		Strong
	Funny		Competitive
	Ready for a fight		Winner
	Handsome		Hard-working
	Happy		Smart
	In control		Confident
	Kind		