

Detoxifying Masculinity *Elective*

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SUMMARY:	This discussion and activity-based session will explore masculinity and work to help participants unpack, explore, and consider their relationship to masculinity in a way that is ultimately positive for and supportive of individuals and camp cultures.
TOPIC(S):	Gender, Identity Development
LEARNING OBJECTIVES:	Participants will leave this session being able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define masculinity in a way that reflects one's highest ideals • Identify examples of positive masculinity in one's personal life and in those individuals we admire from afar.
AUDIENCE:	All and any ages are encouraged to take part in this program, and any group size that feels comfortable and supportive given your camp's make up.
TIMING:	90 minutes
APPENDICES:	Flower Power Worksheet
MATERIALS NEEDED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blank paper (2 sheets per participant) • Scissors (participants can share) • Large bowl (to hold the rice) and large serving spoon • 1 pound of rice (uncooked) • 1 large bottle of rainbow cake sprinkles • 1 each per participant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A copy of the Flower Power Template ○ A pen ○ A pair of chopsticks ○ A salad bowl ○ A Sharpie/permanent marker ○ A ~10"x10" square of aluminum foil
SET-UP DETAILS:	It is recommended that this session take place in an open space area where people can sit in a circle on the floor/ground and spread out as needed during the various activities both seated and standing.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:

- Masculinity should not be confined by reductive definitions (e.g. “All men like sports.”), shallow criteria for male expression (e.g. “Real men don’t show emotion.”) or outdated value judgements (e.g. “Gay men are less male than straight men.”)
- My identity, and the way that I relate to men, manhood and masculinity are bound up in the relationships I’ve had with boys and men in my life.
- Masculinity, like most identifiers is, at face value, neither good nor bad.
- Camp is a place where we come to explore our inner life alongside others in order to become our highest selves.

AFFECTIVE OUTCOMES:

- Participants may feel challenged and supported when invited to consider masculinity and its presence in their life.
- Participants may feel a sense of camaraderie, loyalty or connection to others that is deeply rooted in shared values like pride, loyalty, courage and perseverance.
- Participants may also feel a deeper sense of empathy for masculinity and/or masculine-identifying people, and may consider their role in supporting positive representations of masculinity.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: Participants will leave this session having considered the following essential questions:

- *What is toxic masculinity, how does it impact my life, and how am I contributing to it?*
- *How can masculinity be positive?*
- *Where am I in this global and cultural conversation?*
- *And what do I want to do about it at camp and beyond?*

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

- **0:00-0:10 OPENING : Framing/Set Induction -- Allergy Fruit Salad!**
- *Participants are each given a set of chopsticks to serve themselves from the shared bowl of “Fruit Salad” (actually uncooked rice with rainbow cake sprinkles mixed in).*
 - *“You are a person with several food allergies and cannot eat everything in the fruit salad. In fact, you can only eat one or two of these fruits. (It’s ok that they’ve touched other “fruits.”) And, in the house where you’re being served, it’s considered extremely rude to only take the fruit you will eat from the salad when serving yourself. So take a scoop, and using your chopsticks only “eat” from the two colors of sprinkles that you’ve identified, i.e. the fruits you desire.*
 - *Note: It is considered equally rude to take the other “fruits” out of the salad to leave behind the fruit you do not like. Better to take the fruit you want (e.g. red and blue sprinkles) from the whole.*

- There are prohibitions on Shabbat, the 39 *melachot*¹, acts of creation, that are the source of some of our most stringent restrictions on Shabbat. One of those often overlooked by Jews who choose not to guard these weekly prohibitions is that against removing things you do not want from those that you do desire. This is considered either sifting or gleaning, both of which are forbidden.
- **What might this teach us about our topic today?**
- *Just as Shabbat frames the removal of that which we despise as prohibited, and highlighting that which we love as permitted (ne celebrated!), so too must we look to men, manhood and masculinity with an eye towards elevating that which we find desirable and honorable. Try as we might to detoxify cultures of masculinity, we can be more effective promoting honorable behaviors and habits. Rather than use our energy on rooting out that which we despise about cultures of masculinity, may we constructively lift up the things that we think all of us are capable of doing. May we ignore those features which toxify, and celebrate those which repair and build up our communities.*
- **0:10-0:35 ACTIVITY 1: Qualities of the Self: Yetzer Ha-Tov and Yetzer Ha-Ra**
- **0:10 --** *Judaism teaches that we each have two competing halves of our selves -- the yetzer ha-tov and the yetzer ha-ra, the good and wicked inclinations. These are considered to be innately programmed aspects of our being, each with a commitment to its own purpose. **The challenge of life is not to eliminate the yetzer ha-ra, but to moderate it and make it work for the other.***
- **0:11 --** Fold a sheet of blank paper in half, lengthwise, and cut out the silhouette of a person's body using a pair of scissors.
 - Using a pen or markers, "dress" your paper doll in qualities that you believe present positive aspects of masculinity.
 - Where do these qualities live in the body/self?
 - How do they manifest themselves in your hands? Your eyes? Your ears? Your feet? Your belly?
- **0:18 --** On the opposite side of your paperdoll, list, draw or color the qualities that are negative and degrading to masculinity?
 - Where do these qualities live in the body/self?
 - How do they manifest themselves in your hands? Your eyes? Your ears? Your feet? Your belly?

¹ The [number of] principal *Melakbot* is forty minus one. [The forbidden *Melakbot* are]: Sowing, plowing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, sorting, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking, shearing wool, whitening it, combing it, dyeing it, spinning, weaving, making two loops, weaving two threads, separating two threads, tying [a knot], untying [a knot], sewing two stitches, tearing for the purpose of sewing two stitches, hunting a deer, slaughtering it, skinning it, salting it, curing its hide, scraping it, cutting it, writing two letters, erasing for the purpose of writing two letters, building, demolishing, extinguishing a flame, lighting a flame, striking with a hammer, carrying from one domain to another. These are the principal *Melakbot* - [they number] forty minus one. *Mishnah Shabbat 7:2*

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- **0:25** -- In groups of 2-5 people, share one quality that you labeled as positive and one you labeled as negative.
 - How do you see this quality contributing/detracting from a culture of positive masculinity?
 - Why is this quality important for to you to name?

- **0:35-0:40 BREAK**

- **0:45-1:10 ACTIVITY 2: The Whole Self Cares for the Whole: Assessment and Action Plan**

- **0:45** -- The question becomes how do we move from identifying the qualities and characteristics of positive masculinity and integrating them into ourselves, our camp cultures and the communities we call home. This requires us to create a map for action in the world.
- What is a Power Flower? A Power Flower is a way of mapping and reviewing the dominant forces of social identity influences in your life. While there are many ways to state our values and pursue their lived fulfillment, this [modified Power Flower](#)² exercise, used in anti-racist education, is meant to model what is possible through careful thought, planning and pruning of our behavior.
- [*Share example of Power Flower you created in advance of this program.*]

- **0:50-1:05 Facilitator directs each of the next three steps.** Participants will need 3-5 minutes to complete each of the following steps.
 - Step One: Write out a single idea (word/phrase) in each **inner** circle segment that describe **how you see yourself?** What defines you? What is important to who you are?
 - Examples:
 - Educator
 - friend
 - outgoing
 - confident
 - quiet
 - Sephardi
 - interfaith family
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 - Step Two: Write out a single idea (word/phrase) in each **middle** petal adjacent to word/phrase in the inner circle that describe **how others see you with regards to the adjacent petal's word/phrase?**

² https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/edactivism/Activist_Resources/The_Power_Flower.html

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- Examples:
 - Educator → Teacher
 - friend → caring
 - outgoing → loud
 - confident → aggressive/arrogant
 - quiet → anti-social
 - Sephardi → mistaken as not Jewish
 - interfaith family → interesting
- Step Three: - Write out a single idea (word/phrase) in each **outer** petal adjacent to the word/phrase in the middle petal that describe **what adjustments need to be made in you or the way that others perceive you to align the inner two petals?**
 - Examples:
 - Educator → Teacher → Advocating for good education
 - friend → caring → continue to be a caring
 - outgoing → loud → happy, optimistic
 - confident → aggressive/arrogant → make space for others while holding one's place
 - quiet → anti-social → Communicate my needs to others
 - Sephardi → mistaken as not Jewish → Wear my Judaism with pride, Not to take other's ignorance personally
 - interfaith family → interesting → Celebrate my family!
 - **1:10** -- Take a few minutes in hevruta/pairs to share with someone else what you noticed in filling out this Power Flower.
 - Guiding question to ask each other: How did this activity (filling out the Power Flower) make you feel?
 - We've now created a visual model for an integrated self, that incorporates our highest ideals with the challenges of daily life and social norms. Now we need to ask how do we deploy that integrated person? How do we invite that person to greet the world first every day?

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- **1:20-1:30 -- CLOSING: A Vision of Our Highest Selves**
- In presenting ourselves to others, we are given the opportunity to offer respect to them and to show that we are also worthy of respect. In each interaction, there is another chance to live more like the person you imagine you can be--more honest, more brave, more sensitive, more thoughtful...
- Looking back at both your paper doll from the first activity and the Power Flower from the second, see if you can finish the phrase "I am a person who..." with one or several affirmations. e.g. "I am a person who seeks to understand the views of others before needing to feel understood myself."
- Once you've generated some affirmations for yourself, take a piece of aluminum foil (cut into a 10" x 10" (or larger) square) and write these affirmations on the shiny side.
- **Closing Questions:**
 - What did you write on mirror?
 - In thinking about the first activity (paper dolls), what qualities do you think best represent you? Your camp?
 - How can you help your campers be their highest selves at camp? Your peers?
 - How does camp prepare us to present out highest selves?

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

- Each of the activities in this session can be used on their own and/or in combination with one another.
- Some recommended reading if you are going to do lead/facilitate this session (either as a whole, or individual activities from this session):
 - [APA Guidelines for Men and Boys](#)
 - [Caroline Rothstein's WMC article](#) re: toxic masculinity
 - 2019 [Gillette ad](#)
 - [YouTube Playlist](#)
 - [Michael Steinhardt, a Leader in Jewish Philanthropy, Is Accused of a Pattern of Sexual Harassment](#) by Sharon Otterman and Hannah Dreyfus
 - [How Jewish Academia Created a #MeToo Disaster](#) by Kate Rosenblatt, Lila Corwin Berman and Ronit Stahl
 - [Are Jewish Men Pigs?](#) by Rabbi Daniel Brenner