

Takeaways for those who work with young people

Educators, coaches, mentors, youth workers, faith leaders, counselors, and after-school staff.

Your role in the ecosystem

School, teams, and programs give boys daily exposure to how adults navigate conflict, curiosity, and care, shaping interpretation long before language catches up.



WAYS TO EXPAND POSSIBILITY

Slow the room when it needs slowing. Revisit tough interactions with steadiness. Build small rituals of settling and reflection. Cultivate the environment before building the curriculum.

WHAT BOYS LEARN HERE

Who is given patience, what participation feels like, whether emotion is treated as information or disruption, and how conflict gets handled.

PLACES TO LOOK FOR INSPIRATION

Social and emotional learning models, restorative practices, and A Call to Men's Live Respect and Healthy Masculinity Curriculum: Life Skills and Well-Being For Boys and Young Men.

The State of Masculinity 2025 is a project of A Call to Men. 25 years of violence prevention, healthy manhood, and culture change. Get the report and free resources at acalltomen.org.

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A Call to Action

Two invitations from the report to try at home

BRING FACILITATION STRATEGIES INTO YOUR CONTEXT.

A FEW OF THE STRATEGIES THAT WORKED AMONG OUR INTERVIEWEES AND TRAINERS

- Environment before curriculum. Tone and psychological safety matter more than lesson sequencing. Food, music, and opening circles say “you’re welcome here.”
- Relationship-building first, instruction/correction at the speed of trust. “Tell me what you think and we’ll figure it out together”
- Smaller cohorts, deeper trust. Groups larger than 10 to 12 members can result in overlooked voices. Keep groups small enough to track emotional nuance.
- Call in, don’t call out. Give boys room to test ideas out loud without shaming them for what they’ve been taught.

A CALL TO CONSIDER

REFLECT ON THE PROMPTS BELOW AS THEY RELATE TO YOUR EXPERIENCE OR CONTEXT.

- What am I modeling? What emotions do young people see me express? How do I handle stress or repair?
- Who feels safe in my context? Whose voices are loudest? Who hesitates? What unspoken rules shape belonging?
- What language do boys learn here? Do they gain words beyond anger? How do we respond to vulnerability?
- How do we practice repair, and make empathy and accountability normal parts of our day?



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From the Field: What We Heard In Our Interviews About Family Life



"Sometimes the 'head of household' idea becomes a kind of silence people live inside."

– Professor of Sociology, D.C.

"Pride in providing isn't the problem. The problem is when providing becomes permission to avoid everything else."

– Therapist, WA

"I can care for my child. I can care for my partner... I want men to conjugate that verb in all those spaces."

– Non-profit CEO, D.C.

"Parents are trying to keep their kids safe... but they're also exhausted, and that changes what 'being present' looks like."

– Non-profit Executive, MO

"Some kids don't have the adult at home who can model what repair looks like. So they learn it from whoever shows up."

– Community Leader, ME



"Work takes the best of you, and your family gets what's left. People don't say it that clean, but they live it."

– NFL Player, OH

"That 'what goes on in this house stays in the house' language can sound like loyalty, but it can also be how pain survives."

– Survivor Advocate, NM

"The economy... the grind... it shapes what people can offer at home, even when the love is there."

– Lawyer, D.C.



"I had a single father growing up, but I was always able to be affectionate with my father. I lived in a very privileged and safe household with my dad."

– Data Analyst, TX