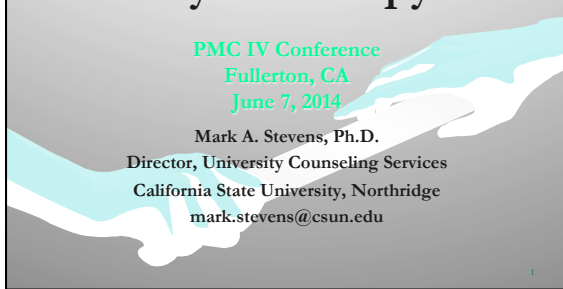


**Engaging Men in
Psychotherapy**

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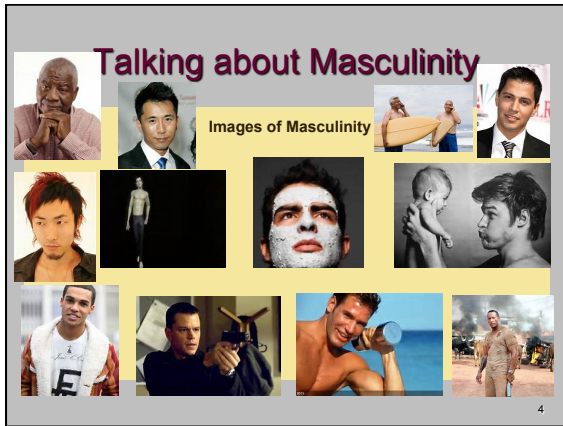
**Making Your Personal Reactions
and Assumptions More Visible**

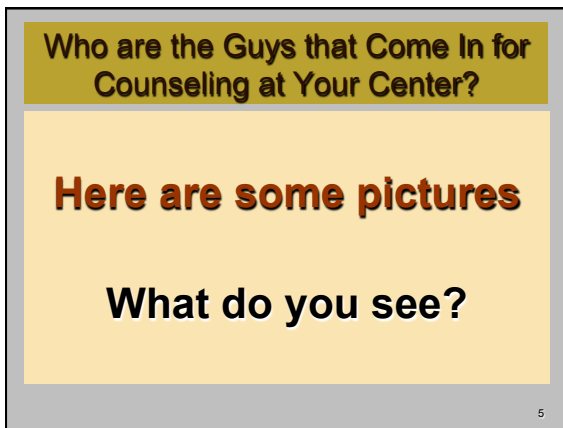
When you find out your client is **male** what
are the subtle and not so subtle reactions you
experience?

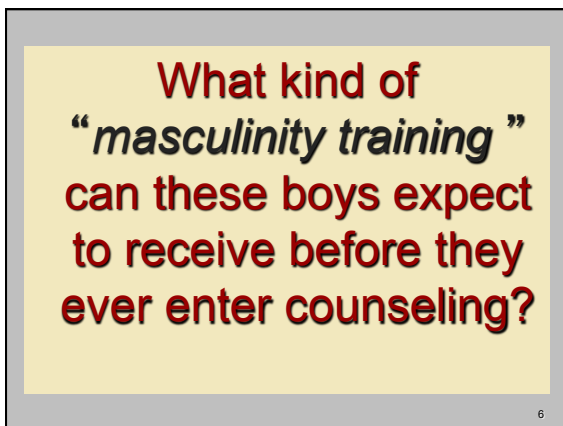
- Cognitively
- Physiologically
- Attitudinally
- Behaviorally

What Does It Mean to be a Man?

- All cultures have defining “rules of masculinity”
- Not a masculinity but *masculinities*
- Socially & culturally constructed variations of masculinity
- Importance of reference group in formation of masculine identity
- Most men have some relationship with traditional masculine norms
- Are there masculinity stereotypes?







Emotional Expression

Steven Seagal Emotion Chart

Happy	Sad	Petrified	Lonely
Amused	Skeptical	Furious	Wistful
Confused	Bored	Sarcastic	Regretful
Anxious	Terrified	Proud	Mischievous

To

How Are You Feeling Today?

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Rules of Masculinity

- No Sissy Stuff
- Sturdy Oak
- Big Wheel
- “Give em Hell”

David and Brannon (1976)

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Influence of Masculine Socialization on Well-Being

- Men tend to externalize
- Men may more often self-medicate
- Anger is often the “funnel” emotion
- Stress “can’t” be relieved through expressing “vulnerable” emotions
- Intimacy needs are often silenced
- Avoidance of physical health care
- Avoidance of mental health care

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Wait....
There is More to the Story of Masculine Socialization

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What Lens are Looking Through ?



Fuller Picture Model	Deficit Model
• To protect.....	Chauvinistic
• To be loyal to friends.....	Good old boys
• To problem solve.....	Don' t Listen well
• To be heroic.....	Enjoy danger
• To withstand pressure....	Unfeeling
• To provide.....	Entitled-Male Privilege
• To take physical risks.....	Show off
• To take charge	Need to Control
• To absorb pain	Fear of vulnerability
• To succeed	Are Competitive

Acknowledging His Strengths
Recognizing the **Benefits** to His Approach to Life

▪ Responsible.....	Can be relied on
▪ Clear thinking.....	Solutions under pressure
▪ Conscientious.....	Gets work done
▪ Strong.....	Others may lean on him
▪ Self-Sacrificing.....	Lessens danger for others
▪ Courageous.....	Is rewarded by others
▪ Physical Caring.....	Provides security
▪ Practical.....	Time efficient
▪ Dedicated.....	Stays with difficulty
▪ Wanting to succeed.....	Produces results

The Recognition there are also Costs Associated to His Approach to Life

- Stuffing Feelings----- Physical Health Problems
- Problem Solving Mode----- Disconnection from Others
- Driven to Succeed----- Loss of Perspective
- Not Admitting Weakness-- Limits Self-Learning/Awareness
- Avoidance of Fear----- Reduced Emotional Risk Taking
- "Male Pride"----- Unnecessary Violence
- Staying Strong----- Missed Opportunities to Grieve

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How Might This Information Help US As Counselors?

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Therapy with Men: Basic Assumptions

- It is extremely embarrassing and shameful to go to counseling
- Going to counseling is a sign of weakness
- Counseling may be viewed and felt as a punishment
- Counseling is usually last resort or viewed as forced choice
- Men are worried they will be devalued and misunderstood by the counselor
- Being vulnerable in counseling is difficult
- Men prefer to focus on solutions rather than process
- Men have a difficult time accessing "inner world" experiences

Skills to Engage Men in Counseling

- 1. Acknowledge, address, and normalize ambivalence about counseling. Use his language.**
- 2. Developing the Working Alliance with men: Focus on the goals, tasks, and bonds of counseling.**
- 3. Assessing masculinity, and understanding the client's identity as a man. Navigating his form of masculinity.**
- 4. Building the relationship: Share his story, validate his experience, and work on deepening into affect.**

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Skills to Engage Men in Counseling

- 5. Help the client save "masculine face" in the counseling setting.**
- 6. Be patient.**
- 7. Conceptualize presenting concerns through a masculinity lens.**
- 8. Moving into affect: Begin to experience it in session, and educate about expressing it.**

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Skills to Engage Men in Counseling

- 9. Helping the client get his story out.**
- 10. Identifying and building male strengths.**
- 11. Listening to male clients, not forcing them to do what they don't want to do, and honoring what they want.**

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