

The Men's Project

Driving positive change in attitudes towards masculinity to support men and boys be their best selves

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A Jesuit Social Services initiative

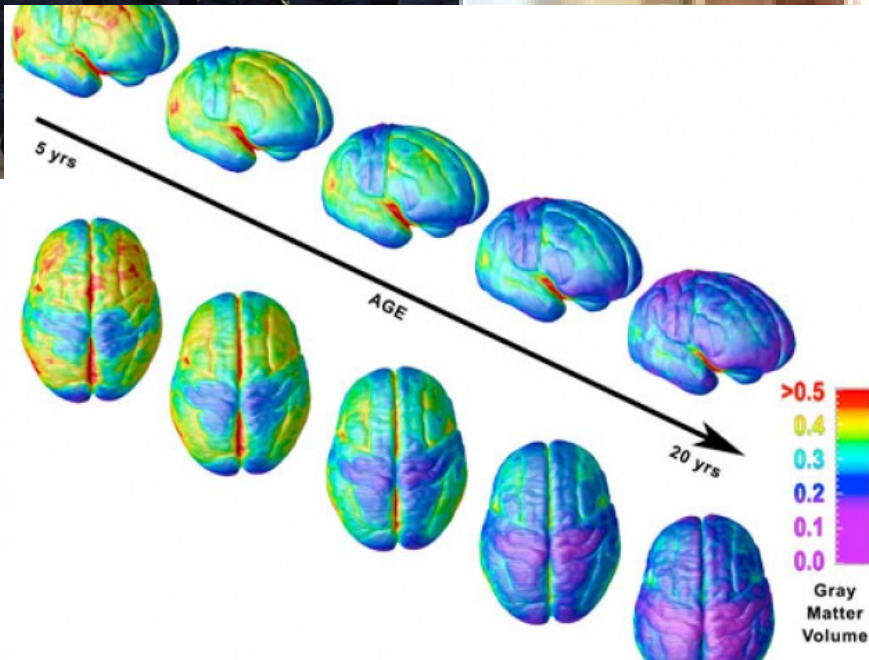


Some foundations on gender

1. Gender inequality – impacts women and men
2. Gender is a social construction and therefore the expectation placed upon men and women are impacted by context
 - Impacted by culture
 - Changes over time



Setting the scene – significant economic and social changes

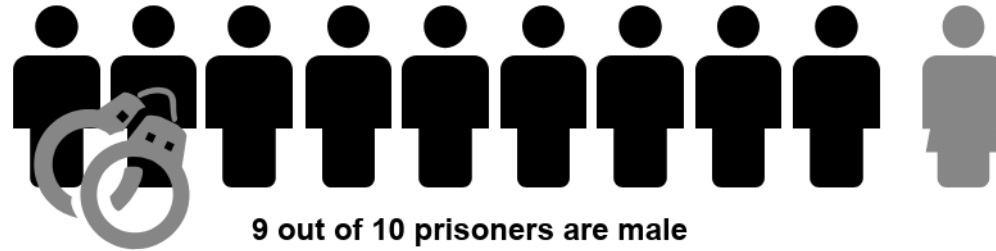


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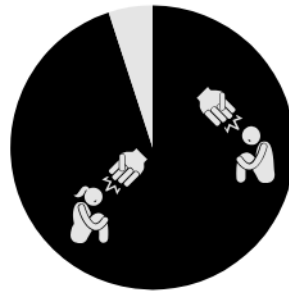
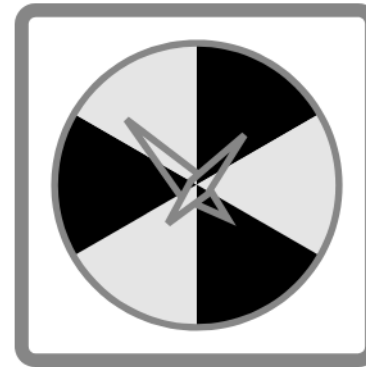
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We have a problem with our men and boys – not all of them, but too many



On average, every
four hours a male
suicides



95% of victims of violence -
whether male or female -
experience violence from a male
perpetrator

The Man Box is the set of beliefs in society that place pressure on men to be a certain way.

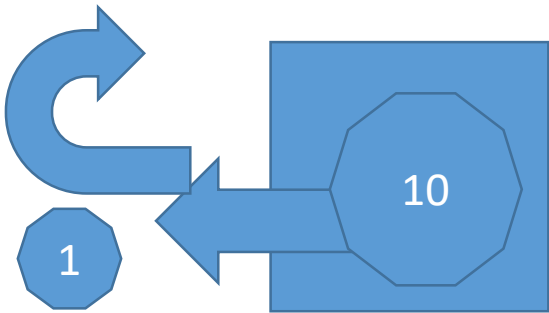


Findings from our Man Box research

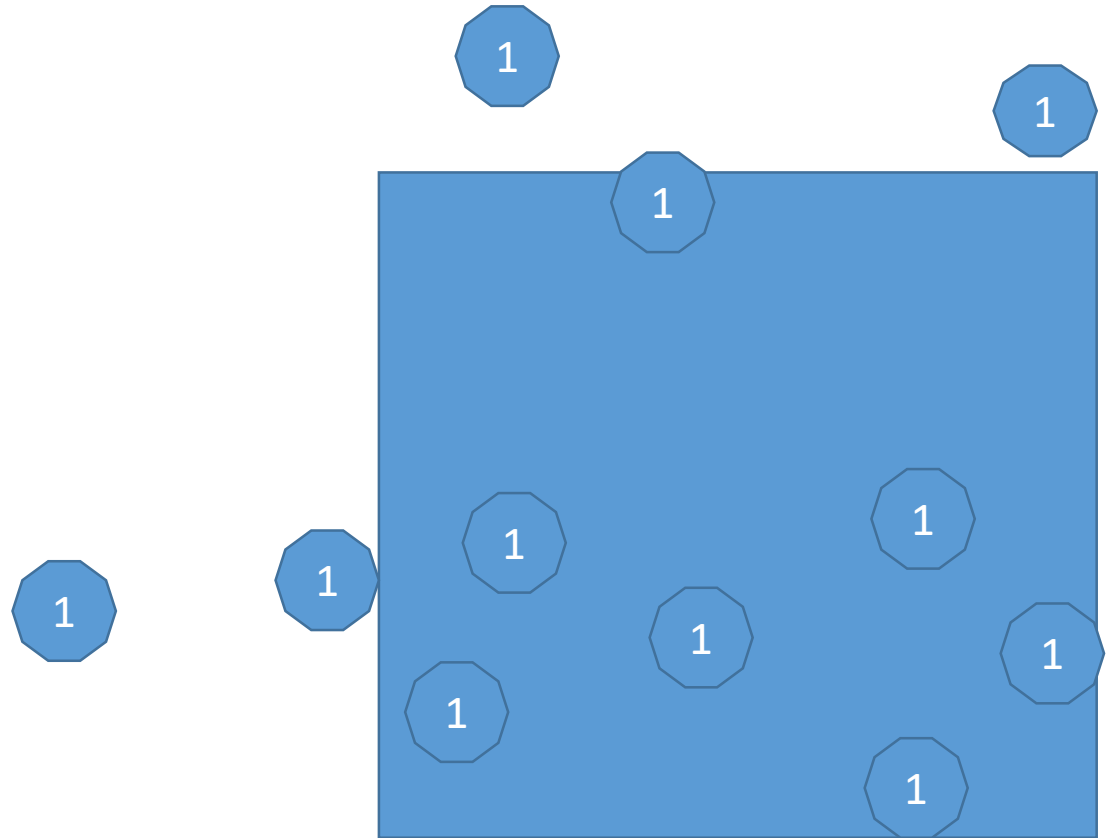
Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree that <i><u>“Society as a whole tells me that...”</u></i>	Man Box Rule	Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree that <i><u>“In my opinion...”</u></i>
69%	Acting tough: E.g. Guys should act strong even if they feel scared or nervous inside.	47%
54%	Self sufficiency: E.g. Men should figure out their personal problems on their own without asking others for help.	27%
35%	Aggression and control: E.g. Men should use violence to get respect if necessary	20%
56%	Hypersexuality: E.g. A “real man” would never say no to sex.	24%
56%	Rigid gender roles: E.g. Men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women.	35%
48%	Physical attractiveness: E.g. A guy who spends a lot of time on his looks isn't very manly.	32%
47%	Heterosexuality and homophobia: E.g. A gay guy is not a “real man.”	28%

A system of rewards and punishment

The Man Box

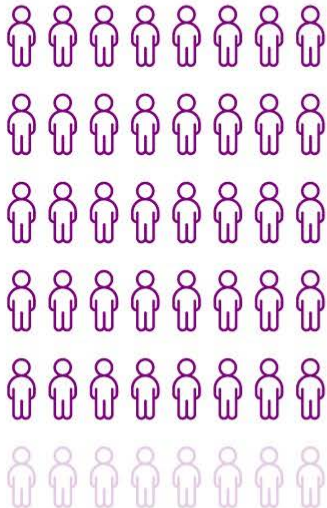


The Possibilities Box



Mental Health

83%



Inside

Down and Depressed

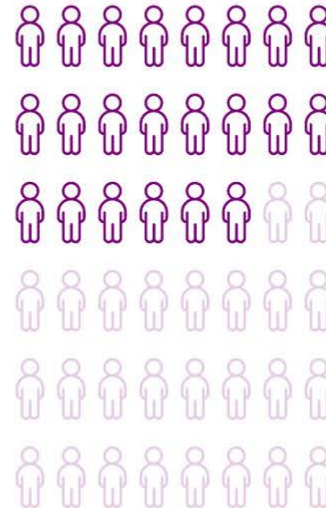
77%



Outside

Down and Depressed

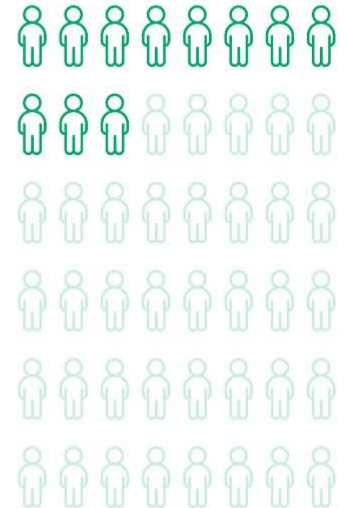
44%



Inside

Suicidal Thoughts

22%



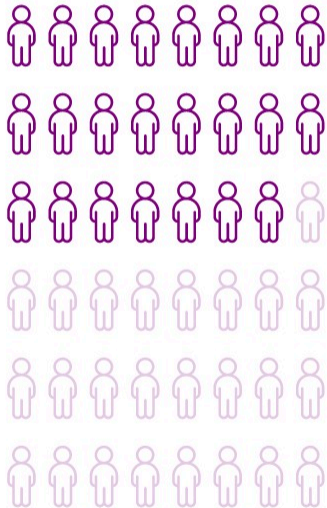
Outside

Suicidal Thoughts

All statistics refer to the likelihood of experiencing the variable in the last two weeks.

Violence Perpetration

47%



Inside

Physical Violence

7%



Outside

Physical Violence

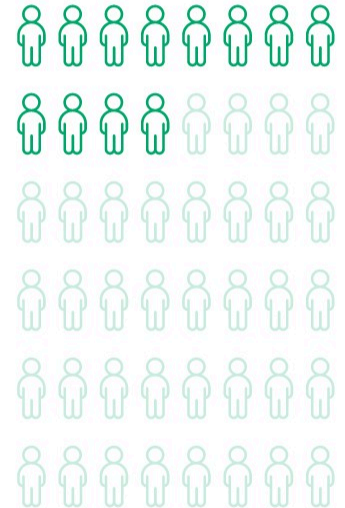
56%



Inside

Verbal Violence

24%



Outside

Verbal Violence

All statistics refer to the likelihood of experiencing the variable in the last month.

Made sexual comments to women you don't know in a public place.

46%



Inside

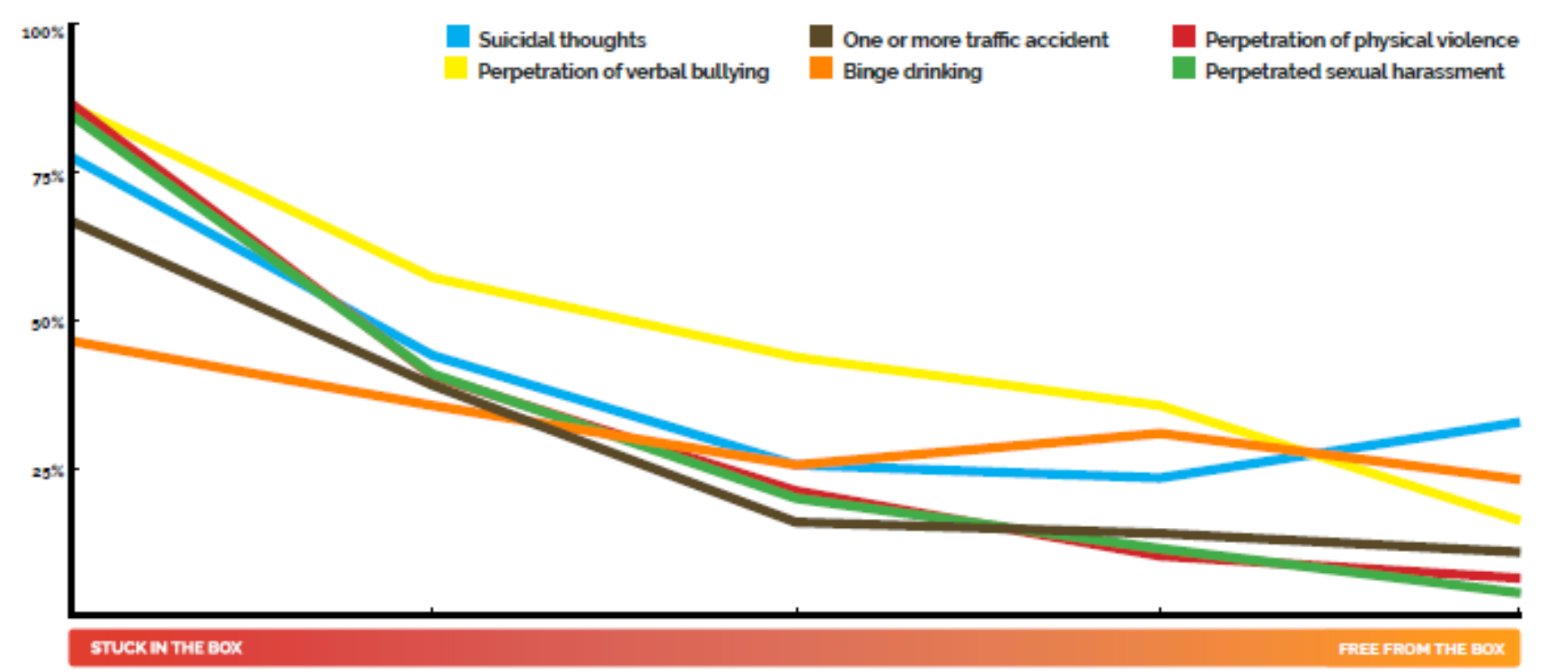
7%



Outside

All statistics refer to the likelihood of experiencing the variable in the last month.

Life in the Man Box



Two thirds of young men have been told that a
“real man” behaves a certain way.



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Coming soon – the adolescent Man Box



Emotional Restriction

Assumption that to be masculine, boys must be emotionally stoic and refrain from sharing their feelings with others



Constant Effort

Belief that to be masculine, one must constantly, and without interruption, maintain one's tough, confident and strong public persona



Social Teasing

Assumption that to be masculine, one must be able to both dole out and stand up to teasing and taunting in the peer context



Heterosexism

Norm that masculinity is defined in opposition to homosexuality and femininity, and that one must distance oneself from behaviours and attitudes traditionally thought as "girly" or "gay"

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So what to do?

Community-wide discussions – e.g. modelling respect and equality

Build knowledge about attitudes – building on our initial Man Box work

Engage earlier with men and boys at risk – incorporating a focus on masculinities and connection

Question, be curious and understand “what works”



Principles – engaging men and boys

1. Raise awareness about masculinity as a social construction
 - Distinguish between sex and gender
2. Work at different levels – individuals, role models, organisational practice, legislation
3. Challenge the Man Box norms – there's a tension here
4. Use peers and think about the messenger
5. Embed an intersectional approach – there are differences in privilege and access to power
6. Maintain accountability to women



What we've learnt

1. Not lone wolf
2. A means to save face – “get out of the Man Box”
3. Orientate in a place and driven by community
 - Supports following “one-offs”
4. Invest in understanding what men and boys think as well as existing behaviours
5. Highlight benefits to men
6. Expand possibilities – permission, safety and reinforcement