



Thank you for choosing Progressive Masculinity. We hope you enjoyed and felt supported by our Parental Session. Those involved in creating this session are also parents and we know how challenging it can be to support boys and young men as they negotiate their way into manhood. Below you will find a summary of the session's content:

Introduction:

- How we frame the language around this topic is critical.
- Many boys / men follow a socio-culturally conditioned 'code' of masculinity.
- Boys/Men are not a homogenous mass possessing the same characteristics. We are a diverse, complex and nuanced social group. There are many key intersections of masculinity that each carry their own significance, pressures and expectations (sexuality, race, neurodiversity, social class etc).
- To end the 'performance' of masculinity we need to give boys/young men the agency and freedom to design their own models of masculinity based on their key values. Nobody should not be imposing or dictating what it means to 'be a man'.

Masculinity in a digital world:

- Social media algorithms often **targets young men** with content and influencers who display regressive models of masculinity based on dominance, control and aggression.
- There is an **entire industry of masculinity experts, gurus and bro's** claiming to teach vulnerable boys the 'secrets' of being a man. These regularly include extreme ideologies and fulfil the characteristics of radicalisation.
- Boys who consciously move towards the 'Manosphere' and red pill communities mainly do so because they feel **unseen, unheard, marginalised and frustrated**.
- Get **curious, not furious**. Be **nonjudgemental** and explore why they see this kind of content in a positive way. Call them '**in**' rather than calling them '**out**'.
- Humiliating them **pushes them towards** the ideologies and influences we are trying to protect them from.
- Point out the '**real world**' harm of these views.
- Place a premium on the development of **critical thinking skills** (questions sources of information, look for bias, consider different perspectives etc)

Tips and advice when dealing with digital issues:

1. **Reassure** young people that **making mistakes is a key element of the learning process**. This is as true in the digital world as it is in the offline world.

2. Reassure them that device removal will **not be the default option**. This will make them **feel safe enough to discuss any issues**.
3. When an issue arises: **stay calm. Knowing is far better than not knowing**. This calmness will translate to them.
4. No matter what it is, reassure them that coming to you about it was **the right thing to do**.
5. Save and record **evidence** (screenshots, usernames, gamer tags etc)
6. **Involve them** in your plan of action. The 'leave this to us' approach results in anxiety as they don't know what's happening. **Making them part of the process reduces their anxiety**

Manosphere Vocabulary

Yellow Flag:

The Matrix – A system of institutional control designed to make men subservient to authority.

Blue Pill - still living in the matrix, blind or unwilling to see the truth of masculine oppression

Red Pill - becoming aware of the anti-male biases inherent in society, including in the mainstream media, and ultimately becoming an independent thinker

Alpha - Socially dominant male. The 'pack leader'

Sigma - The powerful 'lone wolf'. Doesn't need a pack. Anti-authoritarian.

Beta - Weak, timid, inferior men (soy boy, simp, cuck)

Red Flag:

Black Pill - a belief system that is characterized by extreme pessimism, hopelessness, and a nihilistic outlook

Elliot Roger - self-described 'incel' responsible for a mass shooting in 2014. "Go full ER" "Be a hERo"

Gynocentrism - dominated by or emphasizing feminine interests or a feminine point of view.

AWALT - acronym used by men in the pick up artist and red pill world to mean 'all women are like that.'

80/20 - 80% of women are attracted to 20% of men, highlighting the need to improve your sexual marketplace value (SMV)

The P.O.R.N Talk Framework

P – Prepare yourself

- What was your introduction to this topic? How did you first learn about it?
- Did you get ‘the talk’? What was this experience like?
- What method of communication makes your child feel comfortable and safe?

O – Open the conversation early

- Don’t wait for them to bring it up
- Start before they encounter it
- Avoid ‘The Big Red Button’
- Explain what it is in simple terms (resources on handout)
- Introduce the idea that ‘just like Spiderman’s powers’ it isn’t real

R – Respond without shame

- Research shows that when parents react with awkwardness, anger and shame, teens can shut down.
- Let them know their curiosity is natural
- Staying calm and open builds trust
- Reaffirm messages of respect, trust and open communication

N – Normalise media literacy

- Helping your child think critically keeps them connected to their values.
- Use everyday moments to talk about healthy relationships, body image, boundaries etc.
- Regular low-stakes conversations are far more effective than ‘the talk’

Useful Support Resources:

[How to Talk With Boys About Porn \(Before the Internet Does\) — Next Gen Men](#)

[Teaching porn literacy](#)

[On Talking to Teens About Porn with Dr. Megan Maas - Connected & Courageous: The Art and Science of Showing Up For Kids in the Digital Age](#)

[AMAZE - Age appropriate puberty and sex education videos](#)

[Boys & Sex: Young Men on Hookups, Love, Porn, Consent, and Navigating the New Masculinity by Peggy Orenstein | Goodreads](#)

Let's change the narrative around masculinity by drawing attention to some of the amazing men out there (**follow them** on social media). Help to **construct an aspirational model** of masculinity for our young men.

Reading Recommendations:

Boy Mom: Reimagining Boyhood in the age of impossible masculinity – Ruth Whippman

Mask Off: Masculinity Redefined – JJ Bola

Rebels with a Cause – Dr Niobe Way

For the Love of Men – Liz Plank

The Will to Change – Bell Hooks

Digital Resources:

Teenagers Untangled Podcast

Understanding Men Podcast

Modern Masculinity – Guardian series on Youtube

Mr Pink – Twitter/X account

Men we talk about in our sessions:

Kevin Sinfield & Rob Burrow – friendship, loyalty & compassion

Dele Alli – Mental health, pressure

Ben Francis (Gymshark) – Resilience, goal setting

Ade Adepitan – Disability, resilience

Paddy Pimblett – Men's mental health, LGBTQ

Joey Swoll – Fitness and positive gym culture

Ashley Cain – Grief and emotional literacy

Moeen Ali – Identity and culture

Chris Evans (Captain America) – Charity and LGBTQ

Ted Lasso – Humility, kindness