Changing gender norms:
A to Z of engaging men and boys

Ante natal care is an ideal location to start exploring the impact of gender norms.

Bringing up boys free from restrictive gendered expectations is crucial to breaking men free from stereotypical definitions of what it means to be a man.

Challenging gendered social norms is essential to create a more peaceful, happy and equal society.

Difficulties men have in disclosing experiences of violence and abuse are linked to gendered social norms.

Engaging men in difficult conversations is essential, though it can feel uncomfortable and challenging at times.

Fatherhood norms are positively changing and one way this could be reinforced is through increased leave for fathers.

Generalisations about men are often made, but there are huge differences in their life outcomes based on where they are born and their family background.

Highlighting opportunities for creating change through dialogue with men and boys is an important part of effective practice.

It is not enough to encourage individual men and boys to change – change is also needed on a political level.

Joining community groups such as men's sheds can be one way of tackling loneliness and isolation among older men.

Knowing that gender norms are a problem isn't enough – every one of us needs to act to change things.

Limited sets of expectations and behaviours for boys and girls are reinforced through things like toys and clothing.

Men's mental health can suffer as a result of struggling to live up to unrealistic expectations around masculinity.

Neither women and girls nor men and boys can solve the problem of gender norms by themselves.

Online spaces could be used more to challenge gender norms and generate more positive debate.

Privilege for men and boys works in complicated ways and intersects with ethnic background, religion, dis/ability, sexuality, and age.

Questioning heterosexuality as the norm should be a core feature of any intervention.

Recognising that many gendered social norms can be detrimental to men and boys is an important step in engaging with them.

Schools should adopt a whole-school approach to gender norms involving pupils, staff, parents and the wider community.

Training to a high standard when engaging with men and boys is important to ensure that workers avoid inadvertently reinforcing harmful stereotypes.

Underfunding and undervaluing services for women and girls is a long term problem, and work with men and boys should avoid compounding this.

Violence against women is connected to men's adherence to traditional masculine norms and a cause and consequence of gender inequality.

When boys are away from peer group pressures, they can be much more reflective on norms of masculinity.

X-rated sexually explicit material is contributing towards damaging gendered norms and expectations around sex and relationships.

Young men and boys should be given opportunities to learn the skills required for caring and domestic work and to explore and develop caring roles in their lives.

Z-generation young people and millennials are witnessing big changes in what it means to 'be a man', and there is space for them to continue and advance these changes.

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