

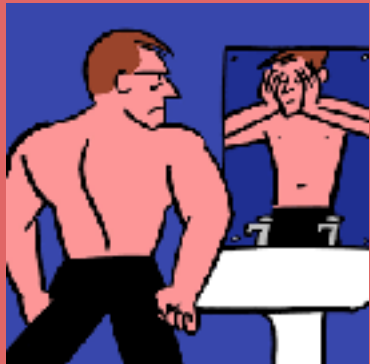
## Do Now

What are some examples of stereotypical masculine traits?

What are some examples of stereotypical feminine traits?

# Gender Traits & Toxic Masculinity

Identification, Impact and Issues



# What are Gender Traits?

**Masculinity** = qualities or attributes historically regarded as characteristic of men

**Femininity** = qualities or attributes historically regarded as characteristic of women



# What are Gender Traits?

The gender people are assigned at birth can impact the way people expect you to behave when you grow up.

Boys are typically expected to behave almost the opposite of how girls are expected to behave.

For example, when growing up, boys are expected to play rough, act tough and hide their emotions. Girls on the other hand are expected to play nicely, be polite and are less likely to be put down for crying or showing that they are upset about something.



# Example Masculine and Feminine Traits

## Masculine Traits

- Being tough
- Showing bravery
- Being competitive
- Being in charge



## Feminine Traits

- Being caring
- Being pleasant to others
- Showing sensitivity
- Gentleness



# Masculinity and Femininity

Certain traits that are considered 'masculine' do not belong to men alone, just as certain traits that are considered 'feminine' do not belong to women alone.

Women are driven and hard-working, just as men can be vulnerable and show emotion. Also, not everyone identifies their gender as masculine or feminine, or male or female.

There is nothing wrong with masculinity or femininity, or wanting to fulfill certain traits of either (there can be positive traits for both). However, sometimes masculinity has been used as a way to have power and control over other people and this can be a problem.

# Traditional Gender Roles

These traits place us into traditional gender roles within our society, with men expected to be leaders and the breadwinners (make more money), while women are expected to be the caregivers and the homemakers (taking care of house and kids)

These traditional traits of masculinity and femininity put men into a position of power over women, because masculine traits are given a higher status and power compared to feminine traits. This can lead to situations where the women is expected to rely on the man.

Of course, many people challenge these traditional gender roles, but for many, these traditional gender roles can still shape the direction of their lives.

# Toxic Masculinity - What is it?

**Toxic Masculinity** = is used to describe how certain masculine traits cause harm to men themselves and are also harmful to women and others.

Toxic masculinity spreads a message that in order to be a “real man” you have to suppress your emotions, act tough and behave in a certain way.

Showing any feminine traits is to show signs of weakness.





# Toxic Masculinity - What is it?

Toxic Masculinity does not refer to all men, nor does it mean that men themselves are toxic. Instead, it describes certain behaviors and performances that are based on gender stereotypes.

Men learn these behaviors from a young age and they can become part of their identity and status as a male. Within our patriarchal society (society largely controlled and influenced by men), many of these behaviors are seen as normal and because of this not everyone sees this behavior as toxic.

In reality, this type of behavior can have toxic effects on women, non-binary people and men themselves.

# Toxic Masculinity - Examples

Masculine traits that are considered 'toxic':

- Using or threatening violence
- Controlling others
- Acting aggressively
- Suppressing emotions
- Trying to appear 'tough'
- Treating sex as a competition
- Feeling entitled to sex from others
- Using power over women, 'weaker' men, and marginalized groups

# Toxic Masculinity - Examples

**Example** - Recently at a high school in Massachusetts, there was an incident involving toxic masculinity.

After a male student had broken up with their girlfriend, he shared multiple inappropriate pictures of her with a number of other students. The girl reported this incident to the school and the male student was suspended.

The male student convinced others (male and female students) to bully, harass and intimidate the girl over a number of weeks.

Toxic masculine traits were used by multiple students in this incident to create power and fear over another student.

# Toxic Masculinity - Impact on Others

Toxic masculinity can affect people in a number of ways (this includes men themselves). Here are multiple ways that people can be impacted by toxic masculinity:

- Masculinity and power
- Masculinity and violence
- Masculinity and mental health

# Toxic Masculinity - Power

Ultimately, toxic masculinity is all about having power over others, whether that is over women, over other men, or over groups of people they see as weaker or less.

Some men will find different ways to try to display their power to other men (like treating things like a competition). They might try to do this by becoming the most physically fit or built-up, by sharing stories of sexual conquests, by bragging about how much money they have or by finding another way to show they are more masculine than others.



# Toxic Masculinity - Violence

Men are not naturally violent, however, men are more likely to be found guilty of a violent crime than women.

This is because men have grown up in a culture where the expectation to be aggressively masculine has resulted in violent behavior.

This is a symptom of toxic masculinity because it makes men feel like they need to prove their manhood through physical dominance and using violence.



# Toxic Masculinity - Mental Health

Toxic masculinity can have negative impact on men's mental health. If men have been told to suppress their emotions and are made to feel embarrassed for crying or talking about how they feel, it can make it even harder to reach out when they are experiencing mental health crisis.

When people feel like they cannot talk about their issues and choose to bottle everything up they are more likely to experience mental health problems.

Rates of suicide across the world are higher for men than for women (almost 2/3rds of all suicides are committed by men).



# Toxic Masculinity - How can we challenge it?

Challenging toxic masculinity can help to improve mental health for men and create safer spaces for women and non-binary people.

Speaking up when we hear people say something we know is not right and challenging our own assumptions about the ways men and women should be in society can help start to break the negative trends of toxic masculinity.





# Discussion Question

Question: Reflect on the topic of 'toxic masculinity' and explain at least 3 things you learned about the topic.

## Requirements:

- Between 150-300 words
- Give 3 ideas with detailed explanations to defend your answer
- Provide at least one piece of evidence from resource materials other than the Slideshow provided as either a direct quote or paraphrase with the source listed in your answer (sources/articles on slide 18)

# Sources/Articles

- [What is Toxic Masculinity?](#)
- [New York Times Article](#)
- [Talking about Toxic Masculinity](#)
- [How to Fight Toxic Masculinity](#)
- [The Problem with a Fight Against Toxic Masculinity](#)