

FINDING YOUR ROLE WORKBOOK

Resource of the Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force's
Men's Engagement Committee



No one person, group, or institution can end sexual violence alone. Together, we can engage in efforts at the various levels in which sexual violence, abuse, oppression, and inequity are experienced and reinforced in our society. These levels are known as the socioecological model. Every person, group, community, or institution may have a different role, and these roles will likely change over time; but it is important to identify what those roles can be so we can start and continue actively working to end sexual violence in our communities.

The chart on the next page identifies some strategies all people, including men, can choose to be allies in the work to end sexual violence and other forms of violence and abuse, and promote healthier and safer communities for all.

The Men's Engagement Committee (MEC) of the Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force created this workbook, which **includes a series of tools, activities, and facilitation strategies**, to help people explore how we each can be rooted in anti-violence. This includes being accountable to the roles we individually play in supporting violence in our communities and society. You can use these tools individually to think about your own attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors and to identify how you are remaining accountable to anti-violence values. Additionally, these resources can be utilized in group settings and we have included facilitation strategies throughout to support implementation of this workbook with others.

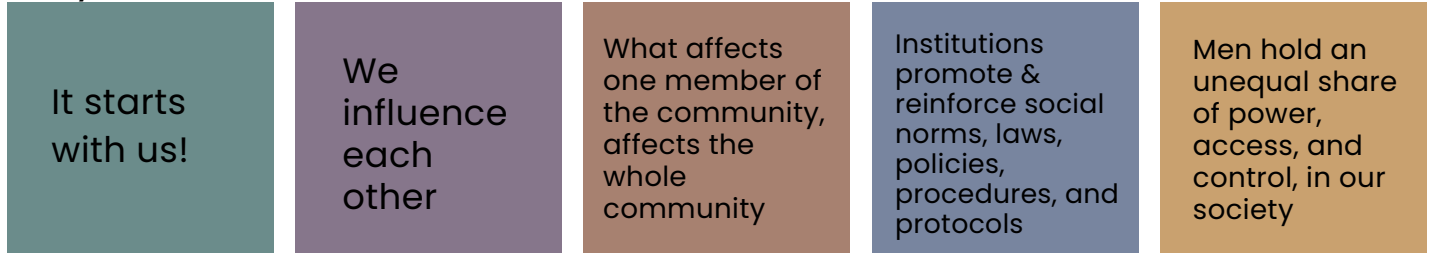
Violence is Preventable and We all Play a Role! What is Your Role?

This chart identifies some strategies people can enlist to be allies in the work to end sexual violence and promote healthier and safer communities for all.

Where?



Why?



What are some strategies we can use?



BEFORE WE BEGIN....

When using these resources, we want to invite you to consider the settings in which you are doing this work - individually, in small groups of people who know one another well, in a larger training where folks know one another, some other setting? Anti-violence includes building individual and collective vulnerability. This may be easier done when relationships are established between participants. The act of being vulnerable is difficult when we are trying to connect with populations that are not intimately connected to us. Whatever your setting, we invite you to think about what is needed to create a brave space.

“Brave Space: A brave space is a space where participants feel comfortable learning, sharing, and growing. A brave space is inclusive to all races, sexes, genders, abilities, immigration status, and lived experiences. Everyone in the space acknowledges that there may be some discomfort due to discussing topics that may be uncomfortable in nature. In the established brave space, participants honor each other’s experiences and opinions with respect to achieve a place of understanding. The most important part of a brave space is inclusion of all.”

- Roosevelt Union Free School District. (n.d.). Creating a brave space for dialogue. Retrieved April 11, 2023, from https://www.rooseveltufsd.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=3566&dataid=4472&FileName=Creating_A_Brave_Space.pdf

This section on 'Creating Brave Spaces' can be helpful for individuals to do self analysis and be better prepared to help build/contribute to brave spaces by answering the prompts below on our own. These prompts can also be used by facilitators to invite the group to contribute to a vision for a brave space together by asking groups as a whole and taking notes that can be revisited each session. This could also include individuals completing the prompts ahead of time and then contributing to a group discussion.

What is an example of a time you were in a brave space (either intentionally or unintentionally) and what stands out from that experience?

What are some strategies, set-up, resources, framing, etc. that help you feel brave in spaces?

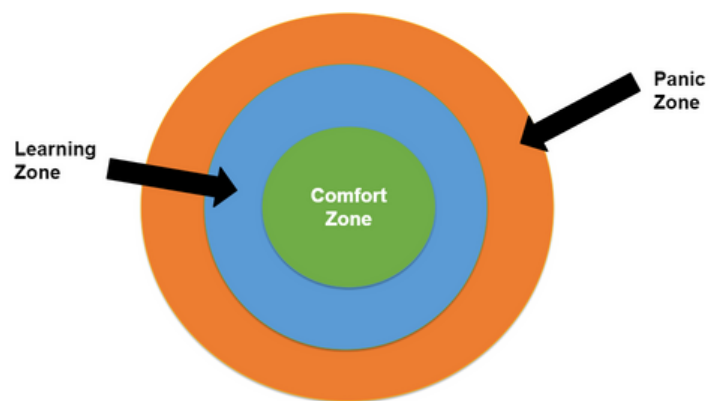
In addition to the thoughts you noted on the previous page, and any participants express, we wanted to offer some ideas that help us be brave and more vulnerable.

1. In conversations that require some vulnerability, **be very clear what level of vulnerability, sharing, transparency you are expecting from participants.** From sitting in openness and nonjudgement to inviting people to share personal stories/experiences, levels of vulnerability can be different. If we are not clear up front how we are expecting people to engage, how we are expecting them to express vulnerability, we are making it harder for people to do so.

For every activity you do on vulnerability, answer the following questions. For this activity today, what does the vulnerability we are inviting look like? How do we want people to express vulnerability?

2. Be clear about your goals for the space. When possible, and if aligned with your goals, reframe to trying to create a brave and courageous space instead of trying to create a safe space. We often unintentionally conflate safety and comfort, and therefore unintentionally conflate being uncomfortable with being unsafe. We learn the most when we are moved out of our comfort zone and into our learning zone. Sometimes safe means that folks don't grow. Be clear with participants about what the goal truly is. A brave space for vulnerability = welcomeness + belonging – judgment.

The zones of learning model can help us visualize growth for each of us individually. Immediately surrounding our comfort zones is a learning zone. This is the ideal place to take in, adapt, and apply new information. If pushed too far too fast, people might move into a panic zone where learning becomes significantly harder or impossible. For each of us, our zones may vary in size. A person's learning zone may be very small or narrow, meaning they jump to panic much quicker than someone else. Extending an invitation to grow our learning zones, and sit in bravery and courageousness can help facilitate meaningful vulnerability and collaborative learning.



3. Get buy-in and commitment from participants before asking for vulnerability. There will likely be various challenges for individuals to be vulnerable in any given space, so coming to a collaborative agreement on why vulnerability matters can be a helpful starting place. This can include discussions about positive vulnerability.

PRINCIPLED SELF-DISCLOSURE:

Sharing personal information and stories about ourselves and experiences can be especially meaningful to build relationships and cultivate positive vulnerability, something that promotes anti-violence. If we are sharing our stories and personal information in ways that do not account for the potential impacts on the people in the “room,” we may cause/reinforce harm unintentionally. This is true when we share about experiencing violence and especially true when we share about perpetrating violence or causing harm towards others. Principled self-disclosure means we are not prioritizing our own feelings and desire to share over the impact to others in the space, especially if a space has not been set up for the purposes of sharing.

4. Take into account the identities of the people in the room and the power dynamics that exist as a result.

Have awareness of your (the facilitator) identities and how they may interact with the people in the room. This includes an understanding of the systems we are a part of and how those may impact participants. Vulnerability becomes easier to hold when you are also aware of your own power. Work to shift and redefine "power" in the space and context in which you are doing this work. This includes considering power dynamics around who is tasked with and how we provide care and consideration to participants. Invite principled self-disclosure. Before disclosing, consider the following:

How does sharing/disclosing this contribute to the conversation? Have other people been able to contribute to the conversation and share their stories/information meaningfully?

Who may be negatively impacted by my sharing this? In what ways might I trigger, retraumatize, or make it less safe for others in this space as a result of my sharing? How do my identities (eg. race, gender) impact my ability to share and the way it is received?

What emotional support am I asking people (explicitly or implicitly) to provide me as a result of disclosing? What follow-up needs to happen?

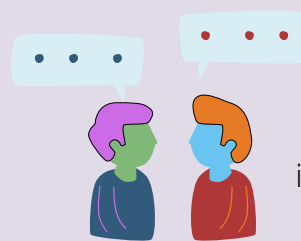
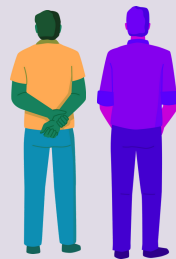
5. Utilize opportunities to model vulnerability. Share personal stories guided by the principled self-disclosure approach. Name and invite self-compassion. Having self-compassion is a really important starting place for individuals to put things into perspective, recognize brave spaces, safe spaces, and comfortable spaces. Recognizing when we need or want help is a skill, and an element of vulnerability that we want to cultivate in these spaces. Self-compassion can help. Naming struggles with vulnerability is also modeling some vulnerability.

6. Be flexible in the agenda. Vulnerability is not just about getting our list done in a timely manner. Make space for the process to take longer if needed.

7. Think about how you are facilitating the conversations. Circle style (round-robin) facilitation as opposed to popcorn-ing shifts how everyone can participate as well as how we listen to one another. If necessary, look for opportunities for participants to have side by side conversations versus face to face conversations.

SIDE-BY-SIDE

Members of MEC recognized that often for them it is easier to have conversations that require vulnerability when they are physically side by side. This allows for the opportunity to engage in other activities, focus on surroundings, and more. This conversational style can be an important start when cultivating vulnerability.



FACE-TO-FACE

Face-to-face conversations often invite more eye contact and non-verbal communication cues. This is really valuable, but can often promote a level of vulnerability that requires additional trust and relationship building for these vulnerable conversations to happen positively and meaningfully.

8. What did we miss? Add some additional key points here that you want to make sure to remember and keep in mind whenever you are trying to create brave spaces!

WORKBOOK CHAPTERS:

20 Questions: Exploring AccountabilityPg. 8

In this resource, we walk through a 20 Questions activity that helps us explore accountability as a concept, our own relationship with accountability, and how this impacts violence and abuse in our communities.

Masculinity + Violence Discussion ToolPg. 14

The purpose of this resource is to promote constructive conversations, interrupt gender inequity, and address privilege and oppression, including sexism and misogyny. This document is a resource for people in Oregon's communities to talk about these issues and how they impact all of us.

Critical Reading: Sexual Violence & EconomicsPg. 27

The purpose of this resource is to help explore how violence and abuse overlap with other social issues and contexts within our society. In this section, we particularly look at the overlaps with economics, our economy, and class.

Telling the Story: Emotional Intelligence and Positive VulnerabilityPg. 41

In this section of the workbook, people are invited to join us in our own struggles with being vulnerable by examining positive vulnerability, exploring emotional intelligence, and practicing skills through application and storytelling.

20 QUESTIONS: EXPLORING ACCOUNTABILITY

In order to effectively address the violence and abuse that exists in our world, we have to hold ourselves, each other, and our communities accountable for our behaviors, actions, and beliefs. We can do this by promoting anti-violence in all we do.

In this activity, we walk through 20 Questions that help us explore accountability as a concept, our own relationship with accountability, and how this impacts violence and abuse in our communities. We recommend revisiting these questions regularly to consider changes to thoughts, attitudes, behaviors, and what actions we can take.

Understanding Accountability

1. What does accountability mean to you?

2. How do you promote accountability with yourself?

3. How do you encourage accountability with others?

20 QUESTIONS - CONTINUED

4. In 2019, the statewide SATF Men’s Engagement Committee identified the following components of a shared working understanding of accountability.

- Internal
- Understanding of one's place in a relational world, understanding that one's actions impact others, and understanding that there are consequences to our actions.
- Ability to own/explain and be answerable for our words, actions, behaviors and their effects on all concerned including the Communities we live in.
- Willingness to accept responsibility
- Acknowledge and potentially atone for that impact, even if the impact was not intended or anticipated
- Actively working to not cause similar harm again - Taking positive steps to prevent the same type of response in the future.

How do these components align with your understanding of accountability?

5. What questions do you have about the components listed in question 4, and what can you do to find answers to those questions?

There are many different ways to utilize this resource. In the margins, we've included just some strategies for utilizing and facilitating this resource:

Individually

- You can walk through this worksheet on your own
- You can ask participants in a group to complete the worksheet individually, then facilitate a debrief discussion with participants asking questions like, 'what came up for you as you completed this worksheet?' 'what are you left wondering?' 'who is an accountability partner that you identified that can help you remain accountable to the items you identified working on?'
- This resource can be shared with participants to work on on their own as a follow-up to a webinar, group, or training.

In Partnerships

- You can ask participants to partner up and discuss each question - or just some of the questions. By only asking them to partner with someone on one question at a time, you give people an opportunity to have many conversations with different partners.
- You can ask them to partner with another person (from in or outside of the meeting, group, or training) - and ask them to schedule a time outside of the current space to discuss their answers to the questions.
- You can focus in on as many or as few of the questions as is useful. Although the questions in this resource were designed to build on the previous questions, we encourage you to utilize the questions that feel pertinent to your topic when facilitating, as well as sharing the larger resource with participants beyond that.

20 QUESTIONS - CONTINUED

6. What do you think about your own levels of entitlement?

Entitlement refers to our personal feelings and behaviors that show that we believe we deserve something, especially that we deserve something that someone else does not deserve. We often recognize entitlement by how it affects us, through emotions like jealousy and anger or actions like acting on our biases, etc.

7. What have you heard from people around you about what they think of your levels of entitlement? If nothing, who are two people you can begin this conversation with?

8. What power do you have?

Power over others? Power with others? What places in your life do you have some power? Most of the power? All?

9. Describe a time that you used the power you have to get your way.

Do you use any of the power you have to control others, to control situations, access, or other factors that limit other people's power?

20 QUESTIONS - CONTINUED

10. What can you do to shift how you use what power you have?

What can you do differently? What small, medium, and/or large changes could you make to your behavior and actions that would change how you may control other people or have power over other people?

11. What have you learned from people about how they would like to see you use your power?

What have you heard from people around you? Have you ever asked anyone how they would like to see you use what power you have? Who do you need to ask this question?

12. What is your reaction to these questions? How do you feel thinking about these questions?

13. Do you support and listen to people around you when they name their own experiences?

Are you conscientious of the space you choose to take up, (physically, but also emotionally and mentally)? Are you conscious of the ways that you may be presumed to take up space? Do you make sure that there is room in conversations for all people to talk about their experiences?

20 QUESTIONS - CONTINUED

14. How do you honor/respect peoples' experiences/feelings?

Do you disagree with people when they are telling stories about their experiences? What can you do/change in order to improve how you respond to people's personal experiences?

15. What can you do to be more respectful towards other people?

16. How do you focus on the impact of your behavior and actions rather than your intent?

Because we know that sometimes even the best intentions might cause harm, might have unintended consequences for us and others around us.

17. Do you take personal responsibility when you cause harm (intended or unintended)?

Have you considered the impacts (positive and negative) that an apology from you might have on someone? What does personal responsibility look like to you?

In Larger Groups (in person or online)

- These questions can be used to have valuable conversations during meetings or webinars. By posing some/all of these questions and using a round-robin style facilitation - everyone in the meeting can contribute thoughts and ideas to shared understandings and values around accountability.
- As these questions are designed to build on each other - this resource could be used for a specific accountability training, webinar, or workshop. By creating a powerpoint or another presentation to go along with it, participants can follow along using this resource as their own worksheet/workbook for the training.
- You can use these questions as a subtopic or filter for another training, group, meeting, etc. For example a workplace equity training may benefit from utilizing all/some of these questions to expand on the topic of equity and people's roles in sustaining an equitable work environment.

20 QUESTIONS - CONTINUED

18. When you have caused harm, intentionally or unintentionally, how do you actively work to not cause that harm again?

Do you know how to ask for help? What help do you need to hold yourself accountable? What help do you need to work to not cause harm again?

19. What is one thing you can and will actively work to improve on this year to address accountability?

Who can you ask for help? Who can be an accountability partner for you?

20. What is one thing you can and will actively work to improve on today, and during this month and week, to address accountability?

Who can you ask for help? Who can be an accountability partner for you?



MASCULINITY AND VIOLENCE DISCUSSION TOOL

The purpose of this resource is to promote constructive conversations, interrupt gender inequity, and address privilege and oppression, including sexism and misogyny. In this resource we will explore how we can have conversations about these issues and how they impact all of us. We, as men, want each of us to rise up, speak out, and take action to end sexual violence, because historically the burden of ending sexual violence has predominantly been placed on people who do not identify as men. MEC recognizes there is a particular need for thoughtful conversations about the role of toxic and harmful masculinities in gender-based and sexual violence. We also recognize that this work is ongoing, and each of us is in a process of learning, and growing. Therefore, it is important that we continue to practice.

Some Background Information

Speaking out is the first of many actions that empower people to change the conditions that support violence. Inequity and oppression lead to and excuse violence, often making violence seem normal. When we respond to inequity and oppression with silence, we are reinforcing violence as normal. Historically the work to respond to and prevent sexual violence has been predominantly seen as work by and for women. Because of this perspective, male or masculine people haven't often had these conversations, or had to look at and be aware of the issue. We want to challenge what is considered normal in our communities, institutions and society, including what is considered violent and inequitable.

Similarly, we are often taught a very narrow definition of what it means to "be a man," and that definition often includes characteristics like power, domination, and control. Knowing this, it is important to broaden definitions of what it means to "be a man" or identify as a man, and more broadly, what it means to be a human being. Challenging the things that are accepted as "normal", especially those that reinforce or promote privilege and oppression, benefits all people and whole communities. By challenging these norms, we are working to make our communities safer and healthier for all people.

As we prepare to have conversations about all of this, it is valuable for us to consider the current norms that make it harder for people to engage in anti-violence conversations and work. For example:

- **Centering and Re-centering Male Privilege**

Comments like 'men are just naturally stronger' or 'my parents worked hard for me to have privilege' are often used to avoid exploring how we benefit from unearned privilege.

- **Excusing behavior**

Comments like 'boys will be boys,' 'it was just a joke,' and 'it's just the way it is,' often make it harder to discuss what it could be like, or how our behaviors and attitudes impact others.

- **Minimizing behavior**

Comments like 'it's just a joke,' 'I was just flirting' and 'guys just get carried away' often try to shift focus onto "good intentions" instead of the real impacts of comments/behaviors.

- **Blaming women and people who are gender nonconforming**

Comments like 'they were asking for it,' 'they shouldn't have dressed that way,' and 'why did she get so drunk' are often used to shift blame and avoid focusing on accountability.

- **Trying to redefine sexual violence**

Comments like 'it's not rape if both of them were drunk' and 'why didn't they fight back' are often used to re-write the definitions of what harm is to avoid accountability. Such comments often assert that what happened was a 'miscommunication' or a 'lie' rather than acknowledge harm caused.

- **Reinforcing harmful norms**

Comments like 'man up,' 'grow a pair,' 'toughen up,' and 'be a man' often make it challenging to push back on stereotypical gender norms and confront harmful behavior.

- **Putting the burden of anti-violence work on women or others who predominantly experience violence**

Comments like 'that's a women's issue,' 'what did they expect,' and 'I thought she was on the pill' put the onus for violence prevention, as well as sex and reproduction, entirely on women or other marginalized people, and reinforce resistance to thinking about men's roles in these dynamics.

What strengths do we bring to the conversation?

Violence is supported and enacted in many ways that harm every one of us, regardless of our identities. We envision a world where all people have access to health, safety, agency, and authenticity in their lives. We can focus on what we all can do to address sexual violence and make our communities healthier and safer. We can promote a focus on affirmative consent, healthy relationships education, discussions of masculinities, and what it means for everyone to practice/achieve healthy sexuality. Some of the core values that we are trying to promote in this document that help us get to this vision, include:

- **Each of us has a unique influence**, in our homes, with friends, at work or in the communities we frequent. Our interactions impact others, so when we stand up and challenge gender-based violence we make a difference and play a role in ending it.
- **Affirmative consent** is a necessary part of healthy sexuality, and is never present in incidents of sexual violence regardless of the individual circumstances. Affirmative consent means that all people involved in a sexual act are able to enthusiastically say "yes" without external influence, coercion or pressure.
- Men as human beings are made up of more qualities than "toughness" or violence. **Every person deserves the opportunity to be treated as a whole human being.** When we place expectations on boys and men to always be "tough," we deny their humanity. We believe it is better when all people have the opportunity to decide who they are and who they want to be, rather than expecting them to adhere to stereotypes, especially those that are destructive.
- All people, regardless of how they express their sexuality or identities, have the **right to healthy sexuality, personal agency, and autonomy.**
- The burden of **healing and maintaining health is collective and societal.**

What are two values that motivate you to do something about violence and abuse?

What are three personal strengths that you can bring to these conversations with friends, family, peers, and other people?

Having Different Conversations

Violence is preventable, and we all have a role and responsibility to prevent it. Our roles may change over time, they may change day to day, but we all have a place in the work to end violence. Often, it can seem challenging to find our role in anti-violence. These tips can be useful for each of us, as we navigate this process.

- Use many, varying approaches that work on changes at all levels: social, personal, and economic, among others.
- Focus on engaging people in conversations about gender inequities and empowering others to have these conversations.
- Help people speak up and not be silent. This includes thinking about the ways in which men interact with other men. It is detrimental to exclusively focus on how one gender treats another gender. It is critical to also look at how men treat other people with similar identities.
- Support those who have already been assaulted (listen and believe).
- Learn how to recognize and interrupt violence before it occurs.
- Change the conditions that tolerate violence and promote health and safety for all people.

In order to improve how we have certain conversations, we have to practice. Take a moment to answer the following questions to check-in on where our comfort levels are around discussing and preventing violence and abuse.

MASCULINITY AND VIOLENCE DISCUSSION TOOL

There are many different ways to utilize this resource. In the margins, we've included just some strategies for utilizing and facilitating this resource:

Individually

- You can walk through this worksheet on your own. It's important to check-in with ourselves regularly, and create opportunities to practice starting these conversations. Starting conversations will help other people feel more comfortable talking about the topics as well.
- You can ask participants in a group to complete the worksheet individually, then facilitate a debrief discussion with participants asking questions like, 'what strengths did you all identify that can help these conversations?' 'where are some places you identified comfort/discomfort?' 'who are some people you can practice these conversations with outside of this setting?'

In Partnerships

- You can ask participants to work through the different examples on the following pages (or assign each pair a different example). In their pairs have them discuss responses and then develop a short role play to practice using those responses in conversations. After everyone comes back together they can model for the whole group, and discuss alternative strategies.

What is a topic, related to violence and abuse, inequity, oppression, etc. you feel really comfortable talking about?

What is a topic you feel really uncomfortable talking about?

What are two things you can and will do to increase your knowledge around these topics?

Who are three people you can, and will, try starting a conversation with?

While starting conversations has its own challenges, interrupting conversations, violent comments, or problematic jokes brings whole new challenges. As with starting conversations though, this takes practice. Let's consider some examples.

1. When people try to minimize the extent and impact of sexual violence, some things to consider that can help respond to this include:

- Acknowledging violence in all its forms is critical. We don't want any person, family or community to experience violence. We want to ensure that we are validating the experiences of all survivors. Historically people who identify as female or gender-nonconforming are raped at much higher rates than people who identify as male. Sexual violence is a problem for everyone, so let's do something about it.
- Survivors are often treated differently based on their identities, such as gender, sexual orientation, race, or ethnicity. Their unique identity may also prevent them from accessing or using resources.

Considering these dot points, what are some things you could say if you hear someone minimize the impact of violence on someone?

What is a way you can practice saying this?

2. When people put the responsibility for addressing violence on others, some things to consider that can help respond to this include:

- Men can play a critical role in the work to end violence by helping to build a culture based on non-violence and gender equity. When people are assaulted, forced to be sexual, threatened, abused, or constantly put down, it not only harms the individual, it harms the whole community. It is important to understand the lifelong impact, damage, and trauma, of violence.
- Collectively, we have made progress, but we're still not done. Women and gender nonconforming individuals continue to experience sexual assault at higher rates than men, receive lower wages than men and hold fewer positions of power such as CEOs in corporations, and leaders in Government, etc.

Considering these dot points, what are some things you could say if you hear someone put the responsibility for addressing violence on others? If they avoid any responsibility for addressing it themselves?

What is a way you can practice saying this?

3. When people try to excuse behavior or ignore the impact of their actions, some things to consider that can help respond to this include:

- Just because something is intended as a joke does not mean that it is not harmful, or something that cannot be questioned. Impact is different to intent. It is extremely likely that not everyone agrees with the comment, joke or statement that was said. What are the ways our silence makes other people think we agree with the problematic thing?
- It's important to believe people when they say they're not ok with what you or someone else is doing or did.

Considering these dot points, what are some things you could say if you hear someone excuse harmful behavior, and/or attempt to ignore the impact of harmful behavior?

What is a way you can practice saying this?

4. When people conflate sex and sexual violence, some things to consider that can help respond to this include:

- Passion and violence are different. It is common to experience passion for something or someone. We may feel like driving fast on a highway, but we are required to stop when we see a red light, and we usually slow down when we see flashing lights. In a sexual relationship, not stopping when the other person does not give consent is a choice. Coercive sex is violence. It is a choice to use violence.
- If someone really honestly feels like they can't stop themselves from harming others when they have sex, it may be unsafe for them to have sex with others.
- If someone doesn't say yes, they haven't consented. Consent allows all people to express what they value and enjoy sexually. It is sought and given by all people involved. It's important to trust people when they say "No" and respect their "No."

Considering these dot points, what are some things you could say if you hear someone talk about sexual violence as if it were just "normal" sex?

What is a way you can practice saying this?

5. When people blame victims for the violence they experience, some things to consider that can help respond to this include:

- Regardless of how someone dresses or acts, they have the right to withhold consent and have their boundaries respected. There's no research that says a person's clothing choice has anything to do with another person's choice to perpetrate sexual violence against them.
- Kissing can be consent for kissing. Kissing is not consent for sex. It's really common for people to want to kiss and not want to have sex. If people had sex every time they kissed, we'd live in a much different world.
- As we learn more about how our brains respond to traumatic experiences, including sexual violence, we know more about the Flight, Fight, or Freeze responses. We have no control over which of these our brain enlists to cope with a traumatic situation.
- We know people drink alcohol all the time and that most people who drink alcohol don't rape people. If someone rapes another person when they are drunk, then they shouldn't drink. Ever. People often increase culpability for women who are sexually assaulted or raped because they have been drinking, and decrease culpability for men who commit acts of sexual violence because they have been drinking. This reality demonstrates the inequity in our conversations about alcohol and sex. Using violence is a choice, not a side effect of alcohol.

Considering these dot points, what are some things you could say if you hear someone blame a victim for the sexual violence perpetrated against them?

What is a way you can practice saying this?

6. When someone insults someone else, some things to consider that can help respond to this include:

- People often use insulting language to protect power dynamics. These types of statements point out how our culture values some people less than others, in this case because of their gender identity. These statements have also been used historically to justify acts of violence and to oppress women and people with many other identities. They imply violence and can, and often, lead to more and escalating violence. Words or spoken acts are often the first note or step towards more violence.
- People often use derogatory and gendered terms to justify invalidating, devaluing, and ignoring specific populations. We are all challenged every day to address any biases we may have and how we enact them on others. All people have the same right to express their sexuality as they see fit, as long as they seek enthusiastic consent and avoid coercion or violence. We need to remove the labels of “player” and “slut” from our cultural vocabulary.
- People of all gender identities experience acts of violence. Most perpetrators however, are men. We need to address why men are perpetrating violence if we truly want to end violence. These types of statements reframe violence and place the blame on those that are experiencing it.

Considering these dot points, what are some things you could say if you hear someone use insulting language, particularly to silence someone else, in these conversations?

What is a way you can practice saying this?

In Partnerships (Continued).

- After participants have had a chance to think about the different examples of conversation, you can ask them to pair up to discuss challenges they experience and/or anticipate and strategies to overcome those challenges. When the group comes back together - or via a survey/reflection slip - ask each person to share one thing that they will work on to overcome barriers they are or may experience.

In Larger Groups (in person or online).

- Each example of how people may avoid having constructive conversations (or may say something problematic) can be used as a 'case example' in a presentation. By asking the group to walk through the dot points, maybe even think of some examples of what this can look like, then think through the questions listed below, can help participants apply a plethora of concepts (ex. communication strategies, addressing harmful gender norms, bystander intervention, etc.). Feel free to pull the examples in isolation from each other to utilize for skills practice in presentations, etc.

MASCULINITY AND VIOLENCE DISCUSSION TOOL

One way we can interrupt problematic comments, jokes, statements, and actions is by promoting thoughtful and critical thinking. Below is a series of questions that you might want to consider having some conversations about. It is also valuable for each of us to take some time and consider our own answers before having these conversations with our peers, friends, families, colleagues, and strangers.

As we imagine a better world, what does better mean to you? Better is a range and better doesn't mean done. One in four women will experience sexual violence in their lifetime. Does this mean the work is done?

What would it look like if a person you were "flirting with" did feel like what you were doing was harassment? How would that change your response?

Would you agree that every adult has the right to go out, and to drink alcohol, without being sexually assaulted?

In Larger Groups (Continued).

- You can use flip-chart paper, or a shared document online, and ask participants to move from station to station (either alone or in pairs/small groups) and add some ideas for how they may be able to respond if they heard these comments. After folks have rotated around several categories, come back together and debrief as a group asking questions like, 'which of these strategies might work best for you?' 'Would these strategies escalate or de-escalate a situation? Why or why not?' and 'How could you shift these strategies to work towards more constructive conversations? (If needed)'
- As a follow-up to the previous discussion or a stand alone activity, you could ask folks to create a series of role plays to practice these strategies. You can wrap-up a role play discussion by asking folks to identify at least one strategy they will enlist in the coming week to practice having some of these constructive conversations.

When a person says “they were asking for it” what do they mean by ‘it’? Do you think they’re asking to be sexually assaulted? What does a person’s appearance tell you about what they want? Do you know what state experiences the highest rates of SV? Alaska. How do you think people often dress in Alaska?

What do you do to keep yourself safe when you go out? How might this be different for other people and genders?

Who has to worry about being sexually assaulted when they’re drunk? Why? What does this tell us about privilege?

What are we saying about women when we use being a woman, or a girl as an insult? What does this tell us about how we value women and girls in our broader society? In our communities Does this reveal a personal fear of feminine qualities or does our society fear anything associated with femininity?

What does “boys will be boys” mean? Does this mean it’s ok for boys to be violent because they’re boys. Does this mean violence is inherent in boys?

If men are predominantly the ones perpetrating sexual violence, why do many say it is a women’s issue?

CRITICAL READING: SEXUAL VIOLENCE & ECONOMICS

The costs of sexual violence are far more wide-ranging than is generally acknowledged by most research on the subject. Tallying the medical bills, missed work, police and court costs, and even the rare occasions of imprisonment only scratches the surface of the actual costs that we as a society pay because of the fact of sexual violence. Additionally, there are examples throughout history of how sexual violence has been used as a tool to uphold and reinforce economic disparities. There are innumerable connections between sexual violence and economics. If we are to effectively address economic disparities tied to gender (ex. wage gaps, costs of childcare, etc.), we also must look at the ways sexual violence creates, reinforces, and upholds these disparities. As the Men's Engagement Committee (MEC) began exploring these connections, we recognized that these connections are extremely expansive, and a good place to start might be trying to understand and better acknowledge what these costs and connections look like.

Included in this section is a series of eight vignettes that can help us explore the ways different forms of violence and abuse have economic impacts, and how economic structures and systems may reinforce violence and abuse. Each vignette is followed by a series of questions to help explore more depth around these connections.

Vignette #1:

While organization "A" was created to serve kids and teens, it served many needs in the community. This included providing financial assistance for utilities, emergency food and resources. "A" was also helpful in enabling community members to find jobs. Many of the youth served were also employed in different levels within the organization. The organization was a tight-knit family. The program garnered much money and acclaim based on the work it did in cultivating relationships between youth and adults and in supporting the community.

However, healthy boundaries were undefined, both personally and professionally. Within this environment, a culture of sexual harassment became pervasive in the organization between staff members. Child sexual abuse became part of the culture, involving touch, sexual pictures, and other forms of child sexual abuse. Conversations between staff and students were often explicit in nature. Further, after a while, many people in the community became aware that adult staff members developed inappropriate relationships with older teenagers. When complaints were raised, some families who knew about this culture reacted negatively toward the complainants. These reactors felt like no one should disrupt the good services that "A" provided. They favored an approach that would [a] strategically remove offenders while [b] working with attorneys to have victims and families sign NDAs.

There are many different ways to utilize this resource. In the margins, we've included just some strategies for utilizing and facilitating this resource.

Individually

This worksheet is designed to help us intentionally examine the connections between sexual violence (and other forms of violence and abuse) so we can better understand, discuss, and address economic disparities and gender based violence. On your own, you can use work through these vignettes to broaden your own understanding of these topics.

Who might be affected in this vignette? What kind of costs are there to other people connected to the situation?

What connections do you identify in this story that are related to money/resources (costs, profits, etc.)? Related to lost contribution? Related to the root causes of violence?

If Organization "A" served under-resourced, inner-city youth predominantly from one-parent and foster households, how might that impact the story, and the connections identified above?

What prevented prevention in this vignette? What allowed this to happen? What would have been different if there weren't these missed opportunities?

What could change this story? What could be helpful in this scenario?

Vignette #2:

"B" is 47 years old, in need of home care. "B" was assaulted by a doctor when "B" was 7 years old. When this occurred, "B" was told by parents to "move past it" and forgive the person who abused "B," since "B" was expected to "do the Christian thing." In reality, "B's" family was in a small town and the parents wanted to avoid gossip. "B" has never moved away from thier hometown and lives in the house "B's" parents owned, though it is now in disrepair.

Throughout "B's" life, "B" has had to deal with health issues. Consequently, "B" did not finish college and has always made less money due to fear, self-esteem issues, and repetitive illness. "B" has no pension and limited Social Security. "B" has also had difficulty with health insurance at times due to pre-existing conditions. For example, "B" has exhibited several some of the health concerns issues that are identified in the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACEs Study).

Who might be affected in this vignette? What kind of costs are there to other people connected to the situation?

What connections do you identify in this story that are related to money/resources (costs, profits, etc.)? Related to lost contribution? Related to the root causes of violence?

If B was a white gay man from a lower socioeconomic class, how might that impact the story, and the connections you identified above?

What prevented prevention in this vignette? What allowed this to happen? What would have been different if there weren't these missed opportunities?

What could change this story? What could be helpful in this scenario?

Vignette #3:

Faith Community "C" is unique, in a rural county in OR. Set among Oregon's rural small towns, it serves immigrants and their families. In contrast to the surrounding community, "C" is a community of persons of color.

Recently, three members of "C" shared concerns with their pastor. The 25 year old offspring of the landlord who owns a building that houses a few of "C's" families assaulted teenage children who attend "C." The pastor, untrained in response to sexual violence, has decided to become an advocate for these teens and their families. Local support services do not have persons from "C's" community, who can speak "C's" shared language(s), and who know much about the community that "C" serves.

In Partnerships

- Ask each pair to look at a different vignette and discuss the questions below (in a workshop, online meeting, or outside of formal spaces). Once they are finished reviewing and discussing, if part of a larger group, they can share out about their discussions, with a particular focus on what connections they identified and what could have changed the scenario.
- One of the strategies listed on the Finding our Role resource on page 2 of this workbook is to 'Talk about the Economics of Gender.' This worksheet can be used as a discussion tool as well. By asking pairs to review all (or just a couple of the vignettes) and discuss them, they are not only cultivating their understanding of these topics, they are also practicing actively talking about the economics of gender. A good debrief for these paired discussions may include talking about ways they could elevate and hold these conversations in other aspects of their lives.

Who might be affected in this vignette? What kind of costs are there to other people connected to the situation?

What connections do you identify in this story that are related to money/resources (costs, profits, etc.)? Related to lost contribution? Related to the root causes of violence?

Some additional costs to the community "C" serves may include support of individuals, costs of refocusing the service needs of the community ["C's" pastor regularly does other forms of advocacy which have to be shelved], and costs associated with any outside help that must be acquired. Issues for the larger community may include transferring limited resources toward an underserved community.

If Faith Community "C" was actually in an extremely wealthy community with predominantly white parishioners, how might that impact the story, and the connections identified above?

What prevented prevention in this vignette? What allowed this to happen? What would have been different if there weren't these missed opportunities?

What could change this story? What could be helpful in this scenario?

Vignette #4:

Historically, tech and coding, and even more so gaming specifically, have been seen as masculine domains. This is so true that even esteemed economists like Lawrence Summers opined that there might be something about women's "natural" interests that keeps them out of these types of fields. Then, as women began making inroads into game play and game development, stories began breaking of the ways in which women in these sectors were ostracized, threatened, ignored, and abused. Despite some talk of making changes, not much if anything seems to have been done to address this issue, and women's representation remains shockingly low.

Who might be affected in this vignette? What kind of costs are there to people connected to the situation?

In Larger Groups (in-person/virtual).

- These vignettes could be utilized to sustain conversations on these topics in meetings and or working groups by picking a vignette for each meeting and discussing it as a larger group. By doing one per meeting, space is being intentionally carved out to discuss these ideas. By spending intentional time on the questions around what could change the story can be expanded within a group to focus more on how the group, the organizations represented, etc. can address the costs and economic disparities that may arise within their settings (intentionally or unintentionally).
- In a training or workshop, a facilitator can hang the vignettes and following questions around a room (or in a shared document) and participants can move through them on their own in a gallery walk format. After folks have had enough time to read through at least half of the vignettes, the group can come back together and discuss what themes they noticed, what stood out to them, and what action items came to mind. Then the group can focus on next steps with the information - what else do they want to learn, what information was missing, what can they do about these disparities?

What connections do you identify in this story that are related to money/resources (costs, profits, etc.)? Related to lost contribution? Related to the root causes of violence?

If this were happening in an industry made up of predominantly women, and men were being excluded, how might that impact the story, and the connections identified above?

What prevented prevention in this vignette? What allowed this to happen? What would have been different if there weren't these missed opportunities?

What could change this story? What could be helpful in this scenario?

Vignette #5:

A specific form of exercise, exercise "D," swept the nation. Many people find physical and emotional healing by practicing "D." People from all walks of life, including the rich and famous, find benefits from this exercise. Among many of the devotees, people seeking healing from trauma have been served in large numbers, and many have shared personal stories of healing and empowerment. The individual at the forefront of this movement, 'the founder,' is very successful in branding. They bill themselves as the exclusive person to appropriately oversee practice or training in "D." This founder has successfully patented the method and received copyright for the literature related to the exercise. The founder is also the only person who can legally certify trainers, teachers, and others. The business employs thousands. Approved locations, with the founder's name and method are in every state.

News has broken that The founder has harassed and abused people. They used touch to correct people's positioning with ultimate authority. They cultivated a cult-like discipleship and required people to not use the bathroom for extended periods of time. Frequently, demeaning, racist, and sexual language was used to establish the founder's authority. The founder has dismissed these allegations and made a statement that learners need to approach the discipline with complete submission. Most recently, the founder is facing allegations that they required some they teach to perform massages. It is further alleged by three unrelated persons that the founder also committed sexual assault upon some when they sought certification and endorsement to open their own studios.

Who might be affected in this vignette? What kind of costs are there to people connected to the situation?

What connections do you identify in this story that are related to money/resources (costs, profits, etc.)? Related to lost contribution? Related to the root causes of violence?

Exercise "D" was a practice related to yoga. How does knowing this impact the story, and the connections identified above, versus exercise methodology like CrossFit, weightlifting, or barre?

What prevented prevention in this vignette? What allowed this to happen? What would have been different if there weren't these missed opportunities?

What could change this story? What could be helpful in this scenario?

Vignette #6:

"E" is the sole living parent of a child. "E" has a partner living in the home with whom "E" shares childcare of both their children [ages 16 and 12]. "E" is an artist working at a small publisher that publishes children's books. "E" carools with the other artist employed by the company.

Recently, "E" was sexually harassed by someone at work. In lodging a complaint and following through with the required protocols, "E's" life was radically impacted. The small publisher was ill-prepared to handle the matter. Although "E" was found to have a credible complaint, the conclusion and after-effects of the process left "E" unemployed. "E" has initiated a legal complaint and filed suit. An immediate cost of the harassment and loss of work includes the inability of "E's" best friend and carpool partner to continue getting affordable transportation. "E's" friend also became unemployed. The children in "E's" home are facing short and long-term effects of this, including but not limited to: health care [mental, physical, preventative, etc.], School activities, School materials, Clothing, and College savings. "E's" PTSD from the events have cause "E" to stop producing art, limiting their ability to find additional work. "E" has traditionally stocked the freezer during hunting season. In part this is because "E" has had suicidal thoughts, and in part the sale was to acquire money to hire legal help concerning the harassment complaint.

Who might be affected in this vignette? What kind of costs are there to other people connected to the situation?

What connections do you identify in this story that are related to money/resources (costs, profits, etc.)? Related to lost contribution? Related to the root causes of violence?

If "E" is a straight cisgender white male, how might that impact the story, and the connections identified above?

What prevented prevention in this vignette? What allowed this to happen? What would have been different if there weren't these missed opportunities?

What could change this story? What could be helpful in this scenario?

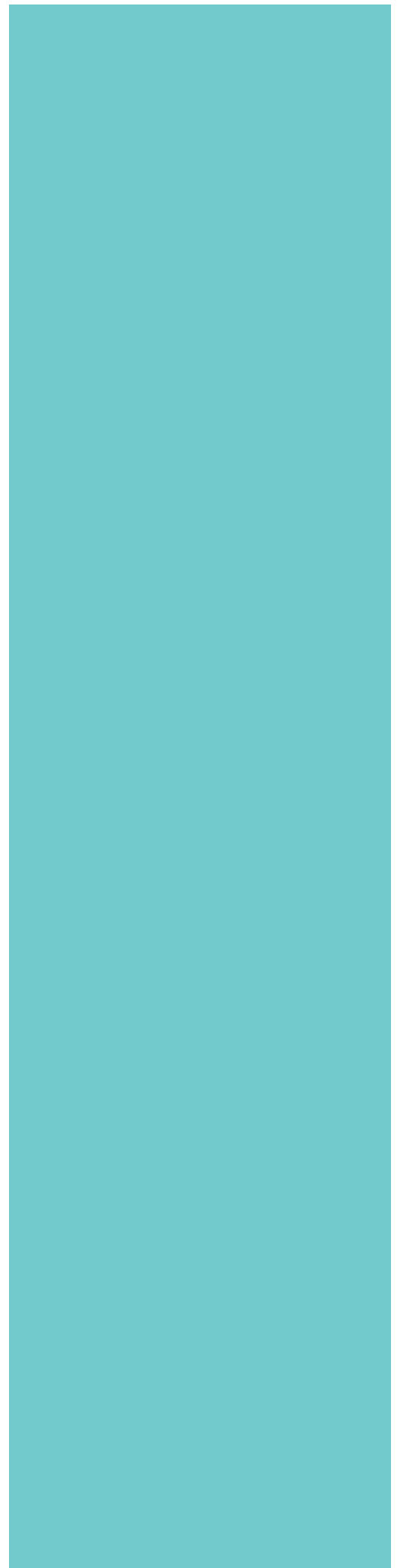
Vignette #7:

One of the largest international humanitarian aid organizations in the world (Organization "F") was in the news because of allegations of child sexual abuse by one of the founders, and of a dismissive response by the organization when the allegations came forward. Now, instead of focusing on continuing and expanding its critical efforts, Organization "F" is focused on image repair and cleaning up this mess of its own making. In 1995 (when allegations were first made) and 2018 (when they came up again), Organization "F" made a calculated decision that its own comfort and focus were more important than the well-being of women who were being abused. As a result, literally millions of people relying on the organization for survival are being underserved as the organization deals with this existential threat.

Who might be affected in this vignette? What kind of costs are there to other people connected to the situation?

What connections do you identify in this story that are related to money/resources (costs, profits, etc.)? Related to lost contribution? Related to the root causes of violence?

If Organization "F" was actually a major international for-profit corporation, how might that impact the story, and the connections identified above?



What prevented prevention in this vignette? What allowed this to happen? What would have been different if there weren't these missed opportunities?

What could change this story? What could be helpful in this scenario?

Vignette #8:

A leading international ride sharing program has acknowledged publicly that sexual harassment, assault, and abuse are serious problems, both for passengers and drivers. It has undertaken an extensive effort to develop common language in order to make reporting easier and more consistent, and also intensive training for all customer service representatives so that they can handle complaints more easily and quickly. Further, they have publicly released their internal research on the extent of the problem within their system, despite the public criticism that they correctly anticipated they would face as a result. Finally, they have recently implemented a policy to no longer require that survivors sign non-disclosure agreements as part of any settlements that the company makes. While this is not anywhere close to a perfect response, this company is taking its role as corporate citizen very seriously, and providing a model for other companies to follow.

Who might be affected in this vignette? What kind of costs are there to other people connected to the situation?

What makes this story different than the other vignettes in this series?

What connections do you identify in this story that are related to money/resources (costs, profits, etc.)? Related to lost contribution? Related to the root causes of violence?

What enabled prevention in this vignette? What enabled change? How are these changes impacting economic disparities?

What does this vignette tell us about opportunities to impact the connections between sexual violence and economics?

TELLING THE STORY: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND POSITIVE VULNERABILITY

In this section of the workbook, the Men's Engagement Committee (MEC) invites people to join us in our own struggles with being vulnerable. This conversation began with an acknowledgement that vulnerability is an important skill and value necessary for addressing violence and abuse in our communities. In our initial discussions we openly acknowledged how important vulnerability is to stopping violence from ever happening and healing from violence that has occurred while simultaneously expressing our own personal and collective reticence around being more vulnerable with one another and within other relationships in our lives. Knowing the importance of vulnerability, we embarked on a process (outlined in this section of the workbook) to help us examine what would enable our own vulnerability as a means to build different kinds of relationships, value people for more than their identities or what they 'contribute,' and build spaces rooted in anti-violence.

This work is hard, and we continue to navigate discomfort, fear, and anxiety around vulnerability - but we also acknowledge that vulnerability takes practice. We hope that this section of MEC's Finding Your Role workbook can help you and others practice, as it has helped us.

The order of activities in this chapter reflects the process MEC has gone through to explore these topics and we invite users of this workbook to also follow them sequentially unless meaningful to you and your groups otherwise. Each activity builds on one another, offering some foundational concepts, stories, imagery, and prompts for you to use in your efforts. Lastly, because we are inviting vulnerability, we also want to offer our own vulnerability. Hopefully you see that reflected throughout this section.

Vulnerability can wield power and can open doors. It can be performative, strategic, enriching, scary, profound, and so many things. Although vulnerability is often viewed as a risk, there are so many positives to vulnerability that we miss out on when we avoid it out of fear, anxiety, or other emotions. Vulnerability can be a tool to help unpack harm and damage. It can decrease shame and guilt attached to behaviors, and that's powerful because shame and guilt can cause more harm down the road. It can help us not only have healthier relationships with others, but also thrive individually and collectively. Here are some of the things MEC members shared about our experiences with vulnerability:

"Vulnerability has allowed me to bring my humanity forward – especially as a human connecting to other human(s)."

"Vulnerability has made me more effective at doing the real work and accomplishing what is meaningful to me."

"Sometimes my power is not in showing my power but in empowering that other person."

"Emotional awareness can change everything. The person that inspired me the most in my life has also had the most emotional courage."

"I spent years of my life denying my capacity to cause harm and recognizing harm that I have caused. This came to a transition point engaging with other folks who have caused harm because I believe that there is opportunity for a future with less harm in it."

"I've been doing rape prevention work since I was about 18, and have grown accustomed to being in spaces where most people identified as female. I was one of the "good guys" who got lots of (unearned) credit and praise just for showing up. I tried to earn that credit too, of course, but I also have to admit that I reveled in the praise I got for doing virtually nothing.

Not long after we started Men Can Stop Rape, where we continued to collect lots of unearned praise, I got involved with a hobby that has become a real passion in my life: poker. As you probably know, even if you know nothing about poker, it is a game played almost entirely by folks who identify as male (>90% by most estimates). I hadn't really thought much about the fact that I had sought out this male space as my pastime, but it happened while we at Men Can Stop Rape were openly grappling with the challenge of reaching men. We had had some moderate successes, but a very large part of our work was talking to women, many of whom knew far more about the issue than we did.

So, on my first trip to Las Vegas, probably in about 2005, I was very nervous. I was going to be risking much more money than I ever had, and probably playing against far more experienced and talented players than I ever had. It was very intimidating! The first day I was there, I decided to play in a tournament, which is usually safer because the amount of money you can lose is limited. I was so nervous walking to my table that a dealer actually stopped me, grabbed me by my shoulders, and said "you're going to be fine." (He became a good friend over the years.) I actually made a little money that first time out, so that helped a lot!

The next morning, I decided to try out the cash games, where you can make a lot more money, but you're also risking a lot more. I was bolstered by my (small) success the day before, so that helped a lot. I was wearing the standard poker uniform, jeans and a tee shirt. What I hadn't paid attention to was that the tee shirt I was wearing said "Stop Violence Against Women" in big bold letters. That's a professional hazard of going to all those Take Back the Nights and other events; pretty much my whole wardrobe had messages like that.

So, I sat down at a table with 9 other folks, including the dealer. People come and go as they want, so the lineup changed regularly. But, the whole time there was never more than one woman at the table, and that was often the dealer. As the hours passed, we talked about all sorts of different things, usually just trying to stay friendly and reduce our nerves.

Eventually, one of the guys who had been at the table with me for a while pointed to my shirt and asked what that was about. In that moment, all of us were men. I told him about my work to engage men in ending gendered violence, and I noticed that the table started getting a little quiet. He nodded at my comments and then said, "well, the reason I asked is that my wife was married before, and her first husband was really abusive. It still makes it hard for her to trust me sometimes." The guy next to him spoke up about the fact that his daughter was sexually assaulted during her first semester in college and wound up dropping out. And then it happened. Each person at the table chose to tell a story about someone in their lives who was harmed by gendered violence. One of the men even started openly weeping at the table. The dealer silently stopped the game, and everyone just waited. The person next to the weeping man put his hand on his neighbor's shoulder, and several people murmured supportive (if uncomfortable) words. After a minute, the weeping man had collected himself, and the game continued. The conversation drifted on to other subjects, but my sense was that we all knew we had witnessed a rare and powerful moment of vulnerability and bonding among men.

To get a sense of just how rare this moment is, just consider what the dealer did. To simplify a bit, casinos and dealers make their money based on the number of hands they deal. A key role for the dealer is to keep the game moving, no unnecessary delays. A second key role for the dealer is to ensure the integrity of the game: few or no misdeals, no confusion about the money, and always making sure to control the cards that haven't been dealt (so that no one can gain an advantage by seeing extra cards). In stopping the game, the dealer took his hands off the deck, something I have never seen before or since. He also waited until it was clear that all the players were ready to resume before restarting. Again, extremely rare, and potentially risky. The casino cameras were on, and they saw that he had both slowed the game and let go of the deck. Either one could have put his job at risk.

The other players probably risked somewhat less, but given how much psychology plays into the game, they certainly risked revealing a part of themselves that they didn't want other players to see. The choice to become vulnerable in that moment had enormous potential costs for each of us, and somehow all of us found a way to that choice. It was a profound gift."

Positive vulnerability invites us to focus on the power within relationships and within the way we walk through the world, rather than just focusing on the power that comes with something like a job title. It helps us individually and collectively promote authenticity, accountability, wholeness, health, and safety. By starting here - by working towards positive vulnerability, we get closer to all of these things. We get closer to experiencing and expressing joy, love, and hope and we get better at navigating anger, shame, anxiety, loneliness, and fear.

Positive vulnerability calls us to create more time, space, etc. for internal dialogue – including asking questions that promote observation ‘what baggage are you carrying,’ and ‘who helped you pack the bag and why?’ It also highlights the opportunity to take stuff out of the bag. We do not need to keep carrying it. Positive vulnerability helps us understand that we all have needs and wants in each relationship – and we cannot expect to have these met all the time, but we can learn how to express these needs and open ourselves up to negotiation, learning, and opportunity.

What does positive vulnerability mean to you?

What is an example of something positive you experienced during a time you were vulnerable?

Facilitator NOTE: To fill a space with conversations around and expressions of emotion is both a choice, and a given, considering power dynamics in the room. Recognizing context is part of emotional accountability. With this in mind, facilitators might want to share some considerations around what the purpose of the group being convened is, and how this may inform collective and individual choices around how we demand emotional labor and/or how we invite emotional vulnerability. More on this can be found on pages 3-5 of this workbook with tips on building creative Brave Spaces.

There are many different ways to utilize this resource. In the margins, we've included just some strategies for utilizing and facilitating this resource.

Individually

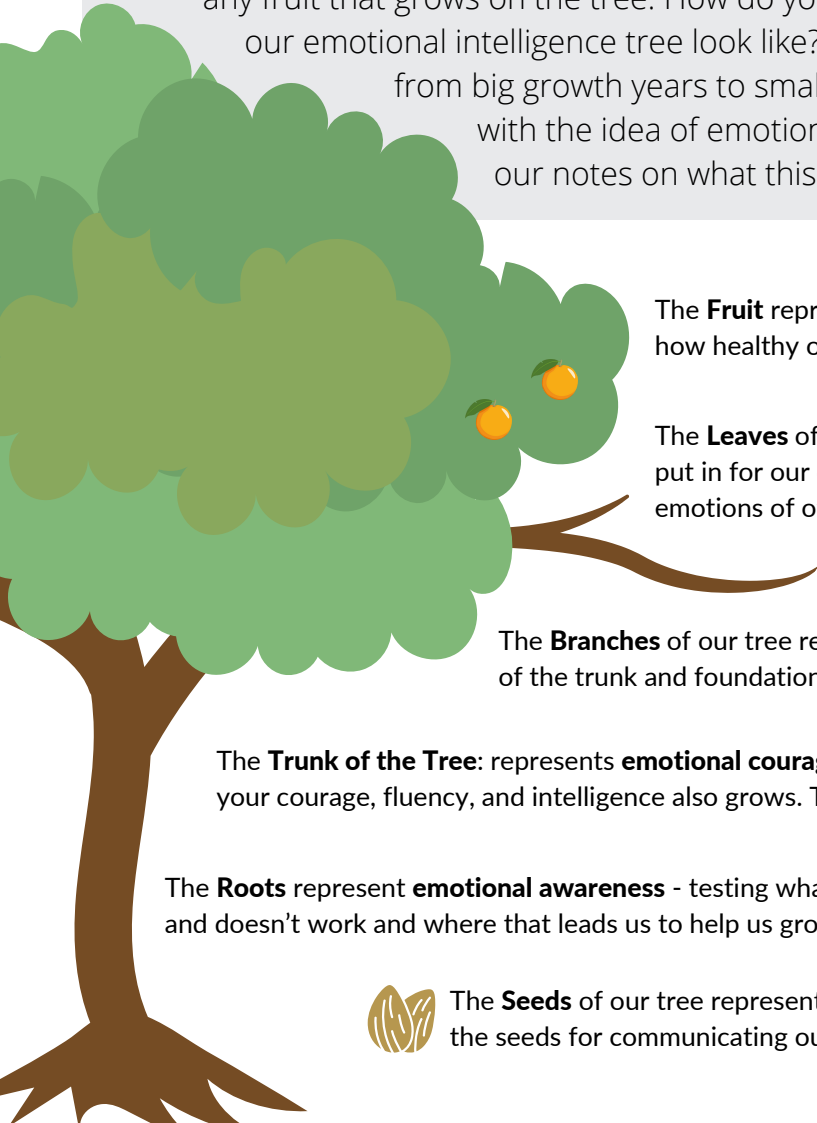
This worksheet is designed to help us describe our own experiences with emotions and opportunities to identify strategies to communicate about, express, and honor our emotions and the emotions of others. On your own, you can respond to the prompts throughout this chapter, read the stories included and capture your emotional responses to them in a free-write format, and/or utilize other creative outlets (like drawing, art, movement, storytelling, etc.) to help represent positive vulnerability to you.

Learning how to identify the feelings that we actually have and how we react to them physically and emotionally is necessary to actually addressing the feelings. This takes personal vulnerability, and requires us to cultivate, grow, and hone our emotional intelligence. In our discussions around vulnerability and emotional intelligence, we discussed several different concepts that build upon one another and add up to emotional intelligence. These include, but are likely not limited to:

- Emotional Awareness
- Emotional Equity
- Emotional Labor
- Emotional Courage
- Emotional Fluency
- Emotional Accountability
- Emotional Expression

Understanding how these concepts interact and connect with one another for ourselves and others can be helpful for us in the work to cultivate, grow, and enhance emotional intelligence. As part of identifying our feelings and emotions, MEC spent some time trying to visualize different elements of emotional intelligence that promote positive vulnerability. One of our best metaphors came in the form of a tree.

A tree offers us the opportunity to understand all of the elements of emotional intelligence within a frame of growth. All of the elements of emotional intelligence will sprout from solid beginnings of emotional expression, awareness, courage, fluency, and intelligence. From there grows emotional accountability, equity, and labor - elements of emotional intelligence often enacted in relationships with others. The growth of each of these parts is impacted by the world around us that fosters opportunities and sometimes creates barriers to growth. We can further look to the ways wounds impact our trees and how they heal. We can consider any fruit that grows on the tree. How do you grow tasty fruit? What does the inside of our emotional intelligence tree look like? Are the rings of our tree fluctuating in size from big growth years to small growth years? Our group really resonated with the idea of emotional intelligence as a tree. Below are some of our notes on what this meant to us.



The **Fruit** represents the ways our tree provides us outcomes based on how healthy or unhealthy the rest of the tree is.

The **Leaves** of our tree represent **emotional labor** - both the energy we put in for our own emotional intelligence and honoring space for the emotions of others.

The **Branches** of our tree represent **emotional accountability and equity**. Growing out of the trunk and foundations, these shape how we nourish ourselves and others.

The **Trunk of the Tree**: represents **emotional courage and fluency** woven together. As the tree grows, your courage, fluency, and intelligence also grows. This is never static. This never stops.

The **Roots** represent **emotional awareness** - testing what works and doesn't work and where that leads us to help us grow.



The **Seeds** of our tree represent **emotional expression**. This is where we start - planting the seeds for communicating our wants, needs, etc. and growing all the other elements.

"I was 12 and had just finished brushing my teeth before bed when my Dad told me he wanted to talk about the birds and the bees. I could tell he felt uncomfortable with the topic and after a few minutes of talking about body changes, I pretended to know the full scope and said something like, "Okay Dad, thanks, I think I know most of this." He was glad to hear that and added if I had more questions I could always come and ask later. I didn't end up asking later though I really appreciate that he took the time to initiate the conversation and left it open for me to ask further questions.

It's understandable he was nervous communicating about puberty with me because I don't think there was ever much modeling or information directed towards him around how to have that conversation growing up in the 50's and 60's. Like all caregivers and parents, my dad had so much experience, knowledge, and comfort in many capacities and areas of comfort. Multiple generations of men on my Dad's side were loggers in rural Oregon and my dad himself was a finish carpenter who also ran a chainsaw often since that is how we got firewood. I grew up going up 60ft in boom trucks with him while he brought down big technical tree branches that were hung after storms. I always felt it was interesting that he could do that, and yet something like the topic of communicating about puberty would be a challenge or space of discomfort. I used to think, "what was in the way of him asking someone for help to learn more about a topic he wasn't as comfortable navigating?" and how that conversation may have been different if he had a framework of knowledge to work off of as going through puberty and communicating about puberty are two different things.

My dad passed suddenly when I was in my mid-twenties and I had to run his chainsaw to clean up some big oak branches that came down in a storm shortly thereafter. He taught my brother and I how to run a saw growing up, so we had the basics, though I hadn't practiced more than a few times. I tried to get the saw running on my own and after endless tinkering, adjusting, and watching saw repair videos on youtube, I couldn't get it going. I could either take it to a local shop my Dad used to get it tuned up in the past or I could cut up the branches with a small dull handsaw. Obviously I selected the small dull handsaw, shelved the chainsaw, and spent hours after work the next week taking the branches down to small logs. "Eh, I need the exercise" I rationalized to myself, but really, I didn't want to admit I needed help learning more in an area I didn't know much about. Months later, I finally took the saw into the shop to get it fixed. The voice I imagined that would meet me from behind the counter of "What kind of man are you? Can't even start a chainsaw?" was actually, "Sure thing, we do this all the time. Glad you brought it in." A week later the saw was fixed and they showed me how they did it.

I had delayed asking for help for so long because I didn't want to acknowledge that I had more to learn in an area that wasn't my comfort zone. My Dad would not have expected me to be an expert at fixing his saw and he would not have shamed me for asking for support. Still, along the way I had internalized having to act like I knew what I was doing. Years later and thanks to a lot more practice, learning from friends and family members, and some 'what not to do's' along the way, running a saw is something that brings me a lot of pleasure. It helps me provide firewood for my family, makes me think about my Dad, and gave me perspective on the role positive vulnerability plays in asking for help when learning a new skill."

Like anything we do - being vulnerable and reflecting our emotions authentically takes practice. We have to try, and often fail, a few times before we even begin to become good at something. The following prompts are, like this workbook as a whole, just one tool, and it does not exist in a vacuum. There are many ways to work on building our emotional intelligence. We decided to focus on practice.

Pairs/Small Groups

If you are utilizing/facilitating this chapter of the workbook as a pair, or in small groups, it could be beneficial for cultivating depth and meaning in the conversations to break this into at least three unique sessions, if not more if participants are having robust discussions.

A strategy that can be helpful is to invite people to work through each activity on their own (one section at a time), starting with the skills identification activity on this page, moving to the emotional intelligence activity, and finally the next steps activity. Give them time in the moment to complete the section(s). Then invite people to come back together and share what they came up with (at least three ideas per section). Encourage story-telling and creativity from the beginning to enable successful skills development by the end of the section.

Alternatively, invite each person to work through the workbook chapter in its entirety on their own. The final part of this workbook section invites people to describe some imagery around emotional intelligence. Invite each participant to spend some time developing this imagery (either through storytelling, art, writing, movement, etc.) and ask them to share with one another/discuss their process for identifying and creating that imagery, as well as what it means to them moving forward.

Skills Identification Acitivity

1. What is something specific that you are good at? (ex. A specific task, job, hobby, skill, sport, etc.)

We recognize that many men are socialized to act as if they are good at anything and everything they do, while simultaneously taught that they're never good enough. With this in mind, we recognize that even naming something that you're good at can sometimes feel complicated.

2. What makes you good at this thing?

3. How do you feel being good at this thing?

4. How did you become good at it?

What is an emotion you feel pretty comfortable with expressing?

What does this emotion look like for you (internally and externally)?

What does this emotion sound like for you?

What does this emotion feel like for you?

Why are you comfortable with it?



Emotional Intelligence Practice Activity

For each emotion listed below, answer each question. Think about ways to describe the emotion as you experience it and observe it in those around you.

JOY

What does this emotion look, sound, and feel like for you (internally and externally)?

How might you recognize if someone else is expressing this?

When might you experience this emotion?

On a scale of 1-10 (1=not at all & 10= extremely), how comfortable are you expressing this emotion, and with whom?

ANGER

What does this emotion look, sound, and feel like for you (internally and externally)?

How might you recognize if someone else is expressing this?

When might you experience this emotion?

On a scale of 1-10 (1=not at all & 10= extremely), how comfortable are you expressing this emotion, and with whom?

LOVE

What does this emotion look, sound, and feel like for you (internally and externally)?

How might you recognize if someone else is expressing this?

When might you experience this emotion?

On a scale of 1-10 (1=not at all & 10= extremely), how comfortable are you expressing this emotion, and with whom?

FEAR

What does this emotion look, sound, and feel like for you (internally and externally)?

How might you recognize if someone else is expressing this?

When might you experience this emotion?

On a scale of 1-10 (1=not at all & 10= extremely), how comfortable are you expressing this emotion, and with whom?

Excerpt from *The Compassion Imperative, From Hurt to Healing: A New North*

By Mel Anthony Phillips

At one time, my loving family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances would have said I am a decent free-spirited open-minded pure of heart sort of guy. They were right, to a point. Truth was that in many ways my spirit was anchored to a hard place in my consciousness, allowed to roam only a few lengths from that limited spot. That wide door of perceived mindfulness opened only for some and only so far. I was a good person trapped in a mental lockup of my own design. It wasn't until I decided to engage compassion that I learned to put this underused inner guidance system to direct use. Without realizing, I had been slightly misdirected in my social justice aim, a bit off course on my mission and sometimes totally missed the point of my calling. Currently, as I set my essential being on a more compassionate course, this slender needle of awareness is guiding the vessel of my values. Compassion fuels me, directs me, buoys and steadies me when crises arise. My hope is lifted by the life raft compassion provides for me and others in need.

When I talk about setting my soul on a new life course and about life rafts and folks in need, I like the analogy of a ship on open seas because the words "compass" and "compassion" have everything in common and derive from the same root meaning. "Com" is a prefix meaning "with," or "as one" or "together." It also implies that this with-ness, this oneness, this togetherness has intensity and force. And the word "pass" means to go beyond what has been done. In essence, compassion means for us to come together and, with intensity and force, to go beyond or rise above whatever boundaries to our highest callings. A compass in our hands gives us longitude and latitude as well as the four directions: North, East, South and West and all the space in between, in order to go to those difficult and challenging places on land, sea and air. Compassion in our hands gives us fortitude, grace and an attitude of gratitude and all the space in between, in order to go to those difficult and challenging places in our hearts and minds. Like the compass and its four directions, compassion in our hearts has four directives: to See, Feel, to Act, and to Heal. I call it the "three-action reaction." When rightly aligned and combined, the first three requisites—see, feel, act—create a domino effect that automatically engages that manifest reaction we call healing, well-being or post-traumatic growth.

I know the mighty power of self-compassion. As a victim of violent crime, I can attest personally to its healing properties. Still in all honesty, it was a long time coming. In the 1970s & 80s we didn't have words for what happened to me, not words I knew at 6, 8 or 11. People didn't talk about such things, so I grew up and it came with me, like a shadow that never touched the ground. For years it was fistfights and foul language. I excelled at running and combat sports. I did six years active-duty military service, and for two of those years I tried my damndest to knock the block off any dude who thought he might want to step into the boxing ring. No pussywillow here, Jack. Mess with me and the only thing blowing in the breeze will be your ass. Bet that! First round bell, school bell, dinner bell or church bell, if it's ringing, I'm swinging, and with a fat bag of homemade whoop-ass! I was golden for a while. But, let's be honest; most great warriors do have their setbacks. Napoleon had Waterloo, Rocky Balboa had Apollo Creed, and Muhammed Ali had Smokin' Joe Frazier. Me? I had a Texas tornado with a tricky left hook. He was one of the only guys who'd actually knocked me down; and not only did he knock me on my butt, he pretty much just cleaned my clock. If I'd had a little less pride, I'd have probably jumped out of the ring to get away from that man. Instead, I stood there and took my punishment. Dude hit me so hard. Minus the stepdad, I had never been hit like that. BAM!! I saw the lights explode and felt everything shift to cinematic blurry slow motion.

It was after that bout when I had to ask myself why I was fighting. What's it all for? Why am I boxing? What am I really doing here? I stayed with those questions until finally going all the way back to him. That little guy. That first tiny little one. I had almost forgotten about him. Time to circle back. For a long minute I was chained to an ideal, closely bound to certain notions of righteousness and masculinity that, in ways I did not notice, barred my mind from reaching outside that rigid construct of what I believed was Justice. Yet it was in this moment of recollection and reckoning with my little self that the light bulb in my head just seemed to instantly turn on like a switch. It came to me that I was fighting my childhood secrets. I was trying to box them into a corner to keep them off me. I had been jabbing at my loathing and guilt to hold them at bay. I was battling the shames of my past. I was fighting to prove something to myself, you, him & anyone else who saw me in that square that I was nobody's little boy.

Truth was, all this time I had been fighting me—HIM—my little self. But, what had he done to deserve his dismissal to a back closet in my mind? What had he done? He wasn't anything but a little boy, a little me. Why should I be embarrassed of him, ashamed, mad, neglectful and uncaring? Whatever happened all that time ago surely was not his doing. Then, why do I hate him this much? I remember being more than surprised when I felt the flutter in my stomach and chest as he slowly scratched his way out of my skin, breaking through the fabric of my shirt like a precious baby bird. In that moment of truth, my spirit reawakened. He was cute as a chick peep and his skin shone rosegold against my own. He was sweet, innocent, curious, golden and perfect. Perfect that's what he was with his little man shoes all nicely laced-up with a loose lopsided bow he tied all by himself, the way Momma taught him. Then he spoke; a shy voice, a sad little chirp like a nestling fallen from its tree. He looked right up in my face and said, "I'm sorry."

I said, "Man, what you got to be sorry for"? And I could barely look him in the eyes when he said what he did.

"I'm sorry I didn't run fast enough," he said as I looked at his tiny brown legs about the width of my wrists.

He said, "I'm sorry I didn't hit him or kick him. I should of bit him hard," gritting his baby teeth and, with his soft hands and paper fingernails, he shaped two tiny claws.

He said, "I should have scratched their faces real hard. And I should have talked to that policeman that one time—remember? But what if I got took from momma?"

I could see he was scared now, but he continued.

"I'm sorry I didn't tell anybody. I'm sorry I disappointed you. I'm sorry I was so scared. I was so, so scared. I should've been bigger."

I say to him, "Little man, that ain't for you. You can't hold that; this is too big for you. You were a child. You were 8, and you were perfect. It wasn't your fault."

I apologized to him for being the way I was, for denying his existence, hiding him out of sight like a shameful object. I stand there, tears in my eyes trying to understand how I had left him alone for so long, all by himself in a lost nook of my memory; stashed away like a filthy magazine.

I say to him, "I see you; I feel you. I love you. You are not alone. Not anymore."

I pick him up and hold him close, sniffing the pomade in his curly hair that's laid to the side with the part on the right, looking like a little mini-Malcolm X. Like a good little bayou boy, he smells like sweetgrass and swamp mud. We visited a long while. Then I ate him. I put him into my mouth and I push him down my throat like a Twinkie; he's sweet, soft, comforting. I swallow him down, take him back into myself, put him back into every pore of my being and every strand of my DNA, and then go about the task to find a new space for him; a room with a little more light and a lot more love. It's what he deserves; it's what he needs; it's what I need, too. Compassion, the thing I was denying myself and others was, in itself, the antidote for my very own hurts. It was a potent pill resting in the palm of my hand the whole time, a tiny caplet of humanity, unused and still secure in its original silver lining. Compassion for others and myself is what redirected my life, shifted my mindset, moved my restive heart and recalibrated my moral GPS. I am on a better course, following a new North, a brighter guide star called compassion.

Compassion is power you can hold. To understand the raw gravity of it you want to start with yourself. If you will indulge me, please, let's try it now. First, breathe in for a moment to center yourself. Find that place of inner solitude; that peaceful place where all your best memories and good dreams are stored. Some of us might need to blow off the cobwebs and shake off the dust in that space, if you haven't been there in a while. Breathe and remember. Let yourself conjure-up you—the BEST you that maybe ever was. Call out the little you. Be solemn here. Be intentional here. With intensity and force let us come together—be together—in this place in this moment, to revisit ourselves at that particular point in time when we were angels. For some folks it maybe has been a while since you actually laid eyes on that little one, your perfect You-ness. You might have to go all the way back before colors even had names, back to when words were for grown-ups, and giggles and fart noises were the language of the times. Can you see him yet? Do you see her? Do you see your little man, your baby girl—your best little self? Look at him or her. They are cute, tiny beings, shining like the sun in their little peewee clothes. They are looking up at you and smiling so big as if they were just told that their birthday would last for TWO years. Make eye contact with them and keep it there. SEE them. As they beam up at you now, see them, as you knew them when—back when we were beautiful, innocent and perfect. Hold them close and feel their cheeks, hair, their heartbeat and say this to your one:

"I see you." "I feel you." "I love you." "I got you."

"You are not alone."

Now, staying focused on that vision of our purest selves, turn your little one to the little one to the left of you and let them see each other. Look at them; they can't help but smile. Now turn your little one to the other little one on the right. Oh yeah, they are going to get along just fine. Let us hold onto this vision just for another minute. This feels nice. Hold on to you—that best little you—for the rest of the day or more. Take some time to reacquaint and catch-up. Then take them back into your flesh. Stuff them into your mouth and swallow them if you have to, and give them some space, some light and some love. What a wonderful thing to be able to say to someone you love.

"I See You. I Feel You. I Love You. I Got You. You Are Not Alone."

This is an excerpt of the keynote address delivered December 7, 2017 for 200 graduates of Stanford University's "Compassion Course." The graduates were all incarcerated men serving life sentences at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola. This speech celebrates the inmates' inaugural "Day of Compassion"

What other emotions do you want or need to explore for yourself?

Pick at least two of those and complete the below sections.

EMOTION #1: _____

What does this emotion look, sound, and feel like for you (internally and externally)?

How might you recognize if someone else is expressing this?

When might you experience this emotion?

On a scale of 1-10 (1=not at all & 10= extremely), how comfortable are you expressing this emotion, and with whom?

EMOTION #2: _____

What does this emotion look, sound, and feel like for you (internally and externally)?

How might you recognize if someone else is expressing this?

When might you experience this emotion?

On a scale of 1-10 (1=not at all & 10= extremely), how comfortable are you expressing this emotion, and with whom?

In Larger Groups

When implementing with larger groups, start with the 'Before we Begin' section, on page 3 of this workbook. In order to offer space for necessary conversation/discomfort with emotions, we recommend separating the activities in this chapter into at least three unique sessions, if not more. Some facilitation strategies include:

Utilizing Think, Pair, Share approaches where people are invited to reflect on the questions for a set amount of time, discuss their responses with one other person, and then share with the broader group overarching themes that arose and the impacts on them doing the activity.

We have included some of our own stories throughout this chapter of the workbook to model storytelling as a way to practice skills around emotional intelligence. Inviting participants to develop their own stories, imagery, and art using the prompts throughout the section can be meaningful for people to practice the skills of emotional intelligence and positive vulnerability, especially when that is shared with others (the whole group or subsets of the group) throughout the process.

Another strategy, particularly for the Emotional Intelligence Practice activity would be to separate people into pairs or small groups and assign each group an emotion to discuss. If you do this, we recommend inviting people to still work through the other emotions on their own.

Next Steps Activity

What would help you address your needs around each emotion you explored in this activity?

How do you honor, sit with, move through/explore emotions?

What are some ways you can practice the skill of emotional intelligence?
Think back to the initial questions around how you have gotten better at skills in the past.

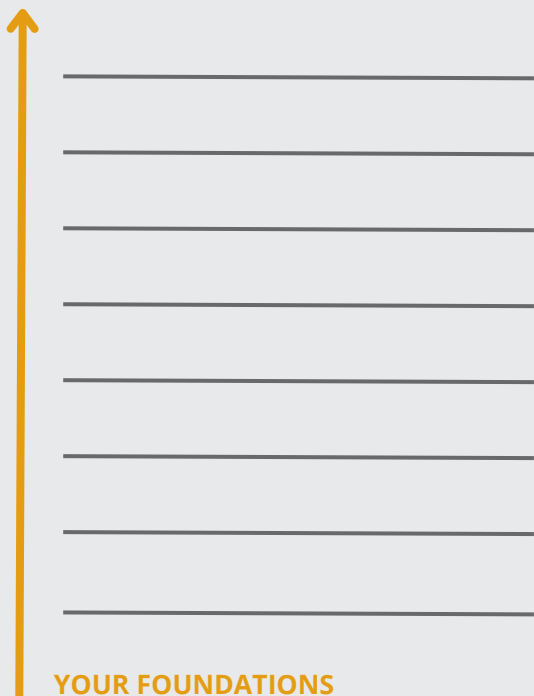
Where do you need help?

How can you seek out and initiate that help?

Emotional Intelligence is made up of so many different things, but our individual journeys each look different. As a group MEC offered the tree metaphor for thinking about how each of these elements of emotional intelligence build on and connect with one another. What does your emotional intelligence spectrum look like? Use the below space to think about how these concepts build on one another for you. No order is wrong.

- Emotional Awareness
- Emotional Equity
- Emotional Labor
- Emotional Courage
- Emotional Fluency
- Emotional Accountability
- Emotional Expression

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SKILLS SPECTRUM



Where are you at right now on this spectrum? In this moment? Generally in your life?

What led you to list these the way you have?

How did you get to this point? Who has helped you along the way?

If you were going to create your own visual of this, what could it look like? Use the space below to draw, write, or envision a visual representation of emotional intelligence and your own skills spectrum.

Describe your imagery. What led you to this imagery? What does it mean to you?

Some visuals that emerged for MEC members included:

- **Series of Peaks and Valleys** – thinking about how emotional intelligence is holding the reigns a lot in our lives and how this plays out as high highs and low lows.
- **Heartbeat Monitor** – if we are doing well, there will be fewer peaks and valleys along a straight even line. If we are not doing well, there will be lots more peaks and valleys.
- **Kid at Night at the State Fair** – everything is a wonder, everything is a delight, all could be right in the world even though there is danger about – there is a ride, a space, food for all of us.
- **The Picture of Specific Individuals in our Lives** - people that practice these pieces so well.
- **Abstract Painting** - the colors and brushstrokes bleed off the canvas – this is how feel in life, everyone needs respect, needs to be heard, has to be a release of emotions somewhere, has to be a blending.
- **'Days Since _____ Sign'** - for example a sign that reads 'days since crying' as a reminder to feel.
- **Musical Triplets** – in typical counting fraction notes, music is often broken into counts of 2 - thinking about the courage it takes to be a triplet note instead.
- Emotion as **Water** – it can take many forms including a container that it is in. It is fluid/flexible. It can be affected by different forms (steam, frozen, etc.) and how it connects and interacts with the water of other people. It can be stagnant or moving. Things can grow in it, which can be both a benefit or a problem.

Using the imagery around emotional intelligence that you came up with, what is an example in your life where this expression of emotional intelligence has been positive for you?

What does this story tell you about your skills and opportunities to practice positive vulnerability and emotional intelligence throughout your life?



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