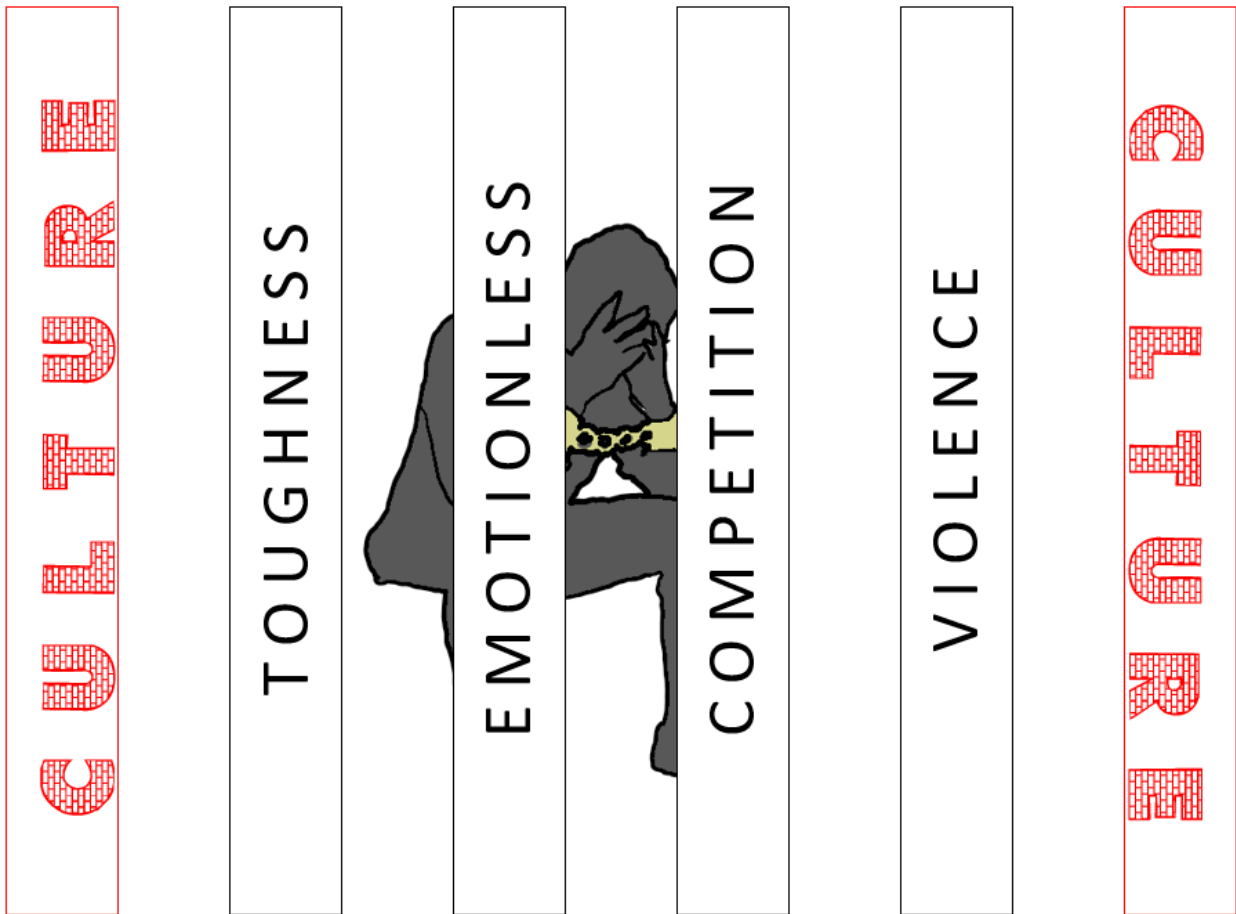


f e M I n i s t t h e r a p y

f o r M E N



Jia Cao, Taylor Shafer & Keya Williams

# But Men Don't Go to Therapy



We get it! Real men don't go to therapy, or so they say.

According to researchers Addis & Hoffman (2017) there is lots of evidence to support the fact that many men do not seek help when they need it, and that this lack-of-help-seeking behavior is tied to how men are raised to view manhood.

But what does it mean to be a man? What happens and how do you feel when you sometimes behave in ways that are considered feminine?

Here's the thing, we all are socialized in specific ways based on our biology. To not meet these cultural expectations can cause a great deal of stress and make us downright emotional. This is where a feminist approach to therapy can be helpful.

Don't let the name fool you! Feminist therapy is not just for the ladies. It is a way of understanding that everyone that has been socialized (that's all of us) bears the emotional burden of living up to societies' social rules.



Here are the answers:

*Men are NOT the Problem -- Patriarchy, the System of Male Superiority, is the Problem.*

Patriarchy is not only oppressing women but also essentializing men's identities and lived experiences, dictating a way men "must" or "should" behave. Those who "violate" the masculinist norms, including people who identify as neither males nor females, may be marginalized or even traumatized. Those who uphold this system may also experience constant oppression and stress competing for dominance.

*Within this Oppressive System, Feminist Therapists Recognize the Influence of Power.*

In therapy, they work to form an egalitarian relationship with each client. You may expect them to try to understand your lived experience while sharing their power with you and assisting you to explore issues not only limited to gender.

# Diversity In Men's Identities

Trans men, cis men, Black men, White men, Indigenous men, Muslim men, Christian men, disabled men, non-disabled men, working-class men, middle-class men, ..., all share the common gender identity of "men".

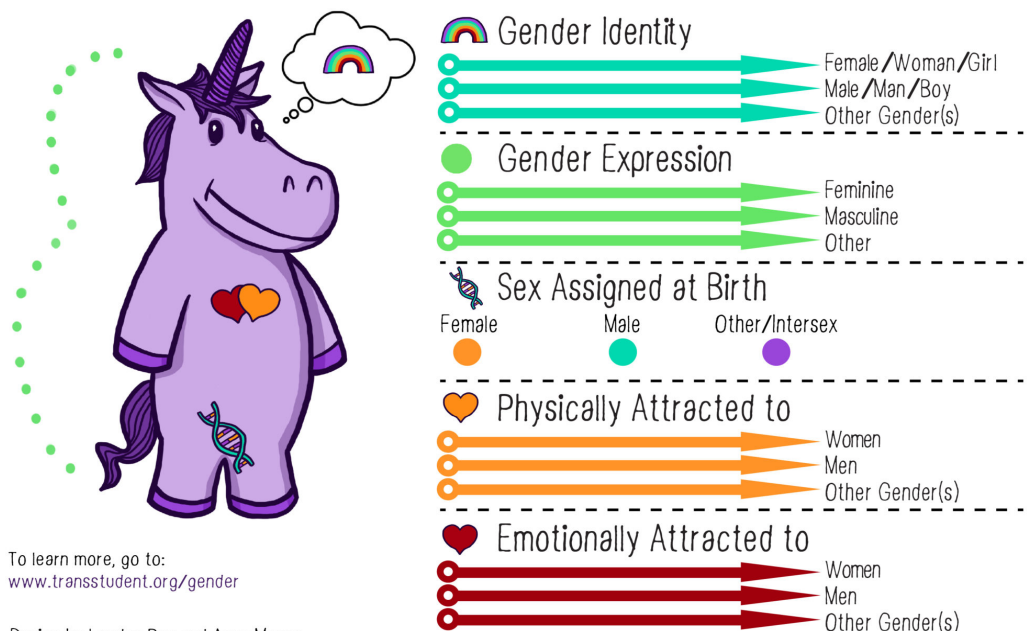
Besides the male gender, men also define and express themselves through other intersecting social identities (such as above-mentioned race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion, age, (dis)ability, etc.), which altogether create different lived experiences and make each man unique.

Gender identity, gender expression, sex assigned at birth, sexual orientation, and romantic orientation are all different concepts relevant to gender.

*How would you define your gender uniqueness based on these gender unicorn scales?*

## The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:  
**TSER**  
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:  
[www.transstudent.org/gender](http://www.transstudent.org/gender)

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

# Masculine Gender Role Stress

Gender role socialization--the way you learned what being a man or woman means--affects everyone, and it can even determine what situations you find stressful.

Masculine gender role stress can occur when a male-identified individual violates masculine gender norms. This stress can result in rigid thinking, relationship problems, aggression, and violence. (Baugher & Gazmararian, 2015)

Have you been feeling stressed lately?



**In every cry of every Man,  
In every Infants cry of fear,  
In every voice: in every ban,  
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear**

**- William Blake, "London"**

## **How a feminist approach to therapy can help you:**

- ❑ It can help you figure out how cultural norms about what it means to be a man are affecting your psychological well-being
- ❑ It can help you redefine what it means to be a man for YOU and assist you in living a life in alignment with your personal values of manhood
- ❑ It can help you to understand and get comfortable with your emotions so that you can better know yourself and so that your significant others can better know you too



*“We must dare to face the way in which patriarchal thinking blinds everyone so that we cannot see that the emotional lives of boys cannot be fully honored as long as notions of patriarchal masculinity prevail. We cannot teach boys that real men either do not feel or do not express feelings, then expect boys to feel comfortable getting in touch with their feelings.” — Bell Hooks*

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