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Monadnock Men's Resource Center

We are committed to providing all men with a safe space for growth, sharing, connection and community building... and to overcoming men's violence in all our lives.

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Steering Committee

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a director's view

The Changing Face of Masculinity

If we look at most realms of our society, from politics to business, sports and academics, we see men continuing to hold the most powerful positions. Overall, women still make only seventy-six cents for every dollar a man makes in the same job with the same experience. Women are also more likely than men to be seriously injured by domestic violence and rape. It is almost always a man who perpetrates this violence.

And yet, within this patriarchy, men are hurting as well. Male rates of suicide are very high, and life expectancy is lower than a woman's. Men themselves are frequent targets of violence and ridicule by other males. Men are more likely to suffer from substance abuse, and by some accounts, hidden depression. This causes many men to live in secret agony, feeling isolated from their partners, friends, families and selves.

Patriarchy does not mean men are happy and healthy. It means men have a sense of privilege over women, and a confusing one at that. "If I am privileged," a man may ask, "why do I feel so powerless?"

Possible answers to these questions are suggested in the work of many men and women who study gender relations. One of them is Jackson Katz, who has produced, amongst other resources, a video called "Tough Guise: Violence, Media & the Crisis in Masculinity." (available at many libraries and on the web at <http://mediaed.org/videos/MediaGenderAndDiversity/ToughGuise>).

Katz and others say that for the last fifty years, our society's image of what it means to be a man has been changing. Four powerful societal forces have challenged traditional notions of masculinity: the civil rights movement, gay rights, anti war, and, probably most significantly, the feminist movement. Over this period, many men and women have come to expect new and different things from men. For minorities gay men, and women in general, these changes have meant a growth in opportunities, a widening of possibilities. For many men, however, and straight white men in general, these changes often seem threatening. After all, if this is a patriarchy, and the basis for it is challenged, it will feel like a loss of

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power, prestige and privilege. For men and those who love them, a longing for clarity creates tension and backlash that can be seen in our high rates of domestic violence, divorce, social panic over gay marriage, and in our nations macho foreign policy.

Our work at the MMRC is motivated and shaped by the realization that masculinity as we know it is in transition. We are committed to supporting men who face the burdens, challenges and rewards of broadening and understanding their own and society's definition of what it means to be a man. It is our mission to create safe places for this to happen. It will mean a better world for us all.

~ *Forrest Seymour* is Co-Director of MMRC

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| <p>Always Open • Drop-In SUPPORT GROUP for all men SUNDAY EVENINGS 7:00 PM SHARP LifeArt • 43 Central Square • Keene</p> | <p>Monadnock Men's MMRC Resource Center</p> |
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March For Women's Lives

MMRC steering committee member Schultz attended the "March for Women's Lives" rally in Washington DC on April 24. He reported it was an experience he will long remember, and felt honored, "sharing the spirit of good directions for women with over a million other people." Two speakers, he said, stood out in his mind. One was Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, who reminded people that the last time there was such a big rally in Washington was in 1992, when a pro-choice candidate was elected president.

The other speaker was Gloria Steinem, who, at seventy years of age, celebrated the large turnout of young women at the rally. She and other feminists had been concerned in recent years that young women did not realize what was at stake in protecting the right to choose. She also celebrated the differences she sees in younger feminists. "When I was younger, we always thought we had to cover up [our bodies], but these young women are making the statement that they ought to have the right to be naked and still feel safe."

"I wonder when men will be educated enough to always take a stand to insure the safety of others," added Schultz.



Promoting Peace

On March 20, the MMRC was one of many local co-sponsors of "The World Still Says No To War" rally. Over one hundred people gathered in Keene's Central Square as part of an international day of rallies to protest the war in Iraq. The MMRC's Jim Duffy shared these words with those in attendance:

"The MMRC is honored to be one of many co-sponsors of today's rally. Part of our mission is seeking alternatives to violence. We recognize the suffering caused by war is meaningless if we do not witness it and take responsibility for feeling that suffering within ourselves. We seek to strengthen the bonds between men, and between men and their communities. We realize a man's strength, courage, and need to protect is not solely defined through warfare, but in an open and loving heart as well.

"War is a parasite. It will not live without a host. It cannot wither our hands into fists when we refuse it.

"I believe there is no greater gift we can give ourselves than the empowerment we exercise here today; the intelligence of our compassion, creativity and courage, our willingness to bear the healing and responsibility of love.

"We need not create bombs and bullets for the strength and freedom war promises. We need not make an enemy of the very air we breathe. We do not challenge each other by demanding we be for, or against, with, or without. And we are brave because we are telling this truth:

There is enough within all of us to create honor for every person on earth.

Fathers and Small Things

by Mark Brandenburg MA, CPCC

I was packed and ready to leave for my two day trip. My mind had been consumed with work and with many of the small details of getting ready to go. As I got into the car to leave, my thoughts turned to my children. I'd been preoccupied for the last few days, and now I'd be gone for a few more.

How to stay in touch with your kids during busy times is often a father's dilemma. Men tend to focus on one thing extremely well for long periods, but this can lead to trouble. Shifting from work to your family life isn't always the easiest thing to do. And if you don't show your kids that you're thinking about them, they may assume that you're not.

As I started down the road, I suddenly stopped the car and turned around.

I drove back to my house, found a couple of cards, and wrote a short message to each of my children. I put each in a "secret" place where I knew they'd find it.

When I called the next night, it was clear that they'd received the cards. "Daddy, I got your card," they both blurted excitedly. "When did you do that?"

My heart was warmed to hear this. It was such a small thing. But it had a big impact on my kids. It was their "proof" that I was thinking about them. And it was encouragement for me to continue to do the small things that have a big impact.

Here are some ideas for fathers to show your kids that you're thinking of them:

- Call them to say hi when you're at work. It doesn't have to be more than two minutes a week, and they'll notice your efforts.
- Leave special messages for them around the house when you're not there. This lets them know that they're in your thoughts, even when you're not there.
- When you're out of town, call your kids and keep them up to date on what you're doing. This helps your kids to feel involved in your life.
- Surprise your kids by showing up at an event where you weren't expected. This shows them that they're high on your priority list.

Make sure you tell your kids that you're thinking of them when you're away from them. Tell them that you think of them when you're at work. They may not realize this until you tell them.

As fathers get busier and work longer hours, the little things can sometimes be lost. Don't lose the opportunity to show your kids how important they are.

Take a moment to do the small things for your kids. It won't seem small to them.

Mark Brandenburg, MA, CPCC, coaches men to be better fathers and husbands. He is the author of "25 Secrets of Emotionally Intelligent Fathers".

Sign up for his FREE bi-weekly newsletter, "Dads, Don't Fix Your Kids," at <http://www.markbrandenburg.com>

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SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE MMRC!



- **DROP-IN TO A GROUP!**
(SUNDAYS - 7:00 PM @ LIFEART)
- **SPREAD THE WORD!**
- **VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME!**
- **DONATE MONEY!**

CALL (603) 357-5780 FOR DETAILS.

THANK YOU!

“We should take care, in inculcating patriotism into our boys and girls, that it is a patriotism above the narrow sentiment which usually stops at one’s own country, and thus inspires jealousy and enmity in dealing with others. Our patriotism should be of the wider, nobler kind which recognizes justice and reasonableness in the claims of others and which leads our country into comradeship with, and recognition of, the other nations of the world.”

~ *Robert Bayden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scouts*



“The only tyrant I accept in this world is the still, small voice within me.”

~ *Mahatma Gandhi*

“There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.”

~ *Henry David Thoreau*

“There is no wilderness so terrible, so beautiful, so arid and so fruitful as the wilderness of compassion.”

~ *Thomas Merton*

“A man or woman with outward courage dares to die. A man or woman with inward courage dares to live.”

~ *Lao Tzu*

Men and Women In Conversation

MMRC Co-Director Forrest Seymour and Planned Parenthood of Northern New England Educator Katherine McLaughlin co-lead a Planned Parenthood training entitled “Sexual Violence: Men and Women in Conversation” on May 3, 2004. The training, which took place in Hanover, NH, included a structured discussion segment where panels of men and women were able to ask each other the sometimes difficult questions concerning gender, sexual violence and personal experiences.

Fourteen women and five men attended. Because reviews were so positive, planning is underway for a follow-up conversation that will most likely take place in Keene. We will keep you posted.



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MMRC COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Every Sunday night, 7pm:
MMRC Drop-in Support Group, for all men,
 LifeArt, 43 Central Square, Keene, 603-357-5780

First Monday of each month. **Dads Group**,
 105 Castle Street, Keene NH.
 RSVP with Rebecca Fray, 603-355-3082

First Tuesday, monthly (7/6, 8/3, 9/7) 7-9pm:
PFLAG (Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbians & Gays)
 St. James Church, 44 West St., Keene 603-355-1040

Men’s Group: A peer-led group using the arts, poetry, movement, myth, ritual and discussion to honor the past and explore the here and now. Tuesdays 7:15–9:15pm at the Mariposa Museum, Peterborough, NH. Call Andrew at 603-878-1409 for details.

Men’s Wilderness Retreat: Saturday August 14 to Friday August 20, 2004. Seven days in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Cost \$325. Contact Andrew Hannah at rosbobs@hotmail.com or Mark Halperin at 508-785-1891.