Adolescent Man Box Report

A study on the attitudes to manhood of adolescent boys

the men's project

A Jesuit Social Services initiative

EDMUND RICE EDUCATION AUSTRALIA

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1. Executive Summary

The Men's Project at Jesuit Social Services as well as Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) and VicHealth are committed to working with adolescent boys in our community to ensure they adopt healthier attitudes to what it means to be a man. Through fostering positive attitudes, we hope to assist adolescent boys improve their well-being, form greater positive self-concept, engage in safer behaviours, and develop more respectful and fulfilling relationships with the people in their lives.

The first step in creating more positive attitudes for boys is to better understand the nature of their endorsement of stereotypical masculine norms as well as the association between this endorsement and attitudes and behaviours. This is the focus of the current study. Through identifying these relationships, parents, schools, and other influencers will be able to implement more meaningful approaches to address harmful attitudes and foster more positive attitudes.

The Adolescent Man Box is the first study that focuses on the attitudes to manhood (endorsement of stereotypical masculine norms) and the association between these attitudes and the mental health, self-concept, use of violence, bullying, sexual harassment, risk-taking behaviours and sexist attitudes and behaviours of adolescent boys aged 11 to 18.

Specifically, the aims of the current study were to evaluate:

1. The boys' perception of societal pressures to endorse the Adolescent Man Box masculine norms;

2. The level of the boys' personal endorsement of the Adolescent Man Box masculine norms;

3. The well-being of the adolescent boys in this study across a range of variables related to their self-concept, mental health, relationships and risk-taking behaviours

4. The impact of personal endorsement of masculine norms on different areas of adolescent boys' lives, including their mental health, self-concept, violence, bullying, sexual harassment, risk-taking behaviours and sexist attitudes and behaviours.

The study involved a sample of 1,228 adolescent boys:

- 451 boys in years 7-8;

- 719 boys in years 9-12 from a single Victorian boys' only Secondary School; and

- 58 boys in years 7-12 from four of EREA's Flexible Schools Network in Queensland.

EREA's Flexible Schools Network is designed to provide a place and an opportunity for boys to re-engage with learning and community. The Flexible Schools Network operates on a common ground basis where young people are empowered to determine their own pathways.

All 1,228 boys completed a survey that asked them questions about what it means to be a man (both their personal endorsement and perception of societal pressure to conform to stereotypical attitudes and behaviours). Because of the limited number of schools from which the sample was drawn, the findings from this study cannot be generalised to adolescent boys Australia wide.

The Adolescent Man Box was drawn from Oransky and Fisher's (2009) *Meaning of Adolescent Masculinity Scale*. This scale evaluates the set of beliefs within society that place pressure on adolescent boys to act in a certain way. Our study explored how adolescent boys encounter the Adolescent Man Box rules in society and internalise them personally by asking their views on 27 messages about how a "*real man*" should behave. These 27 messages were organised under four pillars of the Adolescent Man Box, which are:

- **Constant Effort to be Manly:** boys must maintain a strong and confident persona in order to appear manly;

- **Emotional Restriction:** masculinity involves hiding emotions and remaining emotionally invulnerable;

- **Heterosexism:** masculinity as avoiding behaviours traditionally considered feminine or "*gay*"; and

- **Social Teasing:** boys must be able to tease their friends and stand up to such teasing when it is directed at them in order to be masculine.

Boys in years 7-8 are at a different stage in their physical, emotional and cognitive development compared to the older boys and are likely to respond differently to the questions in the survey. Likewise, the boys in the Flexible Schools Network are likely to have had different experiences from the other boys that may impact on their attitudes and behaviours. Because of the above differences, the analysis of the responses of the adolescent boys was completed separately for boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 and for the Flexible Schools Network.

This study extends the research previously conducted by Jesuit Social Services with young adult men in Australia (The Men's Project and Flood, 2018), as well as existing research with young adult men in the United States, United Kingdom and Mexico that was released by Promundo in 2017 (Heilman, Barker, & Harrison, 2017).

1.1 Key Findings

This section outlines findings related to our research aims. First, we present the societal messages received by boys in relation to the four pillars of masculinity (constant effort to be manly, emotional restriction, heterosexism and social teasing). This is followed by a brief summary of the findings related to personal endorsement of these pillars of masculinity. The responses of each of the three groups of boys to questions regarding their self-concept, psychological distress, support seeking, bullying, violence and sexual harassment, risk-taking behaviours, male stereotyped behaviours at home, as well as attitudes to relationships and family are listed. Finally, the impact of the boys' personal endorsement of masculine norms on the above variables is presented. Further detail of the findings listed below is outlined in Section Five (p. 34).

Masculine Norms, societal messages

Overall, across the four pillars of masculinity, there was not much variation in the societal pressures to conform to the different pillars: an average of 52 per cent across all groups of boys endorsed the items related to it being okay to engage in social teasing. These numbers were 47 per cent for avoiding behaviour considered to be feminine or gay; 46 per cent for items related to feeling constant pressure to be manly; and 34 per cent for guys not showing their emotions.

The societal pressures were also similar for each of the pillars across all groups of boys. The exceptions were:

- Emotional restriction, where students from the Flexible Schools Network felt more pressure to conform;
- Boys in years 9-12 from the Victorian Secondary School were more likely to feel pressure related to social teasing.

In terms of responses to individual items in the Man Box survey, across all pillars, the three items where all groups of boys experience the most social pressure to conform are:

- Guys do not pick on one another to be mean;
- Being thought of as gay makes a guy seem like less of a man;
- A guy should always appear confident even if he is not.

Masculine Norms, personal endorsement

Across the pillars, there is variability in personal endorsement of Adolescent Man Box norms. An average of 52 per cent of boys endorse attitudes related to social teasing, 35 per cent for heterosexism, 32 per cent for constant efforts to be manly and 20 per cent for emotional restriction.

The personal endorsement of masculine norms for each of the pillars for boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 are very similar. The only exception is social teasing with 55 per cent of boys in years 9-12 endorsing this norm compared to 35 per cent of boys in years 7-8.

Boys from the Flexible Schools Network personally endorse the pillars of masculinity to a greater extent – an average of over 50 per cent of these boys personally endorse stereotypical attitudes compared to less than 30 per cent of boys in both years 7-8 and years 9-12.

In terms of responses to individual items in the Man Box survey across all pillars, the three items where all groups of boys showed the highest levels of personal endorsement are:

- Guys do not pick on each other to be mean;
- A good way to appear manly is to avoid acting gay;
- A guy must always appear confident even if he is not.

Results from the focus groups indicate that social teasing seems to be something that was accepted by the students who were interviewed and part of their daily routine and school culture. The boys interviewed seemed to be able to detect the subtle reactions that indicated whether someone was upset or not by the teasing. Teasing amongst friends was generally deemed to be acceptable as long as the friends did not get upset.

Well-being of adolescent boys across a range of life outcomes

a. Self-Concept and Mental Health

Boys in all groups generally demonstrated a positive self-concept, with over 60 per cent of each of the three groups of boys indicating that they had good relationships with others (friends and parents) and achieved well at school and at sport. Boys in all groups also demonstrated a low level of mental health concerns.

b. Support Seeking in relation to pressure to be a "*Real Man*"

The main sources of support for boys when they were sad or wanted to talk about pressures to be a "*real man*" were the boys' parents, siblings or male friends. These findings applied for all boys but were not as evident for the boys from the Flexible Schools Network. Similar findings were found in relation to the boys' male friends, although older boys were more likely to seek out their male friend. Similar trends were found for support in relation to pressures to be a "*real man*", although the percentages were lower than for seeking support when the boys were feeling sad.

c. Bullying, Violence and Sexual Harassment

The main areas for potential intervention strategies related to bullying, violence, sexual harassment and binge drinking. The experience of bullying was not as high as the perpetration of bullying. Although only about 20 per cent of boys reported experiencing physical violence, almost half of all groups of boys had been in a fight in the past year. With all of these behaviours, they were higher among boys in years 9-12, and higher again for the Flexible Schools Network. Only boys in years 9-12 were asked about sexual harassment and the findings demonstrated that these boys were unlikely to object to sexual comments made towards women.

d. Risk-Taking Behaviours

Overall, the levels of risk-taking behaviour are low among boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12. Levels of binge drinking were substantially higher among boys from the Flexible Schools Network.

e. Male Stereotyped Behaviour at Home of Father and Son and Attitudes to Relationships and Family

Generally speaking, boys and their fathers appeared to be engaged in household activities and so there was no evidence of strong stereotyped behaviour at home. However, boys demonstrated stronger sexist attitudes in responses to relationships and the family. Boys in years 9-12 and particularly in the Flexible Schools Network held stronger sexist attitudes than boys in years 7-8.

Impact of Personal Endorsement of Masculine Norms on Behaviour

Boys were divided into five groups based on their responses to the Adolescent Man Box survey. Boys in the top quintile (20%) showed the strongest endorsement of masculine norms, those in the bottom quintile (20%) showed the lowest adherence to masculine norms.

The findings described below and in Section Five do not include an analysis of the boys from the Flexible Schools Network, as the numbers of boys in this group was too small (n=58) to conduct this type of analysis.

The Adolescent Man Box attitudes had the most substantial impact on attitudes related to relationships and risk-taking behaviours (see Table 1). Across boys in years 7-8 and 9-12, those conforming most to Adolescent Man Box attitudes were likely to:

- Have controlling attitudes towards women and sexist attitudes in relation to the role of the man in the family;
- Engage in getting drunk and using drugs.

Other findings include:

- Moderate relationships between Adolescent Man Box attitudes and their impact on violence and bullying;
- Little or no relationship between the Adolescent Man Box attitudes and self-concept and psychological distress. Two of the areas where there were some differences are discussed in Section Five;
- Boys who are more likely to endorse the Adolescent Man Box attitudes are also more likely to have fathers who conform to stereotypical behaviours in the home.

Table 1. **Risk-taking behaviours and sexist attitudes and behaviours for boys in Years 7-8 and Years 9-12**

	Years 7-8		Years 9-12	
	Bottom 20% of scores	**Top 20% of scores**	**Bottom 20% of scores**	**Top 20% of scores**
Risk-taking behaviours				
Ever been drunk once or more	2%	17%	23%	46%
Been in a fight once or more in the past year	40%	68%	27%	57%
In last month, 6 or more drinks on one occasion	N/A	N/A	20%	46%
Ever used cannabis	N/A	N/A	10%	26%
Ever used other drugs	N/A	N/A	6%	18%
Sexist attitudes and behaviours				
Man responsible for bringing home money for family	22%	65%	27%	71%
Deserves to know where girlfriend is at all times	15%	55%	18%	58%
Deserves to know if girlfriend talks to another guy	36%	82%	44%	86%
A guy should use violence to get respect if necessary	2%	26%	2%	37%
Husband shouldn't have to do housework	2%	26%	4%	35%
Men are always ready for sex	N/A	N/A	20%	76%

1.2 Recommendations

The results in this study relate to specific cohorts of adolescent boys and are not generalisable to the adolescents across Australia more broadly. The findings do, however, inform recommendations with relevance beyond the schools in this sample including avenues for further research.

> **Recommendation 1: Create an environment where the major influencers on boys' lives – parents, peers, teachers, other role models, and siblings can work together to assist boys to develop healthy, strong and positive identity. This will include the development of values which will drive positive attitudes and behaviours.**

This recommendation relates to:

- Working with parents to promote a greater understanding of the central role they play in shaping and guiding their son's and daughter's development. In particular, equip them with age-appropriate strategies and resources to assist their sons in negotiating their journey towards adulthood as it relates to healthier masculinities. Resources should be disseminated at critical touch points with parents – maternal and child health, kindergarten, community hubs such as libraries, and Primary and Secondary Schools;

- Promoting discussion within the school community among teachers, boys and parents in relation to the role of masculinity and its impact on the attitudes and behaviours of boys. This should be pursued using engaging and strength-based approaches with the support of school leadership. External experts in masculinities could be drawn upon to inform the approach and co-deliver content. However, to foster sustainability, the school community itself should take ownership of this agenda and, in doing so, tailor the approach to the specific needs and objectives of their community;

- Supporting teachers to assist them to implement strategies to work with boys to address the negative impact of masculine norms. This may require the provision of professional development related to both the theoretical aspects of this work as well as concrete tools that teachers can use to engage their students. One more nuanced area highlighted by this report is helping teachers understand the role of social teasing. Rather than limiting these strategies to specific aspects of the curriculum, role modelling could be expanded to other settings such as sports coaching and other pro-social activities that the students engage in. Teachers should be encouraged to role model healthy masculinities and embed strategies in all of their interactions with students. Schools should explicitly highlight the impact of masculinities and assume responsibility for the associated work to address these impacts in the position descriptions of key staff;

- Expanding the Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) curriculum to other states. As a result of a recommendation of the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, the Department of Education has led the implementation of the RRRR curriculum since 2016. The curriculum is designed to embed a culture of respect and equality within the entire community. In the school system, it is designed to bring about change in students' attitudes and behaviours so that each person has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Noting that the evaluation is currently in progress, this curriculum has raised the prominence of these topics. Drawing on lessons learnt during implementation, the RRRR curriculum could be rolled out across other Australian states and territories.

> **Recommendation 2: Create, implement and evaluate strategies to work with boys and girls to develop a shared understanding of and challenge rigid adherence to stereotypical masculine norms and, in doing so, facilitate positive and healthy definitions of what it means to be a man.**

While there is still much work to do, we have seen a positive shift to empower girls and women to develop a positive view of self that includes traditionally masculine and feminine characteristics – and rightly so. This same shift now needs to take place for boys where terms like '*strong*' and '*tough*' do not have to mean not expressing emotion or hiding one's vulnerabilities. This content could be integrated into curriculum related to substance use, sexual harassment and mental health – all areas where rigid adherence to stereotypical masculine norms has a negative impact. Drawing on lessons from climate change advocacy, opportunities for young people (e.g. years 9-12) to lead other young people (e.g. years 7-8) could be explored. Areas to be targeted could include the positive value of: expressing emotions, asking for help – standing up for others being victimised (e.g. when witnessing sexual harassment), respectful relationships – recognising the potentially negative impact of their actions (e.g. teasing), providing support for one another and valuing diversity. This work will be most successful when it is integrated into a sustained whole of school approach rather than one-off events with external facilitators that are not led by the school community.

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Recommendation 3: **Use the Adolescent Man Box survey to inform curriculum development, track progress over time and identify boys, based on aggregate survey results, who may be at risk.**

Use the Adolescent Man Box Survey to:

- Engage with students to understand their attitudes and behaviours and assess the extent to which there are positive shifts. While curriculum related to well-being has risen in prominence over recent decades, schools are continuing to develop and refine their approach. This is an approach that is widely adopted for other aspects of the curriculum such as math or science to understand students' progress and tailor the teaching approach in response. In turn, the Adolescent Man Box tool provides an opportunity for schools to better understand how their students are progressing on critical aspects of well-being. In response, approaches could be developed for specific cohorts (e.g. Flexible Schools Network) based on the findings;

- At a school level, inform curriculum development and track progress in attitudes and behaviours over time. This could involve changes in boys' personal endorsement of masculine norms, as well as the levels of bullying, violence, sexual harassment, risk-taking behaviours, male-stereotyped behaviours at home, and attitudes to relationships and family;

- Identify the cohorts of boys who are more at risk of engaging in risk-taking, violent and sexist behaviours, so that, without stigmatising these boys, early intervention supports can be provided to avoid an escalation in unhealthy attitudes and behaviours as young men move towards early adulthood.

Recommendation 4: **Complete further research using the Adolescent Man Box survey on a broader population of adolescent boys and also adolescent girls across Australia and compliment any quantitative work with qualitative methods to further explore the survey results.**

Complete further research to:

- Examine the extent to which the findings of this study are generalisable to other adolescent boys including in co-educational and non-Catholic settings. This will demonstrate how different types of environments impact upon the development of a healthy identity and what the associated implications for curriculum development are;

- Understand the perspectives of adolescent girls including their experience and expectations of adolescent boys. An understanding of the perspectives of adolescent girls will further inform the curriculum to shape the attitudes and behaviours of adolescent boys. It will also be useful to identify unhealthy attitudes and behaviours of adolescent girls that may limit their formation of a positive sense of self. This information could then be built into a revised wellbeing curriculum for adolescent girls;

- Work with the boys to explore how they understand terms in the survey such as what is meant by a physical fight and, where survey data present concerns understand the environments where these behaviours are most likely to occur.

INTRODUCTION

- Why this study?
- What is the Adolescent Man Box?

2. Introduction

2.1 Why this Study?

The concept of the Adolescent Man Box draws on both scholarly research on men and masculinities and community–based work with men. The Men's Project's inaugural Australian Man Box survey was launched in September 2018, based on research conducted by Promundo in the US, UK and Mexico in 2017. The Man Box refers to "*a set of beliefs, communicated by parents, families, the media, peers, and other members of society, that place pressure on boys to behave in a certain way*". In order to better understand the influence of societal pressures to be a "*real man*", the original Man Box tool asked men about 17 messages related to how men should behave, organised under seven pillars.

The Adolescent Man Box tool is a measure of masculinity that has been designed and validated on an adolescent population. It allows us to better understand how young men see these societal pressures to be a "*real man*", and the extent to which these young men actually adhere to traditional, rigid ideas about masculinity. The current study was designed to determine the extent to which the Adolescent Man Box rules, both societal pressure as well as personal endorsement, influence mental health, self-concept, use of violence, bullying, sexual harassment, risk-taking behaviours and sexist attitudes and behaviours amongst adolescent boys. The aims of the research are listed on page 2. The full details of the design of the study are outlined in the next section.

2.2 What is the Adolescent Man Box?

The first step in adapting the Adolescent Man Box for adolescent boys was to identify which aspects of masculinity were most appropriate to include in evaluating the adherence of adolescent boys to stereotypical masculine norms. Drawing on research by Oransky and Fisher (2009) and Pleck, Sonenstein and Ku (1993), as well as the original adult Man Box study, we identified 27 messages about how adolescent boys should behave to fit with stereotypical masculine norms. These 27 messages were organised under four pillars of the Adolescent Man Box (see Table 2).

The *Meanings of Adolescent Masculinity Scale* (Oransky & Fisher, 2009) that we used to measure the Adolescent Man Box rules in the current study is a multidimensional scale developed to assess the endorsement of adolescent masculine social norms among adolescent boys. The content of the scale items was generated from data collected via interviews and focus groups with adolescent boys, which explored what it means to be masculine in today's society (Oransky & Fisher, 2009). The *Meanings of Adolescent Masculinity Scale* was then validated with adolescent boys. Analysis of these data supported a four-factor model of adolescent masculine social norms. The four factors identified by Oransky & Fisher were:

The Adolescent Man Box Messages, organised under the four pillars

Pillar 1 - Constant Messages to be Manly
• A guy should always seem as manly as other guys that he knows.
• A guy should never back down from a challenge in public.
• Acting manly should be the most important goal for guys.
• A guy must always appear confident, even if he isn't.
• No matter what happens, a guy should seem strong to others.
• Getting made fun of helps guys become tough.
• A guy should try to appear manly in almost all situations.

Pillar 2 - Emotional Restriction
• It is not important for guys to listen to each other's problems.
• It is weird for a guy to talk about his feelings with other guys.
• Guys should not talk about their worries with each other.
• It is not a guy's job to comfort a friend who is upset.
• When a guy has a fear, he should keep it to himself.
• It is hard to respect a guy who shows his feelings.
• If a guy is upset about something, he should hold it in.

Pillar 3 - Heterosexism
• A guy who wears nail polish is hard to take seriously.
• It is embarrassing to have a lot of gay friends.
• Being thought of as gay makes a guy seem like less of a man.
• It would be embarrassing for a guy to admit he is interested in being a hair dresser.
• A good way to seem manly is to avoid acting gay.
• A guy should be embarrassed to "*run like a girl*."
• There is something wrong if a guy wants to do activities usually done by girls.
• 'Real' guys never act like a girl.

Pillar 4 - Social Teasing
• A guy should be able to take teasing from his friends.
• There is nothing wrong with a guy who picks on his friends.
• It is normal for guys to make fun of their friends.
• In order to fit in, guys must be able to tease other guys.
• Guys do not pick on each other to be mean.

Pillars of the Adolescent Man Box

Constant effort to be manly

Belief that to be masculine, one must constantly, and without interruption, maintain one's tough, confident and strong public persona

Emotional restriction

Assumption that to be masculine, boys must be emotionally stoic and refrain from sharing their feelings with others

Heterosexism

Norm that masculinity is defined in opposition to homosexuality and femininity, and that one must distance oneself from behaviours and attitudes traditionally thought as "*girly*" or "*gay*"

Social teasing

Assumption that to be masculine, one must be able to both dole out and stand up to teasing and taunting in the peer context

Although adolescent boys are at a different stage of development, they are exposed to ideas about what it means to be an adult man. As a result, we have included the Adult Man Box pillars below.

Pillars of the Adult Man Box

Self-sufficiency

A man who talks a lot about his worries, fears and problems shouldn't really get respect

Men should figure out their personal problems on their own without asking others for help

Acting tough

A guy who doesn't fight back when others push him around is weak

Guys should act strong even if they feel scared or nervous inside

Physical attractiveness

It's very hard for a man to be successful if he doesn't look good

Women don't go for guys who fuss too much about their clothes, hair and skin

A guy who spends a lot a time on his looks isn't very manly
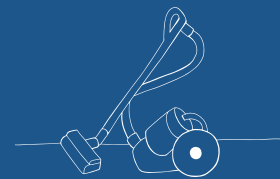
Rigid masculine gender roles

It is not good for a boy to be taught how to cook, sew, clean the house, and take care of younger children

A man shouldn't have to do household chores

Men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women

Hypersexuality

A "*real man*" should have as many sexual partners as he can

A "*real man*" would never say no to sex

Heterosexuality and homophobia

Someone who is gay is not a "*real man*"

Straight guys being friends with gay guys is totally fine

Aggression and control

Men should use violence to get respect, if necessary

A man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationship or marriage

If a guy has a girlfriend or wife, he deserves to know where she is all the time

METHODOLOGY

- How we conducted this research
- Survey
- The Focus Groups
- Demographics
- Limitations

3. Methodology

In the next section, we outline how we conducted this study, including how the survey was conducted, demographics, well-being, as well as the Adolescent Man Box variables. We also provide an overview of the demographic variables.

3.1 How we conducted this research

In late 2018, The Men's Project, Jesuit Social Services partnered with Edmund Rice Education Australia and VicHealth to pilot the Adolescent Man Box study. This involved the completion of a survey and undertaking focus groups with adolescent boys at one boys only Victorian Secondary School and four schools from the Flexible Schools Network in Queensland.

Ethics approval for the study was obtained through Jesuit Social Services' Ethics Committee and a governance structure was established. This included an Advisory Group to provide expert advice and oversight to the project.

3.2 Survey

A new survey, the Adolescent Man Box survey, was developed for the Adolescent Man Box study. This survey was comprised of validated questionnaires as well as single item questions, to specifically target adolescent boys. The specific sections of the survey are described below.

A total of 1,228 adolescent boys aged between 11-18 years took part in the online survey, with a sample of 451 adolescent boys in years 7-8 and 719 adolescent boys in years 9-12, from a single-sex boys' schools, and 58 boys from four Flexible Schools Network (FSN) in Queensland. 58 boys completed Part 1 (self-concept and psychological distress of the survey) and 48 completed Parts 1, 2 and 3 described below. A decision was made to analyse the data separately for boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 as well as the boys from the Flexible Schools Network. Boys in years 7-8 are at a different developmental stage, physically, emotionally and cognitively compared to the older boys, and so are likely to provide quite different responses to the survey questions. Boys from the Flexible Schools Network have had a different educational experience from the other boys and so may also respond differently to the survey. The results of the surveys were confidential and this was communicated to students. Parents or guardians of the students were informed of the purpose and content of the study and no parents indicated that they did not want their son to complete the survey. Students were given the option of whether or not they wished to complete the survey. The survey was completed anonymously by students in their classrooms.

Edmund Rice Education Australia coordinated the collection of the data. In the single-sex boys' school in Victoria, the Wellbeing Team, led by the Assistant Principal Wellbeing, worked with the whole school community to introduce and contextualise the survey. The process involved integrating the survey within the pastoral program, Home Room discussions, Year Level Assemblies and Whole School Assemblies. Boys were given the opportunity to discuss the themes and purpose of the survey, and clarify their understanding prior to undertaking it. They were also provided with the names of support staff within the school who were available if the survey raised any concerns for them.

One teacher from each of the Flexible Schools Network worked with young people to complete the survey. This was completed in three separate stages due to the length of the survey. The demographic, self-concept and psychological distress questions were completed as Part 1. Personal endorsement of masculine norms and societal messages about masculine norms were completed as Part 2. Bullying, violence, harassment, risk-taking behaviours, male stereotyped behaviours at home and attitudes to relationships and family were completed as Part 3.

The Adolescent Man Box survey included questions on the following topics:

- Demographics;
- Self-Concept;
- Psychological distress
- Support-Seeking;
- Bullying, Violence, and Harassment;
- Risk-Taking Behaviours;
- Male Stereotyped Behaviours at Home;
- Attitudes to Relationships and Family;
- Personal Endorsement of Masculine Norms;
- Societal messages about Masculine Norms.

The nature of these scales, as well as the boys' responses, are summarised below. The discussion of the findings is in Section 4: Results.

3.2.1 Self-Concept

The *Self Description Questionnaire II – Short Survey for Adolescents* (SDQII-S) (Marsh, 2002) is a well-validated scale designed to assess adolescents' self-concept (i.e. their sense of self on a number of dimensions). The questionnaire comprises of 11 scales each covering different aspects of self-concept; nine of the scales were used in the study. The nine scales included physical abilities, physical appearance, same-sex relationships, opposite-sex relationships, honesty/trustworthiness, parent relationships, emotional stability, school (i.e. performance in school subjects generally) and general self-concept. In order to reduce the length of the survey, the scales that evaluated school performance in English and Maths were not included in the survey.

Respondents rated the 37 statements across the nine scales, on a four-point scale according to how true the statement was about them (i.e. '*false*', '*mostly false*', '*mostly true*', or '*true*'). The adolescent boys' responses to the items were used to calculate a total score on each of the nine scales as well as a total score of self-concept, where a higher score indicates a more positive sense of self. The range of the total scores differed across subscales due to the varying number of items included with each subscale (range 3-12 for subscales of physical appearance, opposite sex relationships, and school; range 4-16 for subscales of physical abilities, same-sex relationships, and parent relationships; range 5-20 for subscales of honesty/trustworthiness and emotional stability, and; range 6-24 for the subscale of general self-concept).

3.2.2 Mental Health

The *Kessler: Psychological Distress Scale (K10)* (Andrews & Slade, 2001; Kessler et al., 2002) is a 10-item questionnaire used in clinical settings to assess self-reported psychological distress. The questions enquired about anxiety symptoms (nervousness, nervousness that could not calm, feeling restless and fidgety, and restlessness to the point of not being able to sit still) and depressive symptoms (tired with no good reason, worthlessness and hopelessness, feeling depressed or sad, and feeling as though everything was an effort) that the adolescent has experienced in the past four weeks. The questions were rated on a four-point scale according to how frequently the adolescent had experienced the symptom, with options of '*none at all*', '*some of the time*', '*most of the time*', and '*all of the time*'. The adolescent boys' responses to the items were used to calculate a total score of psychological distress (range 10-40 for the scale), where a higher score indicates higher levels of psychological distress. This measure is a more comprehensive tool than the PHQ-2, which was used in the adult Adolescent Man Box survey.

The purpose of these questions is not to establish a diagnosis of depression and anxiety or to monitor severity of depressive and anxiety symptoms. Our results do not act as an indicator of adolescent boys who would screen positive for depression or anxiety. Instead, they give an indication of the presence and frequency with which adolescent boys experience these symptoms.

3.2.3 Support-Seeking

We asked adolescent boys a series of questions about support-seeking when they were sad or down, whose opinion mattered most to them when making an important decision, and who they talk to about the societal pressures of being a "*real man*". These questions were used to explore whom the adolescent boys felt comfortable displaying personal or emotional vulnerability with.

A detailed list of who adolescent boys seek help from first and who adolescent boys talk with about societal pressures was provided in the survey, including girlfriend or boyfriend, male or female friends, mother or father (or both parents), siblings, and professionals such as medical doctor, therapist or counsellor, psychiatrist or psychologist, teacher, or online sources. Options of '*I don't seek help from anyone*' and '*I never feel sad or depressed*' were also included. The adolescent boys were instructed to select three options from the list. A more condensed list of whose opinions matter most was provided, including one or both parents, one or both siblings, friends, girlfriend or boyfriend, teacher or professor, social media, religious teacher or leader. An option of '*I don't take advice from anyone*' was also included. The adolescent boys were asked to rank the options in order from '*those whose opinions matter most*' to '*those whose opinions matter least*'.

3.2.4 Bullying, Violence, and Sexual Harassment

The Adolescent Man Box survey included separate questions relating to adolescent boys' experience and perpetration of bullying and violence. The questions distinguished between verbal, physical, and online bullying and violence, with definitions provided to guide the adolescent boys (see Table 2). In addition, for the adolescent boys in years 9–12 a question was included to capture whether they had perpetrated sexual harassment (see Table 2). The seven questions asked about the extent to which the adolescent boys have experienced or perpetrated bullying or violence over the past four weeks. Each question was rated on a four-point scale ranging from '*not at all*' to '*very often*' with an additional option of '*prefer not to say*'.

3.2.5 Risk-Taking Behaviours

To explore the relationship between masculinity and overt risk-taking behaviours, we used a selection of questions from the *Adolescent Risk-Taking* survey (Kwong et al., 2018). These questions covered alcohol and drug use, physical fights, and helmet use when riding a bicycle. In addition, years 9-12 students were asked about drug use and safe sex practices. The adolescent boys were asked to rate their consumption of alcohol (e.g. frequency and amount of alcohol), including frequency of being intoxicated and consuming six or more standard drinks in one sitting.

Table 3. Experience and Perpetration of Bullying, Violence, and Sexual Harassment

Experienced

Verbal	Physical	Online
Someone, or a group of people, made jokes about you, teased you, or called you names that you did not like, for any reason.	Someone, or a group of people, physically hurt you on purpose by pushing you down, kicking you, or hitting you with a hand, clenched fist, object, or weapon.	Someone, or a group of people, insulted you, posted photos meant to embarrass you, or made threats to you on SMS, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, or another app or website.

Perpetrated

Verbal	Physical	Online	Sexual harassment (Years 9-12 only)
You made jokes about someone, teased someone, or called someone names that they did not like, for any reason.	You physically hurt someone on purpose by pushing them down, kicking them, or hitting them with a hand, clenched fist, object, or weapon.	You insulted someone, posted photos meant to embarrass someone, or made threats to someone on SMS, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, or another app or website.	You made sexual comments to a woman or girl you didn't know, in a public place, like the street, your workplace, your school/university, or in an internet or social media space.

In addition, the adolescent boys were asked about their use of other substances such as tobacco, cannabis, and other drugs (e.g. amphetamines, ecstasy, inhalants, cocaine, or heroin). The years 9-12 boys were asked about whether they have had sex, and if so whether they used contraception. Although all risk-taking behaviour items were measured for the frequency of the behaviour, the reference points on the scale differed to reflect the type of frequency (e.g. amount, duration, or number of occasions).

3.2.6 Male Stereotyped Behaviours at Home

The three groups of boys reported on the extent to which their father, or father figure, as well as the boys themselves (ranging from never to very often) engaged in behaviours in the home that are traditionally viewed as being completed by the mother e.g. cleaning, cooking, and caring for children.

3.2.7 Relationships and Family

Boys were asked additional questions about their view of relationships and a guy's role in the family. All boys were asked about the extent to which a guy should know about what their girlfriend, if they have one, is doing, where she is and if she talks with other guys. In addition, years 9-12 boys were asked if they thought guys "*should always be ready for sex*". In relation to guys' roles, all boys were asked if guys were responsible for bringing home money for the family as well as doing the housework.

3.2.8 Man Box - Societal Messages and Personal Endorsement

Boys were asked about the extent to which they received messages from society that a guy should behave in a particular way (Societal Messages). These items were grouped into four pillars (27 items in total): Constant Efforts to be Manly, Emotional Restriction, Heterosexism and Social Teasing. In addition, boys were asked to give their own opinion of how much they supported the same items (Personal Endorsement).

3.3 The Focus Groups

In order to complement and allow for a more detailed understanding of the issues covered in the online survey, focus groups with 45 adolescent boys aged 12-18 were conducted with boys from the Victorian Secondary School. The Student Counsellor at the Secondary School run by Edmund Rice Education Australia conducted the student focus group interviews among boys from year 7 to year 12. There were six to eight participants per focus group. The interviews were conducted over a two-week period. Students were asked a range of questions including:

- Think of a person or persons that you think of as a real man/men.
- What are the qualities they have that make them real men?
- What do you think has influenced your understanding of what it is to be a real man?
- Here's a sheet with six categories on it: movies/media, friends, sport, family, music and advertisements. Can you put in order from the most important to the least important, the influences on your understanding of what it is to be a real man?
- Is teasing friendly or unfriendly, and what is the difference?
- When is violence justified?

Interviews were conducted in an atmosphere of collaboration and collegiality where, building on existing relationships, rapport and trust was established between the Student Counsellor and the students.

The taped recordings of conversations were transcribed into a Microsoft Word document by Rev Transcriptions, professional transcription service. The data was then uploaded into QSR International's NVivo 10.1.0 and coded. The NVivo 10.1.0 software is a database where queries can be run to observe relationships and patterns in the data. The process identified emerging themes and student quotes are presented in different parts of this report. Time and opportunity precluded focus group sessions with the students from the Flexible Schools Network.

3.4 Demographics

Demographic questions included age, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, country of birth for the adolescent boy themselves, their mother, and their father, as well as religious background. Sexual orientation was included for boys in years 9-12.

The average age of the sample of boys in years 7-8 was 12.64 years, years 9-12 was 15.14 years, and for the Flexible Schools Network was 15.41.

The majority of the adolescent boys in years 9-12 did not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (99.78% of the year 7-8 boys, 99.30% of the year 9-12 boys) although its percentage was higher for the Flexible Schools Network (19.30%). Most boys were born in Australia (93.13% of the year 7-8 boys, 94.71% of the year 9-12 boys, and 91.40% of boys from the Flexible Schools Network) although country of birth for the adolescent boys' mothers and fathers showed more variability, with approximately 20 per cent of the mothers and fathers born in countries other than Australia. The majority of the boys identified as Catholic, although this information was not generally reported by the boys in the Flexible Schools Network. In terms of reported sexual orientation, the majority of boys in years 9-12 identified as heterosexual (95.13%) (see Table 4 for sample demographic characteristics).

3.5 Limitations

The majority of respondents were from boys from a single boy's only Secondary school in Victoria. This greatly limits the ability to generalise the findings to the broad population of adolescent boys across Australia. Further, four Flexible Schools Networks in Queensland also completed the survey. This provided information on a small group of boys outside the mainstream educational system. Due to the small sample size, these findings can also not be generalised to the broader population. A number of behaviours were evaluated using single items (see the bar graphs). These findings should be treated with caution and future studies should explore these behaviours using more extensive validated scales.

In order to address research question 4, we used descriptive statistics whereby we examined a range of life outcomes for adolescent boys with different Man Box scores (i.e. across different Man Box quintiles including the top 20% and bottom 20%). In any research, information at the tails of a distribution should be treated with caution and the analysis completed for the purposes of this report is no exception. As a result, due to the small sample size, we did not examine Adolescent Man Box quintiles for the Flexible Learning Schools.

Table 4. **Demographic Characteristics of the Sample**

	Years 7-8	Years 9-12	Flexible Schools Network
Sample size	n = 451	n = 719	n=58
Age (years)	12.64 (0.65)	15.14 (1.15)	15.41 (1.59)
Indigenous Australians			
Not of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin	99.78%	99.30%	80.7%
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	0.22%	0.70%	19.30%
Sexual Orientation			
Heterosexual	-	95.13%	-
Homosexual/Bisexual	-	4.88%	-
Religion			
Religion other than Catholic	6.21%	10.71%	-
Catholic	93.79%	89.29%	-
Country of birth			
Australia	93.13%	94.71%	91.40%
Overseas	0.67%	5.29%	8.60%
Country of birth (mother)			
Australia	80.93%	84.42%	82.70%
Overseas	19.07%	15.58%	17.30%
Country of birth (father)			
Australia	80.93%	80.81%	76.40%
Overseas	19.07%	19.19%	23.60%

The Years 7-8 and Flexible Learning School adolescent boys were not asked about their sexual orientation.
An insufficient number of Flexible Learning School adolescent boys answered the Religion question to report a percentage.

Photo by Rachel Crowe on Unsplash

RESULTS

- Well-Being and Self-Reported Behaviour
- Attitudes to Manhood: Societal Messages and Personal Endorsement
- Insights from the Focus Groups
- What is the impact of personally endorsing stereotypical masculine norms?

4. Results

In this section, we outline the survey results for self-concept, mental health, bullying and violent behaviour, engagement in risk-taking behaviours, gendered behaviour in the home, as well as extreme sexist behaviours. Results of the questions relating to the Man Box - both Societal Messages and Personal Endorsement – are also detailed.

The findings are reported below, using bar graphs to represent the data. Responses from boys in years 7-8, years 9-12 as well as the boys from the Flexible Schools Network are presented side by side to allow comparisons between groups. The percentage of boys in each group who ticked each response is represented in each figure.

The response to the total scale was used for the nine self-concept and the psychological distress scales, and responses to each item are included for the other variables.

4.1 Well-Being and Self-Reported Behaviour

4.1.1 Self-Concept

Figure 1. **I am confident in my physical abilities**
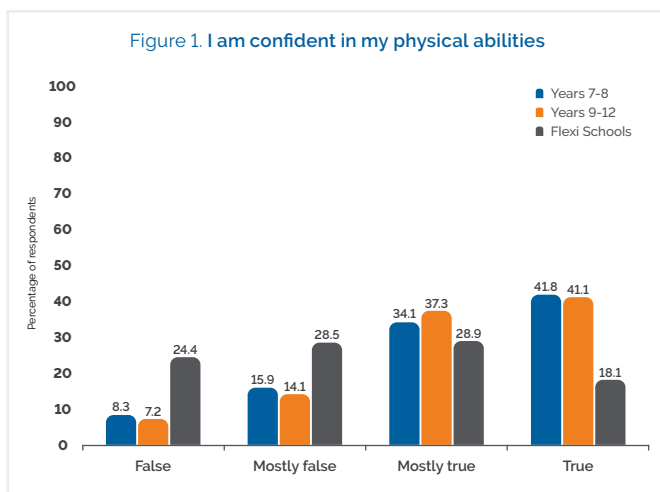
Boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 are generally satisfied with their physical abilities. Over 75 per cent of boys indicated they are satisfied with their physical abilities. This satisfaction was not as strong for the boys in the Flexible Schools Network, with these boys demonstrating about equal responses to the true and false options - less than 50 per cent of boys are satisfied with their physical abilities.

Figure 2. **I am confident in my physical appearance**
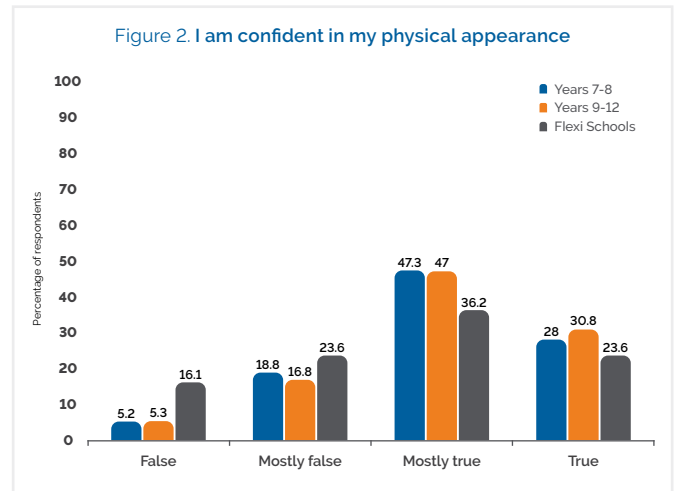
Boys from all groups demonstrated a generally positive response to their feelings about their physical appearance - over 60 per cent of all groups of boys are satisfied with their physical appearance.

Figure 3. **I am confident relating to other boys**
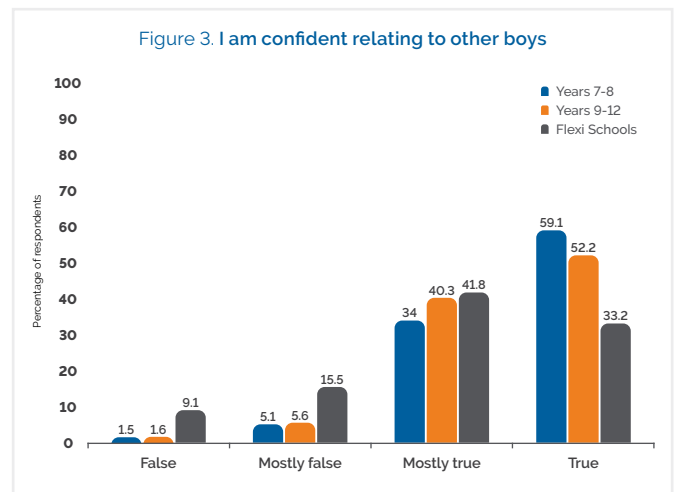
Over 70 per cent of boys in all groups demonstrated a positive view in relation to their relationships with other boys.

Figure 4. **I am confident relating to girls**
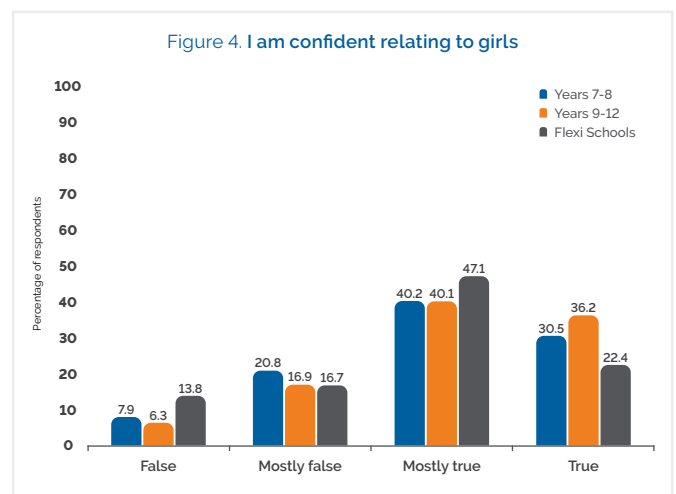
Over 65 per cent of boys in all groups demonstrated a generally positive attitude in the relationships with girls, but not quite as positive as relationships with boys.

Figure 5. I am an honest person

	False	Mostly false	Mostly true	True
Years 7-8	3.5	8.4	43.4	44.4
Years 9-12	5.1	12.7	44.0	37.9
Flexi Schools	14.5	19.7	38.3	27.2

Boys in all groups were generally positive in terms of the assessment of their honesty with over 60 per cent indicating that they felt they are an honest person.

Figure 6. I have a good relationship with my parents

	False	Mostly false	Mostly true	True
Years 7-8	2.2	4.9	19.5	72.8
Years 9-12	2.6	5.0	28.3	63.8
Flexi Schools	8.6	13.4	31.5	45.3
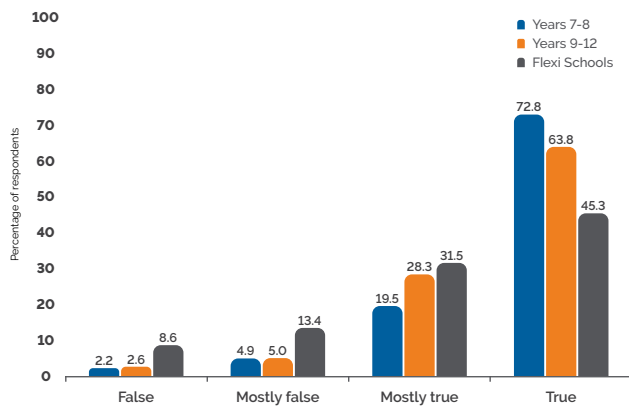
Boys in all groups were strongly of the view that they had a good relationship with their parents - more than 75 per cent saw themselves as having a good relationship with their parents.

Figure 7. I am emotionally stable

	False	Mostly false	Mostly true	True
Years 7-8	25.2	37.7	23.5	13.4
Years 9-12	24.7	25.9	34.4	14.8
Flexi Schools	17.9	28.6	31.4	21.4
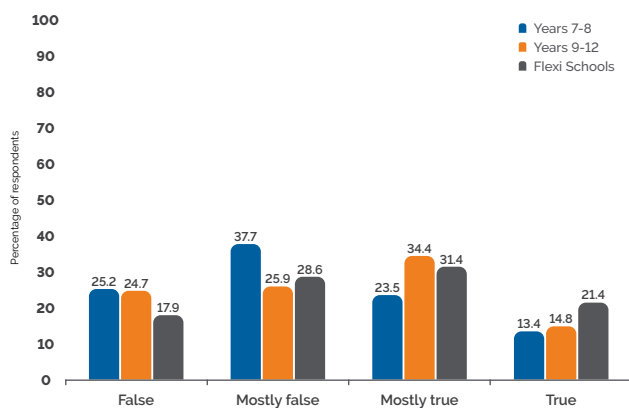
Approximately half of all boys indicated that they are emotionally stable. There was a similar spread of responses for all groups of boys across different groups in relation to their emotional stability, with about equal percentages of boys indicating that they were or were not emotionally stable.

Figure 8. I perform well at school
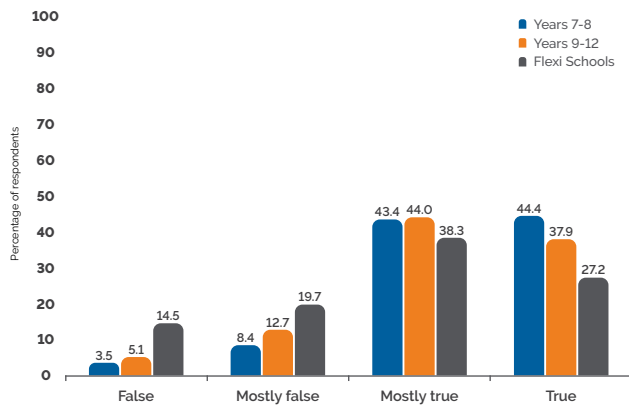
	False	Mostly false	Mostly true	True
Years 7-8	3.7	9.6	49.7	36.9
Years 9-12	3.2	14.0	50.3	31.4
Flexi Schools	12.3	36.5	39.9	11.2

Boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 were equally of the view (about 90%) that they performed well at school. There was a greater spread of scores for boys in the Flexible Schools Network, with a greater percentage (about 40%) of boys indicating that they did not perform well at school.

Figure 9. My general self-concept is strong

	False	Mostly false	Mostly true	True
Years 7-8	13.7	11	46.1	28.9
Years 9-12	2.7	8.8	50.2	37.8
Flexi Schools	10.6	21.3	40.2	27.0

Overall, boys in all groups indicated a good general self-concept (over 70% for all groups of boys), although it was not as strong among boys in the Flexible Schools Network.

4.1.2 Mental Health

Figure 10. **Psychological distress**

A response of "*All of the time*" indicates greater psychological distress.

There was a spread of scores in relation to psychological distress, although the percentages of boys in all groups who experienced psychological distress frequency was low - less than 20 per cent for the boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12; the frequency was higher – over 30 per cent - for the boys in the Flexible Schools Network than for the other two groups of boys.

Descriptive statistics for the self-concept scales and psychological distress are included in the Appendix.

4.1.3 Support-Seeking

Figure 11. **When you feel sad or down, who would you seek help from first?**
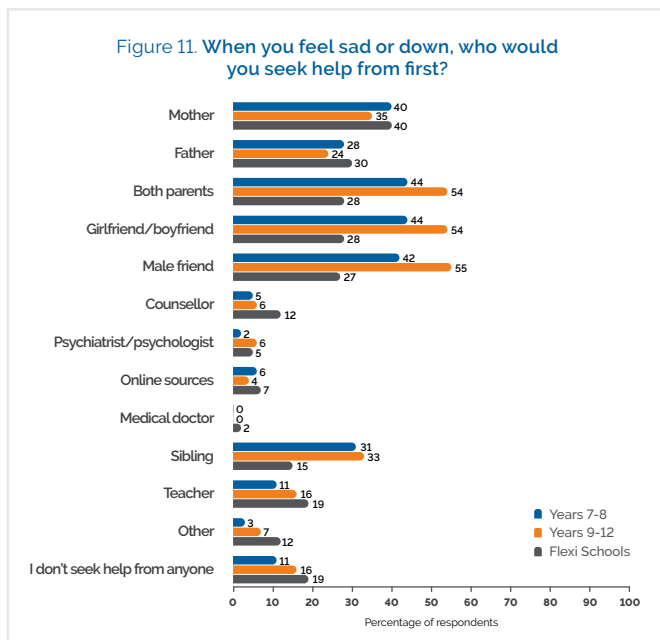
Looking at adolescent boys' help seeking when they are sad or depressed, the sources of support were overwhelmingly close relationships (mothers and fathers individually as well as together and siblings) and peers, as opposed to online or professional support.

- Over half (53%) of the years 7-8 boys identify '*both parents*' as a first source of support, compared to 44

per cent of the year 9-12 boys and 27 per cent of the boys from the Flexible Schools Network;

- Over half (54%) of the year 9-12 boys identify a '*male friend*' as a first source of support, compared to 42 per cent of the years 7-8 boys and 28 per cent of the boys from the Flexible Schools Network.

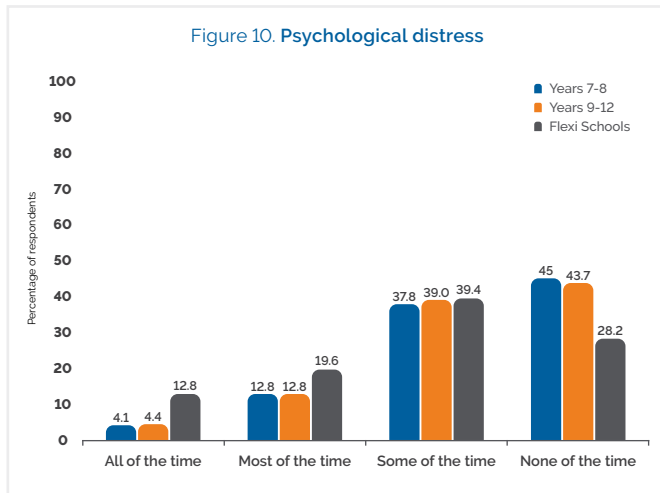These results demonstrate the importance of family as well as friends in providing support to all groups of boys when they are feeling sad, although support seeking is substantially lower among the boys from the Flexible Schools Network.

Figure 12. **Who do you talk with about your experiences of the pressures to be a "real man"?**
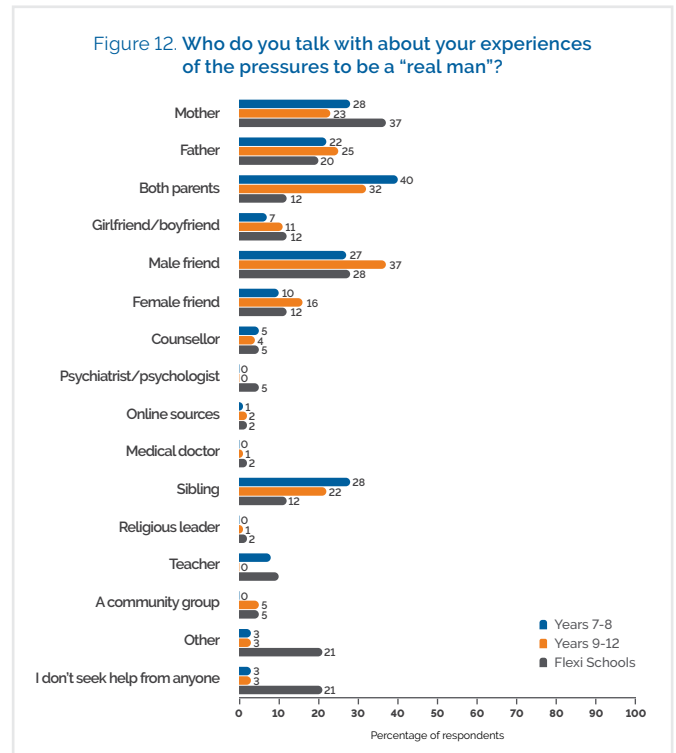
Looking at help seeking when boys need to discuss their experiences of the pressures to be a "*real man*", the sources of support were overwhelmingly close relationships (mothers and fathers individually as well as together and siblings) and peers, as opposed to online or professional support:

- A greater percentage of the boys in years 7-8 identify '*both parents*' (40%) and '*mother*' (28%) as a source of support to discuss pressures about being a "*real man*" compared to the years 9-12 boys (32% and 23% respectively) and boys from the Flexible Schools Network (20% and 27% respectively);

- A greater percentage of the boys in years 9-12 identified '*male friend*' (37%), '*female friend*' (16%) and '*girlfriend/boyfriend*' (11%) as a source of support to discuss pressures about being a "*real man*" compared to the years 7-8 boys (27%, 10% and 7% respectively) and all boys from the Flexible Schools Network (28%, 12%, and 12% respectively);

- An interesting finding is that about 30 per cent of boys did not discuss these pressures to be a "*real man*" with anyone.

4.1.4 Bullying, Violence and Sexual Harassment

Figure 13. Experienced Bullying
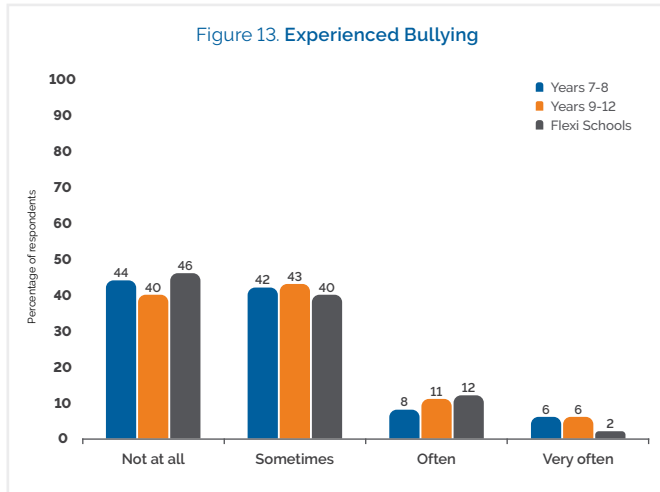
Over half of the boys across all groups had experienced bullying with a small number experiencing bullying often or very often. Patterns were similar across the different groups of boys.

Figure 14. Perpetrated Bullying
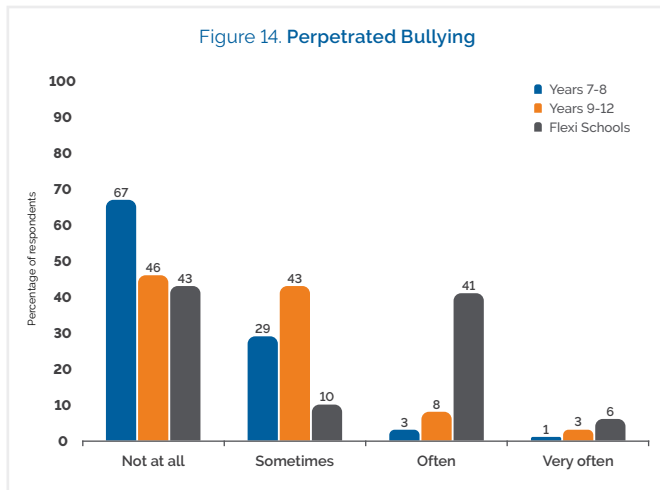
The level of perpetration of bullying was higher than the experience of bullying, with 33 per cent of boys in years 7-8 and 54 per cent of boys in years 9-12 engaging in bullying at least sometimes. This number was 57 per cent for boys from the Flexible Schools Network.

Figure 15. The last time you were around when other guys made sexist comments/jokes what did you do afterwards?
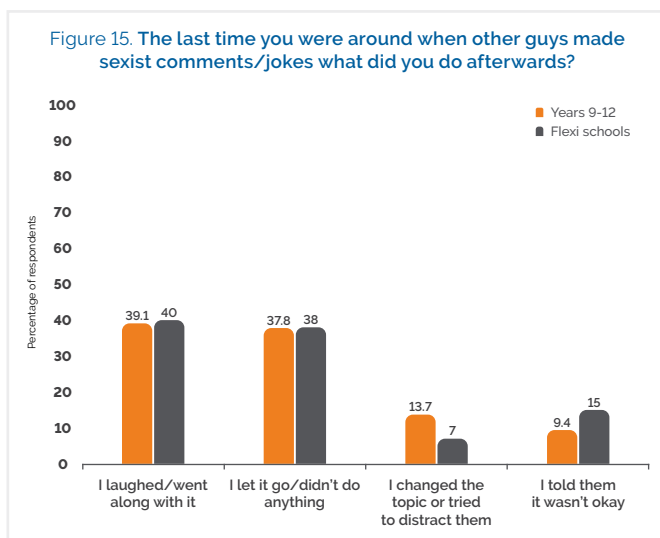
Less than 10 per cent of the boys in years 9-12 and only 15 per cent of boys from the Flexible Schools Network objected to sexual comments when they occurred.

Figure 16. What did you do the last time you were around guys who verbally or physically harassed a woman or girl?
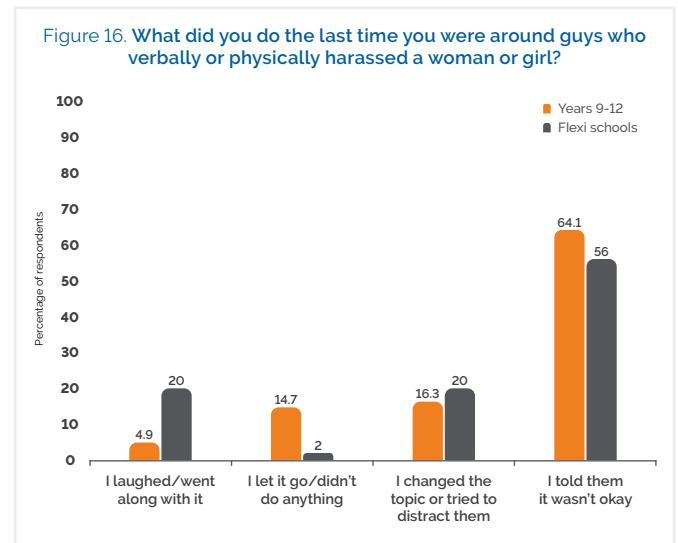
Almost two-thirds of the boys in years 9-12 as well as half of the boys from the Flexible Schools Network said it is not okay if they are around boys who are actually sexually harassing a woman or girl.

Figure 17. In the past 4 weeks, how often has somebody physically hurt you on purpose by pushing you down, kicking you or hitting you with a hand, clenched fist, object or weapon?
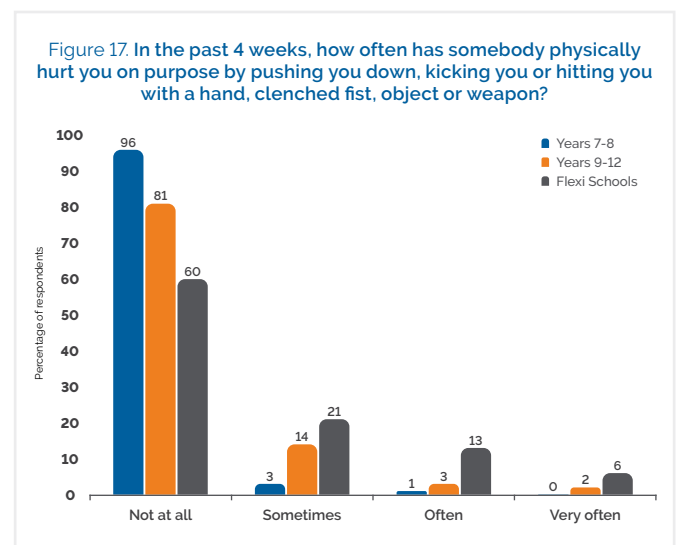
The level of experience of physical violence was low among boys in years 7-8 with only 4 per cent of boys experiencing violence at least sometimes. This experience of physical violence was higher amongst boys in years 9-12 with the equivalent number being 19 per cent. For the boys in the Flexible Schools Network, 40 per cent of them experience physical violence at least sometimes.
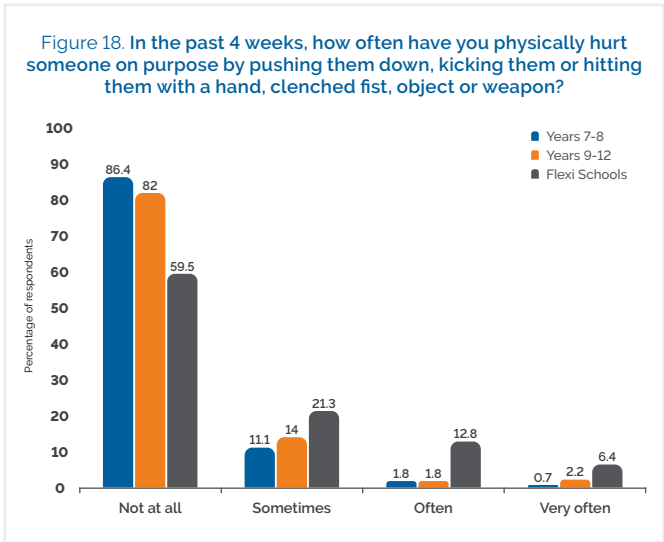
Figure 18. In the past 4 weeks, how often have you physically hurt someone on purpose by pushing them down, kicking them or hitting them with a hand, clenched fist, object or weapon?

About 15 per cent of boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 perpetrated physical violence at least sometime in the past four weeks. For the Flexible Schools Network the percentage was 40 per cent.

Figure 19. In the last year, how many times have you gotten into a physical fight?
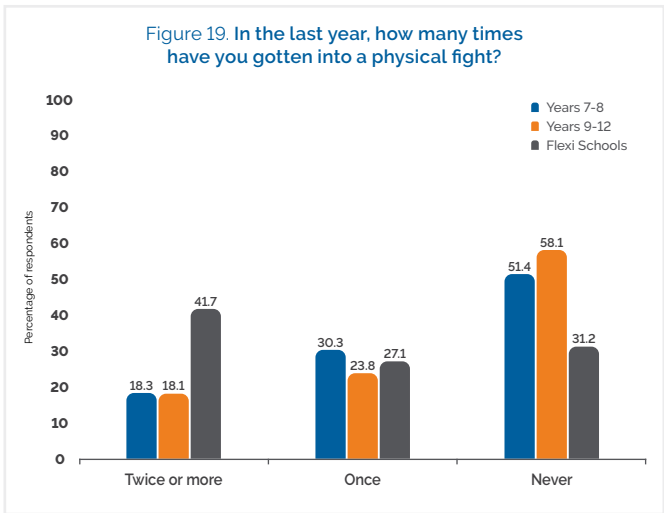
Almost half of the boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 had been in a physical fight in the last year and this increased to almost 70 per cent for the boys in the Flexible Schools Network. Almost 20 per cent of boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 and 41 per cent of the boys in the Flexible Schools Network had been in a fight twice or more.

In response to the question asked of the boys in the focus groups about when violence is justified, a number of students commented that violence is justified when you are being attacked or required to defend yourself (see comments below from boys in years 7 and 11). However, the majority of students claimed that violence is not justified under any circumstances - see comments below made by the students in years 8, 9 and 12 by way of example. The response from the student in year 10 (Table 5) represents a slightly different world view. This group of students discussed the importance to them of low-level physical contact (pushing, bumping, shoving) in order to de-stress and avoid more aggressive forms of violence.

Table 5. **Comments on violence**

Year Level	Comment
Year 7	*It's justified in defence because for most times you're allowed to defend yourself, if you're being attacked or something.*
Year 8	*Violence isn't justified at all. The only reason it could be justified is for defence. It can still be a form of injustice, which many laws and rights have been addressed to avoid violence, and especially the court of law. So, self-defence should never be tolerated or put in the category of justice.*
Year 9	*I think anyone has the ability to harm someone on purpose and negatively, so I don't't think it is justifiable.*
Year 10	*I think the little moments that happen allow people to get enough stress out of them. The little play headlocks and pushing each other around means that boys don't get to the stage where they're wanting to physically attack and hurt another individual.*
Year 11	*I'd probably just say it's justifiable if you are just defending yourself. I would say it doesn't really matter what it is, if you feel like you're threatened in any way, you should be able to retaliate so that you're not at risk.*
Year 12	*I'd say, never. Violence is never the answer, and that if you do become a violent person, you should have a real look at yourself, and think about what you could have done. There are heaps of ways to get out of bullying, or talking about things like your problems in your life. But violence, there's no place for violence in the world.*

Figure 20. In the past 4 weeks, how often have you made sexual comments to a woman or girl you didn't know, in a public place, like the street, your school, or on the internet or social media?
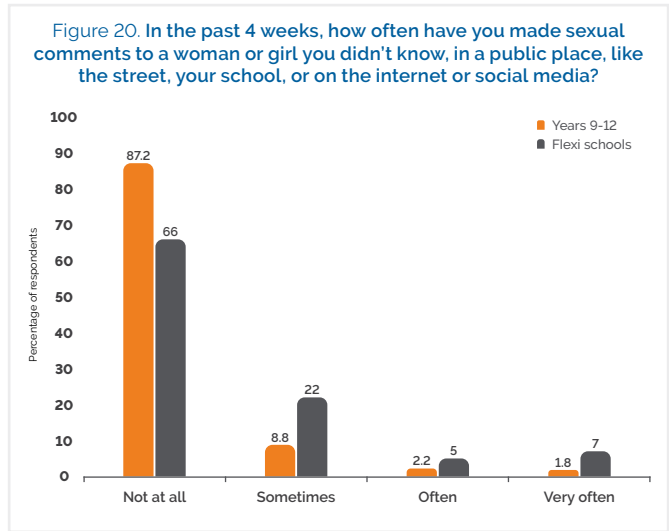
The level of perpetrating sexual harassment in the past four weeks among boys in years 9-12 was 13 per cent and for boys from the Flexible Schools Network, this number is 35 per cent.

4.1.5 Risk-Taking Behaviours

Figure 21. **In your whole life, on how many days have you smoked cigarettes?**
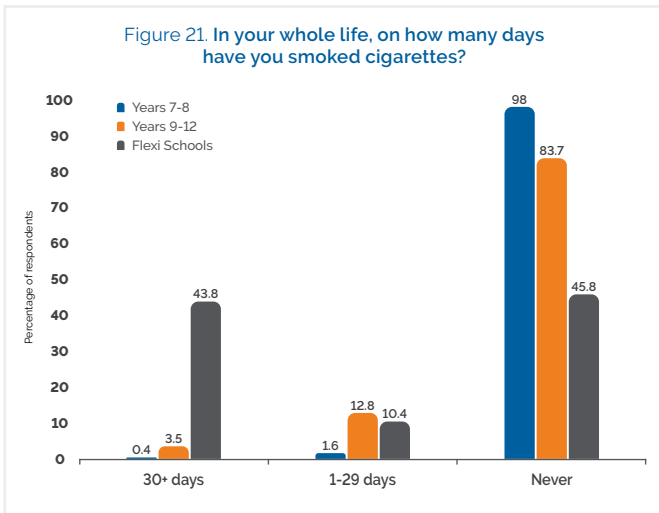
The frequency of smoking cigarettes was low for boys in years 7-8 (0.4%) and years 9-12 (3.5%); however, over 50 per cent of boys in the Flexible Schools Network smoked.

Figure 22. **If you are drinking, how many drinks do you normally have?**

The general level of drinking consumption on a particular occasion was low amongst boys in years 9-12 with almost 50 per cent of boys indicating that they did not drink and just over 50 per cent indicating that they normally consumed one drink or less. Only 25 per cent of the boys from the Flexible Schools Network did not drink, with 60 per cent of them having two drinks or more when they did drink.

Figure 23. **In your whole life, how many times have you been drunk?**

Boys in years 7-8 had rarely been intoxicated. However, 25 per cent of boys in 9-12 had been intoxicated more than once, and this number was over 50 per cent for boys in the Flexible Schools Network.

Figure 24. **In the last year, how often have you drunk 6 or more standard drinks in one sitting?**
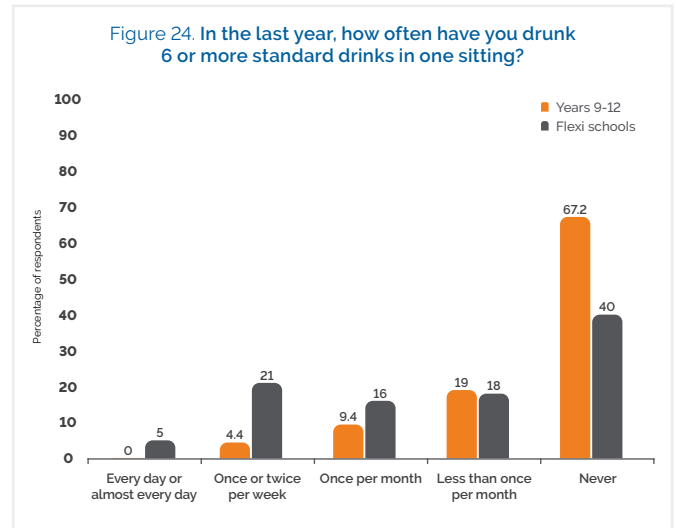
Two-thirds of the boys in years 9-12 had never engaged in binge drinking and only 40 per cent for the boys from the Flexible Schools Network. For those who had engaged in the behaviours, 13 per cent of boys in years 9-12 did so at least once a month and for the boys from the Flexible Schools Network, this number was 42 per cent.

Figure 25. **In your whole life, on how many days have you used (smoked or eaten) cannabis (marijuana, weed)?**
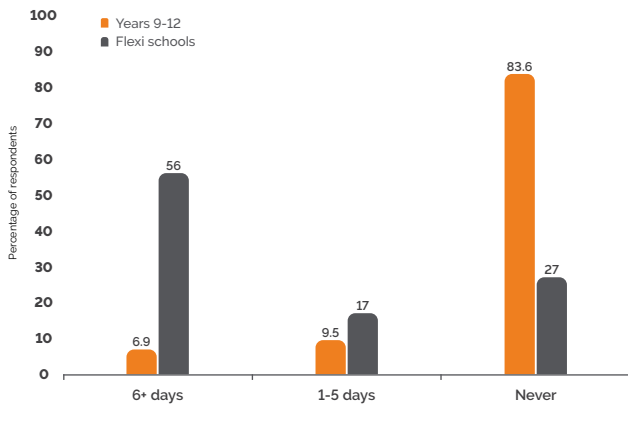
More than 80 per cent of the boys in years 9-12 had never used cannabis. In contrast, this was number was 27 per cent for boys from the Flexible Schools Network, with over one half of them having used cannabis more than six days in total.

Figure 26. **In your whole life, how many times have you used drugs other than cannabis (e.g. amphetamines/speed, ecstasy, inhalants such as petrol or glue, pain killers, cocaine, heroin)?**
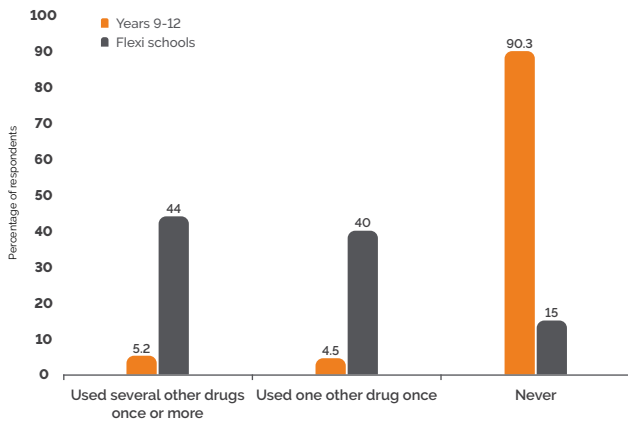
More than 90 per cent of the boys in years 9-12 had never used drugs other than cannabis. In contrast, only 15 per cent of boys from the Flexible Schools Network had never used drugs, with 44 per cent of them having used them more than once.

Figure 27. **In your whole life have you ever had sex? If so, have you used contraception (e.g. condoms)?**
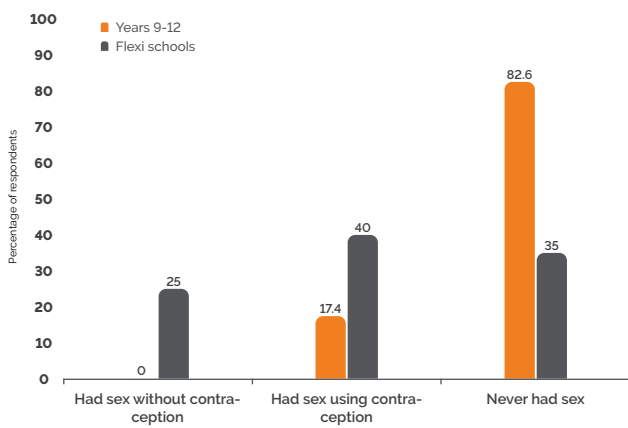
Most boys in years 9-12 (82%) had not engaged in sex; if they had engaged in sex they did so using contraception. For boys from the Flexible Schools Network, only one-third had never engaged in sex and 25 per cent of these boys had experienced sex without using contraception.

Figure 28. **How often do you wear a helmet when you ride a bicycle?**
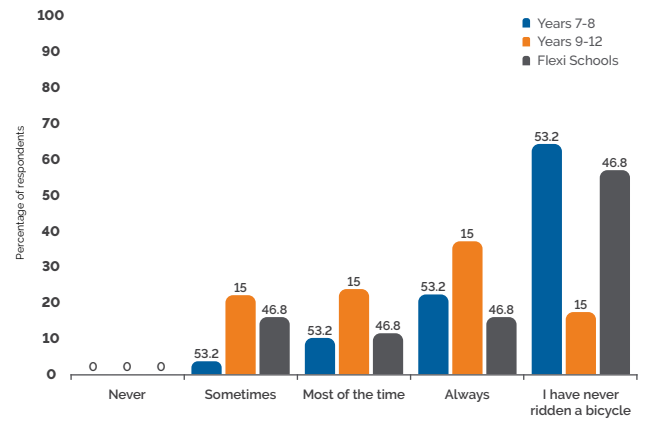
Generally speaking, if they rode a bike all groups of boys wore a helmet, with 22 per cent of boys in years 9-12 and 16 per cent of boys in Flexible Schools Network only sometimes wearing a helmet.

4.1.6 Male Stereotyped Behaviours at Home

Figure 29. **Fathers engaging in home-related activities**
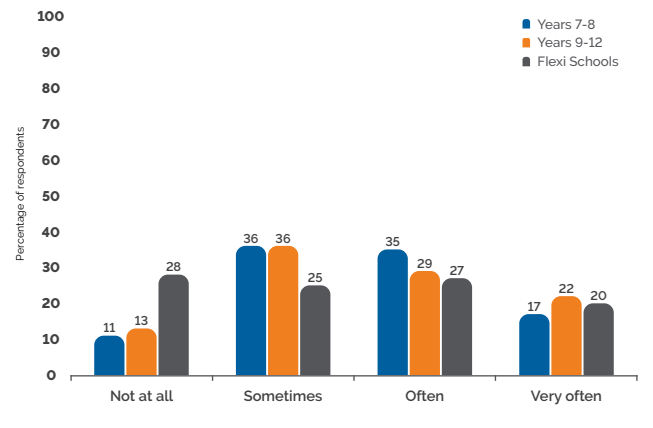
Roughly half of all boys reported male stereotyped behaviours at home. There was a variability in the responses from the three groups of boys in relation to the extent to which boys' fathers completed housework, cleaning, cooking and taking care of children. Boys in the Flexible Schools Network were more likely than the other two groups of boys to indicate that their fathers never engaged in these behaviours.

Figure 30. **Sons engaging in home-related activities**
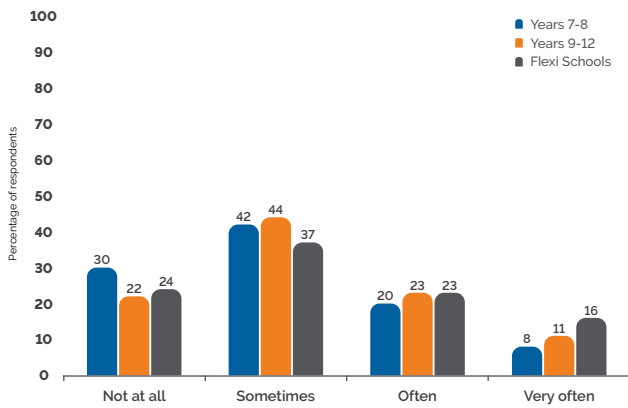
Boys were less likely than their fathers to engage in housework and other home-related activities. There were no major differences across the three groups of boys in relation to the frequency of these activities, with only about one-third the boys engaging in these activities often or very often.

The three groups of boys reported that both their fathers and themselves demonstrated a moderate level of these male stereotyped behaviours at home, with the average score being between sometimes and often. See Appendix for descriptive statistics.

4.1.7 Relationships and Family

Figure 31. **Men are responsible for bringing home money**
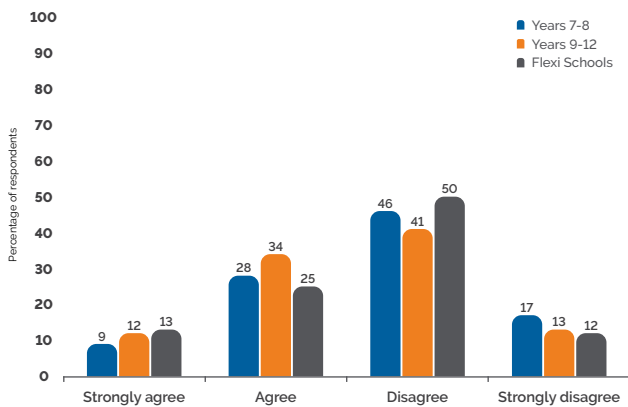
Over 50 per cent of boys in all groups disagreed with the statement that men are responsible for bringing home the money. The numbers were 63 per cent for boys in years 7-8, 54 per cent for boys in years 9-12 and 62 per cent for boys in the Flexible Schools Network.

Figure 32. **Guy needs to know where his girlfriend is at all times**
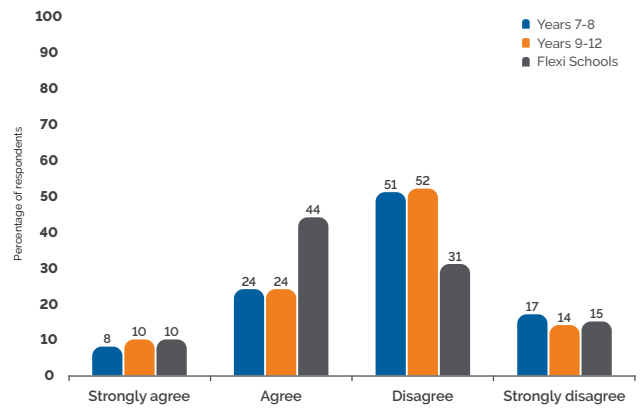
About a third of all boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 agreed that a guy should know where his girlfriend is all the time; this number was over 50 per cent of the boys from the Flexible Schools Network.

Figure 33. **Guy needs to know if girlfriend talks to another guy**
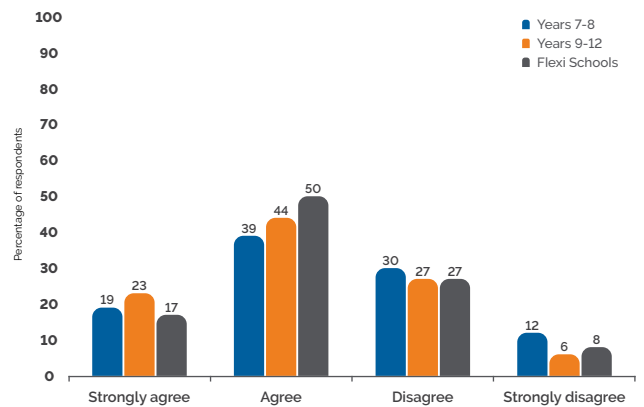
About 60 per cent of all groups of boys were of the view that a guy needs to know if his girlfriend talks to another guy.

Figure 34. **A guy should use violence to get respect**
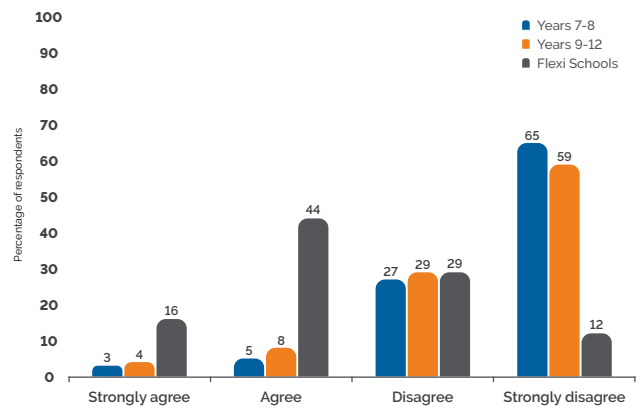
Only 8 per cent of boys in years 7-8 and 12 per cent of boys in years 9-12 agreed that a guy should use violence to get respect; this number was 60 per cent for boys from the Flexible Schools Network.

Figure 35. A husband shouldn't have to do the housework

Only 8 per cent of boys in years 7-8 and 14 per cent of boys in years 9-12 agreed that husbands should not do housework; this number was 81 per cent for the boys in the Flexible Schools Network.

Figure 36. Men are always ready for sex
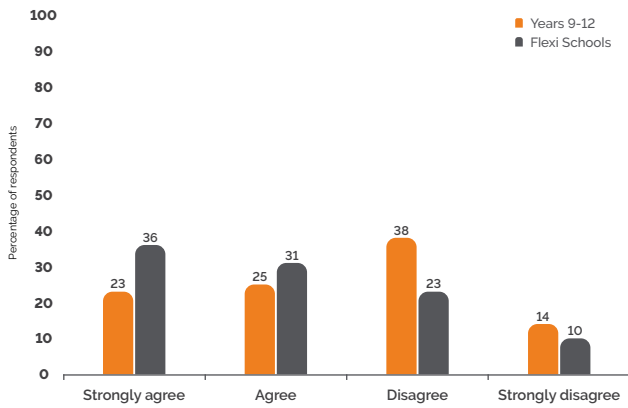
Almost 50 per cent (48%) of boys in years 9-12 agreed that men are always ready for sex; two-thirds from the Flexible Schools Network held this view.

The highest scores were for it being acceptable for a guy to use violence to get respect and guys not doing housework. Boys in all these groups scored about average on these scales, but there was quite a high spread of scores. See Appendix for descriptive statistics.

4.2 Attitudes to Manhood: Societal Messages and Personal Endorsement

4.2.1 Societal Messages

For each of the separate pillars of masculinity (societal pressures) an average percentage response across all the items was calculated for strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Figure 37. Pillar 1 - Constant Efforts to be Manly

About 40 per cent of all groups of boys were of the view that they received messages from society about the importance for a guy to put in constant efforts to be manly.

Figure 38. Pillar 2 - Emotional Restriction
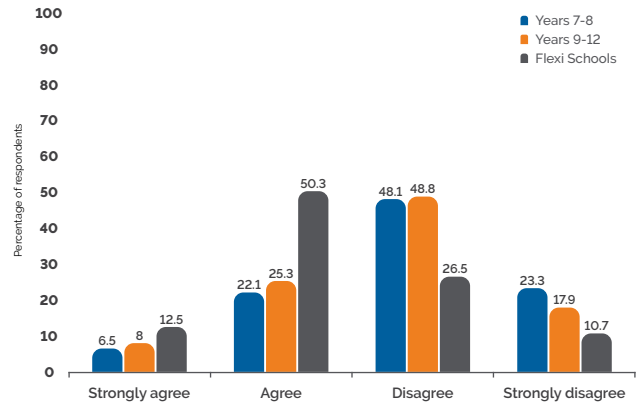
About 30 per cent of boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 received messages from society that guys should not show their emotions; this percentage was over 60 per cent for boys in the Flexible Schools Network.

Figure 39. Pillar 3 - Heterosexism
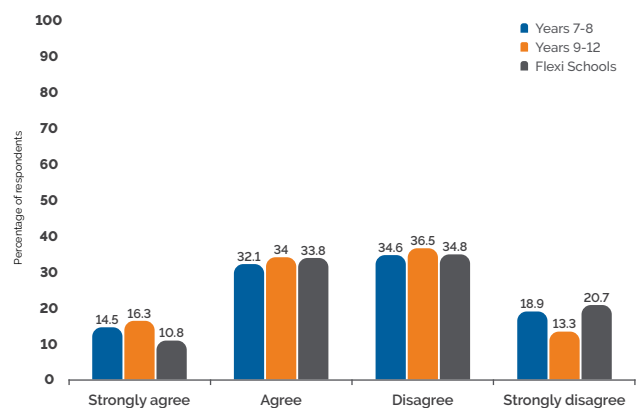
Less than 40 per cent of boys from all groups of boys agreed that they received messages from society that they should not should not act "*gay*" or engage in activities generally done by girls.

Figure 40. **Pillar 4 - Social Teasing**
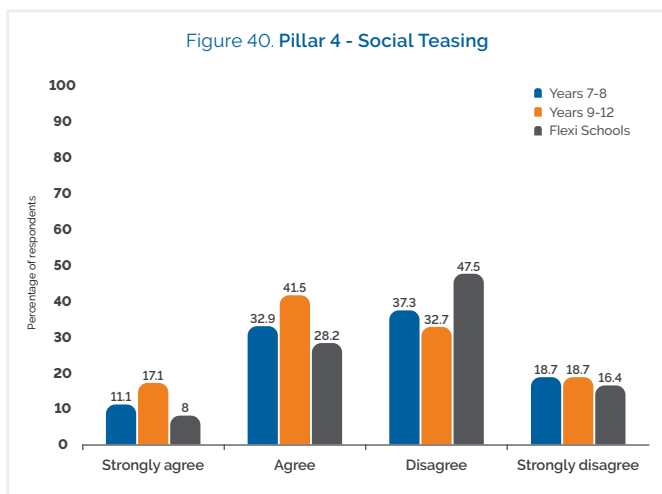
About 40 per cent of boys in years 7-8 were of the view that the message received from society is that boys should be able to take teasing from their friends; this was higher among boys in years 9-12 (almost 60%), but lower among boys in Flexible Schools Network (less than 40%).

4.2.2. Societal Messages – Individual Items

For each of the items in the scales, the percentage of boys in each of the three groups who indicated the responses of strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree are reported. These responses are reported for each of the four pillars of masculinity (societal pressures). See Appendix for tables that describe responses to individual items.

The results demonstrate that there are:

- **Constant effort**: There are fairly consistent responses to the items under Pillar 1, Constant Efforts to be Manly, with limited differences across cohorts. About 45 per cent of boys either agree or strongly agree with societal messages on this pillar;

- **Emotional restriction:** About 30 per cent of boys from years 7-8 and years 9-12 were of the view that Societal Messages indicated that guys do not share their feelings – responses across items were fairly consistent. However, boys from the Flexible Schools Network are much more likely to perceive that there were societal messages for boys not to listen to one another, talk or provide emotional support for one another;

- **Heterosexism:** There are no major differences in the perception of societal messages regarding behaviours considered to be "*gay*" with about 45 per cent of boys in all groups receiving these messages. However, there is some variability across the items;

- **Social teasing:** In relation to social teasing, there is quite a bit of variability in terms of perceived messages from society, ranging from about 30 per cent to 60 per cent agreement. Boys from the Flexible Schools Network are less likely than the other two groups to see societal messages communicating that it is okay to tease their friends.

4.2.3 Personal Endorsement

For each of the separate pillars of masculinity (personal endorsement) an average percentage response across all the items was calculated for strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Figure 41. **Pillar 1 - Constant Efforts to be Manly**
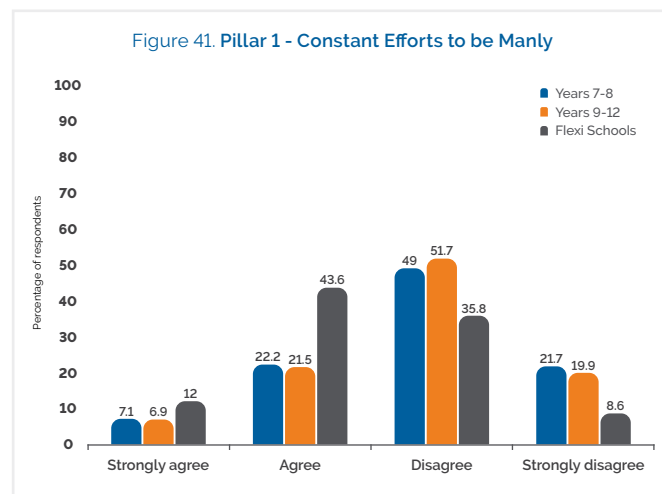
About 30 per cent of boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 personally endorsed the importance of appearing strong and tough in order to be manly. The percentage for boys from the Flexible Schools Network was over 50 per cent.

Figure 42. **Pillar 2 - Emotional Restriction**
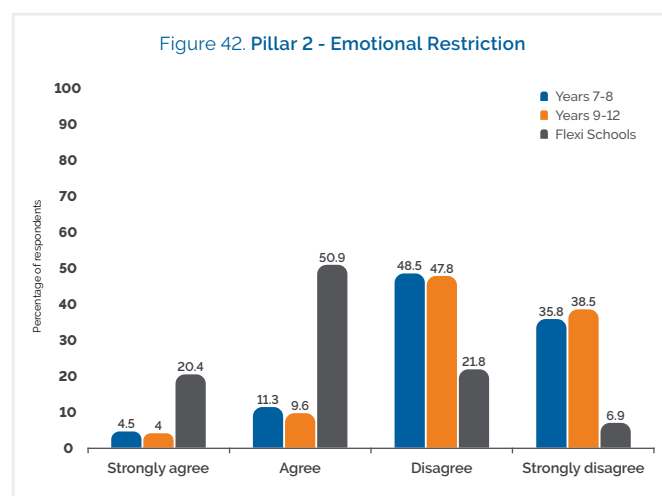
Just over 10 per cent of boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 but over 70 per cent of boys in the Flexible Schools Network agree that a guy should not share his feelings or provide support for his friends.

Figure 43. **Pillar 3 - Heterosexism**
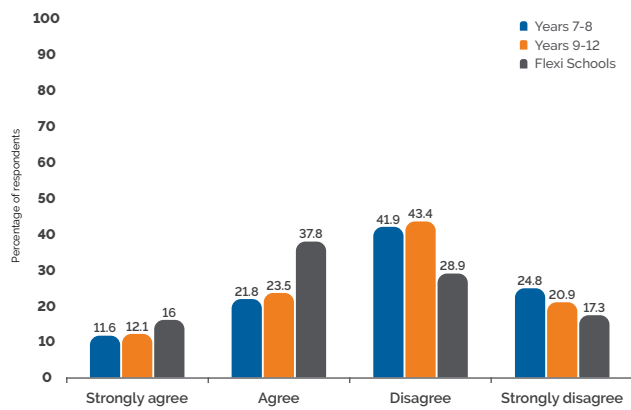
Over 50 per cent of boys from the Flexible Schools Network agree that it is important to avoid behaviours that have traditionally been seen as being too gay or feminine; this value is endorsed by about 30 per cent of boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12.

Figure 44. **Pillar 4 - Social Teasing**
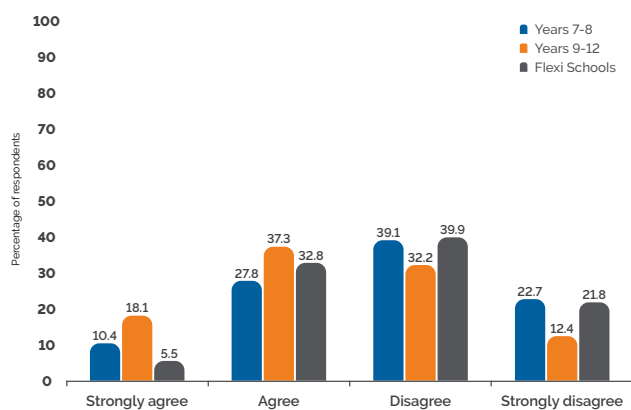
About 40 per cent of boys in years 7-8 and the Flexible Schools Network are of the view that to be masculine boys should be able to tease their friends and stand up to teasing when it is directed at them; this number was almost 60 per cent in years 9-12.

4.2.4 Personal Endorsement – Individual Items

The level of agreement for the individual questions under each of the four pillars of adolescent masculinity (personal endorsement) for the different cohorts of students. See Appendix for tables that describe responses to individual items.

The results demonstrate the following:

- **Constant effort:** In terms of personal endorsement of the masculinity items, the greatest differences are between the boys from the Flexible Schools Network and the other two groups of boys. Boys in the Flexible Schools Network are more likely to endorse the view that in order to be manly, guys need to be tough. There are fairly consistent responses to the separate items that comprise the personal endorsement of

this pillar, with almost 30 per cent of boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12, and about 60 per cent of boys in the Flexible Schools Network;

- **Emotional restriction:** Boys from the Flexible Schools Network are also more likely to endorse the items related to the importance of guys not discussing their feelings or supporting one another – about 70 per cent agreement compared to 10-20 per cent among boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12;

- **Heterosexism:** There is quite a bit of variability to the items related to appearing to be gay or acting like a girl – endorsement ranging from about 20 per cent to 50 per cent for all groups of boys;

- **Social teasing:** In terms of the teasing pillar, boys from the Flexible Schools Network are less likely than the other two groups of boys to agree that there is nothing wrong with teasing (20% compared to about 50% for the other two groups).

4.3 Insights from the Focus Groups

Focus Groups were held with boys from Years 7-12. The boys from Years 9-12 were asked about whether teasing is friendly or unfriendly. Most students (73.3%) responded by saying that it depends on the situation (Figure 45). Teasing amongst friends was deemed to be acceptable as long as their friend did not get upset. Male adolescents claimed to know when to stop teasing their friend before they became upset.

It would appear that the social skills of both the boys who tease as well as the boys who are targeted are important in determining whether or not teasing has a negative effect. For those with higher social skills, teasing is seen more positively (Endo, 2007). Depending on the context, teasing may be a form of bullying or an expression of humour and/or mateship (Kowalski, 2004). It would appear that it is interpreted differently (by both the perpetrator and the target) if it occurs within the context of a friendship group (teasing conveys closeness), as opposed to boys outside this group (teasing is seen as a hurtful act) (Jones et al 2005).

Figure 45. **Student views on teasing**

🔹 Friendly ⬥ Unfriendly ⬥ Depends
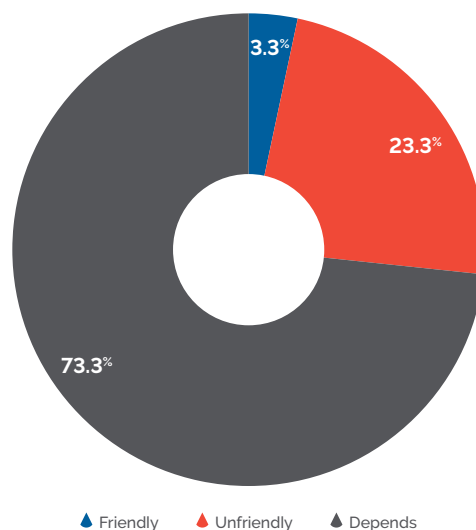
Social teasing seemed to be something that was accepted by the students interviewed and part of their daily routine and school culture. The reaction of the person being teased was most important in determining whether teasing was acceptable or not. When someone reacted poorly to teasing, it was clear that the instigator had overstepped the boundaries of social norms. The boys interviewed seemed to be able to detect subtle reactions that indicated whether someone was upset or not by the teasing. This included facial expression, tone of voice, body language and being socially withdrawn. The quote below from a Year 8 adolescent boy best captures the views of those interviewed:

> *You could normally see their behaviour after that. If they tried to avoid the group that keeps teasing them, or not reply back, or laugh back, or their tone of voice could also drop and change from being comfortable to serious or very worried. You could tell that maybe they're being teased or if they start to skip school days just because of it, then you may have to start realizing that they're getting teased, bullied.*

Boys in Years 7-12 were asked about the most important influence on them to be a "*real man*". When asked to rank six categories (movies/media, friends, sport, family, music and advertisements) from most important to least important on the influences of what it is to be a real man, students unanimously named '*Family*'. All students ranked '*Friends*' as second. '*Sport*' as a category was clearly categorised third (61%). Students were then divided on which category to list next. As such, '*Music*' and '*Movies/Media*' were equally ranked fourth and fifth. All students from all year levels had '*Advertisements*' listed as the least important influence on what it is to be a real man. When combined, question 2 and 3 highlights again the significant influence of family and how they shape the attitudes of male adolescents and what it is to be a real man.

> *Family first because I think we all probably get influenced the most by our family because we live with them. Friends because they're who you hang out the most with outside of when you're not with your family so I think that's a heavy influence, as well.*
> *- Year 11 student*

> *Family is definitely the most important. You spend the majority of your life with them. Yeah. Even no matter what you do. Yeah. You can always relate to your family, and they're very strong bonds. I have friends who did the next one, because you see them equally as much depending on later in the track of what your career or life job is, lifestyle. - Year 8 student*

In relation to who or what has influence on the boys' understanding of what it is to be a "*real man*", the focus groups identified the areas of '*media*', '*dads*', '*family*', '*culture*', '*school*' and '*friends*' (see Figure 46). Twenty-three per cent of all students interviewed reported that the '*media*' is a significant influence on

their understanding of what it is to be a "*real man*". This included electronic and print media as well as advertisements, television shows and movies. The next most significant influence was '*dads*' (21%). However, when combined with '*family*' (15%), students were indicating that home life has the most significant influence on their understanding of what it means to be a "*real man*". '*School*' (16%) and '*friends*' (14%) were the next most significant influences. The results seem to suggest that including parents and family is integral to supporting male adolescents on their journey to becoming a "*real man*".

Figure 46. **Influences on what it is to be a real man**
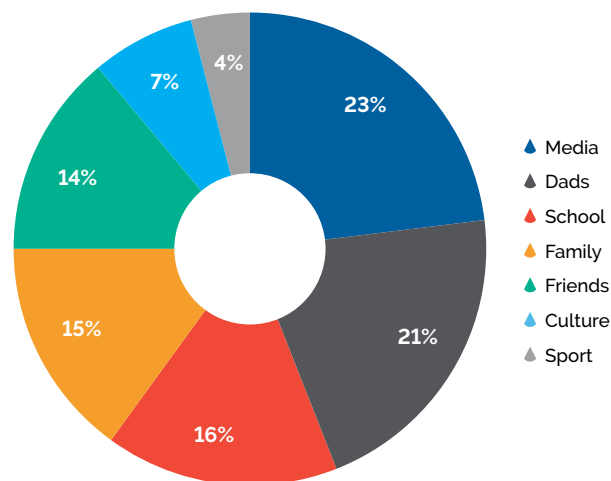
> *I'd probably say my father's influenced me the most, because I get a couple of lectures by him, that, open up, and if there's something on my mind, tell it. And that's what I think a real man is, to be also physically strong, and mentally, and also loving and caring. I didn't tell him about my feelings that much, nor do I tell anyone, so I should improve that. But besides that, I reckon my father's influenced me the most. And I haven't even told him that yet, which I should do soon.*
> *- Year 12 student*

> *I would say my parents; probably like they teach me how to be a respectful person and a man and tell me all the ways I should be acting around people in public and just being respectful in general. - Year 11 student*

4.4 What is the Impact of Personally Endorsing Stereotypical Masculine Norms?

For this analysis, the boys were split into five groups (quintiles) based on their total score of the personal endorsement of the Adolescent Man Box scale. At one end of the scale we have the 20 per cent of respondents whose responses to the Adolescent Man Box questions showed that they most tightly adhere to the rules - we call this group the "*Top 20 per cent Man Box*" group. At the other end are those boys who most strongly reject the rules of the Adolescent Man Box - "*The bottom 20 per cent Man Box*" group. The boys in the three quintiles in between do not have a label but they represent the spectrum of the views of boys, with those in quintile three representing the middle in terms of response to the Adolescent Man Box. Boys from the Flexible Schools Network were not included in the quintile analysis due to the low sample size.

4.4.1 Self-Concept/Physiological Distress

The findings below summarise the percentage of boys in each of the quintiles who responded true/mostly true with the statements related to self-concept and psychological distress (see Tables 6 and 7) to the sub-scales.

- The major differences between the quintiles related to honesty, general school ability and psychological distress. Boys in the bottom 20 per cent of the Adolescent Man Box group were more likely than those in the top 20 per cent to be honest, see themselves as achieving better at school and experience less psychological distress.

- Boys in both years 7-8 and years 9-12 across all quintiles generally demonstrated high levels of self-concept and mental health across all quintiles.

Table 6. Self-Concept/Psychological Distress - Years 7-8

	Bottom 20%	2	3	4	Top 20%
Honesty/trustworthiness	91%	92%	81%	88%	74%
Physical attractiveness	75%	78%	80%	83%	80%
Self-esteem	92%	92%	91%	87%	86%
Physical ability	76%	82%	84%	88%	89%
Quality of same-sex relationships	88%	97%	95%	96%	92%
Quality of opposite-sex relationships	74%	72%	73%	74%	74%
General school performance	91%	91%	88%	85%	78%
Emotional stability	63%	70%	66%	69%	68%
Quality of parent relationships	89%	90%	89%	88%	88%
Psychological distress	14%	16%	20%	30%	26%

Table 7. Self-Concept/Psychological Distress - Years 9-12

	Bottom 20%	2	3	4	Top 20%
Honesty/trustworthiness	88%	88%	88%	82%	76%
Physical attractiveness	82%	78%	81%	78%	80%
Self-esteem	88%	89%	88%	86%	83%
Physical ability	76%	85%	85%	89%	84%
Quality of same-sex relationships	88%	94%	93%	94%	89%
Quality of opposite-sex relationships	69%	71%	76%	76%	72%
General school performance	88%	87%	82%	78%	73%
Emotional stability	59%	66%	65%	71%	66%
Quality of parent relationships	95%	95%	95%	90%	88%
Psychological distress	16%	16%	18%	16%	19%

4.4.2 Risk-Taking Behaviours

See Tables 8 and 9 for the percentage of boys in each of the Adolescent Man Box quintiles who self-reported engaging in risk-taking behaviours. Boys who are in the top 20 per cent based on their Adolescent Man Box score were:

- More likely to indicate that they had been drunk, been in a fight and not used a bike helmet. E.G. 68 Per cent of years 7-8 boys and 57 per cent of years 9-12 boys in the highest quintile had been in a fight more than once in the last year compared to 40 per cent of years 7-8 boys and 27 per cent of years 9-12 boys in the lowest quintile;

- For boys in years 9-12, 46 per cent of boys in the highest quintile indicated that they had been drunk more than once and 46 per cent also indicated that they had consumed six drinks or more in one sitting in the past month compared to 23 per cent and 20 per cent respectively in the lowest quintile;

- These years 9-12 boys in the highest quintile were more likely to have used cannabis (26%) and other drugs (18%) compared to 10 per cent and 6 per cent in the lowest quintile;

- Boys in this highest quintile responded quite differently from the boys in the other four quintiles, who did not respond very differently from one another.

Table 8. Quintile Breakdown of Responses - Risk-Taking Behaviours - Years 7-8

	Bottom 20%	2	3	4	Top 20%
Frequently smoke cigarettes	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Drink alcohol more than once a week	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Been drunk once or more	2%	5%	3%	9%	17%
Been in a fight once or more in past year	40%	41%	44%	56%	68%
Only sometimes wear a bike helmet	1%	1%	2%	2%	10%

Table 9. Quintile Breakdown of Responses - Risk-Taking Behaviours - Years 9-12

	Bottom 20%	2	3	4	Top 20%
Frequently smoke cigarettes	2%	2%	4%	1%	9%
Drink alcohol more than once a week	9%	8%	8%	8%	20%
Been drunk once or more	23%	37%	37%	42%	46%
Been in a fight once or more in past year	27%	40%	1%	41%	57%
Only sometimes wear a bike helmet	16%	21%	24%	24%	22%
Have more than 2 drinks when I drink	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
In last month, 6 or more drinks on one occasion	20%	32%	32%	36%	46%
Ever used cannabis	10%	14%	14%	14%	26%
Ever used other drugs	6%	7%	8%	9%	18%
Sex without contraception	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%

4.4.3 Bullying, Violence and Harassment Behaviours

See Tables 10 and 11 for the percentages of boys in each quintile who experienced the behaviours related to bullying, violence and harassment behaviours either often or very often:

• Boys in years 9-12 in the highest quintile experienced physical bullying more frequently (12%) than those in the lowest quintile (2%). They also perpetrated physical bullying (11%) and made sexist comments (10%) more frequently than those in the lowest quintile (2% and 3% respectively);

• For boys in years 7-8, there were no major differences between the different quintiles in the Bullying and Violence Behaviours – levels for all of these behaviours were low for these boys.

4.4.4 Male Stereotyped Behaviour in the Home

In terms of male stereotyped behaviour in the home (see Tables 12 and 13), the following differences were evident:

• Boys in years 7-8 who are in the highest quintile are more likely to have a father figure who never cleaned the house, washed clothes or cleaned the bathroom;

• The biggest difference for boys themselves was that years 7-8 in the highest adolescent man box quintile were less likely to have cleaned the house;

• There was much stronger evidence of male stereotyped behaviours for boys and their fathers of years 9-12 boys who were in the highest quintile compared to the boys in the other quintiles;

• This finding for boys in years 9-12 was most apparent for the preparation of food, washing clothes or helping children with homework by the father and the boys, and father cleaning the house and taking care of children.

Table 10. **Quintile Breakdown of Responses - Bullying, Violence and Harassment - Years 7-8**

	Bottom 20%	2	3	4	Top 20%
Experienced verbal bullying at least often	15%	15%	14%	12%	15%
Experienced bullying on line at least often	3%	6%	5%	6%	5%
Experienced physical bullying at least often	2%	7%	5%	5%	7%
Perpetrated verbal bullying at least often	3%	1%	3%	2%	7%
Perpetrated online bullying at least often	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%
Perpetrated physical bullying at least often	0%	0%	1%	4%	6%

Table 11. **Quintile Breakdown of Responses - Bullying, Violence and Harassment - Years 9-12**

	Bottom 20%	2	3	4	Top 20%
Experienced verbal bullying at least often	18%	18%	20%	12%	19%
Experienced bullying on line at least often	2%	2%	6%	3%	8%
Experienced physical bullying at least often	2%	3%	5%	3%	12%
Perpetrated verbal bullying at least often	8%	8%	10%	8%	20%
Perpetrated online bullying at least often	2%	0%	4%	1%	8%
Perpetrated physical bullying at least often	2%	2%	4%	1%	11%
Made sexual comments to an unknown girl/woman at least often	3%	8%	4%	2%	10%

Table 12. Quintile Breakdown of Responses - Male Stereotyped Behaviour in the Home - Years 7-8

	Bottom 20%	2	3	4	Top 20%
Father never or only sometimes prepared food	45.4%	47.1%	47.9%	51.1%	47.0%
Father never or only sometimes cleaned house	39.8%	42.3%	46.7%	48.9%	54.1%
Father never or only sometimes washed clothes	46.6%	44.7%	58.6%	55.9%	62.2%
Father never or only sometimes cleaned bathroom	51.2%	58.8%	72.4%	65.1%	71.4%
Father never or only sometimes taken care of children	23.7%	18.9%	20.2%	21.0%	31.6%
Father never or only sometimes helped siblings with homework	40.9%	42.3%	54.2%	40.7%	57.2%
You never or only sometimes prepared food	79.5%	73.0%	67.1%	70.9%	62.5%
You never or only sometimes cleaned house	54.5%	57.6%	58.5%	63.9%	75.3%
You never or only sometimes washed clothes	80.6%	80.0%	80.9%	84.9%	87.6%
You never or only sometimes cleaned bathroom	79.5%	76.5%	84.1%	84.9%	75.5%
You never or only sometimes taken care of children	62.5%	63.6%	57.5%	62.8%	59.2%
You never or only sometimes helped siblings with homework	69.3%	76.4%	81.9%	69.8%	79.6%

Table 13. Quintile Breakdown of Responses - Male Stereotyped Behaviour in the Home - Years 9-12

	Bottom 20%	2	3	4	Top 20%
Father never or only sometimes prepared food	43.8%	45.3%	45.8%	67.8%	62.6%
Father never or only sometimes cleaned house	41.6%	46.1%	44.5%	79.2%	51.0%
Father never or only sometimes washed clothes	50.4%	60.4%	53.8%	61.0%	61.9%
Father never or only sometimes cleaned bathroom	66.4%	58.5%	61.9%	64.3%	66.0%
Father never or only sometimes taken care of children	19.0%	23.8%	14.2%	24.7%	32.7%
Father never or only sometimes helped siblings with homework	51.1%	48.4%	57.1%	58.5%	63.9%
You never or only sometimes prepared food	65.7%	65.0%	75.5%	74.0%	68.7%
You never or only sometimes cleaned house	40.9%	51.6%	54.9%	53.2%	54.4%
You never or only sometimes washed clothes	70.8%	70.6%	75.5%	72.1%	70.8%
You never or only sometimes cleaned bathroom	68.6%	83.0%	81.2%	80.6%	74.8%
You never or only sometimes taken care of children	46.0%	51.6%	51.0%	59.7%	57.9%
You never or only sometimes helped siblings with homework	67.2%	71.5%	67.8%	74.7%	69.4%

4.4.5 Relationships and Family

Boys who were in the highest Adolescent Man Box quintile were substantially more likely than boys in the other four quintiles to endorse controlling attitudes towards women and sexist attitudes in relation to the role of the man in the family (see Tables 14 and 15):

- 82 Per cent of years 7-8 boys who were in the highest quintile compared to 36 per cent in the lowest quintile were of the view that a guy deserved to know if their girlfriend spoke to another guy;

- The equivalent percentage for the highest quintile for years 9-12 boys was 86 per cent compared to 44 per cent in the lowest quintile;

- For years 7-8 boys, 65 per cent in the highest man box quintile held the view that the man was responsible for bringing home the money for the family compared to 22 per cent in the lowest quintile;

- The equivalent percentage for the years 9-12 boys was 71 per cent in the highest quintile compared to 27 per cent in the lowest quintile;

- Finally, 76 per cent of years 9-12 boys who were in the highest quintile were of the view that men were always ready for sex compared to 20 per cent of those in the lowest quintile.

Table 14. **Quintile Breakdown of Responses - Relationships and Family - Years 7-8**

	Bottom 20%	2	3	4	Top 20%
Man responsible for bringing home money for family	22%	24%	24%	38%	65%
Deserves to know where girlfriend is at all times	15%	18%	28%	42%	55%
Deserves to know if girlfriend talks to another guy	36%	49%	54%	67%	82%
Okay for guy to use violence to get respect	2%	0%	5%	6%	26%
Husband shouldn't do housework	2%	2%	6%	5%	26%

Table 15. **Quintile Breakdown of Responses – Relationships and Family – Years 9-12**

	Bottom 20%	2	3	4	Top 20%
Man responsible for bringing home money for family	27%	34%	44%	58%	71%
Deserves to know where girlfriend is at all times	18%	22%	32%	37%	58%
Deserves to know if girlfriend talks to another guy	44%	63%	66%	73%	86%
Okay for guy to use violence to get respect	2%	6%	5%	13%	37%
Husband shouldn't do housework	4%	6%	8%	12%	35%
Men are always ready for sex	20%	36%	45%	62%	76%

FINDINGS

- Masculine Norms
- Self-Concept and Mental Health
- Support Seeking in Relation to Pressure to be a *"Real Man"*
- Bullying, Violence and Sexual Harassment
- Risk-Taking Behaviours
- Male Stereotyped Behaviour at Home of Father and Son and Attitudes to Relationships and Family
- Impact of Personal Endorsement of Masculine Norms on Behaviour

5. Findings

The next section summarises the findings from the research and then develops recommendations. The responses of the three groups of boys (boys from years 7-8, years 9-12, and the Flexible Schools Network) are discussed.

The nature of the societal messages received by boys in relation to the four pillars of masculinity are discussed first, followed by the level of personal endorsement of these pillars of masculinity. The responses of each of the three groups of boys to questions regarding their self-concept, psychological distress, support seeking, bullying, violence and sexual harassment, risk-taking behaviours, male stereotyped behaviours at home, as well as attitudes to relationships and family are then discussed with the major findings in each of these areas being highlighted. Finally, the impact of the boys' personal endorsement of masculine norms on the above variables is considered. Boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 were separated into quintiles based on their personal endorsement of the pillars of masculinity and then the top and bottom quintiles were compared. This comparison was not conducted for boys from the Flexible Schools Network as the numbers were too low. The responses of boys to the top and bottom quintiles to the variables outlined above are compared.

Finally, recommendations developed relate to:

- Implications of the findings from the current study in terms of the impact of masculinity on adolescent boys;
- Prevention and early intervention strategies to ensure that masculine norms can be incorporated into a boy's sense of self;
- Adolescence being a crucial stage in lifespan development when boys and girls establish their own values, which then drive their attitudes and behaviours. It is essential that important influencers in boys lives are engaged, educated and actively participate in helping boys appreciate a positive sense of identity as they transition to adulthood;
- Future research to inform on how to ensure that boys are provided with the opportunities to develop a strong, positive sense of self as well as respectful relationships with others.

Adolescence is an important stage of development in the life cycle, particularly in terms of identity formation (Erikson and Erikson, 1981). It is the stage of life when boys (and girls) consolidate their view of who they are and where they fit within different parts of society – their friendships, family and the broader society. They move towards determining their attitudes to a wide range of issues as well as their views regarding behaviours that fit with their ethical standards and values.

Findings from the current study demonstrate the range of attitudes and behaviours adopted by adolescent boys on a broad range of topics. It is clear that there are areas of difference between the different groups of boys. It is also clear that personal endorsement of masculine norms is strongly related to these attitudes and behaviours in quite a few areas, particularly those related to bullying and violence, risk-taking behaviours, use of alcohol and drugs, as well as sexist attitudes and behaviours.

Given that adolescence is the stage of development when boys and girls are challenging and forming their sense of identity, it is imperative that adolescents are given the opportunity to discuss and understand the factors that underpin these future attitudes and behaviours. It is important that we create an environment where this discussion can occur so that the process of identity formation is built on a positive view of self and others and not on a view of being a man that limits boys' expression of themselves and their relationships with others.

5.1 Masculine Norms

5.1.1 Perceptions of Societal Messages

Overall, across the four pillars of masculinity, there was not much variation in the perception of societal messages to conform to the different pillars: an average of 52 per cent across all groups of boys perceived messages related to it being okay to engage in social teasing. These numbers were 46 per cent for items related to feeling constant pressure to be manly; 34 per cent for guys not showing their emotions and 47 per cent for avoiding behaviour considered to be feminine or gay.

The societal pressures were similar for each of the pillars across all groups of boys. The exceptions were:
- Emotional restriction, where Flexible Learning School students felt more pressure to conform; 62 per cent compared to 28 per cent for boys from years 7-8 and 30 per cent for boys from years 9-12
- Boys in years 9-12 from the Victorian Secondary School were more likely to feel pressure related to social teasing; 57 per cent as opposed to 40 per cent for boys in years 7-8 and 36 per cent for boys from the Flexible Schools Network.

In terms of responses to individual items in the Man Box survey, across all pillars, the three items where all groups of boys experience the most social pressure to conform (average responses over 50%), are:
- Guys do not pick on one another to be mean (66% agree or strongly agree);
- Being thought of as gay makes a guy seem like less of a man (57% agree or strongly agree);
- A guy should always appear confident even if he is not (53% agree or strongly agree).

5.1.2 Personal Endorsement

Across the pillars, there is significant variability in personal endorsement. An average of 52 per cent of boys endorse attitudes related to social teasing, 35 per cent for heterosexism, 32 per cent for constant efforts to be manly and 20 per cent for emotional restriction.

The personal endorsement of masculine norms for each of the pillars for boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 are very similar. The only exception is social teasing with 55 per cent of boys in years 9-12 endorsing this norm compared to 35 per cent of boys in year 7-8.

Boys from the Flexible Schools Network personally endorse the pillars of masculinity to a much greater extent – an average of over 50 per cent of these boys personally endorse stereotypical attitudes compared to less than 30 per cent of boys in both years 7-8 and years 9-12.

In terms of responses to individual items in the Adolescent Man Box survey across all pillars, the three items where all groups of boys showed the highest levels of personal endorsement (over 40%) are:

- Guys do not pick on each other to be mean (73% agree or strongly agree);
- A good way to appear manly is to avoid acting gay (44% agree or strongly agree);
- A guy must always appear confident even if he is not (41% agree or strongly agree).

Results from the focus groups indicate that social teasing seems to be something that was accepted by the students who were interviewed and part of their daily routine and school culture. The boys interviewed seemed to be able to detect the subtle reactions that indicated whether someone was upset or not by the teasing. Teasing amongst friends was generally deemed to be acceptable as long as the friends did not get upset.

5.2 Self-Concept and Mental Health

Boys in all groups generally demonstrated a positive self-concept, with over 60 per cent of each of the three groups of boys indicating that they had good relationships with others (friends and parents) and achieved well at school and at sport. Boys in all groups also demonstrated a low level of mental health concerns.

5.2.1 Support-seeking in relation to pressure to be a "*Real Man*"

- The main sources of support for boys when they were sad or wanted to talk about pressures to be a "*real man*" were the boys' parents, siblings or male friends. These findings applied for all boys but were not as evident for the boys from the Flexible Schools Network: 53 per cent of boys in years 7-8 identified both parents as their first source of support; the percentage for boys in years 9-12 was 44 per cent, and 28 per cent for the boys from the Flexible Schools Network;

- Similar findings were found in relation to the boys' male friends, although older boys were more likely to seek out their male friend: 42 per cent for boys in years 7-8; 54 per cent for boys in years 9-12. The numbers for the Flexible Schools Network were 28 per cent;
- Similar trends were found for support in relation to pressures to be a "*real man*", although the percentages were about 10 per cent lower than for seeking support when the boys were feeling sad.

5.3 Bullying, Violence and Sexual Harassment

The main areas of concern related to bullying, violence, sexual harassment and binge drinking. The experience of bullying was not as high as the perpetration of bullying. Although only about 20 per cent of boys reported experiencing physical violence, almost half of all groups of boys had been in a fight in the past year. With the majority of these behaviours, they were higher among boys in years 9-12, and higher again for the Flexible Schools Network. Only boys in years 9-12 were asked about sexual harassment and the findings demonstrated that these boys were unlikely to object to sexual comments made towards women. A more detailed description of the findings is outlined below.

- Less than 30 per cent of all three groups of boys experienced bullying at least sometimes; the perpetration of bullying was higher with 33 per cent of boys in years 7-8 engaging in bullying at least sometimes; the equivalent numbers for boys in years 9-12 was 54 per cent and 60 per cent for boys from the Flexible Schools Network;
- Some level of physical violence was experienced by 20 per cent of boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12, with about 30 per cent of boys from the Flexible Schools Network. About 15 per cent of boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 perpetrated physical violence; this number was 40 per cent for the boys from the Flexible Schools Network;
- Almost half of the boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 had engaged in a physical fight in the last year; the equivalent number for boys from the Flexible Schools Network was 69 per cent;
- Less than 10 per cent of the boys in years 9-12 (15% for boys from the Flexible Schools Network) objected to sexist comments if they occurred, and only 64 per cent of boys objected if a woman/girl was verbally or physically harassed compared to 34 per cent for the boys from the Flexible Schools Network;
- For boys in years 9-12, 13 per cent reported that they at least sometimes engaged in sexual harassment compared to 34 per cent for boys from the Flexible Schools Network.

5.4 Risk-Taking Behaviours

Overall, the levels of risk-taking behaviour are low among boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12; they were substantially higher among boys in the Flexible Schools Network. Levels of binge drinking were substantially higher among boys from the Flexible Schools Network.

- The frequency of smoking was low for boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 (less than 5%). However, over 50 per cent of boys from the Flexible Schools Network smoked;

- Boys in years 9-12 were more likely to have been drunk than boys in years 7-8 – 25 per cent compared to 8 per cent. These numbers were over 50 per cent for boys from the Flexible Schools Network;

- Two-thirds of the boys in years 9-12 had never engaged in binge-drinking compared to 40 per cent from the Flexible Schools Network;

- Drug use was low in years 9-12, with more than 80 per cent never having used cannabis and more than 90 per cent never having used drugs other than cannabis. The equivalent numbers for the boys from the Flexible Schools Network were 27 per cent for never having used cannabis and 15 per cent for never having used other drugs;

- Over 80 per cent of boys in years 9-12 had not engaged in sex. If they had, they used contraception. For boys from the Flexible Schools Network, only one-third had never engaged in sex and 25 per cent of them had engaged in sex without using contraception;

- Generally speaking, for boys in all groups if they rode a bike they mostly used a helmet.

5.5 Male Stereotyped Behaviour at Home of Father and Son and Attitudes to Relationships and Family

Generally speaking, boys and their fathers appeared to be engaged in household activities and so not evident strong stereotyped behaviour at home. However, boys demonstrated stronger sexist attitudes in responses to relationships and the family. Boys in years 9-12 and particularly in the Flexible Schools Network held stronger sexist attitudes than boys in years 7-8.

- About 50 per cent of fathers from all three groups of boys were engaged in household activities often or very often;

- About one-third of the boys were engaged in household activities often or very often across the three groups;

- In terms of questions about relationships and Family, less than 50 per cent of boys in all groups were of the view that men are responsible for bringing home the money;

- About one-third of boys in years 7-8 and years 9-12 agreed that a guy should know where his girlfriend is all the time; this number was over 50 per cent for boys from the Flexible Schools Network;

- About 60 per cent of all groups of boys were of the view that a guy needs to know if his girlfriend talks to another guy;

- Only 8 per cent of boys in years 7-8 and 12 per cent of boys in years 9-12 agreed that a guy should use violence to get respect; this number was 62 per cent for boys from the Flexible Schools Network;

- Only 8 per cent of boys in years 7-8 and 14 per cent of boys in years 9-12 agreed that husbands should not do housework; this number was 81 per cent for the boys in the Flexible Schools Network;

- Almost 50 per cent (48%) of boys in years 9-12 compared to two-thirds (57%) for the boys from the Flexible Schools Network agreed that men are always ready for sex.

5.6 Impact of Personal Endorsement of Masculine Norms on Behaviour

Boys were divided into five groups based on their responses to the Adolescent Man Box survey. Boys in the top quintile showed the strongest endorsement of masculine norms, those in the bottom quintile showed the lowest adherence to masculine norms.

The findings described below do not include an analysis of the boys from the Flexible Schools Network, as the numbers of boys in this group was too small (n=58) to conduct this type of analysis.

The Adolescent Man Box attitudes had the most substantial impact on attitudes related to relationships and risk-taking behaviours. Noting the limitations outlined in section 3.5, the association between Adolescent Man Box attitudes and these variables is substantial – across a range of measures boys in the top 20 per cent by their Adolescent Man Box score, relative to boys in the bottom 20 per cent, were more than twice as likely to experience negative life outcomes (e.g. binge drinking; drug use) or hold concerning attitudes about relationships (see Table 16). Specifically, for boys in Years 7-8 and 9-12, those conforming most to Adolescent Man Box attitudes were likely to:

- Have controlling attitudes towards women and sexist attitudes in relation to the role of the man in the family:

  - *65 per cent of boys in the top Adolescent Man Box quintile were of the view that men are responsible for bringing home the money for the family compared to just over 20 per cent of the boys in the bottom quintile.*

  - *the equivalent figures for whether or not a boy deserves to know if his girlfriend talks to another guy were over 80 per cent compared to 40 per cent.*

  - *for boys in years 9-12, 76 per cent of those who showed highest endorsement of Adolescent Man Box attitudes were of the view that men are always ready for sex. The percentage of those in the bottom Adolescent Man Box quintile was 20 per cent.*

- Engage in getting drunk and using drugs:

  - *46 per cent of boys in years 9-12 who were in the top Adolescent Man Box quintile reported being drunk once or more in the last year compares to 23 per cent of those in the bottom quintile. The corresponding numbers for boys in years 7-8 was 17 per cent compared to 2 per cent.*

- *26 per cent boys of years 9-12 who were in the top quintile reported using cannabis compared to 10 per cent in the bottom quintile.*

- There were moderate relationships between Adolescent Man Box attitudes and their impact on violence and bullying:

  - *57 per cent of boys in the top Adolescent Man Box quintile who were in years 9-12 reported being in a fight once or more in the past year compared to only 27 per cent in the bottom quintile.*

  - *the equivalent numbers for boys in years 7-8 was 68 per cent compared to 40 per cent.*

- There was little or no relationship between the Adolescent Man Box attitudes and self-concept and psychological distress. Two of the areas where there were some differences are discussed below:

  - *78 per cent of boys in years 7-8 in the top Adolescent Man Box quintile saw themselves as having a good high school academic performance compared to 91 per cent of those in the bottom quintile. There were equivalent numbers for boys in years 9-12.*

- *in terms of psychological distress, 26 per cent of boys in years 7-8 in the top Adolescent Man Box quintile demonstrated high levels of psychological distress compared to 14 per cent in the bottom quintile. There were equivalent numbers for boys in years 9-12.*

- Boys who are more likely to endorse the adolescent Man Box attitudes are also more likely to have fathers who conform to stereotypical behaviours in the home:

  - *Over 70 per cent of boys in the top Adolescent Man Box quintile indicated that their father never or sometimes participates in cleaning the bathroom compared to just over 50 per cent boys in the bottom quintile.*

Table 16. **Risk-taking behaviours and sexist attitudes and behaviours for boys in Years 7-8 and Years 9-12**

	Years 7-8		Years 9-12	
	Bottom 20% of scores	**Top 20% of scores**	**Bottom 20% of scores**	**Top 20% of scores**
Risk-Taking Behaviours				
Ever been drunk once or more	2%	17%	23%	46%
Been in a fight once or more in the past year	40%	68%	27%	57%
In last month, 6 or more drinks on one occasion	N/A	N/A	20%	46%
Ever used cannabis	N/A	N/A	10%	26%
Ever used other drugs	N/A	N/A	6%	18%
Sexist Attitudes and Behaviours				
Man responsible for bringing home money for family	22%	65%	27%	71%
Deserves to know where girlfriend is at all times	15%	55%	18%	58%
Deserves to know if girlfriend talks to another guy	36%	82%	44%	86%
A guy should use violence to get respect if necessary	2%	26%	2%	37%
Husband shouldn't have to do housework	2%	26%	4%	35%
Men are always ready for sex	N/A	N/A	20%	76%

RECOMMENDATIONS
REFERENCES
APPENDIX

6. Recommendations

The results in this study relate to specific cohorts of adolescent boys and are not generalisable to the adolescents across Australia more broadly. The findings do, however, inform recommendations with relevance beyond the schools in this sample including avenues for further research.

Recommendation 1: Create an environment where the major influencers on boys' lives – parents, peers, teachers, other role models and siblings can work together to assist boys to develop healthy, strong and positive identity. This will include the development of values which will drive positive attitudes and behaviours.

This recommendation relates to:

- working with parents to promote a greater understanding of the central role they play in shaping and guiding their son's and daughter's development. In particular, equip them with age-appropriate strategies and resources to assist their sons in negotiating their journey towards adulthood as it relates to healthier masculinities. Resources should be disseminated at critical touch points with parents – maternal and child health, kindergarten, community hubs such as libraries, and Primary and Secondary Schools;
- promoting discussion within the school community among teachers, boys and parents in relation to the role of masculinity and its impact on the attitudes and behaviours of boys. This should be pursued using engaging and strength-based approaches with the support of school leadership. External experts in masculinities could be drawn upon to inform the approach and co-deliver content. However, to foster sustainability, the school community itself should take ownership of this agenda and, in doing so, tailor the approach to the specific needs and objectives of their community;
- supporting teachers to assist them to implement strategies to work with boys to address the negative impact of masculine norms. This may require the provision of professional development related to both the theoretical aspects of this work as well as concrete tools that teachers can use to engage their students. One more nuanced area highlighted by this report is helping teachers understand the role of social teasing. Rather than limiting these strategies to specific aspects of the curriculum, role modelling could be expanded to other settings such as sports coaching and other pro-social activities that the students engage in. Teachers should be encouraged to role model healthy masculinities and embed strategies in all of their interactions with students. Schools should explicitly highlight the impact of masculinities and assume responsibility for the associated work to address these impacts in the position descriptions of key staff;
- expanding the Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) curriculum to other states. As a result of a recommendation of the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, the Department of Education has led the implementation of the RRRR curriculum since 2016. The curriculum is designed to embed a culture of respect and equality within the entire community. In the schools system it is designed to bring about change in students attitudes and behaviours so that each person has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Noting that the evaluation is currently in progress, this curriculum has raised the prominence of these topics. Drawing on lessons learnt during implementation, the RRRR curriculum could be rolled out across other Australian states and territories.

Recommendation 2: Create, implement and evaluate strategies to work with boys and girls to develop a shared understanding of and challenge rigid adherence to stereotypical masculine norms and, in doing so, facilitate positive and healthy definitions of what it means to be a man.

While there is still much work to do, we have seen a positive shift to empower girls and women to develop a positive view of self that includes traditionally masculine and feminine characteristics – and rightly so. This same shift now needs to take place for boys where terms like '*strong*' and '*tough*' do not have to mean not expressing emotion or hiding one's vulnerabilities. This content could be integrated into curriculum related to substance use, sexual harassment and mental health – all areas where rigid adherence to stereotypical masculine norms has a negative impact. Drawing on lessons from climate change advocacy, opportunities for young people (e.g. year 9-12) to lead other young people (e.g. year 7-8) could be explored. Areas to be targeted could include the positive value of: expressing emotions, asking for help – standing up for others being victimised (e.g. when witnessing sexual harassment), respectful relationships – recognising the potentially negative impact of their actions (e.g. teasing), providing support for one another and valuing diversity. This work will be most successful when it is integrated into a sustained whole of school approach rather than one-off events with external facilitators that are not led by the school community.

Recommendation 3: Use the Adolescent Man Box survey to inform curriculum development, track progress over time and identify boys, based on aggregate survey results who may be at risk.

Use the Adolescent Man Box Survey to:

• engage with students to understand their attitudes and behaviours and assess the extent to which there are positive shifts. While curriculum related to well-being has risen in prominence over recent decades, schools are continuing to develop and refine their approach. This is an approach that is widely adopted for other aspects of the curriculum such as math or science to understand student's progress and tailor the teaching approach in response. In turn, the Adolescent Man Box tool provides an opportunity for schools to better understand how their students are progressing on critical aspects of well-being. In response, approaches could be developed for specific cohorts (e.g. Flexible Schools Network) based on the findings;

• at a school level, inform curriculum development and track progress in attitudes and behaviours over time. This could involve changes in boys' personal endorsement of masculine norms, as well as the levels of bullying, violence, sexual harassment, risk-taking behaviours, male-stereotyped behaviours at home, and attitudes to relationships and family;

• identify the cohorts of boys who are more at risk of engaging in risk-taking, violent and sexist behaviours, so that, without stigmatising these boys, early intervention supports can be provided to avoid an escalation in unhealthy attitudes and behaviours as young men move towards early adulthood.

Recommendation 4: Complete further research using the Adolescent Man Box survey on a broader population of adolescent boys and also adolescent girls across Australia and complement any quantitative work with qualitative methods to further explore the survey results.

Complete further research to:

• examine the extent to which the findings of this study are generalizable to other adolescent boys including in co-educational and non-Catholic settings. This will demonstrate how different types of environments impact upon the development of a healthy identity and what the associated implications for curriculum development are;

• understand the perspectives of adolescent girls including their experience and expectations of adolescent boys. An understanding of the perspectives of adolescent girls will further inform the curriculum to shape the attitudes and behaviours of adolescent boys. It will also be useful to identify unhealthy attitudes and behaviours of adolescent girls that may limit their formation of a positive sense of self. This information could then be built into a revised wellbeing curriculum for adolescent girls;

• work with the boys to explore how they understand terms in the survey such as what is meant by a physical fight and, where survey data present concerns understand the environments where these behaviours are most likely to occur.

7. References

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8. Appendices

Table 1. **Descriptive Statistics of the Mental Health and Self-Concept Scales: Years 7-8, Years 9-12 and Flexible Schools Network**

	Mean	Average Score/Item	Mean	Average Score/Item	Mean	Average Score/Item	Range	Min	Max
	Years 7-8		**Years 9-12**		**Flexible Schools Network**				
Psychological distress	17.54	1.75	17.75	1.78	21.8	2.18	30	10	40
Self-concept									
Physical abilities	12.58	3.14	12.49	3.12	9.6	2.40	12	4	16
Physical appearance	8.90	2.97	9.02	3.01	8.1	2.70	9	3	12
Same-sex relationships	5.98	1.50	6.26	1.56	12.0	3.00	12	4	16
Opposite-sex relationships	6.17	2.06	5.77	1.92	8.4	2.8	9	3	12
Honesty and trustworthiness	8.55	1.71	9.23	1.85	14.0	2.8	15	5	20
Parent relationships	14.50	3.62	14.12	3.53	12.5	3.12	12	4	16
Emotional stability	11.24	2.25	11.51	2.30	12.9	2.58	15	5	20
School	9.59	3.20	9.28	3.09	7.6	2.53	9	3	12
General	17.37	2.90	19.35	3.22	17.1	2.85	18	6	24

Table 2. **Male Stereotyped Behaviour at Home: Years 7-8, Years 9-12 and Flexible Schools Network**

	Mean Years 7-8	Mean Years 9-12	Mean Flexible Schools Network	Range	Min	Max
Father prepared food	2.63	2.62	2.50	4	1	4
Father cleaned the house	2.63	2.63	2.50	4	1	4
Father washed clothes	2.45	2.41	2.40	4	1	4
Father cleaned bathroom	2.27	2.26	2.40	4	1	4
Father cared for children	3.04	3.10	2.50	4	1	4
Father helped with homework	2.65	2.43	2.00	4	1	4
You prepared food	2.18	2.26	2.50	4	1	4
You cleaned the house	2.38	2.50	2.50	4	1	4
You washed clothes	1.84	2.05	2.50	4	1	4
You cleaned bathroom	1.75	1.94	2.30	4	1	4
You cared for siblings	2.23	2.37	2.20	4	1	4
You helped siblings with homework	1.96	2.03	1.90	4	1	4

Table 3. **Relationships and Family: Years 7-8, Years 9-12 and Flexible Schools Network**

	Mean Years 7-8	Mean Years 9-12	Mean Flexible Schools Network	Range	Min	Max
Guy brings home the money	2.79	2.53	2.6	4	1	4
Guy needs to know where girlfriend is	2.76	2.70	2.5	4	1	4
Guy needs to know if girlfriend talks to another guy	2.33	2.16	2.8	4	1	4
Guy should use violence to get respect	3.53	3.41	2.4	4	1	4
Husband shouldn't do housework	3.34	3.19	2.4	4	1	4
Men are always ready for sex	N/A	2.41	N/A	4	1	4

Table 4. **Descriptive Statistics of the Pillars of Masculinity across all three groups of Adolescent Boys**

	Mean (SD) Years 7-8	Average Score/Item	Mean (SD) Years 9-12	Average Score/Item	Mean (SD) Flexible Schools Network	Average Score/Item	Range	Min	Max
Personal Endorsement									
Total Masculinity Scale (Composite)	77.76 (14.17)	2.88	75.96 (13.98)	2.52	65.5 (13.2)	2.42	81	27	108
Pillar 1. Constant Efforts to be Manly	19.86 (4.38)	2.83	19.83 (4.36)	2.49	16.8 (3.8)	2.40	21	7	28
Pillar 2. Emotional Restriction	21.97 (4.09)	3.13	22.42 (4.07)	2.76	15.1 (4.0)	2.15	21	7	28
Pillar 3. Heterosexism	22.28 (5.77)	2.78	21.78 (5.53)	2.47	19.7 (5.7)	2.46	24	8	32
Pillar 4. Social Teasing	13.64 (3.20)	2.73	11.93 (3.27)	2.33	13.9 (3.2)	2.78	15	5	20
Societal Messages									
Total Masculinity Scale (Composite)	72.70 (16.99)	2.69	68.08 (17.25)	2.81	69.7 (15.9)	2.58	81	27	108
Pillar 1. Constant Efforts to be Manly	18.86 (4.83)	2.69	17.42 (4.88)	2.83	18.3 (3.9)	2.61	22	7	28
Pillar 2. Emotional Restriction	20.12 (4.85)	2.87	19.30 (5.12)	3.20	16.5 (4.8)	2.35	21	7	28
Pillar 3. Heterosexism	23.09 (7.00)	2.89	19.73 (6.07)	2.72	21.3 (6.2)	2.66	24	8	32
Pillar 4. Social Teasing	13.17 (3.67)	2.13	11.63 (3.58)	2.39	13.6 (3.2)	2.72	15	5	20

Table 5. **Percentage of Adolescent boys' responses to the statement "Society as a whole tells me that..."** (Responses are in bold and orange where there is a difference of more than 15% between the lowest and the highest responses across different groups of boys.)

		Social Messages: Percentage of adolescent boys responses to *"Society as a whole tells me that..."*		
Pillar 1. Constant Efforts to be Manly		**Years 7-8**	**Years 9-12**	**Flexible Schools Network**
A guy should always seem as manly as other guys that he knows.	Strongly agree	6.90%	11.60%	4.20%
	Agree	**29.20%**	**39.50%**	**50.00%**
	Disagree	46.40%	39.30%	33.30%
	Strongly disagree	17.50%	9.60%	12.50%
A guy should never back down from a challenge in public.	Strongly agree	9.10%	13.60%	4.20%
	Agree	33.20%	38.10%	33.30%
	Disagree	41.00%	37.10%	47.90%
	Strongly disagree	16.70%	11.20%	14.60%
Acting manly should be the most important goal for guys.	Strongly agree	4.70%	10.90%	4.20%
	Agree	**25.70%**	**30.20%**	**47.90%**
	Disagree	46.90%	45.80%	35.40%
	Strongly disagree	22.70%	13.10%	12.50%
A guy must always appear confident, even if he isn't.	Strongly agree	12.70%	14.30%	2.10%
	Agree	39.40%	42.50%	39.60%
	Disagree	33.40%	35.70%	43.80%
	Strongly disagree	14.50%	7.50%	14.50%
No matter what happens, a guy should seem strong to others.	Strongly agree	8.00%	12.50%	4.20%
	Agree	37.70%	42.90%	41.70%
	Disagree	39.70%	36.10%	41.70%
	Strongly disagree	14.60%	8.50%	12.40%
Getting made fun of helps guys become tough.	Strongly agree	6.00%	10.40%	10.40%
	Agree	**25.50%**	**29.80%**	**41.70%**
	Disagree	44.30%	45.90%	39.60%
	Strongly disagree	**24.20%**	**13.90%**	**8.30%**
Guy should try to appear manly in almost all situations.	Strongly agree	7.10%	12.00%	4.20%
	Agree	33.00%	37.40%	37.50%
	Disagree	44.10%	39.40%	43.80%
	Strongly disagree	15.80%	11.20%	14.50%
Pillar 2. Emotional Restriction				
It is not important for guys to listen to each other's problems.	Strongly agree	6.70%	8.90%	12.50%
	Agree	**24.90%**	**26.70%**	**43.80%**
	Disagree	**43.00%**	**45.80%**	**29.20%**
	Strongly disagree	25.40%	18.60%	14.50%
It is weird for a guy to talk about his feelings with other guys.	Strongly agree	7.80%	9.80%	14.60%
	Agree	**24.30%**	**27.50%**	**45.80%**
	Disagree	**44.50%**	**46.90%**	**31.30%**
	Strongly disagree	**23.40%**	**15.80%**	**8.30%**

Pillar 2. Emotional Restriction (con't)		Years 7-8	Years 9-12	Flexible Schools Network
Guys should not talk about their worries with each other.	Strongly agree	6.00%	8.20%	10.40%
	Agree	**20.30%**	**24.20%**	**56.30%**
	Disagree	**50.80%**	**50.30%**	**22.90%**
	Strongly disagree	22.90%	17.30%	10.40%
It is not a guy's job to comfort a friend who is upset.	Strongly agree	5.60%	6.70%	8.30%
	Agree	**17.80%**	**21.20%**	**54.20%**
	Disagree	**48.60%**	**49.90%**	**27.10%**
	Strongly disagree	**28.00%**	**22.20%**	**10.40%**
When a guy has a fear, he should keep it to himself.	Strongly agree	7.10%	8.10%	14.60%
	Agree	**20.90%**	**27.90%**	**50.00%**
	Disagree	**51.00%**	**49.00%**	**27.10%**
	Strongly disagree	21.00%	15.00%	8.30%
It is hard to respect a guy who shows his feelings.	Strongly agree	5.30%	6.90%	14.60%
	Agree	**23.80%**	**22.50%**	**52.10%**
	Disagree	**48.60%**	**50.50%**	**22.90%**
	Strongly disagree	22.30%	20.10%	10.40%
If a guy is upset about something, he should hold it in.	Strongly agree	7.10%	7.70%	12.50%
	Agree	**22.70%**	**26.90%**	**50.00%**
	Disagree	**50.30%**	**49.40%**	**25.00%**
	Strongly disagree	19.90%	16.00%	12.50%

Pillar 3. Heterosexism

		Years 7-8	Years 9-12	Flexible Schools Network
A guy who wears nail polish is hard to take seriously.	Strongly agree	21.40%	26.60%	12.80%
	Agree	38.80%	36.80%	29.80%
	Disagree	26.30%	26.30%	27.70%
	Strongly disagree	**13.50%**	**10.30%**	**29.70%**
It is embarrassing to have a lot of gay friends.	Strongly agree	14.00%	13.60%	17.00%
	Agree	32.70%	27.70%	31.90%
	Disagree	34.70%	42.60%	27.70%
	Strongly disagree	18.60%	16.10%	23.40%
Being thought of as gay makes a guy seem like less of a man.	Strongly agree	18.30%	18.50%	10.40%
	Agree	37.60%	36.30%	41.70%
	Disagree	28.10%	33.70%	29.20%
	Strongly disagree	16.00%	11.50%	18.70%
It would be embarrassing for a guy to admit he is interested in being a hair dresser.	Strongly agree	6.50%	11.10%	14.60%
	Agree	18.70%	23.80%	33.30%
	Disagree	47.70%	44.40%	33.30%
	Strongly disagree	27.10%	20.70%	18.80%

Pillar 3. Heterosexism (con't)		**Years 7-8**	**Years 9-12**	**Flexible Schools Network**
A good way to seem manly is to avoid acting gay.	Strongly agree	15.70%	16.60%	8.30%
	Agree	38.00%	39.10%	29.20%
	Disagree	**28.40%**	**33.30%**	**45.80%**
	Strongly disagree	17.90%	11.00%	16.70%
A guy should be embarrassed to "run like a girl."	Strongly agree	13.60%	17.10%	10.40%
	Agree	**31.60%**	**38.60%**	**31.30%**
	Disagree	**35.60%**	**32.00%**	**43.80%**
	Strongly disagree	19.20%	12.30%	14.50%
There is something wrong if a guy wants to do activities usually done by girls.	Strongly agree	10.70%	12.70%	6.30%
	Agree	**24.60%**	**31.20%**	**43.70%**
	Disagree	**44.10%**	**43.10%**	**25.00%**
	Strongly disagree	20.60%	13.00%	25.00%
"Real" guys never act like a girl.	Strongly agree	15.60%	14.10%	6.30%
	Agree	35.00%	38.20%	29.20%
	Disagree	31.60%	36.30%	45.80%
	Strongly disagree	17.80%	11.40%	18.70%

Pillar 4. Social Teasing

		Years 7-8	**Years 9-12**	**Flexible Schools Network**
A guy should be able to take teasing from his friends.	Strongly agree	**13.60%**	**20.60%**	**4.30%**
	Agree	**36.10%**	**44.40%**	**17.00%**
	Disagree	**33.00%**	**28.00%**	**53.20%**
	Strongly disagree	**17.30%**	**7.00%**	**25.50%**
There is nothing wrong with a guy who picks on his friends.	Strongly agree	8.90%	13.70%	10.40%
	Agree	25.80%	38.00%	31.30%
	Disagree	41.10%	38.30%	43.80%
	Strongly disagree	24.20%	10.00%	14.50%
It is normal for guys to make fun of their friends.	Strongly agree	10.50%	19.10%	6.30%
	Agree	**39.90%**	**47.90%**	**27.10%**
	Disagree	**33.20%**	**25.90%**	**50.00%**
	Strongly disagree	16.40%	7.10%	16.60%
In order to fit in, guys must be able to tease other guys.	Strongly agree	5.80%	11.60%	10.60%
	Agree	**18.70%**	**30.20%**	**42.60%**
	Disagree	**50.20%**	**45.90%**	**34.00%**
	Strongly disagree	25.30%	12.30%	12.80%
Guys do not pick on each other to be mean.	Strongly agree	16.90%	20.30%	8.30%
	Agree	**44.00%**	**46.90%**	**22.90%**
	Disagree	**28.90%**	**25.60%**	**56.30%**
	Strongly disagree	10.20%	7.20%	12.50%

Table 6. **Percentage of Adolescent boys' responses to the statement "In my opinion…"** (Responses are in bold and orange where there is a difference of more than 15% between the lowest and the highest responses across different groups of boys.)

	Personal Endorsement: Percentage of adolescent boys responses to _"In my opinion…"_		
Pillar 1. Constant Efforts to be Manly	**Years 7-8**	**Years 9-12**	**Flexible Schools Network**
A guy should always seem as manly as other guys that he knows.			
Strongly agree	4.30%	6.00%	12.50%
Agree	**22.40%**	**20.70%**	**58.30%**
Disagree	**58.70%**	**59.40%**	**22.90%**
Strongly disagree	14.60%	13.90%	6.30%
A guy should never back down from a challenge in public.			
Strongly agree	9.20%	9.50%	12.50%
Agree	23.20%	21.20%	29.20%
Disagree	50.20%	53.10%	45.80%
Strongly disagree	17.40%	16.20%	12.50%
Acting manly should be the most important goal for guys.			
Strongly agree	4.50%	5.40%	14.90%
Agree	**12.90%**	**12.80%**	**51.10%**
Disagree	**52.10%**	**51.10%**	**31.90%**
Strongly disagree	**30.50%**	**30.70%**	**2.10%**
A guy must always appear confident, even if he isn't.			
Strongly agree	10.90%	8.20%	4.20%
Agree	31.70%	28.50%	39.60%
Disagree	42.40%	49.70%	45.80%
Strongly disagree	15.00%	13.60%	10.40%
No matter what happens, a guy should seem strong to others.			
Strongly agree	8.30%	7.00%	12.50%
Agree	**23.90%**	**26.50%**	**41.70%**
Disagree	51.00%	50.80%	37.50%
Strongly disagree	16.80%	15.70%	8.30%
Getting made fun of helps guys become tough.			
Strongly agree	6.90%	7.10%	16.70%
Agree	**19.40%**	**21.50%**	**39.60%**
Disagree	**38.20%**	**43.10%**	**27.10%**
Strongly disagree	**35.50%**	**28.30%**	**16.60%**
Guy should try to appear manly in almost all situations.			
Strongly agree	5.40%	4.90%	10.40%
Agree	**22.10%**	**19.00%**	**45.80%**
Disagree	**50.20%**	**55.00%**	**39.60%**
Strongly disagree	**22.30%**	**21.10%**	**4.20%**
Pillar 2. Emotional Restriction			
It is not important for guys to listen to each other's problems.			
Strongly agree	**6.70%**	**8.10%**	**27.10%**
Agree	**14.90%**	**11.70%**	**43.80%**
Disagree	**41.90%**	**39.30%**	**22.90%**
Strongly disagree	**36.50%**	**40.90%**	**6.20%**
It is weird for a guy to talk about his feelings with other guys.			
Strongly agree	6.90%	5.70%	12.50%
Agree	**13.80%**	**17.10%**	**47.90%**
Disagree	**48.00%**	**44.20%**	**22.90%**
Strongly disagree	**31.30%**	**33.00%**	**16.70%**

Pillar 2. Emotional Restriction (con't)		Years 7-8	Years 9-12	Flexible Learnings Schools
Guys should not talk about their worries with each other.	Strongly agree	3.60%	2.90%	21.30%
	Agree	8.70%	6.30%	57.40%
	Disagree	53.20%	51.90%	14.90%
	Strongly disagree	34.50%	38.90%	6.40%
It is not a guy's job to comfort a friend who is upset.	Strongly agree	4.00%	2.60%	27.70%
	Agree	6.20%	5.60%	48.90%
	Disagree	38.50%	43.10%	19.10%
	Strongly disagree	51.30%	48.70%	4.30%
When a guy has a fear, he should keep it to himself.	Strongly agree	2.90%	2.50%	18.80%
	Agree	12.50%	10.00%	47.90%
	Disagree	55.70%	55.20%	29.20%
	Strongly disagree	28.90%	32.30%	4.10%
It is hard to respect a guy who shows his feelings.	Strongly agree	2.90%	2.40%	18.80%
	Agree	10.30%	7.10%	56.30%
	Disagree	50.10%	49.50%	18.80%
	Strongly disagree	36.70%	41.00%	6.10%
If a guy is upset about something, he should hold it in.	Strongly agree	4.20%	3.80%	16.70%
	Agree	12.70%	9.60%	54.20%
	Disagree	51.80%	51.70%	25.00%
	Strongly disagree	31.30%	34.90%	4.10%

Pillar 3. Heterosexism

		Years 7-8	Years 9-12	Flexible Learnings Schools
A guy who wears nail polish is hard to take seriously.	Strongly agree	21.90%	26.30%	14.60%
	Agree	30.40%	31.70%	27.10%
	Disagree	32.10%	31.70%	29.20%
	Strongly disagree	15.60%	10.30%	29.10%
It is embarrassing to have a lot of gay friends.	Strongly agree	14.30%	11.60%	18.80%
	Agree	22.40%	18.90%	45.80%
	Disagree	39.60%	46.20%	20.80%
	Strongly disagree	23.70%	23.30%	14.60%
Being thought of as gay makes a guy seem like less of a man.	Strongly agree	15.40%	15.30%	12.80%
	Agree	30.60%	32.60%	40.40%
	Disagree	35.30%	35.10%	27.70%
	Strongly disagree	18.70%	17.00%	19.10%
It would be embarrassing for a guy to admit he is interested in being a hair dresser.	Strongly agree	4.70%	7.40%	27.10%
	Agree	10.70%	15.50%	45.80%
	Disagree	49.70%	48.60%	16.70%
	Strongly disagree	34.90%	28.50%	10.40%

		Personal Endorsement: Percentage of adolescent boys responses to *"In my opinion..."*		
Pillar 3. Heterosexism (con't)		**Years 7-8**	**Years 9-12**	**Flexible Schools Network**
A good way to seem manly is to avoid acting gay.	Strongly agree	12.30%	12.70%	16.70%
	Agree	30.90%	31.70%	29.20%
	Disagree	37.00%	37.80%	41.70%
	Strongly disagree	19.80%	17.80%	12.40%
A guy should be embarrassed to "run like a girl."	Strongly agree	8.50%	10.20%	17.00%
	Agree	15.70%	26.40%	29.80%
	Disagree	47.20%	44.10%	40.40%
	Strongly disagree	**28.60%**	**19.30%**	**12.80%**
There is something wrong if a guy wants to do activities usually done by girls.	Strongly agree	5.30%	6.20%	12.80%
	Agree	**14.00%**	**13.20%**	**51.10%**
	Disagree	**49.10%**	**54.60%**	**19.10%**
	Strongly disagree	**31.60%**	**26.00%**	**17.00%**
"Real" guys never act like a girl.	Strongly agree	10.00%	7.40%	8.30%
	Agree	**19.60%**	**18.30%**	**33.30%**
	Disagree	44.90%	49.20%	35.40%
	Strongly disagree	25.50%	25.10%	23.00%
Pillar 4. Social Teasing				
A guy should be able to take teasing from his friends.	Strongly agree	**14.30%**	**23.20%**	**2.10%**
	Agree	**31.20%**	**41.60%**	**20.80%**
	Disagree	**37.70%**	**25.20%**	**41.70%**
	Strongly disagree	**16.80%**	**10.00%**	**35.40%**
There is nothing wrong with a guy who picks on his friends.	Strongly agree	4.00%	9.20%	8.30%
	Agree	**12.00%**	**27.20%**	**45.80%**
	Disagree	**47.20%**	**43.70%**	**29.20%**
	Strongly disagree	**36.80%**	**19.90%**	**16.70%**
It is normal for guys to make fun of their friends.	Strongly agree	**8.90%**	**22.40%**	**6.30%**
	Agree	**38.80%**	**51.30%**	**18.80%**
	Disagree	**33.40%**	**19.30%**	**47.90%**
	Strongly disagree	**18.90%**	**7.00%**	**27.00%**
In order to fit in, guys must be able to tease other guys.	Strongly agree	3.10%	6.40%	4.30%
	Agree	**12.30%**	**18.70%**	**63.80%**
	Disagree	**51.30%**	**55.40%**	**27.70%**
	Strongly disagree	**33.30%**	**19.50%**	**4.20%**
Guys do not pick on each other to be mean.	Strongly agree	**21.70%**	**29.10%**	**6.40%**
	Agree	**44.50%**	**47.90%**	**14.90%**
	Disagree	**26.00%**	**17.50%**	**53.20%**
	Strongly disagree	**7.80%**	**5.50%**	**25.50%**

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