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The Men's Resource Centre Update

The Men's Resource Centre of Saskatoon a Member of Men's Resources International

White Ribbon Campaign – 2005

The Men's Resource Centre helped to lead a successful White Ribbon Campaign in Saskatoon in late 2005.

The White Ribbon Campaign is a Canadian based International effort to raise awareness among men and boys about violence against women.

The WRC takes many different forms in communities around the world but the main focus is to have men and boys wear White Ribbons and sign public pledges stating their opposition to male violence against women.

In 2005 in Saskatoon the Board of Directors of the Men's Resource Centre were joined by students at the Leadership Advantage program at the University of Saskatchewan in the WRC campaign.

The MRC successfully lobbied Saskatoon City Council and had December 5th declared White Ribbon Day.

Educational talks and information were delivered to Revenue Canada workers, City Police, Parole services Yanke Trucking, Alternatives Program Members, Saskatoon Public Schools and University and College students.

The MRC partnered with the University Women's Centre to staff an informational display at the University and a similar display was staged at SIAST.

Media coverage of the White Ribbon Campaign ranged from print media to local television and radio stations including SHAW public access.

By the end of the week of activities over 250 men had signed the White Ribbon posters pledging their opposition to violence against women and funds had been raised for donation to Interval House (the local Battered Women's

transition home).

On December 5th the MRC hosted a public forum on Violence Against Women at the Downtown Public library. Speakers there included Allyson Clark and Jennifer Kim from the UofS Women's Centre and Bruce Wood and Ken Macleod from the Men's Centre.



Representatives of the MRC on Shaw Cable discussing the White Ribbon Campaign

MRC in South Texas Develops Innovative Parenting Program

Workshop aims to help curb violence in children to teach Boys to be good Men

Gabe Hernandez / Valley Morning Star 2006

The Men's Resource Center of South Texas has been conducting monthly parenting workshops on how to raise boys with a focus on curbing their violent behavior.

Emiliano Diaz de Leon, the center's director, said that U.S. Department of Justice figures show that 95 percent of domestic violence acts are committed by men against women, hence the need for the workshop.

The workshop is open to anyone raising boys and is primarily based on the book, "Raising Boys" by Dr. William Pollack. It also encourages dialogue among parents, who share their experiences about raising boys.

Diaz de León said that the ultimate goal of the workshop is to help parents raise non-violent boys by debunking the "Boy Code," which books like Pollack's call the collective societal messages that boys receive about being boys: being aggressive, violent, domineering and controlling.

The MRC workshop also teaches how important it is to have men that are positive role models in their lives. Raquel Oliva agrees. She is the executive director of AVANCE Rio Grande Valley, a nonprofit organization that works to strengthen and promote families through programs across the region.

Oliva said that "the dynamics in the family change" when fathers are involved in child rearing. "It makes a big difference in the life of the family," she said. "It's important for males to have a bond with a father. It will make a long-term impact. But little girls need fathers too."

"We want men to be involved in the lives of their children," he said. "It doesn't come out of the book. We want to say that. The goal is to teach our boys to be strong but compassionate."

Diaz de León said that the "Boy Code" teaches

boys how to behave (or misbehave), to separate from their mother and all things female or be called "sissy," to have bravado and cruelty, that sex is a conquest, that bullying and teasing are normal. In short, the code forgives a boy's behavior because "boys will be boys."

The workshop encourages parents to establish "shame-free zones" where boys can express themselves, cry and get attention, Diaz de León said.

"One of the things is to provide individual attention," he said. "We tell parents, 'Don't use shaming language. If he's crying, let him cry. Don't tell him to stop crying like a girl.'"

Parents should teach boys to speak up when they see bullying, Diaz de León said.

"They need to speak out against violence," he said. "There are definitely biological things (males) are born with, but we are not born violent. All men are naturally loving, compassionate, and sensitive. We are trained to be competitive, aggressive. If it's a learned behavior, it's something we can unlearn. We believe that violence is a gender issue."

Diaz de León said that men needed to be the focus if society is going to successfully prevent violence.

Oliva, however, believes that violence is not exclusive to boys. "A girl can be just as physical as a boy. Girls can be violent too," she said.

For example, more girls are joining gangs, she said. Gang initiation rituals can include the carrying out of violent acts, Oliva said.

She agreed that it is important to note how much social pressure plays into boys' behavior. Oliva said that people raised in violent households often raise their children with a similar semblance

of violence as well.

"They'll say, 'This is how my parents treated me, so this is how I'm going to treat my children,'" she said. Some children who see their parents stealing, doing drugs or having a fight may grow thinking, "Dad hits Mom, so it's okay for me to hit."

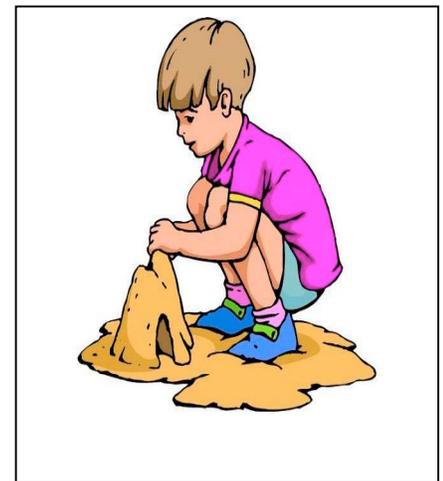
The MRC's workshop teaches that aggressiveness is a learned behavior.

"We're taught to be aggressive," Diaz de León said. "We're trained to be at a very early age."

Diaz de León said that he teaches parents to model compassion, for example, by having them give up toys for the needy.

When the workshop is presented again, Diaz de León hopes to make it available in Spanish and he also hopes to recruit a man who is raising boys to facilitate the workshop.

Reproduced from the Men's Resource Network, January 2006



Loneliness can “break men’s hearts”

A recent medical study shows that men who are isolated and lonely, without close friends or family, may be more prone to heart disease.

The study, presented by Dr. Eric Loucks of the Harvard School of Public Health to a recent meeting of the American Heart Association, found that men who are socially isolated tend to have elevated levels of a blood protein called interleukin -6 (IL-6) which is a risk factor for heart disease.

U.S. researchers led by Dr. Loucks studied 3,267

American men and women with an average age of 62, who were part of the Framingham Heart Study, begun in 1948.

Participants in the study were given physical examinations and also asked questions about their social lives. They were then assigned a “social network score” of 1 to 4 with one being the most isolated. Men with a score of 1 were found to have an average level of IL-6 of 3.85 picograms per millilitre of blood while men with a score of 4 had an average level of 3.52 picograms.

“Our analyses suggest that it may be good for the heart to be connected,” said Dr. Loucks. “In general, it seems to be good for health to have close friends and family, to be connected to community groups or religious organizations, and to have a close partner.”

Both Loucks’s team and British Heart researchers say that men who are socially isolated tend to be less active, more likely to smoke and more likely to be depressed and suffer from anxiety.

Reproduced from Voice Male Magazine Winter 2006.



Sunshine Promotes Prostate Health?

While spending more time in the sun may increase your risk of skin cancer, it might be helping your prostate, according to a recent study.

A research team led by Dr. Esther John of the Northern California Cancer Centre found that men with high sun exposure actually had half the risk of prostate cancer in men with low sun exposure. And in men with certain gene variants, the risk was reduced by as much as 65 percent.

“We believe that sunlight

helps to reduce the risk of prostate cancer because the body manufactures the active form of Vitamin D from exposure to sunlight,” said Dr. John. The results of the study appeared in the June 15, 2005, issue of *Cancer Research*.

Another member of the research team, Dr. Garry G. Schwartz of the Comprehensive Cancer centre at Wake Forest University has previously found that the prostate uses Vitamin D to promote the normal growth of

prostate cells and to inhibit the invasiveness and spread of prostate cancer to the rest of the body.

The researchers stress that sunlight is not the only source of Vitamin D and that men should not take up sunbathing as a means of reducing their risk of prostate cancer. They suggest that taking a Vitamin D supplement may be safer, especially if you have a family history of skin cancer.

Voice Mail 2006

“the prostate uses Vitamin D to promote the normal growth of prostate cells...”

“Until recently CAMSS work and website were supported by the Department of Justice”

Canadian Association of Male Survivor Services carries on.

The fledgling Canadian Association of Male Survivor Services is a growing effort of a number of community services offering support and resources to Male survivors of sexual abuse.

The association strives to offer information education and referral to

member services across Canada for men in need.

Through its website www.malesurvivor.ca men can read articles and access information about resources sensitive to the needs of adult male survivors.

Until recently CAMSS work and website were

supported by funds from the Canadian Department of Justice but those funds ended in 2005. The website continues to be supported by the Ottawa-based Men's Project.

The Men's Resource Centre of Saskatoon is a CAMSS member.

Bruce Wood 2006

A Commission on the Status of Men?

In New Hampshire they have had a working Governors Committee on the Status of Men since 2002.

On the right you will see the Mission Statement and mandate of this 11 member commission.

While some aspects of the commissions work may seem praiseworthy (male suicidality for example) we are concerned about the emphasis on and influence by “fathers' rights” organizations in bringing this about.

Mission Statement

The mission of the New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Men:

- *To examine issues and effects of cultural biases and stereotyping, beginning with childhood experiences and progress in public schools, and extending to adult concerns such as family relations.*
- *To promote education and policies which bring fathers and children closer together, with an emphasis on the importance of the role of the father in child development.*
- *To examine physical and mental health problems unique to, or predominantly affecting men, including a study of male suicide, and make appropriate recommendations.*
- *To promote initiatives, programs and incentives that will enable men to continue their education and develop family and career skills to improve their ability to be productive and responsible citizens.*

The Commission was established by the New Hampshire legislature in 2002, as described in [RSA 19-1](#).

If you are interested in learning more about this commission the website link is www.nh.gov/csm/

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Threatened males more likely to be homophobic, support war and buy SUV's?

A researcher from Cornell University has found that if you threaten men's masculinity they may react by assuming more hypermasculine attitudes.

Robb Willer, a Doctoral candidate in sociology, surveyed 111 male and female Cornell undergraduates about their ideas on gender identity. Participants were then randomly given feedback that their responses indicated either a "masculine" or "feminine" identity. While the women's responses remained unchanged regardless of the feedback

they received, men's reactions "were strongly affected by this feedback," according to Willer

"I found that if you made men more insecure about their masculinity, they displayed more homophobic attitudes, tended to support the Iraq war more and would be more willing to purchase and SUV over another type of vehicle." Willer calls males reactions to such feedback "masculine overcompensation".

Willer questioned participants about their political attitudes, such as

how they felt about same sex marriage and whether they supported President Bush's handling of the Iraq war. In a separate study Willer was able to verify that support for the war, homophobia and interest in purchasing and SUV were all considered "masculine" positions by the studies' participants.

From Voice Male magazine 2006

About the Men's Resource Centre of Saskatoon

The Men's Resource Centre of Saskatoon is a non-profit organization which receives no funding from public or private sources.

We are a male positive, pro-feminist, gay affirmative and anti-racist group dedicated to improving the lives of adult men in our community.

We are always looking for individuals with time and energy to work with us on our Board and committees.

Call or write us if you are interested.

This newsletter is produced quarterly and distributed electronically to individuals and programs in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada and Internationally. We would like to hear from you about anything that you read here. If you wish to be removed from our distribution list please contact us by phone or email.

*Bruce Wood
Editor and Chairperson*