Within the broad and multidisciplinary field of men’s studies, the exploration of men’s issues in counseling is one focus. The purpose of this study was to begin to develop a new model for understanding men’s issues in counseling which included increased recognition of diversity, consideration of both internal and external influences, and the concept of multiple masculinities.

Participants in the study included 6 African-American and 6 Caucasian men between the ages of 19 and 92 years and representing both low and high incomes. The researcher interviewed each of the men 3 times in a process of theory development based on the Grounded Theory Method proposed by Corbin and Strauss (1990). Results of the study included the development of a new model for conceptualizing men’s issues in counseling.

According to this grounded model, men are adaptable in their expression of masculinities. Masculinities are defined by flexible adaptations of the masculine self over time and within multiple contexts. The range of potential adaptation of a man’s masculinities is based on exposure to multiple models of masculinity and intrapsychic factors. The flexibility of adaptability in a given situation is tempered by perceived responsibility for others.
Additional findings are also discussed. The experiences of African-American participants pointed to the importance of religion and suggested coping skills that have developed in response to racial discrimination, including maintaining a cautious stance and going around dangerous situations. The experiences of all participants suggested the value of the interview process for raising gender consciousness and personal awareness. Finally, the men in the study suggested that they maintain some deep connections with other men through straight talk and teasing.

Implications of the model include the importance of research focus on the process of enacting masculinity, inclusion of men’s issues within the framework of multicultural competency in counselor education, and the therapeutic value of exploring the different expressions of being a man.
THE PROCESS OF BEING A MAN:
A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

A Dissertation submitted to the
Kent State University College and Graduate School
of Education, Health, and Human Services
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by
Scott C. Baker

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The completion of a dissertation signals the success of a team and not simply an individual effort. Therefore, it is paramount that the many members of that team be acknowledged for their contributions.

This study would not have been possible without the participants who chose to share their lives. They displayed remarkable willingness and courage to endure a long process and challenging questions which led to revelation of intimate details about their experiences as men.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Counseling services for men in the modern world are especially necessary. In popular culture, men are projected as being in crisis (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Brooks & Good, 2001; Jefferson, 2002). The focus of this crisis is on the masculine gender and the challenges of enacting one’s masculinity. In acting out their version of masculinity, men struggle with resolving conflicting social messages and internal needs and desires. Research literature adds some support to this image (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Brooks & Good, 2001; Cochran, 2005; Good, Thomson, & Brathwaite, 2005; Stevens & Englar-Carlson, 2006).

The counseling profession has dedicated itself to understanding the many aspects of culture, including gender, that impact its clients (American Counseling Association, 2005). The masculine gender is part of the cultural experience of men (Liu, 2005; McCarthy & Holliday, 2004). To provide comprehensive and sensitive services to this population in need, counselors must understand the unique experiences of men.

Within the broad field of men’s studies, there are various theoretical explanations of men’s experience. Within some disciplines, understanding of men’s behavior stems from a social constructionist perspective, which stresses the making of masculinity in conversation and actions in relation to others (Connell, 2005). Within counseling, the focus is often on social roles to which men must conform (Addis & Cohane, 2005;
Smiler, 2004). Also within counseling, some stress the importance of psychodynamic conflicts and drives (Jefferson, 2002; Rabinowitz & Cochran, 2002). The most current trend in men’s studies is the acknowledgment of the existence of multiple masculinities that are performed by men (Smiler, 2004).

As counseling has attempted to integrate this concept of multiple masculinities as developed in the broader field of men’s studies, its prevailing theory has been a barrier. The social role theory lacks the necessary flexibility for integration (Connell, 2005; Smiler, 2004). Other existing counseling theories have also proved difficult to modify (Wade, 1998). In order to integrate these new understandings, the counseling profession needs a new theoretical basis for understanding men’s experiences.

Purpose and Rationale

This chapter includes a review of each of the existing paradigms that are used to understand men’s experiences and identification of the strengths and weaknesses of those paradigms. The literature reviewed supports some conclusions. The current body of literature in men’s studies is imbalanced and focuses heavily on external influences to the exclusion of other factors (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Jefferson, 2002; Wetherell & Edley, 1999). The body of research in men’s issues in counseling lacks an integration of the concept of masculinities as understood in the broader field of men’s studies (Connell, 2005; Gough, 2001; Smiler, 2004). Finally, current research uses homogenous samples and lacks incorporation of diversity in sampling (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Archer, 2001; Englar-Carlson, 2006; Good et al., 2005; Liu, 2005).
These conclusions support a need for a new theoretical paradigm to understand men’s issues in counseling that can integrate the concept of masculinities. That theory should include consideration of internal and external influences and should include some component of diversity in sampling. The purpose of this study is to begin to generate such a theory. The following research question guided this project: How do Caucasian and African-American men of different ages and income levels express “being a man” in their lives?

Definitions

Exploration of the existing literature and explanation of the research question begin with definitions of terms and concepts that were used. As in any specialized area of research, the study of men and masculinity makes use of a number of terms and concepts. To facilitate understanding of the review of literature, definitions are included for gender, men’s studies, men’s issues in counseling, traditional masculinity, and masculinities.

**Gender:** Gender is a basic organizing principle of people’s lives, having an influence over what people believe they should and should not do (Smiler, 2004). Gender is distinguished from sex in that gender is related to socially defined attributes and not biological differences (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Smiler, 2004). As suggested by Kilmartin (2007), this review refers to men and women when addressing sex differences and masculine and feminine when addressing gender.

**Men’s Studies:** The field of men’s studies is multidisciplinary, including, primarily, disciplines from the social sciences and the humanities. Researchers in the field of men’s studies explore topics related to men and masculinities. The purpose of
men’s studies is not to oppress women, but to understand gender as a factor for men (Kilmartin, 2007).

**Men’s Issues in Counseling:** Men’s studies are multidisciplinary and the study of men’s issues in counseling is one avenue of pursuit of understanding men’s issues. Counseling for men’s issues emerged from a belief that there is something unique about the way men experience gender (Stevens & Englar-Carlson, 2006). That experience has an effect on the way that men cope with life and interact with others in the world. Counselors seek to understand these experiences and their connection to behavior and perception in order to provide more effective counseling for men (Brooks & Good, 2001).

**Traditional Masculinity:** Traditional masculinity is used to refer to valuing of emotional stoicism, independence, homophobia, and anti-femininity (Good et al., 2005).

**Masculinities:** The term “masculinities” is used to stress a focus on the different expressions of masculinity that are created by different men (Kimmel & Messner, 2004). Whereas the term “masculinities” has been adopted widely within men’s studies, the definition of this term varies somewhat with theoretical orientation (Archer, 2001; Connell, 2005; Englar-Carlson, 2006; Kilmartin, 2007; Kimmel & Messner, 2004; Pleck, 1995; Smiler, 2004; Speer, 2001; Wetherell & Edley, 1999).

Review of the Literature

With an understanding of definitions, attention can now be paid to exploring the current body of literature related to the experiences of men. This review includes consideration of the importance, to the counseling profession, of understanding of men,
the history of counseling theories of men and masculinity, and current theories of masculinities from both the counseling perspective and the broader research in men’s studies. The review ends with consideration of the limitations within the current body of literature which support the research question under consideration.

**The Importance to Counseling**

Levant (2006) concluded that traditional counseling does not serve men well. Because traditional models of counseling were designed by men to treat women, they are flawed for both men and women. As feminist scholars have shown that models that consider women’s issues are important, their scholarship has supported a conclusion that development of models that consider men’s issues are important as well (Kilmartin, 2007; Kimmel & Messner, 2004). An increased understanding of the unique experience of being a man is particularly important for the profession of counseling because of the current needs of men and the counseling profession’s commitment to multicultural competency.

**The Current Needs of Men**

Stevens and Englar-Carlson (2006) suggested that the world of gender expectations is changing for men and that this can be a difficult change for men to navigate. This claim is supported by the findings of one qualitative study in which the participants expressed confusion about how to be a man amidst the feminist critique (Gough, 2001). The men said they could not follow traditional gender prescriptions for fear of being like the men critiqued by the feminists. They further stated that they could not adopt any new form of masculinity because their efforts were met with further
criticism that, while they were not actively supporting patriarchy, they were still being complicit.

Some have said that men are in a state of crisis (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Brooks & Good, 2001; Jefferson, 2002). Current research suggests that men experience mental illness at rates similar to women (Cochran, 2005). Men are at particular risk for health problems, substance abuse, depression, and suicide (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Englar-Carlson, 2006). Some research suggests that the risks of mental illness and problematic behavior are particularly great for men who adhere to a traditional masculine role and that those men are least likely to seek help (Good et al., 2005). Cochran (2005) suggested that, even when they do seek help, men often face barriers to treatment, including differing expectations about counseling, fear, shame, power differentials between the man and the counselor, talking about feelings, and counselor bias to see the man as resistant. In order to serve these men, the profession must have a better understanding of their needs and must address barriers.

*Men’s Issues as a Multicultural Competency*

Some researchers have suggested that an understanding of men’s issues be included as a component of counselors’ multicultural competency (Good et al., 2005; Liu, 2005; McCarthy & Holliday, 2004). In at least one way, counseling men can be considered cross-cultural (Good et al., 2005). The traditional culture of masculinity, based on emotional stoicism, independence, homophobia, and anti-femininity, is obviously different from the established culture of counseling. When these cultures meet, there is a potential for misunderstanding and mistreatment.
There is some reason to believe that bias exists in the counseling profession. Seem and Johnson (1998) asked counselor trainees to respond to four vignettes, which were written to represent traditional and non-traditional male and female clients. The results of their study suggest a bias against non-traditional men and women by counselor trainees. Specifically, the trainees discussed parenting more with female clients, were skeptical of a female client who denied interest in having children, and questioned the sincerity of a male client who wanted to stay home with his children.

There has been some research to support that this same bias may occur among practicing professionals as well (Wisch & Mahalik, 1999). Building on three prior studies of professional counselors, Wisch and Mahalik asked male professional members of the American Psychological Association to respond to four vignettes, representing traditional and non-traditional men who displayed either angry or sad affect. Results of that study suggested that more traditional male counselors tended toward overpathologizing angry, non-traditional men and less traditional male counselors tended toward underpathologizing sad, non-traditional men. This suggests the possibility of a clinical bias that is based on myth and misunderstanding of the experience of being a man.

The possible existence of such bias supports the conclusion that counselors should be educated about men’s issues. Liu (2005) stressed the importance of men’s issues in multicultural training by comparing inclusion of men’s issues to inclusion of White Identity Development (WID) as a multicultural competency. Inclusion of WID acknowledges that being White has an influence on one’s worldview. Being male also has an influence. Further, there is no singular maleness, just as there is no singular
Whiteness. And, like Whiteness, maleness has consequences for the self, such as restricted intimacy, and consequences for others, such as homophobia and patriarchy. Liu suggested that, to provide culturally sensitive services, counselors must become aware of their own stereotypes and biases about men, confront their own heterosexism, homophobia, and sexism, and develop strategies and intervention specifically for working with men.

Writing from Feminist perspective, Addis and Cohane (2005) explained there are three reasons to include understanding of men as a multicultural competency. First, those who have power are least likely to recognize it, and feel powerless. Second, power is not distributed equally among all men and that power differential is likely to be obvious to other men. Finally, maintaining power and privilege has costs, such as harms to the self and toward others. Connell (2005), who labels himself as a Feminist researcher and is concerned with the use and abuse of power, specifically pointed to counseling as a profession in which understanding of the construction of masculinities is important because of a need to understand gender relationships and demands of gender in providing counseling to men.

*The History of Theory in Men’s Issues in Counseling*

There have been three main movements in the broad study of masculinity (Connell, 2005; Kimmel & Messner, 2004). The first was based on Freudian theory and explored attachment and the effects of early experiences on later expression of masculinity. A large body of research has also been dedicated to the social psychological focus on gender roles (Brooks & Good, 2001). Finally, the most recent research, based in
Sociology and Anthropology, focuses on the social construction of masculinity (Archer, 2001; Speer, 2001; Wetherell & Edley, 1999). Counseling trails behind other social sciences in the analysis of gender and the great majority of counseling research is still rooted in gender role socialization (Addis & Cohane, 2005).

Smiler (2004) provided a review of the development of theory specific to men’s issues in counseling. Prior to 1970, counseling researchers embraced the Male Sex Role Theory. According to this theory, demonstration of traditionally masculine traits was a sign of maturity and emotional health. Pathology was associated with hypomasculinity. Once the premise of the sex role theory was tested, overwhelming research findings disconfirmed this association and further suggested that there is more difference between men than between men and women (Hoffman, 2001).

In response to these research findings, two movements emerged in the 1970s (Smiler, 2004). The first was the Androgyny Movement. The key figure in the movement was Bem, who is considered to be the first theorist to suggest that gender is socially defined (Hoffman & Borders, 2001). Bem’s Gender Schema Theory (GST) posited that children internalize societal messages about masculinity and femininity to different degrees (Hoffman & Borders, 2001; Smiler, 2004). Those who heavily weigh these societal messages as children later exhibit behaviors and attitudes associated with the internalized gender (sex type). Within GST, health and maturity were associated with an equal balance of both masculine and feminine traits (androgyny) and pathology was associated with too much of either (Hoffman, 2001).
Research related to GST has been widespread, due to the popularity of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI; Hoffman, 2001). However, several concerns have been noted with regard to this instrument. At the construct level, one concern is that the theoretical position that gendered behavior is determined in childhood does not account for changes in gendered behavior over the lifespan (Smiler, 2004). Additionally, Hoffman and Borders (2001) suggested that there is an inherent contradiction in an instrument which both supports, by placing masculinity and femininity in opposition, and denies, by suggesting that there is no masculinity or femininity, a polarity between genders.

Concerns have also been raised about the psychometric properties of the BSRI. Results of early research on the BSRI, comparing it with instruments such as the Personal Attributes Questionnaire, suggested that the instrument measures the broader personal characteristics of instrumentality and expression, not masculinity and femininity (Hoffman, 2001; Hoffman & Borders, 2001; Smiler, 2004). More recent concerns include a lack of pure factorial structure, differences in results between the short and long form of the instrument, differences in results between the two most common scoring methods, and lack of agreement on classification of items as masculine or feminine (Choi & Fuqua, 2003; Hoffman & Borders, 2001). These concerns led Hoffman and Borders to conclude that, despite the gains to knowledge that were created by GST, this is no longer a viable paradigm for gender studies.

A second, less deterministic, movement emerged at the same time. The Ideology Movement was based on social role theories and suggested that, over the life span, men are socialized into a masculine role and internalize that role (Smiler, 2004). The
mechanisms of socialization are punishment, reinforcement, and modeling which lead to
development of gender based schemas and beliefs in individuals (Addis & Cohane,
2005). The dominant role into which men were assumed to be socialized is referred to as
traditional masculinity and included emotional stoicism, independence, homophobia, and
anti-femininity (Good et al., 2005). Within this movement, there was some concern that
hypermasculinity was problematic (Smiler, 2004).

In the 1980s, the Gender Role Strain (GRS) movement built on the Ideology
Movement by suggesting there are at least three dysfunctional elements to the socialized
male role (Smiler, 2004). First, the role changes with history, leading men to be confused
about their role over time. Second, there are different expectations of men in different
situations, such as at work, at home, and at war. Finally, men often live in fear of real or
imagined consequences of violations of the male role. Within this movement, being
masculine at all was considered problematic.

Pleck (1995) outlined three types of negative effects caused by the cultural
expectations of masculinity. Discrepancy strain leads to strain between real and ideal
masculine self because of not fulfilling gender role expectations. Trauma strain can occur
when roles are successfully fulfilled as the process of socialization into those roles can
leave scars or the long term effect of fulfilling the roles can lead to strain. Finally,
dysfunction strain occurs when the masculine gender role itself leads to negative
consequences because the characteristics that are viewed as acceptable for men are
detrimental.
As part of the GRS movement, the Gender Role Conflict (GRC) model has been a primary model for the consideration of men’s issues (Smiler, 2004). The GRC model provides a framework for understanding the connection between the traditional male role and negative effects to the self, in the form of psychological distress, and others, in the form of sexism and homophobia (O’Neil, 1981). According to this model, the more one ascribes to traditional masculinity, the more conflict (harm to self or others) the individual faces.

The Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS) was developed to operationalize the GRC model (O’Neil, 1981). The GRCS is a measure of the extent to which an individual ascribes to traditional masculine values (O’Neil, 2001). The instrument includes 37 statements to which respondents are asked to respond on a Likert scale from (1) strongly disagree to (6) strongly agree. A total score is calculated and higher scores are associated with higher levels of GRC.

Construct validity of the GRCS is supported by multiple factor analyses which have consistently yielded four factors. These four factors account for 36% of the total variance in scores (O’Neil, Helms, Gable, David, & Wrightsman, 1986). The original four factors included (a) Success, Power, and Competition ($\alpha = .85$); (b) Restrictive Emotionality ($\alpha = .82$); (c) Restricted Affective Behavior Between Men ($\alpha = .83$); and (d) Conflict Between Work and Family Relations ($\alpha = .75$). Two confirmatory factor analysis procedures have provided support for this factor structure (Good et al., 1995; Rogers & Abbey-Hines, 1997). Internal consistency findings range from $\alpha = .89 – .90$ for the Total
scale and $\alpha = .72 – .85$ for the subscales (O’Neil, Good, & Holmes, 1995). Test-retest correlations over four weeks ranged from $r = .72 – .86$ (O’Neil et al., 1986).

The GRCS is widely recognized as a valid measure of GRC (Good et al., 2005). Good et al. (1995) found support for concurrent validity in high correlations between the GRCS and measures of fear of intimacy as well as other measures of masculinity. Additionally, scores on the GRCS have been positively correlated with multiple measures of psychological distress, substance abuse, violence, and negative attitudes toward women, minorities, and homosexuals (Good et al., 2005).

Current clinical recommendations for counseling men are based on this theoretical perspective. Levant (1995) suggested that counselors should help men acknowledge that the role into which they have been socialized is problematic. Brooks and Silverstein (1995) theorized that recognition of the negative effects of the male role will lead to increased gender consciousness of men and will motivate men to change. Englar-Carlson (2006) pointed out that it is not men themselves but the traditional male role that is problematic. His recommendations for treatment continue a theoretical approach that values gender role analysis that is informed by an understanding of traditional masculinity.

*External Influences on Masculine Behavior*

One of the conclusions that can be drawn from the voluminous research based on the GRC model is that men are influenced negatively by socialization. The focus on gender roles has led to a large amount of research on the relationships between adherence to traditional gender roles and psychological variables (Good et al., 2005). These studies
have yielded some understandings about the ways gender role socialization can affect men. However, some have raised concerns about this model.

Critique of the Gender Role Strain Movement

Some researchers have pointed out that one problem with the GRC model is that it is based on White, Western, middle-class values and research using the GRCS has included participants almost exclusively from the same group (Cochran, 2005; Good et al., 2005; Liu, 2005). Critics have suggested that the dominance of this model does not consider other masculine roles, such as African-American men’s expected masculine role (Hunter & Davis, 1994; Liu, 2005). Although the ideas of the Gender Role Strain movement allow for alternate forms of masculinity, the great majority of the research has been conducted on traditional masculinity (Englar-Carlson, 2006).

Connell (2005) offered one of the strongest critiques of gender role theory and is the theorist who enjoys a competing centrality of importance among the broader field of men’s studies. According to Connell, gender role theory lacks specificity because it ignores the possibility that people occupy many roles. The theory does not account for the interplay between the multiple roles in people’s lives. The polarized way in which gender roles are conceptualized exaggerates the differences between men and women.

Connell (2005) suggested that, by ignoring the relational nature of behavior, gender role theory exaggerates the control that the externally imposed gender role has over people’s behavior. By this omission, it suggests that men simply act out a predefined script without ability to act purposefully. They can only react to changes and seemingly have no agency for change.
Masculinities

These criticisms stem from a reorientation of men’s studies toward a more inclusive model which considers more than just the stereotyped experience of White, Western, middle-class males. The newest research points to variations among men as central to understanding and seeks to demonstrate the differences in the worlds of men (Kimmell & Messner, 2004). The term “masculinities” is used to stress a focus on the different expressions of masculinity that are created by different men. Although the term “masculinities” has been adopted widely, there are at least three apparent variations on the concept.

Categorical masculinities. Within counseling research, the focus on masculinities seems to represent variations on masculinity that occur between various categorical divisions. In his review of the five movements in development of theory in men’s issues in counseling, Smiler (2004) stated that the Deconstruction Movement of the 1990s led to understanding that different versions of masculinity are dominant at different times and in different settings. For example, masculinities vary by ethnicity, points in the lifespan, and historical eras.

Englar-Carlson (2006) described the “intersection of masculinities,” referring to a statement that people struggle with negotiating the masculinities prescribed by, for example, the larger society, their own ethnicity, and their social status (p. 20). In response to critiques by social constructionists, Pleck (1995) attempted to argue that the gender role strain model is sensitive to the concept of masculinities by pointing out that he had written about different masculinities in one culture or another or at one time or another.
Among researchers who have approached masculinities from a categorical perspective, there appears to be consensus that masculinities in the United States vary by socio-economic status, age, and ethnicity (Englar-Carlson, 2006; Kilmartin, 2007; Kimmel & Messner, 2004; Pleck, 1995).

An example of the way this perspective has been operationalized is the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI; Mahalik et al., 2003). The CMNI measures the extent to which an individual conforms to 12 masculine norms. Those norms were created by the authors after review of the literature and input from two focus groups of master’s and doctoral students in a clinical psychology program.

Initial studies of the psychometric properties of the CMNI were conducted by the authors using students who were mostly White as a sample (Mahalik et al., 2003). The results of these studies suggested an 11 factor structure that fit the 12 norms originally proposed by the authors. Internal consistency studies suggested $\alpha = .94$ for the total CMNI score and a range of $\alpha = .72 – .91$ for the subscale scores. Test-retest reliability over a three week time period was $r = .95$ for the total score and ranged from $r = .51 – .96$ for the subscales. Concurrent validity was demonstrated by high correlations with the GRCS and the Masculine Gender Role Strain scale, which are both measures of traditional masculinity. The CMNI has been used to attempt to document masculinity profiles that are associated with different groups, or categories, of men and to connect profiles with problematic behavior (Burn & Ward, 2005; Tager & Good, 2005).

Some researchers suggest that this categorization of masculinity is vulnerable to the same critiques made about gender role theories (Connell, 2005). Connell and
Messerschmidt (2005) suggested that universal or categorical claims about what masculinity is are biased and ethnocentric. To address these concerns, counseling research should consider and move toward the approaches that have been employed in sociological research (Smiler, 2004).

Masculinities and hegemony. Connell (2005) described the theory of hegemonic masculinity. This theory is based on the concept of hegemony presented by Gramsci (1971), whose Marxist perspective stressed the subtle ways that the superstructure mechanisms of society coerce people to observe the power of a ruling class. Connell (2005) applied this concept to explore the way that patriarchal society is organized to sustain the power of men.

According to Connell (2005), researchers can conceptually, though not literally, view masculinities within four abstract categories. Hegemonic masculinity involves practices, things that are done in society, that allow dominance of men over women to continue. These are not necessarily forceful and are often related more to creating a superstructure that supports male dominance. This is an ideal or normative masculinity to which men aspire, but only a small minority of men enact.

Based on their analysis of discourse in a qualitative study of focus groups of students, Wetherell and Edley (1999) suggested that hegemony is not necessarily the same as convention. Results of this study suggested three ways that hegemony can be differentially related to conventional models of masculinity. In discourse, a man can embrace a heroic position and embrace convention by presenting himself as a hero in a given episode. He can distance himself from convention and take an ordinary position, by
representing himself as normal, moderate, and average. Finally, he can flout social
expectations and define himself by being unconventional, taking a rebellious position.

Men position themselves in relation to hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). All other masculinities are subordinate to hegemonic masculinity in a hierarchy of gender relations and are considered subordinated masculinities. Some subordinated masculinities are complicit. That is, the men benefit from the dominance of masculinity, but do not actively participate in a dominating form of masculinity. Other subordinated masculinities are marginalized and neither participate in nor benefit from patriarchal domination. As an example of marginalized masculinity, Connell pointed to the marginalization of black male masculinity by the dominant White culture.

In a review of the theory of hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) clarified the misconception by some researchers that there is a categorical nature to hegemony. No person fits any one category. At some times, men adopt hegemony and at others, they distance themselves from it. The abstract category of hegemony is meant to represent a situational ideal against which men position themselves or from which men distance themselves at any given time.

In their rethinking of the concept of hegemony, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) identified levels of gender relations, including local, regional, and global levels. At the local level, different contexts, such as situations and organizations, yield different hegemonic ideals. So, the influence of masculinity on individual behavior varies across local contexts. A similar process occurs simultaneously at the regional and global levels, yielding a marbled tapestry of hegemonic ideals against which men position themselves.
Wetherell and Edley (1999) noted some advantages to the idea of hegemonic masculinity. The conceptual framework allows for diversity among men, attends to the issue of power in gender relations, and acknowledges the relationships between men and between men and women in the construction of gender identity.

**Masculinities as social constructions.** Whereas the prior two perspectives seem to view masculinities as entities that can be isolated and identified, others refer to masculinities as elements of a fluid, ever changing process of relating to others. From a constructionist perspective, there are multiple masculinities that are contested and constructed within relationships simultaneously (Addis & Cohane, 2005). Men are made through a constant process of social interaction that involves both considering social expectations and modifying those expectations to fit personal preferences (Kimmel & Messner, 2004).

Speer (2001) supported the purposeful nature of the performance of masculinity in the results of a conversational analysis of data generated by a qualitative study involving two semi-structured interviews of men in their early twenties. Through conversation, elements of masculinity were enacted based on the need of the individual in the situation. These results suggested that it is not just the alignment with a form of masculinity, but also the actual definition of what masculinity is that changes across situations.

Depending on the needs of the situation, Speer’s (2001) respondents defined masculinity differently. Masculinity was constructed as an extreme that the man would not endure. It was performed as self-confidence, such that accused lack of masculinity
was a choice, not a deficiency. It was defined as inauthentic in efforts to create space for alternative behavior by positioning some external masculinity as fake. At times, the respondents constructed masculinity as something that one must live up to, a determined mind set. It was constructed as something foreign to the man that is intentionally enacted, something that the man unintentionally and unknowingly enacts because of group pressure, and something that is used as an excuse for problematic behavior. Thus, Speers’ results suggested that the definition of what masculinity is to a given man at a given time changes based on the purpose that the concept of masculinity serves at that time.

Also focusing on the way that masculinities are constructed through discourse, Archer (2001) added an element of complexity to the purpose served by construction of masculinities. Drawing on qualitative interviews of 24 British Muslim teenagers, results of this study stressed the importance of race and the fluid, shifting nature of constructions of masculinities in relation to others. The participants in the study used racial and masculine discourse for three purposes. They constructed a shared solidarity against racism, resistance to Whiteness and racial divisions, and assertion of masculine power. These results support the assertion that masculinities are constructed and reconstructed to meet the needs that arise in situations.

**Intrapsychic Influences**

Whether one embraces gender role models or one of the perspectives on masculinities, there is considerable evidence to suggest that external influences affect the experience of being a man. However, that experience includes an internal experience as well. Connell (2005) reminded researchers that masculinities are created in the interplay
between social relationships and individual personality. Less research has been conducted on the internal dimension of the male experience.

The Importance of the Individual

Chodorow (1978), in discussing the application of psychoanalysis in sociological inquiry, reminded readers that unconscious processes can be expressed in many ways. Thus, group expressions of similar behaviors do not necessarily imply similar underlying processes. Therefore, it is important to include exploration of the unconscious in any research on behavior. Chodorow warned against the omissions of “cultural school” psychoanalysts who put so much emphasis on culture that they lost their perspective on the underlying psychodynamic issues (p. 46). There is a mutual influencing that should always be remembered.

Heeding this warning, Jefferson (2002) reminded readers that there is an emotional or intrapsychic element to masculinity. Reductionism in the form of reducing hegemony to a category instead of a fluid and shifting concept results from not acknowledging the internal aspect of gender. Researchers cannot just look at cultures, but must also look at individual men and explore the way that actual men with unique personalities relate to different constructions of masculinity.

The findings of Tokar, Fischer, Schaub, and Moradi (2000) support this concern. In their study, personality factors mediated 94% of the significant relations between endorsement of traditional masculinity and mental health symptoms. These results suggest that although social message have some influence on the expression of masculinities, intrapsychic elements may be heavily involved.
The Psychodynamic Model

Addis and Cohane (2005) reviewed the four paradigms that are most widely used in counseling to understand men’s experience: psychodynamic, social learning, social constructionist, and feminist paradigms. Among the latter three paradigms, the major focus of understanding is on external influences. Of the four, the psychodynamic paradigm provides the most guidance in considering possible intrapsychic issues.

Rabinowitz and Cochran (2002) discussed the importance of the psychodynamic model for understanding men. According to this model, counselors should attend to the psychoanalytic issues that exist alongside gender socialization. These include issues of dependence, unresolved grief, and basic elements of personality that have been formed through attachment.

It is important for the counselor to recognize inner conflicts and wounds that stem from attachment problems in early relationships (Rabinowitz & Cochran, 2002). From a psychodynamic perspective, there are two major relational problems that are faced by most men (Addis & Cohane, 2005). First, the pressure that boys face to disidentify with their mothers leads to repressed needs in men for intimacy and connection. Also, the shaming that boys endure from other boys leads to a hypersensitivity to shame among men. Remembering the psychodynamic perspective leads to consideration of an internal dimension that may be relevant to the expression of masculinities by men.

Existing Documentation of Variety in Masculinities

Perhaps internal influences on behavior can explain some of the variety in masculinities that are enacted by men. Unfortunately, most of the literature does not
include this focus. Instead, a large body of research exists that suggests that men have similar experiences with regard to masculinities. However, criticisms of this literature have been expressed and there is now a call to explain variation among men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kimmell & Messner, 2004; Smiler, 2004).

Though research based on the GRC model has been based on a homogeneous group of, primarily, White, Western, middle-class individuals, consideration of research from other paradigms provides some insight into the diversity of masculinities. In contrast to the large body of research that has been generated within the gender role strain paradigm, the research from these other perspectives is minimal and most literature is theoretical (Smiler, 2004). Because the experience of African-American men has been largely absent from the GRC literature, African-American masculinities are considered separately.

**African-American Masculinities**

Discussion of African-American masculinities offers a strong starting point for an exploration of varieties of masculinities. Observation of the difference between broad social definitions of African-American masculinities and more nuanced and personally relevant perspectives highlights some of the criticisms of theories of masculinities. Additionally, because most writing related to men’s issues in counseling refers to Caucasian men, focusing first on African-American masculinities is a reminder that the existing research base has a biased focus.

Studies by Hunter and Davis (1994), Lawson Bush (1999), and Wade (2006) both support and challenge the notion of masculinities as categorical. Support for the concept
comes from the recognition that African-American men, as a group, may not be well characterized by the traditional masculinity that is posited within the GRC model and may share some external expectations and influences (Wade, 2006). However, the acknowledgment that some assumptions have been made and have created biases challenges the notion of categorization on the basis that it is inconsiderate of relevant individual differences (Hunter & Davis, 1994; Lawson Bush, 1999).

*The history of African-American masculinities.* Hunter and Davis (1994) and Lawson Bush (1999) offered historical reviews of the social perceptions of Black masculinity. An awareness of this history is important to sensitize researchers to the social context in which African-American masculinities are enacted. They suggested that, throughout most of the history of the United States, the social definitions of African-American masculinities have been dominated by the themes of Black men gone bad or unfulfilled manhood.

Current constructions of African-American masculinities are rooted in earliest imagery of Black men as animals (Hunter & Davis, 1994; Lawson Bush, 1999). Descriptions within this definition focused on the physical characteristics of Black men and a belief in their lack of mental capacity and humanity. Later conceptualizations painted African-American men as problematic because of female led households. This conceptualization suggested that being raised by women led to men who were psychologically and interpersonally deficient.

In the 1960s, there was growing awareness of the economic and political oppression faced by African-American men (Hunter & Davis, 1994; Lawson Bush,
This understanding led to characterization of African-American men as emasculated and rendered powerless by the political structure. The Black Power movement was a way for men to embody rage and create social change. But although the rage that was expressed during the Black Power movement was embraced, rage associated with the more modern image of the urban African-American man has been associated with hypermasculinity, rooted in desperation and leading to self-destruction and dangerous behavior. This image dominates current images of African-American masculinities.

Understanding the perception of the history of African-American masculinities as posited by these authors provides a basis for acknowledging that historical and ongoing racism has an effect on expression of being a man by African-Americans (Marable, 2004). Kilmartin (2007) pointed out that this history of racism is associated with suspicion of dominant culture men and feelings of anger and low self-esteem. Majors and Billson (1992) suggested that African-American men cope with this anger and low self-esteem by adopting a cool pose. They defined cool pose as a rigid expression of masculinity that involves behaviors that imply strength, superiority, and a detached calmness. The consequence of this behavior is thought to be lack of intimacy in relationships.

Mattis, Fontenot, and Hatcher-Kay (2003) hypothesized that African-American men also use religious faith or spirituality as a way to cope with oppression and racism. Other researchers have also suggested that spirituality is particularly important to African-American men (Figueroa, Davis, Baker, & Bunch, 2006; Mattis et al., 2001).
Mattis et al. (2003) stated that African-American men are less involved in organized religion than African-American women. However, they pointed out that African-American men view themselves as religious and tend toward a strong sense of spirituality. That is, though they display low levels of religiosity, they report high levels of spirituality. Subjective feelings of spirituality among African-American men have been associated with higher levels of health care seeking and increased optimism (Figueroa et al., 2006; Mattis et al., 2003).

*Alternative images of African-American masculinities.* In sharp contrast to the societal images that Hunter and Davis (1994) and Lawson Bush (1999) presented, Wade (2006) offered alternative themes of African-American masculinities, claiming that they are stable across age and socio-economic status. He suggested that African-American masculinities involve: (a) respect and care for one’s mother, (b) brotherhood, (c) emotional expression, (d) expression of affection toward male friends, (e) determination to act like a Black man and not a White man, (f) and a requirement to be psychologically and emotionally strong and tough. Qualitative research into African-American masculinities has begun to identify some similar strengths.

Hunter and Davis (1994) reported results of conceptualization and Q-sort study of 32 African-American men, diverse in age and socioeconomic status, regarding their beliefs about masculinity. The results of this study suggested four major themes. Self-determinism and accountability was expressed through directedness, maturity, economic viability, perseverance, and free will. A focus on family included sub-themes of responsibility and connectedness, equity in relations, and importance of fulfillment of the
family role. Pride included pride in one’s self and attempts to better one’s self. And a focus on spirituality and humanism included maintaining principles, connectedness to community, respect for women, sensitivity, and belief in human equity.

Approaching the issue from a different angle, Lawson Bush (2004) conducted a qualitative study of 27 African-American mothers. Respondents were asked to identify the masculine ideology that they tried to teach their sons. Results of this study suggested 24 attributes of African-American masculinities, including items that represent the importance of love and compassion, honor and honesty, moral and familial responsibility, respect for others, and strength of character.

**Context-Specific Masculinities**

In contrast to a categorical view of masculinities, other research into masculinities focuses on the varieties of masculinities as enacted in various contexts. Archer, Pratt, and Phillips (2001) studied British working class men in the context of attitudes toward higher education through a qualitative study using focus groups and analyzing discourse. Among the men in their study, higher education was associated with negative, undesirable images of masculinity. Men who pursued higher education were described by the participants as men who enjoyed study and could not succeed socially. The social benefits of enacting a hegemonic masculinity were expressed by ridiculing other men.

The men in the groups defined themselves through work and money (Archer et al., 2001). Their perspectives focused on sustenance, safety, and security, which the authors characterized as “lower order” needs (p. 438). Even those who valued higher education justified their position by pointing out the financial potential.
Also studying British men, Gough (2001) employed a grounded theory design and focus groups to examine the discourse of nine college students discussing specific contexts, including talking to female feminist colleagues, addressing division of labor in the home with a partner, and socializing in the pub. Results of this study point to masculinity as confusing and possibly distressing for men, particularly when interacting with feminist women.

Gough (2001) identified three themes in the results. At times, the respondents stated they do not know how to behave because of conflicting messages about masculinity. In this sense, they viewed masculinity as problematic. However, they also suggested that masculinity is problem-free in that being a man involves privilege financially and socially. Finally, they associated masculinity with suppression of behavior, stating they tend to take great care in what they say in conversations with women, in order to avoid condemnation, and with men, in order to avoid being drawn in to macho behavior.

Although much research into masculinities explores attitudes, Pringle and Markula (2005) offered some information about the connection between beliefs and behaviors. Their qualitative methodology included in-depth interviews with 14 male rugby players in New Zealand and focused on the power of social messages. Those respondents who viewed masculinity as being tough, unemotional, tolerant of pain, competitive, and aggressive enacted that masculinity through feats of bravery and skill and aggressive competitiveness.
Conclusion

Review of the literature supports three broad conclusions about the current literature base and offers support for the current research question. The current body of research is imbalanced, lacks a theoretical position from which to integrate the concept of masculinities, and lacks diversity in its samples. These conclusions support a need for development of a new theory of men’s experiences.

Imbalance

The current body of literature leans heavily toward explication of the external influences on men’s experience of being a man. There is a need for in-depth exploration of how gender is subjectively lived and enacted (Addis & Cohane, 2005). Such explorations could serve to expand knowledge of internal influences by addressing differences within and between individual men (Jefferson, 2002). They could examine the internal processes by which men negotiate external influences (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). These types of explorations may clarify how individual men adopt, enact, and define masculinities (Wetherell & Edley, 1999).

Masculinities

Researching masculinities from the perspective that they are organized into static categories ignores the awareness that the creation and recreation of masculinities is a dynamic process (Connell, 2005). Future research in men’s issues in counseling should look beyond demographic categories in research on masculinities (Smiler, 2004). Approaching the process of how individuals adopt masculinities may be a more fruitful
approach than the endless pursuit of documenting the countless forms that masculinities can take.

Much of the current research on masculinities is theoretical and does not account for social practice (Gough, 2001). Future research should address the ways that everyday men behave in their everyday lives. There is a need to link ideology with actual behaviors (Smiler, 2004).

**Diversity**

Whereas future research should avoid a categorical approach, it should not do so at the expense of diversity in sampling. Ignoring diversity leads to skewed images of men. This has been observed in research into traditional masculinity which has tended to omit the positive aspects of masculinity (Englar-Carlson, 2006). At the least, there is a need to include consideration of age, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity in future research into masculinities (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Archer, 2001; Englar-Carlson, 2006; Good et al., 2005; Liu, 2005).

**Research Question**

Based on the review of the literature and identified needs for future research, this study explores the following question: How do Caucasian and African-American men of different ages and income levels express “being a man” in their lives?

The large body of research in men’s issues in counseling is based in the gender role strain paradigm. Whereas exploration of this paradigm has been beneficial in that it has helped legitimize the specialty of counseling men and has led to increased knowledge about the gendered experiences of men, this specialty has fallen behind the continued
efforts of the parent field of men’s studies. The broader perspective on men’s issues has begun to intentionally consider diversity in masculinities and the dynamic nature of masculinities. By integrating the new paradigm within men’s studies and the voice of the counseling profession, this research project is a first step in the development of increased understanding that is necessary to develop new theories and instruments that will lead to more effective counseling of men.
CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Current research in men’s issues in counseling is based, primarily, on the gender role strain paradigm (Smiler, 2004). Critics of this approach assert that the knowledge that it has generated is based in ethnocentric bias, is unable to account for diversity in values and performances of masculinities, and ignores the agency of the individual (Cochran, 2005; Connell, 2005; Englar-Carlson, 2006; Good et al., 2005; Liu, 2005). Research in the broader field of men’s studies suggests a need to examine masculinities as created in a dynamic process of social construction (Archer, 2001; Kimmel & Messner, 2004; Speer, 2001; Wetherell & Edley, 1999). As researchers of men’s issues in counseling have absorbed the social constructionist argument, they have attempted to merge the ideas of social construction with those of gender roles, creating more diverse and complex categorical divisions of masculinities (Englar-Carlson, 2006; Kilmartin, 2007; Kimmel & Messner, 2004; Pleck, 1995; Smiler, 2004).

This modified gender role approach is vulnerable to many of the same criticisms that have been levied against its predecessor (Connell, 2005). What is needed to advance the research in men’s issues in counseling is a new theoretical position which is grounded in direct consideration of how diverse individuals interpret and perform masculinities in everyday life (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005;
Jefferson, 2002; Smiler, 2004; Wetherell & Edley, 1999). The purpose of this study is to begin to explore that theoretical position.

The question guiding this research is as follows: How do Caucasian and African-American men of different ages and income levels express “being a man” in their lives?

Use of a Qualitative Methodology

Wiersma and Jurs (2005) discussed the difference between quantitative and qualitative research. They suggested that the methods take different approaches to understanding phenomena, based in different paradigms for understanding the world. Although quantitative research is concerned with a process of deduction that leads to finite, reduced outcomes, qualitative research is concerned with an inductive process that leads to greater understanding of the complexity of that which is being studied. Whereas quantitative research seeks to limit and control variables, qualitative research is based in a respect for the natural environment or context of the subject.

Much of the research in men’s studies has been qualitative in nature (Connell, 2005; Kimmell & Messner, 2004). Stanistreet (2005) suggested that qualitative research is useful for generating new understandings and interpretations of gendered behavior. Pringle and Markula (2005) pointed to the value of a qualitative approach for understanding complex interactions between ideology and behavior. Several researchers of men’s issues in counseling have stressed a need for qualitative explorations of masculinities (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Good et al., 2005; Smiler, 2004).

The topic being studied in this project is one which requires induction and not deduction. Indeed, one of the problems that this project is meant to address is the
tendency in the current literature to reduce masculinities to categories and not acknowledge the complexity of the process through which men perform masculinities. A naturalistic approach is recommended in the development of a theory because it is flexible enough to consider multiple meanings that are grounded in the experiences of the participants, thus breaking away from the binds of established theories that can bias results (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1994). In order to account for the complex natural processes involved, a qualitative approach is necessary for this study.

Grounded Theory Method

The specific qualitative method that was used in this study is the Grounded Theory Method. Rather than testing an a priori theory against data, the Grounded Theory Method attempts to discover theory from systematically obtained data (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). Deriving a theory in this way is inductive in that the researcher observes what is happening and uses that data to inform an evolving theoretical understanding.

There are multiple purposes to a good theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). It aids in prediction and explanation of behavior. It advances understanding of a phenomenon. It can be used in practice. It provides a perspective for understanding new data. And it serves as a framework for further research on a subject matter.

Theory developed by the Grounded Theory Method meets these purposes by assuring that theories fit and work (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). To fit, categories that are derived in the Grounded Theory Method are suggested by and not forced upon the data. To work, categories must be relevant and meaningful to explanation of all of the data.
One benefit of theories that work and fit in these ways is that they can be continually modified and revised as new or changing data emerges.

The Grounded Theory Method is a rigorous research method which emphasizes specific steps and procedures used to generate a theory (Patton, 2002). Comprehensive theories are created in the Grounded Theory Method by merging themes and concepts to create thorough and definitive categories that interact to fully describe relationships within a given phenomenon. This is accomplished through simultaneous data collection and analysis, such that analysis of collected data directs continued data collection (Charmaz, 2005). Because it seeks to understand the way real people respond to changes and their resultant consequences, the Grounded Theory Method is an effective way to explain the core processes involved in real world experiences (Charmaz, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Patton, 2002).

Pilot Study

In preparation for this study, the researcher conducted a pilot study, the purpose of this pilot study was to explore the viability of the research question and to refine the interview questions to be used to generate data for the study. The pilot study was conducted in May 2006 and included four participants from different age groups and income levels. Results supported the viability of the research question and helped to refine the interview process to include participant review of the question prior to the first interview and the inclusion of formal interview prompts.
Procedures

Prior to initiating the pilot study, the researcher consulted with the Kent State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) representative in the Adult Counseling, Health, and Vocational Education (ACHVE) Department. The representative informed the researcher that IRB approval was not necessary for conducting this pilot project.

Participants included four men known to the researcher who were likely to provide different answers to the research question. The researcher chose the four men based on age and occupation. The ages of the men ranged from 35 to 87 and their occupations included both professional and skilled labor.

The researcher met individually with each man for approximately 15 minutes. Interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. The men were encouraged to answer the main interview question in their own way. However, in anticipation of possible difficulty answering the interview question, the researcher included a series of prompts in the interview guide. Each man was interviewed using the following protocol.

1. What are the different ways you express “being a man” in your life?
2. Repeat question 1.
3. For some people, “being a man” means something different in different contexts (such as work, home, with friends, etc.). Think of the many contexts of your life. What are the various ways you express “being a man” in your life?
4. Think of different times (recent and past) in your life. What are the different ways you have expressed “being a man” at different times?

*Results*

Results of the pilot project supported the viability of the research question. Despite interviewing the men only cursorily for 15 minutes, a complex picture of expression of masculinity was revealed. General themes related to control, relationships with family, relationships with others, social responsibility, taking action, considering context, and freedom from traditional roles were identified. These results suggest that a more nuanced view of expression of masculinity is possible.

The results also helped to refine the interview process. For two of the interviews, the researcher asked the participants to consider the question for at least one day before the interview. These participants were more easily able to give full responses than those participants who did not receive the question prior to the interview. This informed the researcher that prior knowledge of the question may be useful.

In each interview, the researcher found the prompting was necessary to help the participants to answer the questions. However, because each man answered the initial question with a different focus, there is likely some value in asking and repeating the general question before prompting. Additionally, the researcher learned that specific prompting for processes, behaviors, and experiences would be necessary to elicit a comprehensive response that addresses all aspects of expression.
Participants

The sample used in this study was selected using maximum variation or heterogeneity sampling (Patton, 2002; Wiersma & Jurs, 2005). By including a heterogeneous sample, analysis can reveal both rich individual descriptions and meaningful patterns that expose core concepts and variables. The intention of a heterogeneous sample is to increase the diversity of responses and add breadth to the study. This study included 12 participants, representing African-American (See Table 1) and Caucasian (See Table 2) men from three age groups and in two income categories.

Table 1

Participant Grid—African-American Men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Low Income (&lt; $32,686)</th>
<th>High Income (&gt; $32,686)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young (18-24)</td>
<td>Abe</td>
<td>Ben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle (36-45)</td>
<td>Carl</td>
<td>Don</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior (&gt; 55)</td>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>Fred</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age Groups

For the purpose of this study, different ages were expressed by age ranges. In a study of the levels of gender role conflict across the lifespan, Theodore and Lloyd (2000) found significant differences in salient factors among men from three age ranges. Drawing from their findings, this study employed similar categories of age ranges, such
Table 2

Participant Grid—Caucasian Men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Low Income (&lt; $45,573)</th>
<th>High Income (&gt; $45,573)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young (18-24)</td>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>Harold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle (36-45)</td>
<td>Ian</td>
<td>Jerry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior (&gt; 55)</td>
<td>Keith</td>
<td>Lou</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

that 18-24 was designated as young, 36-45 was designated as middle aged, and 55-plus was designated as senior. The age range of the participants was from 19 (Greg) to 92 (Edward) years.

Income Levels

Socioeconomic status can be addressed from multiple angles. Within men’s studies, there is a large focus on the issue of power in gender relations (Connell, 2005). Kilmartin (2007) discussed the relationship between income and power differentials as an indicator of socioeconomic status. He suggested there are differences between high and low income men, differentiating the two based on median income in the United States. According to the United States Census Bureau (2004), the median income for Caucasian men was $45,573 and for African-American men was $32,686. Those men who have a family income below the median income for members of their ethnic group were considered low income and those above were considered high income.
Selection

Because the aim of the study was to include as much diversity as possible, no identified participant who met the inclusion criteria was excluded. However, the study only included one participant per Ethnicity X Age Group X Income cell. Each cell was filled by the first willing participant who met inclusion criteria.

Participants were identified and recruited purposefully by the researcher. Potential participants were screened briefly by telephone and were advised of the nature and requirements of participation in the study. Telephone or in-person screening involved asking each potential participant about his ethnicity, age, and income level and discussing the purpose of the study and requirements of participants. If a potential participant met the inclusion criteria, a formal initial interview was scheduled as soon as possible in a mutually agreeable location that allowed for privacy in conversation. Interviews with Abe, Ben, Carl, Fred, Greg, Ian, and Jerry were held in a private room at a university library. Interviews with Don, Edward, Harold, Keith, and Lou were held in the participants’ homes or private offices. Prior to beginning the interview, the researcher established informed consent verbally and in writing with each potential participant (See Appendix A for consent forms).

Description of Participants

Other than verification of meeting age, income, and ethnicity category requirements, no demographic information was specifically requested of the participants. Throughout the interview process, participants provided information that described them. The following are brief descriptions of each of the participants. To protect confidentiality,
names of participants have been changed and only general information about their lives is provided.

*Abe*

Abe was a 22-year-old African-American college student in an associate’s degree program. At the time of the interviews, he was attending classes full-time and working full-time. He lived with his girlfriend and their 3-year-old daughter. The couple was expecting a second child.

*Ben*

Ben was a 25-year-old African-American man who had recently graduated with a bachelor’s degree in psychology. At the time of the interviews, Ben was applying to graduate programs in psychology and counseling. He was living with family and working full-time. He had recently severed his relationship with his girlfriend.

*Carl*

Carl was a 39-year-old African-American man who was taking university classes to prepare for a possible future role in business. Carl described himself as a recovering alcoholic who had been sober for several years. At the time of the interviews, he was living in a substance abuse recovery home. He was not involved in a romantic relationship, but said that he was hoping to develop a relationship with a woman.

*Don*

Don was a 36-year-old African-American counselor education professor at a community college in a major city. He described himself as the father of two children and
a leader in the African-American community. At the time of the interviews, Don was engaged to be married.

Edward

Edward was a 92-year-old African-American man who described himself as a former farm laborer, hobo, railroad worker, and roofer. At the time of the interviews, Edward was living in his own home, receiving in-home nursing care, and caring for an adopted son with mental retardation. Edward had been married twice. He was divorced from his first wife and was a widower of his second.

Fred

Fred was a 56-year-old African-American counselor education professor at a medium-sized university. At the time of the interviews, he was married with one adult son and was living with his wife in their own home.

Greg

Greg was a 19-year-old Caucasian college student in a bachelor’s degree program. At the time of the interviews, he was attending college full-time, not employed, and living at home with his mother. At that time, he was also involved in a romantic relationship with his girlfriend.

Harold

Harold was a 24-year-old Caucasian man who had recently graduated with a bachelor’s degree from a large university. At the time of the interviews, he was employed as a business consultant for a prestigious East Coast company. He lived with his wife and no children in their own home.
Ian

Ian was a 38-year-old Caucasian man who described himself as a sports lover. He stated that he had earned a bachelor’s degree. At the time of the interviews, he was unemployed and was taking classes to prepare for a possible future business career.

Jerry

Jerry was a 36-year-old Caucasian man who was employed as a school counselor. At the time of the interviews, he was living in his own home with his wife and young, twin children.

Keith

Keith was a 63-year-old Caucasian retiree who was living in his own home with his wife. He had been married twice and divorced once and had three grown children. He described himself as an avid golfer and tennis player.

Lou

Lou was a 64-year-old psychiatrist who had his own private medical practice. He described himself as someone who had been through many years of psychoanalysis and stated that he was approaching the interviews as an opportunity for “free therapy.” At the time of the interviews, Lou was living alone in his own home.

Participant Retention

Participants in this study were asked to maintain an active involvement in the research for the duration of the 3-month data collection process. This involvement included two individual, face to face interviews with the researcher. The face to face interviews each lasted between one and two hours. Involvement also included a final
follow-up interview that was conducted primarily through e-mail, though Keith completed the interview through regular mail, Edward requested and completed a face to face interview, and Lou completed his interview by telephone. Involvement also included review of research data, including interview transcripts and researcher coding schemes.

In order to recruit and retain participants for this intensive experience, an incentive was offered for each phase of the study. The first phase included the two individualized, face to face interviews and review of transcripts. To those participants who maintained involvement through the first phase, the researcher offered $25 in the form of a check. All 12 participants completed the first phase of the study.

The second phase included a standardized follow-up interview and review of transcripts and coding schemes. To those participants who maintained involvement through the second phase, the researcher offered a second $25 check. All of the participants completed the second phase of the study with the exception of Don.

The researcher contacted Don several times by telephone and e-mail. Twice, Don responded and stated that he would complete the follow-up interview. However, he did not do so. The timing of the follow-up interview likely interfered with Don’s sincere efforts to complete the follow up. The follow-up interview was requested during the winter holiday season, which coincided with the scheduled date of Don’s wedding.

Description of the Researcher

Interviews for this study were conducted by the researcher. The researcher is a Caucasian male whose household income would fit the category of High Income and whose age would fit the category of Middle. He is currently a doctoral candidate in the
Counselor Education program at Kent State University. He is a licensed Professional Counselor in the State of Ohio and a Nationally Certified Counselor.

The researcher acknowledges that he entered the research process with some assumptions about men and about human behavior. The researcher assumed that a man’s ideas about masculinity and masculine behavior have an effect, either overtly or covertly, on the way a man lives his life. The researcher further assumed that, whereas socialization and social interaction have an effect on behavior, individuals have some agency in social interaction. Finally, the researcher assumed that participants in this study would be positively affected by the opportunity to raise their own level of awareness about the way that they perform gendered behavior.

Methods

Four general categories of methods were used in this study. Data collection involved individual interviews. Organization and reflection was aided by memos and process notes. Verification was supported through member checks, external audit, and peer review. Finally, the study involved a method of addressing potential emergency situations. The purpose of this section is to describe each of these methods.

Data Collection

The primary method of data collection employed in this study was individual interviewing. Each interview included the researcher and an individual participant. An electronic audio recording device, which stored the recording as an electronic file, was used to record the interview. Audio-recorded interviews were immediately uploaded to
the researcher’s home computer and placed in a password protected file. Uploaded recordings were also burned onto a compact disc and stored in a protected location.

Interviews were transcribed and transcripts were stored in a protected location. Transcriptions were completed primarily by the researcher. However, some outside transcription was necessary. Outside transcription was completed by KSU College of Education Bureau of Research Training and Services (BRTS) Staff who offered their services as private transcription providers.

Transcription providers received compact discs labeled with only a number to identify the participant. Discs were destroyed by the transcriptionist after transcription. To further ensure confidentiality, transcription providers signed confidentiality agreements. Transcriptionists were referred to the study through BRTS and had completed the standard BRTS confidentiality form. Because they were functioning as private providers for this study, they also completed a generic confidentiality form (see Appendix B) as part of their service contracts.

Open Question Format

Open questions involve engaging the participant in an informal conversation about a topic (Patton, 2002). This format is most commonly used in participant observation studies because the researcher can not anticipate what will emerge from the situation. The open question format was appropriate for this study as a way of reducing researcher bias about what specific discussions are most important to the participants.

Although the open question format relies on following the lead of the interviewee, it is not wholly unstructured (Patton, 2002). Researchers provide initial direction by
explaining the purpose of the study and craft initial and follow-up questions with an awareness of sensitizing concepts. Sensitizing concepts help the researcher to maintain some loose framework for focusing the study.

Sensitizing concepts for this study were based on knowledge of the research in at least three subject areas. The researcher maintained an awareness of the possible influence gender roles, the multiple levels of influence on beliefs about gendered behavior, and the gender role conflict that has been suggested by research on men’s issues in counseling. Sensitizing concepts from sociological research included the purposeful use of language to construct gender within relationships, power differentials in gender relations, and the contextual nature of performance of gender. Acknowledging the contribution of psychodynamic theory, the researcher was sensitive to internal processes such as fears and anxiety, shame, and patterns of attachment.

In order to provide some direction and structure to the open question format, the researcher used the following process. During the screening interview, the researcher informed the potential participant of the purpose of the research. At that time, the researcher presented the guiding question for the participant’s consideration: What are the different ways you express “being a man” in your life?

To begin the initial interview, the researcher asked the guiding question again. In many cases, the researcher then used unstructured follow up questions to continue the interview. However, some participants struggled with learning to engage in the interview process and needed some further structure. Also, some participants needed assistance with providing a response that addressed multiple aspects of expression, including
process, behavior, and experience. When necessary, the researcher followed up this guiding question with one of the following questions:

1. What are some of the messages you have received from family, friends, and society about what it means to be a man? (Experience)
2. What do you imagine other men might say about the way you express “being a man” in your life? (Experience)
3. What do you personally believe about what it means to be a man? (Process)
4. How is your experience of being a man unique? (Process)
5. What behaviors do you avoid in order to be a man? (Behavior)
6. What are some of the behaviors you do that express “being a man” in your life? (Behavior)

**Interview Guide Question Format**

In the Grounded Theory Method, continued data collection is based on analysis of existing data (Charmaz, 2005). Corbin and Strauss (1990) proposed that the process of sampling in Grounded Theory Method involves intentionally taking samples of potentially theoretically relevant ideas. After each interview, the researcher engaged in an analysis of the data. Based on that analysis, the researcher created interview guides for follow-up interviews in order to obtain the samples that were suggested by ongoing analysis (See Appendix C for an example of an interview guide).

An interview guide is a format for structuring interviews around salient issues or questions that have been identified, in this case, from analysis (Patton, 2002). By using an interview guide to structure follow-up interviews, the researcher attempted to make the
most effective use of the limited time that was available. Though this provided added structure, it did not formalize the interview process. Using the guide, the researcher was free to explore new issues that arose and to craft questions informally throughout the interview.

Organization and Reflection

The Grounded Theory Method involves a process of simultaneous data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2005). In order to structure and aid that process, the study included use of memos and process notes. Memos were used for organization of data and process notes aided analysis through reflection.

Memos

Because the Grounded Theory Method involves a complex process of theory building based on interrelations among categories of data, researchers need some way of organizing ongoing analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Memos are formally written records of emerging categories and relationships of data. Creation and maintenance of memos from the beginning until the end of the study guides the researcher in the process of research and helps to ensure that conceptual detail is not lost from the study.

Burck (2005) presented a format for creation of memos that was adapted for this study. Burck’s memos included three columns. The first column was labeled “text.” In that column, the researcher placed actual interview text that was selected as relevant. In the next column, labeled “category,” the researcher inserted a label for the category that was represented, or potentially represented, by that bit of textual data. In the final
column, labeled “researcher category,” Burck placed broader concepts with which categories may be related.

Burck’s (2005) memo format was followed for this study with one alteration (See Appendix D). A fourth category was created to identify the individual with whom the piece of textual data was associated. Adding this column added context to the data. After the first interview, the researcher created a memo and that memo was updated and revised following each additional interview.

**Process Notes**

Reflexivity involves questioning one’s own assumptions and biases as they develop through the research process (Patton, 2002). Burck (2005) suggested that researchers should engage in some form of reflexivity as an ethical safeguard related to fairly representing the other person. Through reflective practice, the researcher can question how the emerging data is leading to increased knowledge (Patton, 2002). In addition to protecting against biased assumptions, a process of reflection may lead the researcher to further conceptual, categorical, or theoretical questions and more abstract reasoning.

As a reflexive process, the researcher completed process notes. Immediately following each interview, the researcher reflected on the interview process. This reflection helped to establish a contextual complexity to the interview data, offering a platform from which to consider the data that was generated (Patton, 2002). Process notes included immediate ideas of the interviewer, observations of the interview situation, and potential themes, concepts, categories, and metaphors that were exposed (Creswell,
1998). Process notes were included in data analysis and, as suggested by Patton (2002), were used to inform the explanation of methods that was used in the final presentation of data.

*Verification*

Verification procedures are used in qualitative research to enhance the quality and trustworthiness of the research (Creswell, 1998). By including these procedures, the researcher heightens a sense of validity of conclusions that are drawn from the data. Verification procedures in this study included member checks, external audit, and peer review.

*Member Checks*

Following each interview, the researcher provided participants a copy of the transcribed data from that interview. Each participant was asked to provide feedback on the accuracy of the transcription and encouraged to clarify statements that were unclear or misleading when transcribed. One participant did not follow this procedure because of his illiteracy. That member listened to audio recordings of the interviews in order to provide feedback. Using these member check procedures provided participants an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of the researcher’s perspective and greatly enhance the credibility of the results (Creswell, 1998).

*External Audit*

Before the final round of interviews, someone outside of the project reviewed and independently coded a portion of one transcript. The external auditor was a doctoral level researcher who was familiar with the Grounded Theory Method and gender studies. The
The auditor was not given any identifying information about the individual from whose interview the transcript was taken.

The external auditing process was conducted prior to the final round of interviews in order to provide questions and considerations for the final interview. Corbin and Strauss (1990) pointed out that verification procedures should be conducted during the data collection process so that they can inform continued data collection. One goal of the external audit was to provide some indication of the accuracy of the researcher’s codes by comparing the researchers coding of data with the coding of the external auditor and to examine any discrepancies through continued data collection (Creswell, 1998).

The results of the external audit suggested similar themes to those that were already being considered by the researcher. In particular, the external auditor noted a strong theme of responsibility and a possible connection with respect. The auditor also introduced another possible connection between responsibility and leadership. This possible connection was further explored in the final interviews.

Peer Review

Before the final round of interviews, the researcher met with a peer reviewer who was a doctoral candidate in a counselor education program. The peer reviewer assisted the researcher with debriefing the interview experience and considering the research process (Creswell, 1998). The researcher selected a peer reviewer who thought critically and was comfortable with direct and honest confrontation of discrepancies. The peer reviewer engaged the researcher in direct discussion of possible discrepancies, personal biases, and the logic of concepts that were being created. After the peer review, both the
researcher and the peer reviewer created process notes (See Appendix E). Questions generated during the peer review process were incorporated in the final interview.

*Potential Emergencies*

As part of informed consent, participants were made aware that confidentiality would be breached upon indication by the participant of any danger to self, danger to others, ongoing child abuse, or ongoing elder abuse. Had a participant given such an indication, the researcher would have contacted the appropriate agency for intervention. There was no need to implement this process during the study.

**Procedures**

Prior to engaging in any contact with research participants, the researcher secured approval from the Kent State University Human Subjects Review Board (See Appendix F). Following approval, the researcher recruited and screened participants. The researcher initiated interviews with participants as soon as possible after each participant was identified. All initial interviews occurred within one week of identification of the participant.

After approvals were secured and as participants were identified, the study proceeded in a sequence of two phases (See Appendix G for an outline of procedures followed). The first phase involved an individualized interview process. In the second phase, the researcher engaged in verification procedures which informed creation and completion of a standardized follow-up interview with all participants.
Phase I

The first phase of the procedure included two rounds of interviews for each participant. A round of interviews included an interview and an organization and reflection process. The first phase continued until all participants completed two rounds of interviews.

Initial Interview

The initial interview for each participant was conducted face-to-face and typically lasted close to two hours. The initial interview followed an open question format, utilizing guiding questions to provide some structure (See Appendix H for a sample transcript of a first interview). During the initial interview, participants were encouraged to lead the interview as much as possible.

Organization and Reflection of Initial Interview

Immediately following the initial interview for each participant, the researcher completed a process note. The interview was transcribed and returned to the participant for a member check. The researcher updated the memo using transcribed data, process notes, and member feedback from the member check. The researcher used the data that had been organized in the memo to create an interview guide for the next interview. That interview guide was individualized for a given participant and influenced both by data generated by that participant and any other data that had been entered in the memo.

First Follow-Up Interview

When organization and reflection processes were completed for a given participant, a follow-up interview was scheduled for that participant. Follow-up
interviews were conducted approximately two weeks after each initial interview. Because initial interviews were staggered over one month, some participants completed follow-up interviews before others had completed initial interviews.

The first follow-up interview was conducted face-to-face and typically lasted one hour. This interview followed an individualized interview guide question format (See Appendix I for a sample transcript of a first follow-up interview). This interview was slightly more structured so that conversation related more specifically to themes that had begun to emerge in the research process. However, participants were encouraged to share new thoughts and insights they believed to be relevant.

*Organization and Reflection of First Follow-Up Interview*

Immediately following the first follow-up interview for each participant, the researcher completed a process note. The interview was transcribed and returned to the participant for a member check. The researcher updated the memo using transcribed data, process notes, and member feedback from the member check.

*Phase II*

The purpose of Phase II of the study was to clarify relationships among data in order to support the theoretical framework that was created. This phase of the study involved one round of interviews based on a standardized interview guide that was developed following verification procedures.

*Verification*

Following completion of Phase I, the researcher initiated verification procedures in preparation for a standardized final round of interviews. A portion of one transcript
was submitted for external audit and the researcher engaged in peer review. The researcher considered existing data, external auditor comments, and results of the peer review process to inform creation of a standardized interview guide. The researcher then used that standardized interview guide with each participant in the study.

*Final Follow-Up Interview*

The final follow-up interview was conducted primarily through e-mail, though Keith completed the interview through regular mail, Edward requested and completed a face-to-face interview, and Lou completed his interview by telephone. This interview followed a standardized interview guide question format. This interview was more structured than the previous two so that conversation related more specifically to the theory that had begun to emerge in the research process (See Appendix J for a sample transcript of a final follow-up interview).

*Organization and Reflection of Final Follow-Up Interview*

Immediately following the final follow-up interview for each participant, the researcher completed a process note. No member check was completed because, in most cases, the participants wrote the responses to questions themselves. For the phone and face-to-face final interviews, the researcher wrote the participants’ responses and read them back to ensure accuracy. The researcher updated and finalized the memo using transcribed data and process notes.

*Analysis*

Grounded theory is both the method used in this study and the ultimate product of the study (Charmaz, 2005). Patton (2002) stated that a theory is an outline of the
systematic relationships between well-defined themes and concepts that explain some phenomenon. Analysis that is focused on generation of a theory is conceptual in nature and aims to generate and codify such relationships. As such, the analysis that was used in this study moved beyond description to explain broader connections (Charmaz, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

In basic terms, there are three steps to analysis in the Grounded Theory Method (Patton, 2002). The first step provides basic description. Moving beyond description, the analyst engages in conceptual ordering, sorting data into discreet categories. Finally, a logical scheme, or theory, is created.

More specifically, the three phases of coding described by Corbin and Strauss (1990) were employed in this study. Although there are other methods of coding that have been defined for use in Grounded Theory Method, their similarities outweigh their differences (LaRossa, 2005). The scheme described by Corbin and Strauss (1990) is currently the most commonly accepted coding scheme for use with the Grounded Theory Method (LaRossa, 2005).

This method of analyzing data involves use of constant comparison through stages of open, axial, and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Analysis of data in this study proceeded through three rounds of analysis, beginning after the first round of data collection and informing and following two follow-up rounds of data collection. While the process of coding is not linear, such that any type of coding can be employed at any stage of the research process, each form of coding was dominant during one of these three rounds of analysis. Open coding dominated analysis of initial interviews. Axial
coding dominated analysis of first follow-up interviews. And selective coding dominated analysis of final follow-up interviews.

*Constant Comparison*

Constant comparison guided all analysis in this study. The process of creating the building blocks of a grounded theory involves constantly comparing findings and placing them into categories, which are also compared (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Constant comparison relates to the simultaneous nature of data collection and analysis in the Grounded Theory Method (Charmaz, 2005). As new data and categories are created, they are compared to existing data and categories to identify similarities and differences.

Corbin and Strauss (1990) identified three benefits of use of constant comparison. First, it protects against researcher bias because all conclusions must stand up to new data and conceptual formulations. Second, it helps to achieve precise results because broad generalizations will not be supported under the scrutiny of comparison. Finally, consistency of the study is improved by ensuring that similar concepts are joined together.

*Open Coding*

Open coding was used throughout the research process, but dominated the first round of analysis of data. Open coding involves a detailed exploration of the raw data (Patton, 2002). The primary purpose of open coding is to identify concepts which assist the researcher with generating questions to guide continued research (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Concepts are broader meanings that are identified by the researcher and attached
to pieces of data (LaRossa, 2005). For example, a participant statement that “men should fight when confronted” may be labeled by the researcher as “aggressive imperative.”

Open coding also involves the creation of categories (LaRossa, 2005). Categories are groups of concepts that are related to the same phenomenon (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Creation of a category involves considering the abstract connection between concepts that are related (LaRossa, 2005). Concepts can be related along several dimensions, including similarity, difference, and sequence. Taking the earlier example a step forward, the category labeled “aggressive imperative” may be a concept that fits in the category of “responses to confrontation,” which could include many different behaviors or sequences of behaviors.

**Axial Coding**

Axial coding refers to two levels of analysis which dominated the second round of analyses in this study. One level of axial coding involves full development of categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; LaRossa, 2005; Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006). During axial coding, the researcher considers four elements of each category, including: (a) the conditions in which the category emerges, (b) the context in which it operates, (c) the actions and inactions that are involved, and (d) the consequences of these actions. Engaging in this activity increases the complexity and comprehensiveness of the categories that have been created through open coding.

Axial coding also involves relating categories to other categories through relational statements (Patton, 2002). Relational statements are initial formulations of ways in which categories relate. One technique that was used in this process was
diagramming (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). By representing in a diagram the ways that categories are related, the researcher can easily identify strengths and weaknesses in the supporting data (Mills et al., 2006). Examination of the diagram and consideration of existing relationships assisted the researcher with identification of guiding questions for continued data collection.

Selective Coding

LaRossa (2005) referred to selective coding as identification of the “main story” that is told by the data (p. 850). This type of analysis was used primarily during the final round of analyses in this study. In selective coding, all categories are joined in a core theory that relates to the phenomenon under study (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Engaging in this process, the researcher looked for categories that lacked description and were poorly developed. Those categories were either enhanced or discarded. During selective coding, the researcher attempted to ensure that the theory that has been created is clear, distinct, understandable, and useful (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; LaRossa, 2005).

Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the use of multiple strategies to view the same phenomenon (Sands & Roer-Strier, 2006). Triangulation serves two purposes in qualitative research (Tobin & Begley, 2004). One purpose of triangulation is to increase the complexity of the findings in the study (Patton, 2002; Sands & Roer-Strier, 2006). By comparing different perspectives on the data, the researcher can consider similarities and differences to arrive at a fuller understanding of the phenomena.
A second purpose of triangulation is verification, a measure of the validity of the study (Patton, 2002; Sands & Roer-Stier, 2006). Whereas some have argued that the concept of validity, based on a positivistic rather than naturalistic paradigm, is incompatible with qualitative research, others have continued to stress that this process is important to assure scientific rigor (Patton, 2002; Sands & Roer-Stier, 2006: Tobin & Begley, 2004). Use of triangulation as verification involves demonstrating that the conclusions that can be drawn from multiple perspectives are compatible.

Four main processes of triangulation are identified in the literature, including data, investigator, theory, and methodological triangulation (Patton, 2002; Sands & Roer-Stier, 2006: Tobin & Begley, 2004). Data triangulation was the main form used in this study. Data triangulation involves using multiple data sources to explore the same phenomenon (Patton, 2002; Sands & Roer-Stier, 2006). In this study, multiple individual interviews, researcher process notes, peer-review process notes, and participant review of analysis were used to explore the research question.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to consider a new theoretical position for understanding the experiences of men. A qualitative methodology was used to counter the reductionistic tendency of current research which categorizes masculinities. Instead, this study aimed to identify a theory that allows more flexibility in understanding masculinities as contextual and dynamic.

Specifically, this study employed the Grounded Theory Method to identify that theory. Through a complex and rigorous process of simultaneous data collection and
analysis, this study allowed a diverse set of individual men to verbalize a theory that is grounded in their personal experience. The resulting theory provides a new platform for research into the experiences of men.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The results of this study are supported by data that was collected through three rounds of interviews with each of the 12 men in the study (See Table 3). According to the data, the participants view themselves as capable of adapting to different situations by enacting different masculinities. Those multiple masculinities are created through an interaction between social messages and a unique individual self. The participants suggested that this adaptability allows for flexibility in expression of masculinities. However, flexibility is limited or constrained by the demands of the men’s perceived responsibilities for others, particularly responsibility to lead within their families and communities.

The influence of perceived responsibility for others on adaptability was exemplified by the participants’ descriptions of relationships with others and experiences of emotional expression. The data create a model of expression of masculinities that demonstrates adaptability which is tempered by perceived responsibility for others (See Figure 1). In this chapter, data to support and explain this model are provided.

Adaptability

The participants suggested that they are able to adapt their expression of masculinity by considering the many forms that masculinities can take as well as unique personal preferences and beliefs. Their perspectives on the forms that masculinities can
Table 3

_Brief Participant Descriptions_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Family Status</th>
<th>Special Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abe</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>full-time student</td>
<td>employed full-time</td>
<td>lives with girlfriend and daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>college graduate</td>
<td>employed full-time</td>
<td>lives with family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>taking business</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>lives in a substance abuse recovery home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>professor of</td>
<td>father of two</td>
<td>engaged to be married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>counselor education</td>
<td>children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>retired from</td>
<td>widow</td>
<td>cares for an adopted son with mental retardation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>professor of</td>
<td>father of one</td>
<td>married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>counselor education</td>
<td>adult son</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>full-time student</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>lives with mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>college graduate</td>
<td>business consultant</td>
<td>married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>college graduate</td>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>lives alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>school counselor</td>
<td>father of two</td>
<td>married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>retired from</td>
<td>father of three</td>
<td>married</td>
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<td>skilled labor career</td>
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<td>Lou</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>psychiatrist</td>
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Figure 1. Influence of perceived responsibility for others on adaptability in relationships and emotional expression
take were influenced by the many models they had seen and messages they had heard. These messages and models came from multiple sources. The participants discussed creation of a masculine self that was influenced by, yet distinct from, those models and messages. They pointed to this self as a guide in interactions as they flexibly adapt to varied situations by drawing on different models and messages.

Multiple Models and Messages

The participants suggested that they learned about being a man through multiple sources. Those sources included the family, society, ethnicity, and religion. The multiplicity of models and messages points to a complex socialization process. The following is an account of the varied and multiple messages that the men received from these sources.

Family

The primary source of socialization was the participant’s family. Though no participant was asked directly about his family, every participant described models and messages about being a man that they associated with their families. Models of being a man were represented by behaviors in which family members engaged and messages were verbal.

Models. The participants described many models displayed by family members. In particular, participants focused on male family members. These models were varied, ranging from reservation and detachment to being the life of the party, from modesty and humility to pride, and from men as head of household to absent fathers.
Models were provided by various family members. For example, Keith described the model provided by his grandfather: “He was a religious man and was a very quiet and nice guy. He would never push himself on anybody.” Abe discussed his older brother: “My brother, the one that went to jail, he was the partier, like the life of the party all the time.” Jerry talked about his father’s model of being a man: “He could be an ass in many ways when I was growing up, but he always worked, supported the family, made sure that we had food to eat, toys to play with.”

Messages. Like family models, messages verbally conveyed by family members were also varied and came from multiple sources. Participants related messages from both female and male family members. For example, Carl discussed his parents’ teaching that “one day we would be able to stand on our own two feet, whether we decide to marry or not, and we had better learn how to be independent quickly.” Edward recounted his grandfather’s deathbed request, “I want you to promise me that you’re gonna be a good fella and you’re gonna stop fighting and you’re not going to drink any more.” Don talked about “things [his] mom instilled . . . being responsible, taking care of your duties, your bills, your family.”

Verbal messages from family members sometimes matched behavioral models, but often contradicted them, adding to the complexity of the socialization process. For example, Abe pointed out that his father’s admonition to “stay with one girl” was contradicted by his father’s multiple relationships with women.
Participants identified multiple messages that they have received from society about being a man. Harold pointed out, “There’s so many different messages out there. With your friends, it’s ‘drink the drink.’ With the media, it could be anything from commercials where you see big, strong guys. There’s the full spectrum.” Keith added a cultural perspective: “If you’re a farmer in Iowa and you’re Regis Philbin in New York City, you’re going to have two entirely different perspectives on what being a man is.”

*Man’s man.* One social model to which many of the men referred was the “man’s man.” This model was also referred to by some as “machismo” and by others as the “macho-type.” Ben described these men: “They walk with their chest out. They always got to say something about their self to make themselves look like they the top dog or something.” Lou also described them: “They’re tougher. They’re a little more outgoing, a little more social, and I think more comfortable with their own manly self.”

Though the participants discussed recognition of multiple models of masculinity, they also described common social messages that reinforce the man’s man model. One message was that a man should not do anything that might lead others to think that he is homosexual. Jerry stated directly, “There are a lot of guys that would not be a friend with a gay man because he’s gay.” Carl described a recent incident at the doctor’s office where he was watching a soap opera. When another man turned the channel, Carl wanted to confront the man but did not because he was afraid that the man might have thought he was “soft” or “gay.”
Another common social message was that men are strong and independent. Harold stated, “I think a lot of people would consider how independent I am as an attribute of being a man.” Greg discussed messages about strength as portrayed by men in movies: “We are heroes or very strong or whatever. They can deal with all their own problems. They don’t need to talk to other people about it and work things out because we’re supposed to be stronger.”

A third common social message was that men should be more logical than emotional. Discussing his relationships with male friends, Greg pointed out that there is a “pecking order” with his “one friend who is a football player” at the top and his “emotional” friend at the bottom. Don described a social message that “men are supposed to be logical thinkers . . . intelligent, rational thinkers.” According to Greg, others view “dealing with emotions” instead of “figuring stuff out with logic” as “how a girl would deal with her problems.”

*Ethnicity*

Keith discussed his ethnic background, a combination of “Scotch and English,” and explained that this background has influenced him to express being a man in ways that are “quiet” and “a little mellower.” Although Keith was the only Caucasian participant to discuss ethnic influences on being a man, this connection was common among the African-American participants in this study. Fred stated that “African-American men have a different experience than do dominant culture men.” Common messages to use caution in social interactions and go around problems were connected with those experiences.
Experiences. Each of the African-American participants shared examples of situations in which they viewed their experience as different from that of Caucasian men. These examples provide a picture of experience that includes being treated differently, being blamed, being watched, and being last in line.

Ben talked about being treated differently in public: “If the White guy next to you had baggy pants, they let him in. But, if you had baggy pants on, they would tell you to change.” Edward explained his experience of being blamed: “You see, in them days, when something happened, they didn’t wait on the right man. If you were Black, you got it.” Don discussed the experience of being watched while shopping at a store: “As I move through the store, the person is moving along with me but just trying to camouflage and disguise it.” Fred described his experience of being last in line for available resources: “And then there were us 4 or 5 Black guys who quietly waded through whatever was left and did the best we could with what was left over.”

Caution in social interactions. Another message that has resulted from these experiences is the importance of maintaining a cautious stance in social interactions. Fred explained, “That is something we as African-American boys were taught very early. Be cognizant of where you are. Be cognizant of who’s around. Be aware of the kind of situation you expose yourself to. Watch where things are going.”

Ben talked about the need to consider safety over personal preference: “There are places that you can’t go by yourself and I usually like to do stuff by myself. But wherever I went, I basically took friends with me.” Abe described questioning the motives of others when a White man came up to talk to him at a bar: “We were sitting there talking for like
10 minutes. But in the back of my head I’m thinking, is he doing this just to be funny or is he really a nice person?”

*Going around barriers.* One of the messages that the men have gleaned indirectly from these experiences is that they must find ways around problems and barriers. Edward shared what his grandfather taught him about dealing with such situations: “This is a straight road. But he learnt me, when I get to one of these places, if there’s trouble there for me to go around it. And I learned to go around.”

Though they saw an emotional consequence for this behavior, the men contrasted it with the reality of the situation. Edward discussed the difference between his behavior and that of those around him who tried to confront problems directly: “We were down there with the rest of them, but we swallowed it . . . so we made it. And I think that we did the right thing. We could have been dead like they are.” In a less dire example, Ben discussed his reaction to the situation in which he was being treated differently in public: “I really didn’t like that at all, but we didn’t have a choice if we wanted to go out and have a good time.”

Another way that the men described going around was through creating alternative options. Fred explained, “As an African-American male, I’ve had to create opportunities for myself. I’ve had to do things differently. It’s always been kind of an in the back door kind of approach.” He stated that this experience has made him “more of a resourceful man” and one who does not “wait for things to come to” him. Don expressed a strong belief that this approach can be effective, adding that “you just have to have clear, concise goals and you have to have motivation.”
Religion

A fourth source of models and messages about being a man was identified by the participants as related to religion. Identification of this source was particularly common among African-American participants. Religious beliefs and practices among the participants served as a guide and reinforcement for behavior.

Several of the participants stressed the importance of their religious beliefs as a guide for their behavior. For example, Abe stated, “That’s what I base my life on . . . trying to be a good Christian.” Don related this belief more directly to his expression of being a man, stating that he strives for “understanding what’s written in the Bible, understanding how that relates to my manhood, understanding how that relates to me being a man.”

The specific messages that were conveyed by religion about being a man differed between men. For example, Jerry and Don, though both describing messages from Christianity, expressed different messages. Jerry described Jesus as a model of masculinity, sharing his belief that Jesus “didn’t let the pharaohs tell him what to do, didn’t let Caesar tell him how to act, and the soldier, and the Jewish priests.” He concluded that Jesus’ model was “masculine . . . it’s powerful. It’s strength personified.” Whereas Jerry seemed to say that men should wield their power, Don described the Christian model as a remedy for “self-centered” thinking, stating that “it’s kind of dealing with understanding that there is something greater than you. I guess that speaks to kind of being able to humble yourself, being able to walk in a manner where you’re confident but not arrogant.”
For those men who wanted to change their behavior, religious beliefs seemed to reinforce their efforts. Ben discussed his recent life changes and the connection with religion: “I have been trying to change my life you know because . . . college puts you through different situations and you just try to make a change basically and I know I needed God in my life more.” Carl added that the structure of religion has been an important part of changing his lifestyle: “Living my life within guidelines and within restrictions is important to me because there was a time when I didn’t.”

Creation of a Masculine Self

The participants discussed themselves as unique men. Some men believed that this unique self was innate. Ian said, “I just don’t think you can be somebody you’re not, so I think it’s important to just be yourself.” Lou added that the expression of his masculine self “mostly comes about naturally. I don’t go so much for outside stuff. It’s internal.”

However, several of the men discussed a more intentional creation of a masculine self that, while influenced by the models, is separate from them. Harold stated, I like to think I am my own man. I have never really found a single definition for a man and for that reason I guess I tend to shun them all and form my own opinion of what it means. Many would disagree with my perspective on what a man is, but I think my approach is a healthier approach than trying to fit into a pre-existing mold.
The participants described this creation of a masculine self as occurring through meshing models, comparing one’s beliefs to existing messages and models, doing something new, and changing over time.

*Meshing Models*

The participants described blending existing models together to create a personal model, or self. In some cases, this was only marginally intentional. Lou stated, “I had a very unusual set of primary people in my life . . . and these different characters, I think I have a mesh of them inside me.” Abe said, “I got bits and pieces of everything . . . any aspect of life I grab somehow and just make into my own self.”

For others, the meshing of models has been more intentional. Carl discussed blending models of his brother, his close friend, and Jesus, each of whom contributed to Carl’s beliefs about his own masculine self. Fred explained,

> I watch the models that have been successful in my life, men who have directed me and mentored me. Not all possess all qualities; however, I take from each and blend it into things and parts that are consistent and workable for me.

*Comparing Personal Beliefs to Existing Messages and Models*

Many of the participants described a conscious process of examining the existing messages and comparing their beliefs to those messages. Don identified messages and outlined his attempts to be intentional with including or excluding them from his self as a man: “trying to, in a sense, incorporate these into who I am or who I am not, trying to either prove them opposite or prove them to be so, and just try to incorporate that into my
being.” Keith described a similar process: “By how I respond to other men’s actions and images, I then say I do or do not want to be looked at in that way.”

As part of this examination, many of the participants decided that they did not agree with many of the messages they had received. For example, Carl, in opposition to the messages that he received from his father, stated, “I just feel like you can still be a man and show pride. You can still be a man and sympathize with someone else.” Abe expressed disagreement with the messages that he receives from his friends: “They want to sit and look mean all day or play the tough role. I’m not like that.”

In this process, some of the men were critical of other men. While discussing his tendency to diverge from the group, Harold described men who conform to models of others as “sheep,” stating that they are “just giving up any choice that [they] would have” and adding that “that’s not manly at all.” Greg, analyzing why his “jock” friend picks on him, concluded that his friend is insecure or jealous. Abe compared his friends who act “tough” to a “beast,” “dog,” and “animal.”

**Doing Something New**

Another way that the participants responded to models and messages was to do something different than they had been shown. Jerry gave a dramatic example,

> When I was growing up, my dad hit my mom. I saw it sometimes and it was terrible. And I’ll never forget that and I swore that I would never, never touch a woman in that physically aggressive way. I’ve stuck to my guns.

Abe discussed wanting to be a different type of father than his father was: “I want to live there with my son. I don’t just want to pop up when I have to or pop up when they call.”
As the man’s man model was so resonant among the participants, it is interesting to consider their attempts to counteract these messages in particular. Keith described his reaction to the man’s man model: “I just kind of like turn away from it or I just internally get really upset or angry about it.” Other participants spoke of efforts to undermine or compete with the model. Greg stated that he sometimes uses self-deprecatory comments, such as “you guys are so manly,” in an effort to undermine man’s man behavior when it surfaces. Lou described a process of competing with the model by “finding niches to be good at and be better than anybody else.”

*Changing Over Time*

Efforts by the participants to become aware of and challenge models and messages occurred as a process over time. One of the effects of time was that there were new acceptable models of masculinity. Explaining his comment that he was “not afraid to do housework,” Keith pointed out, “in the 35-40 years difference of our ages, a lot happened in society. It became a little more accepted or maybe expected for men to contribute more to the housework and stuff like that.”

Another effect of time is the maturing of the individual. Carl stated, “I am a middle-aged person, but I just feel like I’m more mature now. I have outgrown the stigma that they attach to you.” As a more mature person, he saw himself as “pretty well secure in who I am.”

A final effect of time is that, over time, the men were able to identify, challenge, and begin to change their behaviors and their beliefs about being a man. Fred described this process as it occurred over time:
It’s a process of letting go of some of the old stuff, and a process of stepping out and not always having to be traditional, not always having to be right off the page of the textbook, masculine-type thing, be okay with whatever comes off of the page.

**Situational Flexibility**

The men characterized their masculine selves as stable and consistent over time. However, they recognized that there are many aspects of the masculine self and that they are able to adapt to different situations. Greg summarized this idea nicely:

> I have a vast database of “manly” actions and feelings and even not so manly actions and feelings, and finding the right ones is based on the situation I’m in and who I’m with. I don’t think any particular model fits for me every time in every situation, and so I find that I adapt to different situations. Like if I’m hanging out with my girlfriend, I’ll let my guard down and not be a stereotypical “tough guy,” but if I’m with my friends, I act like more of a hard ass.

Only one of the participants expressed a negative view of having flexibility in one’s expression of being a man. Edward stated, “A man supposed to be a man, not a flip-flop, a man.” Among the other participants, there seemed to be a positive view of adapting one’s expression of masculinity to fit the situation. Carl commented that adapting to a situation is not the same as changing who one is: “Maybe I change a bit, but maybe I’m that way. Maybe it’s not being someone I’m not. Maybe it’s showing different sides of me that I can adjust to. I have that ability.” Greg suggested that this type of
flexibility is necessary: “You have to be more malleable when it comes to this stuff. You have to be able to adapt to a lot of situations.”

For some of the participants, adapting to situations was facilitated by consultation. Abe stated that “a little guidance from a parent or peer can only help.” Fred revealed, “I often talk things over with a close male friend.” Edward stated, “I’ll talk to the Lord about it. When I get through talking to the Lord, I’ve got it all figured out.”

Other participants discussed choosing their behavior in a given situation by considering consequences. Carl considered consequences for himself: “I decide by what the consequences will be for a certain situation. Will I go against my own beliefs and moral standards or who’s this benefiting in the end, them or me?” Ben considered consequences for the other people involved: “I think of what I feel is right, and would it be pleasing to someone else. Usually, I would try to put myself in someone else’s shoes.”

Still others chose their behavior based on the expectations of the given situation. Don explained, “When you’re with your buddies, you can act a certain way, but when you are in a certain setting or environment, it might be a more professional setting or environment, you have to act another way.” Greg also stated,

Depending on the situation, society expects us to act a certain way, and we either act accordingly or not. There’s not a simple algorithm for any specific action in any situation for me. I usually have to observe what’s going on and then act accordingly.

The “man’s man” model offers an example of how these men respond to various situations. Although many of the participants expressed a negative view of the model and
described efforts to compete with or undermine that model, they also admitted to acting out the model in certain situations. For example, Don stated that he may use that model in situations where he does not feel “comfortable” or “safe and secure.” In those situations, he suggested that “you’re going to put on your armor and come out like a soldier ready for battle.”

Perceived Responsibility for Others

When discussing situational flexibility, Harold laid out the bottom line, stating, “The challenge is, do you, as a man, overcome stereotypical perspectives of being a man and do the right thing?” For these participants, attempts to create a unique masculine self and adapt flexibly to situations are tempered by perceptions of responsibility for others. The participants identified development of responsible behavior as an important aspect of being a man. They discussed leadership as a prime responsibility. And they outlined the effects of this perceived responsibility on their experience of being a man.

Development of Responsible Behavior

A major theme expressed by participants in this study was that, as men, they are responsible to care for others. Abe stated, “To me, being responsible is to have someone or something trust and rely on you and you being able to accommodate them in a successful manner.” Jerry added, “I think that if you can do stuff for people, impact their lives in a positive way, that is probably the most important thing we can do while we’re here.” Harold connected caring for others directly with being a man: “When I think what it would be to be a man, I think about having some dependency upon me. I really don’t see myself being a man until I have to take care of someone.”
Examples of this responsibility for others reflected caring within families, between friends, and toward strangers. Harold reported a perceived “emotional responsibility” for his wife that involved “love and support.” Edward cited his willingness to care for his grandfather until he died as evidence of meeting family responsibility. Both Harold and Greg claimed to be the responsible person on whom their friends could rely for support. Lou talked about providing low cost medical care to the community: “I don’t do this for money. I don’t make money here. It’s kind of a donation and I plan to do it for as long as I can.”

Several participants suggested that meeting this responsibility was a process that occurred over time. Fred pointed out, “It was an evolving process.” Many participants agreed that the process is fueled by experience. Abe stated, “I’m still becoming a man . . . there’s still a lot of stuff I have to do to make me a man.”

Some of the participants reported being thrust into a position of responsibility. Jerry recalled his response to having children:

I realized playtime’s over. I got these little people now, relying on me. I can’t go and do whatever the hell I want to do. I have to take care of them and I want to take care of them.

Abe talked about a similar response: “I had a child when I was 19. So I didn’t do what most people did when they were like 19 . . . I was mostly working and trying to support a family.”

For other participants, the process involved more choice. Harold described the process of accepting responsibility for children as a “sacrifice” that he was “not ready” to
make. For him, increasing his responsibility for others is a “decision” that he will make intentionally.

Whether the experiences are planned or thrust upon the men, many participants agreed that the process of accepting increasing responsibility, and thus becoming a man, involved taking on and meeting responsibilities. Keith said succinctly, “I would certainly say that’s in the process of becoming a man, accepting responsibilities and dealing with them.”

Abe explained the process of taking on responsibilities: “I’m gradually slowing down, cutting back on what I used to do. Now I’m going out trying to find jobs, going to school, doing stuff that’s preparing me to be the man I want to be.” Ian reflected on when he began to see himself as a man and connected that experience with successfully meeting a responsibility for others: “Maybe it was after I did all the diaper changing of my step-sister’s little girl and that was done and over and she got a little older and I didn’t screw up.”

Responsibility to Lead

Review of the many specific types of responsibilities cited by the men yielded a major theme of responsibility to lead others. They presented this responsibility as self-imposed rather than emerging from the expectations of others. The men reported a responsibility to lead by influencing others. In particular, the participants expressed a responsibility for leadership in the family.
Influencing Others

Don explained that being responsible involves “making sure that I’m a leader . . . not only in my household, but in the community as well.” Many of the participants echoed this belief as they discussed ways in which they influence others. The participants identified three behaviors used to influence others, including modeling, decision-making, and mentoring.

**Modeling.** Some of the men described leading others indirectly by demonstration of appropriate behavior. Ben explained, “Just do what you do, but don’t tell everyone about it. Let people see it.” Abe connected this modeling directly with leadership: “Instead of telling them, maybe they will follow me if I keep doing right. They see that I’m going positive ways, they’ll follow.”

Keith expressed a belief that older men model for younger men, even if it is unintentional: “Certainly through their actions, they do serve as a role model for younger men.” Carl described a more intentional process of modeling for others:

Living my life in a sober, constructive manner shows others around me my strength as a man. It shows them that I love myself, that I care about myself. And by doing that, they can get some insight on how they should be living their lives.

Don pointed out that he viewed this modeling as particularly important for other African-Americans:

I think it sends a strong message that, even though they may not have seen positive African-American role models in their community or on TV or different
media sources, here’s one person that they can look to as an image of what they consider to be a success.

During the interview process, Abe revealed to the researcher that one of the reasons he agreed to participate in the study was to show the researcher a model of an African-American man. After sharing his beliefs about the likelihood of the researcher holding stereotypical bias about him, Abe stated, “I wanted to show you every 22 year old Black man ain’t the same.” He stated that it was important to him that the researcher sees that, “I have goals. I’m trying to reach them.”

**Decision-making.** Closely related to modeling behavior is leading through decision-making. Harold described leadership as, “my ability to stand by a decision . . . to make the tough decisions.” Ben explained his stance on dealing with tough situations: “I don’t think of the easy way, just the right way of doing things.” Keith stressed the importance of decisiveness, stating that “some people can see both sides of a question and see right on both sides. In doing that, you can sometimes get really confused.”

Making the tough and right decisions was important to the participants for two reasons. First, it led to more responsible personal behavior. Abe cited a responsible decision he had made as, “Choosing working over going partying.” Second, responsible decision-making is focused on others. Harold stated, “Questions that you ask yourself are no longer, ‘What am I going to do for me?’ It is, ‘How do I plan my day, prioritize the things that I’m going to do to help this person?’”

**Mentoring.** Unlike the previous two strategies, mentoring was described by the participants as a deliberate attempt to teach others. Ben defined mentoring as,
Basically somebody usually older than you, wiser than you, experienced more than you have and they basically guide you and tell you about their experiences. So, hopefully, when you come into the situation, you handle it better than they did.

Some mentoring occurred through formal mentoring programs. Don was a mentor in a formal program and explained that he passes along to other African-American men information he has learned about ways to “adjust” to different life situations. Other mentoring was less formal. Abe stated, “I tell all my friends all the time, ‘Man, you can go to school. It’s easy.’”

**Leadership in the Family**

Abe described his role within the family as “like being a coach or something like that in the household.” This family leadership responsibility was expressed by many of the participants. The two responsibilities the participants connected with family leadership were responsibilities to be the financial provider for the family and to be a moral guide for the children.

**Financial provider.** Many participants expressed beliefs that it was their responsibility to provide financially for their families. Jerry explained his belief: “I have a family, a wife and two kids who are relying on me. I’m the bread winner . . . it makes me feel good that I bring home a paycheck to help them out.” This was true even for participants who did not have substantial financial resources to contribute. Greg talked about his financial responsibility to his family: “I think I have a responsibility to help out when I can, even though I make the least amount of money.” This was also true when
other members of the family did not expect financial leadership. Abe described his planning for ultimate financial responsibility in his situation:

That’s why I went to go find another job. I’m seeing bills starting to get kind of high, the baby’s coming, it’s time to do more. Even if what she wants to do fails, I’m still going to back her up. So I let her make that decision right there. I let her make that decision, but I’m still quarterback and I’m still going through the motions.

*Moral guide.* The second way that the participants described leadership responsibility within the family was as a moral guide for the children. Don explained his leadership role in this regard: “I know my children are looking at me . . . to do what’s right as opposed to what’s wrong.” Edward stated, “My kids . . . I’m supposed to look after them and raise them right.” About raising his child, Abe said, “It can only help if you’re in the house and try to lead her the right way.”

The Effects of Perceived Responsibility for Others

The participants reported both negative and positive effects of the perceived responsibility for others. One of the major effects was related to respect. Participants discussed the relationship between responsibility and respect and the effects of giving and receiving respect from others.

*Positive and Negative Effects*

The participants noted some positive effects of this perceived responsibility. Carl stated that “responsibility helps me to organize my priorities and to focus my obligations toward everyday situations.” Jerry noted that perceived responsibility has “made me a lot
more grounded in decisions and life choices.” Edward suggested that his efforts to help others in the past are paying off now as they have returned to help him. Harold stated simply, “I enjoy the fact that other people view that in me and will reach out to me for that.”

They also identified some negative effects of perceived responsibility. Don pointed out, “the extra stress or the extra burdens that I have to carry or even overcome . . . just to show myself that I’m being a responsible person.” Harold suggested that the responsibility to care for others can be seen as a burden when it is “pushed on you” and might lead to his becoming “bitter and wishing I could do other types of things.” Greg stated that responsibility for others cannot be avoided and that, when things go wrong, he believes that he is to blame. Ben added that he has been unable to have what he wanted at times because of his responsibility to others.

Another consideration about the effects of perceived responsibility was neither good nor bad, but was stated as a related caution. Greg suggested that he uses power in his group of friends to lead them. He stated, “With all of that power, you have to be responsible with it. It’s like sometimes I can get them to do a lot of different things that may or may not be good.” Keith said, “There is a question. Do I even have a right to say you should do it this way? Maybe that’s not my right.”

Respect

The relationship between responsibility and respect was complex. Some participants suggested that respect demands responsibility. In other words, one acts responsibly because he respects others. Harold explained, “The key driver of why you do
what you need to do is respect for the individual that it would affect had you not satisfied that responsibility.”

Another perspective from the participants was that respect is a responsibility. In other words, one respects others because it is his responsibility to do so. Jerry stated, “I need to respect others because it’s the right thing to do. It’s my responsibility as a man.”

A third view was the most common among the participants. Many participants viewed respect as earned by responsible behavior. Likewise, lack of respect resulted from irresponsible behavior. Abe stated, “To be responsible automatically brings respect to me.” The participants discussed giving respect, getting respect, and feeling like less of a man when they do not get respect.

*Giving respect.* The respect as responsibility relationship seemed most relevant regarding giving respect to others. Carl had some vague expectations of those whom he would respect: “I respect men who are decent and good.” However, other participants made no suggestions about basing their respect for others on that person’s behavior.

The participants discussed ways that they demonstrate respect for others. Keith identified respectful behavior as, “Maybe helping people in little ways. Not helping them to shine light on you, but just helping out of the goodness of your heart.” Ben shared his perspective: “You always try to be truthful, but you don’t try to downgrade people. You basically talk about people like they’re there next to you.” Greg suggested that he gives his trust to those whom he respects: “I think it’s easier to talk to people about emotions if I respect them.”
**Getting respect.** The participants described a process through which meeting responsibilities leads to being respected by others. Fred stated, “Handling my responsibility earns respect.” Greg added that the respect is deserved: “People who are responsible and trustworthy deserve respect.” Don recalled a time when he was not respected, despite meeting his responsibility. He recounted, “I definitely made a point that you are going to respect me.”

The participants identified three benefits of being respected. Edward pointed out that meeting his responsibilities in the past has earned the respect of others who now feel responsible to him and care for him. Keith explained that earning the respect of others is a way of building a bond and connecting with them. Greg asserted that respect from others creates power in relationships that he can then use to lead.

**Feeling like less of a man.** The participants also described times when they did not earn respect or did not think they were getting respect from others. A lack of respect for one’s experience of being a man was labeled by the participants as feeling like less of a man. The participants discussed two main situations in which they felt like less of a man.

The first involved being dominated by other men and, in the process, losing respect for oneself as a man. Lou described a childhood situation in which other boys threatened to beat him up if he continued dating a girl. His decision to stop their relationship made him feel less of a man. Ian described a situation in which he believed that the police were picking on him and he did not fight back as an example. Greg
admitted that the constant pejorative comments from others about his height make it hard for him to respect himself as a man.

The second situation related more directly to not meeting responsibilities for others. The main contributor to this situation was a belief that one is not meeting his responsibility as financial provider of the family. Abe talked about his partner: “She was working two jobs for a little while. She was doing more than me. That was making me feel a little less of a man.” Jerry stated that he was meeting his financial responsibility and shared his reaction to his wife’s accusation that he was not: “She’s good at making me feel guilty, which sort of equates to being less of a man.”

Other situations that the participants reported were related to a lack of responsibility for others. Lou stated that he felt like less of a man because he “never got married, never had kids, will never have grandkids.” Abe stated, “I’d feel less of a man if I was just using a girl or using anybody.”

Adaptability and Responsibility in Relationships

A topic that was most common during the interview process was that of relationships between the participants and other people in their lives. As part of this discussion, the men discussed their experiences with competition and with dependence on others. They also described the various ways that they relate to family and others.

Competition

The men in this study primarily referred to competition with others in two ways. The first was considered positive and was directed at the self. The participants explained that competition with others motivates them to a higher level of performance. Jerry
explained that he views the purpose of competition as a way to challenge himself: “If I didn’t give one hundred percent, I hated it. But if I gave one hundred percent, I didn’t mind losing.” Keith also stated, “It’s a test of yourself and if you can look in the mirror and say, ‘Yes. I gave it everything. I prepared and I gave it the effort and I got beat,’ more power to the other fellow.”

The second way in which the participants referred to competition with others was as a response to perception of being tested or challenged. Greg stated,

If I get in there and somebody is really challenging me, like testing me or belittling me, or acting like I’m not something . . . as smart as I am, I will be like,

“Okay, you want to go? Let’s do this.”

Ian talked about a situation in which his competitiveness was triggered by a challenge from another man while watching football in a local bar. Ian explained that the other man’s jeering of Ian’s team “tricked my switch” and Ian began competing with the man by engaging in some jeering of his own.

Dependence and Independence

Among the participants in this study, the experience of being dependent on another person was described overwhelmingly as negative. Ben, Carl, and Jerry each talked about their discomfort when they have depended on others. Carl stated, “It doesn’t feel good, even though I know that she doesn’t mind helping me.” Jerry talked about his wife working in addition to doing most of the housework: “Sometimes I feel guilty, like I need to step it up, be more of a man to my wife as far as a helper. I don’t like being dependent on anybody.”
Edward, Ian, and Carl warned of the dangers of depending on someone else. Edward spoke of times in his life when people offered, for a fee, to help him get a job. He concluded, “People will steer you wrong.” Carl stated that, in his experience, depending on others can lead to rejection when the others choose not to help. He said, “Rather than to feel that rejection, I find something. Even if it’s beneath what I’m qualified to do, I’ll take it just so I can maintain my own self-sufficiency.”

Ian explained that his experience with depending on others has often involved damage to relationships. He recalled a time when his sister was helping him by allowing him to live in her house. He felt pressure to end the dependency on his sister, which resulted in increased stress and difficulty performing at work. He explained, “The stress gets worse. The anxiety gets worse. The frustration gets worse. Just the whole picture in general just gets worse.”

Harold and Greg also indicated that, in their experience, dependence on others leads to increased anxiety. In their experiences, being out of control of a situation because of dependency was associated with their anxiety. Greg gave an example of this association related to working in groups in class: “Sometimes I get real nervous about, you know, am I going to be able to count on everybody to do their part?”

Benefits of Independence

Solidifying this connection between control, anxiety, and dependence on others, Harold and Greg described one of the benefits of being independent as having control over what they produce. Harold explained, “I always like to do things for myself and on my own because I know I’ll do it the way I like it.” Greg added, “I generally like to be
the one that organizes it or even do everything myself so that it gets done and I know that it’s getting done and I know that it’s up to my standards.”

The participants outlined other benefits of independence. Edward suggested that being independent is equivalent with being free. He explained the difference between his experiences of living as a hired hand and paying for his own room and board:

You felt more independent. You felt as a man. But when they were doing it for you, you felt it was a handout. And if you’re like me, the things they had to do around the house, like fix the barn, fix a gate, help build a fence, and all this stuff, you go to it. You want to show those people you appreciate them letting you live there and feeding you. But now, when you are paying your way, if you didn’t want to, you didn’t think you were obliged to do it.

Fred and Carl described their experiences of independence as freedom. Carl said, “I don’t have to listen to anybody telling me when to get up, or telling me when to go to bed, or what time to come in.” Fred also commented on freedom as involving little supervision or direction from others, “I don’t want you hanging over my shoulder. If I need you, I’ll come and get you.”

Another value of independence was its contribution to meeting responsibilities and gaining respect. Harold explained the connection with meeting responsibilities:

If you’re going to be independent, you might as well be independent and doing the right thing. And to me that’s what responsibility comes down to. To be able to do what you are supposed to do, what you need to do.
Abe discussed the connection, in his experience, between being independent and gaining the respect of others. He recalled, “A couple of my friends came up to me like, ‘I respect you for that. You never asked your brothers for anything, not to drive their cars, not to get money, nothing.’ I wanted to get my own.”

Exceptions

Although no participants described dependence directly as helpful, one participant considered the benefit he experienced from a lack of acting independently. Harold described his lack of independence with his wife as “like charging a cell phone.” He explained, “Not that being independent is a mask or a costume, but it’s also like being able to take it off. You don’t have to prove anything or show anything.”

When dependence was inevitable, the participants referred to recognition of a need for help as strength. Edward explained:

You look back at yourself and say, “I can’t do this.” And I ask the good Lord for his guidance. So this must be his guidance, I gotta ask you. That’s the way you get behind that. I’ve done all I could do. I busted my butt trying to work here and show you that I don’t mind earning my pay, but it just doesn’t work out right. I have to ask you to give me a hand.

Lou labeled his asking for help as an “ability” that he possesses. He stated that he is able to identify and approach people who “could do stuff I couldn’t do. And they would help me get through things.”
Relating to Family

Asked to reflect on the interaction between relationships with family and perceived responsibility for others, the participants repeated the themes already described. Ben stressed the importance of family responsibilities: “You have to do right and put family first no matter what you do.” Greg stated, “My responsibility for my family comes down to providing for them.” Jerry explained that providing for his family includes “The basics . . . food, shelter, warmth, and love.” Abe added that he tries to be a leader and “provide guidance for improvement in any aspect.” When discussing their relationships with family, participants described relationships with members of their family of origin, children, and partners.

Family of Origin

The participants characterized their relationships with their families of origin in four ways. The most commonly identified characteristic was a strong feeling of love. Greg’s statement summarizes this perspective: “When it comes to my family, I have infinite love. There is nobody that is closer to me on this planet.” Another characterization involved having a high level of trust. Ben explained his trust for his family: “They never lied to me or did anything to hurt me. Even friends do that sometimes . . . my family never did anything like that to make me have doubts about them.”

The third characteristic was a general respect for family members. Keith pointed to “respecting my parents and siblings” as a characteristic of his relationship with them. Finally, Harold identified being a supporter as characteristic of his relationship with his
family of origin. He said, “As a man, you become the supporter . . . of younger siblings, support your parents as needed.”

More specifically, the men described behaviors in which they engage in relationships with their family. One of those behaviors was related to being trapped in old roles. Harold explained,

Whenever I go home, I seem to get in that shell almost, like where I’m resorting back to what I was in high school. I think I’ve changed a lot, but I feel like I go back there and I fall back into the same person that I was.

Another set of behaviors related to attempts to connect with their fathers. Jerry described some tendency toward old roles in the way he acts around his father:

I feel like I tend to act like a little boy a bit. And I think I do that for me and him, make him feel good and to make me feel like, almost make myself feel a little bit more at ease almost, so that I’m not like competition for him.

Greg discussed his attempts to connect with his father by making his father proud: “I just kind of tell him all of these good things that have been happening, just to make him proud of me.” Abe described a change in his behavior with his father: “He’s starting to realize that I’m growing up, being the young man that I am, so we start talking more about certain situations.”

Whereas the men seemed to be seeking connection with their fathers, some reported an existing strong connection with the women in their families. Carl described his easy and strong connection with his sister: “We talk about religion and spirituality, relationships, and school . . . just life in general.” Abe reported a deep and lasting
connection with his mother and her teaching: “I always had my mom in the back of my mind.”

Children

Participants characterized relationships with children in two ways. One of the ways the relationship was characterized was with the father as a disciplinarian. Jerry spoke of the importance of “disciplining” his children. Carl asserted that, “discipline and guidance should be included in rearing children, all children.” Abe described his perspective on being a disciplinarian: “Demand respect but show it also. Just be a little tougher than mom in situations, even if it’s hard, and I believe later it will pay off.”

The other way that the participants characterized relationships with children was with the father as a subtle leader. Keith described himself as a “quiet, thoughtful mentor” with his children. He further explained, “I try to lead my life and, if I lead it in a fairly decent way, then maybe they will see that and try to emulate it a little bit.” Harold suggested that relationships with children should be focused on providing opportunity within a supportive environment: “You need to provide for your children so that they are afforded every opportunity to improve their own lives. That would also include building a supporting environment where they are able to develop into adulthood.”

The men described feeling intense love for their children. Edward pointed out that this feeling was still present when he had to leave his daughter with family so that he could work and earn money to provide for them: “Many nights that I woke up, I’d been playing with the baby in my sleep. I was crazy about my baby.” Jerry stated that he demonstrates his love through “tenderness . . . that means hugging my daughter, kissing
her on the cheek, hugging my son, kissing him on the cheek, putting them on my
shoulders and running around the house acting goofy.”

Don pointed out that he expresses his love for his children by spending “quality
time” with them. He described quality time as “interacting more with them, whether it’s
helping them with their homework, taking them out to an event, or even sitting back and
taking time to talk and see what’s going on with them.” He suggested that this behavior is
“nurturing” through “being intellectually closer.” He also stated that he has more
difficulty engaging in this nurturing role with his son than with his daughter because
“sometimes I fall into the assumption that I have to show him what it means to be a man.
So, certain things I withhold or withdraw or be a little more desensitive or distant with.”

Partner

The participants stated that their relationships with their partners are different than
other relationships. Don stated, “The type of relationship that I’ve developed with my
fiancé . . . I feel like I can open up. I can show my weaker side.” Fred explained,
Physical closeness, the hugging, and touching, and all that, is something that is
very much a part of the relationship I have with my wife. But it is not part of the
relationship I have with my son, nor is it part of the relationship I have with
people outside my home.

Harold suggested interdependence between him and his wife: “I don’t think of myself as
doing anything separately than what she would do.” In a related comment, he suggested
that he has “an emotional responsibility to dedicate every decision in your life to the goal
of improving both lives.”
The men also characterized their relationships with their partners as based on care and compassion. Keith pointed to the importance of “sharing feelings” and “being respectful.” Carl asserted the importance of “understanding” which leads to “love and trust and fidelity.” Harold suggested that “it is important to learn about your partner to know what he or she needs from you.” Greg added, “With my girlfriend, I think it’s important that I’m there for her when she needs me.” He also asserted that “it is more important to care for a loved one than to shower them in gifts.”

Though the men described caring and compassionate relationships, the primary behavioral description that emerged was related to handling frustration in relationships with a partner. Keith reported attempting to avoid confrontation: “I’ve learned to bite my tongue because there are a lot of minute things that just drive me up a wall.” Abe reported an inability to avoid confrontation: “I really try to be the mature one in the situation, but I do find myself yelling sometimes.”

The men also outlined expectations about the roles that they and their partner would play in the relationship. Don stated that he and his fiancé have a “clear delineation” of roles. As an example, he stated, “When I leave here, I have to go home and cut the grass, whereas my wife doesn’t cut the grass.”

Edward discussed his valuing of a partner on whom he can rely: “I didn’t have to worry about her loafing on me, cutting corners.” Abe pointed to the value of his partner encouraging his growth: “She grew me up a lot . . . After we had the baby, she just stayed constantly on me, constantly on me.”
Relating to Others

As asked to reflect on the interaction between relating to others and perceived responsibility for others, the participants again repeated the themes already described. Greg stated, “My responsibility to my friends is really important . . . This responsibility I have to them to keep their secrets helps strengthen my relationships.” Ian discussed a responsibility to role model appropriate behavior: “I want others to perceive me as someone who mostly tries to do right and that I believe in doing things the way I believe is right.” Abe used a metaphor about pets to describe the responsibility to provide for others and the payoff that is associated with meeting that responsibility: “Even with pets, if you provide them food and love, that’s responsibility and they will love and protect you for it.”

In discussion of relationships with others, the participants described experiences with both lack of connection and connecting with others. They also shared particular considerations in their relationships with men and women.

Lack of Connection

The men in the study discussed having few relationships with others. At times, this was a choice. Fred stated, “I don’t particularly need a lot of people around me all the time. I’m comfortable being alone. I’m comfortable not having a whole lot of friends.” Abe talked about keeping to himself as a matter of self-preservation: “That’s me staying out of the way, like not trying to get in trouble. I know what the streets are, nothing but trouble.”
Another common reason that the men reported for having few relationships with others was a belief that many relationships with others are non-productive or even harmful. Carl explained,

I am not really going to continue a friendship that is destructive, self-destructive, counter-productive . . . If I see that they are not really interested in some of the things that I’m interested in such as getting ahead, being independent, things like that, for too long, I’m not going to put up with that type of behavior.

Keith described his intentional detachment from some others: “If there’s people I don’t particularly like and don’t like the way they act . . . I just go about my business and let them go about their business.” Ben explored his reaction to old friends who are frustrated with Ben’s unwillingness to conform to old roles and behaviors: “Those aren’t the kind of guys I want to hang around. Those are the kind of guys that keep holding you back when you are trying to move forward, so I can’t hang with those guys any more."

At other times, the men discussed having few relationships with others as a situation over which they have no control. Some of the men stated that they have tried to connect with others, but have found that others will not reciprocate. They suggested that this is the fault of others who are unable or unwilling to form relationships. Edward stated,

It’s amazing, you bump into somebody and they don’t have a smile for nothing. They’re just a solemn person. Say what they’re going to say and don’t say no more. Don’t care what you say. You don’t bring a laugh to him or a smile.
Ian expressed his frustration with lack of reciprocity from others. He said that he has approached people to become friends and they have said “we are going to have to keep in contact and blah, blah, blah and so on and so forth, but then I make the effort and then they don’t.”

Other men commented that attempts to form lasting friendships are foiled by situations. Fred stated that his relationships with others tend to be transient because the people with whom he associates “change and come and go.” Lou pointed out that, “Most people who would be friends mostly had used their energy within their own family.”

The participants described characteristic behaviors associated with their lack of connection with others. Abe talked about sitting outside of the group and observing others: “If I’m around somebody I don’t know, like I really don’t know you, I would rather observe you than you observe me.” Keith talked about ignoring what others are saying, even if he disagrees, in order to avoid conflict: “I didn’t maybe stand up for things that I would have liked to see changed as much as I should have or could have.” Fred discussed relating with others without emotional connection: “It’s very business like, not a whole lot of emotion attached.”

Connecting

Though many of the men reported having few relationships, they were able to reflect on how they connect with others. The participants identified a few behaviors that they used to make connections. Harold stated that he uses humor to connect with others: “I always try to make people laugh.” Ian stated that he is “not afraid” to talk with others: “I’m a person that wants to talk. I want to know stuff.”
Carl outlined two main behaviors that he uses to make connections with others. He stated that he demonstrated his care and concern for others by “intentionally” listening to what is happening in the person’s life. He explained, “To show them the next time I see them, which may be weeks or months down the road, but I’ll remember this one thing they told me.” The second way that he demonstrates his care and concern is “by not taking advantage of people.”

Building trust. When the men do connect with others, they begin a process of building trust. The participants suggested that building trust involves interacting with others on an individual basis. Ben said,

I basically just hang around until you have a one-on-one time where I talk to them and see where their head is, and I can easily tell, this person has a good heart or this person is basically playing you for a fool.

Edward stated, “You’ve got to mangle with them. You’ve got to have different dealings with them to get to know them good, see what kind of person he is. Then you can see whether he’s a good person or bad person.”

Carl pointed out, “When I find people that I can trust, we have very close relationships, very meaningful relationships. We can tell our problems to one another. We can share secrets and troubles. There’s nothing really to hide.” However, the participants discussed difficulties with building trust with others.

They suggested that other people are not trustworthy. Carl stated directly, “Most people aren’t very trustworthy. That’s what I’ve found.” Ben said, “They all end up basically hurting you in the end. So, you can never be sure of anybody now days.”
Some of the participants described a realistic concern for safety that creates a guarded stance that may add to the difficulty of trusting. Fred explained that a concern for safety is something that was taught between generations in his family: “It was unsafe for you to be in particular settings or situation based on their cultural background. So he passed that on to me and I passed it on to my son.” Abe shared his experience of feeling unsafe:

There was a lot of stuff you had to watch out for when I was younger than compared to another person in middle or upper class . . . A lot more street crimes, a lot more stuff you had to worry about in the streets.

The participants described taking a guarded stance around others in response to concern for their safety. Part of this guarded stance is expressed through going around. Edward explained this way of protecting one’s safety when in a potentially dangerous situation; “You get close and find, uh oh, better not go this way, better go around.” Abe stated that his guarded stance involves expecting the worst in any situation: “When you expect the worst and it happens, then you’re prepared for it.”

Creating a strong appearance as a guarded stance was described by Carl: “Where I grew up at, in the ghetto, you had to be strong. You had to exude that masculine side. You couldn’t exude weakness.” Abe stressed the importance of vigilance in maintaining a guarded stance: “Usually when you do let your guard down, that’s when you get disappointed, something happens or something goes wrong.”
Though the participants described building trust as difficult, they did express some success with trusting others. However, they suggested that trust develops as a process over time. Don explained,

The more you know a person, the more you feel close to a person. Usually, you feel a heightened sense of psychological safety, even physical safety. So you can tend to be more of yourself. You can tend to show yourself, expose your weaknesses, expose yourself as a true person.

Greg shared his experience of this progression:

When I first meet somebody, I’m just like, you know, “I like to play video games and watch wrestling and eat pizza, and that’s what I do. I’m a typical guy. I don’t have emotions or feelings and I don’t care.” But once I start to get to know somebody a little bit better and I warm up to them, I start letting them know, showing them who I really am.

Greg explained that his efforts to show others who he really is occurs slowly, beginning with self-deprecatory jokes and culminating in sharing of more vulnerable aspects of himself. Abe suggested that, although his trust also progresses, “I still don’t let the guard down. It just lessens it. It never goes away. It never goes away.”

*Relationships With Men*

The participants commented specifically on the unique nature of their relationships with other men. They described deep relationships which are sustained through straight talk and teasing behavior. The participants also discussed the effect that homophobia has on their relationships with men.
Deep connections. The participants used the term “deep” to describe their unique relationships with other men. Though the men listed few relationships with other men, they characterized these relationships as involving a deep connection. For several of the participants, these relationships were longstanding. Fred stated, “The few relationships that I have, the personal relationships, are fairly deep relationships that have lasted a long time.” In describing his deep relationship with a male friend, Carl pointed out, “We have been friends for over 8 or 9 years.”

Depth of the relationship was associated with the sincerity of the interaction. Carl described a deep relationship:

It is a relationship where I can be honest with him and open with him and he can be honest with me and open with me. He told me some problems he’s going through. I can tell him problems that I’m going through.

Depth was also measured by the level of disclosure. Fred stated, “There were things that I would not have talked to anyone else about had I not felt that level of comfort that I feel with him.” Harold contrasted deep relationships to those that are superficial: “There’s not much pettiness, so it’s all real.” Lou added that deep relationships involve reciprocity: “He tells me that I’m his best friend.”

Fred explained that he has relationships with men that are deep in a way that does not include physical affection:

We were very connected, but it wasn’t that close, huggy, kiss, kiss type thing. It was very supportive. I knew I could call. If I needed help, I knew he would be
there, knew he wouldn’t always have the right thing to say to me, but he had the
ability to take me in the right direction.

These relationships also did not require frequent contact. Harold stated, “You can not talk
to someone for 3 months and then you go out and hang with them. It’s like you just
talked to them 5 minutes ago and everything is great.” Fred asserted, “It is possible to
have a relationship that is a very deep relationship, a very intimate relationship without
having to have a lot of contact.”

Straight talk. The participants characterized their relationships with other men as
involving straightforward communication. The participants suggested that, in
relationships between men, they have a responsibility to be genuine. Abe stated, “By
attempting to be something you’re not around them shows that you’re not a man yourself
and diminishes character.” Edward said, “If you hold yourself right, you look for the
other fellow to treat you right.”

This genuineness is expressed through direct communication. Fred described this
style of communicating: “Be very blunt. Get to the point. This is what I see. This is what
I hear. This is how I feel about what you’re telling me.” Harold added, “We will say it
right to each other’s face.” Ben explained, “They will tell you stuff that you probably
need to hear, but you don’t want to hear.”

Teasing. Another way that the participants described connecting with other men is
through teasing, which was also referred to as “razzing,” “nailing,” “ragging,” and
“busting balls.” Harold defined this behavior as “giving each other a hard time about
something” and explained that, for each of his male friends, “There’s a characteristic
about everyone that we always just rag on.” Greg stated that a typical behavior among his male friends is to “make fun of each other.” Jerry discussed the nature of his relationship with his best friend: “I tease him all the time.”

The men stressed that this behavior is not meant to be harmful. Harold said, “It is not detrimental in a way where one person is always the butt of it. Everyone always gets their turn.” Greg echoed, “It all goes around.” Keith stated that his experience has been that teasing is “in good fun” and has only become problematic when “the other person maybe took it the wrong way or something.”

*The effect of homophobia on relationships between men.* The participants discussed fear of homosexuality and the ways that it affects their relationships with other men. Carl attributed his fear of homosexuality to an early experience: “When I was seventeen, I had a man . . . he was a boxer and I was interested in boxing, so I used to train with him. But one time after boxing, he approached me sexually.” Edward also attributed his fear to an attempted sexual encounter by another man. He described his reaction to the proposition, “I came near going to jail. And I’d have gone for a while too ’cause I had my gun in a holster under my coat.”

Lou connected his fear with a comment made to him as a child by a neighbor girl. He recalled that he told her, “When I grew up, I wanted to marry my father.” He described the memory of her response as vivid: “She laughed and said, ’You can’t do that.’”

The participants shared that homophobia interferes with their relationships with other men. They suggested that others look critically upon close relationships between
men and imply that the men must be gay. Lou shared a recent example in which his close
friend told Lou about their relationship being questioned by outsiders: “He said, ‘You
know I told somebody I call you a couple times, we get together once or twice a week, or
talk once a week.’ And they said to him, ‘Well, that’s like with a girl.’” Carl explained
his belief that this type of misperception can lead to rejection from his community: “They
will tell all their friends and then you have a problem.”

The men also described ways that homophobia affects their behavior toward other
men. A tendency to avoid hugging was one of the effects. Don shared his trepidation
about hugging men, stating that maintaining space is important because “They don’t want
to be viewed as being gay.”

The participants also suggested that homophobia was related to lack of eye
contact between men. Abe stated, “Some people probably think if you look them in the
eyes, you gay or homosexual.” Carl shared his experience with eye contact: “The first
thing they think is that you are trying to hit on them.”

Relationships With Women

When speaking of women in general, the participants stressed a responsibility to
show respect. Harold stated, “With other women, the key is respect. Respect in every
aspect of interaction; physical, verbal, and emotional.” Carl stated that “women deserve
to be respected.”

One of the ways that the men met this responsibility and gained the respect of
women was, as Abe stated, “through building trust and faith.” Greg suggested that he
builds this trust by showing women “I won’t betray them” and “treating them as equals
instead of objects.” Another way that the participants tried to show respect for women was by not abusing their physical or financial power. As Edward stated, “You cannot go out there and beat up on them. You cannot starve them.”

*Difficulty connecting.* The participants reported two difficulties in their efforts to connect with women. One of these difficulties was related to fear of women. One concern was that women can be very powerful if not controlled. Abe stated, “You have to be wise and strong and lay out the guidelines or they will run over you.” Edward said, “You pick the wrong one and you have a problem. If she doesn’t have a good head on her, you’ve got trouble.”

A second fear of women was that they could hurt the men. Edward discussed this as a literal concern related to sexual interaction: “I’d have to know them a while, know whether they were clean, know whether there was any chance of disease.” Lou spoke more of an emotional fear: “I think I have a deep distrust of women, and some of this leaving them was maybe before I expected they would leave me.” Ben noted a similar concern: “I just didn’t want to express myself, maybe because I didn’t want to get hurt or something like that.”

The second difficulty with connecting was related to the historical nature of interactions between the sexes. Keith discussed his frustration with what he viewed as hypocrisy: “At this point in time, it seems to me as though women are doing the very things that they expressed to dislike in men over the years.” He clarified by giving some examples of behaviors such as “swearing,” “smoking and drinking,” “bad mouthing men,” and not respecting “fidelity.”
From a different angle, Jerry expressed guilt about the history of men. He said, “Who starts the wars? Men. Who’s killing each other? Men. Who robbed someone last night and killed someone? A man did.” He described his reaction to this belief: “makes me feel like, as a man, I need to make up for some of the things that we’ve done.”

Greg and Lou noted that they are self-conscious about being a man around women. Greg stated his behavioral response around women is to “act out manly stereotypes . . . to make fun of these ridiculous stereotypes that are associated with the male sex.” Lou stated simply, “That’s when I am at my least manly.”

*Connecting.* The men characterized their relationships with women when they do connect. They described relationships that involve providing support to women and receiving support from women.

The support that the men claimed to provide to women was, primarily, in the form of fixing problems. Ian described his role: “To find out what’s bothering her if something’s wrong and to want to help her fix it.” Abe stated, “I’m willing to listen,” and then try to “help her out” by sharing advice and encouragement.

The support that the men claimed to receive from women was, primarily, emotional. The participants viewed women as more emotionally oriented than men. Carl suggested that women “are more in tune with their feelings than men are and they easily show their emotions far more readily than men do.” Abe explained his perspective on relating to women: “Realize they are usually more sensitive and be understanding of their feelings.”
The participants discussed feeling more comfortable talking with women about emotional issues. Greg stated, “I have no problem talking with girls. Usually, I can tell them anything.” Ian stated that the type of relationship that he desires with women is “to be close with her, sharing thoughts, feelings, and so forth.”

Sexual attraction. When there was a sexual or romantic component to the connection between the participants and women, the relationships were complicated. One of the complications occurred when the man was attracted to the woman but did not reveal his attraction. Carl described a situation where he did not reveal his attraction because of a fear of rejection: “I did have feelings for her that were maybe love . . . and she had expressed that she didn’t really care for older guys, so I didn’t really reveal to her that I had those feelings for her.” Jerry talked about his situation with a co-worker: “I sort of think she’s hot, but I don’t tell her that because it would get too weird.” He clarified, “I try not to go that way with her because I feel that it ruins a friendship between a man and a woman.”

A second complication related to sexual attraction occurred when sexual attraction led to treating women as sexual objects. Lou referred to this as “womanizing,” which he defined: “You meet somebody just for the sex and you leave them after you have sex with them.” Ian talked about this type of behavior: “All that I would want to do with her is have sex with her and then I would be done with her.”

A third complication occurred when a woman expressed interest in a man and the man feigned interest in the woman. Abe provided an example of this situation. Talking about meeting women in bars, he explained, “I probably get their number, but I usually
don’t call.” He stated that he does this “just to see if I still can” and reported that his success results in feeling “Like I ain’t lost myself . . . I’m still there.”

A fourth complication occurred when a woman expressed interest in a man and the man feigned disinterest in the woman. One situation in which this occurred was shared by Jerry, who recalled a relationship in which he became “arrogant” and “didn’t return her affection.” He claimed he was “a jerk” and said, “I still feel bad about it.” Another situation was shared by Ben who claimed that his feigned disinterest was a matter of naïveté. He stated, “I was kind of a jerk because I was always used to being by myself, so I told every girl down there that I was not interested in them.” However, Ben added, “I would get mad at them messing with other guys.”

Adaptability and Responsibility in Emotional Expression

The participants described emotions as powerful and potentially dangerous. They cited a responsibility to control their emotions. They discussed ways that they expressed their emotions and focused particularly on experiences of loss.

*Emotions Are Powerful*

A common perception among the men in the study was that emotions are powerful. Ben stated, “Emotions show powerful feeling.” Abe suggested that emotions can be used to manipulate someone. He said that expression of emotions was inappropriate “when you’re not emotional about the situation and you try to trick or deceive someone.”

Some of the participants recounted experiences in which they lost control as a result of expressing their emotions. Ben stressed the perceived danger of emotional
expression: “You keep a lot of things inside when you probably should get them off your chest, but it will probably get you in trouble if you get them off your chest.” He explained that expressing his feelings in the past had led to hurting other people’s feelings: “It made me feel better, but it really hurt those people.”

*Control*

Fred stated succinctly, “It is my responsibility as a man to keep my emotions under control.” The men described three ways that they demonstrate control of their emotions. The first is infrequent expression. Ben stated, “I only show my emotions in moderation . . . In other words, very seldom.” Keith said, “I tend not to be overly emotional.”

The men stated that they prefer to rely on rationality than emotions in stressful situations. Greg said, “I don’t like acting solely based on my emotions and just doing whatever my heart tells me to do and just not thinking about something before I do it.” He stated that he prefers, instead, to “just go through and deduce things and figure out why it’s even bothering me.” Abe criticized those who do not take this approach: “People don’t think. They act in the heat of the moment.”

The second way that the men demonstrated control was by expressing only emotions that they perceive to be appropriate in a given situation. Keith explained that it is appropriate to show emotions “in joyful and trying times.” Ian pointed out that “it depends largely on what type of emotion we’re talking about.” He stated that it is appropriate to “get into the game at a sporting event” but “practically never acceptable” to cry.
Others also discussed the type of emotion being expressed. Greg described some emotions that are appropriate for expression: “There’s always really good emotions, like love and being happy and relaxed.” Carl expressed belief that expression of all emotions except anger is appropriate. He added, “I believe that if you can’t hold your tongue from cursing, you may need to remove yourself from that situation before you lose respect for others or yourself.”

The third way that the men demonstrated control was by expressing emotion only in private and not in public. Fred stated directly, “It is unacceptable for me to demonstrate emotion in public.” Ian suggested that restraining emotions in a public setting is a matter of respect: “I am a responsible and respectful person. I would never yell in a restaurant or most public places.”

Expression

The participants characterized their expression of emotions in three ways. At times, the men do not express their emotions. When they do express them, they are sometimes expressed in unintentional ways. Other times, their expression of emotion is intentionally verbalized or attempted through touch.

No Expression

The men described three conditions under which their emotions are not expressed. The first is an intentional effort to keep emotions to themselves. Edward referred to this as “swallowing it.” He defined this behavior:
Things that you don’t like, some of them you have to swallow for your own being well and getting along. Swallow it. There you go. It’s not going to hurt you . . . only on the inside. Long as it don’t come out, it don’t bother you.

Ben described his effort to intentionally keep his emotions from others: “I guess that it’s kind of like my defense mechanism is smiling. I have problems too, but everyone thinks that I kind of brush them off my shoulder.”

The second condition under which the men’s emotions are not expressed is a lack of awareness of their own feelings. Don stated, “I’m not always in touch with my emotions.” Harold said, “I have the ability to just walk around and not think of anything.”

The third condition under which the men’s emotions are not expressed is an inability to express emotions when they try. Ben explained, “Sometimes I want to cry. I’ll be thinking that will make it go away. But sometimes I can’t.” Greg added, “I think that I just don’t have a lot of practice with expressing my feelings . . . or even talking about them in general.”

*Unintentional Expression*

At times, the participants displayed emotion unintentionally. One of those times was when the men were feeling something but not expressing it verbally. Don stated, “Sometimes my emotions may show on my face.” Fred recalled comments from his students, “They can tell by the tone of my voice how things are going to go that day.” Harold shared, “I have been told many, many times that I wear my emotions on my sleeve.”
Another experience in which the men unintentionally display their emotion is when emotion builds up and overtakes their efforts to avoid expression. Keith recalled an incident with a man who had been picking on him for several months. Keith explained his response, which included challenging the man to a fight: “I guess it had built up over a period of months of not saying anything and I just kind of threw down my gloves.”

**Verbal Expression**

At other times, the men express their feelings verbally. Ian commented, “I know from personal experience that you need to talk about stuff, even though you don’t want to talk about stuff.” Don explained his perspective on the importance of expressing emotions verbally:

To talk about it, to vent, to have someone to talk to, just to even be willing to acknowledge, that’s the first thing because as a man, you really do have to humble yourself. You have to learn how to really move beyond your pride.

When the men do express themselves verbally, it is usually to people with whom they have developed trust. Ben stated that it is appropriate to share emotions “with people you trust and feel comfortable with.” Greg pointed out that “you need someone who isn’t going to throw it in your face, like when you’re actually doing better.”

*Experience of verbal expression in the interview process.* During the interview process, the participants were asked to share their experiences openly with the interviewer. The participants discussed this experience. They identified two ways in which the process of verbal interaction in the interviews affected them.
The first way that they were affected was through increased consciousness about their experience of being a man. The men related elements of their own experience that they had “never thought of before.” After his first interview, Harold asked the interviewer to restart the taping so that Harold could make a statement. He was unable to cite the exact example from the interview, but stated, “That’s something I never thought of and I think it’s pretty interesting that just having this conversation brought that up.” Fred described his experience of raising consciousness:

It’s been a troubling experience for me, hasn’t been the most comfortable of experiences for me. But it was a growth experience. I thought about things in ways I had never thought about them before and will continue to think about them now that the issue has been raised.

Greg offered a specific example of how this increased consciousness has affected his experience:

My girlfriend asked me to go and meet her parents and one of the first things I thought of was how I should express my manliness in front of her family. I never really thought of something like that before, but now it’s something I consider when I’m in different social situations.

The second way that the men were affected by the interview process was through increased awareness. The men related elements of their personal experience that were not new to them, but with which they had been disconnected. Jerry explained, “I feel more introspective now. I’ve thought about some things that I haven’t thought about for a while.” Abe offered a concrete example of how increased awareness from the first
interview created behavioral change. At the start of the second interview, Abe stated that his realization that he was acting “strict” like his father caused him to begin treating his son a little differently. He described, “Little things that I tend to do before I did a little different, whether it’s one word sentences like ‘Don’t do that,’ ‘Stop,’ I find myself, ‘Don’t do this because this will happen.’”

Fred described the shock that increased awareness caused: “I guess I never thought of myself as conservative . . . as I do now. That did surprise me.” Keith explained that becoming aware was difficult:

In the process of doing this, I’ve reflected on my life and came to the conclusion that I have not pursued certain interests over my life, in part because of my environment, in part because of circumstances and responsibilities, but mostly by my own intention. Not necessarily a positive reflection.

**Touch**

Some of the men expressed discomfort with touch in general. Fred stated, “While I will be compassionate and caring, I’m not going to come up to you and put my arm around you and give you a hug and that kind of thing.” Harold described his attempts at physical affection as “awkward” and said, “I am not very smooth with it and it just turns into an uncomfortable feeling and you feel like a moron.”

The participants commented specifically on hugging men. Ian described his experience with situations in which hugging men is expected: “With guys, you just do it because that is kind of what you are supposed to do and you kind of give a half-hearted half-hug.” Don referred to this type of hugging as a “manly hug.” He described the manly
hug: “Where you get a little bit of physical distance in there, where you may not be as close as you would if you would hug a female.”

Some of the participants stated that they enjoyed hugging other men, but were quick to explain that it is only appropriate in certain situations. Harold stated that hugging other men is appropriate when it is spontaneous: “It would take an exciting event and just like an immediate reaction.” Other suggested that hugging is only appropriate with others who are willing to hug. Jerry stated that he likes to hug, but pointed out that it is not appropriate with his father: “I have no problem hugging. I can hug a man or a woman. My dad I can’t really hug though because we just don’t do that.”

Loss

Coping with loss was a topic that was especially salient among the participants. In particular, the men stressed the power of death of their fathers. Referring to his own experience, Lou said, “That’s the most significant loss in a man’s life, his father’s death.” Fred reported handling loss fairly well with other family members, but described having a “very, very difficult time” with the death of his father.

When discussing loss, the participants expressed fear. Harold stated, “I think about it all the time” and suggested, “I don’t think that I would handle it very well.” Other men connected this fear with their behavior. Abe stated that he is preparing for the eventual death of his parents by detaching himself from them: “I mean, they’re getting up in age. I’m building myself to that now. Like, I used to talk to my mother all the time. I probably talk to her once a week now.” Ben admitted that he is trying not to attach to
others because of a fear that they will all leave him: “I have got to stop getting close to people.”

The men described a responsibility to be strong for others when there is a loss. Don explained that he had been taught to be strong in the face of loss so that he can “show the real support and be that real rock for the family.” Ben described his role after the death of his uncle as one of support for his mother: “I just had to be there for her, be there to support her . . . you got to be there for them because they do a lot for you.”

At times, the role of strong one caused a delayed expression of emotion. Fred suggested that his instinctual assumption of the “traditional caretaker” role after his father’s death was a way of avoiding his feelings. However, the men suggested that those feelings can be triggered by other events in the future. Ben stated, “You try to forget about it but there’s always something that brings it up.” Fred recalled that his feelings of grief for his father were triggered by a church service and the rush of feelings was overwhelming: “I can remember very clearly having to get up and having to leave the service because I was so overcome with emotion at that point.”

The participants described other experiences with expression of loss. Keith recalled the death of his parents and discussed an internal process of coping:

I certainly didn’t show as much emotion as I’ve seen other people do. In my mind, I don’t think that means I cared any less. It’s just my way, my personality. Being a more private person, I tend to internalize.
Ian stated directly, “I do cry.” Carl described using several strategies to cope with a recent death: “I went to see her body. I just talked about it. I went to Bible study that night and other things. I got it out of me.”

Don suggested that some men grieve in private. He said, “He is the one that is usually, at night, when nobody else is around, crying or really just having difficulty dealing with that loss.” Fred described a desire to express his grief in a controlled manner:

It became a case of it being important to me to be able to show that I could display emotion, but I could put myself back together and move on, that I wasn’t going to dwell in the land of doom and gloom.

Summary

The men in the study described exposure to multiple models of being a man, including family, social, ethnic, and religious models. The influence of these models contributed to the participants’ development of a unique masculine self that they view as consistent. However, the participants also expressed some situational flexibility in their expressions of being a man.

This situational flexibility was tempered by the participants’ perceived responsibility for others. The men connected acceptance and fulfillment of responsibility for others as a key element of becoming a man. They focused specifically on perceived responsibility to lead others through modeling, mentoring, and decision-making and to lead within their family as a financial provider and moral guide. They outlined the
positive and negative effects of this perceived responsibility on their experience, with a focus on the reward of respect from others.

The participants offered detailed descriptions of their relationships with others. These descriptions revealed the multiple ways that the men adapted their expressions of being a man in different relationships and exemplified the influence of perceived responsibility for others. Similar descriptions and examples were provided by the men regarding the expression of emotions.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

The question which guided this research asked how Caucasian and African-American men of different ages and income levels express “being a man” in their lives. The data support some findings which frame discussion in response to this question. In this chapter, findings suggested by the data are summarized, interpreted, and compared with current literature. Implications and limitations of the study are discussed and future directions for research are suggested.

Main Findings

The results of this study suggest that there are major findings supported by data from all of the participants. The data provide ideas related to several aspects of the main question asked in this study. The experiences shared by the men support the possibility that there are multiple models of masculinity from which the men can draw and incorporate into their personality. The data also support the idea that men intentionally draw upon existing models in creation and adaptation of a relatively stable masculine self which can be flexibly applied to different situations. This adaptability is tempered or restricted by men’s perceived responsibility for others. Through an interaction between the ability to choose from multiple models of masculinity and the temperance by perceived responsibility for others, men express multiple masculinities in their lives.
Multiple Models of Masculinity

Results of this study suggest that there are multiple models of masculinity from which men can choose. Men are exposed to a variety of models of masculinity. Though many models of masculinity may be compatible, they may also contradict.

The data suggest that models vary by social context. Family, social, ethnic, and religious interactions are particularly important contexts to consider. Contradiction may exist between these contexts. For example, a family model that encourages emotional expression may contradict a social model that encourages rational thinking.

The results also suggest that within each of those social contexts, there are multiple models. According to the experience of the men in this study, models within a given social context do not necessarily agree. For example, within the family, some family members may value more traditional models of masculinity while others value different models.

While there was great variety in the models of masculinity to which the men claimed to be exposed, all of the men related experiences with one model in particular. This model, which will be referred to as the man’s man model, was of a masculinity which involves not being homosexual, the importance of strength and independence, and a preference for logic over emotional expression. The characteristics associated with this view of masculinity seem to match the characteristics of emotional stoicism, homophobia, and independence that are associated in current literature with traditional masculinity (Good et al., 2005).
Though all of the men discussed the man’s man model, none of the men claimed to follow the model. They described the model as though it were distasteful and outside of their personal beliefs. Although some of the characteristics they described in themselves, such as strength and independence, might be viewed from the outside as fitting the man’s man model, the men did not view them in this light. Instead, they viewed their behavior as related more to a personal blend of the many models that had influenced their lives.

This finding contradicts the theoretical assertions made within the Ideology Movement in men’s issues in counseling in two ways. First, the finding that there are many models of masculinity to which the men are exposed questions the suggestion that there is only one dominant model of masculinity. The second finding is related to the perception of the men that the man’s man model is something with which they do not associate themselves.

Within the Ideology Movement, theorists have suggested that there is one dominant model into which men are socialized (Smiler, 2004). However, the results of this study suggest that the men have been socialized away from that model. Instead of viewing the man’s man model as something to which they aspire, these men suggested that it is something they avoid. Although it is a model with which they were all familiar, it was also a model which they all claimed to reject.

One consideration in interpretation of these results is that the sample of men may have included only healthy men who are not experiencing gender role conflict. According to the GRC model, men who ascribe closely to traditional masculinity will experience
conflict in the form of psychological distress and sexism (O’Neil, 1981). By extension, it might be suggested that men who display less psychological distress and sexism likely do not ascribe to traditional masculinity. The psychological health and sexist attitudes of the participants were not assessed. Therefore, this criticism might have some validity. It would be interesting to explore further the perspectives related to multiple masculinities among men who are assessed by the GRCS as having high levels of GRC.

*Internal Factors*

In addition to drawing from models of masculinity, the participants in the study claimed to be influenced by internal factors. Results of the study support the suggestion that men create masculinities through the interaction between social influence and personality (Chodorow, 1978; Connell, 2005; Jefferson, 2002; Tokar et al., 2000). The participants in this study stated that they are unique individuals and claimed to have a personal platform from which they could evaluate social messages. Clearly, explication of the many aspects of personality is beyond the scope of this study. However, the men discussed powerlessness, anxiety and dependence, and sexual attraction as internal factors that influence their expression of being a man.

*Powerlessness*

Addis and Cohane (2005) commented that those in power often feel powerless. Throughout the data, the participants expressed feelings of powerlessness. Specifically, the men perceived that they lacked power over women, emotional expression, other people, and death. With women and other people, the men feared being hurt emotionally.
They stressed that building trust with others takes time and experience and suggested that trust is not given easily.

The men also feared the power of their own emotions. They were cautious about the effect that expression of emotion could have on others and reported instances of being overcome by the power of their emotions. This was most poignant when confronting loss through death. The men reported coping with this powerlessness by maintaining emotional control.

**Anxiety and Dependence**

Although the majority of participants described depending on others as a negative experience, it was the two young, White men who directly connected perceived dependence with anxiety. For these men, their beliefs about the potential negative consequences of their lack of control when they are dependent on others led to taking control whenever possible. The connection between being a young, White male and these direct statements is unclear and should be explored in future research.

Other participants alluded to a connection between anxiety and dependence by describing discomfort and fear in the context of depending on others. Conversely, the men described independence as reassuring and safe. They connected independence with being free and able to meet the demands of the world. When depending on others was inevitable, framing the process of asking for help as an independent act seemed to lessen the men’s anxiety.

This finding converges with Rabinowitz and Cochran’s (2002) suggestion that issues of dependence are salient for men and are related to problems of attachment.
Although the men in this study did not directly connect these issues with attachment, they did discuss their difficulty with connecting with others. Though the men claimed depth and intimacy in the relationships they did have, they also suggested that they had few such relationships. The men described difficulty with building trust with others. They also described comfort and ability to disconnect from others and be without many connections. Future research might explore more fully the relationship between attachment, dependency, and expression of masculinities.

**Sexual Attraction**

When men in the study talked generally about connecting with women, they reported a desire to show respect through trustworthiness, care, compassion, and consideration of emotions. However, when sexual or romantic interest was part of the relationship, the men discussed four patterns of complications that occur. Those patterns included not revealing attraction to the woman, womanizing, feigning interest in a woman, and feigning disinterest in a woman. These results suggest that expression of being a man with a woman is influenced by whether such attraction exists.

This finding is limited to the specific effect of sexual attraction toward a woman on expression of masculinities because none of the men discussed experience of sexual attraction toward men. Future research should explore the nature of each of the patterns of complication that occur and should include the effects of sexual attraction toward men and women.
Creation of a Masculine Self

By choosing from different models of masculinity, men create a masculine self, beliefs, and behaviors that they associate with being a man. No one model emerged as the most influential. Rather, the results suggest that men draw from multiple models to create a masculine self that both reflects models they value and respects other aspects of their personality. Although the influence of this socialization process is likely complex, results of this study suggest that men may have some ability to intentionally choose and assimilate aspects of multiple models in their development of a masculine self.

Statements by participants in this study suggest that men may react to some models in an oppositional manner. As part of intentionally choosing, men choose what not to believe and how not to behave. For example, a man who sees other men abusing power may intentionally create a masculine self with a basis in sharing power with others.

This type of reaction was observable with regard to the man’s man model. For the men in this study, the man’s man model was a model with which they felt opposed. They shaped their masculine selves to be something other than the man’s man model. Though the model had a strong effect on them, that effect was as a model of unacceptable behavior which is to be avoided.

The results also suggest that the masculine self is adaptable over time and that men intentionally adapt their beliefs and behaviors during their lives. The influence of models is not restricted to childhood. While childhood models of masculinity may have a strong influence over initial development of the masculine self, changing models and
exposure to diverse models over time can lead to changes in the masculine self. For example, men who are raised in one era can adapt their beliefs and behaviors to incorporate the models of a new era.

This adaptability may rest on a man’s ability and opportunity to develop awareness of their expressions of masculinity. Maturity and experience may lead to men’s ability to identify, challenge, and begin to adapt their masculine selves. Through a combination of increasing personal security and opportunity for exposure to diverse models of masculinity, men may be more likely to adapt their masculine selves as they age.

Men can be flexible in their expression of masculinity depending on the demands of the situation as well. The participants in this study stated clearly they are aware that different situations require different expressions of masculinity. These results suggest that men may recognize they have access to expression of multiple masculinities, which can be enacted to meet the needs of a situation.

This situational flexibility further demonstrates the adaptability of the masculine self. Although the men claimed a masculine identity that was fairly static though open to change over time, they also pointed to the internal complexity of that identity. When a man accesses an expression of masculinity in a situation, he is not contradicting his masculine self; he is simply acknowledging there is not a single masculinity, but many masculinities to which he ascribes.

Based on these findings, the term masculinities can be defined as flexible adaptations of the masculine self over time and within multiple contexts. This definition
positions masculinities as dynamic in that the particular masculinity expressed by the men varies from situation to situation. The definition also is anti-categorical, suggesting that a given man’s expression of being a man cannot be categorized, but is continually formed and restructured in an evaluative process. This definition fits most closely with the social constructionist perspective in which expression of masculinities is viewed as purposeful, flexible, and practical (Archer, 2001; Kimmel & Messner, 2004; Speer, 2001).

Perceived Responsibility for Others

Results of this study suggest that the acceptance of responsibility for others and the demonstrated ability to meet those responsibilities are perceived by men as indicators of being a man. Men may judge themselves and others through evaluation of these criteria. Those men who meet the criteria respect themselves and expect respect from others. Receipt of this respect is confirmation of one’s masculinity. Therefore, gaining respect through fulfillment of responsibilities for others is a primary task of being a man.

The participants in this study seemed to equate taking responsibility for others with leading. By leading others, they seek to have a positive effect on others’ lives. As leaders, they teach, support, and provide for others. This responsibility may be particularly important between a man and those with whom he has some familial, ethnic, communal, or spiritual connection.

In a given situation, a man’s choice of masculinities may be affected by this sense of responsibility. Whereas before considering this responsibility the man may have had many options for expression, consideration of responsibility may limit available options
of masculinities. For example, a man who values expression of emotion may limit his expression of emotion because of a perceived responsibility to support or provide for others in a crisis.

The belief in responsibility through others as expressed through leadership seems to converge with Connell’s (2005) concept of hegemonic masculinity. These findings suggest that because the men feel responsible for others, they take power through leadership. Although the men framed leadership as a form of caring for others, an alternative interpretation is that the men accept power over others. In fact, two of the men in the study warned of the potential to abuse the power that comes with leadership.

Those who fulfill this model are rewarded with respect and men seek that respect. Therefore, it might be said that being responsible, or hegemonic masculinity, is something to which men aspire. Additionally, meeting responsibilities is accomplished through different behaviors in different contexts, reinforcing the theoretical position that hegemonic masculinity is not a category but a changing ideal that is attained in many ways (Archer et al., 2001; Connell, 2005; Wetherell & Edley, 1999).

Adaptability as Tempered by Perceived Responsibility for Others

Among this diverse sample of men, a model of expression of masculinity emerged. According to this model, the masculine self is adaptable over time and within a given situation. A key component of this adaptability is the perception of responsibility for others, which has a strong influence over the messages and models of masculinity that men choose in a given situation. Though a man may have multiple masculinities on
which to draw in a given situation, his choice is tempered or restricted by his perceived responsibilities in that situation.

Results of this study support a statement that men do not express being a man in one way, but demonstrate multiple expressions of masculinities. A given man may express being a man differently in different contexts and at different times in his life. That is to say that expression of multiple masculinities demonstrates a capacity for adaptation to different situations and responsibilities. In this study, the assertion that adaptability is tempered by perceived responsibility for others was exemplified by the participants’ descriptions of relationships and experiences of loss.

*Relationships*

Within different relationships, men express being a man in different ways. Characteristics associated with masculine behavior differed in a given individual when he was describing himself in relation to different family members and in other relationships. Results of this study suggest that several factors are involved in variation of expression of masculinities in relationships with others.

The factors in the expression of masculinity within a relationship were level of trust, perceived responsibility for others, and expectations of others. Results of this study suggest that more trust and less perceived responsibility within relationships is associated with more flexibility in expression of masculinities. When there is a high level of trust and a low level of perceived responsibility, men may feel freer to choose from a wider variety of expressions of being a man.
This assertion is supported in this research by the men’s descriptions of their relationships with their partners. This relationship was described as different from other relationships and was characterized by high, though possibly tenuous, levels of trust and interdependence, which may be considered a moderate level of responsibility. Within this relationship, men reported feeling free to be open and vulnerable, express emotion, and demonstrate care and compassion, even through physical touch.

In contrast, low levels of trust and high perceived responsibility may be associated with less freedom of expression. This relationship was best exemplified in this study by the participants’ relationships with women other than female partners. The men described a high feeling of responsibility for exhibiting behaviors that demonstrate respect for women, but also reported a fear and distrust of the power of women. In these relationships, the men described feeling constrained in their expression of being a man.

*Experiences of Loss*

The tempering of adaptability by responsibility was also exemplified in this study by the participants’ descriptions of their experiences of loss. Results suggest that expression of emotion by men may be highly restricted by perceived responsibility for others. In order to avoid harming others or to maintain an ability to lead others, men perceive a responsibility to control and restrict the expression of their emotions.

In the example of loss, the effect of this perceived responsibility is dramatic. Although men recognize the need to express their grief and are capable of doing it, they may adapt this expression because of perceived responsibility to be strong for others by controlling their emotions and taking an active leadership role in times of loss. To adapt,
the men may try to express emotions in a controlled manner, express emotions in private, or find other active ways to cope with their grief.

Comparison to Current Literature

The finding of a model of expression of masculinities offers a new perspective on the experience of being a man. Results clearly contradict GST by suggesting that the expression of masculinity is adaptable across the lifespan and contextually. However, comparisons with the paradigms within the Ideology Movement are more complex.

As a general statement, results of this study contradict the theoretical assumptions of the Ideology Movement. Contrary to the belief that men are socialized into one model of masculinity and feel pressure to comply with that model, findings of this study suggest that men are exposed to many viable models of masculinity and are able to draw from those models with some intention and flexibility. Although men may share a common view of traditional or man’s man masculinity, they may also be socialized away from that model rather than into it.

Regarding paradigms within the Ideology Movement, findings of this study converge with some ideas in the GRS model. Specifically, results of this study support the assertion that roles of men change over time and that expectations differ contextually. Participants in the study expressed some strain around meeting multiple responsibilities in varied settings. However, the lack of a perception of a single, externally imposed role suggests that strain is likely more associated with particular situations and not the experience of being a man in general. Although the men felt constrained in certain
situations by their perceived responsibilities for others, they still felt relatively free to make a choice from a variety of available models.

Because the GRS model and the GRC model are based in the same theoretical principles, similar divergence between results and the GRC can be observed. However, it is the context specific nature of masculinities suggested by this study that most diverge with the GRC model. According to these results, the masculine self is adaptable and flexible. This suggests that a static picture of expression of masculinity is flawed.

Another consideration regarding the GRC model is that high scores on the GRCS may suggest a lack of adaptability. Whereas the men in this study might have difficulty categorizing their expressions of masculinity, men who are able to clearly identify with the statements which make up the GRCS may have a static view of their own masculinity. If this were so, it might suggest that the connection between GRCS scores and multiple maladaptive conditions might be related more to a lack of adaptability than to ascription to traditional masculinity. Future research should explore this connection.

Recent alterations to these Ideology Movement paradigms have tried to accommodate diversity in expressions of masculinity (Englar-Carlson, 2006; Kilmartin, 2007; Kimmel & Messner, 2004). This accommodation is accomplished by creating multiple categories of masculinities. However, the men in this study stressed the individuality of their expressions of masculinities. Rather than viewing multiple masculinities as models that intersect, the men discussed their expression as a meshing of models. The picture that is presented is one of flexibility and not the rigidity that is suggested by categories.
Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) used similar characterization of expression of masculinities as meshing of models. Results also converge with Connell’s (2005) concept of hegemonic masculinity with regard to the possible relationship between leadership and power. However, the men in the study characterized their leadership activities as part of meeting responsibilities for others. They suggested that they were making a contribution to society through care and concern for others.

This type of characterization fits most closely with social constructionist perspectives of expression of masculinities. Findings of this study converge with the social constructionist perspective that masculinities are continually made and remade with consideration of social expectations and modification to fit a given context. However, the results of this study diverge from this perspective in that the flexibility and adaptability is regulated within the individual and not directly through discourse.

As a result of comparison to current literature, it is clear that the model presented by the data both converges with recent models in the study of men and masculinity and adds a new perspective which is grounded in the individualized experiences of men. According to this model, there is no singular role into which men are socialized. Rather, men choose from multiple roles and consider perceived responsibilities for others in an intentional and context-based expression of masculinity. Future research should test the model that is presented by this data.

Additional Findings

Although the main findings were relevant to all participants and delineated the most prevalent themes in the study, there were additional findings that are worthy of
discussion. Additional findings include African-American men’s experiences, value of the interview process for participants, and deep connections between men. In this section, each of these findings are summarized, interpreted, and connected with existing literature. Areas for future research with regard to these findings are also considered.

African-American Men’s Experiences

Although the aim of the study was not to compare ethnic groups, the unique experience of the African-American participants cannot be avoided. Results of this study strongly support Hunter and Davis’ (1994) and Lawson Bush’s (1999) assertions that there is a great deal of difference between African-American men’s expressions of masculinities. However, results also support Wade’s (2006) contention that African-American men share some common influences on their expression of masculinities.

Two findings were particularly strongly related to African-American men. The first related to the perceived influence that historical and ongoing racial discrimination has on African-American masculine self. The second connects expression of being an African-American man with religion.

Effects of Racial Discrimination

The statements of the African-American participants supported Marable’s (2004) assertion that racism continues to be a factor in their expression of masculinities. Results of this study suggest the possibility that, in response to the perceived existence of racial discrimination, African-American men have developed two coping strategies that affect their expression of being a man. These strategies may have emerged historically as, quite
literally, survival skills. Taught through generations, they now are adapted to cope with perceived injustice and inequity.

The first is the skill of maintaining a cautious stance in social situations. African-American men may spend considerable energy attending to their surroundings and calculating risk. This may include behaviors such as closely watching and questioning motives of others. By taking this stance, the men are prepared to protect themselves if necessary.

A skill that African-American men may use to protect themselves is “going around,” which involves circumventing potentially dangerous or problematic situations. Going around can be accomplished most directly by avoiding such situations. However, some situations cannot be avoided or must be confronted in order to reach some end or goal. In these situations, going around can include quietly enduring discomfort or creating alternative opportunities.

Supporting Kilmartin’s (2007) statement, these men did report responding to racism by maintaining a suspicious attitude toward others. However, the participants did not limit their suspicion to men of the dominant culture. They suggested that their suspicion was of all people with whom they had not developed trust. Additionally, the men in this study did not discuss anger or low self-esteem as related to the existence of racism. Regarding this finding, it should be acknowledged that there is a possibility of a social desirability effect between the White researcher and African-American participants.
These results add a different perspective to Majors and Billson’s (1992) discussion of cool pose. The distancing behaviors associated with maintaining caution in social interaction and going around may present as similar to the cool pose behaviors. However, unlike the rationale given for cool pose by Majors and Billson, the men in this study characterized caution and going around as efforts to maintain safety, not attempts to display masculine power. Regardless of the purpose, such behaviors may still have the same effects that are associated with cool pose, including lack of emotional connection and poor attachment with others. Future research should explore this possibility.

Connection With Religion

Particularly among the African-American men in the study, the expression of being a man was connected with religious beliefs and practice. Results suggest that religious beliefs effectively serve two purposes among African-American men. First, religious beliefs are a guide for behavior. Depending on what the specific beliefs are and how they are interpreted, African-American men may afford religious models of masculinity extra weight and may shape their behavior to fit the values of their religion.

The second way that religion may help African-American men is by reinforcing changes in behavior. For those men who would like to change their masculine self, religion may be an avenue that provides models and reinforcement for engaging in new behaviors. For African-American men in particular, religion may be a facilitator for such adaptation.

The participants in this study used the terms religion and spirituality interchangeably. The term religion was chosen to identify the influence on African-
American men because an explicit connection was made by several of the men between spirituality and Christianity. Additionally, several of the men connected the value of religion with the structure of religious practice. This finding seems to diverge from findings in the literature which suggest that spirituality has more of an effect than religiosity among African-American men (Figueroa et al., 2006; Mattis et al., 2003; Mattis et al., 2001).

However, the men in this study did not describe distinct religious doctrine that they followed. Instead, they described their religious practice as a more general following of religious values and beliefs. They spoke more of their relationships with a higher power then of a specific religious community. Therefore, although the statements of the men invoked religiosity, the tone of their discussion spoke more of subjective spirituality. In this way, findings of this study converge with current literature.

These findings also converge more directly with the results cited by Mattis et al. (2003). Similar to their results, these results suggest that having a spiritual connection is associated with optimism. Men in this study suggested their religious beliefs gave them confidence in their own behavior and even helped them make changes they believed improved their lives.

Finally, results of this study add to the findings of Mattis et al. (2001) and Mattis et al. (2003). One of the limitations cited by these authors was that their research involved primarily affluent men. That these findings extended across the small but diverse sample in this study suggests that larger scale quantitative exploration of the
applicability of these findings to a more generalizable group of African-American men is warranted.

Value of the Interview Process

During the interview process, men were asked to reflect on their experience of being a man. The ability of the participants to engage in such reflection supports the finding that such reflection among men is possible. Additionally, results suggest that the process can be beneficial for raising gender consciousness and personal awareness.

Discussing their experiences of being a man may help men become conscious of their gendered selves. By discussing these experiences, men may come to recognize some of the ways that being a man has an effect on their behavior. Raised consciousness may be indicated during the process when men acknowledge gender issues about which they had never previously thought. Once those issues are brought into consciousness, the men may consider them in future expressions of being a man.

Consciousness involves an increase in knowledge. Becoming more personally aware may help men incorporate consciousness into their actual behavior. Results of this study suggest that discussion of the experience of being a man may also help men become more aware of their personal behavior. As men gain awareness, they may be more able to freely adapt their masculine selves and choose from a wider variety of masculinities.

These findings converge with recommendations in the literature that counseling include discussion of the experience of being a man. Results support assertions that discussion of such experience can increase consciousness about men’s issues (Englar-
Carlson, 2006). However, results of this study suggest that, rather than an evaluation of gender roles, discussion of the experience of being a man should include consideration of multiple models and situational flexibility.

Results also suggest that this more personalized approach may lead to the type of increased awareness of personal experience that is advocated by the psychoanalytic approach (Rabinowitz & Cochran, 2002). Future research should consider the possibility of the connection between a personalized exploration of expressions of masculinity and increased personal awareness.

*Deep Connections Between Men*

Englar-Carlson (2006) suggested that men are capable of intimate relationships, but that those relationships may not resemble the relationships that are expected within popular culture. The results of the study converge with this statement. Results suggest that men may have some intimate relationships with other men. These relationships may be few in number and develop over many years. Physical demonstration of affection and frequent verbal contact may not be necessary for men to develop close bonds.

In fact, the participants described a strong message that is reinforced regularly which seems to prohibit physical demonstration of affection. The participants stated that a fear of being perceived as gay affects the way they express themselves toward other men. Specifically, the men pointed to avoidance of eye contact and hugging as related to homophobia.

In lieu of physical contact, close relationships between men may involve two key characteristics. First, the men engage in straight talk with one another. Straight talk
involves blunt and direct communication that is not filtered or contrived to please the receiver. Although men may not like what is said, they may respect it as an effort to help and, therefore, may respect the other person more.

The second characteristic that may be an integral part of relationships between men is teasing. This behavior may be viewed by men as an enjoyable way of relating to each other. In some ways, teasing may be considered an extension of straight talk. Whereas straight talk is part of a more serious interaction, teasing may be viewed by men as genuine interaction about less significant topics.

Observation of these behaviors by an outsider may suggest problems of attachment, leading the observer to consult psychodynamic explanations. However, the men in the study stated strongly that these relationships are not problematic. Instead, they referred to these close relationships as fulfilling and important in their lives. Future research should more fully explore the functions of teasing and straight talk in relationships between men.

Implications

The findings of this study and their connection with current literature yield implications for theory, research, and application. Implications for theory and research point toward a new direction in exploration and consideration of men and masculinities that both builds on existing theories and adds a unique focus. Implications for application include recommendations for the practices of counseling and counselor education. This section discusses implications in each of these areas.
Implications for Theory and Research

Findings of this study build on previous research in men’s issues in counseling by adding a focus that incorporates recent changes in theory in the broader field of men’s studies. Ideas from the Ideology Movement in men’s issues in counseling, the theory of hegemonic masculinities, social construction theory, and the psychodynamic approach to men’s issues can be observed within the model. Rather than view these theoretical positions as separate, the model suggests that each plays a part in a dynamic process which guides individual and situational construction of masculinities.

One theoretical implication of this model is that the expression of masculinities may not be predetermined by or measured against a static model. Instead, expression is influenced by many models and messages that are often situation specific and contradictory. Therefore, the approach to understanding expression of masculinities must be one that is process rather than content oriented. That is, what is expressed as a function of masculinities is less important than the process through which it is expressed. This model suggests that, rather than evaluating the status of men related to categorical divisions of masculinities, theory should attend to the process through which men choose from multiple models in determining which masculinity to express in a given situation.

This influence on theory has implications for continued research in men and masculinities. Since the model suggests that theory should focus on the process of expression, the implication is that research should also shift to examine elements of the process and their relation to one another. Research should shift to attend to expression of
masculinities as a dynamic phenomenon that is influenced by both social models and internal factors.

**Implications for Application**

The findings of this study have implications for the practices of counseling and counselor education. With regard to counselor education, findings support suggestions in the literature that understanding of men’s experience be considered a multicultural competency. In some ways, previous research on men and masculinities has contributed to this need.

By suggesting that there is a single model of masculinity that dominates the socialization of men, prior research has reinforced a belief that men are shaped in ways that are harmful. The results of this study imply that this understanding of men’s experience is biased in its assumption of the effects of dominant model. This finding converges with the findings of Seem and Johnson (1998) and Wisch and Mahalik (1999). To address potential bias among students and professionals, multicultural training should include consideration of the dynamic nature of the expression of masculinities.

The findings also have implications with regard to the practice of counseling. Current recommendations for counseling men suggest that counselors help men to examine the effects of gender role socialization on their behavior (Brooks & Good, 2001; Englar-Carlson, 2006). Those recommendations guide counselors to compare the beliefs and behaviors of male clients to those of traditional masculinity. Within this therapeutic conceptualization, men who report or display characteristics associated with traditional
masculinity are helped to see the negative effects of that socialization and encouraged to break away from that model.

One implication for the practice of counseling that emerged from the results of this study is the possibility of a different approach to counseling men. Counselors who approach the expression of masculinities as a process can evaluate each man’s ability to adapt. That evaluation would include an exploration of the multiple models of masculinities to which the man has been exposed, internal factors such as feelings of powerlessness and anxieties, and perceptions of responsibilities for others. Counselors working from this strength-based conceptualization can help men build on their process of adaptation in expression of masculinities.

Another implication for practice was that this approach may be beneficial to men who do not display traditionally masculine characteristics as well. Results suggested that talking about the experience of being a man was associated with raised gender consciousness and increased personal awareness. Addressing this issue with any man who comes to counseling may be beneficial.

Consideration of Relative Contributions of Participants

Analysis of the data with regard to relative contributions of participants yields further considerations about the possible implications of the study and suggestions for future research. Although major findings were constructed from contributions of all participants, closer examination of the data suggests questions about the possibility of more nuanced patterns in the data. In this section, questions and possible patterns related to main and associated findings are considered.
Participant Contributions to Main Findings

All participants contributed to each major theme in the main findings of the study. That is, all participants contributed to construction of themes of multiple models of masculinity, internal factors, creation of a masculine self, perceived responsibility for others, and adaptability as tempered by perceived responsibility for others. However, some patterns were evident among participant responses with regard to sub-themes within the main findings.

Religious and Ethnic Models of Masculinity

African-American participants were the primary contributors of data related to religious and ethnic models of masculinities. This finding suggests the possibility that ethnic and religious models may be of more importance to men from non-dominant culture than they are to Caucasian men. Future research should explore the salience of these models among other men. Additionally, it would be interesting to examine the relative strength of each of these models for men of diverse ethnicities.

Internal Factors

The two young, Caucasian men most strongly connected dependence with anxiety and the young, high-income, Caucasian man was the only participant to suggest that feeling some interdependence in a safe context offered needed relief. This finding leads to questions about the pressure to succeed among young, Caucasian men. It seems possible that these men are expected to perform and may even be pushed into positions of authority. Their efforts to maintain control may be related to a perceived responsibility to
lead. In which case, their drive for success may be interpreted as an imposition of their power in society.

*Creation of a Masculine Self*

Three of the participants diverged from others in sub-themes related to creation of the masculine self. Two Caucasian participants expressed beliefs that their creation of a masculine self was not intentional. They seemed to suggest that they possessed some core personality that influences their behavior. A senior African-American participant offered a view that might be considered to be in opposition. His position that it is a man’s responsibility to maintain a rigid self and not allow for flexibility may suggest that it is only through focused intention that men can maintain a masculine self. This finding suggests questions about the possibility that ethnicity affects masculinity in yet another way. Caucasian men may be willing to attribute their behavior to nature while African-American men may attempt to prove that they are able to act purposefully.

*Perceived Responsibility for Others*

Although African-American participants were the primary contributors to sub-themes of modeling, mentoring, and moral guidance, Caucasian participants were the primary contributors of examples of leading through decision-making. This finding suggests the possibility that African-American men have incorporated an ability to go around convention in their satisfaction of a responsibility to lead. To lead through decision-making, one must be in a position of power from which he can make decisions. It seems possible that African-American men, who often may not be in positions of power, turn to other forms of leadership and influence.
Adaptability as Tempered by Perceived Responsibility for Others

Within this theme, there was considerable contribution from all participants. The only sub-theme for which there was any discernable possible pattern of contribution was loss. Predictably, the older participants in the study contributed more examples of behavioral responses to loss. It seems likely that this is associated with having had more experience with loss as the men aged. Although younger men expressed anxiety about the potential experience of losing loved ones, older participants related sadness about losses that had already occurred.

Participant Contributions to Additional Findings

The additional findings in the study included African-American men’s experiences, value of the interview process, and deep connections between men. Review of relative contributions by participants suggests some questions and considerations about these themes.

African-American Men’s Experiences

With regard to African-American men’s experiences, all African-American men contributed to the sub-themes of effects of racial discrimination and connection with religion. No Caucasian participants contributed to this theme. The term “going around” was first suggested by the eldest African-American man and was implied by others. This finding suggests that behaviors that African-American men use to avoid or overcome perceived barriers may have a long history in African-American culture.
Value of the Interview Process

The contributions from participants regarding the value of the interview process were volunteered based on an interview question which invited them to comment on the experience of participating in the interviews. This question emerged from an initial contribution by one participant who volunteered his perspective on participation without being prompted. All of the participants contributed to this theme, except one. This finding suggests the possibility that discussing the research topic holds some value among men.

The eldest African-American participant did not contribute to this theme. When asked to reflect on the interview process, he simply stated that he did not mind sharing his experience with the researcher. This response fits the general tone of that participant’s involvement in the study. Throughout the interviews, he seemed to attempt to impart knowledge rather than engage in reflection. This finding suggests that there may be an age at which exploration of the expression of masculinity is no longer a valuable process for the individual. Further exploration of this phenomenon may be useful for counselors who provide services to older men.

Deep Connections Between Men

All of the participants contributed to the sub-themes of straight talk and the effects of homophobia on relationships between men. However, contributions regarding the third sub-theme, teasing, were primarily from middle-aged and young Caucasian men. This finding begs the question of whether this is a phenomenon that is part of the culture of Caucasian men. Future research should search for comparable behaviors among men from diverse cultural backgrounds.
Limitations

Consideration of the implications of these findings must include acknowledgment of the limitations of the study. The study was limited by a few main concerns. The first concern is related to the diversity among the sample of participants. Of the 12 participants, 3 were professional counselors. Current literature suggests that men in the counseling professions ascribe to the traditional masculinity model less than other men (Wisch & Mahalik, 1999). The inclusion of these three men may have limited the diversity of the sample because male counselors may share beliefs about masculine attitudes and behaviors.

The diversity of the sample was also limited with regard to sexual orientation. The researcher did not directly question the participants about sexual orientation as this was not a variable under direct consideration. However, all of the participants alluded to preference for sexual relationships with women and none openly discussed any other sexual orientation. This limitation must be considered when examining the data, particularly the homophobic influence on relationships between men. Based on the responses of the participants, it would be unlikely that the men would disclose gay male experiences or desires without being asked directly.

Another limitation of the study is the possibility of answers being tainted by social desirability. The men in the study discussed difficulty establishing trust and being vulnerable with others. The researcher was a stranger to all of the participants. It is possible that, to some extent, the men presented images of themselves that might be viewed as favorable by a White male researcher. This consideration may be particularly
relevant with regard to responses of African-American men. However, the researcher identified no evidence of deception or lack of trust during the interview process.

A third limitation of the study is the possibility that use of a presuppositional question led the responses of the interviewees. Presuppositional questions are valuable because they encourage the respondent to consider that they do have a response (Patton, 2002). When the interviewer asked the men to comment on the different ways they express being a man in their lives, the presupposition was that there were different ways. While no cajoling or further encouragement was necessary, it is possible that the men presented the possibility of multiple masculinities because they were asked to do so.

Delimitations

The results of this study are not meant to be generalized to all men. Instead, these findings have generated questions and possibilities that must be explored more fully. Findings of this study can only be said to be valid among the participants. A small sample size, potential bias in sampling, and a lack of a representative range of diversity among participants contribute to this conclusion.

However, the abstract theoretical constructs may be generalizable to some extent. Corbin and Strauss (1990) theorized that the generalizability of a grounded theory study is related to three characteristics, including level of abstraction, reproducibility or verifiability, and specification of conditions. The concepts outlined in the findings of this study are abstract and accommodate a high degree of variation among participants. As a result, another researcher, following the same procedures and theoretical assumptions, might reasonably be expected to reach similar conclusions. Finally, the relationship
between concepts specifies the process that is expected to occur under given conditions. Therefore, the theoretical constructs outlined in this study, though in need of significant further research and support, may have some external validity.

Recommendations for Future Research

Throughout the chapter, recommendations for further research have been connected with individual themes that emerged in the research process. However, broader recommendations are suggested by consideration of implications of those findings. Recommendations for further research in this section are focused on necessary testing of the theoretical model that has been suggested and concurrent exploration of the potential practical implications of the findings.

Given the limitations and delimitations of this study, recommendations for further research stress the importance of further examination of the theoretical model that has been presented. Additional grounded theory studies that incorporate increased diversity in the sample should be conducted to test the findings of this study. In-depth descriptions of the process of enacting a specific masculinity in a given situation would strengthen the associations suggested in the model. In each given situation, research should clearly identify the interactions between relevant models, internal factors, and perceptions of responsibility toward others.

As the model is being solidified, research efforts should also be directed toward examining the practical implications of these findings on counseling men. Valuable research might include exploring the relationship between discussion of the different ways a client expresses being a man in his life and levels of gender consciousness and
personal awareness. Research should also consider the value of use of this strength-based approach to conceptualizing masculinity to satisfaction with counseling and perceived efficacy of counseling among male clients.

Experience of the Researcher

Throughout the interview process, the researcher was struck by the ease with which the participants communicated personal and sensitive information. At times, the researcher asked questions of the participants that would not be appropriate in daily social interaction. Though they acknowledged some discomfort, the participants were consistently willing to trust and confide in the researcher. The feeling of intimacy within these interactions was both shocking and exhilarating.

As the data were collected and analyzed, the researcher was drawn into personal reflection on his expression of masculinities. Like the participants, the researcher found this process to raise consciousness and awareness of his gendered behavior. This experience added strength to the researcher’s conclusion that a contextualized, process-oriented approach to understanding men’s experiences is a valuable pursuit.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to begin to generate a new platform for understanding men’s issues that addresses limitations in current literature. To do so, the study integrated a consideration of multiple masculinities as influenced by both internal and external factors and included some diversity in sampling. By using the Grounded Theory Method, the researcher, in an inductive process, was able to discover a model that advances current knowledge and will facilitate future research.
The model of adaptability as tempered by perceived responsibility for others integrates real men’s experience and existing theories of men and masculinities into a single framework. This framework can be used to guide further study into both theoretical development and clinical practice. As a result, the study of men’s issues in counseling can join with the broader field of men’s studies to advance knowledge and understanding of the experience of being a man.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORMS
Consent Form: The Process of Being a Man: A Grounded Theory Study

I want to do research on the ways that men express being a man in their lives. I want to do this as a dissertation project in order to contribute to the research on effective counseling services for men. I would like you to participate in this project. If you decide to do this, you will be asked to maintain an active involvement in the research for the duration of the data collection process, which is anticipated to be approximately three months. This involvement will include at least two individual interviews with me and one telephone or e-mail follow-up interview. The first interview will be conducted face-to-face and will last approximately 1-2 hours. The second interview will be conducted face-to-face and will last one hour or less. The final interview will be conducted by either telephone or e-mail and will be structured and brief. Involvement will also include review of research data, including interview transcripts and my notes.

This research involves only interviewing you about your experience. Some people find that talking with another person about their personal life can lead to new insights and understandings about themselves. While this may be positive, it could also cause distress. If you experience distress while engaging in this study, I will assist you with identifying and contacting local resources for mental health services.

Your participation in this study will be confidential. You will be assigned a coded name in the study and will be identified only by your ethnicity, age group, and income level. While I will not divulge your participation, others whom you make aware of your participation may be able to identify you by these identifying characteristics. If I believe that you pose a danger to yourself or others or if you disclose ongoing child or elder abuse, I will break confidentiality and
notify the local authorities. Tapes and transcriptions of our interviews will be stored in a secure location and tapes will be erased upon completion of the research project.

If you take part in the project and maintain your involvement throughout the entire process of data collection, you will have provided a great service to my research efforts and may gain increased personal awareness of your own process of being a man. This project will include two phases. You will be provided $25 as thanks for each phase that you complete.

Taking part in this project is entirely up to you, and no one will hold it against you if you decide not to do it. If you do choose to take part, you may stop at any time. You are free to refuse to answer any question which makes you uncomfortable.

If you want to know more about this project, please call me (330-831-6756) or my advisors, Dr. Page (330-672-0696) or Dr. McGlothlin (330-672-0713). This project has been approved by Kent State University. If you have questions about Kent State University’s rules for research, please call Dr. Peter Tandy, Acting Vice President for Research (330-672-3012). You will get a copy of this consent form.

Sincerely,

Scott Baker, PC, NCC
Doctoral Candidate, Kent State University

I agree to take part in this project. I know what I will have to do and that I can stop at any time.

Signature                            Date
AUDIOTAPE CONSENT FORM

I ____________________ agree to audiotaping at______________________________
on____________________________________________.

________________________________   _____________
Signature                        Date

I have been told that I have the right to hear the audiotapes before they are used. I have
decided that I:

_____want to hear the tapes  _____do not want to hear the tapes

Sign now below if you do not want to hear the tapes. If you want to hear the tapes, you will be
asked to sign after hearing them.

Scott Baker and other researchers approved by Kent State University may / may not use
the tapes made of me. The original tapes or copies may be used for:

_____this research project _____ presentation at professional meetings

__________________________________   __________________
Signature                        Date

Address:
APPENDIX B

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FOR TRANSCRIPTION
Confidentiality Agreement for Transcription

I ___________ agree to maintain the confidentiality of any information to which I become privy during the transcription process. I will not reveal any information related to the content or process of the interviews being transcribed to anyone other than Scott Baker. I am aware that any violation of this confidentiality agreement will result in termination of my services and may result in further legal action.

Signed ________________________________ on ______________________

Name Date

Witnessed by ___________________________ on ______________________

Name Date
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE EXAMPLE
Interview Guide – Second Interview

Subject 8

1. What comments do you have about the transcript?

2. What things have you thought of since our last interview about the different ways that you express being a man in your life?

A couple follow up questions from our last interview:

3. You talked a little about leadership.
   a. How do you display leadership?
   b. Example (thoughts/feelings/behaviors)

4. We talked about your relationships with family and male friends. How would you characterize your relationships with women other than your wife?
   a. Example
   b. How are those relationships different than relationships with men?

5. You said you and your guy friends can go months without talking and, when you get together, it’s like no time has passed.
   a. How do you do that?
   b. True with other relationships?

6. You mentioned a couple times that you and your close guy friends “bust each other’s balls.”
   a. Can you explain exactly what that is?
   b. Example
   c. What does that do to your relationships?
   d. Ever get to be too much?
   e. How do you know where the line is?
   f. (whatever this accomplishes . . . how do you do that in other relationships?
      What is the counterpart of this behavior in other contexts?)

7. You said that “fake communication” is saying one thing to your face and another behind your back.
   a. What is real communication?
   b. Is it different with friends, family, wife, men, women?
8. You talked about independence as a “skill set.”
   a. What are those skills?
   b. What does it mean to be independent
      i. As a husband
      ii. As a friend
      iii. When interacting with strangers

9. You said that other people might consider being independent as an attribute of being a man.
   a. What do you think?
   b. How is it or is it not an attribute of being a man?
   c. How do you demonstrate it?
   d. How do you demonstrate it differently in different contexts?

10. You said, “I never really rely on people.” And you connected that to not having “a trust for others.” (not trusting that they’ll do things right)
    a. Is that true in contexts other than work?
    b. Examples (how does trust develop? How is it demonstrated? What’s different between those you trust and those you don’t?)

11. You talked about your friends seeing drinking as being part of being a man.
    What’s the connection there? How is drinking ethoh part of being a man?

12. When I asked about messages you’ve received about what it means to be a man, you said there is a “full spectrum out there.”
    a. From what to what? Describe the spectrum.
    b. Where do you fit?

13. You mentioned that, with your wife, you are dependent emotionally.
    a. What do you mean?
    b. example
    c. What’s that like?

14. One of the questions that we talked around a lot was related to how you will be different when you become a man. You talked about being dedicated to someone else and being selfless.
    a. Could you talk about that a little more?
    b. As I re-read it, it sounded like you were talking about responsibility. What’s your take on that?
A couple questions come from things brought up in other interviews:

15. I wonder if we could talk about your experiences of loss. How do you express being a man when you lose someone or something? How do you cope with loss? Examples (Explore – thoughts/feelings/behaviors)

16. Have you ever felt that you were being treated like “less of a man?” What happened? What did you think/feel/do?

17. What has your experience been with hugging?
   a. Other men
   b. Women
   c. Different in different contexts (ok in some not in others)

18. Eye contact – What have been your experiences with eye contact with other men? With women? With other people?

19. How would you describe the experience of discussing your experience of being a man with me in these interviews?
APPENDIX D

MEMO FORMAT
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APPENDIX E

PEER REVIEW PROCESS NOTES
Peer Review Note

Researcher

1. Date and Time of peer review: 12/9/06 1330

2. Main topics/issues discussed:
   a. Reviewed original research question and design
   b. Reviewed participants and diversity of participants
   c. Reviewed axial codes and discussed possible selective codes
   d. Discussed possible discussion of selective codes
   e. Reviewed final interview form and data that supports interview questions

3. Peer reviewers comments:
   a. Reviewer made a good point that “balancing” models and messages seems to imply that a zero point is reached. Discussed use of “weighing” models and messages and connecting with the idea that this weighing is part of adapting to situations.
   b. Discussed whether adaptation (weighing/balancing) is a conscious or unconscious process. This led to a discussion of the potential value of consciousness-raising for men. If men were more aware of the multiple models from which they can draw, they would have more freedom to consciously use a model of their choosing. For example, peer reviewer discussed a relationship with another man. Discussed how they unconsciously reinforce a pattern of relating that is somewhat superficial and leaves them feeling somewhat distanced. Discussed the possibility of slowly incorporating other models in attempts to change their relationship.
   c. Discussed use of term “spirituality.” Reviewer asked researcher to describe the difference between spirituality and religion in the context of the study. Researcher agreed that religion fit the data better. However, spirituality was the term used by the participants.
   d. When discussing relationships, reviewer pointed out that knowing the participants’ relationship status may be valuable. Reviewer suggested that men who are in relationships may differ significantly from those who are not. Researcher countered that this diversity is helpful because it illuminates different expressions of being a man.
   e. When discussing relationships with women, the subthemes seemed to merge such that four conditions emerged.
i. When there is a connection with women, the men either tried to support the women or accepted support from the women (or there was some interdependence).

ii. Some connections are skewed by the effects of sexual attraction.

iii. Some of the men expressed fear of women.

iv. When the men feared women, but connected with them anyway because of sexual attraction, they sometimes treated them poorly.

f. When discussing connections between men, the reviewer asked for clarification of the subtheme that suggested that men can maintain deep connection despite lack of contact. The researcher explained that 2 men had insisted that this is true and that one even started out the second interview by stating that he had thought a lot about it and still felt the same way.

g. When discussing relationships with others, reviewer asked for clarification between which subtheme related to physical safety and which related to emotional safety.

h. During review of emotional expression, researcher questioned whether “revisiting issues” subtheme was connected with experiences of loss.

i. During review of final interview, reviewer stated that questions seem supported by previous data and explore connections between themes.

4. Ways to implement peer review

   a. Consider changing theme of “balancing” to incorporate “weighing” and connection with adaptation.

   b. Consider consciousness-raising as discussion topic.

   c. Consider use of “spirituality” and “religion” – review data.

   d. Make note of participants’ relationship status in Chapter 2 – description of participants.

   e. Review data regarding subthemes under relationships with women.

   f. Review data regarding deep connection and lack of contact.

   g. In Chapter 3, clarify physical and emotional safety.

   h. Review data regarding “revisiting issues” to see if this theme is connected with experiences of loss.

   i. Use final interview as is.
Peer Review Note

1. Date and Time of peer review:
   a. Review was conducted on 12/9/08 from 1:30 – 2:30

2. Main topics/issues discussed:
   a. The nature of the study and how it was based on grounded theory
   b. How data was collected
   c. The diversity of the subjects in the study
   d. Subject responses
   e. The themes that appeared based on subject responses

3. Peer reviewer’s reactions:
   a. I am not quite sure how to answer this other than to say I was quite intrigued by the ideas presented, i.e. the idea that we can select from a number of different models of ‘masculinity’, that is “what it means to be a man”, depending on the situation. On a personal level, I found it interesting as I know that sometimes I unconsciously adapt myself, ‘as a man’, depending on the situation I myself am encountering. It was thought provoking to think that raising one’s awareness of different models can lead to more informed choices, and thus achieve greater balance.
   b. It struck me how sincere Scott was with respect to receiving feedback on something he knows very well. In addition, I think it helped Scott to simply discuss something that is of great importance to him with a peer who is intent on listening and understanding.
   c. Scott answered all of my questions regarding how data was collected, and how questions were asked. I felt that he was open to the process of following the subjects in the study, and having the subjects expand upon, or clarify, answers to his questions.

4. Peer reviewer’s suggestions
   a. Probably the most important thing that stood out for me in the study was the use of the term “balance”, where males attempt to balance models of what it is like to be a man. Balance to me means equality or a sense of equilibrium, whereas the term that kept coming to my mind was “adaptation”, where one uses different models in order to adapt to the situation one finds oneself in.
   b. At the time of the review I felt it might be important to list the relationship status of the participants. Since the review however, I am not sure if this would be necessary.
   c. I felt the term ‘spirituality’ could be replaced with the term ‘religion’.
APPENDIX F

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER
Scott Baker, Graduate Student
Department of ACHVE
Kent State University

October 5, 2006


Dear Mr. Baker:

I am pleased to inform you that the Kent State University Institutional Review Board approved your Application for Approval to Use Human Research Participants as Level I, Category 2 research. This application was approved on October 5, 2006 and is good for one year. This approval will expire on October 4, 2007. An annual/periodic review form will be sent within a year of the original date of approval of the application. If the annual/periodic review form is not received, please contact me, as it is the responsibility of the principal investigator to renew the information on the approved application on an annual basis. A sample copy of the periodic review form has been included for your awareness.

Please complete the annual/periodic review form and return it within 1-2 months prior to the expiration date to ensure renewed approval of the application. If the project is complete and all data analysis has concluded, please mark the appropriate box on the form. If data analysis is continuing, research is considered to be continuing.

HHS regulations and Kent State University Institutional Review Board guidelines require that any changes in research methodology, protocol design or principal investigator have the prior approval of the IRB before implementation and continuation of the protocol. The IRB further requests an annual report and a final report at the conclusion of the study.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 330.672.2704. (klight@kent.edu)

Sincerely,

Katherine Light
IRB Administrator
APPENDIX G

PROCEDURAL OUTLINE
Procedural Outline

1. Phase I – Individualized interview process
   
a. Initial interview
      
i. Face-to-face
   
ii. Open question format
   
iii. 1.5 - 2 hours
   
b. Organization and reflection of initial interview
      
i. Create process note
   
ii. Transcribe audiotape of interview
   
iii. Member check
   
iv. Create/update memo
   
v. Create interview guide for follow-up interview with given individual
   
c. First follow-up interview
      
i. Face-to-face
   
ii. Individualized interview guide question format
   
iii. 1 hour or less
   
d. Organization and reflection of first follow-up interview
      
i. Create process note
   
ii. Transcribe audiotape of interview
iii. Member check
iv. Update memo

2. Phase 2 – Standardized interview process

   a. Verification
      i. Initiated after Phase 1 has been completed for all participants
      ii. External audit
      iii. Peer review
      iv. Create standard interview guide for all final follow-up interview

   b. Final follow-up interview
      i. Telephone or e-mail
      ii. Standard interview guide question format

   c. Organization and reflection of final follow-up interview
      i. Create process note
      ii. Transcribe audiotape of interview
      iii. Member check
      iv. Update memos
Q - The question that I asked you to think about was what are the different ways that you express being a man in your life?

A - Well I had time to think, to ponder about that question. And the main thing that stuck out in my mind was my ability to be independent. To me that shows true manliness, and my mother and father—they instilled that to me and my brother, because I have a younger brother and they instilled that most of all. That one day we would be able to stand on our own two feet, whether we decide to marry or not. And we had better learn how to be independent quickly. So, morality had its place in my life. I live my life by a set of moral principles. I never robbed anyone, I never had thought of harming anyone else for my particular gain, for me to gain. I don’t believe in, let’s say, taking advantage of others, I like to be able to be self sufficient, self supporting. The first half of my life, when I graduated, I did graduate from High School, in 1971, and I had some thoughts of going into the military, so I did follow up on that, but I never actually entered any military service. A friend of my mothers got me into a factory and I worked out there for almost 18 years, and I had dreams during that time of earning a degree, but I knew that if I stayed in that, out in that type of environment . . . during those days, they paid good money, there was no reason. My mother, she had never really supported me going into college, even when I was graduated from high school and I would say “Momma, I want to go to college,” and she would say “no, you are gonna have to work” . . . We were living in the projects at that time, my mother and father had divorced by the time I was 18. So she was, she had four other children, so she had . . . and she was a young mother too, so I guess she kinda wanted us to get, reach 18 or 19, and then get out, move on with
our lives, so that she could have some type of life after we all left, and that’s exactly what happened. Me and my other siblings, we all ended up leaving home probably around 18, 19, most of us left the nest, and my mother went on to . . . Today she owns her own business, she’s very successful. She runs her own jazz, restaurant bar-type business. She is very successful too. Every time I turn around she is buying something. Bought a new car the other day, Brand new 2007 Cobalt. But anyway, my parents were the kind of parents that instilled in us a sense of independence, self-sufficiency, morals, morality was important. I am not going to say I’m perfect. I like a little porn here and there. I used to drink, I don’t drink anymore. I used to like the night life, the bar life, I was involved in that at one time.

But then religion . . . spirituality has its place in my life today, I am more of a spiritual person. I don’t believe in per say just sitting in one church, just sitting in a church for 50 years. I like to evangelize, I like to go around, I like to travel and hear different views on religion and spirituality. It is very important to me . . . My spirituality, my connection with God, it’s very important to me. So having that in my life, my life is constructed around my beliefs now, today.

I worked in the mill for about 18 years, and after that job was over, I decided to go on to get the degrees that I have always wanted, and I am also a singer. I sing and I love singing, singing offers me freedom, when I am singing up there on stage or before an audience, or before a group or whoever, it’s like I’m flying, you know, it releases, it gives me a sense of relief and comfort . . . its beauty, you know. So those are some things about being a man that mean a lot to me, that help me find myself . . . that help me, define
who I am, as a man. Living my life within guidelines, and within restrictions, is important to me. Because there was a time, where I didn’t . . . I didn’t care, I didn’t care about discipline necessarily, I didn’t care about too much, I just wanted to be free, I wanted to drink, I wanted to sleep around if I wanted to, you know . . . not work, if I wanted to. You know, be careless, never anything violent or anything like that. But there was a time, that I didn’t have any structure . . . real structure, in my younger days.

Q - So what changed?

A - Well, I guess when I lost my job out at the factory. I lost that job because I was drinking heavily and they gave me several chances to go into rehab and get that under control but in the end, I ended up being terminated from that job. When I found myself, after 18 years of that kind of stability, I found myself without a job, without education, no money, and I began to realize that I had to get some kind of stability going, I had to . . . My family at that time, my family, they were there as far as giving me advice, but they were not supporting me financially, and I had to find a way make money. And I was used to, that job that I lost paid like 40,000 and up, and I was spoiled-rotten. I was single, I had no family obligations, just to myself, and then to find myself out of work? At first, I began to drink even more, after I got fired, due to, that was just due to depression and wondering: “what am I going to do now?” and this and that, and I just began to turn to God and I had power, and God began to deal with me, and began to show me that I could make it, even after such a dramatic loss. I could make it, but I had to bring my life under some discipline to do it. I could no longer just live frivolously, I could no longer just ignore guidelines and rules, and we all have those . . . and by the time I was close to 39
years old, and out of work at that age, so I stopped drinking, and I stopped running the streets and all that, just began to take a more mature grown-up attitude about my life, began to go to AA meetings and get involved with AA groups and went and talked to people at the University down here about coming in . . . Even when I was in the factory, when they were having lay-off, this was in the last five years that I worked out there, I went into college, I was doing classes while I was laid-off. When they would call me back, I would go back to work . . . I was in good standing with the university; so that I could come back. Then when I got terminated, there was no going back to the factory so this door was open for me. Because I left the college in good standing, so I came into school and began to study sociology and business management, and I ended up graduating and after that, I took a few jobs out there. I have been out of school about two years now, and since I took some jobs out there and stuff. But then I saw that, if I wanted to make even more money, I said “well I got to go back in and get my masters” so that is where I am at today.

Q - So the first thing that you said about the way you express being a man is, through independence. How do you do that? How do you show your independence?

A - Well, one way I manage to do that is, I have my own place, I don’t live with my mother, or my brother or my friends or anything like that. I live in a place that is designed for people who had lost everything, and who were recovering from alcoholism and they offer you counseling there. They . . . if you don’t stay clean, you will loose your subsid. I am in section 8 there, but if you don’t stay clean, you loose your section 8 and you’ll be virtually homeless unless you can get a job and you can maintain your own rent. Like,
they pay for my rent while I am in school and having my own place really gives me a sense of independence, you know, because I don’t have to listen to anybody telling me when to get up, or telling me when to go to bed, or what time to come in. You know, I do that on my own, as far as coming in at a decent hour. But that is on my own really. If I don’t have . . . if I want to do to the dishes, I can do the dishes whenever I get ready. I can do my clothes whenever I get ready. But I am a very neat person anyway. I can’t stand a dirty house. So I keep that under control myself. But yea, having my own place, let’s see . . .

Q - So there are rules but they are easy for you to comply with because . . .

A - Yea, there are rules there, you have to maintain sobriety, you have to . . . for me, because I have been there about 8 years now, so for me, at first I used to have to report to a counseling group and all that but then after four years . . . They offered a management training program there, through the government, so I took that course and that lasted about six months . . . and they hired me on for part of the project was working for them. And take a semi-annual or annual performance test. You know you just had to work on advancing, progressing along the lines as the company, as far as, like I was a resident manager, so they wanted to know if you were going to school. So you had to show them each year that you were trying to advance your education or your abilities on the job, even if that was just taking CPR classes every six months. Different things like that, just showing progression was a lot. Meant a lot there. Now where I live, you could stay there till you die. You can stay there as long as the program is going on there. There is two sections in the building. Downstairs is more for people who have more severe addiction-
type problems. Let’s say, even some emotional and mental problems. They can stay down there for two years. After two years there is other programs that they offer, and you can go into those programs and a lot of those programs have their own housing units. So you can move out after two years down there, or you can move upstairs where I am at. You can move up there. Just having my own place, being involved in school, where I am perusing higher education. Maybe one day I can own my own business like my mother does... she owns her own business... or she might leave me her business. So like right now, I am taking accounting and marketing, taking different courses in business that helps me see maybe how to run a business and eventually one day... My religion, my religion gives me structure. Loving people, the right way, not taking advantage of them; loving them trying to offer some image of success of being successful for like my brothers and sisters to see...

Q - That’s part of loving.

A - To emulate... to see loving people. Taking care of yourself. Offer them a positive image of you. Because I do believe that people emulate us, especially siblings, I believe they watch us, and they learn from us as well so living my life in a sober constructive manner shows others around me my strength as a man, it shows them that I love myself, that I care about myself. And by doing that, they can get some insight on how they should be living their lives. Because I don’t believe that I could change anybody but me, really. But I do believe that all of our lives influence other people in some way shape or form.

Q - So one of the ways that you show love is by being that sort of role model.

A - Yes. Showing them that you can do it and they can too.
Q - How else do you show love?

A - I show love by being generous in areas. I am a very giving person. Maybe too giving. Sometimes I give when I don’t really have the means. I am not working a steady job right now. I work different temporary jobs. Things like I read the (inaudible) and there might be jobs. Like last week, there was a job where you made 50 dollars working for the expo, the job expo. So I signed up for that, it was just a one day thing. But then I do get an allowance from the government, it is about $100 a month. There is an agency, like I don’t have classes on Tuesday or Thursday, I have one class on Thursday and it is in the evening, so I can go up to the agency and work temporary jobs. I make money that way. I tend to be very generous with my friends, who aren’t working, who might need some, just a loan, a small loan. I like helping people that way.

Q - How does it feel when you do that?

A - Well it makes me feel like I’ve done something good for someone else, takes me out of myself. Gives me a sense of pride to know that I cared about—I cared enough to even put myself last. I put somebody else first. But I have people in my family, they have money and they aren’t very generous with it and I mean. You, they just don’t feel like giving their money to people. If I call and ask for something they may help me, that’s not always the case, I have been turned down. So rather than to feel that rejection, I find something.
APPENDIX I

SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT – FIRST FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW
Q - Okay, so what things have you thought of since our last interview about the different ways that you express being a man in your life?

A - Um, you know, nothing has really changed, the last question that you had asked me, is there anything that I should tell you, you know what I mean, I guess that I said not really, but I guess, some basic things about my past that might add context to the way I am. Like, my parents got divorced, my dad remarried when I was—he has always been remarried ever since I remember, like one or two, and I am the oldest of three boys, that type of background. My independence is sort of based maybe, the oldest is more responsible people say and stuff, there is that component to it. But other than that, I haven’t really had any new thoughts. It was definitely pretty interesting, talking to you, expressing some of the things that we talked about, and I enjoyed it, but I didn’t have any new thoughts.

Q - Okay, alright so some questions just out of the transcript, and some of this is redundant, I apologize.

A - It is part of the process.

Q - You talked a little bit about leadership. How do you display leadership?

A - I think in my—from my prospective in different positions that I have held, at school and so forth, I think there is two components to being a leader. There is people who know how to do stuff the right way and they are in charge and there is the people who are strong in their will. You know what I mean—they have the ability to make the tough decisions. I think that I don’t know a lot of things about a lot of things but I don’t know a lot of things but I think my leadership just comes from my personality as opposed to my
expertise in that type of area. So, it is my ability to stand by a decision and I look at positions that I held at school and it is my ability to make the tough decisions, stand by it, and knock that down.

**Q - Can you give me an example of that?**

**A -** So I was at, in college I was the president of the fraternity that we were in so, I mean the type of decisions that I made on an everyday basis were not popular, you know, doing the responsible thing—it is an interesting dynamic where you are in an organization like that where not only are you leading and making the tough decisions but they are also the people that you are friends with so it’s—I tell my parents all the time that I really didn’t feel like I learned anything in college but the fraternity taught me more. It taught me how to make tough decisions, how to be a leader and that type of stuff. Specific examples—anytime there were decisions on how to spend funds that everyone chipped in for, and the responsible way to spend the money for parties and things were just not very popular. Responsible things that we needed to do like planning alumni weekend as opposed to having another party weekend, there is a lot of other types of scenarios, using money for things that don’t violate the law . . . Using house money that to buy large amounts of marijuana because everyone in the house smoked pot and they wanted to put their house fund towards—you know what I mean, and it sounds really stupid, and it sounds really ridiculous but this was literally a large number of individuals that were flabbergasted that I would not allow them to use the money for that regard you know what I mean . . . For some reason they thought that it was a viable option but it was one of those times that I had to stand by—it is an easy decision but it just, it is different when the decision that
you make is not popular, and you have to stand by it amongst people in your organization and people that are your friends.

Q - So how did you do that?
A - How did I stand by it? To me, in that particular example it is just so obvious, you know . . . But I think that other people would have rolled over and said “hey it’s your money, do what you want, just don’t put my name on it”—you know there is ways around it but I just said no—go out of your way to make sure that it doesn’t happen rather than just separating your name from it.

Q - You said what was hard about it was that it was the unpopular decision.
A - Right

Q - So you were kind of going against the grain.
A - Right

Q - What was it like for you to be going against the grain?
A - See it kind of feeds back into some of our conversation topics from yesterday where I am just the type of person where I really don’t care what people think, you know what I mean? So, I don’t know if it is necessarily that I think I feel that I was going out of my way to make a decision and felt like I was flexing my muscle by going against the grain, whereas, I just felt like it wasn’t a big deal because there is a lot of things that I don’t really care what people think about me, because I know in my mind that it is the right decision so I will just do it anyway.

Q - So I guess the question is, if you don’t care what people think, then why was it hard to make an unpopular decision?
A - The decision wasn’t hard, the decision was easy. It’s what—having to deal with the fallout of your decision—you don’t want to strain friendships and so forth on that. The decision in itself, the decision itself was very easy and I handled it well. It was just unfortunate how you had to handle—deal with the fallout, what people would say, and give you a hard time and all that kind of good stuff.

Q - So how did you deal with that?

A - How did I deal with it? It is just one of those things that you have got to say, you made the right decision—ignore it and let it go and after awhile everyone forgets about it. It’s not like I necessarily had to sit down each person and say—“what do you think about this” and talk through it, so it’s something in my mind that is so ridiculous that it is just something that I wasn’t going to budge on, where obviously you and I, our interests are going to conflict and we are going to agree to disagree, you just want to let time heal the wounds I guess.

Q - So basically, it is that same sort of pattern, you do what you have to do and then you just sort of wait out the discomfort if it goes on.

A - Exactly

Q - We talked about your relationships, with family, with male friends; we talked about that a lot. How would you characterize relationships with women other than your wife?

A - So, if you know what I mean, there is a difference between—I guess I differentiate my behavior if it is social or friend setting verses a work setting you know. So, if it is the friends, like my wife’s friends, people, my friends from high school or anything like that,
my personality is that I am always joking around, I am never really serious. I am always
giving them a hard time or always being the funny guy with the one liners and all of that
kind of stuff. My general personality when I am with people and am comfortable is—I
always try to make people laugh. So I don’t necessarily think that I differentiate guys
verses girls in that regard, I am always trying to make people laugh and have the funny
one-liner just with the guys and usually more aggressive and joking around. And with the
girls, it is just the general nice guy; I wouldn’t make fun of them or anything like that.

**Q - You said that you and your guy friends could go months without talking. When
you get back together it is like no time has passed at all—how do you do that?**

**A - How do you do it?**—You see, I think that, I don’t know if this is the exact answer to
your question but I think that guys, in general, their relationships are a lot easier because
you are in it for what you get out of it. You joke around, it is fun, and you enjoy it. In
girls relationships I see that there is a lot of pettiness to it, where it is always work, you
always have to have a smile on, you always have to try like everyone is your best friend.
So, it is almost like stressful having—my view of my wife’s different relationships with
different friends—it is almost like—we have got to go out with the girls and it’s like with
guys, you are not really that much invested, it’s not like hard so when you get back—I
have a friend from high school who lives out in Chicago now and I don’t really talk to
him that much on the phone, but I went out and visited him and nothing—because we are
in it just for the immediate—just hanging out, having fun, joking around, there is not
much pettiness so it is all real.

**Q - What do you mean you are not much invested in it?**
A - There is—for example: If you look at some of my wife’s relationships with some of her friends, they have been friends since high school, they all still live in the same area, they all still go out, but a lot of them are different people now. They go out because it is almost routine and they have to, as opposed to them actually being excited to go out and see each other; so over time it feels like their relationships are separating and it becomes more of a chore. So when I say invested, it is not that I don’t like the person, it’s like, it’s easy, I don’t feel like I am going out of my way where it’s a chore, that’s it. It’s not that I don’t like the person; it’s that it is easier. I don’t feel like I am going out of my way; or that it is a chore to go out and see this person—I am excited to do it, it is not stressful to have to deal with it, if you will.
APPENDIX J

SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT – FINAL FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW
Q - For what are you, as a man, responsible?

A - At this point in my life, I think that I am mainly responsible for myself and my family. Basically, I think I’m responsible for making my way through college and getting my degree, but also I feel I have an obligation to my family. We all kind of support each other and I think I have a responsibility to help out when I can, even though I make the least amount of money.

Q - How has feeling a sense of responsibility affected the way you express being a man in your life?

A - I think responsibility is affects the way everyone acts, not just men, but I suppose as a man, I feel more responsible for certain things even if that’s not the case. I feel that maybe I am supposed to be responsible because I think that is the way men are raised. We need to be responsible and take care of our families etc. For me, I think responsibility is more a consequence of being an adult rather than in particular a man. I think that feeling might change as I grow older, but for right now I’m still struggling with the responsibilities of growing up.

Q - What is the relationship between responsibility and respect in your life?

A - Responsibility and respect go hand and hand in my life. I think in order to have an increased amount of respect, you need to be responsible. People who are responsible and trustworthy deserve respect. Being responsible is a large task for anyone, and I think it needs to be recognized as so and given the proper amount of respect.

Q - How do you decide which of the many messages and models about being a man “fit” for you?
A - Finding the right messages and models is sometimes difficult I think. Finding the ones that fit is not always the easiest thing to do. Society tells us to act so many different ways and some ways are appropriate for men to express themselves, and some not so much. For me, finding the right models are based mainly on the situation. I have a vast database of “manly” actions and feelings and even not so manly actions and feelings, and finding the right ones is based on the situation I’m in and who I’m with. I don’t think any particular model fits for me every time in every situation, and so I find that I adapt to different situations. Like if I’m hanging out with my girlfriend, I’ll let my guard down and not be a stereotypical “tough guy,” but if I’m with my friends I act like more of a hard ass.

Q - How do you decide which model or message about being a man is appropriate in a given situation?

A - Deciding the right model is usually based on the people I’m with. Like I said before, I act differently around my girlfriend than I do when I’m around my friends. However, these actions are not set in stone. Each model is largely based on the context of the situation. It feels awkward to describe. It’s almost a culture thing. Depending on the situation, society expects us to act a certain way, and we either act accordingly or not. There’s not a simple algorithm for any specific action in any situation for me. I usually have to observe what’s going on and then act accordingly.
REFERENCES


