# HEALTHY MASCULINITY



City of Casey

## Promoting healthy masculinity in our community

### What is healthy masculinity?

Healthy masculinity is about expressing strength through empathy, respect, confidence, equality, and accountability. It encourages men and boys to express emotions, be vulnerable when needed, support others, and take responsibility for their actions.

Healthy masculinity benefits not only men, but also women, children, families, and the broader community by helping to create safer relationships, stronger friendships, and better mental health outcomes.

### Understanding harmful masculinity

Harmful masculinity is characterised by behaviours and attitudes such as:

- Disrespect and discrimination.
- Aggression and domination over others.
- Controlling behaviours.
- Hypersexuality.
- Homophobia.
- Risk-taking behaviours.
- Low self-awareness and emotional suppression.

These harmful attitudes can negatively impact relationships, mental health, workplace culture, and community safety. Challenging these behaviours is an important part of building respectful and inclusive communities.

### What does healthy masculinity look like?

Healthy masculinity is demonstrated through a range of positive personal qualities and behaviours, including:

- Resilience and self-awareness.
- Respect for yourself and others.
- Emotional honesty and vulnerability.
- A commitment to personal growth.
- Open communication.
- Providing and accepting emotional support.
- Building authentic and healthy relationships

Other examples include:

- Listening to others and showing empathy.
- Valuing equality and mutual respect in relationships.
- Speaking out against violence, bullying, and sexism.
- Encouraging friends and colleagues to seek help when needed.
- Being a positive role model for boys and young men.
- Recognising that masculinity can be expressed in many ways, including being nurturing, creative, playful, confident, or assertive.

## Key facts and statistics

- **One in three** men report feeling pressure to act "tough" even when they are struggling.
- **Men die by suicide at three times the rate of women**, highlighting the importance of open conversations about mental health and help-seeking.
- Men who openly discuss their feelings are more likely to **seek support** and recover more effectively.
- Rigid stereotypes about masculinity are linked to family violence and abusive behaviours.
- Most Australians do not support outdated stereotypes about men and masculinity.
- Men are more likely to engage in certain risk-taking behaviours, including higher rates of road fatalities, smoking, and accidental drug-related deaths.
- Men are predominantly identified as perpetrators of violence, with 95% of victims reporting male-instigated violence.

These facts demonstrate the importance of encouraging healthier attitudes, behaviours, and support networks for men and boys.

## Practical tips for promoting healthy masculinity

**Challenge stereotypes**
Do not allow outdated expectations to define behaviour. Instead, explore and embrace a personal understanding of masculinity that aligns with positive values and respectful behaviours.

**Seek help when needed**
Reaching out for support, whether for mental health, personal challenges, or practical issues, is a sign of strength rather than weakness.

**Be a positive role model**
Demonstrate that expressing emotions, communicating openly, supporting others, and treating women with respect are important qualities of healthy masculinity.

**Build healthy relationships**
Focus on mutual respect, active listening, understanding, communication, and support within relationships, families, and friendships.

**Be an active bystander**
If you witness disrespectful, aggressive, or harmful behaviour, speak up or take appropriate action to challenge it safely and respectfully.

## Key takeaways

Healthy masculinity is about promoting respect, empathy, emotional wellbeing, equality, and positive relationships. It encourages men and boys to reject harmful stereotypes, seek support when needed, and contribute to safer and more inclusive communities. By modelling positive behaviours and challenging harmful attitudes, everyone can help create a culture where people feel valued, respected, and supported.

## For more information, scan the QR code