A Sort of Preface

As I gathered more and more information, I realized that one article could not do justice to this topic. However, in my discovery, I found very few articles or books that specifically addressed the role of culture, sexual identity, and fatherhood. As the start of what I hope will be a series of articles, I have decided to write this initial article from my own experiences as a father. The purpose of this first article is to initiate the conversation on the topic of LGBTQA+ parenting, starting with fatherhood.

Identity and Sexual Orientation: Complexities of Fatherhood

Being a father has been one of the greatest joys of my life. I chose to write this article as a both a male of color and an identifying “bisexual” male. The reason this framing is important to me is that my initial and main identity is that of a male of color whose sexuality is secondary. As a cis-gendered male, I recognize that my experiences as a father may be different from individuals who identify or present differently. However, I believe that many of the experiences of being a father and balancing heteronormative perspectives (the assumption that fatherhood, in sexual minorities, resembles a standard North American ideal) are similar across cultural and sexual identities.

Culture plays an important role in one's development of identity, especially as it affects how we live out “fatherhood”. These identities, for self-identifying men, are the result of entangled experiences that, among other factors, include 1) verbal and non-verbal messaging about masculinities; 2) relationships and their enforcement of physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional norms; and 3) cultural identification (i.e. race and ethnicity). I approach these complex topics from a multi-dimensional lens that highlights one's life span journey and perceptions of life changing moments. The idea of sexual identity, as observed in some research, is not necessarily just a concern in sexual minorities, but across all identities when it comes to fatherhood. The simple fact is that there are few places where culturally responsive support exists for LGBTQA+ males of color.

Marginalized status within the LGBTQA+ fatherhood community

In a recent trip with my daughter, now 23 years old, we discussed my sexuality and “if” and/or “how” it affected our relationship. This was important to me as I needed to understand if I tended to “discard” one part of my identity in order to appropriately father. I learned in our conversation that she’s never perceived me as being inauthentic or anything other than “Daddy”. In addition, she informed me that since she’s known since the age of 10, she’s never thought about whether her experience as a daughter was different from her friends’. Though comforting, I recognized a few variables that may seem mitigating or even protective of our relationship, personally and socially. One, being a cis male who presents in a stereotypical fashion, I’ve not

Statement on the murder of George Floyd:

Many of you are acutely aware of the circumstances surrounding the death of George Floyd on May 22, 2020. The death of yet another unarmed black man has once again highlighted the continued historical trauma that members of our communities experience daily. The Twin Cities Men Center stand together with our communities to denounce any and all acts of racism and human oppression.

While we alone cannot dismantle societal forms of racism, oppression, and discrimination, we stand in solidarity with those communities that face these traumas to create a more just and equitable city and state. The mission of The Men’s Center is “to provide resources for men seeking to grow in body, mind, and spirit; and from that foundation to advocate for healthier family and community.” In living and embracing this mission we cannot ignore, minimize or shut out the all-encompassing pain and convolution that our communities in Minneapolis and Saint Paul are experiencing.

We live in troubled times reflected by institutional, ideological, interpersonal and internalized racism. Though we view our organization as inclusive, the events since Memorial Day 2020, calls us to reflect on how we, individually and organizationally, unwittingly support structural and systemic racism of white supremacy and racial injustice. Moving forward the Men Center will review our processes, policies, partnerships, and structure through an equity lens to ensure our practices align with dismantling systems of oppression and racism, to advance an equitable agenda for all.
I’m looking for suggestions on what I can do to organize the library and make it more user friendly. What would people like to see in the library? They can text or email me suggestions at 612-275-5861 or jeffreyscotspringer@gmail.com.

The books in the Men’s Center Library are sectioned off into 14 categories. These categories are: Fathers, Children & Families, Fiction, Gay & Lesbian, Health & Therapy, Humor, Men’s Movement & Masculinity, Men’s Stories & Poetry, Miscellaneous, Reference, Relationships & Friendships, Sexuality, Spirituality, Valued Elders, Women.

In addition to members having borrowing privileges from our library, we also have a reading room with free WiFi access. Stop in for a cup of coffee and catch up on your men’s literature, and check out a book to go!

Continued from Page 1

experienced some of the same barriers as many of my peers. Two, I’ve had a lot of family support in my identity journey. Finally, I’ve enjoyed a healthy co-parenting relationship with her mother, mostly.

Furthermore, a factor not necessarily considered in many of these discussions is gender roles or gender role strains. Mark Giesler (2012) conducted a qualitative analysis on gay fathers’ negotiations of gender role strains (GRS). GRS, as described in Mr. Geisler’s paper, is psychological strain in gay men’s ability to present to society. This may mean that gay or bi-sexual fathers experience greater anxiety and depression due to exerting excessive energy in presenting as masculine or heterosexual in social situations. Less is known about single fathers whose children are a product of heterosexual relationships and GRS. I would infer that that GRS may be more pronounced when we include social stratification by education, income, race/ethnicity, and geographical location.

Research by Megan Carroll (2018) found that single gay fathers, gay fathers of color, and gay fathers who had children as a result of heterosexual relationships often found themselves in the margins of communities of gay fathers. Furthermore, she found that given the perception of gay parents, especially non-Hispanic whites, as being financially secure and a part of the normative culture depicted in the media, many of these individuals did not feel or know where to receive support. Having access to diverse groups of supportive men/fathers for all men, especially those in marginalized groups, would benefit our overall health as we navigate as fathers.

Finally, in doing the research for this article, I am reminded of the diversity of trajectories LGBTQIA+ men take to fatherhood and many factors that influence our complex identities. For example, while I was navigating life as a new father, minister, and a college student, I was also beginning to explore my sexual identity. I imagine that many of the mistakes that I made would have been avoided or I would have felt less alone or guilty if I had the awareness or access to culturally responsive gay father support groups or knew of other LGBTIA+ fathers. Though I am grateful for the support that I’ve had, it is important that we began to create spaces for conversations and support for our LGBTIA+ parents.

References:

Carroll, Megan. Family Relations; Minneapolis Vol. 67, Iss. 1, (Feb 2018): 104,108-117. DOI:10.1111/fare.12300

Giesler, Mark, PHD, LMSW. Fathering; Harriman Vol. 10, Iss. 2, (Spring 2012): 119-139. DOI:10.3149/fth.1002.119
## events calendar

**The mission of the Men’s Center is to provide resources for men seeking to grow in body, mind, and spirit; and from that foundation to advocate for healthier family and community relationships.**

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<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
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**Jun/Jul 2020**

**web site:** [www.tcmc.org](http://www.tcmc.org)

**e-mail:** tcmc@tcmc.org

**phone:** 612 / 822-5892

**1976 In Our 44th Year of Public Service 2020**
The Twin Cities Men’s Center has been an important voice in the community for 44 years providing classes and support groups promoting personal growth to many men and women. Professional leaders in the community have led weekly presentations providing a wide opportunity for educational, spiritual and emotional growth for 32 years.

In recent years, attendance of the presentations by TCMC supporters has diminished to the extent that the TCMC Board of Directors has agreed to schedule them intermittently as the interest arises.

The 1st Wednesday of the month Family Law Clinic will continue by providing legal support for those experiencing legal issues. The Board wishes to express appreciation to the supporters who attended the presentations and the many volunteer professionals who gave their time and talent to support a strong educational component of the TCMC mission.

A small fee is collected at the door for each person attending:
- Non-Members of TCMC – $5
- Regular Members ($25 level) – $3
- Sustaining Members – FREE

All presentations, classes, and clinics meet at The Men’s Center, 3249 Hennepin Ave. So, Suite 55, Minneapolis, MN 55408 (unless otherwise noted).

The Twin Cities Men’s Center does not endorse, takes no specific position, nor holds any opinion on the presentations, or of any information imparted, or of the presenter(s) themselves. Presentations are the sole product and responsibility of the presenter(s).

Mankind Project
Open Circle
Facilitators: Dave Semenchuk and David Grocott
Where: Video Chat
When: Every Thu., 7:00-9:00 pm
Open to Men Only

Mankind Project Minnesota began in 1990 and over 800 men are in our community. We have more than 20 on-going men’s groups which serve as places where men can develop their Emotional Intelligence, practice Accountability to their Commitments of Service to others, and practice Authenticity in Actions and declarations.

This Open Circle enables participants to witness other men practice clarity of self-expression from their hearts rather than their heads. Join us in our 5-round format and ask questions to learn more and even participate yourself if you choose. Our structure is based on the masculine archetypes of King, Warrior, Magician & Lover in Moore and Gillette’s book.

CLINICS

Family Law Clinic
Leader: Rasheen Tillman
Where: Video Chat
When: Wed., June 3, 7:00-9:00 pm
Open to all Genders

Targeted to the needs of men or women going through or anticipating divorce or dealing with other family law issues, this Clinic will give you an opportunity to discuss your own questions on such topics as:
- Divorce
- Separation
- Paternity
- Property Division
- Custody
- Spousal Maintenance
- Child Support
- Financial Settlements
- Co-habitation

Attorneys will volunteer their time and expertise for the benefit of those who attend.

Family Law Clinic
Leader: Steve Yasgur
Where: Video Chat
When: Wed., July 1, 7:00-9:00 pm
Open to all Genders

Targeted to the needs of men or women going through or anticipating divorce or dealing with other family law issues, this Clinic will give you an opportunity to discuss your own questions on such topics as:
- Divorce
- Separation
- Paternity
- Property Division
- Custody
- Spousal Maintenance
- Child Support
- Financial Settlements
- Co-habitation

Attorneys will volunteer their time and expertise for the benefit of those who attend.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Anger Management
Facilitator: various
Where: Video Chat
When: See calendar for dates
Open to Men Only, Registration Required

Have you been told that your verbal and emotional expression of anger is out of control? Have you lost your job or spouse because you “blew up” one too many times? Have you been hit with a court order to take an Anger Management Class? Learn how to manage your feelings with the Twin Cities Anger Management Program. This is one of the best, and most affordable, programs in the area. It’s ideal for men who desire to significantly improve their relationships at home and at work.

The focus of the twelve week anger management class is both education and support. Through class interaction, experiential exercises, lecture, and homework assignments, men will develop new ways to manage their feelings of anger. Following completion of the class, participants can join an ongoing support group to reinforce their new skills. These ongoing support groups will also be facilitated by the trained volunteer facilitators.

Classes are filled on a first come, first served basis. Currently, there are classes on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. Please call TCMC at 612-822-5892 to be placed on the waiting list. State name, address, telephone, preferred starting class. Or if you need further details, call our Anger Management coordinator, John Hesch, at 612-229-3102.

“...The mission of the Men’s Center Support Groups is to create a safe place, in times of personal and social challenge, for any men and women to receive and give support to one another and share feelings and experiences to facilitate SELF-ACCEPTANCE and PERSONAL GROWTH.”

The Men’s Center support groups are hosted by a trained facilitator. Although each group has a specific focus, all groups are Open to general discussions and attended as a Drop-In basis. Support groups begin promptly at 7:30, so arrive early such that you can browse the many resources and library materials. A donation of $3-9 helps keep TCMC operational. Liquid refreshments are available at a separate donation rate. All groups are men only, except where listed for all genders.

- Location: Video Chat
In Memorium – Bob Anderson

It is with great sadness that we share with you the passing of Bob Anderson. Many of you know and love Bob and know the kind, gentle and giving man that he was. Bob passed away on May 4, 2020. Speaking to his partner, John, we learned that Bob had not been sick and was feeling just fine. He suddenly went downhill very fast and “just wasn’t feeling well”. He laid down to take a nap and within an hour, he was gone.

There was a private service for Bob for just his family. Once the COVID-19 stay-at-home order has been lifted and social distancing concerns are lessened, the family intends to hold another service that will be open to the public. we will publish that information when available.

Despite being legally blind, Bob never hesitated to answer that call when he was needed. He always had time to give to others and whenever the Men’s Center had a fundraiser or asked for donations, Bob ALWAYS contributed! John shared with me how very important TCMC was to Bob. He frequently accompanied Dick Madigan and Tom Maher to the corrections facility in Lino Lakes to present to the men there about TCMC. Besides teaching Anger Management classes and speaking at Lino Lakes prison, Bob wrote grant applications for TCMC and MenTalk articles and donated some of his poems and essays to our library. Since the 1980’s he was a frequent resource for info and support for our office managers (Randy and Tom). His networking with The Fathers Resource Center and Aliveness Project provided key outreach opportunities for our members. Bob felt strongly supported by and exemplified our Mission Statement in action. It goes without saying that Bob will be greatly missed by many!

Bob’s family asked that gifts and memorials be directed to TCMC, Read the Star Tribune obituary here: http://www.startribune.com/obituaries/detail/0000355010/

Cards and letters can be sent to: John Schmidt, 6051 Laurel Ave #211, Golden Valley MN 55416
Upcoming OUTDOOR Monthly Men’s Sunday Brunches, drop-in anytime 10am-1pm (bring something to share/cook up): June 21st OUTDOORS at Damon Stark’s 5108 Washburn Ave N 55430 612-529-5243 (near the Hwy 100 / Brooklyn Blvd interchange). July 19th OUTDOORS at Andy Mickel’s, 106 SE Arthur Ave, Minneapolis, 55414 612-331-8396. (in Prospect Park off University Ave near I-94 and 280).

– Andy Mickel, 2020-05-11.

“Here’s a small donation having attended the Family Law Clinic. Thanks for providing this service.”
– John Conley, 2020-01-08

“Nice April/May newsletter. A lot of heart in it. Thanks for all that your organization does for men.”
– Michael Obsatz, 2020-04-01.

“I did spend a little time on the website to get your email address and am quite impressed with how well you are addressing the issues & being available for the men. Congratulations to all who took part in making this happen!!”
– Mary Peterson, 2020-04-03

“Hang in there, guys!”

“The Men’s Center is essential, period. Thanks for being on the job.”
– Keith Prussing, 2020-05-06.

“Keep up the wonderful work!”
– John Cordes, 2020-05-08.

“Thank you, Tom! It is the least I can do. During this crazy time, I want to be of service when I can.

My clients love the groups (Saturday and Wednesday night). Please reach out to me if there is any other way I can be of service and support your work. Your work is invaluable.”
– Susan Persons, MS, LP (Project Pathfinder Therapist), 2020-05-14.

“Just letting you know I have written two articles about the pandemic. One is “Monks Don’t Mind Monastic Life — Why Do We?” It is on the www.unityminneapolis.org website — go to blog. The other is on my www.mentorsmatter.us website and is called “Coping with Uncertainty: Acting with Integrity, Praying with Zeal.”

I am inviting you to use either of these for upcoming newsletters if you think they are appropriate. Hopefully by June, we will be past this challenging time. But who knows?
– Mike Obsatz, 2020-04-01.

ManKind Project Minnesota holding regular TCMC Thursday Zoom meetings, 7-9 p.m.
– RSVP: Jamie Wellik, 612-267-2467.

ManKind Project Central Plains is holding regular Tuesday Zoom meetings (2nd and 4th Tuesdays) And men from ACROSS Central Plains are welcome!
– RSVP: Jamie Wellik, 612-267-2467.

Also former Minnesota MKP brother, Mac MacElroy is holding daily Drop-In Open Warrior support Zoom call groups for MKP-USA from his new base at MKP St. Louis 7 a.m. and 5 p.m.
– FYI: Mac McElroy <hj.mac.mcelroy@gmail.com>


Here are a few scary headlines from the authoritative Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP):

• US food processing plants become COVID-19 hot spots.
• Study: Many asymptomatic COVID-19 cases undetected.
• Trump adds confusion on COVID-19 treatments as US deaths top 50,000.

So, what’s the good news? First, we have to recognize that all humans have a negativity bias. It helped us survive throughout evolutionary history by focusing our attention on every potential danger that might kill us. Psychologist Rick Hanson, Ph.D. summarizes this inherent brain bias saying, “The brain is like Velcro for negative experiences and Teflon for positives ones.”

Psychologists John Tierney, Ph.D. and Roy F. Baumeister, Ph.D., describe the impacts of our negative perceptions on our relationships. In their book The Power of Bad: How the Negativity Effect Rules Us and How We Can Rule It, they tell us, “The negativity effect destroys reputations and bankrupts companies. It promotes tribalism and xenophobia. It spreads bogus scares that have left Americans angrier and Zambians hungrier. It ignites moral panics among both liberals and conservatives. It poisons politics and elects demagogues.”

Read the entire blog posting at: https://menalive.com/covid-19-the-good-news/#more-6170
– Jed Diamond 2020-04-30

Have You Overcome Adversity? Would You Like to Earn $20?

Jane Gilgun, Professor, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities is looking for men to interview for research on success stories, stories of men who have coped with and overcome adversities. She pays $20 per interview. She typically does three interviews because she want men to tell me their life stories, and this can take time. The first interview is for men to learn about the research. They will receive $20 for that interview whether or not they choose to be part of the research. If interested, men can text or leave a voice message at 612-237-6126. All are welcome.
Twin Cities Men’s Center ALL-PURPOSE FORM

Men’s Center members are entitled to: participate in our annual & monthly Board meetings, receive Men Talk, use the reference library, and enjoy reduced fees to Men’s Center-sponsored events such as Weds. presentations.

☐ I want to sustain the activities of The Men’s Center by becoming a “20 x 12 Honor Roll Member.”
☐ Please ENTER/RENEW my membership at The Men’s Center for the next 12 months:

Enclosed please find $________  □ $25 (Regular)  □ $50 (Patron).

☐ I want to make an additional, tax-deductible gift of $________. (Thanks much!)
☐ My new|correct address|phone is printed below.
☐ Please remove me from The Twin Cities Men’s Center mailing list; this also cancels Men Talk deliveries.
☐ I have these feelings, thoughts, opinions, ideas, news items for The Twin Cities Men’s Center / Men Talk

DATE: __________________________
FROM Name: __________________________
Mailing Address: __________________________
Home Phone: __________________________
Work/Cell Phone: __________________________
E-mail Address: __________________________

Please support our Men Talk advertisers!

Family Law Clinic

Every 1st Wednesday of the month, the Men’s Center is proud to present the Family Law Clinic. Targeted to the needs of men or women going through or anticipating divorce or dealing with other family law issues, this Clinic will give you an opportunity to discuss your own questions on such topics as:

• Divorce  • Separation
• Paternity  • Property Division
• Custody  • Spousal Maintenance
• Child Support  • Financial Settlements
• Co-habitation  • Your personal issue

Attorneys will volunteer their time and expertise for the benefit of those who attend. A nominal fee of $5 is charged for the public. Members of the Men’s Center receive a courtesy discount.

Where: The Men’s Center, 3249 Hennepin Ave S #55, Minneapolis MN 55408
When: Every 1st Wednesday from 7:00 to 9:00 PM
Just come! No advance registration required!

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612-279-6400
www.factorof4.com


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hgreenberg@iacounseling.com
www.iacounseling.com

Athena
Counseling Services, LLC.
2000 Old West Main St., Suite 336, Red Wing, MN 55066
Silas Richardson, LGSW, LADC
(651)764-2190
silas@athenatherapy.org
website: athenatherapy.org

Couples and Family Counseling, Stress Management, Anxiety, Depression, LGBT and Relationship Issues

MEN TALK MARKETING RATE SCHEDULE

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(612) 822-5892
tcmc@tcmc.org
Anger Management Program

Have you been told that your verbal and emotional expression of anger is out of control? Have you lost your job or spouse because you “blew up” one too many times? Have you been hit with a court order to take an Anger Management Class? Learn how to manage your feelings with the Twin Cities Anger Management Program. This is one of the best, and most affordable, programs in the area. It’s ideal for men who desire to significantly improve their relationships at home and at work.

The focus of the twelve week anger management class is both education and support. Through class interaction, experiential exercises, lecture, and homework assignments, men will develop new ways to manage their feelings of anger. Following completion of the class, participants can join an ongoing support group to reinforce their new skills. These ongoing support groups will also be facilitated by the trained volunteer facilitators.

Length of Class: 12 consecutive weeks
Number of Participants: Limited to 12 men per class
Cost: $265 for TCMC Members ($275 for Non-Members)
Starting Dates: Classes are filled on a first come, first served basis. Currently, there are classes on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays.

Please call TCMC at 612-822-5892 to be placed on the waiting list. State name, address, telephone, preferred starting class. Or if you need further details, call our Anger Management coordinator, John Hesch, on the Anger Management phone 612-229-3102.

24 Years of Successful Classes