

The components of toxic masculinity

Terry Kupers, a professor at The Wright Institute school of psychology, defines toxic masculinity as "the constellation of socially regressive male traits that serve to foster domination, the devaluation of women, homophobia and wanton violence"

Misogyny

Hatred of women

Dominance

Claiming social primacy through intimidation or controlling behaviors

Homophobia

Irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against gay culture or gay people themselves

Physical Violence

Violence with no just foundation or without provocation

If Toxic Masculinity Were a Tree

If there were a flower/fruit/offspring of this tree it would be homophobia. While Homophobia presents in a variety of ways - as it relates to toxic masculinity it functions as a fear of the feminine (or other).

-Toxic masculinity is threatened by anything that is not centered around male-cis-heteronormativity.

The trunk would be misogyny as it serves to stabilize the dominance over female power and protects the seed (fear of subjugation) by targeting and subjugating women

Acts of dominance serve as roots. Establishing male power over female power

The seedling of Toxic Masculinity is the fear of being subjugated or oppressed.

How Queerphobia & Transphobia work in the framework of Toxic Masculinity

Cis person sees another person and determines that they want to approach them.

Examples of sexual preferences

Queer

Lesbian

Bisexual

Heteroflexible

Pansexual

Questioning

Examples of gender identities

Androgyne

Transgender

Non-Binary

Genderqueer

Agender

In general society rejects the agency of alternative preferences and genders. Toxic masculinity takes this rejection a step further by imposing penalties for not adhering to predetermined norms.

A determination is made that the individual exists outside of the norms of cis/hetero norms.

In some instances this triggers a violent response in the pursuer. That violent response is rooted in misogyny & homo-transphobia. Fearing that desiring said individual dilutes their masculinity. Violence has traditionally served as an accepted form of masculine expression and is thus instituted for an individual to reassert their masculinity.

Acts such as these are justified by societal norms or in many instances an outright lack of consideration. In many cases queer and trans people face multilayered discrimination that our culture has not taken the steps to address.

The Physicality of Toxic Masculinity

Physical violence is the enforcer of Toxic Masculinity

**Physical Spaces**  
In some instances close physical proximity can set individuals off if they feel as though their space is being violated. EVERYONE has a personal bubble.

When male identified folks intentionally impose on that physical space without regard for female identified people it becomes problematic.

**Subtle Intimidation**  
Repeatedly mention strength differences, power dynamics, and using language with the purpose of hinting towards a directed danger.

**Mindfulness**  
The sad but true aspect of Toxic Masculinity is that it is the norm for our society and victims of it will respond to what they identify as threats.

In order to not perpetuate this cycle of abuse or oppression one must be mindful not to intentionally engage in toxic behaviors AND one must be willing to correct them when they come up. We must keep in mind that to some people the underlying threat of physical violence is constantly present

**Non-Verbal Communication**  
When someone postures in a threatening manner with the intended purpose of intimidating another individual that is considered toxic

Understanding Consent & How It Functions

**Consent:** permission for something to happen or agreement to do something.

But wait there's more!

**Continuous**

**Enthusiastic**

**Yes's**

Consent is a living agreement. Consent can be revoked / denied at any point. Which is why you have to be certain that all parties have agreed to any actions that may occur.

Someone can say yes to something and later change their mind

It must be noted that consent can be enthusiastic and ill informed. If a person is intoxicated, it's possible they cannot give consent. If circumstances of a given interaction change, all parties should check-in and ensure that consent is still given.

**Permission / Consent Know where it starts and stops!**

In this zone you should stop/pause and take a minute to assess or reassess the standing of an interaction.

In this zone you should see if any of your bias or inputs are pressuring the person you are interacting with

In this zone you have been granted the permission to do x with a given person. Assume them you will check in later. Do that. Live your best life!

Do I have consent to do X?

Did you ask if you could do X?

Yes

No

Did they say yes?

No you do not have consent

Yes

Were they enthusiastic?

Yes

Assure them that you will check in and continue!

**Entitlement Zone**

This area is where we see many problems come up in interactions with people. Individuals assume that because a person has said yes to one thing that they have blanket permission to do all of the things that the individual believes are encompassed in the norms of said interaction. This is an entitlement mindset, believing that one has the right to behave or commit an act rather than getting permission or consent from the other party.

Coercion & Boundaries

**Coercion**

the practice of persuading someone to do something by using force or threats

Something important to remember is that consent can never be coerced. If someone feels pressured or threatened then they may or may not give in to the request without being wholly invested.

**Boundaries**

Boundaries are like fences. They are put up to protect the things the an individual has invested in and that they care about. Anytime a person has to jump a fence one of three things has happened.

You don't have the proper access to the space and aren't allowed in

Something went wrong and you lost access to the space

You are intentionally disregarding the boundaries.

Using Language

Language is the key to interaction. Toxicity exhibits itself in many ways and especially the way that we interpret real concepts.

- Spouses or intimate partners or potential partners
- Sex
- Desires

Conversation Zones

Zone 1

Zone 2

Zone 3

Zone 1 Utilizing language that is honest, general, non threatening, and allows for respect of a persons agency within the conversation

Zone 2 Use of language that does not consider the listeners feelings and/or agency. This type of language is self centric & often forcefully directional.

Zone 3 Language that is intentionally harmful and specifically designed to threaten or belittle a listener.

How can we frame language that is useful for you?

**Post - Assessment!**