

Toxic Masculinity Project

Isaac Tabb, Nathan Blanchard, Eamon Deffner

10/17/2021

Introduction

This data comes from a survey conducted by FiveThirtyEight, WNYC Studios, through a survey on SurveyMonkey. The data was collected in May 2018. 1,615 men over 18 were surveyed, and the data was collected using weighted variables of age, race, education, and location using data from the Census Bureau. Questions were asked online through SurveyMonkey, and this was an observational study. There may have been some bias, as people who feel more masculine may be less likely to take a survey about toxic masculinity. This data was interesting to us because masculinity can affect the way we see ourselves. We also wanted to know how demographics affect masculinity. For the class, a lot of us make assumptions based on a person's demographics and how masculine they are. We wanted to see if those assumptions were true, and how they could be interpreted. The data cleaning that we had to do was filtering out "no answer" responses from how masculine a man feels, how important masculinity is to him, how often he goes to therapy, and his marital status. We also took out separated and widowed responses from the marital status question because these did not make up much of the responses and could throw off the data. A final piece of data wrangling was to re-order the responses to the therapy question because they were in alphabetical order, and not the order we wanted the graph to put them in.

Setup Chunk

```
knitr::opts_chunk$set(echo = TRUE)

# load tidyverse
library(tidyverse)

# read in file
survey <- read.csv("T_masculinity_survey (4).csv")
```

Filtering of data

```

# filter for first three graphs

# filters out no answer / other for sexual orientation
# filters out no answer for masculine, importance, therapy
survey2 <- survey %>%
  filter(q0026 != "No answer", q0026 != "Other",
         q0001 != "No answer", q0002 != "No answer",
         q0007_0010 != "No answer")

# filter for last three graphs

# filters out no answer / separated / widowed for marital status
# filters out no answer for masculine, importance, therapy
survey3 <- survey %>%
  filter(q0024 != "No answer", q0024 != "Separated", q0024 != "Widowed",
         q0001 != "No answer", q0002 != "No answer", q0007_0010 != "No answer")

# sorts the levels for therapy for graph three
survey2$q0007_0010 <- factor(survey2$q0007_0010, levels = c("Never, and not open to it",
"Never, but open to it", "Rarely", "Sometimes", "Often"))

# sorts the levels for therapy for graph six
survey3$q0007_0010 <- factor(survey3$q0007_0010, levels = c("Never, and not open to it",
"Never, but open to it", "Rarely", "Sometimes", "Often"))

```

Demographics: Marital Status, Sexual Orientation

Questions: How manly you feel, how important, therapy usage

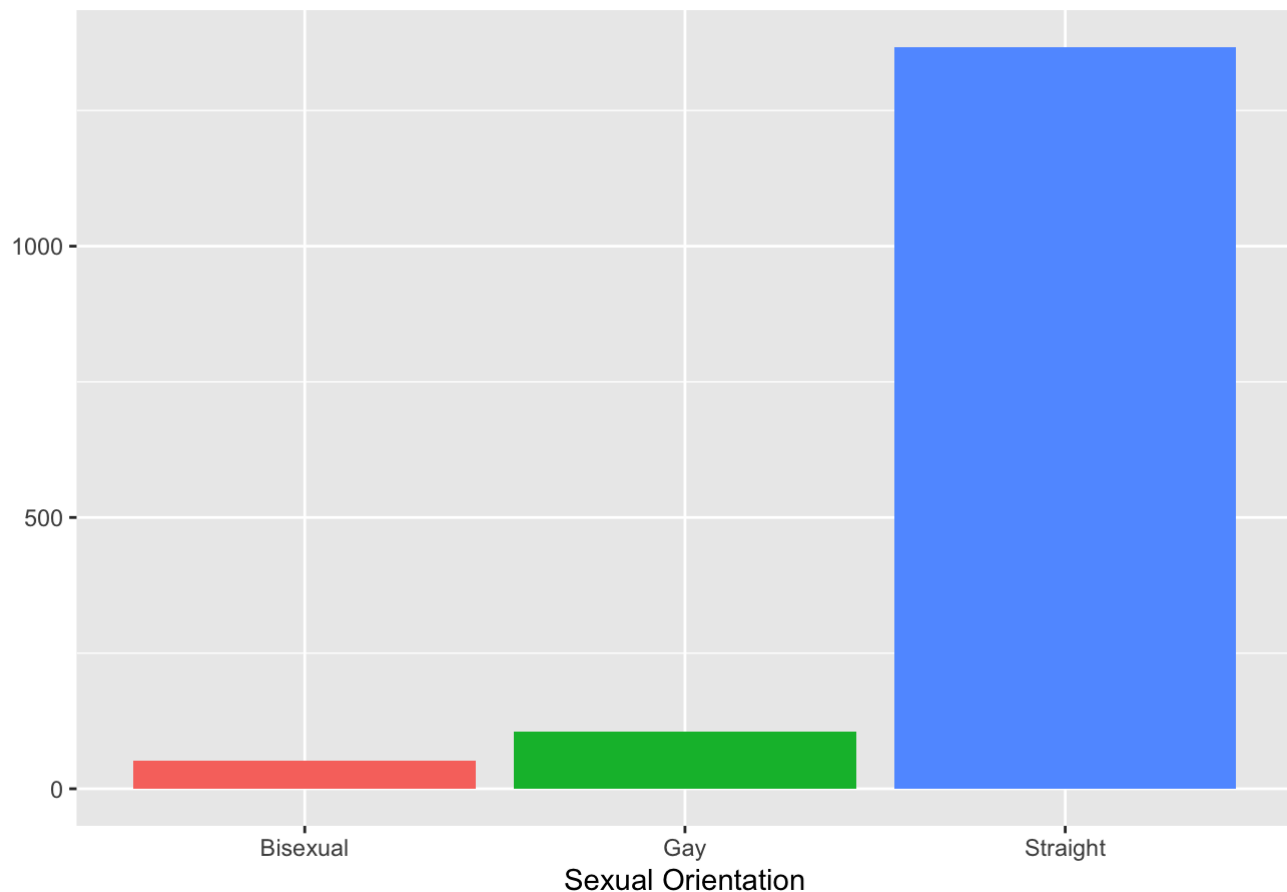
Frequencies of Sexual Orientation in Survey

```

# bar graph of sexual orientation frequencies
ggplot(data = survey2,
       mapping = aes(x = q0026, fill = q0026)) +
  geom_bar() +
  guides(fill = 'none') +
  labs(x = "Sexual Orientation",
       y = "",
       title = "Total of Each Sexual Orientation in Survey")

```

Total of Each Sexual Orientation in Survey



```
# frequency table
survey2 %>%
  group_by(q0026) %>%
  summarise(N = n())
```

```
## # A tibble: 3 × 2
##   q0026      N
##   <chr>   <int>
## 1 Bisexual    52
## 2 Gay        106
## 3 Straight  1367
```

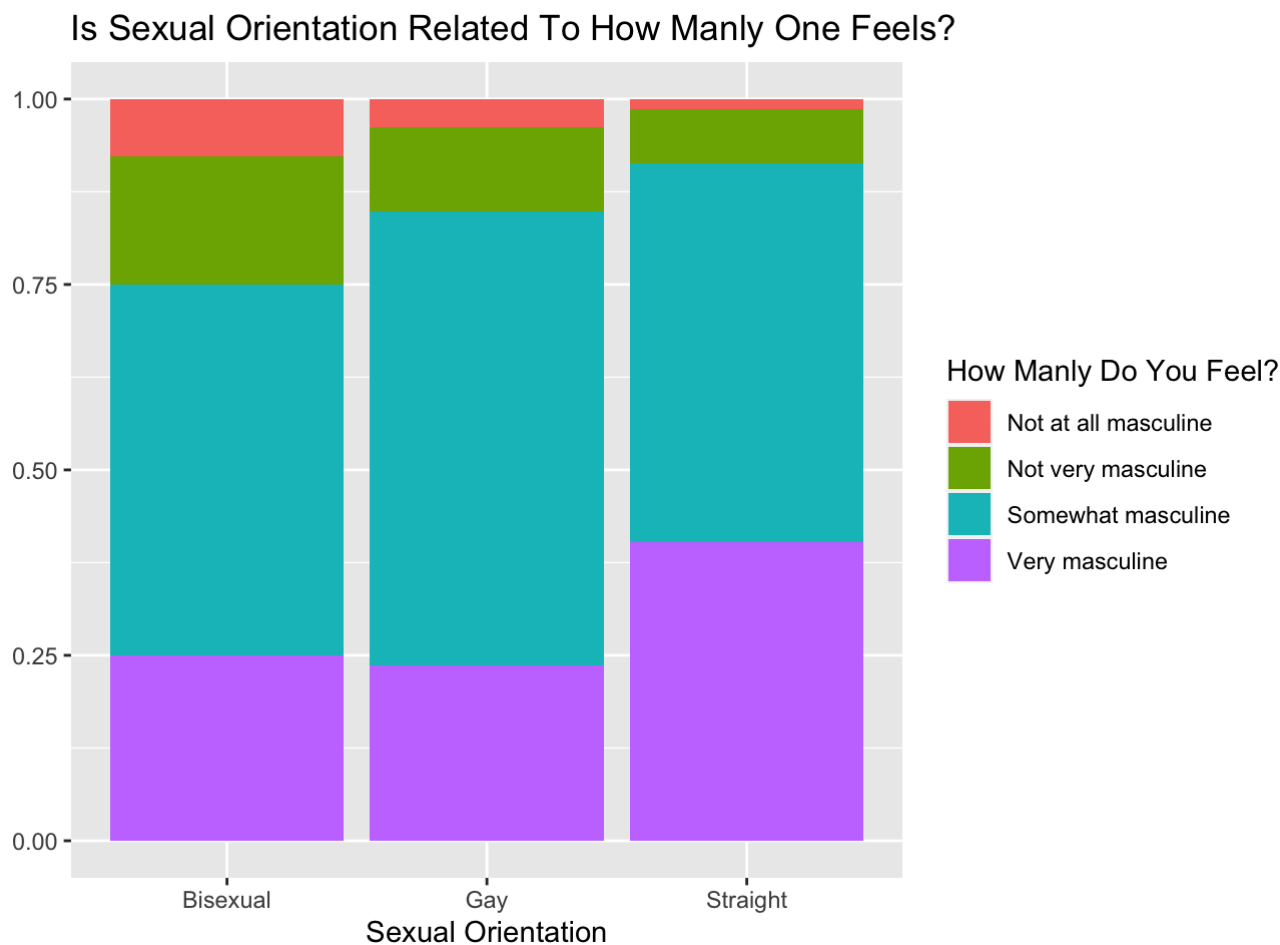
Sexual Orientation / Manliness

This graph was the result of surveying 52 bisexual men, 106 gay men, and 1367 straight men. Straight men are more likely to describe themselves as very masculine or somewhat masculine than gay and bisexual men. About 40% of straight men self-described as very masculine, while only one-quarter of gay and bisexual men did. Gay men described themselves as very masculine or somewhat masculine more than bisexual men did. About 85% of gay men self-described as very or somewhat masculine, compared to less than 74% of bisexual men. Straight men were also very unlikely to say that they were not at all masculine or not very masculine, with both categories totaling only 8%, compared to 26% of bisexual men and 15% of gay men.

These results may be an effect of how gay, straight, and bisexual men are portrayed in the media, for straight men are usually shown as stronger and more masculine than gay and bisexual men. However, given how gay men are shown in the media, it is somewhat surprising that bisexual men were less likely to view themselves as somewhat masculine than gay men. This could be a result of gay men feeling strong in their own masculinity, as there have been some changes in how the LGBTQ+ community is shown in the media in recent years.

The relationship between the variables is definitely not a strict cause and effect. There are many things that this relationship could be caused by, but sexual orientation is probably one of them.

```
# plots bar graph for how manly one feels based on sexual orientation
ggplot(data = survey2,
       mapping = aes(x = q0026, fill = q0001)) +
  geom_bar(position = 'fill') +
  labs(title = "Is Sexual Orientation Related To How Manly One Feels?",
       x = "Sexual Orientation",
       y = "",
       fill = "How Manly Do You Feel?")
```



```
# creates summary table of proportions for graph 1
survey2 %>%
  group_by(q0026) %>%
  summarise(N = n(),
            percvery = sum(q0001 == "Very masculine")/N,
            percsome = sum(q0001 == "Somewhat masculine")/N,
            percnotv = sum(q0001 == "Not very masculine")/N,
            percnotat = sum(q0001 == "Not at all masculine")/N)
```

```
## # A tibble: 3 × 6
##   q0026      N percvery percsome percnotv percnotat
##   <chr>   <int>   <dbl>   <dbl>   <dbl>   <dbl>
## 1 Bisexual    52    0.25    0.5    0.173    0.0769
## 2 Gay        106    0.236   0.613   0.113    0.0377
## 3 Straight  1367    0.403   0.511   0.0732   0.0132
```

Sexual Orientation / Importance

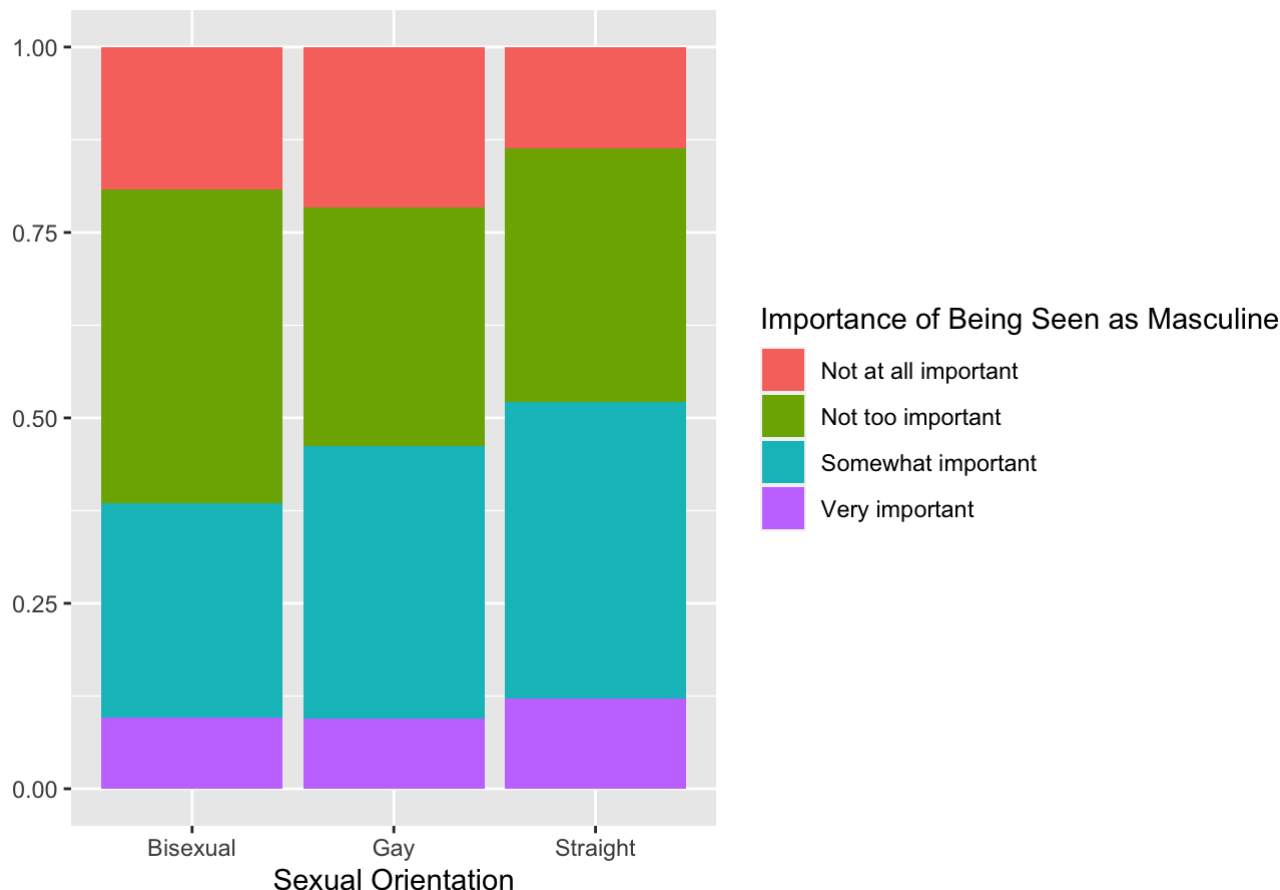
According to the graph, there is a relationship between men's sexual orientations and how important masculinity is to them. Straight men are more likely to say that masculinity is important to them in some capacity. Men who are both bisexual and straight were about equally as likely to say that masculinity is very important to them. This was about 10% of straight and bisexual men. Gay men were slightly less likely to say masculinity was very important to them than straight men, but they were more likely than bisexual men to say masculinity was either very important or somewhat important to them. For gay men, this number was about 45%, and for bisexual men it was about 37%. More than half of straight men responded that masculinity was very important or somewhat important to them. Gay and bisexual men were about equally as likely to say that masculinity was not at all important to them (about 20%).

These results show that masculinity is generally more important to straight men than it is to gay and bisexual men. This may be because gay and bisexual men are more likely to be comfortable with who they are, and therefore less worried about what other people think. What was surprising, as in the first plot, was that gay men were more likely to say that masculinity was very important or somewhat important to them than bisexual men.

This relationship is probably not a cause and effect, because there are a variety of factors that determine how masculine a man feels. Sexual orientation is probably one of the factors, given the relationship in the graph.

```
# plots bar graph for importance of manliness based on sexual orientation
ggplot(data = survey2,
       mapping = aes(x = q0026, fill = q0002)) +
  geom_bar(position = 'fill') +
  labs(title = "Is Sexual Orientation Related To How Important Masculinity Is To A Person?",
       x = "Sexual Orientation",
       y = "",
       fill = "Importance of Being Seen as Masculine")
```

Is Sexual Orientation Related To How Important Masculinity Is To A Person?



```
# creates summary table of proportions for graph 2
survey2 %>%
  group_by(q0026) %>%
  summarise(N = n(),
            percver = sum(q0002 == "Very important")/N,
            percsom = sum(q0002 == "Somewhat important")/N,
            percnot = sum(q0002 == "Not too important")/N,
            percnota = sum(q0002 == "Not at all important")/N)
```

```
## # A tibble: 3 × 6
##   q0026      N percver percsom percnot percnota
##   <chr>   <int>   <dbl>   <dbl>   <dbl>   <dbl>
## 1 Bisexual    52  0.0962  0.288  0.423  0.192
## 2 Gay       106  0.0943  0.368  0.321  0.217
## 3 Straight 1367  0.122   0.399  0.342  0.137
```

Sexual Orientation / Therapy

According to the bar graph, there is a relationship between a man's sexual orientation and how often they see a therapist. Of straight, bisexual, and gay men, straight men had the highest proportion of those who never see a therapist. Approximately 71% of straight men reported never seeing a therapist (open to it or not). Gay and bisexual men had noticeably smaller proportions though not far smaller. Approximately 57% of gay men reported never seeing a therapist and 65% of bisexual men.

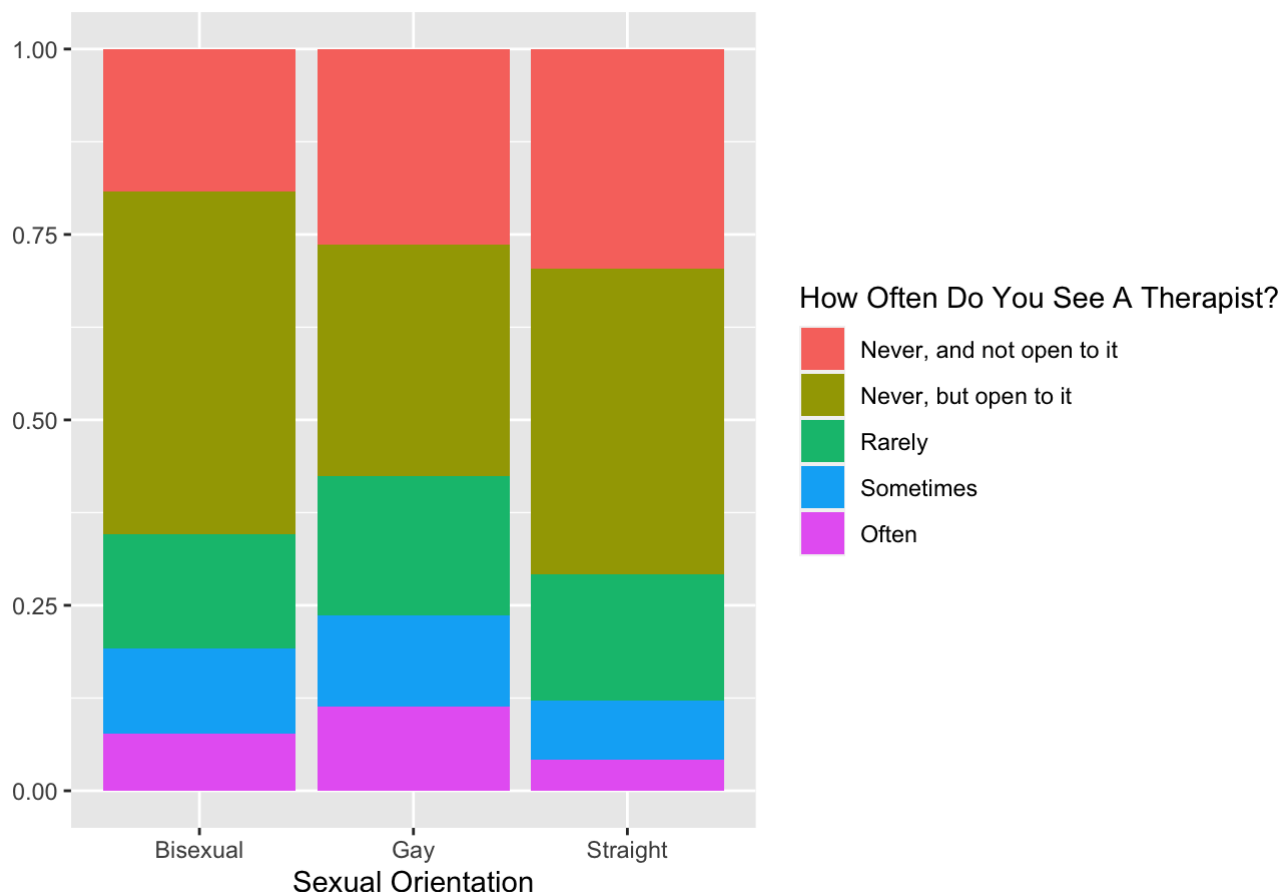
Another noticeable difference was in the proportion of those who see a therapist often. The proportion of straight men who reported often seeing a therapist was 4%; about half the proportion of bisexual men (7.7%) and nearly a third of the proportion of gay men (11.3%).

Overall, the bar graph indicates men as a whole do not often attend therapy but that both bisexual and gay men go to therapy more often than straight men. Part of the reason for this could be related to oppression in society relating to sexual orientation. Bisexual and gay men are more often subject to oppression than straight men. Homophobia can take a heavy toll on a person's mental health, which could lead bisexual and gay men to being more open to therapy. A commonality among men in today's world is to hold down their emotions. As children, they are often told that "boys don't cry". Sayings like "boys don't cry" are likely the reason that men as a whole avoid therapy, but homophobia is likely the reason for the proportional differences by sexual orientation.

Could this be considered a cause and effect relationship though? Probably not. A lot of other factors go into a man's openness to receiving therapy other than sexual orientation so causation is unlikely.

```
# plots bar graph for how often one sees a therapist based on sexual orientation
ggplot(data = survey2,
       mapping = aes(x = q0026, fill = q0007_0010)) +
  geom_bar(position = 'fill') +
  labs(title = "Is Sexual Orientation Related to Men's Openness to Getting Help?",
       x = "Sexual Orientation",
       y = "",
       fill = "How Often Do You See A Therapist?")
```

Is Sexual Orientation Related to Men's Openness to Getting Help?



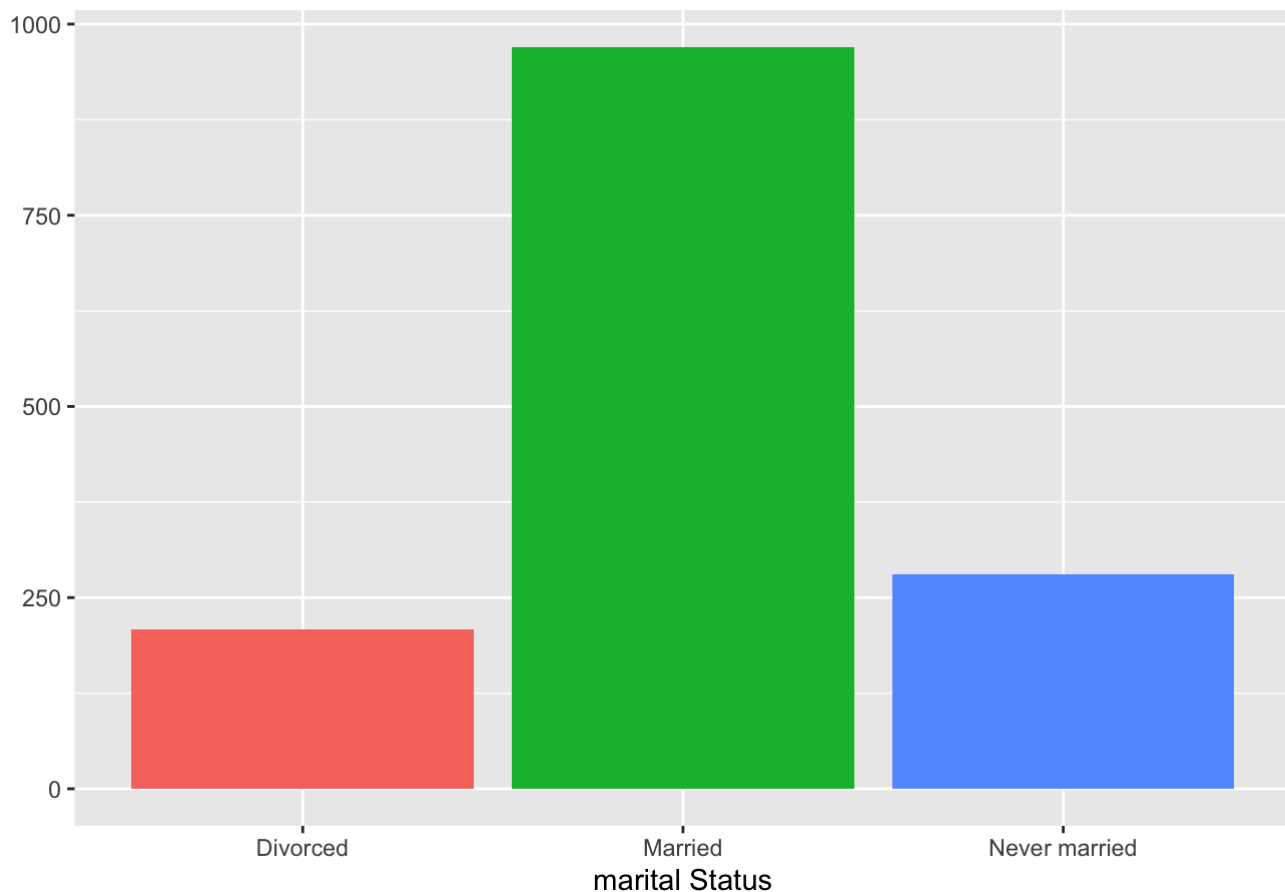
```
# creates summary table of proportions for graph 3
survey2 %>%
  group_by(q0026) %>%
  summarise(N = n(),
            perc_never_notopen = sum(q0007_0010 == "Never, and not open to it")/N,
            perc_never_open = sum(q0007_0010 == "Never, but open to it")/N,
            perc_rarely = sum(q0007_0010 == "Rarely")/N,
            perc_sometimes = sum(q0007_0010 == "Sometimes")/N,
            perc_often = sum(q0007_0010 == "Often")/N)
```

```
## # A tibble: 3 × 7
##   q0026      N perc_never_notopen perc_never_open perc_rarely perc_sometimes
##   <chr>   <int>           <dbl>           <dbl>           <dbl>           <dbl>
## 1 Bisexual    52             0.192             0.462             0.154             0.115
## 2 Gay        106             0.264             0.311             0.189             0.123
## 3 Straight  1367             0.296             0.412             0.170             0.0797
## # ... with 1 more variable: perc_often <dbl>
```

Frequencies of Marital Statuses in Survey

```
# bar graph of marital status frequencies
ggplot(data = survey3,
       mapping = aes(x = q0024, fill = q0024)) +
  geom_bar() +
  guides(fill = 'none') +
  labs(x = "marital Status",
       y = "",
       title = "Total of Each Marital Status in Survey")
```


Total of Each Marital Status in Survey



```
# frequency table
survey3 %>%
  group_by(q0024) %>%
  summarise(N = n())
```

```
## # A tibble: 3 × 2
##   q0024      N
##   <chr>    <int>
## 1 Divorced    208
## 2 Married    970
## 3 Never married 280
```

Marital Status / Manliness

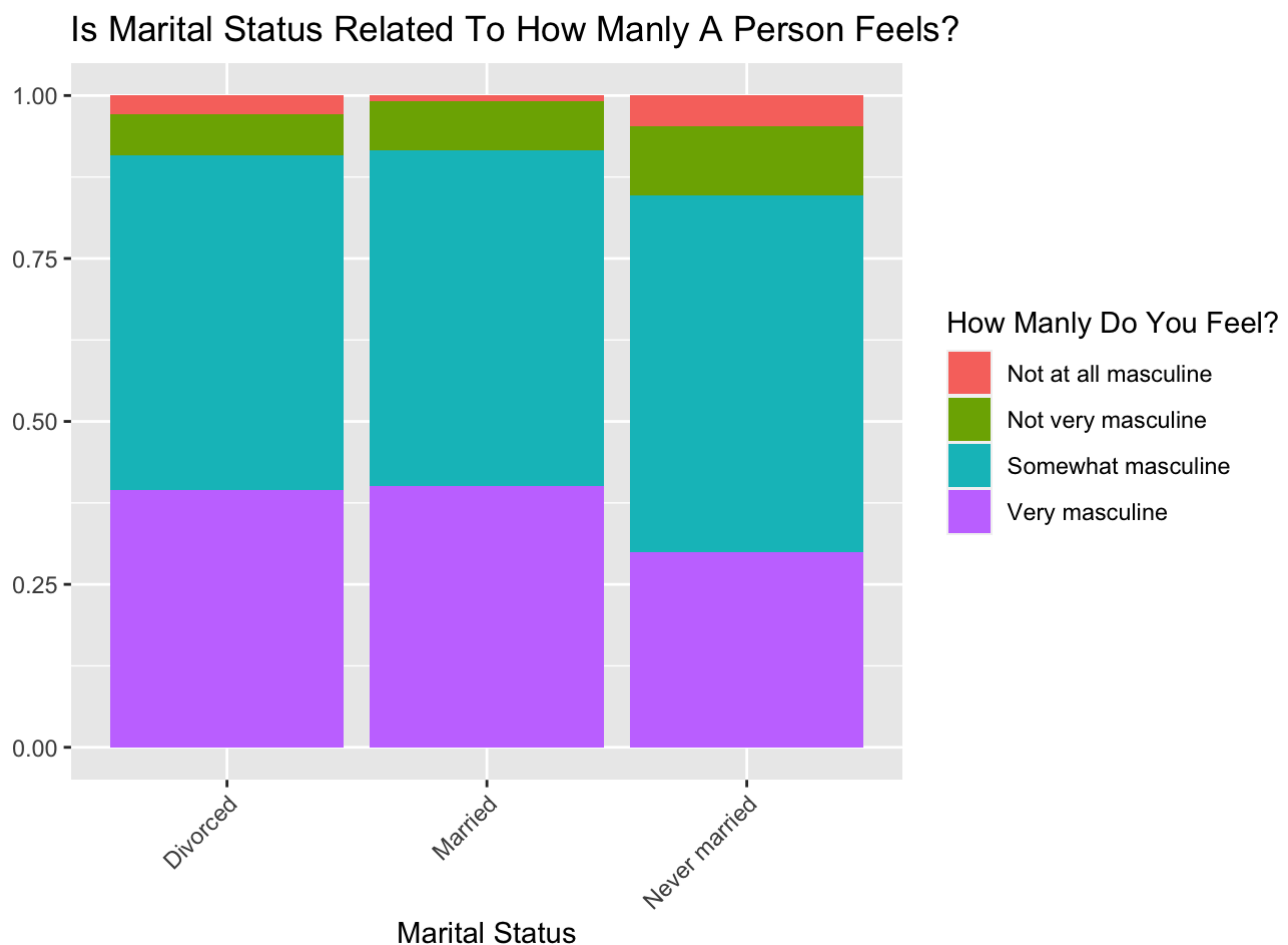
This graph displays how there is a relationship between marital status and how masculine men feel. In the survey, there were 208 divorced men, 970 married men, and 280 never married men. More specifically, men that have never been married generally feel less masculine than those that are married or divorced. The first thing that we noticed when viewing these data is that two of the columns, “Divorced” and “Married” have very similar trends for the responses, while “Never Married” has noticeable differences in the proportions of responses. For “Divorced” and “Married”, most respondents said that they either feel “Very masculine” (39% and 40% respectively) or “Somewhat masculine”, which when combined with very masculine, totaled 52% and 52%. As for the other responses, “Not very masculine” and “Not at all masculine”, there was a small proportion of people that responded “Not very masculine” (7% and 8%) and even less responded “Not at all masculine” (3% and 1%). For

the column “Never Married”, when compared to the other two columns, had a smaller proportion of people that responded “Very masculine” (29%), about the same proportion responded at least “Somewhat masculine” (55%), and a greater proportion of people responded either “Not very masculine” (11%) or “Not at all masculine” (5%).

Before creating this graph, our assumption was that the bar that would show the most differing results from the others would be for men that are divorced. We also assumed that, when compared to people that are married, those that are not married would feel slightly less masculine. Although this turned out to be true, we did not expect the difference to be so much greater than the difference between the responses for married and divorced.

We think that it is a possibility that there is a cause and effect relationship between these variables. In particular, since masculinity differs from men who are divorced and married to never married, men who feel more masculine may be more likely to get married at some point.

```
# plots bar graph of how manly one feels based on marital status
ggplot(data = survey3,
       mapping = aes(x = q0024, fill = q0001)) +
  geom_bar(position = 'fill') +
  theme(axis.text.x = element_text(hjust=1, angle = 45)) +
  labs(title = "Is Marital Status Related To How Manly A Person Feels?",
       x = "Marital Status",
       y = "",
       fill = "How Manly Do You Feel?")
```



```
# creates summary table of proportions for graph 4
survey3 %>%
  group_by(q0024) %>%
  summarise(N = n(),
            percvery = sum(q0001 == "Very masculine")/N,
            percsome = sum(q0001 == "Somewhat masculine")/N,
            percnotv = sum(q0001 == "Not very masculine")/N,
            percnotat = sum(q0001 == "Not at all masculine")/N)
```

```
## # A tibble: 3 × 6
##   q0024          N percvery percsome percnotv percnotat
##   <chr>      <int>   <dbl>   <dbl>   <dbl>   <dbl>
## 1 Divorced    208   0.394   0.514   0.0625   0.0288
## 2 Married    970   0.401   0.515   0.0753   0.00825
## 3 Never married 280   0.3     0.546   0.107    0.0464
```

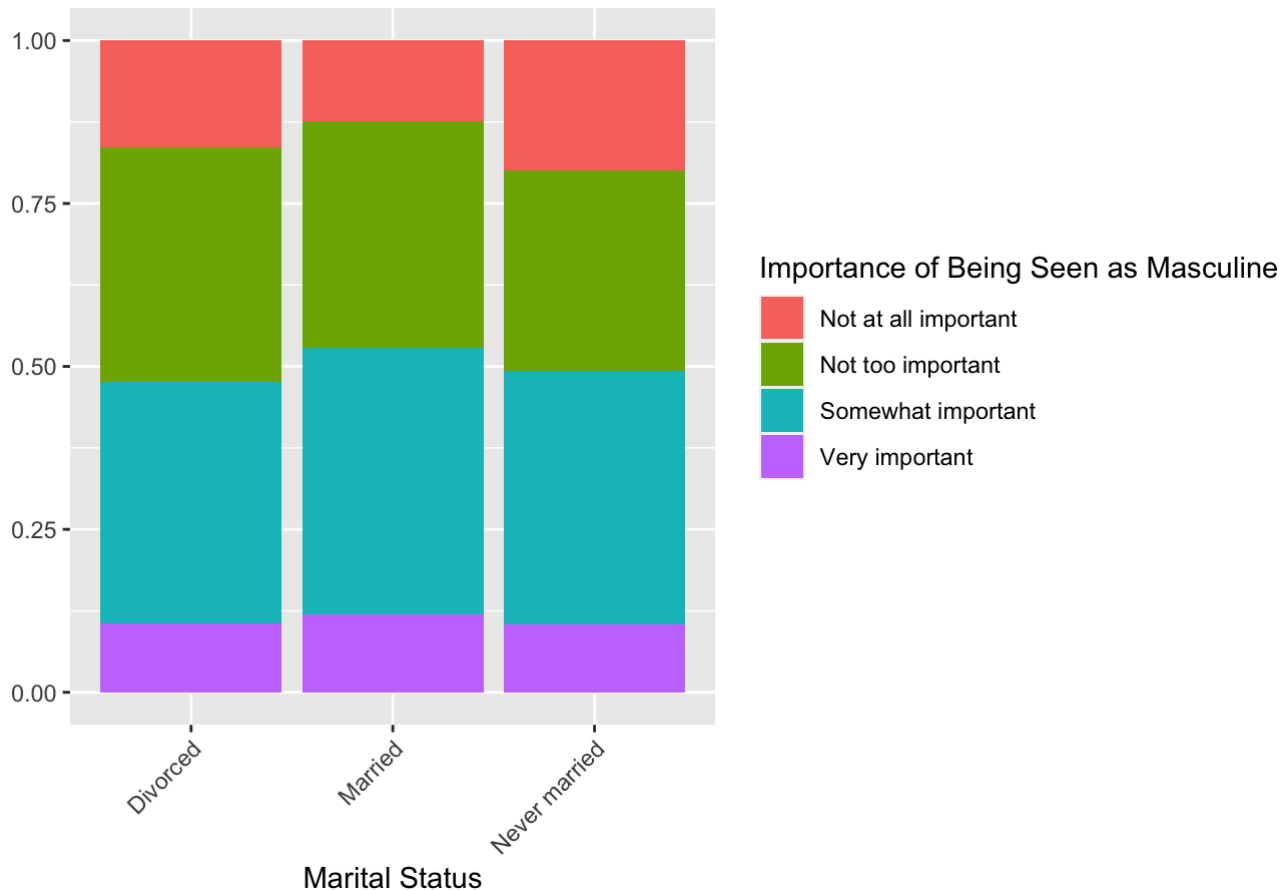
Marital Status / Importance

The bar graph shows how men who are married believe that it is more important to be seen as masculine than men who are divorced or have never been married. About 37% of divorced men and about 39% of never married men responded that it is “Somewhat important” to be seen as masculine, making this the most common response among these groups. This was followed closely by the response “Not too important”, which made up about 35% and 31% of responses. The next most common response was “Not at all important”, which was the response for 18% of divorced men and the response for 20% of never married men. Finally, only about 11% of both divorced and never married men said that it is “Very important” to be seen as masculine. When compared to married men, although the order of how common these answers are remains the same, it can be seen that married men generally see it as slightly more important to be seen as masculine (12% of married men responded “Very important”) and a smaller proportion believe that it is not important to be seen as masculine (13% of married men responded “Not at all important”).

This graph was surprising, for, after viewing the previous graph, we assumed that the bars for “Divorced” and “Married” would once again yield similar proportions. Instead, being married is correlated with wanting to be seen as more masculine. As for a cause and effect relationship, it is likely that being married causes men to want to be seen as more masculine. One possible reason for this is because of traditional gender roles, and being married may cause men to feel pressured to take on the stereotypical “strong manly husband” role that has been normalized, making these men want to be seen as more masculine.

```
# plots bar graph of importance of manliness based on marital status
ggplot(data = survey3,
       mapping = aes(x = q0024, fill = q0002)) +
  geom_bar(position = 'fill') +
  theme(axis.text.x = element_text(hjust=1, angle = 45)) +
  labs(title = "Is Marital Status Related To How Important Being Seen As Masculine?",
       x = "Marital Status",
       y = "",
       fill = "Importance of Being Seen as Masculine")
```

Is Marital Status Related To How Important Being Seen As Masculine?



```
# creates summary table of proportions for graph 5
survey3 %>%
  group_by(q0024) %>%
  summarise(N = n(),
            percvery = sum(q0002 == "Very important")/N,
            percsome = sum(q0002 == "Somewhat important")/N,
            percnottoo = sum(q0002 == "Not too important")/N,
            percnotat = sum(q0002 == "Not at all important")/N)
```

```
## # A tibble: 3 × 6
##   q0024      N percvery percsome percnottoo percnotat
##   <chr>    <int>   <dbl>   <dbl>     <dbl>     <dbl>
## 1 Divorced    208  0.106   0.370   0.361   0.163
## 2 Married    970  0.120   0.409   0.347   0.124
## 3 Never married 280  0.104   0.389   0.307   0.2
```

Marital Status / Therapy

The bar graph indicates that divorced and never married men are more likely to see a therapist than married men. This can most notably be seen in the proportion of married men who reported that they never see a therapist (both open to it and not). About 74% of married men who were surveyed reported never seeing a therapist. This is compared to 54% of divorced men and around 64% of never married men. In addition, only about 10% of

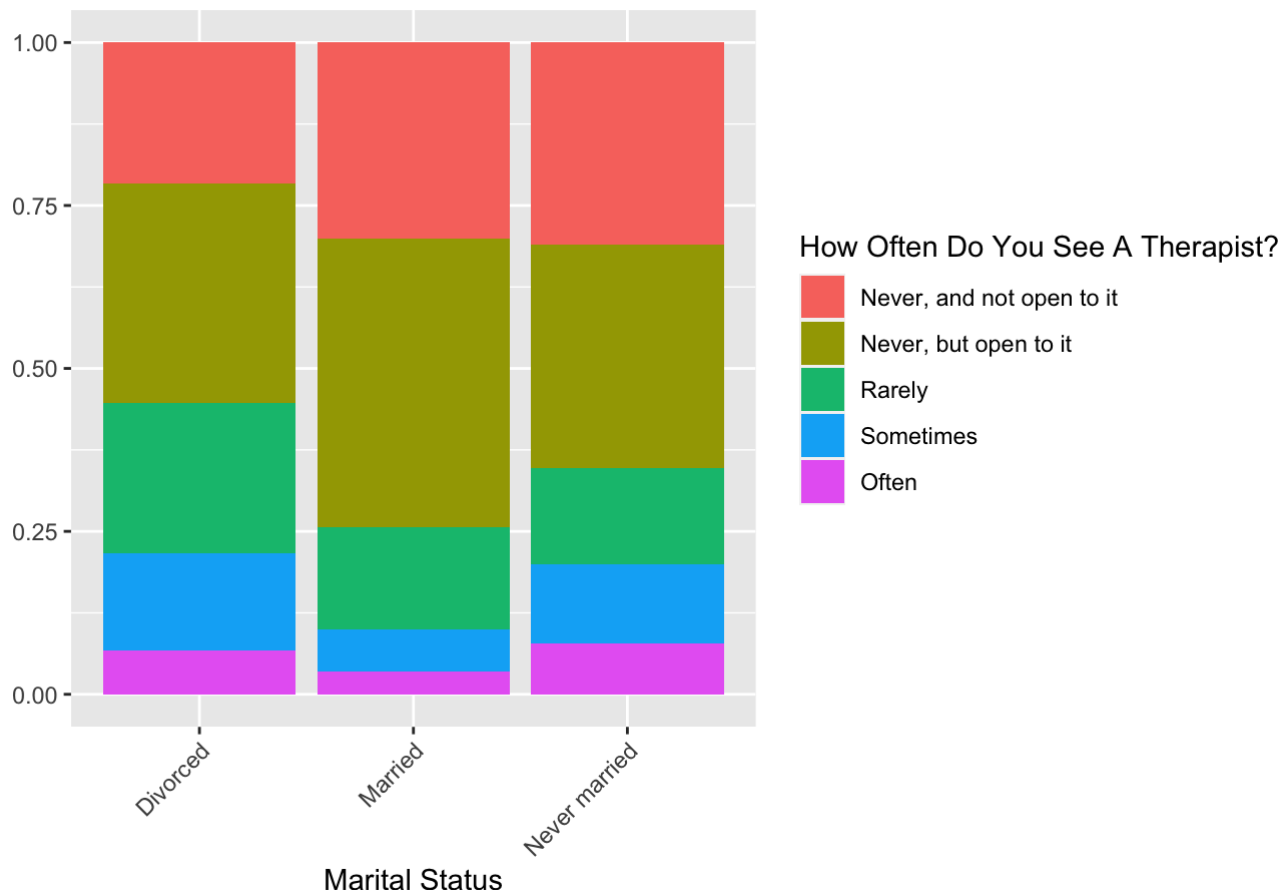
married men reported seeing a therapist sometimes or often. This is a very small proportion compared to divorced men (approx. 22%) and never married (approx. 20%). Married men are going to therapy far less than divorced and never married men.

The uptick in therapy usage for divorced men makes sense. Divorce is one of the most stressful experiences that a person can go through. Help is necessary and seeing a therapist can often be the help a person needs. The lack of therapy seen in married men is less expected though. Navigating building a life with another person can be very stressful as well, so one might expect married men to go to therapy often. This is not the case though. One reason that married men might not go to therapy is that they might find emotional support in their partner. It could also be possible that once you are married, you have already developed more independent ways of coping. Never married men also report seeing a therapist more often than married men so it is possible that married men have already tried and moved past therapy by the time they are married. The important overall trend though is the lack of therapy usage all together. In general, men are never or rarely utilizing therapy. This is more than likely a result of socialization of men to conceal their emotions.

Unlike sexual orientation and therapy usage, there is probably at least a bit of cause and effect relationship present with marital status and therapy usage, especially with divorced men. As previously mentioned, divorce is an extremely stressful experience and therefore it likely causes an uptick in therapy usage. With married and never married men though, there are probably a lot more influential variables at play and therefore, a cause and effect relationship cannot really be determined.

```
# plots bar graph of how often one sees a therapist based on marital status
ggplot(data = survey3,
       mapping = aes(x = q0024, fill = q0007_0010)) +
  geom_bar(position = 'fill') +
  theme(axis.text.x = element_text(hjust=1, angle = 45)) +
  labs(title = "Is Marital Status Related to Men's Openness to Getting Help?",
       x = "Marital Status",
       y = "",
       fill = "How Often Do You See A Therapist?")
```

Is Marital Status Related to Men's Openness to Getting Help?



```
# creates summary table of proportions for graph 6
survey3 %>%
  group_by(q0024) %>%
  summarise(N = n(),
            perc_never_notopen = sum(q0007_0010 == "Never, and not open to it")/N,
            perc_never_open = sum(q0007_0010 == "Never, but open to it")/N,
            perc_rarely = sum(q0007_0010 == "Rarely")/N,
            perc_sometimes = sum(q0007_0010 == "Sometimes")/N,
            perc_often = sum(q0007_0010 == "Often")/N)
```

```
## # A tibble: 3 × 7
##   q0024      N perc_never_notopen perc_never_open perc_rarely perc_sometimes
##   <chr>    <int>          <dbl>          <dbl>          <dbl>          <dbl>
## 1 Divorced    208            0.216            0.337            0.231            0.149
## 2 Married    970            0.301            0.442            0.157            0.0649
## 3 Never married 280            0.311            0.343            0.146            0.121
## # ... with 1 more variable: perc_often <dbl>
```

Conclusion

Each of the graphs that we made showed a unique relationship between the responses being viewed. This gave us a unique perspective on masculinity and how it is influenced by these demographics. One demographic that we viewed was sexual orientation. Through our graphs, we were able to see how straight men are more likely to describe themselves as very masculine or somewhat masculine. Straight men are also generally more likely to say

that masculinity is important to them. A potential reason for why these trends are present is because of how straight men are portrayed in the media. Media often portrays straight men as more masculine and less emotional. As a result, straight men are less likely to be comfortable with who they are and therefore participate more often in toxic masculinity. We also saw that bisexual and gay men go to therapy more frequently than straight men. Oppression in society relating to sexual orientation is likely the reason for their openness to therapy. In addition to sexual orientation, we also focused on marital status and how it relates to masculinity. This allowed us to understand that men that have never been married generally feel less masculine than those that are married or divorced. We also learned that men who are married believe that it is more important to be seen as masculine than men who are divorced or have never been married. Finally, we found that divorced and never married men are more likely to see a therapist. These trends that we observed could be due to factors such as stereotypical gender roles that become prominent as a result of marriage and the emotional difficulties that can arise as a result of marriage and divorce.

Limitations / Further Research

Although many conclusions could be made from this data, there were still some limitations to the research. One thing to note is that the survey was voluntary, so it may not be a representative sample of the United States male population. With the graphs regarding masculinity and sexual orientation, the small sample size of bisexual and gay men made the data less accurate. Conclusions could be made from the sexual orientation graphs but the accuracy of those conclusions would be more precise if the sample sizes for bisexual and gay men were larger. Another limitation comes from the way the survey was constructed. The multiple choice format creates limitations in data analysis as there is a limited range of answers that respondents could choose. For example, in Graph 2 the jump from “somewhat masculine” to “very masculine” does not allow for the respondent to answer in-between. This could result in less accurate data. In regards to further research, one conclusion that we could not make was the reason for married men’s avoidance of therapy. One idea that we had was that since married men have a partner, they may feel lonely or isolated less often. If one feels lonely or isolated less often, they likely will not attend therapy as often. Examining how often married men feel lonely or isolated could help us unearth the answer to why married men do not attend therapy.