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## DMT and “The Man Box:” Provoking Change and Encouraging Authentic Living, An Arts-Based Project

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DMT and “The Man Box:” Provoking Change and Encouraging Authentic Living,

An Arts-Based Project

Capstone Thesis

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### Abstract

This thesis explores the mind-body experience through an arts-based research approach to examine, and redefine the emotional capacity and usefulness of males through societal determinants that limits and hinders men from living their authentic selves. Through the lens of a metaphoric “Man Box” 112 men participated in a workshop recreating their personal narratives of socialization through, style of dress, coping mechanisms, belief systems and who they should be as men through society's standards. In the “Man Box,” male bonding, and emotional feelings are discouraged, while the objectification of women, material property and physical/emotional strength are encouraged. This research investigates the mind-body approach as a positive shift to increase quality of life while decreasing symptoms of anxiety, depression, subjective well-being, poor mood, shame, and body image. Effects for sexual orientation were also explored, but due to the inconsistency of the information, the data remained inconclusive. Methodological shortcomings of more specific studies limited the results and, therefore, further investigations are needed to strengthen and expand upon art-based research in DMT, with the consideration of personal narrative and poetry as therapy. Information about the usefulness of the mind-body approach in practices, career choices and various aspects of life are discussed.

*Keywords:* mind-body approach, socialization of the man box, arts-based project, performing masculinity, positive identity constructs

## DMT and “The Man Box:” Provoking Change and Encouraging Authentic Living, An Arts-Based Project

### Introduction

The Man Box is a metaphor that represents the socialization of men. The Man Box is a societal of determinations with limitations specifying who and what men are, what they are supposed to be, how they should be, how they should dress, cope, and what they should believe in. These expectations are taught to men - sometimes unconsciously – and reinforced by society. In the man box, men are supposed to be: powerful and dominating, fearless and in control, strong and emotionless and successful – in the boardroom, the bedroom, and in sports. In the Man Box, women are objects, the property of men, and seemingly less valuable than men. The teachings of the Man Box allow violence against women, girls and other marginalized groups to persist. In the Man Box, male bonding and feelings are discouraged (Edwards, 2012, Greene, 2013).

Contemporary society continues to perpetuate the stereotype of young black men as dangerous criminals, which has devastating consequences. Some of the many illustrations of this point was the killing of Amadou Diallo, Manuel Loggins Jr., Ronald Madison, Kendra James, Sean Bell, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Alton Sterling, and Trayvon Martin, to name a few. On February 26, 2012, neighborhood watch coordinator, George Zimmerman, gunned down Martin, a 17-year-old African American male. According to transcripts (CNN, 2012), Zimmerman began the call by telling the authorities, “hey we’ve had some break-

ins in my neighborhood, and there's a real suspicious guy, uh, (near) Retreat View Circle... This guy looks like he's up to no good, or he's on drugs or something.

It's raining and he's just walking around, looking about" (CNN, 2012).

Zimmerman was later acquitted of charges associated with Martin's death. It is clear that Zimmerman's impressions of Martin were riddled with racial, gendered, and age-based presumptions. Where did Zimmerman's perceptions of Martin come from? Before we delve into the obvious, let's take a look back where all this began. Slatton (2014), described social construction of these negative and damaging remarks of defined masculinity. She wrote,

America defines hyper sexuality and hyper masculinity as controlling, socially-constructed identities that do not necessarily represent, nor are they unique to black men. Yet, due to prevailing social structures, these aspects constrain or encumber the development of their identities. (p. 4)

Another study examined the prevailing stereotypes and challenges Asian-American men faced. It was noted that the model minority stereotype has led to the portrayal of Asian-Americans as "reserved, quiet, diligent and studious" (Mok, 1998, p. 195). Though "deceptively positive on the surface" (Mok, 1998, p. 195), the stereotype carries negative connotations of Asian-Americans as nerdy, passive and socially inept, while also being used to de-legitimate protests of racial inequality. For men, the stereotype can be particularly acute as it fails to convey "the charismatic, masculine American icon" (Mok, 1998, p. 195). Which is

similar to a construct that is reflective in stereotypes of African American men, where the adjectives that are used to describe them, often come with a negative connotation.

Lau (2015), made a reference about Asian Americans having a triple consciousness in a similar fashion as the term double consciousness coined by W.E.B. Du Bois was used to describe the split subjectivity of African Americans. DuBois (1897) wrote, “it is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others.” In the context of his subjects, Lau proposed that rather than having a double consciousness, as mentioned above, but rather Asian Americans (and other minority subjects) possess a triple consciousness, a “particular intuition for being watched” (Palumbo-Liu, 1999, p. 301). Firstly, an individual consciousness representing how they see the world (Lau, 2015). Secondly, the double consciousness: the sense of forever looking at oneself through the eyes of others (Lau, 2015). Thirdly, there is a group consciousness representing the capacity of minority subjects to view representations of their demographic group as society views them. For minority subjects, this entails a painful awareness of the racist judgments and media perpetuated stereotypes attached to their bodies. Coupled with an internal sense and acknowledgement of the same, perpetuating the internal dialog and external expression of seeing oneself as the media and others do, but also viewing one’s peers in this subsequent manner. Lau (2015) wrote,

As minorities develop awareness of their difference, they become irrevocably aware that society evaluates them as an inseparable whole. Subsequently, they have a third sense of viewing their peers as the dominant group does, and decoding these representations as society does. (p. 13-14)

Brittany Slatton (2014), argued that potential for developing a healthy masculine identity is constrained by society's normative expectations of hyper-sexuality, hyper-criminality, and violence from black men. Laws and policies against crime are applied disproportionately to black men, leading to their mass incarceration. Additionally, expectations of criminality and violence shape police officers, judges, jurors, and other individuals' encounters with black men, which can lead to aggressive or overreactions, including excessive surveillance, arrests, and unjustified killings. Slatton (2014), posited that the "normative expectations of white society limit black men's options and cause dire consequences for their lives" (p. 5). Accordingly, the psychology of men and masculinity has acknowledged that gender socialization not only influences the lives of women, but also the lives of men. While patriarchy certainly grants men privilege over women, it also contributes to rigid gender ideology that has negative implications for the lives of men and society as a whole (Levant, 2011). It is in this regard that one also looks at various religious based influences and socialization when studying masculinity and how it affects various individuals within a community.

According to Pleck (1995), men can experience gender role strain (GRS) as a result of being socialized to adhere to a rigid and stereotypical masculine ideology. Gender role conflict (GRC) and masculine gender role stress (MGRS) are two forms of gender role strain that have been investigated (Eisler, Skidmore, & Ward, 1988). Men's gender role conflict is a psychological state in which restrictive definitions of masculinity limit men's well-being and human potential. Gender role conflict (GRC), doesn't just harm boys and men, but also girls and women, transgendered people, and society at large. O'Neil (1981), noted that "research related men's GRC to myriad behavioral problems, including sexism, violence, homophobia, depression, substance abuse, and relationship issues" (p.204). It is from this understanding that one looks at the various restrictions that are conditioned for masculine ideologies, in hopes to investigate ways to eradicate these restrictive, confining ideologies and promote authenticity instead.

Statistics showed that Asian-American men have felt the impact of emasculating media stereotypes seep into all aspects of their lives from self-confidence to romantic success to body image to how they seek certain identities (Chan, 1998). Given this information, my question for this subject would be to investigate how Asian-American men then approach gender performativity as they attempt to negotiate a rigid hegemonic, heteronormative power structure in which their masculinities are devalued? Do they prefer a re-masculinization approach in which they can claim their rightful manhood through adhering to hegemonic



masculine ideals? Or do they prefer to leverage their marginalized positions to redefine masculinity in less heteronormative ways?

In his book Marvin Allen (1993) discussed the idea that healthy masculinity being modeled. He stated:

Men & boys are socialized into whatever those around them define as "male" in words, images & actions. Healthy masculinity is healthy humanity. Gender is a performed role, not a natural state of being. We can help those who identify as men/boys find the healthiest way to express masculinity. We must change the culture to end the violence. (p.6)

The above words resonated deeply and familiar to a man who has found himself fighting to live as his authentic self. One, who's societal footprint and success is conditioned by someone else's approval. In this thesis, the experiences described above are powerful interactions facilitated and expressed through the integrating processes of dance/movement therapy and narrative therapy. This mind-body approach offered opportunities for males to literally regain a sense of balance and strength, and to find healthy ways to connect with each other as an essential first step in dealing with issues that kept them stuck in the cycle of performing masculinity, or the need to take on a more masculine demeanor to fit into the constructs of society, when one's authentic self boasts otherwise. Integrating movement experiences, coupled with narrative guidance opens the way for more direct exploration of core issues of shame and guilt, negative identities, insecurities, depression, and behavioral problems. This thesis examines and

analyzes a body of work, created and workshopped with a group of males from their personal narratives to the explicit use of perspective, Dance/Movement Therapy, with the expectation to re-define the emotional capacity and usefulness of males, while ridding them of the necessity of a subjugated society that hinders their ability to live authentically.

### Literature Review

Elham Bagheri (2012), conducted a qualitative investigation of religion, gender role beliefs, and culture in the lives of a select group of Muslim men. This study aimed to explore the relationship between religion, gender, and culture in the lives of Muslim men. Understanding the gender ideology of diverse men is an issue of multicultural competency within counseling psychology that deserves attention. Muslim men in the U.S. are stereotyped as being violent and misogynistic; however, there is a lack of multicultural competence regarding the relationship between religion, culture, and gender ideology among Muslim men (Levant, 2011). Bagheri (2012), used Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) to investigate religion, gender role beliefs, and culture in the lives of Muslim men in the U.S. Furthermore, in order to inform culturally competent clinical interventions with Muslim men, this study aimed to address the role of Islam in the lives of Muslim men, the interaction between Islam and culture, and psychological implications of their gender ideologies. Major influences of Islam included guidance, coping, emphasis on pro-social behaviors, and prioritizing of family. Participants had traditional and non-traditional gender ideologies that were

multidimensional, complex, and have both positive and negative implications for their psychological well-being (Bagheri, 2012). According to O'Neil (1981), "GRC occurs for men when there is a strict adherence to traditionally masculine norms and avoidance/devaluing of roles and behaviors that are stereotypically feminine" (p. 204). Patterns of GRC include men's preoccupation with status and power, lack of emotional expressiveness, lack of affection towards other men, and difficulty with achieving work-life balance. Other associations of GRC include, "interpersonal functioning, marital dissatisfaction, sexual aggression and assault, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and substance abuse" (O'Neil, 1981, p. 208).

Bagheri (2012), conducted a study that included nine men between the ages of 20 and 45 participated in this study. All of the participants identified as Muslim. Four of the participants identified as Middle Eastern, two identified as Asian, one identified as Latino/Middle Eastern, one identified as White American, and one identified as African American. Seven of the participants were first generation immigrants. Data for number of years in the U.S. is missing for one of the first-generation immigrants. Six of the participants had been in the U.S. between 10 months and 3 years. First generation immigrants represented Jordan, Palestine, Iran, Pakistan, and Colombia. One of the participants was a second-generation immigrant whose parents were from Pakistan. Two of the participants were American. Seven of the participants were born Muslim and two were converts. Six of the participants were married, two were single, and one had a partner (which came from a second set of questions as the first set was too vague).

Four of the participants had children. Six of the participants identified as students. Four of the students were pursuing graduate degrees and were research assistants and two were pursuing undergraduate degrees. Two of the participants had undergraduate degrees and one had a doctoral degree. One of the participants was working as a financial advisor, one as a Juvenile Court Liaison, and one had a job in Special Education (Bagheri, 2012). The investigation was conducted using CQR, which included the use of semi-structured interviews and a consensus process among three research team members for data analysis. The results indicated that the majority of participants do not strictly observe formal practices of Islam, though they reported that Islam influences their lives in many ways. The most typical responses were that Islam provides guidance, aids in coping with life's obstacles, promotes pros-social behaviors, and motivates participants to prioritize their obligation to their families. The typical beliefs about gender were that women are physically weaker than men, women are better equipped to be nurturers and primary caretakers of children, men and women should have equal access to education, opposite sex interaction is permissible, a woman's role should not be limited to the home, Islam prohibits oppression of women, women should be respected, women's sexual modesty can prevent objectification, and household labor should be shared. In regard to the influence of Islam on gender role beliefs, the majority of participants reported that Islam is not a direct source of their beliefs. Instead, family and culture are direct sources of beliefs and Islam reinforces those beliefs (Bagheri, 2012).

The purpose of this study was to understand the role of religion in the lives of Muslim men in the U.S. and the relationship between religion and/or culture and gender role ideologies. Participants appear to have an intrinsic motivation for religion and Islam appears to promote and reinforce a non-rigid masculine identity that allows men to seek guidance and support, encourages altruistic social behaviors, and prioritizes men's relationships with family. Also, Islam's influence on participants is more similar than different to the influences of other major world religions on their adherents (Bagheri, 2012). From the lens of the Man Box, religion acts as another stimulant that also contributes to individuals being faced with categorical confusion and misunderstandings. This literature supported the argument of ridding such subjugated experiences that affected some males during their time of growth and development.

Matthew Johnston (2014) examined the culture of hyper-masculinity as it was witnessed and ultimately rejected during the author's sixteen-month career working as a private security officer in an Ottawa hospital. The goal of this article was to trace the non-linear transformation from a masculine-conforming security agent to a critical researcher who now calls for the decay of hegemonic masculine discourses and practices within medicalized establishments. The personal ethnographic narratives express positions and experiences in a way that, as Rancière (2006) imagined, "destroy(s) all of the hierarchies of representation" that distinguish affects and emotions from "legitimate" knowledge (p.14).

Johnston (2014) draws on two ethnographic narratives to distribute the embodied and emotional experiences that accompanied his struggles to achieve hegemonic masculine status, and resist military-like hierarchies inside an institutional setting. In using this creative methodological exercise, researchers were allowed to freely explore their delicate, complex and messy feelings that may otherwise be ethically suppressed or co-opted through less corporeal representations of academic writing. Moreover, by revealing the sensitive and coercive interactions that steered gendered relationships with psychiatric patients, ward nurses and other security agents, one was better able to demonstrate how embodied research can transform uncritical hetero-normative positions on masculinity and violence, as well as contest the unequal, gendered and medicalized judgments that are imposed on incarcerated mental health patients. This article supported the notion of how the ideologies of masculinity are further personified and stifling in our society-at-large. Although the perspective was of someone with authority, or in charge, conversely to the many other subjects studied, I think it is pertinent to hear the opposing viewpoint in the same narrative.

Wright (2007) posed questions questioning the validity and usefulness of language and how it has become a detriment to our society. She wrote,

If cultural diversity is to be sustained then the question arises; if language, rather than being a communication tool that bridges us, acts as a barrier to our ability to communicate globally, then what communication medium can be used as a common intermediary? What communication medium do we

have as human beings that might allow us the ability to collectively and cooperatively construct shared meanings? (p.83)

In this instance, the author speaks from the lens of the creative practice of viewing and making art offering a distinctive communicative language for inquiry and exploration into contemporary cultural issues arising out of our globally interactive world. In agreement with this, I would like to offer a slight change in the lens and assert that dance movement or the embodied experience serves as a communication medium to construct shared meanings. The article began by explaining how the use of visual images to construct narrative enables opportunity for an increase in expressive range (Sullivan, 2005). Increasing also, is the interpretive possibilities, because there is a different medium and lens from which one is viewing (in this case art or dance), that offers a new perspective. It later spoke about the idea that meaning is made through the activation of memory units that Solso (1996) suggested are “fragments of a larger picture” (p.226). The way these memory units connect up are determined by previous individual learned experiences, but also hidden components that are inbuilt, collective impressions. The perspective in embodied memory unit connection is closely correlative to the ideas expressed in *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*, by Bessel van der Kolk (2014). With the knowledge that trauma affects the mind and body immensely and prevented those affected from living in the present, Van de Kolk (2014) explored the ways in which trauma rewired the brain and changed the way people experience the world (Van de Kolk,

2014). With a similar understanding, I used the embodiment of movement to help make sense of the idea, specifically with the subject matter of shame and dissecting the man box. The trauma that surrounds individuals (men) living life in-authentically, can further be examined through this artistic lens that an empirical scientific lens may lessen. With this lens, one will create connectivity and encouragement and/or empower one to seek a different sense of self, allowing for an alternative discovery and viewpoint on life, that very well may enable one to live their best life, as their best self.

### Methods

The community engagement project was a performance based method that is derived from the various narratives of the male subjects and the stories they provided. This project provided critical insight into the many, often disregarded, challenges that plague men today. Through exploration, I exposed and analyzed how the subordinated racial and sex status of men of minority backgrounds excluded them from the many privileges and advantages available to an idealized male persona and the impact this unfair treatment has aided in the detriment of men's understanding, ability to cope and healthy living. Furthermore, with the use of Dance Movement Therapy coupled with Narrative Therapy, and Poetry this project tackled how social structures and governing societal expectations resulted in internal and external constraints on the male identity formation, sexual expression, and daily living.



This community based project aimed to reach a vast population of males through surveys of questions. In the surveys, questions were asked that surrounded issues of identity, sexuality, and the opposition. Subsequently, these surveys served as the questions that governed the group discussions and later inspired the creation of the choreographic work. In the group discussion, I examined the impact of expectations of masculinity on people's lives, both positively and negatively, overtly and unexpectedly, and imagined new possibilities for gender expression. By using a similar methodology created by Augusto Boal (2006), dance was used to equip and empower individuals to transform society through art. Theater, dance, poetry, spoken word, performance art, and dialogue, was used to challenge thinking and transport participants to new worlds and perspectives. From the discussions, I guided and instructed the participants to create narratives that were later used in formulating a performance piece, allowing for self-authentication. During the creation process, narratives were read anonymously to evoke emotions and movement vocabulary. Without knowing who said what, participants were asked to respond with movement, sound, and/or words. Phrases were created and replicated to exhaustion, allowing for others to experience other's points of view (through movement). This process continued for 6 sessions that lasted about 2 hours each in length. After the 6<sup>th</sup> session, the piece *My Brothers' Keeper* was created. After the performance, a talk-back section was arranged to hear from the participants and viewers on how the experience was for them. Some of the questions discussed in the talk-back

were: What themes emerged? What was easy about the process (as viewer to witness)? What was difficult (as a viewer to witness)? What did they take away from the performance? What needed to be clearer? Subsequently, for those that could not attend, feedback was taken from their viewing of the piece remotely. Initially, I gathered their feedback without giving the parameters of what the piece was about nor how it was created. I would then inform them of the descriptors and asked their opinions again to see if anything changed or shifted with the given information.

In this project, 112 males completed surveys, although more surveys were taken (127), some were omitted due to their incompleteness. The initial selection of males generated 20 participants, ranging from 23 to 49 years of age, and were random entries that came from an internet post inquiring about volunteers for a school project. Of the twenty, sixteen were black, two were Caucasian, one was Pacific Islander, and one did not specify race. Seven individuals identified as non-religious, but spiritual. One identified as an Atheist, four did not specify and the remaining eight identified as Christian. Three of the eight that identified as Christian acknowledged that it was their childhood upbringing, and ideology, but current practicing was minimal (and questioning). The next collection of data was generated from focus/performance groups organized or facilitated by the researcher:

Group 1: Boys/Men in Motion age range 8-17 included 10 participants: (three Caucasian, one Hispanic/Mexican, six African American. Religion: Christian (sexual orientation questions were omitted from this age group).

Group 2: Boys Class (Multidisciplinary Dance Class centered around male behaviors and adaptations) aged range 4-17 included 8 participants: two Caucasian, six African American) seven Christian, 1 non-specified (sexual orientation questions were omitted for this age group).

Group 3: Be Moved (Dance Movement Therapy Group) 18-54 included 23 participants: (two Asian American, six Caucasian, one Mexican American, six Mixed-Race, eight African American). Twelve identified as heterosexual, one identified as Bi-Sexual, one Did Not Specify, and nine identified as Gay. Of the twenty-three, only three specified religion (Christian) and the others chose not to specify.

Group 4: SGL Cruise Men's Talk Session (Same Gender Loving Group) age range 27-68, contributed 66 participants: (five Caucasian, four Caribbean-American, two, not specified, fifty-five African-American (three were cis gender Female, twelve identified as Transgender ((five Female to Male (FTM) and seven Male to Female (MTF)). For this group, six individuals identified as bi-Sexual, one identified as heterosexual, forty-three identified as Gay and seventeen chose not to disclose.

## Results

At this juncture, I propose a key theory emerging, as mentioned earlier, the ideology behind W.E.B. DuBois' (1897) double-consciousness idea of always looking at one's self through the viewpoint of others, has relevance here. This cognitive distorted consciousness serves as the road map by which men perform their identities and gender, interact with others in society, see themselves, and navigate through society at large—with the microscopic understanding that someone is always watching. Some subjects were able to maintain the external consciousness and expression of society's overwhelming noose and segregate this ideology from their individual consciousness, whereas others internalize (or externalize) the aggregated observations, ingesting them into their internal consciousness, leading to a sense of uncertainty, paranoia, feelings of inadequacy, depression, shame and a host of other cognitive distortions, as they conceptualize all the ways their authenticity is challenged and/or compromised.

Several of the men expressed an internalized endurance of overt racism (Lau, 2105). One subject spoke candidly about his inferiority complex to his white and black male counterparts, “you know the Asian male stereotype of being less endowed,” and how it affected his ability to be in the presence of his white and black friends. His internalized inferiority resulted in externalized expression of anger. He found himself unable to see the beauty in himself, in other Asians, and also began to become “ill” by their accents. This cognitive distortion coincides with the notion of shame and the need to distance oneself from natural-born cultural affiliations, and presents an internalization of his group

consciousness (Lau, 2015). As Palumbo-Liu (1999) writes, “for some Asian-Americans this ‘schizophrenic’ sense of always being watched, can lead to an internalization of the dominant’s point of view” (p.300). When placed among a brotherhood of males, stripped to innocence, naked...bare, and asked to simply be themselves and embody that presence, the subject appeared to find commonality and assurance...a presence that seemed lacking prior to the start of the experience. He stated, “I think it was really nice to see all of our bodies. I cannot believe no one made fun of mine. All seemed to mind their own business and did not care for what I (or anyone else) looked like. Interesting.” Another male resonated very closely to the self-constructed notion of ugliness, and struggled with being in the presence of others. He felt that due to media portrayal of men of color, it is always difficult to find beauty in his own skin. The stereotypical black man is “athletic, muscular, assertive, masculine, and strong”—all of which he could not identify. Conversely, he felt his hyper-femininity would offend all the other males in the group or at least make them uncomfortable. He initially asked for us to turn off all the lights in order for him not to offend anyone. After a few guided and poetic directives and encouraging the group to do so with their eyes closed, I was able to get the client to a place of comfortability and vulnerability. participant exclaimed outwardly, “what a relief it is to just let go and not be judged because of it!” Another male began an open dialog about having to constantly apologize and conform to satisfy other’s comfortability, whereas several others spoke critically about their inability to access emotions other than anger. Although apprehensive

about “being in the company of males,” naming sports as the only objective for which this unity made sense, one male decided to trust the process and continued to attend the weekly sessions. He stated, “I look forward to spending time with my Bros. There is something about the energy here that is contagious and...healing!”

Identity-wise, the majority of the males were aware to varying degrees that their male exteriors took the driver’s seat in people’s perception of them and the expectations therein, regardless of how alternative or nuanced the identity. A vast majority considered the stereotypes as a hindrance, preventing people from seeing beyond their gender and its pre-conceived characteristics. Similar to a ‘birthmark’ (Palumb-Liu, 1999) on one’s body that presents itself as a potential for intuition or self-consciousness to manifest, men are unable to wipe off the gendered meanings, cultural misconceptions, or racial misappropriation society has encoded them with. Consequently, many stressed needing to over-emphasize in order to succumb and “fit into” the meanings their gender, culture, and/or race norms connoted.

In addition to masculinity strategies, authenticity is another key measure by which a vast majority of the males judged which identities were most accessible and acceptable for them. A few of the males mentioned a disgust with certain affluent African Americans who they felt emulated white culture or perpetuated the understanding that in order for one to be accepted they had to assimilate into the dominant culture, and rid themselves of their culture, identity and ideology. When asked to stand in their own presence, and let go of any preconceived notions about themselves and others, and love on the whole person they saw, many

responded with tears and heavy breathing. When asked what the tears represented, responses catapulted from “years of self-hate” or “a lifetime need for acceptance” to “fear, love, and gratitude.” One particular male, who was born in an urban community and later adopted into a rural Midwestern community, found himself often questioned and criticized by both his black friends for being “proper” and the white community for being an imposter. During his narrative, in response to a question of what he felt he was supposed to do and how he was supposed to act as a man and look like as a man, he stated, “I felt alone for a very long time, and I actually thought about killing myself. Because for me, the picture of what I was to be as a man did not reflect what I saw in the mirror, nor what others saw of me, or how I felt.” When asked what felt different about this experience, he responded that he felt “seen and heard.”

### Discussion

Working from the values of love, play, and peace, this project used an art based workshop to address masculinity, build a sense of community, and create possibilities for new gender expressions--in order to create a world free of gender-based oppression in which every person has the power to play with and create their own identities.

According to the results and testimony of a majority of the men studied, men dwelled in a place where it is virtually impossible to live up to socially constructed notions of masculinity and sexuality. Stereotypes about Black men, Asian males, and men of various ethnicities and other walks of life such as being

hypersexual, hyper-masculine, dangerous criminals are commonplace in the minds of many Americans. Thus, an integral part of male identity formation often includes attempts to counter these conflicting and impossible definitions of manhood. Although, all of the above movements could possibly show promise for a changing world, dominant definitions of ‘manhood’ or even ‘rightness’ are in opposition to socially constructed definitions of manhood. But again, it would require that the men live in-authentically: as someone else, if you will, in order to be accepted, or simply to “fit in” (Slatton, 2014). Manhood in the United States is fundamentally constructed around perceptions of whiteness and heterosexuality. The disproportionate failure of non-white men to live up to the standard of “true manhood” reinforces the process of “othering” (Slatton, 2014, p 4).

Clearly, constructions of manhood across the races are far from equal. Kimmel (2014) called forth the importance of accentuating the privilege associated with maleness and whiteness. He said, “being white, or male, or heterosexual in the United States is like running with the wind at your back. It feels like just plain running, and we rarely, if ever get a chance to see how we are sustained, supported, and even propelled by that wind” (Slatton, 2014, p.3). So, imagine if those same allowances were afforded to “all men,” the world would be at a completely different place, you know, a brotherhood of men, a family (women included). Just like John Lennon (1975), proposed: “Imagine all the people, living life in peace...and the world would be as one.” Like Lennon, many of the men in this study also felt the emotional capacity of living life under preconditioned



circumstances and found “relief” in being able to express themselves authentically. Results suggest that DMT, coupled with personal narrative and poetry are effective ways to re-define the emotional capacity and usefulness of males, while ridding them of the necessity of a subjugated society that hinders their ability to live authentically. The mind-body approach presented itself as positive for increasing quality of life and decreasing clinical symptoms such as depression, anxiety, subjective well-being, positive mood, shame, and body image; as it offered opportunities for males to literally regain a sense of balance and strength, and to find healthy ways to connect with each other as an essential first step in dealing with issues that kept them stuck in the cycle of performing masculinity, or the need to take on a more masculine demeanor to fit into the constructs of society, when one’s authentic self-boasted otherwise. Effects for sexual orientation were encouraging, but due to the neglect and inconsistency of the information, the data remained inconclusive. Methodological shortcomings of more specific studies limit these encouraging results and, therefore, further investigations to strengthen and expand upon art-based research in DMT, with the consideration of personal narrative and poetry are necessary. Furthermore, information about the usefulness of the mind-body approach in practices and other career choices and aspects of life are needed.

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## Appendix A1

## Adult Male Questions

Can you please fill out this survey for me please? All the answers will be kept anonymous.

What do you fear? Now? When you were a child? What about yourself do you hide from others?

How was your childhood?

Have you ever been shamed or ashamed in your life? If so, please share.

How do you associate culturally? What is your identity?

What do you consider normal for one of your cultures? Of your identity?

Do you feel you fit into what is considered your cultural normative?

How do you feel other individuals of your culture view you?

What do you feel is the general view of individuals of your culture?

What aspect of your life (from childhood to now) do you feel has the most impact on your current self? Positively? Negatively?

If there was one thing about your past you could change, what would it be? And why?

When you look in the mirror, what do you see?

What is your age?

What is your ethnicity?

What is your religion/religious affiliation?

How has your religion/religious affiliation affected your decision in life?

What is your sexual orientation?

How has your sexual orientation affected your life/decisions in childhood? In adulthood?

## Appendix A2

## Questions for non-adult Males

Can you please fill out this survey for me please? All the answers will be kept anonymous.

What do you fear? Now? When you were a child? What about yourself do you hide from others?

How was your childhood?

Have you ever been shamed or ashamed in your life? If so, please share.

How do you associate culturally? What is your identity?

What do you consider normal for one of your cultures? Of your identity?

Do you feel you fit into what is considered your cultural normative?

How do you feel other individuals of your culture view you?

What do you feel is the general view of individuals of your culture?

What aspect of your life (from childhood to now) do you feel has the most impact on your current self? Positively? Negatively?

If there was one thing about your past you could change, what would it be? And why?

When you look in the mirror, what do you see?

What is your age?

What is your ethnicity?

What is your religion/religious affiliation?

How has your religion/religious affiliation affected your decision in life?



## Appendix B

Below are some of the questions asked of men who contributed their stories to My Brother's Keeper

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### **1. Important Male Mentors**

Who was an important male mentor for you (other than your father) as you were growing up? Tell us how this man helped you along on your journey to manhood.

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### **2. Between Boyhood and Manhood**

Do you remember shyness, confusion, and the discomforts of no longer being a boy, but not yet being a man? Will you share a story about the rapid growth in your body, your voice changing, your general restlessness, feeling clumsy, stealing for the excitement of it, your emerging sexuality, embarrassing moments (first hard-on), pimples, being with girls, or testing parents' limits?

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### **3. Important Lessons about Manhood**

What were some of your earliest lessons you were taught about how to be a man? Who taught you? Did the lessons come from your father, a relative, a friend, someone in the neighborhood, or someone else? Tell us about one important lesson you learned about something men do... something men don't do?

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### **4. Learning How to Be a Man**

Tell me about one of those moments when, on your own, you discovered or figured out one of the pieces to the puzzle called "How to Be a Man." It could have been from experimentation, reading, TV, movies, or just watching older boys and men. What was your discovery, how did you figure it out, and what did you learn?

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### **5. When You Became a "Man"**

What was THE moment in your life when you knew, for sure, that you had become a "man"? Who was there? What was done? What event, action, or ceremony took place so that you knew a line had been crossed and you were no longer a boy and had entered manhood? If you can't remember any defining moment, how do you feel about that now? How do you know if you are a "man" today?

---

### **6. Your Boyhood Adventures**

Tell me a story about one of the ways that, as an adolescent boy, you explored your hunger for adventure, challenge, and testing your male powers. Did you build something, climb something, or push legal or parental limits in some way? Did it

happen in sports or with other boys in your pack? Was it competitive . . . about being more powerful or competent than other boys? Did you prey on or play tricks on someone? Did it get you in trouble? How does the story make you feel now?

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### **7. Your Boyhood Heroes**

As an adolescent boy, who was one of your male film, music, sports, or television heroes and what did he teach you about manhood? Was there another man who was less visible and famous who stood out for you? Who are your male heroes today?

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### **8. Learning about Women**

How did you learn (directly or indirectly) about relationships with the women in your life? Who taught you how to treat women... how to love, argue, romance, do money, take care of, commit to, or “love’em and leave’em?”

- Did you learn by watching your parents, relatives, TV, movies, or the neighbors?
- Did you get any direct lessons, such as, “a man always...” from anyone? Did the older boys tell or show you what to do?
- Name an important lesson you acquired, the teacher, and the value of the lesson, for better or worse, as you’ve progressed toward manhood.

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### **9. Teaching a Boy to Be a Man**

A motivation for this research was when a father, asked me to help him teach his son “how to be a man in this country.” My reaction was that I immediately felt lost, confused, and seriously challenged. If this question were asked of you:

- What actions would you take?
- What do you feel is important for the boy to know?
- What would be important for the boy to experience?
- What values would be critical to communicate to a young man today?
- What man would you hold up as a positive role model?
- If we’re going to point young men in the direction of strong, responsible, loving, and stable manhood, how should that be defined and taught?

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### **10. Rites of Passage for Boys**

Ritual, ceremony, and people gathering around a boy to mark his natural life transitions can be enormously helpful. These events help a boy know he’s on the right track, making progress and is approved of by his family and/or his community. The absence of these events contributes to a boy feeling lost, alone, and unsure about his direction in life.

The question is what Rite-of-Passage experiences, formal or informal, positive or negative, do you remember on your journey to manhood?

Create a Rite-of-Passage Ceremony: You can click [here](#) to download a PDF article about a Rite-of-Passage ceremony I helped create for a young man going off to college. Using this as a guide, you might create a similar experience for a boy or young man in your life.

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### **11. Your Boyhood Male “Tribe”**

It’s been said that boys need a “tribe.” They need to have men around them as mentors and to be watched by the boys for cues on “what men do,” and how to become manly. When there are men around, boys instinctively learn their right and natural place in the male hierarchy and how to be a “man.” The question is, when you were an adolescent on the edge of manhood, who were the men of your male “tribe

**12. What emotions did you experience during the performance? As a viewer? As a performer?**

**13. What are your thoughts about the performance?**

**14. What do you feel is missing? Or needs more explanation? As viewer? As a performer?**

## Appendix D

## MOTHERLESS CHILD

BY JOHN LEGEND

Sometime I feel like a motherless child  
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child  
And sometimes I feel like a motherless child  
A long, long way from home

And sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone  
Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone  
Sometimes I feel like I'm all alone  
A long, a long way from home

Come on, come on  
Who's got a shoulder when I need to cry?  
I feel restless and I don't know why  
I cry for help but still feel alone  
Like a motherless child, a long way from home

Lord, I'm lost, I can't find my way  
I'm dealing with the struggles in my day to day  
My soul is weak and I wanna be strong  
I try to run away but I've been running too long

I've been running too long  
I've been running  
I've been running too long

Like a motherless child  
Like a motherless child  
Like a motherless child

Like a motherless child  
Like a motherless child  
Like a motherless child  
Like a motherless child

## Appendix E

EACH OTHER  
BY KEM

I'm talking to You, it's Your son  
Father, I can't believe all the things  
We have done to each other

The problem I find, in all my years  
The danger is high though Your love is near  
So, what can be done to heal each other

I hold my head up high to ease the pain  
But quite frankly Lord, I don't know how much more  
This world can take, yes, we need more love for each other

Lord it's me, it's Your son  
Trying to take a stand for peace, like Your other one  
Send us Your love, 'cause we need each other  
We need, we truly need each other

## Appendix F

INVICTUS  
WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

Out of the night that covers me,  
    Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
    For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
    I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
    My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
    Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
    Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
    How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
    I am the captain of my soul.

Appendix G

He Ain't Heavy, He's my Brother  
By Hollies

The road is long  
With many a winding turn  
That leads us to who knows where  
Who knows where  
But I'm strong  
Strong enough to carry him  
He ain't heavy, he's my brother

## Appendix H

## THE MEASURE OF A MAN

By Stephan Reynolds

The measure of a man,  
Is the money he possesses,  
Not the deeper recesses,  
Of his mind or soul....  
His Compassionate use of accumulated wealth,  
Which historically evaded those who have acquired by stealth.  
It is the belief in me, myself, and I,  
Where on egocentricity one must  
rely?

The measure of a man,  
Isn't about concepts and values,  
Or integrity, to boot.  
But hurt, harm and dangers,  
Seeking jovial pursuit.  
Where deeds of morality become a  
chimney's sweep,  
And pre-conceived notions, churn  
the potion, for a bastard's weep.  
Is it when disposition and  
discontentment become disguises of  
humanity?  
Or when the ridicule of dismay scars  
our personality?

The measure of a man,  
Is the masses of destruction that  
mars the quality of life;  
Or the mere reality of misery's,  
agony and strife?  
Is it an abolition of a theory known  
to put asunder?  
Or is it that ever so carelessly  
whispered murmur, jape, or blunder?  
Is it the imposition of ignorance  
causing someone else's pain?



Or the historical misinformation and  
immoral gain?

Is it when it's "better to give than  
receive," becomes a concept of  
greed.

Validating lives a plenty, but clearly  
not a concern, for the mouths one  
has to feed.

So, I ask, what is the Measure of a Man?

Is it all measurement and  
manifestations of belief?

Or Is it simply, what you can take,  
AND WHO you can deceive....?