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An Exploration of Gender Socialization and Alcohol Misuse in Men

by

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Abstract

Within the alcohol and drug field there has been a growing movement towards offering gender-specific group treatment for men. However, to date, there is limited research to guide this program development. The current study focused on exploring the phenomenon of gender socialization in the lives of men who are recovering from an identified misuse of alcohol. A mainstream qualitative approach was utilized to capture the lived experience of the six men interviewed in the study. Two central themes emerged; the collection of beliefs the participants had about being male and the collection of experiences in which alcohol was used as a way of coping. The implications of the study are discussed in relation to men's treatment needs.

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INTRODUCTION

The misuse of alcohol has affected much of society, either directly or indirectly. Children are affected by their parent's misuse of alcohol, women by their partner's misuse, and both men and women by their own misuse of alcohol. Generations of families have been impacted by alcohol. Over the years, as awareness about alcohol misuse has risen, scientists and researchers began to ask "why do people misuse alcohol?" and therapists and administrators began to ask "what can be done?". From these questions, other questions have arisen. Within the last twenty years, one question became whether or not theories that emerged from the study of men could be unilaterally applied to women. This gave rise to numerous studies focused on women's experiences with alcohol, where it became clear that women have unique treatment needs.

My current position working in the field of alcohol and drugs has provided me with extensive experience exploring women's underlying issues around alcohol and drugs. As I continued to work with women in gender-specific groups it became apparent that many mixed-gendered groups were becoming men-only by default, yet the group leaders were not changing the focus of the group to explore men's experience as had been done in the women's groups. While some programs were beginning to move towards developing groups that specifically focused on men's issues in recovery (Munro, McBeth & Aubry, 1994), there was limited research on the nature of men's needs, as identified by

men, to guide program development (Aubry, 1992; Lemle & Mishkind, 1989; Van Wormer, 1989). This prompted me to question whether or not men's use of alcohol was influenced by any factors that would effect the focus of their treatment. It was at this point that I decided to conduct a study to explore men's socialization experiences and the misuse of alcohol.

Chapter's One and Two review the literature related to this study. Chapter One outlines theories on alcohol misuse, in order to provide a theoretical foundation for the study. Chapter Two includes theories on gender socialization, a review of men's socialization experiences, speculative links to alcohol misuse and a review of related studies. The chapter concludes with the rationale for the current study, along with its relevance to social work. Chapter Three outlines the methodology utilized within this study, including the rationale for a mainstream qualitative approach, techniques used for data collection and analysis, as well as how the issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations have been addressed. Chapter Four provides the results of the study by describing the themes that emerged from the men's shared experiences. The significance of the findings, implications for treatment, directions for future research and the limitations of this study are presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER I

THEORIES OF ALCOHOLISM

In order to explore the possible connections between male socialization experiences and the misuse of alcohol, it is important to first have a theoretical understanding of addictions in general. Theories of alcohol misuse have emerged primarily from three main perspectives: biological, psychological and sociocultural. Within each perspective, numerous theories have attempted to explain the etiology of alcohol misuse. Some theories are very distinct, while others appear to build on previous theories. This chapter outlines the distinguishing features of each of the three major perspectives and describes some of the theories that have emerged. As well, the biopsychosocial model of addictions is presented as a comprehensive model which considers the understandings gained through each of the three perspectives. The dynamic of gender, as it pertains to addictions theories, is also introduced.

Biological Perspective

The biological perspective provides an understanding of alcohol misuse by focusing on genetic and physiological factors. Blane and Leonard (1987) suggest that although studies exploring the effects of alcohol on physical features such as psychomotor and cognitive functioning were conducted as far back as the mid-1880's, the first attempt to explain the etiology of substance misuse was not until much later. According to Tarter (1983), the first systematic theory grounded in research was introduced by Jellinek in his

1960 publication of “The Disease Concept of Alcoholism”. Ward (1986) suggests that Jellineck’s conceptualization of alcoholism as a progressive disease with physiological determinants became the foundation for the biological perspective.

Often referred to as the “disease model” or “medical model”, the biological perspective views alcoholism as a disease where the body reacts to alcohol in such a way that the person is susceptible to becoming addicted (Ward, 1986). Goodwin (1994) reviewed a number of studies which found that alcohol affects chemicals that transmit signals in the brain: serotonin brain levels increase when drinking and decrease after drinking, suggesting an addictive cycle. The studies also found that these levels vary within individuals, which Goodwin suggests might explain why some people are more susceptible to alcoholism than others.

Frawley (1988) proposes his own biological model which he calls the “neurobehavioral model of addiction”. He theorizes that “...the disease is manifested by the involuntary biochemical adaptation (tolerance, physical dependence, and perhaps other unknown changes) and a patterning of the nervous system in terms of the procedural memory and perhaps also a kind of imprinting to seek the drug for its effect” (p.31). Tabakoff and Hoffman (1988) suggest that reinforcement, tolerance and physical dependence occur due to biological processes. Alexander (1988) posits that this reaction causes a person to become addicted due to a genetic predisposition.

Koopman and Boomsma (1996) reviewed a number of studies which suggest that alcoholism may be linked to genetic factors which are inherited, although they concluded that, to date, the gene(s) responsible for the development of alcoholism have not been

discovered. Lester (1988) also made reference to numerous studies on twins and children separated from their biological families at birth where alcoholism developed, indicating some degree of heritability. According to Tarter (1983), numerous research studies have provided a wealth of data supporting an heritability factor in alcoholism.

Nonetheless, genetics and physiology have not been able to explain all aspects of alcoholism. If genes were solely responsible for the development of alcoholism, then studies on identical twins would consistently produce results of both twins being alcoholic - - but this has not been so. According to Goodwin (1994) numerous studies on identical twins have produced results where one twin was alcoholic, while the other was not. Thus, the biological perspective provides an understanding of one facet of alcoholism, but other influences likely also exist.

Psychological Perspective

According to Blane and Leonard (1987), the field of psychology has proposed that alcoholism cannot be explained by the disease model alone, that the pharmacological and physiologic factors interact with and are mediated by psychological processes. Based on this framework, numerous theories have emerged to explain the psychological processes that explain alcoholism.

Psychoanalytic/psychodynamic models explain alcohol use as a symptom of an underlying personality conflict or disorder that is often rooted in early childhood (Ward, 1986). Based on their own research, McCord and McCord (1960) theorized that as a child, "...the typical alcoholic...underwent a variety of experiences that heightened inner stress,

intensified his desire for love, and produced a distorted self-image” resulting in a personality with “...intensified dependency needs... conflict over the means of satisfying dependency... and confusion in self image” (p. viii & 151). Based on a review of studies and literature, Barry (1988) suggests that alcoholism emerges as a result of disturbances in the stages of development, leading to destructive interactions between the id, ego and superego, with alcohol temporarily relieving the anxiety and frustration these conflicts cause. According to Lemlie and Mishkind (1989), “Repressed Homosexuality theory” suggests that this disturbance is “...latent unconscious homosexual impulses and feminine identifications...” (p. 217) whereby alcohol is used to seek closeness to men and to counteract the anxiety of feeling less masculine. Yet despite numerous studies exploring early development and comparisons between alcoholics and non-alcoholics, Barry (1988) argues that psychoanalytic theory is not commonly accepted as a valid general theory, given that it does not focus specifically on alcoholism, but simply applies its theory to alcoholism which is viewed as merely another form of “pathological behavior”.

Closely related to psychoanalytic theories is the alcoholic personality theory which suggests that alcoholics have distinct personality traits that distinguish them from non-alcoholics and predict alcoholism (Blane & Leonard, 1987; Nathan, 1983; Tarter, 1983). Numerous standardized measures have been used in an attempt to identify the alcoholic personality type. Examples cited by Nathan (1983) and Tarter (1983) include the Rorschach and Thematic Apperception Test, Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, Drinking Related Locus of Control Scale, and other personality tests. A review of the literature by Cox (1988) noted that the majority of studies aimed at identifying personality

characteristics of alcoholics administered personality tests to groups of alcoholics undergoing treatment for alcoholism. The major themes that emerged from these studies were that alcoholics were characterized as having "...low tolerance for frustration, unconventionality, and sensation seeking, and their relationships with other people are marked by social adroitness, but superficiality and lack intimacy...have low self-esteem and show strong negative affect (depression and anxiety)" and that "...the cognitive/perceptual style of alcoholics is characteristically different from that of non-alcoholics..." (p. 164-165). As well, Cox summarized retrospective, archival, prospective and high-risk studies which suggested that persons who develop problems with alcohol later in life have personality characteristics that distinguish them from other groups of people including: "...impulsivity, independence, social adroitness, and reflection of conventional values" and "...have difficulty working toward long-range goals that will bring enduring satisfaction" (p. 169). McClelland, Davis, Kalin and Wanner (1972) concluded that the characteristic most predominant in male alcoholics is a sense of powerlessness compounded with the need for power and control. Nonetheless, according to a number of authors, despite ongoing research efforts during the past thirty years and hundreds of published studies, no reliable personality type, trait, or disposition has been found that consistently predicts alcoholism (Cox 1988; Nathan, 1983; Tarter, 1983). Graham (1994) and Cox (1988) suggest that this is partially due to the difficulty in determining what personality characteristics precede the use of alcohol and what characteristics are a result of the use of alcohol.

Other psychological perspectives focus on the thought processes of the individual. According to Nathan (1983), tension reduction theory proposes that alcoholics rely on

alcohol to reduce tension because they believe it will have the desired effect. Combined with the pharmacological effects of alcohol is the commonly held belief that alcohol has the power to reduce tension and pain while heightening mood. This explanation contradicts the biological perspective, suggesting that if a person thinks that alcohol will have a physiological response, then one is more likely to drink, whether or not the alcohol actually produces a physiological change (Nathan, 1983). Goodwin (1994) cites a number of studies which support this “expectancy theory”. Numerous studies have confirmed that subjects who think they are receiving alcoholic beverages react as if they were drunk even though they have been given non-alcoholic drinks.

Behavioral and social learning theories build on this further, suggesting that alcohol is used as a way of coping with life stresses. Alcoholism is thus a learned behavior influenced by outside messages about the rewards and costs of drinking (Ward, 1986; Nathan, 1983). Oei and Baldwin (1994) suggest that “repeated association of drinking behavior with internal and external cues...produce classical conditioning of the response to the stimulus, such that decisions to drink no longer require conscious effort...but become incorporated into an automatic process” (p. 525). Thus cravings, triggers and relapses are explained through this process of associations between certain cues and drinking behavior (Oei & Baldwin, 1994; Wilson, 1988). According to Wilson (1988), social learning theory suggests that alcoholics rely on alcohol to cope when other modes of coping are not fully developed and is influenced by observing the drinking behavior of parents or significant others. Tarter (1983) believes that this also challenges the biological perspective, questioning whether heritability is due to genetics alone or whether it is a learned behavior

transmitted through modeling. Despite these arguments, Goodwin (1994) and Nathan (1983) argue that biological responses to alcohol cannot be explained by these behavioral approaches alone. Nonetheless, Heath (1988) concludes that there is general agreement that social learning and expectancy theories play a major role in understanding the patterns of alcohol misuse.

Thus, according to Goodwin (1994), while no one psychological theory can account for the biological responses to alcohol, the theories provide an understanding of dynamics that the biological perspective cannot fully address either. Yet even when the two are combined, dynamics still remain outside the realm of either psychology and biology. Some of these are addressed in the sociocultural perspective.

Sociocultural Perspective

Sociocultural perspectives theorize that the environment in which the alcohol abuser lives influences the maintenance of his/her use (Tarter, 1983). Taking this perspective, a number of authors believe that an understanding of the social and cultural factors within the external world of the alcoholic is necessary in order to understand patterns and consequences of alcohol misuse (Szalay, Inn & Doherty, 1996; Heath, 1988). According to Goodwin (1994), “the strongest evidence that social factors contribute to alcoholism is the great diversity in alcohol use and alcohol abuse among various cultures, nations, ethnic groups, social classes, regions, sexes, and other groupings” (p. 110). In general, Heath (1988) describes the sociocultural perspective as one that examines different beliefs and attitudes about alcohol and its effects, beliefs and attitudes around patterns of drinking, the

meanings ascribed and the cultural response to the use of alcohol. Szalay, Inn and Doherty (1996) believe that social influences are powerful tools for shaping people's perceptions and attitudes, thus influence the use of alcohol.

According to Ward (1986), strain theory suggests that alcoholism emerges due to imbalances in class structures, which leads to blocked opportunities and a sense of hopelessness that results in escapist drinking. Sociocultural deprivation theories suggest that individuals use alcohol to cope with the anxiety, stress, tension and concerns which Heath (1988) suggests emerge in response to being alienated from the norms of culture that have had value and meaning. Broader sociocultural perspectives look beyond class structure and theorize that the beliefs and values held by a culture influence the alcohol user's support system's response to his/her use of alcohol, which in turn influences the pattern of use (Heath, 1983). Szalay, Inn and Doherty (1996) attempted to explore the interaction between social influences and substance misuse, by comparing "high use" and "low use" environments with levels of misuse. The findings indicated that students in high use environments showed significantly higher levels of vulnerability than students in the low use environments, showing that the "high use" campus environments were "...sources of social influences that result from the myriad's of social interactions and contribute to a social climate conducive to substance misuse" (p. 364). Each of these perspectives emphasize the role of the support system, the predominant cultural beliefs and the overall impact of the environment in which the user lives.

Heath (1988) believes that sociocultural perspectives also elaborate on the socialization process that influences what people learn about alcohol. Feminist perspectives

elaborate on this by emphasizing the dynamic of gender as a powerful socializing force. Van Den Bergh (1991), who takes a feminist perspective on addictions, suggests “...that the development of addictions can be related to the isolating and oppressive conditions engendered by societal values which promote competition and conquest over others, as well as conformity and perfectionism” (p. 33). This is in keeping with sociocultural perspectives in that the focus is on understanding alcohol misuse by looking beyond biological and psychological processes occurring within the individual to include the processes that occur outside of the individual.

Sociocultural perspectives have gained much support as a complementary model to existing theories of alcohol misuse. For example, Heath (1988) cites the role of family and cultural traditions as offering additional explanations of high rates of alcoholism among certain populations that heredity alone fails to address. Thus, according to a number of authors, sociocultural perspectives are generally considered complimentary to biological and psychological theories to provide a comprehensive approach (Szalay, Inn, & Doherty, 1996; Heath, 1988; Marshall, 1986; Heath, 1983). The combining of all three theories has become known as the biopsychosocial model.

Biopsychosocial Model

Ward (1986) suggests that since there is no proof as to which theory is most valid, the approach one takes is more a matter of personal preference. This perspective has led some to continue to view alcoholism through one lens only, negating any possible contributions of other theories. For example, Graham (1994) reviewed the literature and

stated that the idea that people use alcohol as a way of coping with some other problem, "...is simply and totally incompatible with the modern disease concept of alcoholism" (p. 6), which led him to discount all other theories. To prevent this narrow focus, another response has been to amalgamate the contributions of many theories. Marshall (1986) and Nathan (1983) hold the view that since alcoholism is a multifaceted issue, it requires acknowledgment of all the factors that may influence drinking behavior ranging from biology to culture. Thus, a new biopsychosocial theory emerged that recognized that no one theory alone can explain alcoholism, but combined, each contribute to a more holistic and comprehensive approach (Blane & Leonard, 1987; Heath, 1983; Nathan, 1983; Tarter, 1983).

The Dynamic of Gender

Yet even with this more integrative theory, a fundamental limitation of previous theories still exists. According to Blume (1992), in the mid-1970's it was acknowledged that previous research on alcoholism was based primarily on samples of men, so limited empirical knowledge was available on the physiological, psychological and sociological aspects of women's use of alcohol. The question became whether or not theories that emerged from the study of men, could unilaterally be applied to women. Over subsequent years, researchers began to explore women's experiences with alcohol. More became known about the impact of alcohol on women's bodies. Beyond the biological realm, numerous other themes began to emerge. A number of authors linked women's experiences with alcohol to past and present experiences of physical and sexual abuse, violence,

depression, poverty, racism, socialization experiences, women's roles and status in society, as well as the impact of living in a patriarchal society (Garceau, 1994; McConnell, 1994; Blume, 1992). While not negating the contributions of past theories, Garceau (1994) and McConnell (1994) found that research began to move away from the traditional focus on single issues and causative factors and moved towards addressing the context of women's lives and the underlying issues around women's misuse of alcohol. Thus, according to Bigsby (1994) another dimension to a biopsychosocial approach became gender.

This focus on gender poses a question. If our body of knowledge on alcohol misuse has increased by looking at the dimension of gender as it pertains to women, what about men? Although previous studies were based primarily on men, the theories were transferred to both men and women, thus men's unique experiences as men were not taken into consideration: the dimension of gender was not explored. Van Wormer (1989) believes that while female alcohol abuse has been conceptualized as being impacted by social forces of sexism, male substance abuse has not yet been conceptualized in gender-role terms. Yet, we know that the impact of stereotypical gender-roles and societal messages are not experienced by women alone. A number of authors believe that men's socialization experiences are restrictive as well, have negative impacts and contributes to distress in numerous areas of their lives, which may be connected to their misuse of alcohol (Bigsby, 1994; Aubry, 1992; Van Den Bergh, 1991; Van Wormer, 1989). To date, however, this has not become the focus of systematic study.

CHAPTER II

MEN'S SOCIALIZATION AND ALCOHOL MISUSE

Recently, writers theorizing about alcoholism have begun to include gender as a factor in women's misuse of alcohol. Writers have also speculated about potential links between men's issues and the misuse of alcohol. In order to explore these possible connections, it is important to have an understanding of the dimension of gender. This chapter begins by providing a theoretical understanding of the socialization process, followed by a review of men's socialization experiences, and proposed links between men's issues and alcohol misuse. It is important to stress that these links are only speculative, given that they are not grounded in research but are based on observations and opinion taken from a variety of sources ranging from clinical observations to men's movement literature that is based primarily on narratives. The inferences are summarized in order to provide background information for this study as well as to demonstrate the gaps that exist in the literature. Although I found no research that directly focuses on men's socialization experiences and alcohol, studies that relate to this issue are outlined to further support the applicability and feasibility of this study. Once this has been established the rationale for the current study is presented, along with its relevance to social work.

Gender Socialization Theories

Socialization theories challenge the concept that differences between men and women are due simply to biology. From a biological perspective, hormones, chromosomes,

genes, biochemicals and brain “circuitry” cause men and women to act the way that they do (Kimbrell, 1995; Doyle, 1989). On the other side of “nature”, is the “nurture” argument which suggests that human behaviors are not pre-set through biology. Kimbrell (1995) believes that while biological and physiological differences may exist between men and women, cultural and social factors (nurture) influence how these differences manifest in the real world. This occurs through the process of socialization.

Robinson and Salamon (1987) define gender role socialization as “the process through which individuals acquire a gender identity as well as ways of acting, feeling, and thinking that are appropriate to the gender expectations of their society” (p. 123). A number of theories have been applied to explain this process, with the central ones being psychodynamic theory, social learning theory, cognitive-development theory, and gender-schema theory (Basow, 1992; Richmond-Abbott, 1992; Doyle & Paludi, 1991). Similar to theories around alcohol misuse, Basow (1992) suggests that the most recognized theory on gender socialization is an integrated one that takes into account concepts from each of these theories.

According to Basow (1992), psychodynamic theory proposes that gender role acquisition is primarily an unconscious process, whereby a child’s personality is shaped by early childhood experiences with the primary caretaker. Gender is seen as an integral component of the child’s developing sense of self, thus, these early interactions shape a child’s sense of who he/she is as a gendered being. Doyle (1989) suggests that this develops out of an innate psychological need, not as a result of the influence of social agents such as family, school or media. As a result, Basow (1992) proposes that gender

identity becomes intrinsically linked to an unconscious core sense of self. From this perspective, a “psychological healthy male” was one that conformed to society’s prescribed gender-appropriate male behavior, a less “psychologically healthy male” was one whose behaviors were more distant from this stereotype (Doyle, 1989).

Social learning theory, on the other hand, does not see gender identity as primarily unconscious. Instead, it emphasizes that gender socialization is an active learning process (Richmond-Abbott, 1992). According to Doyle and Paludi (1991), through reinforcement, imitation and modeling, a child learns what is “appropriate” gender role behavior. Richmond-Abbott (1992) suggest that according to this theory, a child imitates the behavior of a same-sex model, and the reaction to the behavior, be it rewarded or punished, instills in the child a sense of what is sexually appropriate behavior. For example, if a boy is admonished for crying, is told that “big boys don’t cry”, and sees his father remaining “stoic”, he learns that displaying feelings is not appropriate for males. Thus, Basow (1992) proposes that a child learns both directly (through rewards and punishments) and indirectly (through observations and modeling) what it means to be either male or female.

Similar to social learning theory, cognitive-developmental theory sees gender socialization as an active learning process, influenced by models and rewards (Basow, 1992). What distinguishes it from social learning theory, though, is its emphasis on stages of cognitive development. According to Richmond-Abbott (1992), the theory suggests that gender identity is learned in stages, based on the child’s cognitive level of understanding. In addition, Doyle and Paludi (1991) suggest that the theory expands the concept of “models” from parental figures (social-learning) to include all models in the child’s

environment. And finally, according to Richmond-Abbott (1992), the theory expands on the concepts of “rewards” to include moral reasoning, where a child displays “appropriate” gender role behavior out of a sense that it is the right thing to do.

According to Doyle and Paludi (1991), the final theory, gender-schema theory, incorporates aspects of both cognitive-developmental and social learning theories, but takes it a step further by suggesting that by observing society’s emphasis on distinctions between males and females, a child learns that gender is of central importance and begins to categorize new information on the basis of gender. Thus, Basow (1992) proposes that a child develops dichotomized thinking, seeing behaviors as either “feminine” or “masculine”, and regulates his/her behavior to ensure he/she is able to meet the rigid gender requirements. “From the point of view of gender schema theory, gender is the primary cognitive way to organize new information because cultures have allowed a dichotomy between male and female to influence almost every aspect of experience” (Richmond-Abbott, 1992, p. 84). Thus, central to gender-schema theory is the emphasis on the influence of cultural messages regarding gender.

Through the process of socialization, males and females are taught characteristics and values that society deems appropriate for their particular gender in a specific culture. These gender specific characteristics are stereotypical and often misleading. Basow (1992) suggests that the use of stereotypes exaggerates or distorts the actual degree of differences between the sexes. In other words, differences may exist between the genders, but by dividing characteristics into distinct categories, we often overemphasize the differences. The division of these characteristics into such distinct polarities results in a form of

confinement. Even though all are human characteristics, men are limited to the utilization of only masculine traits, and women strictly to feminine, thus interfering in the realization of full potential.

Through these stereotypical characteristics, gender roles are established with expectations of corresponding behavior. If a person fails to conform to their gender role expectation, the individual is often punished by society's disapproval. This disfavor may vary in degrees. The behavior may be labeled in a negative way (ie. "sissy") or be met with outright hostility and public ridicule. Such social sanctions cause individuals to conform and to avoid roles that are considered inappropriate. Conforming to these beliefs and expectations may become so habitual that we can no longer distinguish between what is society's view, and what is our own. Choices and decisions are guided by society without us always being aware of it. Yet, these rigid societal beliefs and roles have an impact on an individual level.

Men's Socialization Experiences

A review of the literature suggests that in most societies, including North America, men are exposed to certain messages about what is expected of them as males. Men's socialization experiences vary and the degree to which these messages are internalized by each individual man is unique to that person. According to Harris (1995, p. 16) "just because men receive certain messages does not mean that they will act in accordance with the behavior described by that message. (Nonetheless) gender-role messages are scripts

that set normative standards men carry around in their heads and try to realize". With this in mind, it is important to understand what these gender-role messages are.

A number of authors suggest that boys are more intensely socialized than girls, through praise, punishment and pressure to avoid gender inappropriate behavior (Basow, 1992; Robinson & Salamon, 1987). According to Basow (1992), this differential pressure is thought to exist due to the increased demands of the masculine sex role, lack of male role models and the increased value placed on males. Growing up, men's ideas of what is appropriate male behavior may become rigid and stereotyped for a number of reasons. Basow (1992) reviewed a number of studies showing that from an early age through adolescence, boys spend more time with peers and have less exposure to same-sex adult role models than girls, which is thought to result in distorted and oversimplified ideas around male behavior, given that it comes primarily from same age peers who have limited information. As well, males often learn more about what not to do, than what to do. According to a number of authors, young boys receive the message that it is not okay to do anything that could remotely be interpreted as feminine (Doyle, 1989; Robinson & Salamon, 1987; Tavris, 1987; O'Neil, 1982). Thus, if women are considered emotional, dependent or nonassertive, men must behave in the opposite manner in order to prove their masculinity (Doyle & Paludi, 1991). Basow (1992) believes that this results in men denying certain aspects of themselves simply because they are associated with femininity. As well, Robinson and Salamon (1987) suggest that "being told what not to do, still leaves unanswered what one should do and creates anxiety about future behavior" (p. 125).

According to Basow (1992), this “what to do” often remains unclear given the lack of male role models available to many boys. Osherman (1986) suggests that through the process of individuation, boys psychologically separate from their mothers, and when they try to identify and bond with their fathers, they experience them as rejecting, inadequate or absent, leaving them with a conflicted inner sense of masculinity. Coreneau (1991) posits that the inability of many fathers to guide, support and be emotionally available to sons may be a reflection of the socialization process experienced by fathers, which is then passed down to sons. Thus, it has been suggested by a number of authors that many men experience a sense of grief and loss over the lack of an involved father figure, given the culturally prescribed peripheral role of fathers (Aubry, 1992; Corneau, 1991; Meth & Pasick, 1990; O’Brien, 1988; Swenson & Elliot, 1987).

Many males are socialized into believing that their actions, what they do, and what they accomplish is of primary importance and that they must compete to “win” or come out on top (Kimbrell, 1995; Basow, 1992; Doyle, 1989; Franklin, 1984; O’Neil, 1982). Doyle and Paludi (1991) suggest that by doing better than others, a man proves himself more masculine, thus, more of a success. Competition becomes a way for a man to prove his worthiness. The emphasis on being tough, working hard, and winning at all costs is thought to continue on into adult life, since it is a reflection of dominant values in our society, where men are often judged by the level of living they provide (Richmond-Abbott, 1992; Bernard, 1987). Doyle (1989) posits that men are expected to be a success at everything, whether it be work or play, which provides considerable stress, given that the expectation is impossible. No one can be a success at everything, yet this is what the role

prescribes. Some authors believe that if those measures of success are taken away (i.e. through the loss of a job) men's sense of self may become lost since it is tied so directly to work/success (Kimbrell, 1995; Meth & Pasick, 1990; Bernard, 1987; Baker & Bakker, 1987).

Compounding this further is the fact that the measure of success is an illusion. The message implies that if you work hard enough you can succeed and that if you have not succeeded, it is because you have not worked hard enough. Kimbrell (1995) suggests that it is an illusion because it does not take into account that in a competitive based society only a few will have power, yet power and success are intertwined. Neither does it take into consideration external realities, such as the state of the economy, which may result in situations where men are unable to find work or feel trapped in demeaning jobs. The result is that in the pursuit of success and power, many men end up feeling frustrated and powerless (Brod, 1992; Kipnis, 1991; O'Neil, 1982). Kimbrell (1995) believes that this feeling of powerless is not validated, since men are told, through the media, that as men they are in the position of power. They feel powerless, yet are told that they hold the power. "This disparity between their real lives and the synthetic, public male perpetuated by the media is rarely mentioned, and thereby the myth of the power man continues" (p. 128)

Other authors suggest that men are socialized to be more aggressive, to fight for what they consider to be right and to be self-reliant and in control at all times (Doyle & Paludi, 1991; Doyle, 1989). Doyle (1989) proposes that boys are encouraged to act aggressively in order to prove themselves manly. He argues that aggression is a valued

quality in a society, like ours, that is characterized by inequality between groups, since aggression becomes the means by which one group retains its power over the other group. Kivel (1992) adds to this, suggesting that being powerful and in control are hallmarks of aggression, with power taking the form of power-over rather than power from within.

“When boys are supported and encouraged to be active, aggressive, competitive (“be a boy”) and the like, while girls are supported and encouraged to be passive, cooperative, and submissive (“to be ladylike”), male dominance is promoted” (Franklin, 1984, p. 46). Some speculate that this dominance may not only take the form of controlling others, but it may also involve the effort to control oneself (Kivel, 1992; Franklin, 1984). If this is accurate, it may suggest that whether or not a man feels in control, he must act in control. Given that there are so many things out of one’s control, this may put a great deal of pressure on men. Lister (1991) theorizes that as issues build up, the message to be in control and self-reliant makes it difficult to reach out and ask for help.

Robinson and Salamon (1987) propose that these beliefs around competitiveness and self-reliance may also send messages around the need for emotional control. A number of authors believe that without male modeling and with the message to avoid anything feminine, men are socialized to inhibit emotional expressiveness which may continue into adult life (Aubry, 1992; Basow, 1992; Balswick, 1988). Basow (1992) theorizes that the expression of feelings may be associated more with femininity than masculinity, given that most boys grow up without seeing intimate emotions expressed by men. As well, “if boys do not hide their emotions, they are likely to suffer marked loss in prestige, to be liked less, and to have difficulty assuming the competitive role society has set out for them” (p. 208).

Stevens (1987) suggests that in the competitive world, rationality is valued over emotionality, with emotions being equated with vulnerability. Franklin (1984) adds to this, speculating that this acts as a strong barrier against the expression of feelings, since this vulnerability makes men less competitive, thus less likely to achieve the level of success that is expected of them. If this is accurate, then men may have more difficulty expressing emotions.

The exception seems to be the expression of anger. Stevens (1987) suggests that given the influence of messages around dominance and competitiveness, anger appears to be the one feeling that is relatively acceptable for men to express. Yet men's experiences with anger may leave contradictory and confusing messages. Anger may be one of the few feelings that society deems appropriate for men to express, yet it has been suggested that men are not taught how to express anger in non-aggressive, non-violent ways. As a result, some men end up fearing anger and respond by alternately repressing it and blowing up, both of which have negative impacts (Biggsby, 1994; Munro, McBeth & Aubry, 1994; Kivel, 1992).

Some authors suggest that such suppression of feelings results in men becoming less aware of their emotions (Stikwerda & May, 1992; Balswick, 1988). Others believe that men are aware of their feelings, but are simply less demonstrative or direct in their expression (Kipnis, 1991). Either way, this may impact men on both an interpersonal and intrapersonal level. On an intrapersonal level, a man's socialization experience may impact how he deals with feelings and situations within himself. In response to messages that it is not okay to show feelings, men may suppress these feelings and indirectly react to them by

acting out. For example, Kipnis (1991) suggests that many male sex offenders were abused and responded to this abuse by repressing their emotional pain, then externalized their rage by becoming victimizers themselves. The ability to heal from the pain and trauma which leads them to lash out may be difficult given the strong social sanctions against expressing feelings and asking for help. As well, it has been suggested that males are often socialized to believe that they need to be emotionally strong, dominant and in control, so when they are abused, they often question their masculinity and feel ashamed which also makes it very hard to disclose being abused (VSMMSA, 1995). Through the suppression of feelings a person may become less in touch with feelings (thus less in touch with themselves) and less able to work through and release feelings which results in a build-up that has both physical and psychological effects (Balswick, 1988). Thus, according to numerous authors, grief and loss is often a predominant issue for many men, given the societal messages that inhibit the expression of feelings and the grieving and letting go of past losses and old wounds (Bigsby, 1994; Munro, McBeth & Aubry, 1994; Aubry, 1992; Backus, 1992, Lister, 1991)

Meth and Pasick (1990) and Osherson (1986) suggest that men's socialization experiences may also impact them as husbands, lovers, fathers, sons and friends. A number of authors have characterized men's relationships with other men as having lower levels of self-disclosure, lower levels of intimacy and are activity more than personal focused (Basow, 1992; Meth & Pasick, 1990; Stevens, 1987). It has also been suggested that men are exposed to numerous messages that may inhibit intimacy, including messages around suppression of feelings and self-disclosure, independence and competition, and

homosexuality taboos (Basow, 1992; Richmond-Abbott, 1992; Meth & Pasick, 1990). Meth and Pasick (1990) and Stevens (1987) believe that men have difficulty expressing their personal feelings directly, given that it places them in a vulnerable position. Instead, they may joke about fears and feelings of inadequacy in a way that does not allow the deep sense of intimacy and connection that comes from mutual self-disclosure (Strikwerda & May, 1992; Stevens, 1987). Messages around needing to be self-reliant may also effect intimacy since it limits the level of self-disclosure. Kupers (1995) believes that for men to ask for help or be vulnerable means that they risk being seen as less manly by traditional standards. Kimbrell (1995) adds to this, suggesting that competition may disconnect men from other men, since in a competitive market others are viewed with suspicion and as a threat to winning and achieving success. Thus, the emphasis on competition prevents cooperation and connection, which is believed by some to undermine male friendships and bonding (Strikwerda & May, 1992; Kimbrell, 1995). Other authors, such as Richmond-Abbott (1992) and Herek (1987) also believe that homosexual taboos force men to deny natural homoerotic feelings as well as culturally defined feminine qualities such as sensitivity and nurturance, which they believe results in men fearing real closeness with one another and fearing a loss of status if they disclose a vulnerable part of themselves. Thus, intimacy is often hidden behind engaging in some type of activity together, which Stevens (1987) believes only meets the human need for intimacy at a minimal level. A number of authors suggest that these types of relationships do not provide the milieu for sharing emotional issues and problems which may lead to a sense of loneliness, a weak

support system and an over-dependence on women for a sense of intimacy (Kupers, 1993; Aubry, 1992; Strikwerda & May, 1992; Letich, 1991; Meth & Pasick, 1990)

These messages likely also impact men's relationships with women. Bigsby (1994) proposes that, given their experience of disconnecting from their feelings, men may feel less skilled when communicating with a female who appears to be more in tune with her feelings, a factor which could impact the relationship. As well, some authors believe that men receive strong messages that sex and an interest in sex are central features of the male role (Doyle, 1989; Brod, 1987; O'Neil, 1982). Expectations to be independent, self-reliant and tough may limit the intimacy, warmth and affection that comes from connecting with others. Thus, Doyle (1989) believes that sex becomes the medium to gain this intimacy that other messages deny. Doyle (1989), along with Brod (1987), also suggest that numerous sexual myths add further pressure, ranging from beliefs that men are naturally good at sex; the more sexual partners, the more masculine the man; men cannot get enough sex and are always ready and; that sex is all that counts in a relationship. Thus, men's sense of sexuality may be negatively impacted by societal messages, which may lead to a fragile sense of self, insecurity and confusion (Bigsby, 1994; Nelson, 1994; Aubry, 1992; Kivel, 1992; Van Wormer, 1989).

One message that has been given little attention within the literature on gender socialization is with respect to alcohol. More recently, within the alcohol and drug literature, authors are identifying gendered messages around alcohol. For example, Lemle and Mishkind (1989) argue that alcohol consumption is a key component of the male sex

role, whereby drinking is culturally encouraged as a means of affirming one's masculinity.

They suggest that:

“In our culture, alcohol use is a symbol of masculinity.... The symbolic meaning of drinking as masculine is internalized in childhood. A boy's first drink represents a rite of passage into manhood. Along with his first sexual experience, it is one of the fundamental activities by which a boy is initiated as a man, perhaps because more formal rituals have dwindled...By drinking, boys are initiated as men, and men are accepted among peers” (p. 214-215)

Landrine, Bardewell and Dean (1988) also argue that expectations around alcohol consumption are associated with masculinity. The results of their quantitative study indicated that drinking and getting drunk were associated with the traditional male gender role. According to the authors, “these results imply that men may drink more often than women in part because such behavior has been defined as an aspect of the male gender role” and that “...men may experience a need to drink, to drink beer, and to drink to excess in order to live up to this gender expectation and to prove their masculinity” (p.709).

Olenick and Chalmer's (1989) study on gender-specific drinking styles also found that men equate drinking as a part of socializing with friends and that “men, more than women, appear to use alcohol to help them relax socially, overcome shyness and improve communication with others,...to help them be more congenial, and to use it in a gregarious fashion” (p. 327-328). Thus, it appears that one socialization message may be that drinking is an expression of masculinity and another is that it is a method that men use to connect with one another.

Harris (1995) believes that in recent years men are being exposed to many contradictions: on the one hand, men are conditioned to suppress feelings and be self-

reliant, on the other they are expected to be sensitive and nurturing. Balswick (1988) suggests this shift to being more emotionally expressive is difficult since many men are still bound by the early socialization experiences which inhibit expression. If this is so, then as Harris (1995) suggests, it can be very confusing for men and place them in a double-bind, given the contradictory nature of traditional versus modern standards of male behavior. According to Baker and Bakker (1987) a man "...is expected to be "successful" in terms of the old norms but he is also expected -- at the same time -- to remain somewhat aloof from the old set of expectations and explore new, emerging male sex roles", which is made difficult since these old norms "...are reinforced by societal structures such as the legal system, schools, occupational settings, and also primary groups" (p. 332 & 334). For example, Kimbrell (1995) suggests that even when a man challenges messages around fathering and becomes more deeply involved with his children, his contributions are often minimized within the court system, where he is still considered less suitable as a single parent. Thus, Brod (1987) believes that "stress in men's lives is caused not so much by the individual's failure to socialize properly as a male, but by the contradictory demands of the male sex role itself" (p. 271). As well, Grimmell and Stern (1992) suggest that the traditional male role does not allow the outlets needed to deal with the stresses encountered by the contradictions in the role nor the general stresses in daily life. One way of coping may be through the use of alcohol.

Speculative Links to Alcohol Misuse

Lemle and Mishkind (1989) have speculated about a connection between male gender roles and alcohol misuse. It is important to note, though, that such speculation remains unverified, given the lack of research exploring this phenomenon (Aubry, 1992; Lemle & Mishkind, 1989; Van Wormer, 1989). Ritter and Cole (1992), for example, conducted research that supports the theory of male role conflict and gender role stress, however substance abuse had only been tentatively identified as a potential outcome. This link was not directly researched. To date, the links between men's issues and alcohol misuse have come from a variety of sources ranging from clinical observations to men's movement literature that is based primarily on narratives. Although one may argue that it is difficult to assess the accuracy of such literature since one cannot critique what has led up to the observations, it is important for two reasons. First, it provides preliminary ideas from which exploratory studies can emerge. Second, clinical observations and men's movement literature reflect men's experiences, which although not grounded in research are still a valuable source information. Therefore, these speculations will be summarized to provide background for the current study.

A number of authors make reference to the stress of the male gender role and how it limits outlets for coping (Harris, 1995; Kimbrell, 1995; Kupers, 1993; Basow, 1992; Brod, 1992; Grimmell & Stern, 1992; Richmond-Abbott, 1992; Strikwerda & May, 1992; Corneau, 1991; Doyle & Paludi, 1991; Kipnis, 1991; Lister, 1991; Meth & Pasick, 1990; Doyle, 1989; Balswick, 1988; Baker & Bakker, 1987; Brod, 1987; Robinson & Salamon, 1987; Osherson, 1986; Franklin, 1984; O'Neil, 1982). Basow (1992) suggests a link to

alcohol misuse, stating that “since the male gender role emphasizes autonomy and such traits as dominance, aggressiveness, and activity, it is not surprising that men are more prone than women to acting-out disorders, such as substance abuse...” (p. 190).

Unfortunately, Basow does not expand on these ideas. Kupers (1993) and Kipnis (1991) also make a link to alcohol, proposing that since men have no socially prescribed way of dealing with feelings, alcohol is used to repress pain and to “drown” feelings.

Unfortunately, these comments are made only in passing and no elaboration is provided.

Practitioners and authors in the area of family violence and sexual abuse have also made links between men’s issues and the misuse of alcohol. In exploring the issue of men and violence, Kivel (1992) writes at length about men’s socialization experiences and its link to violence against women. Through this process he suggests that men are “trained” to pass on their hurt to others, to move out of feeling powerless by relating to people who are less powerful. When that fails they may turn the violence inward by using alcohol and drugs. According to practitioners at the Vancouver Society for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse (1995a; 1995b), men’s socialization experiences impact the way men cope with sexual abuse experiences. Messages around feelings, self-reliance, sexuality and homosexuality interfere in disclosing sexual abuse and result in men learning to survive by being tough and dissociating from the emotionality of the experience. They often use alcohol to dissociate and to cope with being abused.

Practitioners who work with men with substance misuse issues have speculated about connections between men’s socialization experiences and the misuse of alcohol. Lenfest (1987) interviewed six therapists who he considered to be key figures in the field of

both alcohol treatment and men's issues, asking each to express opinions about men's issues and alcohol misuse. The main ideas that emerged from the therapists were that: (1) men's socialization experiences affect their ability to grieve, such that men often use alcohol to suppress feelings of grief associated with past losses; (2) alcoholism is not about alcohol, but is about filling a gap that exists because of men's loss of identity resulting from being a "work object" and being disconnected from themselves and others; (3) men are socialized to feel inadequate to deal with their feelings, which results in isolation and the use of alcohol to cope and numb feelings; (4) men's lack of intimacy and connection with their fathers as children results in a sense of loss and dependency, with alcohol being used to numb the pain; (5) men's socialization experience limits the healthy outlets to express feelings, so past abuse issues are left unresolved and suppressed rage is turned inward through the use of alcohol, and; (6) recovery needs to involve redefining roles and challenging social norms that restrict and limits men's sense of wholeness.

Other practitioners have made similar observations. In their treatment program for men with substance misuse problems, Ritter and Cole (1992) observed that most men were dealing with "...a profound sense of loss about the father-son relationship" (p. 164) as well as difficulties forming and maintaining close relationships, disconnection from themselves and their feelings, difficulty expressing emotions, and confusion between intimacy and sex, all of which the author's connected to their male socialization experiences. Authors describing another treatment program (Surrey Alcohol and Drug Outpatient Clinic, 1992), suggested that men's socialization experiences result in fears of dependency, vulnerability, self-disclosure, failure and being perceived as "feminine", all of which needs to be

addressed since men need to overcome them in order to work through their substance misuse issues.

In attempts to develop gender-focused treatment groups for men, three separate authors reviewed men's literature and made similar links between alcohol misuse and gender. These links are summarized in the following seven points:

1. Messages to repress, deny and ignore feelings results in pressure building up until it becomes overwhelming, at which time men cope by attempting to escape through the use of alcohol (Bigsby, 1994; Aubry, 1994; Van Wormer, 1989);
2. Men experience a sense of grief and loss over the lack of an involved father figure, given the culturally prescribed role of fathers, which is repressed through the use of alcohol (Aubry, 1992);
3. Given their experiences of disconnecting from their feelings, men may feel at a disadvantage when communicating with a female who appears to be more in tune with her feelings. In response, men may try to gain a sense of equilibrium by using power-over tactics, which result in regret and remorse, which erodes self-esteem and may lead to escapism through alcohol (Bigsby, 1994);
4. Men's socialization experience may lead to a fear of disclosing childhood sexual abuse and result in the man turning to alcohol to numb the pain, grief and shame of the abuse (Bigsby, 1994; Aubry, 1992);
5. Messages that men must be strong and independent, may interfere with the seeking of support, which may lead to a sense of hopelessness and depression,

which may also be numbed or acted out through the use of alcohol (Bigsby, 1994; Aubry, 1992);

6. Given the restrictive and often destructive societal definitions of masculinity that are often so idealized and rigid that they cannot be reached, men may feel shame, guilt and a sense of failure and inadequacy for not being able to meet the stereotype and may turn to alcohol to cope with these feelings (Bigsby, 1994; Aubry, 1992; Van Wormer, 1989), and;
7. One of the culturally sanctioned ways for men to connect with one another and socialize is through drinking (Van Wormer, 1989)

Lemle and Mishkind (1989) elaborate further on this last point. They suggest that messages about drinking being a symbol of masculinity, compounded with numerous messages around what is expected of men, result in many men using alcohol to feel and act more masculine. The outcome is that "...the greater a man's need to shore up his masculine identity, the greater and more frequent would be his alcohol usage -- with alcoholism representing the furthest extreme" (p. 218).

Related Studies

Although the previously described authors have speculated about men's issues and the misuse of alcohol, no research has been conducted to directly explore men's socialization experiences and the misuse of alcohol. Over the years, researchers have focused on the issue of alcohol misuse from a variety of perspectives. Twelve studies appear to have some bearing on this current research.

Two of the twelve studies are somewhat less relevant, given their age. McClelland, Davis, Kalin and Warner (1972) conducted a cross-cultural research study of men who use alcohol. After observing and interpreting various cultural practices, the authors developed a hypothesis that “the typical alcoholic has a power problem: he wants especially to be strong, masculine and assertive, and he has adopted drinking as a way of feeling personally powerful” (p. 314). They also suggested that the need for power emerges from various socialization experiences within the family, culture and society. The second study, conducted by McCord and McCord (1960), was a retrospective study of 510 boys at adulthood to determine the typical alcoholic and to propose a model of alcoholism based on the emergent data. The authors made reference to inadequate modeling of the “male role”, cultural pressures to define the male role according to a stereotype, and the struggle to maintain a masculine self-image, as all impacting the development of the “typical alcoholic”. Both studies have a bearing on this research, in that they suggest a link between men’s socialization experience and the use of alcohol. However, neither describe the socialization experience nor explore it with their participants.

More recently, Christmon and Luckey (1994) conducted a quantitative study to determine whether the stress of early parenting was associated with alcohol and drug use by young fathers. The sample consisted of 48 young fathers compared with 410 peers who had not fathered children, with data collected from a longitudinal study that had gathered information through interviews and alcohol/drug problem scales. The study found that young fathers had a higher frequency of alcohol and drug use. No mention was made of what the link between early parenting and increased alcohol use was for the men. A

second study, conducted by Munro, McBeth and Aubry (1994) was less formal and was based on a sample of 202 men who had completed a three week program within an alcohol and drug treatment facility. The men were asked to respond to open ended questions about what they valued most in early stage treatment and recovery. The key issue identified was the opportunity to connect and to learn to work and relate with other men. The authors speculated that unless this support continued after treatment, higher relapse rates would occur. While reference to male friendships was made, the authors did not explore how it may connect with alcohol misuse. Both studies suggest that the issues of parenting and male friendships are linked to alcohol misuse, yet neither elaborate upon these issues.

Denzin (1987) carried out a phenomenological analysis of men and women's experience of alcohol misuse, with data being drawn primarily from the self-stories of active and recovering alcoholics in Alcoholics Anonymous. Denzin stated that his goal was to present a side of alcoholism that was based on the perspective of an active, drinking alcoholic. Six themes emerged: (1) that alcoholics experience the world differently, given the altered consciousness alcohol produces; (2) alcoholics have social relationships that are distorted by the effects of alcohol and the relationships become alcohol-focused; (3) alcoholics' experience painful emotions, but they are altered and suppressed through the effects of alcohol; (4) alcoholics attempt to deny the existence of their problem; (5) alcoholics believe they are in control of themselves and drink to prove self-control and; (6) recovery begins with accepting powerlessness over alcohol. Unfortunately, the study did not differentiate between men and women's experiences, thus men's gendered experiences were not explored. As well, while it provides clarity on the active-phase of alcohol misuse,

the results pertain only to this stage and cannot be applied to men who are not actively using, since their perspective may be different.

Five studies utilized quantitative methodology to research alcohol use in connection to gender roles. Vanegeren (1994) used a structural analytic model to assess the impact of masculine role strain, social support, and coping styles of alcohol-dependent male veterans. Her sample population was African American men. The results of her study suggested a link between masculine role strain and the development of alcohol dependence. Masculine role strain was associated with decreased social support, although the study did not find social support to be causally related to the misuse of alcohol.

Isenhardt (1993) examined the concept of masculine gender role stress amongst alcohol-dependent male veterans. The sample consisted of 200 male veterans who were receiving inpatient substance abuse treatment, with the data being collected through the use of two standardized measures: Masculine Gender Roles Stress Scale and Alcohol Use Inventory. The study found that men who had higher scores on the Masculine Gender Roles Stress Scale and Sexual Inadequacy and Inadequate Performance subscales also scored higher on measures of alcohol abuse. They hypothesized that “this may indicate that a man who is concerned about his competence or sexual adequacy may use alcohol to enhance his functioning and thus to behave more consistently with the traditional male role” (p. 183).

Kelty (1985) explored the relationship between substance abuse and sex-role identity in men. The sample consisted of 36 substance abusers compared with a control group of 18 psychiatric patients and 18 non-patients. Data was gathered utilizing Henry

Biller's model of sex-role conflict and Jerome Kagan's sex-role conflict paradigm. The results suggested that sex-role conflict may be one factor that contributes to men's substance misuse. Chomack and Collins (1987) conducted a study with a similar focus to Kelty, but with a sample of both men and women. Seventy-two men and 75 women completed two instruments: a shortened version of the Sex Role Behavior Scale-2 and The Drinking Habits Questionnaire. For men, higher sex-role behavior scores were associated with increased alcohol consumption, although there was no support for the hypothesis that sex-role conflict actually leads to increased alcohol consumption.

Snell, Belk and Hawkins (1987) explored whether the relationship between stress and substance use was influenced by the masculine role and masculine and feminine traits, which were measured by the Masculine Role Inventory and Extended Personal Attributes Questionnaire. The sample consisted of 567 male and female undergraduate students. The findings were correlational in nature and indicated that both men and women who scored higher on the Masculine Role Inventory had higher levels of alcohol use.

These five studies connect gender roles to the misuse of alcohol. As quantitative research endeavors, they rely on empirically constructed definitions of gender roles. Gender roles are precisely defined within the boundaries of the measurement instrument, thus are limited to these parameters and are not broadly explored with the participants. A qualitative study could expand on these constructs and provide more detailed information about links between gender roles and alcohol misuse.

The two studies that appear to be most relevant to the current research utilized qualitative methodology to explore the underlying issues connected with alcohol use.

Wylie and Casswell (1991) conducted a study to identify the underlying psychological dynamics that influenced drinking behavior in young men. Data was gathered from two group discussions (one with 8 members, one with 7 members) along with individual interviews with 10 men who did not participate in the group discussions. The themes that emerged centered around low self-esteem, the need for peer group acceptance and poor relationships with women, with alcohol being used as a way of fitting in. The authors also made reference to the impact of New Zealand's culture which emphasizes male bonding through drinking, suggesting a further link between men's socialization experiences and the use of alcohol. But like previous studies, these socialization experiences were not the major focus of the study and thus were not explored. As well, the participants were not identified as misusers of alcohol, only as "heavy drinkers".

The second study was conducted by Forth-Finegan (1991). She explored the meaning of gender socialization through qualitative methodology that utilized in-depth semi-structured interviews which explored women's childhood experiences and their addiction to alcohol. Forth-Finegan specifically set out to study "the life experiences of the woman alcoholic, and whether or not gender socialization and gender role expectations were related to the course of her alcoholism and recovery career" (p. 83). The women participants made connections between gender socialization and their experience with alcohol, with re-socialization being an aspect of their recovery. The results suggest that gender socialization plays a role in women's experience of alcohol misuse, which may imply that exploration of men's experiences of gender socialization and its role in their use of alcohol may be useful. In fact, one of Forth-Finegan's recommendations for future

research was to explore whether the implications for the male child who chooses to reject traditional gender expectations were similar to her findings for women.

Rationale for the Current Study

The focus of this study is to explore the phenomenon of gender socialization in the lives of men who are recovering from an identified misuse of alcohol, through a qualitative approach that captures their lived experience.

The rationale for this study is twofold. Firstly, there is an increasing body of literature that is exploring men's issues. As issues of gender socialization are addressed, several authors are linking the use of alcohol to a way of coping with the restrictions of this gender role (Biggsby, 1994; Kupers, 1993; Aubry, 1992; Kivel, 1992; Van Den Bergh, 1991; Van Wormer, 1989). Yet, the implications of this for those who treat men who misuse alcohol has not been directly explored. According to Aubry (1992), research specifically related to men's issues in substance abuse treatment does not yet appear to exist. Thus, this study provides thick descriptions of lived experiences at an exploratory level that directly relates to the issue of alcohol misuse.

Secondly, there appears to be a growing movement towards gender-specific group treatment for women, since it is believed that the needs of women can be better addressed within a women's only group (Biggsby, 1994; Harmer, 1994; McConnel, 1994). As women's programs are being developed, groups that were once mixed-gendered are losing their female participants and are becoming male-only by default, yet the focus, philosophy and objectives of the group have not changed to address men's issues (Aubry, 1992).

While some programs are beginning to move towards developing groups for men that specifically focus on men's issues in recovery (Munro, McBeth & Aubry, 1994), there is limited research on men's needs, as identified by men, to guide program development. Thus, this study provides information that could be helpful for future men's programming, in the field of alcohol.

Relevance to Social Work

This study is relevant to the profession of social work for a number of reasons. One of the strengths of the social work profession is its' emphasis on the impact of the environment, which examines the individual out of isolation, looking at a number of dynamics that impact and shape them, resulting in a more systemic approach. Men and women's unique experiences as gendered beings are a part of this system. This study will hopefully add to the knowledge base by exploring the impact of gender socialization on men's misuse of alcohol, a phenomenon which, according to Aubry (1992), is only beginning to be explored. The knowledge gained through this study may also be relevant to social work at practice and program development levels. There is limited research on men's needs, as identified by men, to guide practitioners and program development. Since social workers are one of a number of professionals who offer treatment for substance misuse, this study would appear to be relevant to the social work profession.

Summary

Support for the feasibility of the current study and the need for further exploration into male socialization experiences has been established through a review of the published research and clinical literature. No studies which relate specifically to men's socialization experiences and the misuse of alcohol were found. The studies which were related to the focus of the current research were outlined to identify the gaps and weakness in the literature, to support the need for this study and to provide guidance in methodological considerations.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology used to conduct the current research. The rationale for choosing a mainstream approach to qualitative research is addressed in the first two sections. Following this is an explanation of how participants were solicited for this study, including how the participants were sought, from whom, and by what criteria. The next two sections address the procedures involved in the collection and analysis of data, both of which demonstrate the integrity of this study. A summary of the ethical issues addressed prior to undertaking this study and throughout the process of this study, including informed consent, confidentiality and management of information, as well as ethical issues specific to the study are presented. Finally, the steps that were taken to establish trustworthiness are addressed by looking at the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Methodological Approach

Rationale for Qualitative Methodology

I chose qualitative methodology for a number of reasons. The literature review suggests that at the stage of knowledge building where little is known about the problem area, a qualitative study is an appropriate methodological choice (Rothery, Tutty, & Grinnell, 1996a). Reid and Smith (1989) believe that a preliminary understanding of a

phenomenon is needed to yield a sense of what is possible in order for future studies to have a basis upon which to build hypotheses. At this point, developing a hypothesis based on the limited knowledge available on men's socialization and alcohol misuse is premature. According to a number of authors, a qualitative study is best suited for exploring what is possible, given the richness and depth of understanding that is produced (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Reid & Smith, 1989; McCracken, 1988; Stainback & Stainback, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Another reason for using qualitative methodology is the concepts being studied. The previous chapter outlined a gap in the literature where the few existing studies relied on standardized measures to define aspects of the socialization experience which were linked to alcohol misuse. A qualitative study could add to this knowledge base by providing depth and detail to the socialization process as experienced by men, given the "...complexity-capturing ability of qualitative..." research (McCracken, 1988, p. 16). Glesne and Peshkin (1992) believe that a qualitative study can build on the precision of quantitative methodologies, since qualitative studies produce data that is often broader and more detailed. An exploration of the phenomenon, based on in-depth interviews of men who have an identified misuse of alcohol, would, according to Rogers and Bouey (1996), provide knowledge of a more detailed nature and would capture their experience in a more profound and personal way.

Rationale for “Mainstream” Approach

Within the field of qualitative research, there are numerous approaches. Authors such as Glesne and Peshkin (1992), Patton (1990), and Stainback and Stainback (1988) believe that even though all qualitative studies have naturalistic principles in common, each approach has its' own theoretical perspective or philosophical orientation that guides the research process. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) argue that when the historical roots, assumptions, focuses and methods are compared, each orientation can be quite distinct. Yet others have argued that following one theoretical perspective is not always possible or feasible. For example, Bryman and Burgess (1994) have noted that even when grounded theory is cited as an approach, “rarely is there a genuine interweaving of data collection and theorizing of the kind advocated by Glaser and Straus” (p. 6). Thus, more and more researchers and authors are advocating drawing from a variety of theoretical perspectives and mixing techniques in order to produce a more comprehensive and practical approach (Berg, 1995; Bryman & Burgess, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Patton, 1990; Robson & Foster, 1989; McCracken, 1988; Lofland & Lofland, 1984). Robson and Foster (1989, p. 1) argue that “it is inappropriate for qualitative researchers to be a “purist” in their approach...” and Patton (1990, p. 89) believes that it “...is not necessary...to swear vows of allegiance to any single epistemological perspective to use qualitative methods”. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) also argue that one “...should be open to learning about social phenomena from a variety of perspectives...” (p. 10) and develop more of what Berg (1995) describes as a “mainstream” approach.

According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992) and McCracken (1988), a mainstream approach also allows the researcher the flexibility to conduct the literature review prior to data collection. I felt it was necessary to begin to review the literature prior to commencing this study in order to confirm that minimal research had been conducted focusing on men's issues and alcohol.

Participants

Participants sought for this study were to meet the following criteria: (1) they were men who were recovering from an identified misuse of alcohol; (2) alcohol was their primary substance of choice; (3) they had an interest in exploring their male socialization experience, and; (4) they were currently seeing a counselor within the alcohol and drug system. The rationale for this sampling criteria was to ensure that the sample focused on the research goal.

The first criterion was in direct relation to the research goal. The term "misuse of alcohol" was purposefully used instead of terms such as "alcoholic" or "alcohol addiction", given that it is more inclusive and does not label. The terms "recovering" and "identified" were used to ensure that the focus of the study was on men who were past the stage of denial (Denzin, 1987) and were at a point where they recognized that they had a problem with alcohol and were motivated to stop using. This is important, given that the focus of the study was not on exploring whether or not someone was struggling with alcohol, but was based on the assumption that they had already identified that they misused alcohol. The term "recovering" gave some assurance that the men were not actively using at the time

of the study, while at the same time recognized that the recovery process often involves relapses. As such, length of sobriety was not stipulated.

To ensure that the study remained focused on the misuse of alcohol, the second criterion was established. The term “primary substance of choice” implies that even if the men used other substances, they viewed alcohol as their main substance problem. This delimitation was made given that the focus of the study was on alcohol and considerations were not made for the various dynamics that could have emerged from the use of other substances, such as cocaine.

The rationale for the third criterion was to ensure that the participants were open to the idea of exploring their beliefs, feelings, thoughts and experiences in relation to being male. The term “male socialization experience” was left as a broad term to be defined and explored by the men according to how they experienced and gave meaning to it.

The rationale for the fourth criteria (having an alcohol and drug counselor) was twofold. As previously mentioned, the label “alcoholic” can be disempowering for some, thus, was not used in the study unless the man referred to himself in this manner. Since the term “misuse” can be interpreted in many ways, having a counselor within the alcohol and drug system ensured that the man’s misuse of alcohol was an issue. The second more important reason was to ensure that the men had support in case the interview process stirred up issues that put them at risk of relapsing.

By deliberately establishing the above-mentioned criteria, purposive sampling was used. Reid and Smith (1989) argue that when a study is primarily exploratory, as this one was, it is important to form a sample that is typical not of the general population but of the

focus of the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) add to this, suggesting that even when purposive sampling is used, it is important to ensure that the sample is selected in a way that will ensure the broadest range of information within a preset context. The above criteria was open enough to ensure a broad range of information, yet specific enough to meet the needs of the study.

Participants for this study were solicited from two Alcohol and Drug Out-patient Clinics in the city of Burnaby. Both clinics are accountable to the same governing body, thus provide similar services, but in two separate areas within the city of Burnaby. Counselors from the first clinic passed the advertisements (Appendix I) on to their male clients. Through this process, two men volunteered for the study. The second clinic operated a weekly drop-in support group for men only and agreed to pass on the advertisements for participants to the client advocates for the men's only group. The rationale for this method of soliciting participants was based primarily on the expressed need of the clinic. Since the decision to participate was client-driven, the agency need not be involved. I also made two informal presentations to two men's groups: one information group (mixed) and one drop-in support group for men-only. The focus of this drop-in support group was to provide weekly opportunities for men to connect with other non-drinking men, to share common concerns, and to learn relapse prevention and life skills (South Burnaby Alcohol and Drug Outpatient Clinic, 1994). On both occasions the study was briefly explained, the advertisements handed to those who expressed interest and general questions were answered. Without my direct involvement, individual counselors also became aware of the study through word-of-mouth and informally passed on the

information to their clients. Through this process of advertising, four men volunteered for the study: one from the men's drop-in group and three by word-of-mouth.

No new participants were solicited after the sixth interview. Qualitative researchers are concerned with saturation of information, thus, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the appropriate sample size is based primarily on when the information being gathered becomes redundant and no new themes emerge. In this study the criterion was met after six interviews.

Data Collection

Given the exploratory nature of the study, an unstructured interview format was used. This choice is supported within the qualitative research literature, where it has been suggested that an unstructured interview is appropriate when little is known of the phenomenon (Reid & Smith, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The rationale for utilizing an unstructured interview was also based on the type of data that it elicits. Since questions are asked in direct response to what the participant shares, a number of authors believe that an unstructured interview tends to be more spontaneous, interactive and individualized which can lead to more in-depth conversations and richer data (Rogers & Bouey, 1996; Patton, 1990; Reid & Smith, 1989). According to Patton (1990) an unstructured interview would also allow the participants' reality of being men who misuse alcohol to emerge in their own voice. A number of authors believe that by exploring certain topics rather than asking specific pre-determined questions within each topic, the interview elicits information based

on the participants' perspective of each topic rather than the interviewer's preconceived perspective (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Patton, 1990; Reid & Smith, 1989).

In keeping with this unstructured format, an interview guide was not utilized. Instead, the participants were informed at the beginning of the interview what general topics would be explored during the interview (Appendix III). The rationale for providing this brief outline to the participants was two-fold. First of all, it outlined the focus of the study and how the interview would proceed. And secondly, it emphasized the interactive and free-flowing nature of interview.

Data was collected through in-depth , in-person interviews with each participant, lasting an average of ninety minutes, with a range from sixty-five minutes to one hundred and ten minutes. According to Reid and Smith (1988), in-person interviews elicit information in greater depth and in larger amounts and are "...particularly useful for obtaining data on topics that are complex, highly sensitive, emotionally laden, or relatively unexplored" (p. 213) making it a solid data collection choice for the current study. The interviews were audio-taped and, in addition, I took notes after each interview to comment on impressions, reactions, hunches and general observations about the interview process. These journal notes were kept in a systematic manner, as outlined later.

The setting for these interviews was the agency where the participant attended counseling. The rationale for utilizing this setting was that it was neutral ground, it was familiar to the participant and it was more likely to be a place that was associated with focusing on alcohol issues. Steps were taken in order to ensure that the participant understood that a research interview was different than the therapeutic interviews he may

have associated with the agency (Rogers & Bouey, 1996). This was accomplished during the initial telephone contact with the participant, in which the interview process was explained. As well, during the first stage of the interview the research interview process was outlined again in more detail.

A small amount of demographic information was gathered from each of the participants in order to determine their exposure to discussing men's issues, their misuse of other substances, length of sobriety, race and age. This information was gathered at the end of the interview and recorded by the author on a demographic sheet (Appendix IV). The rationale for asking these questions was based on an acknowledgment of factors that could influence the men's socialization experiences and their level of awareness.

Data Analysis

Originally the data analysis was to take place throughout the interviewing phase, since Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Lofland and Lofland (1984) suggest that this helps to facilitate an evolution in the data collection where successive interviews can be influenced by emerging data. The extent to which the data analysis was addressed during data collection was limited to extensive process notes which highlighted emerging themes and the clarity and insight that was gained through the transcription of the audio-tapes. Further data analysis was not possible given the limited time in between interviews as well as the time-consuming task of transcribing the data. Nonetheless, this process did accomplish the goal of facilitating the evolution of data collection, with successive interviews being influenced by the emerging data. Through the process of writing process notes and

transcribing the tapes in between interviews, I made note of emerging themes which guided some of the questions that were asked in successive interviews. Thus, each interview built on the previous interview, as a way of checking out the similarities in experiences. In this way, the interviews became somewhat more focused as they progressed, in the sense of exploring emerging themes, yet remained unstructured in order to spontaneously respond to the participant's experience.

According to a number of authors, another ongoing component of data analysis is the recording of ideas and impressions that emerge throughout the data collection phase (Bryman & Burgess, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Patton, 1990). These analytical insights were consistently recorded to produce a very detailed, comprehensive journal. In addition, journal notes describing methodology choices and decisions, as well as coding notes, memos, and rules were kept throughout the study, in a separate computer file.

All interviews were transcribed via word-processor, verbatim and in their complete form. Coleman and Unrau (1996) support the researcher completing the transcription, since they believe that it allows the researcher to become thoroughly familiar with the content of the interviews, which aids in the data analysis process.

Two general approaches to data analysis have been suggested: one that moves from broad themes to smaller, distinct issues; and another that moves from small units to broad themes (Coleman & Unrau, 1996; Bryman & Burgess, 1994). The latter is descriptive of a constant comparative method that is commonly used and supported within the qualitative research literature (Berg, 1995; Bryman & Burgess, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and was utilized within this study. A number of

authors believe that the coding process needs to be systematic since this reduces the likelihood of biased results and allows the themes to emerge from the data which better reflects the shared, common experiences and meanings of the research participants (Patton, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process was strictly adhered to, with extensive notes taken throughout all levels of coding.

After the transcription was completed meaning units were identified in the first three transcripts. Categories were then identified in the first interview, with extensive notes being taken during the categorization of meaning units. During the constant comparative categorizing, I re-wrote the rules for several of the categories. After the first interview, a list of categories and brief rules which outlined the perimeters of the meaning units within each category was constructed. Analysis continued with the second transcript, then the third, following the same pattern, again making extensive notes throughout. Meaning units were then identified for interviews four to six. By the time the fifth interview was categorized, it became clear that meaning units were fitting into the category rules easily and few new categories were needed. By the sixth interview, it was apparent that the criterion of saturation had been met. Throughout this process, records were kept of my ongoing reflections, which also verified the experience of category saturation. Codes were then assigned, and the categories were further refined and reorganized. The final categories were reviewed to ensure that there were no overlaps or gaps and the rules were reviewed to ensure that they were distinct, clear and polished. This was supported by the fact that the miscellaneous pile accounted for less than six percent of all meaning units (5.197%) which is well within acceptable parameters, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985). Thus, first

level coding was completed in a thorough and methodical manner, with extensive journal notes being taken throughout the process.

During the latter stages of first-level coding, my initial thoughts on emerging themes and ideas around how the categories might interact with one another were consistently recorded. During second-level coding these ideas and impressions were further refined, with the rationale for each being carefully documented. Diagrams were used to visually explore connections between categories and to expose gaps in the data, which is encouraged by Glesne and Peshkin (1992) as well as Miles and Huberman (1984). In order to ensure that this analysis was methodical and disciplined, yet allow the researcher to respond to interpretations and themes that seemed to be emerging, I relied on extensive note-taking, recording all thoughts and ideas whether or not they moved into interpretations. These ideas were then analyzed to determine whether they were biased by: (1) keeping a record of the similarities between ideas by comparing the different themes that roughly developed; (2) putting those ideas aside and methodically exploring the categories again to see if they were similar in other ways, keeping any interpretations separate; and (3) after looking at all the possibilities, determining which best represent the participant's voice, again, separate from interpretations. By slowing the process down, by methodically completing the task of comparing categories without jumping ahead to interpretations and by keeping ongoing and accurate notes, credibility was heightened.

Once second-level coding of the themes was completed the analysis moved into looking for meaning and relationships. According to Patton (1990), once the themes emerge a final step in the data analysis is the interpreting of data, which involves going

beyond the descriptive data to identify relationships between major themes and sharing the insights, by way of statements describing speculations, interpretations, hypotheses and/or theory. This process was aided by the use of diagrams, a matrix and meticulous note taking of ideas, thoughts, and impressions. These techniques, particularly the use of diagrams and matrices, are supported by a number of authors as being effective methods for looking for meaning (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Miles & Huberman, 1984). Another analysis tool that was used was a form of content analysis (Berg, 1995; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), whereby a tally sheet was created in order to count the number of times each participant made reference to a particular category (see Appendix VI). This technique is also well supported in the research literature as a method for determining, identifying and verifying patterns in a manner that increases the credibility of the researcher, given its analytical nature (Berg, 1995; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1984). Two major themes and six sub-themes emerged from this analysis, which captures the lived experiences of the men. After the themes were written up a final diagram was created, which Glesne and Peshkin (1992) suggests helps to summarize the interactions between themes and acts as a final presentation of the study.

Ethical Considerations

Since this study involved working closely with human subjects through the in-depth interviews, numerous ethical issues were considered prior to the commencement of the study. According to a number of authors, the primary concerns include informed consent, confidentiality and management of information, as well as ethical issues specific to the

study, such as the potential risks to participants (Rothery, Tutty, & Grinnell, 1996b; Patton, 1990). These concerns have been addressed in this study in a manner that ensures a strict adherence to ethics.

To ensure that participant's consent to take part in this study was truly informed, a two-tiered information system was set up. At the first stage, when participants were being solicited, an information sheet was provided that outlined the purpose and focus of the study, the time commitment involved, and the type of participants needed (See Appendix I). This provided potential participants with basic information to assess whether or not they were comfortable with the focus and format of the study, thus allowing them to make an informed decision. The consent form was the second stage of ensuring informed consent (See Appendix II). It explained the process of informed consent and elaborated on the voluntary nature of the study, participants' rights and the study's procedures as well as the precautions that were to be taken to ensure confidentiality. To further ensure that this second stage was adhered to, informed consent was also addressed in an ongoing manner. As was outlined on the consent form, participation within the study relied on ongoing consent which could be gained through asking questions and clarification whenever it was needed. An open invitation was made to the participants to ask questions whenever they came up. Rather than leaving the responsibility for this solely to the participant, I also checked to see if there were any questions at the start of the interview and made periodic checks as the interview progressed. In addition, I checked with the participant whenever a non-verbal behavior indicated possible confusion.

Confidentiality was a further ethical consideration that was addressed in the interview consent form and at the beginning of the interview. The following steps were taken to ensure confidentiality: (1) the use of first names only, in a personal journal that was kept for the purposes of contacting participants; (2) the use of a code number on tapes and documents; (3) the deletion or disguise of any personal identifying information within the written document; (4) the researcher being responsible for the transcription of the interview tapes; (5) the counselors not being notified of participation; (6) an explanation of the three limits to confidentiality (See Appendix II), and; (7) the steps taken in the management of information.

The management of information was addressed in the interview consent form. The steps taken included: (1) the storage of the audio tapes in a locked desk in a secure personal office; (2) the tapes being destroyed within three months of the interview, and; (3) the availability of the final report as a public document.

The final ethical issue that was considered was whether or not there were any potential risks to participating in the study. When working in the field of alcohol, an issue to take into consideration is the risk of relapsing as a result of exploring issues related to alcohol misuse. Since a previous pattern of dealing with uncomfortable feelings may have been to use alcohol, it was important that the study participants have an alternative in place, in case uncomfortable feelings or issues emerged during the interview. One protection against this risk was to ensure that all of the study participants had access to an individual counselor. In addition, I explained at the beginning of the interview that the participant could chose not to explore a question with which they felt uncomfortable and that they

could stop the interview at any point if they did not feel safe continuing. None of the participants chose not to explore a question, nor asked to discontinue the interview. Two participants asked to take a brief bathroom/smoke break and later commented that it helped them to re-collect their thoughts. Both noted that they were comfortable continuing when they returned.

Trustworthiness

In order to ensure that the results of a study are accurate and reliable the researcher must establish the trustworthiness of the methods and procedures utilized within the study. Quantitative studies use terms such as “internal and external validity”, “reliability” and “objectivity” to establish the legitimacy of the results, while qualitative studies use terms that better reflect the naturalistic approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to McClelland and Austin (1996), terms such as “credibility”, “transferability”, “dependability” and “confirmability” are the standards that provide evidence of trustworthiness in a qualitative study. Numerous steps were taken during this study to establish trustworthiness.

Credibility is one measure of trustworthiness. In a qualitative study the interviewer is the data gathering tool and it is also the interviewer’s judgments and interpretations that are central to the analysis of the data. Thus, the credibility of the study is based on the believability of the interviewer/researcher. This has been established within this study through the use of a detailed journal throughout the study as well through the completion of a member check (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that a journal include: (1) methodological notes consisting of daily activities, decision making rules and

procedures, and rationales for procedures, decisions and conclusions; (2) personal notes consisting of reflective notes taken after each interview, personal reactions to the study, speculations about growing insights and future research plans and; (3) an inventory of biases and preconceptions including reflections and steps to control the effects of biases. These journal topics were methodically addressed throughout the study, in one of two journals: a data collection journal and a data analysis journal.

Biases, preconceptions and the actions taken to address these issues were systematically recorded in either journals depending on the stage in the study where these insights emerged. During the data collection phase, one preconception was that the men would be able to identify socialization messages more easily. The actions taken to ensure that this preconception did not bias the interview process were to: (a) accept that this might be difficult to explore and allow for pauses in the interview to give more time to think (b) use paraphrasing, summarizing and depth-probing to get the men to elaborate when they were having difficulty going into more detail; (c) if an experience they shared sounded like it connected to their socialization experience I would say something to the effect "I'm not sure if this fits for you or not. It sounds like..." With this tentative, less leading approach, the men readily told me in what way it fit or did not fit, and; (e) the use of a journal to assess the actions taken to control for biases. An example of a potential bias that came up during

data analysis and the steps taken to address it are explained in the following journal excerpt:

July 18, 1996: I realize that analysis needs to be methodical and disciplined. I want to avoid jumping to conclusions or letting my own thoughts and ideas bias how the data emerges. At the same time though, I couldn't ignore the fact that a number of ideas were taking shape in my head. I didn't want to impede the spontaneous

thoughts by stopping to ask myself “Am I jumping ahead?” “Is this my bias?”. I wanted to allow my creativity to flow, let my mind wander and write every thought down. By doing so, I could then proceed in a number of ways to analyze my ideas to determine whether they were biased. I could: (1) keep a record of the similarities between my ideas by comparing the different themes I roughly developed; (2) put those ideas on a shelf and go back and look at all the categories to see if they were similar in other ways, keeping any interpretations separate; and (3) after looking at all the possibilities, determine which best represents the participants’ voice, again, separate from interpretations. So basically, I’ve allowed my mind to wander where it wants to go, which captures my “gut” feelings and creativity. Then, I’ve slowed the process down, by methodically completing task 4b: comparing categories, without allowing myself to jump ahead to interpreting or allowing myself to be influenced by my interpretations.

Thus, through the journaling process, biases and preconceptions were addressed in order to ensure that they did not adversely influence the study.

The data collection journal recorded notes on all stages of the data collection, including personal notes on gaining access to agencies, telephone contacts with participants and extensive reflective notes during and after interviews. Reminder notes were placed in the journal to aid in the reflection process after each interview (see Appendix V).

Immediately after each interview I carefully responded to each reminder note in order to thoroughly reflect on the interview process. These notes were then entered into a computer, where additional observations were made and dated. Reflective notes were also made during the transcription of the interviews. An example of a reflective note is shown in the following journal excerpt:

June 14, 1996 - Interview 05 (Immediately after interview) Well, once again, I feel really good. It’s fascinating delving into men’s experiences. He was so real and honest (like 02 and 04). I think he had many valuable things to say that fit very well with this study -- very useable. I did observe the same thing that I have in other interviews -- when I ask about men’s issues/experiences that connect to alcohol use, the men tend to only focus on a few (i.e. men and drinking, socializing) but don’t categorize all the other things we may have been talking about as men’s issues (i.e.. relationship with father, powerlessness, messages to be in control, handle things on

own, don't show emotion). I think they just use different language and categorize it differently. I did check that one in this interview and he agreed -- said he did see those things as men's issues (I'm not sure if he said he just uses different language, but I did feel like he agreed with my observation -- check transcript). This has left me feeling somewhat.... I don't know the word. I guess it supports what I've been seeing.

This reflection process was strictly adhered to, resulting in a twenty-six page single-spaced typed journal, which documented all levels of reflection in the data collection phase

Methodological notes were kept in a data analysis journal and were recorded throughout the data analysis process. Analytical insights were consistently recorded to produce a very detailed, comprehensive journal. In addition, journal notes describing methodology choices and decisions, as well as coding notes, memos, and rules were kept throughout the study. The following is an excerpt from my data analysis journal:

I think I have done a very thorough and methodical job of "Refining and Reorganizing Coding". I have become very clear about why I created categories and through the process of asking myself "Why did I create this category" I was able to re-organize the categories in a way that made sense and eliminate categories that did not have a sound basis for being created. By carefully analyzing categories I was able to distinguish whether a category was too complex and needed to be set up as two separate categories. I reviewed all the categories to see how the meaning units fit, analyzed what made a meaning unit fit, and tightened the rules to ensure that there was no vagueness about where a category fit.

Once again, this process was strictly adhered to, resulting in an eighty-six page single-spaced journal which documented all levels of the data analysis process.

In addition to the use of a journal to establish credibility, I also conducted a member check. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member checks are a strong tool for establishing credibility in that they directly test the accuracy of the findings and interpretations through the feedback of the participants involved in the study. The member

check occurred after the themes were written up, and consisted of an individual interview with three of the six participants. At this time, I orally presented the results of the study and encouraged the participants to ask questions and to offer feedback on the accuracy of the interpretations.

The credibility of the researcher was also demonstrated through following a systematic plan to guide the data analysis, which ensures that analytic procedures were repeated and applied to each unit of data, which Coleman and Unrau (1996) suggests guards against biased results. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) a high standard of unassignable cards would be within 5-7% of the total, which they believe would ensure the accuracy of the category set. The credibility of the methodology and in turn, the researcher is supported by maintaining this standard. Within this study, upon completion of first level coding the miscellaneous pile consisted of only 5.197% of the total category set, thus establishing a high level of credibility.

According to a number of authors, the standards set to meet the criteria of credibility also help to meet the criteria of dependability, which refers to the level of consistency within the study (Coleman & Unrau, 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The comprehensive journal attests to the rigorous steps taken to ensure that the results are based on consistent analytic procedures. Coleman and Unrau (1996) believe that the member check also supports the dependability of the study, given the participant's confirmation of the accuracy of the results. A third measure of trustworthiness is transferability. In qualitative research transferability is different than the external validity of a quantitative study, since, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the intent of qualitative research is not to produce

generalizable information but is to produce richness and depth of information. Nonetheless, qualitative research still needs to address whether or not the interpretations made within the context of the study might relate to a context outside of the study. Unlike quantitative research, where this is statistically proven, qualitative research leaves this question open-ended and allows the reader to be the judge of whether or not the data and interpretations can be moved beyond the context of the study. According to a number of authors, this is accomplished by providing thick descriptions through direct quotations and contextual data, to give sufficient information about the study for an outsider to decide on its transferability (McClelland & Austin, 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In describing the themes that emerged from the interviews, direct quotations of the participants' have been heavily emphasized, in order to ensure that the lived experiences of the men is captured and relayed to the reader. In this way, transferability has been addressed in this study

The final method of establishing trustworthiness is through meeting the criteria of confirmability. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), confirmability is the quantitative equivalent to objectivity and refers to the degree to which the findings of the study are grounded in data rather than researcher bias. This has been demonstrated through the establishment of an audit trail. According to a number of authors, verbatim transcriptions along with the journal, with its comprehensive notes on the interviews, methodologies, biases and preconceptions and personal observations, establish a map that can be followed that demonstrates the neutrality of the researcher (McClelland & Austin, 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Summary

This study has been conducted according to rigorous methodological procedures as outlined in this chapter. A rationale has been presented supporting the utilization of a mainstream qualitative approach to exploring men's socialization experiences and the misuse of alcohol. The strength of this study was further established through the explanation of sampling procedures, the extensive procedures involved in the collection and analysis of data, the strict adherence to ethics and the steps taken to establish trustworthiness. These data analysis procedures produced two central themes and six sub-themes that capture the lived experiences of the men in this study and will be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents data collected during in-depth interviews of the six male participants in this study. The data was collected and analyzed with strict adherence to the methodological procedures outlined in the previous chapter. A brief description of the participants in this study is provided, followed by an outline of the themes that emerged from the interviews. The emphasis in this chapter is on the presentation of each of these themes, relying heavily on direct quotations from the men, in order to ensure that the experiences are captured and relayed to the reader in a more profound and personal way (Rogers & Bouey, 1996). Pseudonyms are used to reference the quotations, in order to further personalize and humanize the data, yet still protect the anonymity of the participants.

Profile of Participants

The ages of the six participants ranged from 44 to 51, with the mean age being 48.5 years. The length of sobriety experienced by the majority of the men in this study was quite short. The range included: three weeks (Mark), one month (Joe), two months (Bill), three months (Sam), nine months (John) and two years (Bob). All of the men were Caucasian, with alcohol being their primary substance of choice. No participant identified having misused any other substance. One participant, Joe, mentioned that he was currently prescribed Valium, but this was not being misused and was being monitored by his doctor.

A second participant, Mark, used marijuana in his teens and twenties, but noted that he had easily stopped and did not see it as a substance that he misused. Two of the men were married (Sam and Bill), three were divorced (Bob, Joe and John) and one was single (Mark). Four of the men were also fathers (Bob, Sam, John and Bill). Sam and Bill were employed full-time, Bob and Bill were unemployed and Mark fluctuated between being employed and unemployed in manual labour jobs. John had recently been fired from a long-term full-time job, with the reason related to his use of alcohol. Sam, Joe, John and Bill had high school educations, Bob had a university education and Mark had briefly attended university, but did not complete.

Four of the six study participants (Bob, Joe, John and Mark) were solicited from an agency that offered a men's only drop-in group. However, only one of these four men attended the group regularly. This participant, Bob, seemed to have more of an awareness of points that he wanted to address in the interview and the links between men's issues and his use of alcohol. Although I was initially concerned that he might be too different from other participants, as the interview process continued it became apparent that there were numerous parallels between his experiences and the others'. This was confirmed during the data analysis. Of the remaining three participants solicited from the first agency, Mark had exposure to two recovery house groups where men's issues were discussed and John had occasionally discussed men's issues with his individual counsellor. The final participant from this agency, Joe, had not talked about men's issues within a group or individual session prior to the research interview. The two participants who had been solicited from

the second agency (Sam and Bill) had no previous exposure to formal discussions of men's issues.

Presentation of Themes

Through the process of coding and analyzing the data from the in-depth interviews with the six male participants, themes and sub-themes emerged that captured the experiences of the men as it related to their socialization and the misuse of alcohol. By careful attention to how findings overlapped and through a final process of reorganization, two central themes, six sub-themes and 26 categories were identified. The first theme was a collection of beliefs about being male. Four central beliefs (sub-themes) emerged; (1) don't show feelings, (2) be self-reliant, (3) real men drink, and (4) fit the mold. As outlined in the previous chapter, content analysis was used to document how many of the participants made reference to their experience of being male through various messages. In keeping with this, I developed a table to count the number of times meaning units appeared for each category that related to messages (Appendix VI). This analysis supported theme one.

The second theme was the collection of experiences in which alcohol was used as a way of coping. This theme describes early experiences where alcohol was seen as beneficial in some way, to later experiences that highlighted the benefits of alcohol as a way of coping. Table 1 illustrates the categories and sub-themes under each theme.

Table 1: Summary of Results

THEME 1: BELIEFS ABOUT BEING MALE

Sub-theme 1: Don't Show Feelings

- Category 1: Be tough and in control
- Category 2: Feelings are not okay
- Category 3: Don't do anything "feminine"

Sub-theme 2: Be Self-reliant

- Category 4: Don't ask for support
- Category 5: Don't be too close
- Category 6: Male role model (lack of closeness)
- Category 7: Male friendships (not sharing problems)

Sub-theme 3: Real Men Drink

- Category 8: Messages about drinking from peers and media
- Category 9: Early exposure to alcohol
- Category 10: Drinking with friends
- Category 11: Drinking associated with work

Sub-theme 4: Fit the Mold

- Category 12: Be the financial provider
- Category 13: Be married
- Category 14: Be a good father
- Category 15: Be successful
- Category 16: Look a certain way
- Category 17: Be sexually active
- Category 18: Meet other's expectations

THEME 2: USING ALCOHOL AS A WAY OF COPING

Sub-theme 5: Benefits of Alcohol

- Category 19: Escape from problems/feelings
- Category 20: Feel more accepted
- Category 21: Have fun

Sub-theme 6: Drinking to Cope

- Category 22: Family problems
- Category 23: Loss
- Category 24: Powerlessness
- Category 25: Pressures
- Category 26: Recovery needs

THEME 1: BELIEFS ABOUT BEING MALE

From a very early age, both men and women are exposed to messages around what is expected of them as a male or a female. This first theme, entitled “beliefs about being male” contains the messages that participants identified around what was expected of them as males. During the data analysis, four key beliefs emerged as sub-themes, drawn from 18 categories. Each of the four beliefs will be addressed separately.

Don't Show Feelings

For the participants in this study, a strong belief emerged that it is not okay for men to show their feelings. This message took a variety of forms. All six of the participants reported being exposed to messages that men were to uphold a certain image that was based on being tough and in control:

Tough. You were supposed to be impervious to pain. Willing to take risk. Major risk. You know be able to sit down at the end of it and polish off a bottle of Vodka or Scotch or whatever and get up and walk away from the table. Burp. And carry on. That was the ideal. (Bob)

I was supposed to be stronger, dominant, smarter. Controlling. (Sam)

I was mister tough guy, that's what that means. Try to be mister tough guy. Be bad. (Joe)

I think in high school and that. You were supposed to be tough and macho and sports minded and tough. Oh probably that you could drink and smoke and. Swear like a trooper, and. Be a jerk out on the street. It was kind of like a tough punk growing up. Basically the image being portrayed by a lot of them. (John)

Being tough was not equated with showing feelings. Five of the six men reported hearing directly that feelings were not okay:

Yeah, one of the things that is specific to a male is that you are not supposed to be emotional....I was brought up that way. (Bob)

Guys should be tough, able to take it kind of thing. We never showed much feeling. Matter of fact, I can't think of showing any feelings. (Sam)

Yeah, I think basically it was boiled down to don't show any emotion ever. That was the big message. (John)

The sixth participant was aware of having heard this message, but did not feel it was a part of his experience:

As far as boys don't cry and boys are tough. That sort of stuff never really got laid on me.... Oh I heard it, but generally, it wasn't really directed at me. Or, you know, I never really thought nothing of it any ways *(So you were able to cry or show your feelings?)* Yeah, pretty much, show my feelings and such. There weren't very many reasons for me to cry or anything. (Mark)

Five of the men in this study spoke of the negative reaction they received or witnessed when a male did show his feelings. These experiences seemed to further support the belief that feelings were not okay, thus should not be shown:

(Was it okay for boys to show feelings?) No! No! *(So what would happen if a boy would show feelings?)* You'd be sent to your room. You were sent to hide somewhere. (Sam)

No. Well, if they got beat up. It wasn't a strike against you because if you got beat up you were gonna cry *(But other than being beat up?)* No. No. That wasn't accepted. (Joe)

I think it was more or less something that was always just expected of you. Especially in private school and that. If you were hurt playing a sport or whatever, you didn't. You didn't show it and if you, you couldn't show that you were weak any way. Because if you showed you were weak by letting people intimidate you and, showing. You were crying or whatever, you were. That was it, you were humiliated for the rest of the time you were there. (John)

Oh, that was definitely what my father used to say. "You don't cry. That's weak" *(in a put-down type of voice)*. So I didn't cry. (Bill)

This message around not showing feelings was also emphasized in other ways.

Three of the six men reported being influenced by the belief that boys had very distinctive roles from girls and that doing anything that was considered “feminine” was not acceptable.

There were very very distinct roles for boys and girls.... So. You know. You were brought up that way and you're adult role models were brought up that way. Women or girls were supposed to be emotional in that area. The men were aggressive and the workers. (Bob)

No. No. I guess it was kind of unwritten rules. Just thing you didn't do.... Like play with dolls. Good example. If I played with a doll, it would be like “you get that out of your hand. Here's a baseball bat, go play baseball”. (Sam)

(And I was wondering if there was an unwritten rule that you didn't do anything that was feminine or that the girls did?) Oh, of course there was.... Well, it was just taken for granted. I mean, it just wasn't talked about back in them days I mean, you knew what was accepted and knew what was expected of you. And you knew the proper behaviour. (Joe)

Since the expression of feelings was considered to be “feminine”, this was another way of sending the message that it was not okay for boys or men to show their feelings.

Thus a common belief for the majority of the participants was that it was not okay for men to show their feelings. All six of the men made reference to a belief related to not showing feelings (52 references, range of 4-20).

Be Self-reliant

A second set of beliefs that emerged for the men in this study was around men needing to stand on their own and be self-reliant. All six of the men reported having learned that males were not supposed to ask for help (38 references). Part of being male meant that one must handle problems on their own:

There was no way to. If you had a problem, it was your problem. You don't talk to anyone about it. You don't talk to another man about it and you don't talk to a woman about it. Coming here, I was able to get rid of a lot of that excess baggage, but this place is unique. I don't think very many men have the resources to get rid of it. (Bob)

No. No. This was how I thought life was supposed to be. You're supposed to get through it on your own, you're supposed to take your punches. (Joe)

No. No, not as a young boy. Because, once again, it wasn't the macho thing to do. It's only been in the last, say the last 15 years that we've had an EAP at work. Which is heavily used. But you know, up to that point you just, you never would tell anybody that you were really distraught about anything, emotional or. It just wasn't done. You know, these things are coming into the open now, thank heavens. (Bill)

Similar to the messages around feelings, five of the six men had also received reactions to asking for help. Again through these experiences they developed the belief that men handled problems on their own and should not ask for support or help.

So, along those lines, even with the friends that I had on both sides, you weren't going to really (*emphasis*) show a weakness by asking somebody for some support or some, if I had a problem." (Sam)

(*What if you had a problem? Was it okay for guys to talk to other guys?*) No, I'd keep it inside....No, I thought I was smarter than other people, so I wouldn't talk to other people. Now I realize I'm not, but then I thought I was. (Joe)

I've noticed it in friends, they just wouldn't want to talk about it or....Yeah. Just figured, "Well, its not that important any ways. Nobody wants to hear it any ways, so". That was another thing at work too. Some guy would come crying about something about his lady or something and it would be "Hey! Don't want to hear nothing about that at work. After work, okay, maybe. But not at work". "You leave your home problems at home. Don't bring 'em to work, because we don't want to hear 'em. We've got enough problems right now as it is. There's a time and a place" (*gruff, stern voice*). (Mark)

In addition to these messages around not asking for support, the participants also identified other messages that made it difficult to connect with others and promoted the

belief that men had to be self-reliant. Three of the men shared experiences where the underlying message was that it was not okay for men to be too close to other men. Implicit in this message were fears that closeness meant that one had homosexual feelings.

Things like going to hug your father and him saying, no you don't hug men, you don't touch men.....You never do. Shake hands, that's it. (Sam)

Oh definitely. Well, everybody was down on queers, you know this kind of stuff. That's what we used to call them. Fags. That was very (*emphasis*) unmanly..... Well, anybody, anybody that was homosexual. Of course in those days, they didn't look on homosexuality as they do today. Definitely homophobic..... Oh, you would never, for the one thing, you would never show a weakness. Because of fear of being, that's why you wouldn't cry. That's why you wouldn't tell your friend that you were lonely or that you felt badly about how we treated that fag. You'd never. You would never stick up for the guy. You know. You would never. (Bill)

Yeah. Like you sort of wonder. Well, we sort of grew kind of innocently too in a sense. It wasn't until I was in late teens or early twenties, that "Oh, there are guys like that?" (*It almost sounded to me like, from your voice, that that wasn't really looked too highly on*) Yeah. No, it wasn't. (Mark)

Three of the men also spoke of having dissatisfying relationships with a significant male role model growing up:

You know, my father didn't believe that my brother was ever going to amount to anything, so it was always "that rotten little bastard, just forget about him". Don't be like your brother, type of thing. And. So maybe that was an image that. Was said and I never thought that he was all that (*emphasis*) bad. He wasn't terrific, but he wasn't that bad either. So. If I was to try and associate a friend somewhere in between, what was I supposed to put an ideal friend as? You know, if he couldn't be a brother that I thought should have been or could (*emphasis*) have been, then there was nothing else gonna match up there. I didn't really know, I guess what I'm saying, I didn't really know. What to base a friendship on. (Sam)

Well I was the youngest in the family, remember, I had six older brothers. And they were all good guys and everything, and I. Was the least loved child. I knew that. I wasn't planned or anything. My dad was old enough to be my grandfather. And. I was the least loved. I knew that. Its something you just know. You grow up knowing this. (Joe)

You see, my father and I were never. I mean we would never have a conversation like this. Never. (*So how would you describe your relationship with your father?*) How would I describe it? It was. Passive. Like it was, I never got a “well done”, never got any. There was never a closeness. It was a very cool. As hard as I tried (*emphasis*). It was very cool. And I never understood it. (Bill)

These messages and experiences seemed to affect the intimacy of the relationships that the men developed. When discussing their male friendships, five of the participants described them as not being the type of relationship where they could share their problems or feelings openly:

To me, I don't have a whole bunch of close friendships with men other than. A social friendship. I don't have any really close male friends, that I would really say that I would trust my life to or trust my family to. So I don't have. There are no friends out there that I have presently that I would go up to and put my arms around and say “I really trust you to look after things if I wasn't here”. (Sam)

Oh, I've always had friends. I keep things to myself, always have.... No. The type of people I hung around with. The type of things I'd want to say inside myself. They just. Just wouldn't understand. And I'd look like a goof for coming out and saying something like that, so I just kept it inside (*quieter voice*). (Joe)

I've always been able to make friends easily. Even though I never said much or. Did to much. But people seemed to know they could trust me and that kind of thing, so I always had friends around and that kind of thing. But I never, ever, shared anything with them or let them know how I was feeling or anything. If I was homesick or if I was upset at somebody for doing something or. Even good emotions, I never really showed. It took me years and years and years to figure out that, I missed out on all of that. (John)

Both the experiences and messages the participants received encouraged the belief that men need to stand on their own and be self-sufficient. This type of belief system did not support sharing problems or vulnerabilities.

Real Men Drink

The experiences of the men in this study suggest that the combination of exposure to alcohol and messages around alcohol culminate into a belief that men are expected to drink. All six of the men made reference to the sub-theme of alcohol being an expectation of being male (total of 97, ranging from 11 to 27). Each had childhood experiences of being exposed to alcohol which seemed to indirectly support this message that men “should” drink. As well each heard more direct messages from peers and the media. Five men reported receiving messages from their peers:

Well, when I was growing up, alcohol was, shall we say a status symbol.... Status symbol, when you went through. Well for me it started in junior high and it was a big thing for a boy, not a girl to have had a couple of drinks at a party or something like that. Or even to the point of being intoxicated. It was a big deal. I remember growing up that way. Right from junior high to senior high, senior secondary. So it was part of our culture as a teenager. And it was expected of you. To the point where, I guess looking back on it, your ranking in the, shall we say, Primeval Tribe for teenagers, was pretty much based on the amount that you could consume..... Well, what I mean by that is where you have a group of guys hanging around and where you rank, in position as to. If you are cool or sort of a nerd. Somewhere. Was the amount of alcohol you could consume and keep it down, without throwing it up (*chuckles*). So, it was a big deal for a boy when I was growing up. (Bob)

Everybody else was drinking. Yeah, so that was the thing to do. No big deal to get sick, because people were always getting sick. (John)

Well they were my friends all the way through school. We kind of just went all the way up, through to high school. And that’s where you started, the drinking started. And I think it was part of the whole process..... Well. the process of growing up. Going to school. It was just part of it. And the thing, we saw alcohol at home and you know, it wasn’t foreign to us. I don’t think advertising would have been as strong in those days. It might have been. (Bill)

It was kind of the thing that if a guy didn’t drink with us, we always figured he was hiding something or he figured he was better than us or something like that. So it was like a peer pressure group on another person. Well he doesn’t drink, so no

sense us hanging around him.... Kind of unwritten, but kind of said too. He doesn't drink, so it was generally understood that he doesn't belong with us. (Mark)

Three of these five men also identified being influenced by messages from the media:

The hero was always a macho drinker. He drank heavily, he still was the fastest gun. I believe that it did have a tremendous effect when I was growing up.... Well you always go for the hero. That's what you want to be as a boy. The guy who gets the girl. The guy who gets the money. The guy who rides the big horse, etc. And part of being that was drinking. (Bob)

You know, there's no doubt that alcohol is a big (*emphasis*) item in a young man's growing up. I imagine it is even worse now. Way more advertising, role models, subtle advertising. You can't do anything without have a beer now, can you? You know in the ads and all. (Bill)

Well, other than what media hits you with and everything, and plus, as you say, growing up. You know, guys sit around and drink beers and what not. (Mark)

Another way that the men appeared to receive this message was through their early exposure to alcohol. This took a number of forms. Four men recalled witnessing their father drink when they were young:

Lifestyles definitely (*emphasis*). I think my upbringing. Not an excuse for the amount I drank, but what I seen as a child and what I perceived it to be as a child, had an affect on why I drank. The volume I drank had nothing to do with them. But it seemed to be "Hey it worked for him, it should work for me". (Sam)

But I think I was meant to drink because right from fourteen on, from my first drink, I took to it like a duck to water. So I think it was genetic with me. You know how they talk about it being genetic with some people now? I believe that is true for me. My father was a boozer and I have six older brothers and none of them have a drinking problem. So I'm the only one and I'm the youngest. Except for my father who had a drinking father. So I think it is genetic. Because I took to it right from the beginning. (Joe)

I remember that my dad would be unemployed a good three months every year because he was in construction. You know everything all shut down. And I know he used to take, get into the sauce some times. But they were all pretty negative. They were very negative..... Well, they were negative in that I can remember that he was, Dad was never a good drunk. He was an ugly drunk..... Falling all over. Mean..... Yeah, things that he would say. His vocabulary would become, like a

paratrooper. You know, and that type of thing. And, he wasn't. He wasn't in control (*emphasis*) of himself. (Bill)

But then, as I said, my father was an alcoholic and I saw the other side of it too.....Oh, he wasn't like violent or anything like that. But where he would get sick or. He was also epileptic too and it would bring on seizures. And I'd see that. So you know, it wasn't all good times. (Mark)

Two of the men mentioned how distressing it was to witness their father drinking. For all four, it was about observing a male figure who, by simply being their father, influenced how they identified themselves as a male. Of the four, three reported additional experiences of being exposed to alcohol when they were young, through a friend's father:

I can remember when I was 13 years old we used to. We actually cultivated a friend's father to buy harder liquor for us because we would buy his for him. We would get a group of guys together, maybe 10 guys each buy a Mickey, but each would put in 50 cents extra, or whatever it cost at that time so that he got his at the end. And he would buy our Mickey's for us and we would have it for our Friday night, Saturday night or whatever. (Sam)

Twelve, sort of just sipping my friend's dad's home-made wine. (Mark)

Me and my buddy. My buddy. His father kept his beer down in the cellar and so we made our, we made a fort in his cellar. And we'd steal his dad's beer. I was really young then. Before fourteen. At fourteen I started drinking wine. Before fourteen I was drinking the odd beer down in the cellar. (Joe)

Finally, two of the four mentioned gaining early access to bars:

From the time I got to be 15 to 16, unfortunately I looked older when I was younger, than what I really was. So I was able to get into bars by the time I was 16 years old. I could get into the local pub and drink beer, even though the drinking age was 21. I was. I don't even remember being asked how old I was when I went into a local pub. Just went in to drink. As long as I didn't cause trouble I could drink and get out of there. I did that until I was, probably 21, which was the drinking age, at that time. But. But at that point I was pretty well established as a drinker. (Sam)

I was able to get in the pub, or the beer parlor or in the liquor store by the time I was 17 or 18. And so I was quite a hero, because I was always getting the booze for everybody. (Bill)

The messages around alcohol being expected and part of the lives of males seemed to manifest itself in the relationships the men had with other males. For all six of the men, alcohol was a key part of their experience of interacting with other males, particularly as they were growing up:

(Did you swap stories when you weren't drinking?) No, we never really did that. If you went and did some sport or something, you were there for the sport. But if you were going out to drink usually. At that age, any ways, you would sneak off to the bush with a case of beer, depending on how many guys, and you would just sit around in a circle. Nothing else to do but. (Bob)

And after that it seemed like everybody I hung around with, you played ball and went drinking afterwards. You curled, you drank before and afterwards. That was just always the circle I was in. (John)

Oh, that was it, that was a part of the socializing with men. To drink. There's no doubt there. We'd go on the odd tours. I was lucky, I went all the way around the world. You got to see a lot, of tours and that kind of stuff. But as soon as the tour was over, away you were to the pub. Or the bar. (Bill)

And also its sort of a bonding thing between friends. Everybody gets drunk and babbles their nonsense. A lot of times it seems like you hear more truth when somebody is drunk then when they are sober and they're sort of closed. (Mark)

For four of these men, drinking was also associated with work:

And I was sent out to work out in these (pulp mill) when I was 16, it was a great experience for a 16 year old. One, I was making an awful lot of money, two, I was working hard, three, you were expected to do a man's job because you were making all this money. The job had to be done and there was no. You were in a man's world. You became a man, whether you liked it or not. One of the things about the camps, they were isolated, to the point you were close to a town.... So they were lonely, not much to do, card playing and there was a lot (*emphasis*) of drinking. I got into a man's world, to do a man's job and afterwards, drinking was a major factor of that lifestyle, so to be a man, you had to be able to hold it. (Bob)

Because up to that point, I never worked anywhere where. The opportunity to have a drink. But here, there was always, we always had. There was a fridge that was always, beer in the fridge, vodka and that in the fridge. It was acceptable to drink at the end of the day. A lot of the times at the end of the day, people would just sit around and drink. Once 3:30, 4:00 o'clock rolled around, it was sort of happy hour

at work. And I think that was just the trigger that I needed. Eventually I got to the point where, I needed (*emphasis*) that, rather than it just being a social drink after work. (John)

No, it was just that there was a lot involved there. Like you would have the rum ration everyday. You'd get your beer every day. That was probably the first time that I was drinking on a daily basis. You know, like before I don't think I was ever drinking on a daily basis. (*And when you said "that kind of went with the territory", what did you mean by that?*) Well, its part of the macho (*emphasis*). It was probably pretty hard to find someone that didn't (*emphasis*) drink. You know, on board ship. (Bill)

Well, we used to get these contracts for planting trees. You know, we'd all go out into the bush. We usually didn't bring any booze with us. You know, just basically did our work and what not. You know, then when it's Miller time, it's Miller time (*smiles*). (Mark)

These experiences, where drinking was central to socializing and was associated with work, further supported the belief that drinking was expected of men.

When the influence of these messages are combined, the potential strength becomes apparent. Five of the six men reported receiving direct messages through their peers, along with being exposed to alcohol in one to four different ways. The one participant who did not report receiving any messages from his peers or the media, was still exposed to alcohol in four ways. Thus, all six participants connected their expectation of being a male to drinking.

Fit the Mold

While the men were quick to identify the previous sub-themes of men not showing feelings, being self-reliant and drinking to be a man, a final sub-theme emerged around less strongly identified messages. Unlike the previous sub-themes, where the majority of the

men made reference to these beliefs, this final grouping of messages were emphasized in varying degrees. Nonetheless, all six of the men expressed some beliefs about what was expected of them as men, above and beyond the previous sub-themes. As mentioned by Harris (1995) even if men do not act in accordance to these messages, they still act as a blueprint, becoming a part of the man's unconscious belief system about what is expected of them and what they "should" be achieving. When reflecting on their socialization experiences, the men in this study identified a number of messages around what they thought they "should" be like. The common thread between these various messages was the belief that there is a certain "mold" that a man needs to fit.

All six men reported that part of the "male mold" was the role of being the provider. This meant that men were responsible for being the primary financial supporters of the family, which resulted in a strong emphasis on work, with work being an integral part of a man's sense of self:

Both my brother and myself were the, image was that you were the provider, you got a good job, you made sure that if you got into a family that you were going to provide for that family. You were going to make sure if you had kids, they were going to be clothed, fed, whatever. What my father, I'm sure he got the same rules (*emphasis*) from his father. I think that was a way of life, at that particular time. My sisters. Never, never, I never once in all the time that I was home, ever heard anybody say that. As a female, may have to provide for your family. It was more that you will get married to somebody who is going to be in the same position as your brothers, and they are going to provide for you. (Sam)

Again, that was man's work. It was too complicated for women....It was expected that. I do the financing. I pay the bills. I earn the money. That was the. It was a different era. (Bob)

Well. I think it was a tough time for him because of the idleness. You know. And then we always had financial problems because of it. You know, so that entered in to it. And my mother always worked. From the time I was ten she always worked.

They both worked. So she was making a wage and he wasn't. And I guess that affected his macho (*emphasis*) image of himself. (Bill)

The degree to which the men personally identified with each of these messages varied, but all reported having been exposed. Some also learned contradictory messages that emphasized more of a sense of shared responsibility as well.

Five of the six men also identified being exposed to messages around men needing to be married and the strong sense of responsibility and commitment marriage brings with it:

That was probably the biggest one. Being married. You had to be married to be successful. In my book you had to be married to be successful, but you shouldn't be married. And I think that one sort of came from my parents, because they kind of wanted grandkids. (John)

There was one thing that I respected my dad for, that he stayed. And I guess that was the part of. Why I loved him. Was that he did stay. He stayed in the family unit. You know, tried to be a breadwinner and that. And I don't think I could have stayed in that type of relationship, like he did. It must have been. (Bill)

Within the expectation to be married, one man also made reference to expectations around being a father:

Well. Pressure. Probably insecurity. I was feeling like a failure. I was feeling a lot of things that. I don't know. If other people feel them or if it was isolated to me. I was feeling. Like. Maybe as a father we weren't going to perform the way. You should. Because you didn't have the tools, or whatever. (Sam)

When asked about what constitutes a successful male, four of the six men equated it with being married and having a good job that would allow them to comfortably provide for their family.

The participants reported numerous other messages, all of which contained the underlying message that there was a standard that a man must achieve in order to be a man.

For one, this came in the form of looking a certain way:

I guess, just, probably, just the image you receive about what the real man is supposed to be like..... I don't know if there, it certainly wasn't a muscle man or anything. I don't know, I guess somebody that was. Your normal weight and normal, I can't say normal height, because I'm probably a little more than normal height or whatever. I don't know, I just always felt that I needed somehow, some way, to put on weight. Your weight is of relationship to your height kind of thing, I guess, and that kind of thing. (John)

Four of the six men reported being exposed to messages around their sexuality, with the emphasis being placed on gaining a sense of status by being sexually active:

Well, the only thing we always talked about was the sexual part. That was always pretty up front and centre as young boys. Oh, as far as getting a girl in the hay. And. When I look back on it now, well, I. Feel terrible (*emphasis*) about some of the things we did to the girls. You were only too happy to hop in the sack, but then you told everybody. Or you even told on girls you never even, it was terrible when I think about it now. At that (*emphasis*) time, it was more important that everybody thought you were a real stud (*emphasis*). (Bill)

Well okay like. Always trying to score. And (*And if you didn't score?*) You're not trying hard enough. What's wrong with you? (*So it was, kind of, your status went up if you did score?*) Oh yeah. Definitely, yes. (Mark)

One participant summarized his experience of having to follow a prescribed role as set out by others, rather than himself:

I always felt like I was in the position where I had to try and prove something. And if it wasn't proving something then I had to prove I was manly (*emphasis*). Failing that, you know. Failing something first of all should've been proving that you were smart and successful. If you weren't going to do that, you'd have to prove you were manly, strong. Failing that, you had to prove that. The worst of all circumstances you would be able to survive it at some level of your life. And. I felt that. There was always something to show, something to. Always strive for. (Sam)

Thus, trying to “fit the mold” seemed to result in a great deal of stress and pressure. Adding to this stress are the other three central beliefs (sub-themes) identified by the participants. They learned that it was not okay for men to show their feelings. Rather, they needed to be tough and in control. They also learned that they needed to rely on themselves and stand on their own. This involved not asking others for help and working through their problems on their own. One way that they learned how to connect with other men was through drinking. The various experiences and messages around alcohol appeared to culminate into the expectation that men drink. Thus, it is not surprising that many of the men used alcohol to cope with a variety of life experiences.

THEME 2: USING ALCOHOL AS A WAY OF COPING

The second theme describes the men’s use of alcohol to cope. Distinguished within this broad theme are two sub-themes. The first addresses the experiences where drinking was seen as positive and beneficial. The second grouping of categories contains a variety of experiences, feelings and situations which the men coped with by using alcohol.

Benefits of Alcohol

All six of the men described experiences with alcohol where they perceived drinking as beneficial in some way. This took various forms and occurred at various stages of their lives. Six of the men noted that one of the benefits of drinking was that it allowed them to escape from their problems. Four remembered this starting when they were quite young:

And I also remember that. Problems, who cared about problems. You're three quarters lit. Who cares. That was in there. So it was a way of looking for something enjoyable and at the same time looking for an escape. (Bob)

I found very early that it was a release for a lot of things that I maybe didn't want to face or at that time I maybe didn't even know that I didn't want to face them. (Sam)

I didn't have to worry about my parents being on my back. My school, my school work. At the moment I'm high, I. I had no worries (Joe)

By the time they were adults, all six men identified using alcohol to escape from their problems.

And then when you have a couple of drinks, the tension lessens. And you stop thinking about, money. It's a form of escapism. I didn't realize it at the time, exactly what I was doing. Trying to back off from responsibility. The whole bit. (Bob)

I think. Number one, it was a release for me. And not a release in some ways, but a way of not having to face a lot of things. I could kind of hide myself or delay (*emphasis*) a reaction. That's probably a better word. Just put off. By drinking I could, if I didn't want to face it today, maybe tomorrow and if I didn't want to face it tomorrow, maybe the next day.... I used it as a place to hide. I don't think there is any other, any other reason. Probably to this day I still use it as a place to hide. (Sam)

So when I go to a liquor store and I go in happy and pick up a bottle, I know full well in my mind that I'm going to be sick as a dog tomorrow plus I know bad things can happen when I'm drinking. I know it. And I'm paying for the privilege of doing it.....I think life's a bitch until you die, so you try to have some good moments. And if it costs you that hangover, you knew it costs you that. You try to have some good moments where your worries, you could just put them aside..... Have you ever seen that. Poster with the monkey with the beer in his hand that says "Booze is the only answer"?.... Well they have it. Booze is the only answer. (Joe)

The alcohol was a quick fix. I hadn't really considered any counselling or anything like that. I just figured, well, you've got to work out your own thing..... Yeah, quick fix for the moment. It never fixed anything, but. (Mark)

Just the, it was the relaxation. Relaxing. Calming. If I was tense or whatever, it was my way of relaxing. And, I don't know if you would call it escaping (*emphasis*) or not, but it was just a. Then it eventually got to the point where once I had had a few, I just wouldn't stop..... Just drinking kind of obliterated it all.

Figured I'd worry about it again tomorrow. So then you just drink the next day to. (John)

In a similar vein, four of the six men identified using alcohol to escape from feelings that they felt they could not express:

The mothers were expected to show emotion and be upset about it. The fathers weren't. And you didn't show emotion. It was that sort of thing. There was no one to talk to. No one to vent those negative feelings that you had. So it was just as easy to use the ol' bottle. To escape. I'd done it before, so why not. (Bob)

I guess I didn't...I just suppressed it.... With alcohol, probably. Put it in the back of your mind, work around it. I don't know, I just. Probably hid the feelings. Don't think about it or if you do think about it. Drink enough until you don't think about it, I don't know. (Sam)

I don't know about those early years and that, if it was or not. It probably was, because I always figured I was so shy and quiet and I don't want to say anything. So it probably was a form of. Like I could drink and all those feelings would mellow out. (John)

Four of the six men noted that another benefit of drinking was that it helped them to feel more accepted and comfortable. All four remembered this starting when they were quite young:

Normal things that I think a teenager struggles with. Defining oneself, sexuality. You lost a lot of your inhibitions when you were drinking. People, really. If you did something when you were drunk which was absolutely stupid. I mean that was. That was hilarious the next day. People thought it was a joke. Whereas if you did it when you were sober, people thought you were nuts. (Bob)

I guess when I first started to drink it was maybe just for acceptance (*emphasis*). At that point I could, even when I first started drinking I could drink more than just about anybody else. So they always knew I was a good one to hang around with because I'd be sure to get them back home again. Look after them and that kind of thing. And now I realize it wasn't really a claim to fame to be able to. Drink more than anybody else in back in those days. (John)

If I was going to go to a dance or some other social function as a young fellow, I would probably drink a bottle of wine before I went there. Made me feel more

comfortable by the time I got there. In my mind, I guess, more accepted. For whatever reason . (Sam)

Two of the men also noted that drinking to feel more accepted was a key part of their drinking as adults:

I would say the main reason why I drink is because when I drink I feel more accepted. To other people and I don't know why I have to feel that they have to accept me.....Doesn't make a whole lot of sense but sometimes you. Feel more comfortable under the influence of alcohol and feel that people like you more or. Maybe you like yourself more so they like you more. But. You, I shouldn't say you, I tend to strive to make people like me more and I don't really know why.... The alcohol, I guess is. Making me feel that they like me more or they will or I have more opportunity of achieving that, but. I guess acceptance is the key word. (Sam)

And into my older life too. I would have a drink to meet a woman too. And I didn't have the fear. I didn't fear rejection. That's a terrible thing.... When it came to marriage, when it came to going out with girls, having fun. You'd feel like you would have to drink so you could talk to a girl. And to be exciting.... It seemed like the answer. To rejection to fear... Fears made me drink. Fears have been with me all my life. That's about the main thing, fears. (Joe)

Finally, three of the six men identified that one of the benefits of drinking was that it provided a sense of fun, excitement and freedom:

Well, alcohol has always been, one, it was fun. If I go back to my teenage years and work my way up, any time that I used alcohol in a party situation there was a lot of fun. So there was that....When I was younger we associated alcohol with fun and we were always active. (Bob)

There was no swearing, no talking back to your parents. There was no. So it was a strict life. And then when you were out and you got away and you were drinking. You never had this strictness and you were free. (Joe)

To relieve boredom. To create some sort of excitement. Warp my perception of everyday reality, I guess....It creates hilarity or, you know, it just seems to magnify things. (Mark)

Thus, all six of the men experienced drinking as being beneficial in some way.

Five of the six participants traced their use of alcohol back to when they were young, where it was perceived as beneficial and served a purpose. Alcohol worked for them when they were young and the pattern of coping continued throughout their adult life.

Drinking to Cope

All six of the participants described using alcohol to cope with a variety of experiences, feelings and situations. Four participants referred to using alcohol to cope with family problems. Two of the four shared experiences of feeling trapped in relationships with women and using alcohol to cope:

Yeah, I think basically all the time I was married I was unhappy, but I didn't want to be, shouldn't have been married. Or maybe I should've been married, but not to this person.....Yeah, I think you'd have to say I felt trapped, yeah. I was here and I committed to it and I couldn't get out of it. I don't think I ever had the realization that I could. Up and leave. And especially after I had a daughter, then I knew I didn't want to do anything to hurt her, which what I ended up doing probably hurt her more than if I'd up and left before, but. Which wouldn't have solved my problem at that point of time any ways.....That's, where I think I started drinking at night times. Just to escape from it. (John)

Well, I had been living with a woman from about age 29 to 34. And. Probably after the first six months I realized sort of, well yeah, don't, not really much here. A friendship maybe. As far as a man -woman relationship, she wasn't my woman, as far as I was concerned. But, you know, she always seemed to keep me snagged. "If you leave, I don't know what I'll do". All that sort of stuff. So I stayed around. Started drinking pretty heavy then. Sort of hoping she would just leave then. Yeah, but it didn't seem to. She didn't drink. My drinking wasn't enough to get her to leave. (Mark)

The third participant referred to using alcohol to cope with problems with his partner:

So there was a lot of financial pressure. Emotional pressure. A lot of tension between the two of us and the easiest way out for me was to drink. (Bob)

The fourth participant had difficulty determining whether a problem existed in his relationship prior to his drinking or as a result of his drinking. He recalled that at the time of his drinking, he perceived the family as the problem:

Well, I put drinking ahead of everything else. That's describing it all I can. You know, my way out was leave my family, leave my responsibilities and just drink as much as I could and maybe the problem would go away..... I thought the problem was the family, the problem was the drinking. (Sam)

Thus, all four men experienced problems in their families, which they coped with by drinking.

Three of the men identified using alcohol to deal with losses. One participant, who did not perceive his early use as a form of coping, identified using alcohol to deal with losses he experienced as an adult. It was at this point that he felt his drinking moved from being social to a way of coping:

Well, it probably started with the death of my mother. And then it really got going with my father, in 1990, rejected me. And my family and. Told me that I was adopted . That was at the age of what? 46? And that was pretty traumatic..... No. No, I think more, the reason I really started drinking there was. I had tried all my life for my dad to love me. And. All, I knew all the reasons why, that all the futile, all the futile efforts I had gone through. All my life. And then the fact, the final rejection he lays on you. First of all, he doesn't want to see my wife, my kids, and by the way you're adopted and you're an f-ing this and I never liked you (*quieter voice*). It was. Just (*shakes head*).....Brutal, yeah, brutal. You got her. I mean, I could've taken a beating better than, you know, what he did..... Well, the alcohol was. Part of my grieving. You, know, with my mother's death. And then. Just again, was the grieving. Cause it was the loss of, my father didn't die but he so much as did and what he had done. That was the grieving there too..... Well, I guess you got that little bit of a buzz on. You know, and you got away from the sadness. I don't know?" (Bill)

Using alcohol to deal with losses, was also identified by two of the five men who had used alcohol as a coping mechanism at an earlier age:

And then I graduated. And my son was born. And he was born with Down's Syndrome. I don't know to this day if that had a negative effect, or if it was just. A fact of life. But I started drinking more after that..... But. And I started. Then there was, you know, the normal things that people go through normally: buying a house, financial pressure. Because he was, with Down's Syndrome, my wife couldn't work, so she was a homemaker. And that was definitely not in our plans, because I had just graduated from University. So there was a lot of financial pressure. Emotional pressure. A lot of tension between the two of us. And the easiest way out for me was to drink. (Bob)

Oh, yeah. I did immediately, yeah. My sorrow. I would immediately grab a drink. Rejection. Fear, all those things.... The way things turned out, with certain ways and with certain people, whatever. Poor me (*quieter voice*). But when you get older you can look back on these things and see how wrong you were and how stupid you were, but its too late. (Joe)

Thus, by adulthood, all six men shared the common experience of using alcohol to cope with uncomfortable feelings.

Three of the six participants reported using alcohol to cope with experiences in which they felt powerless and out of control. One participant drank to feel more powerful:

Maybe sometimes when I drink I feel more forceful, I know I do. It makes me feel like I'm more in control, when actually I know I've (*can't decipher word*) control. But it makes me feel more in control. It gives me that false sense of power or whatever and. Maybe that's it. Maybe its my release of my own tension or whatever. My stress. My way of feeling powerful for whatever length of time the booze lasts. And then the next day I get back to reality and say "okay, another day". But unfortunately in some cases those days go on and on and on, you know it goes from one day to the next. I don't feel powerful enough so. Next day your back into it again. (Sam)

This same participant also made reference to using alcohol to feel more powerful as a boy:

Another thing is more courageous. Alcohol makes you feel like you can do things that you normally wouldn't do. When you're sober or when you haven't had alcohol..... And I went from fearing him (*father*) to challenging him. And saying. I guess I have to find a medium here, either you're going to beat me or I'm going to beat you. And then it went to the point where I went to the extreme the other way. I would think, okay, I've got you at a disadvantage and now I've got alcohol so I'm going to challenge you. And see who is going to be the winner. So now I've got this false courage, through this alcohol. (Sam)

Another participant spoke of using alcohol to cope with having been sexually violated:

(You said you were raped, its not something that you talked about, you didn't)
(jumps in) I never did. I never did talk. In fact you're the first one I ever told. It doesn't bother me. Because. It did for many years. I kept it all in here *(points to head)* and it really screwed me up for many years. And. Now. I know that now. It doesn't bother me now. It was something I had no control over. Why should I be ashamed of something I had no control over? *(But you did feel ashamed for a number of years?)* Oh, yeah, oh yeah. Everything, it was one of the many things that made me, and booze helped. (Joe)

A third participant used alcohol to cope with a situation where his mother was dying and he felt powerless:

Powerless situation, yes. *(Was that difficult to deal with?)* Yes, very difficult to deal with..... I guess, I. for 25 years I'm called on to try correct things and intercede if you have to in certain situations. And here, my, the person that I really loved, I can't intercede. I've got to sit there and watch. And that was very, very difficult. very difficult *(quieter voice)*. And. Still difficult now. It brings emotion. Yeah.... That powerless feeling, yes. So, I guess with all that, you know the trip she lays on me and then the method of the dying. I would have been just as happy if I hadn't of seen it. You know, I hadn't been there. In retrospect. You know, that. Led up to the drinking. (Bill)

Thus, all three men used alcohol to cope with feeling powerless.

Three of the six men shared a common experience of drinking alcohol to cope with pressures. These pressures took a number of different forms. All three reported using alcohol to cope with feeling dissatisfied with their lives, of somehow not meeting the expectations that they or others had set out for them:

To this day, don't feel comfortable with my own life. Whether its what I'm doing at work or when I had a family. And I have a different family now. But when I had my first family. It always seemed to be I was struggling for something that maybe was not achievable, or in my mind should have been achievable. And I was never getting there *(What do you think you were supposed to be like?)* I don't know, something that I guess was instilled in my mind as a young fellow, that. I should have been, but I wasn't getting there. I really don't know. (Sam)

I don't connect too many issues to my use of alcohol, other than I was. Just plain and simply too afraid to stand up for myself and. Say this is what I want..... Oh, I see links, where. How, just being. I don't know exactly how to explain it. But its. Just that everything that is expected of you. Is. You don't take time out for yourself. If you just go along with what everybody expects of you. You're not going to be happy with yourself. And that's what I wasn't, I wasn't happy with myself. So the only way out, rather than leaving everything. Which might have been the best way, although it probably wouldn't have ended my alcoholism any ways. But I just escaped into a bottle rather than escaping into. Life and dealing with it. Instead of dealing with anything, I just ran away. (John)

Well once I do get drinking, it gets me physically, like I have to drink because my body is just. On the fritz kind of thing. And my mind starts spinning. So there's that..... Well, if I have started to drink, then I sort of have to keep drinking. Maintain a certain level of intoxication..... You know I'll start getting the shakes or I can't. Put my mind at rest or anything (*So what is your mind like when it is not at rest? Like what kinds of things go through your head?*) Not so much thoughts, but feelings of. Agitation or anxiety or hopelessness..... Not being able to do anything I want (*So by drinking more, those feelings of agitation numb out?*) Yeah. You forget for a while. (Mark)

One of the three participants also referred to using alcohol to cope with the pressures of pursuing success:

You had to be successful because you were able to work hard and bring home the pay cheque. I went back to school, and even though I went back to school and did well and came out of school better than what I would have done had I stayed at the steel mill. In my father's eyes, it was like a backwards move, you never.....As a young man, maybe. I was going to prove. That he couldn't say those things. And I would prove him wrong. So maybe you work hard. I did a lot of things. Had a family, bought a house, bought many houses. And, really (*emphasis*) proved him wrong. I was very successful. You know, never suffered financially. The things that maybe he thought. Or I thought. His impression of me was that I was going to fail in that respect, that I wouldn't achieve those things. I was determined I would prove him dead wrong and I did. On the other hand, in the mean time I was drinking like crazy and destroying a lot of things that really should have meant a lot to me and. I set them aside. (Sam)

Similarly, another participant used drinking as a way of coping with his sense of frustration over his pursuit of success. He achieved what he thought were the signs of success but did not feel successful. He coped with his frustration through drinking:

That's, where I think I started drinking at night times. Just to escape from it. Because all the rest of the time I was. Pretending to go along with it and. I had the job and I had the company vehicle and I had the home. Took care of the home and you, took care of the yard.....I had everything you were supposed to have. *(But you didn't feel happy. So was that confusing for you? Here you had the ideal role, you fulfilled everything?)* Frustrating would be maybe, would be probably. I don't know if frustrating is the word. It's. it just goes back to saying, still looking for something. Like life isn't what its supposed to be. But I didn't know what I was supposed to have at that point, because I was supposed to have everything. That you're supposed to have. (John)

Thus, all of the men in this study used alcohol to cope with a variety of uncomfortable feelings and events, many of which were influenced by beliefs about being male.

Using alcohol to cope with pressures was highlighted by some of the men when they considered the process of their recovery from alcohol misuse. The majority of the men used alcohol to cope with feelings that they felt they could not or should not express. Five of the men reported that making changes to these patterns would be or has been a part of their recovery:

I'm trying to stop drinking so I know I have to accept certain things in trying to stop drinking. And one of them is that. So I know I have to go through that *(So one of the things is reaching out and getting the support?)* Yes. I know I have to do that. Because you can't do it on your own. I can't. (Joe)

Whether I was thinking about it or not, subconsciously they're there and its. When you spend all your life not talking to people about anything, there is no reason for them to. Sort of come up and spill out for you to realize them. This is something that should be looked at. (John)

With the men's group here I can, because one, they are sober, two they are in control and three they have power over themselves. Maybe in some areas, for some of them, its very small, but for some of the other guys its very large. But you can

see it and I can draw from that power and get power back in myself. So that kind of male bonding, in a structured group setting where we are supportive is very important to me. (Bob)

I really see us as men in society, that we need a lot of help. And that we need to. Know that we can cry. And that its not unmanly. (Bill)

Believing that it was not okay to express feelings/problems limited one method of dealing with issues. The belief needed to be challenged so they could begin working through them rather than suppressing them through alcohol.

Summary

The interplay of the two themes suggest that the early positive experiences of alcohol, compounded with messages around not accessing other ways of coping, the acceptable use of alcohol and the interplay of rigid beliefs about men, result in an atmosphere that made alcohol the choice for coping. At many levels, the alcohol worked. The participants used it to escape from stress, tension and the build up of feelings. They used it to cope with experiences of loss, powerlessness, a sense of feeling trapped, family problems, the pressures of pursuing success and with feelings of dissatisfaction of not meeting theirs' or others' expectations. It also becomes the "acceptable" way for the men to connect with one another. Thus, alcohol temporarily "solved" many problems.

Yet if men are to give up this method of coping, other alternatives may need to be found that are not so temporary and detrimental. This suggests that one part of recovery may need to focus on recognizing and challenging beliefs that inhibit men from accessing other methods of coping. A few of the men began to identify beliefs that were associated

with their using. The next chapter will address this further, as the themes are further interpreted.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The focus of this study was to explore the phenomenon of gender socialization in the lives of men who are recovering from an identified misuse of alcohol through a mainstream qualitative approach. The previous chapters provided a rationale for the research, outlined the methodology used and presented the themes that emerged through the in-depth interviews. The presentation of themes relied heavily on direct quotations from the men, in order to ensure that the experiences were captured and relayed to the reader in a more profound and personal way. This final chapter discusses the themes from the perspective of the author, summarizing the significance of the findings and the implications for treatment. The limitations of the study are outlined to assist the reader in judging the trustworthiness of this research endeavor, followed by suggestions for future research.

Significance of Findings

The experience of the research participants suggests that men's socialization experiences influence the use of alcohol. This is not to suggest that these experiences "cause" alcohol misuse nor "explain" it. Alcohol misuse is a complex multi-dimensional issue. In the review of theories on alcoholism, a number of authors (Blane & Leonard, 1987; Heath, 1983; Nathan, 1983; Tarter, 1983) suggested that the strength of a biopsychosocial model is that it combines ideas from numerous theories which results in a more holistic and comprehensive approach. The findings of this study do not challenge the

contributions of these theories. Rather, they add another dimension, by suggesting the impact of gender.

The dimension of gender is important to consider for a number of reasons. Until recently, the idea of viewing women's treatment needs as being different from those of men was virtually unheard of. Yet when research began to focus on women and alcohol, women became perceived as having special needs and problems reflective of their gender experience (Blume, 1992). Our body of knowledge about alcohol misuse has become more comprehensive by looking at the dimension of gender as it pertains to women who misuse alcohol. To date, a similar body of knowledge has not yet emerged for men. Even though past research on alcoholism were based primarily on men, the theories transferred to both men and women, thus men's unique experiences as men were not taken into consideration. The dimension of gender, as related to alcohol misuse, was not explored. According to Van Wormer (1989), female alcohol abuse has been conceptualized as being impacted by social forces of sexism, while male substance abuse has not yet been conceptualized in gender-role terms. Yet, we know that the impact of stereotypical gender-roles are not experienced by women alone. A number of authors (Bigsby, 1994; Aubry, 1992; Van Den Bergh, 1991; Van Wormer, 1989) suggest that men's socialization experiences are restrictive as well, have negative impacts and contributes to distress in numerous areas of their lives. Thus, if we view alcoholism from a biopsychosocial model and as a multi-faceted issue, the dimension of gender is important to consider.

The contribution of the current study's results is the emphasis on the dimension of gender on men's misuse of alcohol. To date the impact of gender has been written of only

speculatively (Aubry, 1992; Lemle & Mishkind, 1989; Van Wormer, 1989). The findings of this study provide support as well as add narrative detail to some of the links previously made in the literature between men's issues and alcohol misuse.

Support of Speculative Links

A number of authors have suggested that men use alcohol as a way of coping with feelings (Bigsby, 1994; Aubry, 1994; Kupers, 1993; Ritter & Cole, 1992; Kipnis, 1991; Van Wormer, 1989; Lenfest, 1987). The findings of the current study support this theory. The participants verified that one of their central beliefs is that males should not show their feelings, citing numerous experiences which directed them to inhibit expressing their feelings. As well, the belief that men should "stand on their own" and not look to other's for help and support was central in their relationships. Combined, these seemed to have a profound impact on the men, leading them to limit the extent to which they expressed their feelings and accessed support. These limitations left them isolated with few outlets for dealing with life events and stresses. Disconnecting themselves from their feelings also appeared to have an impact on their ability to connect with others. As described in theme two, the men used alcohol to suppress, control and numb their feelings. Three of the men directly linked their drinking to grief and loss, providing some support for Lenfest's (1987) proposal that men who misuse alcohol have unresolved grief and loss issues.

Several authors (Lemle & Mishkind, 1989; Landrine, Bardewell & Dean, 1988), have previously linked beliefs about being a male and messages around alcohol consumption. The findings of this study support this link. One major sub-theme focused

on the belief that men are expected to drink. The participants in this study were quick to identify a variety of experiences that encouraged them to believe that part of being a man was expressed through drinking. Their experiences ranged from early exposure to alcohol, watching their father or another male figure use alcohol, drinking to interact with other boys/men and exposure to alcohol in the work place. Also of influence were direct messages from peers and the media. Taken together, these experiences and messages seemed to culminate into the belief that drinking was not only permitted, but expected of men.

Van Wormer (1989) suggests that men are also socialized to view drinking as a culturally sanctioned way for men to connect with one another. The findings of this study add support to this idea. With messages to not self-disclose or express feelings, the men confirmed that their relationships with other men were not based on high levels of intimacy. Messages dissuading men from becoming too close to other men and past dissatisfying relationships with significant male figures also seemed to impact the level of intimacy. All but one of the men considered their relationships with other men as lacking the support and openness to be able to share problems and feelings. At the same time, they were given another strong message that men were expected to drink. Thus, alcohol seemed to become the way in which the men could comfortably connect with one another.

A number of authors have suggested a link between men's socialization experiences, sexual abuse and the use of alcohol to cope (VSMSSA 1995a; VSMSSA 1995b; Bigsby, 1994; Aubry, 1992; Lenfest, 1987). At least one of the men in this study noted that he coped with past sexual abuse issues by numbing the feelings and the shame

with alcohol. His gender socialization need to be tough and in control also seemed to be connected to his disassociating from his abuse through the use of alcohol.

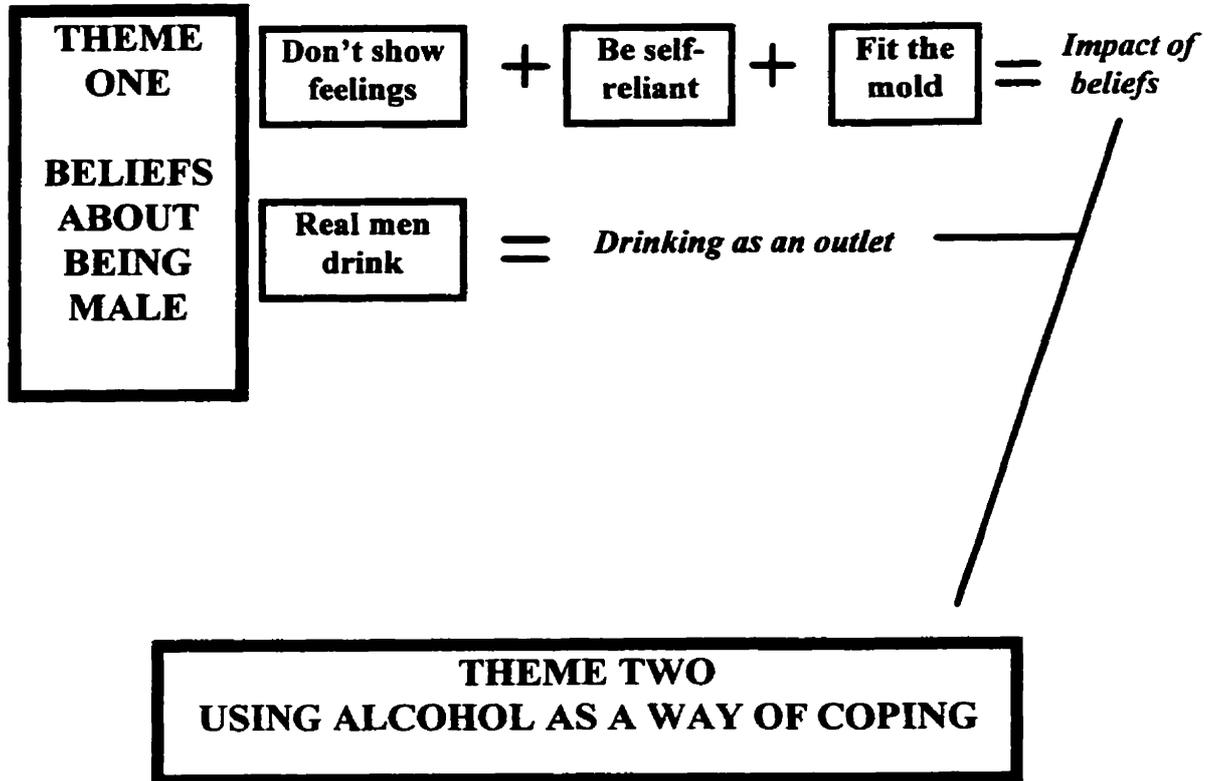
Finally, a number of authors have suggested that men may use alcohol to cope with the stress of gender role expectations (Bigby, 1994; Aubry, 1992; Kupers, 1993; Basow, 1992; Kipnis, 1991; Van Wormer, 1989). The findings of this research support this to some degree. Few of the men made direct connections between their belief system and the feelings that emerged as a result of their beliefs. The men did not immediately connect messages around needing to be powerful and in control with drinking to feel more in control or to numb feeling powerless. Neither did they connect their experience of drinking to relieve the feeling of being trapped in an unsatisfying relationship with a woman to the beliefs they held around successful men being married and providing for their families. Beliefs around men and success were not immediately associated with the experience of drinking to cope with pressure of pursuing success. And finally, although the men identified drinking to cope with pressure and dissatisfaction, none related it to feeling confined by rigid roles. While they realized that using alcohol to cope seemed to support the idea that they were experiencing stress, the men had difficulty uncovering the beliefs that were contributing to their apparent conflict. When asked directly, the majority of the men admitted that they were quite unaware of their beliefs or their socialization experience. In fact, four of the six men stated that exploring their alcohol misuse within the context of their socialization experiences was not something they had previously given much thought to. This was an important observation since it is difficult to challenge a belief that causes conflict without first having an awareness of the belief.

During the interviews, when I made this connection and checked it with each respondent to see if it fit their experience or not, some of the men were able to identify the beliefs and pressures that they responded to by drinking. Yet without the aid of the interview, those connections may not have been made. At the member check interview, two of the three men noted that the interview had helped them in their recovery because it guided them towards recognizing the connections and the need to explore issues further. They also mentioned that it was not something they had explored with their counselors, but by being encouraged to look at their socialization experiences during the interview, the relevance of the issues had become clearer. The significance of this will be further elaborated upon when implications for treatment are addressed.

Interpretation of the Findings

The results of this study have thus far been presented in distinct themes that carefully reflect the voices of the participants. This section focuses on the voice of the researcher, offering a further interpretation of the findings. I believe this is appropriate for a number of reasons. As previously noted, the participants often had difficulty exploring their alcohol misuse within the context of their socialization experiences. In response to my probes they identified connections, but had difficulty expressing them in detail on their own. For this reason, when it came time to do the member check interviews, I took the opportunity to ask them about some of the connections that I perceived between their beliefs about being male (theme one) and their use of alcohol to cope (theme two). Although these interpretations need further testing through continued research, the feedback

Diagram 1: Interpretation of Findings



helping them to fit in, have fun and connect with others. It also worked to escape from problems or to numb feelings. Thus, alcohol was experienced as a way of coping.

One participant used the analogy of a box. Socialization messages kept him in a box. The box was rigid and restrictive, both of which added stress, which was dealt with by using alcohol since it was the only outlet within the box. To further elaborate on this analogy, the box also added pressure, in that it was unrealistic. The men could not always be what was expected of them within the box, but were given few other options of how they could be. Their belief system informed them that a successful man must be tough, in control, powerful, competitive, self-reliant, stoic, along with numerous other ideals. This added considerable pressure not only because of the unrealistic, rigid nature of the ideals, but also due to the fact that most of the men had not identified or challenged the beliefs which guided them in how they thought and behaved. Thus, when they were unable to attain these ideals (such as when they were in a powerless position), the men identified using alcohol to numb their feelings. Because the drinking was effective at some level, the men continued to rely upon it as a way of coping with the stress of their gender role expectations.

Again, this interpretation of the findings does not suggest an “explanation” for the men’s misuse of alcohol within this study. Alcohol misuse is a complex issue, therefore to suggest that it emerges solely from men’s socialization experiences would be overly simplistic. Rather, these findings suggest that men’s socialization experiences and the emerging belief system influences men’s use of alcohol, thus it is a dynamic that should be considered in treatment. Using the analogy of a puzzle, understanding alcohol misuse

involves putting together a number of pieces in order to get a clear picture of what the alcohol misuse is about. The findings of this study indicate the men's socialization experiences are one piece of the puzzle. In order to see the whole picture, this piece must be explored. Thus, the significance of this study's findings is not so much related to the "why" of alcohol misuse, but more the "what can be done".

Implications for Treatment

The findings of the current research have implications for treatment, suggesting that gender-socialization issues should be addressed in men's only treatment groups. If one views alcohol misuse as a multi-faceted complex issue, then these findings offer clarity into one facet of men's misuse of alcohol. Ritter and Cole (1992) argue that "...interventions which address the gender role and challenge men's perceptions of themselves are critical variables in the outcome of therapy, i.e. enabling them to make the necessary changes in order to promote psychological well-being" (p. 163). This is even more critical when these socialization experiences appear to be so intricately linked with the issue being addressed during treatment – the misuse of alcohol. Thus, messages around feelings and support, beliefs about being a male and messages around drinking may all need to be identified and challenged in order to open up new outlets for coping that do not involve the use of alcohol.

Not only do these issues need to be addressed during treatment to enhance the recovery process, but therapists need to be aware of how the issues may interfere with the treatment process. According to the Surrey Alcohol and Drug Outpatient Clinic (1992, p. 2):

“Counseling is difficult for many men because of a set of fears that men acquire as a tacit part of their socialization. These include: fears of dependency, vulnerability, femininity, self-disclosure and failure. It is important to understand these fears because counseling asks most men to not only face them, but to overcome them as a part of the counseling process”.

Having an awareness of men’s issues might prevent the therapist from misinterpreting the client’s behaviour as “resistance” and give the practitioner more insight into how to help male clients work through these potential hurdles to treatment.

As well, the recovery literature suggests that a central aspect of recovery is the development of support systems of people who also value abstinence, which makes it easier to abstain from using. The AA system is modeled around the belief that a support system of non-users is an essential part of recovery (Ward, 1986). Yet, the findings of this study suggest that the messages men receive about how to interact with other men likely act as a barrier in developing non-using relationships, since the level of intimacy may be difficult to achieve without drinking. Developing new ways to interact that do not involve the use of alcohol yet fulfill intimacy needs may be facilitated by identifying and challenging early socialization messages.

Another treatment issue emerged through the process of collecting the data. It became evident to me that the research participants had difficulty identifying socialization messages and exploring links between their socialization experiences and their misuse of alcohol. While these links emerged in the discussions, it is unlikely that the majority of the men would have made these connections on their own, since they appear not to have given much thought to their socialization. This suggests that a therapist or group facilitator may need to take a more active role in facilitating this type of exploration. If groups are set up

“assuming” that these issues will emerge on their own, the group may not meet the needs of men. Even with the expressed focus of this study on men’s socialization experiences, the respondents had difficulty exploring the issues. Addressing men’s socialization experiences in this fashion may encourage exploration that would extend beyond the scope of this study.

A final implication for treatment is the question of when to address men’s socialization experiences. The participants who had the most difficulty identifying their socialization experiences were those who had the shortest period of sobriety. As such, this type of exploration might be difficult in the early stages of recovery. Some identification of gendered experiences may be helpful in order to address some of the issues that may interfere with treatment, but more in-depth consciousness raising work may be better suited for second-stage recovery. Further research with respect to these treatment implications is warranted.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the current research is the characteristics of the participants in the sample. Although the participants were from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, they were all Caucasian and between the ages of 44 and 51. Thus, the sample represents the socialization experience of men from a similar era. Different issues may have emerged if a wider sample of ethnic and age variations were included.

One participant, Joe, failed to meet the criteria of “an interest in exploring their male socialization experience”. During the initial telephone contact, he implied that he had read

the advertisement and was clear about the purpose of the study. It was only during the interview that he admitted that he had not read the study description. When I attempted to go over the purpose of the study, he interrupted, directing me to continue the interview process. However it became obvious as the interview progressed that he was still unclear about the purpose of the study and did not understand the idea of exploring his male socialization experience. I decided to keep his interview in the study, given the similarities in the data that emerged, despite his limited awareness into his male socialization experience. Thus, despite failing to meet one of the sampling criteria, this does not appear to be a significant limitation to the study.

The variation in the length of sobriety may be considered a slight limitation. The sample consisted of men at various stages of their recovery, which did seem to impact awareness level and the ability to explore issues to a degree. The two participants (Joe and Mark) who appeared to have the most difficulty exploring their socialization experience and making connections to their alcohol misuse had the shortest periods of sobriety. One of these two, Joe, was also the participant who had not been clear about the purpose of the study, nor had ever discussed men's issues before. Despite this, their experiences were very similar (albeit less detailed) than the other participants'. Therefore, while this limited detail may be a potential limitation, the stages of recovery added a breadth of experiences that better represent the context of alcohol misuse that was being studied.

Only three of the six men were available for the member check interviews. Of the three participants who agreed to meet for the member check interviews, all strongly supported the summary of the results of the study. None challenged or questioned the

results in any way and all commented that the themes reflected their experiences comprehensively. Unfortunately, three participants were not available to give their feedback, including Joe and Mark, who had the shortest periods of sobriety. Given the lack of clarity in their interviews around their misuse of alcohol and given my experience working in the area of alcohol and drugs, I became concerned about whether they would be able to maintain their sobriety and be available for the member check, even after the initial interview. Mark had only provided a telephone number where messages could be left and passed on to him. Although two messages were apparently delivered, he did not return either. Joe relapsed shortly after the research interview and has been drinking heavily since. We spoke briefly on the telephone, at which time it became apparent that he would not be reliable in the member check procedure, given his limited recollection of the interview and the fact that he had been drinking heavily over the past few months. Furthermore, since he was no longer seeing his counselor he was not comfortable going to the agency for the follow-up interview. He commented that he had not relapsed in response to our interview, but immediately after ending his counseling sessions. A third participant, John, was similarly unavailable for the member check interview. His lack of response was a surprise, as I had experienced him as a willing participant who had seemed quite interested in the study.

One might consider my gender, as a woman, to be a limitation of the study, yet I believe that my awareness of this potential limitation and the steps taken to address it prevented it from becoming a factor. There is debate within the men's therapy literature as to whether or not men are comfortable sharing their experiences of being a male with a

female. Aubry (1992) and Keen (1991) believe that only men can understand the experiences of other men, thus, the client's need is better met by a therapist of his gender. The alternate perspective, held by authors such as Corneau (1991) and Kipnis (1991), is that the gender of the therapist is not as important as the awareness and openness to men's issues. Thus, by demonstrating an interest in the area of men's issues and an awareness based on previous work experience with men, I believe that I minimized the impact of my gender. As well, my stance taken within the interviews seemed to minimize the potential impact of my gender. This stance was based on Kipnis' (1991) suggestion that, as therapists, "women should assume that they do not fully understand the male experience, and ask their male clients to explain it to them" (p. 267-268). This is descriptive of the role that I took in the research interviews. By taking the perspective that the participant is the "expert" in his experience and the role of the researcher is to be "an interested audience" whose goal is to learn from the participant (Rogers & Bouey, 1996), I was able to engage with the men and encourage an environment that felt safe and comfortable for them to share their experiences in depth.

I suspect that the level of engagement was also aided by my taking a non-traditional approach to interviewing. I took special care to avoid setting up a hierarchy and attempted to minimize status differences and treat the men as equal participants in the data collection process, which is suggested by Fontana and Frey (1994). In addition, special care was taken to use language the participant associated with and to avoid the use of labels, unless it was used by the participant. According to Fontana and Frey (1994), this is important since language and the use of specific terms can create "...a 'sharedness of meanings' in which

both interviewer and respondent understand the contextual nature of the interview” (p. 371). Finally, careful notes were taken after each interview to assess whether or not my gender impacted the study. The ease at which the participants spoke to me, their feedback that I was “non-threatening” “easy to talk to” and “comfortable to talk to” suggests that my gender was not an issue. This dynamic was likely aided by the fact that all of the participants had had good relationships with female counselors.

A final limitation of this study may have been the choice of an unstructured interview format. Given the difficulty that the men had in exploring their socialization experiences, a semi-structured interview format may have been preferable. This observation may be helpful in future research.

Directions for Future Research

While the findings suggest that men’s socialization experiences influence their misuse of alcohol, it is important to ground these findings within the limited scope of the research. Further research needs to be conducted to explore men’s issues and connections to the misuse of alcohol in more depth. A number of questions emerged from the current study which could become the focus of future research.

One possible focus could be to investigate how men’s relationships with their fathers impact the misuse of alcohol. A number of authors (Aubry, 1992, Ritter & Cole, 1992; Lenfest, 1987) have speculated that a key issue for men is grief over the lack of an involved father figure. Even though three of the participants in this study made reference to

poor relationships with their fathers, only one connected it to his misuse of alcohol and even then, it was within the context of losing his father later in life.

A second focus could examine the prevalence of male sexual abuse experiences and how it may relate to the misuse of alcohol. As previously mentioned, one participant made reference to having been raped and made the connection to using alcohol as a way of numbing the feelings and the shame of the abuse. This did not emerge as a theme nor was it possible to address it in any depth during the interview. This is an important area that may need to be researched further, especially given the speculation that there is a link between men's socialization experiences, sexual abuse and the misuse of alcohol (VSMSSA 1995a; VSMSSA 1995b; Bigsby, 1994; Aubry, 1992; Lenfest, 1987).

A third question may examine possible relationships between men's socialization, violence and alcohol misuse. Bigsby (1994) and Kivel (1992) speculated that there was a link between how men are socialized, the use of violence and the misuse of alcohol, but these issues did not emerge in the current study.

A fourth focus could be to explore whether different themes emerge with younger men who misuse alcohol. The ages of the men in this study ranged from 44 to 51, which may be considered a narrow age range which reflects a certain "era". In the last twenty years how have socialization messages changed? Perhaps men between the ages of 24 and 31 would have significantly different socialization experiences.

A fifth focus would be to study participants from different ethnic backgrounds. The volunteers for this study were all Caucasian. The results may have been different if ethnicity varied.

A final focus would be exploring how men's socialization experiences impact men's recovery. The findings of this study suggest a link between men's socialization experiences and the misuse of alcohol, but to what degree does this impact the recovery process? One could compare the effectiveness of a men's only treatment group that addressed socialization issues to a group that did not.

Summary

This study has explored men's socialization experiences and the misuse of alcohol, through a qualitative approach that attempted to validate their lived experience. As awareness around alcohol misuse has risen over the years, scientists and researchers have asked "why" and therapists and administrators have asked "what can be done". The findings of this study suggest that men's socialization experiences are a dynamic that need to be considered from both perspectives. In trying to address "why", one piece of the puzzle may be men's socialization experiences. For the research respondents, messages about being a man seemed to influence their use of alcohol. In the words of one of the men:

If you go along with what everybody expects of you, you're not going to be happy with yourself. And that's what I wasn't. I wasn't happy with myself. So the only way out, rather than leaving everything...I just escaped into a bottle rather than escaping into life and dealing with it. Instead of dealing with anything, I just ran away. (John)

The significance of these findings are in its application to treatment. The messages men receive may need to be challenged in order to open up new outlets for coping that do not involve the use of alcohol:

Men's emotions are equally important as women's emotions are to women. And we do not have, at least I don't see it, a way of venting those emotions. We have taken our box and sealed it. (Bob)

By addressing the element of men's socialization experiences, treatment may help men to "unseal" their boxes and challenge the restrictive messages that keeps them in a box with a bottle.

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APPENDIX I

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR STUDY

ARE YOU: :

- an adult male currently seeing a counselor within the alcohol and drug system?
- recovering from an identified misuse of alcohol with alcohol being your primary substance of choice?
- interested in exploring your experiences of being a man and your use of alcohol?

If you answered “yes”, please take a moment to see if you would be interested in participating in this study

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

With the movement toward men's only groups in alcohol treatment, a greater understanding of men's issues and needs would be helpful for future program development. The purpose of this study is to explore men's socialization experiences and the use of alcohol which could aid in an increased awareness of men's needs within the field of alcohol. The research has been undertaken in fulfillment of degree requirements for a Master's Degree in Social Work

FOCUS OF THE STUDY

This study is designed to gather information based on the lived experiences of men. The focus will be on your experiences, thoughts, beliefs and feelings of being male and how that may relate to your use of alcohol.

TIME COMMITMENT

You will be asked to take part in a 60 to 90 minute audio taped interview as well as one follow-up interview to discuss the study results. A compensatory travel expense of \$5 will be given to you at the beginning of each interview.

INTERESTED?

If you are interested in participating in this study or want more information to help you make a decision, please call:

Diane Roski at 437-4496 (day or evening)

(I should be available to take your call but if you get my answering machine, please leave your name and telephone number. For confidentiality purposes, please leave your first name only).

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE: An Exploration of Gender Socialization and Alcohol Misuse in Men

INVESTIGATORS: Diane Roski, BSW, MSW (candidate)

Supervisor: Leslie Tutty, DSW

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, please ask. Please take the time to read this form carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The purpose of this study is to explore the gender socialization experiences of men who are recovering from an identified misuse of alcohol. With the movement toward men's only groups in alcohol treatment, a greater understanding of men's issues and needs would be helpful for future program development.

As a participant, the study would involve one audio taped interview lasting approximately ninety minutes, and one audio taped follow-up interview to discuss the study results.

A personal journal will be kept by me containing your first name and telephone number only, for purposes of contacting you. No personal identifying information will be on the document developed from the interviews and the audio tape will be kept in a locked desk in a secure personal office, and will be destroyed within two months of the interview. Thus, strict confidentiality will be maintained. The only limits to confidentiality are if you disclose knowledge of a child being abused or disclose an immediate threat to hurt either yourself (ie. suicide) or someone else.

A compensatory travel expense of \$5 will be given to you at the beginning of each interview.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and if you chose to participate, you may withdraw at any time. Your decision to withdraw will in no way affect your treatment with the Alcohol and Drug Outpatient Clinic in which you receive counseling. This study is not related to the counseling services you receive, thus your counselor will not be notified in any way regarding your participation in this research study.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors,

or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. If you have further questions concerning matters related to this research, please contact:

Diane Roski, BSW, MSW (candidate) 437-4496
Supervisor: Leslie Tutty, DSW (403) 220-6945
(University of Calgary)

If you have any questions concerning your participation in this project, you may also contact the Office of the Vice-President (Research) at the University of Calgary and ask for Karen McDermid, (403) 220-3381.

Participant

Date

Investigator/Witness (optional)

Date

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

APPENDIX III

OUTLINE OF INTERVIEW

The purpose of this study is to explore men's socialization experiences and the misuse of alcohol. The following is an outline of the topic areas that will be explored during this interview. Questions, probes and prompts are unstructured and will be in response to what the participant shares.

TOPIC AREAS:

- Participant's understanding of what his alcohol use has been about;
- Participant's beliefs, feelings, thoughts and experiences in relation to being male, and;
- Participant's experience of how misuse of alcohol is connected to men's issues.

APPENDIX IV

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Participant: _____

Age: _____

Race: Caucasian Asian Native American Other _____

Length of sobriety: _____

Misuse any other substances: _____

Discussed Men's Issues: Therapist Group Men's Group
Other _____

How often _____

How often does participant attend Men's only group: _____

APPENDIX V

JOURNAL EXCERPT -- REFLECTION PROCESS

June 4, 1996 - Journal

In preparing for my first interview, I have decided to put "reminder-notes" in a journal that I will take with me to each interview. These notes will act as prompts on what to include in my journal when I am reflecting after the interview. The notes come from Rogers & Bouey (1996) and have been written on the inside covers in my journal in the following way:

Reflecting: "Without reflection and analysis during data collection, your study may be unfocused, repetitious and the amount of data collected overwhelming"

insights
 reaction
 questions
 self-analysis
 biases
 impressions about emerging patterns
 ideas about connections to other knowledge
 decisions about next steps
 why

(A) Reflecting in Action: During interview, keep asking yourself:

"Is this information really needed for my study?"

"Is the information of a high enough quality that I can use it in my study?"

(Note your personal reaction to how you phrased a question or to how an interviewee's comments impacted you)

(B) Reflecting on Action: Review the actions you have taken, as well as the underlying assumptions. Ask yourself:

2. Am I getting the kinds of data that are relevant for study?
3. Was the interview too structured?
4. What should I do to get more in-depth information on a pattern that seems to be emerging?
5. Is the interviewee withholding something? What should I do?
6. What impact could my race, social status, gender, ethnicity or political beliefs have on my study or the interviewee?
7. Did what the interviewee say ring true -- did he want to please me, look good, idealize a situation, or push a particular agenda?
8. Why am I feeling so stressed after this particular interview?
9. What assumptions did I make when I asked a particular question of the interviewee?

After writing in my journal (immediately after the interview) I will re-copy the journal entry on to the computer. If during the re-copying process I think of something more I want to add, I will make a new journal entry (on the computer) and date it the date of the recopying (not the date of the original entry). As well, after I have transcribed the interview or at any other time, if something more comes to me, I will make another journal entry on to the computer. This way, I will be accurately and fully documenting my train of thought throughout the data collection process.

APPENDIX VI

CONTENT ANALYSIS – MESSAGES TABLE

+ = received message - = opposite message +/- = received mixed messages

	“Bob”	“Sam”	“Joe”	“John”	“Bill”	“Mark”
C - 1 Be tough	+++	++	++	+	+++	++
C - 2 Feelings are not okay	+++++ ++	+++++ +	+++	+++++ ++	++	--
C - 3: Nothing feminine	+++++ +++++	++	++	--		--
C - 4 Don't ask for support	+++	+++++ +++	+++++ +	++	+++ -----	+++++ +/-
C - 5 Don't be too close		+++++			+++++	+ +/-
C - 8 Messages: peers/media	+++++ +++++		+++++ +	+	+++++ +++	+++++ ++
C - 9 Early exposure: alcohol		+++++ +++	++		+++ --	+++++
C - 11 Drinking / work	+++			+++++ +++	+++++	+++
C - 12 Be the provider	++	+++++ +/-	++	+/- --	+++++ +	+++ --
C - 13 Be married		+++	+	+++++ +	++	++
C - 14 Be a good father		+++++			+/-	
C - 16 Look a certain way				+++++		
C - 17 Be sexually active	+		+		+++	+
C - 18 Other's expectations		+++++ +++++ ++		+++++	+/-	+++++ +++ +/-

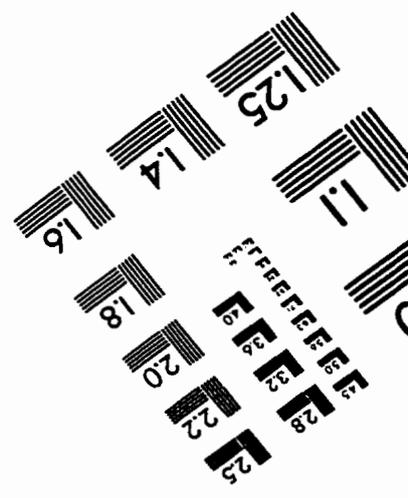
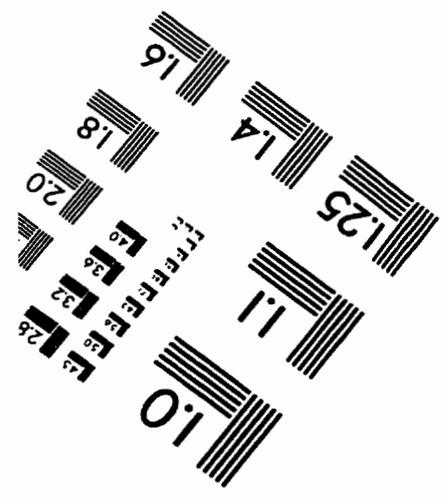
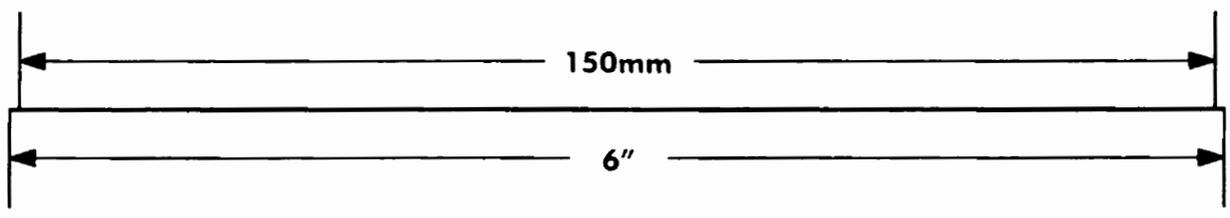
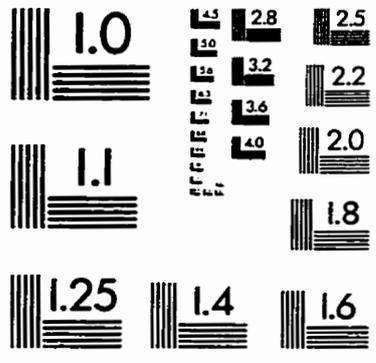
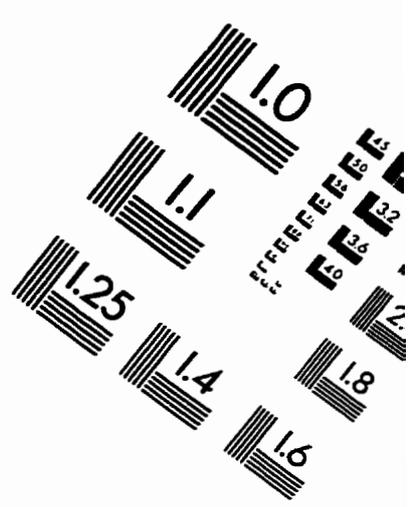
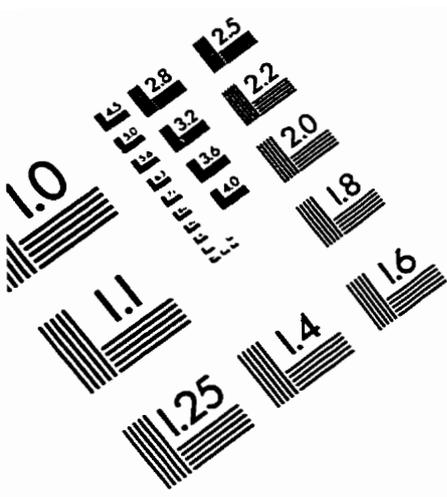
Categories within Sub-theme “Don't show feelings”

Categories within Sub-theme “Be self-reliant”

Categories within Sub-theme “Real men drink”

Categories within Sub-theme “Fit the mold”

TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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