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The WiseGuyz program and gender transformative change: Playing the long game

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The WiseGuyz program and gender transformative change: Playing the long game

by

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ABSTRACT

This research addresses the gap in the literature on engaging boys in gender transformative programming by examining the long-term benefits of having participated in WiseGuyz, a male-only local sexual health and healthy relationship program using a mixed methods approach. The Male Role Norms Inventory-Adolescent Revised (MRNI-A-r), focus groups and semi-structured interviews were used to gather data from a sample of boys who were five months to three years out of the program, along with a comparison group of boys who did not participate in the program. Participant observation and focus groups with program facilitators were also used in order to understand the program mechanisms that contribute to young men's experiences in the program.

The study is grounded on several critical concepts from sociology of gender, particularly *doing and undoing gender* and the concept of masculine performance to make sense of, and ground my findings. The theory of gender relations, focused primarily on the social organization of masculinity, was also used to frame findings relative to structured power relations and dominant ideologies. These concepts provide a foundation for understanding the differences between the two groups of young men.

My data show that there are significant and distinct differences between the two groups of young men in relation to their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours about masculinity, gender, and relationships. Through participant observation and focus group/interview data, the program mechanisms that support change are highlighted and revealed. The thesis ends with an examination of the implications of using sociology of gender concepts and theories in gender transformative program design and closes with a call to action for funders and policy makers to

re-think the ways in which program research and evaluation of gender transformative change is conducted.

Key Words: masculinity, adolescence, sexual health education, gender transformative program

PREFACE

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, C. Claussen. The data reported in Chapters 4-6 were covered by Ethics Certificate number REB16-0919, issued by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board for the project "WiseGuyz program: Understanding the long-term effects of a male-only sexual health and healthy relationship program on adolescent masculinity – Phase 2" on July 6, 2016.

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Chapter One: Introduction

When I started my PhD, I could not imagine the ways in which the social and political landscape surrounding masculinity and violence would shift and erupt. In 2014, I entered the program focused on examining the long-term influences of having participated in WiseGuyz, a male-only local sexual health and healthy relationship program. At that point, there were no other programs like WiseGuyz available locally and a very select few in existence internationally. In many cases, programs like this were viewed as a curiosity, one which fell outside the traditional offering of dating and sexual violence prevention programming and school-based sexual health programming. I could see the links between sexual health education, sexual violence and gender, and was curious about the potential for a male-only program focused on masculinity to initiate different kinds of conversations than those typically had in schools and communities.

Little did I know that by the fall of 2017, a seismic shift would occur with the arrival of the #MeToo movement. Called a "watershed moment" (Canadian Women's Foundation, n.d.), social media campaigns and movements that have followed (e.g., #timesup) have brought tremendous attention to the prevalence of sexual violence in society. This sobering reality has re-energized the call for interventions and efforts that challenge traditional gender norms among men and promote gender equality. The global prevalence and impact of gender-based violence has sparked the recognition that preventing such violence requires the participation of men and boys (Casey, Carlson, Two Bulls, & Yager, 2018). By engaging men and boys in violence prevention efforts, positive and transformational impacts will be realized not only in the lives of women and girls, but also in the lives of men and boys by freeing them from harmful and rigid aspects of traditional masculinities (Minerson, Carolo, Dinner, & Jones, 2011).

The why and how of engaging men and boys

The "why" of engaging men and boys in gender-based violence prevention is abundantly obvious. The reality is, it is largely men and boys who perpetrate gender-based violence (Flood, 2019). Since the #MeToo movement, more and more attention has been given to "toxic masculinity," a phrase originally used to define regular acts of aggression by men in power to dominate people around them (Morgan, 2019). Violence and aggression are typically seen as a "normal" part of sexual and intimate relationships (Flood, 2019). Research has shown that men and boys who adhere to rigid views about masculinity are more likely to report having used violence against an intimate partner and beliefs in inequitable gender norms are associated with using physical violence (both against women and between men; WHO, 2010). Traditional social and cultural norms often support or condone the use of violence by men (Barker, Ricardo, Nascimento, Olukoya, & Santos, 2010; Flood, 2019; WHO, 2010).

Patriarchy and societal norms reflecting the dominance of men are harmful not only to girls and women, but also to men and boys. Over the past decade, popular media have increasingly voiced concerns about particular features of masculinity, such as young men's worsening academic achievement and increasing rates of psychological distress and suicide, (Kindlon & Thomson, 2000; Phoenix, Frosh, & Pattman, 2003; Way, 2012). Scholarly attention has also focused on the importance and relevance of gender norms on men's health and well-being (Barker et al., 2010; Courtenay, 2003; Kimmel, 2008; Kindlon & Thomson, 2000; Wong, Ho, Wang, & Miller, 2017). For example, a recent meta-analysis investigating the relationship between conformity to masculine gender norms and mental health outcomes has shown that there is a strong correlation between conformity to masculine norms and negative social functioning (Wong et al., 2017). In particular, specific masculine norms of self-reliance, power over women,

and sexual prowess/performance were all "unfavorably, robustly, and consistently related to mental health related outcomes" (Wong et al., 2017, p. 80).

Although the "why" of engaging men and boys in gender-based violence prevention is well-established, the "how" is not. Less is known about how to do this work in ways that are meaningful, effective, and gender transformative (Casey, Carlson, Fraguela-Rios, Kimball, Neugat, Tolman, & Edleson, 2013; Casey, Carlson, Two Bulls, & Yager, 2018; Wells, Dozois, Exner-Cortens, Cooper, Esina, Froese, & Boutillier, 2015). Gender transformative approaches, according to Gupta "are those that seek to transform gender roles and create more gender equitable relationships" (2000, p. 6). These types of programs explicitly focus (at least in part) on a critical examination of gender-related norms and expectations, particularly related to masculinity (Barker et al., 2010). Recent research on prevention initiatives using a gender-transformative approach found they were often used holistically, targeting multiple gender-related outcomes such as gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and were particularly used in low-to-middle income countries (Dworkin, Treves-Kagan, & Lippman, 2013; Gibbs, Vaughn, & Aggleton, 2015). Less would appear to be known about gender transformative approaches in high-income countries. In 2015, a special issue of *Culture, Health and Sexuality* called for the submission of papers on the topic of working with men and boys in the areas of health and sexuality (Gibbs et al., 2015). The purpose of the special issue was to create greater insight into some of the wider contemporary dynamics of the field of masculinities and potentially stimulate new conversations, reflections and debates. The editors of the special issue found that the topic was heavily skewed towards the Global South (Africa in particular), with only two submissions from North America (Canada and Mexico; Gibbs et al., 2015). In 2018, Casey, Carlson, Two Bulls, & Yager reviewed the current evidence-base regarding

promising strategies for reaching out to men and inviting them to participate in gender-based violence prevention. Of the 12 peer-reviewed articles that met the criteria, only one was based in North America, with the rest being from Africa and India (Casey et al., 2018). In both cases, the programs focused on older adolescents and young adults.

Increasingly, there is a call for gender transformative programs that engage younger adolescent boys in masculinity issues and promote healthy and positive constructs of masculinity (Igras, Macieira, Murphy, & Lundgren, 2014; Kimmel, 2000; O'Neil, Challenger, Renzuli, Crasper, & Webster, 2013). Unfortunately, research identifies a lack of gender-specific programming for adolescent boys (Foley, Powell-Williams, & Davies, 2015; O'Neil & Lujan, 2009), particularly gender transformative interventions focused on promoting healthy and positive constructs of masculinity for younger adolescents (Igras et al., 2014; O'Neil et al., 2013; Tharinger, 2008). Understanding the design and effectiveness of gender transformative programs that engage adolescent boys is also challenged by the limited body of evaluative evidence in the field. My dissertation seeks to overcome this limitation. While face-to-face education with men and boys is the strategy that has been evaluated the most, there remains a growing awareness and emphasis of the continued need to evaluate prevention efforts (Flood, 2019). A 2018 review concluded that there was still a fairly small body of evaluation studies documenting the effectiveness of gender transformative interventions, reflecting the relative newness of efforts to engage men and boys (Casey et al., 2018).

In terms of evaluation, there is increasing debate regarding the methodological and epistemological standards that should be used to guide and assess research in this area (Flood, 2019). The dominant paradigm for program evaluation, favoured by government and funders in the human services, is the experimental method (McCall & Green, 2004; McCall, 2009).

Approaches that are steeped in a positivistic stance, such as randomized control trials or quasi-experimental designs, seem incompatible with the relational and interactional ways in which gender is actualized and understood in the everyday lives of young men. There is an emerging critique of the common hierarchies of evidence and method with scholars calling for ways in which to incorporate alternative research methods that are flexible and match real-life circumstances in order to move the field forward in a comprehensive and integrated way (Crooks, Jaffe, Dunlop, Kerry, & Exner-Cortens, 2019; Flood, 2019; McCall & Green, 2004). By using a feminist-based, mixed methods approach that takes into account the realities of community-based research as well as understanding the relational ways in which gender is constructed and performed, my dissertation contributes to the call for incorporating alternate research methods that address real-life circumstances.

Background of the WiseGuyz program

The Centre for Sexuality (C4S) is a feminist-based, anti-oppression organization that has operated for over 40 years in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The organization aims to normalize sexual health through sex-positive, evidence-informed, non-judgemental programs and services focused in three areas: healthy bodies, healthy relationships, and healthy communities. The need for a program targeted at young men was based on several different observations made by C4S. The organization recognized that, while teen pregnancy rates had dropped dramatically, STI rates continued to rise (Government of Alberta 2011); there were disturbing trends around the cultural and media messages of what it meant to be a man; and persistent bullying and homophobia in schools (Hurlock, 2016). Their review of available literature and programming in this area identified the lack of focus on young men in current iterations of school-based sexuality

education. This led C4S to develop its own program - WiseGuyz - to incorporate curricula that would address gender influences on sexuality and relationships.

WiseGuyz is a gender transformative school-based sexual health and healthy relationship program that strategically targets young men in grade nine (ages 13-15) in multiple public schools in the local area. This age group was targeted because research has suggested that early adolescence is a key time to address topics such as gender socialization and sexuality because there is a natural curiosity at this age (Wolfe and Jaffe, 2003). WiseGuyz is a voluntary program that consists of four core modules facilitated over 15 weekly, 90-minute sessions. The scheduling of holidays and other breaks in the school calendar means that these sessions take an eight-month span to deliver in full. The sequence of the modules plays a critical role as each one builds into the next. The four modules are: (1) Healthy Relationships; (2) Sexual and Reproductive Health; (3) Gender, Sexuality and Media; and (4) Advocacy and Leadership (see Table 1 for more information on sessions within each module).

Table 1

WiseGuyz Module Content

Module Name	Session	Content
Healthy Relationships	1	Program Introduction and Rapport Building (Hang-out)
	2	Values and Building Empathy
	3	Emotions, Self-Care, and Mindfulness
	4	Conflict Resolution and Healthy Relationships
	5	Consent and Communication
	6	Healthy Decision Making and Boundaries
Sexual and Reproductive Health	7	Human Sexuality
	8	Introduction to Anatomy & Puberty
	9	Birth Control
	10	Sexually Transmitted Infections
	11	Consent
Gender, Sexuality and Media	12	Gender Socialization
	13	Gender and Sexual Diversity
	14	Gender and the Media - Masculinity
	15	Gender and the Media – Sexism
	16	Gender-based Violence and Sexual Assault
Advocacy and Leadership	17	Introduction to Human Rights
	18	Exploring Privilege and Oppression
	19	Being an Active Bystander
	20	Making Change in Your World

A fundamental and core belief of C4S is that teen boys are pivotal catalysts in facilitating

positive social change for both genders by being able to positively influence attitudes and

behaviours related to gender identity. C4S views boys not as potential future perpetrators in

relationship violence, but rather as potential change agents in positive gender identity. The way

in which C4S has re-framed the issue (i.e., boys as social change agents in preventing

relationship violence), is markedly different from the way in which many programs and

organizations frame the need for male-only violence prevention programming (i.e., as potential future perpetrators of violence).

C4S has conducted ongoing evaluation of WiseGuyz since its inception. Qualitative and quantitative data collected from the program over the course of five years has consistently shown positive outcomes for participants, not only in sexual health but also masculinity. The program uses several validated instruments, such as the Sexual Health Practices Self-Efficacy Scale (SSES Survey) and Male Role Norms Inventory-Adolescent-revised (Masculinity Survey; MRNI-A-r) to collect pre- and post-program data from participants in order to identify statistically significant improvements. Consistently since 2014, the program has shown statistically significant improvements in both the SSES and the MRNI-A-r (Claussen, 2017; Hurlock, 2014, 2017).

For example, in 2014, data has shown the average post survey score for both sexual health (SSES) and male norms (MRNI-A-r) improved significantly by 16% (Hurlock, 2014). In 2015, the average post survey score for male norms improved significantly, again by 16% (Claussen, 2017). In 2017, average post survey scores for sexual health improved by 24%, suggesting the young men were much more confident around abstinence, sexual equity/diversity, safer sex, sexual assault, sexual health care and sexual relationships (Hurlock, 2017). There was a 17% improvement in scores related to male norms, suggesting again that boys who took the program were changing their attitudes and beliefs about masculinity (Hurlock, 2017).

Since the inception of WiseGuyz in 2010, the program has grown exponentially. The program is now offered in more than thirteen schools across three school divisions in Calgary and surrounding areas. In 2018/2019, the program reached more than 250 young men (Exner-Cortens, 2019). In one school where the program had been offered since its inception, all young

men in the Grade 9 cohort participated in the program. Sites that offer WiseGuyz are very enthusiastic and supportive of the program, primarily because of the changes they see in those young men who participate.

Exploratory Research

The program's apparent success in shifting attitudes and behaviours for adolescent boys in relation to masculinity ideologies developed my curiosity as to the role of program facilitation early on. An increasing body of literature has suggested that teachers and other school staff are not viewed by students (particularly young men) as legitimate and "credible" sources of sexuality information (Allen, 2009; Limmer, 2010; McKee, Watson, & Dore, 2014). This perceived lack of credibility often resulted in lack of engagement with the content (Buston & Wight, 2006; Hilton, 2007). Lack of engagement is a missed opportunity to promote healthy sexuality and connections to positive masculinity, because young men actually do value and desire explicit and specific information on sex and sexual health (Buston & Wight, 2006; Hilton, 2007; Limmer, 2010). Unfortunately, studies have suggested that, while young men do gather information about sex and relationships from a variety of sources, their impression of sexual relationship education is that it is too focused on facts and bears little relevance to the lives they lead (Allen, 2009; Hilton, 2007; Limmer, 2010).

Prior to recruiting and interviewing young men for my dissertation research, I spent a little more than two years (September 2015-December 2017) attending bi-weekly WiseGuyz facilitator team meetings. These meetings were initially intended to support me in developing a trusting relationship with the facilitators, given that they were important gatekeepers to accessing the boys for future research. My experience with the facilitators at these meetings enhanced my awareness of how much training and professional development went into being a WiseGuyz

facilitator. Facilitators receive extensive training before they can independently run a WiseGuyz program site. First, they observe a sexual health education series delivered by colleagues from CSHC in each grade in selected schools for a total of 16 sessions over grades 7, 8, 9 and 11 (youth ages approximately 12 to 16). This is to familiarise them with the sexual health education components. They shadow and co-facilitate two to four sexual education classes, specifically in grade 9 (the grade in which WiseGuyz is offered, with youth who are approximately 13-15). CSHC also requires pre-reading, such as Becoming an Ally (Bishop 2015) and The Social Workers Pocket Guide to Reflective Practice (Maclean 2010), before WiseGuyz facilitators can teach on their own. CSHC offers bi-monthly unlearning sessions for all their staff on various topics, including: racism, ableism, classism, and sexism.

Over the time I spent with the facilitators, I began to realize that the way in which the program was facilitated may have been critical in promoting healthy sexuality and connections to positive masculinity for the program participants (as opposed to program outcomes being solely due to curriculum content). In addition to my field notes from meetings, I conducted a focus group with the facilitators in order to explore the processes they used to engage young men and support them to be conscious, critical and self-aware of the masculinity ideologies that impact their sexuality and their relationships (see Chapter 3 for more information on methods). The data I gathered ended up being a significant piece of work, which I published as an article in the journal *Sex Education* in 2019. I will be referring to critical findings from the data in Chapter 6 of the dissertation.

While I discovered a number of valuable insights into how the program engaged young men (Claussen, 2019), the findings most relevant to this dissertation focussed on the ways in which facilitators supported young men in shifting their understanding of masculinity ideologies.

My data highlight how facilitators built safe social spaces for dialogue and introspection. Facilitators encouraged young men to reflect on and challenge gendered beliefs regarding their sexual health and sexuality, specifically through norm-critical dialogic approaches and through facilitators' own expressions of vulnerability (Claussen, 2019).

Consistently, the concept of safety emerged as a critical pre-condition to engaging young men in the program curriculum. What does safety mean? I found the data to reflect the complexity of this concept, as it was an issue with multiple layers, including individual and group, and emotional and physical safety. Emotional safety can be understood as being comfortable with being open and vulnerable (Claussen, 2019). Physical safety, such as the classroom space where the program was held, could positively impact emotional safety, specifically the comfort young men felt when discussing their feelings. When physical safety was disrupted, it had a ripple effect on feelings of emotional safety and could impact the quality of the conversations and self-reflections of the boys. Disruptions to physical safety may occur through having an inconsistent classroom space or sharing a classroom space with a teacher.

Norm-critical approaches have been described by Lindroth (2014) as approaches by which opinions and questions are handled in a non-judgemental question format as opposed to a lecturing format. This approach and its impact with the participants are explored in more detail in Chapter 6. Norm-critical, dialogic approaches take patience and time. Critical reflection, self-awareness, empathy-building, and conscious masculinity require a "long game" approach using small group discussions to explore topics in a non-judgemental and engaging way (Claussen, 2019).

Facilitators also supported participants to reflect on and challenge their beliefs about masculinity by modelling more expansive and positive expressions of masculinity, such as

emotionality and vulnerability (Claussen, 2019). Modelling vulnerability was a vital first step towards supporting young men in dismantling masculinity stereotypes associated with being a "man," such as independence and emotional stoicism. This willingness by the facilitators to be vulnerable and emotional with the young men provided an opportunity to discuss and critique the prevailing understandings of masculinity and men's discomfort with these understandings (Claussen, 2019; Hossain et al., 2014). Men are influenced by other men and by what they think is true about other men regarding masculinity, which can be positively channelled and modelled in all-male groups (Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenbach, & Stark, 2003; Hossain et al., 2014). This finding is also explored in greater detail by the past participants in Chapter 6.

Dissertation Overview

The WiseGuyz program has generated a tremendous amount of interest from community organizations working with youth, funders and policy makers both locally and provincially, as this program targets an identified gap in available programming around gender transformative prevention interventions and engages adolescent boys (Carmody, 2009; Crooks et al., 2007; Foley et al., 2015) and integration of gender and violence prevention into adolescent sexual health agendas (Carmody, 2009; Haberland, 2015; Powell, 2007; Schalet et al., 2014).

My dissertation addresses the gap in the literature on engaging boys in masculinity issues and promoting healthy masculinity and healthy relationships by employing a mixed methods research design to examine the long-term influences of having participated in WiseGuyz. I recruited young men in high schools who had taken the WiseGuyz program in junior high, along with a group of young men in the same high schools who had never taken the program. These young men filled out surveys measuring their adherence to traditional masculinity ideologies and a sub-sample of them participated in focus groups and interviews.

Not only does my study address the effects of having participated in gender-transformative healthy relationships program (as compared to young men who did not participate), but it also explores the ways in which the program processes supported the realization of positive outcomes for those who participated. I spent two years attending facilitator team meetings in the role of participant as observer, as well as conducting a focus group with the facilitators to better understand the program processes.

Essentially, this work addresses the "how" around engaging young men in gender-based violence prevention efforts. Through an exploration of data comparing the two groups of young men, I will discuss the ways in which the program supported individual and peer-level change by providing meaningful and effective gender-transformational experiences. By gender-transformational, I am referring to those approaches designed to transform gender roles by critically examining gender-related norms and expectations related to masculinity (Casey et al., 2018). My concluding discussion focusses on the implications of gender-transformational programming for shifting attitudes and behaviours around masculinity and sexuality where I also argue for more expansive and inclusive forms of research and evaluation than what is currently favoured in the human services sector in attempts to definitively make claims about program effectiveness.

Key Concepts and Theories

At the heart of it, my dissertation is informed by interpretive theories, primarily symbolic interactionism and social constructionism, due to my understanding and belief that gender is constructed within and through intersubjective contexts. From the tradition of symbolic interactionism, I pull on the concepts of *doing* and *undoing gender* (Deutsch, 2007; West & Zimmerman, 1987) and the concept of masculine performance (Brickell, 2005) to make sense of,

and ground my findings. From the social constructionist tradition, I use the theory of gender relations, focused primarily on the social organization of masculinity, in order to frame findings relative to structured power relations and dominant ideologies (Connell, 2005a).

Organization of thesis

In Chapter 2, I review the theoretical and empirical literature on adolescence and masculinities; adolescent masculinities and sexuality; sexual health programs, youth, and gender; and gender transformative programs and youth. In Chapter 3, I present the methodology used to undertake this research project. This study is a feminist research project grounded in community-based research principles. These principles are foundational to the kinds of questions I ask in this thesis, as well as the ways in which I have chosen to answer them. In Chapter 4, I present the analysis of my quantitative data. In this chapter I also critique the emphasis on experimental research methods and what it means to generate quantitative data in the current political landscape. I suggest, instead, engagement with alternative methods that address the relational and performative aspects of gender. In Chapter 5, I present qualitative data from the non-WiseGuyz group of young men. In Chapter 6, qualitative data from the WiseGuyz participants is presented and discussed. In Chapter 7, I pull together findings from the previous three findings chapters in order to make meaning of the differences between the two groups of boys exploring the high-level conditions and concepts that I argue are at the root of what we see play out in the data and present final arguments related to the significance of the data. I also consider implications for policy makers, funders, and practitioners when considering the development and implementation of gender transformative sexual health and healthy relationship programming for adolescent boys.

Chapter Two: Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

In this chapter, I outline two critical areas of thinking in relation to the sociology of gender and situate my grounding concepts. As such, I begin by addressing the core concepts at the heart of my dissertation: (1) doing and undoing gender; (2) gender as performance; and (3) Raewyn Connell's theory of gender relations (focused primarily on the social organization of masculinity; Connell, 2005a). I then move on to examine the empirical evidence in a number of content areas related to my project, specifically: (1) adolescence, masculinity, and sexuality; (2) sexual health programs and gender; and (3) gender transformative programming.

Foundational Concepts and Theories

In the 1980s, there was a growing criticism of the gender literature (and the gendered nature of science) and recognition of the influence of sociocultural factors on theories (Siltanen & Doucet, 2017). The sharpest break from sex role paradigms, the prevailing approach and theory at the time, emerged from sociology, which was heavily grounded in the interpretive approaches of symbolic interactionism and social constructionism (Connell, 2005a; Siltanen & Doucet, 2017).

Doing and undoing gender

Sociologists began to argue that gender was an active social accomplishment, and as such, started using gender as a verb to reflect this idea that it involved a continuous effort (Siltanen & Doucet, 2017). The concept of *doing gender*, as first proposed by West and Zimmerman (1987), captured the notion that gender was something individuals must work at to produce. West and Zimmerman argued that gender is a "routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment" (1987, p. 126). Doing gender relies on three key arguments: (1) gender is an active accomplishment; (2) gender is created through interaction; and (3) gender is articulated in

performances and displays that are held accountable to social gender norms and expectations (Siltanen & Doucet, 2017). These three key arguments are foundational to the analysis in this dissertation and are explored in Chapters 4 through 6.

Inspiration for the idea of gender as an accomplishment came from the theoretical influences of Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel (Siltanen & Doucet, 2017; West & Zimmerman, 1987). West and Zimmerman built on these theorists' ideas, particularly Goffman's (1976) idea of gender displays and Garfinkel's (1967) lengthy discussion of Agnes (a famous case of a transgender woman; 1987). The doing gender perspective, as influenced by these two theorists, focuses on and examines the specific ways in which individuals manage, present, and account for themselves in everyday situations (Siltanen & Doucet, 2017). The concept of performances is important to consider when using doing gender as an analytical tool, as these gendered performances come into play when considering how they maintain the dominant social order and gender norms (Siltanen & Doucet, 2017; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

In both cases, however, West and Zimmerman engaged in a critical examination of those ideas and discussions, arguing that instead of simply focusing on the behavioural aspects of being a man and woman, participants, through social interaction, organize their activities to reflect or express gender and are conditioned to see the behaviour of other individuals with whom they interact in the same light (1987). They argued that sex, sex category, and gender[1] are

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[1] According to West and Zimmerman (1987), sex is a determination made based on socially agreed upon biological criteria for classifying individuals as males and/or females. Sex category, on the other hand, is established and sustained by producing the necessary identificatory displays required to claim membership in either of those categories. Sex and sex category, they argued, can vary independently. One can claim membership in a sex category even in the case where the sex criteria is lacking (e.g., female transgender individual who has not gone through sex re-assignment surgery but who dresses and grooms themselves in stereotypical female ways). Gender is the social activity required to manage one's conduct in light of societal understandings of attitudes and activities appropriate for one's sex category.

important concepts for understanding the ongoing and routine construction of gender in everyday

relational settings (Siltanen & Doucet, 2017; West & Zimmerman, 1987, 2009). By doing

gender, differences are created between girls and boys, women and men. While many in society

may view these resultant differences as "natural," they are anything but (West & Zimmerman,

1987). Rather, these differences, constructed through social interaction, are used to reinforce the

"essentialness" of gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 137).

The concept of doing gender highlights the different ways in which gender is actively

constructed on a variety of social levels, from the dyadic to the cultural (Addis & Cohane, 2005;

West & Zimmerman, 1987; West & Zimmerman, 2009). This focus on individuals as active

agents who construct particular meanings of gender in particular social contexts is a distinct shift

from sex role theories that view individuals as respondents to processes of reinforcement and

punishment (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Courtenay, 2000; Hare-Mustin, 2004; West & Zimmerman,

2009). This understanding of doing gender conceives of gender as an emergent feature of social

situations (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Gender is both an outcome of, and a rationale for, a

variety of social arrangements, as well as a way of legitimizing gender inequality (West &

Zimmerman, 1987).

While there may seem to be significant overlap between the work of West and

Zimmerman and Judith Butler, who also uses the concept of undoing gender (2004), these two

approaches differ dramatically in their theoretical underpinnings and how they address gender,

sexualities and bodies (Siltanen & Doucet, 2017). According to Siltanen and Doucet (2017), the

doing gender approach is based on symbolic interactionist traditions, referring to the *active*

capability of conceptualizing one's internal states and external relationships. What this means is

that individuals can exercise agency in interactions as well as engage in an active process of

accounting for one's perception of one's internal states. In other words, the individual is not a solid and static entity, but rather one who is constantly defined and redefined based on the reflections of the social world as a result of interaction with others (Brickell, 2005; Joas & Knobl, 2009). There are some symbolic interactionists, such as Garfinkel, who considers the notion of a biography that surrounds the socially constituted self as exhibiting some continuities over time (1967).

Butler's use of undoing gender and performativity, however, is based largely on linguistic declarations that perform actions. For example, when new parents tell others their new baby "is a girl," this begins the process of "girling" the female subject (Butler, 1993, p. 232). The individual is constituted through actions and their regulatory effects without any biographical continuity to the notion of self (Brickell, 2005; Siltanen & Doucet, 2017). Butler has been criticized for the lack of clarity regarding the level of agency held by subjects, and rarely uses the term self, only doing so to explore the problems with the notion of a true self (Brickell, 2005; Siltanen & Doucet, 2017).

Doing gender was a conceptual breakthrough at the time it was developed, and significantly influenced feminist theory worldwide (Messerschmidt, 2009; Risman, 2009; West & Zimmerman, 2009). The concept has been used by researchers in the area of adolescence and masculinity, highlighting that gender is not only something youth do through interaction with others, but that their gender practices are evaluated by those present in relation to normative understandings of gender within specific settings (Carrera-Fernandez, Lameiras-Fernandez, & Rodriguez-Castro, 2018; Landstedt, Asplund, & Gillander Gadin, 2009; Messerschmidt, 2009). In other words, young men construct masculine identities through interaction with others and

these masculinity practices and performances are evaluated by others in relation to the normative expectations and constructions of masculinity within those specific settings.

While the concept of doing gender has been widely used, it is not without its critics (Deutsch, 2007; Risman, 2009; Siltanen & Doucet, 2017). In addition to scholars highlighting that most writing on doing gender ignores the physical body and puts too much emphasis on gender itself, they also point out the limited attention to intersectional connections to race and class (Deutsch, 2007; Risman, 2009; Siltanen & Doucet, 2017). There is also a call for greater attention to be placed on research that illuminates how gender can be undone (Deutsch, 2007; Risman, 2009; Siltanen & Doucet, 2017). Deutsch proposed that sociological research should focus on how social interactions become less gendered, and whether gender can be irrelevant in interaction (2007). Siltanen and Doucet (2017) suggest that research on undoing gender could be threefold. That is (1) focusing on undoing as opening up or widening understandings and practices of gender norms; (2) undoing as transgressing gender (e.g., transgender individuals who leave behind their assigned-at-birth gender identity to live new lives with chosen gender identity); and (3) undoing as transformation (e.g., use of gender neutral pronouns such as Ze and Zir). Despite the call for more research focused in this area, there remains a large gap in the literature that focuses on undoing gender and opportunities for social change (Deutsch, 2007; Risman, 2009; Siltanen & Doucet, 2017).

Theory of gender relations and the social organization of masculinity

By the mid-1980s, gender had emerged as a key feature of sociological theory and research, although there was a recognized need by academics to theorize gender (Siltanen & Doucet, 2017). Gender theory moved from homogenous, static, and category-focused ideas to those that were dynamic, heterogeneous, and relational (Pascoe & Bridges, 2016; Siltanen &

Doucet, 2017). There is no doubt that Raewyn Connell's influential theory of gender relations significantly shifted the sociological discussion of gender and masculinity (Chistensen & Jensen, 2014; Messerschmidt, 2011; Pascoe & Bridges, 2016). In fact, her theory of gender relations is what underpins the conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity, perhaps the single most recognized and utilized concept in masculinity research and one that is central to my work (Chistensen & Jensen, 2014; Jefferson, 2002).

Connell conceives of gender as "the way in which social practices are ordered" (2005a, p. 71). Her theory acknowledges the importance of the physical body without situating it as a causal explanation for gender, thereby broadening the possibilities for understanding embodied gendered practices. For Connell, gendered social practice refers to the ways in which the conduct of everyday life is organized in relation to a reproductive arena, defined as the bodily structures and processes of human reproduction (Connell, 2005a). The reproductive arena encompasses the various practices, performances, and social processes that get culturally attached to reproductive differences (Pascoe & Bridges, 2016). Gender relations then, are the relationships arising in and around the reproductive arena, constituting one of the major structures of all documented societies (Connell, 2005a; Pascoe & Bridges, 2016). For Connell, history is developed over time through the gendered relationships humans produce and re-produce around the reproductive arena. Connell (2005a) convincingly asserts that gender organizes and orders the social practices people engage in. We can see these gendered social practices in a multitude of ways, such as the way we parent our children (e.g., speaking lots to girl babies and rougher handling with boy babies) and educate students (e.g., discouraging girls from taking advanced math and science classes and reprimanding boys more for their behaviour).

By focusing on gender relations as opposed to roles, it becomes clear that the gender order is composed of various dimensions with the capability of moving in different directions (Pascoe & Bridges, 2016). Focusing on the relational aspect between genders also helps illuminate the ways in which social structures and institutions are produced by gender (Connell, 2005a). There are patterns in gender relations and arrangements, and society is structured in ways that make these arrangements and relations more likely (Pascoe & Bridges, 2016).

For Connell, there are several dimensions of gender relations: power relations, production relations, and cathexis (Connell, 2005a). Power relations refer to the facet of contemporary society that structures women's overall subordination and the overall dominance of men, also known as patriarchy (Connell, 2005a). This structure persists despite many upheavals and shifts, such as women in positions of power in the workplace, women entering male-dominated fields, etc. These relations organize gender on a global scale and exist on an interpersonal level and/or institutional level (Connell, 2005a; Pascoe & Bridges, 2016). Production relations are the gendered divisions of labour that exist and the resulting economic consequences (Connell, 2005a). For example, we tend to think of the work that men do – whatever that may be – as more important than the work women do because men are doing it, and as such, are deserving of more pay and prestige (Pascoe & Bridges, 2016). Cathexis refers to the ways in which our emotional attachments, which feel quite individual and individualized, are deeply patterned by gender (Pascoe & Bridges, 2016). The practices that shape and realize sexual desire are an aspect of the gendered order. The result of this is the powerful connection between masculinity and sexuality, with heterosexuality being deeply connected to men's position of social dominance (Connell, 2005a). Homophobia is central to masculinity, acting as a form of gendered policing, rather than solely a reaction to an identity, desire, or practice (Pascoe & Bridges, 2016).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity plays a key role in the overall theory of gender relations, serving as an analytical instrument to identify those attitudes and practices among men that perpetuate gender inequality (Pascoe & Bridges, 2016; Jewkes et al., 2015). In moving towards a theory that was based on practices, performances and structures of gender relations, Connell has suggested that not all men benefit from gender inequality in the same way (Connell, 2005a). Recognizing multiple masculinities, she has also suggested that there needed to be a focus on the gendered relations among men themselves. Connell (2005a) outlines various masculinities and the relationships among them:

1. Hegemonic masculinity: This refers to a dominant and socially legitimized form of masculinity that confers greater status, power and control on those who practice it, effectively subordinating women and other men who do not fit and/or identify with that particular version of masculinity. This practice of hegemonic masculinity dominates over other forms of masculinity as it is the culturally exalted form of masculinity. This dominance of hegemonic masculinity is not imposed, but rather accepted by women and men as the norm because there is congruence between the cultural ideal and institutional power (collective, not individual; Jewkes et al., 2015; Pascoe & Bridges, 2016). It is important to remember that the same configuration of hegemonic masculinity may not be exalted everywhere, or in the exact same ways (Connell, 2005a). Regardless, as the term hegemonic indicates, these practices of masculinity are viewed as ideologically legitimate and superior, even by those whose masculinity practices would not be characterized as hegemonic (Connell, 2005a). The concept of hegemonic masculinity has become understood as the most normative masculinity, embodying the currently most honoured way of being a man (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Hearn, 2004). While only a minority of

men may embrace and enact hegemonic masculinity, it requires that all other men position themselves in relation to it (Connell, 2005a; Hearn, 2004).

2.   Complicit masculinities: The reality is that most men do not meet the normative standard of hegemonic masculinity. Yet, the majority of men gain from its hegemony, benefiting from the patriarchal dividend and overall subordination of women (Connell, 2005a). Complicit masculinities, however, are not actively engaged in the subordination (Pascoe & Bridges, 2016). An example of this may be a husband who endorses egalitarian relationships with women but still benefits from making more money for performing the same job as women. Or, in regards to parenting, may receive extra credit for parenting, while his wife's parenting contributions are not acknowledged or celebrated.

3.   Subordinate masculinities: This refers to those masculinities with the least cultural status, power, and influence. This is the repository for whatever is not considered within the purview of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005a). This function of subordinate masculinities is important, as societal language is very much tied to the ways in which we symbolically expel people from occupying masculine statuses, while simultaneously feminizing them in the process. For example, from the point of view of hegemonic masculinity, gayness has been assimilated to femininity (Connell, 2005a). While gay and queer masculinities may be the most conspicuous, they are not the only subordinated masculinities. Some heterosexual men and boys may be expelled from the legitimacy of hegemonic masculinity (Pascoe & Bridges, 2016). The relational pattern between hegemonic masculinity and subordinate masculinities exists because, to a greater or lesser extent, hegemonic masculinity is constructed as a gender position that is "not gay" as well as "not female" (Jewkes et al., 2015).

4.   Marginalized masculinities: This refers to those masculinities where other structures, such as class and race, play a significant role. Different masculinities can share some ground with hegemonic masculinities but exist as marginalized by, and alienated from, these forms (Connell, 2005a). For example, working-class masculinities may strongly portray hegemonic ideals (e.g., toughness, intense disavowal of anything feminine, etc.) but do not benefit from patriarchy in the same way as hegemonic masculinities. Marginalized masculinities relate to hegemonic masculinity, in that they can reinforce hegemonic ideals, without necessarily occupying the same privileged arena (Pascoe & Bridges, 2016).

Despite its prolific use in the study of masculinities, there have been a number of criticisms levied against the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Of those that have emerged, two in particular hold relevance to my work. The first is the argument that the masculinities outlined by Connell can be used simply in reference to certain groups of men and/or a specific set of character traits (Beasely, 2008; Hearn, 2004; Wetherell & Edley, 1999). Beasely (2008), for example, has suggested that by using terms such as subordinated, marginalized and complicit masculinities, certain groups of men are being referenced (e.g., the subordinated gay man, the marginalized black man, the complicit white man, etc.). This is a serious criticism, given that actual men may or may not conform to the experience of masculinity that these "types" are referring to (Beasely, 2008). For example, gay men may not perform an effeminate masculinity and black men may not perform an urban masculinity. Connell does not pretend, however, that these configurations of masculine practice are intended to define groups of men; rather, they are configurations of masculinity that interact in relationship with hegemonic masculinity, femininities, and with each other (Connell, 2005a). Understanding these configurations of practice as part of a dynamic system is necessary to prevent a collapse into character typologies.

As Messerschmidt (2012) stated, hegemonic masculinity has no meaning outside its relationship to other masculinities and femininities, so reducing the concepts to static character typologies results in a faulty application to empirical findings. The incorrect appropriation of the term to refer to character traits has been noted by other scholars and has been repeatedly addressed by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005). Correct application of the concept is founded on the inclusion of the relational idea among hegemonic masculinity, femininity, and non-hegemonic masculinities in addition to the understanding that this relationship is a pattern of hegemony, as opposed to one of simple domination (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2012). Embracing the idea of social organization as foundational to the concept of hegemonic masculinity is critical in understanding how hegemony is constructed, practised, and reinforced in various social settings.

The second significant argument related to my own analysis, which has emerged more recently in the past decade, is that there has been a shift in gender relations and as such, concepts such as hegemonic masculinity and the theory of gender relations are no longer well-suited to understanding the contemporary culture of masculinity (Anderson, 2009, 2013, 2016; McCormack, 2012, 2014). Eric Anderson has developed the Inclusive Masculinity Theory (IMT) from a number of research projects in the mid-2000s after finding lower levels of homophobia among male athletes in Britain and the U.S. (Anderson, 2009). The theory rests on the idea of declining levels of homohysteria, a term developed by Anderson to refer to a culture panicked by the omnipresent threat and suspicion of homosexuality (Anderson, 2009, 2011). Anderson has argued that there are three conditions necessary for a culture of homohysteria to exist, specifically: (1) widespread cultural awareness of homosexuality as a sexual orientation; (2) cultural disapproval of homosexuality; and (3) cultural disapproval of any behaviours or traits

associated with femininity in men and masculinity in women, as they are associated with homosexuality (Anderson, 2011). Anderson had stated, based on research data, that homophobia has declined and, as a result of no longer having to ward off perceptions of homosexuality, young men are permitted to engage in a wider range of behaviour choices around their clothes, recreational pursuits, and most importantly, expressions of friendships and emotional intimacy (Anderson, 2013). Anderson has posited that inclusive masculinity theory is better suited to understanding the contemporary social dynamics of young men, and that hegemonic masculinity and the social organization of masculinity is no longer well-suited to the conceptual task (Anderson, 2016).

There have been several critiques of inclusive masculinity theory (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014; de Boise, 2015; O'Neil, 2015) and Anderson himself has acknowledged that his theory requires further elaboration (2016). He has also acknowledged that men considered as belonging to a set of inclusive masculinities may still sexually objectify women, may use homophobic discourse, and reproduce heteronormativity within his theory of inclusive masculinities (Anderson, 2013).

de Boise has identified a number of problematic features of inclusive masculinity theory, both conceptually and empirically (2015). Not only is the theory based on a teleological argument, suggesting that decreasing cultural homohysteria has led to the development of inclusive masculinities, which are in turn characterised by an absence of homophobia, (O'Neil, 2015), but that there has also been no account of understanding gender inequalities within patriarchy (de Boise, 2015). Anderson himself has recognised this omission, suggesting it was purposeful as he does not want to fall into the same circular argument trap that Connell's theory does (2016).

Content Areas and Empirical Evidence

In the next section, I review the scholarship in a number of areas that both situate and inform my own project, namely adolescence and masculinity, adolescent masculinity and sexuality, sexual health programs and gender, and gender transformative programming.

Adolescence and masculinity

Since Connell's work emerged, there has been an explosion of research on masculinities, covering a variety of sites of masculinity practices, such as sports, workplace, violence, education, etc., leading to an abundance of descriptive studies on the lives of men and boys (Connell, 2005a; Pascoe & Bridges, 2016; Siltanen & Doucet, 2017). Increasingly, within the past two decades, more focus and public attention have been placed on issues of youth and masculinity (Atkinson, 2012; Connell, 2005b; Kimmel, 2000). Connell has suggested that the popular concerns that have emerged around boys and education, violence, and mental health are based on essentialist conceptions of both gender and adolescence (2005b). While the notion of fixed developmental sequences is false, human growth is a reality. Connell has argued that in particular cultural settings, patterned and characteristic encounters will occur in the teenaged years between the individual and the larger social order (2005b).

There are a variety of "sites" where certain types of encounters occur during adolescence (Connell, 2005b). Violence is one of the sites of masculinity formation that has been taken up by adolescent boys, with studies of violence emphasizing the gender dimension (Connell, 2005b; Katz, 1995; Kimmel & Mahler, 2003; McCarry, 2010; Messerschmidt, 2000; Paechter, 2007). Paechter (2007) has suggested that through all the ways in which identity is constructed and performed, one of the prevalent themes found in the literature is the association between masculinity and danger. Sexuality is another site where adolescent masculinity is constructed and

performed, with an emphasis on heterosexuality (Connell, 2005b; Kimmel, 2008; Paechter, 2007; Smiler, 2008). There are a variety of arenas in which masculinities are constructed throughout the period of growth known as adolescence (Connell, 2005b; Hauge & Haavind, 2011). Regardless of the site of construction, a relational approach to gender and adolescence is critically important, as both are constructions within an established social order (Connell, 2005b).

In regards to masculinity and adolescence, gendered ideals for boys (and ultimately, adult males) are reproduced through the temporal and constructed time known as adolescence. Moving toward adult male ideals is essential because adults are seen and understood as superior to children (Lesko, 2012). In a society where adults are proclaimed superior to children and youth, male youth must become like adult men or risk a loss in valued identity (Lesko, 2012; Rafalow, 2009).

Male youth must differentiate themselves not only from "children," but also from girls. While Connell has suggested that adolescent boys' lives and emotions are not categorically distinct from girls, when the dominant gender ideology insists on essential differences between the two, a developmental dilemma is created (2005b). As a solution, boys "exaggerate the enactment of masculinity as a way of "doing difference" (Connell, 2005b, p. 13).

Despite the importance of engaging in a relational approach to gender and adolescence, the intersection of adolescence and gender has often been overlooked (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Hauge & Haavind, 2011). Many empirical analyses have failed to see how age and gender intersect in boys' social transitions between categories of age (Hauge & Haavind 2011). Current North American conceptions of masculinity are defined not only in opposition to being a woman, but also in opposition to being a boy (Gardiner, 2002). Some feminist researchers have stated

that age categories should form a more integral part in feminist theories of gender, particularly in analysis of the ways in which power plays into boys' development (Addis & Cohane, 2005; Gardiner, 2002; Way, 1997). Understanding why and how some boys develop particularly rigid and maladaptive notions of what it means to be a man and how practices of power can be changed, are particularly important questions to be studying.

Adolescent masculinity and sexuality

Scholarly research has suggested that the connection between sexuality and masculinity is undeniable (Fracher & Kimmel, 1998; Messerschmidt, 2000; Pascoe, 2005). Through sexuality, confirmation of the successful construction of gender identity occurs (Messerschmidt, 2000). In other words, while gender *informs* sexuality, it is sexuality that *confirms* gender (Fracher & Kimmel, 1998).

Sexuality is an area where adolescent masculinity is constructed and performed, particularly regarding heterosexuality (Connell, 2005b; Paechter, 2007; Pascoe, 2005). Aggressive heterosexuality is both assumed and expected of adolescent boys (Smiler, 2008, 2012). The dominant understanding of adolescent masculinity, both in common sense wisdom and mass media messages, has been to direct boys to focus on sex and "scoring" over relational concerns, and to initiate both romantic and sexual encounters (Messerschmidt, 2000; Smiler, 2008). Sexuality has been used by adolescent boys to establish hierarchies, and the greater the ability to score, the higher one's position in the masculine hierarchy (Cohan, 2009; Smiler, 2012). As explained by one researcher in the area of adolescence, masculinity and sexuality, "Being able to score, especially being able to score repeatedly, turns a boy into "the man" (Smiler, 2012, p, 92). Research has suggested this need for conquest to prove masculinity even pertains to homosexual or bisexual adolescent males (Wilson et al., 2010; Wolfe & Jaffe, 2003).

In response to dominant masculine ideologies, gay or bisexual males may overcompensate by enacting the more accessible aspects of masculinity, such as having multiple sexual partners (Wilson et al., 2010).

For many adolescent boys, there is a relationship between desired gender identities and reward through sexual gratification (Philaretou & Allen, 2004; Rafalow, 2009). Adolescent boys are busy adhering to hegemonic ideals of masculinity in order to gain power through sexuality (Rafalow, 2009). This is not, however, without its problems. Hegemonic masculinity supports a mechanistic notion of male sexuality, devoid of any humanistic ingredients of emotional intimacy and connection in relationships (Philaretou & Allen, 2004).

Sexual health programs and gender

An emerging body of literature has proposed that building all adolescents' healthy relationship skill sets are imperative to making healthy sexual choices, engaging in healthy relationships free of violence, and experiencing positive sexuality (Adams & Williams, 2011; Carmody, 2009; Tolman, Striepe, & Harmon, 2003). Unfortunately, international research in the area of sexual violence and sexual health has put forward that many young people are not being adequately prepared by existing school-based sexual health programs to deal with the relationship issues emerging with their developing sexuality; issues such as consent and conflict, and negotiation of their own and their partners' sexual needs and desires (Carmody, 2009; Powell, 2007). Research from Australia and the United States has shown both young women and young men value and need broader information and discussion around the social aspects of negotiating sex and consent (Adams & Williams, 2011; Carmody, 2009; Powell, 2007). Furthermore, researchers have called for comprehensive sexual health approaches that go beyond discussions of STIs, pregnancy and sexual behaviour to include psychological/emotional

considerations, individual and family values, and societal messages (Adams & Williams, 2011; Carmody, 2009).

While models of sexual health such as those described above have moved beyond a sole focus on risky sexual behaviour and pregnancy prevention, gender does not appear to be considered in a substantive way (Haberland, 2015; Schalet et al., 2014; Tolman et al., 2003). Although there has been consensus that gender is a key aspect of sexuality, some researchers have stated that gender influences on sexual health are understudied (Carmody, 2009; Tolman et al., 2003). There is a strong theoretical and empirical base of support for the inclusion and emphasis on gender and power in sexuality education (Haberland, 2015). Research into gender and sexual intimacy has found highly gendered expectations by adolescents (Carmody, 2009; Schalet et al., 2014). Sexual and reproductive health behaviours and outcomes are impacted by gender and power (Haberland, 2015). For example, studies have shown that men who adhere to rigid gender norms and attitudes are significantly less likely to use contraception or condoms (Peacock, Stemple, Sawires, Sharif, & Coates, 2009; Pleck et al., 2011; Santana, Raj, Decker, La Marche, & Silverman, 2006).

Gender ideologies influence not only how youth view themselves, but also how they understand and take up messages around sexual well-being and sexuality (Schalet et al., 2014). For example, sexual health educators often spend time discussing the importance of accessing health and other support services. This message of accessing services can be at odds with traditional masculine ideologies that value expertise in sexual performance, potentially marking those who seek support seem sexually inadequate and, ultimately, less masculine (Hall & Applewhite 2013; Schalet et al. 2014; Knight et al. 2012). As a result, young men may not seek

out the information or services they need to make healthy sexual choices in order to preserve their image.

Sexual health programs that ignore traditional gender ideologies linking masculinity with heterosexuality, high sex drive, and focus on sexual satisfaction with lack of emotional involvement with relationships, ultimately disadvantage boys by stigmatizing their emotional needs and vulnerabilities in relationships and leave them less prepared to have fulfilling and meaningful intimate relationships (Hall & Applewhite, 2013; Schalet et al., 2014; Way, 2012). Research has highlighted the need for sexual health education to be free of harmful gender beliefs and to include tools to help students address and challenge these beliefs (Schalet et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2010).

Gender transformative programming

Inequitable gender norms have been shown to be harmful to both women's and men's sexuality and overall well-being (Courtenay, 2000, 2003; Impett, Schooler, & Tolman, 2006; Levant et al., 2003; Schalet et al., 2014; Wong et al., 2017). Increasingly, there has been a growing recognition that health programming with men needs to include efforts to transform power relations between women and men in order to create changes in gender relations and health outcomes (Barker et al., 2010; Dworkin, Fleming, & Colvin, 2015; Gibbs, Jewkes, Sikewiya, & Willan, 2015; Kedde, Rehse, Nobre, & van den Berg, 2018). A growing evidence base has suggested that efforts to improve sexual and reproductive health outcomes and reduce gender-based violence are more effective when well-designed, relatively short-term interventions using a gender transformative approach are employed to engage men and boys (Barker et al., 2010; Dworkin et al., 2015).

Social science theories and concepts of gender have been influential in the conceptualization and development of gender transformative health programming (Dworkin et al., 2015). First, the notion that gender is something that one does, as opposed to what one is, within a patterned set of social interactions and institutions, means that gendered patterns can be undone (Courtenay, 2000; Dworkin et al., 2015; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Second, understanding the relational dimension of gender is critical to understanding how men are implicated in the overall gender order (Connell, 2005; Dworkin et al., 2015). Gender relations cannot be reduced simply to the notion of roles, as this then ignores the ways in which women and men are positioned differentially in social institutions, and as a result of that positioning, may experience different causes of, and harms to, their overall health and well-being (Connell, 2012; Dworkin et al., 2015). Dworkin et al., (2015) have suggested it is this dual understanding of gender relations that has been important to the development and implementation of gender transformative interventions with men.

Gender transformative approaches are those that seek to reshape gender relations towards being more gender equitable (Kedde et al., 2018; Rolleri, 2014). Geeta Rao Gupta initially proposed a continuum of gender programming, ranging from gender exploitative through to gender transformative in order to help practitioners incorporate a gender perspective to achieve greater impact (2000). Gupta has proposed that gender transformative interventions have three goals: (1) create and raise awareness about unhealthy gender norms; (2) question and examine the costs of adhering to these norms; and (3) replace unhealthy, inequitable gender norms with redefined healthy ones (Rolleri, 2014). Interventions with men that utilize a gender transformative approach support men in reconstructing their understandings of what it means to

be a man, with the assumption that these new understandings will be healthier for men and less harmful for women (Dworkin, Hatcher, Colvin, & Peacock, 2013; Gibbs et al., 2015).

The evidence around the effectiveness of gender transformative approaches with men is growing. Several systematic reviews of a variety of health interventions targeting men have shown that gender transformative approaches were more effective than those that used gender neutral approaches (Barker et al., 2010; Dworkin et al., 2013). While promising, there is still a fairly limited body of such evaluation studies (Casey et al., 2018). Evidence of effectiveness of gender transformative programming with adolescent boys is extremely limited (Foley et al., 2015). While there is substantial scholarship around the effectiveness of school-based healthy relationship interventions (Flood, 2019), there is limited information as to whether these interventions have utilized a gender transformative approach, deemed by global health scholars to be more effective than those that utilize a gender neutral or sensitive approach (Barker et al., 2010; Dworkin et al., 2015; Gibbs et al., 2015). In fact, according to some scholars "The majority of US programming has failed to integrate gender and power as a means to develop and foster healthier youth, relationships, and communities" (Kato-Wallace, Barker, Garg, Feliz, Levack, Ports, & Miller, 2019, p. 122).

In addition to the paucity of evidence of effectiveness, scholars have highlighted other lingering questions in relation to the development and implementation of gender transformative programming, such as which dimensions of gender relations gender-transformative interventions are attempting to change (Dworkin et al., 2015). Furthermore, whether new patterns of masculine practices continue after the close of programs is another question troubling scholars. My study directly addresses this question, providing an empirical base for making the case that WiseGuyz creates transformative change.

Conclusion

My review has outlined a number of critical arguments that contribute to the context of my inquiry and analysis. The substantive bodies of literature reviewed highlighted that while adolescent masculinity and sexuality are deeply intertwined, this is an area of understanding that has not been traditionally considered in sexual health and wellness programming. Young men have failed to be engaged, despite the fact that they want information and discussion around the social aspects of sexual health and wellness (Adams & Williams, 2011; Carmody, 2009; Powell, 2007). Exploratory research on the WiseGuyz program has demonstrated the power of the program to successfully engage young men (Claussen, 2017, 2018), a noted anomaly in the literature (Buston & Wight, 2006; Hilton, 2007; Meaney, Rye, Wood, & Solovieva, 2009; Quinlan & Bute, 2013; Saewyc, 2012). My dissertation provides an empirical example of gender transformative sexual health programming that successfully engages young men, addressing an important gap in the literature.

In making sense of the differences between the two groups of young men in my study, and understanding the ways in which the WiseGuyz program creates changes for past participants, I pull on a number of critical sociological concepts identified in my literature review. Doing gender, understood as something that one does, as opposed to what one is (West & Zimmerman, 1987) has become more influential in the development and design of gender transformative health programming (Dworkin et al., 2015). My dissertation extends this understanding by focusing on salience of gender assessment threats in the lives of adolescent boys and highlighting the relational mechanisms at play when considering the possibilities for gender transformative programming.

These relational mechanisms are critically important in understanding my findings from the non-WiseGuyz group of boys, particularly Connell's theory of gender relations and understanding of the social organization of masculinity (2005a). I use concepts such as hegemonic masculinity, subordinate masculinity, and marginalized masculinity to make sense of the findings in my data. I draw on the relational component in my findings chapters, outlining the social organization at play amongst masculinities.

As I point out in my literature review, scholars have called for more research that focuses on ways in which gender can be undone (Deutsch, 2007; Siltanen & Doucet, 2017). I intend to address this gap, through my analysis of findings. Exploratory research on the WiseGuyz program has shown participants engage in a more critical understanding of gender norms, as well as showing shifts towards more progressive, gender-equitable ideals (Claussen, 2017; Hurlock, 2014, 2017). My dissertation extends these findings by highlighting the ways in which these young men open up and widen their understandings and practices gender norms.

"Hey, I know you…you're the pizza lady. Yeah, I'll do your survey"
Non-WiseGuyz Participant from School A

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

If someone had told me that I would spend many hundreds of dollars on pizza during the course of this dissertation, I would not have believed them. When I started this project, I anticipated providing pizza lunches for a couple of scheduled focus groups at one high school in the city. What actually happened, however, was vastly different. The best laid plans are often reduced to rubble through the realities of conducting research in the real world, particularly with young people. In my prospectus, I carefully and neutrally explained that my research would be focused on conducting "a comparative mixed methods evaluative approach to investigate the difference between WiseGuyz participants' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours regarding masculinity and a sample of boys who did not participate in the program" (Claussen, 2016). I outlined four basic questions to frame my research project, specifically: 1) Do boys who have participated in the WiseGuyz program hold less traditional views of masculinity than boys who have not participated in the program?; 2) In what ways are the attitudes and behaviours regarding traditional masculinity different between boys who have and have not participated in the program?; 3) How do past participants describe the impact the program has had on core beliefs about masculinity and sexuality?; and 4) What factors appear to encourage program success or failure? While I did indeed conduct a comparative mixed methods project and address the four questions posed above, nothing about the process ended up being quite so neat and tidy as my simple statement projected it to be. I will explore the shifting research methodology in relation to young people and this project throughout this chapter.

Contributing to the sense of sand under my research feet is the fact that my project was grounded in community-based research (CBR) principles and practices. Projects committed to CBR principles may find themselves needing to pivot more often than not, simply due to the fact that the participatory, action-oriented, and collaborative approach used often runs afoul of schedules, attempts at organization, and constructed timelines. Regardless of the challenges, my project was deeply committed to the tenets of CBR. Community-based research is very much aligned with the body of public sociology, as both endeavour to develop a relationship between the university and local communities and focus on social change and social justice (Bach & Weinzimmer, 2011; Pennell & Maher, 2015). Collaboration, relationship building, and ongoing dialogue are key attributes of public sociology and the CBR process (Kingsley & Chapman, 2013). Over the course of four years, I engaged in ongoing relationship building and dialogue with C4S, my community-based partner in this research journey.

There are two key features of CBR that are intertwined and important to foreground. The first are the concepts of "rigor" and "quality." How does one "do" community-based research well? Increasingly, academic researchers in this area have pointed to the limitation of traditional (also known as positivistic) discourses around rigor and quality in relation to CBR (Kingsley & Chapman, 2013). Traditional discourses of research and research quality see knowledge claims as separate from "the methods, politics and context of their production" (Kingsley & Chapman, 2013, p. 12). This traditional discourse of knowledge production and claim are diametrically opposed to CBR principles and practices. Politics and context are not separate from the production of knowledge, given that sharing of experience, transparency, and responding to mutual need are core aspects of the CBR process. Simply having a community partner does not

necessarily mean CBR is being conducted, especially when the research design attempts to strictly control and "neutrally" produce knowledge in the field.

Working with a community partner in the field means shared leadership and acknowledging expertise. Like feminist researchers, CBR researchers seek to break down or eliminate hierarchies of knowledge construction (Mikesell, Bromley, & Khodyakov, 2013). Feminist research also tends to recognize situated knowledge, in that the knowledge produced is never separate or distinct from the researcher and those researched (Small, 1995; Westmarland, 2001). Similarly, CBR views partners as having a powerful place in the knowledge-creating hierarchy, recognizing that co-construction and dialogue are key features of rigorous CBR practice (Kingsley & Chapman, 2013; Mikesell et al., 2013).

For these reasons, I always brought my observations and insights to the facilitator team meetings. Facilitators would offer advice on the most effective forms of participant recruitment, discuss what incentives might be good to use, and shared their own reflections on some of my observations. For example, prior to beginning recruitment, facilitators recommended I bring chips with me and be visible and present in a high traffic area of the school. They found from their experiences recruiting young men to the program that this strategy was effective. This suggestion definitely garnered a lot of interest in my project, as well as enabled me to become a familiar and friendly face at the school.

A second, related, feature of CBR is the notion of ethical practice. High-quality ethical CBR is essentially an ethical practice (Mikesell et al., 2013). What this means is that sharing of experience, transparency, ongoing dialogue and negotiation are ethical obligations in CBR (Mikesell et al., 2013). Answering research questions that are relevant to a community is also part of the ethical practice of CBR (Kingsley & Chapman, 2013; Mikesell et al., 2013). My

research questions guiding this project were co-constructed with C4S and findings and analysis from the facilitator focus group have been written into a briefing note and incorporated into the organization's training centre curriculum (see Appendix A).

This focus on answering research questions that were relevant to a community - an important tenet of CBR - was also why a mixed methods approach was used in this project. Because the research questions guiding my project were co-constructed with a community partner, quantitative methods were appropriate in answering the first of the four research questions (i.e., Do boys who participate in the WiseGuyz program hold less traditional views of masculinity than boys who did not participate in the program?). C4S wanted quantitative data similar to what they had been collecting over the course of several years to include in reports to their funders. Given that they had an appropriate standardized questionnaire ready to use, it made sense to use the survey tool to answer the first research question. Identifying appropriate research methods to address research questions of interest is also a pragmatic one. Pragmatism is concerned with addressing practical problems faced by practitioners and those in the "real world" (Hall, 2012, pg. 4). The basic belief is that the act of discovery has priority over the justification of knowledge for knowledge's sake (Small, 2011). In this case, epistemology is empirical rather than foundational, with the research primarily concerned with solving an empirical puzzle through whatever means appear useful in the process (Small, 2011). The empirical puzzle, in the case of the first research question, required survey-based data collection methods.

Research Design

Data sources

My project utilized a number of data sources in order to address the research questions guiding the study. In some cases, data sources were identified in the proposal stage prior to conducting the research. In other cases, data sources emerged throughout the course of the research project. My primary data sources were young men in high school in grades 10 through 12 (ages 15- 18). This included young men who were past participants of the WiseGuyz program (WG), as well as young men who had never participated in the program (NWG). WiseGuyz facilitators emerged as another important data source in the project, particularly in regards to addressing the question: "What factors appear to encourage program success or failure?" Originally, I had also wanted to conduct a focus group with young men currently taking the high school version of the WiseGuyz program. Once I entered the field, however, I found out that the program was more of a small, inconsistent gathering of young men over the lunch hour. The facilitator in charge of this group had struggled getting a consistent, critical mass to run the sessions. Over the course of my time in the school conducting research, there were only a few sessions that ran. At the end of the school year (June 2017), due to resource constraints, C4S made the decision to no longer offer sessions at that particular school.

Surveys

A survey was used to measure young men's endorsement of traditional masculine ideologies. For the purposes of this research project, masculine ideology referred to "internalized beliefs regarding culturally defined standards or norms for males' roles and behaviours" (Levant et al., 2012, p. 1). My independent variable was participation in the WiseGuyz program. The specific dependent variables under study, based on previous exploratory qualitative and

quantitative research on the program, were the total score and three subscales on the validated

tool described next: The Male Role Norms Inventory – Adolescent Revised version (MRNI-A-r)

was used to measure these variables (See Appendix B). Permission was obtained from Dr. Ron

Levant to use the validated survey in the WiseGuyz program. The masculinity survey is a 29-

item inventory using a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). It

comprises three subscales designed to measure individuals' beliefs about appropriate behaviour

for adolescent boys. These three subscales were: emotionally detached dominance (EDD),

toughness, and avoidance of femininity (AF).

In addition to collecting data on traditional masculinity ideologies, I also collected

demographic data in order to create a profile of the participants. These questions were included

in the survey, above the MRNI-A-r questions. I used a range of forced choice (i.e., yes/no),

multiple answer, and open-ended questions.

I collected a total of 64 surveys (n = 25 NWG; n = 39 WG). Paper-based surveys were

completed by the young men at the two schools of recruitment, and I also used Survey Monkey

to reach WG and NWG participants who had scheduling conflicts with the paper-based

administration of the survey. Pizza lunches were provided to the young men who completed the

paper-based surveys, and those who completed the online version received a Pizza 73 gift card

for a personal size pizza to thank them for their participation (equivalent to having a pizza lunch

for filling out a paper-based survey).

Focus groups and interviews

In my proposal, I had anticipated conducting focus groups with young men in dyads and

triads, as this format has been identified by C4S researchers as optimal for fruitful focus group

discussions. What occurred in actuality, however, was that I completed focus groups with

upwards of six young men, and at other times single interviews (both using the same semi-structured interview guide). Regardless of my attempts at scheduling, I had to be content with whoever decided to show up on any particular data collection day. Focus groups and interviews were usually 30 minutes in length, as they were always conducted during the school lunch hour in order to make it convenient for the young men participating. In one case, the group was particularly chatty and I scheduled a second focus group with them to continue our conversation and pursue a number of topics that had emerged in our original discussion. Interviews and focus groups were conducted within the school setting, in a room designated by school administration. At the first school site, the designated room was also the wellness room where a number of other wellness programs took place (although not simultaneously). At the second school site, the designated location was a classroom.

I conducted a total of five focus groups (n = 3 WG; n= 2 NWG), as well as three individual interviews (n = 3 WG) for a total of 20 participants (n = 10 WG; N = 10 NWG). Pizza lunches were also provided to those who participated in the focus groups.

A semi-structured interview guide was used for the interviews and focus groups, modified from earlier iterations of qualitative research done with participants of the WiseGuyz program, and from the literature in the area of sexual health and young men (see Appendix C). While I did have questions that were the same between both groups of boys, I had additional questions for the WG around their experience in the program. I also took my lead from the young men, talking about issues that emerged as important to them. I also "went" where the group went conversationally, seeking to hear their own experiences and thoughts as they pertained to school, parents, friends, and being a guy in today's world without following the questions I had down in my guide. To me, maintaining the organic and fluid nature of the conversation was more

important than adhering to a pre-defined list of questions. As it were, many of the same topics emerged from both groups of boys, such as sports, friendships, and family.

A focus group with the facilitators of the program was also conducted, as it had become increasingly clear to me throughout the course of my observations that they may be a factor in the program's success and/or failure. A semi-structured interview guide was also used for this focus group (see Appendix D). The guide was developed based on themes and ideas emerging from the participant observation field notes. The focus group was 90 minutes in length. All focus groups and interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Participant observation

An unintentional but rich source of data emerged from my attendance at monthly WiseGuyz facilitator meetings. Originally, I had proposed to attend their team meetings in order to develop an authentic relationship with the facilitators (Berg & Lune, 2012), knowing they would be a critical support in recruiting boys for the study. It was my intention that this would then allow the facilitators to get to know me, and then be able to "vouch" for me with participants during recruitment.

Over the course of two years, I attended approximately 32 meetings. Each meeting lasted about 90 to 120 minutes. On average, I took three to five pages of field notes per meeting, for a total of 102 pages of handwritten field notes. I paid particular attention to the updates facilitators gave each other in regards to specific program sites, the challenges they were facing, issues that emerged with the boys, as well as conversations they were having with each other and with other community stakeholders and partners regarding the program (e.g., other schools besides WiseGuyz sites, the local school board, rural school surrounding the city, etc.).

Ethics approval

There were many steps involved in the ethics process for this project. First, I had to obtain ethical approval from my University's Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB). Since participant observation began well before the beginning of data collection with the young men, ethical approval was sought for the observation of facilitator team meetings in the winter of 2016. This was a fairly straightforward process, with minimal revisions required.

I knew that I would need ethical approval from the local school board in order to collect data from young men in the school. I got in touch with the board representative responsible for handling research requests and she advised that I should ideally obtain ethical approval from the university prior to seeking approval from the school board. Therefore, in the spring of 2016 I submitted an ethics modification to include data collection from the young men in the chosen school site. This was again approved with minimal revisions. This allowed me to proceed with submitting an ethics application to the school board in June of 2016. This was approved without revisions in August 2016.

A final ethics modification was required in the winter of 2017, which involved modifying the recruitment strategy to include an online method through social media (i.e., Facebook). This was done solely through CFREB, as I was not going into schools to recruit participants. For this reason, modification to the local school board protocol was not required. This is discussed in more detail further in the chapter

Sampling and recruitment

Purposive and convenience sampling were the two sampling strategies used for my study. Purposive sampling was used to generate a WG sample, while convenience sampling was used to generate a NWG sample. Sampling participants for inclusion in the research and recruitment

strategies underwent many, many modifications. I learned that conducting research with young people is not as easy as it is with adults! Young people do not carry an itemized schedule of their week or month, and the longer lead time you give them for returning forms and scheduling data collection sessions, the fewer the participants. Whereas adults prefer time to schedule and prepare, young people prefer to be met where they are at on any given day. I often found myself trying to capitalize on potential participants in the moment while always trying to adhere to ethical guidelines. Making decisions intuitively during the research process, sometimes at odds with conventional academic standards based on notions of control and neutrality, is what sometimes makes CBR a "messy" practice (Kingsley & Chapman, 2013).

Initial sampling and recruitment process

In thinking about ways to access and recruit my sample, I wanted to narrow down my site of recruitment as much as possible. WiseGuyz is offered in several different public junior high schools across the city, with past participants moving on to attend several different public high schools. As opposed to recruiting at all high schools where past participants were likely to be, I chose one school where I could focus my efforts. I chose School A,[2] a mid-size high school with less than 1,000 students across grades 10, 11 and 12. There were two junior highs with WiseGuyz programs that were feeder schools to this high school. I specifically chose this school for several reasons. C4S had a presence in the school, not only in providing comprehensive sexual health education sessions in the Career and Life Management (CALM) courses but also through a high school version of the WiseGuyz program. I believed that this presence would allow me to more smoothly recruit both WG and NWG participants to participate in the study.

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[2] As per the local school board ethical approval, I am unable to directly name the school(s) included in the research, or the name of the school board.

Second, there was a guidance counselor in the school who acted as a champion for the program and saw the value of providing healthy relationship programming at the high school level.

In the spring of 2016, the WiseGuyz facilitator at School A invited me to a meeting with the guidance counselor to discuss the possibility of conducting research in the school. We discussed the need for a program like WiseGuyz, particularly in relation to some of the issues the counselor was facing in the school (i.e., social emotional competencies of students). I described my research, identifying my specific research questions, and we explored how the information resulting from my study could be useful for the guidance team and the school. This conversation occurred approximately nine months prior to commencement of data collection and was the beginning of the relationship-building process with the school and important gatekeepers.

In the fall of 2016, I was invited by the guidance counselor to join the WiseGuyz facilitators to attend a full staff meeting at the high school. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the WiseGuyz program to staff and let teachers know how they could support boys who they believed would benefit from attending. I discussed my research study, letting the teachers know they could expect me to be a presence in the school. I also informed staff that, while I was not offering any actual incentives to the boys for participation in my study (as per the ethical regulations from the local school board), I would provide a pizza lunch as a token of appreciation. Teachers agreed that food was the best way to entice boys into the study and thought that if I were to offer free pizza, I would have more boys than I could handle wanting to participate.

In discussions with the guidance counselor, I made the decision to start recruitment once students had transitioned to the second semester (Claussen, 2018). There were two reasons for my decision. First, the guidance counselor felt that late fall recruitment would be too difficult

given that grade ten students were generally overwhelmed with the transition to high school. As a cohort, they generally needed some time to get used to the demands and schedules of a high school setting. Second, the school, as an institution, had its own rhythms, with professional development days, winter break and preparation for exams. Therefore, certain blocks of time and months were not appropriate for recruitment and data collection (Claussen, 2018).

The guidance counselor suggested recruiting in classrooms the first week of the new semester (February 2017). This coincided with information sessions from several other community-based programs; WiseGuyz being one of them. The guidance counselor scheduled time in classrooms over the course of the first week of the new semester and took me and the service providers to each classroom, introducing us to the students. In theory, it seemed like the ideal recruitment scenario: I would explain the study, hand out parent/guardian consent forms to those who were interested and students could return them to an envelope in the guidance office at their convenience.

On the first day of recruitment, I went to three classrooms (two grade 10 classes and one grade 11 class) and presented details of my research project, what I was interested in, and why I was looking for boys to participate. At the end of the presentation, I asked who might be interested in participating. Two students in the first classroom put up their hands to take a consent form. I went to the next two classes where I gave my same talk on the research. When I asked who might be interested in participating and looked into the room, I saw the students staring down at their shoes, desperately avoiding eye contact with me. After an awkward moment of silence, I let them know I would leave some blank parent/guardian consent forms in the guidance office that they could pick up if they decided to participate.

This lack of success with the structured classroom recruitment led me to re-think my strategy (Claussen, 2018). The WiseGuyz facilitator working with me that day suggested that an informal approach might be better, as this was how they recruited boys to participate in the junior high program. He explained how they set up a table in a busy part of the school, then handed out free chips or donuts to the students and talked about the program. I decided to use a similar strategy to recruit my sample. I spoke with the guidance counselor, who had no objection to setting up a table for my exclusive use in the front foyer of the school, just down the hall from the cafeteria. I quickly developed some recruitment posters and hung them on the front door of the school, behind the table in the foyer, and a WiseGuyz facilitator placed one in the boys' bathroom.

During the lunch period, a WiseGuyz facilitator and I stood behind the table and as students filtered out of classrooms, we asked groups of male-identified and mixed-gender groups if they wanted chips. As they came over to the table, I explained my research purpose and what participation would entail (as well as let them know I would be serving a pizza lunch as thanks for their participation) and then asked them if they thought they would like to participate. Not everyone who had chips wanted to take consent forms home to be signed or were interested in participating. Groups of young women were able to take chips as well. I would just ask that if they knew any male friends to send them over to chat with me about participating in a potential research project. Students who took consent forms were told they could drop them off within a week's time at the guidance office in an envelope labelled WiseGuyz and that survey administration would be scheduled in the next three weeks. Given the relatively high level of chaos (i.e., lunch time, multiple groups of students, etc.), I was unable to record names of students who took consent forms.

The first day of this informal way of recruiting led to 24 consent forms being passed out. I had originally planned to recruit 40 WG and 40 NWG participants, so felt I was about a third of the way to that goal. I repeated the same process for the next two days, passing out chips and consent forms to young people who stopped by the table. Some young men would come by and take chips, even though they had already received a consent form. Others would bring friends who had missed the event the previous day, encouraging them to take chips and a consent form. Overall, together with the structured recruitment and revised recruitment, I had passed out 64 consent forms over three consecutive days.

After one week, I went to the school to check how many consent forms had been returned. None of the 64 consent forms were returned. The guidance counselor and I talked about how to remedy this situation. First, she suggested that a week was too long a lead time to have forms returned (Claussen, 2018), it needed to happen the next day or else the forms risked never coming back to the school. Second, she offered to personally remind any student who took a consent form if I recorded their name.

Based on her feedback, I devised a three-fold strategy. I broke the week into alternating recruitment/data collection sessions. For example, recruitment would happen on a Monday and I would return the next day to do survey administration. I also made a concerted effort during the lunch hour to capture student names and contact info. While I was not able to reach as many potential participants as I would have liked, gathering contact information made it easy for the guidance counselor to get in touch with the students, to remind them to bring back the signed consent form, and to pull them 10 minutes early from class for the pizza lunch and survey administration. This very quick, rapid cycle proved to be more successful in eliciting participation.

Over the course of several weeks in order to recruit a wider variety of students than those who lingered in the foyer at lunch time, I took to coming to the school at various times of the day. Twice, I went for the morning period, and three times I went in the periods leading up to lunch, then the period right after lunch. I walked through the cafeteria and in the hallways, stopping at tables and talking with groups of male-identified students and mixed-gender students out and about in the school. I offered anyone who wanted a donut and chatted about my research project. I let them know I would be back the next day to conduct surveys and that a pizza lunch would be served to show appreciation for their participation. From the end of February 2017 to end of May 2017, I recruited 6 WG and 21 NWG participants. This was a far cry from the original 80 I had planned for.

Non-WiseGuyz Sampling and Recruitment

In many ways, I had anticipated it would be harder to recruit NWG participants to the study than WG participants, primarily because NWG participants would have no vested interest in supporting long-term understanding of a program in which they had not participated, or might not have even been aware of. Contrary to my expectations, I found it was actually *easier* to recruit NWG participants for several reasons. There were so many more NWG participants to recruit from, given that the vast majority of young men had not taken WiseGuyz in junior high. Besides this, however, I found the young men to be extremely curious about my research leading them to want to participate. Given the time I spent at the school in areas where students were hanging out, I came to informally know several of them who, over time, became adept recruiters in their own right. While I did not go into the field seeking it, I had unknowingly tapped into several peer recruiters for my study (Claussen, 2018). These were the young men who would always bring a previously untapped friend to the chip table to hear about my research, or even

find someone with no lunch plans to come and fill out the survey or participate in the focus group. While this did, at times, prove challenging (due to the need for parental consent prior to participating), I again met the young men where they were at, speaking with parents over the phone to secure verbal consent then sending young men home with signed consent forms that parents could scan and email back to me.[3]

What I found curious was that this group of 4-5 peer-recruiters (all NWG) would stay in the survey administration room over the lunch hour, chatting with myself and their friends. They could have simply come with the new recruit, grabbed some pizza, and left, but they never did that. They spent the 30 minute lunch period talking about spring break plans, sports, and after a couple of sessions, what I was studying in University, why I was interested in gender (young men) and what I hoped to do with the research once I collected it.

This experience was in opposition to the argument for "matching" – making sure the interviewer and interviewee is matched by gender, race, ethnicity, or any other identity characteristic in order to strengthen the interview (Way, 1997). While the literature has suggested interviewers may not necessarily have to possess similar characteristics to the interviewees, some degree of understanding through similarity is helpful (Berg & Lune, 2012). Regarding research with adolescents by adults, there are those who feel adult researchers must be cautious in assuming understanding of adolescent culture simply by thinking, "I have been there" (Miller & Glassner, 2011, p. 134).

On many levels, I was not matched to the boys in my study. I am neither a self-identified male, nor am I an adolescent. Rather, I am a middle-aged mother of two girls. How can this

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[3] This process happened on three separate occasions where those volunteering were less than the age of majority (18 years). I spoke with all parents over the phone, and two consent forms were scanned and emailed back. In one case, I had to turn a student away, as we could not reach his parents and I could not ethically proceed without some kind of consent (verbal or written) from their parent or guardian.

disclosure and comfort of the boys be explained? A number of feminist approaches to research have stated that the researcher must be willing to present themselves and offer self-disclosures of personal information in order to create genuine relationships and build rapport (Berg & Lune, 2012; Way, 1997). Within this feminist approach to qualitative research, there are those who feel issues of difference between interviewer and interviewee are less important than the ability of the researcher to convey warmth and familiarity in the interview process (Way, 1997). Qualitative research methods within this paradigm consider how dynamics within the research and participant relationship may influence the quality of data collected and suggest the development of comfortable and trusting relationships to be key to the interview process (Chu, 2005). I believe that my continual presence in the school, my lack of authoritarian or "adult" way of knowing, and ability to meet young men where they were at (both physically and metaphorically) conveyed to the boys that I was a person who was simply there to listen to them, regardless of what they had to say. I believe this ability to demonstrate my genuine and open curiosity about their daily lives was what created the conditions for young men to feel comfortable hanging out with me in the data collection space, along with having a different kind of adult role, outside of teacher or parent.

Since this peer-recruitment group was so willing to assist my efforts, I went on to spend a good deal of my time at the school trying to track down WG participants (who after all were the focus of my study). While I left the school site with 21 completed surveys and two structured focus groups of NWG participants, I could have continued recruiting this group of participants for the remainder of the school year. Unfortunately, much of my attention and worry was on recruiting WG participants.

I had anticipated that a large population of WG participants would be at the school site, which would provide me with a good size sample of participants for my study (I had originally hoped for surveys to be completed by 60 WG participants). Over the course of the three month recruitment and data collection period; however, I realized that while *in theory* there should be many WG participants, the reality was different. When I asked the past participants "where are the rest of the WiseGuys?" a couple of different trends emerged. First, many WG participants did not attend that school, choosing another school in the area instead. I realized that in the current context, students were not obliged to attend their feeder schools if other schools were willing and able to accommodate admission. Second, I also realized that young people may start out in a particular school, but for a variety of reasons, leave the school at some point throughout the school year. These reasons include moving, not liking the school and wanting to transfer, or being expelled from school. I realized, only well into my data collection, that my potential population of WG participants from which to sample was significantly smaller than I had originally thought. After 3 months of a fairly regular presence in the school, going to grade 10 and 11 classrooms to recruit as well as roaming the hallways passing out study information and recruitment forms, I only had six completed surveys, one focus group of three participants, and two individual interviews.

I presented my problem to the WiseGuyz facilitators and they suggested using the past participants' Facebook page to post a link to an online version of the paper survey. They specifically suggested expanding recruitment from those who attended School A to a second high school in a different part of the city, School B. I carefully considered what the risks were of adding another study site to my project, but concluded that there was no reason to expect that

WG participants would be substantially different from each other, and the community and school demographics were similar to those of School A. I decided to include past participants from this second school.[4]

I also worked closely with CFREB at my University to understand the possibilities and constraints of modifying my recruitment strategy towards an online avenue as opposed to through the schools. They informed me that, while the school board had strict guidelines on requiring parental consent for anyone under the age of 18 recruited through schools, CFREB guidelines only required parental consent for those minors under the age of 16. Young men 16 years of age or older could consent for themselves to participate in the survey. I drafted up a notice about the study and study parameters that the facilitators could post to the Facebook page. They also individually contacted young men who had provided them with email contacts to let them know about the study. This yielded another 14 respondents to my survey, three of whom agreed to meet for an interview; however, I was still faced with the need and desire to conduct more focus groups and/or interviews with WG participants.

The facilitators wanted to engage young men in developing an alumni strategy and suggested that we pair our efforts and host a past participants lunch at School B where I could hand out consent forms and schedule times for surveys and focus groups/interviews. The facilitators looped me into communications with school administration and I contacted the local school board's ethics board regarding changes to the school site for sampling and recruitment. They informed me that as long as the sampling and recruitment strategies remained the same, I did not need to modify my application to include a second site.

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[4] At the beginning of the project, the facilitators had suggested I sample and recruit from School B, as they knew there was a strong WiseGuyz presence at the school from having done events there in the past several years. I chose to limit recruitment to School A because there was a gatekeeper at the school who was willing to work with me in terms of recruitment. I realize I should have listened to the facilitators, as I wound up having to spend extra time and effort recruiting from School B in the fall of the following school year.

School B invited us to set up a table outside in the field during their fall BBQ lunch. WiseGuyz facilitators printed a flyer indicating the day and time a pizza lunch would be held for past participants to get more information on the alumni strategy. Past participants recognized the facilitators, and came over to speak with them and catch up. The facilitators would introduce me as someone who was working with them, and I would then speak with past participants informing them of my study and ascertaining if they were interested in participating in a survey/focus group/interview. Those who were interested were offered a parent/guardian consent form to take home and bring back signed to the co-hosted pizza lunch.

On the day of the lunch, we provided multiple boxes of pizza, chips and chocolate bars. The school provided us with a room in their library, a fairly central location, so we were visible with our pizza boxes to a multitude of students. Promptly at the lunch bell, a swarm of young men entered the room and began to attack the pizza. WiseGuyz facilitators gave a brief talk about the engagement strategy then collected any research consent forms that had been returned. I let those students know I would return to a different room the following day to conduct surveys, after which there would be a second pizza lunch. My goal was to spend a week at the school, with two days focused on surveys and two days on focus groups.

The following day, I returned with pizza and surveys. I was overwhelmed with the number of young men who came, although very few had brought back parent consent forms. I set up those few boys who were eligible to participate, and then sent the others on their way with pizza and a second consent form, telling them I would be back the next day to conduct focus groups (after which a pizza lunch would be served). They would need to bring back their parent consent form in order to participate.

The following day of data collection, I had approximately 15 young men show up to participate in the focus groups, however, only four had signed consent forms. I informed the rest that pizza would only be available to those who had brought back parent/guardian consent forms. I passed around more parent/guardian consent forms to those who indicated they still wanted to participate. The following day, I only had one young man show up for the focus group, and, therefore, it ended up being an individual interview.

Recruiting young men from this second site was more challenging than it had been at the first site since I had limited time to develop a rapport with the Principal and other gatekeepers (e.g., office personnel, guidance personnel, etc.). While these individuals were helpful, they were not as motivated as the first site in supporting the research. I did not have a dedicated room for data collection, which meant that I was often finding out last minute where I would be hosting surveys and focus groups. This made it more challenging when scheduling the young men, since I could not tell them exactly which room I would be in any given day.

At the end of the eight month data collection process, I had collected 39 surveys from WG participants (between five months to three years out of the program), and had conducted three focus groups (n=7, two focus groups with the same grouping of three and one with four participants) as well as three individual interviews.

I had collected 25 surveys from NWG, and conducted two focus groups (n=10). By the end of October 2017, I had officially completed my data collection and was ready to move on to data analysis.

Facilitator Focus Group Recruitment

Facilitators were recruited to the focus group during a regular observation session. I explained the purpose and the timing of the focus group. Participants were free to withdraw at

any point during the process. Five of the six facilitators participated in the focus group (one facilitator did consent to participate but was away sick), and participants were all self-identified men between the ages of 22-35 who had between nine months and six years experience in the program.

Data Analysis

The challenge with data analysis was in uniting the various forms of analysis to create a coherent picture of the effectiveness of WiseGuyz. Specifically I wanted to know whether boys who took the program held less traditional masculinity ideologies compared to boys who never took the program; the ways in which the program had changed young men's beliefs about masculinity as compared to those young men who never took the program; and what role program processes (i.e., facilitators) played in creating that change. Like the data collection process itself, analysis was messy and complex (Blommaert & Jie, 2010). It was this complexity, however, that reflected the different perspectives from which actions and ideas on masculinity can be viewed.

I began by analyzing the participant observation data and facilitator focus group data in early 2017 while I was collecting data. There were a couple of reasons for starting with this grouping of data. First, I wanted to present some emerging data from my thesis project at the Graduate Student Research Symposium and at an international conference focused on youth in the summer of 2017. Second, C4S was beginning to consider expanding the WiseGuyz program to other settings within Alberta. Data on the program processes, specifically facilitation, would have been useful to them as they began to develop curriculum for their training institute.

Quantitative analysis of the survey data was the second dataset I worked with. This was a logistical decision on my part because I knew I could complete the analysis relatively quickly,

thereby allowing me to share another aspect of the research with C4S. This was important to me, as this collaborative and relatively real-time way of doing research was congruent with CBR principles. Also, I knew the qualitative analysis from the interview data with the young men would be a relatively lengthy process, given my chosen analytic methodology, The Listening Guide (Chu, 2005; Doucet & Mauthner, 2008; Gilligan et al., 2006; Way, 1997).

Facilitator Focus Group Data

With the facilitator focus group, I utilized thematic analysis. In thematic analysis, researchers interpret raw text data to apply codes and subsequently develop themes (Namey, Guest, Thairu, & Johnson, 2008). I chose this analysis because it is a flexible qualitative method that enables exploration of meaningful patterns within a dataset (Reigeluth & Addis, 2016). Thematic analysis provided me with the opportunity to look for patterns in the focus group transcript that corresponded to the research questions. I developed codes based on facilitator responses and the written field note observations (see the following section: Participant Observation Data). I read and reread the data in order to identify overlapping codes between the two data sources, from which categories were developed. These categories were then aggregated into themes and used to supplement the findings from my WG data.

Participant Observation Data

With the first reading of my fieldnotes, I utilized an open coding format. Open coding is a process by which small segments of the field note record are categorized to identify and name specific analytic dimensions and categories (Emerson et al., 2011). Emerson et al., (2011) have suggested a number of questions to guide the analysis of field notes. I used the questions they posed to help guide me through the reading of the field notes. The questions I particularly focused on were:

- What were facilitators talking about?

- How were facilitators talking?

- What did I see going on here? How did what I saw correspond to what I saw in the focus group data?

- How was what was going on here similar to, or different from, other incidents or events recorded elsewhere in the field notes and from the focus group data?

From this point, I made the decision to work with the "chunks" that seemed to correspond to, and enrich, the facilitator focus group data, regardless of whether the group was discussing community-based programming or school-based programming. I read the fieldnotes a second time, whereby I narrowed down the chunks that corresponded to school-based programming and emerging themes from the facilitator focus group. Finally, upon a third reading, I used selective coding of the facilitator themes from the focus group (Emerson et al., 2011).

Survey Data Analysis

SPSS version 25 was used to analyze the quantitative data. I began by setting up and naming all my variables. There were a number of demographic variables, specifically:

- Age – age was asked in two different ways. First, the young men were asked to indicate the day, month and year they were born. This corresponded to the way in which C4S had collected data and was intended to support my ability to calculate an estimation of any self-selection bias.[5] I also asked the boys to indicate their age in years in question 6 on the survey, given the advice from facilitators that participants historically have tended to

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[5] This proved to be extremely problematic, as many of the time 1 scores for my sample were unidentifiable due to the lack of birth date information. This, combined with some of my own participants failing to correctly fill out the required birth date, month, and year, resulted in my inability to calculate a self-selection bias estimate for the group as it would have meant dropping a significant number of survey responses from my sample.

fill in the current day's date (i.e., the date they filled out the survey), as opposed to their

birth date, month and year.

- Gender identity – there were three categories for this variable: male/masculine,

  transgender, and other.

- Grade – participants were asked to indicate their grade in school (e.g., 10, 11, or 12).

- Ethnicity – I used the categories from City of Calgary Family and Community Support

  Services (FCSS) questionnaire, as this was in line with the categories used by C4S in

  their ongoing evaluation data collection tool.[6] Participants were asked to select the

  group(s) which best described them. In total there were 12 categories listed, specifically:

  White, Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.),

  Chinese, Arab, South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.), West Asian

  (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, etc.), Black, Korean, Filipino, Japanese, Latin American, and

  Other.

- Participation in WiseGuyz in junior high – this was a select choice, yes or no question.

  This was the independent variable, having taken WiseGuyz in junior high or not.

- Mothers' highest education[7] - this question asked how far in school did the participant's

  mother go? Participants were asked to select the best choice out of the following

  categories: 8th grade or less, Some high school, High school graduate, Some post-

  secondary, University graduate, Post-university study, Don't know, Not applicable.

- Current romantic relationship – participants were asked two questions in this variable.

  The first was taken directly from the WiseGuyz Intake form developed by the C4S.

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[6] The researcher does note that White, Black, and Chinese are not ethnicities. However, when the list was constructed by FCSS, they developed categories that made intuitive sense for the people filling them out, as opposed to using academic definitions of the term.

[7] This variable was used as a proxy for socio-economic status (SES), congruent with other WiseGuyz data collection and reporting structures (City of Calgary FCSS collects this data as an SES proxy).

Young men were asked to indicate whether they currently had a steady romantic partner or sexual partner (yes or no). If yes, they were then asked how long they had been in this relationship. Three choices were provided: less than 6 months, 6 months-1 year, 1 year or longer.

- Length of longest intimate/sexual relationship – This open-ended question was converted to months in order to create a standard way of coding responses in SPSS. For example, one year was 12 months, 2 years was 24 months, etc. Relationship lengths shorter than one month were converted to a portion of a month, for example 2 weeks became .5 months, based on the assumption of 4 weeks in a month.

- Sexual orientation – five choices were provided for participants to indicate which best described them. Categories were: (1) Heterosexual (straight); (2) Gay/Homosexual/Bisexual/Pansexual/Omnisexual/Polysexual; (3) Other (space left for them to write what that other category might be) (4) Not sure; and (5) I would rather not say.

MRNI-A-r Variables

29 individual MRNI-A-r variables were set up (one for each question in the survey), as well as four dependent variables, specifically:

- Total average MRNI-A-r score

- Mean score for Avoidance of Femininity (questions 3, 12, 14, 15, 21 and 23).

- Mean score for Toughness (questions 11, 16, 17, 19, 26, and 28).

- Mean score for Emotionally Detached Dominance (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, and 27).

Total mean score, as well as mean scores across each of the three subscales, were calculated for each survey participant. These were calculated twice by hand to ensure accuracy. Data was entered into SPSS, and was double-checked for accuracy by someone other than myself (i.e., fellow graduate student).

Descriptive analysis was used for the demographic data and an independent sample *t*-test was used to determine significant difference between WG and NWG test score means for the entirety of the MRNI-A-r and for each of the three subscales (Chapter 4). Significance was determined at $p \leq .10$ level because of the small, uneven sample sizes. I was unable to calculate the self-selection bias due to the lack of time 1 scores (pre-program) for many of WG participants (n= 10). As noted in the footnote, I had originally intended to examine self-selection bias, given the possibility that boys with less traditional attitudes self-select to participate in the program. I had expected that boys who participated in the WiseGuyz program would have statistically lower scores on the time 3 survey than boys who did not participate in the program. Given this expected group difference to emerge in my research, I felt it would important to estimate whether it is due to a self-selection bias (since boys self-selected into WiseGuyz in Grade 9) or the long-term educational benefits of the WiseGuyz program. I intended to accomplish this by ascertaining the extent to which the pre-program (time 1) scores of WiseGuyz participants are lower on the MRNI-AR than the time 3 scores of boys who did not participate in the program; the larger the difference on this comparison, the greater the contribution of self-selection bias to the overall time 3 difference. Using this approach, I was hoping to roughly decompose the overall time 3 difference between the two groups (either on the overall MRNI-AR or on a subscale) into two components, self-selection bias estimate and program effect, where:

Overall difference = WiseGuyz (time 3) – Others (time 3)

Self-selection bias estimate = WiseGuyz (time 1) – Others (time 3)

Program effect = Overall difference – self-selection bias estimate

I was unable to calculate the self-selection bias due to the inability to retrieve several time 1 scores (pre-program) for many of the young men (n= 10). Given that my starting sample size was already quite small, I was unwilling to reduce it further.

Past Participant and Non-participant Qualitative Analysis

These in-depth, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were embedded within a relational, voice-centred, feminist approach to research (Chu, 2005; Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2003; Way, 1997). The central aim of this approach is to listen closely to the subtleties of human voice and stories, knowing there is an inherent complexity in the development of feelings and thoughts (Way, 1997). While voice-centred relational approaches grew out of "listening" to girls and women (Gilligan et al., 2003; Way, 1997), there are those who have contended that using this approach to examine boys' relational experiences may contribute to an understanding of male development that is dramatically different than what is found in the adolescent development literature, opening up new possibilities for understanding the emotional lives and realities of adolescent boys (Chu, 2005; Way, 1997).

An underlying assumption in this approach is that the words of individuals cannot be separated from the cultural and societal context in which these experiences and narratives are embedded (Chu, 2005; Way, 1997). In addition to assumptions regarding the importance of the larger cultural and societal contexts, the relational, voice-centred approach assumes that the dynamics within the researcher-participant relationship influence the nature of the data collected (Chu, 2005; Way, 1997). Specifically, this approach understands that the narrative in an

interview is never a neutral representation of reality, but rather a jointly constructed product

between researcher and researched (Way, 1997).

Congruent with using a voice-centred, relational approach is the multi-layered

interpretive approach called The Listening Guide (Chu, 2005; Doucet & Mauthner, 2008;

Gilligan et al., 2006; Way, 1997). This data analytic technique encourages the reader to pay close

attention to both the form of the narrative (i.e., how the story was told) and the content of the

interview (Chu, 2005; Doucet & Mauthner, 2008; Way, 1997). The term "listening" instead of

"reading" is used because it reflects the active participation on the part of both the storyteller and

the listener (Doucet & Mauthner, 2006; Gilligan et al., 2006). This method has been used by

many researchers analyzing a range of phenomena such as girls' sexual desires, adolescent girls'

relationships (Gilligan et al., 2006), and adolescent boys' friendships (Chu, 2005; Way, 1997).

Self-reflection is a critical component of this technique (Way, 1997), with the voice of

the researcher brought explicitly into the process (Gilligan et al., 2006). This reflexive reading of

the narrative centres on why particular interpretations are made or themes detected, and

subsequently brings into play the researcher's views and assumptions that may affect

interpretation of the participants' words (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008).

The Listening Guide method generally involves four separate readings of the interview

text, with the first two episodes of listening focused on plot, interviewer responses, and how

participants speak about themselves by listening to the first-person voice (Chu, 2005; Doucet &

Mauthner, 2008; Gilligan et al., 2006). Third and fourth readings are shaped and tailored to the

specific research questions guiding the project, bringing the analysis back into relationship with

the research questions (Chu, 2005; Gilligan et al., 2006). The fourth reading, in particular,

focuses on structured power relations and dominant ideologies that frame narratives (Doucet &

Mauthner, 2008). No single step, or listening, is intended to stand alone (Gilligan et al., 2006). The act of listening to the text is also documented through interviewer notes and summaries written during the implementation of each step, thereby helping the researcher "stay close" to the text (Gilligan et al., 2006, p. 6).

Step 1: Listening for Plot

I began my analysis by listening to the audio-recording of the boys' focus groups and interviews. In this initial listening, I wanted to ground myself around what kind of stories were being told, what were some repeated images, metaphors, and dominant themes, as well as some contradictions being expressed. I took notes on these concepts. I also paid attention to my own responses to the boys' comments and ideas, making my thoughts and feelings about what was happening in the sessions explicit. I took notes on my reactions, thoughts, and feelings in each interview or focus group as well. I then merged these two sets of notes to create another word document where repeated images, metaphors, and dominant themes were expressed in one column and my corresponding reactions and interpretations were in another column (See Appendix E).

Step 2: I Poems

After listening for plot and recording and capturing my reactions and interpretations, I moved on to developing I poems. This involved focusing in on the voice(s) of the "I" who was speaking, picking up the rhythm of their voice in addition to listening to how the person spoke about themselves (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). This was a critical step in the process, in that it allowed me to tune into the boys' voices and what they knew of themselves before talking about them in an objectifying way.

I went through each focus group and interview transcript, beginning with a short statement about the nature and composition of the focus group or interviews. I then selected every first person I within the passage together with the verb following it. I also included any seemingly important accompanying words after the verb. Each I statement was kept in order as they appeared in the text (See Appendix F for an example of an I poem). I then merged all I poems into one document, with one column for WG participant poems and the other for the NWG participant poems. This allowed me to see any potential patterns, contradictions or variations between the poems. Next, I integrated the patterns, contradictions and variations into the document I created from Step 1, which included the metaphors, key ideas, reactions, and interpretations.

Step 3: Listening for Contrapuntal Voices

The third step in my analytical method was drawn from the musical form counterpoint, which consists of combining two or more lines of melody (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). In this step, I was focused on bringing the analysis back into relationship with the research questions and listening for the multiple facets of the story being told. I was focused on identifying, specifying, and sorting out the different strands in the interviews and focus groups that spoke to my research questions. I read through each transcript two more times, and in each of these readings, I was interested in following not only the voices of the young men in each group (i.e., WG or NWG), but also in the collective voice *between* the two groups, whether complementary or oppositional. I essentially treated each group as a singular voice in order to understand the ways in which WG participants communicated a collective experience in relation to NWG participants' collective masculine experiences.

There has been extremely limited use of the Listening Guide with focus groups. A 2015 review identified only one instance when it had been adapted for use outside of individual interviews (Gilligan, 2015). In my case, I was interested in constructing the analysis in a way that would support locating the boys within their personal and social contexts comparatively (Wilkinson, 1998). This importance of personal and social context meant I treated boys as members of a group with a shared experience. In the case of WG participants, it was as program participant, whereas NWG participants shared the experience of being a non-participant. By treating WiseGuyz focus groups and interviews as a collective voice telling a collective story, I could compare and contrast the ways in which themes were congruent or "in harmony" with each other, or whether they were in tension with each other (Woodcock, 2010).

I used different coloured pens to underline key pieces of text as they related to my research questions. This step was multi-faceted, in that I was underlining not only tensions and harmonies within each interview/focus group, but also the contradictions between the voices in the two groups as these contradictions were at the heart of my research questions. Using colour-coded themes allowed me to see where the colours interacted and overlapped and where they did not. I found I needed to go back and revisit this step several times, as is often the case when analyzing many different interviews (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). This involved reading for the "voices" that had been newly redefined through the analysis of the other focus groups and interviews. I took the passages from the colour-coded sections and merged them into the document where I had earlier recorded the repeated images, metaphors and dominant themes with my corresponding reactions and interpretations from Step 1.

Step 4: Composing an Analysis

This step involved revisiting my research questions and using guiding analysis questions to support my reflection process (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

- What did I learn about this research question through the process?

- How have I come to know what I learned?

- What is the evidence on which I am basing my interpretations?

Through this process, I was better able to illuminate the similarities in the themes that emerged and clearly understand the distinct differences between them. I put my responses to my questions and my final analyses in the same master document where I had been collecting and layering my findings from Steps 1, 2 and 3. This provided a clear map of my final conclusions from the data analysis process.

Making Choices

Given the data collection methods I used in my project, I found myself to be in the enviable (or not so enviable) position of having a significant amount of data with which to deal with. Having so much data meant I needed to be very focused on which slice or segment of data was integral to the explanation I wanted to make. According to Mason (1996), thinking carefully about the role specific slices and segments of data perform in an explanation is part of the overall analytical exercise. Reflecting on the slices and segments in relation to the intellectual puzzle at hand is how researchers should, ideally, make choices about which pieces of data to use to illustrate, or constitute, their analysis (Mason, 1996).

Using slices and segments of the I poems was an emergent process. At the outset of the analysis, I had not intended to use them, primarily because I was not familiar with the Listening Guide as a method and was uncertain as to that particular step of the process. It was only when I

went through and pulled the I poems from the first WG and NWG focus groups that I was struck by the visible differences between the two in the way they used action-oriented language (e.g., I love, I hate, I see, I support vs. I don't know, I guess, I'm not sure). This observation in the data started me towards developing explanations around emotions and emotional reflexivity. Following this, I developed the rest of the I poems and selected segments that were illustrative of the theme around emotionality. I thought carefully about which group of I poems I was selecting from, as I wanted to ensure I had a range of boys' voices represented and not just those from the initial focus groups. I did not use entire I poems, but, like other forms of qualitative data, chose slices and segments that were illustrative of the analysis I wanted to make.

Issues of Reliability and Validity

Inevitably with qualitative research, questions of reliability and validity emerged. Positivists' views of reliability generally refer to replicability; that is, whether "another researcher with similar methodological training, understanding of the research setting and rapport with its members can make similar observations" (Stebbins, 2001, p. 25). This view of reliability within the qualitative research paradigm is, in my view, misguided and unattainable, since human behaviour is fragile, reflexive and prone to constant change (Goldenberg, 1997).

The issue of whether researchers can really provide accounts from the perspective of those they study and how to evaluate the validity of the interpretations of those perspectives is a question that emerges when conducting analyses and drawing conclusions from qualitative data (Bryman, 1988). There may be questions of why certain quotations or segments of data were used over others, and how we know that these slices of data were genuinely consistent with the perspectives of those we study. I agree with Stebbins, who argued that, while reliability and validity are important, exploratory researchers must recognize that the most authoritative

statement about validity and reliability can only be made "down the road in the wake of several open-ended investigations" (2001, p. 27).

Researcher Positionality

My positioning in this research project was a key component of how the project unfolded and how sense-making occurred. It is my belief that researchers cannot be neutral, objective or detached from the knowledge or evidence they are generating (Mason, 1996). This issue of "reflexivity" (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008; Mason, 1996; Mauthner & Doucet, 2003) means that the researcher must constantly take stock of their actions and role in the research process. Understanding my own particular personal, theoretical, and practical orientations and how they influenced the research process and findings was part of the activity of reflexivity (Doucet & Mauthner, 2003; Mason, 1996).

Personal Orientation

This study focused on teenage boys. I am neither a teenager, nor am I male, resulting in me being a total outsider to the intimate social world of young men. This matter of being an outsider is generally viewed as problematic, as literature has suggested that being different from one's research participants is a potential liability (Miller & Glassner, 2011). Female researchers studying male-oriented social worlds are positioned at being at an even greater disadvantage (Bucerius, 2013). Given that some degree of similarity and understanding is beneficial, where does that leave those of us where researcher and researched are coming to the interview process belonging to very different social categories and with very different backgrounds (Miller & Glassner, 2011)?

I approached this project with the desire of becoming a "trusted outsider"; essentially an outsider with insider knowledge (Bucerius, 2013, p. 692). Research has proposed that being a

trusted outsider can actually be a help as opposed to a hindrance, in that it can facilitate insights about the participants potentially unavailable to insiders (Bucerius, 2013; Way, 1997). Both my age and my gender set me apart from the group with which I was working. These aspects of my identity, however, became less salient over the course of the research process, primarily due to the efforts I extended to be visible and present in the subjects' own social environments. Through multiple and lengthy visits during class spares and lunch hours, I became a known and familiar figure in the hallways and corridors. I approached the boys' social world with infinite curiosity and used my difference in social positioning (i.e., adult, mother, female) to frame my curiosity and situate the boys as experts in their own lives.

While I entered every conversation with curiosity and openness, it is important to acknowledge that the personal aspects of my identity came with me into every interaction. I could not shed or dismantle who I am in the world and the experiences I have had to become a neutral, objective researcher. I readily shared personal aspects of myself with the young men I conversed with, not only to build rapport and trust for the research process, but as a fellow human being engaged in mutual conversation. A number of feminist approaches to research argue the researcher must be willing to present themselves and offer self-disclosures of personal information in order to create genuine relationships and build rapport (Berg & Lune, 2012; Way, 1997). These personal disclosures allowed me to personalize myself, and I believe the young men came to view me as a "researcher-buddy", someone who was their friend but also retained a certain degree of professional distance (Bucerius, 2013).

Practical and Theoretical Orientation

In addition to the personal orientations, my practical and theoretical orientations undoubtedly came into play, particularly during the data analysis phase. I have spent the past

seven years researching masculinity, the prevention of domestic violence, prevention of sexual violence, bullying, paradigms in sexual health promotion plans, and social and emotional skill building for children and adolescents. This acquired knowledge did not simply evaporate at the start of the research project. The reality is, I brought this knowledge with me throughout the entire study. These disciplinary and informational lenses no doubt impacted how I listened to the data. When I walked into every focus group and interview, or analysed any of the texts, I approached these moments and data sets as the person I was in that moment, with all the baggage that entailed. As such, the account I present in this dissertation should be read as not objective, but as a subjectively-driven exercise, framed within the methodological and theoretical articulations that I chose (Walby, 2007).

"Policymakers tend to want to know whether a given service program works… 'yes' or 'no' not 'maybe'…." (McCall & Green, 2004, p. 6)

Chapter Four: Quantitative Evaluation Results

The quote above outlines the reality facing non-profit organizations in the current context. Funders and policymakers increasingly demand evidence that the services and programs they fund and the policies they create are grounded in empirical research and provide clear evidence of effectiveness (McCall, 2009). What, however, exactly qualifies as "empirical" research and proof of effectiveness? More and more, there have been attempts to identify a set of criteria for what constitutes "evidence" (McCall, 2009). Generally, these criteria include components related to robustness, generalizability, reliability, and validity, which are traditionally all hallmarks of quantitative research methodology and data (Denzin, 2009; Shaxson, 2005). McCall & Green (2004) have identified these components under the umbrella of "gold standard methodology", which implicitly refers to experimental research designs that include theory-driven hypotheses, random assignment of "subjects"[8] to intervention groups, and controlled and uniform interventions.

The C4S is not immune to this pressure and understands very well the currency "empirical" data gives them in their request for funding and scaling of the WiseGuyz program. The accountability processes they are beholden to often require the use of a wide range of methodologies and data collection tools in order to "prove" that they are engaging in evidence-based practices (Flood, 2019). The Centre is an anti-oppressive, feminist organization committed to social justice work. While historically feminist researchers have taken a post-positivist stance, (suggesting quantitative positivistic methods have traditionally excluded

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[8] I use quotation marks to denote the objectifying process of experimental research to refer to the diversity and complexity of human beings participating in these research designs as neutral, benign vassals from which the researcher-as-expert can determine an objective set of knowledge.

women) (Small, 1995; Westmarland, 2001), these arguments have cooled over the past two decades, with scholars suggesting that any method can be feminist and that both quantitative and qualitative methods are necessary for understanding social phenomenon (Campbell & Wasco, 2000; Small, 1995).

In the area of understanding gender inequalities, feminist quantitative researchers have made important contributions. First, quantitative data is extremely useful when looking at the prevalence and distribution of particular social problems (Westmarland, 2001). For example, Hester, Donovan, & Fahmy (2010) developed a national community survey in order to study domestic violence in the UK, which also allowed comparison of the experiences of such behaviour across heterosexual and same sex relationships. The survey was developed using a feminist epistemological approach, meaning it was sensitive to the gender and power dynamics of domestic violence in addition to reflecting this sensitivity in relation to same sex relationship contexts (Hester et al., 2010). Using this approach to the survey development allowed the researchers to differentiate between forms of abuse and their relative impacts, something which had been missing in traditional scales (like the Conflict Tactics Scale) (Archer, 2002; Hester et al., 2010).

Second, feminist scholars have shown that complexity can be managed in quantitative, comparative, multi-group studies, particularly when considering issues of intersectionality (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016; McCall, 2005). McCall, who has studied structural inequalities among women, argues that by using traditional analytical categories as a starting point and then examining the relationships of inequality among a variety of groups (i.e., women, men, college educated, non-college educated, blacks, latinos, and whites), she is better able to arrive at a complex outcome which no single dimension of inequality can adequately encompass (McCall,

2005). Else-Quest & Hyde agree with this argument, suggesting that comparing multiple

intersecting locations can be achieved with traditional quantitative designs (2016). For example,

Shaw, Chan, & McMahon (2012) examined workplace harassment, taking into account ethnicity,

gender, age, and disability. Their analytic technique allowed them to focus on the intersectional

effects, providing them with the opportunity to delineate patters in harassment allegation rates.

Ultimately, the value of using any method over another depends greatly on the questions

being asked (McCall, 2005; Westmarland, 2001). Through collaboration with the Centre, we

determined several areas of potential research based on their needs as an organization reliant on

funding and government support for their work and my research interests. Based on this, we

developed four questions of interest, which required both quantitative and qualitative research

methodologies. Our decision reflects the realities of trying to understand something as complex

and nuanced as gender transformation alongside the need to produce tangible, quantifiable,

"evidence".

This chapter outlines the results of the quantitative data collected. Ultimately, I was

guided by my research question: Do boys who have participated in the WiseGuyz program hold

less traditional views of masculinity than boys who have not participated in the program? This

chapter offers an answer to this question. Yet, I must also give that answer with some

parameters, first of which is that I am using the survey results for heuristic purposes. Using

survey data in this way refers to an approach to problem solving, learning, or discovery that

employs a practical method not guaranteed to be optimal or perfect, but sufficient for the

immediate goals (Dzemyda & Sakalauskas, 2011). I did not use an experimental or quasi-

experimental design; the survey was a supplementary tool in my overall research project,

providing a way to quantify attitudes. Using my quantitative data in this way allowed me to

address the research question at hand and provided the organization with an answer that, while imperfect, was sufficient for use in funding reports and presentations.

Survey Participants: Demographics

I collected demographic information in order to capture a profile of the young men participating in my research study. During data collection, I readily recruited any male student willing to participate. I did not target specific age or grade groupings and recruited from common spaces in the schools that were frequented by all students (i.e., cafeteria, foyer of entrance to school, space outside of main office, etc.). What was interesting regarding demographics, was that both WG and NWG samples appeared fairly similar to each other (Table 2). Mean NWG age was only slightly older than mean WG age (16.7 years and 16 years, respectively). Both groups were also similar in ethnic diversity representation, (WG 84% white, and NWG 83% white) as well as sexuality (WG 89% heterosexual and NWG 83% heterosexual).

Table 2.

Group Demographics

Group	N	Age (Years)	Current Grade	Ethnicity/Race	Mother's Education	Partner (Yes)	Sexuality
NWG	24	16.7	21% (10) 25% (11) 54% (12)	83% White 17% Other	58% Post-Secondary	46%	83% (Heterosexual) 8% (Gay/Homosexual) 8% (Bisexual/Pansexual)
WG	36	16	54% (10) 16% (11) 30% (12)	84% (White) 5% (Latin) 11% Other	70% Post-Secondary	24%	89% (Heterosexual) 5% (Bisexual/Pansexual) 3% (Unsure) 3% (Would rather not say)

Note: NWG = Non-WiseGuyz participants; WG = WiseGuyz participants

The groups differed somewhat in terms of grade, mother's education and whether they had a partner. There were many more young men from grade 10 in the WG sample than there

were in the NWG sample, which had a high number in grade 12. This difference may have implications for the differences in whether they had a partner; NWG participants were more evenly split between having and not having partners as compared to WG participants. Given that more of the NWG sample were in higher grades (i.e., 11 and 12), it perhaps was not surprising that a higher number of them were in romantic relationships.

Most interesting was how the two groups were different in terms of mother's education. Many large, longitudinal surveys use education as a proxy for socioeconomic status (SES; e.g., The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health), as well as local surveys used by municipal funders (e.g., City of Calgary Family and Community Support Services – FCSS). In order to keep consistency with data being collected on a local level, I also chose to ask about mother's education as proxy for SES. My results showed that the WG group had a higher percentage of mothers with post-secondary education than did those in the NWG group. While this could mean that participants in the WG group were in a higher SES group than the boys who were in the NWG group, another explanation is possible: Mother's education is a proxy for the degree of exposure to feminist ideals. Generally, attending post-secondary education exposes a person to a vast array of liberal ideas, such as feminism and social justice. It could be that these same university educated mothers exposed their sons to principles of liberal thinking, such as feminism. This could be why a group of young men were open to voluntarily participating in a program examining healthy relationships, masculinity and sexuality. While I can only speculate on this relationship between mothers' post-secondary achievement and participation in WiseGuyz, this is an idea that would be worth testing out in future research.

Survey Results: Mean Scores

Since the development of WiseGuyz in 2011, there has been a focus on understanding the influence of normative masculinity ideologies on adolescent boys in relation to their sexuality, sexual health, gender equity, and relationships (Claussen, 2017). "Masculinity ideology" refers to "internalized beliefs regarding culturally defined standards or norms for males' roles and behaviours" (Levant et al., 2012, p. 1).

In order to measure changes around masculinity ideology, C4S chose The Male Role Norms Inventory-Adolescent-revised (MRNI-A-r). The instrument was developed by Dr. Ron Levant, who is an active researcher and practitioner in the psychology of men and masculinity (Hurlock, 2014). Permission to use the validated survey for my study was obtained from Dr. Levant, and C4S has been using it since 2013 to measure changes in adolescent male norms.

For the sake of consistency and because there are very few validated tools that measure changes in adolescent male norms, I used the same tool as C4S to answer my research question: Do boys who have participated in the WiseGuyz program hold less traditional views of masculinity than boys who have not participated in the program? I was interested not only in the overall MRNI-A-r score, which indicates the degree to which young men adhere to traditional masculinity ideologies overall, but also in the results of the subscales within the survey, specifically Emotionally Detached Dominance (EDD), Toughness, and Avoidance of Femininity (AF) (Levant et al., 2012).

All scores are shown in Table 3 below. The table shows mean scores between the two groups across all of the three subscales, as well as in the total score. Internal consistencies for the study were as follows: MRNI-A-r Total (α = .95), which is slightly above the alpha reliabilities reported by Ron Levant in the 2012 reported revision of the scale (α = .89), but on par with

follow-up assessment of the scale (α = .93), (Levant, McDermott, Hewitt, Alto, & Harris, 2016),

Avoidance of Femininity (α = .90), which is much higher than the original alpha reliability (α =

.75), but closer to reported values in subsequent studies (α = .84) (Shepard, Nicpon, Haley, Lind,

& Ming Liu, 2011) and (α = .84) (Levant et al., 2016), Emotionally Detached Dominance (α =

.91), on par with original and follow-up reported values (Levant et al., 2012; Levant et al., 2016),

and Toughness (α = .84), which is higher than reported values in original (α = .71) and

subsequent studies (α = .70). As seen in the table, WG participant scores were all lower than the

NWG participant scores. Avoidance of femininity showed the largest percentage difference in

mean scores at 20%. Toughness had the smallest difference in mean scores, with only an 11%

difference.

Table 3. Differences in mean scores on the MRNI-A-r

Group	Avoidance of Femininity	% Diff (M)	Toughness	% Diff (M)	Emotionally Detached Dominance	% Diff (M)	Total Score	% Diff (M)
NWG	3.3		4.0		2.7		3.1	
WG	2.7	20% lower	3.6	11% lower	2.3	16% lower	2.7	14% lower

Note: NWG = Non-WiseGuyz participants; WG = WiseGuyz participants

Survey Results: t-Test

A one-tailed independent sample *t*-test[9], with p < .10, was used to assess significant

difference. As shown in Table 4, we can see that the average MRNI-A-r scores between NWG

participants (M = 3.1, SD = 1.18) and WG participants (M = 2.7, SD = 1.01) were statistically

significant, *t* (59) = 1.4, p = .079. Avoidance of Femininity between NWG participants (M = 3.3,

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[9] Given that I had a non-random sample, I used a t-test just to show the difference in mean scores was large enough
to be substantively meaningful. This analysis is not meant to suggest that inferential statistics can be used to
generalize to the entire WiseGuyz and Non-WG populations of students. Statistical significance in my study is used
as a heuristic device.

SD = 1.49) and the WG group (M = 2.7, SD = 1.30) were also found to be statistically

significant, t (59) = 1.4, p = .078.

While Toughness and EDD were not found to be statistically significant, both results

trended in that direction (p = .109 and .115, respectively). The large percentage difference in

means between the two groups leads me to suspect that if I had a larger sample size, I may have

found all subscale scores to be statistically significant. Having a small sample size is one of the

limitations of the quantitative data. On another note, the fact that all the scores trended in the

direction I had expected them to (i.e., higher for NWG and lower for WG) is a promising factor

in the data.

Table 4.

t-test for total MRNI-A-r score changes and sub-scale changes

	NWG		WG			
Variable	*M*	*(SD)*	*M*	*(SD)*	*df*	*p*
MRNI-AR Score	3.1	1.18	2.7	1.01	59	.079
AF	3.3	1.49	2.7	1.40	59	.078
Tough	4.0	1.26	3.6	1.42	59	.109
EDD	2.7	1.16	2.3	1.30	59	.115

Note: NWG = Non-WiseGuyz participants; WG = WiseGuyz participants; AF = Avoidance of

Femininity; Tough = Toughness; EDD = Emotionally Detached Dominance

Answering the Research Question

Given the findings, the answer to the question: "Do boys who have participated in the

WiseGuyz program hold less traditional views of masculinity than boys who have not

participated in the program?" appears to be yes based on the MRNI-A-r survey results. This is an

important finding, as literature has suggested that adolescent boys who adhere most strongly to

traditional masculine norms (e.g., independence, high status, etc.) are most at risk of negative

consequences such as depression, poor academic achievement, and engaging in unsafe sexual

practices (Courtenay, 2000; Rogers, DeLay, & Martin, 2017; Schalet et al., 2014; Wong et al.,

2017).

Holding less traditional masculinity ideologies is also critical when thinking about factors

related to dating violence amongst young people. Young men who adhere to traditional

masculinity norms were more likely to perpetrate acts of violence towards dating partners

(Moore, McNulty, Stuart, Addis, Cordova, & Temple, 2008; Reidy, Shirk, Sloan, & Zeichner,

2009). As toughness, aggression and dominance are key features of socially constructed gender

roles, using aggression and violence in intimate relationships may be an effective way of

demonstrating one's "manliness" and silencing any challenge to one's masculine status (Reidy,

Smith-Darden, Cortina, Kernsmith, & Kernsmith, 2015). By shifting young men's adherence to

traditional masculinity ideologies, the WiseGuyz program may not only be building a protective

factor for individual boys against poor academic, mental, and sexual health outcomes, but also

supporting healthier dating relationships for participants and their dating partners. My qualitative

data, explored further in Chapters 6, show that young men are using newly developed

communication skills, which allows them to discuss issues with friends and family members as

opposed to engaging in fighting and violence to solve problems. Alumni are re-evaluating the

kinds of relationships they have, and report having more respectful dating relationships.

Avoidance of femininity is perhaps the most important dimension of masculinity, as

much of masculinity is framed around the persistent repudiation of anything and everything

associated with girls, women, and femininity (Connell, 2005a; Kimmel, 2008; Pascoe & Bridges,

2016; Way, 2012). Findings from analysis of the Avoidance of Femininity subscale suggested

that boys who took the WiseGuyz program may be less concerned with demonstrating traits or behaviours associated with femininity, given their statistically significant lower score than boys who never took the program. This finding is critical for two reasons. First, because North American conventions around masculinity include studiously avoiding femininity, young men are, in many ways, restricted in the choices they have available to them (Way, 2012). Girls are afforded a great deal more latitude to express and partake in "masculine"-type behaviours and activities, such as playing hockey, having short hair, wearing boyish clothes, etc. (Tremblay & L'Heureux, 2012). This tolerance remains, to a degree, even into adulthood, as we see an increase in the number of female sports teams in traditional male avenues (e.g., hockey) and trendy fashion styles that mimic three-piece suits and ties. Boys, however, at a very young age, are rarely afforded opportunities to participate in "girl's" games or fashion (Tremblay & L'Heureux, 2012). By encouraging young men to hold less rigid beliefs around behaviour associated with femininity, the WiseGuyz program may be creating space for young men to choose a wider range of human experiences. Qualitative data supports the meaningful difference we see in the quantitative data in regards to Avoidance of Femininity. The WiseGuyz alumni repeatedly spoke of being able to engage in a full range of human expressions, such as sadness, disappointment, uncertainty and fear. The alumni explained how the program supported them to see these qualities and expressions as not limited to "girl" behaviours, but rather, as things that all people need to be emotionally healthy individuals.

The second reason why being less concerned with avoiding femininity is critical is related to homophobia. Gayness is feminized, as it becomes the repository of whatever is not considered masculine (Connell, 2005a). Homophobia, as the repudiation of anything to do with gayness or homosexuality, is a central component of masculinity in Western cultures (Connell,

2005a; Pascoe, 2005; Bridges & Pascoe, 2016). As a result, masculinities that do not conform to the Western ideal are policed, sanctioned, or excluded from peer interactions (Levesque, 2016). Examples of this can be seen in the qualitative data from the group of NWG participants. They repeatedly shared with me the ways in which they view certain sports, and as a result, the way in which they view the young men who participate in those activities. Those who engage in certain kinds of pursuits (such as drama) are tagged with the label of being "gay", regardless of their actual sexual orientation. This labelling, policing, and exclusion can be extremely detrimental to those who experience its effects, with suicide as its most extreme consequence (Bridges & Pascoe, 2016). By reducing the beliefs that support avoidance of femininity, the WiseGuyz program is supporting young men to perhaps be more inclusive and tolerant than their peers of a wider range of gender practices. My qualitative data highlights this point, suggesting that WG participants are experiencing greater diversity in their relationships, and are dismissive of traditional stereotypical behaviour.

Challenges in Evaluating Gender Transformative Work

While neither of the other two subscales (toughness and EDD) is statistically significant, both showed large percentage differences in mean scores between the two groups in the direction I theorized it would go (reduced adherence to toughness and emotionally detached dominance). I argue that this percentage change in the direction I anticipated is conceptually significant, particularly when considered with the qualitative data (discussed in Chapter 6). WG participants spoke of knowing themselves and others on a deeper emotional level, using different kinds of worldviews to understand others, and embracing a wider range of masculinity practices in others and themselves than before entering the program. The quantitative data supported this qualitatively observed and analyzed change in behaviour. Young men who did not participate in

the WiseGuyz program spoke of always jostling for social position, along with the need to be seen as independent and to be emotionally contained and restrained. This qualitative difference between the groups of boys is borne out in the quantitative data results.

In the purely empirical realm, however, this percentage difference, affirmation of speculation and young men's stories are not considered robust "evidence," due to the positivist paradigm that dominates prevention programming. Scholars in the field of behavioural research have long sought to design program intervention evaluation designs on random assignment, standardized measurement tools, and strict protocols for gathering "robust" enough data (McCall & Green, 2004; McCall, 2009). Too often, gender transformative programs are pressed into the constraints of a randomized trial, in order to produce the most "powerful" evidence that an intervention works (Dworkin & Barker, 2019). This pursuit of empirical, positivistic rigor has resulted in an over-valuing of certain kinds of research and an undervaluing of other methods, even when those alternatives may be better suited to answer some key research and policy questions (McCall & Green, 2004).

I argue that this heightened use of, and value for, quantifiable research using standardized tools and controlled designs is often ill-suited to the study of gender transformative change. Most contemporary gender theorists utilize social construction and/or postmodern theories of gender identity, which argue that gender is constructed through socially situated practices and behaviours (Connell, 2005; Phillips, 2006; West & Zimmerman, 1987, 2009). While individuals are the ones who "do" gender, it is always carried out as socially situated, whether in the real or mental presence of others who are also attuned to gender's production (West & Zimmerman, 1987). This sociality of gender means it cannot be reduced to a pre-defined set of questions developed in a separate context away from the current one in which gender is being produced.

Those using interpretivist paradigms to understand gender (such as symbolic interactionists and social constructionists) argue that quantifiable data and statistical analysis tell us little about how people actually behave in specific action situations, and instead, efforts should be focused on examining the context and setting in which individuals take action (Joas & Knobl, 2014).

I do not believe that when my sample of young men sat down and answered 29 questions around items related to throwing baseballs, being tough, or never crying, that it somehow produced a "truth" that was unknown to me through observing their interactions and listening to how they spoke with each other about masculinity and being young men. The notion that there is separation between the body and the mind, the individual and the social, is false, and worse, it is unhelpful in understanding the complex process of gender transformation.

This, however, is the conundrum with which many community-based, feminist, and postmodern scholars (myself included) find themselves faced. On the one hand, we know gender identity and expression are incredibly complex, with socially situated practices both arising in specific circumstances while simultaneously being constrained by them (Connell, 2005b). Policymakers and other stakeholders are interested in supporting social projects that are more complex in nature, as awareness builds around the challenges to shifting gender practices and norms. On the other hand, these same policymakers and stakeholders are demanding, and often legislating[10] prescriptive empirical research designs that yield quantifiable data. Numbers are what matter and count as evidence in today's climate of accountability, measurability, and quest for effectiveness.

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[10] See the Alberta Government Safe Communities Innovation Fund Pilot Project Executive Summaries
https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/448d377f-0c0c-4c5e-856b-06b71988e70f/resource/d1e85e85-5cc7-4ab6-b5c8-7bb519ea97f3/download/2015-safe-communities-innovation-fund-pilot-project-executive-summaries.pdf

My purpose is not to denigrate the value of quantitative methods, but rather to begin the call for those in power to recognize that all methods be appropriately valued for the information they can provide, particularly around various kinds of complex social issues. Gender is not simply a facet of individual identity expression, but rather is conflated, constrained and reinforced by peers, families, institutions and policies. Using one tool that asks a small set of pre-directed questions may not be the best way to understand the mechanisms by which gender transformative programs support change. By integrating multiple methods and valuing them appropriately in the context of the research question, we can begin to develop more comprehensive and nuanced understandings of the social issues which we are tasked with solving. Gender is an exceedingly complex phenomenon; interventions that focus on shifting gender norms and practices need to use multiple methods across traditions in order to begin to understand the changes and impacts that may be occurring.

The next two chapters focus on developing a deeper understanding of the changes that are occurring through exploration of the non-alumni and alumni focus group data. This exploration allows me to examine in detail the ways in which young men understand and relate to issues of gender and gender relations. Quantitative data, while useful in a number of ways, fails to illuminate the ways in which individuals do gender and how gender is organized socially within these two groups of young men.

"I mean, in sports like football or soccer you have to be more manly."
NWG from School A

Chapter Five: Non-WiseGuyz Participants and the Hegemonic Hold

The previous chapter highlighted the challenges associated with solely relying on numbers when considering something as complex and profound as gender norms and behaviours. While my quantitative data did tell me some things (i.e., that there is a statistically significant difference between the WG and NWG participants regarding adherence to traditional masculinity ideologies), the data did not tell me anything about the ways in which NWG boys' attitudes and behaviours regarding traditional forms of masculinity differed from attitudes and behaviours of boys who participated in the program. What are the boys' relationships to these pervasive masculinity ideologies, and how do NWG participants relate differently than those WG participants?

This chapter focuses on NWG participants and the ways in which they understand, practice and speak about masculinity. I start here because I believe that through these young men, we catch a glimpse into how everyday high school boys experience and reproduce the masculine gender order. Some scholars have recently noted shifts in contemporary expressions of masculinity, moving from hierarchical organization to one that is more inclusive and horizontal in nature (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014; Pfeffer, Rogalin, & Gee, 2016). Based on data from my focus groups with the NWG, here I explore the social organization of masculinity and argue that hegemonic masculinity as an analytical instrument remains a powerful way of understanding the gender order in which the young men are steeped and engaged. Throughout this chapter, I focus on five ways in which the behaviours and attitudes of the NWG young men regarding masculinity are constructed and performed differently from those of the WG young men, specifically through sports and athletics, homophobia, sexual prowess, emotions, and

humour. It is through the qualitative data that we see the ways in which these young men engage in, and are beholden to, hegemonic practices within a relational framework of power, dominance, and subordination.

Who are the NWG?

As mentioned in my methodology chapter (Chapter 3), I came to know this group of young men very well, particularly my informal peer recruiters. My first focus group was with four young men in grades 11 and 12, two of whom were good friends with each other outside of the session. Three of the young men were very engaged in competitive sports (e.g., hockey), while the other was in the school's performing arts program. This group focused a lot on athletics, most likely because the two friends were seriously involved in hockey. After a few initial minutes of me being really curious and asking a ton of questions in an effort to find a topic/rhythm for the group to slide into, this was where the group really opened up. Athletics, competition and violence seemed to be it.

My second focus group contained the informal peer recruiters and their friends. There were six of them, ranging from grade 10 to grade 12. This was also a mixed group, with two exchange students, and one student fairly new to Canada. This group required less effort to start talking, although I quickly realized that much of their interaction involved a lot of posturing, continually contesting power amongst themselves and with the spectre of those outside of the focus group room. I found myself having to navigate their posturing carefully, making sure to create a trusting environment so that the young men felt free to speak what was on their mind but in a way that attended to creating a safe group dynamic.

In both groups, I asked many questions about what it was like in high school, and what kinds of pressures they faced. These usually led to rich avenues where I could begin gently

probing and digging down past the surface-level answers and conversations. When analyzing these conversations, I could see the insecurities and inconsistencies in their physical performances of masculinity, their attitudes, as well as their discursive strategies, although not always at first. In some cases, such as through emotions and humour, the ideologies and practices were subtle, and only after multiple reviews of the transcripts did they begin to emerge. In other cases, such as in discussions of sports and athletics, the performances and practices of hegemonic masculinity were boldly revealed, standing out in the data so strongly they were impossible to ignore. I begin here by examining the most obvious ideology in relation to masculinity, athletics and sports, subsequently addressing the more subtle, although no less pervasive, practices related to sexuality, emotions, and humour.

Sports and Athletics

As the quote at the beginning of this chapter indicated, athletics and sports were directly tied to the practice and meaning of manliness. When asked about the pressures young men in particular faced in high school, athletics was mentioned in the first five minutes of the conversations.

I: What kind of pressures [do you face]?

P1: I mean possibly athletics.

I: Yeah?

P2: Yeah.

P3: Yeah.

P1: Yeah, athletics like I mean of course again there's a lot more kind of body related pressure when it comes to women, but…it's so present.

Athletics were tied to strength and the young men were very aware of the repercussions of not presenting or embodying athleticism or strength. The young men in focus group #2 explained to me:

P1: I mean, just with the whole sporty thing. If you're not athletic or like strong, I guess you kind of get a stereotype about you saying like "Oh, he's like, he's a bitch" or something like that.

P2: Yeah, there's pressure.

Demonstrating athleticism has long been noted in the literature as a way in which a "legitimized" masculinity can be constructed (Alley & Hicks, 2005; Hauge & Haavind, 2011; Hill, 2015). Physical contact in particular emerged as a core component of valued masculine performance with the young men. A member of focus group #1 explained to me why hockey was viewed as a "higher" sport:

P1: I feel like hockey and stuff that there's a lot more kind of know, I don't know what the term would be, but it's kinda like the whole thing with checking someone. There's a lot more physical contact between people.

Others in the group nodded their heads, seeming to agree with this statement. Physical contact (such as checking, tackling, pushing, etc.) was directly associated with manliness and strength. When I posed the question of why hockey or football were manly sports to the other group of NWG, they explained to me that guys who played these sports needed to be strong because a high degree of contact was required. Strength and the ability to overpower one's opponent or even injure one's opponent appeared to be a critical aspect of a valued masculine performance with the young men.

Tied to the ideas of strength and contact, data illuminated that particular sports were places where masculinity was validated or repudiated. Several of the young men in focus group #1 shared their perspective on different types of sports:

I: So does any sport count or is it certain sports that there's more pressure for?

P1: Any sport.

P2: Yeah.

P3: Not a dumb sport.

I: What's a dumb sport?

P3: Curling.

P2: Golfing.

P1: [laughing]

I: Um, so what would be at the "top of the heap" for sports?

P3: Hockey.

P2: Football.

P1: Possibly basketball.

In this exchange, we can see several things occurring. First is the clear way in which certain sports (e.g., hockey and football) were linked to a "validated" or idealized masculinity. Second, this exchange also demonstrated how other sports, like golf and curling, failed to support an idealized masculinity, and ultimately denied the young men who played them the sources of masculine privilege and power. Sports that require power, speed, strength, and physicality are traditionally considered masculine sports, whereas those sports that emphasize form and technique tend to be associated with feminine sports (Alley & Hicks, 2005).

I argue that violence is also an underlying thread in these passages, as it may be the violent aspect of football and hockey that were ultimately valued by the young men. Research has explored the role of violent contact sport in relation to masculinity (Kidd, 2013; Messner, 1992; Weinstein, Smith, & Wiesenthal, 1995; Young & White, 2000). Sports, particularly violent contact sports, constituted a central experience among young men (Young & White, 2000). Not only was violence itself accepted and celebrated in these sports, but through acts of violent contact, players were positively defined as assertive, tough, and independent (Young & White, 2000). Conversely, by engaging in violent sporting acts, a young man negatively defined himself in opposition to what he was not: a girl or gay (Kidd, 2013; Young & White, 2000).

Through the passage above, we can also see how hierarchies of masculinity were constructed and reproduced through discourse about sports. Claiming hockey and football as "real" sports and curling and golf as "dumb" sports, positioned the young men who played those sports in either culturally exalted or subordinated positions (Kreager, 2007). One of the young men from focus group #2 elaborated on this process:

I: Curling, golf, tennis, what do you think about those sports?

P1: Well, I wouldn't think anything but I feel like the stereotype would be like, "Oh, you're gay.".

P4: [laughs]

I: What do you think [name of participant] just because you laughed. Do you have some thoughts on that?

P4: I don't even care, but in sports like football…you have to be more manly.

In this discussion, we can see how strongly these young men adhered to ideologies which positioned those who played certain sports as being more manly or embodying masculinity.

Violent contact sports, like hockey and football, are intertwined with essentialist understanding

of maleness (Kreager, 2007). This essentialist understanding of maleness was incredibly

powerful, creating tremendous pressure for young men to not only participate in these valued

sports, but to excel at them.

     P2: When you think about it, like football for high school is like THE [vocal emphasis]

sport.

     P1: Yeah.

     P2: If you wanna think about it, that's what makes it a lot more pressure.

     P3: Like if a guy sucks at curling, no one is going to care. But if a guy's bad at football,

people kinda laugh about it.

This exchange showed the tremendous disparity between those sports that are manly and

those that are not. So under-valued are those sports that are intertwined with femaleness, it does

not even matter whether someone excels at them or not. The pressure to excel at those sports

intertwined with maleness, however, was extreme.

These excerpts highlighted how athletics, and particular sports, were processes by which

hegemonic masculinity was practiced and reinforced. Through the focus groups with the young

men, we can see how traits like strength and physical ability were associated with notions of

manliness. Athletics and sports provided a powerful avenue for constructing and maintaining

masculine identities, both valued and under-valued. In the conversations between the young men

and me, the hierarchy of sports was actually a conversation about the hierarchies of

masculinities. By exalting hockey and football as being manly and delegitimizing sports like

curling and golf by associating them with femaleness and gayness, these young men were

actively engaged in reinforcing the cultural ideals associated with hegemonic masculinity. We

can see production of masculine relations in their discussions, whether through marking someone who was not athletic or strong as a "bitch" or someone who golfed or curled as "'gay."

Homophobia and Avoidance of Femininity

As C.J. Pascoe's seminal piece, "Dude, you're a fag" (2005) aptly demonstrated, homophobic insults and teasing were central to affirming masculine identity. "The fag" identity, as she called it, was not an identity limited to homosexual young men, but an identity that could be placed on heterosexual young men as well (Pascoe, 2005).

More than a decade since that foundational study, emerging research seems to challenge the understanding of homophobia as a central component of masculinity in the West (Anderson, 2013, 2016; Dashper, 2012; Heath, 2016; McCormack, 2012). Societal changes have appeared to correspond with a wider range of permissible gendered behaviours for male students, resulting in boys being able to personalize their masculinity without being homosexualized (McCormack, 2012).

Given the changing research, how do I make sense of the very notable homophobic discourse being used by the young men in my focus group? Bridges & Pascoe (2016) have suggested that while certain expressions of homophobia may be declining, others remain. I contend this is, indeed, the case with the young men in my study. Homophobic language and sentiment threaded itself through several of the discussions, particularly in focus group #2:

I: One of the things that others have talked about was not really feeling like there's a lot of bullying at this school. What would you say to that?

P4: I think [name of school] is less than others. This school has a lot of…how can I say it, people…

P2: Minorities.

P4: People who dress up like, I don't know, like men dressed up like girls.

I: Like transgender students?

P1: They even have a bathroom. I don't think any other high school does.

Several concepts worth noting took place in this exchange. First was the counterpoint (contradiction) in P4's description of transgender students. At first, he was hesitant. When he said, "…how can I say it, people…", he was trying to find language that would not position him as being homophobic or intolerant. In his second sentence, he further expanded upon his statement and, instead of being vague, he described them clearly as, "…men who dressed up like girls." His exchange displayed the tension he felt, both wanting to construct himself as tolerant while constructing the transgender students as being less than a normal guy (a girl). This "othering" of transgender students also emerged with P1, who pointed out that "they" had their own bathroom. Discursively, we can see how the young men were constructing normative masculinities (themselves) while simultaneously constructing marginalized and subordinated masculinities (minorities, transgender students).

Further on in the discussion, the young men expanded on the issue of bullying, and why someone might be the target of violence.

I: What would somebody get picked on for?

P4: Being gay.

I: Yeah, would that be? [looking at others around the table]

P3: Yeah, if they're gay, or sometimes when a man is in drama, like the things you do.

P1: Kinda like people will – they won't judge you or pick on you for like being gay, but like if you do something that's like…Let's say [name of participant], he does something and the guys kinda think, "Oh, that's kind of more feminine," they'll just say, "that's kinda gay." Not

meaning he's actually a gay guy, he's just...kinda weird, you know? I think you got to be a guy to

get picked on for that kind of stuff, but it's not actually being gay.

In the passage above, we see how homophobia was not just about gay young men. Homophobic harassment, such as in the example provided above, was as much about discursively disciplining offenders who strayed from the masculine code as it was about the fear of gayness itself (Bridges & Pascoe, 2016).

Sex and Sexual Prowess

There were two significant threads within the area of sex and sexual prowess. First was regarding the need to demonstrate sexual conquests in order to establish the masculine hierarchy. Second was centred around young men needing to be seen as sexually experienced and all-knowing regarding all things to do with sex and sexual health.

Sexual conquests

There is a strong connection between sexuality and masculinity, as sexuality is an arena where adolescent masculinity is constructed and performed (Connell, 2005a; Messerschmidt, 2000; Pascoe, 2005; Schalet et al., 2014). In both everyday discourse and through mass media, there is a proliferation of messaging that directs young men to emphasize sexual conquests and concerns over relational and emotional concerns (Messerschmidt, 2000; Smiler, 2008). These same messages also emphasize the need for young men to initiate both romantic and sexual encounters in order to blatantly and aggressively demonstrate their heterosexuality (Smiler, 2008). This ever-present expectation pushes boys to use sexuality to establish hierarchies and, the greater the sexual prowess, the higher one's "position" in the masculine hierarchy (Cohan, 2009, Smiler, 2012).

The NWG participants in my focus groups were very much aware of the expectation and stereotypes surrounding young men in relation to sexuality. In the following passage, focus group #2 explained to me the clear double standards at play.

I: So not the same stereotypes. Would you say there's different stereotypes for guys?

P1: Well, there's a lot of stereotypes for girls, but for guys it's just one or two different things.

I: What would be some of the stereotypes for guys?

P2: I mean, like when a girl sleeps with 3 guys or 4 guys, it gives her a title, the "bad thing", and the guys doesn't.

P3: Yeah, like one thing for guys and then the other thing for girls.

The young men returned to this conversation later in the focus group, explaining the connection between sexual activity, heterosexuality, and masculinity.

P5: It should be like for girls, they're all about is she a whore or not, if she's like hooked up with boys. For men, it's more like if he's not man enough, or if he's gay.

The exchange above demonstrated both the freedom and intense pressures associated with sexual activity. Young men were encouraged, in fact celebrated, for being sexually active with many partners. As described by Andrew Smiler, a researcher in the area of adolescence and sexuality, "Being able to score, especially being able to score repeatedly, turns a boy into 'the man'" (2012, p, 92). This aggressive sexuality was also linked to heterosexuality, as the passage above indicated. The young men in the focus groups recognized that teenage boys were encouraged and celebrated in their pursuit of the heterosexual sexual experience and stigmatized for their lack of experience (Schalet et al., 2014). Focus group #2 also discussed the competitive aspect of sexual prowess and the importance of "being able to score."

P1: With guys I think it's just more of a masculine, like a guy thing….

P5: It's just about who got more girls.

I: Is that what it's about?

P3: Sometimes, yeah….

While they spoke about getting girls, the group was also clear to distinguish themselves from guys who sexually used girls in a crass and disposable way.

P5: There's guys that are kind of like douchebags, kind of thing. They're just there to have sex, they don't care about anything else. Once they have, like once they have what they have they just….

P6: They're like "I'll leave you now".

P5: Those kind of guys I don't like.

I was fascinated by how the group discursively distanced themselves from the "bad" guys, constructing themselves in the process as the "good" guys. Later in the conversation, the group returned to the topic of girlfriends when discussing who they talked to about sex.

P5: If you had a girlfriend you won't be like, "Oh yeah I did this with my girlfriend too," cuz you want to keep that private.

P3: Some people do….

P2: Some people do depending on how comfortable you are with it.

P5: Yeah, I don't like it.

I: You say no, that's off limits?

P6: The guy would never talk about his girlfriend.

P5: He will talk about his other girls that he had, but if his girlfriend, it's his girlfriend.

P6: If you're like a normal guy, kind of like a polite guy you want to protect your girl.

P1: You don't want to expose her in that way. Like some guys….

This separation between "those types" of guys and the "normal polite guys" appeared to be a way for the young men to distance themselves from the problematic behaviour typically associated with heterosexual, adolescent males. In the process of this conversation, however, I argued that these young men were actually perpetuating gender and sexual inequality (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014). This was because for young men, confirmation of heterosexuality was not only about expressing love and intimacy with a partner; it was also about demonstrating a gendered and sexualized dominance over girls and their bodies (Bridges & Pascoe, 2016). In using words and phrases like "protect your girl", "not wanting to expose", and "his girlfriend", the young men were discursively positioning young women as weak, without agency, and in need of masculine oversight and guidance.

Talking about sex

Sexual relationships were a key site for both the performance and construction of masculinity (Claussen, 2019). At the same time, however, messages of accessing health and other support services can be at odds with traditional masculine ideologies that valued and prescribed expertise in sexual performance, potentially marking those who seek support as sexually inadequate and at risk of having their masculinity called into question (Hall and Applewhite 2013, Schalet et al. 2014, Knight, Shoveller, Oliffe, Gilbert, Frank, & Ogilvie, 2012). This reality played itself out in focus group #2:

I: So for the guys who haven't taken sexual education yet, where do you get your information from?

P6: Like from friends, it comes out through conversation….

P1: Like you're starting, you start talking about something and you'd be like, "Oh what does that mean?" or something like that they'll tell you. Sometimes it's….

P5: I would never say what does that mean.

P1: Well, like you know….

P5: We would never say [that], everybody would be like what?….

During this exchange, the young man (P5) challenging P1 looked straight at him with a smirk, appearing to taunt him for revealing that he may be inexperienced in any aspect of sexual activity. I caught this body language, and probed further:

I: Ok, so that's interesting cuz you would never be like, "What is that?", so you would never admit that you don't know something?

P6: Yeah.

I: So you just kind of stay quiet until maybe you figure it out?

P1: That's part of the masculinity thing, or whatever word it [is], just being a guy.

The young men from focus group #1 also revealed that they spoke to friends about sex, but in round-about, unfocused way.

I: Guys talk about it [sex]?

P4: Well, my group at least.

P1: It's not like, "Ok, now we are going to talk about it." It just….

P2: Just kind of comes up.

P3: It's not all you talk about….

P4: Yeah, it's definitely not a focus.

P1: It's like the least focus.

Research has shown that young men do value and desire information on sex (Buston & Wight, 2006; Hilton, 2007; Limmer, 2010). While young men gather information about sex and relationships from a variety of sources, it may be, as indicated through this exchange with the group, that information gathered from friends is done in a passive way. The young men in my groups presented themselves as observers and listeners to conversations about sex, rarely actively involving themselves in the dialogue. During data analysis, when I started listening for plot (Step 1 of the Listening Guide), I suspected that perhaps a couple of the guys from both focus groups did use their close friends as a way of discussing sex, due to a couple of them suggesting guys learn about sex through friends and conversations. My reflections on these comments highlighted that in a larger group of young men, however, they were very careful to back-peddle on that admission (in the case of focus group #2) or downplay the purpose and importance of those exchanges (focus group #1). The importance of the peer group as a place where specific ideas about what constituted appropriate masculine behaviours was exemplified in the passages above. Individually, perhaps some of these young men did talk to their friends about sexual relations, however, the group worked to prescribe and proscribe behaviours that transmitted confidence, expertise, and knowledge. These conversations among the young men demonstrated the reticence they felt in discussing sex and sexual health with other young men. This corresponded to findings by Knight et al. (2012) who reported that idealized notions of masculinity can influence young men's discussions of their sexual health with their peers. In focus group #2, we especially saw the ways in which group dynamics served to censor and filter young men's sex talk. When P1 revealed he may talk to friends, he experienced a soft rebuke from P5. By his admission of perhaps not knowing a sex term and asking other young men about

it, P1 risked invoking a subordinate masculine status, as his behaviour was at odds with hegemonic ideals presupposing sexual expertise.

Traditional masculinity ideologies of sexual prowess and conquest both produce and govern the ways in which knowledge about sex and sexual health can be discussed (Knight et al., 2012). The ways in which the young men in the focus groups talked about stereotypes (i.e., girls as whores, guys as studs) and the repercussions of not living up to those stereotypes (i.e., not man enough, gay) exemplified how idealized masculine expectations are produced and upheld in relation to sex and sexual activity (Flood, 2008; Knight et al., 2012).

Emotions and Emotional Connection

When I first went through the transcripts, identifying key ideas and metaphors used by the boys, the sports and athletics emerged so strongly that it became difficult to see anything else. Once I started developing the I poems, however, I was able to see the way in which emotion, or the lack thereof, played a strong role in the young men's attitudes and beliefs about masculinity. Lack of emotion, specifically "caring" about something or someone, emerged as the hallmark feature of an idealized masculine identity. The role of emotions is critical in gender-relational processes, specifically as a way to hierarchically mark admired, versus devalued, masculine identities (Pfeffer et al., 2016). The young men in focus group #1 explained this to me:

> *I: When you think of guys in the school, who is like a "real" guy?*
>
> *P2: Just someone who doesn't really care.*
>
> *P3: Yeah.*
>
> *P1: Like, he doesn't really get bothered about the things people say or do. They don't really keep to themselves, but they don't say things and like start arguments and stuff like that.*

The exchange above demonstrated how young men who were able to contain, stifle, or repress their emotional responses to things were very much admired by those in the group. Young men who could manage their emotional responses were seen as "real" men. This cliché of emotional restraint, shown to be common for boys in later adolescence (Way, 2012), was particularly evident when tracing focus group #2's I poems.

> *I don't know*
> *I guess*
> *I don't know*
> *I'm not sure*
> *I think it's better*
> *I mean like*
> *I kind of learned*
> *I just keep to myself*
> *I think guys*
> *I don't think guys really care*
> *I they they're*
> *I don't know*
> *I don't think*
> *I mean*
> *I guess*
> *I wouldn't think anything*
> *I don't even care*

Their responses showed the deflection (I wouldn't think anything), the distancing (I just keep to myself) and the stoicism (I don't even care) that was required of traditional masculine practices in relation to emotion.

The young men also discussed the shift from close friendships to fewer and more distanced friendships. This shift, as expressed by focus group #1, was couched around being appropriate for high school, given the need for maturity and independence.

I: Do you think there is a different criterion [sic] for guys to be popular in high school, like they were in junior high?

P1: I think people should start to care less in high school because they're starting to focus on their career. In junior high, it's easier, you can get away with, I don't know how to explain it, but yeah, when you get to high school you shouldn't care about that sort of thing [being popular].

This move to high school definitely represented a shift for the NWG participants in regards to their friendships and relationships. This corresponded to extensive research conducted by Niobe Way (2011, 2012), who demonstrated that as boys became increasingly attuned to cultural messages about manhood, they began to distance themselves from close relationships. Mainstream North American culture tends to frame this distance as part of growing up, however, this lack of close relationships can leave young men feeling isolated and alone. As expressed by one young man from group #2, "I kind of learned in high school after grade 10 [to] just keep to myself more and more.*"* In fact, some young men felt that part of being a guy was being alone, or at least, not seeking out friendships.

P6: I think guys don't try to be friends with other people as much as like a girl. Like the commitment to a friend wouldn't be as strong.

I: Oh, ok. Why do you think that is, out of curiosity?

P4: I don't think guys really care so much. I think they're just there to be them and do what they do, right? And they don't care what other people are doing around them.

The one emotion young men were allowed, and perhaps were in some ways encouraged to feel was aggression. It was also through aggression where friendship ties could be demonstrated and reinforced. The young men in focus group #2 explained this process to me:

P5: If someone has a problem with you, there's a problem with the whole group.

I: Oh really?

P3: So, I said earlier guys don't really care about their friends as much as the girls. But your friend group, if you're in a friend group, they will get your back. If you have something with another person, like beef with another person, then you will have people to back you up.

Interestingly, despite this coming together of friends to demonstrate a united front, the young men were quite straightforward about the sense of constant competition between friends and other peers. Focus group #1 couched this pressure for competition within the world of sports:

P3: I think it's more instead of like this direct pressure from like your friends and everything it's more based on competition….

I: Ok.

P1: Ummhm. 100%.

I: Competition between guys?

P3: Umhm.

The young men in focus group #2 were adamant that a sense of competition was omnipresent and part of what it meant to be a guy.

I: Competition, what did you say [name of participant]?

P2: Yeah, sometimes.

P6: Yeah, I agree with that. I think with every guy, even if you're friends or not there's competition.

P4: Everyone.

P1: I have a thing like, cuz I play soccer and I have a friend from the NSA group who plays soccer. We're competitive all the time. With guys, I think it's just more of a masculine like guy thing.

Through her research, Way (2012) identified that as boys enter late adolescence (high school), they grow increasingly distrustful and wary of their male peers. For the NWG participants, this wariness appeared to manifest itself as the ever present need to compete with each other.

"Chirping" and Jabbing

There is much theorising about the role of humour as part of the construction and maintenance of status and power among young men (Barnes, 2012; Oransky & Maracek, 2009; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016; Tucker & Govender, 2017). In my study, the young men referred to such humour as "chirping" or "jabbing"; essentially put-downs that took place through joking within their male peer groups. In the following passage, young men from focus group #1 explained what chirping was, as I had never heard the term before.

I: What's chirped?

P1: Roasted.

[laughter from all four boys]

P2: They [other guys] won't like make a big deal out of it, but like they'll call you out and just kind of like make a little jab at you, not to start a fight, just like, you know….

I: In a joking manner?

P4: It's joking, but you know….

P3: You know….

P1: It goes deeper.

Given that this was the first time I had ever come across the notion of chirping, I was curious to dig a little further with the group to see if it was similar to the ways in which young

men police masculinity in order to establish hierarchy and reproduce dominant forms of masculinity (Kimmel, 2008; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016).

I: So when the chirping happens, does that make you go, "Oh, I should change my behaviour and act differently?"

P3: If you're the one chirping?

I: If you are the one getting chirped at.

P1: No, you just kind of brush it off.

P2: And you don't worry about it.

P4: It depends on what you're getting chirped on, but mostly you just kind of brush it off.

P3: You just chirp back.

P1: Chirp wars [smirking].

The idea of chirp wars was reflective of research suggesting that humour is used by young men to both gain and keep status (Barnes, 2012; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016). The battle to outwit or embarrass a peer was continuous and on-going (as suggested by focus group #1 P1 through the use of the word "war"), potentially reflecting the need many young men felt to constantly protect and validate their masculine status (Neyak & Kehily, 2001; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016).

Humour was used as a way of producing differential positions of domination and subordination within a peer group (Neyak & Kehily, 2001). At the start of the second focus group, I was going around the table and reminding myself of the young men's names. One of the young men who was sitting across from me called out, "All the immigrants on one side of the table! [chuckling]." In this instance, it was not only the physical location of where individuals were seated which marked them as outside the group (sides of the table), but also the choice of

language in the chirp which actively worked to bestow a sense of otherness on several members of the focus group. Using humour in this case appeared to be at the expense of potentially marginalized masculinities (i.e., newcomers and visible minorities), while simultaneously reinforcing and reproducing dominant forms of masculinity (Barnes, 2012). The young men in focus group #2 told me how they pretty much chirp on anything. Interestingly, the examples they gave certainly pointed to the way humour was used to shore up various practices of hegemonic masculinity.

P4: Like, we'll joke about, "Oh, you're short" or "you're lanky." It doesn't mean anything.

I: Ok, it's just chirping?

P4: Yeah.

The examples the young men provided, short and lanky, were contrary to idealized masculine forms, specifically height and musculature. So while the young men suggested the chirps did not mean anything, I argue that they are in fact, significant. They function to uphold traditional masculine conventions in addition to competing with and outperforming other guys.

Being able to withstand the chirping was a critical feature of the process. Taking the insult personally was seen as a weakness and something to be avoided. As explained by one of the young men from group #1, "You can't really have sensitive friends…." Guys needed to be able to brush the chirp off, almost needing to be made of Teflon. No matter the insult, these young men were expected to take it without batting an eye. This was part of the "being in control" masculine ideal.

The Hegemonic Hold

While young men were active creators of their own lives, their activity was social, in that they drew meaning from a larger societal social framework (e.g., language, social structures, etc.; Connell, 2005b). The gender order in particular was a powerful circumstance colouring young men's lives (Connell, 2005a, 2005b). I argue that hegemonic masculinity as an analytical instrument remains a powerful way of understanding the gender order in which the young men in my focus groups were steeped and engaged. Not only did the NWG participants express attitudes and beliefs concurrent with traditional or idealized notions of masculinity (i.e., athletics, homophobic language, sexual conquest, lack of emotion and connection, and humour as a resource for status), they also used the tools of hegemony to maintain and reproduce the current gender order. Tools like cultural discourses and the delegitimization of alternative practices of masculinity actively worked to uphold socially exalted practices of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

In this chapter I presented numerous examples where the young men used dominant discourse and behaviour to not only reproduce and reinforce an idealized masculinity, but to simultaneously construct and imply versions of masculinity that were inferior to the ideal (Philips, 2006). When the young men in my groups called other guys a "bitch" and "gay" because they were not athletic or strong, subtly mock statements made about behaviour, or suggest jokes about physical appearance as benign, they were constructing the social organization of masculinities, where those who engaged in hegemonic practices were exalted, and those who did not were relegated to subordinate or marginalized positions.

Hegemonic masculinity was also constructed by how it related to femininity and women. Specifically, in the sex and sexual prowess discussion, we clearly saw how young men

positioned themselves in relation to young women. In some instances, such as with the division between "polite guys" and "those guys," young men discursively distanced themselves from more toxic masculinity practices, appearing to be different from those who perpetrated the offending behaviour. This strategy, however, actively perpetuated sexual and gender inequalities, as it upheld the underlying idea that young women needed protecting and looking after by young men from other, "bad" young men. In this process, we saw how young men configured their gendered practice within a bigger system of gender relations (Pascoe & Bridges, 2016).

While there are scholars who have felt hegemonic masculinity is no longer a useful or relevant analytical instrument (Anderson, 2013; 2016; McCormack, 2013; Moller, 2007), data from my NWG focus groups led me to emphatically disagree. My data demonstrated the relational processes that structure power differences among young men and between young men and young women. Clearly power and privilege were hierarchically distributed, given that boys told me that young men who displayed athleticism, strength, aggression, emotional stoicism, independence and sexual conquest were considered manly, while those who did not were considered a bitch, gay, or were the source of ridicule. Girlfriends were to be protected and shielded, positioned as masculinity resources that shored up masculinity.

Appreciating the power and hold of hegemonic masculinity are important when considering the larger gender order. Hegemonic masculinity is achieved largely through cultural ascendancy and idealization, which can be seen in the focus group data. The pressure to conform and live up to such ideals is intense and unforgiving, and we saw various inconsistencies and tensions in the data. These inconsistencies and insecurities appeared to reflect the struggle to attain the masculine ideal. Young men knew they must attain that ideal, but were also unsure of

how to do that, which ultimately undermined their sense of self (hooks, 2004). The young men tried different tactics in pursuit of the ever-elusive title of "man enough."

Privileging certain practices of masculinity over others encourages the existence and perpetuation of unequal gender relations as a whole (Jewkes et al., 2015; Messerschmidt, 2012). The dismantling of gender inequality is the ultimate concern and challenge for gender activists (Jewkes et al., 2015). Working to fundamentally change ideals of masculinity is a key component of achieving gender equality, which is why interventions that address those ideals are critical.

"The man box – yeah, that was something I remember very clearly."
WG from School A

Chapter Six: WiseGuyz and the Undoing of Gender

The focus of this chapter is the WG participants and the ways in which they understood, practiced and spoke about masculinity. The concept of undoing gender is important in this regard, as criticism of the doing gender approach has focused on the way it has, perhaps, undermined the pursuit of gender equality by unintentionally perpetuating the idea that the gender system of oppression is impervious to real change (Deutsch, 2007). Providing examples of social processes that underlie and promote resistance against conventional gender relations have been called for in the literature (Butler, 2004; Deutsch, 2007; Risman, 2009). This chapter answers the call for examples whereby gender is undone. While not a truly longitudinal design, my research is a glimpse into the "stickiness" of the lessons learned in a small-group gender transformative educational experience, showing how the young men who took the WiseGuyz program actively resist conventional gender relations and dismantle masculinity power dynamics.

The chapter is thematically organized in a way that blends together findings around program benefits with program processes, using data from both the facilitator focus group and the WiseGuyz interviews and focus groups. I begin with empathy and support, and explore the various elements required for the young men to demonstrate these qualities, specifically reflexivity and reflection. I pull on facilitator data to highlight how curiosity and dialogic approaches support critical reflection and emotional reflexivity skills. I then move to the expression of emotion and vulnerability, something which has been noted in the literature on adolescent boys as typically being stifled and shut down (Kindlon & Thomson, 2000; Pollack, 2006; Tremblay & L'Heureux, 2012; Way, 2011, 2012). I show how the WiseGuyz alumni feel a

sense of freedom around emotional expression, and explore how certain program processes around the development of emotional safety are critical to the development of skills related to emotional expression. I finish the chapter by examining the ways in which WG alumni demonstrate the ways in which they resist, and actively undo, ideas about masculinity and gender.

Who are the WiseGuyz?

I came to know certain members of this group very well, especially since three of the participants I met with on more than one occasion to dig deep into several selected topic areas. My first focus group was with three young men, in grades 10 and 11. This was a very diverse group, with one participant having only come to Canada at the start of Grade 7, one who seemed more into sports and athletics, and the other participant engaged in more creative type pursuits (e.g., drama and dressing up in characters). One of the members of this group developed a teasing relationship with me, usually making fun of the amount of pizza and snacks I would bring with me to the focus group sessions. This was a very easy group to talk with, as they had a lot they wanted to share with me about the program and their experiences in high school.

I conducted several individual interviews in between the first focus group and second focus group. There was one interview with a young man in grade 11 (School B) and two with young men in grades 12 (School A). Of all the conversations I had with young men, one of the interviews particularly stood out for me. The young man in question was extremely reserved and it required all my skills as an interviewer to get this specific young man to open up. I asked many more pointed questions than I had with the others, hoping to find a topic on which he would open up and express himself. While we eventually found some kind of footing to dig into, I left the interview feeling that I had still failed to fully gain the young man's trust and comfort.

My final focus group was with four young men at School B. This group was cheerful and exuberant, pleased to be brought together and share each other's company again, given that they had all been in the same junior high school where WiseGuyz had been offered. They were eager to talk about the program and hoped they would have the opportunity in the future to engage with the program in high school.

What struck me about all the conversations was the capacity for reflection each young man showed and the frequently sophisticated analyses they provided on their experiences. From my perspective (as an older, female, adult researcher), being with the WiseGuyz alumni *felt and looked* different from my experiences with the NWG group. WG participants spoke eloquently and compassionately about the stress of loneliness, what being alone did to a person and how it was not good for one's mental health. They were able to reflect on the challenges teachers faced when dealing with classrooms of 25+ students and feeling the pressure to ensure those in their classes did well academically. I also watched them respectfully disagree with each other on certain topics or statements, without name calling, put-downs, or shut-downs. It is interesting to note that while I did ask the young men about any negatives to the program, all those interviewed gave positive responses, saying "nothing comes to mind", or provided practical suggestions such as "have more than one facilitator per group, depending on the size of the group" (see Appendix C question 9). Through the data presented below, we see these young men demonstrate awareness and compassionate understanding of difference, and a strong sense that attributes or behaviours lie not in the domain of one gender versus another, but rather as human qualities that applied equally to all genders.

Demonstrating Empathy and Support

Early research into the WiseGuyz program highlighted how the program supported young men to respect and dismantle the differences within and between themselves, as opposed to acting in ways to enhance hierarchical constructions of masculinity (Hurlock, 2014). Certainly, demonstrations of empathy and inclusion were significant in my conversations with the alumni. Not only did they speak in empathetic ways, but they were able to reflect and trace their process of developing empathy, shifting between their past self and present self simultaneously.

P1: I used to call people names and everything, like before WiseGuyz. I noticed how it affects people and everything, so kind of midway through [the program] I stopped being like that.

P2: I mean, yeah, we learned about how other people feel. Like before that, you would call people names and you think that they're like a stone, they didn't have any feelings about what you said and they didn't care. Then we started learning about how other people care, just like you do, and then it made it easier to see that what you say isn't just meaningless and people actually take it to heart.

Through critical reflection, the young men were able to compare their level of awareness pre-program to post-program. They could trace their emotional development, which allowed them to not only "see" others, but acknowledge the pain a person may be experiencing. We could trace this reflective voice through one of the young men's I poem, taken from an individual interview, where he moved back and forth through his past and present self.

I'm in
I was
I was
I remember
I was
I definitely solidified

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*I'm **still friends***
I don't have to
I've been to
I'm trying
I was really
I know how
I know how
I know what kind
I wouldn't know if I didn't take the course
*I'm **a little more conscious***
I do
I agree
I also think
I would have
I would have thought
I had
I disagree with someone
I walked in and I was like
I can't remember
I learned
I haven't had to use
I've been able to
I don't think so
I'm learning
I'm screwed
I gain
I have
I do
I know
I know
I liked
I felt uncomfortable
I was actually learning
I've helped
I had to take
I learned

This young man reflected on his past behaviour (I remember, I would have, I was trying), and was aware of his own learning through the program. I argue that this capacity for emotional reflexivity (reflecting on their own and others' emotions) allows the young men to recreate different kinds of relationships with peers that are kinder and more compassionate as opposed to taunting and teasing (Holmes, 2015). We saw this exemplified through the passages above,

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where young men expressed their awareness of how others may have felt as a result of a comment.

The ability to engage in processes of emotional reflexivity also allowed the young men to deepen their relationships. Empathy is an important social and emotional competency, the development of which allowed these young men to experience greater diversity in their relationships and more fulfilling relationships (von Salisch, Zeman, Luepschen, & Kanevski, 2014). One young man explained this in greater detail below:

I: What are your thoughts on WiseGuyz impacting your relationships?

P5: I respect my friends a lot more. I have a lot of friends now who don't fit into stereotypes. A friend named C, he's gay, super feminine, nicest guy on the planet. I feel like my relationship has improved. I have another friend, he used to always feel bad about himself because he has a very feminine voice, so it makes him very shy. It's easier to empathize with them and get to know them.

One of the other young men explained that WiseGuyz contributed to his ideas about what constituted a good friendship, and empathic understanding was a core component of that.

P6: It [the program] helped me create stronger friendships than what I had – [without the program] it wouldn't probably be possible.

I: How, in what way?

P6: It showed that people are going through other problems too. It just kinda helped me understand that others are also going through this too. It's not just me.

Being able to take others' perspectives and understand others' thoughts and feelings is a key factor in developing and maintaining friendships (Flannery & Smith, 2017). The young men

I spoke with talked a lot about being supportive in their friendships and key relationships. One of the guys from focus group #1 told me:

P1: I don't know why I attract people like this, but I kind of attract people that are depressed and stuff. I support them…. One of the things with people that causes them to go insane the most is actually loneliness. When you're lonely, people don't understand the stress.

While the young man did not necessarily attribute his empathic and supportive approach to his friendships to WiseGuyz, he did demonstrate a level of critical reflection that helped him make connections between isolation, loneliness, and mental health. His ability to make those linkages, and be compassionate as a result of that understanding, allowed him to more fully support his friends who were experiencing those issues.

Using questions and curiosity

In discussions, the alumni were aware of how the program provided them with opportunities to see what others thought, and how that allowed them to ask different kinds of questions to build empathy with others.

I: [name of participant], what were you going to say, you had something to say in terms of bringing that learning [from the program] with you into high school?

P1: Yeah, it was kind of like seeing what other people thought and what they were like, not just how they felt about a topic. Looking at what they thought, not just what I think.

I: Yeah.

P1: More like, "Oh, you think that? Why do you think that? Explain it to me so I can understand."

I: Yeah, for sure.

P1: Which I found really nice, because sometimes I was like, "What are you thinking!"
whereas now I'm like, "Oh, why do you think that?"

I argue that this ability to ask different kinds of questions was, in part, due to the way in which the facilitators of the program modelled dialogic processes to understanding different topic areas. Asking questions was a key component of the way WiseGuyz facilitators engaged with the participants in the program. The passage above showed how this young man was able to integrate this dialogic approach into his own conversations and relationships with others. By using these techniques, this young man was approaching others with curiosity and empathy ("Explain it to me so I can understand"), as opposed to shutting down ideas and turning people away ("What are you thinking!").

One of the facilitators explained this approach to me from his perspective, using an example from one of the sessions with the young men:

F3: I unpack [that scenario] by asking questions…[for example] I think my response
was, "You don't like looking people in the eyes, how do you talk to people? What do you mean
by that? What makes it gay to look someone in the eye? So where do you think that might be
coming from? Once you actually have a moment to talk about that with them and ask them a
question, I find, that's where you can get into that piece of that [the attitude or belief].
Using this kind of approach to provide the curriculum in a norm-critical way was essential in supporting young men to be reflective about gender norms and the ways in which they were impacted by such norms (Claussen, 2019). The WG participants I spoke with consistently mentioned the openness and curiosities the facilitators brought with them into any conversation.

In conversations with another young man, I also saw the power of facilitators modelling curiosity, empathy, and healthy communication skills on those who were exposed to them. In the

following passage, a young man explained to me how he helped his younger brother as a result of the things he learned in the program.

P4: I've helped my little brother, cuz he's starting to be old enough. I had to take him in and be like, "These are all the things I learned and these are the things you're gonna have to learn, but here's a head start…"

I: That's interesting, so what kind of advice do you give him?

P4: Like listen, they [other people] don't know their feelings, they're confused, you just have to talk to them about it. So if someone says something to him, he shouldn't maybe get offended and get into a fight, he should just understand what they're saying because it could apply to him in the future. Just something he has trouble with.

In the passage above, we can see the different strands of time and experience weave together for this young man and his younger brother. He reflected on the past things he learned in the program ("These are the things I learned"), as well as offering his brother an alternative future response to how he may deal with some troubling peer situations ("If someone says something, he should understand what they are saying"). We continued our conversation:

I: It sounds like you have a lot of great skills that you learned from the program to support him in that.

P4: Yeah, that's really, really good that I get to be able to be the Thomas [WiseGuyz facilitator] for him.

The support provided to this young man through the program was now allowing him to take what he learned and apply it to supporting others. By modelling empathic and caring behaviours, the facilitator had given this young man a way in which to see how he could support

others in his life. In turn, now he felt like he could model and demonstrate a caring, compassionate presence for his younger brother to see and hopefully follow.

Expressing Emotions and Being Vulnerable

The young men all spoke about the ways the program created a space in which they felt they could open up and express their thoughts and feelings to others. They might have entered the program feeling closed and shut down, however, throughout the length of the program they came to cherish the opportunities to share what was going on in their lives with the others in the group. One young man I spoke with explained:

I: How do you think that feeling was created in WiseGuyz?

P6: There was a lot more trust than just putting a bunch of people into a room and being like, "Oh, I don't want to say something because they could judge me on it." If you know somebody you can trust them and be like, "Oh, they're not gonna judge me, they're gonna understand."

Sense of safety

The sense of trust being referred to above was critical in the WiseGuyz program, functioning as an important pre-condition to engaging young men in the program curriculum. Ensuring that individuals felt a strong sense of emotional safety was noted by the facilitators as an essential element of engaging young men and ensuring program success. Emotional safety can be understood as being comfortable with being open and vulnerable (Claussen, 2019). My field notes consistently pointed to the first several weeks of the program being spent building trust and connections with each of the young men in the group. This point was further explained by one of the more senior facilitators:

F1: So it can start individually. I find with certain groups I'll have to, like, build connections individually with the members in the group and try to keep that, like, so that my connection with them is they can sort of start to trust that, start to see that I'm a person who is there…because I care about them.

Facilitators spoke about the formalized processes put into place to support emotional safety in the group setting, including conversations about rights and boundaries, and working together to create a vision of what they wanted the space to feel like (Claussen, 2019). As one of the other senior facilitators explained:

F2: I usually will share what I want out of the space. One of the things that Zander [newer facilitator] and I have been talking about is what the boundaries are. So like really establishing, "Here's my boundaries, like we share the place but here's my, here's my vision for what I want it to be." So that often comes up as we talk about the rights, and asking them if there any others that they want to include.

During my conversations with WG participants, this issue of implicit trust and safety within the group emerged strongly in interviews and focus groups. Young men consistently spoke about their ability to "open up" because they knew the trust would be honoured. As explained by one participant:

P7: That's what you wanna have, you wanna have that kind of fun where no one is judging you, no one cares what you say, nothing leaves that room. That's one of the things I noticed is no matter who you were in there, nothing left that room.

Another young man described how the group he was in always honoured the sanctity of the WiseGuyz space by keeping and sharing confidences. He described why this might have been the case:

P5: Everyone knew they could open up. They didn't have to raise these shields. I'd have to act all macho and stuff [before], but in there, everyone just opened up. Like bared their hearts. Everyone was vulnerable. So that's what really made that place so safe because everyone felt like they could be normal, be themselves, and not have to raise these shields.

The idea of being your "real" self appeared to be at odds with traditional masculinity ideologies that promote stoicism, independence, and emotional closure. In the passage above, the young man came to understand that being "normal" ("being himself") was a relief to how he had been operating before the program ("by wearing a shield").

The ability for the young men to feel safe and express vulnerability emerged from the sense of safety they felt in the program. Emotional safety was a dynamic process, something that facilitators were keenly aware of. During team meeting check-ins at various points throughout my time observing, facilitators would sometimes discuss how they needed to refocus their WiseGuyz groups on the agreed upon rights and responsibilities or monitor emotional safety with the group based on the kinds of conversations being had in the session. During the focus group I had with them, facilitators discussed how participants' group dynamics outside the WiseGuyz sessions could impact the WiseGuyz space, so there was a need to be aware of this and address issues as they came up.

F2: I start to catch wind of like, "Oh, actually, there's something going on there," and you have to be really on top of it to catch things. Cuz at [name of school] there's that one kid that I didn't realize but you'd notice the other kids were kind of making fun of him every time he spoke. Ok, I wasn't catching that [at first]. That's something that needs to be addressed.

Safety was not a static element, but rather a dynamic issue that was affected by interactions both inside and outside the WiseGuyz classroom (Claussen, 2019). Facilitators

needed to be "on top of" relationships in the group and the dynamics that entered the physical space in order to maintain emotional safety. The importance of ensuring safe spaces when doing gender transformative work with men has been noted in the literature (Carmody, Salter, & Presterudstuen, 2014; Davies, Shen-Miller, & Isaaco, 2010; Gibbs et al., 2015), however, few have expanded on what this concept really entails in practice, particularly with young men. Non-judgemental and accepting environments have been noted, but details on how to build these have been lacking (Davies et al., 2010). Furthermore, the existing literature fails to account for the complexity and dynamic nature of safety in group settings, particularly with young men.

Emotional expression

Alumni explained to me how they learned communication skills in the program, giving them access to a range of emotional expression beyond anger or violence. Through recollection and memories of the program, one young man reflected on the skills he learned and how he now used what he learned to support his emotional health in a positive way.

P7: I remember one time there was like this sentence we used, and it was, "I felt like this when you did that, I wish you would do this." And it just works whenever you don't feel good about anything, you can feel sad, mad about anything. You can just tell them you felt that way and maybe they won't do it again to you. You don't have to raise your voice or yell at them or hit them or use violence or anything...

The young men I spoke with valued emotional expression and understood the link between expressing emotions and positive mental health. Niobe Way, in her longitudinal study of boys in early, middle, and late adolescence, found that boys in early and mid-adolescence also recognized the importance of emotional expression (2012). They wanted to "reveal one's heart" to a best friend, and knew that by keeping emotions bottled inside, they could go "wacko" (Way

et al., 2014, p. 242). What made the WG participants different, however, was that, unlike boys in Way's study, who shut down and disconnected from themselves and others as they entered late adolescence, my data showed the WiseGuyz's *remain emotionally connected and aware into late adolescence.* One of the young men explained:

P6: I think you should be allowed to show emotions at emotional times. It's like if somebody you know dies, you should be allowed to cry and not bottle it up to that one moment where you have a mental break down.

I: Oh yeah, that's the truth.

P6: So emotions are good, they shouldn't be hidden.

It was not just sadness that WG participant felt comfortable expressing, but joy, uncertainty, and fear. One of the participants described how he expressed himself freely, regardless of judgement.

P1: I remember I was wearing it [a cloak] and running around people, just like having fun about it, like this is so cool because I like to do it sometimes. People enjoy it, and I love the thing. Some people were like, "Oh my God, what sort of autistic 'fuck' are you, why the hell are you doing this?" "Dude, I'm just having fun. Can't you *have fun?"*

The I poems created from the WG participant data were interesting and in stark contrast to the I poems of the NWG participants in that the WGs used more action oriented verbs, specifically those that showed emotions or feelings. The excerpt below was taken from a section of WG focus group #1 transcripts:

*I **can relate***
*I really **surprised***
I never seen [sic]
*I **also like***
I hang out
I come to Canada [sic]

I respect
I saw
I always knew
I've worn
I cross dress
I always thought
I see lots of people
I know
I do it
I love
I attract people
I kind of attract
I seem to attract
I seem to do
I support
I never bullied
I was able
I was able
I can speak
I've talked
I feel more comfortable

Their responses highlighted the amount of agency these young men felt (I've talked, I can speak) as well as a range of emotional expression and abilities (I love, I feel more comfortable, I can relate). These young men's voices had not been stifled by normative masculinity ideologies and were not emotionally bereft; they were, in fact, willing to express their feelings willingly and openly.

This emotional connection was apparent not only with their peers, but to themselves. Several young men I spoke with talked about how the program supported them to become reconnected to themselves in positive ways. In the following passage, one young man discussed this reconnection to himself as a result of the program.

I: So…what do you think has stuck with you from the program?

P5: Learning to accept myself better. Back in, oh years ago, I've never felt like I was, I never felt like my father was happy with me…my brother's always been the sporty one, he's the

one that's always been into cars and stuff. And I always felt discouraged…I felt like I wasn't

good enough. Then I went to WiseGuyz and the more I went to that program, the more I learned

to like myself.

Another young man spoke with me about how the program allowed him to connect to

some of the impacts from the traumatic events he experienced in his life.

P7: I was able to share stuff that was troubling me. I was able to open up to everyone. I

was able to open up to everyone about my mother's death, which is something I don't open up

about, but I can speak it freely and don't have much trouble [anymore] because I've talked

about it with these guys over here and I feel more comfortable saying that kind of stuff.

In another case, one young man described to me how the program supported him to work

towards being comfortable "in his own skin." His growing comfort with himself allowed him to

deepen feelings of care and support for others.

P4: [Through the program] you'd be like, "I may not be perfect now, but there's things I

can do to work towards me being comfortable with who I am." [Since then] I've been able to

help friends who were coming out and be like, "Hey, you're fine. People care about you."

In all cases, these young men had been disconnected from their own experiences and

emotional sense of self. By participating in the program and having opportunities to explore

issues of empathy, communication, relationships, and masculinity, they were able to reconcile

those aspects of themselves which had previously been ignored, silenced, or uncomfortable for

them to make sense of.

Resisting and Undoing Ideas of Masculinity

There is a small but growing body of research on the ways in which boys both implicitly

(challenging indirectly) and explicitly (challenging directly) resist the norms of masculinity

(Chu, 2014; Reichert & Ravitsch, 2010; Way, 2011; Way, Cressen, Bodian, Preston, Nelson, & Hughes, 2014). Providing contexts in which young men are encouraged to build their imaginative resistance to masculine norms has been suggested as being critical in supporting the development of alternative constructions of masculinity (Reichert, Nelson, Heed, Yang, & Benson, 2012). Based on WG participant data, the WiseGuyz program appeared to be such a context. As outlined in the background chapter, the program actively educated boys to be conscious, critical, and self-aware of the masculinity ideologies contributing to the development of their identity and relationships (Claussen, 2017). The data strongly suggested that through the process of becoming conscious, critical, and self-aware, young men were challenging and questioning masculine norms and expectations. For example, in the passage below, one young man explained how one of the program activities, the gender box[11], helped him become aware of the subtle masculinity expectations being placed on him and others.

I: What stands out from the program?

P1: The gender box, yeah, that was something I remember very clearly. I was like, "My God, we have a demented society?" Like, oh boy, this is, the fact that we know this at our age doesn't say much about society.

I: How do you think the program helps guys?

P1: It kind of gives you an idea of how the world works also. Like gender box, probably everyone knows about it but they've never thought about it. It's like, "I know what this is," but they've never thought about it like, "This is what this is I should probably try and avoid it." So when you're in WiseGuyz it's like, "This is what this is, learn what it is…."

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[11] This is an activity to support young men to explore stereotypes and pressures as they relate to gender socialization. Through exploring the language of put-downs or "gender policing," participants learn about the connections to gender and the relationship to violence.

By engaging in activities that helped to illuminate the norms of masculinity and support their critical reflection skills, the young man was able to consciously reflect on norms of masculinity and the ways in which those norms impacted him and others. In this passage, we saw him openly challenge the requirement to stay in the gender box, critiquing it by calling society demented. He also pointed to the importance of continuously recognizing those gendered expectations and working to avoid falling into the confines of the gender box.

The young men I spoke with demonstrated both implicit and explicit ways of resisting norms of masculinity. For example, one young man described how people should have the freedom to do the activities they wanted, without fearing the potential consequences of engaging in something which is potentially seen as not appropriate for their gender. He explained:

P6: I think anybody can play any sport, it doesn't really matter what gender you are, you should be able to do what you enjoy.

I: Right, right.

P6: So I think that people should just lighten up and just try something like girly or whatever that is considered as. So I guess really there's no real difference between something that's manly or girly. There should be no line between that.

This young man mildly critiqued the current gender order by drawing on the aspirational aspect of how people "should" be, or how things "should" be perceived. His implicit resistance, by framing his ideas about the way things *should* be, spoke to his desire for a more inclusive framework in which to expressed interests. He may or may not have actively structured his own behaviour along these guidelines, but he was implicitly resisting the strict parameters of the current gender order. In focus group #2, the young men spoke to me about the things they

learned in the program, which was essentially how to resist and reject certain beliefs, values, and expectations of being a guy.

P9: We learned things about being a guy, for example, talking instead of fighting and what guys are supposed to do isn't actually what you might want to do. You don't have to do it if you don't want to. Like if you are expected to play football on the football team but you want to do swimming, you can do that. You can do whatever you want.

This line of "you can do whatever you want" was reminiscent of empowerment ads traditionally targeted at women and girls[12], where ideas of what women and girls can and cannot do were directly addressed and rejected. Based on the description from the young man, the WiseGuyz program supported him to reflect on norms of masculinity and expand his understanding of masculinity outside of the narrow box in which boys and men are placed.

Most of the alumni I spoke with explicitly resisted norms of masculinity by directly critiquing, challenging, and acting against gender norms. This was in contrast to findings from other studies examining resistance to norms of masculinity, where most resistance was implicit (Way et al., 2014). For example, in one focus group, one young man spoke passionately about his frustration with being boxed in by norms of masculinity and openly critiqued the gendered meanings attached to things.

I: It was interesting what you said about the gender box. How do you think that has changed how you act, or the way you think? Or does it?

P1: I always thought why are we forced to not like [something], why are we forced to be like this or like that? When we have this huge box, and we're really forced into a small category

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[12] See female empowerment advertising https://lbbonline.com/news/the-new-trend-in-advertising-female-empowerment/ or https://econsultancy.com/17-marketing-campaigns-with-a-positive-message-for-women/

of behaviors. It's like, why is this not accepted [wearing a dress], it's just clothing? It's just the way people wanna live their life. Why is it like, "Oh, they're not manly, we can't hang out with them." You are not giving them a chance; you're just being biased.

In one of my other conversations, the young man challenged the thought patterns of his past sense of self, moving beyond binary understandings of gender norms.

I: Can you give me an example?

P4: Well, we had a presentation in social yesterday and one of the presentations was about bathrooms and how there shouldn't be male or female bathrooms. I agree that the gendered bathrooms thing is something that needs to be worked on, because there's people who don't fit into the two categories…I would have, a long time ago, like three years ago [before the program], I would have thought, "Oh no, it's stupid like there's men and there's women." But I actually learned like, "Hey, there are other people…."

In this passage, we saw this young man move beyond thinking about norms of masculinity to reflect more broadly on the spectrum of gender. He was critical of his former position, that there were only two categories of gender. I argue that his ability to "see" a broader range of gendered expression allows him to contemplate a greater fluidity of gendered behaviour, thereby breaking down discrete norms associated with two categories.

My conversations with the young men revealed ways in which their actions explicitly resisted norms of masculinity. For example, one of the young men in focus group #2 explained:

P8: I remember I used to be afraid of asking for help, but now I do regularly whenever I need it. I mean I work with [names of other boys in the group] all the time for homework, and I honestly have such a good time. Besides all the jokes, you know?

There were two things happening in the passage above. First, the young man was subtly critiquing his past attitudes regarding help-seeking by emphasizing the pleasure and freedom he experienced by being able to work with others and ask for what he needed. Second, his actions of asking for homework help directly contravened norms of masculinity focused on independence and competition. He pointed to the fact that, not only did he make himself vulnerable, but the group was supportive as opposed to competitive.

Undoing gender

As demonstrated through the examples and discussions above, the young men in my study certainly showed their capacity to resist or reject particular beliefs, values, and expectations about being a guy. What I found, however, was that these alumni were not just resisting or rejecting, but actively undoing and redefining gender norms in their conversations with me. For example, one of the young men spoke to me about asking for help in school and what that meant to him.

P9: I was always afraid to ask for help, and now I don't, I'm not afraid anymore. I find that like you just wanna learn, you don't have to be afraid for asking for it, it's not going to show that you're weak or stupid. It shows that you want…that you have more intent, that you are intentional.

In this passage, we saw the young man actively reject norms of masculinity and then discursively redefine that action into something that was no longer attached to typical gendered qualities. In another case, one young man worked to redefine the understanding of strength.

P10: I believe that when you open up to your feelings, that is actually a show of strength as well. It takes a lot, especially when you have some sort of dark secret, or really complicated

life, and you open up to that. That's another type of strength, it doesn't have to be physical, it doesn't have to be what people say it has to be.

In many cases, young men resisted norms of masculinity by undoing the connection to gender completely, shifting the emphasis to qualities that all people wanted or cared about. They used words like "being human", "they're human beings", etc., to reframe the gendered expectations they were reflecting on. For example, in focus group #2 the young men explain how expressing emotions was a necessary quality of being human.

P7: You always have this goal, everyone tells you like, "You're a guy, you have to be tough, you have to be strong, you can't show any feeling," and you have to be this and you have to be that. Well, the WiseGuyz group said, "Forget that, be yourself, whether you cry, whether you like talking, whether you do anything else…."

P10: Yeah, so like in society as a man I am supposed to be strong, not show any feelings, like be a stone and everything.

I: Yeah.

P8: But like if you show your emotions and you cry and everything, it doesn't show that you're weaker, it just shows that you're a human being, that's all.

Another young man from one of the interviews talked about how the program emphasized that respect for all people was essential, that everyone was a human being, regardless of where they sat on the spectrum of gender.

P5: You know, you can be respected if you're not [stereotypically] masculine. Like I hate sports, I'm not a super fit guy…I don't really fit into that category of masculine. I'm more what you would consider stereotypical "feminine." Well you know what, I don't like that. So now I understand this respect thing and it just feels so awesome. I've always been more on the quiet

side, but in WiseGuyz, I felt that everyone there was [equal]. It's just that we're all in this

together, we're all normal people, and that is what felt good about the program.

He reflected on how the respect piece stuck with him, even after many years. He explained:

P5: Everything [now] relates back to the respect thing they taught us. You've got to respect everyone, everyone is worthy of respect, everyone is worthy of being treated human.

This emphasis on being human shifted the way in which these young men understood their social relations. No longer were they viewing others as boys or men who possessed certain definable qualities that were different (and more highly valued) from the definable qualities of women or girls. Rather, they recognized there were a range of values, beliefs, and behaviours that were possible and encouraged as a result of being human. This push to move past distinctions based on hierarchical divisions of man/women has been called for by Way (2012), who has argued that we need to begin understanding that a range of desires, needs, and abilities is precisely what makes us all human.

Making Sense of Program Influences

It became clear there were several different but simultaneous and overlapping selves that were being referred to by the WG participants. These contrapuntal voices, as explained in the methods chapter, refer to the way of hearing and developing an understanding of the many different layers of a person's expressed experience as it bears on the question posed (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Three main temporal elements emerged in the data. Young men expressed themselves as who they were in the past (before WiseGuyz), the process of change (during the program), and who they were now (after WiseGuyz). This temporal aspect to their accounts was intertwined with the substantive content of their discussions regarding masculinity ideologies

and gender norms, specifically around demonstrating empathy and support, expressing emotions and being vulnerable, and resisting and undoing ideas of masculinity and gender. While it is certainly possible that the program is not 100% effective for every participant, the young men in my study shared with me the power of participating in the program and how that experience fundamentally changed who they were and how they saw the world.

I propose that young men were able to express their intertwined sense of selves and experiences (the contrapuntal voices) because of the critical reflection skills they developed in the program. The young men were able to hold and talk about these three facets of their sense of self (past, in process, and present) because of those skills. When the young men spoke to me about what stood out for them in WiseGuyz, they moved back and forth between their previous sense of self, their new sense of self, and the process that supported the change. This reflexivity supported the young men in developing a stronger and deeper sense of empathy for others (as well as themselves), in addition to the ability to embrace their full range of human emotions.

These changes are important for several reasons. Close friendships and connections rely on the ability to take another's perspective and demonstrate empathic concern (Flannery & Smith, 2017; Smith & Rose, 2011; van Salisch et al., 2014). Research points to the importance of close friendships and connections in adolescence to positive outcomes. Supportive and positive relationships can buffer the effects of family risk factors, acting as a protective factor (Bukowski, Motzoi, & Meyer, 2009). Close friendships and connections support academic achievement (Wentzel, 2009) and can be an important source of coping during the transitions of adolescence (von Salisch et al., 2014). Youth without close and positive friendships have shown elevated feelings of loneliness, are less self-assured, and have reported overall lower levels of social satisfaction (von Salisch et al., 2014).

Emotional inhibition has been shown to be incredibly problematic for boys and men, resulting in harmful physical, psychological, and social outcomes (Kindlon & Thomas, 2000; Tremblay & L'heureux, 2012; Way, 2012). By exploring gendered norms regarding showing emotions, WiseGuyz actively expanded young men's emotional repertoire and skills beyond anger and violence, traditionally the only allowable forms of expression afforded to men and boys (hooks, 2004). The young men I spoke with expressed all kinds of emotions beyond anger, such as joy, fear, gratitude, and sadness.

I submit that the program was able to produce these kinds of outcomes for the young men as a result of the critical reflection and dialogic processes used throughout the curriculum. Furthermore, WiseGuyz provided a group-based environment through which facilitators modelled and encouraged behaviours, creating an interactive context where participants were supported to redefine themselves. The literature in the area of engaging men and boys supports my argument, suggesting that opportunities for self-examination and introspection through participatory teaching practices are effective when delivering face-to-face programming to men and boys (Flood, 2019; Gibbs et al., 2015; Nelson et al., 2010).

By raising their awareness and consciousness, WiseGuyz allowed the boys to develop a strong ability for emotional reflexivity, shown through their conversations with me. The young men consistently demonstrated their ability to reflect on their own and others' emotionality and make alterations to it to strengthen their connections with others (Holmes, 2015). Through the program processes, such as check-in or other activities, young men were provided with the opportunity to build skills around communication and reflection. Reichert et al., (2012) have argued that this kind of awareness can emerge only through practice, where young men have the

chance to put feelings into words, to distinguish different types of feelings, and to communicate what they feel.

I also contend that the critical reflection skills they learned in the program and the modelling behaviours from the facilitators directly contributed to the shifts in understandings of gender norms and stereotypes. Prior to the program, the young men were presented with limited options about how to position themselves relative to masculine identity. By participating in the program, they developed their ability to exercise their capacities for alternative masculine possibilities. In many cases, as we saw in the data, the young men worked to undo gendered concepts and behaviours. They did this by freeing those ideas and actions from applying to only men or only women to those that apply to all people, regardless of gender.

There is limited research suggesting that context is an important mediator in the ways boys develop their capacities for resistance to norms of masculinity (Reichert & Ravitsch, 2010; Reichert et al., 2012; Way, 2012; Way et al., 2014). I argue that the WiseGuyz program provided the young men in my study with an important context in which they could exercise their capacities to express themselves as well as develop the confidence and skills to resist current conventions of masculinity. The young men spoke about the importance of having a space where they did not feel judged by others, and where they could learn and practice new ways of communicating how they felt. Having this kind of supportive context emerged from the data as being critically important to building their collective capacities for embracing new attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours regarding gender.

"I feel like if every guy had spent two months in WiseGuyz it would have eliminated bullying. I feel like it would have stopped everything…they would make much better people."
WG in School A

Chapter Seven: Discussion and Conclusion

The previous four chapters addressed the basic framework of my research project, specifically answering the following questions: 1) Do boys who have participated in the WiseGuyz program hold less traditional views of masculinity than boys who have not participated in the program? 2) In what ways are the attitudes and behaviours regarding traditional masculinity different between boys who have and have not participated in the program? 3) How do past participants describe the impact the program has had on core beliefs about masculinity and sexuality? 4) What factors appear to encourage program success or failure? Given the breadth and depth of those chapters, I provide a table below to help organize the findings in relation to the research questions and provide a review of the findings before moving on to tie them back to my grounding concepts outlined in Chapter 2, specifically doing and undoing gender (Deutsch, 2007; West & Zimmerman, 1987), the concept of masculine performance (Brickell, 2003, 2005; Goffman, 1976), and the theory of gender relations, focused primarily on the social organization of masculinity (Connell, 2005a).

Chapter Summary

Table 5.

Research Questions and Chapters

Research Question	Chapter	Summary of Findings
Do boys who have participated in the WiseGuyz program hold less traditional views of masculinity than boys who have not participated in the program?	Chapter 4: Quantitative Evaluation Results	Boys who participated in the WiseGuyz program held less traditional views of masculinity than boys who did not participate in the program. The difference between the groups is the largest in the

		Avoidance of Femininity sub-scale
Research Question	Chapter	Summary of Findings
In what ways are the attitudes and behaviours regarding traditional masculinity different between boys who have and have not participated in the program?	Chapters 5: Non-alumni and the hold of hegemonic masculinity	Expressed attitudes and beliefs concurrent with idealized notions of masculinity (i.e., sports as a site of masculine construction and contestation, homophobia and avoidance of femininity, restraint of emotions and emotional connection, humor as weapon and defense).
	Chapter 6: WiseGuyz	Expressed and experienced a wider range of human emotion and connection (i.e., empathy, vulnerability, support); critical reflection skills; positive interpersonal relationships.
How do past participants describe the impact the program has had on core beliefs about masculinity and sexuality?	Chapter 6: WiseGuyz	Re-defining and undoing understandings of masculinity.
What factors appear to encourage program success or failure?	Chapter 6: WiseGuyz	Building and Maintaining Safety. Norm Critical Dialogic Approaches (led to critical reflection skills for boys). Expressions of Vulnerability (facilitator modelling for boys, who then modelled to friends and family).

In Chapter 4, I outlined that young men who participated in the WiseGuyz program do hold less traditional views of masculinity than young men who did not participate in the program. With respect to the constructs that comprise traditional masculinity, I found that past participants all had lower scores on the Avoidance of Femininity, Toughness and Emotionally

Detached Dominance MRNI-A-r subscales. While only Avoidance of Femininity was statistically significant, the fact that all the scores were in the direction I had expected them to be is a promising factor in the data. Overall, the quantitative findings are encouraging and, given a larger sample size, could possibly lead to all subscale scores being statistically significant.

While the quantitative findings are promising, they are also limited. They do not answer the question of what these differences meant in the lives of the boys: the "so what" of those differences. Chapters 5 and 6 outlined the thoughts, attitudes, behaviours, and enabling mechanisms that give meaning to the expression of being a guy in the everyday lives of the young men in this study. From the data on NWG participants (Chapter 5), I learned that hierarchies of masculinity are still very much at play in their lives and social interactions. Sports, homophobia, and sexuality are all avenues for constructing and maintaining masculine identities and, in these avenues, young men are actively engaged in reinforcing cultural ideals associated with hegemonic masculinity.

I also found several ways that the NWG particpants stifle and constrict their emotional selves. This repression, alongside a pressure to perform and inhabit appropriate "manhood" means that the young men also speak about fewer close friendships, more distanced friendships, and friendships based on competition. Even their use of humour is, at its essence, a form of competition amongst the peer group.

In comparison, I found interesting differences in the attitudes and behaviours of the WG participants (Chapter 6). Through the program, the young men were supported in building empathy for others and to critically reflect on how others may be feeling in certain situations. My data revealed how WG participants demonstrate emotional reflexivity, and the ability to reflect on both their own, and others' feelings. The participants reported that these abilities support the

strengthening of various relationships, whether with friends or family members. I also found that the young men built skills around healthy communication, supporting them to experience and express a more diverse range of emotions.

Most importantly, I found that experience in the WiseGuyz program provided contexts in which to build resistance to masculine norms. This supportive context allows the young men the space in which to critique, resist and, ultimately, redefine masculine norms. The WG participants in my study resist the reinforcement of hegemonic hierarchies and, instead, redefine gendered expectations into qualities and behavioural practices that all people want or care about. For example, expressing emotion was redefined as an essential human quality, not a gendered one.

Relevance to Grounding Concepts and Literature

In the following section I explore how these findings relate to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks grounding this research, including doing and undoing gender, masculine performance, and the theory of gender relations, focused on the social organization of masculinity. I begin by discussing: (1) doing gender and masculine performance, and from there, move on to (2) relevance of hegemonic masculinity and theory of gender relations, and conclude with (3) undoing gender.

Doing Gender and masculine performance

As explained in Chapter 2, doing gender refers to the "…routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment" of gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 126). The argument is based on three factors: (1) gender is an active accomplishment; 2) gender is created through interaction; and 3) gender is articulated in performances and displays that are held accountable to social gender norms and expectations (Siltanen & Doucet, 2017).

When considering the findings from the two groups of young men, my data revealed how young men perform and display their masculinity in social interaction, and how much these displays are accountable to the current cultural norms and expectations of being male. With the NWG group, they are engaging in the continuous exercise of impression management, ensuring their displays correspond with social gender norms (West & Zimmerman, 2009). When they laugh at statements like, "Oh, you're gay," or when they ridicule other young men who are not good at football, we can see the ways in which they are doing gender, in that they express attitudes and sentiments congruent with what others see as normative gender behaviour (West & Zimmerman, 1987). West & Zimmerman have argued that gender is accomplished through these interactional and institutional arenas, and suggest they are a process by which relations of inequality are sustained (2009). In other words, by using normative homophobic discourse in a group of peers and with me, these young men are producing configurations of behaviour that is seen by others as normative, enabling them to meet the collective accountability associated with idealized male behaviour (Brickell, 2003; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

There are a number of resources available in order to do gender, however Goffman has cited organized sports as one important institutionalized framework for the expression of "manliness" (Goffman, 1976; West & Zimmerman, 1987). It is through sports where qualities associated with masculinity, such as speed, strength, aggression, and competitive spirit, are celebrated and expected (West & Zimmerman, 1987). My data reveal that sports and athletics are a rich resource for the young men to actively accomplish gender. Certain activities, like being involved with the performing arts, project an image of femininity, which places the young men who occupy those social settings at risk of negative gender assessment. Sports like football and

hockey provide young men with opportunities to be accountable to the conceptualization of what it means to be a "real" man by being strong and aggressive through the use of physical contact.

According to West and Zimmerman, engaging in any behaviour is at the risk of gender assessment (1987). Based on the data from NWG, we can see the young men mitigating and managing potential risk of negative assessment. They appear to do gender through a defensive stance, always concerned and preoccupied with ensuring they are successfully navigating the gender assessment. I contend that for this reason, these NWG participants are constantly pulled into a "better than" or "less than" assessment of themselves, which has implications for their ability to develop a positive sense of self (hooks, 2004). This constant mitigation of the risk of negative assessment can be especially intense in young adulthood, where healthy self-esteem essentially means having a sense of internal worth and not being "one up" or "one down" (hooks, 2004; Real, 2002). Gendered selves are reinforced or repudiated through routine interactions (Siltanen & Doucet, 2017), and are also constantly accountable within shared communities of understanding (Brickell, 2003; Siltanen & Doucet, 2017). I argue that the NWG group of young men are continuously managing this threat of failing to do gender appropriately, with consequences to their sense of self. We see this through their I poems, where passivity, avoidance, and distancing are ways in which the young men show up in their emotional and relational life.

This notion of a sense of self that is accomplished in an ongoing way was raised in my literature review, and I return to this discussion as it has implications for my findings. As discussed, Goffman believes there is no authentic core self, only a sense of self that is developed by being influenced by others' impressions as well as the process of managing their own self-impressions (Brickell, 2005). Garfinkel has taken a slightly different understanding of the self,

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suggesting the accomplishment of self is an ongoing matter (Brickell, 2003). This ongoing

process is opposed to discrete, individual episodes which he critiqued Goffman analyses for

focusing on (Brickell, 2003; Garfinkel, 1967). From the incorporation of this idea of

accomplishing the self in an ongoing way, Garfinkel raised the idea of a socially constructed

gendered sense of self *with a biography* (1967). This sense of self is receptive to feedback and

susceptible to change, inconsistency, and inner conflict. While it is susceptible to change and can

be reconstructed, the biographies that accompany the sense of self exhibit some continuities over

time (Brickell, 2003). The existence of a biography means that the sense of self is able to

experience recollection, remembrance, anticipation, and expectancy (Brickell, 2003). Garfinkel's

understanding of a socially constructed sense of self with a biography is important to my

findings, given that the data illuminate the ongoing process of the accomplishment of self in the

WG chapter (6). For example, young men reflected on the biographies that accompanied their

sense of self, talking about the "shields" they used to wear with their friends and in social

interactions and the difficulty they had opening up to others and revealing their thoughts and

feelings. I contend that within their biographies are the reflections and recollections of past

appearances and performances, where the young men can be seen as engaging in the same

impression management that NWG participants engage in.

As mentioned above, prior to participating in the program the WG participants wore a

"shield" or "mask" in order to ensure that the images they were projecting met the expectations

and approval of their peer group (Cote, 1996). This notion of performance, as alluded to by the

young men in my study, does suggest a kind of agentic performance, in that these young men are

able to reflect on and understand, that in relationships and social interactions, they chose to

project or perform an image that was congruent with normative understandings of gender. This is

aligned with the doing gender perspective, which is concerned with examining and understanding the ways in which individuals manage, present, and account for themselves in everyday actions (Siltanen & Doucet, 2017). The WG participants recollect their past selves as being heavily concerned with mitigating the risks of gender assessment (West & Zimmerman, 1987). The data also showed how the WG participants reconstruct their sense of self-worth through their participation in the program. We see this through statements the young men make about "learning to accept myself better," "I learned to like myself," or "I'm not afraid anymore." By reconstructing their sense of self, the WG participants are able to move towards a healthier sense of self and esteem.

My findings show how program facilitators are critical in providing an intersubjective context in which reflection, remembrance, and reconstruction takes place. Through the WiseGuyz program, participants are supported to "shed their masks" and be vulnerable with the group to share their thoughts and feelings about a wide range of topics. The facilitators consciously create an environment where young men feel safe to express themselves, even if their vulnerability directly contravenes the normative masculine ideals of stoicism, toughness, and emotional detachment. By creating a safe space, providing empathy and support, and modelling healthy expression of emotion, the facilitators begin to create conditions whereby young men reconstruct their gendered sense of self. From a program practice perspective, facilitators provide a social context where new meanings around vulnerability and emotionality are created and shared with the young men by modelling, and young men are able to see adult men comfortably embracing a wide range of human expression. I will further explore the impact of social interaction on the creation of new norms and meanings in my discussion of undoing

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gender later in this chapter. For now, I move on to discuss the relevance of hegemonic

masculinity and theory of gender relations in relation to my findings.

Theory of gender relations and relevance of hegemonic masculinity

Connell's theory of gender relations is critical to any discussion of masculinity, as it is

within this theory that the concept hegemonic masculinity lies. Gender relations, she has argued,

are those relations among "people and groups that are organized through the reproductive arena"

(Connell, 2016, p. 72). I posit that this emphasis on relationships among people and groups is

critical, as it forms the bedrock of understanding hegemonic masculinity and the social

organization of masculinity. We cannot look to define masculinity as an assemblage of traits or

character types. Instead, we need to understand the practices through which men engage in

gender (Connell, 2005a). Connell has suggested configurations of masculinity interact *in*

relationship with hegemonic masculinity, femininities, and with each other (Connell, 2005a). In

fact, hegemonic masculinity has no meaning outside its relationship to other masculinities and

femininities (Messerschmidt, 2012).

My findings from the non-WiseGuyz participants clearly show the practices through

which young men engage in gender, as well as illuminate the interacting relationships between

masculinities and femininities that contribute to relations of power and inequality. These

relations of inequality unfold through the data when considering the concepts of sports, violence,

homophobia and avoidance of femininity. Hierarchies of masculinity are constructed and

reproduced through the young mens' discourse in their conversations on these topics. NWG

participant data not only shows the processes by which their own gendered identities are

constructed, it shows how hegemonic masculinity is practiced and reinforced within this group of

young men. This is apparent through much of the data, where young men reveal that other young

men are picked on or judged for doing something "more feminine," playing the wrong kind of sport, or not "hooking up" with girls.

For NWG participants, I assert that the process used to construct and understand themselves is only in reaction and repudiation to what they do not want to be (i.e., female, or feminine). They can only understand themselves in relation to their accomplishment of the hegemonic standard. bell hooks has pointed to the passive acceptance young men feel in relation to patriarchal masculinity (2004). She has argued that young men know the rules, in that they must not express feelings (except anger) and never do anything that could be considered feminine or womanly (hooks, 2004). The hesitancy that boys experience about their gendered identity during adolescence may in part be due to the fear of not measuring up to the standards of patriarchal masculinity (hooks, 2004).

Containment and expression of emotions.

Emotionality is the most obvious point of difference between my two groups of young men. For the NWG participants, I put forward that their overall lack of emotionality is linked to their gendered sense of self and the shifting ground in which they constantly find themselves in trying to perform and accomplish hegemonic masculinity. As seen in the data, the lack of "caring" emerges as the essential feature of an idealized masculine identity. As such, for the young men to achieve this, they need to show they care less about situations and others in their lives.

In the NWG I poems, they use the phrase "not care" over and over again. Research has repeatedly shown that young boys are capable of emotion and intense feeling (Chu, 2005, 2014; Kindlon & Thompson, 2000; Way, 2012). Kindlon and Thompson have suggested that younger boys are free to be more emotional, as they have not yet learned that expressing emotions and

vulnerability is something to be feared and despised (2000). As boys move into adolescence, the struggle to prove manhood and rigidly adhere to exaggerated gendered notions intensifies (Cote & Allahar, 1996; Kimmel, 2008). We see the truth of this claim in one young man's own words: "I think people should start to care less in high school." At this point in the life course, the young men face expectations to present themselves and perform in ways consistent with hegemonic masculinity practices. Failure to meet those expectations places them in the uncomfortable psychic space of constructing a "less than" assessment of themselves in relation to idealized masculinity standards.

Aggression and violence are the two emotions young men are allowed to express. In the data, young men refer to using aggression or "getting your back," as a way of protecting their friendship groups. Being able to act aggressively in order to protect or defend one's family and friends, belongings, or oneself has been noted as a trait essential to the marker of masculinity (Ravn, 2018). While at first glance, sentiments like "having your back" and "having people to back you up" may seem more aligned to concepts of friendship and loyalty, I argue that using aggression and violence is another way in which young men can reassert or defend their position in the social organization of masculinity (Connell, 2005a; Manninnen et al., 2010; Ravn, 2018). Given that young men are placed in a psychic space which demands them to constantly perform and assess themselves in relation to the hierarchy of masculinities, what we see in the data is more about that demand to meet the normative expectation in order to claim being a "proper guy." The NWG participants readily admit that "guys don't really care about their friends," and further explain how guys are competitive all the time.

I contend that this lack of emotionality and sense of competition stems from the larger gender order. Any emotion besides anger cannot be expressed, because to do so would risk not

measuring up to the standards of patriarchal masculinity (hooks, 2004). Expressing and sharing emotions require vulnerability, which has been feminized and devalued. Given that these young men's identity construction is based on a "better than" or "less than" assessment of themselves, competition is a way to continually assess where one places on the hegemonic hierarchy. Combined, these elements impact the ways in which the young men construct and experience their relational world with others.

Relationship to others.

This continual assessment of where one stands within the social order of masculinity plays out in regards to friendships. For NWG participants, data highlights this shift between junior high to high school. Young men spoke about "keeping to themselves" and having fewer friends. This corresponds to extensive research conducted by Way (2011, 2012; Way et al., 2014), who demonstrated that as boys become increasingly attuned to cultural messages about manhood, they begin to distance themselves from close relationships. Mainstream North American culture tends to frame this distance as part of growing up; however, this lack of close relationships can leave young men feeling isolated and alone.

The pervasive and prevalent sense of competition amongst friends that the young men refer to aligns with other research identifying the distrust young men begin to feel for their male peers as they enter late adolescence (Way, 2012). My findings support these earlier findings and appear to be in direct contradiction to several researchers who argue that young men's attitudes towards the expression of love for another male are ones of inclusion and plurality (Anderson, 2013; Anderson & McCormack, 2015; McCormack, 2014). Rather, the non-alumni young men appear to be sustaining existing masculinity ideologies pertaining to emotions and their connections with their male peers.

The way in which the NWG participants use humour also appears to support and perpetuate the notion of relationships based on competition. When the young men speak of chirp wars they are describing a verbal battle where there are winners and losers. They speak about "joking" with each other; however, I postulate that they are using chirps to construct and maintain hierarchies of status and power among themselves (Barnes, 2012; Oransky & Maracek, 2009; Reigeluth & Addis, 2016; Tucker & Govender, 2017). Again, this process is one where the continual measuring of "better than" or "less than" is intensely at play.

My findings also reveal configurations of masculinity in relation to femininity. The NWG participants readily acknowledge the cultural stereotypes depicting young men as sexually promiscuous and that the standards for guys are not the same as the standards for girls (i.e., "when a girl sleeps with three or four guys, it gives her a bad title. The guy doesn't"). Sexual activity is a significant way young men can earn status in the eyes of other boys (Kimmel, 2008; Smiler, 2008). Data from my study support this, as the young men speak about how a man needs to "hook up," in order to prove that he is "man enough, or if he's gay."

There are tensions that play out in the data regarding sex, masculinity, and relationships. NWG participants are adamant about distancing themselves from the "douchebags" who are out to just have sex with girls, without any kind of connection or relationship. Furthermore, they speak about "polite guys," who protect "their girls." I contend that this "good guy" and "bad guy" dichotomy serves a discursive purpose for the young men in terms of identity construction (both personal and social). The young men use the word "douchebag" to position their own sexualized relational behaviour. By not being like "the douchebag," the young men are able to construct their sense of self positively, almost like chivalrous partners in the world of high school dating.

This dichotomization, however, is ultimately problematic when we consider the larger gender order. When boys and men are framed against "the bad guy," it acts to reinforce men's dominance and power (Pease, 2017). My data show how the young men construct their "politeness," in that they are there to protect their girlfriend and ensure she is not exposed to rumors or degrading behaviours. By doing so, they exceptionalize themselves from the wider problem of sexist stereotypes and behaviours, while simultaneously positioning themselves higher in the masculine hierarchy (Smiler, 2008, 2012). This dichotomization also serves to undermine young women's autonomy and agency, which reinforces and naturalizes gender differences and inequalities (Brush & Miller, 2019).

Relevance of hegemonic masculinity as an analytical tool

There are scholars who feel hegemonic masculinity is no longer a useful or relevant analytical instrument to understand the lives of adolescent boys (Anderson, 2013; McCormack, 2012; Moller, 2007). Inclusive masculinity theory (IMT) has been offered as a way to account for contemporary social dynamics of young men (Anderson, 2016). My data from NWG participant focus groups leads me to emphatically disagree. My findings show that hegemonic masculinity and the social organization of masculinity is a relevant tool with which to understand the lives of my participants, given the ways in which the young men structure hierarchies between themselves. Through institutional arenas such as sports and athletics, my participants demonstrated how masculinities are constructed and stratified.

Contrary to findings from Anderson and others suggesting decreased homophobia and use of homophobic discourse (Anderson, 2011, 2013; Anderson & McGuire, 2010; Dashper, 2012; McCormack, 2012, 2014), my findings reflect the continued use of homophobic language and sentiment by NWG participants. Homophobic harassment was also acknowledged as a

possibility, for both those who transgress normative masculine behaviours and for those who are gay. This harassment is a tool with which to uphold the gender order and structure configurations of masculinities and femininities.

My findings also illuminate the relational structure and power differentials between configurations of masculinities and femininities and, based on this finding, I argue that the lack of discussion, or even acknowledgement, around gender inequalities within patriarchy is a serious flaw within inclusive masculinity theory. The NWG participants are open about the double standards at play in relation to young men's and women's sexuality, and actively used language that reinforces power differentials and inequalities (e.g., "for girls…is she a whore or not…", "protect your girl", etc.). Through these discursive acts, gender and sexual inequalities are perpetuated and maintained. The issue of patriarchy in the definition of hegemonic masculinity is important, given that hegemonic gender practices legitimize and uphold patriarchy, which guarantees the domination of men and the subordination of women (Connell, 2005a). Discounting this system of oppression, as inclusive masculinity theory does, essentially means discounting the structural realities of sexual and gender inequalities.

Undoing gender

It is fortunate that, while inequality remains a core feature of the current gender order, this does not mean the gender structure is static (Risman, 2009). Calls for research that focus on illuminating ways in which gender can be undone have been found in the literature (Deutsch, 2007; Risman, 2009). My findings address this gap by providing an empirical example of undoing with the WG participants. The young men in my study demonstrate their capacity to resist, reject, and transcend gendered beliefs, values, and expectations. My data show how the young men actively undo gender, whether redefining actions so they are no longer understood

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within a gendered frame of reference (e.g., asking for help does not mean weak or stupid, it means you are intentional) or shifting emphasis toward the humanness of the action or behaviour (e.g., showing emotions does not show weakness, it shows that you are human). Deutsch (2007) has suggested that when individuals do not follow traditional scripts, they are undoing gender.

Undoing gender is not only about the use of individual discourse, but also about the interactional expectations and outcomes that are at the heart of doing gender (Risman, 2009). These interactional occurrences are important. Deutsch (2007) has suggested that acts of resistance can do more than expand an individual's identity: they may shape the possibilities for those around them. For example, my data shows that as a result of what they learned in the WiseGuyz program, several young men spoke about adopting a mentorship role with siblings. They feel confident and capable to support younger siblings with friendship issues by sharing with them communication and conflict skills they learned in the program. By modelling mentorship, WiseGuyz facilitators are building the young men's capacities to show up differently in their role as "brother." I argue that the program facilitators provide an avenue for participants to see how they can relate to others in a way that is not enclosed in the "better than" or "less than" hierarchy they are constantly exposed to. Rather, the WG participants come to understand different ways of being sons, brothers, friends, and partners.

Undoing and the role of program facilitators

As previously mentioned, doing and undoing gender concepts are founded on symbolic interactionist principles and rest on three key assumptions. If we examine two of those assumptions, (1) that gender is created through interaction and (2) that gender is articulated in performances and displays that are held accountable to social gender norms and expectations, we can begin to understand *how* social interactions become less gendered, a need identified in the

literature (Deutsch, 2007; Messerschmidt, 2009; Risman, 2009). I put forward that when program facilitators work to create a safe space for young men, support the development of new ideas, language, and attitudes, and model alternative behaviours, they are adhering to the assumptions outlined above to support the undoing of gender with participants.

Creating a safe space is the bedrock of the program: it begins the first day and is continually cultivated throughout the program. In doing so, the facilitators are identifying the norms, social rules, and values of the WiseGuyz space. These norms and rules may be contrary to the norms and rules in other social groups, but, according to symbolic interactionists, actors have "room to manoeuvre" in making their interpretations, and existing meanings, thought to be secure, may be subject to repeated change (Joas & Knobl, 2009, p. 133). Within the WiseGuyz space, facilitators and participants co-construct the rights and boundaries of the group, working to develop a shared vision of what that space should look like. The performances and displays of the young men from that point forward are held accountable to rights and boundaries developed by the group; essentially a shared community of understanding (Siltanen & Doucet, 2017).

Using norm-critical dialogic approaches was essential in supporting young men to be reflective about gender norms and the ways in which they were impacted by such norms (Claussen, 2019). New meanings, understandings, and behaviours for undoing gender are developed through such approaches, as both facilitators and young men engage in a continual interpretive process around masculinity, gender, and sexuality. Through interaction with facilitators in ways that supports their critical reflection capacities, young men are engaged in a process of change. Symbolic interactionists would argue that social interaction is a way in which individual behaviour is formed (Joas & Knobl, 2009). My data support this argument, showing

how interactions with facilitators around issues of gender and sexuality are a process that supports young men in undoing gender.

Being able to be vulnerable and open about their own struggles with masculinity issues in a very real and mundane way was an important way for facilitators to support young men to become conscious and self-aware of their own understandings of masculinity (Claussen, 2019). This willingness to be vulnerable with the young men provided an opportunity to discuss and critique the prevailing understandings of masculinity and the young men's discomfort with them (Hossain et al. 2014). Men are influenced by other men and by what they think is true about other men regarding masculinity, which can be positively channelled and modelled in all-male groups (Hossain et al. 2014). By engaging in performances and displays that run contrary to current cultural conceptions of masculinity, the facilitators are supporting the development of social interactions that are less gendered and are providing participants with new meanings about masculinity, gender, and sexuality.

Undoing research and gender transformative programming

As examined in my literature review, scholars who engage in gender transformative programming have been increasingly influenced by the concept of doing gender, understanding that gender is not something someone is, but rather, as something one accomplishes through a patterned set of interactions within social institutions (Dworkin et al., 2015). Understanding gender in this way means that this pattern can be undone, opening up possibilities for the development of interventions directed towards gender relations (Dworkin et al., 2015). At the same time, however, there is a call for research to understand the mechanisms of change in gender transformative health interventions (Dworkin et al., 2015; Gibbs et al., 2015).

Given the understanding of gender as an accomplishment through interaction, this has methodological considerations for research attempting to understand the mechanisms of change in interventions. I raise this point in Chapter 4, arguing that the pursuit of empirical, positivistic rigor has resulted in an over-valuing of certain kinds of research and an undervaluing of other methods, even when those alternatives may be better suited to answer some key research and policy questions (McCall & Green, 2004).

Flood (2019) has suggested that one of the challenges to determining evidence of effectiveness with gender-based prevention programming is that evaluations are often conceptually and methodologically limited. He referred to the methodological and epistemological debate in violence prevention fields regarding the standards to be used in guiding assessments of prevention programming (Flood, 2019). While notions of best practice in prevention programming have been greatly influenced by the dominant paradigms in the natural sciences, Flood (2019) has provided several reasons why these methods and designs are inappropriate for evaluations of community-based violence prevention projects.

In addition to the practical rationale for the inappropriateness of these kinds of designs for evaluations (e.g., lack of capacity to conduct experimental designs, incompatible programming features, etc.), I believe there is further rationale based on theoretical understandings of gender. Using the doing gender approach, which has been so important to gender transformative programming for men and boys, means that the underlying assumptions of gender being created through social interaction and articulated in performances and displays that are held accountable to social gender norms and expectations must be acknowledged in research design. Good gender-related research, according to Siltanen & Doucet, should "recognize the links between theory, method, methodology, and epistemology" (2017, p. 208). They have also

suggested the use of multi-method approaches as a way of producing knowledge that is most appropriate for the research questions that need to be answered. I argue that my research accomplishes both these tasks by using a variety of methods to answer the research questions posed in a way that recognizes the links between theories of gender, research methods and methodologies, and feminist epistemologies.

Conclusion

As discussed in my introduction, there is an acknowledgement of a lack of gender-specific programming for adolescent boys in North America (Foley, Powell-Williams, & Davies, 2015; Igras et al., 2014; O'Neil et al., 2013; O'Neil & Lujan, 2009), along with a limited body of evaluative evidence regarding the design and effectiveness of gender transformative programs that engage adolescent boys (Casey et al., 2018; Dworkin et al., 2015; Flood, 2019; Gibbs et al., 2015). My study contributes and extends the knowledge base in this field by providing a degree of evidence for the long-term benefits of the WiseGuyz program. While my study cannot account for the experiences of all young men who participate in the WiseGuyz program, it does demonstrate that the program provided a positive, gender-transformative experience for the young men whose voices are presented in the data.

My study also provides a theoretical foundation for the ways in which young men are engaged in programming and supported to be conscious, critical and self-aware of the masculine ideologies contributing to the development of their identity and relationships. I demonstrate how participants changed their beliefs and expectations about what adolescent boys are like and should do, which had a positive influence on their own sense of self, and the relationships they have with others. My data shows that this group of young men, out of the program a minimum of five months upwards to three years, retain the benefits of having participated in the WiseGuyz

program, as compared with young men who had never taken the program. This addresses a call in the literature for more focused research on how maintenance of new patterns of masculine practice are continued after participation in gender transformative programming (Dworkin et al., 2015).

By using feminist and community-based mixed methods approaches that are flexible and meet the young men "where they are at" both metaphorically and physically (Claussen, 2018, p. 13), my dissertation contributes to the call for incorporating alternate research methods that address real-life circumstances. Working with community-partners to develop research questions and collect data that is useful and meaningful to their day-to-day practice is a key feature of community-based research. My study provides my community-partner with data that addresses their real-life circumstances.

Using sociology of gender concepts, I outline why research designs that do not consider the interactional, relational, ongoing accomplishment of gender may not completely address and illuminate the processes of change that exist in gender transformative programming. As researchers working in the area of gender and social change, we must integrate multiple methods and assess them appropriately in the context of the research questions we are asking. By doing so, we can develop more comprehensive and nuanced understandings of the social issues which we are tasked with solving and educate funders and policy makers as to the complexities and possibilities of conducting gender transformative program research.

Limitations of the research

No research design or study is perfect, and my research is no exception. Self-selection issues are one of the more pressing limitations of the research. First, we cannot be sure that young men with less traditional attitudes self-select to participate in the program, resulting in the

program having no influence on their attitudes. The small sample size in my study precluded my ability to calculate the self-selection bias due to the inability to retrieve several Time 1 scores (pre-program) for many of the young men (n= 10). I was unwilling to reduce my sample size further to accommodate this calculation, so the self-selection bias remains unclear. It is worthwhile to note that since the program began using the MRNI-A-r as part of its regular outcome monitoring, results consistently show statistically significant changes in boys' attitudes and beliefs from pre-program to post-program (Claussen, 2017; Hurlock, 2013,2014, 2017).

Self-selection issues are also at play in regards to those young men who chose to participate in my study. It is possible that there are young men who may not have liked the program, and as such, were not inclined to participate in any follow-up research. Given that I did not purposively sample for young men who had negative experiences, it is possible that there are a group of young men for whom the program had no positive influence or benefit.

Prior to beginning my project, I had intended to recruit a much larger and equal sample size of both groups of boys. As is sometimes the case with real-life circumstances and research, reality did not meet my intention. I ended up with smaller and unequal sample sizes with which to work. Qualitatively, my purpose was not to generalize findings but to shed light on aspects of the young men's experiences as boys in high school, and to understand the ways in which they practise and understand their masculine sense of self. Quantitatively, a larger and more balanced sample size would have been useful in making more definitive generalizations. I am cautiously optimistic, however, that if I had a larger sample size, I may have found all subscale scores to be statistically significant, given the large percentage difference in scores between means of the two groups of young men. A larger and more balanced sample size would also have allowed me to

explore the characteristics of the sample in relation to program outcomes (e.g., sexuality, ethnicity, grade, etc.), something which was limited with my small sample size.

As scholars point out, the gold standard of research and evaluation in the area of violence prevention programming with men and boys has been the randomized control trial (RCT) (Dworkin & Barker, 2019; Flood, 2019). Key features of RCT in evaluation include systematic, random sampling with control groups (Patton, 2008), something which may not be possible in community-based programs (Flood, 2019). Multivariate statistical procedures are the preferred analytical choice in RCT designs, with descriptive procedures being a less favored second choice (Patton, 2008). By these standards, my study fails to measure up. The American Evaluation Association, however, suggests that RCTs are not always the best way to determine causality, and can be misleading in that they examine only a limited number of isolated factors, which in the "real world" are neither limited nor isolated (Patton, 2008). Patton (2008) suggests that evaluation methods should be adapted to the evaluation questions and the information needs of the intended users. In this regard, my study robustly measures up. Through consultation with my community partner, relevant and important research questions were developed to guide the direction of the study. The data gathered through the use of multiple methods has produced information which has already been utilized by the C4S, a central feature of community-based research and utilization-focused evaluation.

As mentioned, my research project is based on community-based principles. Part of this ethos is to work in community in a flexible way and to address real life circumstances (Crooks et al., 2019). In my project, I had to adapt recruitment methods and settings multiple times over the course of my data collection efforts. This flexibility can be seen as being a limitation by those in the health promotion and prevention field, given the way in which rigor is perceived and

understood in evidence-based program paradigms and evaluations (Crooks et al., 2019; Flood, 2019).

A large percentage of my sample in both groups identified as white in regards to ethnicity and race, and heterosexual in regards to sexuality. While there was a small sample who identified as other races and ethnicities (e.g., "other", "Latin"), and a small sample who identify as gay/homosexual or bisexual/pansexual, my project did not address the ways in which race, class, and sexuality intersected with the young men's sense of gender identity. These aspects of identity and social positioning are not taken up analytically in my project, which is a limitation. Calls for this to be more fully addressed for prevention programming have been made by scholars working in this area (Malhotra et al., 2015; Schalet et al., 2014; White, 2009).

Suggestions for future research

Based on the findings and limitations of my study, there are number of avenues for future research, as well as lingering questions that remain to be addressed. First, while I argue for the need for a wider acceptance and adoption of mixed methods approaches to studying gender and prevention programming, there still remains the question of selection bias regarding the young men who choose to take the WiseGuyz program. Conducting research using designs that account for controlling of variables, such as a quasi-experimental or randomized control trial method, would help to address this question. I recommend that this research be framed and implemented, however, within an equitable university-community partnership paradigm as opposed to the typical researcher-led models at use (Crooks et al., 2019). Efforts to conduct research in this way (i.e., experimental and through an equitable university-community partnership) on the WiseGuyz program is currently underway through the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary.

While the WiseGuyz participants in my study attest to the long-term positive influence the program had on their attitudes and behaviours, more long-term post-intervention research is required, particularly research focused on the relationships the young men have with dating partners and with their peers. First, conducting research with romantic partners around the quality of their relationship would help to identify the specific ways in which WiseGuyz participants engage in healthy, equitable relationships, supporting earlier exploratory research and my doctoral research that the program is gender transformative. Second, conducting research with friends and other peers would help researchers understand whether young men who shift their behaviours and beliefs towards ideas of healthy relationships and gender equality are accepted by their peers, or whether the peer group polices and sanctions their equitable attitudes and behaviours (Dworkin et al., 2015). Understanding these mechanisms may have wider implications for how to support young men in their new patterns of masculine practice once they leave gender transformative programs (Dworkin et al., 2015). Also related to this is the need for research with the young men examining what, if any, challenges they have sustaining the personal change they claim to have experiences in the program.

One of the lingering questions that remain with me is how theories of intersectionality have been considered (or not considered) in the design and implementation of gender transformative programming. More research needs to focus on understanding how prevention programming accounts (or does not account) for the ways in which significant social identities, such as race, class, and sexuality, intersect with gender. I wish to pursue this area of research in a post-doctoral position, focusing on how boys who are positioned at specific intersections of gender, race, and ethnicity experience healthy relationship programming. What are their lived experiences and how do they feel those experiences are reflected and/or accounted for in healthy

relationship programming? As part of my post-doctoral research program, I have outlined these research questions and propose using Digital Storytelling (DST) with a group of racialized, adolescent male-identified WiseGuyz participants to co-develop materials that can be shared with practitioners, program developers, and policy makers to inform the application of an intersectional lens into violence prevention programs and strategies.

Using the research

As part of conducting rigorous community-based research, ensuring that the findings are communicated and mobilized are integral components of both rigor and quality. As part of ensuring that my research is used in a timely way, I not only developed academic publications based on focus group findings with the facilitators, I worked with C4S to embed the research into their training institute curriculum for new WiseGuyz facilitators.

Based on my research, I propose several recommendations to consider. For program developers and educators:

- Consider the concept of "safe space" in order to increase the engagement of young men in sexual health curriculum in a meaningful way. This means engaging in trust building exercises, co-creating boundaries and expectations for behaviour, and revisiting both these elements on an ongoing basis throughout the program duration. This will allow for the development of a shared community of understanding regarding the rights and boundaries within the group.

- Facilitators are a critical component of gender transformative programming and when working with young men around sexual health and healthy relationships, facilitators need to be comfortable and competent in demonstrating alternative and positive masculine displays and practices.

- In order to fully engage young men and support them in being conscious and critical around their masculinity, sexual and healthy relationship programming needs to build educators' capacities for nurturing young peoples' capacity to think and act for themselves. This means continually ensuring a program context (i.e., modelling new behaviours) and setting (i.e., safe spaces) in which reflection, remembrance, and reconstruction of gendered identities can take place.

Based on my findings, I also pose recommendations to funders and policy makers:

- Require the development of a theory of change for gender transformative programming and ensure interventions are based on feminist and/or gender theories (Flood, 2019). These theories of change should also be linked to research methods and methodologies.

- Require multi-method designs when evaluating gender transformative programming. Issues of gender and social change are inherently complex, and as such, research needs to account for this complexity in way that accounts for the dynamics of change so we better understand how to scale up, and out, effective gender transformative interventions.

- Provide long-term funding for gender transformative programming that meets best practice principles. As pointed out by one of the program facilitators, having the young men in the program for a full school year allows them to take a "long game" approach to developing relationships, covering content, and going where young men are at on any given day. Gender-based violence is a complex social issue, and as such, cannot be addressed in stand-alone workshops or events. Only by supporting high quality, evidence-informed programming and social change efforts can we begin to hope to shift the beliefs, norms, and values that perpetuate gender-based violence.

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Appendix A: Briefing Note for Community Partner

BRIEFING NOTE

By

Caroline Claussen, PhD Candidate for Calgary Sexual Health Centre

Subject: The importance of WiseGuyz facilitators to program success

Issue

Adolescent sexual health is a significant concern to parents, educators, health professionals, and policy makers; however, research suggests there are challenges with school-based sexual health education, both in terms of its content and delivery. The curricular literature consistently points to a lack of attention to the impact of gender ideologies (attitudes regarding the appropriate roles, rights and responsibilities of men and women) on the development and expression of young people's sexuality, as well as a primary focus on the sexual and reproductive needs of girls and young women. Consequently, boys and young men have tended to disengage from school-based sexual health education, viewing the content as largely negative and irrelevant to the realities of their life.

Sexual health programs that ignore traditional gender ideologies linking masculinity with heterosexuality, high sex drive, sexual prowess, and total lack of emotional involvement with relationships disadvantages boys by stigmatizing their emotional needs and vulnerabilities in relationships, leaving them less prepared to have fulfilling and meaningful intimate relationships. Evidence highlights the need for school-based sexual health education to be free of harmful gender beliefs and to include strategies and tools to help young people reflect on and challenge these gendered beliefs.

Background

WiseGuyz is a school-based sexual health promotion program that targets Grade 9 boys (ages 13-15) in Calgary, Alberta. The program not only addresses the sexual health and positive relationship needs of adolescent boys, but also pays attention to the impact of masculinity ideologies on adolescent boys in relation to their sexuality, sexual health, gender equity and relationships. The program employs male facilitators who work with the boys using a norm-critical dialogic approach. Norm critical ways of discussing sexuality is where opinions and questions are handled in a non-judgemental question format as opposed to a moralizing, lecturing format. Preliminary findings suggest that WiseGuyz is lessening boys' endorsement of traditional masculinity ideologies. The data, furthermore, point to the importance of program processes (e.g., facilitation, developing a sense of safety, etc.) as being critical pre-conditions in supporting change.

This research asks: How is it that WiseGuyz is able to engage boys in the program and lessen their endorsement of traditional masculinity ideologies? An 18-month study was conducted to answer this question by exploring: (1) How WiseGuyz engages young men in school-based sexual health education; and (2) How facilitators support young men to be conscious, critical, and self-aware of the masculinity ideologies that contribute to the development of their sexuality and relationships.

Who Was Involved in the Study?

This study involved all of the WiseGuyz facilitators. Observation of team meetings was conducted over an 18-month period and extensive handwritten notes were taken. In November of 2016, a focus group with facilitators was held. The focus group was 90 minutes long and included such questions as "What strategies do you use to get the guys critically thinking about

masculinity?", "How do you handle conflict in a group?", "What has worked well and what hasn't?", and "How do your own values and beliefs impact your facilitation process?" Data from both the observation and focus groups were combined and analyzed to answer the study questions.

What Was Found?

Facilitators were able to engage boys in sexual health education in two primary ways. First, they focused on building and maintaining safety with the boys. Safety has multiple layers, both individual and group. The strategies facilitators used to build individual safety were not always the same as those used to build safety as a group. This research suggests that safety is not static, but a dynamic process. Safety must be maintained, and this is an ongoing process throughout the duration of the program. For example, having a consistent program space in a school allowed the facilitators to build a shared space that was perceived as safe by the group.

Acknowledging and dismantling power was another way in which the facilitators were able to engage boys in programming. Facilitators were aware that they needed to differentiate themselves from teachers. They work hard to move away from a disciplinary, authoritative, surveillance role to one that is supportive, attentive, and conversational. Working with and listening to the young men, as opposed to directing, informing, and refusing them in what they needed, allowed the facilitators and the participants the freedom to develop opportunities for mutual discussion and reflection.

Norm critical dialogic approaches were used by facilitators to support young men to be conscious, critical and self-aware of the masculinity ideologies that contribute to the development of their sexuality and relationships. Critical reflection, self-awareness, empathy

building and conscious masculinity requires a "long game" approach using small group discussion to explore topics related to masculinity and sexuality.

This long game approach means starting the program with conversations around healthy relationships, which provides the participants with opportunities to begin building self-awareness and reflection on issues around stress, handling emotions, peer relationships, etc. These discussions are then used to engage the young men with more pointed discussions around masculinity and the impact of masculinity ideologies on their lives. Data suggests that building and fostering these capacities in the young men requires a high degree of awareness and skill on the part of facilitators.

Acknowledging and dismantling power requires the facilitators to demonstrate and model vulnerability with the young men. Being able to be vulnerable and open about their own struggles with masculinity issues provides a way for facilitators to model healthy masculinity for the boys. Learning from modelling supports the boys to become conscious and self-aware of their own understandings of masculinity.

Implications

By conducting observations and a focus group with facilitators, this study highlights several important considerations for the design and implementation of school-based sexual health programming. Congruent with previous research on the WiseGuyz program, data showed that attending to concepts of safety may be especially important for adolescent boys. School-based sexual health programs may need to consider more fully the concept of "safe space" in order to increase the engagement of young men in sexual health curriculum in a meaningful way.

Embedding discussions about healthy relationships early in the curriculum appears to be a promising way to engage young men on issues of gender and sexuality. By starting the

WiseGuyz program around elements of healthy relationships such as ways of dealing with stress, dealing with emotions, open communication, and personal values, young men can be drawn into initial conversations on masculinity and its potential negative impacts on sexuality and sexual health in a non-threatening and inclusionary way.

Findings from this study point to the possibility of sexual health facilitators acting as role models for the young men by demonstrating emotionally vulnerable expressions of masculinity. School-based sexual health educators need to consider this in order to effectively provide young men with the strategies and tools to reflect on, and challenge, gendered beliefs.

Despite the best intentions of adults, educators, and policy makers to provide young people with information and options regarding their sexual health and sexuality, school-based sexual health education remains steeped in a moralizing discourse where adults hold power and control over the topics of discussion, and the curriculum in general. By being aware of, and actively dismantling expressions of power, the WiseGuyz facilitators are working to build ethical adult-youth relationships where collaboration on topics of discussion can occur. In order to truly engage young men and support them in being conscious and critical around their masculinity, school-based sexual health programming needs to support sexual health educators' capacities for nurturing young peoples' capacity to think and act for themselves.

Appendix B: Survey Instrument

Masculinity Survey

Thank you for participating in this research. These questions will ask your opinion about the roles of guys. Please answer all questions honestly.

Participant ID Number

First letter of first name _____ First letter of last name_____

> 1. **What day were you born?**
> 2. **What month were you born in?**
> 3. **What year were you born in?**
>
> 4. **Gender Identity**: __ male/masculine___transgender_____other
>
> 5. Please select the group(s) that best describe you:

☐ White
☐ Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.)
☐ Chinese
☐ Arab
☐ South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
☐ West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan, etc.)
☐ Black
☐ Korean
☐ Filipino
☐ Japanese
☐ Latin American
☐ Other, please specify: _____
☐ First Nations, Métis or Inuit

> 6. **Age_____Grade in School_____**
>
> 7. **Did you take the WiseGuyz program in junior high?**

Yes   No   Unsure

> 8. **Have you taken part in the Healthy Relationships program since being in High School?**

Yes   No   Unsure

9. How far in school did your mother go? (your mother is the person who functions as the mother in your household. This could be the biological mother, a foster mother, a stepmother, a grandmother, an aunt, etc.).

Select the best choice from the list below:

☐ 8th grade or less

☐ Some high school

☐ High school graduate

☐ Some post-secondary

☐ University graduate

☐ Post-university study

☐ Don't know

☐ Not applicable

10.   Do you currently have a steady romantic and/or sexual partner?

Yes No

If yes, how long have you been seeing each other? Please circle an answer below
Less than 6 months
6 months-1 year
1 year or longer

11.   What is the longest romantic/sexual relationship you have been in?

12.   Which of the following best describes you? (Please circle one)

Heterosexual (straight)
Gay/homosexual
Bisexual/pansexual/omnisexual/polisexual
Other_____
Not sure
Rather Not Say

Read each question, and then give your answer by circling the number that best agrees with what you think.

1. If needed, a guy should stop being friends with someone to be more popular.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. Guys should do whatever it takes to be cool.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. A guy should prefer football to sewing.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. A guy should never depend on someone else to help him.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. Guys shouldn't cry, especially in front of others.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. When in a group of guys and girls, guys should always make the final decision.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. It is not ok for a guy to ask for help fixing a flat tire on his bike.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. Guys should never tell others if they're worried or afraid

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

9. A guy should win at any game he plays.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. Guys shouldn't ever show their feelings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

11. A guy who can't make up his mind will not be respected.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Kind of Disagree | Unsure | Kind of Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

12. Guys should not be allowed to wear skirts.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Kind of Disagree | Unsure | Kind of Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

13. In a group of guys and girls, it is up to the guys to get things organized and moving ahead.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Kind of Disagree | Unsure | Kind of Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

14. It is too girlish for a guy to wear make-up.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Kind of Disagree | Unsure | Kind of Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

15. Sports like hockey and wrestling should only be played by boys.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Kind of Disagree | Unsure | Kind of Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

16. If someone else starts it, a guy should be allowed to use violence to defend himself.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Kind of Disagree | Unsure | Kind of Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

17. When the going gets tough, guys get tough.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Kind of Disagree | Unsure | Kind of Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

18. Chores like doing the laundry or cooking aren't for guys.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Kind of Disagree | Unsure | Kind of Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

19. It's important for a guy to be able to play it cool.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Kind of Disagree | Unsure | Kind of Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

20. Guys should not tell their friends they care about them.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Kind of Disagree | Unsure | Kind of Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

21. Guys should play with trucks rather than dolls.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Kind of Disagree | Unsure | Kind of Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

22. It's important to have the newest video game system.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Kind of Disagree | Unsure | Kind of Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |

23. Guys shouldn't carry purses.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

24. Guys shouldn't show fear.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

25. When they're sad or upset, guys should just "suck it up" and get over it.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

26. Boys should not throw baseballs "like a girl."

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

27. If a guy is in pain, it's better for him to keep it to himself rather than to let people know.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

28. It's important for guys to try hard to be the best.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

29. A guy should defend his sister, even if it is dangerous.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Kind of Disagree	Unsure	Kind of Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Appendix C: Focus Group Guides

Focus Group Guide: **WiseGuyz Past Participants**

1. What's it like being a guy in high school? In what ways, if any, is it different from being in junior high?

2. What are some of the pressures guys in high school face? What are some of the expectations? Prompts: from peers, from dating partners, from other adults. How do you handle those pressures?

3. Thinking about your time in Junior High, what made you interested in the WiseGuyz program. Prompts: what made you interested in a program just for guys?

4. When you began WiseGuyz, what were you hoping to learn and/or get out of it?

5. Tell me about your experience in the program. What was it like? What was the best part?

6. It's been (6 months, 1 year, 2-3 years) since you took the program. What from the program has 'stuck' with you? Prompts: knowledge about sexual health practices, information about human rights, different ways of being a man, etc.?

7. In what way (if at all) do you think the WiseGuyz program has contributed to your ideas about what it means to be a guy? Contributed to your ideas of dating relationships? Friendships?

8. How do you think a program like WiseGuyz helps guys?

9. Are there any negatives to a program like WiseGuyz?

Below are some more specific questions regarding masculinity, in the event they are not touched upon spontaneously in the focus group discussions:

10. What do you think about the idea of guys having to be in control of their emotions all the time/that guys can't express emotion?

11. What do you think about the idea of guys having to be aggressive? Do you think there is an expectation that guys be aggressive?

12. What are your thoughts about guys having to be independent and not ask for help?

13. What do you think of the idea that it is important for guys NOT to be seen as doing anything that might be considered 'girly'? Why do you think that is important/why don't you think that is important?

14. If you don't see that as being important, do you think other guys feel the pressure to avoid anything that might be considered girly?

Focus Group Guide for Non-Participants

1. I want to start by hearing from you what it's like being a guy in high school?

2. As a high school guy, what pressures do you think guys face? What expectations are placed on guys? Prompts: from peers, from dating partners, from other adults. How do you handle those pressures?

3. What do you think about the idea of guys having to be in control of their emotions all the time/that guys can't express emotion?

4. What do you think about the idea of guys having to be aggressive? Do you think there is an expectation that guys be aggressive?

5. What are your thoughts about guys having to be independent and not ask for help?

6. Do you agree that it is important for guys NOT to be seen as doing anything that might be considered 'girly'? Why do you think that is important/why don't you think that is important?

7. If you don't see that as being important, do you think other guys feel the pressure to avoid anything that might be considered girly?

Question # 8 may be raised earlier in the interview if there is a space to do so naturally.

8. If there was a guys-only sexual health program, what do you wish it would do? Or How do you think a guys-only sexual health program could help guys?

Appendix D: Facilitator Focus Group Guide

Facilitator Focus Group Questions

1. I am curious about how you create safety in the room with the guys. Can you tell me a little bit about that? Does this process differ whether you are in schools or community settings?

2. What strategies do you use to get the guys critically thinking about masculinity? Do these strategies differ depending on the schools you are working in?

3. How do you handle conflict in the group? What has worked well and what hasn't worked well?

4. How do you, as a team, manage consistency across program settings?

5. What kind of situations are most challenging to deal with? How do you handle those?

6. How do your own values and beliefs impact your style of facilitation? What strategies do you use to be mindful of this?

7. How does working with the boys impact your own understandings of masculinity? What has changed for you (if anything) over the course of facilitating the program?

8. If you had to change anything about the ways in which the program was facilitated, what would that be?

Appendix E: Listening for Plot

WiseGuyz Key Words and Interpretations

Respondent Words	My reaction and interpretation
A safe space	Unbelievable (that's crazy). Then further probing on how that happened in the space – differentiating between inside the program and outside the program. Later in the interview we talk about people just coming for the food. I share with him my experiences of working with guys, and some just coming for the pizza instead of participating. Sharing with him even though he is a participant.
Sports guys Sports	Different types of masculinities – sporting masculinity.
Shields or masks	Felt like he is using the program language. WG teaches the language to use – also through the videos and stuff. My reaction is "that is so cool". Using language congruent to adolescence. Trying to make myself seem relatable.
Respect	Excited because this corresponds to what I had been reading in my sexual health literature. Gilbert sexuality and Lindroth program. Theoretical influences here.
Equal	
Not as teacher or parent	
Man Box	
Self-acceptance	Program is therapeutic for some guys. Self-esteem, self-acceptance. Program is risk reduction for some guys.
Changes	I ask him to comment on changes in others, which he says he sees. I am excited because it's another point of triangulation for program impact. Also trying to get a sense if these changes extended to his relationships…
Stereotypes	
Empathize	
Hard guy	D says "you know he's a hard guy", to which I say "yeah". Meaning that I understand what a hard guy is – we are sharing our understanding of this term.
Students with us	Personal experience and theoretical experience influences my interpretation of these words in relation to the facilitators. Being a part of the team meetings every two weeks makes me much more of an insider with opinions and ideas.
Sport kid who is friends with everyone	
So cool/cool kid/popular group/group leader	Some participants differentiating each other. I don't intervene, just accept.
STDs and protection	Strong theoretical experience/influence here for me, based on what I have read from Gilbert and Lindroth. Adolescence as a time to manage risk.

Relationship part	Theoretical experience, and knowledge of prevention programs. Inserting the relationship piece into sexual health – Carmody 2009 paper stands out for me here. I reiterate for him that current sex ed misses the relationship mark.
WG as leader	I help sense-make, suggest that leadership is around motivation
Bring people in	
Eliminated bullying	I show surprise here – 'really'. He's making a strong claim. He talks about how he didn't get bullied during/after the program.
Ice breaker/team building	Trying to understand and assess if the same environment could be created in high school. Trying to understand the difference between junior high and high school
Fathers/father figures	Sharing with D personal details of some facilitators (they are fathers, expecting).
Making fun/diverse school	I use the language of inclusive – again, most likely because of the Anderson literature I have read.

Non-WG Key Words and Interpretations

Respondent Words	My reaction and interpretation
Girls/pressure to look good	This is a somewhat expected response in some ways. Idea of girls feeling pressure to look good
Easy being a guy	Less pressure? Less expectations? More freedom?
Girls = drama	Such an expected response
More opportunities with being a guy	Recognition of power and privilege, but without naming it as such
Less likely to have your opinion downplayed	Male voices matters in a classroom, in life.
Athletics matter/pressure from friends	Male peer groups/pressure to be competitive.
Competition between guys	Competition big part of masculinity
Dumb sports	What you play matters in the masculinity world. Hierarchy of sports. Curling and golf two examples
Hockey, football, basketball	Physical nature of these sports. Plus social media around these sports as masculine
Physical contact between people	The ability to use masculine body against each other
Laughing at sports abilities	Certain sports are outside the gaze of other spectators. Some sports, lots of gaze, and as such, lots of pressure to perform well.
Physically stronger	Expectation for boys to be physically stronger than girls (at a minimum).
Drama kid	Definitely using typology of students in the school. Drama kid means something which others recognize. This typology also

	allows guys to find 'their people'. Larger groups of kids with variety of interests – can find comraderie.
	Being in this typology create less pressure to be typically 'masculine'. Neutrality around certain ideologies, such as physically strong or aggressive/tough. Less competition
Strongest	Being weaker than isn't necessarily a bad thing
Getting chirped	Jabbing, making fun of another guy. Have never heard the term before. Chirping doesn't stop behavior, but it means you look for leverage to chirp back. They admit you have to be able to brush off these minor insults and digs. Part of being a guy.
People mature in high school	Idea of growing up – friendships in junior high are immature.
Popularity	Being popular changes friendships in high school
Sports vs artsy	Being in arts allows a greater freedom – more supportive. Friendships seem to change less.
Buddies vs close friends	Notion of casual friendships – not as close.
Not caring	This description of a 'real guy' or cool guy is one of not caring. They don't show emotion – they stay even keel. I didn't pick up on this at first – but listening to the boys talk, they admire the ability to not care.

Appendix F: I poem Example

Focus Group #1 – NonWiseGuyz

Focus group where two of the four participants were good friends, a third was friendly with the two, and one individual was unknown to the other three. This group focused a lot on athletics, most likely because the two friends were big time into hockey. This is where the group really opened up, after a few initial minutes of me really being curious and asking questions, trying to find a topic/rhythm for the group to slide into. Athletics and competition seems to be it. They also open up about sexual health education, surprisingly enough. We share some laughs near the end, I think some rapport?

I Poems

I feel like
I mean possibly
I mean of course
I think
I'm not saying
I feel like
I get fun of
I have golf
I have a couple
I feel like
I feel like
I'm a drama kid
I'm literally wearing
I feel like
I feel like
I feel creates
I don't think
I think the whole high school thing
I've kept a lot of my friends
I would say more friends
I still have
I think personally
I've experienced
I think people should start to care less in high school
I don't know how to explain it
I feel like people are also more mature
I remembered
I never encountered
I went
I went
I was like
I heard
I don't
I go
I mean
I will be like

I would say
I've been
I think
I haven't really had to learn it
I just kind of heard it
I haven't
I don't know
I haven't got
I haven't had
I mean if
I had people that came in
I never
I first had that
I remember that
I don't wanna listen anymore
I'm about to
I think
I had a girl over
I don't really need
I guess
I mean
I'm saying
I'd be open
I actually make
I use condoms
I like pizza
I use condoms
I didn't talk
I was in the hot seat
I was just
I didn't do anything