

Dave's Senior Project Proposal: Met School Men's Group

For my senior year I want to run a men's group for the peace street campus. The media is saying men are doing fine and men rule everything but I believe this to be incorrect. I feel that men are being constantly persecuted because of men having this image of not having any emotions, most parents neglect boys because they are meant to be "less emotional" than girls, this is the start of the problem with men, neglect when they are a child.

*Each day in the United States, more than 3 children die as a result of child abuse in the home.*¹ Due to men having a history of neglect this can make a man angry at the world and careless towards others, closing himself to drug abuse, child abuse, sexual abuse, etc. This can be a problem for someone who wants to live a good life but cannot escape the torment of never being loved or growing up without a father figure. These statistics would drop if parents became more involved with their boys and showed as much love and support as they do to their female children.

*Dr. Popenoe notes that 60 percent of America's rapists, 72 percent of adolescent murderers and 70 percent of long-term prison inmates are fatherless.*² Do we really want our children to grow up fatherless like either you or someone you know did? If the statistics of fatherless men committing crimes are this high what does that say about your child when it's time to have one? Especially if he's a boy? Boys need their fathers, and good fathers at that too. This class will help teach men how to be supportive when it comes down to having a child and knowing what to do to be a good father and when the time is right. Getting support from other men is important, so men won't feel so alone and they'll know that there's someone who knows how they feel.

*Men are seven times more likely to kill themselves than girls.*³ Because of the feelings of neglect, bad things happening at home, and the all around general feeling of being persecuted, men are turning to suicide. Men do not acknowledge their feelings, they are taught not to seek help, so when things get bad they close themselves off to the world. Boys are not born with these feelings of not acknowledging their feelings, they are taught it from teachers, parents, peers, this [must] be abolished and the group will help with that.

¹ <http://www.childhelpusa.org/child/statistics.htm>

² http://www.childrensjustice.org/every_child_needs_father.html

³ Raising Cain

*By 2006 60% of college will be girls.*⁴ Men have more energy than women do and it is true for the most part that boys have a less attention span, and that's because they have more [physical] energy. Teachers find men to be impossible because of their short attention spans; therefore they are easily blamed for problems in the class. This feeling from the teacher [lowers] their self-esteem and makes most men feel like they don't need school, and that a lot of them can get by with GEDs, but they don't get everything they need from that.

For my Senior Thesis Project I want to start a men's support group. The class will be during school hours sometime between 12:30 to 1:30 and it will be held on Wednesdays and Fridays. This class will only be available to the men who are really committed to the group, I will have all the men who are interested write an essay of why they want to join a male support group then I will conduct an interview with each student who is interested in joining the group and submitted their essay. All things said in the group will be confidential; there'll be emotional safety and emotional support as well as guest speakers, articles to read, movies to watch, trips to take and stories to share, and we will discuss and reflect at the end of all of these. Here are some of the issues that will be discussed...

Home— abuse, fathers, mothers, and emotional support

School— motivation, self worth, embarrassment, school history, learning styles, and college

Drugs— substance abuse, peer pressure, options for the future, and analyzing why drugs come into the picture.

Sex/Sexuality— relationships, “who am I?” gay/lesbians, safe sex, and contraceptives.

Friends/peer support— changing who you are, cliques, and styles.

Suicide/Depression— where does it come from? Why do people choose this option? And alternatives.

Violence— incarceration, conflict resolution, why does it happen, “males,” and [physical] abuse.

Growing up— (see school and home)

Self-Confidence— (see school and home)

Anger— violence, conflict resolution (see Suicide/Depression)

These will be addressed by telling a personal true story about my life that's related to the subject being talked about just so everyone in the group will know that it's about being real when you're going to join my group. Like what was said above articles, movies, trips, and guest speakers will be a big part of one of the issues that is being discussed at

⁴ statistic from Phil

the time. Things like movies, speakers, articles, trips, will be shown/heard/read/taken about every month.

So what learning goals will I be tackling with this group? I'll be hitting Empirical Reasoning on account of using research to pull out stuff from books to use in the class; I will also be using info I've gained from my psychology class I'll be taking next year. Another thing I'd be using is logic because you need logic to look at different points of view of a problem. I'll be using Quantitative Reasoning because I will be putting together statistics for the class from research; also fundraising for trips will be a big part of this. Communication is a big one, there will be writing involved through poetry and me writing letters to guests to ask if they'd like to speak to my group. I will be having group reading both from factual books to just straight up novels written by men. I will be listening to the members of the group. Listening and understanding is a major key to the group. There will also be creative expression through poetry and art therapy programs (from Brent). Social Reasoning is another big one, there will be diverse perspectives because there will be a diverse group of males in the class and we'll learn about different cultural and family backgrounds together. This is a good community building group because it's for the Peace Street campus community. This group will hopefully change the way males look at things, so they can destroy that thought of they're not good enough from their heads. Personal Qualities are most definitely accomplished with this group. I will hit respect by listening and not putting down someone else in the group. Responsibility on account of I'll be full responsibility for the class. Organization through having lessons for the group set up, leadership with running the group, and of course time management [by] committing to this thing. The way I will document my work is through creating lessons plans and recording with tape recorders some of my classes, perhaps have the students in the group reflect how the group has helped them in some way.

The mentors I picked for this project are Brent who is my current mentor and he's willing to provide a space for the group and help with artistic therapy whenever he has free time. I hope to get in touch with my old mentor Tom who is really in [tune] to helping people out and I feel he'd be a good addition as well. I could talk to Keith Munslow from As220 who was my other mentor from tenth grade and see if he could possibly hook us up with some activity at As220. So as you can see there are plenty of resources. The one student who is willing to help me run this course is Will from Laura's advisory, because he is interested in psychology. I'd like help from anyone whether it is connections for group trips, staff/students who can come in to tell a story, or someone who has a resourceful connection for a guest speaker. As far as I know Brent, Will, Phil, and my mom all support this idea and I'm really excited for it to happen. Some of the materials I'll use are

passages from both *Raising Cain* and *Real Boys*. Also I'll use resources from my college class and stories from my past, I will be honest and straightforward.

The steps to setting up this project will go as follow[s]

- Talk to past mentors and/or other sources who are willing to contribute to the group
- find a permanent space for the group
- set up final times and dates that the class will go on
- get a list of men willing to join and make a complete commitment to the group, there will more than likely be an application process in which I interview the students and let the people in who I think best fit in the group
- as the class goes along set up field trips and dates that guest speakers will come in
- fundraising for group trips (once a month or more)
- the times I'll be mentor[ed] with my mentor(s) is unknown yet, it could very well be only when I need help with the group.
- The goals for the group are to help as many men find themselves as I can and even find myself in the process

Here's a list of things I'd like to add to the group...

Film List

- boys and girls
- Crooklyn
- American History X
- Do The Right Thing
- Monster's Ball
- Shawshank Redemption
- Leaving Las Vegas
- KIDS
- Basketball Diaries
- Cheaters
- Fight Club
- Grand Canyon
- Get on the Bus

Speakers List

- Rick Solomon
- Dr. D
- Brent

- Wayne
- Tom O'Donnell
- Brian Plante
- Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous
- Criminal Justice (cop, judge, lawyer)
- Social Worker
- Prison/Training School

Field Trip List

- ACI (maybe)
- Colleges if there's a guest speaker for a certain topic relating to my group there
- Community Service (clean up, soup kitchen, Christmas)
- Six Flags
- Camping (beach, mass.)
- Museums
- Hike
- Rock Gym
- Get Tested for AIDS (optional)
- Gold's/YMCA gyms

Reading List

- Articles gained from Phil
- Raising Cain
- Real Boys
- Male child abuse books
- L.I.E.
- Frank Zappa book
- Something by Geoffrey Canada
- Something by Michael Moore
- Season Change in a Man's Life

Space/Time

- Shock Therapy (Brent's space)
- School
- Episcopal Church
- New Campus
- Peace Street Campus (media room)
- Mondays and Wednesdays 12:30 to 1:30
- Mondays and Wednesdays 12:30 to 2:00

- Mondays and Fridays 12:30 to 1:30
- Wednesdays and Fridays 12:30 to 1:30
- Wednesdays and Fridays 12:30 to 2:00

Fundraising

- Lunch
- Car Wash
- Pass around a money jar during pair PMUs
- Show case talent show (admissions two dollars and donations)

Advisors

- Sell Learning Plan
- Tell them that it would fit into their students' learning plans

Application Process

- Make sure that student is dedicated
- Agree to confidentiality
- Agree to being completely committed
- After they fill out the application I will interview each and every student just to make sure they are really ready for this.

So my conclusion is that I have a pretty good idea of how I want this to run and I even have a structure for the most part. I'm really passionate about doing this; this is what I want to do for my project. I feel it's selfish to have a project for yourself so the whole Met philosophy is about giving back to the community in the long run and with this group I'm doing just that. So in the end the men who put their time into the group will learn how important it is to be the best man they can be and show the world that men really aren't that bad and that they can overcome.