

Reimagining Masculinities:

Arts-Integrated Approaches to Engaging Men in Violence Prevention in the United States



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Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any work that has already been submitted before for any degree or other qualification except as declared in the preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

Abstract

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William W. McInerney

Men's violence against women (MVAW) is a severe and pervasive problem driven by individual acts, harmful gender norms, and structures of inequality in the US and around the world. An increasingly popular way to address this violence has been to directly engage boys and men in feminist-informed gender justice and violence prevention work, otherwise known as 'engaging men' (EM). The focus of this study is on primary prevention group education programs which work with men from the general public in school and community settings, rather than solely focusing on those identified as perpetrators of MVAW. Research shows that these programs can foster positive changes in men's violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours and promote their involvement in gender justice work. However, the field has also faced a range of calls for reform and innovation, including concerns about a reliance on overly didactic approaches and cognitive-centric pedagogies. Building on a small but promising body of literature, this thesis examines the integration of arts into EM programs as an alternative. This research asks: How are the arts used in efforts to engage men in the US context? How do practitioners and participants perceive the advantages and limitations of such approaches? And how, if at all, might arts-integration support changes in the way men think about masculinities?

Drawing on interviews with fifteen practitioners and a year-long case study of one US program, this thesis argues that arts-integration approaches have several potential benefits for the field to consider. First, they can facilitate more holistic mind, heart, and body pedagogies that support learning in these programs. Second, the arts can make the work more personal and collective, thus aiding the men in applying the knowledge to their own lived experiences and communities. These findings reveal arts-integration can help engage *more men* and engage *men more* – increasing the potential for larger mobilisations of men as allies for gender justice and deepening the learning in their efforts. Third, a holistic and humanising arts-integrated praxis drives a *productively discomfoting* imaginative process which can help men stretch their understanding from a singular rigid idea of masculinity into a more expansive engagement with masculinities beyond gendered boundaries. However,

an arts praxis also includes complex challenges, including limitations on access to resources, time, and training; individual and institutional resistances; the risk of decentring and diluting feminist analysis through uncritical art; and the potential to cause harm to participants, facilitators, and the feminist movement to prevent MVAW. This study calls for first- and second-order reflexivities to help address the risks of doing harm within programs and for the field as a whole to examine the limitations of approaches that rely primarily on individual change.

This thesis explores these benefits and challenges through a transdisciplinary lens that draws together insights from feminist approaches to gender studies, critical studies of men and masculinities (CSMM), and peace education to illuminate EM scholarship and practice from multiple perspectives. Moreover, it weaves together traditional qualitative methods and analysis with poetic inquiry through spoken word poems to present research findings that are both analytic and affective on and off the page. Overall, this research is the first of its kind to document the diversity, or what this study calls the kaleidoscope, of arts-integrated approaches in practice in the US. Furthermore, this research reveals both practical curricular and pedagogical insights and provides a conceptually rich portrait of how the arts can animate a holistic, humanising, and productively discomforting process of reimagining masculinities towards more feminist-informed possibilities.

Dedication

I want to start by acknowledging the centuries of brilliant, creative, and courageous work that has been done, largely by women, to end men's violence against women before me. This work is dedicated to them and is rooted in the belief that we can, and the hope that we will, build a more equitable and less violent future.

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Abbreviations

AERA	American Education Research Association
APA	American Psychological Association
BERA	British Education Research Association
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
COFEM	Coalition of Feminist for Social Change
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
CSMM	Critical Studies of Men and Masculinities
EE	Entertainment Education
EM	Engaging Men
FTB	Forum Theatre for Bystanders
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GEMS	Gender Equitable Men Scale
IMAGES	International Men and Gender Equality Scale
IMT	Inclusive Masculinity Theory
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Plus
MRA	Men's Rights Activists
MVAW	Men's Violence Against Women
PI	Poetic Inquiry
RAINN	Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network
RTA	Reflexive Thematic Analysis
SWP	Spoken Word Poetry
TO	Theatre of the Oppressed
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UN	United Nations
UN ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VAW	Violence Against Women
WHO	World Health Organization

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This thesis examines the findings of my doctoral research project on engaging men in gender equality and violence prevention in the United States (US), otherwise known as the field of ‘engaging men’ (EM).¹ Specifically, this study looks at the potential of arts-integrated group education approaches to EM. The aims of this research are to illuminate this under-examined area of praxis and to examine how such creative-critical education might respond to calls for innovation within the EM field. In doing so, this research seeks to help address the problem of men’s violence against women (MVAW) and patriarchal masculinities and to advance understandings of arts-integrated approaches for scholars and practitioners. This chapter provides an overview of the project including the rationale, approach, and potential contributions it seeks to make before closing by examining my positionality and purpose in doing this work.²

1.2 The Problems and Rationales

This study uses a feminist approach to examine the problem of MVAW and the many related forms of violence and harm that stem from patriarchal masculinities (hooks, 2004). MVAW is severe and pervasive in the United States (US) and around the world (True, 2021). World Health Organisation (WHO) (2021) research found that one in three women globally have experienced intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. This thesis focuses on EM and challenging patriarchal ideas of masculinity, because despite its diverse causes and contexts, MVAW has ‘consistently been empirically linked to masculinity itself’ (Peretz & Vidmar, 2021, p. 5). Guided by the work of Black feminist scholar bell hooks (2003b, 2004), this study employs the concepts of patriarchal and feminist masculinities to explore the connection between masculinity and violence and potential alternatives to it.

¹ While I use the phrase ‘engaging men’ as a shorthand in this thesis, these programs work with a wide range of ages including boys, young men, and older men.

² I do not go into detail about specific instances of violence in this thesis. However, it is nonetheless about violence and violence prevention throughout. Please do take the time, care, and space needed while reading.

MVAW and patriarchal masculinities require a range of interventions, including supporting survivors, holding perpetrators accountable, and centring women's work and activism towards direct and structural change. An increasingly popular complementary approach has been to engage boys and men directly through a variety of EM approaches (Casey et al., 2013; Messner et al., 2015; Ricardo, 2015). This study looks at the most common type of EM work in the US – primary prevention group education programs (Flood, 2019). These programs work with groups of men in school and community contexts from the general public, not just men who have perpetrated acts of violence. This prevention approach seeks to stop violence before it happens by raising men's awareness and empathy about MVAW, teaching bystander intervention skills, promoting healthy and equitable relationships, challenging patriarchal norms, promoting alternative masculinities, and organising and mobilising men to work in solidarity with women and gender non-binary people for political and cultural change (Carlson et al., 2015; Casey et al., 2018). Further, these programs examine the ways MVAW and patriarchal masculinities are linked to a broad range of societal harms including men's violence against other men and themselves (Kaufman, 1987; Heilman & Barker, 2018). EM programs are predicated on the idea that men can and should play a positive and proactive role in preventing MVAW and that healthier, more equitable, and – as this study argues – more feminist masculinities are possible.

Meta-evaluations show well-designed efforts can foster positive changes in men's violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours and promote their involvement in gender justice work (Barker et al., 2007; Ricardo et al., 2011; Dworkin et al., 2013; Jewkes et al., 2015). However, as Flood (2019) notes, these studies also show mixed results and that some programs have limited outcomes. Flood (2014a) calls for a 'critical stock take' on EM efforts and for scholars and practitioners to strengthen theoretical and pedagogical foundations in programs (p. 1). Several other scholars (e.g., hooks, 2003b, 2004; Pease, 2013; Funk, 2018; Kaufman, 2019) have also called for innovations and increased attention to the ways men are engaged in this work. One critique relevant to this study argues that overly didactic and cognitive-centric pedagogies in EM programs fail to facilitate meaningful engagement with participants and that more experiential and participatory approaches are needed (Heppner et al., 1995; Humphrey et al., 2008; Berkowitz, 2004a; Flood et al., 2009; Rich, 2010; Ahren's et al., 2011; Dyson & Flood, 2014; Funk, 2018; Flood, 2019). This thesis examines the integration of arts into group education EM programs as a pedagogical and curricular alternative that might help respond to these challenges, and in doing so, help address the problem of MVAW and patriarchal masculinities. A small body of research shows the promise of arts-integrated EM (e.g., Peretz et al., 2018; Peretz & Lehrer, 2019), yet this area remains underexplored in the literature and is ripe for new research.

Thus, this research is both needed and timely. First, it is a response to an urgent problem: MVAW and patriarchal masculinities. The rise of the #MeToo movement globally and the 2017 Women’s March on Washington in the US, for example, have brought the severity and pervasiveness of MVAW and the wider problems associated with patriarchal masculinities into the public spotlight (Alcalde & Villa, 2022). Second, it draws on EM, an increasingly popular prevention approach which, while promising, has faced recent calls for reform and could benefit from continued innovation. Kaufman (2019) argues we are in a critical moment where men, a group that has historically been disproportionately silent and absent from efforts to end MVAW, are speaking up and acting. Kaufman writes, ‘the time has come’ for men to join the gender justice movement now (p. 1). Third, in response to growing feminist and EM work and a potentially critical moment in the US, this study focuses on a promising but under-examined response to calls for innovation through arts-integrated approaches.

1.3 Research Questions, Approach, and Context

To address the problems, calls for innovation, and limitations in the current EM literature outlined above, this research is guided by three questions.

Research Questions
1) How are the arts being integrated into EM group education programs in the US?
2) How do practitioners and participants involved in these programs perceive the potential advantages and limitations of an arts-integrated approach?
3) In what ways, if at all, do arts-integration approaches support changes in the ways in which men think about masculinities?

Table 1: Research Questions

Question one seeks to better illuminate the current field of practice, including what types of art are being used and how they are integrated within traditional EM programming formats. Question two dives deeper, exploring the perceptions of those involved in designing and teaching, and in the case of one case study program, how participants themselves experience the benefits and challenges of this work. Question three gets to the core of the research, and indeed the heart of EM work itself, by asking if and how the arts might support

a central EM goal of shifting the ways in which men think about masculinity. Such changes in the way individual men understand masculinity are not the singular answer to the complex problem of MVAW and patriarchal masculinities, but as this study argues, they can be an important step within a wider framework of individual, cultural, and structural change. In addition to these three questions, this study is influenced by my positionality as a practitioner-scholar (Lederach & Lopez, 2016) and specifically as a man working in the EM field. While not an auto-ethnographic study, I am interested in how doing this research and engaging with these participant and practitioner perspectives and experiences affects my own thinking and practice. These points will be unpacked further in the methodology chapter.

To address these questions, I conducted 15 semi-structured interviews with practitioners and one year-long case study of a program that culminated in eight interviews with participants. This study's findings and discussion present insights from reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) (Braun & Clarke, 2013, 2019a) and poetic inquiry (Johnson et al., 2017) in ways that seek to engage the reader both analytically and affectively. Spoken word reflexive researcher poems are used to ground this study in my positionality in the introduction and discussion chapters. Found poems are presented in three of the findings chapters as poetic 'multi-voiced narrated testimonies' (Hajir, forthcoming) to bring the practitioners and participants into conversation with one another. All poems include links to recordings via QR codes so that the reader can both see and hear the words (Ehrenzeller, forthcoming). This study does not seek universal or templated answers. Rather, these questions are grounded in this work's limited scope and focus, which are not necessarily replicable across the many diverse contexts of EM work in the US, let alone around the world. Despite this limitation, this study sketches a vivid portrait of the benefits, challenges, and overall potential of arts-integrated EM work in the US that expands the literature and hopes to support the development of pedagogy and praxis. This research seeks to start what I argue is a needed and potentially generative dialogue about this under-examined creative-critical praxis of reimagining masculinities.

1.4 Transdisciplinary Approach

This study brings together scholarship from feminist approaches within gender studies, critical studies of men and masculinities (CSMM), and peace education. Feminist scholarship and has been at the forefront of research into MVAW; drawing attention to the scope and severity of the problem, providing analytical lenses to understand it, and proposing innovative solutions to challenge and transform it (Mackay, 2015). Grounded in a feminist approach to EM through education, I follow hooks' (2000) definition of feminism as

‘a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression’ (p. viii) and education as a liberatory practice for social change (hooks, 1994). For hooks (1984), feminism is about and for women’s liberation from patriarchy. However, she notes that patriarchal masculinities harm people of all genders and that ‘men who actively struggle against sexism have a place in feminist movement. They are our comrades’ (1984, p. 82). hooks’ intersectional feminist approach and decades of writing about men and feminism in the US is particularly helpful for this study in unpacking the ways in which patriarchal masculinities disproportionately harm women and simultaneously harm men too.

Building on this feminist foundation, Hearn (2013) describes CSMM as a critical, gendered, and pro-feminist approach to researching men and masculinities.³ This differentiates CSMM from traditional conceptions of men’s studies and other ‘malestream’ approaches to masculinity scholarship which sometimes resort to essentialist arguments about violence, gender, and masculinity (Hearn, 2013, p. 24). While not the only way to research MVAW, feminist and CSMM perspectives are widely used within the literature on EM and by EM practitioners themselves because of their focus on engaging men as allies and interrogating the complex linkages amongst men, masculinities, and violence (Flood, 2019).

Lastly, as a peace educator and scholar, I add concepts from peace education to this feminist and CSMM approach to provide new insights to EM research and practice. Peace education is the ‘process of teaching people about the threats of violence and strategies for peace’ (Harris, 2009, p. 1).⁴ Despite the lack of cross-pollination between peace education and EM research, the two fields are deeply related in their focus on preventing direct, cultural, and structural forms of violence (Galtung, 1969) and supporting more peaceful and gender equal futures (Reardon, 2021). Elsewhere I have conceptualised this gap as a ‘peace theoretical vacuum’ in the EM literature that could unlock generative new insights for scholars and practitioners (McInerney, 2019c; McInerney & Archer, n.d.). This study engages with concepts from peace education to explore the role of imagination (Lederach, 2005), the importance of multi-order reflexivities in addressing the risks of doing harm (Kester & Cremin, 2017) and the value of transformative optimism (Rossatto, 2005) in arts-integrated EM.

³ CSMM is considered an offshoot of feminist research informed by gender, education, sociology, criminology, psychology, and public health scholarship (Pease, 2013).

⁴ See Reardon (2000, 2021), Page (2008), Hantzopoulos & Bajaj (2021) for overviews of peace education.

1.5 Gender, Men, Masculinities, and Violence

While acknowledging the breadth, depth, and diversity of feminisms (Delap, 2020) and feminist thinking on men and masculinities (Berggren et al., 2021; Burrell & Flood, 2021), this study is grounded in a set of common and foundational feminist-informed ideas about gender, men, masculinities, and violence. First, this research is guided by the idea that gender relations are consequential for individuals, relationships, and societies. As Connell and Pearse (2014) write, gender 'is an arena in which we face hard practical issues about justice, identity and even survival' (p. ix). Gender is particularly important to this thesis as it plays a powerful role in reproducing violence and inequalities within patriarchal systems (Connell, 2005). Second, feminist approaches emphasise the importance of 'gendering' men. Hearn and Pringle (2006) argue the problematic 'common-sense' approach of equating gender solely with women leaves men in a neutral or genderless position. Such an approach naturalises men as the norm and removes the impetus for critical attention to examine their individual and collective gendered privileges and power (McIntosh, 1988; Katz, 2006) as well as the ways in which patriarchal gender norms can harm men too (hooks, 2003b, 2004).

Third, while it is important to note the diversity of theorisations of gender from biological and social approaches, this study follows a feminist and CSMM trajectory towards more social constructionist examinations (Carabi & Armengol, 2014). A social constructionist approach examines gender as culturally, historically, and politically constructed and unveils an understanding of masculinity as plural, unstable, and changing (Connell & Pearse, 2014).⁵ Such an analysis suggests there is no one right or inevitable way to be a man. As Pascoe and Bridges (2016) write, masculinity is not 'transhistorical or universal' and the differences amongst men may be as essential as the differences between men and people of other genders (p. 4). Critical to this study, this analysis points towards the possibilities for change. As Connell and Pearse (2014) note, 'The power structures that shape individual action often makes gender appear unchanging. Yet gender arrangements are in fact always changing'

⁵ However, a social constructionist approach does not mean that biology does not matter. Rather, it means that biology is not a binary and that it is one of many factors which are situated within social structures of power and inequality, along with complex constellations of characteristics which collectively influence, mediate, and construct our understanding of, and relationships with, gender (Burkitt, 2008). As Bridges and Pascoe (2016) argue, saying masculinity is socially constructed does not mean that male bodies are not real; instead, it challenges the 'significance of these biological facts for the rest of social life' (p. 12). Various approaches to social constructionism conceptualise differing possibilities/impossibilities of an underlying 'reality' within a socially constructed world (Burkitt, 2008). This includes 'softer' approaches like what Bridge and Pascoe (2016) have argued for in the above passage and 'harder' approaches that might more clearly link sociological and biological gendered roots as indistinguishable (Burr, 2015).

(p. 12). The question is not if masculinity will change but how it will change. The question is not should we try to change masculinities on a personal or a structural level, but rather how will we leverage each to change both towards more feminist-informed alternatives.

Finally, continuing with a social constructionist perspective, many feminist approaches to MVAW focus on its gendered and social causes (Walby, 2009; True, 2021). This is not meant to discount the complex non-gendered or biological factors, but rather to spotlight the ways gender and socialisation significantly influence MVAW (Messerschmidt, 2018; Peretz & Vidmar, 2021). This approach is particularly relevant to this study because many EM programs in the US, including the ones examined in this research, use feminist-informed social understandings of violence in their attempts to prevent MVAW (Flood, 2019).

1.6 Positionality and Purpose

Throughout this study, and countless times during my decade of teaching EM and researching MVAW, I have reflected upon, and I have been asked: *Why do I do this work? Why focus on this area?* With these questions in mind, I draw upon the feminist, CSMM, and peace education traditions of reflexivity to interrogate and illuminate my personal, professional, and political connections to the field of EM (McCarry, 2007; Pease, 2013; Kester & Cremin, 2017).

First, I approach this thesis as a scholar-practitioner with experience teaching peace, arts, and EM education programs. Specifically, this study draws on my work co-designing and teaching an arts-integrated EM program at a US university for several years where I used poetry, theatre, and visual arts to support men in learning about MVAW. This experience left me with countless questions about the potential of arts-integrated EM work. In turning to the literature, I found few answers. This practice-informed orientation shapes my research questions and drives me towards writing in a 'plain talk' style that strives to produce knowledge that can be shared, understood, and useful for both scholars and practitioners (hooks, 1989, 2000). However, I do not take this as an excuse to simplify or avoid the challenging work of academic writing. As Waling (2019a, 2019b) notes, there is a risk of oversimplification in attempts to make masculinities scholarship more accessible. With this in mind, I take hooks' call for plain talk as a guiding light to continue to ask: Who is this work for? In what ways does complex language open spaces for deeper meaning and understanding? In what ways does it gatekeep knowledge and prevent ideas from being put into practice? This thesis seeks to find a balance between the two; striving to write in an

accessible, analytic, and affective way without sacrificing rigour, depth, and complexity in the hopes that such work can be useful for scholars and practitioners alike (Pease, 2011).

Second, I approach this work through a feminist and peace-informed political lens. While I strive to remain critical and reflexive throughout each stage of the research, I am not neutral about MVAW. I am motivated by the feminist and peace normative traditions of using research to address injustice, explore alternatives, and hold out hope that education can be a liberatory practice (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994). Third, this work is important to me in-part because men's violence has deeply impacted my life, those I love, and my community. I am further connected to this topic by my own male privilege and patriarchal dividend (Connell, 1987). When I speak about men, the ways men have been socialised in the US, and why men need to do more and be proactive in violence prevention – I am also speaking about myself too. I approach this work with humility and a desire to keep learning, listening, and growing in my own efforts to address MVAW and patriarchal masculinities.

These positionalities and experiences reveal layers of personal, professional, and political investment and multiple dimensions of 'insider status' that I must navigate with reflexivity in this study (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In writing this thesis, I use both the first and third person. However, even when referring to 'this thesis', I do so while understanding that this work is an extension of my thoughts, experiences, and positionalities. Research does not happen in an objective vacuum devoid of the researcher's lived experiences, feelings, and perspectives (Cremin, 2018a). This study does not seek to run away from the afore-described messy reality. Rather, I work to illuminate my connections and positionalities as an element of this work that holds both limitations and advantages, challenges and opportunities.

My choice to focus on the US context is also shaped by my positionality as someone born and raised in the US and having taught EM there. I am motivated, and I believe best equipped, to research and reflect upon this context. However, by excluding non-US programs, I may be missing innovative and informative examples of arts-integrated EM work. Minimally, I am excluding practitioners and case studies that could offer alternative perspectives, epistemological understandings, and theories of gender, art, and social change. This limitation is magnified because, as Boonzaier et al. (2021) note, there is a need to challenge the concentration of EM scholarship focused on the Global North. Thus, my choice of context is likewise both an opportunity for me as a practitioner-scholar who is well connected and informed by lived experience in the US to learn and contribute more and an important limitation of my study that points towards the need for further research in different geographies.

Art, and in particular spoken word poetry, is at the nexus of my personal, professional, and political connections to this issue. I have written and performed spoken word poetry for 15 years and am a National Poetry Slam finalist, Southern Regional Poetry Slam Champion, and International Storytelling Center featured performer. Poetry has been a conduit for personal reflection about my own masculinity, a strategic means of communication to support gender justice, and a pedagogical approach for teaching EM programs. Thus, this study integrates spoken word poems in the text to provide an additional layer of meaning and an alternative means of communicating the insights and analysis.⁶ I am drawn toward Santos' (2018) call for knowledge oration as well as creative approaches to thinking about and sharing research (Johnson et al., 2017). Thus, this study seeks to 'walk its talk' (Archer, 2021) by using arts-integrated research methods while researching arts-integration programs.

Accordingly, it seems fitting to end this introduction chapter with a spoken word reflexive research poem that was written and recorded during this project. Research poems are used in this thesis as a way of engaging directly with my insider status by bringing my voice, feelings, and experiences directly into the text. The poem addresses the severity of the problem this study seeks to address and my personal connections to it by answering the question that I started this section with: *Why do I do this work?*

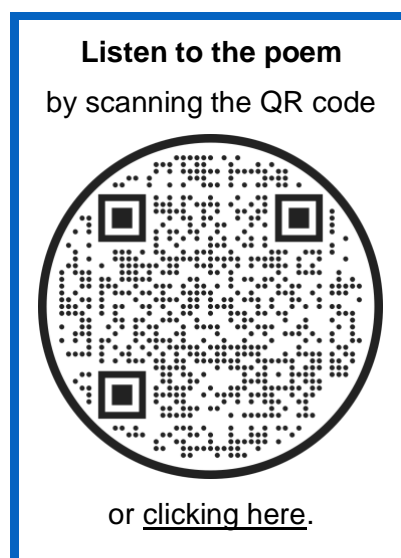


Figure 1: *an answer part I.*

⁶ I detail my use of poetic inquiry methods in Chapter 6 including why I have chosen to write and record the poems in spoken word.

an answer

part I.

the reasons are too many to count
too many men who've caused too much harm too consistently
masculinity and violence like hand and glove
the statistics sting correlation on the tip of my tongue
all around me
it is the air that I breathe
you asked me
why do i do this work
and I say
because of the list of he(s)

he who told me never to cry
he who slapped the tears off my cheek
he who told me man up
he who squeezed my arm till the colour of inside came out
he who hurt me inside and out
he
he
he
he who raised that bat to my head
he who cocked back, swung and

crack

he of no remorse
he who left me bloodied body
eyes rolled round under the moonlight
he
he
he
he who pulled that gun on me
other he who pulled that other gun
other other he who pulled that other other gun

a symphony of he-malevolence
power tripping trigger fingers reaching for crescendo
he
he
he
he who hurt her and her and her and her
a bouquet of he(s) who hurt every woman I've ever loved
he who hurt her and him and her and them
he
he
he who is thief of life
fleece of futures
he who pickpockets lungs
he who put his hands around Ira's neck
he who took her from us
he
he
he
he who put bullets in Deah's teeth
in his ribs
in his head
he who didn't stop there
he who took Yusor
he who took Razan
he
he
he who took Mrs. Mbarki's son
he who took Ahmed's eye
he who took Eduardo's brother
he
he
he
he who slowly drinks away the pain
so he
he who took himself
he
he who took himself

the list expands as I write these words

he and

he and

he

so many he(s) who've done so much harm

to so many lives

i do this because of

he

but also the he(s) who thinks he is different

not that kind of he

further down on the spectrum of harm he

just the he who makes sexist jokes

and the he who doesn't call it out when he sees it

he who bows in silence before the roar of laughter

he who thinks feminism is good

but doesn't apply to him so

he who holds a chest full of gas waiting to be lit

he

he

he

i do this work because there are

so many he(s) that I so badly want to be completely different from me

but he

he who sometimes looks like me

me

me

me who's stayed silent

me who's been wrong

me who's hurt

me who hurts

me who hurts me

me

me

he

me

me wishing upon mirrors
wanting binaries between
but knowing all too well
that borders bleed
boundaries cede
and I see he
he whose privilege I breathe
whose culture within I steep
sometimes I fear
it is as simple and complex as it seems
he is me
maybe not this he or that he
maybe not hyper aggressive explicit violent he
but some days in some ways
i am he
complicit he
silent he
structural he
subtle he
maybe well intentioned he
but still he
still the air I breathe
he
he
he

1.6 Structure

The following chapters start by reviewing the literature on men's violences (Chapter 2), theories of masculinities (Chapter 3), the field of EM (Chapter 4), and arts, social change, and EM (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 then outlines this study's research questions and methodology. The subsequent four chapters outline the findings by each focusing on a key theme: reimagining masculinities (Chapter 7), holistic learning (Chapter 8), humanising approach (Chapter 9), and challenging work (Chapter 10). Chapter 11 discusses the findings in conversation with the literature and answers the research questions. The thesis concludes in Chapter 12 where I reflect on the overall project, its contributions, areas of future research, and limitations.

Chapter 2: Men's Violences

Scope, Causes, and Contexts

2.1 Introduction

This chapter draws on feminist and CSMM literature to examine MVAW as a constellation of men's individual practices, harmful masculine norms, and structural gender and social inequalities. Further, this chapter emphasises the importance of understanding, challenging, and changing patriarchal masculine norms for this study. This chapter is divided into four sections: first, defining key terms related to MVAW; second; revealing the scope and impact of MVAW; third, examining MVAW's characteristics, causes, and contexts; and fourth, concluding with a synthesis of the relevant insights for this study.

2.2 Naming Men's Violence Against Women

Gender-based violence (GBV), a broad term used in gender equality and violence prevention work in the US and internationally, describes violence driven by gender practices, norms, and unequal power relations (Bloom, 2008). While GBV can be committed against people of all genders, it is commonly associated with violence against women (VAW). The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) defines VAW as:

Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. (Article 1)

VAW also includes violence against girls, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence and harassment, femicide, human and sexual trafficking, female genital mutilation, and forced and child marriage (True, 2021). Scholars like hooks (1981, 1984) have long noted the analytical and political importance of language in defining and describing violence. In this light, Penelope (1990), and later Katz (2006), argues the term VAW warrants reconsideration. They note the phrase *violence against women* uses passive

grammar concealing the perpetrator of the violence. In almost all cases, VAW is men's violence against women (MVAW) (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000; Messerschmidt, 2018).⁷ This study uses the term MVAW because it more accurately and precisely describes the social problem that EM programs work to address (Funk, 2007). The term MVAW is not meant to decentre women or to take focus away from supporting victims and survivors. Rather, it seeks to hold men accountable for change and to make clear this is a men's and women's issue; one in which men have an important role to play in stopping and preventing (Katz, 2006).

However, MVAW is also deeply connected to other forms of men's gendered violences. Kaufman's (1987) 'triad of men's violence' examines the ways in which men's violence against: 1) women, 2) other men, and 3) themselves share a core set of gendered drivers related to harmful masculine norms, men's use of power and control, and men's peer group dynamics. Kaufman (1987) argues it is 'impossible to deal successfully with any one corner of this triad in isolation from the others' (p. 13). EM programs in the US commonly focus upon MVAW, as well as the ways in which masculine practices, norms, and structures are connected to homophobic and transphobic violence, more general patterns of violence amongst men, and the harmful impacts of masculine norms on men themselves. hooks (2004) describes these diverse forms of men's violences as sharing a core gendered root in 'patriarchal masculinity', a term which will be explored in depth in the next chapter. Thus, this study focuses on MVAW and the ways MVAW intersects with broader patterns of men's gendered violences.

2.3 The Scope of Men's Violence Against Women

This section outlines three points to demonstrate the importance of researching and addressing MVAW. First, this study's rationale is guided by international and US-based research which reveals MVAW is a severe and pervasive problem. While measuring MVAW is challenging and often relies upon self-reporting measures, there are significant patterns across studies on this subject (Flood, 2019; True, 2021).⁸ Second, this study's examination of primary prevention programs that engage all men and boys as potential allies, not just

⁷ In addressing the 'bewildering variety of terms' amongst GBV, VAW, and MVAW, Flood (2019) notes all names involve 'methodological, theoretical, and political choices' (pp. 11-12) and bring limitations and advantages to our understanding.

⁸ The research studies cited below, like many large-scale studies, have varying levels of trustworthiness and generalisability. In alignment with my research approach, rather than taking any one study as representative of the 'Truth', my thinking is influenced by the wider patterns of quantitative and qualitative evidence compiled across disciplinary lines over the past half century on this issue.

those identified as perpetrators, draws on an analysis of MVAW as often being committed by 'normal' and known men. Furthermore, this section examines men's silence and inaction in the face of other men's violence as forms of violence itself. **Lastly**, this section discusses why it is important to focus on MVAW as a disproportionately severe and pervasive social problem and acknowledge the ways in which men can be victims of gendered violence too.

2.3.1 MVAW Internationally and Within the US

WHO (2021) research in 80 countries found that one in three women have experienced intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both in their lifetime. The report estimated that this violence affects over 736 million women. Further, approximately 50% of women murdered world-wide are killed by an intimate partner or family member, nearly all of whom are men (WHO, 2021). In a 2019 United Nations (UN) study, data from over 100 countries showed that nearly one in five women (aged 15-49) in a relationship have experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner within the last year (UN ECOSOC, 2019). Research from UN Women (2021) shows MVAW has intensified further during the COVID-19 pandemic in-part because lockdown conditions created situations of increased vulnerability for some women in abusive contexts. UN Women has dubbed MVAW an ongoing global 'shadow pandemic'. Overall, while rates of MVAW differ across regions, multi-national research from the UN shows it is a problem impacting every corner of the world.

In the US context, research based on the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) shows that one in two women in the US have experienced some form of sexual violence and that one in five have experienced a completed or attempted rape (Waechter & Ma, 2015). Women across various intersectional categories are deeply impacted by MVAW. However, women of colour and LGBTQIA+ women are often disproportionately targeted (Wilchins, 2019). Further, women aged 16-24 are disproportionately harmed by and at-risk of sexual violence (Sinozich & Langton, 2014). Cantor et al. (2020) found more than one in four undergraduate women experience non-consensual sexual contact during their four years at university.⁹ These forms of MVAW cause massive harm to families, communities, and most importantly to the women themselves. MVAW impacts women's mental and physical health including prolonged

⁹ This research is based on data from the Association of American Universities (AAU). The AAU study is the largest of its kind and includes over 180,000 students around the US. Rates of violence ranged from 14-32% across 33 different universities. Additional research at universities in the US reveals similar numbers ranging between 15-25% of women experiencing sexual assault or rape during their four-year degrees (Winslett & Gross, 2009; Khan et al., 2018).

recovery from physical injury, increased likelihood of depression and anxiety, STI transmission, self-harm, unwanted pregnancies, and connections to drug dependency issues (Safe Lives, 2019; CDC, 2021; RAINN, 2022).

2.3.2 Perpetrators of MVAW

Research internationally and within the US shows that the majority of VAW is committed by men, thus the use of the term MVAW (Jewkes et al., 2015).¹⁰ A study by Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) using a nationally representative sample of 16,000 men and women in the US found that men were responsible for 92% of the assaults on women that had taken place over the age of 18. Black et al.'s (2011) review of the NISVS in the US reveals similar findings and contemporary criminological, feminist, and CSMM research continues to demonstrate this strong link (Messerschmidt, 2018). However, it is less clear what percentage of men commit MVAW. In a UN multi-country study of over 10,000 men, rates of interpersonal MVAW ranged from 26-80% across six countries in Asia and the Pacific (Fulu et al., 2013). Similarly, the International Men and Gender Equality Scale (IMAGES) project interviewed over 10,000 men in eight different countries in Central and South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia and found rates of MVAW in intimate relationships spanned from 17-46% (Levtov et al., 2014). In a representative sample of 530 men in the US, Singh et al. (2014) found that 19.2% of men had perpetrated interpersonal violence towards an intimate partner.¹¹

Using self-reported surveys and assessments of men's perpetration in research has produced differing and at times conflicting data. In a highly debated study, Liask and Miller (2002) sampled 1,882 men at a US university and found that approximately 6% self-reported acts of sexual violence that met the legal definition of rape or attempted rape. 63% of the men who self-reported had committed multiple rapes. The authors argue that a small number of 'serial rapists' perpetrate most of these sexual attacks on university campuses. However, more recent research by Swartout et al. (2015) found that 10.8% of men at two large US universities self-reported behaviour meeting the legal definition of rape or attempted rape. Their research challenged the serial rapist theory by examining self-reported rapes longitudinally and finding that only 25% of men perpetrated across multiple years while at university.¹² From a prevention perspective, searching for serial offenders may be

¹⁰ In addition, men commit a clear majority of almost all forms of violent crime in the US (Katz, 2006, 2013; Messerschmidt, 2018).

¹¹ This study confirmed similar numbers found earlier in the US by Kessler et al. (2001).

¹² Thus, 75% of men who self-reported had a decreasing pattern of behaviour.

misleading and detrimental to addressing the more complex nature of the problem which is diffused across a larger group of men and embedded within male peer group cultures.¹³

2.3.3 Most Men and the Patriarchal Dividend

Studies from the US like the ones discussed above show high rates of MVAW, and at the same time, appear to indicate that most men do not commit commonly measured forms of MVAW. This leads to an often-repeated phrase in EM work: *most men do not commit MVAW*.¹⁴ However, as some of the multi-country statistics above show, the statement that most men do not commit MVAW is not always true. Flood (2019) cautions that this claim can also be co-opted by men's rights activists (MRAs) via campaigns like #NotAllMen that often distort statistics and deflect attention away from men's collective responsibility. As Peretz and Vidmar (2021) note, 'while most men don't perpetrate the most serious forms of GBV, all men have some relationship to the issue' (p. 2). Connell's (1987) influential conceptualisation of the 'patriarchal dividend' is helpful in considering the ways in which all men, regardless of their perpetration or not, benefit from gender inequality and violence through the additional privilege, power, status, and resources they gain within patriarchal societies.¹⁵ Further, claims that most men don't commit MVAW often focus on specific acts, such as violent domestic assaults or rapes. Focusing exclusively on these discrete acts may unintentionally minimise some of the harder to measure forms of men's gendered violence such as coercion and harassment as well as wider patterns of objectification, sexism, and misogyny. As will be discussed in the following section, this study is focused on broader definitions of men's violences that include and go beyond discrete acts of physical and sexual violence.

Additionally, this research is attuned to both men's actions and inactions. MVAW persists in part due to masculine cultures of silence, complicity, and men's 'collective cultural collusion with patriarchy' (hooks, 2004, p. 56). Kimmel's (2008) multi-decade study of US men revealed that men's violence is made possible by 'a culture of entitlement, a culture of silence, and a culture of protection' (p. 59). In this way, men's silence about other men's

¹³ A study of 86 US university male students by Edwards et al. (2014) indicated that 13.6% of the men would rape a woman if there were 'no consequences'. When the word rape was not used, and the question was reframed to ask if the men would have sex with a woman against her will the percentage increased to 31.7%. The study has been critiqued for its small sample size and the potential confusion that participants may have had with the wording and implications of the questions, but nonetheless continues to challenge the notion that only a very small percentage of men have or are willing to perpetrate such violence.

¹⁴ Flood (2019) prefers to qualify the statement by saying; 'most men do not use violence against women, particularly in its bluntest forms' (p. 101).

¹⁵ However, the patriarchal dividend is not distributed equally amongst men as there are hierarchies within gender orders, however, men as a group disproportionately benefit from it (Connell, 1987).

violence creates the social conditions for its perpetuation. Put another way, men's silence is a part of the problem and can be conceptualised as a form of harm or indeed violence itself. Many men in EM programs, and the men this research project worked with, are not identified as direct perpetrators of violence. However, men in these programs are often surrounded by, and sometimes complicit with, other men's violence and sexism as well as broader patterns of cultural and structural harm that extend beyond direct violence in its most blunt forms (Flood, 2019). Working with men to address violence and silence is thus a central area of focus for EM and this study.

2.3.4 Men as Victims of Gendered Violence

Lastly, it is important to address how men are also victims of gendered violence. Data from the NISVS (Black et. al., 2011) indicates upwards of one in four men have experienced some form of physical violence from an intimate partner and one in thirty-three have experienced rape in their lifetime. While not discounting men's individual experiences with violence, at a societal level it is important to note a disparity in the severity and duration of this violence when compared to MVAW.¹⁶ Flood's (2019) review of the literature concludes 'If we think of domestic violence in terms of a pattern of power and control, it is likely that women are 90-95% of victims' (p. 23). However, portrayals of women as victims and/or docile pacifists are also problematic patriarchal stereotypes. Multiple things can be true; women are disproportionately affected by men's violence, women can and do commit violence, and men are victims too.¹⁷ Thus, EM programs in the US often acknowledge and actively work to support men who are victims and at the same time focus on MVAW as a core issue.

Men are also harmed by their own and other men's violences. For example, men were almost four times more likely to die by suicide than women in the US (Ehlman et al., 2022). Research by the American Psychological Association (APA) (2018) indicates men's rigid ideas of masculinity, which discourage help-seeking and confine emotional engagement and

¹⁶ Some measures of domestic violence in the US (e.g., the Conflict Tactics Scale) claim to show closer to a 50-50 'gender symmetry' in rates of victimisation. However, other scholars argue this approach draws false comparisons and that there is a foundational power differential when viewing these violences within their social and cultural contexts, noting that 'patriarchal societies provide men with more power over women so that their violence causes more harm economically, psychologically, and physically' (Morris & Ratajczak, 2019, p. 1985).

¹⁷ In particular, hooks' (2004) work examining the ways in which women support patriarchal masculinities and enact violence against those they have power over including children, other women, and some men is important. People of all genders are capable of violence. While this study focuses on men's violences, enactments of patriarchal masculinities, and disproportionate benefits from patriarchy; it is essential to understand that this violence exists within complex social and cultural structures that are maintained in part by people of all genders too.

expression, lead to disproportionately high negative physical and psychological health outcomes for men in the US. Men who suffer from gendered violence often face a tension as the ‘incompatibility of masculinity and victimhood discourages men from reporting, seeking services, or even recognising their victimisation’ (Peretz & Vidmar, 2021, p. 6). Scholars like Kaufman (1987) further argue that masculinity requires a ‘perpetual act of violence against oneself’ (p. 12). Here again gendered masculine norms are at the root of men’s violences. Mirroring EM practitioners work in the field, this study focuses on MVAW and specifically the harms emanating from patriarchal ideas of manhood which hurt women, people of all genders, and men themselves.

2.4 Understanding MVAW

There is not a singular cause of MVAW but rather a diverse array of gendered and non-gendered factors which interact on individual, cultural, and structural levels (Jewkes et al., 2014; Edström et al., 2015).¹⁸ Our Watch (2021), an influential practitioner organisation, synthesised decades of research into MVAW to distil the diverse yet connected causes into four key areas. First, structures of gender inequality form the base of MVAW. This foundation of inequality underpins and produces a second layer of specific gendered drivers of MVAW. These drivers include men’s control over women’s lives, male peer group norms that support violence, aggression, and gender inequality, as well as rigid gender roles. These drivers in-turn support a third layer; the normalisation and justification of this violence which results in the minimisation or condoning of MVAW. This three-part process is compounded by non-gendered factors including condoning of violence, exposure to violence, experiencing violence, weakened pro-social behaviour, and the larger context of socio-economic inequality and discrimination (Our Watch, 2021). While there are both gendered and non-gendered factors impacting MVAW, Flood (2019) writes ‘the most well-documented determinants of MVAW can be found in gender – in gender relations and gender norms and above all in gender inequalities’ (p. 16).

Building on this foundational analysis, this section reviews five key areas of feminist and CSMM scholarship on the core characteristics and drivers of MVAW relevant to this US-based study. First, the literature reveals men’s violences as plural and operating across a continuum. Second, MVAW is rooted in power and control. Third, MVAW is connected to

¹⁸ IMAGES research across multiple studies and countries (e.g., Barker et al., 2011; Feki et al., 2017) reveals constellations of factors driving the use of MVAW including social marginalization and poverty, rigid gender roles and unequal gender attitudes, as well as experience with violence and victimization, substance abuse, sexual history, and certain psychological factors like lower levels of empathy based on societal averages.

homosocial peer groups. Fourth, rigid ideas of masculinity play a vital role in MVAW. Fifth, gender and social structural inequalities underpin MVAW. These insights are essential for this study because they help identify why EM programs focus on transforming the ways in which men think about masculinity and why that work requires simultaneous attention to individual acts, norms, and structures.

2.4.1 Men's Violence(s) Against Women

There are many types of MVAW occurring in different forms and contexts. Thus, it can be helpful to think of 'men's violences' rather than men's violence (Hearn, 1998).¹⁹ Kelly's (1988, 1996, 2011) influential scholarship on the 'continuum' of men's violences examines how men's violence ranges from everyday acts of normalised degradation and dehumanisation to extreme or 'aberrant' violence. The point of the continuum is not to identify more or less harmful acts of violence, but rather to emphasise how seemingly disparate forms of MVAW have shared gendered roots and reinforce one another.

A plural account of men's violences also points to feminist and CSMM research that shows most MVAW is perpetrated by 'normal' and often known men (Katz, 2006; Kaufman, 2019; True, 2021). 'Stranger danger' (Ahmed, 2000) narratives and simplistic accounts that frame male perpetrators as abnormal villains fail to acknowledge how perpetrators are enacting masculine norms and living within unequal gender structures that have been deemed normal (MacKinnon, 2006). This is not to excuse such violence or to dilute individual accountability, but rather to highlight that violent men are everywhere, that they often know their victims, and that '*their* violence says something about *us*' too (Katz, 2006, p. 28).²⁰ A plural approach to MVAW is thus essential for examining the diverse forms of violence and expanding the scope of who is included in EM work.

2.4.2 Power and Control

MVAW is rooted in men's power and control over women and other men. As hooks (2004) writes, 'patriarchal masculinity teaches men that their sense of self and identity, their reason for being, resides in their capacity to dominate others' (p. 70). Specifically, power is used to control women's lives – their bodies, minds, movements, and decisions. Stark's (2007, 2010)

¹⁹ An emphasis on plurality connects with Kaufman's (1987) triad approach, as well as trends in recent scholarship which move away from overly individualised actor models and towards more social and structural understandings of violence (Flood, 2019).

²⁰ Emphasis in original.

conceptualisation of 'coercive control' examines how men draw on patriarchal gender norms in their relationships with women to justify control and develop strategies to gain and maintain it through manifest and latent violence. Rather than foregrounding disconnected moments of anger or violence, coercive control points to a central ideology of power and control over women which guides men's motivations and actions.²¹ The normalisation of power and control over women further produces norms of entitlement in which men are socialised to expect control over women (Kimmel, 2008; Pascoe, 2007). Thus, when men are denied what they believe 'belongs' to them, their use of violence is construed as justified. Men's entitlement has been explored as a key factor in men's violence in the US through white supremacist and anti-feminist backlash (Kimmel, 2013), mass shootings (Vito et al., 2018) and the emergence of men's online violence (Ging, 2019).

Paradoxically, the strong association between masculinity, power, and violence has been theorised as a result of masculinity's fragility and men's insecurities. Because masculinity is social construction and not a biological fact, it requires work to maintain (Kaufman, 1987). As Peretz and Vidmar (2021) note, masculinity 'must be constantly upheld and re-proven in order to maintain not only dominance and access to the patriarchal dividend, but a measure of safety from other men's violence' (p. 3). Violence is again construed as a legitimate and necessary way to hold the delicate pieces of masculinity together, maintain the core objective of power and control, and attempt to live up to the idealised masculine norm (Connell, 2005).

2.4.3 Men's Peer Groups

MVAW is also linked to men's homosocial peer groups. Male peer support theory examines how men turn to male peers for advice when facing challenges in their relationships (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1993). This advice is influenced by violence-supportive male peer cultures which tolerate and even encourage men to objectify, hyper-sexualise and use violence as valid means of maintaining control over women. Extending from this powerful influence of male peer groups, Kimmel (2001, 2008) argues that masculinity is primarily a homosocial performance for the 'male gaze', with control over women turned into a form of currency to prove one's manhood to other men. Because of its fragility, Kimmel argues

²¹ While coercive control can be practised by a person of any gender against another, Stark (2007) emphasises the connection to wider structural gender inequalities which confer men's dominance over women. It is the patriarchal gender ideology that creates the initial power differential that allows men to weaponize their control so effectively.

manhood must be demonstrated for other men repeatedly and manhood must be defended against threats from other men who question it.

Specifically, homophobia acts as an essential organising force for men's peer relations in the US, and thus within MVAW as well. For Kimmel (1994), homophobia is not just fear of gay people, it is the perpetual 'fear that other men will unmask us, emasculate us, reveal to us and the world that we do not measure up, that we are not real men' (p. 131). To combat this, men defend themselves and challenge one another's masculinity with verbal and physical violence, threats, and homophobic or effemiphobic derogatory terms (Pascoe, 2007). Similarly, when men feel their masculinity has been challenged, Schrock and Schwalbe (2009) have explored the ways in which they use 'compensatory manhood acts' rooted in aggression and violence to reclaim their manhood within the eyes of their male peers. While these male peer group norms and dynamics take place in a multitude of settings, in the US research focuses on homosocial relations in sports (Messner, 1990; Gage, 2008) military (Richard & Molloy, 2020; Rosen et al., 2003) and university and fraternity settings (Harris & Harper, 2014; Waterman et al., 2020).²²

2.4.4 Harmful Masculine Norms and the Man Box

Conducting research for Equimundo,²³ arguably the most influential EM practitioner and research organisation in the US, Heilman and Barker (2018) reviewed the academic and grey literature to examine the links between harmful masculine norms and violence. They define harmful masculine norms as, 'The particular, rigid, and inequitable expectations placed upon men and boys because of their sex that lead to self-directed harm and harm by men and boys against others' (2018, p. 89). The authors conclude masculine norms are 'undeniably linked with violence' (p. 8).²⁴ Heilman and Barker (2018) argue that the links between harmful masculine norms and violence can be understood through the: 1) constant work of achieving and re-achieving the socially dominant idea of manhood; 2) policing of men's performance of gender; 3) 'gendering of the heart' or the norms which regulate and

²² The concept of *rape culture* has been used to describe these contexts as not just full of problematic individual 'bad actors' but wider cultures which produce higher rates of MVAW through norms and gendered roles that dehumanize women and LGBTQIA+ people, protect perpetrators from accountability, and discourage victims and survivors from reporting (Hayes et al., 2016; Gay, 2018). This work points towards the importance of examining both men's relationships with women and their male peer groups.

²³ Formerly known as Promundo

²⁴ Specifically, Heilman and Barker (2018) cite research studies linking harmful masculine norms with eight areas of violence including: intimate partner violence (Barker et al., 2011; Fleming et al., 2015; Heise, 2011; Levitov et al., 2014), physical violence against children (Guedes et al., 2016), child sexual abuse and exploitation (Ricardo & Barker, 2008), bullying (Pascoe, 2007), homicide and other violent crime (Messerschmidt, 2018), non-partner sexual violence (Heilman et al., 2017), suicide (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2012; Coleman, 2015; APA, 2019), and conflict and war (Ormhaug et al., 2009).

limit men's emotional lives; 4) divisions of culture and material spaces along rigid gendered lines; and 5) the defence and reification of patriarchal power. These findings resonate with other key feminist and CSMM scholarship which notes the specific importance of harmful masculine norms in driving and upholding MVAW (Hearn, 1998; hooks, 2003b, 2004; Katz, 2006; Messerschmidt, 2018; Flood, 2019; Kaufman, 2019).

Further, these findings echo across scholarship examining historical ideas of manhood in the US. Brannon and David (1976) outlined four rules of masculinity in the US as: 'no sissy stuff, be a big wheel, be a sturdy oak, and give'em hell'. In this context, men are defined in opposition to women, through the accumulation of success and power, the demonstration of toughness, emotionlessness, and rationality, and the willingness to take risks, be aggressive, and dominate. Kimmel's (1994, 2005) historical analysis of American masculinity concludes that these rigid ideals have proven resilient to change. Kimmel (1994) notes that masculinity in the US means 'different things at different times to different people' (p.59) but that a core patriarchal undercurrent remains and the idealised American man 'is a man *in* power, a man *with* power, and a man *of* power' (p. 124).²⁵ In EM practitioner work in the US, these rigid ideas of masculinity are commonly discussed through the 'man box' model. Originally developed by Kivel (1992) and later expanded by Porter (2016), the man box model is used as an accessible way to describe the implicit and explicit messages men receive about the socially dominant right way to 'be a man'. The model explores ways in which men are socialised to be inside the man box, how they use privilege, power, control, and violence to stay in and keep others out, and importantly, ways in which they might challenge those norms and move beyond the box.

Heilman and Barker (2017) conducted a representative random sample of over 3,000 young men (aged 18-30) in the US, UK, and Mexico to examine the prevalence of man box norms. The researchers adapted 17 messages from the Gender Equitable Men Scale (GEMS) to organise seven pillars of the man box including self-sufficiency, acting tough, physical attractiveness, rigid masculine gender roles, heterosexuality and homophobia, and aggression and control. The results are mixed and vary by country and question; however, one clear finding was that 'young men reported overwhelming social pressure to fit into the Man Box' (Heilman et al., 2017, p. 24). In the US, the research showed 72% of young men 'had been told that a real man behaves a certain way' (Heilman et al., 2019, p. 7). Further, they argue that such messages reinforce that violence is an acceptable way of proving

²⁵ Emphasis in original.

manhood and maintaining control over others.²⁶ Their study findings reveal that the young men who believe in these rigid ideas of manhood the most 'are consistently more likely to bully, binge drink, be in traffic accidents, harass, show signs of depression, and have considered suicide' (Heilman et al., 2019, p. 5).²⁷

However, Helman and Barker (2018) caution that the linkages between harmful masculine norms and violence are complex and that understanding what causes violence is an 'exercise in simultaneous truths' (p. 14). The authors make clear that harmful masculine norms are one of a multitude of factors that impact violence. In each area of violence, they unpack both the links to masculinity and intersecting factors such as other forms of social oppression like race, class, and sexuality, as well as experiences with other forms of violence. This intersectional lens is also essential for EM work in the US (Peretz, 2017). These findings on harmful masculine norms are particularly important for this study as the man box framework plays a central role in many EM programs, including the ones reviewed in this study.

2.4.5 Patriarchal and Structural Inequalities

The final important factor in understanding MVAW is the larger context of structural inequalities within which this violence is situated. The relationship between the two is mutually reinforcing, meaning MVAW is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality. Gender inequalities contribute to increased vulnerabilities and conditions of exploitation, creating contexts of unequal power with increased likelihoods of MVAW, which in turn facilitates greater gender inequalities. There is a growing concern in EM that structural factors tend to be left out of analysis. As Flood (2019) writes, 'Various commentators criticise the dominance in the field of psychological models emphasising individual psychological actors or cultural models emphasising attitudes and norms, while deemphasizing social and structural explanations' (p. 30). Examination of MVAW thus requires attention at multiple levels of men's practices, norms, and structures.

²⁶ Further, as noted in the previous section, while this study focuses on how men engage with these norms, it is also important to acknowledge the ways in which women and people of all genders are influenced by these norms and seek to enact them at the expense of others around them (hooks, 2003b; 2004).

²⁷ A follow up study demonstrated the economic impact of the man box (estimated at \$15.7 billion in the United States per year) by examining six categories – traffic accidents, suicide, bullying and violence, depression, sexual violence, and binge drinking – where young men inside the man box are overrepresented (Heilman et al., 2019). Further, Hill et al. (2020) conducted a statistical analysis on the Man Box Scale used in this work and demonstrated its strong validity and reliability across the US, UK, and Mexico.

Within the feminist and CSMM literature the main theorisation of structural gender inequality connects to the concept of patriarchy (Walby, 1990). Morris and Ratajczak's (2019) meta-analysis of theories in the leading journal *Violence Against Women* over the past 25 years found patriarchy as the most used concept. Johnson (2014) defines patriarchy as a social system that supports men in dominating positions of authority and power across political, economic, and social spheres. Patriarchal societies construct cultural norms and values that identify the characteristics of men and manhood as superior, desirable, and normal. Patriarchies centre men and boys at the focal point of attention and accomplishment. Lastly, men wield control obsessively in patriarchal societies to protect men's privileges and uphold the patterns of dominance, centeredness, and identification (Johnson, 2014).

However, the concept of patriarchy is not without critique and concerns of theoretical stagnation. Scholars like Hunnicutt (2009) have raised issues with the term for being generalised across all contexts and inadequately accounting for other forms of structural violence and the diversity amongst men and women. Specifically, Hunnicutt (2009) writes, 'Patriarchies do not exist in uniform and systematic ways but instead vary across time, place, and material contexts...Varieties of patriarchy must be understood holistically, then, in terms of interlocking structures of domination' (pp. 567-568). Thus, for this project there are two necessary additions to Johnson's (2014) definition. First, following Hunnicutt (2009) it is important to focus on varieties of patriarchy or 'patriarchies'.²⁸ Second, Black feminist scholars in the US like hooks (2004) and Crenshaw (1991) situate MVAW within a wider intersectional analysis of what hooks (2004) calls 'imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy' to show how MVAW is inseparable from a broader systemic analysis of inequalities (p. 17). This analysis aligns with recent reviews of the field (Edström et al., 2015; Jewkes et al., 2015), the analysis from the IMAGES project (Barker et al., 2011; Feki et al., 2017) and Our Watch's (2021) synthesis of the literature which located MVAW within multiple structural forms of violence and inequality. The focus of this study is on EM, and thus men and their disproportionate benefits from patriarchal systems. However, it is important to note that in variance with intersectional identities, people of all genders can and do benefit from and help reproduce patriarchies and harmful masculine gender norms (hooks, 2004).

²⁸ This approach also aligns with Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) emphasis that gender regimes, orders, and relations vary by local contexts and thus there is not a singular hegemonic masculinity.

2.4 Conclusion

There are three key points from this chapter. First, the term MVAW is analytically and politically important. Further, it is essential to acknowledge the ways in which MVAW interacts with men's other gendered violences. Second, MVAW is a severe and pervasive problem internationally and specifically in the US. Third, MVAW in the US can be understood as: a plural form of men's violences along a continuum of harm; tied to power and control; connected to men's peer groups; and driven by harmful norms and rigid ideas of masculinity as well as wider structures of gender and social inequality.

Combined, this analysis points to the need for EM programs to examine men's actions, masculine norms, and patriarchal structures as well as the way each level is affected by an intersectional analysis. Research on the man box and harmful masculine norms in the US highlight the importance of interrogating what masculinity is and how gender unequal, rigid, and violence-supportive norms associated with masculinity are central not only to MVAW but to broader patterns of harm to people of all genders. The next chapter adds to this discussion by examining feminist and CSMM theories of masculinity with an emphasis on how masculinities change and how a hooksian (2000, 2004) analysis might support research into EM programs like the ones in this study.

Chapter 3: Masculinities

Theories and Debates

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines theories of masculinities from feminist and CSMM perspectives that enhance this study's understanding of the connections between men, masculinities, and violence. As the previous chapter makes clear, masculinity itself is a core root of MVAW and men's gendered violences. Thus, an examination of what masculinity is and how it changes is essential to EM work. This chapter: first, highlights key theories relevant to this study including Connell's (1995) influential 'masculinities' scholarship as well as intersectional, poststructural, and queer innovations; second, unpacks important debates about masculinity typologies and the changing nature of masculinities; and third, outlines how and why this study follows hooks' (2000, 2004) approach to engaging men and examining patriarchal and feminist masculinities.

3.2 Social Theories of Masculinities

This section reviews social theories of masculinities and highlights three key points for this study's examination of EM programs.²⁹ First, drawing on Connell's (2009) scholarship, masculinities can be understood as multiple, changing, relational and structural. Second, work with men and masculinities requires intersectional analysis. Third, queer and poststructural theories help challenge simplistic accounts of gender by emphasising identity as an unstable process shaped by contextual norms and expectations.

3.2.1 Connell's Gender Relations, Masculinities, and Hegemony

Raewyn Connell's work on gender and masculinity is regarded as some of the most cited and influential scholarship in CSMM (Carabi & Armengol, 2014). For Connell, gender is an

²⁹ Pascoe and Bridges (2016) note that social theories of masculinities are themselves contested and changing and that the field is 'simultaneously cohering and fracturing' (p. 429). As a result, Borkowska (2020) argues for an understanding of key theories not as points on a timeline of advancement, but as a messy nonlinear web where theories draw upon one another and expand different perspectives rather than providing universalizing answers.

embodied learning, 'a becoming, a condition actively under construction' (Connell & Pearse, 2014, p.6). Connell (1987) places gender within a wider framework to explore how personal gender practices pattern into gender relations, gender regimes, and societal gender orders. Drawing on elements of structuration theory, Connell (1987) describes gender as a fusion of personal agency and structural forces.³⁰ Gender is both a product of our agency and a reflection of the social world which is hailing forward certain gendered practices.

Grounded in this gender relations approach, Connell's biggest contribution to theory and practice has been the shift from a singular concept of masculinity to a dynamic concept of 'masculinities', suggesting there is no one right or inevitable way to be a man. Connell (2005) draws on Gramsci's (1971) conceptualisation of hegemony to explore how masculinities are relationally organised within gender orders in a manner that reifies a given social structural arrangement. *Hegemonic* masculinities are the socially dominant conception of masculinity within a gender order.³¹ Further, hegemonic masculinities must be understood in relation to other patterns of masculinities including subordinate, marginalised, and complicit masculinities. *Subordinated* masculinities are those with the least cultural status power and influence; for example, gay men or men perceived as feminine. *Complicit* masculinities include those who benefit from the subjugation of women but do not appear to be actively involved in it, like a husband who supports gender equality but still benefits from the gender pay gap.³² Lastly, *marginalised* masculinities focus on the interplay of gender relations with other structures such as class and race, such as the ways in which Black and Latino men experience masculinity differently in the US context. Connell's emphasis here is not on good and bad masculinities, but on the relational positions these ideals hold and how such positions propagate a patriarchal order and influence individual practices (Carabi & Armengol, 2014).³³

While Connell's work has undeniably been highly influential in CSMM, it has also been subject to critique and questioned as to whether hegemonic masculinity theory has become hegemonic within the field itself (Yang, 2020). Some scholars have noted that hegemonic

³⁰ Structuration suggests the duality of structure whereby structure and agency mutually reinforce one another (Lamsal, 2012).

³¹ Connell (2005, 2009) argues that while direct violence can maintain this order, domination is often achieved through coercion rather than brute force.

³² As was discussed in the last chapter, this is an example of what Connell (2005) calls the patriarchal dividend, a way to conceptualise how men benefit from patriarchy in different overt and covert ways.

³³ To be clear, hegemonic masculinity is not a set of characteristics. It is a way of providing legitimacy for patriarchy, making men's domination appear natural and inevitable (Connell, 1995). As Salter (2019) points out, the hegemonic ideals associated with masculinity in each regime are often unattainable – and in failing to achieve them men might resort to the use of dominance and control. Despite this emphasis, the theory is often used without the accompanying attention to gender relations and orders and flattened into a typology of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

masculinity is too structuralist to account for the ‘complex interdependencies of inequalities’ (Berggren, 2020, p. 234). Others critique Connell’s work for containing too many conceptual ambiguities (Beasley, 2008; Hearn, 2012).³⁴ Further, Hearn (2004, 2012) is concerned Connell focuses too much on masculinity and not enough on men and their material practices themselves.³⁵ While Connell’s work remains foundational to the field of CSMM, developments in theories of gender and masculinities in the US from Black feminist perspectives on intersectionality as well as poststructuralist and queer theories provide helpful additional lenses to address some of these concerns and to see masculinities in a more complex light.

3.2.2 Intersectional Approaches

Influential US Black feminist scholarship and activism led by groups like the Combahee River Collective (1977) identified how the needs and experiences of Black women were consistently ignored by mainstream feminist movements. hooks (1981, 1984) brought forward a critical analysis of what she called ‘white liberal’ feminism and its inability or unwillingness to see and engage with how Black women like herself experienced both white supremacy and patriarchy in the US. hooks (1981) sought to ‘re-appropriate’ feminism towards a movement invested in understanding how patriarchy impacted women at the margins differently based on the ways in which their complex identities sat within ‘interlocking systems of domination’. Concepts like Crenshaw’s (1989, 1991) ‘intersectionality’, Collins’ (1986, 1990) ‘matrix of domination’ and hooks’ (2000) ‘imperialist, white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchy’ led to a greater understanding of how systems of power and inequality operate collaboratively and simultaneously in ways that are co-constitutive rather than additive. Oppression is not a simple list of additions and subtractions, but rather to use Collins’ term, a matrix in which systems of oppression impact and interact with individuals in distinct ways that require a combined analysis rather than a fragmented one.

Bridges and Pascoe (2016) note that intersectional feminist analysis has strengthened theories of masculinity by drawing attention to other forms of inequality and emphasising that ‘gender is not always the most important category helping us understand different configurations of masculinity and forms of inequality’ (p. 225). For example, research on

³⁴ Scholars have noted this in part explains the ‘slippage’ or misuse and oversimplification of her work (Flood, 2002; Beasley, 2008; Messerschmitt, 2019).

³⁵ Hearn (2004, 2012) argues for a reorientation towards examining the ‘hegemony of men’ rather than hegemonic masculinity, thus placing men and their practices at the centre of accountability and focus.

masculinities has engaged intersectionality as way to examine specific marginalised masculinities in the US context such as Latino masculinities (Hurtado & Sinha, 2008; Alcalde, 2014) and Black masculinities (hooks, 2003b; White & Peretz, 2010; Neal, 2015; Wilchins, 2019) as well how class and masculinity intersect (Pyke, 1996; Ward, 2019). Thus, to understand what masculinity is and where masculinity and patriarchy sit in relation to other forms of identity and social inequality, it is essential to examine how men's experiences with masculinities and violence are impacted by, among many others, their race, sexuality, and class identities (Peretz, 2017).

3.2.3 Poststructural and Queer Theories

Lastly, there is an emergent stream of work within masculinities scholarship drawing on poststructuralist and queer theories of gender.³⁶ Poststructuralists view knowledge as power-laden, partial, and contextual; thus, poststructuralist theories are sceptical of singular ideas of truth. There is no identity prior to or outside of power relations within many poststructuralist approaches; rather identity is an unstable process to be navigated within systems of power (Petersen, 2003; Harland, 2010). Building on these ideas, queer theory questions essentialised and binary framings of gender identity and emphasises the importance of context and power relations (Barker & Scheele, 2016). While initially focused on challenging heteronormativity and what Butler (1990) calls the 'heterosexual matrix' linking gender and sexuality, queer scholarship has moved beyond sexuality towards a 'queering' of many aspects of social life, exposing identities as both constructed and performed rather than something people 'are' (Sedgwick, 1990). The most famous theory of gender in this area of scholarship is Butler's (1990) idea of 'performativity', which examines how gender is brought into existence by repetitive actions. This work of dislocating gender solely from the body is further explored by scholarship that looks at women's relationships to and through masculinities. Halberstam's (1998), and more recently Mackay's (2021), examination of *female masculinity* shows that 'women can do masculinity too' (Bridges & Pascoe, 2016, p. 330).

However, while such scholarship has gained a great deal of attention and usage in gender studies more broadly, it is less employed in CSMM (Berggren, 2014), and even less so at the practitioner level of EM. This lack of uptake can be understood as CSMM's failure to keep innovations within feminist scholarship at its core (Beasley, 2015). Connell and Pearse

³⁶ Whilst this section gives a brief overview, it is important to note that queer and poststructuralist theories are themselves vastly diverse and contested areas of research.

(2014) value the stretching and destabilising such approaches offer but remain cautious of trends in poststructuralist gender theorisations drifting towards abstraction and away from material conditions and application.³⁷

3.3 Masculinity Typologies

Following Connell's multiple masculinities approach and the importance of an intersectional lens, there has been a proliferation of typologies based on setting and locations, (i.e., online, prison, or rural masculinities) as well as specific intersecting social identity categories such as race, class, age, sexuality (i.e., Black, working class, or gay masculinities).³⁸ In addition, some typologies revolve around the use of concepts like 'healthy masculinity' and 'toxic masculinity', although there are a wide range of synonyms used for each term (Waling, 2019b). These attempts seek to name and describe masculinities that align with Connell's (1995) hegemonic ideal as well as more positive, peaceful, and feminist alternatives. While these typologies may provide some analytical and pedagogical benefits, their use is also contested within CSMM.

This section outlines important debates in the literature and reveals three key reflections for moving forward for this study. First, the literature affirms the notion that men and masculinities are changing – something this study is seeking to better understand through EM programs. Second, this debate constructively challenges the assumption that changes in masculinities are necessarily good. Lastly, this section reveals important tensions between the need for accessible frameworks to use in EM group education programs and feminist and CSMM scholarly engagements with more robust, complex, and at times less accessible conceptualisations of masculinities and violences. To unpack these points, I will briefly introduce the 'toxic' and 'healthy' masculinity typologies and then examine Bridges and Pascoe's (2014) 'hybrid masculinity' debate to explore key perspectives from within the CSMM field.

3.3.1 Toxic Masculinities

³⁷ Connell and Pearse (2014) write, 'A whole literature of gender theory makes practically no reference to girls' education, domestic violence, women's health, gender mainstreaming, the state, economic development or other policy questions that feminists had been grappling with' (p. 64). As was noted above, such critiques around the lack of applicability for practitioners have also been levied against Connell's work as well.

³⁸ See Pascoe and Bridges, (2016, pp. 126-127) for a more comprehensive list.

Scholars and practitioners conceptualised typologies of masculinity which seek to align with Connell's (2005) hegemonic ideal and the aforementioned 'man box' (Kivel, 1992). Literature in this area includes examination of violent (Katz, 2006; Bhana & Mayeza, 2019), hyper (Goltz, 2007; Johnson, 2015), orthodox (Anderson, 2005; Anderson & Fidler, 2018), traditional (Ratele, 2015; Rivera & Scholar, 2019), dominant (Brannon, 1976), dominating (Messerschmidt, 2006), and toxic masculinities. The 'toxic masculinity' typology has gained the most widespread traction within public discourse through the rise of the #MeToo movement and the election of Donald Trump, who has been described as espousing and role modelling toxic masculinity in the US (Salter, 2019). To a lesser extent, the concept has also been used within academic (McGinley, 2018; Rajiva, 2021) and grey literatures (Heilman & Barker, 2018).

Toxic masculinity's historical roots date back to the 1980-90s mythopoetic movement in the US (Harrington, 2021), which saw men's aggression, violence, and emotionally distant fathering as a 'sickness'. The mythopoetic movement argued that the antidote to toxic masculinity could be found through male-only gatherings and wilderness retreats where men reconnected with their 'deep masculine' self in workshops blending Jungian psychology, spirituality, nature, music, rituals, and mythologies (Salter, 2019). As will be discussed in detail later, while the movement correctly identified some problems facing men, the mythopoetics have been highly critiqued by CSMM and feminist scholars for blaming their problems on the 'feminization' of boys (Salter, 2019). This approach interprets the problem as not one of men, masculinities, and patriarchy, but rather of women, feminism, and men drifting away from their essentialised core masculine identity (Messner, 1993). Despite these non- or even anti-feminist origins, the term toxic masculinity has more recently been adopted by feminists to draw attention to and describe a broad collection of sexist, homophobic, and transphobic attitudes, beliefs, and acts of violence committed by men.

However, there has been pushback within the literature on the usage of such typologies of masculinity generally (Waling, 2019a), and toxic masculinity specifically (de Boise, 2019; Salter, 2019; Waling, 2019b; Harrington, 2021). First, there are concerns about ambiguous usage of the term. Harrington's (2021) examination of 60 academic articles using the term found the majority did not define it and instead used it as a signifier for an amalgamation of harmful masculine harmful norms and practices. Further, various scholars have noted how the term overly individualises men's violence and ignores the structural factors; is often used monolithically to describe diverse groups of men in decontextualised and ahistorical ways; falls back into binary logics of good guys and bad guys; is disproportionately used to target

racialised and marginalised men as violent 'others'; pathologises men's violence in ways that overly centre men as victims; and frames the problem as something that men passively 'catch', thus ignoring how some men actively participate in such violences (de Boise, 2019; Salter, 2019; Waling, 2019b; Harrington, 2021).³⁹ Yet, even within the critiques there are acknowledgements that the term has helped raise public awareness and can be an 'important and significant first step' in men challenging some social norms around violence, health, and inequality (Waling, 2019b, p. 367). Despite the limitations in its analytical power and the tendency for oversimplification, the term can still be an accessible entry point for EM. This might help explain why it is more commonly used in practitioner work and less so within academic scholarship.

3.3.2 Healthy Masculinities

The rise of the 'healthy' masculinities concept as an antithesis to 'toxic' ones, is also an important area of scholarship and EM practice. There are two key areas to unpack here. First, the idea of alternative masculinities affirms the capacity for masculinity to change to resist the patriarchal gender order. Second, like the toxic masculinity typologies, there has been a rise in healthy masculinity typologies sparking both hope and scepticism within the literature.

First, Connell argues that thinking about gender and masculinity as dynamic social practices and structures allows us to explore 'crisis tendencies' that cultivate capacities for change and agency within the structure itself (Connell & Pearse, 2014, p.87). Despite hegemonic masculinities' rigidity and resilience, Connell (2005, 2009) argues there is always a contest for hegemony. The potential for disruption to, or as Butler might say the 'troubling' of, masculinities within the patriarchal gender order is explored through counter hegemonic practices and the cultivation of more peaceful ways of being a man (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2004; Carabi & Armengol, 2014; Connell, 2022). Second, resistance to hegemonic masculine norms exists in gender orders around the world (Connell & Pearse, 2014). Research on the possibilities of more peaceful ways of being a man has given rise to a plethora of new typologies which may have the potential to challenge patriarchy including healthy (APA, 2019), inclusive (Anderson, 2009; McCormick, 2012), positive (Messerschmidt, 2006; Roberts-Douglass and Curtis-Boles, 2013), critical positive (Lomas, 2013), democratic (Kimmel, 1996), and caring masculinities (Elliot, 2016).

³⁹ Scholars like Waling (2019a; 2019b) have also argued that the term, and a focus on masculinity typologies more generally, overly abstracts men's violence at the expense of a clearer analysis of men's actions. Thus, the term is critiqued for both being too narrow and too broad.

Anderson's (2002, 2005, 2008) research on young men in the US showed a movement away from what he calls 'orthodox masculinity', characterised by emotional stoicism, homophobia, misogyny, and violence, towards a less homophobic and inclusive masculinity. This led to Inclusive Masculinity Theory (IMT) as a new model for societies experiencing a significant decrease in homophobia (Anderson, 2009).⁴⁰ As more heterosexual young men accept and treat homosexual young men more justly, they form more inclusive peer groups which has the effect of a 'virtuous circle of decreasing homophobia' (McCormack, 2012, p. 63).

Anderson argues inclusive masculinities are more fluid, plural, emotional, and physically affectionate and that such work can advance social change, challenge wider structures of inequality, and even an 'erosion' of patriarchy (2009).

This approach, alongside similar works within the healthy masculinity typologies, have also been critiqued (Ingram & Waller, 2014; de Boise, 2015; O'Neill, 2015). Waling (2019b) summarises the critiques by noting IMT's 'lack of engagements with women, its blatant rejection of feminism, and its inability to account for the specific contexts or conditions where transformations of masculinity can occur' (p. 364). O'Neil (2015) characterises IMT as a 'postfeminist' account and emphasises the erasure of women in Anderson's work, noting the theory only essentially engages with men's homosocial relations, as well as critiquing the overly simplistic narrative of linear progress social change which underpins Anderson's work. For O'Neil (2015), there is a particularly pernicious affective appeal embedded within the optimism of IMT's argument which, while grounded in empirical realities of positive changes in some men's homophobic beliefs, misses and perhaps misdirects away from the deeper systemic challenges that remain both in addressing systemic homophobia as well as the unaddressed relations between men and women. In more recent writing, Anderson and McCormack (2018) have clarified the limited claims IMT can make, noting 'IMT does not claim to connect the social dynamics of men with the reproduction of inequality between men and women at a cultural level' (p. 9) and that 'Recognizing social progress does not prevent challenging continued inequality – our contention is that such recognition enhances the ability to challenge the inequalities that persist' (p. 6).

While these critiques have gained traction within the CSMM field, there remains support for Anderson's work as well (e.g., Adams, 2011; Gotten & Kremer Sadlik, 2012; Borkowska, 2016). Further, the active promotion and cultivation of alternative masculinities has become

⁴⁰ IMT argues there has been a breakdown in 'homophobia' amongst young men in countries like the US. Decreased homophobia means that men no longer have to constantly prove their heterosexuality and are allowed to engage in a much wider range of emotions and behaviours.

a key point of emphasis in EM work in the US. Influential organisations like Equimundo (2022), Men Can Stop Rape (2022), and A Call to Men (2022) utilise the concept of 'healthy masculinity' in their programs as an accessible approach to engaging men in complex conversations about masculinity and violence. Indeed, Anderson (2009) and McCormick (2013) explicitly note their intention to create accessible and practical theories for those beyond academic institutions.

3.3.3 Hybrid Masculinity Debate

The tensions surfaced in the literature on toxic and healthy masculinity typologies brings forward an important debate about the extent to which such positive changes in masculinity are currently taking place, how much they indicate a challenge to MVAW and the patriarchal order, and whether the limitations of a typology approach mean we should move away from an abstracted focus on masculinities and towards what men do and the structures of inequality. Bridges and Pascoe (2014), drawing on Arxer (2011), use the term 'hybrid' masculinities to explore this point of tension in the literature. Building from Connell's relational work on hegemonic, complicit, subordinate, and marginalised masculinities, they define hybrid masculinities as 'the selective incorporation of elements of identity typically associated with various marginalised and subordinated masculinities and – at times – femininities into privileged men's gender performances and identities' (Bridge & Pascoe, 2014, p. 246). The authors note three major strands within the CSMM research on this topic. While all three agree changes in masculinity are possible, they vary in their stance on how much change is currently happening and whether such changes are indicative of a meaningful challenge to patriarchy.

First, some scholars are sceptical of the proliferation of hybrid masculinities beyond local adaptations and whether the small amount of change currently seen can have meaningful impacts in addressing MVAW (Bridge & Pascoe, 2014). This more limited approach within the literature suggests a 'positive hegemony' is possible but that, 'recent history has shown the difficulty of doing this in practice' (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 853). Second, other scholars, like Anderson, are more optimistic that transformations are occurring and that such changes indicate progress towards more equitable masculinities and gender relations. Third, Bridges and Pascoe (2014) describe researchers who believe changes are happening in meaningful numbers, but that hybrid masculinities are a product of patriarchal resilience and an example of its ability to adapt superficially without making meaningful steps towards positive change. Arguing this is the most held position, Bridges and Pascoe (2014) note,

'research on hybrid masculinities has primarily documented shifts in – rather than challenges to – systems of power and inequality' (p. 256). This is of particular concern because the authors argue that the rise in such superficial changes give the false impression of meaningful changes and thus work to perniciously conceal patriarchy and its persistent effects. This 'flexibility' of patriarchy (Johnson, 2005) echoes Messner's (1993) warning that 'Men are changing, but not in any singular manner, and not necessarily in the directions that feminist women would like' (p. 723).

In addition to the critiques of IMT noted above, Messner's (1993) research into Bly's (1990) mythopoetic movement is an illustrative example of masculinities changing to unpack. Messner argues the mythopoetic movement shows an emphasis on 'more style than substance' and efforts to change masculinity in ways that support men but that don't address men's collective dominance over women (p. 724).⁴¹ This work sought to highlight how 'traditional masculinity' negatively affected men's relationships with one another and themselves and diluted 'male energy' (Bly, 1990). However, as Messner (1993) writes, 'in focussing on how myth and ritual can reconnect men with each other, and ultimately with their own 'deep masculine' essences, Bly manages to sidestep the central point of the feminist critique – that men, as a group, benefit from a structure of power that oppresses women, as a group' (p. 729). Lingard and Douglass (1999) classify mythopoetics and similar movements as a 'masculinity therapy' response to feminism. Pleasants (2011), drawing on Schwalbe (1996), writes,

Masculinity therapy attempts to create men who can expand their range of emotions and behaviors in traditionally feminine ways without giving up their masculinity or male privilege. While some men in this movement are sympathetic to aspects of feminism, the overall movement lacks a feminist analysis and is supportive of a dominant and hegemonic version of masculinity, albeit a kinder and gentler hegemonic masculinity. (p. 231)

These insights connect to broader critiques about focusing too much on types of masculinities and not enough on holding men accountable for what they do. Macomber's (2012) work researching anti-sexist activist men showed how a focus on harmful masculinity types created an accountability gap: 'by separating "men" from "masculinity", male activists

⁴¹ Bridges and Pascoe (2014) also point to Demetriou's (2001) extension of Messner's (1993) work in employing the idea of patriarchy's 'dialectical pragmatism', meaning its ability to adapt without ceding power, even adopting 'elements of subordinated and marginalised "Others" in ways that work to recuperate existing systems of power and inequality' (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014, p. 249).

could critique the social construction of gender, but still feel good about who they were, at their core' (p. 56). Several scholars call for work to address this challenge by highlighting men's accountability (Macomber, 2015, 2018; Pease, 2018), as well as a focus on 'manhood acts' (Ezzell, 2016) 'men's interests' (Messner, 2016) or the 'hegemony of men' (Hearn, 2004) rather than masculinities. In short, these authors argue accountability is needed because change is not always meaningful or good. We do not need a softer, gentler form of masculinity, but a radical divestment from masculinity itself (Flood, 2019).

3.4 bell hooks' Patriarchal and Feminist Masculinities

While appreciative of the multiple masculinity typologies and the contesting approaches highlighted in the hybrid masculinity debates, this study turns to the work of bell hooks to build upon the previous scholarship and present an alternative feminist conceptualisation of changing masculinities. hooks' scholarship is a particularly good fit for this study because her focus is on the US context and her analysis of masculinities as socially constructed, plural, and intersectional aligns with this study's approach. Further, hooks' feminist scholarship is useful for this project on arts-integrated group education EM as a whole because it centres on three core areas overlapping with this research: engaging men in gender equality and violence prevention as essential feminist work (2004); education as a liberatory process through engaged pedagogy (1994); and drawing attention to imagination and art in feminist praxis (2000). Despite being a key feminist scholar, there is a noticeable lack of theoretical engagement with hooks' work within the literature on EM. This study's hooksian approach to EM seeks to advance the literature in this regard.

Specifically, two key concepts from hooks are useful for this study in thinking about masculinities and how they change: patriarchal masculinities and feminist masculinities (2000, 2003b, 2004). These concepts provide a constructive way forward to engage with the limitations highlighted by the scholarship on masculinity typologies. hooks affirms the dynamic ways in which men and masculinities can and are changing; keeps an intersectional feminist lens at the core of her analysis; develops concepts which simultaneously address men, masculinities, and patriarchies; and presents her work from an educationalist, activist, and scholarly perspective balancing accessibility, applicability, and theorisation. She thus outlines a clear analysis of the problem EM programs seek to address and a vision for the future they work to promote.

3.4.1 Patriarchal Masculinities

hooks' patriarchal masculinities concept is generative because rather than focusing on 'toxic' masculinity or generic invocations of 'violent' and 'dominant' masculinities she explicitly names patriarchy. In doing so, she brings forward an intersectional feminist analysis of both individual patriarchal men and cultural and structural patriarchies. First, building upon scholarship on the history of American masculinities (Brannon & David, 1976; Kimmel, 1994, 2005) and in alignment with recent research on the impact of 'man box' norms in the US (Heilman & Barker, 2017, 2018), hooks discusses patriarchal masculinities as a set of harmful individual attitudes, beliefs, and practices. These include the suppression of emotions, seeking and defending power and privilege, domination over women and other men, and the use of violence and dehumanisation to maintain dominance (2000). hooks (2004) also notes patriarchal masculinities are protected through men's collective silence in the face of sexism and MVAW. In alignment with common EM messaging (Berkowitz, 2004a), hooks (2004) argues not all men in the US uphold these norms in their daily lives – she argues many are in fact opposed to them – but all men benefit from them, are affected by them, and not enough men challenge them.

In an instructive and nuanced way, hooks writes about patriarchal masculinities as disproportionately harming women, and at the same time, also harming men (2003b). As one example, she explores how emotional expression and vulnerability are coded as effeminate and viewed as signs of weakness which must be avoided at all costs. She writes, 'There is only one emotion that patriarchy values when expressed by men; that emotion is anger' (2004, p. 7). hooks describes the first act of patriarchal violence as often inflicted by boys against themselves in a 'psychic self-mutilation' whereby they are compelled to 'kill off the emotional parts of themselves' (p. 66). Further, she also emphasises how patriarchal masculinity is experienced, perceived, and policed differently depending on men's intersectional identities (2004). hooks draws particular attention to the ways in which lower class (2000) and Black men (2003b) are systemically dehumanised and perceived as a threat in the US, regardless of whether their attitudes, beliefs, and practices are in fact violent. This layered intersectional feminist understanding of patriarchal masculinities is key for EM work and helpful for this study.

The second way hooks describes patriarchal masculinity is by focusing on patriarchies as structural arrangements. For hooks, it is impossible to critically examine MVAW without naming both men's patriarchal individual actions and patriarchies as a 'political-social

system' which hails such actions forward (hooks, 2004, p. 18). As poststructural CSMM scholars like Berggren (2020) have noted, hooks' work pays close attention to the agency and lived experiences of men whilst also retaining focus on naming, analysing, and critiquing the cultures and structures of inequality which reify and reproduce men's violences. Further, again retaining an intersectional analysis, she emphasises patriarchy as one part of an 'imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy' (2005) comprising interlocking forms of oppression.

Overall, in naming 'patriarchal masculinity', hooks demonstrates her propensity for language which 'evokes a political world that we can all frame ourselves in relationship to' (2005, p. 7). Her analysis of patriarchal masculinity is nuanced and layered – highlighting men's dominance and privileges as well as the ways they are harmed, particularly based on intersecting forms of oppression. Critical for EM programs, she also pays attention to both men's actions and inactions – their own violence and their silence or apathy in the face of other men's violence. Patriarchal masculinity is thus a more analytically useful term because, unlike other popular typologies, it draws our attention directly to an intersectional feminist analysis of patriarchy and simultaneously looks at individual men, patriarchal masculine norms, and structural arrangements of inequality.

3.4.2 Feminist Masculinities

hooks' argument against patriarchal masculinity is clear and thorough, and her hope for a more feminist-informed alternative is equally robust. In contrast to approaches which name and focus on health, positivity, or inclusion, hooks advocates for a broader and more political idea of feminist manhood or masculinity (2000). Feminist masculinity is grounded in hooks' belief that it is essential for men to join in the struggle to end patriarchy and that they should reclaim rather than abandon masculinity. First, hooks (1984) is critical of definitions of feminism which specifically exclude men. She insists men can and must embrace feminism to challenge patriarchal masculinities – starting with their own. She writes that men 'have a tremendous contribution to make to the feminist struggle in the area of exposing, confronting, opposing, and transforming the sexism of their male peers' (1984, p. 83). For hooks, feminist masculinity emerges as a vital component of individual change and a strategic part of the wider feminist movement.

Second, hooks (2004) is critical of perspectives which advocate for abandoning the concept of masculinity altogether. She fears such a stance implies masculinity is intrinsically violent

and irrevocably bad because of the violent systems within which it is embedded. In contrast, she argues that while 'reclaiming' masculinity is challenging work, it is still possible and that 'there is a creative, life-sustaining, life-enhancing place for the masculine in a non-dominant culture' (2004, p. 115). Thus, she argues that while there is nothing wrong with divesting from masculinity and gender altogether, a path forward with masculinities remains. Further, as an educator and activist, hooks returns often to the practicalities of engaging men. Feminist masculinity offers a strategic framework for imagining and practicing an alternative way of being a man. Connecting directly with this study's focus on the imaginative power of the arts, she argues feminist masculinity puts forward an important construct to imagine and work towards, because,

How can you become what you cannot imagine? As is often the case in revolutionary movements for social justice we are better at naming the problem than we are at envisioning the solution. (hooks, 1984, p. 70)

Across various books (1984, 2000, 2003b, 2004) hooks writes about feminist masculinity as men's engagement with emotion rather than suppression, empathy and action rather than apathy and silence, building community rather than rigid individualism, and a commitment to mutuality and interdependence rather than dominance – through a feminist ethic of love rather than violence and aggression. For hooks, love is a verb, a process of change rooted in challenging systems of domination within individuals and within societies at large (1999). This approach contrasts starkly with mythopoetic masculinity which she criticises as 'benevolent patriarchy' (hooks, 2000). In search of 'real masculinity', mythopoetic masculinity has changed masculine norms positively in some ways while refusing to cede control, address MVAW, or to work towards social and structural change (2000, p. 113).

For hooks, it is not enough for individual men to say they are feminist. Feminist masculinity is a call for collective action. As Almassi (2015) writes, 'the extent to which we are succeeding in living up to feminist masculinity norms will be evidenced by what we have done and what we are doing, not by what we want to call ourselves' (p. 18).⁴² This call for a focus on men's practices aligns with hooks' broader vision of feminism and feminist masculinity as a constant and collective action for social change. Feminist masculinity is thus a way of being, not just a personal belief or set of characteristics (Herr et al., 2023). It is a set of individual

⁴² Almassi (2015) provides a helpful comparison when he notes, 'It is not enough for men to see or to describe themselves as feminist allies in order to meet feminist masculinity norms, any more than it would be enough to see or to describe oneself as trustworthy or generous in order to meet the norms of trust or generosity' (p. 18).

and collective values and practices which requires men to be 'disloyal to patriarchal masculinity' (hooks, 2004, p. 115).

Further, in emphasising the need for collective action she writes, 'even if individual men divested of patriarchal privilege the system of patriarchy, sexism, and male domination would still remain intact, and women would still be exploited and/or oppressed' (2000, p. 67). Thus, feminist masculinity is a part of a wider system of change – it is a collective work in progress, not something you are, a badge you receive, or something one ever fully achieves. Like patriarchal masculinity, feminist masculinity operates on multiple levels. Feminist masculinity highlights men's practices, attitudes, and beliefs, feminist values and norms, and an alternative social-political arrangements grounded in hooks' definition of feminism as a visionary and revolutionary social movement.

Lastly, for hooks, this work is not an exercise in wishful thinking. Feminist masculinities are a political act of resistance rooted in a revolutionary feminist movement for change. hooks (2014) writes that, 'to be truly visionary we have to root our imagination in our concrete reality while simultaneously imagining possibilities beyond that reality' (p. 110). While scholars have rightly critiqued the oversimplification of feminist theory and use of simplistic typologies such as toxic and healthy masculinity for engaging men (O'Neil, 2015; Waling, 2019a), I argue hooks' work strikes a generative balance. Her explorations of feminist and patriarchal masculinities are rooted in a core feminist analysis yet conceptualised and communicated through a feminist praxis which is rigorous and accessible. hooks has critiqued what she calls a turn towards increasingly esoteric and exclusionary scholarship, noting that, 'rather than breaking down structures of domination, such theory is often employed to promote academic elitism which embraces traditional structure of domination' (1989, p. 36). hooks' scholarship is thus important to this project both for its substance and how it is represented, with an understanding of accessibility and rigour as compatible and necessary goals. When employing hooks' work, it is essential to keep a critical eye out for 'what is lost in the process' (Waling, 2019, p. 371) of a more accessible approach and a general concern for avoiding work that only superficially changes masculinities, while failing to address the wider issues of structural violence (Messner, 1993). Nonetheless, hooks' work offers a promising path forward for EM work and the complex process of reimagining masculinities useful for this study's analysis.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the way I understand gender, masculinities, and their capacity for change in this study. Why and how masculinities change is essential for EM programs which seek to prevent MVAW and the many harms stemming from men's gendered violences. This chapter draws on a constellation of social theories, feminist perspectives, and debates within the CSMM literature to unpack this key issue. This chapter also brought forward a historical example in the mythopoetic movement that illuminates some of the limitations and risks of masculinity typologies that drift away from feminist analysis. In response, I argue that bell hooks' concepts of patriarchal and feminist masculinities are analytically useful, currently under-utilised within EM scholarship, and practically applicable to this specific study. hooks' work is well-suited to address the multiplicity of men's violences in the US (2003b, 2004), the centrality of men's power and control over women within what she calls a patriarchal 'dominator culture' (1981, 1984, 2000), and the importance of men's homosocial peer groups in reinforcing patriarchy (2003b, 2004). Further, her work on challenging patriarchal masculinity and reclaiming feminist masculinity within an intersectional analysis of MVAW provides a robust framework for not only addressing the complexity of MVAW as presented in the previous chapter, but also thinking about ways to challenge and transform it through revolutionary and visionary feminist work with men. This study explores how the arts might help further such work in EM programs. The next chapter will explore the field of EM, the rationale and potential of using the arts, and further unpack my application of hooks' work to arts-integrated EM programs.

Chapter 4: Engaging Men

Approaches and Evidence of Effectiveness

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the field of EM and focuses on primary prevention group education programs like the ones examined in this research. Further, it reviews the literature on effective practices in men's initial engagement, deepening engagement, as well as men's resistance and challenges. Subsequently, I synthesise four key points from the EM literature which emphasise positive engagement approaches and alternative masculinities frameworks; pedagogies and curricula which engage what men think, feel, and do; approaches that engage men personally and relationally within their peer groups and relationships; and the importance of a feminist foundation in this work. These key points constructed from literature align with my use of hooks' (2004) approach to engaging men and feminist masculinities and help guide this study. This chapter is divided into three main sections; first, an overview of the EM field; second, a review of research on effectiveness, engagement, resistance, and challenges; and third, an outline and discussion of my synthesis of the literature and how it supports this study.

4.2 Engaging Men

Preventing MVAW and addressing patriarchal masculinities requires a range of interventions. Firstly, centring women and LGBTQIA+ people who experience men's gendered violence is essential (True, 2021). An increasingly popular complementary approach has been to work directly with boys and men as allies in gender equality and violence prevention efforts (Berkowitz, 2004a; Casey et al., 2013; Messner et al., 2015; Ricardo, 2015; Funk, 2018). Edstrom et al.'s (2015) review of the global EM field reveals an array of foci including work with boys and men on fatherhood and care work, education, sexual and reproduction health and rights, legal, political, and policy work, economic justice, racial justice, LGBTQIA+ rights, and gendered violence including both state-level peace and security work and interpersonal MVAW.

Calls to work with men specifically on issues of MVAW have increased since the 1990s internationally and in the US. As USAID (2015) notes, 'It is now widely accepted that strategies to end violence against women and girls must include work with men and boys' (p. 16). Efforts in this area seek to engage, educate, organise, and mobilise men for individual and social change (Funk, 2018). Trends in feminist and public health scholarship point towards the importance of engaging all men through 'primary prevention', not just focusing on those identified as perpetrators or at risk of perpetration (Flood, 2019). This approach seeks to prevent men from committing violence themselves, supporting them in stopping and preventing other men's violence, and challenging what Berkowitz (2004a) calls, 'the root causes of men and boys' violence, including social and structural ones' (p. 2).

Casey et al. (2018) categorises primary prevention EM activities into three interconnected domains: 1) initial outreach and recruitment with unengaged men and boys; 2) attitude and behaviour change interventions; and 3) ongoing participation in social action. Common forms of EM work include face-to-face or online education programs, social marketing and publicity campaigns, community mobilising activism and organising work, and more targeted policy change and reform efforts (Berkowitz, 2004a; Carlson et al., 2015). The most common EM interventions, and the subject of this research, are group education programming (Flood, 2011a, 2011b). While this study focuses on formal programs, EM also includes the informal everyday interactions, actions, and activism of boys and men as a valuable component of social change. The content in EM work covers a range of topics including gender and masculinity, men's violence, privilege, and power, prosocial behaviour, relationships, and consent (Berkowitz, 2004b). Programs range in duration from one-time educational events to immersive multi-month learning programs; from time-limited social media awareness raising campaigns to ongoing social advertising efforts; and from singular political rallies to sustained movements for social change (Flood, 2019).

EM programs work with boys and men of all ages, although an emphasis on preventing violence before it happens points towards the importance of working specifically with boys and younger men. EM programs can be gender-inclusive (people of all genders participate), gender-exclusive (only men participate), or gender synchronised (a combination of approaches). The literature is mixed over which approach is most effective but generally leans towards gender synchronisation (Flood, 2010; Ricardo et al., 2011; Greig, 2018). Programs that work only with men can be a strategic and vital first step that creates spaces where men feel more comfortable sharing and speaking about these issues (Flood, 2011). However, it is important that these efforts also eventually include gender inclusive work, do

not over-prioritise men, and bring women's voices and experiences into the work with men (Marchese, 2008).⁴³ Research on the impact of the facilitator's gender reveals similar findings, noting there are some situations where having men teach and role model for other men can be strategic and effective, particularly in introductory contexts, while also stressing the importance of men learning from and with women and gender diverse people (Ricardo et al., 2011).

Scholarship and practice in this area strongly emphasise there is no one-size-fits-all approach to EM. As Casey et al. (2013) note, context and the 'local cultural, political, economic, and social structures' are essential to understanding the challenges and opportunities of such programming (p. 235). Connecting back to theories of masculinities, the work must also be responsive to the diversity amongst men (White & Peretz, 2010; Alcalde, 2014; Peacock & Barker, 2014). An intersectional lens is essential to the 'involvement, commitment, and effectiveness' of men in this work and in countering reductionist understandings of men, masculinities, and EM as a white, cis-gender, and heteronormative movement and practice (Peretz, 2017, p. 544). While EM focuses on MVAW, it also often addresses men's broader gendered violences by exploring the common causes that link them (Kaufman, 1987). This consideration of violence can also be extended to consider how EM focuses on violence and gender and takes into account racism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of structural inequality and violence.

4.2.1 Rationale

Flood (2011a) argues that the feminist rationale for EM is strong. First, as noted in the previous chapters, most VAW is committed by men, meaning it is men who need to change (Black et al., 2010; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Second, certain harmful norms associated with masculinities, particularly those espousing control over women, rigid gender roles, and sexist and violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours, play a pivotal role in driving MVAW (Flood & Pease, 2009; Heilman & Barker, 2018) – meaning it is patriarchal masculinities as well as men which need to change. And third, EM is based on the idea that all men can and should play a more positive, proactive, and strategic role in the vital efforts to end this violence (Berkowitz, 2004a; Kaufman, 2019). This does not mean that women and gender non-binary people should not also be engaged or that people of all genders cannot promote and practice behaviours which contribute to MVAW and patriarchal masculinities (hooks,

⁴³ EM should be one component of a larger context that complements direct efforts with men, women, and gender diverse people to 'create synergistic effects that will accelerate shifts in social norms and gender relations' (Flood, 2011, p. 263).

2004). However, historically, men as a group have been disproportionately absent and unaccounted for in efforts to prevent MVAW (Katz, 2006). EM works to disrupt this status quo of men's violence, silence, and complicity, and encourages them to support women's leadership, activism, and scholarship. Flood's (2011a) three-part rationale points away from biologically essentialist arguments that men are inherently violent and towards work grounded in a feminist social constructionist approach to masculinities which sees the possibilities for, and necessity of, men changing.

4.2.2 Feminist Foundations

Not all EM work is feminist. However, a great majority of efforts aspire to be (Flood, 2015), including the programs examined in this study. Research on the history of men's reactions to feminism in the US shows a range of perspectives from conservative anti-feminist backlash, to masculinist, masculinity therapy, and mythopoetic resistance to feminism and the 'feminization' of men, to varying degrees of feminist and 'pro-feminist' support and solidarity (Kimmel, 1987; Kimmel & Mossmiller, 1992; Lingard & Douglas, 1999). This thesis focuses on the latter, men's feminist/pro-feminist work. Messner et al.'s (2015) examination of 52 North American groups reveal three distinct 'cohorts' of men's feminism/pro-feminism over the past half century starting with grass-roots social activism in the 1970s, moving towards more intersectional analysis and engagement with diverse groups of men in the 80s, and finally the global 'professionalization' of the field in the 90s onwards as more governments and NGOs became involved in EM work.

Drawing on the National Organization of Men Against Sexism (NOMAS), an early influential North American group, Flood (2019) distils three core ideas behind a feminist-informed approach to EM in preventing MVAW. First, the work must be grounded in a feminist analysis. Second, the work must seek to enhance the lives of boys and men. And third, the work must be intersectional in the ways it engages with men from diverse backgrounds and in its analysis of how MVAW intersects with other forms of violence. MenEngage's (2022) core principles align with and expand upon these foundations by emphasising: 1) Women's rights and gender justice, 2) Intersectional feminism, 3) Human rights for all, 4) Disrupting and ending patriarchy, 5) Engaging the many diversities amongst sex, gender, and sexuality, 6) Addressing racism individually and structurally, 7) Believing in the capability of men and boys to change and support gender justice, 8) Decolonising the systems, practices, values, and mindsets of this work, 9) Beginning transformation by looking within, and 10)

Maintaining accountability for words, actions, and decisions. This study focuses on feminist-informed EM work which aligns with the above-mentioned principles.

4.2.3 Prevention Frameworks

In the 1990s, aligning with the rise of the ‘professional cohort’ (Messner et al., 2015), there was a flurry of key UN-facilitated commitments towards addressing MVAW around the world (e.g., UNFPA, 1994; WHO, 1996).⁴⁴ This also marks the start of a key trend in MVAW work – the ‘public health turn’. In the field of EM, public health frameworks have played an influential and contested role. There are four key frameworks that are widely used in the field of EM and that are relevant to this study’s examination of MVAW as a problem requiring ‘multi-systems, multi-layered approach to organising change strategies’ (Carlson et al., 2015, p. 3). These frameworks help clarify who EM programs work with and how individual and structural change are connected.

First, the prevention pyramid divides EM work into three categories: tertiary, secondary, and primary. Tertiary prevention happens after violence takes place and seeks to hold perpetrators accountable, support survivors, and prevent violence from happening again. Secondary prevention works with those identified as being at-risk of perpetration or those experiencing increased vulnerabilities to violence. Primary prevention works with the general population and seeks to address the many causes and contexts that produce violence. Primary prevention seeks to prevent violence from ever happening in the first place. (Berkowitz 2004a; Flood, 2011a; Carlson et al., 2015). Most EM work in the US, and all the programs in this study, focus on EM in primary prevention.

Second, the social-ecological model conceptualises how various levels of the social environment (i.e., individual, relational, institutional, and societal) work together to impact and reinforce human behaviour and social problems. Originally developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and later applied to MVAW by Heise (1998), this model has become influential in EM work and is used by key organisations like Promundo (2010) and Our Watch (2021). This model is used in EM in two ways. First, the model is used to conceptualise MVAW. The ecological model helps show the complex factors driving the perpetration of men’s violence across the various levels of the social environment. This approach pushes back on overly individualised and psychologised explanations of MVAW

⁴⁴ These global meetings are emblematic of larger efforts and successes of the feminist movement in bringing the issue of MVAW into the spotlight (Flood, 2019).

and shows how individual acts of perpetration exist within a more complex series of gendered and non-gendered direct, cultural, and structural factors (Flood, 2011a; Casey et al., 2013).

EM also uses the model to conceptualise multi-level violence prevention activities and strategies. EM seeks to work across the individual, relational, communal, institutional, and societal levels to simultaneously address and transform sexist and violent practices, norms, and structures that drive MVAW. Such work requires coordination and multiple approaches in efforts to influence individuals, peer groups, organisations, communities, broader institutions and systems, and eventually society itself (Casey et al., 2013). The programs researched in this study mostly focus on work addressing individual, relational, and communal levels. However, as the model makes clear, such work must also be in coordination with and aware of the impact of larger institutional and societal levels.

A third key framework, the violence prevention spectrum, presents a helpful way to consider coordinated multi-level prevention work in practice (Cohen & Chehimi, 2010; Carlson et al., 2015). The prevention spectrum was originally developed by Davis et al. (2006) and outlines six key levels of intervention to address social problems. Flood (2011a) adapted this framework to address MVAW. He outlines how EM work can focus on: 1) strengthening individual knowledge and skills; 2) promoting community education; 3) educating providers and other professionals; 4) engaging, strengthening, and mobilising communities; 5) changing organisational practices; and 6) influencing policies and legislation. This research examines the role of arts-integrated programs with men and thus mostly focuses on the first three levels. However, like the social-ecological analysis, it is essential to consider the ways that such work is affected by the broader levels of institutional and societal change as well.

Fourth, the gender equality continuum developed by Gupta (2000) has been a particularly influential framework to categorise the ways in which EM work addresses gender practices, norms, and structures (Carlson et al., 2015; Casey et al., 2018). Gupta (2000) identifies programmes that: 1) reinforce gender stereotypes and exploit harmful gender norms and relations; 2) remain neutral or blind to the impact of gender on violence; 3) encourage a gender-sensitive approach by attending to the differing needs of people of diverse genders; 4) work to transform gender roles and relationships towards equality; and 5) empower women and men to resist patriarchal gender norms. Gupta (2000) outlines this continuum as one working towards 'progress' and identifies the latter two stages as the only ones which

address the deeper roots of gender inequality and violence by examining individual attitudes, social norms, and institutional structures.

UNFPA and Promundo (2010) adapted this framework to be used in EM with the latter two stages of Gupta's original framework condensed into the gender transformative approach; which in turn became a standard for the field of EM (Carlson et al., 2015; Casey et al., 2018). Gender transformative programs in the EM context challenge individual men's patriarchal practices, patriarchal masculine norms, and the patriarchal system of gender rooted in binaries, hierarchy, and power. Flood (2014) argues that these programs help promote alternative masculinities, and at the same time, encourage 'divestment in gendered identities and boundaries' (p. 5). Transformative approaches are effective because they identify MVAW as a gendered personal and structural social problem (Carlson et al., 2015) and because they offer an alternative path forward that stresses the need for change (Casey et al., 2018). Thus, gender transformative approaches fit squarely with this project's understanding of MVAW as individual, cultural, and structural and this study's emphasis on moving from patriarchal to feminist masculinities in the EM context.

4.2.4 Prevention and Feminist Tensions

While these prevention frameworks are used extensively by key EM organisations in the US and around the world, some scholars have raised concerns about the risks and limitations of this public health-informed lens. Most notably, Pease (2014, 2019) brings forward several key concerns. First, he argues public health approaches built around prevention science tend to individualise and pathologise the problem of MVAW through epidemiological language that alludes to men's violence as a 'sickness' that some men 'catch'. This is problematic because, 'violence is not an illness or a disease, but a behaviour and a social phenomenon' (Pease, 2019, p. 18). Further, this approach risks drawing attention away from the ways in which men choose to use violence as a form of gaining and maintaining power that materially benefits them.

Second, Pease (2014, 2019) cautions that public health and social ecological discourses decentre a feminist analysis of patriarchy and risk depoliticising the EM movement. Messner et al. (2015) have noted similar concerns around the professionalisation of EM largely influenced by the rise of public health related funding and jobs. Furthermore, Pease (2019), as well as scholars like Confortini (2006) and Hunnicutt (2009), caution against models which treat gender as just 'another variable' rather than a central organising factor. Third,

Pease (2014, 2019) draws attention to the risk of prevention heuristics that try to organise complex social systems into over-simplistic concentric circles. He argues this simplification may appeal to funders and policy makers, but it conceals the complex and sometimes contradictory work of untangling patriarchy's impact on society. This point echoes Waling's (2019a) caution about the use of typologies of masculinity and the questioning of 'what is lost in the process' of simplification (p. 371).

Other scholars agree with Pease's insistence on keeping feminism at the core of EM but disagree with his position of its incompatibility with prevention frameworks. Scholars like Meyer and Post (2006) argue for 'feminist ecological models' or as Flood (2019) notes a 'feminist critical public health prevention' approach. Further feminist practitioner organisations like Promundo (2010) and the leading US and global network, MenEngage (2022) argue practitioners can integrate insights from public health framework frameworks while retaining Pease's (2019) call for an intersectional feminist focus. As Our Watch's (2021) latest conceptual work shows, an ecological model can centre a feminist-informed structural analysis of gender inequality, men's power and control, peer group dynamics, and social norms, whilst also paying attention to multi-layered gendered and non-gendered compounding and non-linear factors. I take Pease's (2014, 2019) critiques seriously, but also believe it is possible to engage constructively with the limitations and risks he has noted without abandoning the insights gained from this body of work. Hence, this study draws on prevention work as complementary lens to support a feminist analysis in ways that engage with hooks' approach to patriarchal practices, masculinities, and structures.

4.3 Effectiveness, Engagement, Resistance, and Challenges

4.3.1 Programmatic Approaches

Building upon a feminist foundation and prevention frameworks, group education programs work to equip men with knowledge, skills, and communities of support and accountability to challenge their own sexism and use of violence, to help address other men's violence, and to proactively work to support gender equality and feminist ideas of masculinity. Programs work to achieve this in five key ways: fostering empathy, bystander intervention, addressing social norms, promoting alternative masculinities, and mobilising social action.

First, programs work to foster men's empathy and understanding of the harms of MVAW to people of all genders (Berkowitz, 2004b). This is the foundational layer of learning in most

EM efforts. Second, EM works to promote proactive bystander behaviours where men are trained how to speak up when they hear sexist jokes or harmful gender stereotypes and to intervene in cases where they witness men's violence (Berkowitz, 2002, 2004b; Fischer et al., 2011; Flood 2011a, 2011c). Bystander approaches are particularly popular in the US context (e.g., Mentors in Violence Prevention). Research studies have shown these programs can promote increased prosocial behaviour in men and decreased violence and sexist supportive attitudes (Banyard et al., 2007; Cissner, 2009).

Third, EM programs examine men's broader socialisation through work informed by social norms theory. This approach examines how men are socialised into violence supportive attitudes and behaviors as well as sexist and homophobic ones (Berkowitz, 2004b, 2004b). These programs work to specifically challenge men's misconceptions about other men's perceptions of masculinities and violence (Berkowitz, 2004b; 2004c; 2005; Carlson et al., 2015; Flood, 2011a). For example, research shows that men often overestimate their male peers' acceptance of sexist and violence supportive norms (Berkowitz, 2002, 2004b; Kimlartin et al., 2008; Flood, 2011a, 2011b). This approach argues that correcting these misconceptions supports men in being more confident in speaking out and acting to challenge MVAW. This in turn could support new social norms within peer groups which could positively influence other men (Berkowitz, 2004b).

Fourth, EM promotes alternative masculinities (Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Jewkes et al., 2011). Taliep et al.'s (2017) meta-synthesis of 12 intervention programs and 23 studies notes, 'the promotion of positive forms of masculinity as an interpersonal violence prevention strategy is a much-needed' (p. 2). As was discussed in the previous chapter, this approach is commonly used by key US-based EM organisations through the promotion of healthy and positive masculinities and connects directly to my use of hooks' idea of feminist masculinities. While this study examines programs that use all the approaches listed above, this one is of particular importance regarding how the arts are used EM. This point will be addressed in more detail in the following chapter.

The fifth key area involves the promotion of 'men's social action' towards addressing the structural, social, and political dimension of MVAW (Casey et al., 2018). Programs work to help organise and mobilise men towards social activism by encouraging and supporting their social and political involvement outside and beyond the specific EM group program itself. Various scholars have noted the importance of connecting individual change within workshops to broader organisation and mobilisation for structural change (Pease, 2008; Pease & Flood, 2008; Peacock & Barker, 2014; Edstrom et al., 2015; COFEM, 2017; Greig,

2018; Greig & Flood, 2020). This point shows the ways in which prevention frameworks utilised in EM programs seek to conceptualise individual, social norms, and structural changes as intersecting and overlapping dimensions of work.

4.3.2 Evidence of Effectiveness

Four key meta-evaluation studies in the past 15 years have sought to better understand the impact and effectiveness of EM programs like the ones described above (Barker et al., 2007; Ricardo et al., 2011; Dworkin et al., 2013; Jewkes et al., 2015). These studies show that well-designed programs can and do shift men's sexist, harmful, and violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours. However, this research also reveals mixed results overall, an emphasis on attitudinal change over behavioural ones, and an insufficient quality and quantity of evaluations (Berkowitz, 2004a; Flood, 2014, 2019). As Jewkes et al. (2014) write, 'rigorous evaluations are few, their geographical base narrow, and the interventions evaluated have often been weak' (p. 4).

Meta-Evaluation Studies on the Effectiveness of Engaging Men
Barker et al. (2007) reviewed 58 evaluations of programs working with boys and men and found some programs were successful in promoting attitude and behaviour change including decreased self-reported use of physical, sexual, or psychological violence in intimate partnerships, more equitable treatment of partners and children, and healthier communication with partners. Of the 58 programs, 29% were categorised as effective, 33% as promising, and 38% as unclear at changing attitudes and behaviour.
Ricardo et al. (2011) analysed 65 programs and noted some minor successful behaviour changes and more promising successes in attitude changes in boys and men. Very few programs in the review attempted to measure behaviour change and of those, only 8 resulted in clear progress. Attitudinal changes were more successful with programs demonstrating improvements in attitudes toward violence, rigid gender roles, acceptance of rape myths, and pro-social behaviour.
Dworkin et al. (2013) conducted a systematic review of 15 studies, eight of which focused specifically on reducing violence and MVAW and 12 of which evaluated changes in gender norms amongst male participants. In violence prevention, six of the eight studies reported 'statistically significant' declines in perpetration of MVAW. In the studies addressing gender norms 11 of the 12 found at least 'some statistically significant

changes in psychosocial outcomes in a positive direction' (p. 2856). Overall, this analysis found that gender transformative approaches demonstrated evidence of declines in sexual-risk behaviour, perpetration of violence, and inequitable gender attitudes (p. 2861).

Jewkes et al. (2015) identified 65 studies, the majority of which took place in high-income countries and in school contexts. Of the 65, only eight studies were classified as 'strong' using the Cochrane Collaboration Bias Selection tool. The analysis indicates that effective programs were longer-term and utilised a gender transformative approach. However, the authors note that the overall evidence for this work is thin, focused on attitudes, and often much weaker at measuring change in violence perpetration and larger social norms.

Table 2: Engaging Men Meta-Evaluation Studies

While these studies provide useful analysis and perspectives on the effectiveness of EM programs, it is important to also acknowledge the challenges and limitations of attempts to fully 'measure' MVAW and EM efforts (Flood, 2019). This point connects back to Pease's (2019) arguments about the risk of an over-reliance on public health scholarship in EM and the positivist assumptions which commonly undergird it. As will be discussed in further detail in the methodology chapter, this study is grounded in a social constructionist epistemological approach. However, I also seek to better understand and speak back to diverse scholar/practitioner perspectives in the EM field, including those from more positivist public health backgrounds such as some of the studies above.

Building on these meta-evaluation studies, the next section engages more research from the broader EM literature to better illuminate how group education EM programs are understood including initial engagement (why men join EM programmes) and deepening engagement (what effective programs look like once men are in the room). Afterwards, I examine the literature on men's resistances and overall challenges for the EM field.

4.3.3 Initial Engagement

Research on why men become initially involved in EM programmes and activism examines how to best make the case to men and reveals four key themes. First, personal and emotional connections or 'sensitising experiences' based on knowing someone directly

impacted by MVAW or having witnessed or experienced violence oneself can be a major contributing factor to men's involvement (Pleasants, 2011; Piccigallo et al., 2012; Carlson et al., 2015; Funk, 2018; Greig, 2018). Casey and Smith (2010) found that 92% of men interviewed for a study on anti-violence work had a personal sensitising experience. Casey et al.'s (2018) work with men's anti-violence activists noted the importance of both hearing emotionally impactful stories about MVAW from survivors and personal experience with men's violence directly. Alcalde's (2014) research also emphasises the importance of an intersectional analysis here and shows that men's own experiences with racism and homophobia may inspire their work to become involved with EM work. As Casey et al. (2018) note, 'the relationship between men's multiple and intersectional identities, men's own experiences of marginalisation, and relevant GBV prevention recruitment strategies is an emerging and important line of inquiry' (p. 236).

Second, having positive peer or mentor role model support and using peer networks is key to engaging men (Coulter, 2003; Carlson et al., 2015; Casey et al., 2018; Greig, 2018). Piccigallo et al. (2012) found 84% of men in a sexual violence program were influenced by positive peer support. Positive role modelling from other men with social capital can be very influential and impactful for young men (Katz, 2006; Kimmel, 2008; Carlson et al., 2015). Flood's (2019) review indicates the importance of both identifying role models and pointing towards accountable communities of support for men engaging in this work. Further, a supportive community is a valuable place to address men's fears of being or saying something 'wrong' while they learn, and more broadly addressing men's fear of other men (Flood, 2019). Third, men who were able to connect MVAW prevention work to issues of social justice and equality were more likely to engage (Funk, 2008; Flood, 2010; Carlson et al., 2015). EM is more effective when it can connect MVAW to the larger systems of social inequality and oppression, focusing on both the personal and the structural dimensions (Flood, 2014). As Flood (2019) notes, this work involves appealing to broader human rights values and connected common struggles for equality.

Fourth, men tend to engage more when they are treated as partners with opportunities for positive contribution (Berkowitz, 2002; 2004a; Flood, 2011b; Casey et al., 2018). Carlson et al.'s (2015) interviews with 28 EM professionals found that intentional invitations to men and providing concrete opportunities for positive work supported men's initial and long-term engagement. Further, Flood (2019) argues that approaches that provide men with specific accessible resources and start with small steps (with clear frameworks for increasing and deepening involvement later) can help 'make the case' to men. This finding connects to an overall 'positive' approach to EM rooted in 'hopefulness' about men's capacity to change

(Casey et al., 2018; Grieg, 2018). Flood (2011a) identifies the importance of a ‘men-changing’ approach, rather than a ‘changing-men’ one. Changing-men views men as targets that must be moulded and reformed. Men-changing positions men as active agents willing and capable of change and positive contributions. A changing-men positive approach also connects to the importance of encouraging counter-narratives (Flood, 2019), promoting alternative masculinities (Taliep et al., 2017), and providing a vision for change (hooks, 2004; Greig, 2020).

4.3.4 Deepening Engagement

Once initially engaged, research on EM reveals a series of effective practices that can help deepen engagement. Looking specifically at group education programming, the literature stresses the importance of EM work being informed, engaging, relevant, and comprehensive (Flood, 2019). First, programs should be informed, using relevant research and sound theoretical frameworks (Berkowitz, 2004a; Flood, 2011a). As this thesis has shown, there is an emphasis here on a robust feminist foundational analysis of gender, masculinities, and MVAW as well as the use of public health informed prevention frameworks. Second, scholarship emphasises the importance of engaging men's work actually being *engaging* – meaning it is both well-designed and well-taught (Berkowitz, 2004a; Flood, 2011a). Facilitators should be well-trained, and pedagogy should address cognitive, affective, and behavioural realms of what men know, feel, and do (Dyson & Flood, 2009; Flood et al., 2009). In particular, interactive, experiential, and participatory pedagogies (Heppner et al., 1995; Berkowitz, 2004a; Humphrey et al., 2008; Carmody et al., 2009; Dyson & Flood 2009; Flood et al., 2009; Greig, 2018) are helpful in deepening engagement and engaging with men's emotional attachment to patriarchy and resistance to the work (Pease, 2011, 2013; Flood, 2019). As Berkowitz (2004a) notes, the opportunity to ‘share real feelings and concerns about issues of masculinity and men's violence’ (p. 5) is an essential element of these programs.

Third, as already noted, programs must be relevant and responsive to the local context (Berkowitz, 2004a; Flood, 2011; 2018). Casey et al. (2018) notes the importance of using locally relevant hooks to start the conversation. Berkowitz (2004a) emphasises that ‘providing culturally competent programming should not be considered optional but is a necessity for effectiveness’ (p. 5). And fourth programs should be comprehensive, providing a sufficient duration, using multiple strategies in multiple settings on multiple levels to engage men. This final point connects to a broader ‘whole-of-institution’ approach that seeks

to engage individual men as well as other key actors and to address wider institutional factors within given settings (Jewkes et al., 2015).

4.3.5 Resistance

Researchers examining men's attitudes towards gender equality and violence prevention in the US also reveal a series of themes that help reveal why some men do not participate in this work. First, men may feel unfairly cast as perpetrators or potential perpetrators and do not feel welcome (Katz, 2006; Flood, 2011b; Crooks et al., 2017). Framing all men as perpetrators can lead to defensiveness, guilt, and shame that manifest as barriers to men's involvement in preventive efforts (Berkowitz, 2002, 2004a; Flood, 2015). Grieg and Flood (2020) outline how such framing can have the unintended backlash effect of worsening men's attitudes on the issue and increasing their belief in rape myths.

Second, men do not believe that MVAW is an issue that has relevance to their own lives (Katz, 2006). MVAW is sometimes framed as a 'women's issue' (Rich et al., 2010). It can also be framed as an issue for 'bad guys', for example just those who physically abuse their partners. This simplistic logic holds that if you do not hit women, you are a 'good guy' and you don't need EM work. Further, some men believe that participating in EM programs will make them seem less masculine or homosexual (Crooks et al., 2007; Katz, 2006; Flood, 2011b). Sexist and homophobic norms associated with patriarchal masculinity prevent men from engaging and promote apathetic responses to MVAW (Flood, 2011b).

Third, some men believe the problem of MVAW has been exaggerated (Crooks et al., 2007). Compared to college women, college men disproportionately believe in 'rape myths' (Bohmer & Parrot, 1993; Diemer, 2014; Rich et al., 2010). Burt (1980) defines rape myths as the prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists that create a climate hostile to rape victims. Rape myths continue to perpetuate harmful ideas that place unwarranted doubt on victims and contribute to a culture where men believe the claims of MVAW are exaggerated or concocted from ulterior motives (Reling et al., 2018).

Fourth, men are unwilling to admit or recognise their male privilege and entitlement (Flood, 2015; Kimmel, 2013). Pleasants (2011) found 'men's resistance is often unconscious, enacted despite their stated openness and interest in learning feminism' (p. 248). Pleasants' study also documents men's discourses concerning self, progress, and authority through which the men worked to 'protect and reify their male privileges' (p. 248). Lastly and

importantly, men interact with peer groups, live in communities, and are influenced by structures and cultures that do not support their involvement (hooks, 2004; Casey & Smith, 2010; Funk, 2018). Men's individual choices of resistance are a product of their social environments. Thus, while these forms of resistance are framed in individual characteristics and practices, it is essential for this study to continuously place them within a wider cultural and structural analysis.

4.3.6 Challenges and Tensions

Reviews of meta-evaluation studies and research into men's resistance to EM work also reveals some key tensions within this work. This section outlines three key challenges and limitations. First, Flood (2019) cautions that working with men is a 'delicate form of political activity' because it involves mobilising a privileged group in the process of subverting that same privilege (p. 91). Casey et al.'s (2013) interviews with activists similarly reveal the challenges of 'dismantling' a problem from within. As hooks (2004) notes, doing so requires men to become 'disloyal' to patriarchal masculinity while still living within a system that demands and rewards men's allegiance. Precisely because of the precarity of this work, scholars have noted the importance of framing EM work in feminist principles and practices of accountability. It is important to reiterate that work with men is a complement, not a replacement, to work with women and gender diverse people in addressing men's violence (Jewkes et al., 2015; Casey et al., 2018). Several scholars have noted the complex and sometimes contested relationship between EM work and women's feminist organisations and movements (Macomber, 2012; COFEM, 2017; Burrell, 2018; Grieg & Flood, 2020). For example, Pease (2008) argues EM risks 'diluting' and 'depoliticising' the larger feminist movement to end MVAW by focusing too much on meeting men where they are and not enough on holding them accountable for change.

Moreover, other scholars highlight the potentially problematic use of normative ideas of masculinity in efforts to engage men (Fleming et al., 2014; Jewkes et al., 2015; Casey et al., 2018). Flood (2015) and Salter (2016) examine the risks of invoking ideas such as 'real men don't hit women' or 'men of strength don't use violence' that have been used by prominent EM programs in the US. By attempting to appeal to men using traditional stereotypes of masculinity, such efforts risk unintentionally reinforcing gender binaries rather than deconstructing them. Thus, it is important to carefully frame alternatives to patriarchal masculinity in a way that is both accessible and transformative (Waling, 2019a). Funk (2018) points out that by employing problematic strategies for the sake of trying to engage men,

there is a risk that EM programs start to confuse the ends and the means. By this he means, EM programs define success by getting men involved and not by actually preventing MVAW and addressing patriarchal masculinities.

Further, there are concerns that some men are given disproportionate praise and attention for doing the same things women were already doing (Berkowitz, 2004a; Flood, 2016, 2017; Macomber, 2012, 2015). Peretz (2008) calls this the 'pedestal effect' and shows how as a result, some men may end up taking over campaigns, taking up too much space, and diminishing women-focused efforts to address violence. Macomber's (2012) research on US-based EM programs also reveals the ways that accountability is often an abstract idea rather than a set of principles and practices within this work and how it is women, rather than fellow men, who end up having to enforce such standards. The MenEngage accountability standards (2022) seek to address this and provide a framework for making accountability tangible and the responsibility of men.

Related to accountability, Flood (2017) also critiques how EM frequently 'asks too little of men' through pledge-based campaigns like HeForShe and White Ribbon which sometimes fall into the trap of simplifying the process of change, individualising the problem, and relying on women's labour to fulfil most of the organising work. In sum, the literature argues that men need to be more aware and critical of the ways they enter feminist spaces and support long-standing feminist work. This scholarship highlights the importance of a robust feminist foundation in EM work and connects to this study's understanding of feminist men and masculinities as a perpetual process of action and accountability. The challenges and risks outlined here are directly relevant to this study's examination of creative approaches to engaging men in reimagining masculinities. For example, arts-integrated EM programs might end up focusing too much on the arts and not enough on MVAW prevention - diluting and depoliticising the work while asking too little of and overly centring men and men's experiences. These challenges will be explored in the findings and further unpacked in Chapters 10 and 11.

Second, Flood (2014a, 2015, 2019) warns against the persistence of overly-simplistic conceptualisation of men's violences, men, and masculinity in EM programs. Flood (2014a) argues that EM programs 'treat violence itself as homogenous' (p. 3). Flood (2015) notes the preponderance of programming focused on individual men's attitudes and lack of attention to structural violence. These concerns are echoed by scholarship calling for focus on broader cultural norms (Pease & Flood, 2008) and greater analysis of structural violences (Edstrom et al., 2015; Salter, 2016). Burrell's (2018) interviews with EM practitioners revealed a

frustration that some EM programs seemed to limit their focus to only certain types of violence. Noting the lack of attention to structural violence, Burrell's (2018) research reveals, 'work with men is too often on changing individual attitudes, leaving patriarchal structures that provide the foundations for men's violence largely untouched' (p. 459).

Further, as previously noted, a growing number of scholars challenge the way men and masculinities are conceptualised in EM. For example, some scholars have called for a more intersectional and cultural-specific analysis of masculinities and prevention efforts in working with men (Hurtado & Sinha, 2008; White & Peretz, 2010; Jewkes et al., 2014; Alcalde, 2014; Carlson et al., 2015; Peretz 2017). In addition to intersectional examinations of race and class, Flood (2015) notes that the homogenisation of men is 'most obvious' in relation to the prevalence of heteronormative discourses and assumptions which permeate the EM field. While homophobia is often discussed as a factor in MVAW, men's own diverse sexualities are ignored. CSMM scholars have also noted the importance of decolonial perspectives in examining the study of masculinities (Connell, 2022), and in the linkages between patriarchies, masculinities, and men's perpetration of and complicity in violence specifically (Van Niekerk, 2021). Boonzaier et al. (2021) argue there is a need to shift EM work from 'Eurocentric framings and Northern models...towards the development of local knowledge projects of gender and violence' (p. 84). Van Niekerk adds work in this area should be 'theorised in the south for people in the south' (2021, p. 262).⁴⁵ Thus, while programs can learn from one another and share practices and approaches, there is again no one-size-fits-all approach.

Third, in the EM programming context, there are challenges stemming from an over-reliance on didactic instruction and cognitive focused pedagogies instead of more participatory and experiential learning (Heppner et al., 1995; Humphrey et al., 2008; Berkowitz, 2004a; Flood et al., 2009; Rich, 2010; Ahren's et al., 2011; Dyson & Flood, 2014; Funk, 2018; Flood, 2019). Some EM approaches focus on simply instructing men, giving them the facts, and equipping them with the skills to be less violent men (Funk, 2018; Flood, 2019). These linear and cognitive-centric pedagogies have drawn criticism for their inability to dynamically engage men's complex, embodied, and often emotional relationships with masculinities and patriarchies (Pease, 2011, 2013; Flood, 2014a). Further, approaches with individualised cognitive models of change tend to focus primarily on attitudinal shifts (Berkowitz, 2004a) rather than engaging in the complex dynamics of attitude, affect, and behaviour (Pease & Flood, 2008; Flood, 2014a;). Flood (2019) and Pease (2013), amongst many others, argue

⁴⁵ The authors note this is not meant to reject knowledge and practice from the Global North, but rather to emphasise the starting point as located in the South and seeking South-North dialogues.

for more creative, affective, and experiential approaches to EM which aligns with some of the noted effective practices outlined above.

The combination of these three challenges have led scholars to call for innovations in EM praxis (hooks, 2003b, 2004; Pease, 2013; Flood, 2014a, 2015, 2019; Kaufman, 2019). While all three are relevant to this study, the third point on the limitations of didactic approaches points strongly towards the arts as a pedagogical and curricular alternative. This point will be explored in depth in the following chapter and guides my research here.

4.4 Synthesising the Literature and Returning to bell hooks

This literature review has shown that EM programs have the potential to foster positive changes. However, this review has also shown there is a need for continued improvements, and indeed calls for innovation, to address programmatic challenges and limitations. This section distils four key points from the literature on initial engagement, deepening engagement, men's resistance, and EM challenges that align with this study's hooksian feminist approach to EM and that will be useful in considering if and how the arts might support advancements in EM pedagogy and curricula. These four points are not a roadmap for best practice in EM, but rather a series of guiding lights that might inform EM praxis and lead towards new approaches to responding to the calls for innovation in the field.

First, the literature emphasises the importance of a positive approach to engagement and a visionary framework for supporting alternative ways forward that encourage men to speak up, act, be accountable, and reimagine masculinities towards more feminist-informed possibilities. This point connects to the importance of framing the work within wider human rights and social justice ideas and the limitations of didactic praxis which identify and dictate lists of problems without more affective engagements about creating alternatives. Here, hooks' visionary feminism (2000), her concern for 'blueprints for change' (2003b; 2004) for men, and approach to feminist masculinities (2003b; 2004) provide a powerful feminist-informed framework for this study.

Second, themes on men's initial and deepening engagement as well as men's resistance indicate the importance of an engaging curriculum and pedagogy that addresses what men think, feel, and do. This is essential to counteract didactic praxis by helping men learn, connect emotionally, and support embodied practice. This is a foundational pedagogical concern which impacts programs' ability to convey the relevance and seriousness of this

work to men, to deal with challenging topics like men's privilege and experiences with various forms of intersectional violence, and to organise and mobilise alternatives. This second point also speaks directly to hooks' (1994, 2003a, 2009) feminist engaged pedagogy and provides a guiding light for this study in considering the importance of analytic and affective learning that engages emotions and embodiment in the workshop space. hooks (1994) situates education as a passionate process that rejects mechanistic mind-body dichotomies. Drawing on critical pedagogy, engaged Buddhism, and feminist praxis, hooks (1994) believes cognitive and analytic learning are essential, but they must be placed in conversation with the lived experience of how learners' emotions and bodies move through the world they seek to change.

Third, an approach that strategically engages men personally and relationally through peer networks and communities can help men understand and connect to this work and with each other in ways that challenge homogenised understandings of men and masculinities and bring their full personhood and experiences into the room. This approach is helpful in countering men's resistance to negative framing and providing an alternative to peer, cultural, and structural factors that do not support their engagement. Here again, hooks' engaged pedagogy (1994, 2003a, 2009) provides feminist pedagogical praxis and language for considering the value of personal storytelling in learning and the importance of dialogue, relationships, and community in the liberatory classroom. hooks' insights on the dehumanisation of patriarchy are also insightful here and will be explored in further detail in the findings (hooks, 1994, 2000, 2003b, 2004).

Finally, in response to concerns over the dilution and depoliticisation of EM, group education programs must retain a feminist foundation and be informed by feminist analysis of men, masculinities, and violence. Such work must pay close attention to men's accountability and their relationships with feminist organisations and movements. This is particularly important for countering men's resistances around issues of privilege, entitlement, and power and conveying the seriousness of the problem of MVAW. This approach also creates opportunities for expanding conversations about MVAW around larger issues of gender and social justice. A feminist foundation points towards the importance of the larger social learning context and the need to focus on both individual change as well as a broader structural and cultural analysis of the problem. As was noted in the previous literature chapters, this study follows bell hooks' (1984, 2000) intersectional feminist approach and analysis of MVAW, patriarchal and feminist masculinities.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the field of EM, examining core approaches to such programs and unpacking the literature on their overall effectiveness, including practices to engage men initially, pedagogical insights to deepen their engagement, men's resistances to such efforts, and challenges and tensions for the field as a whole. A synthesis of the above-mentioned literature points to four key insights for this study which align with the hooksian feminist lens of visionary feminism, engaged pedagogy, and engaging men this study follows. These four insights note the importance of a foundational feminist analysis, an analytic and affective pedagogical approach, a focus on men's personal and peer group connections, and a positive and visionary framework that both names the problem and explores feminist-informed alternatives. As will be argued in the subsequent and final literature chapter, these insights collectively point towards the potential of one currently under-examined area of praxis: arts-integrated approaches to EM.

Chapter 5: Arts, Social Change, and Engaging Men

Identifying Gaps in the Literature

5.1 Introduction

Building on the previous chapter's synthesis of EM research, this final literature chapter examines the specific focus of this study: arts-integrated EM approaches in the US. In doing so, this chapter situates this creative and critical work with men within the wider arts, education, and social change literatures. Additionally, this chapter highlights the positive potential and critical need for more research in this under-developed area of EM praxis. This chapter is organised into three sections. First, I focus on art and arts education. Second, I look at the arts and social change literature, drawing insights from arts and peace education and gender equality and violence prevention arts programming before focusing on the limited existing scholarship on arts-integration within the EM literature. Third, I outline how this review of the literature provides a rationale for exploring the arts in EM further and the two key literature gaps this study seeks to address. It is beyond the scope of this project to cover all the diverse arts, arts education, arts for social change, and gender equality and feminist arts literatures here. The goal of this chapter instead is to distil key insights from relevant scholarship that helps inform this study research questions and overall approach to arts-integrated EM programs in the US.

5.2 Arts Education

Art is a notoriously hard word to define (Davies, 2015). While there is no universal description, Graham (2005) contends art is generally understood as 'the conscious creation of something beautiful or meaningful using skill and imagination' (p. 1). Grounded in this basic understanding, art can include traditional mediums such painting, music, dancing, poetry, and drama as well as other forms of creative expression including storytelling. Responsive to my focus on group education programs, this section focuses on the arts in education contexts. There are many different types of arts education. This study explores one specific application known as arts-integrated approaches (Hardiman et al., 2014). Davis

(2008) defines arts-integration as the use of arts in non-traditional arts subjects. This resonates with Bamford's (2006) distinction between education-in-the-arts and education-through-the-arts. The latter, the focus of this study, is pedagogy and praxis to creatively engage learners in non-arts subjects with artistic mindsets, practices, and processes (Bamford, 2006). Research on the purported benefits of art in education are numerous, including improvements in academic achievement, cognitive development, and immersive learning (Montgomerie & Ferguson, 1999; Podlozny, 2000; Deasy, 2002; Gazzaniga et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2011; Courey et al., 2012; Mansour et al., 2017) as well as skills for '21st century jobs' such as creative thinking, problem solving, and interpersonal relations (Dean et al., 2010; Korn, 2010).

Elliot Eisner, one of the most cited arts education scholars in the US and around the world, argues that the arts are a critical component of education for people of all ages not just because they help people learn or get a job, but because they address key life experiences and capacities. In his influential book, *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*, Eisner (2002) outlines how the arts help learners move beyond binary problem-solving approaches with only one, usually quantifiable, right answer. The arts offer an alternative way of thinking that teaches good judgement about qualitative relationships, how to examine multiple perspectives, and the ability and willingness to adapt to changing circumstances. Lastly, he notes that the arts open epistemological horizons to allow learners to see that cognition extends beyond words and numbers, the importance of engaging our full range of emotions, and a 'poetic capacity' to imagine something and make it real through creative and expressive mediums and materials (Eisner, 2002).⁴⁶ Building on this work, researchers have examined connections between the arts and wellbeing (Martin et al., 2013).

5.2.1 What Does Arts Education Do?

Gaztambide-Fernandez (2013a; 2013b) analyses the diverse 'streams of influence' that have shaped contemporary arts education in the US. First, expressionism, where art is understood as expressive and imaginative work. Second, reconstructionism, where art is conceptualised as individually and socially transformative work. And third, scientific rationalism, where art is explored as a means for engaging knowledge through aesthetic experience (philosophical) or cognitive functions (development). In programs focused on arts and social change, like the ones this study focuses on, arts-integration practices are often

⁴⁶ Eisner's ideas on 'poetic capacity' resonate strongly with poetic inquiry research approaches used in this project and discussed in detail in the following methodology chapter.

called upon to engage multiple approaches (Bell & Desai, 2011). In short, art is integrated to *do* a lot. Yet, Gaztambide-Fernandez cautions there has been a turn towards an obsession with what the arts do, and that this oversimplification risks overlooking what the arts *are*. He cautions that attempts to maximise the quantifiable impact of arts education risk placing a 'straitjacket' on the complex process and nature of art as cultural production (2013a).

Further, while the amount of research into the purported benefits of arts education is large and growing, there is also a recognition that measuring the arts is challenging (Ewing, 2010). Schneider and Rohmann's (2021) recent systematic review of arts education points towards the lack of what they call 'gold standard' experimental research designs, such as randomized control trials, and shows more muted evidence of outcomes within studies that do use them. Echoing the previous chapter's discussion of tension with public health and feminist epistemological foundations in EM programs (Flood, 2019; Pease, 2019), this critique from Schneider and Rohmann (2021) connects to an important debate within the literature over what Gaztambide-Fernandez (2013a, 2013b) describes as two main camps exploring what the arts *do* in arts education. First, there are intrinsic views whereby arts are viewed as refining our aesthetic expertise and cultivating imagination or artistic habits of mind (Hetland et al., 2007). Here art 'enhances individual experience and perceptions of the world' (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013a, p. 212). Second, there are instrumentalist views whereby arts are used to promote and develop academic and other non-arts achievements (Deasy, 2002).

Gaztambide-Fernandez argues that both approaches to what the arts do use a 'rhetoric of effect' (2013a). This understanding centralises the impact of the arts through a secessionist model of causation, measuring effects before and after an encounter with the arts. As an alternative, he argues for viewing arts as a 'rhetoric of cultural production' focusing on the 'conditions that shape the experience rather than the outcomes' (2013a, p. 216). Art does not *do* something; art *is* something. In a later article (2013b), Gaztambide-Fernandez clarifies he is not arguing for a puritan forsaking of any language or understanding that connects art and impact.⁴⁷ His point is that such language and thinking comes with risks and thus we should be cautious about the unintended consequences of how simplistic and mechanistic language can hide the complex experience and process of art. I find this critical yet balanced mindset helpful in approaching the field of EM that sometimes stresses linear

⁴⁷ There are times when such language and thinking is useful to help illuminate what is happening and how it is being experienced. For example, such language may be particularly helpful in attempts to justify why the arts are valuable and needed in a time that increasingly challenges the need for arts in education (2013b).

logics and didactic instruction over elicitive and creative pedagogies in group education programs.

5.3 Arts and Social Change

The literature on arts, education, and social change is vast, varied, and spread across disciplinary boundaries (Ayers et al., 2009; Dewhurst, 2011, 2014; Hochtritt et al., 2017). Following Gaztambide-Fernandez (2013a), this scholarship illuminates art as more than just 'beauty' and 'skill' and examines it as a cultural and social practice for critical and creative meaning making, resistance, and imagination. This section provides an overview of arts and social change, focuses on arts in the fields of gender equality and violence prevention, and then discusses the research on arts within the EM literature. Following this study's transdisciplinary approach, this chapter particularly draws on insights from peace and arts education as a valuable lens through which to consider the potential of arts-integrated EM.

5.3.1 Arts, Peace, and Imagination

In assessing the broad potential of the arts for social change, Scher (2007) asked a group of experienced organisers: Can the arts change the world? Reflecting on years of work and research, they argue yes. Scher describes how the arts allow for honouring the past, recording the present, and envisioning and communicating an alternative future to the violent status quo. In doing so, the arts help create safe spaces for people to express, connect, and create with one another and to slow down and reflect on the work of social change. Further, they argue the arts can also be used to help heal and sustain those working for social change. And finally, the arts can be used to help organise and mobilise people in social change campaigns. Scher's (2007) work shows a broad range of potential benefits across the social-ecological model of change from the individual and relational levels up to efforts aimed at social, political, and structural changes.

Research into arts-based peacebuilding (Shank & Schirich, 2008; Marshall, 2014; Wood, 2015; Sandoval, 2016; Leissing et al. 2017; Mitchell et al. 2019; Herbert et al. 2020) and arts and peace education (Roberts, 2005; Morison, 2008; Cremin & Bevington, 2017, Lehner, 2021) reveal similar potential benefits. Drawing on this body of literature and my own experiences teaching arts and peace, I previously outlined an array of key ways the arts can support peace work (McInerney, 2019a). At a personal level the arts can be used to focus on

identity, voice, and healing work. For example, poetry writing, photo voice, and individual visual arts projects can open a space for personal and emotional exploration; processing and coping with loss and hardship; restoring dignity and positive self-identification; and fuelling hope, courage, and resilience (Marshall, 2014; Leissing et al. 2017). The arts can also be used to support accountability and wellness work by exploring peace-worker motivations, practice, and impact; promoting peace-worker well-being; and examining the risks and challenges of arts and peacebuilding work itself (Cremin & Kester, 2020; McInerney & Cremin, 2023). Examples of this creative reflexive practice could include the use of reflective journaling and creative writing.

At a relational level the arts can support interpersonal communication and community building through promoting exchange, dialogue, and reconciliation; challenging stereotypes, bias, and dehumanisation; and strengthening communal and cross-communal culture (Shank & Schirich, 2008; Marshall, 2014; Leissing et al., 2017; Herbert et al., 2020). Examples of arts used in this context include group poetry or storytelling events, forum theatre, and collaborative dance. Finally, at the cultural and structural level the arts can catalyse social change and support advocacy work (Shank & Schirich, 2008; Chaplin, 2021). Arts practices such as murals in public spaces and expressive arts like poetry or drama used in organising campaigns can help in shifting, challenging, and trying to change social norms and structures; raising awareness about conflict; creating safe spaces; and mobilising activists. This research shows the breadth of possibilities in arts for social change in addressing diverse forms of violence and in using a plethora of artistic mediums as an amplifier of peace messages, a creative focal point to bring people together, and a magnifying glass to look within.

One key aspect of the arts and peace education literature that is relevant to this study focuses on the importance of imagination in social change (Medina, 2012). Scholars like Greene (1995), Cremin and Bevington (2017), and Morrison (2008) examine art as a powerful way to activate imagination in the cause of understanding injustice and constructing more peaceful alternatives. Others like Wood (2015) and Shank (2004) draw upon Eisner's (2002) foundational work to contend that art can evoke an imaginative process for challenging violence because it dynamically translates between the cognitive and emotional realms. Lederach's (2005) work on the moral imagination is a particularly helpful way to articulate the capacities which undergird this imagination for social change. Lederach argues that the creative process is not a 'tangential inquiry' but instead a 'wellspring that feeds the building of peace' (2005, p. 5). Lederach embraces creativity as a key element in helping

people in conflict gain clarity and understanding, and ultimately the ability to imagine solutions that transform relationships and conflicts. He calls this ability to imagine, recognise, and embody creative alternatives to conflict the 'moral imagination' (2005, p. 5).

Lederach outlines four guiding principles for transforming conflicts with a moral imagination: 1) imagine ourselves in a web of relationships; 2) sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity; 3) believe in and pursue the creative act; and 4) accept the risk of stepping into the mystery. He argues that by tapping into these capacities for connection, complexity, creativity, and courage people can develop an imagination that allows them to see the conflict and the alternatives to the conflict more clearly. This clarity in-turn provides new possible pathways for transformation from violence towards peace. This imagination approach focuses on the relational dynamics and the presence of art in peace education rather than a strictly utilitarian understanding of what art mechanistically produces in these contexts. This distinction aligns with Gaztambide-Fernandez's (2013a, 2013b) critique of what art does instead of contextualising and illuminating what art is in education. The reimagining of alternative ideas of masculinities and the articulation of those alternatives through the arts are an essential dimension of this study.

5.3.2 Gender Equality, Violence Prevention, and the Arts

While a comprehensive review is beyond the scope this study, it is important to start any conversation about the intersection of gender equality, violence prevention, and the arts by acknowledging the foundational role of feminist artists and art. Feminist art in the US gained traction in the 1960s as an extension of feminist activism (Robinson, 2015). However, just as this thesis conceptualises masculinities and feminisms, rather than masculinity and feminism, it is important to question homogenous conceptualisations, linear representations of the history of feminist art in the US, or overly siloed understandings of what qualifies as feminist art. Feminist art is an expansive category of artistic practices that spotlight the voices of women and gender non-binary people, challenge men's violence, and advocate for a more gender just society (Robinson, 2015). In the US, feminist art like Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* exhibition, the Guerrilla Girls' activist protest posters, and timeless poems from Maya Angelo and Audre Lorde showcase the diversity of mediums and styles through which these artists encourage their audiences to question and creatively disrupt the patriarchal status quo (Robinson et al., 2019). At an international level, MacNeil et al. (2019) documented 100 programs, projects, and featured media campaigns that use the arts to support the feminist goal of gender equality. Their research details key findings that overlap

with the insights from peace education above indicating gender equality are using the arts to: 1) raise awareness about the problem of gender inequality, 2) promote empathy for those experiencing gender inequality, 3) disrupt and challenge gender binaries and roles and cultivate more progressive alternatives, and 4) provide valuable platforms for 'truth-telling' and 'self and collective expressions' (MacNeil et al., 2019, p. 2).

Research and practice in the US on arts and gender equality has tended to focus on university contexts (although not exclusively so) where drama exercises and productions are integrated into gender and sexual violence prevention programs and performances (Cappiello & McInerney, 2015; Foshee et al., 2004; Crooks et al., 2007; Mitchell & Freitag, 2011). Many of these programs are informed by Augusto Boal's (1979) influential *Theatre of the Oppressed* (TO). Boal argues creativity is a necessary component of social change and that drama exercises and community-driven dialogues and performances can be spaces to 'rehearse for revolution' (1985). Drawing on Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy, Boalian inspired programs seek to counter 'banking' approaches to education in which the teacher is the sole authority depositing knowledge didactically into the students in favour of 'problem-posing' education rooted in democratic student-teacher relationships, dialogue, and creativity. Boal believed in the importance of all members of society taking a proactive stance in the face of injustice – arguing that we are socialised into playing the roles of passive spectators within scripts written by oppressive systems (1979, 1992).

Boal contends we must proactively resist, and that theatre creates a space to help make that possible. This philosophy is put into practice in this context through TO forum theatre productions where the spectators are called 'spect-actors' because they actively take part in the scenes, freezing them, recasting themselves into the roles, and practising ways to challenge gender inequality and violence in real-time together. This is often followed by a community dialogue about the issues and scenes aimed towards organising and mobilising for social change within that community. Thus, these programs involve two educational components and groups: the small core group of participants who design and present the forum theatre scenes and the audiences or spect-actors who witness and take part in the productions and dialogues.

Mitchel and Freitag (2011) combine insights from TO with bystander intervention to propose a Forum Theatre for Bystanders (FTB) as a 'new model for gender violence prevention' (p. 991). They argue FTB's affective, proactive, and dialogic learning can address four key areas of bystander work (Banyard et al., 2007) including decreasing victim blaming, building

community responsibility, increasing awareness, and equipping audiences with intervention skills. By using forum theatre to rehearse ways to interrupt gender inequality and violence, the arts 'offer innovative ways to spark dialogue and equip audiences with the skills to become active bystanders' (Mitchel & Freitag, 2011, p. 991). Similarly, Crooks et al. (2007) argue forum theatre engages all the key elements of EM work by raising awareness, challenging cultures of silence and violence, and increasing self-efficacy by providing opportunities to practise proactive bystander behaviour.

Christensen (2013) conducted a systematic review of nine studies exploring the use of TO in gender violence prevention programs. Quantitative studies showed some promising evidence of changes in attitudes about sexual violence and rape myths (Lanier et al., 1998; Rodriguez et al., 2006). However, other studies showed small positive changes which decreased over time (Black et al., 2000) or showed no difference at all for men (Milhausen et al., 2006). Qualitative studies showed evidence of positive changes in attitudes and awareness for both audiences and the core participants creating the performances (Howard, 2004). This work points to the value of arts-integrated programs as producing potentially beneficial products, such as performances to be shared with audiences, as well as beneficial critical consciousness raising processes, such as the ongoing program workshops for the core groups of participants designing the scenes. However, Christensen (2011) cautions that more research is needed because quantitative and qualitative studies reveal inconsistent levels of rigour.

One instructive and well-researched example program that was also not included in MacNeil et al.'s (2019) research and that is relevant to this study is the InterACT program. InterACT does not solely focus on EM, but it explicitly addresses patriarchal masculinity in their gender equality and gender violence prevention work. Various research articles have argued that the program's 'proactive' TO engagement approach allows for deeper learning experiences compared to traditional didactic violence prevention models (Rodriguez et al. 2006; Rich & Rodrigues, 2007; Rich et al., 2009; Rich et al., 2010; Ahrens et al., 2011). Rich's (2010) review of 10 years of programming argues that InterACT was helpful in promoting empathy, raising awareness, challenging 'hyper-masculinity', and promoting bystander intervention with college men.

An earlier study on InterACT with over 500 university students in the US revealed how proactive performances were more effective at increasing empathy and students perceived self-efficacy in supporting survivors of sexual violence than traditional didactic approaches

(Rodrigues et al., 2006). Research on InterACT reveals the limitations of banking education, and instead argues for 'affective learning' and 'proactive pedagogies' which engage men both 'cognitively and viscerally' (Ahrens et al., 2011, p. 776). Rich (2010) critiques the 'cartesian body/mind split' and Rich and Rodrigues (2007) argue that arts-based affective learning complements rather than replaces traditional cognitive learning in this context. In addition to using the arts to engage men's emotions, research indicates that drama allows for the potentially transformative embodiment of non-normative masculine gender roles (Rodriguez et al., 2006; Rich & Rodrigues, 2007; Rich et al., 2008). In summary, it is argued that InterACT provides a space within which to envision and rehearse alternatives to patriarchal masculinity.

5.3.3. Arts-Integrated Engaging Men Efforts

The previously outlined international research on gender equality and the arts and US-based drama programs focused on gender equality and violence prevention points towards the ways in which more specific gender transformative EM work can benefit from the arts as well. Importantly, the insights from this research align with the EM effective practices noted in the previous chapter by advocating for using the arts to advance pedagogies addressing men's cognitive, affective, and behavioural domains (Dyson & Flood, 2009; Flood et al., 2009) through interactive, experiential, and participatory learning (Heppner et al., 1995; Berkowitz, 2004a; Humphrey et al., 2008; Flood, 2019; Greig, 2020).

Three key EM scholars, Pease, Flood, and Funk have called for increased attention to more affective approaches in working with men. Pease (2013) writes about his previous practices using creative and personal writing as a catalyst for memory work to explore 'the emotional underpinnings of men's adherence to privilege' (p. 29). He argues for more research into the role of creative, critical, and personal writing as a way for men to reflect on masculinities (Pease, 2011). This point connects to Funk's (2018) work highlighting the importance of moving away from a mechanistic problem-solving approach in EM work and towards a more affective and engaged one. As Funk (2018) notes, 'A purely logical response will likely not prove effective. Addressing men who are resisting requires utilising a mixed strategy of information/knowledge and meeting them emotionally' (p. 28). Lastly, Flood (2019) advocates for the role of affect, emotion, and arts in EM. He notes the importance of balancing cognitive and affective domains and argues for interactive and experiential pedagogies as well as explicitly highlighting the role of art as a 'valuable means of inspiring interest and involvement' (2019, p. 270).

However, these insights from key scholars within EM have not yet led to significant advances in the academic literature on this topic. There is some research outlining arts-integrated gender violence prevention work with male perpetrators (Malcor, 2021) and a larger body of literature on arts-therapy work with men that examines masculinity (Nylund & Nylund, 2003; Augusta-Scott, 2007; Furman & Dill, 2012; Levy, 2012; Levy & Keum, 2014). But my review of the literature reveals arts-integrated praxis as an underdeveloped area of scholarship within the EM literature, and specifically within this study's focus on primary prevention, group education, and gender transformative programs. The gaps in the literature are both in terms of an analysis of the breadth of the field of practice and depth in terms of case studies exploring participants' experiences.

One notable example within the current literature in the US context is the Men's Story Project (MSP).⁴⁸ Two articles about the MSP (Peretz et al., 2018; Peretz & Lehrer, 2019) describe the program as an intersectional feminist approach to gender justice and 'healthy masculinities' that builds upon entertainment education (EE) to explore the role of storytelling and other creative mediums (i.e., poetry and singing) within the EM context (Frank & Falzone, 2021)⁴⁹. In doing so, the MSP argues that personal narrative-based approaches can produce realistic and relatable narrative examples from peers and role models dealing with the consequences of harmful patriarchal masculine norms and practices and benefits of more gender equal masculinities in ways that support learning and are more engaging than traditional didactic approaches (Peretz et al., 2018; Peretz & Lehrer, 2019). Also drawing upon Bandura's (1986; 2004) social cognitive theory (SCT), the program argues that these opportunities promote 'observational learning' and increases in audience members 'self-efficacy' to understand gender norms and feel confident in their ability to challenge and change them. The MSP argues that such work promotes a 'social learning environment' that is facilitated when the people who hear the stories directly share and critically discuss them within their wider peer networks (Peretz et al., 2018; Peretz & Lehrer, 2019). This narrative-inspired dialogic process extends the impact of the work beyond the room in which the narrative was shared and helps reinforce the learning and motivation (Peretz et al. 2018; Peretz and Lehrer 2019).⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Several other key EM organisations in the US have also explored storytelling and masculinities work such as TMI's and A Call To Men's Locker Room Talk project (TMI, 2022) and Men Can Stop Rape's Counter Stories project (MCSR, 2022). However, there does not appear to be any published research on these programs.

⁴⁹ For overviews, case studies, and systematic reviews of EE see Green (2021a), Braddock and Dillard (2016), Frank et al. (2015), Murphy et al. (2013), and Shen et al. (2015).

⁵⁰ The MSP also compliments SCT work on narratives with insights from the transportation imagery model (TIM). TIM posits that relatable, personal narratives can help influence attitudinal and behavioural change by 'transporting' audience members into the story which has the effect of reducing resistance and supporting

Peretz et al. (2018) conducted six focus groups with 31 MSP audience members. The researchers found that after the MSP, audience members were more informed on masculinities and intersectionality, more willing to challenge gender stereotypes, and found an overall sense of 'educational and social value' in the experience (2019, p. 1). Additionally, Peretz and Lehrer (2019) conducted three focus groups with the male presenters and nine qualitative interviews with select participants six-to-eight months later. Themes from this research revealed the men experienced a strengthened sense of safety and community during the project, a heightened willingness to challenge stereotypes and prejudices about masculinity, a sense of empowerment and healing, a reinforced commitment to end violence, and a broader desire to engage with gender justice work (2019). Like InterACT, the MSP provided a space for men to envision, rehearse, and role model alternatives to patriarchal masculinity. Thus, the use of storytelling not only impacted the audiences but also appears to impact the participants themselves who worked together during the program learning, crafting their stories, and sharing and practising them with each other. While the literature on arts-integrated EM programs is small, this example provides a key point of reference and inspiration for my thinking and research in this study.

5.3.4 Challenges, Risks, and Limitations

The collection of literature above on arts and social change, global gender equality and violence prevention and the arts, US-based TO-based drama programs, and the limited body of work on EM and arts-integration through storytelling reveals a promising potential for this area of praxis, especially when compared to more traditional didactic approaches. However, there are important challenges, risks, and limitations to consider as well.

First, echoing concerns from the previous chapter on challenges of EM work more generally, Rich (2010) notes the importance of well-trained facilitators for arts and gender violence prevention programming. He argues that arts work in this context can be powerful but is also risky because it can involve discussions and re-enactments of traumatic experiences. In response to this challenge, Rich (2010) advocates for robust training as well as the use of external experts, such as having mental health care professionals available if needed at productions.

connection and empathy towards the people in the story through mental imagery and emotional engagement (Green, 2021b; Green & Brock, 2000, 2002).

Second and relatedly, Rich et al. (2008) caution that interrogating men's privileges and questioning gender roles can be a painful process that produces complex emotions and resistance. This point connects to the previously discussed delicate balance of engaging a privileged group in deconstructing their own privileges (Flood, 2019) and notes the importance of facilitators being cautious about the ways in which the arts can be used to amplify rather than deconstruct men's privilege. As Rich (2010) cautions, 'In the hands of an inexperienced facilitator, Theatre of the Oppressed disintegrates into Theatre of the Oppressor, and historically underrepresented groups are further marginalised as the dominant group highlights their perceived victimisation' (p. 520). Third, Rich (2010) also cautions that this work requires a large amount of time and investment for both facilitators and participants. Creating the scenes for InterACT's Boalian forum theatre productions requires significant commitment which can be a barrier for participants general and men who are uncertain about this work specifically.

Lastly, in addition to men's patterns of resistance to EM work that was noted in the previous chapter, another important limitation is men's potential gendered resistance to art itself. Insights from art-therapy with men note that the arts are stereotypically viewed as a non-masculine practice due to their association with emotional expression and softness (Furman & Dill, 2012). This notion is paradoxical considering many of the artists young men learn about in school are revered male historical figures. Patriarchal masculinity's rigid emotionless script, which fears anything remotely effeminate, pushes men and boys away from nuanced emotive writing and expression. As a man who grew up in the US and who taught poetry for many years, I have seen how this perception creates barriers for men's engagement. Despite this challenge, researchers have shown poetry and narrative work can be an effective 'counter-hegemonic practice' (Nyland & Nylund, 2003) and a way to engage young men in learning and emotional development (Furman & Dill, 2012; Schermer, 2013).

5.4 Research Rationale and Current Gaps

This review of arts education, arts for social change, and arts and gender equality and violence prevention literatures reveals a range of potential benefits for EM practice that warrant further examination. The literature emphasises the arts have the capacity to support individual, relational, cultural, and structural social changes (Shank & Schirich, 2008; Marshall, 2014; Wood, 2015; Leissing et al. 2017; Herbert et al. 2020). The arts might support such work by providing a space for creative and critical thinking (Eisner, 2002) where participants can better connect with the material and one another (Scher, 2007) and

use an imaginative process to consider alternatives to violence and proactive approaches to social action (Greene, 1995; Lederach, 2005; Morrison, 2008; Cremin & Bevington, 2017). Applied to gender equality specifically, MacNeil et al. (2019) argue that the arts can support awareness raising and empathy, help challenge gender binaries, and provide a powerful platform to self-expression. Gender violence prevention TO programs in the US (Rich, 2010; Mitchel & Freitag, 2011; Christensen, 2013) and specifically the MSP (Peretz et al., 2018) have explored these benefits further and showed how such work might specifically apply to work challenging patriarchal masculinities.

These insights point towards the arts as a potential way to respond to the calls for innovation in the field of EM by replacing didactic approaches with more balanced creative-critical ones that engage men 'cognitively and viscerally' in addressing patriarchal masculinities. (Ahrens et al., 2011, p. 776). Further, these insights show resonance with the four key points of synthesis from the EM literature I identified in the previous chapter (visionary and positive approaches; focus on what men think, feel, and do; make the work personal and relational; and maintain a feminist analytical and pedagogical foundation). This literature review thus reveals a strong rationale for exploring the arts in this context further. Despite the ripe potential this literature review has revealed, calls for use of the creative approaches by key EM scholars (Pease, 2011, 2012; Funk, 2018; Flood, 2019), and positive research from drama (Rich, 2010) and storytelling programs (Peretz & Lehrer, 2019) examining masculinities, arts-integrated EM remains an under-examined area of praxis with important gaps to be addressed.

Specifically, this chapter has revealed two key areas this study will explore further. First, there is a gap in the literature concerning the wider scope and substance of arts-integrated EM work in the US. *Who is doing this work? What kind of arts are they using? What is their perception of the advantages and limitations of this practice?* MacNeill et al.'s (2019) report is a great example of this mapped knowledge for the broader field of gender equality and arts with a global scope. More focused research on the US and on the specific field of EM is not well covered in the literature. Current research in EM either speaks briefly and generally about the potential value of the arts (Pease, 2013; Funk, 2018; Flood, 2019) or examines one case study (Peretz et al., 2019; Peretz & Lehrer, 2019). Like the insights from Scher (2007) on arts and social change and my previous work (McInerney, 2019a) on arts and peace education, EM is missing a broader understanding and analysis of how this approach is being utilised by a variety of different practitioners in different contexts in the US.

Second, there is a gap in the literature concerning deeper explorations of the qualitative experiences of men using the arts in these programs. *How do men experience these programs? How might this work specifically benefit EM programs which seek to challenge patriarchal masculinities and promote feminist ones?* Peretz et al. (2019) and Peretz and Lehrer (2019) begin to explore this area but do so with focus groups and interviews after the fact and with a more general framing around stories as narratives rather than a focus on the potential benefits and challenges of stories as art. Further, the research on InterACT (Rich, 2010) provides valuable relevant insights but tends to focus on the impact on audiences rather than the experiences of participants who create the dramatic works. While a focus on the impact on audiences is essential for wider social change and speaks to the strategic value of the arts in raising awareness, deep qualitative explorations of men's learning and artistic experiences in these programs could be generative for informing the development and refinement of EM pedagogy and praxis.

5.5 Conclusion

This final literature chapter has outlined arts-integrated praxis by reviewing the literature on arts, arts education, arts for social change, and diving into the specifics of arts within gender equality and violence prevention programs as well as the limited research within the EM literature. This chapter has highlighted key aspects of this study's approach: using a broad definition of art; focusing on arts-integration approaches in group education programs; and engaging with the important debate around what art does and what art is. Drawing on insights from peace and arts education, this chapter has also highlighted the diverse array of arts and social change work across various levels of the social-ecology in addressing direct, relational, cultural, and structural violences as well as the importance of moral imagination within this creative and critical work. Lastly, this chapter has revealed a small, but promising body of literature calling for and reviewing storytelling EM work with men in the US that this study can directly build upon. In doing so, this chapter has outlined a strong rationale for this study and outlined key gaps in the literature which this study addresses. The next chapter outlines the research methodology and shows how the gaps in the literature inform this study's research questions and design.⁵¹

⁵¹ See Appendix A for a summary table of the literature review.

Chapter 6: Methodology

6.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines my research methodology by drawing on seventh moment qualitative inquiry and a bricolage approach (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000). I develop a four-part methodological framework to unpack the overlapping roles of researcher-as-bricoleur, -feminist, -artist, and -curator. This methodology further draws upon the transdisciplinary blend of CSMM, feminist, and peace education scholarship that undergirds this project's examination of EM research and practice. The following sections outline the methodology in further detail by discussing: first, research questions; second, methodological approach; third, research design; fourth, analysis; and fifth, research ethics.

6.2 Research Questions

The research questions for this project were developed and refined over an extended period while dwelling in the relevant bodies of scholarship, adapting to the opportunities and limitations of this research project within the global COVID-19 pandemic, and reflecting on my own experiences as a practitioner in this field. The resulting questions are designed to directly address gaps in the literature identified in the previous literature review.

6.2.1 Connecting Literature Gaps to Research Questions

Arts-integrated EM programming in the US is an under-examined area of praxis in terms of a broad understanding of the field of practice and a deeper examination of the perceptions and experiences of practitioners and participants. The following three research questions address these identified gaps.

Research Questions
1) How are the arts being integrated into EM group education programs in the US?
2) How do practitioners and participants involved in these programs perceive the potential advantages and limitations of an arts-integrated approach?
3) In what ways, if at all, do arts-integration approaches support changes in the ways in which men think about masculinities?

Table 3: Research Questions

The first question seeks to better understand the breadth of the field, the types of art being integrated, and the approaches being used. The second question works to unpack some of the potential benefits and challenges of this work based on the first-hand perspectives of the practitioners who support, design, and teach these programs and the participants from one case study who experience them. The third question seeks to focus on one key aspect of EM work around promoting alternative ideas of masculinities as a way of preventing MVAW and addressing patriarchal masculinities. In short, these questions work on several levels to explore who is doing this work, how they understand it, and how participants think and feel about it. Taking a step back, these questions seek to illuminate this under-examined area of praxis, considering how it might respond to calls for innovations in EM, and how in doing so, arts-integration might help support EM efforts at preventing MVAW and addressing patriarchal masculinities.

6.2.2 Aligning Research Questions with Methodology

The research questions reveal two key characteristics that inform the research approach and methodology. First, the questions are open, broad, and address an underdeveloped area of literature. The complementing research approach is exploratory and adaptable to navigate these gaps in scholarship and practice. Thus, the methodology must be able to use a collection of methods to zoom in and out as the research unfolds. Adaptability became an increasingly necessary approach as the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in the middle of my study. Second, the research questions seek to illuminate the socially constructed perspectives and experiences of the practitioners and participants. Thus, the approach should be qualitative and attuned to creative, critical, and feminist perspectives.

6.3 Research Approach and Methodology

This study is grounded in a qualitative inquiry research approach and bricolage methodology. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative inquiry as ‘a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible’ (p. 3). Within this broad and diverse paradigm, there is a core commitment to studying the complexity of the social world through situated, dynamic individuals and groups in diverse settings. Denzin and Lincoln’s approach to qualitative research is often framed by calls for social justice and layered in various theoretical and methodological perspectives (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, 2011), including those that inform this work from CSMM, feminism, and peace education.

6.3.1 Seventh Moment Qualitative Inquiry

This study draws on Lincoln and Denzin’s (2000) historical analysis of the evolution of qualitative inquiry in North America. I find inspiration and resonance with the ‘seventh moment’ of qualitative inquiry focusing on critical, creative, transdisciplinary, and bricolage (open, adaptive, multi-method) research (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000). In this approach, the social world is not something that can be captured and packaged through mechanistic manipulation of knowledge. On the contrary, it embraces the importance of using a combination of qualitative methods to cultivate thick descriptions and ‘messy texts’ (Marcus & Fischer, 1986) that embrace creativity and criticality in addressing the complexity of socially-constructed human thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000). This study’s approach to seventh moment inquiry engages research as an open and active process of discovery (Lincoln et al., 2018). Within this process, observation and representation are not neutral, and the products of research are not a definitive result revealing ‘the truth’. Instead research is an opportunity to encounter complex affective experiences from which meaning can be contextually distilled (Lincoln & Denzin, 2018). Research does not explain reality; rather, it seeks to illuminate our relations to reality through the lens of the social world. The ‘god’s eye view’ and grand narratives of objectivity are rejected in place of situated, ethical, and reflexive research and researchers (Haraway, 1998; Lincoln & Denzin, 2000).

This approach is also a call to rethink the researcher-researched relationship and to challenge the process of othering (Smith, 2012). Here, this study is influenced by the idea of transformative inquiry (Toews & Zehr, 2013) which defines the researcher as ‘facilitator,

collaborator and learner' rather than neutral expert (p. 267). Gaining traction within peace education research, this approach seeks to 'acknowledge that the researcher is open to being affected personally by interaction with others' (Cremin, 2016, p.12). This research-as-a-process-of-discovery approach engages a social constructivist epistemology (Kincheloe et al., 2018) which embraces the tensions surrounding data collection and representation of socially-constructed worlds. It does so by using multiple methods and a methodological negotiator to interrogate and make meaning of social experiences, thoughts, and feelings (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018; Lincoln & Denzin, 2018). Paired with an interpretivist ontology, the ability to engage 'reality' is through an intersubjective approach grounded in our experiential social worlds. Meaning-making is thus a never-ending-process of interpreting the interpretations of others (Wegerif, 2019). Doing seventh moment qualitative inquiry in the EM context, I draw inspiration from Adams and Jones (2011), Pleasants (2011), Pease (2013), Hearn (2013), and Flood (2019) who call for more critical, creative, and transdisciplinary methodologies, methods, and data to help explore the complexity of masculinities in research and practice. This alignment in research focus and research approach is bolstered by Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) point of emphasis on qualitative inquiry in the seventh moment as a gendered project guided by feminist perspectives.

However, there is also an underlying epistemological tension between some EM research (including several studies cited in the previous literature review) and my social constructionist stance outlined here. As I previously noted, the field of EM is heavily influenced by both feminist and public health approaches. This multi-disciplinary foundation has spurred debate by EM practitioners and researchers. Some notable EM scholars have critiqued a reliance upon positivist epistemological stances driven by public health approach (Pease, 2019). However, as outlined in Chapter 4, this study follows scholars like Flood (2019) who have called for a more nuanced epistemological engagement across disciplinary and methodological lines.

As someone who originally went to university for electrical engineering and half-way through changed course to study poetry, peace, and conflict, I appreciate and value these multiple epistemological stances and see them as potentially complementary rather than contradictory approaches to understanding our social and material worlds. For this research, I designed the study with a social constructionist epistemological framework. This decision was made based upon the nature of the research questions being asked about people's perceptions and experiences and the limitations of the methods and design being employed. These points will be expanded upon further in the subsequent methodology section. However, it is important to note here the role positivist research, and the language of

positivism, still plays within this study. Throughout this thesis I outline the key claims and findings that emerge from my analysis in alignment with my epistemological stance. At the same time, I highlight the limitations of such findings in speaking to positivist questions and critiques. This is done to be clear about the implications of this research. Further, as noted in the literature review, this study uses such language to speak back to the diverse EM scholar/practitioner field – some of whom may be more accustomed to positivist methodologies. In this way, I seek to contribute to a body of research that can remain epistemologically congruent and at the same time exist within a wider transdisciplinary field in which research studies across disciplinary and methodological boundaries can be placed into dialogue with one another.

6.3.2 Bricolage Methodology

This study uses a bricolage methodology inspired by the work of Denzin and Lincoln (2005, 2011) and Kincheloe et al. (2018). The French word *bricoleur* describes a handywoman/man who uses a variety of tools to complete tasks (Levi-Straus, 1966 cited in Kincheloe et al., 2018). Bricoleurs ‘enter into the research act as methodological negotiators’ (Kincheloe et al., 2018, p.245). The researcher seeks to remain in an active conversation with the research questions and is pragmatic, strategic, and self-reflexive in adjusting the unfolding research study (Kincheloe et al., 2018). hooks (1990) writes about a similar researcher-as-quilt-maker process to describe a multi-method and multi-representation approach whereby, ‘the quilter stitches, edits, and puts slices of reality together’ (p. 115).

Multi-method approaches can often be framed as triangulation. However, bricolage is not a means to ‘validate’ reality. Rather, it is an alternative to validations (Kincheloe, 2005). Bricolage is a strategy to add adaptability, rigour, complexity, and thickness to inquiry while acknowledging the impossibility of a singular unrecoverable truth (Flick, 2002). Triangulation in bricolage ‘is the display of multiple, refracted realities simultaneously’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2015, p. 5). This multi-method and adaptive methodology stems from seventh moment qualitative inquiry, fits well with the research questions, and facilitates a context within which to engage both broad and in-depth scopes through a combination of methods. Seventh-moment qualitative inquiry and bricolage methodology are not tied to the use of a specific theory or method. Instead, this research approach is based on a series of researcher roles that are responsive to the researcher and needs of the project.⁵²

⁵² Similar methodological approaches that highlight multiple roles of the researcher can be seen in approaches such as *a/r/tography* that highlight the simultaneous roles of artist, researcher, and teacher (Irwin et al., 2006; Leggo et al., 2011).

So far, this chapter has outlined the central researcher-as-bricoleur role in this study as a methodological negotiator adapting and employing multiple methods. I will now briefly present three additional researcher roles that expand upon this approach, methodology, and ethics while engaging and aligning with the specifics of this study. These roles include: 1) researcher-as-feminist, 2) researcher-as-artist, and 3) researcher-as-curator. While these roles are discussed separately here, they are entangled with one another in this project and manifested throughout my thinking, writing, and actions. These roles also connect back to the personal, professional, and political motivations that guide this thesis and that were introduced in the first chapter. My methodological and epistemological choices outlined here provide a framework for thinking about how I navigate my multiple insider and outsider roles throughout this study as a researcher, a feminist, a man, a practitioner, and a poet.

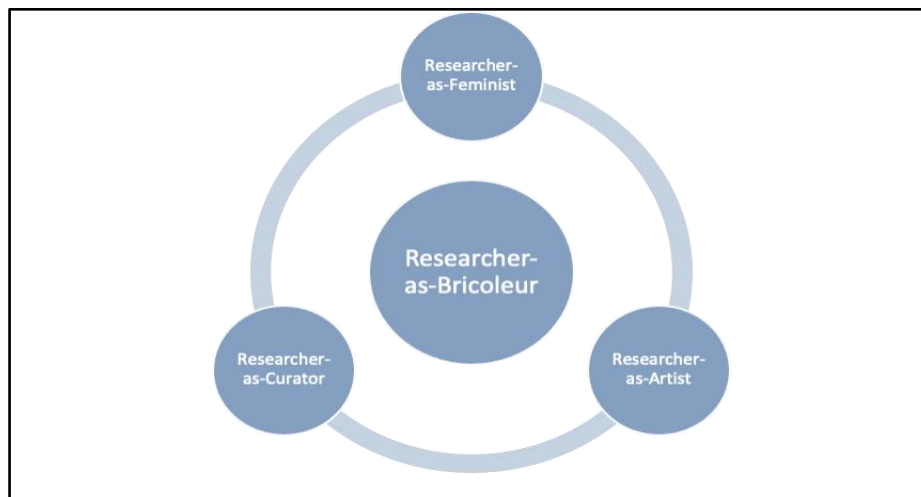


Figure 2: Interconnected Researcher Roles Informing Research Approach

6.3.2.1 Researcher-as-Feminist

The researcher-as-feminist role manifests in the topics investigated, my reflexive research process, and in the overall research approach and ethics. Stanley and Wise (1993) outline some key themes of feminist research and ethics that influence this study including: 1) emphasising gender through a non-essentialist analysis, 2) interrogation of gender inequality and violence, 3) rejection of rigid binaries between researcher and researched and claimed objective and subjective realities, 4) close attention to power within the research process, 5) focus on highlighting marginalised voices and standpoints, especially those of women and girls, 6) valuing of the embodied, affective, and emotional experience and understanding the personal as both generative and political, and 7) emphasis on qualitative, multi-method,

critical, and creative researcher approaches and methodologies. This paradigm of research closely aligns with Lincoln and Denzin's (2000) seventh moment and presents the case for an engaged project that strives to close the gap between scholarship and practice to challenge MVAW and cultivate gender justice.

This research is, however, a specific type of feminist research grounded in the CSMM and the EM field, and involving me, a cis-gendered man researching masculinity and other men. Whereas feminist research often, and for good reason, emphasises the voices and experiences of women, this research critically examines and highlights men. Such a positionality and focus can understandably be met with scepticism and brings forward several key points of tension which must be examined – including whether such research can be called feminist at all or should instead be labelled pro-feminist. There is a debate within the literature about whether men can or should claim the label of feminism. Some scholars and practitioners prefer the use of the term pro-feminist to emphasise the importance of women's standpoints in feminist work, activism, and research. This approach seeks to include men and encourage their support but also to decentre them from claiming feminism (Ritchie, 2017; Flood, 2019). Others argue that men can and should be feminists, not as an essentialised identity, but as a descriptor of feminist-informed practice (hooks, 2004). As noted in the introduction, hooks defines feminism as 'the liberation from sexist role patterns, domination, and oppression' (1981, p. 195) and she famously wrote, 'feminism is for everybody' (hooks, 2000). Under this definition, feminism, historically associated with and led by women and gender-nonbinary people, is an inclusive practice open to men as well. Specifically, hooks (2000) calls for men to be 'comrades in the struggle' by embracing feminist masculinities and working towards enacting feminism as a revolutionary and visionary alternative social arrangement (p. 84).

As a man researching men's violence through a feminist lens, I acknowledge the tensions and risks of encouraging men to identify as *being* feminists. As will be discussed later, men and the EM field have rightly been criticised for misusing, diluting, and depoliticising feminist work (Macomber, 2012). However, I also see the importance of encouraging men to listen to feminists, think like feminists, and ultimately to enact feminist practices and masculinities in their daily lives. As a privileged group within a patriarchal society, men must constantly earn association with feminism through their actions. Thus, men can be feminists, but this is not a stable position, or a statement of identity one can simply claim. Rather, being a feminist man requires a constant process of feminist praxis (Herr et al., 2023).

Accordingly, the researcher-as-feminist role is grounded in a CSMM positionality. CSMM research approaches and ethics require researchers to consider the implications of highlighting men's voices while using feminist theory and practice. Focusing on men can mean not highlighting women, a key and valuable tenet of feminist practice. This can contribute to problematic trends in social science research which disproportionately represents men's voices and male subjects. Burrell (2019), drawing on Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2003), notes that research has long been 'dominated by men, from a masculine standpoint, and with a focus predominantly on men' (p. 71). Further, as it relates to this study, men's standpoint in relation to gender and MVAW is inevitably limited because of the power and privilege men possess in patriarchal societies like the US. This does not mean it is impossible to engage such men-centric perspectives or that they are without utility, but it does mean I must be critical, intentional, and reflexive when engaging men's voices, including my own, in such contexts.

Various scholars have called for reflexivity and accountability in contexts where men are researching men and masculinity (Robinson, 2003; McCarry, 2007; Pleasants, 2011; Macomber, 2012; Hearn, 2013; Burrell, 2019). For men doing feminist research, Pease (2013) argues for a 'pro-feminist standpoint epistemology' and Hearn (2013) calls for 'anti-patriarchal standpoint and praxis'. These approaches contend that men engaging in this work must constantly focus on researcher power, privilege, and positionality. Pease (2013) outlines three important practices for men doing this type of research: 1) working with and under the guidance of women and feminists, 2) being reflexive about gender and your gender at all stages of research, and 3) remaining accountable to feminist and women's interests. In alignment with Burrell (2019), I engage Pease and Hearn's guidance by: 1) working with key women feminist colleagues, including my supervisor, who consulted and advised this project; 2) acknowledging the points of tension that arise from the nature of being a man and doing CSMM work with men in patriarchal contexts; and 3) keeping a reflexive research journal throughout the project where I actively interrogate these issues on a regular basis. I seek to move beyond simple reflections and to dive deeper into a space of critical-interrogation and creative-openings where I reflexively examine my actions and inactions, as well as the broader assumptions that come with my research agenda and the field of EM itself (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017; Kester & Cremin, 2017). In doing so, I try to uphold the idea that *good intentions are not good enough* and seek to hold myself to a higher standard whereby I examine not just my intentions but also the impact of my thinking and actions in this research.

6.3.2.2 Researcher-as-Artist

In alignment with the seventh moment research approach and my background as a spoken word poet, I engage art as a reflexive medium, a learning process and method of discovery, and as an affective means of representation and dissemination (Johnson et al., 2018). Arts-based research (ABR) is an umbrella term that includes a variety of approaches to research that infuse arts-based theories, epistemologies, data, and representations (Leavy, 2015) in ways that reveal the 'generative power of the arts to invigorate social science inquiry and social science to propel the arts' (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2018, p.4). ABR uses the arts to help make research more 'accessible, evocative, and engaged' (Chilton & Leavy, 2020, p. 601).

I put the researcher-as-artist role into practice through poetic inquiry (PI). PI is the infusion of poetry into research (Furman, 2004; Prendergast, 2009; Butler-Kisber, 2010). More specifically, PI is 'using poetry as a tool for data collection, analysis, or most frequently, dissemination' (Johnson et al., 2018, p. 2).⁵³ PI is valuable in research, and particularly aligns well with this study, because it can tap into the 'emotional, experiential, and relational' realms of the human condition with depth and complexity (Johnson et al., 2018, p. 3). As Morrison (2009) writes, 'poetry makes us human' (p. 89) and in doing so PI becomes 'a way to expand perspectives on human experience' (Vincent, 2018, p. 51). PI can 'convey poignancy, musicality, rhythm, mystery, and ambiguity. It appeals to our senses and opens our hearts and ears to different ways of seeing and knowing' (Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 2). PI uses poetry to distill research into potent forms of communication that can reach larger audiences within and beyond academia (Johnson, 2021). Lastly, PI can be a powerful method for social justice research (Vincent, 2018; Johnson et al. 2018) and feminist research specifically (Faulkner, 2009). Faulkner (2018) uses PI in research 'to agitate for social change, to show embodiment and reflexivity, to collapse the false divide between body and mind, public and private, and as a feminist ethical practice. I use poetry as a feminist methodology to crank up the feminism' (p. 4).

Feminist poet, scholar, and activist Audre Lorde (1985) discussed the power and importance of poetry in understanding the structures of violence in the world, our personal and political positioning within it, and our capacities individually and collectively to transform them. She writes,

⁵³ Some key early scholarly work with PI includes Flores' (1982) poetry as researcher reflexivity, Richardson's (1992, 1993) interview data as poems, and Glesne's (1997) process of poetic rendering. For a more detailed history on PI see Vincent (2018).

The quality of light by which we scrutinise our lives has direct bearing upon the product which we live, and upon the changes which we hope to bring about through those lives. It is within this light that we form those ideas by which we pursue our magic and make it realised. This is poetry as illumination, for it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are — until the poem — nameless and formless, about to be birthed, but already felt. (Lorde, 1985, p. 35)

This speaks to art not just as a silent act of inward reflection, but as an illuminating, interrogating, meaning-making, imaginative act which is vital to this study's feminist approach to be reflexive about my own positionality, to bring forward to the voices of participants in affective and engaging ways, and to critically examine the violences of patriarchal masculinities and possibilities of feminist masculinities. As hooks' (1994) writes, 'The function of art is to do more than tell it like it is – it's to imagine what is possible'. In this light, my researcher-as-artist role through PI contributes to my ability as a researcher to think critically about men and masculinities and to bring forward multiple ways of seeing and being in the social world. Through this process, PI can transform both the writer and the readers; it is a process of uncovering knowledge and a method for disseminating it (Vincent, 2018).

In this study, I focus specifically on spoken word poetry (SWP). Simply put, SWP is poetry that is designed to be read or performed aloud. While all poetry *can* be read aloud, SWP is distinct in that it is created for the explicit purpose of being shared or performed (Smith & Kraynak, 2009).⁵⁴ A common refrain within the US SWP community notes, SWP is the art of 'taking poetry from the page to the stage'. In doing so, SWP combines performance and literary art and connects contemporary poets with diverse ancient oral storytelling traditions (Coulter et al., 2007). Contemporary SWP in the US is often characterized by emotive personal narratives, a political and critical orientation, and a dynamic interaction between the poet and the audience (Desai & Marsh, 2005; Chepp, 2016). I use SWP in-part because I am an experienced spoken word poet. In the US, I was a Southern Regional Poetry Slam Champion and National Poetry Slam Finalist. I have performed poetry hundreds of times across the country and internationally including invited appearances at prominent and historic venues such as the International Storytelling Center and the Nuyorican Poets Cafe. I have also used SWP to specifically reflect on the issues of masculinities, men's violence,

⁵⁴ Spoken word poetry is often associated with slam poetry. Poetry slams are poetry competitions where original poems are performed aloud and judged, typically from 0-10 by selected audience members (Smith & Kraynak, 2009). For a deeper exploration of slam poetry, see Gregory (2008, 2009) For a closer look at the contested and debated history and meanings of the terms spoken word poetry and slam poetry (amongst others), see Nikolova (2019).

and my own silence and complicity with patriarchy for the past decade. This experience and expertise give me a deep working knowledge of the power and potential of SWP as a means of communication and contemplation for key issues relevant to this study.

SWP is described in the literature as a particularly apt PI approach for research into issues of social justice because of its ability to navigate the personal and the political whilst engaging diverse audiences, thus making it a good fit for this feminist EM study (Johnson et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2018). This poetic form is also specifically responsive to my research context. In the US, the contemporary SWP movement draws influence from the 1940s and 50s Beat Movement, the Feminist and Black Arts Movements of the 60s and 70s, and the emergence of activist-oriented hip-hop music and culture in the 90s and into the 21st century (Fiore, 2015; Chepp, 2016). This historical grounding situates SWP as a form of resistance art in which poets explore a reflexive and critical understanding of the social world (Fisher, 2005; Stovall, 2006; Chepp, 2016).

Also relevant to this study, in education contexts, SWP is frequently described as a transformative classroom praxis that engages critical thinking and social justice (Desai & Marsh, 2005; Camangian, 2008; Xerri, 2017).⁵⁵ In ethnographies of SWP educators, Stovall concludes that ‘teaching social justice through poetry is a liberatory, conscious-raising, politicised process that challenges young people to develop understandings of their world and begin to engage the world as agents of change’ (2006, p. 63). For similar reasons, scholars like Johnson have strongly advocated for its potential as a more dynamic, accessible, socially engaged, and justice-oriented PI approach to research (Johnson et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2018; Johnson, 2021, 2022).

To summarise, my role as researcher-as-artist is an acknowledgement that this work is both about art and undertaken through art, and that my background as a spoken word poet can be a valuable contribution to this study's research approach. To ‘walk my talk’ (Archer, 2021) and maintain synergy between my research methodology and research focus (Cremin, 2016), I have incorporated elements of PI to provide an affective lens to this research.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ The literature on SWP in education also shows its potential as a means of promoting and developing academic achievement (Desai & Marsh, 2005), critical literacy (Fisher, 2005; Muhammad & Gonzales, 2016), critical consciousness raising (Desai & Marsh, 2005; Stovall, 2006; Camangian, 2008), emotional expression, intelligence, and empathy (Levy, 2012; Levy & Keum, 2014), student voice (Desai & Marsh, 2005; Gulla, 2007; Camangian, 2008; Xerri, 2017), identity exploration (Camangian, 2008; Levy, 2012; Fiore, 2015), community building (Fisher, 2005; Chepp, 2016), and performance and public speaking (Smith & Kraynak, 2009; Muhammad & Gonzales, 2016; Xerri, 2017).

⁵⁶ The specific PI methods used in this study will be expanded upon subsequently in section 6.4.4.

6.3.2.3 Researcher-as-Curator

Lastly, how this research is communicated is an essential dimension and an extension of the researcher-as-bricoleur/-feminist/-artist roles. I conceptualise my role here as a researcher-as-curator that helps find, consider, process, arrange, and ultimately represent research data and analysis so that others can have an analytic and affective experience with it. Unpacking the curation metaphor further; the researcher-as-curator does not deny the power and privilege a curator holds. For example, art curators have immense power in deciding what counts as art, what art gets to be seen, and how. But I argue the curator brings an element of criticality and creativity to this power. In contrast to an expert researcher or neutral observer and reporter, the researcher-as-curator acknowledges that representation will always have biases and limitations; research is not distilled truth. This is not a failure but rather a reflection of the limitations of a social being in a social world doing social practice. Thus, the researcher-as-curator must always be critical about positionality and open about the limitations of representing the findings. Seventh-moment inquiry produces contextualised possibilities, maybe even contextualised probabilities, but not certainties, generalisations, or statements of fact or causality. Research from a researcher-as-curator does not *have* clear effects, instead, it *is* an affective experience itself that people engage with and make meaning from.

Further, the research-as-curator understands their power in conversation with the power of the research participants, their voices, feelings, perspectives, and art, and the viewers/readers of the research itself. Again, the researcher-as-curator seeks to navigate these dynamics openly and with reflexivity (Kester & Cremin, 2017). In considering this role in my research, I focus on letting the participants' voices come through in this thesis, allotting time to introduce each of the 23 people I interviewed in the next chapter, using extended direct quotes throughout the findings, and indeed letting the findings be the longest section of this thesis itself. I see this as an essential part of my methodology and one that I hope brings forward a contribution by creating space for their perspectives to be heard in this under-examined area of scholarship. While my analysis and discussion of the findings deeply shapes who and what is heard, I try to present the findings in a way that strives to also let the participants' voices stand on their own. Lastly, in my researcher-as-curator role, I seek to use PI through SWP to make the research, both my voice and the voice of the participants, more engaging and accessible. This aligns again my practitioner-scholar and feminist approach in seeking shifts towards 'knowledge oralisation' (Santos, 2018) and more accessible (Pease, 2011) and engaging 'plain talk' praxis (hooks, 1989, 2000).

Grounded in seventh moment qualitative inquiry, bricolage methodology, and researcher-as-bricoleur/-feminist/-artist/-curator roles, I sought to conduct an open, exploratory, creative, and critical research project that engages with my multiple positionalities relevant to this study. This approach is responsive to my research questions and scholar-practitioner position and was designed to complement the CSMM, feminist, and peace education literatures that informs this EM study. In the next section on research design, I continue this discussion by exploring some of the specific power relationships I encountered as a man, feminist, fellow practitioner, and artist within the interview and observation contexts of this study.

Researcher Roles	Alignment with Seventh Moment Qualitative Approach
Bricoleur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research is adaptive and open, using a pragmatic and reflexive approach - Use of multi-method research designs to bring richness to the findings
Feminist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative inquiry as a critical gendered project aimed at addressing men's violences - Need for feminist and CSMM-guided reflexive work throughout
Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ABR and PI approach bringing an affective, creative, and human dimension to this work - Using SWP as a way of constructing and disseminating knowledge
Curator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Embracing the value and limitations of qualitative inquiry - Acknowledging the power of the researcher in deciding whose voices are heard in this research

Table 4: Researcher Roles Summary

6.4 Research Design

Following my multiple researcher roles, the research design employs a multi-method two phase approach. In **phase one**, I conduct 15 purposely selected semi-structured interviews with a diverse group of experienced practitioners. This phase aims to understand how the arts are being engaged, what advantages and limitations the practitioners perceive in their work, and if/how they thought the arts support changes in men's understanding of masculinities. The **second phase** of the research project is a year-long case study with one program using a combination of observations and semi-structured interviews. The case study provides a powerful example of this work in action. Further, this phase aims to dive deeper into and better understand the experiences of the men in the program and to place their insights into conversation with the practitioners in phase one. Across both phases of the research, I actively engage my research methodology by incorporating PI practices to reflect on the data and my researcher roles and positionality.

6.4.1 Bricolage Meets Pandemic

The design for this study was forced to adapt at several points due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Initial fieldwork in the US started in February 2020 and by mid-March 2020 significant disruptions emerged. I had originally intended to conduct all phase one practitioner interviews in person and to conduct three in-person case studies in phase two. As a result of the pandemic, all the potential case study EM programs were cancelled. I was not able to conduct any more phase one practitioner interviews or any phase two case study work in-person.

In addition, beyond the logistical challenges and cancellations, the first few months of pandemic in the US took a heavy personal toll. I struggled to balance care responsibilities for family, friends, and colleagues, and to find time to process this unprecedented moment of global crisis and uncertainty. These changes, both to my research plans and to our world, required me to return to my bricolage methodology to adapt. After six months of uncertainty and several failed attempts to redesign the research, I was able to restart the project with online practitioner interviews to complete phase one. In addition, I was able to find and secure the opportunity to work with one case study program that was adapted to run online. This was fortunately the one program I had already begun partnering with prior to the pandemic. This program was the only arts-integrated EM program that I was aware of in the US able to return to programming in 2020 and was serendipitously also an ideal fit for this project.

6.4.2 Phase One: Practitioner Interviews

Phase one consisted of 15 purposely selected semi-structured qualitative 75-120 minute in-person and online interviews conducted with US-based practitioners.

6.4.2.1 Interviewee Selection

Purposeful sampling selects information-rich interviewees for study based on set criteria (Patton, 2002). This practice is common in qualitative inquiry and is used when a researcher believes there is a lot to be gained by understanding key actors and contexts in-depth. The criteria used in phase one of this project had two components. First, the practitioners worked in the US. Second, the practitioners had first-hand experience and/or knowledge related to the use of the arts in EM group education programs in the US. I did not want to be prescriptive in defining art and was open to how and why practitioners classified art within their own practice. Doing so helps get a broader understanding of the field in ways that are responsive to the first research question and aims of this study. Engagement with the arts was thus defined broadly as the incorporation of artistic practices including various forms of poetry, drama, storytelling, dance, painting, sculpture, mask-making, and music.

A total of 15 practitioners met the two criteria and were willing to participate in an anonymised interview.⁵⁷ These practitioners were identified through online searches, professional contacts, and via the snowballing technique (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The searches included contacting major industry groups and networks, general online searches for relevant organisations and programs, keyword searches on academic journal databases, and leveraging my own professional contacts and knowledge of the field. In particular, I reached out to the MenEngage network, the largest men's gender justice network in the world. I spoke with MenEngage leaders in the international and North American regional teams about arts-integrated EM programs and made use of their extensive digital networks across North America to help identify possible practitioners.

This process, both searching on my own and working with MenEngage, is not systematic or representative. Instead, it is an extension of the bricolage approach and designed to illuminate more context and understanding of the field. This work is also limited by my

⁵⁷ 14 of the 15 practitioners sat for an audio recorded interview. One practitioner preferred to not have the interview recorded. As a result, I took detailed notes during our conversation and expanded on the notes in my field research notebook immediately afterwards. While there will be no direct quotes from this practitioner in this study, her insights and perspectives, as documented in my notes, are infused throughout the findings.

reliance upon English language documentation and correspondence. As a result, this project sought to be alert to the possibilities of programs that use other languages but also acknowledge that my ability to locate such programs is limited.⁵⁸

6.4.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured qualitative interviews were used to elicit detailed descriptions and reflections about how the practitioners perceived their arts-integrated work.⁵⁹ Qualitative interviewing is rooted in the belief that individuals possess a level of expertise of their own lived worlds and experiences, and that knowledge, when shared, can be a powerful source of collective understanding (Denzin, 2001). In contrast to less personal methods like surveys or focus groups, one-on-one interviewing can be a particularly effective way to engage participants about complex social experiences or sensitive social subjects like those around masculinities and MVAW (Hearn, 2013; Pease, 2013). This study uses interviews to illuminate perspectives from the practitioners via their lived experiences and perspectives about arts-integrated programming. Interview questions were developed to align with research aims and questions.⁶⁰ Since the process was semi-structured, I remained open to adapting and moving to where the conversation went organically. Overall, in alignment with the methodology, I sought to bring participant voices into the conversation of my analysis and to erode the false dichotomy between subject and expert in favour of a more dynamic understanding of co-constructed knowledge through the interviews.

Additionally, in alignment with my research roles and CSMM standpoint, I paid close attention to the power relationships within the interviews and how my positionalities as both an *insider* fellow EM practitioner and feminist and *outsider* interviewer and external researcher. Many of the people I interviewed are key figures in the EM field and people that I personally admire. Thus, I examined how my position as a fellow (in all cases more junior) practitioner might influence these interactions. Specifically, I was conscious of the risk of being overly deferential to their work, considering many of the people I interviewed had produced books, videos, and articles that shaped my own thinking on EM in the US. When the interviewee was a man, I was also conscious of the ways in which some men – including myself – who do EM work are given disproportionate praise compared to the many women who work in similar roles (Peretz, 2008; Macomber, 2012). As a result, I sought to remain both critical and open in my orientation towards their work, conscious of the tensions

⁵⁸ A more detailed introduction to each of the 15 practitioners and their programs is provided in Chapter 7

⁵⁹ Semi-structured interviews are also used in phase two and will be discussed in the subsequent section.

⁶⁰ See Appendix B for a copy of my interview protocols.

between EM work and feminism outlined in Chapter 4, and reflexive about the ways in which my own feelings and experiences might impact my understanding of their answers (Costa & Kallick, 1993; Fontana & Frey, 1994; Hearn, 2013; Pease, 2013).

I drew on Lanskey's (2018) post-interview procedure and her post-interview reflection approach to help me reflect on these power relationships and develop an organized and repeatable post-interview procedure. This process included immediate general notes and reflections followed by detailed and contextualised transcriptions as soon as possible after each completed interview. See table 5 below for more a more detailed overview.

Post-Interview Guidance (drawn from Lanskey, 2018)
1) Save a copy of the interview on a secure cloud system and make a backup copy of the interview on a secure hard drive.
2) Make detailed field notes on the interview to clarify themes, key moments, or important details. Make specific notes regarding my positionalities and any potential power relationships or dynamics.
3) Reflect more generally and over time on the interview in a research journal, including first impressions, what stands out, key connections to other data, and how does this interview add to/amend/question my research assumptions and questions. Further, reflect on what worked and what didn't work from a methods standpoint, asking, how can I continue to become a better interviewer? How can I navigate the power relationships and my positionalities with transparency and reflexivity within the interviews? These questions help connect back to my overall researcher reflexivity approach.
4) Begin the transcription process as soon as possible. Emphasise the importance of detailed, contextualised transcriptions that seek to illuminate the complexity of the social interaction of the interview process.

Table 5: Post-Interview Guidance

6.4.3 Phase Two: Case Study

Phase two of this project used a case study approach to examine the perspectives and experiences of participants in one arts-integrated EM program. The 'case' in this case study

was defined by and restricted to the facilitator and participants involved in one program in late 2020. Observations of the case study program included two components. First, I observed a four-session online training program for new facilitators. Second, I observed an online program consisting of six approximately two and a half hour weekly playshop sessions; five additional online lessons and discussion forums for the men to continue learning between the weekly sessions; four approximately two-hour productions where men shared their stories with their communities; and one wrap-up session with all the participants. In addition, I conducted interviews with the director/lead facilitator and eight participants after the completion of the program. In the following sections I will outline my case study approach, selection criteria, and review methods used.

6.4.3.1 Case Study Approach and Selection

Case study approaches employ multiple methods and forms of data to help researchers understand complex social actors and processes in context (Stake, 2000). Specifically, interviews and observations of case studies garner thick descriptions of social phenomena and institutions (Yin, 2003). These two methods served as the foundation for my case study approach. Some scholars criticise case studies for not being representative and lacking statistical generalisability (Yin, 2003). I acknowledge these limitations and note that this project's case study is not meant to be representative, nor does it aim to develop universal templates for EM programs. A case study approach is intentionally employed here to emphasise how each individual example of arts-integrated EM programs must be understood within its context. Yet, despite a lack of generalisability, the case can still provide valuable insights that may be applied and localised to other contexts through an intentional process guided by local actors, approaches, and epistemologies.

The case study for this research, a US-based arts-integrated EM program, was selected for this project using purposeful sampling. The case study was selected based upon three criteria.

Case Study Selection Criteria
1) US-based program with clear and documented use of arts-integration approach
2) Primary prevention, group education, and feminist-informed approach
3) Accessible and open to in-depth partnership, observation, and interviews with educators and participants

Table 6: Case Study Selection Criteria

After reviewing the literature and discussions with the case study facilitator/director Irene, I concluded that the program met all three criteria.⁶¹ Interestingly, the case study was also mentioned by several practitioners in phase one interviews as a key organisation doing arts-integrated work and framed as an exemplar that I should consider looking into. Thus, the case provides a helpful level of detail and depth that, when combined with phase one practitioner perspectives, paints a more vivid portrait of arts-integrated praxis in action. The case study and practitioner perspectives do not always align, sometimes surfacing different perspectives and often reflecting on different programs and artistic mediums. However, my analysis in this study indicates several important points of resonance that are illuminated by placing their collective voices into conversation throughout this text.

6.4.3.2 Observations

I use a semi-structured qualitative observation approach (McKechnie, 2012a, 2012b) in examining the case study. My approach to observation is exploratory and aligns with my bricolage methodology by seeking to dwell in the site, immerse myself, and illuminate the depth and complexity of the arts-integrated EM program (Bratich, 2018).⁶² Further, my approach to observation remained open to patterns that I noticed from the data. Those patterns in-turn were placed in conversation with my research questions and shaped subsequent observation and analysis in an iterative and generative manner. This process of searching for patterns and potential themes led me from an open observation towards a more focused one over time (McKechnie, 2008b).

⁶¹ As will be discussed in Section 6.6, all names used in this thesis, including Irene, are pseudonyms.

⁶² See Appendix C for a copy of my observation guide.

Using Gold's (1958) typology, I positioned myself as an observer-participant. This role aligns with my seventh moment qualitative inquiry and the feminist approach to blurring the line between researcher and researched and echoes the critical and open orientation I took towards interviewing. My presence in these often small and personal learning contexts required moving beyond a 'fly on the wall' approach and instead towards one of engaging with participants more directly. In consultation with the lead facilitator of the case study program, I took what we called an 'embedded' role in the program in which I was able to both step back, observe, and document, and step forward to participate, share, and support with feedback and reflections on stories shared in the weekly sessions. This role aligns with what Costa and Kallick (1993) call a 'critical friend' approach. This framing allowed me to balance the needs of documenting and analysing this work from a critical distance and the methodological imperative to not 'other' the participants (Patel & Kester, 2023). Further, this approach also allowed me to build rapport and trust with the men in the program. In turn, this helped me to understand their perspectives and experiences better and was helpful in creating a context in which the men felt more comfortable sharing with me.

I documented my observations in a field note journal and collected descriptive and relational data about the physical setting and context as well as about what the participants said and did. Following a similar set of practices as the post-interview approach (Lanskey, 2018), the fieldnotes from real-time observations were expanded upon with additional written reflections as soon as possible following the observation to recount the most detailed recollection. Yet, my observations were not neutral or meant to be mirror reflections of what happened (Bratich, 2016). Rather they must be understood through the prism of my positionality and the potential for researcher and observation bias.

6.4.3.3 Semi-structured interviews

To complement observation, this study used semi-structured qualitative interviews to elicit detailed descriptions and reflections about the case study program. First, I conducted pre- and post-program interviews with the case study director and lead facilitator. Second, I conducted eight interviews with participants after the completion of the program about their experiences. Five additional men took part in the program and were observed during the study but preferred to not have their specific stories and experiences included in the research. Like phase one, the interviews with the eight men sought to illuminate the participants' perspectives, and in this case, also their experiences within one specific arts-

integrated programming. Topics and questions were responsive to my research questions but remained open to adapting and moving to where the conversation went organically.⁶³

This approach to interviewing, as well as the above outlined critical friend observation approach (Costa & Kallick, 1993), connects with the previous section's discussion of tensions between my insider and outsider positions as a fellow EM practitioner and researcher and the power relationships within this specific study's context. The same dynamics discussed pertaining to my previous knowledge of and admiration for the practitioners applied to the head of the case study program as well. Thus, I had to be reflexive about the ways my appreciation for the program she was leading might influence the way I document, analyse, and write up this research.

I also had to consider the ways the program participants' perceptions of and power relationships with me might impact this work. For example, as a white heterosexual cis-gendered man, I had to be aware of the ways some men may be cautious of sharing or sceptical of my ability to understand and properly document their intersectional lived experiences – notably concerning the ways Black men, gay men, and trans men experience masculinities in the US. Additionally, as someone who was introduced to the group as an experienced EM educator, researcher, and as an accomplished storyteller and poet, I had to be conscious of the ways in which the men might feel pressure sharing their art with me. I also had to consider that they might censor what they shared with me or attempt to tell me what they think I want to hear, rather than what they were actually thinking, feeling, or experiencing. These challenges connect to my previously outlined concerns and limitations around both men doing EM work, and more specifically men researching other men doing EM work. There are no easy answers to the challenges and questions presented by these power relationships within my study. In alignment with my epistemological stance and methodological choices, rather than ignoring these points of tension or assuming I might be able to isolate and remove them, I sought to incorporate active and iterative reflexive work to bring these issues to the surface and be mindful of the ways they might be impacting the work.

6.4.4 Poetic Inquiry

Lastly, in alignment with my research methodology and researcher-as-artist role, phase one and two of this project are complemented with PI methods. Butler-Kisber (2010)

⁶³ See [Appendix B](#) for a copy of my interview guides.

distinguishes between ‘generated’ poems, written by the researcher, and ‘found’ poems, the process of turning data (such as interview transcripts in this study) into poems by rearranging the text, adding and removing words, changing line breaks, and bringing multiple voices into conversation with one another.⁶⁴ This study incorporates PI in both ways, and stemming from my experiences as a spoken word poet, all poems are written as SWP.

First, I wrote researcher poems throughout my fieldwork, analysis, and writing process. I have included two of these poems in the Introduction and Discussion Chapters. Building on my previous writings and performance about poetry, masculinities, and peace (McInerney, 2019a; McInerney, 2019b; McInerney & Cremin, 2023), these research poems create space for me to be reflexive and to engage my CSMM positionality, unpacking my relationships with men’s violences and my own process of reimagining my masculinity. Specifically, these poems are an opportunity for me to stretch my thinking and to apply the knowledge learned from this study to my own personal, professional, and political positionalities. Poetry is a vehicle that allows me to embrace the challenge of not just learning about my participants but also learning about myself in doing this research. In this light, the researcher poems are a form of *productive discomfort* (a term that will be unpacked and utilised at length to analyse the findings in the discussion chapter) that helps me maintain congruence with my methodological approach and my intersecting researcher-as-bricoleur, -feminist, -artist, and -curator roles (Keddie, 2021). While not an autoethnographic PI approach, (e.g., Johnson et al., 2017; Johnson et al. 2018), this thesis is strengthened by my use of poems in this way as a means of feminist-informed researcher reflexivity – poetically connecting the personal to the political and the research to me.

Second, Chapters 8, 9, and 10 begin with reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) (Braun & Clarke, 2013, 2019a) and end with a found poem drawn from the same quotes (as well as additional ones from the transcripts) to provide an affective and aural point of engagement to complement the analytic written text. While not a ‘collaborative poetics’ project, I draw inspiration from Johnson et al.’s (2017) use of both traditional and poetic analysis to facilitate multiple ways of engaging with the findings. Further, distilling the collective phase one and two data into a single stream of consciousness-style SWP found poem is inspired by Hajir’s (2023) work where she creates ‘multi-voiced narrated testimonies’ in her thesis findings. In doing so, I seek to place the collective 23 voices that inform this project into poetic dialogue with one another to illuminate key points of resonance and salient findings.

⁶⁴ In a similar way, Prendergast (2009) delineates PI into ‘vox participare’, poems voiced by participants and ‘vox autobiographia/autoethnographia’, poems voiced by researchers.

To be clear about the approach taken here, the words in the poems created are not new or my own – in fact many of the exact quotes are shared in the RTA of the findings that supersedes the poems. What is new is the order in which they sit on the page and the resulting poetic movement and meaning this arrangement creates. For each poem I first gathered all the quotes from the chapter into one document. Next, I returned to the NVivo data sets to again review the codes and themes for any additional insights that might have gotten lost in the RTA process or cut in the final text version of the chapter. I then began the process of crafting the lines of the found poem. I used an iterative process of mixing, fracturing, stitching, and mending to eventually create what I call a *poetic mosaic*. These poems bring the voices of phase one practitioners and phase two case study participants into conversation with one another, trying to find synergy in their insights. This mosaic takes the fractured parts of quotes and rearranges them to create something new that is representative of its constituent parts and at the same time constitutive of a completely new work – something greater than the simple summation of quotes in isolation. The found poem highlights the participants voices again, this time as a more immersive and collective narrative. But it is important to note that as the researcher-as-curator, their voices are filtered through me. Thus, while I strive to keep bringing the perspectives of the practitioners and participants forward, I do so within the limitations of my research approach.

Both types of poems in this study are written as SWP, in a stream of consciousness style, and with the intention of being spoken aloud. This study again seeks to shift towards oral epistemologies to create a generative new space within this written document for meaning-making to occur beyond the rigid confines of the page and conventional academic representational discourses (Desai & Marsh, 2005; Santos, 2014). Inspired by conversations with my colleague Carlotta Ehrenzeller (forthcoming) and her idea of using QR codes to infuse the spoken word into academic research, I include a way to scan and connect to a recording of each poem online so the reader can hear me performing them.

6.4.4.1 Critiques and Limitations of PI

Lastly, it is important to consider critiques and limitations of PI. Vincent's (2018) review of the PI literature notes concerns that poetry is too subjective to be considered research, raising problems with replicability and transparency in PI methods, and issues of quality – what is 'good' poetry? Similarly, Johnson et al. (2017) note that autoethnographic PI has been critiqued for being framed as potentially narcissistic, small in scope, and not always

particularly aesthetic or good art. In reflecting how to assess and evaluate PI, Chilton and Leavy (2020) stress the importance of the methods fit within the research project. As noted above, I believe SWP PI strongly aligns with this study's approach. PI's subjective-dimension is a meaningful limitation in terms of generalisability; however, this study's approach acknowledges this limitation and believes that non-generalisable research can still produce important knowledge that can be reflected upon, questioned, and adapted by other researchers and practitioners in their own work. In response to issues of methodological replicability, this study uses well-established PI methods and seeks to detail my thinking and approach in both poetic methods.

And finally, in terms of the quality of the art, I echo Johnson et al.'s (2018) insights on the value of working with experienced artists to address this challenge. In the case of this study, I benefit from my own background and experiences as a spoken word poet in the US. Further, I also challenge the idea of what constitutes 'good poetry' and worry that such discourses drift towards what Finley (2003) has called 'hegemonic control of the beautiful' and 'missing the opportunity' the arts have to offer (p. 292). Perhaps the question should not be what good poetry is, but more about how well the poem is doing/being within the context of the specific PI approach. This aligns with a shift towards 'good enough' research poetry (Lahman et al., 2011, p. 894). PI has important critiques and limitations, but I believe this study can navigate the challenges and bring forward this creative approach's value. As Vincent (2018) writes,

Poetic inquiry is not selected by researchers as a way to avoid the stringent nature of scientific studies or to diminish the need for thorough, well-supported studies, but is chosen as a method to realise new or different ways of knowing with the potential for a variety of views and voice. (p. 51)

In summary, this project utilises a multi-method qualitative design divided into two phases. In phase one I use 15 semi-structured interviews with practitioners from across the US. In phase two I conduct a year-long case study of one arts-integrated EM program in-depth using observations and interviews as an embedded researcher. Across both phases I continue to employ a spoken word poetic lens by writing and recording researcher poems and found poems.

6.5 Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) is a popular qualitative research approach for analysing data, such as semi-structured interviews and observations. TA seeks to construct patterns, or themes, from data sets that help identify key insights and answer research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013). This study uses a reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) approach (Braun & Clarke, 2019a, 2019b, 2020).⁶⁵ RTA emphasises researcher subjectivity and creativity, often uses a constructivist epistemology, and is theoretically flexible. RTA is used with a variety of different theories and disciplines, although the authors argue that the approach is grounded in the qualitative paradigm (Braun & Clarke, 2019a). Braun and Clarke's (2013) core principles for qualitative research include: 1) emphasise the messy reality, 2) teach and learn from your own standpoint, and 3) prioritise the practical. This approach is well suited for researching people's perceptions and experiences and aligns well with my seventh moment qualitative inquiry approach and research questions.

In response to critiques that TA was too flexible and an 'anything goes' method, Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013) developed an open, iterative, six-step RTA approach to constructing themes including: 1) become familiar with the data, 2) generate initial codes, 3) search for themes, 4) review themes, 5) define themes, 6) write-up. They argue the structure is helpful, but that RTA is still an organic process in which coding and theme generation are always adapting. Thus, it is important to ensure researchers 'retain the fluidity' and 'contextual decision making and processes of qualitative approaches' (Braun et al., 2019a, p. 3).⁶⁶

RTA can be inductive (codes, sub-themes, and themes guided by the data), deductive (guided by theories or concepts), or both. Braun and Clarke (2013, 2019a, 2020) see these approaches as existing on a spectrum rather than as binary choices. Following Byrne (2022), this study uses a combination, starting with an inductive open coding and then a more deductive reading and analysis guided by the research questions and this study's feminist approach (i.e., my understanding of what masculinities are, how they might change, and what implications that might have for MVAW and broader patterns of men's violences). A purely inductive approach offers many benefits. However, if applied comprehensively, inductive approaches create near limitless potential themes for investigation. This opens practical barriers concerning the volume of data and clarity of the research project.

⁶⁵ Originally conceptualised by Braun and Clarke (2006) as thematic analysis (TA), it has been expanded and updated by the authors in more recent scholarship, including a shift away from TA and towards RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

⁶⁶ See Appendix D for a detailed overview of my six step RTA process.

Upon gathering the data from phases one and two, the software NVivo was used to help organise, code, and construct the themes. RTA was conducted on the combined phase one and two data together. While there are benefits to thinking about the practitioner and case study insights separately, the initial RTA steps pointed towards strong points of resonance across the data and value in placing the practitioners and participants into conversation with one another. This approach aligned with the research questions and provided a richer qualitative portrait of arts-integrated EM programs from multiple perspectives.

Lastly, Braun et al. (2019b) caution against reliance upon 'code checking' approaches because RTA is rooted in the researcher's active interpretive role in meaning making and the application of theoretical approaches. Thus, it cannot be assumed that the results are necessarily replicable by others. This limitation is important to note. However, in alignment with my seventh moment approach, it does not mean that RTA is not a valuable means of knowledge production which can be used as a way for others to learn, reflect, question, and consider application to their own contexts. Instead of structured codebook and coding reliability approaches,⁶⁷ Braun and Clarke (2006) outline a 15-point checklist of criteria to help inform RTA. Drawing on that list, some of the key points that guide this study include an emphasis on giving attention to each code and checking themes for internal coherence, consistency, and distinctiveness. Further, I worked to ensure that the analysis told a compelling story by interpreting and making meaning out of the themes with strong support from the data. Lastly, I checked to make sure RTA aligned with my overall research approach and questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013).

6.6 Research Ethics and Risk

This section outlines my approach to research ethics and risks and details four key areas: informed consent, do no harm, researcher reciprocity, and mitigating COVID-19 impacts. As detailed in the methodology section, this project draws on feminist research ethics and a CSMM standpoint. In addition, I follow ethical guidance from the University of Cambridge and relevant professional research bodies. First, I ground this work in the five key principles of the Cambridge University Research Integrity Statement (2019).

⁶⁷ Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013) point to Boyatzis (1998) as an alternative more positivist-oriented TA approach.

Cambridge University Research Integrity Key Principles
1) Honesty in all aspects of research
2) Scrupulous care, thoroughness, and excellence in research practice
3) Transparency and open communication
4) Care and respect
5) Accountability for yourself and others

Table 7: Cambridge University Research Integrity Key Principles

Further, this general guidance is bolstered by legal requirements under the U.K. Data Protection Act (1998) and General Data Protection Regulation (2018), the British Education Research Association's (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018), and the American Education Research Association's (AERA) Code of Ethics (2011). The collective BERA and AERA guidance outline a range of responsibilities that I incorporate throughout my project. Some of the specific guidance applicable to my study includes, but is not limited to, the information adapted in the chart below.

Ethical Guidance (drawing from BERA (2018) and AERA (2011))
Be mindful of the way inequalities manifests in social relationships within the research project.
Maximise benefit and minimise harm to all involved.
Inform participants about the research fully and gain continuous, voluntary, informed consent from all individuals involved. Maintain participants' right to withdraw consent at any time.
Be very clear that participating in research is optional and that not participating in research does not inhibit anyone from participating in the wider program.
Consider the implications and burden of long-term observation or interviews on participants and adjust to minimise stress or harm to participants accordingly.

Consider the implications of how personal reflexive or autoethnographic work could identify or impact others.
Maintain transparency with participants about the purpose and focus of the research.
Consider the potential emotional and psychological harms that may arise from talking about sensitive issues like violence, trauma, discrimination, and complex notions of identity.
Only gather data necessary for the research study and store all data on platforms that are locked and always secured. Delete all raw data upon completion of the research study.
Maintain participant anonymity to the fullest extent possible, but also recognise and disclose to participants that in some cases, contextual factors may limit the ability to guarantee complete anonymity. Consequently, be aware of the consequences of breaches of anonymity to participants and make those implications clear to participants prior to involvement.
Maintain the privacy and confidentiality of participants as a priority but reserve the responsibility to disclose information reported if it is determined to constitute an active threat to the participant or someone else's life.

Table 8: Select BERA and AERA Ethics Guidance

For example, regarding the first item shared in Table 7, it is important to examine how inequalities manifest within social relationships in this research project. As discussed in both the previous methodological roles and research design sections, I remain conscious and critical of the ways power relationships may impact my observations and interviews. I use researcher poems and a specific post-interview process (Lanskey, 2018) to support reflexive thinking in this area. I emphasis this point here again because it is essential to understanding my insider and outsider roles as: 1) a man researching other men (although not exclusively men); 2) an EM practitioner looking at other EM practitioner approaches, and; 3) an artists who uses poetry to reflect on masculinities examining other men's artistic attempts to do the same.

These researcher responsibilities, while broad and generalisable to many types of education research, have concrete applications to my project that had to be thoroughly considered before, during, and after the research process. In alignment with my researcher-as-feminist role, this project engaged ethics as central to and entangled in all aspects of research

(Lincoln & Denzin, 2000; Hearn, 2013; Pease, 2013). My adaptable bricolage and PI-infused practice establishes a research process and framework that supports this ongoing interrogation of ethics and creates space for adjustments as needed.

6.6.1 Informed Consent

This research maintained full and ongoing consent and information sharing with all phase one and two participants.⁶⁸ I sought to establish open and clear communication channels where I explained in detail what my study entailed, what my intentions were, and what the potential impact of the research could be. I sought to mitigate any perception of pressure to participate in my study by being very clear with the case study program administrators and participants that participation was completely optional and subject to their continuous consent. Further, not being involved in my study in no way prevented them from participating in the program. As a part of the informed consent process, I also made clear that no names would be included in this research and that a process of pseudonymisation would be implemented. While pseudonymisation helps protect privacy, I was also clear with interviewees that despite my efforts there may still be ways to identify them based on what they say and the relatively small size of the EM, and even more so, arts-integrated EM field in the US. As a result of this concern, I also refrain from using the name of the case study organisation in this thesis to better help better protect the identities of participants who agreed to take part on the condition of not being named.

There is an additional concern specific to this project stemming from the use of found poems drawn from the participants words without being able to give them proper artistic credit due to pseudonymisation (Johnson et al., 2018; Johnson, 2021). In the context of this thesis, it was not possible to give named credit for the art without naming the interviewee as well. For the reasons about participant confidentiality noted above, I refrained from doing so. However, I seek to stress that the poetic mosaics, while filtered and constructed by me, are not my words and credit should be given to the 23 people who co-created them by taking part in this study.

6.6.2 Do No Harm

⁶⁸ See Appendix E or a copy of my informed consent agreement.

Another central ethical consideration for this project involves the precautions necessary for interviewing and observing men discussing and creating art about subjects that could be sensitive including violence, discrimination, and identity. One of my primary responsibilities as a researcher is always to do no harm. Prior to starting the project, a risk-assessment was conducted and passed by the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education. However, while the nature of the questions in this project are not directly inquiring about experiences with violence, some participants did voluntarily disclose such information. In these situations, or during any situation in which I felt the participant was experiencing levels of stress or anxiety during the interview, I offered to pause and/or stop the interview and to steer the conversation in a different direction if they would prefer to talk about something else. In addition, for my case study site, I conducted research ahead of time, consulted with local professionals, and acquired information about the relevant trauma and support resources in that area. All participants in the program received similar relevant information at the beginning of the program from the case study organisation.

6.6.3 Research Reciprocity

Another key aspect of my research ethics is to engage in relationships of reciprocity whereby I work with my participants to consider ways that I or this research can support their work (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000; Toews & Zehr, 2013; Cremin, 2016). In the case study I used my background in spoken word and storytelling to help facilitate story circles, and, when asked, to provide feedback to participants about their creative works. This dual role connects back to my observer-participant position I took in the program, both seeking to step back and observe and step forward and participate and support when appropriate. As the researcher, I must retain autonomy and independence to investigate and illuminate the data with rigour. However, this does not mean I cannot also explore ways to support the same organisation as an acknowledgment of their time and efforts to make my research possible and in ways that are consistent with my research aims and approach.

6.6.4 Mitigating COVID-19 Risks

Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic heightened the importance of ethics and risk management. As previously mentioned, the pandemic and resulting public health guidance and legal restrictions in the US required me to make significant changes to my research project to reduce risks for my participants and myself. As a result, rather than meeting, interviewing, and observing face-to-face as originally planned, all interactions, interviews, and

observations from March 7th, 2020, onwards were conducted online. Whilst COVID-19 delayed, changed, and challenged my research project, I was fortunate to be able to continue interviewing and observing online in a way that prioritised the health and safety of everyone involved and that still created rich opportunities to listen, learn, and document arts-integrated gender transformative work with men in the US.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided a description and discussion of my research approach including research methodology, questions, methods, data, analysis, and ethics. I outlined the specific ways I conducted my fieldwork and analysis. In addition, I argued for why my research approach was theoretically congruent, ethically consistent, and practically achievable given the constraints of carrying out a PhD during the COVID-19 pandemic. At each step I have shown how the research questions address identified research gaps; how the research approach aligns with the research methodology; how the research methodology supports the choices of research methods; and how the overall research questions can be answered by my research project through its approach, methodology, design, methods, data, analysis, and forms of representation.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ See Appendix F for an overview of researcher approach and methodology alignment across this project's multiple stages of data collection, analysis, and representation.

Chapter 7: Reimagining Masculinities

The People and Themes

7.1 Introduction

This is the first of four findings chapters unpacking insights from the practitioner interviews and case study. While acknowledging the power of the researcher-as-curator in deciding whose voices get to be heard, these chapters seek to dwell in the perspectives and experiences of the practitioners and participants and let them speak for themselves before I place them into conversation with the literature and bring in my additional analysis in the discussion chapter. I argue that spending time to bring a large volume of their rich insights into this thesis is an important contribution in itself to this under-examined area of literature.

This chapter has two goals. First, it introduces the 23 people (15 practitioners and eight case study participants) whose perspectives, knowledge, feelings, and experiences inform this study. It is important, and in alignment with this study's seventh moment qualitative inquiry approach (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000), that the findings are grounded in an acknowledgment of each person. Second, this chapter introduces the themes from the RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2013, 2019a), with *reimagining masculinities* as an overarching theme. Guided by this foundational theme, the subsequent three findings chapters further illuminate and interrogate *how* this reimagining of masculinities process was taught and experienced by discussing arts-integrated engaging men (EM) programs as *holistic*, *humanising*, and *challenging*. Thus, this chapter serves as an introduction to the people and the themes constructed from this study.

The following sections will: first, outline the theme; second, introduce the 15 practitioners; third, introduce the case study and participants; and fourth, summarise the findings and discuss how the subsequent three findings chapters expand on this foundation.

7.2 Reimagining Masculinities

The use of the phrase *reimagining masculinities* to describe the overarching theme was inspired by the previously discussed feminist, peace, and arts scholarship examining

imagination as a vital component of learning and social change. Specifically, hooks (2004) advocates a visionary feminist praxis to bring forward more equitable ideas of manhood. She argues that it is essential to both interrogate patriarchal masculinities and to illuminate the possibilities of feminist masculinities. As the previous literature chapters made clear – the process of reimagining masculinities is at the heart of EM work to prevent MVAW. Patriarchal masculine attitudes and behaviours are linked to both patterns of MVAW perpetration (Heilman & Barker, 2018), as well as what hooks' (2004) calls, men's collective cultural collusion through patterns of silence and inaction. EM programs seek to prevent both individual acts of MVAW as well as support a wider collective contestation and transformation of the social norms that define the 'man box' (Kivel, 1992). This individual and collective process of reimagining masculinities is the thread that runs through EM programs – and this thesis. As Lederach (2005) notes, the moral imagination, or the capacity to envision an alternative way whilst amid violence, is the heart of peace work – it is the life force behind social change. Echoing hooks (2004) and Lederach (2005), this study conceptualises the overarching theme of reimagining masculinities as the capacities to understand the complexity of the patriarchal problem, men's interconnected links and complicities with MVAW, and to work creatively and courageously towards scaffolding a more feminist-informed alternative.

The findings presented here show how practitioners and case study participants perceived arts-integrated approaches as 'transformative' because they believed that these approaches helped men expand their understanding of masculinities. The arts were repeatedly described as supporting men in envisioning, personalising, feeling, depicting, discussing, and embodying ideas of masculinity beyond the walls of the 'man box' (Kivel, 1992). In doing so, they argued that the arts opened space for men to reflect on patriarchal masculinity and its deep connections to violence and how they might question, challenge, and change it.

7.3 Practitioner Interviews

7.3.1 The People and Organisations

This section outlines findings from a demographics survey sent to each practitioner. Rather than using predetermined labels, the survey asked the practitioners to describe their sociocultural identity categories. First, on the question of gender, eight participants identified as men and/or male, four identified as women and/or female, and three identified with non-binary categorisations including gender non-binary, gender non-conforming, and gender-

fluid.⁷⁰ Second, on the question of race and/or ethnicity, six participants identified with multiple answers, including African American and Latino, Asian and Caucasian, Asian and Latina, White and Latina, White and Jewish, and white and Ashkenazi Jewish. Further, four identified as white, two as Black, one as Hmong, one as Jewish, and one as Latina.⁷¹ Third, on the question of sexuality, nine participants identified as heterosexual.⁷² Three participants identified as bisexual, one as gay, one as queer, and one did not identify with any label. Fourth, on the question of class, 12 participants identified with variations of middle-class.⁷³ Further, one participant identified as poor, one as professional or managerial class, and one as upper class.⁷⁴

The practitioners had different professional backgrounds, including social work, public health, education, research, academia, community organising, and the arts. Their individual experience in gender justice work ranged from 5-40 years. 11 of the practitioners were educators who worked directly in programs that used elements of the arts, three worked at organisations that ran such programs and helped develop and support them in some capacity, and one had three decades of experience in the field, including in areas that integrated the arts, although not in an explicitly programmatic context.

The 15 practitioners worked at 10 different organisations including individual consultancies, grassroots groups, state and national professional networks, and national and international NGOs.⁷⁵ All the organisations could broadly be classified as specialising in EM. Some organisations focused exclusively on working with men and boys; others also conducted gender-inclusive programs as well as programs specifically for women and girls and/or for gender non-binary people. Further, many organisations worked with a wide age range of boys, young men, and older men. Other organisations specialised in working with certain ages, for example with university age men. Three organisations were represented by multiple practitioners in the interviews. In each case, it was determined that more information

⁷⁰ The demographic survey also asked participants to identify their preferred pronouns. All participants are identified accordingly.

⁷¹ As Nguyễn and Pendleton (2020) argue, the choice to capitalise racial groups and categories is a contested and political decision. Rather than imposing a choice, the inconsistent use of capitalizations of racial and ethnic groups in this and subsequent sections mirrors how the practitioners themselves wrote such terms in describing their identities.

⁷² In one case this was qualified as 'socialised heterosexual'.

⁷³ Variation of middle class included: middle, lower-middle, and upper-middle class.

⁷⁴ The survey also provided space for the participants to share any additional important information. Some participants shared details including their identity as parents, citizenship status, and religion. One participant chose to share that they were working on a piece of art addressing the liminal spaces in which they sit between some identity categories.

⁷⁵ While some of the larger organisations worked globally, the scope of this project was limited. Thus, the focus of conversation in the interviews was on work being done in the US.

could be gained by talking with another colleague who specialised in a different program or whose perspective could support my understanding of arts-integrated approaches.

7.3.2 The Art and Arts-integration Approaches

The findings do not reveal a singular arts-integration approach but rather a wide range of arts mediums integrated in a variety of different ways in EM programs.⁷⁶ First, the ten organisations were classified into two categories of arts-integration approach: organisations that utilised art as a core part of their work and organisations that utilised a smaller additive arts element in at least one of their programs. Three organisations represented by six practitioners interviewed in this study used art as a central and distinct component of their EM work. In these cases, the arts were engaged in an immersive and sustained way, often repeatedly over multiple sessions. While first and foremost EM organisations, arts-integration was an essential part of these organisations' identities and theories of change. These three programs also each included public-facing productions or performances that shared the arts created with their wider communities. These public-facing events were accompanied by community dialogues or audience discussions with the participating men and were often filmed to allow for further online distribution of the finished work.

In contrast, seven organisations represented by nine practitioners integrated the arts less frequently and in more limited and context-specific ways. These programs were not advertised to participants as explicitly arts-integrated, or pedagogically focused on using art as the primary learning approach. Rather, these more traditional group education programs strategically incorporated individual arts activities as creative learning texts, culturally responsive conversation starters, and as ways to deepen the learning experience. Furthermore, amongst all 10 organisations, there was a continuum of fictional and nonfictional-based approaches to arts-integration. Some programs, like the case study, focused exclusively on personal storytelling. Other programs explored more figurative, fictional, real-life inspired, or combinations of fiction and nonfiction inspirations for the arts used in their programs.

Second, across all 10 programs, six main arts practices were mentioned by the 15 practitioners. Storytelling was named six times, drawing four times, music four times, poetry three times, drama three times, dance three times, photo-voice two times, and mask-making

⁷⁶ As noted in the literature review, I draw on Davis' (2008) conceptualisation of arts-integration as a specific form of arts education in which arts practices, skills, and learning are integrated into non-arts classes and contexts.

one time. Storytelling was the most named arts practice and sparked conversations in the interviews about if storytelling was art, the ‘art of storytelling’, and the differences, if any, between a story and other forms of expressive arts. Ultimately, many of the practitioners perceived that storytelling could be considered an art; one that combined elements of spoken word, drama, poetry, and various other forms of creative expression with traditional oral storytelling and one that was being utilised in a variety of ways in EM programs. This expansive definition of arts which includes storytelling also aligns with storytelling scholarly (Spaulding, 2011) and practitioner (International Storytelling Center, 2022) perspectives. Overall, this study engages with both a broad definition of the arts and a diverse range of arts-integration approaches. However, as will be revealed in the findings and unpacked in the discussion, there are important distinctions to be made within the diverse mediums and approaches outlined here.

7.3.3 Introductions and Reimagining Masculinities

This section introduces the 15 practitioners and insights from their interviews connected to the overarching theme of reimagining masculinities.

Olivia is a doctor and researcher specialising in gender violence prevention.⁷⁷ She works at a public university in the Northeast and has collaborated with three of the largest EM organisations in the US. Olivia discussed how programs she worked on incorporated photo-voice and drawing activities into the curricula to explore gender norms and how certain ideas of manhood might connect to MVAW. In one activity, Olivia described how participants were asked to draw ‘what it means to be a man’. She said the art is ‘absolutely vital’ because there is a big difference between,

... sitting around and saying, what does masculinity look like to you? You know, focus group conversation. As opposed to, let's draw this! It's so different. The conversations are so much richer when you involve the visual work.

Alex is a social worker living in the Mid-Atlantic, where he works with Carlton and Kent at an organisation that runs theatre workshops and performances about masculinity.⁷⁸ Alex described it as ‘arts-based, anti-toxicity, pro-feminist work’ that seeks to challenge patriarchal masculinities and MVAW by unpacking ‘the definition of what being a man is and

⁷⁷ Olivia uses she/her pronouns.

⁷⁸ Alex uses he/him pronouns. Carlton and Kent will be introduced below.

how men show up in the world'. He told me about how the arts can complement more traditional approaches to gender equality work with men and why an intersectional lens was essential. Alex emphasised the importance of using the arts to not just be anti-patriarchy but to be pro-feminist. He said,

You can't just be against toxic masculinity; you can't just say it's bad. Because if we are just standing around saying, that's bad, nothing is going to change, no needle is going to be moved.

Carlton is an artist and educator based in the Mid-Atlantic, where he works with Alex and Kent.⁷⁹ He spoke about the power of art to catalyse challenging conversations about gender norms and promote cathartic processing of the harms caused by patriarchal masculinities – with MVAW often being a point of focus. For Carlton, there was a certain element of 'magic' in arts-integrated gender transformative work with men. He critiqued attempts to overly operationalise the arts telling me, 'It's not cognitive behavioural therapy, it's fucking art'. Carlton also cautioned against using the arts to promote simplistic accounts of 'good guys' and 'bad guys'. The goal of his program was not to promote 'ethical masculinity' but rather to disrupt binaries altogether. He said his work seeks,

... to make the category of masculinity a little more confusing and open-ended and have people get down to their values and their desires and be able to do things in the world that resonate with their values and help them meet their desires in a peaceful way.

Kent works with Carlton and Alex and is an educator and non-profit director living on the West Coast.⁸⁰ Kent discussed his passion for applied theatre, LGBTQIA+ rights, and how his experiences as a drag queen influenced his work. For Kent, the arts open a space to play with gender and question patriarchal masculinity's rigid script. He told me the arts are an invaluable spark that opens a reimagining process for individuals and society to consider less violent alternatives. He asks participants in his programs,

What does it mean to you to be a man?... So, it starts with what is your current relationship with masculinity, with being a man. And then we move towards, what do you want to create... what is your vision for a new masculinity for yourself? And for this planet?

⁷⁹ Carlton uses he/they pronouns.

⁸⁰ Kent uses he/she pronouns.

Mason is a West Coast-based educator, activist, and writer working on issues of social justice, including a focus on EM.⁸¹ Mason shared examples of how he incorporated theatre activities, poetry writing, music, and visual arts into his workshops with men. He described the arts as a way of introducing new ideas, deepening engagement on the importance of preventing MVAW, and reimagining what was possible. In one activity, Mason described a visual drawing activity that encouraged men to reimagine and visualise masculinities beyond patriarchal norms and to also reimagine a different social system beyond patriarchy. He said,

... they come up with some wonderful imaginative creative images and they're part of a collective process of visioning a different kind of world.

David is an educator, activist, former professional athlete, and consultant specialising in diversity, equity, and inclusion.⁸² He spoke about how the arts create a powerful and culturally responsive way to challenge men to take 'the mask of masculinity' off. For David, an expansive definition of the arts that embraces creativity in various cultural arenas like literature, music, and sports, can inspire men to change. He told me, 'What art does is it allows human beings to be greater than they imagined'. Adapting an Audre Lorde quote, he ended the interview by saying,

American masculinity in 2020 has the opportunity to define itself for itself if it stops being so fucking afraid. So, I think of masculinity as a plural – masculinities.

For David, this shift to the plural masculinities was a step away from the rigid violent code of patriarchal masculinity towards one rooted in the multiplicity of men's intersectional personhood.

Helena lives in the Midwest where she works as a senior staff member at a large national EM organisation.⁸³ Her organisation integrates arts into their training programs and educational resources aimed at preventing MVAW with songs, storytelling, poetry, and drumming circles. Helena discussed how she believed the arts supported men in understanding and practising 'healthier and more respectful forms of manhood'. She told me,

⁸¹ Mason uses he/him pronouns.

⁸² David uses he/him pronouns.

⁸³ Helena uses she/her/ella pronouns.

Art compels and connects to emotions. If you're lucky, art or stories compel you to be critical at thinking about your own experience, and doing analysis of your life and what you have done or not done...

Ernest is a consultant, educator, and activist based in the Midwest where he works with schools, universities, community groups, and national EM networks to bring the problem of MVAW to the forefront.⁸⁴ Ernest reflected on his experiences using storytelling and poetry in organising and education work with men, as well as his broader thoughts on how other organisations within a network he led incorporated the arts to help men explore more expansive understandings of masculinities that move beyond the man box walls. He said the arts opened a more dynamic space where men were,

... willing to explore things. They're willing to be playful in ways that they're not when just standing in a workshop room with a facilitator in front of them.

Leon is a writer, editor, educator, and activist who has worked on addressing MVAW for several decades.⁸⁵ He shared insights from his work writing about and working with a variety of different arts-integrated approaches, including dance, poetry, theatre, and music. He said the arts were valuable because they engage 'the heart' and in doing so, can inspire alternative ideas of manhood beyond patriarchal norms for men in programs and for wider audiences when shared publicly. Leon said he believed meaningful change was happening; a shift from patriarchal masculine dominance and violence towards the possibilities of more feminist ideas of masculinity and that the arts play a key role in spreading that message. He noted,

Men addressing their condition through art is a way for everyone in society to recognise that this transformation is underway, that there is a great turning happening.

Francis is the director of a dialogue and theatre EM organisation based in the Northeast where he worked with Brent⁸⁶. Francis' work uses drama and education to challenge dominant gender norms about masculinity tied to MVAW and promote alternative ideas of manhood. For Francis, the arts were a way to create opportunities for more stories of masculinity to be shared, challenged, practised, and valued. He argued his organisation's

⁸⁴ Ernest uses he/him and z/zir pronouns.

⁸⁵ Leon uses he/him pronouns.

⁸⁶ Francis uses he/him pronouns. Brent will be introduced below.

approach helped move beyond rigid gender norms and binary thinking, and in doing so, explore alternative ways of being a man. He told me the arts help us question;

How do we break out of binaries? How do we break out of either-or thinking? How do we create multiple perspectives?

Brent works in diversity and inclusion education at a public university in the Northeast.⁸⁷ He described his work with Francis as creating real-life inspired dramatic scenes on university campuses and in community settings to challenge men to think critically about gender norms, MVAW, and to create space to support pro-feminist ideas of manhood. This balance of deconstructing and reconstructing was key. As Brent said, the participants and audience members get to use art to 'see what is possible, in a performative way that is different than just having the conversation'. He continued,

We can say here's a possibility, or here's a situation that went wrong, and now we're going to remix it. Now we're going to give you an alternative.

Juliet is based in the Mid-Atlantic where she works as an educator, researcher, and program manager at a large NGO specialising in healthy masculinities and gender justice.⁸⁸ Juliet told me about the ways the arts had been integrated into some of her organisation's US-based programs as well as other examples she had seen from partner organisations, including the use of dance, drawing, photo-voice, and theatre-based approaches. She said the arts, when combined with gender transformative messages about masculinity, can be a powerful way to communicate this work to larger groups of men, to deepen the work by helping men connect with and internalise the problems of MVAW, and to advance ideas of healthy masculinities.

Nate is a senior researcher at the same NGO as Juliet.⁸⁹ He specialises in programmatic and research work on masculinity, violence, and gender inequality. Nate spoke about his experiences working on programs that use drawing activities to engage boys and men, his overall thoughts on the benefits and limitations of arts-integration, and his personal work exploring alternative masculinities through music. In speaking about the potential of the arts Nate said,

⁸⁷ Brent uses he/him pronouns.

⁸⁸ Julie uses she/her pronouns.

⁸⁹ Nates uses he/him/they pronouns.

I think the benefits are huge. I think the examples are already all around us. Just like all of the creative forces we have, musicians and filmmakers and visual artists, and how those fields are already socially transgressive in so many ways.

Paul is an educator, organiser, and the head of a Midwestern EM network.⁹⁰ He talked about incorporating storytelling and mask-making exercises into his work with men to support them in narrating and visualising the harms of patriarchal masculinity ranging from MVAW to the ways these norms also harm men themselves. Paul described this work as ‘slower’, more ‘process-focused’, and a deeper exploration of masculinity that allowed men to sit with, reflect on, and challenge and change their understanding of masculinity. He said it was important to facilitate spaces for men to be,

... expressive in ways that are not conforming to the rigidity of masculinity, but it's still masculine right... Being able to showcase an alternative form of what masculinity looks like and is.

Irene has a doctorate and is a researcher, practitioner, and social entrepreneur leading an organisation that uses personal storytelling to engage men and masculine-identifying individuals in gender transformative work.⁹¹ Irene’s organisation engages groups of men in learning about the nexus of masculinities, health, gender justice, and social justice, and helps them craft and share stories that highlight how they are challenging rigid gender norms, being accountable for past harms they have committed, and/or enacting more inclusive and health masculinities. Irene described the work as a

movement-building project of men taking a personal, public stand for healthy masculinities and social justice. They share their own personal stories in front of live audiences of their own communities that explore and challenge social ideas about masculinity, so as to help advance health, social justice, and equality for people of all genders. The storytelling events are filmed, to create locally-relevant films and social media videos of each presenter’s story. That media content is then shared as a public education and personal support resource.

Irene and her organisation are the bridge connecting this study’s two data sets. As was discussed in Chapter 6, a case study of Irene’s organisation was conducted after it was determined it aligned with this study’s selection criteria. Further, this organisation was

⁹⁰ Paul uses he/him pronouns.

⁹¹ Irene uses she/her pronouns.

identified by several practitioners interviewed in this study as a leading example of arts-integrated EM work in the US.

7.4 Case Study

7.4.1 Case Study Overview

The case study organisation used a gender transformative and intersectional feminist approach to supporting men and boys in ‘taking a stand for healthy masculinities and gender justice’ (organisation’s website, 2022).⁹² As noted above, Irene described the work as a ‘replicable storytelling and dialogue project that brings critical dialogue on social ideas about masculinity into public forums around the world – via men’s own voices and stories’. Drawing on insights previously discussed in the literature review, the case study program is theoretically grounded in the importance of sharing and role modelling healthy and gender-equitable notions of masculinity, and the power of personal narrative communication in promoting observational learning, strengthening audience members’ self-efficacy, and increasing empathy (Green & Brock, 2002; Bandura, 2004; Peretz & Lehrer, 2019; Peretz et al., 2020; Green, 2021).

This US-based organisation has been implementing its programs for over 12 years across the US, with approximately two programs per year as it developed its work.⁹³ For most implementations of the program, the organisation partners with a university or non-profit interested in bringing this work to their school or community. The case study organisation would then host a series of facilitator training sessions to teach the local partner’s staff the core structure, goals, curriculum, and pedagogy. However, there was no one-size-fits-all template, and the team leading the program in each setting was encouraged to adapt the curriculum and pedagogy to their local context. A typical program consisted of six to eight sessions described as ‘playshops’ (rather than workshops) lasting approximately two and a half hours. Each session typically consisted of four parts listed in the table below.

⁹² This quote is drawn directly from the organization’s website. However, the name of the organization is being withheld in alignment with the previous chapters explanation of anonymity used in this study.

⁹³ While not the focus of this research, the case study organisation had also run program in three international contexts.

Case Study Session Outline
1) Brief check-in / opening circle
2) One-hour learning module where the men learn about and discuss diverse issues pertaining to masculinities, intersectionality, men's health, gender violence and MVAW specifically, and gender equality
3) One-hour story circle where the men can share, get feedback, and learn from each other's personal stories related to these topics
4) Brief check-out / closing circle

Table 9: Case Study Session Outline

Over the course of the program, each participant would work on and complete one story drawn from their lived experiences that was related to the weekly learning topics. The personal narratives the men crafted and shared most frequently took the form of stories, testimonials, and spoken word. Other mediums such as stand-up comedy, poetry, music with lyrics, dance, and visual art had also been used. After completing the playshops, the men participate in a series of public productions where they share their stories with their local communities. Stories were also recorded and could be subsequently shared online to reach larger audiences. Lastly, each production incorporated a culminating community dialogue amongst audience members and presenters to discuss the key themes from the stories and invite reflections and questions from the audience.

This study focused on one program run by the case study organisation in partnership with a state-based gender violence prevention organisation in the Southwest. The local partner helped recruit 12 participants from the same Southwestern state.⁹⁴ The two organisations worked together to facilitate six playshops, four public productions where the participants shared their stories, and one wrap-up session with the participants.⁹⁵ In addition, the program provided additional online learning resources in-between weekly sessions and a discussion forum where the men could share reflections with one another. The storytelling productions were also filmed to create videos of each presenter's story.⁹⁶ This was the first

⁹⁴ All participants identified as men and facilitators included both men and women.

⁹⁵ All playshops and public storytelling events were done using Zoom.

⁹⁶ With the presenter's permission, these videos were subsequently shared online.

time the project had been run completely online.⁹⁷ At the end of the program, eight participants agreed to give interviews for this study.

The case study's gender transformative, true, personal story crafting and sharing approach described above will subsequently be referred to as the program's *storytelling process*. Furthermore, drawing on this study's inclusive definition of the arts, the use of storytelling, with or without other forms of art such as poetry, dance, and singing infused into the story, is considered an art and thus, an arts-integrated approach.

7.4.2 The Participants and Stories

This section outlines findings from a demographics survey sent to the eight case study participants interviewed. First, the men's ages spanned from mid-20s to mid-70s, with the majority in their 30s. Second, on the question of gender, all participants identified as either men/male or 'cis-gender male'. Third, on the question of race, two identified as Black, two as white, one as Asian-American, one as Hispanic, one as Black mixed race, and one as Biracial/mixed/hapa⁹⁸. Fourth, on the question of sexual orientation, five identified as heterosexual or straight, one as bisexual, one as homosexual, and one as queer. Fifth, on the question of socio-economic status, five identified as middle class and three identified as lower- or low-middle class. On the final question asking if the participant had any other additional information to share, one person wrote, 'I am a creative spark of stardust and so are you'.

All participants in the program wrote, edited, and shared a personal story connected to the topics they were learning about. The eight men interviewed for this research used a range of storytelling approaches, including traditional oral storytelling, spoken word, poetry, and singing.⁹⁹

7.4.3 Introductions and Reimagining Masculinities

This section introduces the eight men interviewed and presents quotes from their interviews and stories connected to the overarching theme of reimagining masculinities.

⁹⁷ As was discussed in the methodology, this programmatic decision was in response to the pandemic-based restrictions.

⁹⁸ As previously noted, capitalisation of race and ethnic groups used here mirrors how the participants themselves wrote them.

⁹⁹ Additional participants who chose not to take part in the interview portion of the project but were observed throughout the program also utilised dance and music in their stories.

Chris

This was the exact kind of [program] design that we need to push into, to push all masculine beings of any flavour, into the next century – into this century.

Chris is a non-profit director and advocate for trans rights.¹⁰⁰ He said his experience in the program was 'emotional', 'transformative', 'challenging', and 'uplifting'. Chris told me he wanted to illuminate the Black trans experience in his story and highlight his journey to becoming a 'full-spectrum masculine being'. Through a combination of oral storytelling and singing, he shared intimate glimpses into his family, church, school, and work life revealing moments of joy, confusion, pain, discrimination, hope, and change. Toward the end of the story, Chris highlighted how his thinking on gender norms changed.

I have been re-examining a lot of my narrow ideas about so-called masculinity and femininity. I used to want to be like my grandfather, but as I have grown, I have realised that his vision of masculinity would not include me. His vision of masculinity is antiquated, one that many still hold today. My grandmother, though, would be so proud of me. She didn't live to see me come out as trans, and she initially struggled with learning about my queer identity, but she ultimately became my greatest ally. She convinced my family to start talking to me again.

Chris said that the program expanded the way he thinks about masculinities. He said his conception of masculinities is much more 'complex' now and that this work was vital and 'we need more of it'.

Thomas

You know, this program, it actually has changed who I am.

Thomas lives in a rural town where he teaches at a secondary school.¹⁰¹ He described the program as a 'transformative', 'challenging', and 'refreshing' experience that taught him a lot about masculinities and MVAW. His story used a combination of oral storytelling and singing to share a moment about how he experienced bullying and homophobia because of the perceived effeminate sound of his voice. He chose to sing in his story because he was

¹⁰⁰ Chris uses he/him pronouns.

¹⁰¹ Thomas uses he/she/them/they/his/hers pronouns.

encouraged by another member of the group and because it allowed him to be his ‘fullest self’ by embracing his voice. Thomas said he had never been in a group of men like this before and that the learning community, and specifically the storytelling approach, helped him redefine ‘what it means to be a man’ and ‘made me proud to be the man that I am’. When I asked him for one word that best encapsulated his experience, he told me ‘life-changing’. Thomas’ story ends,

I am an out and proud gay Black man living in the heart of conservative central [name of state removed] with a support circle of family, co-workers, and friends as strong as titanium. I have navigated through the terrain of the harsh and sometimes inhumane society. Coming out with some scratches but stronger, nonetheless. I had to find, accept, and then love my own true self – with my own spirit – and then connect with a part of myself that is deeper.

Dante

We don't have to continue the way that we have. And this is a living example of that.

Dante works at a large charity organisation.¹⁰² He said the ‘community’ of men in the program supported a level of trust and vulnerability needed to get to the ‘emotional core’ of the issues surrounding ‘toxic masculinity’. Dante’s story reflected on his experiences playing competitive sports and how his understanding of masculinity as requiring constant victory, never showing emotion, and being aggressive negatively impacted his relationship with his partner. In the story he shared,

Associating traits like sensitivity, compassion, and gentleness with “submission” or “losing”, while associating aggression, violence, and stubbornness with “domination” or “winning”, is a disservice to the human condition. That I enjoy poetry, music, art, and learning does not make me less “masculine”, it simply means that the definition I was taught is lacking. That I prefer compassion, conversation, vulnerability, and non-violence over competition and dominance does not make me a “loser”, it simply means I see the strength of these strategies, where before I only saw their supposed shortcomings.

¹⁰² Dante uses he/him pronouns.

Dante said the one word to describe his experience in the case study program was 'challenging', but he qualified by saying, 'not in a bad way'. He said getting feedback on deeply personal stories was hard and that the revision process was particularly challenging. Dante said he sought to embrace the challenge as a part of the process, learning to 'be comfortable with being uncomfortable'. Or as he put it; this program was an opportunity to unpack some of his own 'toxic masculinity'.

Jamie

I can't speak for everybody else, but [this program] changed me.

Jamie is a poet, actor, and social worker.¹⁰³ He described the program as a 'positive', 'supportive', 'healing', and communal learning experience that expanded his definition of masculinity.

I no longer have to adhere to one definition or... one way of thinking about what manhood is. There are so many different ways to consider manhood.

Jamie's story was shared as a spoken word poem reflecting on his experience as a survivor of childhood sexual violence committed by another man. Jamie said the group of participants and the storytelling approach allowed him to be vulnerable and to learn more about the connections between patriarchal masculinity and violence. He said the one word that best described the experience for him was 'necessary'. The end of Jamie's poem reflects on personal growth and resilience:

My head is raised high now. High because I continue on my journey to understanding that acceptance of my past can bring a healing that creates healthy relationships for my future....DAMN! It's gon' feel so good to finally feel FREE!

This rediscovery is teaching me to accept the support that I needed to recover from my trauma and to break the cycle of silence that leads to a toxic masculinity.

¹⁰³ Jamie uses he/him pronouns.

Davis

There are masculinities – plural. I think that's very very very important. There's not masculinity... This program supports the idea that there are masculinities. And I hope [it] will help to unravel this bullshit idea about masculinity that is part and parcel of the problem of violence against women.

Davis is a retired photographer and former rape crisis centre employee.¹⁰⁴ He said the program's use of storytelling was transformative in his learning process about men's violence. Davis said the biggest thing he learned was the concept of 'masculinities'. He said the program helped him think outside the rigid mindset of patriarchal masculinity and into an inclusive, more equal, and plural understanding of masculinities. When I asked him for one word to describe his overall experience, he listed, 'refreshing, renewing, life-saving'.

Davis used traditional oral storytelling to share an experience about supporting a survivor of violence at the rape crisis centre and how that moment changed him on an emotional and embodied level. Davis's story ends by noting how '...that experience radically changed my life for the better'. He said the program pushed him to continue to work, listen, challenge himself, and to share. The last thing he told me in the interview was 'I'm still learning. It's keeping me alive'.

Marcos

I saw the whole spectrum of masculinity.

Marcos works at a non-profit organisation in the Southwest.¹⁰⁵ He told me the experience in the program was 'powerful' and 'healing'. He said it taught him a lot about the spectrum of masculinities and how his learning was enhanced by the diversity of men in the group sharing their own lived experiences. Marcos said,

I think just at the end of the day, masculinity, there's no black or white. It can be grey; it can be pink; it could be yellow. It can be whatever the heck you want it to be as long as you remain true to yourself, and I think that's what we did.

¹⁰⁴ Davis uses he/him pronouns.

¹⁰⁵ Marcos uses he/him/hombre pronouns.

Through his story, Marcos reflected on gender and violence in the military and how he learned to become more comfortable with masculinity outside of patriarchal norms. Marcos said the program was hard for him, but he would still do it all over again. At the end of his story, he shared, 'most importantly I am comfortable NOW. In my own skin'.¹⁰⁶

Stan

I just didn't think that there were other guys out there that thought and acted like this.

Stan is a professional musician.¹⁰⁷ He described the program as a powerful learning experience that changed the way he thought about masculinity and that helped him personalise the work of gender justice and MVAW prevention. His story combined traditional oral storytelling with a poem to reflect on men's friendships with one another. He spoke about the importance of disrupting dominant masculine norms and engaging the full spectrum of platonic connections with other men.

Stan said he felt inspired and like he has new knowledge and tools to do 'hands-on' activism for gender justice after leaving the program. When asked what word best describes his overall reflection on the program he said, 'contextualising, grounding, healing, and hopeful'.

Jake

What sort of father do I want to be but also, you know how do I make sense of my journey to understanding masculinity as it is for me?

Jake runs a health technology company.¹⁰⁸ He said the community of men in the program wasn't particularly special to him, but he also noted that he learned a lot from them and that the program helped him restore 'faith in my fellow man'. Jake said Irene, the lead facilitator, was instrumental and helped him make it through the program. He said the work was challenging, but that completing and sharing the story was worth it.

Jake's story was written as a series of letters that explored key life moments involving violence, trauma, challenges and how ideas of manhood have constantly made him question 'Am I enough?' This phrase was repeated throughout the story and showed how his journey

¹⁰⁶ Emphasis is from the original.

¹⁰⁷ Stan uses he/him pronouns.

¹⁰⁸ Jake uses he/him pronouns.

in processing violence, trauma, depression, feelings of inadequacy, and addiction to pornography was connected to patriarchal masculinity. The final letter in his story was addressed to himself.

My manhood is not my accomplishments, my possessions, my sex count, or my dick size. My manhood is mine to define because I say so. It's speaking my truth and not just following the crowd. It's feeling fear and doing it anyway. It's seeing women not as body parts and sex scenes to be had, but as equals. It's fulfilling desire through authentic connection instead of porn.

The last line of Jake's story reads, 'I am a man. And I'm a work in progress too'.

7.5 Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to introduce the 23 practitioners and case study participants and the overarching theme of reimagining masculinities. It is important to this study that each person is acknowledged and introduced. Across this study's interviews and observations, there was an emphasis on the positive potential of the arts to support men in expanding their understanding of masculinities while in pursuit of challenging patriarchal, violent, and rigid 'man box' ideas of what it means to be a man. The introductory quotes shared in this chapter described arts-integration as 'transformative', 'magic', 'emotional', 'embodied', 'personal', 'collective', 'life-changing', and 'impactful'. Collectively, these insights point towards the capacity of arts-integration in helping men to learn about and engage with more feminist-informed ideas of masculinities. Reimagining masculinities is at the heart of EM work and indeed the life force behind preventing MVAW at an individual and collective level – changing how men thinking about their own manhood and how society perpetuates and enforces gendered norms on people of all genders.

However, there is a need to try to understand further *how* the arts support such work, and to examine the potential challenges and limitations, some of which were alluded to in the quotes shared above. A notable risk that will be unpacked in later chapters concerns how focusing too much on reimagining masculinities may divert attention away from the core MVAW prevention focus of these programs – unintentionally diluting and depoliticising the feminist foundations of EM efforts. To explore both the potential benefits and limitations the remaining three findings chapters introduce three additional themes stemming from the overarching theme of reimagining masculinities which illuminate and interrogate arts-

integrated approaches as holistic, humanising, and challenging. The figure and table on the following page provide an overview of all the themes and key points constructed from the findings.¹⁰⁹

Reimagining Masculinities						
Holistic		Humanising		Challenging		
Engaging Emotions	Engaging Bodies	Making it Personal	Building Community	Resource Intensive	Multiple Resistances	Risk of Harm

Table 10: Overview of Research Themes



Figure 3: Expanded Research Themes Diagram

¹⁰⁹ See Appendix H for a larger version of the figure and copies of all theme tables.

Chapter 8: Holistic

Connecting Head, Heart, and Body

8.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the *holistic* theme. Analysis of the practitioner interviews and case study revealed an array of ways in which arts-integrated approaches were perceived as holistically engaging men's minds, hearts, and bodies in EM work. This was described as 'viscerally' and beneficially shaping participants' learning about MVAW and patriarchal masculinities. This chapter outlines the theme from both practitioner and case study participant perspectives and then provides a case study spotlight that takes a deeper look at one participant's experiences in ways that help further illuminate the holistic learning theme. The chapter then concludes by presenting a poetic mosaic constructed from excerpts of the practitioner and case study quotes that brings forward a creative synthesis of their collective perspectives. In doing so, this chapter places the participants and practitioners into dialogue with one another and reveals how holistic learning might help unpack the arts' transformative potential for reimagining masculinities. The following sections will: first, introduce the theme; second, explore the sub-themes of engaging emotions and engaging bodies; third, spotlight one case study participant, fourth; review key insights from the findings, and fifth; close with a poem.

8.2 'Hearts, minds, action'

So much of the time, people... are operating between here and here. And I'm putting one hand above my head and one hand under my chin... we're in our heads. And a good piece of art, no matter what the medium, cuts through that and starts to stir us in our hearts, in our guts, and really captures us... There's a way that art can just work through that barrier of supposed invincibility and invulnerability that we as men are trained to construct and try to maintain throughout our lives. And it just kind of finds that crack in the wall and can get in there. (Leon)

This chapter uses the term *holistic* to indicate learning approaches that balance cognitive, emotional, and embodied knowledges and practices. What distinguishes holistic learning

from more traditional cognitive-based approaches is an emphasis on engaging with affective pedagogies. There is immense diversity in theorisations of affect across disciplines, and sometimes meaningful distinctions can be made between affect, emotion, and embodiment (Brennan, 2004; Greg & Seigworth, 2010; Ahmed, 2014). This study draws on Zembylas' (2016, 2017, 2020a, 2020b, 2021) use of the term 'affective learning' in a broader sense to include a range of emotions, feelings, and embodiments in learning contexts. For Zembylas (2016), all pedagogies are affect-laden. The question is not whether affect is present in learning, but rather if and how it will be acknowledged and engaged. Further, as Zembylas (2016) makes clear, affect is not just a mental or psychological process; it is situated within learning acts and practices. Affective learning is thus about the emotions and bodies present in the learning process.

When attention to affective learning is integrated with more traditional cognitive-based approaches, holistic learning emerges as a way of engaging heads, hearts, and minds in the classroom to advance analytic and affective praxis (Reardon & Snauwaert, 2015; Kester, 2022). This idea of holistic learning connects with hooks' previously discussed feminist engaged pedagogy (1994, 2003a, 2009). For hooks, education as a liberatory practice requires teaching the 'whole' student and allowing the teacher to bring their full selves into the room too. She advocates for combining Freirean critical pedagogy, engaged Buddhism, and Black feminist pedagogy to inspire a classroom rooted in critical consciousness raising as well as passion, love, emotion, and vulnerability. Guided by this understanding of a holistic approach, this chapter explores findings which reveal how arts-integration might help facilitate such praxis in the EM context and support a reimagining of masculinities.

The practitioners shared a variety of perspectives on how the arts connected to holistic learning in ways that were beneficial to their programs. As Francis said, the arts activate 'other kinds of intelligences' that include the head, heart, and body. Arts-integrated holistic approaches were described by Francis as presenting a needed challenge to the 'dominant mental models' that manifest through overly cognitive curricula and didactic pedagogies in EM in the US. Practitioners described this approach as specifically important for working with men because holistic learning approaches created space to transgress patriarchal masculine norms rooted in stoicism and an unwillingness to show vulnerability (hooks, 2004; Heilman et al., 2018). As Mason noted, men are 'so socialised into thinking through things and being in our heads and out of our bodies' and that through embodied and emotional expression, the arts can be 'part of the unlearning male socialisation and becoming more connected to the people and environment around us'. Across the practitioner interviews it was argued the arts opened a more holistic, and thus engaging, learning space that helped them better

understand MVAW, connect with issues of gender justice, and consider a more personalised process of reimagining more peaceful and feminist-informed masculinities.

Irene said the case study program's pedagogy was guided by a 'hearts, minds, and action' approach to EM. The facilitator training program made a case for replacing wholly didactic and overly academic ways of engaging men with ones grounded in the power of personal narratives. Through the program's learning and storytelling process – a combination of presentations on academic research, group discussions, interactive activities, videos, poems, and most centrally, small-group personal story sharing circles – the case study created a group education context that invited the men to interactively learn and to express themselves. Despite being facilitated online, the men shared how this approach facilitated what was widely described as a 'deeper' learning experience. The men discussed how learning through hearts, minds, and action helped expand their connection to the content in the programs, dismantle some of their initial defensiveness, think critically and vulnerably about their own experiences with masculinity and MVAW, and share these personal insights and learnings in an affective way to support others' learning too.

To unpack the theme of holistic learning, I have constructed two sub-themes, engaging emotions and engaging bodies, drawn from the collective practitioner and participant data. In the subsequent summary section these two more affective dimensions of holistic learning are discussed in conversation with more traditional, cognitive approaches. In focusing on *arts-integration* rather than *arts as a replacement*, this chapter explores the value of balanced analytic and affective holistic learning.

Holistic				
Engaging Emotions			Engaging Bodies	
Deepening Learning and Emotional Connection	Creative Sparks and Dismantling Defensiveness	Processing Trauma and Painful Emotion	Applied Learning	The Power of Sharing

Table 11: Holistic Theme

8.3 Engaging Emotions

Both practitioners and case study participants reflected on how the arts helped facilitate a more emotionally rich learning space. This finding was significant in part because patriarchal masculinities in the US often assume rigid emotional stoicism and suppression. Emotions, with the notable exception of anger and aggression, are considered to be located outside of the man box. The practitioners and case study participants described how using the arts to stretch beyond the man box and engage with emotions opened a transgressive and transformative learning space:

Painting and dancing and singing, weaving, and sewing and whatever, any more creative opportunities for emotional expression can only be beneficial in challenging the ways that we tell our boys to be so emotionally repressed and closed off. (Nate)

However, the goal was not to simply increase men's emotional expression and intelligence – EM work is about challenging and transforming MVAW and patriarchal masculinities. The arts were described as providing scaffolding to, as the practitioner Alex said, 'unpack' men's emotional resistance to discussions about MVAW; to engage and express emotions considered outside the man box like playfulness, fear, and vulnerability; and to consider the harms of men's emotional suppression to the people around them and to themselves. This point was made clear in the first week of the case study when participants were asked to watch a video addressing patriarchal norms and men's emotional expression. As the participants reflected on the video, two made comments about how art, specifically music and dance, was the only way they could emotionally open up. One participant noted, 'Music saves me from emotional isolation. I dance to feel and set down the big shield I'd built to the masculine world. It always opens my heart'.

This work was expanded in the second week of the case study program when a version of the man box activity was presented. In the resulting group discussion, the men reflected on how patriarchal masculinity defines 'being a man' in the US as tough, violent, powerful, stoic, hyper-sexual, heterosexual, cis-gendered, and as someone who never cries or shows vulnerability, weakness, or gentleness. The facilitator then asked the men to reflect upon what happens to men who express their feelings or resist these norms. Participants discussed how men's emotional expression was regulated by patriarchal norms and enforced by men on themselves and by other men through peer pressure, shaming, and violence. As one person said, 'these norms squeeze all emotions back into the man box'.

These ideas about emotion and masculinity were present in nearly all the interviews with the case study participants. Dante described patriarchal masculine norms as a rigid and emotionally stoic 'cultural filter' drawn from 'predetermined assumptions about what masculinity and being a man is'. Jamie said that the pressures to not show emotion and the stigma of appearing weak were fundamental to what he called 'the manhood definition'. Similarly, Davis noted that for men, 'If you're going to be emotional, then you're going to be weak'. He qualified this by saying, it was 'not necessarily true, but yeah, that's how it appears in our patriarchal world. If you're not in control, you're weak'. During interviews the men reiterated that the case study's personal storytelling approach created a conducive space to do this challenging emotional work that they had been socialised not to do.

These discussions in the case study then connected men's emotional repression to the wider constellation of norms which facilitate men's use of anger and aggression to achieve dominance and control over women and other men – bringing the conversation from an abstracted idea of reimagining masculinities towards one grounded in preventing MVAW and addressing the impacts of patriarchal masculinities directly. The practitioner interviews also described using the arts as a catalyst for discussions focused on questioning man box norms. As Leon noted,

For a lot of men if we can open up their hearts there's going to be more of an opportunity then to look at their behaviour, look at their attitudes, and maybe make some adjustments and maybe make some real changes.

This idea that arts supported men in transgressing patriarchal norms through engagement with emotions was described by several practitioners as part of arts-integrated approaches' transformative potential and framed as 'productive discomfort' in the case study. Building on these central points, this section focuses on three specific ways in which emotions were discussed by practitioners and case study participants. First, arts-integrated engagement with emotions deepened men's learning and connection to the issues of MVAW and patriarchal masculinities. Second, arts-integrated work disengaged men's defensiveness through accessible entry points and playful dynamics. Third, the arts helped men process challenging emotions around their direct and vicarious experiences with men's violence.

8.3.1 Deepening Learning and Emotional Connection

The practitioners described the arts as a way to strategically bring emotions into their programs to deepen the learning and increase men's connection with and understanding of the topics. Many of the practitioners noted that men enter these programs with varying levels of awareness about MVAW and patriarchal masculinities, and that the arts offer an emotional conduit to convey the gravity of the problem and support them in connecting it to their own lives and communities. For example, at the curricular level, several practitioners emphasised that the arts could be integrated as affective learning texts in EM programs, using poems, songs, stories, or excerpts from novels to introduce key topics about MVAW in more culturally responsive and engaging ways. The arts were perceived as being more beneficial than traditional approaches in this context because as Francis noted,

[Art] brings the heart into the process... and I don't believe that people change by being given information necessarily... I think that more often they change because they're touched emotionally.

Similarly, Ernest said that after decades in the field he was frustrated at the prevalence of traditional didactic approaches to teaching. He argued that the arts offered an emotionally rich and generative new way forward for curricula in these programs.

I think our tendency, I think particularly the US because we're such a Western thinking country, is to focus on engaging men by using intellect... We are so good at intellectualising till the cows come home as a way of defending ourselves from our heart and defending you from my heart... [But] if we want to really engage men effectively, we need to generate their compassion and their passion which is their heart. And I don't I don't think you get to people's hearts through their head. I think you get people's hearts through their heart. And that's what the art does.

Calling for a balanced approach, the practitioner Alex said he created more impactful experiences by integrating arts activities like theatre games in-between what he called, the more traditional 'facts' and 'analysis' sections of his sessions. He said it is unfortunately easy to forget or get overloaded with statistics about MVAW, which is why the arts are so important. Alex continued, 'We forget 80% of what we learn. But we remember 80% of what we feel... I think the arts play a role because you remember how that made you feel'.

Observations of the case study program revealed an array of arts-integrated elements of the curriculum that supported the men's emotional engagement, including the use of a poem about challenging man box norms and collages and drawings depicting men's violence and

silence as catalysts for group discussions. The most prominent example was the weekly story circles where men utilised oral storytelling, poetry, singing, and dance to share draft versions of their personal narratives about masculinities. All eight participants interviewed described the process of writing, crafting, revising, listening, and sharing stories, as an emotional experience. The participant Jamie called the program an 'emotional journey' towards learning more about MVAW and rethinking what it means to be a man. Stan said he expected academic lectures or a 'TED talk style' of teaching, but the opposite occurred. He said the lessons, group discussions, and story circles were informative, emotional, and engaging. A key theme across these interviews was that this personal and arts-integrated approach to learning was, as multiple men told me, simply more 'interesting' than a traditional classroom learning experience and that it helped them connect with the content of the lessons, 'deepening' the learning.

8.3.2 Creative Sparks and Dismantling Defensiveness

Second, nearly all the practitioners reflected on how the arts helped address men's resistance by facilitating a more accessible and playful learning space and providing a creative spark through emotional connections. As was noted in the literature, when men enter EM programs there can be an array of reasons for their underlying defensiveness ranging from general nervousness and unease, to fear of saying something wrong, fear of being treated as a perpetrator, and perhaps most significantly, from an unwillingness to examine or acknowledge their own privileges and complicity in the perpetuation of MVAW and patriarchal norms.

The practitioners in this study argued the arts can help. As Alex said, 'The arts can start the conversation'. For example, the practitioner Olivia spoke about how she incorporated drawing activities into programs where participants would visualise 'what it means to be a man' in their community. She noted, it is important to talk about 'how fun [art] is' and that the arts allowed participants to 'play' and 'express themselves' in less stressful or confrontational ways. This in turn helped address defensiveness and allowed them to be more open, vulnerable, and engaged in the work. Other practitioners shared similar ideas. As Kent said, the arts provide a 'good access point' for getting men interested in these programs that helps 'let down your guard'. He continued,

Playfulness for example is just like a beautiful way to connect people and... start breaking down that man box... helping them connect with each other and connect from their heart.

Similarly, Ernest noted, 'the arts open up cracks in that defensiveness that few if any other strategies are as effective as doing' in the EM programs.

The case study's storytelling process, which was described in the first session as intended to support challenging, introspective, and collective 'work' as well as 'fun', connects with the practitioner perspectives above. Observations and interviews of the case study revealed that the use of personal storytelling helped counter men's defensiveness and make emotional connections to challenging topics like MVAW. For example, the participant Dante said the storytelling approach was a way of 'cutting through the bullshit' and helping him 'find a way to make a resonant emotional connection with the material'. For Thomas, this creative approach helped to 'smooth down the edges' and 'dismantle defensiveness' by engaging with more emotional stories rather than just recitations of facts and academic studies. Similarly, the participant Stan said,

Men are culturally so hardened. And it probably is a little bit harder to get in there and to get those walls down and to like get them in the door.... It really is important to have different ways to invite them into these spaces.

For Stan, the personal storytelling approach created what he called a deep 'visceral' feeling and connection to 'emotionally get people's walls down'. He reflected on how despite what patriarchal norms dictate, men are 'emotional creatures', and that using emotional ways of learning through the arts can help facilitate empathy and connection. Similarly, for Davis the arts and storytelling were a 'way of approaching people that doesn't necessarily slap them in the face with facts... it creates a different way of.... talking about the problem'. These ideas of using the arts as an accessible way to invite more men into the room, engage them on a deeper level, and to challenge defensiveness speaks to the practitioner findings above and the overall potential of arts-integrated approaches for facilitating a more affective learning approach to address patriarchal masculinities and MVAW.

8.3.3 Processing Trauma and Painful Emotions

Lastly, arts-integration provided space for men to directly engage with the sometimes-painful emotional work of healing and processing both lived and vicarious traumas associated with MVAW and patriarchal masculinities. The arts were identified as a prime conduit to engage with this challenging, potentially 'productively discomforting' emotional work. As the practitioner Helena said, 'having art, while offering a really deep sometimes painful content, art helps us through'. Other practitioners like Francis talked about the 'therapeutic' value of helping men better understand their own complicated and emotional experiences with masculinity and violence. As Carlton noted, 'I think [the arts] can provide a catharsis... So, impact? Absolutely. Tears? Moment of truth? Yeah'.

The practitioner Paul took this point further in his discussion of the connections between patriarchal masculinities and art as a healing process. He said,

There are consequences that are attached to not performing masculinity in [patriarchal] ways...I think using the arts and the interconnection of the arts to masculinity; it heals masculinity from violence.

Observations of the case study revealed several lessons addressing how personal stories can be emotionally challenging for the storyteller, other men in the group, and for wider audiences that might hear the story. Professional resources for those seeking help with processing trauma were shared in the first week and reiterated several times throughout the program. During the week focused on MVAW and interpersonal violence, participants learned strategies for emotionally grounding themselves, focusing on breathing and the body, and identifying personal boundaries in this work. The lessons spurred robust discussion amongst the men and several expressed interest in seeking out further resources.

Many of the participants interviewed said the holistic, 'hearts, minds, action' approach of the program created a safe space for the expression of strong emotions, healing, and vulnerability. The shedding of tears was the most evident sign of this. Multiple men became visibly moved or cried during one or more of the playshops. Further, three out of eight men teared up during their interviews while speaking about the experience. These moments were all connected to the arts-integrated approach as they occurred during or directly after sharing their story from the program, talking about sharing their story, or listening to another man's story. Jamie said, 'There were several tearful moments and I learned that if we are as men, able to find the right support... that we can be transparent. We can be free'. For Jake, hearing another participant's story about fatherhood brought forward a strong emotional

reaction, saying, 'It really touched me. It really did. I have an emotional block against it, and I was nearly moved to tears for days afterward'.

Four of the case study participants also spoke about the program's emotional learning space as a place for 'catharsis' and 'healing'. For Chris, this approach helped him in 'understanding why masculinity needed to be looked at under a microscope... Creating a new lens of masculinity. Healing us through our own stories'. Stan talked about how opening space for more creative and emotional expression through storytelling showed that, 'It's important to have spaces for healing men and for holding them accountable'. Furthermore, Jamie noted that expressing his emotions in the playshops and productions through storytelling was hard, and that is exactly what 'makes it all the more important'. Similarly, Davis said, 'I've got a lot to make up for in terms of me being able to be an emotional human being, and so I welcome those moments. As strange and as uncomfortable as they may be, I welcome them'. This idea, that the men's stories could be fodder for each other's learning and growing was a key component of the case study program and provides an example of what was described by the program as the transformative potential of men embracing 'productive discomfort' in learning about MVAW and patriarchal masculinities.

8.4 Engaging Bodies

The second sub-theme connected to holistic learning highlights that arts-integration supported the men in centring the body in the learning process. Embodied work was described as particularly important for EM programs because, like the engaging emotions subtheme, it was perceived as supporting men in embracing the productive challenge of stretching beyond patriarchal masculine norms. As the practitioner Carlton said, 'Doing things nonverbally is really powerful because you bypass all the controlling and analysing that men are so socialised to'. Carlton added that talking about emotions and articulating their complexity into words is challenging, especially for men who are not accustomed to doing so. He spoke about using embodied theatre exercises as a way for men to 'show' rather than 'tell' their feelings about masculinity and men's violences.

It takes a lot of time for people to develop the ability to talk about feelings accurately... I think everyone should learn a vocabulary for their feelings. But we can also use some somatic and symbolic approaches to trade in the feelings without having to wait for that work to happen.

Two main points stem from this sub-theme. **First**, the practitioners and case study participants emphasised using the arts to practise the ideas being taught through applied and experiential learning. **Second**, it was argued that the embodied work of sharing art benefited the men's learning journey and helped expand the impact of the work to other men in the group and their wider communities.

8.4.1 Applied Learning

First, several practitioners, particularly those that incorporated theatre-based activities, some based on enacting real-life moments and others on more figurative or interpretive scenes, talked about the arts as a valuable way to embody, play with, and experience the ideas learned about in the workshops in real-time. Brent described this as 'applied learning' through art, noting 'it's just not this theoretical piece. People are seeing it being actually applied to the space'. Kent said that using embodied arts like dance and theatre allowed the men to take the lessons learned in the workshops and 'integrate them and to experience them and understand them on a deeper level'. Similarly, Alex said that contrary to a passive listening lecture-style, embodied arts approaches to learning were an 'active process' full of 'dynamic thoughts and movement' in the workshop space.

For example, using Boalian (1979) theatre exercises and bystander approaches, embodied learning was used in several programs to practise scenes where men encountered patriarchal masculinity and men's violence. Brent and Francis said that creating a space for the men to act out or 'rehearse' real life-inspired moments from multiple bystander perspectives gave them an opportunity to learn and reflect on how they could respond to relatable scenarios such as when a friend says a sexist joke, when men wolf-whistle at women across the street, or in a situation where someone might be in danger and require support. These embodied scenes were practised through forum theatre techniques and then used as a catalyst for group dialogue and reflections. These examples of embodied work focused on real-life scenarios in which the men might help prevent the spectrum of MVAW – placing the idea of reimagining masculinities into action. In another example, Alex, Carlton, and Kent shared how they utilised theatre exercises that asked men to represent or 'sculpt' what dominant and alternative masculinities look like with their bodies. This more interpretive, rather than real life-inspired, arts approach also focused on embodied acts as a launching point to discuss how participants can challenge patriarchal masculinity norms. As Alex said,

We ask people to, in their body, show us how they think masculinity is viewed right now in our culture. And then we ask them to be aspirational and show us how they would like masculinity to be looked at in our culture and valued. Two very easy things. Reality. Your dream. The hard part is then we ask, how do we get from A to B.

These examples emphasise the process of change, the *how* you get from patriarchal to feminist masculinities. The case study program led by Irene similarly focused on the process of change through storytelling as the creative and embodied conduit. The ideas about embodiment discussed by the practitioners above were present in the case study playshops and productions. The word *play* is again operative here, signalling how the case study program was an interactive rather than a purely cerebral experience. For example, the facilitator training program for the case study encouraged the utilisation of movement and interactive activities to keep men engaged. While the online format of the case study limited participants' physical interactions, participants still reflected on how they 'felt' the experience in their bodies, going so far as to causing what Stan called a 'vulnerability hangover' after sessions. While the practitioner perspectives on drama-based programs most squarely align with the theme of applied learning, storytelling process can also be understood as an embodied act of speaking out and breaking men's silence. The crafting, sharing, and editing of creative, critical, personal stories about masculinities out loud is thus putting the gender transformative learning into practice – first practicing speaking out in the group and then publicly in their communities.

8.4.2 The Power of Sharing

Building on the last point, programs that had production or performance components where the men presented their stories with each other and public audiences revealed insights on the potentially transformative experience of sharing embodied artistic work and role modelling alternative masculinities. As the practitioner Francis noted,

I think there's something that's very powerful about the theatre component... it's like the external manifestation of our internal process... We do our first performance and [participants] are always like oh my god that was great... I love getting the immediate feedback from people. So, I think that's one of the ways in which that translates out for men, and they start to feel it in their bodies.

This work, which was echoed by several other practitioners who incorporated public sharing events, points towards the broader communicative benefits of using the arts to raise the profile of MVAW as a men's issue and to try to inspire a wider reimagining of masculinities within communities.

In the case study, several participants spoke about sharing with each other during the playshops, sharing publicly in the productions, and sharing recordings of their stories online as an embodied learning and experience. Jamie described sharing his poetic story about his experiences with masculinity and violence as a challenging and important physical process of exiting the man box through a metaphorical door he thought he could not cross. Through sharing in the program, he said, 'Now, you know, it's okay to open the door; smell fresh air'. Similarly, the participant Marcos wanted to bring his story about the US Army boot camp 'to life'. He said, 'I wanted people to feel the emotion' and 'to be able to close their eyes and be taken there'. Marcos said he was inspired to bring a level of emotional and embodied passion to his story because he felt physically transported while listening to other men's stories in the sessions. He described a part of Chris' story where he sang by saying, 'when he did that, he took us to church – he took me there. I could visually see everything... He took me visually, mentally with him and on that journey'.

This visceral component was key in how Marcos described the power of his experience in the program. He told me he was often challenged and frustrated at how all these issues around masculinity and violence were confined to books and academic lectures. This approach didn't work for him, and this is what drew him towards the case study program which allowed him to 'experience learning about masculinity' in an emotional and embodied way. Despite the limitations of the online format during the pandemic, observations and interviews indicated the men still perceived the experiences as a deeply embodied and visceral learning process.

8.5 Case Study Spotlight: Davis

Davis' experience in the program was deeply impacted by the holistic approach. This section explores his story more closely to highlight how the holistic learning theme impacted one case study participant's journey in the program. Davis was selected for this spotlight because his interview noted repeated emphasis on holistic learning and because the story he wrote and shared in the program engaged with the idea of moving away from a simplistic intellectual understanding of men's violence and towards an emotional, embodied, and

visceral understanding of the problem and men's roles in preventing it. Davis' story was about his first-hand experiences listening to and working with women who were survivors of men's violence at his local rape crisis centre. In it, he recounted one specific transformative moment of learning. Davis' job was to answer the support hotline calls and provide information about resources. However, one night the line was broken, and he was asked to go to the hospital to talk directly with a woman who had just been raped. Davis spoke with the woman, discussing the resources the centre could provide, and then eventually drove her home. He recalled what happened next in the story,

After leaving their house and beginning the drive home... I totally broke down emotionally. I completely lost control of myself. I sobbed uncontrollably in a way that I had never before... and it frightened me. I didn't feel it coming on. It just happened... as if the proverbial dam had just broken and a lifetime of repressed feelings had burst through.

That night I went from an intellectual understanding of what I was doing to a visceral awareness of what rape work was about. As a man I had never felt vulnerable to sexual assault but now I had come close enough to it to understand it as an affront to human dignity and respect in the most fundamental way. The distance between my 'intellect' and my 'emotions' was obliterated and they became merged in my consciousness.

His story emotionally reconnected to this experience and implored other men to do the same – to connect not just intellectually to these issues but to think and feel deeply about them, to try to empathise, and to use those feelings to inspire action. Talking about that moment in our interview, he noted,

It shifted me from an intellectual understanding to having a very physical reaction. I was feeling such empathy, a level of empathy that I had never encountered before. It was overwhelming, literally overwhelming to me.

The case study program provided an intellectual, emotional, and embodied space for Davis to return to this visceral life moment, to reflect on how it has changed him, and to encourage him to share it with others too. He said the process of working on the story over the course of the program had a profound effect on him. Davis left his job at the rape crisis centre many years prior to joining the case study program. He said that focusing on this experience through the storytelling approach reignited his dedication to MVAW prevention work and

opened new meanings and lessons for him. Davis said, 'I never thought about it as deeply as I had reason to in this program'. While he had written about the moment many years prior, he told me he never really sat with it, shared it with other men, or thought about using it to learn in this emotional and embodied way. As we spoke, some of those emotions emerged.

I felt more emotion in the process of telling the story, especially when I got to that part of it, and I do remember – I'm feeling it now. Good lord! When I got to that part of the story, feeling something inside my chest. I was like, oh shit. Here we go. I'm going to actually say this stuff out loud. I'm feeling it right now, too.

With tears in his eyes and a tremble in his voice he stopped, took a long pause, a deep breath, and exhaled, 'I didn't expect that but there it is'. Davis told me this experience changed him and he is inspired to be more active addressing men's violence because of the program. By the time of our interview a few weeks after the program ended, he told me he had already started volunteering with the case study organisation to help fundraise so that more men can have the kind of visceral experience he had. He said, 'I'm committed'.

8.6 'Leaving a Mark'

In summary, the practitioners argued that adding arts to their programs produced a more balanced pedagogy and curricula that holistically engaged the head, heart, and body. A more holistic process helped the men connect and engage, express their emotions, practice and embody the work, and ultimately to engage with 'productive discomfort' to step outside the man box to rethink and disrupt some of the dominant social norms about masculinity. Holistic learning supported men in deepening their learning – moving from intellectually understanding, to emotionally connecting, and then toward embodied practice. As Kent said, the arts-integrated learning process brings the ideas into 'your nervous system, into practice. Which to me is a deeper learning, it's deeper than just talking about these topics'. This sort of deeper learning is described as key in helping men connect with the problem of MVAW, and critically, to translate it into their own lives – to consider how they might help prevent the perpetration of patriarchal violence and perpetuation of patriarchal masculinities.

However, these approaches to arts-integrated holistic learning were not described as a repudiation of cognitive-focused lessons; holistic includes a focus on the mind as well. Arts-integration – not arts as a replacement – was a key point stressed across the findings.

Several practitioners spoke about the need for a balanced approach that placed the head in conversation with the heart and body and that eroded the false boundaries between these realms of learning. As Alex made clear, 'We want to include some research, some of what I call the hard facts, and take the art. Take the abstract and mix it with the concrete'. Similarly, the case study was not an arts program, but rather a personal storytelling EM program that employed a balance of analytic and affective strategies. More mind-centric traditional EM approaches were not perceived as intrinsically ineffective; in fact, the findings indicate they are an essential component of holistic arts-integrated EM. Specifically, practitioners noted that mind-centric approaches can be an asset as they might be a more comfortable and familiar way for some men to learn, and thus an effective way of engaging them. However, as this chapter has shown, mind-centric approaches, especially as a sole strategy, were perceived to be a limitation that reinforced an intellectualisation of MVAW and prevention work at the expense of a more affective, engaged, and ultimately holistic learning experience. The findings here argue integrating the arts supports the latter in ways that promote a deeper learning experience and one that erodes the false lines between mind, body, and heart.

The case study participant Chris admitted he was initially sceptical of how a storytelling approach could inspire deeper learning and change. But after experiencing the process he noted that the program provided the perfect combination of feminist analysis and scholarship with emotion and embodiment. This created what he called an experience of 'deep dive personal narrative exploration and creativity, healing, and accountability'. He told me, 'Before I knew it, I was in it. It just clicked'. Continuing he added, 'I don't know exactly how they did it... but it was different compared to other programs'. In a post-program interview, the lead facilitator Irene said she had been moved to see that, despite the physical distance and digital medium, the participants had built such strong 'emotional connectedness' within the group, and that they really 'went there'. The findings in this chapter indicate that *there* was a transformative space at the nexus of minds, hearts, and action that transgressed the man box walls and both challenged and supported men in rethinking personal and societal ideas of patriarchal masculinity. *There* is the emotional, embodied liminal space in that doorway of change, the path towards 'fresh air' that Jamie spoke about that holistic arts-integrated programs like the case study have the potential to open.

Earlier in this chapter, the practitioner Leon reflected on how an arts-integrated approach could help men find a 'crack in the wall'. Leon argued that the arts 'can get in there' and support men in these programs in rethinking what it means to be a man and considering how they might help prevent men's violence. This sentiment, that the arts, through holistic

learning can leave a lasting or even transformative impact on men in these programs that includes and transcends cognitive-centric approaches was repeated by the practitioner Paul as well through a different metaphor.

... people will get that aha moment in trainings. But... an aha moment is just an aha moment because it passes by. It doesn't live in the person. But if you can engage them in the ways that you and I are talking about here, it leaves something in them. It leaves a mark in them... and allows for them to actually come back and revisit it.

This idea of the arts leaving a lasting mark within the person, one that is productively challenging, disruptive to dominant social norms, and that can be affectively revisited again and again is a powerful image of the potential of this approach. So too is the idea of the arts as a transgressive crack in the façade of the man box that reveals transformative potential for rethinking and reimagining beyond its walls. These two images, along with the wealth of insights on arts-integration as a holistic learning process above help illuminate the benefits the practitioners perceived in this approach and the experiences of participants using them in one case study. However, using the arts to disrupt patriarchal norms in this way was also described as challenging. Further, as noted in the previous chapter, there is a risk of losing focus of violence prevention itself in the midst of a more emotional and embodied learning experience. Holistic learning does not necessary lead to a critical understanding of MVAW. As Chapter 10 will examine in closer detail, there is concern amongst some scholars and practitioners that focusing too much on affectively engaging men risks losing track of why they are being engaged in the first place – to do the challenging work of trying to prevent MVAW and transform patriarchal masculinities (Funk, 2018).

In closing, it is important to note the diversity of arts mediums and arts-integration approaches being discussed here and the meaningful differences amongst some of the above-described practices. These differences will be explored further in the discussion as this thesis seeks to both better understand key themes that cut across arts-integration gender transformative work while also avoiding the simplistic narrative that there is a singular approach.

8.7 Poetic Mosaic

This chapter closes with a poetic mosaic of the holistic learning theme. As discussed in Chapter 6, this spoken word found poem technique inspired by Hajir (2023) provides a place

to highlight the voices of this study's participants and to explore a more poetic and affective engagement with the quotes presented above. This poem reflects on the holistic theme through the man box metaphor and explores the ways in which arts-integrated EM approaches might have the potential to support men in finding cracks and reaching beyond the walls of patriarchal masculinities.

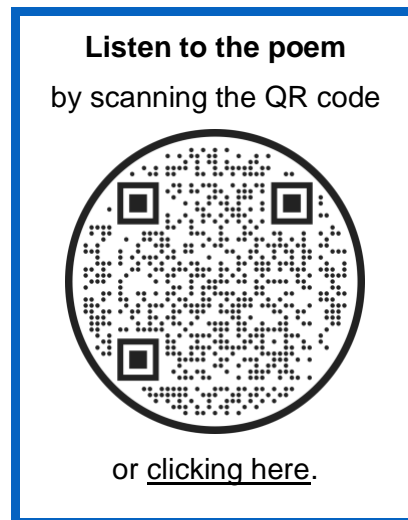


Figure 4: *walls* Poetic Mosaic

walls

I
it all starts
with the manhood definition
never be vulnerable
always be serious
harden yourself
build a shell
get defensive
tighten your grip
hold on to the
socialised system
and predetermined assumptions
about what being a man is
and is
not

see it's simple
if you're going to be emotional
then you're going to be weak
not necessarily true
but
that's how it appears in our patriarchal world
if you're not in control
you're

weak

II

you can't be weak
so stay
emotionally cut off
at a distance
silent
not my problem
just give me the facts
defending ourselves from our heart
defending you from my heart

we're so good at intellectualising
this work
the classroom
the field
the movement
you
me
us
we're stuck inside
the man box walls
of our minds
in dominant mental models
where I'm the expert teaching you
in TED talks

and statistics
preaching didactic prescriptions
and academic pedagogies
till the cows come home

III

but damn
does it even work?

IV

it doesn't work
if saying the facts was enough
things would have already changed
men need to change
and how matters
this work needs to change
to get deeper
to find the emotional core
a crack in the wall
we need a microscope
a new lens for masculinity
i don't think you get to people's heart through their head
i think you get people's heart through their heart
and you know
that's what the art does

painting and dancing and singing
weaving and sewing and whatever
art brings
other kinds of intelligences
minds, hearts, action
sparking conversations
unpacking emotions
arts open cracks in that defensiveness
cutting through the bullshit
get those walls down
get them in the door

a good piece of art
no matter what the medium
cuts through
finding ways to make resonant emotional connections with the material
with the problem
with our role in it
not just this theoretical piece
it's hands-on compassion and passion
applying and learning
bring it into your body
into your nervous system
it's visceral

V

no it's not easy
it's uncomfortable
vulnerable
this work is hard
going against the ways men have been socialised

and that's why it's so important
that's why we have to do it
this arts thing
this is the work
it leaves a mark in you
close your eyes
you can see it

so, impact?
absolutely
tears?
moment of truth?
yeah
trust me
i was sceptical
i didn't expect that

but here it is
we went there
so yeah
it worked

VI

we need balance
take the abstract and mix it with the concrete
the hard facts and the art
there's got to be
cultural
spiritual
embodied
emotional
and analytical
to reach
to inspire
to connect
to change what it means to do this work
to change what it means to be a man

engaging all parts of who we are
from the intellectual to the visceral
a space where men can heal and be accountable
an opportunity to look at their behaviours
look at their attitudes
and make some real changes
it's holistic
the heart
the body
and the mind

art finds a crack
and connects it all
loosening the grip
on the man box wall

Chapter 9: Humanising

Making It Personal and Communal

9.1 Introduction

Following the structure of the previous chapter, the findings presented here highlight how the practitioners and case study participants perceived arts-integration as a way to personalise learning and to foster community within EM programs. These findings point towards the transformative and *humanising* potential of the arts in supporting a deeper learning experience for participants, challenging the dehumanisation of women and people of all genders in patriarchy, and supporting men in reimagining masculinities. This chapter will: first, outline the theme and overall findings; second, explore the sub-themes of making the work personal and building community; third, spotlight a case study participant, fourth; summarise key insights, and fifth; close with a poetic mosaic.

9.2 ‘Bringing humanity to the work’

I appreciate and honour and come from a very academic perspective around violence prevention. And there's a lot of that, right... [But] I think that we still have some areas of growth around humanity. How do we bring humanity to this work?
(Helena)

In constructing the humanising theme, this chapter draws on hooks’ (1994, 2003a, 2009) engaged pedagogy and emphasis on dialogic and community-building praxis. This approach to education centres the personal and relational in pursuit of social change and stands in stark contrast to didactic and depersonalised modes of instruction critiqued by hooks (1994) as well as the EM literature (Humphrey et al., 2008; Funk, 2018; Flood, 2019). The humanising theme also speaks strongly to hooks’ (2004) analysis of patriarchy as a dehumanising system. As discussed in Chapter 4, hooks argues that patriarchy’s dehumanisation and subjugation of women creates power differentials that undergird men’s dominance, privilege, and violence (1994, 2000, 2004). Furthermore, in alignment with Kaufman’s (1987) triad of men’s violence framework, hooks (1981) notes that men too are harmed by patriarchy’s dehumanisation. hooks (2003b) draws specific attention to the

intersectional magnification of violence towards marginalised groups of men, for example, Black men in the US. Considering this context, the findings in this chapter explore the ways in which arts-integrated work with men might act as a *rehumanising* learning community in which the objectification of women, the degradations of trans and queer people, the targeting of Black men and other marginalised groups, and the dehumanisation of oneself stemming from patriarchal masculinity is interrogated and transformed.

Insights on arts-integrated learning as a humanising approach extended across the interviews with practitioners. David described the infusion of the arts as a way of getting towards EM programs that ‘don’t strip them of their humanity’ and instead, ‘honour their humanity’. Other practitioners also described arts-integrated approaches as beneficial and necessary to counter the dehumanising force of patriarchy in the US. As Francis noted,

I think that's part of the way that systems of patriarchy, white supremacy, etc. work, is they work to dehumanise all of us, including the privileged folks. In order to maintain privilege, you have to let go of some of your humanity.

Helena spoke about the dehumanisation problem as not just one of societal patriarchy, but one that specifically permeates the US EM field. She noted, ‘I think sometimes we forget how to be human with each other’ and said what excites her in EM work right now is that the arts can help address this problem. As she said, the arts are, ‘bringing humanity to the work’. The theme of humanising was also strongly present in the case study. When asked to reflect on her experiences of organising and facilitating the program, Irene said it felt ‘earnest, heart-felt, courageous, ambitious, purposeful, raw, tender, paradigm-challenging’, and after a short pause, she noted the experience felt ‘human’. The participant Dante expressed a similar sentiment when he said he found the storytelling process ‘a deeply human way to interact... a deeply human way to connect’.

The case study focused on the power of crafting and sharing personal narratives as a process for individual learning, a mechanism for building community in the learning space, and as a conduit for role modelling to inspire community dialogue and broader social change. This approach was facilitated through the program’s pedagogy employing various forms of small and large group discussions on key lessons, opening and closing sharing circles, and weekly story circles where the men shared draft versions of their stories and offered feedback and support. This was further reinforced in the case study’s culminating public productions where the men shared their stories with their communities and then engaged in facilitated dialogue with attendees about the content of the stories, attendees’

reflections, and how everyone could take action to promote gender justice and healthy masculinities in their own lives and in the community. The case study thus used the power of personal storytelling to support both an inward-facing ‘learning community’ and outward-facing ‘movement-building’ approach to connecting people in pursuit of social change. As Irene noted,

I think we wouldn't have nearly the same kind of effect if people just got up to a mic and said, don't be homophobic, don't be racist... If we were just didactically addressing the audience or attacking the audience, it wouldn't be useful. But what we're doing here is people are sharing their own stories of how they unlearned homophobia. What it's been for them to be on the receiving end of racism... I think this is one of the most powerful ways to help people get humanised to each other and to break down barriers... I think personal public storytelling that breaks social silences and challenges norms, and prejudices is up there as a powerful methodology.

Next, this chapter will unpack what an arts-integrated humanising approach looks like in practice by exploring two sub-themes, *making it personal* and *building community*, drawn from practitioner perspectives and the case study experiences.

Humanising					
Making it Personal			Building Community		
Deepening the Connection	Personalising the Work to Counter Defensive-ness	Facilitators Making it Personal Too	Creating Connections and Community	Facilitating a Safe Space	Building Community Across Lines of Difference

Table 12: Humanising Theme

9.3 Making it personal

Practitioners and case study participants described arts-integrated approaches as helping make EM programs more personal. Specifically, this was described as beneficial because

the arts: first, deepen the learning process by making the content more real, relatable, and actionable; second, countered defensiveness by centring personal experiences as learning texts and fodder for critical reflection; and third, created space for facilitators to role model and become a part of the learning and sharing process.

9.3.1 Deepening the Connection

The practitioners described arts-integrated programs as a more personal and ‘deeper’ learning experience. Kent said the arts can provide powerful learning texts and affective spaces that help men understand the impact of patriarchal violence to women and gender non-binary people and to encourage them to understand how such violence ‘impacts them too’. By making it personal, he argued the arts moved the conversation from abstract ideals into tangible ideas and practices. The practitioners gave examples such as listening to art from survivors of MVAW as conversational catalysts, noting the severity and extent of patriarchal violence and men’s roles in addressing it.

Echoing insights from the holistic theme on embodied learning, programs run by Alex, Kent, and Carlton used theatre exercises to bring the lived experiences of the men into the room. For example, men in their programs would enact scenes involving challenging moments in which they encountered violent men from their own lives. Rather than using a hypothetical fictional account of patriarchal masculinity, this personal driven drama-based approach allowed the men in the room to replay real-life moments using forum theatre techniques to reflect on what happened, discuss new possibilities within the group, and then rehearse challenging patriarchal masculinity. Similarly, Francis and Brent’s program used drama exercises in group learning and public performance contexts that featured the lived experiences of the men in the program. He stated, ‘We’re not trying to tell stories about masculinity that aren’t our stories’. While they would often change details (i.e., names) within the stories, the essence was always rooted in the personal stories of the men. This was viewed as a way of making the content more ‘real’ whilst also respecting the privacy of the men’s lives.

As previously discussed, true personal storytelling was the central pillar of the case study approach. The facilitator training program described vivid personal storytelling as a way of ‘transporting people into the lived experiences of the storyteller and challenging people’s assumptions/stereotypes’. Echoing the practitioner’s perspectives above, Irene said the personal story approach moved men to ‘engage more deeply, and at an accelerated pace’

and fostered a 'more learningful' experience. All eight participants said crafting and sharing their stories increased their connection and investment in the program and that hearing others' stories fostered learning and empathy. As Marcos said, 'I invested in it because it was my life'. The 'realness' of the personal stories had a big impact on several men. Stan and Jamie said they both knew a lot about gender equality and violence prevention before coming into the program, but the storytelling process helped them break through to what they also called a 'deeper' kind of learning that translated the knowledge into practice and drew from their own lived experiences. Chris, Thomas, and Jamie spoke about how music and poetry opened creative spaces where they felt more comfortable reflecting on and sharing personal stories about masculinities. Jamie noted that while he had a lot of pre-existing knowledge about the program's topics, using the arts helped him 'apply that knowledge to myself and my own story'.

In both the practitioner interviews and the case study, the arts allowed men to share in more 'authentic' and 'vulnerable' ways. As the case study participant Jake said, 'This is the expression of me unreserved... unrestrained'. Similarly, Dante told me, 'It's personal, me sharing a part of me'. During a playshop observation, one man shared a sense of relief as he could 'show up as a person and not a list of accomplishments'. Creating space for stories to be shared was particularly resonant for some Black, queer, and trans men in the program. As Dante said, the storytelling approach helped make clear,

We're full-spectrum human beings... not just a dead body on the street that should have complied. And to see that we can interact and be fully human with people, that's critical.

The phrase, 'full-spectrum human beings', was repeated several times in the interviews and in playshop sessions by the case study participants and facilitators. Thomas said the storytelling approach deeply changed him. He said he walked away from the experiences with a new sense that, 'my worth is important – I feel that now'. These insights from the case study also align with perspectives from practitioner interviews, several of whom noted ways in which the arts might specifically support men from marginalised backgrounds to bring their voices and experiences into the room. Speaking from their own lived experiences, David talked about the arts in the Black community and Carlton spoke about the arts in the queer community as culturally responsive and engaging ways to invite men from those backgrounds to deepen their connection to gender equality and violence prevention work.

9.3.2 Personalising the Work to Counter Defensiveness

Practitioners' interviews showed how the arts can address or circumvent men's defensiveness. As Francis noted, 'I think that's a strength [of the arts] ... because it is personal, people can argue about it if they want to, but these are experiences'. In discussing the use of the arts to personalise the work, several practitioners invoked another commonly used metaphor in the EM field of men, *taking the mask of masculinity off*. The practitioners described how the arts supported a creative-critical space to counter some men's defensiveness and to promote a deeper level of vulnerability which allowed them to 'take the mask off'. David argued that the arts allowed men to take a step back, feel less threatened, and critically reflect on the patriarchal norms which construct the 'mask'. In a literal sense, Paul had men craft masks. The men were invited to draw and decorate the outside and inside of the mask representing the feelings they show and hide. The mask became what Paul called a 'visualisation of the socialisation process'.

These ideas were also present in the case study, as Irene said, 'when people speak for themselves, that's powerful, because I can't disagree with your experience'. Many of the men in the case study reflected on how the personalising effect of the story approach helped counter defensiveness and promote empathy. Thomas described the personal storytelling process as releasing the 'tension' he felt doing this challenging work. Thomas also spoke about how hearing personal stories was disarming because, 'it's hard to get offended by this person's life'. Similarly, Davis noted, 'If I'm telling you my life story, honestly, you'd have to be some kind of weirdo to say, oh that's bullshit'. Davis spoke about the disarming effect of the personal story approach as a sort of 'unravelling' of the defensiveness surrounding patriarchal masculinity. For case study participant Stan, the personal aspect of the storytelling approach helped bring his walls down and felt like an invitation to empathise and to use fellow participants' stories to reflect on his own experiences with violence and masculinity. He said, 'It's like inviting people to feel what you're feeling. If people see your joy or see your pain and have some level of empathy, there is probably going to be some level of response to it'.

9.3.3. Facilitators Making it Personal Too

Facilitators also emphasised how the arts allowed them to continuously learn and share with the other participants. The practitioner Helena argued that 'art brings the possibility that

we're all teachers' and that by valuing our personal stories and lived experiences, 'you have to realise that you're not the only expert in the room'. She continued,

We believe that in this work, we must share of ourselves – that we can't solely come from an academic perspective when reaching people's hearts. We believe you got to reach people's hearts, create a level of discomfort, and then grab their heart and offer anything that brings humanity back to the work.

Similarly, the practitioner David argued that while the arts help men take off the mask and be personal and vulnerable, vulnerability is a two-way street that benefits from practitioner role modelling. He said,

So, what it means is having conversations with men where I am deeply vulnerable first about all of my bullshit. Like not trying to show up as Jesus Christ. Like this guy who gets it. But to be brutally dangerously honest about all of my shortcomings in as many ways as possible... And what I've learned throughout my work is that that's where men will sometimes be vulnerable as well.

While not a requirement of the program, case study facilitators also shared personal insights and connections. In weeks four and five, this was saliently demonstrated as facilitators shared deep stories from their own lives while leading sessions on survivorship, allyship, and men's violence. The participant Marcos described these instances as 'eye-opening'. Several other men brought up the examples where facilitators shared personal stories from their own lives as key learning moments in their interviews.

Overall, it was argued that in using the arts to make EM more personal, these programs deepened the learning, increased participant empathy, diffused defensiveness, and created space for the men to see and be seen as full-spectrum human beings. And that in doing so, this work had the effect of bringing the men together. The case study program training guide discussed the idea 'the personal is universal'. Several of the men in the program said they learned that counterintuitively, the more specifically they spoke about their own experiences with masculinity, the closer it brought them to others. For example, Stan commented that this was one of the most diverse groups of men he had ever been around, but that despite their many differences there was a 'ripple effect of our personal stories' that created an 'interconnectedness' that deeply moved him. He called this personal story connection the 'closest thing to religion that I have', showing both the power of personal stories as fodder for individual reflection and growth as well as collective connection and shared learning.

9.4 Building Community

The practitioners and case study participants described integrating the arts as helping men build connections and safe spaces to support challenging EM work. The practitioner Paul noted, the arts allow,

... for there to be interconnections that happen, emotional connections that happen and physical connections to happen... the human connection, the human bond through storytelling.

In the case study, stories were used to inspire and facilitate community amongst the participants and to deepen their learning during and beyond the program. Further, the case study created and recorded public productions to extend the conversation and learning beyond the participants to include their wider communities. This was described as a 'movement-building' approach, engaging men in publicly sharing their stories to spark critical reflection and dialogue amongst audience members – which could in turn support them in taking further personal actions to work towards healthier masculinities.

Overall, building community as a component of the larger humanising approach was discussed in three main ways. First, the arts supported the creative exchange of perspectives and experiences which allowed men to be more vulnerable and to see they were not alone. In doing so, the arts supported a deeper learning and creation of meaningful connections amongst the men. Second, in a related point, practitioners and case study participants spoke about the value of using the arts to create a safe space within the learning context. And third, the arts were described as a powerful conduit for building connections across lines of difference by creating a platform for connecting with people while learning about MVAW and patriarchal masculinities together in what was described by case study participants as a 'rare space'.

9.4.1 Creating Connections and Community

Many of the practitioners talked about the arts as a connector to build relationships and community within the workshop space, which in turn furthered their individual and collective learning. As the practitioner Helena noted, 'art creates the invitation for connection'. Similarly, Mason said art can be a 'deep and intimate form of building relationships with

other people'. These connections and communities were described as the 'engine' behind the humanising learning process which was vital to supporting men in learning about ways to challenge patriarchal masculinities. Helena framed the arts as a counteracting force against the dominant notion of individualism within the US patriarchal context:

Art really offers a collective experience... It makes inevitable, in beautiful ways, the recognition that we are all connected. Art can create that lubrication.

Mason shared similar ideas connected to the dominant focus on individualism in the US and the compounding effects of isolation due to the pandemic. He said,

I think that just think in terms of contemporary times that, you know, people are pretty isolated in general. And we live in a capitalist culture that's highly individualistic. And art is one way for people to connect. And so, I think we need to see art as not just an information transmitter, but as a way to build community

Echoing the practitioner comments above, several case study participants reflected on how the community cultivated through the exchange of stories was particularly important and beneficial for the men during the prolonged periods of pandemic isolation. During the final playshop, one of the men said, 'I know some of y'all on this stale Zoom app more than people I've known for a long time'. This deep community then supported their willingness to invest more in learning about patriarchal masculinities and reflecting individually and together on ways they might challenge it.

Another way this idea was discussed is evident in David's comments about the importance of using the arts to help men see one another more fully in each other's stories. As David said, the arts are so important because they, 'allow men to realise that their story is not singular... The arts allow you to realise that you're not in a vacuum'. Similarly, Francis noted, the strength of the arts was that it allowed participants to realise their 'lives as men are not necessarily separated out from other men's lives'. He clarified, men are not monolithic, but there is power in sharing through the arts as a way of finding the resonances that exist between and amongst men and using those connections to work towards more feminist futures. It was argued that men's peer groups dynamics contribute to MVAW and that arts-integrated EM programs could be used to cultivate an alternative community.

Men in the case study described similar insights when talking about the storytelling process. As the participant Jamie said, the exchange of stories helped him realise he 'wasn't alone'.

This deep connection amongst the men was fostered by what was described in the facilitator training as the program's 'social learning community' approach. The training program reiterated the importance of building community across the multi-week session format and that each iteration of the program was a part of a 'movement' itself, connecting men across programs with each other and their wider communities for change. This connected directly to the program's theory of change, that individual stories from peers and role models about challenging patriarchal masculinities, shared locally in-person and more broadly through videos online, can help inspire individual and collective action to challenge patriarchy. As one audience member shared in a community dialogue, 'It takes a village to challenge what masculinity is'.

Interviews with the men in the case study revealed that this sense of being a part of a community encouraged them to challenge themselves, dig deeper, and participate. During observations of playshop sessions, the men described the group as a 'brotherhood' and a 'family'. Chris said he felt the space was full of love and that this connection kept him coming back. Describing the world today as a 'fear sphere', he said the program was a 'love sphere' where the men worked together, inspired one another, held each other accountable and supported their learning journeys. Starting in week three, the men increasingly greeted each other by name when entering the Zoom room and at times began referring to each other individually as 'good friend', 'amazing human', and 'sweetness'. Around that time the men also started to show up early to meetings and stay late after the program had finished. Program sessions often extended an additional 30 minutes because the men wanted to continue discussing the lessons and to get to know one another more.

Many of the men also said that they had a desire to stay connected to the other men beyond the end of the program. Marcos told me that while they were strangers at first, now they had a 'bond that can never be broken'. The importance of an 'ongoing community' was noted several times in the case study facilitator training program and in playshop sessions. As one example, the men used a Facebook group to connect with each other during and after the program finished in 2020.

9.4.2 Facilitating a Safe Space

Using an arts-integrated humanising approach was also described as helping to create safe spaces where men felt comfortable doing the challenging EM work which sometimes included interrogating one's own privileges and power, reflecting on experiences with

patriarchal violence, and examining your role in perpetuating MVAW through your actions and/or inactions. As the practitioner Mason noted, 'The arts can be one way that we increase the level of safety and break through some of the isolation and individualism that men bring into the room'. Similarly, Alex said the arts created space for connection on a human level that was key to doing the work, 'because you got to feel safe. If people feel safe, first and foremost, then they'll actually bring their whole selves in and stay present and they'll be honest'. It was argued that in providing a platform and a creative medium for men to share their stories and to listen to others, the arts normalised the act of being vulnerable in front of other men and created a more conducive context for the men to rethink dominant ideas of masculinity. Here again the arts are employed as a way of supporting 'productive discomfort' in encouraging men to transgress patriarchal norms by being vulnerable and sharing personal experiences. Returning to the mask of masculinity metaphor, David argued, 'What I believe the arts allow men to do is take the mask off in ways that feel most safe, right?' He continued,

...the arts allow men just a beautiful kind of a kaleidoscope of options that men can choose from. To say hey, now that you recognise that you wear a mask, where's a venue, where's an artistic tool that you feel most comfortable, and you can take the mask off?

The case study facilitator training program also discussed the importance of creating a 'safe, brave, and creative space' for the learning community. First, this was done by creating and observing group agreements. Irene said, 'The safety, established with the co-development and observance of group agreements, then allows for the bravery and creativity to be expressed'. Case study participants spoke about how this was really challenging for them, but that sharing personal stories through the creative mediums with each other supported a shared sense of vulnerability and trust. Reflecting on the space created by this storied exchange, Dante said that the group of men created a 'different way' of being in community with each other that pushed back against patriarchal masculinities. He continued,

Rather than... everyone's going to come in the room like Reservoir Dogs... and all that kind of bullshit. We don't have to do that. And just that in and of itself, all of a sudden, can open up a lot of ground for changing how we relate to not just ourselves, but to each other and to people around us that aren't part of that group.

During the playshops and productions, I repeatedly observed the men relating to one another as Dante described, providing support if someone was struggling to understand a

concept in a lesson, sharing constructive feedback, and holding each other accountable if someone said something problematic. At the centre of this new way of connecting was the exchange of their personal stories, poems, songs, and dances in progress, listening to each other, and providing positive and constructive feedback. This was repeatedly observed as well, particularly during the final weeks of the playshops and in the public productions when the men were preparing final drafts and ultimately sharing their stories with their communities. Chris said he was nervous before sharing his story about his experiences as a Black trans man, including a portion where he sings. He said his palms were sweating and his heart was 'beating a billion times a minute'. But in the half hour before the production, the men and facilitators got together on Zoom and did a check-in. Chris said this point of contact was key to helping him remember that they were doing this work together and that this was a safe space for him to stand up and challenge patriarchal masculinity. He said that right before it was his turn to share, one of the men in the group sent him a direct message on Zoom saying, 'You got this, you're going to do great'. In our interview, Chris told me 'I get choked up now just thinking about it'.

9.4.3. Building Community Across Lines of Difference

Finally, the idea of using the arts to build community was discussed as a way of facilitating connections across lines of difference. For example, the practitioner Helena spoke about the arts as sparking connections across intergenerational divides in EM work. She said, 'Our, quote unquote, movement is very adult. It's very adult. And art, expressions of art, are an invitation'. She explained that art was an invitation to connect men of all ages and an opportunity to highlight marginalised youth voices in spaces where adults are often perceived as the leaders. She argued these marginalised voices were essential as they had the potential to bring forward valuable and necessary perspectives on masculinities and how men can become agents of change. Sharing an experience from a training program she taught, Helena recalled,

There were four young men of colour that we recruited to come. And one of them said to me, you know, I'm so used to being in a room where we're not heard, where people are thinking, why are we here? And he rapped a song that was so raw. Or as young people would say, was so dope. And everyone in the room, regardless of race, age, gender identity, regardless of what their stories and individual identities were, everyone saw him as a leader after he read. That's one of the things that art does...

it just allows people to talk from where they're at, and in ways that they get heard and listen to and honoured...

Using storytelling to build intergenerational community was also discussed in participant interviews for the case study where participants' ages ranged from 20s to 70s. Several men talked about the impact of hearing the stories of the older men in the group who had encountered similar experiences and struggles with patriarchal masculinity. Similarly, the younger men in the group brought forward new perspectives and challenges to binary conceptions of masculinity that some of the older men told me expanded their understanding of gender, particularly around transgender men and women and more intersectional accounts of race and gender. As the participant Davis told me, 'I'm a 74-year-old straight white guy who is still learning a lot of shit, and thankfully so. I like to think it's keeping me alive'.

Expanding further, nearly all the men in the case study discussed how the program and its personal story-telling approach created what was called a 'rare space' to build connections with each other in ways they had previously not been able to do so with other men. The participant Stan said he was more accustomed to engaging in conversation about masculinity and gender equality with women and was excited to be able to engage deeper with other men too. Similarly, Thomas spoke about some college courses he had attended where MVAW and gender equality were discussed, but that he had never done such work in a space that was intentionally designed for men. Another reason the space was described as rare was because of the diversity amongst the men in terms of age, race, sexuality, and gender identity. The men's diverse perspectives, experiences, and identities were illuminated through the case study's storytelling approach. Building community amongst queer and heterosexual and cis, trans, and non-binary men was also explicitly discussed in several interviews with participants. For example, two men who identified beyond binary definitions of masculinity noted how the program helped them feel more comfortable engaging with and 'trusting' cis-men and heterosexual men. Here again, the arts were identified as a medium that allowed the diverse men to connect with one another and to learn from each other's experiences in a creative and engaging way.

The results of this rare space where a diverse group of men shared and learned together was later described by various men as a place of 'comfort', 'challenge', 'trust', and 'growth'. Chris said that by sharing their stories and learning from one another the men had created a 'fabric' brought together by the different experiences, perspectives, and identities in the room. He continued,

.... that's the first time I've ever felt like, holy crap. Like I want to be friends with these people. Where have y'all been my whole life? We could have been homies this whole time!

This sentiment reoccurred in many interviews and observations but was not universal amongst all the men in the program. For example, the participant Jake offered a more measured assessment of the community they built together in the program when he told me, 'So if I'm going to be really candid, there wasn't anything special about this particular group of guys'. However, he qualified that the program still 'worked for him' and that the other men in the group may not become his close friends but that, 'they showed up when they said they would' and helped set a tone of acceptance throughout. The challenges of arts-integrated work in this context will be explored further in Chapter 10.

9.5 Case Study Spotlight: Jamie

This section spotlights Jamie's experience in further detail to help show how the humanising theme can be seen across one participant's journey in the program. Jamie, a professional spoken word artist, was chosen for this spotlight because he spoke more than any other participant about poetry as a means of expression to help illuminate the human condition. He said that in his many years of experience as a poet and social worker he had found that many men have a hard time with honest, vulnerable, personal expression. In his experiences, men had a hard time connecting to and expressing their own humanity. Jamie said poetry was a way to challenge this masculine norm and to help men connect, process, and even heal. For him, poetry was a means to 'speak my truth' in a way that is not just 'entertainment' but rather a captivating, informative, 'act of freedom'. Jamie said you can write a poem and focus on the technical aspects and instructions. Or you can write 'to get free'. He said, there are those who write just to write, and there are those who are, as he was – 'writing for their lives'.

Jamie's story for the program was written and delivered as a spoken word poem. In the poem, he shared his experience as a survivor of childhood sexual violence perpetrated by a man. He talked about how what he calls 'toxic masculine' norms prevented him from fully processing his own trauma and understanding the full impact of men's violence on those around him. For Jamie, sharing his story through poetry and listening to the stories of other men helped him to break what he called the 'cycle of silence that leads to a toxic

masculinity'. Towards the end of his poem, he talked directly about his experience in the program. He wrote,

I've used everything I know to get back here...

Things like prayer, creative writing, poetry slams, acting, aroma therapy, music, meditation, keto... even yoga.

But mainly I sought out supportive groups like the [case study program], which over the last few months has provided me with a tremendous opportunity to be part of a movement of men who share emotional journeys via this positive platform of collective self-expression.

And these invaluable connections have helped me to begin to recognise and respect myself and others in a way I never thought possible.

I'M BEGINNING TO KNOW WHO I AM!

A WORK IN PROGRESS! A man whose heart is only just beginning to embrace his past and whose soul is now brimming with the possibility of a brand-new joy and inner peace.

I'm a survivor who is learning to see past his own experiences and realise the fact is 'I don't always have to try to fix everything'.

The designation of MY manhood is no longer dependent upon social expectations. Basically... this newfound comfortability with my inner me is creating a vulnerability that evolves my masculinity! I SAID! This newfound comfortability with my inner me is creating a vulnerability that evolves my masculinity! ¹¹⁰

For Jamie, the case study program was able to create what has been described in this chapter as a humanising learning community where he felt safe to be courageous, to challenge himself, to share deep personal stories about his experiences with men's violence, and to envision alternatives beyond the confines of the narrow man box walls. He said the storytelling approach was essential because it helped create a 'family' amongst the men in the program. This deep connection in-turn made learning and engaging in the program 'easier' and helped him realise 'I wasn't alone'. He told me that the exchange of personal stories and the connections forged with the men in the program brought him 'closer to humanity'.

¹¹⁰ Emphasis from original.

I asked Jamie to share a word that best reflected his experience, and he told me 'necessary'. The program's personal and arts-integrated approach created a space to help Jamie unpack his own experiences with patriarchal masculinity and to become inspired to join other men in addressing men's violence and as he said, 'expanding the definition of masculinity together'.

9.6 'Heartbeats'

In summary, the practitioners in this study spoke about how the arts benefited their programs by supporting a learning process to make the work more personal and to inspire and cement connections and community amongst the men. Making the work more personal and connected created space for what was described as deeper engagement and increased understanding with the learning topics men's violences, and a willingness to engage in 'productive discomfort' and to be more vulnerable and open in safe spaces to reflect on their own roles in perpetuating and preventing patriarchal masculinities. The case study was a prime example of this personal and community-building work in action. Through the storytelling process, the men in the program shared how using the arts opened space for them to invest more in the work, empathise more with those harmed by MVAW and patriarchal masculinities, and to connect more with each other in the process. This was achieved in large part by the program's specific emphasis on the power of candid, bold, personal narratives in the EM context.

The storytelling process used in the case study was also helpful in building a learning community dedicated to reimagining masculinities and extending the work beyond the program through continued online interaction amongst the participants after sessions finished and after the program was complete. The program's movement-building emphasis and community dialogue component in the culminating public sharing of the men's stories supported expanding the learning community and working towards a wider mobilisation for gender justice. Furthermore, the recording of these presentations and the sharing of the videos online motivated the men in working on their stories and magnified the potential reach of their message. These findings point towards a more personal and communal arts-integrated learning process as facilitating what this chapter described as an overall more humanising approach. In doing so, the practitioners and case study participants shared how such work deepened their learning and helped them to share that learning with others.

Importantly, by humanising the work on the personal and relational level, the practitioners noted that they were working to resist the dominant patriarchal ideas of dehumanisation and individualism that permeate the study's US context. Thus again, the arts bring forward creative products and a creative process for resisting dominant ideas of masculinity – artistically countering the definition of patriarchal masculinity. Returning to the practitioner Helena's metaphor shared at the chapter's beginning on the arts as a 'lubricant', these findings revealed how the arts support men in seeing connections more clearly; connections between themselves and the work of challenging MVAW and reimagining masculinities and connections amongst the men in the programs through their shared experiences with patriarchal masculinities. In describing why she felt it was so important to bring humanity into the learning process, Helena recounted a story from a training course at her organisation. In this session an Indigenous facilitator asked all the participants to join in a circle while he drummed, paying attention to both the sound of the drum and their own heartbeat. Within five minutes, she said 'we all the sudden recognised that all our heart beats were in sync. Right! And the music of the drum is what connected us'. Drumming provided a process to ground the participants within their own bodies – to make it personal and lived. They saw their connections to one another's synchronised heartbeats – making it relational and communal. According to Helena, art was the lubricant helping make these mental, emotional, and physical realisations manifest. She argued that such connections are essential in doing the work of challenging patriarchal masculinities and reimagining more feminist-informed alternatives.

9.7 Poetic Mosaic

Lastly, this chapter closes with a poetic mosaic of the humanising theme.¹¹¹ This poem centres around the mask of masculinity metaphor described by several of the practitioners in this chapter.

¹¹¹ As in the previous chapter, the poem brings together practitioners and case study participants' quotes from above, as well as additional quotes from the study's collective interview transcripts.

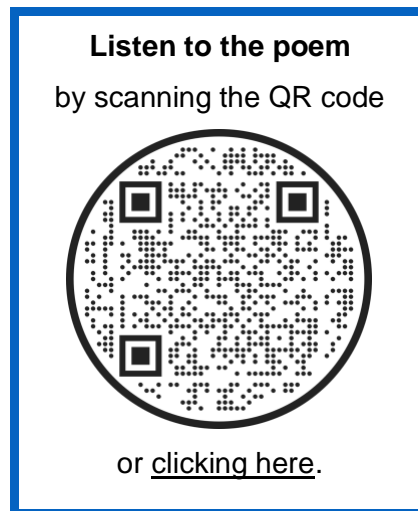


Figure 5: *de/mask* Poetic Mosaic

de/mask

patriarchy is a
system of
de/humanisation

art is a
chance
to interact
to connect

patriarchy is a
cycle of
violence

art is a
an invitation to
break it

patriarchy is
a mask
stitched in
silence

art is a
kaleidoscope of possibilities
for taking it off
smoothing the edges
releasing the tension
letting it unravel
bringing humanity
back

this art is an opportunity to transport
to another's perspective
let it sink in
lived experiences fuel
learning community

this art is a rare space
to be safe and courageous
a purposeful paradigm-changing
grassroots heart
commitment

this art is not entertainment
or performance
not didactically attacking
or preaching platitudes
no prompts
or prescriptions
this is me sharing a part of me
bearing witness
writing to get free

this art is messy, raw
introspective
growth in action
together

this art is the interconnection
rippling across a moment of movement-building momentum
a cone of protection
medicine for digging deep
a synchronised heartbeat
stretching masculinities
into full spectrum
human beings

this is keeping me alive
even on a stale zoom screen
in an isolating pandemic
we are connected
brotherhood
bond
family

our art is a chance to
connect
to re/humanise the system
from within
taking the mask off
breaking the silence
bringing humanity
back

this art is
me/us
in progress
stories
in process
Dante
Chris
Thomas
Juliet
Davis
taking the mask off

Marcos
Stan
Irene
Alex
taking the mask off
Brent
Carlton
David
taking the mask off
Earnest
Francis
Helena
Jake
Jamie
taking the mask off
Kent
Leon
taking the mask off
Mason
Nate
taking the mask off
Olivia
taking the mask off
Paul
taking the mask off
and me
taking
the mask
off

Chapter 10: Challenging

Limitations, Resistances, and Risks

10.1 Introduction

This final findings chapter examines arts-integrated EM approaches as *challenging*. In doing so, this chapter shares how practitioners perceived the limitations of this work, how case study participants experienced points of tension, and how both practitioners and the case study program responded to these challenges. This chapter also returns to the previously mentioned idea of positive challenges in this work, such as the ‘productive discomfort’ participants feel when transgressing patriarchal norms and reimagining masculinities. This chapter highlights three challenges. First, arts-based approaches required extra resources and training for the practitioners and extra time and commitment from participants compared to traditional non-arts integrated programs. Second, integrating the arts produced individual and institutional resistance. Third, practitioners and case study participants discussed a series of risks around trauma, harm, and accountability tied to the use of the arts with men that must be addressed if the work is to be done responsibly. In addition, this chapter explores the specific case study challenge of conducting an arts-integrated program online due to the pandemic. While much of the findings focus on the positive transformative potential of reimagining masculinities through the arts, this chapter provides a vital additional lens to understand the challenges of this work.

This chapter will: first, provide an overview of the theme; second, share findings for the sub-themes of resource intensity, resistances, and the potential for harm; third, spotlight the challenge of doing this work online in the pandemic; fourth; summarise key insights; and fifth; end with a poem.

10.2 ‘I was that close to just walking away’

There certainly are ways to have an arts-based curriculum or program that inadvertently or accidentally replicates some patriarchal notions. (Nate)

Previous chapters noted that the emotional, embodied, personal, and communal arts-integrated work could be challenging for EM participants, and that sometimes those challenges could be 'productive' to the learning process itself by encouraging the men to stretch beyond patriarchal norms through holistic learning and humanising approaches. This chapter digs deeper into the challenging dimensions and expands the focus to include challenges that were described and observed as potential areas of concern, points of difficult resistance, implementation limitations, and risks of harm. The line between a positive challenge that inspires participants to learn and work harder in transgressing patriarchal norms or a negative one that elicits backlash and potentially even harm can be thin and context-dependent. Therefore, in talking about challenges, this findings chapter braids some insights from the previous holistic and humanising themes back in and reveals the multiplicity of positive and negative challenges within this arts-integrated reimagining of masculinities work.

Some of the challenges revealed in the findings connect to generalised forms of men's resistance to the field of EM. As practitioner Mason stated, 'It's hard to get [men] into the room voluntarily'. Similarly, in recounting feedback from a program that included a series of performed sketches on masculine norms, the practitioner Francis recalled one person wrote, 'You were trying to brainwash me. I know you're trying to brainwash me with your feminist propaganda'. Francis made clear, 'You do get pushback from people'. While these general insights on challenges are important, and in many ways align with previous research on this topic (Pleasants, 2011; Casey et al., 2015; Flood, 2019; Westmarland et al., 2021), this chapter's focus is on the specific challenges associated with the integration of arts into EM programs. For example, arts-integrated approaches were described in interviews by practitioners as requiring extra work, space, and time as well as specialised equipment and training, compared to more traditional, classroom-based EM programming. Significantly, the practitioners also stressed that arts-integrated approaches often required more effort and engagement from the participants. The case study participant Marcos said the writing, revising, and sharing of his story was emotionally challenging and that, 'I was that close to just walking away, like I can't, I can't do this'.

The findings in this chapter also reveal various forms of more direct resistance to the arts that can make this EM approach more challenging. As noted above, in previous chapters the fact that art was considered outside the man box was described by practitioners and case study participants as a potentially positive learning opportunity and a helpful way of encouraging men to find 'cracks in the wall' of the box. However, it was emphasised in the interviews that this arts-fuelled creative-critical work was still in fact a *challenge* and that

some men's resistance to engaging in the arts was not always constructive or conducive to the program's goals. As Francis said, 'the arts don't fit into the traditional masculine realm. And so, we're asking [them] to take a leap of sorts, and that's a challenge'. In reflection, the practitioner David told me,

If you would have said to me when I was 13 or 14 or 15, when I'm deep in sports, [and said] I want you to express your masculinity through art. I would have been like, fuck you!

David said the answer was to find ways to address this resistance, adapt to the challenge, and strategically reframe the arts in ways that match the interests and cultures of the men in the room. This point on adapting and using culturally-responsive arts approaches was echoed by several practitioners and aligned with the case study program's 'work in progress' approach of seeking to innovate, improve, and adapt to the local context and interests of the men.

Lastly, during interviews, several practitioners shared concerns about the potential for harm in arts-integrated approaches. Like the quote from the practitioner Nate at the start of this section, the idea that the arts are not intrinsically feminist or helpful, and that patriarchy can and does find ways to manifest in arts-based approaches, was repeated by several practitioners. It was argued that art was not intrinsically 'good'; but rather that art was 'powerful'. Engaging this power productively and through a feminist analysis was a key challenge across this study's findings. Thus, to unpack these challenges associated with arts-integrated approaches, this chapter presents three sub-themes from the collective practitioner and case study findings: resource limitations, multiple resistances, and risk of causing harm.

Challenging					
Resource Limitations		Multiple Resistances		Risks of Harm	
Supplies and Time	Training	Individual Resistance	Institutional Resistance	Engaging with Trauma	Uncritical Art

Table 13: Challenging Theme

10.3 Resource Limitations

The first challenge practitioners and case study participants described involved the resource intensity of arts-integrations approaches. These extra challenges are divided into two further key areas: **first**, the need for additional arts supplies, time, and commitment from the participants; and **second**, the need for specific facilitator training and expertise.

10.3.1 Supplies and Time

Several practitioners talked about the challenges of getting access to arts supplies. While some arts-integrated work required little or more general supplies (i.e., poetry and storytelling work), others were more expensive or hard to acquire on a limited budget. As the practitioner Olivia said, when it comes to extra supply money for arts in EM program budgets, quite simply, ‘not everybody has that’. Issues of supplies were magnified further for practitioners who worked on programs with public performances or presentations. This work could require access to performance spaces and technical production equipment like microphones and lighting.

Practitioners also discussed time constraints as a challenge. Programs were described as squeezed for time due to lack of institutional resources¹¹² and from the participants’ attention span.¹¹³ It was argued that if the amount of time for the program was a fixed quantity, adding arts activities into the program could exacerbate this challenge and often meant cutting something else out of the curriculum. Further, several practitioners noted that arts-based work was more time-consuming and required a longer creative development process than other more traditional learning methods. For example, Olivia’s drawing activity or Paul’s mask-making workshop offered a deeper exploration of patriarchal and feminist masculinities, but they also required more time, resources, and participant engagement than traditional approaches.

Many practitioners shared their frustration with the limitations of the common one-time session format in EM work. The practitioners argued that multiple sessions and sustained contact were needed. Carlton expressed frustration when talking about not having the time needed to properly introduce, practice, and engage in applied theatre in their workshops with

¹¹² For example, programs were often on time-limited contracts or only given the opportunity to engage with a group of men for a one-off event or workshop.

¹¹³ For example, participants may only be willing to commit to one session for a limited time.

men: 'This stupid thing, just having an hour with them... it's a great frustration for me'. Similarly, Kent noted,

Ideally, we'd be working with colleges and universities over the whole year or with groups, you know on a long-term basis. You know, we're looking at shifting a lifetime of programming. So, it'd be, it'd be foolish of us to believe that we can shift that in a significant sustainable way via a weekend residency.

The practitioners' acknowledgement that the arts take up more time also showed up in case study interviews. For example, the participant Stan said that whilst he really enjoyed both the more traditional group learning components and the storytelling circles, he felt like traditional learning got squeezed to make the necessary time for the story work. Stan said the sessions ended up being 'a little too short and hurried to really get into the stuff'. He continued, saying that he would not want to shrink the storytelling but felt like it just took up a lot of time that impacted the other portion.

Several participants also shared that one of the biggest challenges of the storytelling approach was the additional required time and commitment outside of the weekly program sessions. Both Marcos and Thomas said they found it hard to balance the program's work with their jobs. Thomas, who works as a schoolteacher, described it as 'strange tension' with work and noted a colleague said they were relieved when the project finished so he could go back to 'focusing more on his teaching'. Thomas said he found the comment unsupportive, and it ignored how the time invested in the program was beneficial to him and to his teaching. However, both men qualified that the time and commitment during the program and outside of it was worth it.

10.3.2 Training

Another common challenge voiced by practitioners focused on the need for extra specialised training to facilitate arts-integrated programs effectively. As the practitioner Carlton said, 'high quality facilitation is important'. Mason discussed how using the arts required facilitators not just to be skilled in a specific form of art, but also to be more responsive to the affective contexts of this learning approach. Similarly, Olivia described using the arts in EM programs as 'very facilitator dependent' and that problems arose when 'facilitators are not super comfortable with creative expression' and the intense personal and political disclosures that can result from such activities. Olivia went on to discuss how their work with

the arts was greatly enhanced when a professional artist was hired to co-facilitate. The practitioners Brent and Francis shared similar experiences of partnering with professional artists, in their case someone with experience in teaching and performing drama. Lastly, facilitator training in the arts in this context was also described as challenging because this area of practice remained a niche within a broader field of EM. Thus, practitioners struggled to find learning resources and precedents when designing and teaching their programs. This meant many programs had to learn and innovate as they went through cycles of action and reflection rather than using pre-existing formal training programs and resources. As Brent recalled, 'That first cohort that we had was trial and error. We probably put them through some activities that we would not do again'.

The challenge of additional training and expertise was also present in the case study. Irene brought in and trained a variety of educators to work on the case study program with specialisations from storytelling, gender equality and violence prevention, and trauma-informed approaches, both for the playshops and facilitation of the public productions. Many participants said that the team constructed for the project was essential to the overall success of the work and experience. Chris described the facilitators as a 'Justice League team' with a 'secret sauce'. Jamie also noted how the program was well-staffed and that the facilitators gave him confidence that he was in experienced and supportive hands. Several men in the program also said Irene being a facilitator was particularly important. Davis called her 'inextricably essential'. After explaining how Irene was the single reason that helped keep him coming back each week, Jake told me, 'I don't know how you replicate this without finding more [Irenes]'.

10.4 Resistance

A second specific challenge drawn from this study's findings revealed forms of resistance to participating in, or supporting the use of, the arts in EM work. As detailed in the literature review, men's resistance to feminism and EM programs is well documented. However, as in the previous section, the findings here focus on the practitioners' perspectives on resistance specifically connected to the use of the arts in EM. Further insights from the case study help illuminate what these forms of resistance look and sound like, how the program adapted and responded to these challenges, and the differences between resistance stemming from men's productive discomfort verses men's unwillingness to engage in the challenging personal work that EM entails. Resistance in this context was described as stemming from individual participants and institutional factors.

10.4.1 Individual resistance

The practitioners described several types of individual resistance including general disinterest in the arts and more gendered dynamics of resistance to creative approaches. First, several practitioners noted that some men in their programs were simply not interested in the arts. This disinterest-based resistance was magnified if the arts-integrated work was not carefully considered and implemented. As the practitioner Mason noted, the arts in this context can be very challenging ‘if the expectations are too high’, for example, ‘if they’re told to draw a picture off by themselves... and they don’t feel capable of it’. Brent described his drama and dialogue program running into the challenge of having men with divergent interests. Some joined specifically because they were interested in the arts component and others joined despite it. As Brent noted, in any given year, ‘there were quite a few people who are uncomfortable with [the arts component]’. Some practitioners described this disinterest and discomfort as stemming from a generalised idea that the arts can be challenging and are simply not universally appreciated or enjoyed. For example, Kent noted

I guess some of the challenges might be folks will be resistant to the arts. Like oh, well, I’m not an actor. I can’t do this. Or I’m not into the arts. I’m not a creative type. Like this isn’t for me.

Other practitioners reflected on encountering resistance from men when the art being shared was perceived by the participants as lacking authenticity or believability. Describing resistance to a script within a drama-based program, Brent said, ‘The students they were like, this is not what I would say. This is not how other students would talk or communicate. We need to put it in our own language’. These areas of resistance, while not specific to EM work, were described as a foundational concern to understanding the more gendered dimensions of resistance that emerged in the interviews.

Second, practitioners discussed how normative ideas of masculinity impacted men’s resistance, disinterest, and discomfort. As David said, ‘art has been conditioned in a very non-masculine way’. This gendered resistance was reinforced by both sexist and homophobic norms associating the arts with femininity and homosexuality. For example, Leon said,

I'm sorry to say that this, it shouldn't be a challenge, but art has been so identified with you know, the feminine, that there will be resistance to some aspects of art making about masculinity because art making is seen by some segments of the male population as being, you know, not manly.

Similarly, Kent noted, 'I think creativity and the arts is outside of the man box'. While previous chapters on holistic and humanising themes have shared perspectives showing the benefits of the arts being outside the man box, these findings are complicated by statements from practitioners here that such work is at its core, still challenging. For example, Ernest noted that ideas of playfulness and vulnerability, common in the way the arts are used in this context, were beyond the confines of the man box and acted as barriers for some men in engaging with the arts. He argued,

We position men to experience and express masculinity as competitive with each other. Of the need or the assumption that I always have to show up with the other men in the room, as making sure that they know that I'm one of the guys, whatever that means to them. Often that means you don't get playful. You don't get fun-loving. You don't get vulnerable.

Similarly, Nate discussed how the arts often ask men to express and process their emotions, but this may be an unfamiliar and uncomfortable area for them. He said instead of engaging emotions men are taught:

You're supposed to man up. You're supposed to like be able to handle all these things just internally without seeking help. You're not supposed to gush your feelings to a bunch of other guys.

Again however, *if* this challenge could be engaged productively, several practitioners said that arts-integration offered a potentially transformative learning experience – in part because of the challenge itself. Kent told me that using the arts to stretch outside of the man box and to connect in personal, emotional, and vulnerable ways was hard but,

... that's also a gift, right? The fact that like in the same way that getting them into their playfulness is already starting to dissipate that box just them stepping into their creativity and claiming their artistic self is also helping to rid them of that box.

This paradoxical point that the arts being outside of the man box is both a challenge and a benefit will be expanded further in the discussion chapter. Some practitioners also pushed back noting that despite the challenges, arts-integrated approaches that were well-designed, facilitated, and culturally-responsive could help break through with men in these programs. As Mason said,

I think men in general have less affinity for the arts, are more reluctant to participate in activities, but you know with good facilitation and framework and some agreements, usually they're willing to do this kind of thing because they're eager to connect with others and they're eager to learn and to and to speak to their own experience.

Some of these issues around men's general resistance to engaging with the arts were also present in the case study. The program was explicitly advertised as using a candid personal storytelling approach and required participants to submit draft stories or concept summaries before being accepted. Therefore, all participants had a clear understanding of this key creative element. However, the men who joined still had a wide range of experience and comfort with using storytelling – from professional poets and musicians like Jamie and Stan to those with limited arts experience like Davis and Marcos. Davis told me he did not know what to expect in terms of how hard the story work would be, but echoing the previous section's point about time commitment, he quickly realised, 'oh they're serious about this, something substantial is going to happen here'. Davis was not alone, nearly all the participants told me this work was challenging, particularly the creative story writing, revising, and sharing components of the program. In some cases, the challenges of doing this work echoed the gendered forms of resistance the practitioners described above. For example, Jamie said he was often taught, 'it's not manly' to write and especially to share and express yourself in a vulnerable, emotional, and personal way. So, for him, 'this work is hard'.

Several men also told me they were particularly resistant to getting critical feedback and editing their stories. In sessions two through five of the program, the men could opt to share an updated version of their story in small-group, hour-long story circles where participants would listen to each other's pieces, provide feedback on the work in progress, and support one another regarding the topics and experiences being shared. Participants also received one-on-one Zoom-based storytelling support from the lead facilitator, Irene, and other facilitators. Most men opted for Zoom sessions with Irene to discuss their stories. However, not all feedback in the story circles or from Irene was appreciated by the men. For example, Chris said, 'I'm very bad at taking criticism' and that this 'was a huge challenge for me'.

Similarly, after receiving what he described as overly critical feedback from fellow participants during week one, Dante said,

I took it a little personally knowing what my capabilities are and I was just like well fuck it... So, I basically tossed out my entire first draft. I didn't even look at it again and started completely from scratch.

Both Dante and Chris said that in hindsight, some of their resistance was wrapped up in gendered dynamics, or what Chris called his own 'misogynistic bullshit' that teaches men they always must be right and cannot receive criticism. Dante said he had a 'substantial disagreement' with Irene about what he perceived as an approach to feedback that was not sensitive or responsive enough to the personal nature of his story. After some discussions, they came to a more common understanding. While he still disagreed with aspects of her approach, he said, reflecting on his reaction to this resistance was a 'live lesson on sort of my own toxicity, or toxic masculinity'. He continued,

As challenging as some of it was, I am extremely grateful for the opportunity. Like I really want to be as clear about this as I can. Like it's not, there are no hard feelings about this at all. All it's doing is showing me who I am and how I relate to people on a certain level and that is extremely valuable.

Observations of the case study facilitator training and playshops, as well as interviews with Irene, revealed how the program sought to acknowledge this arts feedback specific point of resistance, and when appropriate, to adapt the program to better engage the men's needs and concerns. At the same time, the program sought to push men to confront their own resistances, to use their creative works to challenge patriarchal masculinity, and to engage in other personal growth work via reflection and dialogue when their story drafts and the drafts of others. As has been previously noted, the case study advocated for leaning into 'productive discomfort' and supported men in 'calling each other in' during the groups when needed. The program argued that this discomfort and accountability work was a necessary component of challenging patriarchal masculinity. Jake took this challenge to heart telling me, 'I had one guiding principle and that was that if it scared me to put into words that which may be spoken aloud. Then it must be spoken aloud. It must be spoken aloud'. Similarly, while Chris was resistant to digging deeper and sharing personal parts of his story, he told me, 'I'm so glad I did not [hold back], I'm so glad it's out there. I really am'.

10.4.2 Institutional Resistance

The practitioners also described forms of institutional resistance to arts-integrated EM work. For example, Kent discussed how some colleges were hesitant to book workshops because they feared that the men would not like the arts or misperceived the program as a 'traditional arts program', which in turn limited its funding options. It was argued that this dichotomous thinking of programs as either arts programs or EM programs misunderstood the purpose of the integrative work. As Kent noted frustratedly, their work is not an art program; 'It's really not. It's for anybody. It's definitely not focused at people who are creative types'. Similarly, Paul talked about challenges with getting funders to understand the work, noting,

I think that the connection isn't there in very visible ways and sometimes... funders don't understand the way in which we do the work... That's what I mean when I say that it's not visibly connected in terms of like the arts and masculinity.

Paul and other practitioners like Helena argued that arts-integrated programs incorporated more creative and qualitative dimensions that are harder to quantify and as a result unfortunately sometimes harder for funders to appreciate. Interviews with Irene about the case study program also revealed a range of institutional resistance to this work. Mirroring some of the insights from the other practitioners above, she discussed challenges around funding, the complexities and necessities of measuring success in this qualitative work, as well as the need for and challenge of scaling a time-intensive, process-oriented storytelling approach.

10.5 Harms

There were two main ways the practitioners and case study participants spoke about the potential of arts-integrated approaches causing harm. First, there were perceived risks concerning trauma that may arise in the learning space and that could be magnified by the personal, affective, and embodied nature of the arts. Second, the interviews revealed how art could be misused to either reify patriarchal norms or to unintentionally repeat problematic and anti-feminist ideas through the creative process. In both cases, the case study program presented an example of how such problems could occur, as well as how the program sought to acknowledge, address, and mitigate them.

10.5.1 Trauma

Experiences of trauma or distress when sharing or hearing personal stories related to masculinity and violence were described as a risk of arts-integrated approaches. Several practitioners noted a ‘thin line’ between arts in EM that had a ‘therapeutic effect’ despite not being therapy per se, and ‘art therapy’ for men dealing with trauma as administered in professional therapy contexts. As Francis noted, some men join these programs because they want to be involved in gender justice and prevention MVAW. However, he continued,

Other guys get involved in the work because they're looking for support for themselves. And there are guys that get involved because they have a partner who's an abuse survivor. Guys get involved in it because they are an abuse survivor.

This was a point of concern for several practitioners because they noted EM facilitators are often not trained for therapeutic work. As Kent said, ‘we're not art therapists’. Francis echoed this point as well saying, ‘I am not trained as a therapist. Nobody I've ever been co-facilitating with is a therapist’. It was argued that this specific training-gap created a context in which the use of the arts, particularly if the exercise was based on personal lived experiences with masculinity and violence, could do harm to participants or to others the art was shared with. Several of the practitioners talked about their concerns about unintentionally triggering participants who had experienced violence.

However, the practitioners noted that despite not being trained therapists or art-therapists, they thought there were still ways to engage with this challenge. For example, practitioners spoke about the importance of content cautions when doing this work, both for the participants during the workshops and for audiences if their work was being shared. Others talked about the value of having facilitators with professional experience in social work or counselling on staff in the program. Having educators trained in both trauma-informed and EM work was described as an important asset for programs that used the arts. However, while it was often cited as important, only three facilitators spoke explicitly about having such expertise embedded within their programming.

As a response to this challenge, Kent discussed the importance of abstracting the re-enactments of patriarchal violence in his program’s forum theatre scenes and the use of ‘aesthetic distance’ to engage in potentially traumatic personal experiences in a safer way. The emphasis here was on making the work personal – but ‘not too personal’. Kent said,

We do work that is a little separate from their life. So, it's not, so we're not like having them like re-enact getting beat by their father because they wore their sisters' tutu. Like we wouldn't, we don't go there.

Instead, Kent and his colleagues tried to encourage the men to use drama and embodied work to listen to several personal stories from multiple people and to search for larger, more abstract themes that they could explore and unpack together. The goal was to honour stories that are shared, acknowledge the limitations of the work, and create and sustain a safe space for the exploration of painful memories and feelings. Some practitioners also discussed the risks of harming others when men shared personal experiences through the arts. Practitioners spoke about potential legal and ethical implications of disclosing names, identifying information, and incriminating experiences within stories or works of art shared – and the importance of preventing these forms of harm. Referring to a program that worked with minors, the practitioner Olivia discussed how traumatic experiences disclosed via visual drawing activities can be challenging for facilitators to respond to and entail specific mandated reporting in some circumstances. Speaking about the images she said, ‘I think it hits [facilitators] really differently’.

As the head of the case study program, Irene talked about the importance of talking with fellow facilitators and participants about harm prevention in advance and having standard policies and practices in place. For example, the program has a licence agreement for implementing groups that include the project’s mission and harm prevention guidelines. Further, the program has a storyteller contract which participants are asked to sign, acknowledging that they understand the program's guidelines, amongst other key points. Observations of the facilitator training included content about harm prevention, accountability, and trauma-informed work in personal storytelling as well as specific pre-program training and ongoing guidance on these topics. Speaking on this topic, Irene said,

There are parameters for the story content. Like you may not name a survivor of violence other than yourself without their express prior written consent, and never if they are a minor. There are also guidelines to help facilitators assess whether someone is ready to share about their own experiences with former perpetration of violence and their journey of change – and what a thorough and socially useful public statement of accountability looks like. And counsellors are always present and

*identified at each public storytelling event, and audience members are told they can seek them out for support if needed.*¹¹⁴

Observations and interviews with the case study also revealed some challenges related to the sharing of deeply personal and potentially traumatic stories. For example, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Stan said sharing his own story and listening to others was important and transformative, but at the same time exhausting and at times produced what he described as a 'physical reaction' including headaches and what he called a 'vulnerability hangover'. However, he followed up by reframing this challenge as a form of 'productive discomfort' by saying,

Temporary exhaustion or discomfort leads to better things for sure. So, it's definitely worth doing that work and I think it, you know, it's great because it shows you're getting down to something potent and real if you have even like a physical reaction to it.

In addition, as has been noted above, several men spoke about the challenges of deciding what to share, how much to share, and the specific challenge of getting feedback on story content when the story was about their own personal traumatic life events. For example, in his interview, Marcos spoke about feeling uneasy disclosing his bisexuality in his story about how his time in the US Army boot camp challenged and changed his understanding of masculinity. At times in the feedback process, he said he felt some pressure to include this information. He told me, 'I didn't want to open up [that] can of worms'. Marcos said he was okay talking about this internally within the group sessions, but nervous to share it in the program's final production, a forum where his family, friends, and colleagues might see it. He ultimately kept the reference in but remained 'very nervous' about sharing his story publicly and felt his 'heart pounding in [his] chest'.

On the day of the production, Marcos said he was moments away from bailing. Yet, he knew that he would be okay once he talked with the group of fellow participants in the pre-production Zoom call and saw that the program had invited rape crisis professionals to attend and provide emotional support via private chat if needed. Marcos told me, writing,

¹¹⁴ These sorts of agreements and guidelines were also described as being essential when working on US university campuses, which have additional legal considerations around disclosing information, particularly as it relates to survivors and perpetrators of violence. Observations of the case study facilitator training program revealed an emphasis on proactively working with groups and making sure organisers were in conversation with university officials about programs, responsibilities to report, and efforts to do no harm.

editing, and sharing was a challenging journey, but at the end of the day, 'after I heard it, I was like you know, it's good. It's you know, I wouldn't have changed anything'. Marcos later shared the story, in its full form, with another veteran. He said that this fellow veteran appreciated and connected with the story in ways that made him feel proud and seen. He told me, 'I mean you can't ask for anything more'.

In Irene's interview, she also talked about the importance of these issues. She made clear that no person should ever feel pressured to share anything that they don't want to share. Reflecting on the line between 'productive discomfort' and potential harm, she stressed that there must be a balance between encouraging men to personally reflect and share in ways that challenge patriarchal norms and respecting personal boundaries in a way that honours the case study's 'do no harm' policy, which aims to attend to the needs of presenters, audience members, and the broader community. Further, she noted that the men always have the 'right to pass' or choose to not share their work in progress in the story circles for any reason, without naming a reason and that men are invited to share what kind of feedback they want before sharing their work with the small group.

10.5.2 Uncritical Art

Secondly, the practitioners discussed a range of challenges and risks around non- and anti-feminist uses of art by men in the programs. Several practitioners described how art was not intrinsically a feminist practice. As Mason noted, some art is 'powerful and inspiring', but a lot of it is also 'very negative and reinforcing of oppression and exploitation and marginalisation... art can be manipulated to negative ends because it is powerful'. For example, the practitioner Ernest reflected on his own use of creative expression and noted that art 'tends to invite me to explore my own experience, my own story – and not necessarily in a self-critical way'. He continued that without an intentional feminist gender transformative framework,

using the arts kind of haphazardly could lead to some men exploring how they are victimised by women. Or how they're victimised by feminism. Or how gender equality is really bad for me because look at what I'm losing all of a sudden. I can't whistle at girls anytime I want to.

Ernest was also concerned about overly centring men's experiences through the arts, and EM men work more broadly, at the risk of losing track of the main purpose of the programs.

He noted, 'for me, engaging men is not the goal, the goal is gender equality and preventing gender-based violence'. Ernest argued the arts were an effective strategy, but that they must be situated within a robust feminist analysis and that the goal should not be to just get men to use the arts to express themselves, but rather to use the arts in pursuit of challenging their and other men's patriarchal beliefs, attitudes, and actions. Other practitioners reflected on concerns about art being used as a form of 'mactivism' or 'performative wokeness' in which art, and feminist men's work more generally, was used by some men to perform their allyship or critical consciousness in insincere ways. For example, Carlton shared,

*I remember this one guy in this power blue Under Armour shirt and [he] had just come to hit on one of the co-organisers, this beautiful woman named Andrea. And he's like, we're going to learn how to be good men? And I was like no, honey!*¹¹⁵

Carlton was concerned about both the binary framings of good and bad guys and about the way he perceived this man was using his attendance in the workshop to try and flirt with the organiser.

While the previous example is more direct and addresses men's motivations, the practitioners also spoke about challenges around art produced by men that is unintentionally problematic and counterproductive to the goals of the program. Men who join these programs were described by many practitioners as in an active state of learning and growing. Therefore, it was argued that the art they created may in some ways be problematic or even harmful to share. The practitioners discussed how this was particularly challenging because if the problem was embedded in a piece of art, for example, a poem or a story, the person might be more defensive than if it was just a problematic statement or question asked in a more didactic setting. Again, the benefits of making art personal and affective were revealed to be a double edge. The practitioners said they attempted to engage problematic art directly by proactively discussing it through group dialogue and one-on-one conversations when necessary. In doing so, the practitioners sought to normalise such dialogue and frame it as part of the learning journey. Several practitioners spoke about the importance of acknowledging within the group that we are all 'works in progress'. Practitioners also discussed the importance of accountability to oneself, to the group, and to women and gender-nonbinary people and organisations. For example, Brent described how his drama program sought feedback from key groups after their public performances. He

¹¹⁵ The name of the co-organiser has been changed in accordance with this study's pseudonymisation approach.

noted, it was helpful to have a 'watchful eye always on us' from women's and feminist organisations.

This specific challenge was less present in the case study. Observations and interviews with Irene revealed proactive measures that were taken to address this point. For example, the case study program was selective of participants and required them to share a draft idea of their story as part of their application, along with a statement regarding their intention to participate in the program. As was described in the facilitator training, this selection process helped the facilitators identify men who wanted to craft and share personal stories that aligned with the program's intersectional feminist, ant-racist, and gender transformative goals. In the first week of the program, the facilitators also engaged participants in establishing group agreements which outlined the program's values and encouraged men in the group to take 'ownership' of the process and to 'hold each other accountable'. One way this was put into practice was by a process of 'calling in' (rather than calling out) each other if something was said or perceived to be problematic. The weekly story circles with fellow participants and facilitators, and one-on-one story support from the facilitators were opportunities for the men to get feedback on how their story was being received and if changes needed to be made to avoid uncritical, unclear, or problematic content. As a matter of harm prevention policy in the program, all participants had to share their final written draft with the facilitators before the live events took place, to help the facilitation team ensure, to the best of their ability, that there was nothing in the presenters' content that could cause harm.

Lastly, echoing Ernest's concern, the case study was also clear that the purpose of the stories was to communicate critical insights about their experiences in challenging patriarchal masculinity, their experiences celebrating alternative healthier and more feminist masculinities, and the process of learning, growing, and changing. The goal of the stories was not simply for the men to express themselves on any subject or to use the opportunity to create an interpretive work of art. For these reasons, along with a desire to help presenters focus on authenticity, the program used the terms 'presenters' and 'production' rather than 'performers' and 'performance'. The program's training also differentiated between 'art' and 'communication'. As Irene said, the case study organisation was,

an initiative where the arts and diverse expressive mediums are employed for communicative purposes. And so, if it comes down to it, the bottom line is we want presenters to be able to clearly get their messages across to an audience.

Irene made it clear that she supported the use of the arts, but that if there was a point of tension between artistic expression and clear communication, the programs encouraged the men to communicate clearly. One of the main goals of the program was not just for the men themselves to learn and benefit from the creative and reflective process of writing and crafting their stories, but for those stories to be shared publicly, via the live events and recordings shared online, and for their work to have a positive impact on their communities. To achieve that, clear communication was viewed as the top priority.

10.6 Case study spotlight: Zooming in 2020

Rather than singling out an individual as representative of the challenging theme, this case study spotlight focuses on a distinct and important aspect of this specific program: its virtual format. After initial postponements, the program adapted to run fully online for the first time in the organisation's 12-year history due to the pandemic.

The challenge of running the program online was discussed in all eight participant interviews and in Irene's reflections as well. For example, by late 2020 when the program took place, almost all the men were working full-time from home and varying degrees of lockdowns were still in place. As a result, almost all interactions outside of their immediate households were facilitated through digital connections. Several of the participants discussed the challenge of what Dante and Jake called, 'Zoom fatigue', that stemmed from too much time staring at screens all day. The program ran in the evenings on Thursday nights, which meant that by the time the men joined the session, some had already had multiple hours of Zoom meetings that day. Additionally, several men had internet connectivity issues. Observations of the sessions confirmed a few instances of technical issues where men had trouble getting their video or audio to work. These issues also surfaced in my interviews with participants.¹¹⁶ While such challenges are applicable to all online group education contexts, it was heightened here as the men were sharing and presenting their stories live and technical challenges could interrupt the flow of their storytelling or inhibit the audience's ability to understand.

¹¹⁶ As the interview transcript with Jamie demonstrates: **Jamie:** Sorry, did I lose you? **Will:** No, no, I can still hear you. Can you hear me? **Jamie:** Yeah. Do you hear me? **Will:** I think we've got a delay, but I can still hear you. **Jamie:** Yeah, I know. I know. I know. I know you can still hear me though, right? **Will:** Yeah. **Jamie:** All right. I'm going to switch over to the other. Hold on a second here Will.

As was discussed in the previous chapter, most of the men felt the exchange of stories helped them build a strong community and that their relationships, despite the digital divide, were a key role in their learning experiences. However, several men also said that connecting through a screen was still substantively different from being in the same room in-person. For example, Jake referred to the 'intangibles that are lost' over Zoom; Dante reflected on how it was hard to gauge people's sincerity over the screen; and Davis talked about the difference between a screen-based 'two-dimensional understanding' of a person and an in-person 'three-dimensional' one. Thomas' sentiment that, 'I really would have liked to experience it in person' was echoed across several interviews. This again could be a challenge in all online group contexts; however, the personal, emotional, and vulnerable work of sharing stories might have heightened the importance of this challenge.

However, three men told me that they were used to making friends over the internet and this was no different. As Chris said,

I'm a millennial technically, so that means that a lot of my life experience with humans has been done in this very way. I met my wife online. I've met many partners and friends online... I make these connections easily.

Furthermore, several men also talked about the benefits of doing the program online. For example, the men in the program were all from the same state, but they lived in different cities and regions. It would have been impossible for them to all meet in person each week. As Jamie said, pandemic or no pandemic, for this group of men, 'it would have had to have been some level of virtual meetings'. The lead facilitator Irene agreed, noting that the online format allowed men from disparate regions of the state to all join the program, and that it also averted the cost of renting a physical space for the playshops and public storytelling events. Jake also spoke about how doing it online made it easier to attend or as he said, it 'removed a barrier to action'. He said there were no good excuses why he couldn't join, so even when he was feeling resistant, he was able to convince himself to hop on the call.

Lastly, for both Dante and Jake, dealing with challenging emotional and personal issues discussed in the program and connected to the storytelling process from the relative privacy of their homes was helpful. Rather than getting stuck in what they each described as 'fight or flight moments' in-person, they were able to take a deep breath, take a step back from the computer, and stay present in the session. In this context, Jake referred to this online approach as a way of 'de-risking' the program and making the arts-integration approach more accessible for those who are nervous.

Further, despite the limitations of online community-building, several of the men shared that this space was important and needed for them in a time when nearly all forms of social connection were strained. The men shared that the case study program did a good job of responding to the limitations and providing a meaningful point of connection in a time of isolation. As Stan said,

I think if you were to ask me if I would have preferred to have us all together in person versus this, like for me it's like a no-brainer. I would rather it had been in person with everybody. But yeah, it still worked. I mean I still cried a lot. Like I definitely clearly felt things.

Similarly, Irene summarised,

I don't think that there's a replacement for doing things in person. I think that visceral experience of presence... the online doesn't fully achieve. I think that the online experience is good enough that it's worth doing.

Moving forward, Irene said she will continue to learn from the lessons of this first online program and explore ways to support a combination of in-person and online programs depending on the context.

10.7 Work in progress

The findings above outline an array of the challenges practitioners and participants experienced in arts-integrated EM programs. While there was at times an overwhelming emphasis on the transformative potential of the arts in this context, these perspectives were tempered by the complicated realities of putting this work into practice including the limitations imposed by the need for more time, resources, and specific training and individual and institutional resistances to the arts. Further, this work was also described as potentially risky and capable of doing harm through engagement with traumatic topics and uncritical art which reifies rather than challenges patriarchal masculinity.

Nearly everyone I spoke with agreed that arts-integrated EM approaches were challenging – and that it was in fact *work*. The practitioners often spoke about their programs as ‘work in progress’. They noted these approaches were innovating in real-time and were designed

and run in a way that acknowledged the need to continually adapt and improve. The ideas of Freirean (1970) praxis and 'work in progress' were also strongly present in the case study. Irene spoke about the reality that there was little precedent for their style of personal narrative-sharing work with men and that the program must always be striving to learn, grow, and adapt with each completed program and production. This was apparent in my observations through communication and acknowledgement from the facilitators on multiple occasions as well as an overall culture of seeking both real-time and post-program feedback and reflections from the participants on ways to continue improving and evolving. In a post-program interview with Irene, she highlighted several lessons learned from this program iteration and areas for further consideration including: the possibility of adding more time for participants to be able to dive deeper, both in terms of the number of sessions and the time for each session; the importance of incorporating more knowledge and training on trauma-informed approaches; and continuing to develop the program's approach to encouraging 'productive discomfort' in pursuit of gender transformative learning whilst also prioritising a do-no-harm approach with presenters (i.e., setting group agreements, highlighting the right to pass, and providing participants with guidelines on how to listen and support each other).

This chapter has shown that arts-integrated work was challenging for a multitude of reasons. Sometime the challenge could be engaged productively and become a transformative part of the learning experience and reimagining masculinities process. Other times the challenges brought forward obstacles, resistances, and risks that required caution, adaptation, and a work in progress approach. While a great majority of what was shared in practitioner and case study interviews were positive reflections about arts-integration EM, the challenges revealed here – both productive and unproductive – may be the most important points to reflect upon further in the upcoming discussion chapter.

10.8 Poetic mosaic

In closing, this chapter offers a final poetic mosaic to synthesise an affective representation of the many challenges in arts-integrated work with men.

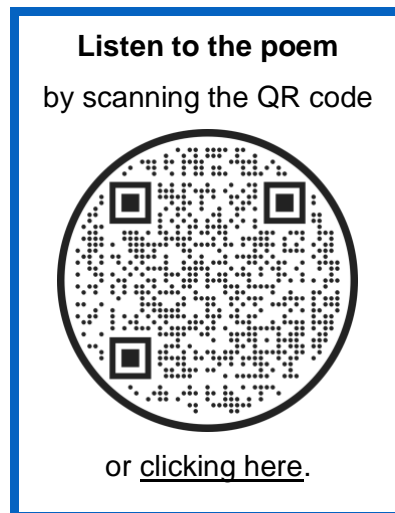


Figure 6: *sometimes* Poetic Mosaic

sometimes

I

sometimes it works
sometimes it didn't

art is not always good
or feminist

art is powerful
a process of digging deep
a strange tension
works in process
work in progress

it's hard to get men into the room
and we're asking them to take a leap
shifting a lifetime of programming
with art
and creativity
stretching
outside of the man box

it's
both
demanding
and not manly

so i'm sorry to say
but
it takes more
more time
supplies
specialisation
patience
funding
communication
practice
effort
more everything

i told you
it's hard

II

you show up and say
i want you to express your masculinity through art
to get vulnerable
to open up

and i was close to walking away
i shit you not
before every single thing
i was like
i'm going to quit
i can't
i can't do this

there were days when I would just sit there for hours

mornings
nights
it was tiring
frustrating
aggravating
time-consuming
all consuming
physically
emotionally
mentally
i didn't want to open up that can of worms
i don't know what to say

i'm going to quit
i can't
i can't do this
the feedback was critical and
i don't take criticism well
burn that draft
start over
that's my own
problem though
misogynistic bullshit
toxic masculinity
still it gets me

i'm going to quit
i can't do this
i wasn't going to share it
heart pounding in my chest
palms sweating
it's risky
fight or flight
it hits people really differently
deep breath
i don't know
deep breath

i just
don't know

III

systems of patriarchy
find their way into anything
art can be manipulated
intentionally
unintentionally

we can get lost in the creative process
performative wokeness
centring men
using the arts
uncritically
haphazardly
dangerously
forgetting the purpose

calling out
and
calling in
but what are we
doing
in the end

can you hear me
sorry, did I lose you?
can you hear me
can you hear me

it's not clear

sometimes it works
sometimes it didn't

IV

it's trial and error

praxis

little precedent

no role models

always changing

adapting

innovating

this work is hard

art is hard

but

certainly and that's also a gift

right?

productive discomfort

stretching

transforming

just them stepping into their creativity and claiming their artistic self

is also helping to rid them of

that box

the mask

i had one guiding principle

and that was that if it scared me to put into words

then it must be spoken aloud

it must be spoken aloud

after i heard it i was like

you know

i wouldn't have changed anything

something substantial is going to happen

here

today

but

it's not clear

did i lose you

can y

ou he

ar m

e

sometimes it works

sometimes

it didn't

Chapter 11: Discussion

Unpacking the Findings and Addressing the Research Questions

11.1 Introduction

This chapter unpacks the findings, addresses the research questions, and brings forward new questions, reflections, and opportunities for transdisciplinary connections. In particular, this chapter draws upon peace education research on productive discomfort, reflexivities, poststructural violence, and transformative optimism to complement the feminist and CSMM analysis of arts-integrated EM. While not originally part of this study's literature review or intended key ideas, these peace education concepts are an insightful way to further illuminate the findings presented here. Thus, through the deployment of a transdisciplinary approach this discussion returns to the problem of men's violences and the calls for innovation within EM that guide this study. In each of the following sections I provide a short synthesis of the findings in conversation with the literature and then pivot towards discussing the implications for EM. This discussion does not reveal 'best' and 'worst' practices. Rather, it presents an analytic and affective analysis of my engagement with 15 practitioners and eight case study participants that reveals both the potential and the limitations of arts integrated EM approaches. Instead of a mechanised template ready for mass distribution, this study offers a rich, layered, and imperfect portrait of arts-integrated EM praxis from the voices, perspectives, and experiences of the people in this study.

The following sections will: first, discuss what I call the kaleidoscope of arts-integration approaches in practice; second, examine the ways in which arts-integration might support engaging *more* men and engaging men *more*; third, discuss the process of an arts-fueled reimagining of masculinities through productive discomfort; and fourth, unpack key challenges from the findings through a poststructural violence and reflexivities lens. In the conclusion, I zoom out to situate individual change and group education programs within the wider prevention spectrum and social ecological models. I then end with a reflection on transformative optimism and a final research poem that considers how this research has impacted me as a person, researcher, and practitioner.

11.2 Arts-Integration in Practice

The first point of discussion connects to research question one: *how are the arts being used in the EM field in the US?* The findings outlined a range of different art mediums and integration-approaches in EM programs. Some examples align with previous research, including drama (Rodriguez et al., 2006; Rich & Rodrigues, 2007; Rich et al., 2008; Rich et al., 2010; Rich, 2010) and storytelling approaches (Peretz et al. 2019; Peretz & Lehrer, 2019). However, this study also documented additional art forms under-examined in the EM literature including music, poetry, dance, and visual mediums. Further, in talking with 15 practitioners from 10 different organisations this study advances the EM literature by showing it is not just specialised arts-integration programs, but also general EM organisations, including some of the largest in the US, integrating the arts in more limited and context-specific ways.

The findings also reveal distinctions in the limited EM literature, such as the difference between fictionalised or interpretive arts and personal narrative-based art in EM programs. The use of arts focused on true personal experiences, such as those described in Chapter 8 and utilized in the case study's program, were perceived as making the work more 'real', relatable, and actionable. In contrast, fictionalised or dramatized approaches that employed 'aesthetic distance', such as those described as by Kent as personal but 'not too personal', opened a different kind of creative and critical space. Rather than being strictly personal or real, these approaches allowed the men to use embodiment to practise fictional scenes of how they might challenge patriarchal norms, to use metaphor to think about the lessons and key concepts in the program abstractly, and to envision new alternatives beyond their lived experiences. There are also important distinctions between learning from other people's art as creative learning texts and participants creating their own art as a creative learning process. Within organisations that asked men to create art, there is further a distinction between programs where the art was shared privately within the workshop space versus those that also included public performances, productions, or recordings.

This final point connects to the purpose of the art in the program as either a more process-oriented private learning approach for the men or a more product-oriented goal of creating a shareable and strategically valuable form of art to reach men beyond it (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013a). Several practitioners resisted quantifying or instrumentalising what the arts do and instead focused more on the intangibles of art as a 'fluid', 'unpredictable', and even 'magic' process to inspire a reimagining of masculinities. In contrast, the case study used art for a clear purpose designed to *do* something – sharing personal real stories about

masculinities publicly to advance gender justice – and employed a specific process with mechanisms to ensure maintenance and accountability towards that goal.

11.2.1 Towards a Conceptualisation of Arts-Integrated EM

Based on these findings, there are two discussion points with implications for EM practice. First, the findings show there is more arts-integrated EM work being done in the US than previously documented. Second, this study reveals there is not one arts-integration *approach*; there are a wide range of *approaches* with important distinctions that have not been explored in the previous literature limited to single case studies. The findings advance the EM literature to document what I call a kaleidoscopic view of different mediums, integration approaches, and understandings of arts used by practitioners. This study is not an exhaustive or representative survey of all arts-integration practices, nor is it a catalogue of practices akin to MacNeil et al.'s (2019) work on gender equality and the arts. However, the 15 interviews and one case study provide an important expansion of the limited literature in this area.

Drawing on the kaleidoscope metaphor, the approaches highlighted here reveal an array of curricular and pedagogical decisions (which medium to use, one-time program vs. multi-session format, fictional art or personal narrative-based, etc.) that can be combined in dynamic ways within programs. Just as you can rotate a kaleidoscope, causing the tiles to rearrange into a new mosaic, so can these approaches be changed, mixed, and matched. A kaleidoscopic understanding of arts-integration resists template one-size-fits-all approaches to EM and instead is responsive to many different contexts, needs, challenges, and opportunities (Casey et al., 2013). These findings reveal how the length of a program, the amount of time and commitment required from participants, the age or demographic group it is working with, and whether the program is voluntary or compulsory could impact what and how art is integrated. Further, a breadth of approaches is needed to address the intersectional diversity of men in the programs who have different experiences, cultural backgrounds, needs, and interests (White & Peretz, 2010; Ricardo et al., 2011; Alcalde, 2014; Peacock & Barker, 2014).

Importantly, a multiplicity of approaches is also vital to address the multiplicity of men's violences EM programs are designed to challenge (Kaufman, 1987; Hearn, 1998). Arts-integrated programs focused on stopping men's wolf-whistling might engage expressive arts created by women who have experienced this form of harassment as key affective learning texts; programs designed to promote bystander intervention in social contexts, like Francis

and Brent's, might focus on more experiential drama-based fictional activities to get men to practise their skills and include a public performance in the community; and programs working specifically with groups of men who both benefit from male privilege and face anti-Black racism might, as the practitioner David noted, draw on culturally responsive arts and use creative personal writing to unpack the men's intersectional experiences. These are just a few of the countless kaleidoscopic possibilities the findings in this study bring forward.

Previous studies narrowly focused on immersive drama or storytelling case studies without engaging with the *arts* more generally or naming *arts-integration* explicitly. By identifying the kaleidoscope of mediums and approaches in practice, this study conceptualises and begins to demarcate arts-integration as a distinct, yet diverse sub-field of EM. Doing so might help facilitate further research in this under-examined area and open the door to transdisciplinary work bringing more arts education, feminist arts, and arts for social change insights into EM scholarship. Further, naming and bringing attention to the ranges of approaches might support practitioners in organising working groups where knowledge and practice can be exchanged through key industry networks like MenEngage. In conversations with the practitioners after their interviews, several people indicated a desire to know more about the work of other arts-integrated practitioners and to try to learn from one another.

Overall, this study is the first of its kind to document the kaleidoscope of arts-integrated EM approaches in the US. This is an important finding. However, it is also a note of caution about the claims that can be made from this study's analysis, which is limited in scope and traverses diverse programs. While I hope to contribute to the literature, this sub-area of praxis warrants further research to both zoom in on specific approaches and contexts and zoom out to more systematically document the collective work being done in the US and other geographies.

11.3 Potential Advantages of Arts-Integration

The second point of discussion connects to research question two: *what are the potential advantages and limitations of arts-integration approaches?* This section focuses on the first half – potential advantages. As was discussed in the literature review, the dominant approach to EM has been critiqued for being rooted in cognitive-centric didactic approaches (Funk, 2018; Flood, 2019). The practitioners and case study participants interviewed in this study argued that arts-integrated approaches activated *holistic* learning spaces that engaged men's hearts, minds, and bodies in EM programs. Specifically, this was perceived as beneficial because it helped deepen learning, affectively dismantle defensiveness, process

trauma and painful emotions, apply learning with and through the body, and help men share their art in ways that supported their own learning and the learning of others.

These findings advance the literature by revealing how arts-integration might support creatively stretching EM pedagogies towards more emotional and embodied approaches to complement core cognitive ones. Arts-integration thus aligns with similar calls for experiential, participatory, and affective learning in these programs (Heppner et al., 1995; Berkowitz, 2004a; Humphrey et al., 2008; Carmody et al., 2009; Dyson & Flood, 2009; Flood et al., 2009; Rich, 2010; Greig, 2018). Specifically, the findings resonate with literature on programs using drama to support participants in embodying and practising alternatives to patriarchal masculinity (Rodrigues et al., 2006; Crooks et al., 2007; Rich et al., 2008; Rich, 2010; Mitchell & Freitag, 2011) and the importance of engaging men's emotions in EM programs (Pease, 2011; Flood, 2019; Keddle, 2021). Rather than simply repeating the need for such embodied and emotional learning, the findings provide specific curricular insights into how arts-integrated approaches might help achieve these forms of learning through music, drama, mask-making, poetry, and storytelling. Thus, the findings are not just in alignment with the literature, but rather a response to calls for innovation in EM through a turn towards arts-integration.

The findings expanded on this holistic foundation by examining how arts-integration brings *humanity* to the work, a stark contrast to the patriarchal ideology of dehumanisation (hooks, 2000; Pease, 2019). Specifically, the findings revealed how the arts helped make EM programs more personal and communal by deepening men's connection to the learning, increasing empathy for survivors of MVAW, countering defensiveness by using lived experiences as learning texts, encouraging facilitators to bring their 'whole selves' into the work too, and creating a 'safe, brave, and creative' space to foster community across lines of difference. The arts were described as an accessible and effective way of helping men to reflect and share their experiences with patriarchal masculinity and to 'take the mask of masculinity off'. In both the holistic and humanising themes, arts-integration was described as a way to support men in transgressing man box norms (Kivel, 1992), specifically those related to emotional expression and vulnerability (Kimmel, 1996; Katz, 2006; APA, 2018; Heilman et al., 2018). The practitioners and case study participants argued that doing so supported the men in learning in the programs, connecting with one another, and reimagining masculinities.

These insights are responsive to research on EM programs that highlights the value of personalising the issue to counter men's defensiveness (Greig, 2018), encouraging the

sharing of honest feelings and experiences (Berkowitz, 2004), providing curricula that are relatable and responsive to their intersectional identities (Peretz, 2018), addressing issues that directly intersect with their lives (Rich et al., 2006), and countering homogenous framings of men and masculinity (Flood, 2015). Furthermore, the relational findings connect to the literature's emphasis on promoting positive peer role models (Piccigallo, 2012; Carlson et al., 2015) and the importance of building communities of support by facilitating intimate dialogues where men can learn from each other, challenge each other, and change together (Flood, 2019). Specifically, the case study provides insights that align with previous research which shows how personal storytelling approaches facilitated an increased 'humanisation' of men and promoted a deep sense of community and connection amongst participants (Peretz et al., 2018; Peretz & Lehrer, 2019). Again, rather than simply aligning with effective practices identified in the literature, the findings presented here are a broader response to the calls for innovation from key scholars and an attempt to advance the literature by illuminating the kaleidoscope of curricular possibilities available that include and go beyond storytelling approaches.

11.3.1 Analytic and Affective Pedagogical Reorientation

Looking at the holistic and humanising themes together, arts-integration has the potential to challenge cognitive-centric approaches in favour of a more balanced analytic and affective pedagogical reorientation in EM. Several practitioners in this study critiqued the field of EM in the US as being focused on academic style instruction that aims to change what men think, or as Ernest said, 'intellectualising till the cows come home'. In contrast, the arts offer a recentring of the 'heart' and 'body' through holistic, humanising, and as hooks (1994) calls for, passionate learning. However, the key word in 'analytic and affective' is *and*. Traditional cognitive-focused lessons are still valuable in EM. Some men can be more comfortable with this approach at first, in part because of patriarchal norms. Thus, these more traditional approaches can be an effective way of 'meeting men where they are' (Funk, 2018; Flood, 2019), especially when they are combined with affective pedagogies. This pedagogic fusion echoes what the practitioner Alex called for in mixing 'the art' with 'the hard facts'. Further, the findings show the arts were not just an emotional or embodied add-on, but rather a way of bridging back and forth between the analytic and the affective (Eisner, 2002; Shank, 2004; Wood, 2015). As noted in the arts education literature, arts-integration offers an approach where the arts support traditional learning and traditional learning informs the arts (Deasy, 2002; Eisner, 2002; David, 2008; Bamford, 2006; Hardiman et al., 2014).

Drawing on this study's transdisciplinary approach reveals similar critiques of overly-cognitive learning in peace education (Cremin, 2016). In response, peace scholars have drawn on Santos' (2018) 'ecology of knowledges' to embrace pedagogies including and beyond logo-centric praxis (Hajir et al., 2021, Kester, 2022) by placing the analytic in conversation with the affective (Reardon & Snauwaert, 2015; Archer et al., 2023). Parallel to the findings here, peace education scholarship also points to arts as a specific way to address these challenges; making peace education more effective by making it more affective (Lederach, 2005; Morrison, 2009; Cremin & Bevington, 2017; Cremin & Archer, 2018). In the EM context, hooks' feminist approach to engaging men offers a guiding light towards putting such arts-integrated EM analytic and affective learning into practice. Her engaged pedagogy (1994) starts with a feminist analysis of men's violences and patriarchal masculinities; it holistically focuses on learning with and through the mind, heart, and body; it is rooted in a humanising ethic of love (2006) that connects the personal to the political; and it is animated through a belief in the power of creative-critical imagination (2000). Further, connecting back to the previous section, the kaleidoscope of arts-integration practices offers practical curricular possibilities for how the arts might be integrated into such an analytic and affective engaged pedagogy in EM programs.

11.3.2 Engaging More Men and Engaging Men More

To deal with MVAW and patriarchal masculinities, the core problems that drive this study, practitioners need to engage more men – the field of practice is called *engaging* men after all. While there is a precedent of small numbers of men working with women for gender justice (Okun, 2014; Messner et al., 2015), men as a group have largely remained silent and on the side-lines (Katz, 2006; Kaufman, 2019). As previously outlined, the rationale for such work is strong (Flood, 2011a), but getting men in the room remains a foundational challenge (Casey et al., 2017). The findings of this study indicate that the arts can help. However, simply getting more men in the room is not enough on its own. Calls for innovations in the field are driven by an understanding that EM programs must find more effective (and this study argues affective) approaches to actually *be engaging* in ways that help men understand the problem, their role in it, and what they can do about it as individuals and as a part of wider societal change efforts. Here again, this study argues that the arts can help.

In reflecting on both the kaleidoscope of arts-integration approaches and the array of potential holistic and humanising benefits, there are two key insights that emerge for how this study's findings contribute to such developments. First, the findings show the potential of arts-integration as a specific approach to engage *more* men. In other words, the arts can

provide an engaging, strategic, and culturally responsive way to bring more men into the EM programs. Notably, the arts can be a way to engage groups of men with an arts background; working as part of a larger strategy of seeking to meet men where they are and making programs responsive to their interests (Flood, 2019). More specifically, in directly appealing to men experienced in performing or public arts, there is a potential that such work could leverage their positions as cultural contributors, creative influencers, and simply people who speak, paint, sing, rap, present, and perform publicly to become amplifiers of feminist messages about masculinities and to act as role models for other men. Thus, by using arts-integration to engage artistic men, this approach encourages them to use their pre-existing experiences and expertise to create and potentially share art that supports their own learning and that of others in their communities. These insights show how arts-integrated work at the group education level could support work further along the prevention spectrum (Flood, 2011a) to include creative-critical resources to be shared in social messaging campaigns and used in wider efforts to organise and mobilise men for gender justice (Scher, 2007; Shank & Schirich, 2008; MacNeil et al., 2019; Chaplin, 2021).

Additionally, arts-integrated approaches have the potential to support increased engagement within the wider population of men who are simply interested in the arts, even if they are not artists themselves. Building on the previous paragraphs point, the findings show this could be done by using works of art such as poems, songs, and stories as imaginative, holistic, and humanising initial learning texts and recruitment materials. For example, the case study program used recordings of men's stories from previous iterations of the project to inspire other men to join. In general, culturally responsive arts approaches have the potential to reach larger audiences of men. In particular, several practitioners and case study participants shared how in their experiences the arts are particularly apt at reaching marginalised groups such as Black and LGBTQIA+ men in the US. As Helena said, the arts can help facilitate a space where men from these groups can 'talk from where they're at, and in ways that they get heard and listened to and honoured'. This is particularly important to challenge the ways some EM programs reinforce white, cis, and heteronormative discourses without accounting for men's intersectional lived experiences (Peretz, 2017; Boonzaier et al., 2021). Thus, the findings point towards the ways in which the arts can be used to spark interest and start conversations, provide culturally-responsive entry points particularly for groups of men who may be often overlooked, and dismantle some men's initial defensiveness. In doing so, the arts can provide both an affective and effective hook for engaging more men.

Second, the findings point towards the potential for arts-integrated approaches to benefit EM programs by engaging men *more*. The practitioners' perspectives and the case study interviews demonstrated a repeated emphasis on arts-integration as a way of 'deepening' the learning. Specifically, arts-integration could complement and support a deepening of learning across the five of the core approaches for group education EM programs identified in Chapter 4: empathy and understanding, bystander approaches, addressing social norms, promoting alternative masculinities, and organising and mobilising for social action.

First, this study's findings shared examples of the arts being used as holistic and humanising learning texts and sensitising experiences, which supported the participants' empathy for the victims of MVAW and gender inequality as well as their understanding of men's violence more broadly (Berkowitz, 2002, 2004b; Fischer et al., 2011; Flood 2011a, 2011c). In alignment with previous research, this study particularly showed how personal narrative sharing through storytelling, poetry, and singing was identified as an effective way to support men's connection with the content, the victims of men's violence, each other, and with an understanding of their own role in perpetrating or disrupting the gendered norms which perpetuate it (Peretz et al., 2018; Peretz & Lehrer, 2019).

Second, findings build upon previous literature on how arts-integration approaches can support bystander approaches with men (Rodriguez et al., 2006; Rich & Rodrigues, 2007; Rich et al., 2008). The findings present several practitioner perspectives on how integrating drama into EM programs can support a more holistic and humanising learning space to strengthen bystander intervention knowledge and skills amongst participants and audiences. Further, moving beyond solely focusing on Boalian (1979) theatre-based work, this study advances the literature by showing how arts-integrated storytelling approaches can also be a form of proactive bystander practice. EM storytelling creates a space for men to rehearse speaking out in front of other men, using their stories about challenging sexism and MVAW and reflecting on their own masculinities to communicate and be role models for other men clearly, critically, and creatively. This conceptualisation of storytelling as a platform for men to practise and publicly share themselves speaking out is a particularly potent way in which arts-integration might support men in challenging the patterns of men's silence and apathy that undergird and protect MVAW (hooks, 2004; Katz, 2006; Kimmel, 2008).

Third, the findings show how arts can be a way to support men in identifying, examining, and challenging harmful patriarchal norms. As noted in the literature review, the social norms approach emphasises the importance of challenging men's misperceptions of what other men think and their overestimations of peers' support for men's violence (Berkowitz, 2004b,

2004c, 2005; Flood, 2011a; Carlson et al., 2015). Here, the arts again offer what has been described in this study as a powerful way for men to share their feelings about these issues through embodied drama scenes, vocalised poems, songs, or stories, or visually through drawing or masks. In providing a wider range of expression and creating space for the sharing and exchanging of perspectives through the arts, these creative-critical activities get to the heart of the social norms approach by not just thinking critically about social norms as an individual, but doing so collectively in efforts to shift group norms.

Fourth, arts-integration can deepen EM work by supporting programs focused on alternative masculinities. As will be discussed extensively in the next section on reimagining masculinities, this study finds that arts-integrated approaches have the potential to support men in expanding their understanding of masculinities towards more feminist-informed possibilities. It could be argued that arts-integrated approaches are most primely positioned to support EM programs in this core area, both in providing a creative process to think critically about what being a man means, and in the utilisation and dissemination of finished art products which amplify and role model alternative masculinities in ways that might influence what other men think, feel, and do.

Lastly, the findings present insights into how arts-integrated programming might support a wider organisation and mobilisation of men for gender justice within group programs. Specifically, practitioners spoke about the power of art to inspire men to not just reimagine masculinities, but to also reimagine different relationships, communities, and wider social arrangements and to inspire change and action. The findings further highlights how arts-integration could support organising and mobilising for social change and use art to communicate gender transformative messages to wider groups of men in culturally responsive and strategically engaging ways. Again, an emphasis on men role-modelling through art in order to influence other men is a key message that ties back to research on the importance of positive male peer groups in encouraging men's involvement in gender justice (Coulter, 2003; Piccigallo, 2012; Carlson et al., 2015; Casey et al., 2018; Greig, 2018,) and in counteracting the destructive role of male peer groups and homosocial relations play in the perpetration and perpetuation of MVAW (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1993; Kimmel, 2001, 2008). The findings here point towards the arts as an effective and affective means of social change communication.

However, while findings show the potential to engage more men and to engage men more, there are a variety of reasons why the arts could have the opposite effect for some men who are specifically resistant to this approach. Thus, when considering arts-integration, EM

practitioners must consider their context and ask which men might the arts help engage, and which men might the arts turn away? These sorts of challenges and limitations will be discussed in detail in a subsequent section of this chapter.

11.4 Reimagining Masculinities

This section addresses research question three: *in what ways, if at all, do arts-integrated approaches support changes in the way men think about masculinities?* This question connects back to the overarching theme first introduced in Chapter 7 – reimagining masculinities. Across the findings chapters, the practitioners repeatedly spoke about how a holistic and humanising approach through arts-integration supported men in critically learning about patriarchal masculinities and creatively understanding, discussing, practising, vocalising, and embodying alternative ideas of manhood. Their insights align with hooks' (2014) quote shared in Chapter 5, that 'to be truly visionary we have to root our imagination in our concrete reality while simultaneously imagining possibilities beyond that reality' (p. 110).

Similarly, case study participants said the program was transformative in their thinking about masculinity, often framing it as 'life-changing'. They described the key point of learning as a plural understanding of 'masculinities', the 'whole spectrum of masculinity', and the 'many different ways to consider manhood'. The men said this learning was a result of the program's combination of analytical learning sessions (which taught them about the man box and provided them with insights about more equitable and healthy alternatives) and the affective storytelling process (which facilitated a deep connection through the holistic learning and humanising process). Practitioners and case study participants perceived that these changes in the ways in which men thought about masculinity were important and linked them to increased empathy with victims and survivors of MVAW, interrogations of one's own complicity with patriarchal masculinities, aspirations to intervene and be a proactive bystander, and an interest in being an ally and staying involved in this work.

These findings resonate with the EM literature that focuses on the importance of deconstructing the problem of patriarchal masculinities and reconstructing alternatives as a central component in challenging MVAW (Taliep et al., 2017; Flood, 2019). An alternative masculinities approach is important because it argues that men cannot become what they cannot see or imagine (Flood, 2019); men cannot change if they are not invested in the process of reimagining and envisioning new paths forward (hooks, 2004). Further, the emphasis on promoting feminist masculinities through arts-integration aligns with the

literature on engaging men through positive and 'men-changing' approaches that advocate for framing men as potential agents of change (Berkowitz, 2002, 2004a; Flood, 2011b; Carlson et al., 2015; Casey et al., 2018; Greig, 2020). Lastly, these insights build upon previous personal storytelling in EM research (Peretz et al., 2018; Peretz & Lehrer, 2019) by bringing forward rich portraits of men's experiences reimagining masculinities in a storytelling program and by framing such work through a hooksian (2004) analysis of patriarchal and feminist masculinities. Further, this study advances the literature by situating a specific storytelling approach within a wider analysis of the kaleidoscope of arts-integration. In doing so, this study presents a broader and deeper understanding of the analytic and affective pedagogical possibilities for promoting a more holistic and humanising space to do this feminist reimagining praxis with men.

11.4.1 What Kind of Masculinities?

This study has advanced the idea that arts-integration can support men in understanding patriarchal masculine norms and reimagining alternatives outside the 'man box' (Kivel, 1992). These sorts of changes in men's understanding of masculinity are essential to EM work because as was outlined in Chapter 2, research has shown a connection between rigid ideas of patriarchal masculinity and MVAW as well as a range of other forms of violence, inequality, and harm to women, men, and gender non-binary people (Hearn, 1998; hooks, 2003b, 2004; Messerschmidt, 2018; Kaufman, 2019). However, as previously noted, there are important debates within the literature on masculinity typologies and doubts concerning the extent such changes in masculinity are necessarily indicative of progress towards challenging patriarchy. Scholars have cautioned against patriarchy's ability to adapt without ceding power (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014). Most notably for this study, the mythopoetic movement, which used creative approaches like storytelling and music in its programs with men, resulted in what scholars have called changes of 'style over substance' (Messner, 1993, p. 729) and more emotionally intelligent men equipped for 'benevolent patriarchy' rather than gender justice through feminist masculinities (hooks, 2000, p. 113).

Thus, while arts-integration appears to be a powerful catalyst for reimagining masculinities, it is essential to continue to ask: what kind of masculinities are being reimagined? This question points towards the foundational role of maintaining feminist analysis within EM programs (Macomber, 2012; Funk, 2018). The findings show many practitioners focused on this point, noting the limitations of arts by themselves and the importance of centring men's accountability – not just their creative expressiveness. In particular, the case study's approach highlighted practical ways in which feminist foundations and accountability can be

implemented including the use of clear and consistent feminist analysis in the learning lessons, the creation and upholding of group agreements with a clear procedure for calling each other 'in', the weekly story circles where men and trained facilitators provided constructive feedback and support, and the policy of having the lead facilitator review each final draft story to ensure it is not intentionally or unintentionally reproducing patriarchal or other harmful ideologies.

Reflecting on what masculinities are reimagined points to the ways the themes in this study interact with one another. This reimagining work starts with a feminist analysis of the problem, MVAW and patriarchal masculinity, and a vision for the future, feminist masculinities and gender justice. Through arts-integration, holistic learning has the potential to act as an illuminating force in the EM workshop space, supporting men in seeing the man box more clearly through analytic and affective learning. The arts help men connect on a deep and visceral level. As practitioners said, 'bringing it into your nervous system' and 'leaving a mark'. In tandem, these findings highlight how a humanising approach can help turn the focus of analysis within; encouraging men to use art to reflect on how patriarchal masculinities affect women, themselves, and their communities. Further, a humanising approach encourages men to do this work together, to organise and mobilise in solidarity and community to address both the individual and collective dimensions of the problem.

Finally, at the nexus of this humanising and holistic work grounded in a feminist foundation is a creative-critical opportunity for reimagining masculinities. This is a space that has been described as expanding the men's understanding of what it means to be man or as hooks (2000, 2004) writes a 'reclaiming' of masculinities. This work also been framed as *productively discomforting*; a place that requires embracing a feminist-fueled sense of courage that asks men to transgress patriarchal norms and to take a step towards alternatives beyond the man box walls. Thus, it is not just about sprinkling the arts on top of EM and expecting it to *do* something (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013a). Reimagining masculinities requires an intentional arts-integration process and context which brings forward a feminist-fueled productive discomfort. The findings and analysis here indicate such a process is essential in distinguishing what masculinities are being reimagined and how impactful the arts might be.

11.4.2 Productive Discomfort as a Catalyst for Change

In reflecting further on the reimagining masculinities process, it is useful to unpack the distinct role of productive discomfort. While not an original focus of this study, the concept of

discomfort repeatedly surfaced in interviews, observations, and in my analysis (both the literal phrase and variations of it). Productive discomfort was described by practitioners and case study participants as the positive learning and growth that can emerge from situations in EM programs where men feel personally challenged or pushed outside of their comfort zones by the lessons and activities. As feminist and EM scholars have made clear, the work of engaging men in divesting from their patriarchal dividend (Connell, 1995) and taking accountability for their role in this work is challenging (McCarry, 2007; Pleasants, 2011) and likely discomfiting (Keddie, 2021, 2022). A key task for EM is using that discomfort as a learning opportunity – productive discomfort.

This idea aligns with what peace education scholars have called pedagogies of discomfort and pedagogies for the privileged (Boeler, 1999; Boeler & Zembylas, 2003). Such work pays close attention to the differences and challenges of teaching about social justice to students whose intersectional identities might include some of the very privileged categories that education seeks to interrogate, deconstruct, and transform (Hajir & Kester, 2021). Zembylas (2015) describes discomfort in these contexts as ‘pedagogically valuable’, noting that pedagogies of discomfort are ‘grounded in the assumption that discomfiting feelings are important in challenging dominant beliefs, social habits and normative practices that sustain social inequities and they create openings for individual and social transformation’ (p.163). Further, this pedagogical work seeks to move participants out of their comfort zones in a holistic way that ‘encompasses not only the cognitive but the embodied and affective dimensions of education’ (Head, 2020).

Productive discomfort shows up in multiple ways in arts-integrated EM programs. First, as noted above, it can emerge in response to men’s general discomfort in interrogating patriarchal masculinities. As Keddie (2021) notes, ‘Discomfort is a necessary part of conversations about gender injustice. For boys, it requires grappling with their identities of privilege and the discomfiting knowledge that they have likely been complicit in perpetuating gender injustices’ (p. 182). This study expands on Keddie’s (2021, 2022) work by showing how the arts can be a specific programmatic way to help transform men’s general discomfort and resistance into productive discomfort towards reimagining masculinities. As the participant Dante said, the key to getting the most out of the storytelling process was ‘being comfortable with being uncomfortable’. Other scholars have also noted that the arts may be effective in facilitating pedagogies of discomfort and helping to dismantle participants’ defensiveness (Dutta et al., 2016). In alignment with this study’s findings, Porto and Zembylas (2020) write, ‘The arts, in particular, are conducive to offering productive ways of handling the emotional responses that are elicited by difficult issues;

therefore, the arts may offer valuable resources to pedagogies of discomfort in the efforts to handle difficult issues in the classroom' (p. 359).

However, the findings in this study complicate this narrative because some men think of the arts as outside the man box. Thus, arts-integrated programs elicit their own distinct form of arts-driven discomfort. As the practitioner Francis said, 'the arts don't fit into the traditional masculine realm... and that's a challenge'. In this case, arts-integrated EM work can be doubly discomforting – both in learning substance (men addressing patriarchal masculinity) and learning approach (men perceiving art as not being a masculine way of expressing oneself). Counter-intuitively, these layered discomfort(s) within arts-integrated programs appear to play a catalytic role in its potential. As the practitioner Kent said, the deep discomforts arts-integrated approaches create by being outside the man box are a 'gift' that helps men to get out of the 'that box'. Some practitioners use the arts in this way precisely because it is challenging and as Leon said, 'not manly', not in spite of it. I argue they do so in-part because these multiple levels of productive discomfort are not disparate challenges, but rather intertwined stems aimed at uprooting the same patriarchal masculine norms. Challenging men to use the arts is thus an important part of the learning and reimagining of masculinities process.

This is what makes arts-integrated EM work potentially distinct and important. As noted in Chapter 5, the arts and social change literature has shown an array of reported benefits (Scher, 2007; Ayers et al., 2009; Dewhurst, 2014; Hochtritt et al., 2017; MacNeil et al. 2019); many of which align with the holistic and humanising findings here. However, I argue that arts-integration within EM might facilitate particularly potent possibilities tailored for men challenging and reimagining patriarchal masculinities because of the transgressive gendered dynamics at play. Arts-integration within EM programs is not just as a gender-neutral way to use art to expand men's emotional intelligence, compel them to care more about MVAW, or address their personal experiences with violence. It is a creative-critical process to expand emotional expression beyond the confines of the man box and to counter the dehumanising culture of dominance that patriarchal masculinity upholds. In focusing on this productively challenging and often emotional work, the findings echo back to Funk (2018) and Flood (2019), who argue that EM work must address the emotional base of men's resistance directly. This further extends Pease's (2013) observations on the importance of not just understanding men's emotions and encouraging more expression, but specifically mobilising emotions for gender justice. In this light, arts-integrated EM can create a deeply productively discomforting space for the arts to, as hooks (2004) might say, help men be transgressive in their learning and emotional exploration while becoming 'disloyal' to patriarchal masculinity.

These insights on the potential catalytic role of arts-integrated productive discomfort in reimagining masculinities resonates with Lederach's (2005) peace education concept of moral imagination in transforming violence. Lederach's work is distinguished from other arts and social change literature here by his attention to the role of discomfort in this creative-critical process. Lederach argues that challenging deeply entrenched systems of violence requires courage and a willingness to step out of our comfort zones. He writes, 'violence is known; peace is the mystery' (2005, p. 39). For many men in EM programs, patriarchal masculinity is known. Research in the US shows that the man box is deeply known, embodied, and felt (Heilman & Barker, 2018, p. 7). In this context, feminist masculinities and stepping outside of the box is unknown. This is a risk – and an act of accountability and solidarity – that arts-integrated EM programs have the potential to challenge and support men in taking. This is a feminist-fueled, holistic, and humanising *moral imagination of masculinities* that as the practitioner Leon said, can help men find 'cracks in the wall'. This is not using the arts to just tell a story or to entertain, but rather as the participant Jamie said, it is 'writing to get free' from patriarchal masculinities. This deeply and doubly productively discomforting praxis is using the imaginative power of the arts to step outside of the man box, tear down its walls, and refashion them into something new.

11.4.3 The Limits of Discomfort

Lastly, in reflecting on the findings, a key question remains concerning what considerations must be taken when actively seeking to facilitate a discomforting space? And what conditions encourage men to embrace the productive discomfort of EM work and reimagining masculinities, and not simply resist or turn away? Drawing from the kaleidoscope of arts-integration approaches reviewed here, one key consideration is how much time is required to generate a learning context conducive to productive discomfort and what role men's initial starting point of resistance or support for feminist masculinities might play. Funk (2018) notes EM programs must respond to a 'continuum' of men's initial resistance and interest to focus efforts 'that align with where men are in terms of their readiness to be engaged' (p. 4).

For example, the clearest evidence in this study for transformative productive discomfort was in the case study; a specialised storytelling program which recruited men to voluntarily participate in a multi-month commitment. While multiple practitioners argued that the arts can inspire a reimagining of masculinities through productive discomfort, longer time and more commitment from the men in the programs might understandably play a factor in

producing the results the case study brought forward. In that program, multiple men told me they embraced the productive discomfort and it ‘changed my life’. The findings here are important, but again must be understood within the limitations of this project and the specifics of the case study. Other organisations with shorter contact times and men who are initially more resistant might encounter different challenges and results.

Further, the findings also show a thin line between men’s discomfort that can be transformed into productive discomfort and men’s discomfort that, if pressured further, can result in entrenched resistance or risk of doing harm. Scholars examining pedagogies of discomfort have grappled with what Zembylas (2015) calls the ‘ethical implications’ of potentially doing harm or ‘ethical violence’ to participants in the pursuit of justice-oriented and transformative learning goals (Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Zembylas & McGlynn, 2012). While acknowledging the importance of such considerations, Hajir and Kester (2020) respond by asking, ‘how ethical and just is it to worry about causing “discomfort” to students on one side of the world when students are bombed and killed in their schools on the other side of the world? Is this concern not comfortably wrapped in coloniality?’ (p. 525). In the EM context, it is warranted to question whose comfort is privileged and protected within the context of a violent, patriarchal world.

Thus, as Irene said, the challenge for EM work generally and arts-integrated programs specifically is to balance efforts at both encouraging men’s engagement and holding them accountable. This is particularly complex as men’s intersectional identities mean their experiences with privilege, power, and oppression vary. This challenge was present in the case study where several participants shared their experiences of racism, homophobia, transphobia, violence, abuse, and trauma from other men. The case study was particularly aware of these dynamics and sought to address them through proactive policies focused on ‘doing no harm’ and men’s ‘right to pass’, as well as investing in facilitator training to support men in such difficult creative-critical work from a trauma-informed perspective. Further, and perhaps significantly, the program openly acknowledged that productive discomfort was a part of the process of the program. By setting this expectation and creating a community of support, the case study primed the participants to embrace the tension, stretch outside of their comfort zones, and move beyond the walls of the man box. The case study made it clear that this was challenging work and that the goal was not for men to be comfortable and simply to express themselves through storytelling; the goal was for the men to learn, listen, reflect, and share real stories from their lives in a way that embraced the productive discomfort of challenging patriarchal masculinities and reimagining more feminist-informed possibilities.

However, it is important to note that such gender transformative imaginative work is not *the* answer to MVAW. Rather, it is a step which must be complemented by work holding men accountable for their actions and working for wider cultural and structural change. This is key to ensure it is not just a mythopoetic reimagining, but rather a step towards more meaningful change. These findings argue that imagination is a key component of such work, but that it must, as hooks (2014) said, be grounded in our social reality. This study follows hooks' (2004) structuration analysis of masculinities as both individual and structural, personal and political, and her call for feminist masculinities and as a way of *being*; a work *in progress*. The masculinities being reimagined are not essentialised stable identities, but rather dynamic reflections of who men are, who they want to be, and what they are doing about it in collaboration and contestation with the social world around them.

11.5 Unpacking the Challenges

This section returns to the second half of research question two to examine *the potential limitations of arts-integrated EM*. While existing literature on the potential benefits of arts in EM is small, the research on the challenges of such work appears even smaller. This section connects the limitations, resistances, and risks identified within the findings to the general challenges outlined in the EM literature, showing how arts-integration can further exacerbate the hard work of EM. The findings began by unpacking issues around resource limitations, time constraints, and extra training. Similar concerns have been echoed in the EM literature. For example, Flood (2019) notes the importance of longer and sustained contact times and the value of quality facilitation in EM programming; challenges, which this study showed can be exacerbated by time-consuming arts-integrated approaches. Similarly, the findings on men's resistance echoed previously identified EM challenges including men's general disinterest and belief that this work is not for or about them (Katz, 2006), men's reluctance to acknowledge their privilege and power (Pleasants, 2011), and the ways in which sexism, homophobia, and transphobia operate as barriers to men's engagement with this work (Kimmel, 2013; Flood, 2015).

While one of the key potential benefits of arts-integration is how holistic and humanising approaches can help disengage and mitigate men's defensiveness and resistance, and how in some cases it could be transformed into productive discomfort, the findings still show arts-integrated programmes struggle with these issues. Further, echoing the points from the previous section on discomfort, in some cases, arts-integrated approaches appear to face a double layer of resistance – both general discomfort with EM and specific discomfort with

arts approaches. Men's perception that the arts are not masculine and their resistance to participating in such work in front of other men was noted by several practitioners. The essential role of men's homosocial peer relations in reinforcing and protecting patriarchal norms and violence (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1993; Kimmel, 2008) and men's fears of being perceived as being gay or effeminate (Kimmel, 1994; Pascoe, 2007) could thus be heightened in the arts-integrated EM learning context.

It is important to highlight that the findings showed a thin and not always clear line between what can be productive discomfort and what is unproductive defensiveness and resistance. For some men, the arts were a transformational creative-critical process of using an approach outside of the man box to transgress the walls of the box. But practitioners cautioned men's discomfort can also calcify into resistance. According to the eight men I interviewed from the case study, the program was successful in informing and inspiring changes in the way they thought about masculinities. As has been highlighted in this discussion and the findings, the organisation's specific pedagogy, support, policies, and accountability standards might all play a key role. However, as noted above, a multitude of additional factors could be relevant, notably how resistant or willing the men were when they started the program (Funk, 2018). This point of tension, whether the arts double down on men's resistance or transform it into productive discomfort, is an important and complex challenge that requires further research to fully unravel. This study provides a range of perspectives on the issue, shows a positive example of it working in practice in the case study, and notes the challenges and risks of such work which indicate it will not necessarily be replicable across the kaleidoscope of approaches and programs.

Moving beyond discomfort, defensiveness, and resistance, the findings also highlighted concerns about uncritical and problematic art and the ways in which the arts might cause harm. There is a risk of men in EM programs creating and sharing problematic stories, poems, and drama scenes which intentionally or unintentionally reinforce patriarchal norms rather than challenge or transform them. As Rich (2010) noted, theatre of the oppressed can become theatre of the oppressor if men's privileges are not properly challenged when the arts are employed in gender justice work. Further, in addressing men's experiences with patriarchal masculinities, practitioners and participants in this study noted issues of trauma surfacing in the EM workshops. Arts and gender violence prevention program studies have indicated, questioning gender roles can be a painful process (Rich et al., 2008). And as this study also showed, this work can be specifically compounded by men's primary and secondary experiences with men's violence. Such work is important, and potentially transformative in shaping how men understand masculinities. But it also entails risks that

can be compounded using the arts and exacerbated further if specialised support professionals are not present.

As several practitioners noted, there is also a thin line between *therapeutic* artistic work for gender justice and arts *therapy* for men seeking personal healing and help. Without proper facilitator training, expertise, and time, something several practitioners noted they did not have, this work could become triggering and cause harm to participants and to others the work is shared with, like audience members and facilitators. Further, the thin line between being therapeutic and therapy also brings forward important questions about what these spaces are designed for: is this a space for engaging men to process and heal; a space for learning from these experiences and feelings with the explicit goal of working to end patriarchal violence; or combinations of the two?

These findings, while limited in scope, advance the EM literature's understanding of the array of challenges arts-integrated programs face, including the ways in which the arts might magnify certain existing EM challenges. The findings reveal the need for further research in this under-examined area as the challenges presented here bring forward concerns about whether such work can achieve its stated goals, and even if it can, at what cost? The findings further illuminate the unclear terrain of where productive discomfort ends and harm begins. The next section grapples with these questions and explores how peace education might be able to offer a conceptual lens to help.

11.5.1 Addressing the Risk of Harm with Insights from Peace Education

To unpack the risks of harm in arts-integrated EM work further, I first return to a foundational question: is EM work necessarily effective at supporting feminist movements to end MVAW (COFEM, 2017). Flood (2014a) notes the importance of problematising the assumption of effectiveness in EM and warns that as the field continues to grow, 'it risks the uncritical adoption of some taken-for-granted truths which are inaccurate, dangerous, or simplistic' (p.6). Similar concerns have been expressed about the assumed effectiveness of arts education and arts for social change (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013a). In exploring the impact of gentrification and social inequalities, Denmead (2018) cautions that well-intentioned arts educators can end up using the arts to accelerate the very cultural and structural violence they seek to counteract through their work, thus becoming part of the problem they seek to solve. Combined, these insights suggest a need for caution in arts-integrated EM programming. As the findings on challenges made clear, it is important that arts-integrated work with men is not assumed to be inherently *good* or *feminist*; rather, art in

this context is *powerful*. Using a powerful medium and learning approach with a privileged population requires criticality and caution. Art can be used within EM programs to reinforce and/or tear down the man box walls; to be complicit in and perpetuate and/or challenge and transform patriarchal masculinities. To discuss this further, I return to peace education, where similar ideas have been explored and new conceptual developments put forward that may be helpful here.

Peace education scholars have cautioned that practitioners and researchers in the field have, in some instances, become blind to their own privileges and Western-centric views, overly optimistic assumptions of effectiveness of their work, and the potential harm that may come from well-intentioned peace education itself (Cremin, 2016). In short, despite having the word peace in its name, peace education is not necessarily always peaceful (Gur-Ze'Ev, 2001; 2011). Just as Denmead (2018) noted in arts education for social change, peace education may have 'become part of the problem it is trying to solve' (Zembylas & Bekerman, 2013, p. 198). In response, Kester and Cremin (2017) conceptualise poststructural violence, distinct from direct, cultural, and structural violences (Galtung, 1969), as a way of understanding the specific types of violence that can emanate from peace educators and peace organisations themselves. Poststructural violence questions the presumption of effectiveness and 'invokes the need for agents to gaze back onto themselves and their field of practice to question their own role in perpetuating violence on the self and others through their peace work' (Kester & Cremin, 2017, p. 1419).

To address poststructural violence, Kester and Cremin (2017) call for first and second-order reflexivities. They distinguish reflexivity from reflection, noting that both involve stepping back to examine one's thoughts, feelings, and actions, but that the former contains an 'explicit social action component' (Patel & Kester, 2023). Reflexivity thus echoes what Freire (1970) famously called *praxis* or 'reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it' (p. 52). In response to poststructural violence, first-order reflexivity is the process of examining how one's individual beliefs, attitudes, and practices may cause or be complicit in violence. Second-order reflexivity is 'reflexivity on reflexivity itself' or a 'zooming out, not merely to gaze back on the self, but to look onto the self as it is in relation with others' (Kester & Cremin, 2017, p. 1423). Second-order reflexivity is concerned not just with individuals, but with programs, organisations, and fields. This is a process of examining the taken-for-granted assumptions of peace education and ways in which it is implicated in the reification of the violent status quo (Patel & Kester, 2023). In the programmatic context, the authors call for sustained first- and second-order reflexivities through dialogue about poststructural violence, reflexive diaries for participants and practitioners, reflexive

monitoring and evaluation surveys, inter-organisation working groups where practitioners gather as ‘living-learning communities’ to reflect on the impacts of the field as a whole, and a broader turn towards collective, transrational, and affective epistemologies that include but also move beyond individualist cognitive-centric understandings (Kester & Cremin, 2017; Patel & Kester, 2023). In the Introduction and Methodology Chapters, I noted that I employ reflexivity to examine my own research process. Here, I argue the same ideas can be expanded and put forward to examine arts-integrated EM programs themselves as well.

11.5.2 Post-Structural Violence and Reflexivities in Engaging Men

This section applies the concepts of poststructural violence and reflexivities to EM. As highlighted above, the EM field faces serious challenges and risks of doing harm. EM is a ‘delicate form of political activity’ (Flood, 2019, p. 91) that seeks to support women by engaging men and asking them to deconstruct their own privileges (Casey et al., 2013; Burrell, 2018). Further, and more explicitly, patriarchy can and does show up in EM work (Macomber, 2015; Pease, 2017). These challenges emerge in arts-integrated programs too. As the practitioner Nate cautioned, ‘There certainly are ways to have an arts-based curriculum or program that inadvertently or accidentally replicates some patriarchal notions’. Given that this discussion has thus far highlighted the potential ways arts-integration could compound challenges and hold the potential to do harm, it follows that arts-integration could magnify poststructural violence in EM.

Returning to the findings on challenges, at a basic level, the extra resources, time, and training practitioners said the arts require could be seen as exacerbating the existing concerns about how EM work might take time, attention, and resources away from prevention efforts focused on women and supporting survivors (Flood, 2019). This point is echoed by scholars who question the risk of EM programs replacing work with women (Jewkes et al., 2015; Casey et al., 2018) and the broader danger of the ‘men-streaming’ of gender justice work (Van Huis & Leek, 2020). Further, efforts at countering resistance by using the arts to make the content more responsive to men’s issues and to ‘meet men where they are’ might lead to a dilution and depoliticisation of the feminist foundation of this work (Pease, 2008). As the practitioner Ernest said, the arts do not necessarily encourage reflection and growth in a self-critical way and could end up having the opposite effect; leading men towards anti-feminist stances (Ging, 2019). The mythopoetic movement provides a potent example of what arts-integrated EM work in the US looked like when its feminist foundation was diluted and eventually discarded. Such work did not address MVAW by examining patriarchal masculinities; rather it produced arts-inspired, more emotionally

intelligent, kinder, gentler forms of patriarchal masculinities (Schwalbe, 1996; Pleasants, 2011).

Poststructural violence can also manifest in arts-integrated EM through uncritical art. Most directly, uncritical art, like that which was described in this study, can cause intentional or unintentional harm to others by reinforcing rather than challenging patriarchal and other oppressive norms. However, more subtly, yet still impactfully, poststructural violence can emerge simply by over-centring and platforming men's art. A second-order reflexive account might consider how and when men's art is shared within the programs. Especially if shared publicly, the art might unintentionally amplify men's voices and marginalise women's (McCarry, 2007). The arts could thus accelerate the 'glass escalator' of men gaining additional praise for doing work women were already doing (Berkowitz, 2004; Macomber, 2012, 2015). The 'pedestal effect' (Peretz, 2008; Messner et al., 2015) could be further heightened because the metaphorical pedestal men are hoisted upon now has a microphone in front of it and a bright light shining down on it. The arts literally and metaphorically amplify and spotlight men's voices even further. As the practitioner Carlton cautioned, so-called 'mactavists' can use the attention gained from being in an EM program and the heightened attention of sharing the art they created in it for their own personal, political, financial, and relational gains. Westmarland et al.'s (2015) concern that feminist men are treated like 'rock-stars' compared to the countless women who lead this work with little praise might become literal through the risks of arts-integration.

Further, returning to the risk of harm and trauma, a focus on poststructural violence combined with this study's feminist analysis of patriarchy points towards the realisation that while patriarchal masculinities disproportionately harm and structurally disadvantage women and gender non-binary people, they also can harm men too (Peretz & Vidmar, 2019). Knowing that men are the victims of violence, and as noted in these findings, that such experiences might drive their interest towards EM programs, creates a clear need to provide support for such individuals. This is doubly important for arts-integrated programs because, as noted above, the findings here showed that the arts were often used to encourage men to share deep and personal experiences about masculinity. Even more so, this study has highlighted the key role of multiple layers of productive discomfort in arts-integrated programs. While privileged populations will importantly, and perhaps inevitably, be discomforted by work challenging their privileges (Pleasants, 2011), there remains a thin line between discomfort and harm; between productive learning challenging men out of their comfort zones and programs which cause more harm than good. Therefore, arts-integrated programs may need to pay particular attention to participants with direct or indirect

experience with violence and trauma who need specific specialised support not commonly found in more generalised EM programs.

However, again a second-order reflexive lens might also draw attention to the concern that men's art about their own trauma and experiences with violence might unintentionally magnify discourses that overly focus on men as the 'real victims' of patriarchy (McCarry, 2007, p. 409). This unintended poststructural violence must be situated within an analysis of the broader backlash to feminist work (Gough & Peace, 2000; Ging, 2019), which seeks to minimise MVAW through misleading accounts of gender-symmetry in gender violence victimhood and purport that it is men, not women, who are disadvantaged legally, politically, and socially (Behre, 2015). Multiple reflexivities attuned to poststructural violence illuminate the need for a feminist analysis of men's nuanced and multiple positions relative to patriarchy. Men are both the beneficiaries and the victims of patriarchal masculinity, as hooks (2004) writes, 'these two realities coexist' (p. 26). Thus, in considering the poststructural violence from arts-integrated programs, practitioners need to account for the unintended ways the arts might amplify men's victimhood and the need to simultaneously account for men's privileges and patriarchal dividend (Connell, 1995), the ways patriarchy also harms men, and ways men's intersectional identities mean that harm and privilege are not distributed monolithically (Peretz, 2017).

A first- and second-order reflexivities approach to engaging with the myriad of arts-integrated challenges offers several implications. First, feminist pedagogical and analytical insights cannot alleviate all the challenges outlined in the findings, but as it relates to men's resistances and the risk of causing harm through uncritical art and trauma, this study points to the importance of keeping feminist praxis at the centre of arts-integrated work with men. This study's focus on bell hooks' approach to intersectional feminism (2000), which is attuned to the nuanced position of how men are both privileged and harmed by patriarchy (2004), provides an approach to engaging men rooted in an ethic of love and grounded in holding them accountable (2006). Her focus on patriarchal and feminist masculinities, naming and interrogating the individual and the structural, further supports a first- and second-order reflexivities analysis by considering both men's lived experiences and the wider cultures and structures in which they are constructed (Berggren, 2020). Macomber's (2012, 2014, 2015) extensive work exploring accountability, or the lack of it, within men's feminist activism is a particularly pertinent complement to hooks' engaged pedagogy for engaging men here as well. As noted in the literature review, MenEngage's (2022) accountability standards for EM could further offer a starting point for putting these ideas into practice and incorporating multi-level reflexivity into EM work.

Drawing additional insights from the peace education examples of reflexivities to address poststructural violence, arts-integrated programs could incorporate more time for individual reflexive writing and collective reflexive dialogues amongst participants to grapple with the ways their work in the program and their art specifically might cause harm by triggering others or by overly centring their own voices. Macomber's (2011) 'Male Rape Prevention Educator Privilege Checklist' provides an illuminating starting point for such personal and collective reflexive work. Participants and practitioners alike should seek continuous critical feedback and guidance from other feminists, whilst being attentive to the importance of not burdening women with doing the emotional labour for them (Westmarland et al., 2021).

Further, at the programmatic level, a pedagogical focus on praxis (Freire, 1970), like the case study in this project, could help facilitate a culture of iterative learning, questioning, and improving in response to these issues. Considering the kaleidoscope of arts-integration in practice as a sub-field itself, Kester and Cremin's (2017) suggestion for critical workshops to facilitate knowledge and learning amongst practitioners echoes the call for such networks amongst arts-integrated practitioners in this study. Further, a reflexivities lens points towards the importance of bringing a wider collection of feminist artists and women-led feminist arts organisations into such spaces. This might help address both individual challenges in resistance and harm, and keep the focus on the bigger picture as well; how arts as an approach might further, not detract from, the collective feminist gender justice movement to end MVAW. Valuable lessons also might be learnt from other adjacent fields, such as collaborations with practitioners who use the arts working in therapeutic settings with men (Nylund & Nylund, 2003) and tertiary prevention programs with perpetrators of men's violence (Malcor, 2021).

Using a reflexivities lens and learning from other fields where the arts are used in traumatic contexts with men, brings attention to the need for trauma-informed approaches (Venet, 2021) in arts-integrated EM. Taking lessons from the case study program, this work might require trauma-informed training for facilitators, sharing support resources directly with all participants, and the presence of support professionals at particularly high-risk sessions such as public presentations or performances. Beyond the strong example displayed by the case study, it is concerning that most of the other practitioners interviewed noted the importance of these sorts of measures, but few had such training or facilitator standards in practice.

This study's transdisciplinary peace, feminist, and CSMM examination of the EM literature has supported me in bringing forward a novel and useful framework for thinking about the limitations, resistances, and most importantly, the risks of arts-integrated EM programs through poststructural violence and reflexivities. However, as noted several times, this work is complex, delicate, and sometimes subtle. In reflecting on EM, Burrell (2018) argues, the field is full of 'contradictory possibilities' where the work must grapple with,

the need to support rather than supersede the women's movement, simultaneously appealing to and challenging men, bringing about both individual and structural social change, and building pro-feminist engagements without diluting them. (p. 1)

This study does not bring forward simple or templated answers for addressing these core EM challenges or the ways the arts might magnify and compound them. Rather, this study centres a hooksian feminist analysis, turns to peace education conceptual insights, and leans into the creative-critical process of reflexivities as a way of wading through the challenges and working to address them individually and collectively. Particularly when it comes to participants, this study has highlighted tensions and thin lines within arts-integrated programs between productive discomfort as a transformative learning practice, recalcified resistance, and poststructural violence. Such thin lines reveal challenging questions about whether poststructural violence can be 'ethical' and indeed, necessary (Zembylas, 2015; Hajir & Kester, 2020). Further, even if it is necessary for the learning process, how might programs find ways to best mitigate risks and support participants in this challenging work? Again, the arts might both be an answer to helping with these issues (Dutta et al., 2016; Porto & Zembylas, 2020) and a way of exacerbating them.

Burrell's (2018) interview-based research with EM practitioners in the UK resonates with this insight when he writes, 'rather than seeking to "solve" its contradictions, an effective approach may be one based around dialectically developing pro-feminist equilibriums within them' (p. 16). Such an equilibrium approach is not an excuse to abdicate men's responsibility and accountability. Indeed, it is imperative to double the efforts and remain vigilant and responsive through cycles of individual, programmatic, organisational, and field-wide cycles of praxis. EM is thus challenging work. Importantly, this study argues arts-integrated EM may in some cases be even more challenging than traditional approaches and require tailored attention and care.

11.6 Reflections and Conclusion

The aims of this research were to illuminate the under-examined area of arts-integrated EM group education programs and to discuss how such work might respond to calls for innovation in the field. Such research and innovations are important because they connect to the need to better address the severe and pervasive problem of MVAW and patriarchal masculinities. Within the limited scope of this project, the research questions have sought to provide guiding lights towards addressing these aims and responding to these big challenges. Overall, this study seeks to advance EM scholarship by revealing a diverse kaleidoscope of arts-integration in practice, an array of benefits and challenges in doing this work, and insights into the complex, uncomfortable, and sometimes unclear process of reimagining masculinities towards more feminist-informed possibilities.

Specifically, this work shows how the four research themes, reimagining masculinities, holistic, humanising, and challenging, resonate with the four points of synthesis from the EM literature in Chapter 4 on the importance of engaging men through a positive and visionary approaches; addressing what men think, feel, and do; making programs personal and relational; and maintaining a feminist analytical and pedagogical foundation to address men's privileges, power, and resistances. These findings bring forward potentially valuable arts-integrated curricular and pedagogical examples and insights into ways to engage men initially, deepen that engagement, and address the challenges of this work.

Findings Chapters	Chapter 7: Reimagining Masculinities	Chapter 8: Holistic	Chapter 9: Humanising	Chapter 10: Challenging
EM Literature Synthesis from Chapter 4	Engage positive and visionary 'men-changing' approaches	Address what men think, feel, and do in the learning process	Make the programming personal and relational	Maintain feminist analytical and pedagogical foundations

Table 14: Aligning Findings with Literature Synthesis

However, it is essential to note the focus of this study has been on primary prevention and the preponderance of insights it highlights show the potential of arts-integration at the individual level within group learning spaces. Individual work is important, but the field of EM has placed too much emphasis on changing men's attitudes and not enough on the cultural

and structural factors that hail forward those attitudes and undergird MVAW and patriarchal masculinities (Pease & Flood, 2008; Edstrom et al., 2015; Burrell, 2018). Individual men might be willing to reimagine masculinities in feminist ways within the supportive environment of an EM program, but what happens when the return to their daily lives and peer groups, some of whom might condemn and ridicule such ideas of practices? Further, as noted in Chapter 3, hooks (2000) argues, 'even if individual men divested of patriarchal privilege the system of patriarchy, sexism, and male domination would still remain intact, and women would still be exploited and/or oppressed' (p. 67). A focus on arts-integrated EM group education programs thus is limited in its ability to speak to the wider cultural and structural changes essential to addressing men's violences and a systemic and sustainable reimagining of masculinities.

Even within the individual level, it is important to note the limitations of reimagining masculinities as a singular strategy. The beliefs and attitudes underpinning patriarchal masculinities play a key part in the perpetuating, condoning, and minimising of MVAW (Heilman & Barker, 2018; Our Watch, 2021). This study argues that reimagining masculinities work can be an important step in promoting men's engagement with prevention and gender justice work. The findings showed that the men in the case study believed such changes were important to them, and that it had changed the way they understood these issues in ways that made them want to be more actively involved. Several men notably mentioned that they wanted to continue doing this work with the case study organisation. Others spoke about how it would positively impact their relationships, their work, and their activism. These aspired actions are important, but also highlight the limitation of this study in not being able to document, assess, or measure changes in behaviour. As hooks (2004) and Almassi (2015) warn, it is not good enough to claim the label of feminist masculinity or to simply think about your masculinity as feminist. Feminism and feminist masculinities must be enacted and put into practice. More research is needed to look at how reimaginings of masculinity potentially might translate into changes in beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours over time.

These insights do not mean that arts-integrated group education is not important or worth doing, but it does call attention to the inadequacies of this as a singular strategy. This work must also include not just gender-exclusive programs with men (as this study looked at) but larger gender inclusive and gender synchronised approaches in which men join women and gender non-binary people in solidarity and collaboration (Flood, 2010; Ricardo et al., 2011; Greig, 2018). The commonly used prevention pyramid, socio-ecological theory of change (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Heise, 1998) and prevention spectrum frameworks (Davis, 2006;

Flood, 2011a) in EM show that group education programs are one part of multi-level strategies. The feminist axiom that the personal is political echoes the importance of not just understanding and engaging the personal, but connecting it to larger social and cultural challenges. The EM literature also notes the importance of connecting men's personal involvement in this work to broader ideas and campaigns for social justice and human rights (Funk, 2008; Flood, 2010, 2014a, 2019; Carlson et al., 2015). MVAW requires what Lederach (2022) describes as an approach rooted in 'multiplicity and simultaneity' not 'fragmentation and sequentially' in addressing systems of violence. Group education is a space to gain individual knowledge and skills to first and foremost not commit violence yourself and secondarily to learn ways to prevent and challenge other men's violence too. Group education is also a space to learn about how to impact wider cultural and structural changes – to think beyond individual change – and a space for the cultivation of such alternative futures.

As outlined in the section on how the arts might support group education approaches focused on organising and mobilising men, the arts can be a powerful and persuasive form of social change communication; raising awareness, role modelling, inspiring, and connecting people with resources and opportunities to support. In doing so, the arts can contribute to shifting cultural norms and be a powerful organising and mobilising force (Scher, 2007; McInerney, 2019a; Shank & Schirich, 2008). The findings in this study show how arts-integrated EM programs used the artistic products they created, whether it was dramatic performances, masks, stories, poems, or songs to engage wider audiences of men beyond the programs themselves. Thus, the arts can be strategically documented, recorded, and disseminated and used to amplify the messages of group education programs to larger audiences online and offline. As Westmarland et al. (2021) and Ging (2019) have shown, anti-feminist men's groups have dominated the online space. Arts-integrated men's feminist online social change communication then seems particularly important. The case study's use of video recordings of the men's stories online is a promising practice that has been used by the organisation to reach larger audiences around the world. The program's adaptation to being fully online during the pandemic warrants further research focused on that dimension as well.

This study has also shown how the arts can be used to reimagine not just individual men's masculinities, but also to reimagine different cultural norms and social structures beyond the matrix of 'imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy' (hooks, 2004, p. 17). The arts might be useful in teaching about complex, often intangible, topics like cultural norms and structural violence (Lederach, 2005). Thus arts-integration programs would benefit from

engaging with what Burrell (2018) calls a triadic approach to EM that addresses men (individual), masculinity (culturally), and patriarchy (structurally). Arts could be used to help men ‘make sense of the micro, meso and macro dynamics through which violence against women is perpetuated, and how they relate to their own lives, personally and politically’. (p. 456). Again, I argue the terminology of patriarchal and feminist masculinities from hooks (2004) is so valuable here in simultaneously naming the cultural and structural within the individual. This study strongly resonates with Burrell’s multi-level focus and brings an additional layer to the framework by emphasising poststructural violence, the specific harms individual men can commit while doing feminist work as well as the wider harms the field of EM itself may be complicit in. Arts-integrated programs must be attuned to how the arts might support addressing each level of violence as well as how they might be complicit within each one.

11.6.1 Transformative Optimism

The findings bring forward a great deal of hope. Hope that the arts can help educators teach more effectively and affectively by engaging more men and engaging men more. Hope that in doing so, the arts might support men in seeing MVAW and patriarchal masculinities as issues that demand their attention, support, and action. Hope that through holistic, humanising, and productively discomforting praxis, men might begin to reimagine what masculinity is and what masculinities could be. However, as O’Neil (2015) has warned, there are many reasons to be cautious about overly optimistic research on EM, and as this study has argued, first- and second-order reflexivities are required (Kester & Cremin, 2017). Foundationally, this study has a limited scope, and its findings are not necessarily representative or replicable. Further, within the findings themselves, the practitioners and case study revealed a constellation of challenges, limitations, resistances, and risks. Reimagining masculinities itself hinged upon men embracing multiple layers of productive discomfort. Further, as noted above, there are real limits to group education as a singular strategy, and it must be understood as one level of multi-level gender justice work.

In zooming out and reflecting on this work, I am reminded of Flood’s (2019) emphasis on the value of a cautious and balanced view of EM work, bringing both a hopeful and critical orientation. He argues that EM practitioners must avoid the extremes of ‘naïve optimism’ – the belief that men’s violence prevention work will suddenly uproot entrenched patriarchal structures of violence, and ‘paralysing pessimism’ – that changing men is impossible and MVAW is inevitable (p. 2). Drawing on Freire (1998) and Rossatto (2005), there are parallels between Flood’s call for a balanced optimism and the peace education concept of

transformative optimism. Rossatto (2005) defines transformative optimism as a reflexive, critical, and informed optimism that avoids the traps of pessimism, naïvety, and reproduction of the status quo. Transformative optimism then is not wishful thinking; it is hope and visionary thinking used as fuel for social change. The findings in this study lean towards optimism in the potential of this work, but it does so with a sober understanding of the depth and breadth of the problem as well as the ways in which well-intentioned efforts can wind up becoming complicit in patriarchy, reproducing the status quo, and causing poststructural violence. Having spoken with the 15 practitioners, observed the case study for a year, and reflected on my own changes, my own journey, and my own teaching – I too lean towards transformative optimism.

Towards the end of this study, I was inspired to write a second part to the poem shared in the introduction in which I reflected on the reasons why I do this work. The first half of the poem sought to communicate the severity, pervasiveness, and systemic quality of MVAW and the impacts of patriarchal masculinity on me, those I love, and my community. The second half reflects how this research has changed me. It seeks to end with a dose of transformative optimistic hope: the hope I feel from teaching and learning with men about these topics in EM programs; the hope I feel in following the path women and gender non-binary people have blazed in this work; the hope I felt talking to 15 practitioners in this study in offices, coffee shops, hotel lobbies, pickup trucks on the way to workshops, and, of course, on Zoom; the hope I felt each week I logged on to observe and be present with the case study participants; the hope from hearing the men's stories progress over the weeks, incorporating new insights with each draft, and witnessing them share these powerful, creative, and critical testimonies with their communities; the hope I felt when analysing the data and constructing the themes for this research; the hope I felt when this work helped me learn and challenge myself to do better, to walk my talk (Archer, 2021) and to embrace my own productive discomforts; the hope I felt in writing this thesis; and the hope I have that this work might play even a small part in supporting more effective and affective EM praxis moving forward. Hope is not just wishful thinking; it is a part of the process of social change (hooks, 2000; Lederach, 2005). As Giroux (2010) reminds us, 'hope is an act of moral imagination that enables progressive educators and others to think otherwise in order to act otherwise' (para 15).

You can read and listen to the poem, *an answer part II*, below. Additionally, it might be helpful to read and listen to both part I and part II of the poem together. Part I can be found at the [end of Introduction Chapter](#).

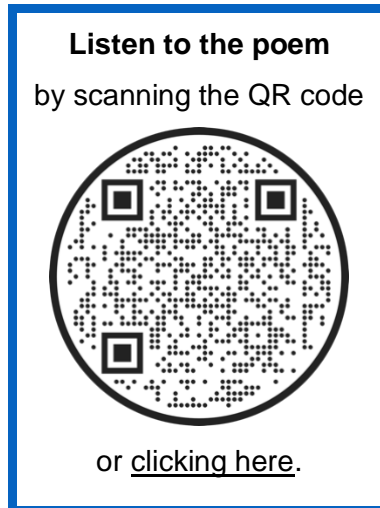


Figure 7: *an answer part II*

an answer

part II.

I do this work because
he
he who seeks breathing freely
he who believes in possibilities beyond caged binaries
he who imagines masculinities in spectrums
not singularities
in humanness
not inhumanity
in all of the complexity that it takes to make whole
he
he
he who embraces the discomfort
he who knows it begins with him and the men around him
he and he and he
he who knows the problem is he
and it is so far beyond he
he
he
he who knows it is stitched into the cultural fabric

cemented into the structures
so he
he who puts wrenches in the machine
he who role models patriarchal disloyalty
he who listens more than he speaks
he who is humble and reflexive
courageous and accountable
he who is sorry for his wrongs
he who knows that's important
and he who knows that's not good enough
he who is fed up
he who knows being a feminist is about action and change
he who won't be silent again
he who will work hard
he who will make mistakes and learn
he who will do it in community and importantly
he who will follow she
and she and she and she and she and she and she and she and she and she and they(s)
lead
he who will thank them for their work and vision
he who will join in solidarity
he who knows his role in the moment and the movement
he
and he
and he
and he who imagines a world with less privilege and power and dominance
less violence against women
less patriarchal masculinity
he who is not naïve or thinks it will be easy to uproot rotten structures
but he who still holds hope
he who dreams of breathing freely
he who is willing to work and sacrifice so all can feel that feeling
he who envisions a reimagining of masculinities
a blueprint for change
a call for action
he
he

he...

Chapter 12: Conclusion

12.1 Introduction

This culminating chapter reflects on the overall research project and brings this thesis to a conclusion. The following sections: first, return to my research questions and aims; second, outline potential practical, conceptual, and methodological contributions; third, discuss limitations; fourth, highlight future research; and fifth, end on a note of personal reflection.

12.2 Research Questions and Aims

Research question one asked: *how are the arts being used in the EM field in the US?* The findings and discussion reveal a range of different arts mediums, integration approaches, and understandings of arts role in EM that connect to different programmatic needs, opportunities, and challenges in engaging men's intersectional identities and the continuum of men's violences. While not systematic nor exhaustive, this study is the first of its kind to document the kaleidoscope of arts-integration approaches in practice in the US. These insights point towards the potential value of distinguishing arts-integration as a sub-field of EM programming.

Research question two asked: *how do practitioners and participants perceive the potential advantages and limitations of arts-integration approaches?* The findings and discussion show numerous perceived benefits of arts-integrated approaches. First, they can facilitate more holistic mind, heart, and body pedagogies that support learning in these programs. Second, the arts can help make the work more personal and collective, thus aiding the men in applying the knowledge to their own lived experiences and communities. These findings reveal arts-integration can help engage *more men* and engage *men more* – increasing the potential for larger mobilizations of men as allies for gender justice and deepening the learning in their efforts. However, the arts also bring forward complex challenges, including limitations on access to resources, time, and training; individual and institutional resistances; the risk of decentering and diluting feminist analysis through uncritical art; and the potential to cause harm to participants, facilitators, and the feminist movement to prevent MVAW. This study offers peace education concepts like multi-order reflexivities, poststructural violence, and transformative optimism to consider the advantages and limitations holistically. Arts-

integration is not intrinsically *good* or *effective*, rather it is a *powerful* pedagogical approach that can produce both positive and negative outcomes in EM group education contexts. Thus, there is a need for caution and attention to ‘pro-feminist equilibriums’ when implementing such work (Burrell, 2018).

Finally, research question three asked: *in what ways, if at all, do arts-integrated approaches support changes in the way men think about masculinities?* Placing the four themes into conversation with one another, the findings and discussion show how a holistic and humanising arts-integrated praxis has the potential to engage a productively discomforting imaginative process in EM programs. Practitioner interviews and the case study indicate such work can help men stretch their understanding from a singular idea of masculinity into a more expansive feminist-informed engagement with masculinities beyond gendered boundaries. However, in doing such work, this study also highlights a series of thin lines between productive discomfort and poststructural violence as well as the limitations of approaches which solely rely on individual changes and shifts in the way men think. Addressing MVAW and patriarchal masculinities require simultaneous and synchronised work across the prevention spectrum and changes in the way men think must be accompanied by changes in the way they act.

The answers to these three questions leave me transformatively optimistic that this study can play a part in addressing the aims outlined in the introduction of this thesis: to use the documented kaleidoscope of practices to illuminate this under-examined area of praxis; to examine how such creative-critical education might respond to calls for innovation in EM with an arts-integrated analytic and affective pedagogical path forward; and in doing so, add another approach to the repertoire of prevention practitioners and scholars addressing the problems of MVAW and patriarchal masculinities.

12.3 Potential Contributions

In answering these research questions and engaging with my aims, this study has sought to bring forward potential contributions for EM research and practice. Starting with the practitioner field of EM, the three research questions have built upon the limited existing arts and EM literature (notably – Peretz & Lehrer (2018) and Peretz et al., (2019)) to provide a broader and deeper understanding of arts-integrated programs in the US in ways that might support the development of pedagogy and curricula in practice. This study has called for a focus on arts-integrated EM as a distinct area of practice and for the importance of an analytic and affective pedagogical reorientation in the EM field. Further, this study is written

in an intentional and accessible way to produce a text rich with extended and direct quotes from those most involved in creating, teaching, and participating in these programs. In doing so, I hope this work is valuable for scholars and practitioners alike and that EM educators can use it to consider the potential of arts-integration in their contexts.

Conceptually, this study has sought to bring forward a transdisciplinary CSMM, feminist, and peace approach to thinking about EM. Specifically, this study advances a novel *hooksian approach to EM*, finding her intersectional visionary feminist praxis (2000) and patriarchal and feminist masculinities concepts (2004) to be a valuable framework for addressing MVAW and patriarchal violence at individual and structural levels in these programs. Further, her approach to engaging men in feminism (2004) combined with her engaged pedagogy (1994) provide analytic and affective pedagogical guiding lights for how the arts can play a role in EM group education. Her work is robust and accessible in ways that make it a ripe foundation for both deep inquiries into the possibilities of feminist masculinities and the practicalities of using education as a means of social change. Building on this feminist foundation, this study's conceptualisation of reimagining masculinities through an arts-integrated holistic, humanising, and productively discomforting creative-critical process provides a rich portrait of the overall potential of the arts in EM programs. In focusing on the catalytic role of productive discomfort in arts-integrated EM as well as the risks and challenges of such work, this study advances Keddie's (2021, 2022) scholarship on the important and contested role of discomfort in gender justice work with men.

This study also worked to bring new transdisciplinary insights by combining peace education with research on EM in ways that seek to break down disciplinary boundaries of scholarship advancing peace and gender justice (Hantzopoulos & Bajaj, 2021; Archer et al., 2023). As noted in the introduction, I believe there is a conceptual peace vacuum in EM that warrants further attention (McInerney, 2019c, McInerney & Archer, n.d.). Peace education concepts like moral imagination (Lederach, 2005), poststructural violence, first- and second-order reflexivities (Kester & Cremin, 2017), and transformative optimism (Rossatto, 2005) open new transdisciplinary spaces to consider how these complementary, yet often siloed, fields can benefit from each other. Overall, I argue these concepts add new depth and understanding to the EM literature and specifically to arts-integrated approaches.

Lastly, this research's methodological approach, using researcher poems and poetic mosaics to complement qualitative thematic analysis, might offer new insights into how the arts support not just EM programming, but EM research as well. This study's technologically-assisted incorporation of poems builds upon calls for the oralisation of research (Santos,

2018) and efforts at making research more accessible and affective in ways that move beyond the page of academic texts (Johnson et al., 2018). This study brings these methodological insights to EM research, where such arts-based approaches are currently under-examined.

12.4 Limitations

There are several important limitations that have been noted in the previous chapters and that are worth emphasising here again. First, the scope of this project is the US context, thus the insights shared here may not be as relevant in different geographies. Furthermore, the US is itself a massive and diverse country. Practitioners in this study worked in a wide range of states and regions, but it is important to note that just because they broadly covered the US, it does not mean that their experiences are applicable to all US contexts. This point is connected to the methodological limitations of this study which is based on a limited sample of 15 purposefully selected practitioners and one case study. In accordance with my epistemological stance, this project is not designed to 'evaluate' the impact of programs or to develop a template of 'best practices' for replication across contexts. Instead, I hope this text serves as an analytic and affective point of learning and reflection for scholars, practitioners, and participants themselves to engage with, question, reflect upon, and apply their own localised meanings.

12.5 Future research

The combination of the findings and limitations of this study indicates there is a wealth of additional research to be conducted to expand on the insights gained here and explore the many areas beyond the scope of this work. Firstly, future research could examine different contexts, including how a focus on more localised understandings of masculinities and arts might impact programs as well as how a global conversation about this work might inspire new transnational insights. Additional research could also unpack the kaleidoscope of arts-integration approaches highlighted in this study by conducting more focused projects on specific arts mediums, integration-approaches, participant populations, and learning contexts. An example of this could be a study on EM through spoken word poetry within school settings. As noted in the discussion, research could expand on this study by more explicitly looking at the benefits and challenges of online arts-integrated EM work. Further, while my research here focuses on primary prevention group education, future research could examine the role of the arts in secondary and tertiary work with men, as well as arts-

integrated efforts along the prevention spectrum. Overall, in naming and advocating for arts-integrated EM to be a distinct area of praxis, this study opens countless doors to more research to continue to illuminate the many approaches within the kaleidoscope outlined here.

Many of the practitioners I spoke with discussed how they wanted to learn more about their own programs through research and learn more about other arts-integrated programs as well. Participatory and action research projects as well as the establishment of an inter-organisational arts-integration working group through a network like MenEngage could provide a space for more sharing, learning, and collaboration. Further, specific arts-based research in this area, such as Johnson et al.'s (2018) collaborative poetics model, could continue to stretch and transgress the boundaries between art and research; scholar and practitioner; researcher and researched. In response to this study's methodological limitations, future research could also use mixed qualitative and quantitative methods to document the kaleidoscope of arts-integration more systematically. Such research could also seek to better understand the longitudinal impact on participants in these programs, as well as attempt to measure how their understandings of masculinities have changed. These more traditional qualitative and mixed method approaches provide important additional lenses to this area, and when combined with purely qualitative and arts-based studies like this one, support a more robust analytic and affective research base.

12.6 Conclusion

In the introduction to her seminal work on men, violence, and feminism, hooks (2004) writes,

Men cannot change if there are no blueprints for change. Men cannot love if they are not taught the art of loving. (p. xvii)

This is a call for visionary feminist praxis to engage men in ways that interrogate patriarchies and illuminate alternative paths forward. This is a call for understanding that while individuals must first and foremost be accountable for their own actions, the work of uprooting patriarchal masculinities must be collective. This study advances the idea that the arts might be able to play a small but potent role in such efforts by making EM group education programs more effective and affective. These creative-critical spaces of gender transformative learning have the potential to be catalytic sites where blueprints for less violent, more equitable ideas of manhood are imagined.

However, reimagining masculinities is not enough on its own. When hooks invokes love, she is not just talking about a feeling, a thought, or a connection to another person. Yes, it is that; but for hooks (1999) love is a verb in pursuit of justice. Love is a call to put the blueprints into action through passion – changing the way men think, feel, and act; changing the way men relate to women, gender non-binary people, other men, and themselves; and working to change the cultures and structures that hail forward systems of patriarchal violences in the first place. EM group education is about critical consciousness raising, violence prevention skill-building, and it is also about love. This study offers insights and transformative hope that the arts might help bring the heart, and, as Helena called for, bring humanity back into EM in ways that remind us of what is possible. As the participant Dante said, ‘We don’t have to continue the way that we have. And this is a living example of that’.

In all my years teaching and researching EM programs, I have found there are no easy answers to addressing the thicket of men’s patriarchal violences. However, I am constantly reminded and inspired by hooks’ words to keep trying, keep teaching, keep learning, keep reflecting, keep listening, keep creating, keep envisioning, keep reimagining my own masculinity, and keep helping other men to do the same.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Summary of Literature Review

Literature Review Chapter Summaries
<p>Chapter 2 focuses on the severe and pervasive problem of MVAW. I discuss MVAW as individual, cultural, and structural and looked at MVAW as connected to other forms of violence including men's violence against other men and themselves. Furthermore, I emphasise harmful masculine norms as a core root connecting men's violence(s) and warranting further examination.</p>
<p>Chapter 3 unpacks social theories of masculinity. I examine masculinities as plural, intersectional, changeable, and changing. I review several typologies of masculinities before focusing on bell hooks' approach. In doing so, I highlight patriarchal masculinity as a way of conceptualising the constellation of harm presented in Chapter 2 and feminist masculinities as an alternative way of understanding manhood that might be helpful in EM programs</p>
<p>Chapter 4 outlines the diverse field of EM which seeks to prevent MVAW, address patriarchal masculinities, and promote feminist masculinities. Specifically, I highlight primary prevention group education programs, the focus of this study. In doing so, I draw attention to the evidence on initial engagement, deepening engagement, men's resistance, and overall EM tensions and challenges. I synthesise four key points from that literature (visionary and positive approaches; focus on what men think, feel, and do; make the work personal and relational; and maintain a feminist foundation) that are responsive to the calls for innovation in the field, align with my hooksian approach, and which guide my thinking towards arts-integrated approaches.</p>
<p>Chapter 5 reviews the arts education, arts for social change, and arts and gender equality and violence prevention literatures and then highlighted the small but promising body of EM and arts research. I argue the various arts literatures reviewed here reveal a range of potential benefits that might support EM work and align with the synthesis from the literature in Chapter 4. This provides a strong rationale for studying this under-examined area further. The chapter closes by beginning to identify the gaps in the literature this study addresses.</p>

Table 15: Literature Review Chapter Summaries

Appendix B: Semi-structured Interview Guides

Phase One: Interview Guide for Practitioners

Key Reminders for Me

- Demonstrate clear and consistent acknowledgment and appreciation for taking part in the study.
- Try to build authentic rapport: this requires time and effort before, during, and after the interview.
- Go through the information sheet and informed consent thoroughly and answer all questions.
- Take time at the end to make sure folks are comfortable and informed on the process moving forward
- The interview is an opportunity for a creative and open conversation where knowledge is co-created.
- Use framing questions to guide the conversation, but let the process move organically and be ready for unexpected turns and/or deep dives.
- Highlight stories, emotions, art, and resonant moments from their thoughts and experiences

Contextualising the conversation

- 1) Can you tell me a little about yourself and your work?
- 2) How would you describe this program and its goals?

Your thoughts and experiences with arts-integrated approaches

- 3) How and, in your perception, for what reasons, does this program incorporate the arts in its work?
- 4) In what ways, positively and/or negatively, do you think the arts affect participants experiences in the program?

Your thoughts and experiences

- 5) How does this work affect you? How would you describe your own experience as a facilitator in this context?
- 6) Is there anything else you want to talk about? Are there any questions, ideas, or stories that I may have missed that you want to reflect on and/or discuss together?

Phase Two: Interview Guide for Case Study Participants

Key Reminders for Me

- Demonstrate clear and consistent acknowledgment and appreciation for taking part in the study.
- Try to build authentic rapport: this requires time and effort before, during, and after the interview.
- Go through the information sheet and informed consent thoroughly and answer all questions.
- Take time at the end to make sure folks are comfortable and informed on the process moving forward
- The interview is an opportunity for a creative and open conversation where knowledge is co-created.
- Use framing questions to guide the conversation, but let the process move organically and be ready for unexpected turns and/or deep dives.
- Highlight stories, emotions, art, and resonant moments from their thoughts and experiences

Overview

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself?
2. Can you talk about the story you created and shared in the program?
 - a. *What is the main message you want people to walk away with?*
 - b. *What part of the story is the most important to you? Why so?*
3. How was this experience for you? (playshops, productions, story circles, one-on-one coach time, individual work)
 - a. *Were there any parts that you really enjoyed or that really resonated with you?*
 - b. *Were there any parts of the experience that you didn't like or that didn't connect with you?*
 - c. *Are there any specific impactful moments from the experience that stand out to you?*

Stories

4. Can you talk about the writing and creative process for your story? What was it like to write and edit this story?
 - a. *Were there things that helped you write and create? Were there things that didn't?*
 - b. *What, if anything, did you gain from this process of crafting the story?*
5. Can you talk about your experience sharing your story? How did that make you feel and how did it affect you?
 - a. *Was the experience of sharing your story different in group circles, productions, and other situations?*
 - b. *What, if anything, did you gain from the experiences of sharing your story?*
 - c. *Can you also talk about hearing other people's stories? How was that for you? Did any stand out in particular?*

6. In what ways, if at all, have your thoughts about masculinity and what it means 'to be a man' changed?
- a. *If it did change, why do you think so?*
 - b. *How, if at all, do you think this will impact you moving forward?*

Closing and Take-Aways

- 7. When you reflect on the experience as a whole, do you have any key take-aways?
- 8. If you had to, what would be your 1-word description of your experience?
- 9. Is there anything else you would like to talk about before we close?

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Observation Guide

Observation Guide

Key Reminders for Me

- The goal is not to address every question on this sheet every time I observe, rather these questions and points are reminders to help me make sense of and document my experience in the room.
- Dwell in the moments. This is an embodied observation and a direct contrast to claims of the disembodied-objective-neutral researcher.
- Use as much detail as possible. Be thorough, vivid, precise, clear, and poetic. Use the five senses to orient the room and illuminate the experience.
- Pay attention to what people say, what people do, and how they interact with each other and the environment.
- Pay attention to individual, relational, and group dynamics.
- Pay attention to peoples' attention, emotions, and affect.
- Give specific examples and make note of details that stand out.
- Zoom in and zoom out. Balance surveying the general narrative and following individual stories in-depth.
- Document heterogeneously: write notes, jot down key quotes, draw pictures, etc.
- Be an observer-participant. Sometimes that means putting down the fieldnotes down and being present in the process. In those moments, continue to be alert and make mental notes.
- The observation process should evolve and be responsive to the active themes and process. As a result, each observation will be different. Make sure to reflect on those differences.
- The observer-participant is never neutral. Keep a critical eye on positionality at all times and practice second order-reflexivity in real-time and in follow up reflections and analysis.
- This is not an attempt at objectivity. I seek to fully experience the moments I observe and then reflect that affective engagement back out. This is a process of opening up and expanding possibilities of understanding, not an attempt to simplify, distil, and close down a representation of what happens.
- Bring the reflexive voice in throughout.

Framing Questions and Prompts

Where am I?

- Describe the physical space in detail.

Who is in the room?

- Document the number of facilitators, participants, and guests, as well as the basic demographics of people in the room.

What is happening?

- Describe the schedule and overall framework for the session.
- Who is teaching? What is being taught? How?
- What are the key themes of this session?
- Describe the facilitators in action. What is their teaching style and tone?
- Describe the participants, both collectively and individually. Write mini portraits of participants in the classroom.
- How are masculinities expressed in the session? How do they show up?

Resonate Moments

- Are there any resonate moments? If so, why are they resonating? Who is involved? What is the subject? Describe the moment in detail.

Appendix D: Reflexive Thematic Analysis Six-Step Approach

Reflexive Thematic Analysis (drawing from Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013)
1) Become familiar with the data. Read and re-read through the data and take initial notes and reflections.
2) Generate initial codes. A theoretical approach is informed by research questions, sensitising concepts, and an open reading of the data. Codes are developed and adjusted throughout the process utilising NVivo software. This is not just a way to reduce the data, it is also an analytic process that engages the semantic and latent approaches of the data.
3) Search for themes. Develop a list of themes (can also include sub-themes) that tie together codes through patterns of significance that engage research questions in some way. It is important to note that 'searching is an active process' by which the research itself 'constructs themes' in conversation with research questions and conceptual framework (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 2).
4) Review themes. Reassess themes and make sure they are both coherent and distinct and develop sub-themes if necessary. At this point, it is important to consider: Is anything missing? Are my positionality and biases influencing the research? What is the prevalence of each theme? Are there alternative ways to conceptualise the themes? Do the themes 'tell a convincing and compelling story about the data'. (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.2). Adjust codes and themes as needed.
5) Define themes. Identify the essence of each theme. Write a detailed analysis of each theme and relate it back to the larger data bank. Finalise the naming and build a thematic map to show the complexity of the relationships amongst themes and sub-themes.
6) Write-up. Utilising the larger conceptual analysis and research methodology, analyse and reflect upon the thematic map and tell a convincing and compelling story about the data. Contextualise this story within the literature and show how it points to and engages with the research questions.

Table 16: Summary of Braun and Clarke's Six-Step RTA

Appendix E: Project Information and Informed Consent Agreements

Phase One: Participant Information Sheet

Research Study: Reimagining Masculinities

Researcher: William McNerney, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge

Contact: [number redacted] or [email redacted]

Welcome!

My name is Will. I'm a PhD Candidate at the University of Cambridge in England. You are invited to take part in a research study I'm conducting for my PhD. Please read over the following information before you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me. Thank you so much!

What is the purpose of this study?

This research study is investigating programs that engage men in gender equality and violence prevention work in the US. Specifically, this study seeks to 1) explore how, and for what reasons, some programs integrate arts into their work and 2) how facilitators and participants perceive and experience such approaches. Data from this research study will inform my PhD thesis at Cambridge and may be used in additional publications on this topic.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are a key person (organiser, educator, artist, or participant) in a program that I am researching. I think your knowledge and experiences are important and could help inform my study.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to participate. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign an informed consent form indicating your agreement to participate.

What do I have to do?

If you agree to take part, you will be asked to attend one or more interviews at a mutually agreed upon time and location. These one-on-one interviews will last approximately one hour. Agreeing to do one interview in no way compels you to participate in follow up interviews if you do not want to do so.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Participating in the research study is not anticipated to cause you any disadvantages or discomfort. In general, the questions asked during the interview will be about you and your experiences working with or participating in the program you are already engaged with. If a

subject arises during the interview that you do not want to talk about or that causes you distress in any way, you can skip that question, pause the interview, and/or terminate the interview. I will support your decision and you do not have to provide any reasons or justifications for taking such actions.

Will my participation in this study be kept confidential?

Your name will not be named, and a pseudonym will be used in all shared documents for this study. All data from this project will be kept on a password protected and secure digital system. However, given the small nature of the field of engaging men in violence prevention in the US, please consider that it may still be possible for some people to identify you from comments you make in the interview.

Will I be recorded?

Interviews or observations will be audio recorded solely to ensure accuracy of the data. These audio recordings will not be published or shared with anyone. Upon completion of the project, all audio recordings will be deleted. If you do not want your interview to be audio recorded, I will not record the conversation. You can withdraw permission to record at any time during the interview.

What happens if I decide to withdraw my consent to participate in the study?

You have the right to withdraw from the study for any reason before, during, or after the interview or observation. If you withdraw, all the information and data collected from you will be deleted and your name will be removed from all the study files. If you do not want your anonymized information included in this study's analysis and subsequent PhD thesis, please indicate your withdrawal from the study prior to the completion of the data analysis phase. If you have any questions or concerns about this, please let me know.

What if something goes wrong?

If you have any concerns or complaints about the research study, you can contact me directly. If you feel your complaint has not been handled properly or if you would like to talk to someone else, you can also contact my Supervisor, Dr. Hilary Cremin, at the University of Cambridge.

Researcher: William McNerney, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Email: [email redacted] UK phone: [number redacted] US phone: [number redacted]

Supervisor: Dr. Hilary Cremin, University Reader, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Email: [email redacted] UK phone: [number redacted]

Who is organising and funding the research?

William McNerney is the lead researcher on this project. This project is further supervised by Dr. Hilary Cremin (University of Cambridge) and advised by Dr. Tyler Denmead (University of Cambridge). This work is supported by scholarships and grants from the Gates Cambridge Trust (Gates Foundation), University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, Queens' College Cambridge, and the Rotary Foundation (Rotary International). These

funding bodies have no input or control over this research study and will not influence the direction or published content in any way.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved by the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education Ethics Review Process (2019). This project is guided by the Cambridge University Research Integrity Statement (2019), the British Education Research Association's Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018) and the American Education Research Association's Code of Ethics (2011).

Phase One: Informed Consent Form

Research Study: Reimagining Masculinities: Arts-Integrated Men's Violence Prevention in the US

Researcher: William McNerney, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge

Contact: [number redacted] or [email redacted]

	YES	NO
I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet for the above study and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions.		
I agree to take part in an interview with the researcher identified above.		
I understand that I have the right not to answer any question that I don't want to, and that I can stop or take a break from the interview at any point.		
I give my permission for the interview to be audio recorded for transcription purposes. This audio will not be shared with anyone else.		
I understand that my name will be anonymized in all documents and publications associated with this project. However, I understand it may still be possible for me to be identified based on comments that I make during the interview, for example about the work I have been involved in.		
I am aware that what is discussed in the interview will be kept confidential, but that if the interviewer feels that I or somebody else is at risk of serious harm, they may need to disclose certain information to relevant authorities.		
I understand that I am free to choose whether or not to take part in this research study, and that I am also free to withdraw during or after the interview.		

After reading the information sheet and consent form, I confirm that I would like to participate in the above-named research study.

Name of Participant

Date Signature

Name of Researcher

Date Signature

Phase Two: Participant Information Sheet

Research Study: Re-Imagining Masculinities

Researcher: William McInerney, University of Cambridge

Contact: [number redacted] or [email redacted]

Welcome!

Hey – This document provides information about my research and outlines how you can participate through a Zoom interview.

As I mentioned in week 1 of the program, I'm originally from North Carolina and I have been living in the UK for the past four years. My professional background is in arts, peace, and men's violence prevention education. Over the past decade, I've worked as a teacher, a spoken word poet, and a journalist covering issues of peace, violence, and masculinities. I'm currently a PhD student at the University of Cambridge where my research explores programs like [REMOVED]. You are invited to take part in this research.

I think your story and experience are important and I would love the opportunity to chat with you more about it over Zoom one day. The following information in this document will outline my project, your potential role, and your protections as a participant. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me. Thank you so much!

What is the purpose of this study?

My research examines programs that work with men on issues of gender equality, violence prevention, and critical explorations of masculinity in the US. Specifically, my study seeks to 1) explore how, and for what reasons, some programs integrate arts into their work and 2) how facilitators and participants perceive and experience such approaches. Data from this research study will inform my PhD thesis at Cambridge and may be used in additional publications on this topic.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are a participant in [REMOVED]. I think your knowledge and experiences in this process are important and could help inform my work. I would love the opportunity to chat with you about them.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to participate. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign an informed consent form indicating your agreement to participate.

What do I have to do?

If you agree to take part, you will be asked to take part in an online Zoom interview at a mutually agreed upon date and time. These one-on-one interviews will last approximately one hour.

Are there any disadvantages or risks in taking part?

I do not anticipate that participating in this research study will cause any specific disadvantages or discomfort. The questions asked during the interview will be about you and your experience in the [REMOVED]. If a subject arises during the interview that you do not want to talk about or that causes you distress in any way, you can skip that question, pause the interview, and/or end the interview. I will support your decision and you do not have to provide any reasons or justifications for taking such actions.

Is this confidential?

Your name will be anonymized in all shared documents and publications for this study. All data from this project will be kept on a password protected and secure digital system. However, given the small nature of this program, please consider that it may still be possible for some people to identify you from comments you make in the interview despite your name being anonymized. Further, if you share information that reveals the risk of serious and immediate harm to yourself or someone else, I may need to follow up with you and be required to share certain limited information to relevant authorities.

Will I be recorded?

Interviews will be audio recorded solely to ensure accuracy. These audio recordings will not be published or shared with anyone. Upon completion of the project, all audio recordings will be deleted. If you do not want your interview to be audio recorded, I will not record the conversation. You can withdraw permission to record at any time during the interview.

What happens if I change my mind?

You have the right to withdraw from the study for any reason before, during, or after the interview. If you withdraw, all the information and data collected from you will be deleted and your name will be removed from all of my internal files. If you have any questions or concerns about this, please let me know. I am always open to talk through any questions and concerns.

What if something goes wrong?

If you have any concerns or complaints about my research study, you can contact me directly. If you feel your complaint has not been handled properly or if you would like to talk to someone else, you can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Hilary Cremin, at the University of Cambridge.

Researcher: William McNerney, PhD candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Email: [email redacted] UK phone: [number redacted]

Supervisor: Dr. Hilary Cremin, University Reader, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Email: [email redacted] UK phone: [number redacted]

Who is organizing and funding the research?

I (Will) am the lead researcher on this project. This project is supervised by Dr. Hilary Cremin (University of Cambridge) and advised by Dr. Tyler Denmead (University of Cambridge). This work is supported by scholarships and grants from the Gates Cambridge Trust (Gates Foundation), University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, Queens' College Cambridge, and the Rotary Foundation (Rotary International). Funding organisations do not have input or control over this research study and will not influence the direction or published content in any way.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved by the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education Ethics Review Process (2019). This project is guided by the Cambridge University Research Integrity Statement (2019), the British Education Research Association's Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018) and the American Education Research Association's Code of Ethics (2011).

Phase Two: Informed Consent Agreement

Research Study: Re-Imagining Masculinities

Researcher: William McNerney, University of Cambridge

Contact: [number redacted] or [email redacted]

	YES	NO
I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet for the above study and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions.		
I agree to take part in an interview with the researcher identified above.		
I understand that I have the right not to answer any question that I don't want to, and that I can stop or take a break from the interview at any point.		
I give my permission for the interview to be audio recorded for transcription purposes. This audio will not be shared with anyone else and will be deleted.		
I understand that my name will be anonymized in all documents and publications associated with this project. However, I understand it may still be possible for me to be identified based on comments that I make during the interview, for example about the work I have been involved in.		
I am aware that what is discussed in the interview will be kept confidential, but that if the interviewer feels that I or somebody else is at risk of serious and immediate harm, they may need to disclose certain information to relevant authorities.		
I understand that I am free to choose whether or not to take part in this research study, and that I am also free to withdraw during or after the interview.		

After reading the information sheet and consent form, I confirm that I would like to participate in the above-named research study.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

Appendix F: Research Outline and Alignment

Research Outline and Alignment	
Research Questions: Responsive to literature gaps and research aims	<p>1) How are the arts integrated into EM group education programs in the US?</p> <p>2) How do practitioners and participants perceive some of the potential advantages and limitations of an arts-integrated EM approach?</p> <p>3) In what ways, if at all, do arts-integrated approaches support changes in the way men think about masculinity?</p>
Approach and Methodology: seventh moment qualitative inquiry and bricolage methodology	<p>Research Questions are 1) Exploratory and multi-scoped and 2) highlight the socially constructed lived experiences of practitioners and participants in arts-integrated programs.</p> <p>Thus, I employ a seventh moment qualitative approach which engages an epistemological orientation that is 1) exploratory and adaptable and 2) qualitative, critical, creative, and feminist-aligned.</p> <p>A bricolage methodology further aligns with this approach and can be put into practice through an open and adaptive multi-method design which embraces the role(s) of the researcher-as-bricoleur, -feminist, -artist, and -curator</p>
Design and Methods: Multi-methods qualitative approach	<p>Phase One: conduct 15 interviews with a group of purposefully selected practitioners.</p> <p>Phase Two: conduct a year-long case study with one program using interviews and observations.</p> <p>Poetic inquiry used across both phases through reflexive researcher poems and found poems drawn from interview transcript data. All poems recorded with links embedded into the written text.</p>
Data: exploratory, creative, and messy	Phase one primary data from interview transcripts and field notes from practitioners.

	Phase two primary data from observation notes and interview transcripts from the case study.
Analysis: six-step reflexive thematic analysis	<p>RTA is a well-cited qualitative approach helpful for interview and observation data and research questions about people's perceptions and experiences. This study uses a blended inductive and deductive approach that is open and influenced by the research questions and aims.</p> <p>Braun and Clarke's six-step RTA emphasises researcher reflexivity through a flexible approach that aligns with my transdisciplinary, multi-method, multi-scope, bricolage project.</p>
Representation: analytic and affective curation	Findings chapters combine insights from both phases to present: 1) Analytic RTA of key themes through interview quotes and observation notes; 2) Researcher and found poems to provide an affective complement and a new creative lens with which to see, hear, and make meaning from the findings.

Table 17: Research Project Alignment

Appendix G: Reflexive Thematic Analysis Overview

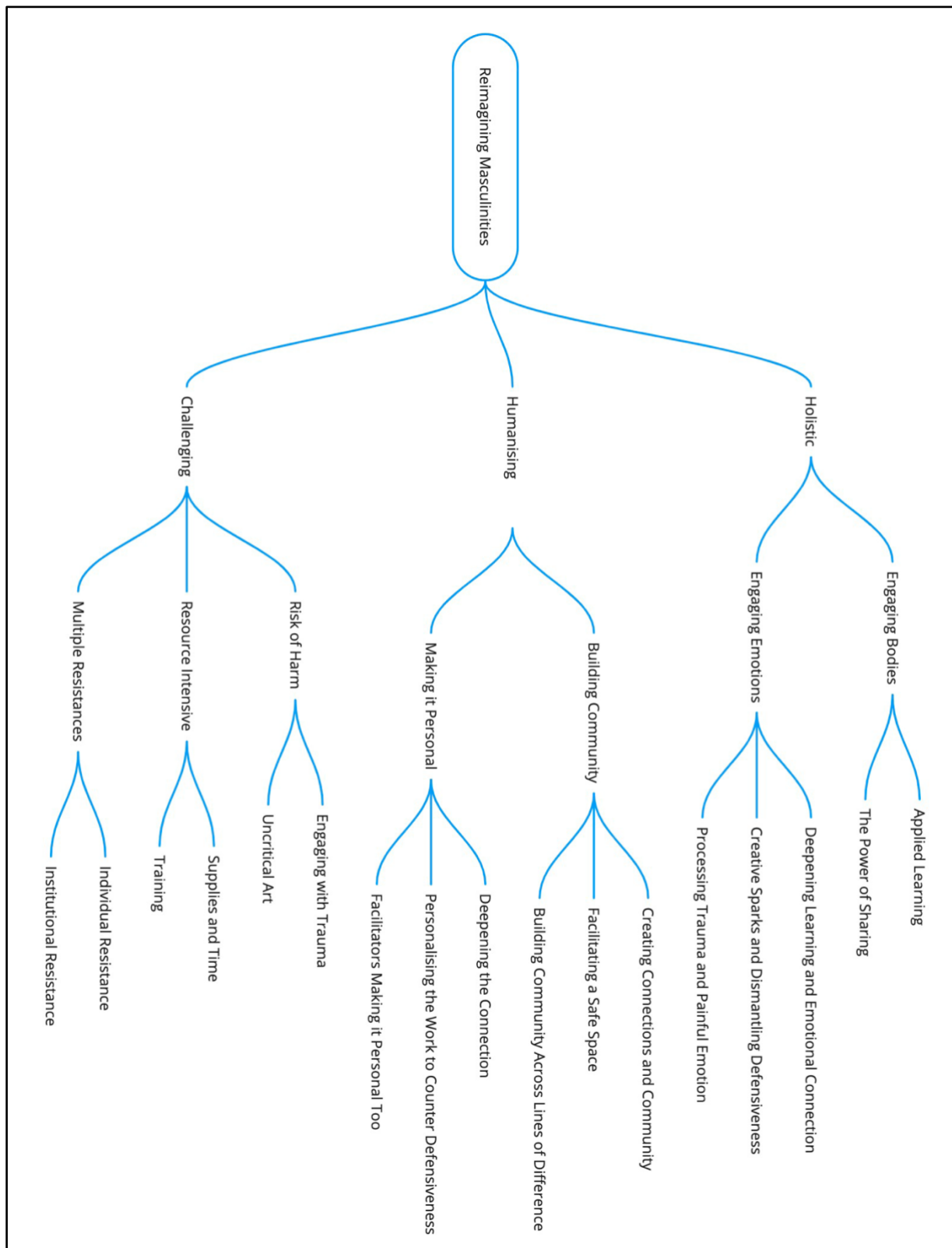


Figure 8: Research Themes Diagram