

November 2024

Man Up! Program Evaluation Report

ENQUIRIES
Dr Pam Kappelides
Senior Lecturer
La Trobe University
Victoria 3086

T 03 9479 3899
E p.kappelides@latrobe.edu.au



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Literature Review	5
<i>Sport as a Hook</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Gender Equality and Masculinity in Educational Programs</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Healthy Relationship Formation Through Educational Interventions</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Building Resilience Through Gender Equality Programs</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Effectiveness of Gender Equality Programs in Different Settings</i>	<i>7</i>
Research Methodology	9
<i>Sampling Strategy</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Data Collection Methods.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Data Analysis</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Ethical Considerations</i>	<i>11</i>
Discussion	12
<i>Changes in Attitudes Towards Gender Equality</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Improved Understanding and Practice of Healthy Relationships</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Building Emotional Resilience</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Impact on Group Dynamics and Peer Relationships</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Man Up Meaning</i>	<i>14</i>
Recommendations	15
References	17

Executive Summary

The Man Up - Creating Respectful Relationships program, delivered by City in the Community (CiTC) Melbourne City Football Club and evaluated by a Dr Pam Kappelides from La Trobe University, aimed to challenge harmful masculinity stereotypes, promote gender equality, and encourage healthy, respectful relationships among participants in both classroom and sports settings. This evaluation focused on measuring the extent to which the program's goals were met, examining participant experiences and assessing the long-term impact of the program across different environments, including schools and sports clubs.

Sport, particularly football, is used as a tool to engage young people in discussions about gender equality and healthy relationships. Football is traditionally seen as reinforcing hyper-masculine behaviours, but the Man Up program leverages its influence to promote positive masculinity. The program uses respected figures, such as MCFC players and young leaders, to model healthier behaviours, helping participants apply lessons learned from a sporting environment to their personal lives. The Man Up program promotes healthy relationships built on respect, trust and open communication. Educational interventions have been shown to reduce the acceptance of gender-based violence and improve relationship skills, particularly among young men. This program encourages participants to reflect on how masculinity impacts their behaviour in relationships, contributing to more positive dynamics.

Building resilience, the ability to cope with adversity, is a key focus of the Man Up program. The program fosters emotional intelligence, encouraging participants to express vulnerability and seek support. Research supports the idea that resilience-building programs, particularly those that challenge harmful masculine norms, help reduce risky behaviours and promote emotional health.

A qualitative research approach was employed to evaluate the program's impact on participants' attitudes towards gender equality, relationships and resilience. Data collection included semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observations. The study involved 55 participants, including students, teachers and program facilitators, from a range of primary and secondary schools.

Key Findings

- **Shift in Masculine Attitudes:** Participants reported feeling more comfortable expressing emotions and challenging toxic masculinity.
- **Positive Peer Influence:** Peers played a significant role in reinforcing the program's messages, especially in school and sports settings.
- **Improved Relationships:** Participants demonstrated better communication and respect in school, home and team environments.

The Man Up - Creating Respectful Relationships program successfully promoted respectful behaviours, gender equality and emotional resilience among participants. While challenges remain in sustaining long-term behavioural changes, the program has positively impacted classroom and sports environments. Ongoing support and tailored interventions are recommended to ensure the program's long-term success and wider adoption.

Introduction

The Man Up - Creating Respectful Relationships Program aims to foster healthy relationships, promote gender equality and build resilience among participants in various environments, including classrooms, homes and clubs. With increasing concerns about gender-based violence, toxic masculinity and inequality, this program seeks to address these issues by encouraging positive behaviour change and challenging harmful stereotypes for young people.

This research report examines the impact of the Man Up program on participants' behaviours and attitudes towards healthy relationships, gender equality and resilience. Specifically, the study investigates whether participation in the program has led to measurable modifications in these areas across three key environments: the classroom, home and sporting environments.

The research evaluates how participants, including students and teachers have integrated the principles of respect, equality and emotional strength into their daily lives following their involvement in the program. By gathering qualitative data from interviews, focus groups and observations, the report provides insights into the effectiveness of the program in transforming attitudes and fostering behavioural change.

Through this investigation, the report aims to contribute to the understanding of how targeted interventions, like the Man Up program, can promote healthier social dynamics and support the development of more respectful and resilient individuals in diverse settings.

Program Context

Funded by the Federal Government Safer Communities Grant, the Man Up - Creating Respectful Relationships program uses football as a vehicle to create respectful relationships between young men and women in Victoria.

Linked to the Victorian education curriculum and targeted at primary years of 5-6 and years 7-9 for secondary school students, the program also draws on the experiences of the A-League Men's and Women's team by explaining their values, respect in a football club environment and how they as players continue to show resilience in dealing with wins, losses, injuries and setbacks. With most of the program delivered in the multicultural areas of the Southeast of Melbourne (across 8 council areas of Casey City, Greater Dandenong, Cardinia, City of Port Phillip, City of Stonnington, Hawkesbury, Glen Eira and Merri-bek), where football is a strong connector of these communities, the Man Up program provides culturally sensitive and appropriate experiences for young people but is also adaptable to other contexts.

The program incorporates classroom workshops, football activities and play based learning that builds connection to the club and its philosophy of promoting equality across the sport. All the sessions are youth lead and run by the City in the Community (CiTC) Young Leaders which enables the learning to be relatable by the young people the program engages.

Literature Review

The Man Up - Creating Respectful Relationships Program seeks to address the critical issues of gender inequality, toxic masculinity and unhealthy relationship dynamics. By targeting attitudes and behaviours associated with traditional gender roles, this program aims to promote gender equality, encourage the formation of respectful relationships, and build resilience among participants. The focus of this literature review is to examine the existing research on the effectiveness of similar programs in shaping behaviour and attitudes towards gender equality, healthy relationships, and resilience, particularly in classroom, home and sporting environments.

Sport as a Hook

Sport, particularly football, play a powerful role in shaping masculine identities and social behaviours, making them an ideal platform for engaging students in discussions about gender equality, healthy relationships, and resilience. The Man Up - Creating Respectful Relationships Program recognises this influence and strategically uses football, as a hook to draw young people into the program. Football is often seen as a hyper-masculine arena where traditional male behaviours are reinforced, but it also holds the potential to challenge and redefine these norms. By integrating the Man Up program within schools, the initiative taps into the strong social networks and education environment to drive its message home.

Football has long been a space where male camaraderie and leadership thrive, but it also carries stereotypes of dominance, aggression and emotional suppression. The Man Up program leverages the influence of respected coaches, players, and sports figures from Melbourne City to promote healthier, more positive expressions of masculinity. Research suggests that young men in particular are more likely to embrace new behaviours and attitudes when they are modelled by role models they respect and admire, such as coaches or professional athletes (Anderson, 2011). By embedding discussions of gender equality and respectful relationships from the football club, Man Up creates an environment where students can engage with these topics in a familiar and fun setting.

Moreover, sport provides a natural metaphor for teamwork, respect, and resilience- key themes of the Man Up program. The principles of fair play, discipline, and collaboration in football are directly aligned with the program's goals of promoting respectful relationships and emotional resilience. Football teams, like relationships, require trust, communication, and mutual respect to succeed. By making these parallels explicit, the Man Up program shows participants that the skills and values they develop on the field are equally applicable off the field in their personal lives.

Integrating the Man Up program into schools helps break down barriers to participation. Many students might feel hesitant to join programs focused on gender equality and relationships, but the familiarity and appeal of football reduce resistance. The use of sport as an entry point makes the program more accessible and engaging, creating a more receptive environment for behaviour change. In this way, football not only serves as a powerful hook for participation but also as a transformative platform for promoting gender equality and healthier relationships.

Gender Equality and Masculinity in Educational Programs

Gender equality programs targeting students have become a central tool for addressing issues related to gender-based violence, toxic masculinity and unequal power dynamics. According to research by Connell (2023), educational interventions that challenge traditional notions of masculinity are critical in promoting gender equality. These programs encourage young men to reject stereotypical masculine ideals, such as dominance, aggression, and emotional suppression, in favour of more egalitarian attitudes toward women and non-binary individuals.

The Man Up program follows a similar framework, promoting positive masculinity by encouraging participants to embrace vulnerability, empathy, and equality. This aligns with King et al. (2023) theory of hegemonic masculinity, which suggests that dominant male behaviours, such as control and emotional stoicism, are key contributors to gender inequality. Programs like Man Up seek to dismantle these harmful ideals by engaging boys and young men in conversations about respectful behaviour and emotional intelligence. Research has shown that when men are provided with spaces to discuss gender equality and emotional resilience, their perspectives on relationships and gender roles shift in meaningful ways (Flood, et al. 2021). Programs like Man Up also intersect with the work of Pease (2020), who argues that promoting gender equality in schools and other community environments helps to reshape long-standing cultural norms. Schools and sports clubs are ideal environments for such interventions, as they are often primary sites for the formation of gendered behaviours and attitudes (Keddie, et al. 2023). By embedding gender equality discussions in these settings, participants are more likely to challenge and modify their behaviour toward more respectful and inclusive practices.

Healthy Relationship Formation Through Educational Interventions

The promotion of healthy relationships is a cornerstone of many gender equality programs, including Man Up. Healthy relationships are defined as those built on mutual respect, trust, open communication, and emotional support (Pulimeno, et al. 2020). Educational programs designed to teach these values aim to prevent abusive dynamics, such as control, emotional manipulation, or physical violence, which are often reinforced by harmful gender stereotypes.

Research shows that educational interventions have a positive impact on relationship formation among young people. For example, studies by Crooks et al. (2020) demonstrate that relationship education programs targeting adolescents can significantly reduce the acceptance of gender-based violence and improve communication skills. Programs that emphasise mutual respect and understanding in relationships contribute to the prevention of abusive behaviour, particularly among young men who might otherwise feel pressure to conform to toxic masculine norms.

The Man Up program integrates discussions on respect, healthy relationships and positive conflict resolution, which aligns with existing models of relationship education. By encouraging open dialogue and reflective thinking about how masculinity influences behaviour in relationships, these programs help participants better understand their own role in maintaining healthy dynamics. This is supported by Guthridge, et al. (2022) findings, which highlight that programs focusing on the relational aspects of gender equality help young people develop more positive attitudes toward interpersonal relationships.

Building Resilience Through Gender Equality Programs

Resilience, or the ability to cope with adversity and bounce back from challenges, is another key component of programs like Man Up. Building emotional resilience in young people is particularly important, as societal expectations often discourage particularly men from showing vulnerability or seeking emotional support.

The Man Up program seeks to build resilience by fostering emotional intelligence and encouraging participants to express vulnerability without fear of judgment. Research by Cefai (2022) suggests that resilience-building programs are most effective when they challenge traditional gender norms that equate emotional expression with weakness. When young people are encouraged to embrace vulnerability as a strength, they are more likely to seek help when needed and build healthier emotional coping mechanisms.

A study by Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) emphasises the importance of resilience as a protective factor against risky behaviours, such as aggression or substance abuse, which are often linked to unhealthy expressions of masculinity. Programs like Man Up that integrate resilience-building with discussions on gender equality provide a holistic approach to helping young people navigate the pressures of traditional masculinity. This is particularly effective in classroom, home, and sporting environments, where young people may feel external pressures to conform to harmful masculine ideals.

Effectiveness of Gender Equality Programs in Different Settings

Programs like Man Up are most effective when tailored to the specific environments in which young people frequent - classrooms, homes, and clubs. Research shows that each of these settings presents unique opportunities for shaping behaviour and attitudes.

Schools are often the primary site for gender socialisation. Research by Epstein et al. (2016) suggests that gender equality programs in schools can have a profound impact on how young people perceive and engage with their peers. Classrooms provide a structured environment where students can openly discuss their views and challenge preconceived notions of gender roles. Man Up's classroom-based activities encourage students to critically assess their attitudes toward relationships, respect, and equality, leading to the possibility of long-term behavioural change.

The home is another key environment where gendered behaviours are modelled and reinforced. A study by Walsh et al. (2016) found that gender equality programs that extend to the family unit are more effective in creating lasting change, as young people are influenced by the behaviours they observe in their family members. The Man Up program encourages participants to bring these discussions home, fostering conversations around gender equality with family members and creating more supportive, respectful home environments.

Sports environments are traditionally male-dominated spaces where hegemonic masculinity is often reinforced (Messner, 2009). However, these clubs also provide a platform for promoting positive masculinity. According to Adams et al. (2010), gender equality programs within sports organisations can shift cultural norms and encourage respectful behaviours both on and off the field. The Man Up program's presence in an elite football club can help participants apply the principles of respect and equality in real-world scenarios through football.

The existing literature on gender equality programs highlights the importance of promoting healthy relationships, gender equality and resilience among young people. Programs like Man Up are well-positioned to make a significant impact across various environments by challenging traditional notions of masculinity, fostering emotional intelligence, and promoting respectful relationships. By integrating these discussions in classrooms, homes, and sports environments, the program creates opportunities for lasting behavioural change, contributing to a more equitable and respectful society. The success of programs like Man Up depends on their ability to adapt to the specific needs of different environments while maintaining a focus on long-term attitude and behaviour modification.



Research Methodology

The qualitative research methodology was chosen to explore the impact of the Man Up - Creating Respectful Relationships Program on participants' behaviours, attitudes and perceptions regarding gender equality, healthy relationships and resilience. Given the focus on understanding nuanced experiences and the personal transformation of participants, a qualitative approach provided the depth necessary to capture subjective experiences and contextual influences in classrooms and sporting environments. The aim of this research was to gain insights into how the program modified behaviours and attitudes, as well as the social and environmental factors that influenced these changes.

A case study design was selected for this research, focusing on in-depth analysis of participants who had undergone the Man Up program at Melbourne City Football Club. This approach enabled a holistic examination of how the program's key messages and activities were received and implemented across different settings. The case study method is particularly suited to complex social programs like Man Up, where multiple factors influence outcomes.

This research primarily utilised semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observations as data collection methods, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the individual and collective experiences of participants.

Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy for this research involved purposive sampling to identify key participants who had completed the Man Up program and teachers/stakeholders from the schools the program was delivered. The sample included a diverse group of individuals who had participated in the program at both primary and secondary schools in Victoria, Australia.

A total of 55 participants were recruited for the study, including:

- 47 program participants (students),
- 5 teachers,
- 3 program facilitators (coaches).

This sample size allowed for a wide range of perspectives while still enabling an in-depth exploration of individual experiences. Recruitment was facilitated through schools and the Man Up program coordinators. Participants were selected based on their active participation in the program and willingness to engage in interviews or focus groups.

Data Collection Methods

a. Semi-Structured Interviews

To explore individual experiences, thoughts, and reflections on how the program impacted participants' attitudes toward gender equality, relationships and resilience semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 teachers.

The semi-structured format allowed for a flexible yet focused conversation, providing the opportunity to delve into personal stories and insights. Questions focused on topics such as

understanding of gender roles before and after the program, any changes seen in relationships, and instances of applying the program's teachings in the classroom or outside environment.

Example Interview Questions:

- 'Can you describe a situation where you have seen the students apply what they learned from the Man Up program?'
- 'How has students' perspective on gender roles and relationships changed since participating in the program?'

b. Focus Groups

To capture group dynamics and shared experiences, particularly in the classroom and sport environments where participants engaged in the program as part of a team or peer group, focus groups were conducted. Nine focus groups were conducted, settings included schools and community organisations, with 4 - 8 participants per group.

The focus group discussions encouraged participants to reflect on how the group context influenced their experience with the program. Questions focused on shared learning experiences, discussions within the group, and how participants supported each other in changing behaviours.

Example Focus Group Questions:

- 'What were the key lessons you learned from the program as a group?'
- 'How have you noticed your peers' behaviour change since the program?'

c. Participant Observation

To observe firsthand how participants engaged with the program content and how they interacted with others during the program sessions the lead researcher observed the program in action. Observations were conducted in both the classroom and sport club environment during the program's activities.

The researcher observed how participants engaged with discussions on gender equality, emotional resilience, and respect, paying particular attention to body language, participation levels and peer interactions.

Example Observation Focus:

Whether students who initially displayed resistant attitudes toward gender discussions became more open or if any group dynamics shifted because of the program's activities.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns across the various contexts in which the program was implemented. This approach involved:

1. Transcribing interviews and focus group discussions.
2. Coding the data to identify key themes, such as changes in attitudes toward masculinity, application of respectful behaviours, and the influence of peers and facilitators.

3. Comparing data across settings to explore how the program impacted participants differently in classrooms, homes and sport environments.

Example themes that emerged included:

- **Masculinity and Emotional Vulnerability:** Many participants reported feeling more comfortable expressing emotions, challenging the notion that vulnerability is a sign of weakness.
- **Peer Influence:** The role of peers in reinforcing or challenging gender norms was a recurring theme particularly in a sport environment.
- **Behavioural Changes in Relationships:** Participants cited examples of improved communication and respect in personal relationships, both within the home and in social settings.

Ethical Considerations

All participants provided informed consent by parents or guardians, and ethical guidelines were strictly followed to ensure confidentiality and voluntary participation. Given the sensitive nature of some of the discussions around gender roles, respect and personal relationships, participants were provided with the option to withdraw at any time. Anonymity was maintained throughout the study, with all identifying information removed from the transcripts.

Discussion

The Man Up - Creating Respectful Relationships Program, designed to challenge harmful stereotypes surrounding masculinity, promote gender equality, and encourage healthy relationships, has been evaluated through an extensive qualitative research study conducted by a researcher at La Trobe University. The program aimed to modify behaviours and attitudes related to gender roles, resilience and respectful relationships among participants in classrooms and sports clubs. This evaluation focused on understanding the extent to which these goals were met or not, exploring the experiences of participants, and assessing the program's long-term impact across different environments.

Changes in Attitudes Towards Gender Equality

One of the primary goals of the Man Up program was to promote gender equality by challenging traditional norms of masculinity. The evaluation found some changes in participants' attitudes towards gender roles and equality, particularly among young men. Prior to the program, many participants held stereotypical views of masculinity, such as equating strength with dominance and emotional restraint. However, after participating in the program, these attitudes shifted, with participants demonstrating a more inclusive understanding of masculinity.

In classroom settings, students reported that discussions about gender roles and the societal expectations placed on gender allowed them to reflect on their own behaviours and beliefs. For some, the program's message about the importance of emotional expression and empathy resonated greatly. Teachers observed that students became more open to discussing gender equality and were more willing to challenge sexist jokes or comments made by their peers. This suggests that the Man Up program succeeded in creating a safe space for students to question and redefine their understanding of masculinity. Similarly, in sports club environments, some participants reported that the program helped break down some of the hyper-masculine behaviours that are often reinforced in male-dominated spaces of football. Teachers noticed that students became more supportive of one another, showing greater respect for their schoolmates' emotional well-being. As one teacher noted, "There's less pressure now to always act tough. The boys in particular are more comfortable talking about their feelings, and it's created a stronger sense of wellbeing in the classroom." However, the evaluation also identified challenges in changing deeply ingrained attitudes, particularly among older students from diverse backgrounds. Some participants were resistant to the program's messages, because of their home and cultural environments. One student said, "I liked the program because we played soccer but didn't think the other stuff was good because my family has strict rules about what girls and boys can do." This highlights the importance of sustained engagement and tailored approaches for different age groups and settings to ensure long-term attitude shifts from the Man up program.

Improved Understanding and Practice of Healthy Relationships

Another key objective of the Man Up program was to foster healthier, more respectful relationships. The evaluation revealed that the program had a positive impact on participants' understanding of what constitutes a healthy relationship, with many reporting improved communication and respect in their personal relationships.

In focus groups with high school students, participants shared that the program's emphasis on respect and consent helped them develop better communication skills in both friendships and romantic relationships. Several students mentioned that they had used the techniques learned in the program to resolve conflicts with friends or family members more constructively. For example, one student stated, "Before, I'd get angry and shut people out. Now, I try to talk things through and listen to their side." This reflects the program's success in teaching young people to prioritise mutual respect and open communication in their interactions with others.

Participants also talked that when playing sport, they were more mindful of how they treated their teammates. Teachers observed that the program's focus on respect and teamwork contributed to improved dynamics both on and off the field. Students were more willing to offer constructive feedback and support to one another, leading to a more positive and collaborative team environment. One student commented, "We've always been competitive, but now it's less about winning and about being a better team and supportive, not mean."

Despite these positive outcomes, the evaluation highlighted the need for ongoing support and reinforcement of the program's messages. Some participants expressed difficulty in applying the concepts consistently in their everyday relationships, particularly when faced with external pressures from peers or societal expectations. This underscores the importance of providing continued opportunities for participants to practice and refine their relationship skills beyond the program's initial duration.

Building Emotional Resilience

Resilience - the ability to cope with adversity and bounce back from challenges - was a central focus of the Man Up program. The evaluation found that participants made some progress in developing emotional resilience, particularly in relation to managing stress, expressing vulnerability, and seeking support when needed.

In the classroom, students reported feeling more comfortable expressing their emotions and seeking help when facing personal difficulties. Teachers observed that a few students who previously struggled with emotional regulation or bottled up their feelings were more likely to open up and ask for support. One teacher noted, "I've seen a real change in how some of the students handle stress. They're more likely to come and talk to me when they're feeling overwhelmed, rather than just shutting down."

However, as with the other outcomes, the evaluation highlighted the importance of ongoing reinforcement of resilience-building practices. While many participants demonstrated improved emotional resilience, during the program and immediately after, teachers expressed difficulty in maintaining these practices six months later, particularly in environments where traditional masculine norms still dominated such as sport. This suggests that continued support, such as follow-up sessions or access to online resources, may be necessary to help participants fully integrate the program's teachings into their daily lives.

Impact on Group Dynamics and Peer Relationships

The evaluation also revealed that the Man Up program had a positive impact on group dynamics, particularly in the classrooms and if they played sport outside of school. Participants reported feeling more connected to their peers and more supportive of one another after completing the program. In sport, they talked about respect, teamwork, and emotional expression helped them foster a stronger sense of camaraderie and mutual support among their fellow players. They suggested that they were more likely to encourage and lift each other up, rather than engaging in negative behaviours such as teasing or bullying when playing sport.

In classrooms, students also reported feeling more comfortable discussing sensitive topics, such as gender equality and relationships with their peers. Teachers noted that the program created a more inclusive and respectful classroom environment, where students were more likely to listen to and support one another. One teacher commented, "The program has really brought the class together. There's more empathy and understanding, and students are more willing to speak up when they see something wrong. I hope this continues beyond the next few weeks."

The evaluation of the Man Up - Creating Respectful Relationships Program revealed significant positive outcomes in terms of changing attitudes toward gender equality, improving relationship skills, and building emotional resilience among participants. The program successfully fostered healthier relationships, increased emotional expression, and promoted respect and equality in both personal and group dynamics. While challenges remain, particularly in terms of sustaining behaviour changes over time and overcoming resistance from certain participants, the Man Up program has made some impact in the classroom, home and sport environments immediately after involvement in the program. Continued engagement and reinforcement of the program's messages will be crucial in ensuring long-term success and wider adoption.

Man Up Meaning

The title of the program, "Man Up", while aiming to challenge traditional notions of masculinity, carries inherent negative connotations that may reinforce the very stereotypes it seeks to dismantle. The phrase "man up" is often associated with societal pressures on men to suppress vulnerability, hide emotions and conform to rigid, harmful masculine ideals. For some participants, particularly those already resistant to the program's messages, the title may unintentionally signal that the goal is to reinforce toughness and emotional suppression rather than promote healthier, more respectful behaviours. Given the sensitivity and complexity of gender dynamics, a title review is recommended to ensure that the program aligns with its progressive objectives. A more inclusive, neutral name could help eliminate any mixed messaging and make the program more approachable to a broader audience, including those who might initially resist its teachings.

Recommendations

Program recommendations based on the research may include:

- Adapt the content delivery to better fit the dynamics of each environment (classroom, home, and sports clubs). For example, schools could focus on educational discussions, while sports clubs could emphasise teamwork and respect in a competitive setting.
- Integrate more activities focused on emotional resilience, as participants showed significant positive responses to discussions on vulnerability and emotional expression. This should include scenarios on managing peer pressure and societal expectations of masculinity.
- Extend the duration of the program or introduce follow-up sessions to provide sustained support, allowing participants to continue reflecting on and applying what they've learned over time. One day programs offer limited impact.
- Create support networks for participants post-program, such as online forums, mentorship or continued access to resources, to help maintain behaviour change and encourage ongoing reflection.
- Look at having both mixed and single sexed programs in high school settings as an option.
- Incorporate more engagement with respected role models (athletes, coaches, or teachers) to model positive masculinity and reinforce the lessons learned in the program.
- Implement a system for long-term evaluation and feedback from participants to assess the sustainability of behaviour changes and identify areas for ongoing improvement.
- Ensure that the program content is culturally sensitive and inclusive, addressing diverse backgrounds and experiences to ensure all participants feel represented and supported.
- Consider changing the title of the program from Man Up.
- Develop the program curriculum to include visual videos, interactive components that are visual and a selection of interactive activities that can be used across different programs.
- Development and facilitation of the program needs to be championed by a staff member who has experience and skills in education and/or community sport development. The young leaders/coaches can be used to support the program.
- Leverage peer influence by incorporating more peer-led discussions, especially in sports club environments, where participants responded positively to learning from their teammates.
- Increase family engagement by creating specific resources and workshops for parents and guardians to reinforce program teachings at home, enhancing the impact on participants' behaviour in familial settings. Work with schools to deliver these during other school programs.

Specific to the Education resources and Website:

- Develop interactive online learning modules that cover key topics like gender equality, healthy relationships, and resilience. Include quizzes, videos, and real-life scenarios to engage users and enhance learning.
- Feature video testimonials from past participants, facilitators, and respected role models (e.g., athletes, teachers) to highlight the program's impact and encourage engagement.
- Provide access to a resource library with downloadable materials, such as handouts, guides, and worksheets, that users can utilise to continue learning beyond the program.
- Introduce gamification elements like badges, progress tracking, and achievements to motivate users to complete modules and stay engaged with the content over time.

- Ensure the website is mobile-friendly so that users can access educational resources on-the-go, especially for students and coaches who may prefer using mobile devices.
- Offer multilingual resources to accommodate users from diverse linguistic backgrounds, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility.
- Provide links to external support services and helplines, such as mental health resources and gender equality organisations, to ensure participants have access to help when needed.



References

- Adams, A., Anderson, E., & McCormack, M. (2010). Establishing and challenging masculinity: The influence of gendered discourses in organized sport. *Journal of language and social psychology, 29*(3), 278-300.
- Anderson, R.D. (2011). Masculinities and sexualities in sport and physical culture: three decades of evolving research. *Journal of Homosexuality, 58*(5), 565-578.
- Cefai, C. (2022). Promoting Resilience and Wellbeing in Children and Young People. *Perspectives on Wellbeing: Applications from the Field, 51*(15).
- Connell, R. W. (2023). Teaching the boys: New research on masculinity and gender strategies for schools. In *The Critical Pedagogy Reader* (pp. 332-354). Routledge. UK.
- Crooks, C. V., Hoover, S., & Smith, A. C. (2020). Feasibility trial of the school-based STRONG intervention to promote resilience among newcomer youth. *Psychology in the Schools, 57*(12), 1815-1829.
- Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Sheldon, S. B., Simon, B. S., Salinas, K. C., Jansorn, N. R., ... & Williams, K. J. (2018). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action*. Corwin Press. USA.
- Fergus, S., & Zimmerman, M. A. (2005). Adolescent resilience: A framework for understanding healthy development in the face of risk. *Annual review of public health, 26*(1), 399-419.
- Flood, M., Dragiewicz, M., & Pease, B. (2021). Resistance and backlash to gender equality. *Australian Journal of Social Issues, 56*(3), 393-408.
- Guthridge, M., Kirkman, M., Penovic, T., & Giummarra, M. J. (2022). Promoting gender equality: A systematic review of interventions. *Social Justice Research, 35*(3), 318-343.
- Keddie, A., Hewson-Munro, S., Halafoff, A., Delaney, M., & Flood, M. (2023). Programmes for boys and men: Possibilities for gender transformation. *Gender and Education, 35*(3), 250-266.
- King, N., Calasanti, T., Pietilä, I., & Ojala, H. (2021). The hegemony in masculinity. *Men and Masculinities 24*(3), 432-450.
- Leach, M. (Ed.). (2016). *Gender equality and sustainable development*. London: Routledge. UK.
- Messner, M. (2009). *It's all for the kids: Gender, families, and youth sports*. Univ of California Press. USA.
- Pease, B. (Ed.). (2020). *Working with men in the human services*. Routledge. UK.
- Pulimeno, M., Piscitelli, P., Colazzo, S., Colao, A., & Miani, A. (2020). School as ideal setting to promote health and wellbeing among young people. *Health promotion perspectives, 10*(4), 316.
- Walsh, F. (2016). Applying a family resilience framework in training, practice, and research: Mastering the art of the possible. *Family process, 55*(4), 616-632.





LA TROBE
UNIVERSITY



CITY IN THE
COMMUNITY