

A Recipe for Healthy Masculinity on Campus

Fraternities and sororities – and Greek life in general – are sometimes known for perpetuating harmful gender norms. You’ve probably heard stories of hazing from fraternity initiations, or about incidents of body-shaming and policing women’s bodies in sororities. But Greek life can also be a source of change on campus. In my workshop on masculinity and Greek life, I challenged fraternity men at Rutgers University to consider how toxic masculinity shapes and harms their community. We brought together members representing many fraternities, and asked ourselves how we could combat gender-based violence within our organizations, and on our campus more broadly. In time, workshops like this one could transform the culture of Greek life for the better – and the campuses they belong to, as well.

About the Chef

I’m Luis. I’m a first-generation college student studying at Rutgers University. I’m majoring in Information Technology and Informatics. I’m active in Greek Life at Rutgers. I’m also passionate about using technology to make a social impact. Learn about me and my work with Breakthrough [here](#).



Ingredients

- ◇ Note Cards: 100 - 200 note cards
- ◇ Black markers for all participants in the room
- ◇ Print worksheets (provided)
- ◇ Tape
- ◇ Scissors

Prep time

Planning this workshop took me roughly three months, which included developing the curriculum, building partnerships, and logistical planning for the actual event.

Cooking time

You’ll need about half a day for the workshop – prep time, a two hour session, and clean-up. But you might want to consider running a social media campaign before and/or after the workshop, which would take additional time.



Recipe:

1. Build partnerships (three months out)

- ◇ Start talking to student groups about the workshop: Greek Life, social justice groups, and others. Figure out whether they would be attendees or if they're open to helping you organize or host the workshop, too. It's always a great idea to have some help, whether it's a co-facilitator, someone to write the curriculum with you, or provide supplies and snacks? Think about what campus groups might be able to support each of your needs.

2. Develop or modify a curriculum (ASAP)

- ◇ Using [mine](#) as a template, you can modify this curriculum to your specific campus setting, fraternity culture, etc. Make any changes or additions you need! If you're focusing on masculinity beyond Greek Life or in a different setting, you can easily replace sections on Greek Life values or even words like "fraternity" with the relevant campus community or group you want to train. There are tons of online resources and example activities you can incorporate into your curriculum, including the [Social Justice Toolbox](#).
- ◇ Remember, it is important to create an inclusive space in order to have nuanced—and at times difficult—conversations about gender norms, masculinity, and violence. You can create that space, through room agreements and icebreakers incorporating personal storytelling. Also, make it clear that questions are welcome. People will come in with different understandings of masculinity, so be sure to create a non-judgmental space for them to ask honest questions.
- ◇ Connect with a campus gender-based violence, prevention, or masculinity advocate and go through the curriculum with them. They put on trainings all the time and can provide you with insights and tips about specific topics you may not have considered. They can also provide help with booking spaces, co-facilitating, and getting the word out about your workshop.

3. Find a location, date, and time (depends on your campus, do this ASAP)

- ◇ You're going to need a room that fits 20-25 people with space to move around.
- ◇ Consider any dates you might need to work around – breaks, exams, and Greek life events? Think about what dates will work best for you and your workshop attendees.

4. Get in touch with potential attendees (one month out)

- ◇ Do some outreach to the Greek organizations you'd like to see attend your workshop. Send them a brief description of your workshop emphasizing that it's a peer-run space. You can reach out directly to individual fraternities or through Greek councils, depending on your campus. It might be worth asking whether they would make attendance at the workshop a mandatory requirement for a representative from each fraternity.
- ◇ Aim for two attendees per fraternity.



5. Practice! (two weeks out)

- ◇ Do a runthrough of the curriculum and flow of the workshop. It will help you feel more comfortable and confident with the material, facilitating, and engaging the audience when the workshop day comes. If possible, practice in front of friends and staff so that they can give you feedback. Take time to practice and make changes to the curriculum or flow of the workshop.

6. Send a reminder (one week out)

- ◇ Confirm all the details with your attendees, and do a final push to any chapters that haven't committed to attend.

7. Pick up your supplies (one week out)

- ◇ Get all your materials for the actual workshop together now – you don't want to scramble on the day of!

8. Run your workshop!

Substitutions:

- ◇ Don't have Greek life at your school? You can create a workshop that addresses specific norms around masculinity in other campus communities as well. What about athletes, male-dominated student organizations, or maybe student government?
- ◇ If you aren't able to run a workshop, you can use elements of this curriculum in other formats. Try starting a conversation about masculinity on [social media](#)!

Helpful Hints:

- ◇ Bring energy to the room – but don't let that energy hide your feelings about the issue. Being vulnerable yourself will make others feel more comfortable doing so, too and this will lead to powerful conversations. Your energy and willingness to share will set the tone for what you see from the participants, so try and embody the spirit of the workshop yourself. The action does *not* have to remain attached to your college/university, especially considering it is an online campaign– consider what will have the most impact.
- ◇ Filling a room can be tough. Direct contact often gets better results than a mass email – personalized outreach through text might work better, if you can get a phone number for someone in each chapter.