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Turn the Wheel: Integral School Counseling for Male Adolescents

David Forbes

In the wake of violent episodes committed by male youths in schools, many male adolescents grapple with the traditional norm of masculinity and the role it might play in contributing to such violence. School counselors need to address the developmental needs of all male youth, because schools play a significant role in the construction of male identities. This article formulates an overarching, inclusive model of integral counseling that enables school counselors to help male adolescents challenge the norm of conventional masculinity. The model draws from 3 areas: transpersonal counseling, holistic education, and mindful social action. The aim is to move the students' level of self-development and identity toward higher and more integrative realms.

In U.S. society today, many male youths struggle with a restrictive norm for masculine success that hampers their development and can harm others (Garbarino, 1999; Kindlon & Thompson, 2000; Pollack, 1998). This norm pressures male youths to prove their masculinity through stoic inexpressiveness and control, avoidance of qualities considered to be feminine, homophobia, competition, domination, and aggression. Influential and highly visible institutions, such as the government and the media, tend to favor male values such as aggression as a means to solve problems. Equally problematic is that male youths often grow up without adequate emotional and conceptual tools that enable them to distance themselves from the norm and become conscious of their own development. Recent incidents of school violence are examples of the destructive effects of boys caught up in the norm. Schools, as Connell (1996) argued, contribute to gender formation and the making of masculinities but do so in an unreflective, inchoate way. Traditional counseling, especially school counseling, has not adequately addressed the mental health needs of all male youths. The goal of this article is to formulate an overarching, inclusive model of counseling that enables school counselors to help boys challenge the harmful aspects of the traditional norm of masculinity and become whole persons. A model that transcends traditional counseling elements and encompasses emergent ones can point toward a fuller meaning of development for everyone.

OUTMODED MASCULINITY

Educators and mental health professionals have recently underscored the damaging extent of the conventional idea of masculinity for boys as well as girls. The difficulties faced by male adolescents are reflected in high incidents of violence, substance abuse, and depression and alienation (Horne & Kiselica, 1999). Faludi (1999) described how many male youths further experience a painful and confusing crisis over the loss of the norm and its privileges.

Yet the breakdown of conventional masculinity allows for the possibility of a more inclusive, egalitarian, and fulfilling vision that many now seek. Moreover, although men's need to change is clearly in the interest of women, arguably, it is also in the interest of men.

COUNSELING FOR WHAT?

Connell (1996) noted that schools are both agents and sites for the formation of a child's concept of masculinity. It is questionable for counselors to accept a range of normal development as a criterion of mental health if that norm, especially with respect to male youths, is itself problematic. As Hanna, Bemak, and Chung (1999) suggested, perhaps a higher standard by which to counsel male adolescents should be the attainment of wisdom, the holistic integration and transcendence of cognitive, affective, and volitional aspects of development. Wisdom, however, is not attained through traditional counseling and education. It may be best alluded to and arrived at through higher, more integrative forms of awareness and through contemplative ways of knowing. One way is through an integral counseling approach.

INTEGRAL SCHOOL COUNSELING

The purpose of integral school counseling is to help a student move toward full development and awareness; this includes the quality of compassion toward oneself and others. It is as necessary for the counselor to engage in this process as it is for the client. Fukuyama and Sevig (1999) believed...
that in counseling, an appreciation of multicultural perspectives and a spiritual approach that sees universality among all people can inform each other. The call for a higher level of conscious development accords with the emerging trend of positive psychology that focuses on how people cultivate wisdom, happiness, and healthy states of mind (Larson, 2000).

MANY CONCEPTS OF MASCULINITY
Male youths can develop a whole sense of themselves without excluding and subordinating women, as Willis (1999) argued, and without harming themselves and other boys. They can come to recognize that there are many concepts of masculinity and that they do not have to live up to any one, narrow, societal vision of manhood (Brod, 1987). Boys can learn to share power with others rather than insisting on power over others. Kupers (1993) believed that when boys' strengths are validated rather than denied, they are more willing to change. Some traditional masculine qualities such as self-control, moral courage, and leadership can be re-framed as positive qualities for both men and women. Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) suggested contrasting these not to perceived female passivity but to what these authors considered to be conventional male traits such as impulsive anger, greed, and selfishness.

Initiation of male youths into a higher form of being differs from one that inducts them into an essentialist model of masculinity. An essentialist model for counseling boys (see e.g., Jolliff & Horne, 1999) assumes one universal, invariant, and biologically deterministic notion of masculinity. As Connell (1995) pointed out, the weakness in the essentialist approach is that the choice of the essence is quite arbitrary, and claims about a universal basis of masculinity say more about the ethos of the claimants than anything else. Boys, as well as girls, can learn to become less identified with and less attached to narrow, oppositional definitions of masculinity and femininity and more aware of the self’s universal qualities.

A WHEEL OF INTEGRAL SCHOOL COUNSELING
An integral counseling model can be represented in the form of a mandala or wheel (see Figure 1). It includes three foundational content areas described by Wilber (1998, 2000). One is personal awareness and exploration of one's inner world and consciousness (I). The second is educational knowledge about the physical and social world (It). The third is social connection, the need for meaningful community, cultural membership, and social justice (We). Each ring consists of these three realms or their combined variants.

The wheel is structured hierarchically in terms of epistemology, or ways of knowing. Within each outer ring, ways of knowing are more evolved than and inclusive of those in the preceding one. The inner ring represents monological knowing. This approach regards knowledge as an object of study and does not require dialogue with the subject of investigation. Within the middle ring, one relies on dialogical approaches to knowledge. This approach uses language to interpret and transform the social meaning of symbols and behaviors. Within the third or outer ring, one draws on transpersonal or contemplative understanding. At this level, through practices such as meditation, one accesses other ways of knowing information and broadly empirical means of verification that, as Wilber (1998) argued, are not reducible to the sensory or mental sciences.

An integral model of counseling youth in schools differs from those that are normative (conservative) and critical (liberal). Normative models seek to adjust students to the dominant conventions of school and society; critical models oppose adjustment in favor of pluralist notions of individual or cultural values. An integral model incorporates and transcends the strengths of both. Based on the research of Kohlberg (1984), Loevinger and Wessler (1970), Kegan (1994), and other developmentalists, it takes into account a person's level of development and seeks to facilitate his or her evolution to the next stage of growth. An integral counseling perspective, however, recognizes higher, transpersonal stages of moral and ego development and also uses transpersonal means to promote comprehensive change. In this way, it aims to improve on current counseling approaches to the evolution of masculine identity.

WHAT IS IN THE WHEEL?

The following is a sketch of the elements found within the wheel. The wheel consists of the self at the hub and the nine content areas, three in each of the three rings.

The Self
At the hub or core of the wheel is the self. Self-development moves from an egocentric self-definition (monological);
through a more conscious, sociocentric self (dialogical); to an expanded, interrelated, integral self that includes identification with all beings and things (contemplative). Fukuyama and Sevig (1999) outlined the phases of a model of Optimal Identity Development researched by L. J. Myers et al. (1991). Table 1 reflects this pattern, which is shared by other developmental theories (Wilber, 2000).

The Inner Ring: Monological Self-Development

Young children display egocentrism through their limited capacity to take on others’ perspectives. Conventional masculinity is a predominant cultural form of egocentrism to the extent that it adopts an individualistic orientation toward others and nature and presumes that the male perspective is normal. The first phase of identity development, individuation (Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999; L. J. Myers et al., 1991), is one in which the dominant culture reinforces a male adolescent’s egocentric self.

A second phase of identity development, the dissonance phase, may occur when the individual attempts to submerge the self within conventional society in order to reduce the discomfort of questioning the norm (Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999; L. J. Myers et al., 1991). For example, male adolescents will often embrace conventional masculinity and try all the more to prove their masculine identity to themselves and others. However, when male adolescents identify with conventional masculinity, and school counselors uncritically seek to adjust them to that norm, the possibility of assuming other perspectives is precluded.

Content Area 1: personal. Traditional school counseling works to strengthen ego functioning, reduce illness, and adjust clients to the dominant norms of society (Strohl, 1998). Male adolescents need help to develop their own personal interests as well as basic skills necessary for social adjustment.

Although teaching male adolescents personal skills is necessary, an exclusive focus on developing personal skills may perpetuate competitive and individualistic patterns of behavior that contribute to social and personal problems in the first place. One study involved the counseling of male adolescents in terms of cognitive-behavioral stress management (Hains, 1992). However, stress management alone becomes a technocratic approach that does not help the participants to question the social sources of their stress nor encourage them to collaborate on addressing them. In another study, adolescents were trained in social skills to reduce their depression (Reed, 1994). Reed uncritically accepted conventional notions about male development and culturally acceptable social goals at the expense of addressing the unique developmental needs of each adolescent.

Yet, humanistic approaches that promote the self without regard to social context are also inadequate. They tend to de-contextualize the self and ignore social inequities. Male adolescents need to learn about themselves and about the social contexts and hierarchies that contribute to their own self-formation and that of others.

Content Area 2: education. The counselor assists male adolescents in achieving success in education, offers career planning, and provides objective knowledge. The DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund (Guerra, 1998) proposed that counselors should spend less time on students’ mental health needs and more time on providing students with sufficient academic guidance and direction and advocating for them to ensure their success in school.

But who defines educational success, and in what terms? For example, advocates of the standards movement seem to accept the typically narrow range of subjects and curricula that boys perceive as acceptable masculine choices. Educators such as Miller (1995), Ohanian (1999), and others have criticized the standards movement for acting in the service of dominant corporate interests.

What is more, academic success is an insufficient criterion for student development. As Kohn (1999) argued, it minimizes other meaningful measures of personal, cognitive, and social growth. The DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund’s (Guerra, 1998) preference for school counselors to focus on academic and student achievement rather than on mental health contributes to the problem. This choice tends to establish a false dichotomy between mental health and education, to subordinate development to measurable achievement, and to reduce learning and knowledge to success as narrowly defined by the school.

Content Area 3: social. School counselors urge awareness of one’s social and group memberships, promote social responsibility, and work to change the environments that affect development and mental health. Even when school counselors work together with social systems such as child and family welfare, juvenile justice, and managed care (Keys, Bemak, & Lockhart, 1998), a shortcoming occurs when counselors do not take into account the unequal and undemocratic power relations in those environments. The social systems that Keys et al. identified may even contribute to or perpetuate the students’ problems; these systems are not necessarily designed to make changes in the environment because they reflect their own bureaucratic or corporate interests. Male adolescents need to learn about

<table>
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<td><strong>Levels of Counseling and Corresponding Identity Development</strong></td>
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<td>Level of Counseling</td>
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unequal and unjust power relations and the politics of social institutions so that they can help to change them in more democratic ways.

**The Middle Ring: Dialogical Self-Development**

In the second ring are more dialogical, critical, and dynamic counseling approaches. They tend to contextualize counseling and educational practices in terms of culture, gender, class, or interpersonal relations in order to promote individual or social change rather than adjustment to conventional norms.

The dialogical model acknowledges the social interdependence of the self; it regards the self as a social being and society as comprising unique individuals. An early stage of this social self occurs as self-identity expands to group membership. It is characterized by feelings of pride and a sense of belonging to a social group (the immersion phase, Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999; L. J. Myers et al., 1991). However, the exclusive focus on group identity difference fails to recognize genuine commonality and universality among others, even one's oppressors and enemies. In school, many boys learn to engage in subcultures of male solidarity that exclude girls and regard them as inferior.

The next, more tolerant, multiperspective phase of the self, internalization (Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999; L. J. Myers et al., 1991), regards identity as including multiple aspects of the self. Multiplicities of selves, however, are relativistic networks that by themselves cannot lead to higher self-development.

A higher stage of self-development furthers personal growth by promoting the meaningful subjectivity of all social relations through social justice. This corresponds to an integration phase (Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999; L. J. Myers et al., 1991) that challenges the dominant society through critical reflection and emancipating practices. Rather than considering a holistic, inclusive self, however, this stage still views the self and the world in external terms and mainly in opposition to socially dominant others and forms of meaning (us versus them).

**Content Area 4: socially conscious counseling (combined personal and social).** Counselors at this level enhance students' awareness and acceptance of their own and others' cultural and gender identities and may promote more socially just forms of relations. However, socially conscious or multicultural counseling can collapse into rigid, intolerant values. For example, Weinrich and Thomas (1998) pointed out that defending diversity-sensitive counseling has led in some cases to harsh criticism, rigid polarization, and doctrinaire rhetoric and behavior. This problem occurs when counseling approaches based on personal experience and social ideology sacrifice the need for openness to knowledge and learning in the service of unassailable political, ideological, and emotional attachments.

Some socially conscious counseling approaches help boys become compassionate, self-aware men who oppose violence and inequality (e.g., Kivel, 1999; Men for Change, 1999). However, they do not provide a mindful practice that allows the practitioners to self-reflect on their own assumptions and processes. These methods, themselves, then often become self-serving, externalized techniques to which the practitioners become overly attached.

Many socially conscious counseling approaches emphasize work with special populations of adolescent boys, for example, Hispanic Americans, gays, and teen fathers (Horne & Kiselica, 1999). One problem is that counseling clients from the a priori standpoint of ethnic or other social categories can lead to meaningless, stereotypical generalities (Lee, 1995). A deeper issue is that the sole focus on identity difference obscures genuine commonality among others.

The issue of development for African American male adolescents is problematic for counselors and educators because of racism in the United States. Schools tend to assume that African American male adolescents must adjust to dominant cultural standards with which many youth are at odds, instead of the school making an effort to meet the cultural, social, and individual needs of these male adolescents (Bass & Coleman, 1997; Lee, 1996).

Lee (1996) developed educational empowerment programs for African American male youth from what he called an African American cultural perspective. Black male adolescents lack positive role models, Lee (1996) argued, and although self-aware, culturally informed, White men can help, "Only a Black man can teach a Black boy how to be a man" (p. 77).

Although many African American male youth do need such empowering interventions, Lee did not challenge the privileges of conventional masculinity within his model. Masculinity is not an internal essence that African American men have or lack but the assumption and possession of a variety of hegemonic privileges, which are denied many of them (Segal, 1990). As hooks (1988) and other African American feminists have argued, the struggle of African Americans should not be made synonymous with African American men's attempts to gain patriarchal power and privilege.

By asserting that there is a unique African American masculinity and that only African American men can teach it, Lee (1996) presumed that there is but one essential African American masculinity and confined himself to a narrow ethnocentrism that closes itself off to dialogue or shared universal values with others. African American men, along with women and gay men, correctly reject the traditional hierarchy of White masculinity that subordinates them, as they struggle to transform the old power relations represented within the concept of White manhood (Segal, 1990). However, African American men, as well as women, gays, and other self-identified group members, may become truly empowered from a vision found within each respective culture that both incorporates and transcends their own unique identity (hooks, 1988).

**Content Area 5: emotional intelligence (combined personal and educational).** Counselors who promote emotional intelligence, or emotional literacy, educate children to become aware of feelings and relationships in order to handle them in satisfying ways (Goleman, 1995). Boys are especially vulnerable to emotional problems because the norm of mas-
culinity discourages them from expressing feelings other than anger and from developing emotional skills such as empathy and the ability to identify their own and others’ feelings. Numerous school programs aim to teach boys emotional and relationship skills (see Connell, 1996; Men for Change, 1999; Pollack, 1998).

Goleman (1995) pointed out that healthy emotions strengthen the immune system and that the emotional brain can be reeducated. However, Goleman (1995) did not integrate emotional literacy with political, social, and economic forces that contribute to adolescent problems. Such problems often are no longer individualistic but are borne by peer groups.

It is ironic that Goleman (1988), with a longtime interest in transpersonal psychology, did not refer to meditation as a means to further self-awareness and to handle emotions, let alone as a basis for mindful social change. Without a transcendent vision, teaching emotional intelligence can become another external method, pedagogical technique, or educational fix that educators apply to others and that allows them to avoid examining and changing their own practices.

Content Area 6: Critical pedagogy (combined education and social). Educators committed to critical pedagogy challenge normative models of education that function to maintain the hierarchy of social power relations based on class, gender, and ethnicity. These educators aim to promote critical awareness of how knowledge is socially constructed and how power plays a role in that construction through what Freire (1970) called a problem-posing form of education. Counselors can use methods of critical pedagogy that help students evaluate popular culture and endorse media literacy (McLaren, Hammer, Sholle, & Reilly, 1995). Popular culture contains images and meanings of masculinity that enter school life, such as those promoted by wrestling and male rappers. Another tool of critical pedagogy is autobiographical writing; instead of accepting dominant-defined gender and cultural identities, critical pedagogues encourage students to produce multiple narratives of the self through writing assignments.

Critical pedagogy, despite its rhetoric about personal meaning and choice, often does not address personal, relational aspects of the student and teacher and does not critically reflect on its own practices. For example, Locke and Faubert (1999) used Freire’s (1970) model of critical consciousness in counselor education but did not spell out any specific method of how the teachers and students actually struggle to carry it out or how they experience the process.

Although boys need literacy skills, there is a problem with relying on literacy alone to help boys overcome conventional masculinity. Language is subject to endless meaning and interpretation based on social context. Counselors need to help students to link language with their innermost meaningful experience, such as one’s interconnectedness with the universe, and not just to regard literacy as a means to change power relations. Some educators urge students to construct multiple narratives of the self through writing and tend to assume that there is no true sense of self to attain, only endless self-interpretations. As Gore (1993) pointed out, language becomes subject to endlessly shifting regimes of power, ideology, and gender relations that can be used in turn to dominate others. Without a higher nonconceptual awareness, literacy skills do no help young men transcend conventional concepts of masculinity.

Freire (1970) and other critical pedagogues overall seem to accept the integration phase of identity development, in which the self seeks liberation from the dominant culture through dialogical and critical knowledge as the highest level of development rather than through a whole union of mind, body, and spirit (hooks, 1994).

The Outer Ring: Contemplative Self-Development

The outer ring represents the transpersonal approach and draws on contemplative knowing. This third, or contemplative, level of self-development furthers individual consciousness, objective knowledge, and social justice by means of an integral, transpersonal awareness (the transformation phase, Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999; L. J. Myers et al., 1991).

Contemplative knowledge is not a narrative that would express a conceptually complete set of information about the self; which is impossible, as postmodernists have shown. Instead, by meditating on the nonexistence, or emptiness, of self, the point is to develop fully the subject’s capacity for nonconceptual clarity, intensity, and expansive, zestful attention. Experience of emptiness requires and strengthens this capacity, until the practitioner becomes capable of resting in this nonconceptual and stable subjective dimension. There is no subjective impulse or objective character by which one is inevitably drawn on to the next incomplete set of details. In this sense, the subject is complete and at rest in ways unimaginable in feminist or other postmodern perspectives. (Klein, 1995, p. 141)

This state of attention, or mindfulness, still includes awareness of the other. What is more, the contemplative appreciation of difference, through commitment to openness, a tolerance for uncertainty, and without preconceptions, can lead to higher development (Simmer-Brown, 1999).

Content Area 7: Transpersonal counseling. Transpersonal counselors help clients transcend identification with the ego and point the way to the realization of the interconnectedness of all existence through higher states of consciousness (Strohl, 1998). Such counselors use meditative practices to help the client go beyond the ego as the highest level of human potential, disengage from overattaching oneself to self-constructs, and attend to deeper feelings and emotional states (Epstein, 1995; Vaughan, 1995). Transpersonal counselors must take into account the student’s ego strengths. The type and degree of emotional problems a male adolescent experiences can limit his capacity for emotional and identity development.

Nevertheless, teens who meditate have reported positive experiences (Bombardieri, 2000). James Garbarino ("Spiritual Empiness," 2000) pointed out that meditation provides male adolescents with a viable, compassionate alternative to repressing feelings or acting them out in destructive ways.
A male teen who practiced meditation in a treatment center said, "I can replace unwanted thoughts much more easily now. I try not to control my feelings, just feel them. Otherwise, they can get stuffed and come out some other way, as abuse" (Derezos, 2000, p. 105).

Some transpersonal counselors, such as Epstein (1995) and Strohl (1998), have minimized community and interconnectedness in terms of engagement with the world or nature. Yet meditation can help one expand the meaning of self. In schools, counselors can help male youth to disengage from narrow self-constructs of masculinity.

Content Area 8: Holistic education. Holistic education promotes an integral approach to learning and development within the context of educational institutions. According to Miller (1997), holistic education has emerged as an outcry against educational forms that deny the wholeness of human life and the spiritual unfolding of each individual by “commodifying” nature (i.e., regarding nature as a commodity for consumption) and reducing the individual to a quantifiable economic resource.

Holistic educators promote higher self-awareness through creating school conditions that enhance a contemplative approach to learning: being open to and attending to the present, taking care, and seeing in each present moment the opportunity for personal and social transformation (see discussion in Glazer, 1999). Boys need to become open to broader educational and curricular possibilities in terms of career choices and their whole development.

Some descriptions of holistic educational programs tend to emphasize educational aspects of development at the expense of psychological needs and social engagement. As it is, Miller (1997) noted that holistic education faces resistance from educators and those in power who consider education primarily as a means to compete and win in the global economy.

Content Area 9: Mindful social action. Mindful social action means spiritually healthy practices that favor creating a harmonious relationship with the environment and others rather than practices that are acquisitive, competitive, violent, and exploitative ones. Counselors can help male adolescents cultivate and care for community as an antidote to the social forces that contribute to the masculine need for what Real (1997) called performance-based esteem and the pressures to "act like a man" (Kivel, 1999).

Counselors can help male adolescents choose meaningful work (in Buddhist terms right livelihood; Whitmyer, 1994) given that they tend to link identity with work. Because many male adolescents also identify being a man with being a conspicuous consumer, they can practice mindful consumption. Mindful consumption depends on feeling whole enough without the compulsive need to validate the self through external commodities or to become overly attached to them. It is linked with awareness of the interdependence of all living things and the need to care for the earth and its precious resources.

Mindful social action must face the limits of a culture that promotes materialistic and individualistic values. What is more, as Boucher (1993) pointed out, exploitative behaviors do not disappear easily, even among those who engage in mindful, socially active practices.

Overall, there is a need for an integral approach that keeps the wheel turning. An integral counseling curriculum for male adolescents would use approaches from all three areas: counseling, education, and social action. Many roadblocks to using an integral model in schools can be anticipated. In introducing the program, the counselor needs to distinguish spirituality, a more commonly shared value, from particular religious beliefs, which, as J. E. Myers, Sweeney, and Witmer (2000) argued, would be inappropriate to impose.

The curriculum also follows Connell’s (1996) distinction between gender-specific and gender-relevant programs. Although it begins with male adolescents (gender-specific), it would at a later time evolve to include female adolescents as well. Counselors can develop parts of the program with teachers who want to create an integral program for male adolescents within a classroom where mindfulness is encouraged. A potential psychological and pedagogical obstacle, however, is male resistance; in formal educational settings, some boys will disrupt or subvert programs to maintain their hierarchical power and privilege (Connell, 1996; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998). Also, male adolescents are subject to peer pressure and tend to display conformist levels of development that reflect conventional masculinity.

A way to avoid resistance is to develop initial aspects of the curriculum through structured voluntary activities. Larson (2000) found that structured voluntary activities for teens produce the necessary conditions of both intrinsic motivation and challenging concentration that are absent from most school or peer involvement. Possible start-up groups are peer-mediation clubs and male athletic teams. In terms of introducing meditation, high school male athletes are motivated to perform in the “zone,” a heightened state of awareness in which they experience deep concentration, lack of self-consciousness, and self-transcendence. As Cooper (1998) and Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi (1999) pointed out, meditation is one way to increase the chances of playing sports in the zone. The effort to facilitate a norm change to a higher level can involve professionally supported peer leaders and mentors for younger students (see discussion in Lewis & Lewis, 1996). A few young male leaders could provide what Gladwell (2000) referred to as the tipping point that helps a norm evolve.

Pilot Meditation/Discussion Group Curriculum

In cooperation with the principal, coaches, parents, and the after-school program of an inner-city high school in New York, I have established a confidential meditation/discussion pilot group for varsity male athletes (Forbes, in press). It is based on the following general components of the curriculum, which are interlinked.

Psychological component. The counseling piece establishes a group based on group counseling principles and then works on various personal problem-solving issues, including the
meaning of masculinity. The group provides a safe space for young men to tell their own stories, to bear witness to one’s own and others’ lives, to explore vulnerable feelings, to reflect on larger values and meanings, to learn emotional skills, and to experience meditation and mindful everyday practice. Through developing empathic skills, male adolescents can increasingly see the world from the standpoint of the other, including other notions of masculinity and worldviews.

Educational component. A holistic educational component is both experiential and formal. It is based on discussions stemming from readings, studying films, and writing position papers and journals. The students learn about social power hierarchies and their place within them. They explore the problematic social and psychological aspects of masculinity within areas such as sports, health, work, peer relations, and popular culture. They learn the rationale for transpersonal activities such as meditation and yoga. The group connects role-playing, visualization, artwork, group projects, guest speakers (such as spiritually evolved adults), and field trips with writing, reading, video production, and research skills. The process of learning is psychologically and politically self-reflective and encourages personally meaningful practices.

Social action component. The social action component consists of mindfully working on a community service project. Students might take on projects that enhance gender relations or fight discrimination. They could serve as mentors and tutors to younger male students in an after-school program. Students could also work on local and global environmental issues and link them with school curricula; research projects; and personal, spiritual, and vocational interests.

Evaluation of Pilot Program

Evaluation by way of action-oriented research (Allen, 1992) or quasi-experimental methods is crucial in order for counselors to demonstrate the credibility and value of the program to the community. Counselors can assess practical outcomes, such as improved academic and personal performance through action research by means of self-reports, observations, and pre- and postprogram questionnaires on development. The pilot program (Forbes, in press) is being evaluated using instruments that measure moral and ego development as well as by other action research methods that assess goals shared by the school community, such as character development, conflict resolution skills, and improved school performance.

CONCLUSION

School counselors can help male adolescents to challenge the norm of conventional masculinity through an integral approach that provides a greater opportunity for them to reach full awareness and self-development. Counselors can assess students’ developmental levels and aspects of the self in need of change and use an appropriate approach from the wheel that helps the students to evolve. An overall contemplative approach that includes meditation may help male youths avoid attachment to restrictive, conventional notions of masculinity and may allow them to be more open to a full range of their own and others’ experience. This model of inclusive integral counseling also invites us as counselors and educators to contemplate our own levels of self-awareness.

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