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**TEACHER'S NOTES FOR BOY'S TALK**  
(Written by Ken Miller and Angelique Malcolm)

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**Boys Talk** is a series of monologues based on interviews with teenage boys and men about issues their adolescence and issues pertaining to it. The accounts are sometimes humorous, sometimes moving and always engaging.

**DISCUSSION POINTS & POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES**

1. Ask the boys which stories they related to, which they did and didn't enjoy and why.
2. Discuss societal perceptions and stereotypes of men. This could involve looking at the different ways the media portrays them – e.g. popular television programs, movies, magazines. Ask the boys how this affects the way they see themselves. What are the positive things that boys can learn from “tough guy” role models? (e.g. Strength, resilience, independence, courage.) What are the negative aspects? (e.g. aggression, inability to express emotions, be vulnerable, etc.)
3. Boys often find it difficult to talk about their feelings. Sometimes it seems as if boys and men don't have any feelings, but of course they do – and they need to express them rather than keeping them “bottled up”. Through discussion, ask boys to identify emotions and feelings that are explored in the various monologues. Refer specifically to characters and stories presented and then ask boys if they can think of other similar examples from their own experiences.
4. Bullying and harassment is a problem for many boys. Ask boys to list examples of when they acted as bullies and when they've been victims of bullying and harassment. Ask them to come up with solutions for how a different outcome might have been achieved in either case.
5. Boys often need activities at school that are better suited to their ways of learning – for example activities that require teamwork and physical activity. In groups, ask boys to have a go at some curriculum planning! Get them to come up with lesson ideas in various subjects that involve teamwork and interesting physical activities but which also have clear learning outcomes.
6. It has been said many times that men and women, boys and girls seem to be from different planets. In the context of areas such as communication, self-expression and sexuality get boys to describe how things are different on these two planets – e.g. customs, laws, social structures. Get them to propose how

these two different “species” from *Planet Guy* and *Planet Chick* might be able to co-exist better on each others planets!

7. Sport is important to many boys. It has both positive and negative aspects. For example, positive aspects include belonging to a group (community) of men, friendship and support of other males, expressing oneself physically, spending time with both older and younger males, learning about collaboration. On the other hand, aggression, and an over-emphasis on competition, performance pressure can be seen as negative aspects.
8. Boys and young men respond well to being challenged by personal goals. Get boys to work in pairs or small groups to establish personal goals for themselves, as well as working out the steps that need to be taken to achieve those goals.
9. Leaders and positive role models are very important to all of us. Through discussion list public figures who provide positive role models for boys and young men? In what ways are they good role models. Also, invite boys to write down who are other good role models in their lives. And ask them to reflect on the ways in which these men provide good examples.
10. Boys need role models to show them that learning and self-expression is a masculine activity. Through discussion, develop a list of positive male role models from areas such as the arts and sciences and other areas of learning and self-expression.
11. Boys find it much easier to express their feelings when engaged in physical activity. Develop exercises in which boys can combine physical activity with expression of their thoughts and feelings.

#### Books and Internet Resources

Biddulph, Steve. *Manhood*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Finch Publishing, Australia. 2002.

Biddulph, Steve. *Raising Boys*. Finch Publishing, Australia.

Bly, Robert. *Iron John: A Book About Men*. Element, London, 1991.

Elium, Don and Jeanne. *Raising a Son*. Beyond Words, California, 1992.

Rigby, Ken. *Bullying in Schools (and what to do about it)*, ACER Books, Sydney, 1996.

Manhood Online – [www.manhood.com.au](http://www.manhood.com.au)

Boys forward – <http://www.boysforward.com>

Any Other Ideas? Class Act is always looking for suggestions to make their shows better and more effective. Please fill out and return the feedback sheet provided, or ring Angelique Malcolm on (08)9337 2060 or 0411 122 064