

The YBMen Project

The Young Black Men, Masculinities, and Mental Health (YBMen) Project

Why should we care about young Black men?

There are tensions associated with race, gender, and class that affect the lives of Black men and boys. They experience discrimination, encounter narrow stereotypes, and face significant economic, neighborhood, and social hardships that are unique to them and their deeply held beliefs about what it means to be a man.

Black men and boys who believe they are not living up to the expectations placed on their gender are at high risk for substance abuse, depression, and anxiety. In addition, beliefs about masculinity discourage taking care of oneself and seeking healthcare. Despite this, the mental health challenges experienced by Black men and boys has largely been left out of national discussions. Programs are needed that are sensitive to race, culture, and gender and that aim to improve the living, learning, working, and thriving of Black men and boys.



What is the YBMen Project?

The Young Black Men, Masculinities, and Mental Health (YBMen) Project is a culturally sensitive, age-appropriate, and gender-specific program that addresses the pressures experienced by Black men and boys, especially issues related to mental health, manhood, and social support. The YBMen Project uses social media to provide mental health education and social support to Black men and boys using information and prompts from popular culture (e.g., YouTube videos, photos, song lyrics, sports, entertainment, and current news headlines). Our team leads daily discussions with participants in their preferred social media platform.

What is next for the YBMen Project?

Our team is committed to developing low-cost, high impact health promotion programs that use technology to engage and support the health of young Black men and boys. We are currently expanding and lengthening the YBMen Project, as requested by participants. We are collecting information from young Black men and boys across the country, which will inform how we adapt the YBMen Project to different settings.








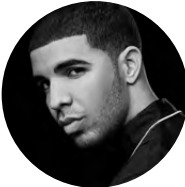

Looking ahead, we will expand the YBMen Project in several locations across the United States and other countries, focusing on different health topics affecting young Black men and boys. We believe the YBMen Project not only improves the lives of Black males, but also the communities in which they live. It also has potential to influence service providers and policies affecting Black males over the life course.



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Sample 6-week Curriculum for YBMen Project

	TOPIC	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT/SUN
WEEK 1	Introduction to YBMen Project & Orientation		Post 'getting to know you' exercises on the Facebook/Instagram wall		Post orientation info about the YBMen Project		
WEEK 2	(Black) Manhood	Post pictures and Videos about Black manhood			Post questions about how Black manhood is represented in society		
WEEK 3	Mental Health		Mental Health is on a continuum			Engage in discussions about past and current mental health	
WEEK 4	Well-being	Review YouTube videos on wellbeing		Post pictures and videos of Black men who have positive well-being		What do 'healthy' Black men look like?	
WEEK 5	Social Support	Define social support for Black men	View YouTube videos on support		Review song lyrics about social support and discuss how they relate to young Black men		Post images of social support with Black men
WEEK 6	Wrap up & Closing		YBMen Project Wrap up	Re-cap what we discussed over the past 6 weeks			What will we take away from the YBMen project?

How does the YBMen Project work?

The YBMen Project uses social media platforms to provide mental health education and social support to Black men and boys who may be uncomfortable discussing sensitive issues face-to-face.



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The innovations of the YBMen Project include our ability to:

- 1 Examine an understudied subgroup of men and boys so we can learn more about ways to support them
- 2 Engage deeply with the social media content generated by our Black male participants, using a variety of methods to document the ways they communicate about mental health, manhood, and social support
- 3 Raise awareness about the influence of race, gender, and culture in mental health and well-being



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