

## Thoughts on Violence

**These questions can be used in a number of ways. Here are some brief instructions:**

- *If there are two of you or you can break up into groups of two, take turns asking each other the following questions. Set a timer and interview each other for approx. 15 minutes each.*
- *If you are more than two, you can also discuss these questions as a group. Start by selecting a moderator. The moderator starts by reading the instructions. Take one question at a time, going around the group, then open up the discussion for all.*
- *The point of the exercise isn't about saying the "right" thing. It's supposed to give you the chance to share your views and experiences, to listen and be supportive. Don't interrupt each other and try to listen actively and encouragingly, don't criticize. If you're brave and generous, it's a much easier process!*
- *Go ahead and finish up with a round of questions about how it felt to discuss these topics and talk about what kind of goals we can set going forward with this work to change things.*

**Warm up questions! Just answer yes or no!**

- A man ought to be able to take a punch
- When I enter a room, I check to see if there are any threatening guys/men there.
- All men are really nice and caring under the surface
- I want to be like my dad
- When I hug a guy, I finish it with a pat on the back

## QUESTIONS

**What does violence mean to you? Have you been a victim of violence or used violence yourself?**

*Possible follow-up questions: How did it feel? Have you ever enjoyed hitting someone? Did you regret it? Did you regret not hitting back?*

**Why do you think men are so good at violence? Considering that nearly all violence; against women, other men, is carried out by men.**

**Violence can be anything from derogatory remarks and harassment to severe physical violence – what do you think is most damaging? Why?**

*Possible follow-up questions: Would you say that was the same when you were younger?*

**Many of the men we see in films and sports are incredibly violent... Have any of those figures been role models for you? Or used to be?**

*Possible follow-up questions: Can you give names and say why they were role models? Are there any cautionary examples of men you didn't want to be like?*

**What happens exactly when a large group of men get together, like as fans at a sporting event? Or at protests. Men do things there they wouldn't do otherwise. Have you ever felt that feeling?**

*Possible follow-up questions: What about the "acceptable" forms of violence, used by police and military? Where it's considered OK to be violent, what kind of signals does that send?*

**Then we have violence in close relationships. Hitting a person you love, or used to love. How do things get to that point for men, what do you think?**

*Possible follow-up questions: What can we do about it? Is more punishment a good solution? What do those men need in order to not do it again?*

## **CONCLUDING QUESTIONS**

**What kinds of dreams do you have for yourself as a man when you're 40?  
What about 60?**

**What do you wish you knew as a young man... when you were 13?**