

## Meeting Details

- Date and Time: 9/14/2020, 8-9pm
- Location: <https://zoom.us/j/92640669024?pwd=YnZQMFRvN0xzc2hjcS93NXI3NytDZz09>

## Attendees

- Host
  - Rox Anderson, They/Them

## Purposes for being present today

- Folks shared that they are looking forward to learning more about inclusion, engaging in a great conversation with community, unpacking the ways these manifest for our community specifically

## Introduction and Grounding Definitions

- Start with a definition of Toxic Masculinity as it is the source of much of misogyny.
  - Harmful to everyone - women, men, trans folks, etc
  - It is not intended to demonize men; just recognize some of the harmful effects related to traditional/stereotypical masculine norms
  - Can include things like dominance, homophobia, and transphobia that circulate out of the idea that men are superior and therefore better
  - Encompasses the violence that co-occurs with these notions such as sexual assault and relationship violence
  - Bullying and other dynamics add to these issues
  - Emotional repressions and other psychological problems result, and toxic masculine traits can proliferate in the form of mental health, substance abuse
  - Posturing to assert dominance such as catcalling and related social behaviors are also harmful results
  - These manifest emotionally in anxiety, depression, withdrawal from connection to others. These all add to a weight that harms men further (and everyone)
- Trans folks and our community
  - Part of transitioning for many people can include *aligning* with gender norms. Folks who are finally invited to express their gender in alignment with who they are can sometimes pendulum far into masculinity and pick up toxic masculine behaviors, e.g. aggression
  - There are lots of reasons, for example hormone changes could make it difficult to access the emotional regulation tools or balance that they are used to.
  - It's common for transmasculine folks to say they are experiencing more anger than they are used to--emotions ascribed more often to men that they are not used to sitting with. They are also often moving into that space without help from counselors and therapists who may ignore it.
  - This mimics "boys will be boys" more broadly in society. We should engage with the toxic masculinity, the posturing, the anger (all of these things are generalizations, and

do not apply to everyone, but some people do experience them). By disregarding them we are unable to deal with them

- Transmisogyny:
  - We are starting with toxic masculinity because it is the source of oppression along gender lines.
  - Transmisogyny: the intersection of misogyny and transphobia
    - Includes misogyny, sexism, transphobia, and cissexism toward trans women and transfeminine people that may not be experienced by cisgender women or trans men,
  - Laverne Cox really changed the conversation around this
  - *Whipping Girl*: seminal book. Julia Serano writes that the existence of trans women is seen as a threat to a "male-centered gender hierarchy, where it is assumed that men are better than women and that masculinity is superior to femininity
  - Affects our interrelationships with other people specifically the presence of "consuming" others. Also gets baked into our social structures like laws, policies, and social structures.
  - How can we use inclusive gendered language across cultures:
    - E.g. latine/x communities wanted the more masculine language on the t-shirts to be culturally competent
    - We have a keen awareness of cultural norms around gender in our community
    - The way words are gendered in language change the adjectives that are used e.g. "key" is masculine in German and feminine in Spanish. Spanish tended to describe the key using "delicate" and other traditionally "feminine" terms. In German, the descriptions tended to use "jagged" and more "masculine" terms.
    - See [Gender Neutral Pronouns: They're Here, Get Used To Them](#)

## How have folks addressed transmisogyny?

- Personal anecdote: at social event, 'masculine' folks gathered to put a grill together while 'feminine' identified folks went in to the house to prep food. The sharer noted that they were pushed into a role of organizing the grill-building presumptively because they were the least masculine in the group. Even though there were many family members who are queer and trans and gnc, the isms played out in a simple, ordinary, uneventful situation. The sharer noted that they verbalized the issue to the family so they could re-organize the event.
- Reaction: I am struck by the fact that in addition to performing toxic masculinity, people calling up health coalitions and saying "because I'm on testosterone I am feeling increased aggression" and that could be an opportunity to explore how we can explore the relationship we have with aggression, limits and boundaries, how can we as a society talk about what aggression means to us.
- Some of this is conditioning. Maybe someone is using their voice differently. Maybe they felt the need to be more quiet when presenting in a feminine way. Sometimes what happens is the embodiment of self is different and holding the physical presence is allowed in a way that isn't when folks are perceived to be feminine and less allowed to take up space in that way.

- Transmasculine folks specifically can have such a different reactions to testosterone. For many it chills them out, for others there can be more anger or aggression. For others it's a very neutral experience. Femmes are often put in the role of setting boundaries and educating transmen on where the lines are. If you don't come up in a space where you are guided by people, you run the risk of buying in to what masculinity is--which is fraught with toxic masculinity. The positive things within masculinity can be really powerful and thus we need to take the good and thread developing masculinities so that the toxic parts are avoided/not picked up.
- Within spaces where trans men are known to be trans or queer, there is another type of transmisogyny which appears where transmen are subject to the gender-based biases such as doing the "housekeeping" work. The way patriarchy oppresses continues for transmen.
- Transmasculine folks who continue to identify with Butch, women's communities, and/or remain tapped in to femme communities can provide a constant stream of new information about gender relationships among a community. They challenge and create vulnerabilities in how we confront and interact with one another. We can learn from femmes in finding vulnerability
- **Book:** *Chemically Enhanced Butch* by Ty Bo Yule - multiple folks are either reading it now or are about to. Great memoir that looks at these complex gender nuances for transmasculine folks that we are discussing.
- The expectation we have as a community asks us how we continue to model it and teach it to others. How do we interrupt the larger systemic toxic masculinity and transmisogyny in our own communities. How do we continue to do this work both within the context of our relationships with other people and in our roles in our communities. As someone that has been in positions of leadership, it is important to continue to have these conversations with younger trans people who come out.
- Speaking to the transmisogyny we have seen in our lives: there is high visibility for transfeminine folks, specifically in media. A lot of stereotypes are negative portrayals of trans-women. This prevented one participant from recognizing their own transness and leading to transphobia when those negative stereotypes were the only thing they were able to see when they were younger, especially for anyone who doesn't have trans representation in their lives.