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OPINION

## The Importance of a Male Presence in College Counseling

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The Taoist concept of yin and yang asserts that in order to have a healthy equilibrium in society, as in nature, integration must be achieved between two complementary and interdependent energies. Jung (Fordham, 1966) was most articulate about bringing this concept to bear on Western psychotherapy, and in particular, discussed its importance for balance in men and women alike. He noted that there was a yin and yang to everyone and that it was in this integration that we brought together the best of the conscious and unconscious: wisdom, empathy, discernment, and equanimity.

Jung (Fordham, 1966) believed that men and women embodied and actualized these energies in distinct and yet highly prized ways, and that the health of the culture itself relied on the proper balancing of them. While this may seem like a quaint notion in our postmodern, postbinary world, there is something elemental about it that seems to have gone missing in our dialogues about the importance of a male presence in our field and at our centers.

Men are fast becoming an endangered species in our profession and in college counseling centers today. After nearly 10 years, it's a trend that is hard to ignore. It reminds me of a scene from the show *Cabaret* (Kander et al., 1998) where the audience hardly notices the musicians slowly disappearing from the orchestra. In a less sinister fashion, men are exiting from the stage of psychology, and as a profession, we don't seem very concerned.

In this article, I will focus on the state of men as counselors and patients of psychotherapy in colleges and the ways in which a more complex narrative of these issues has been neglected. In bringing together the microissues of the experience of male subgroups alongside men more broadly, it is hoped that a view with greater depth and dimension will emerge. Another important goal of this article is to demonstrate the need for psychologists to examine the data a little closer when making claims about men as a whole or in part, and to synthesize these findings with a healthy respect for possible complexities and contradictions.

Throughout this piece, I will discuss ways that college counselors, professors, and students can support scholarship, training, and outreach that forward multifaceted portraits of male psychology, efforts to reach out

to underserved male clients in college counseling, discussions about the diverse experiences of males in college and graduate programs, and ways to promote an overall college culture in which men's contributions are valued and prized.

The male imbalance in our field has been largely fueled by economic and sociological factors. Over the past 20–30 years, lower salaries and the diminishing status of psychology due to the rise of managed care has led men to exit the field for more lucrative careers (Carey, 2011; Cynkar, 2007; Willyard, 2011). Cantor (Cynkar, 2007) posits that this trend created the space that women quickly began to fill. From a sociological standpoint, improvements in access for women into psychology training and employment and a concerted effort to right injustices have also led to a surge in the numbers of women in the field. Serving as a necessary corrective to an inequitable workplace, the success of women in clinical and research practice in psychology since the 1970s has been an enriching and valuable addition to our profession.

From a conceptual standpoint, with a more and more narrow focus on subgroups that have been underserved (gay men, African American men, etc.), the macroissue of men's place in psychology as clinicians and patients has been largely unexamined. Conversely, when men are scrutinized through a wider lens, they have often been deprived of the kind of multidimensional treatment that we as psychologists treasure in our work. Both present hidden problems in the way we view and think about men in psychology and college counseling today.

According to the American Psychological Association, Center for Workforce Studies (2011), men are a growing minority in the field of clinical psychology, with women earning doctoral degrees outnumbering men 3 to 1. Data show that the percentage of psychology PhDs awarded to men has fallen from nearly 70% in 1975 to less than 30% in 2008. The gender reversal is also prominent in clinical, counseling, and school psychology programs, with the respective percentages of male doctoral trainees at 23%, 26%, and 18% (American Psychological Association, Commission on Accreditation, 2014). This percentage shrinks even further when one considers underrepresented male groups (American Psychological Association, Center for Workforce Studies, 2010).

Within college counseling, the gender imbalance is also striking. The Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors (2015) reports that men comprise 28% of counseling center staff and 37% of counseling director positions. This underrepresentation of men in college counseling centers is problematic because it may deter men from seeking counseling services, makes it difficult to serve the needs of clients who prefer working with a male psychologist, and may have a negative impact on productivity, creativity well-being, and retention in college counseling

centers as workplaces (Herring, 2009; Wegge, Roch, Neubach, Schmidt, & Kanfer, 2008).

With respect to men as consumers of counseling, trends show that males are the least likely group to seek help both in terms of mental health and medical treatment (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Blazina & Watkins, 1996; Good, Dell, & Mintz, 1989; Kim & Omizo, 2003; Mahalik, Good, & Englar-Carlson, 2003). They make fewer contacts with physicians and seek help less often than women for a host of issues, including depression, drug and alcohol use, and medical concerns (Mansfield, Addis, & Mahalik, 2003). Even when comparably distressed, men do not seek out counseling services at the same rate as women (Mansfield et al., 2003) and hold more negative attitudes toward therapy (Andrews, Issakidis, & Carter, 2001; Gonzalez, Alegria, & Prihoda, 2005). More specifically, women have been shown to be twice as likely as men to seek out therapy or medication for mental health issues, and are more likely to acknowledge & report struggling with emotional and psychological issues (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, 2013). Blumberg, Clarke, and Blackwell (2015) report that one in three men (33%) with daily feelings of anxiety or depression took medication for those feelings, and just over a quarter (25.7%) talked to a mental health professional within the past year (Blumberg et al., 2015).

These issues worsen when we examine the trends for men of Color and sexual minorities. African Americans and Hispanic Americans used mental health services at about one half the rate of Whites in the past year and Asian Americans at about one third the rate (Blumberg et al., 2015). Additionally, compared with White Americans, people of other races were less likely to have proper access to mental health care (Blumberg et al., 2015). Younger men of Color reporting daily feelings of anxiety or depression were also less likely than their White peers to take medication or receive counseling (Blumberg et al., 2015). Regarding gay and bisexual men as clients in college counseling, statistics indicate that they represent between only 4%–6% of the college counseling sample (Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors, 2015).

Internal and cultural barriers lead men to self-stigmatize and avoid going to counseling. In addition, poor access to health care plays a large role in the difficulties men face in receiving mental health treatment. Overall, it is clear that men are challenged with making their way to counseling, and that they are underserved by our profession in a number of important ways.

Despite being a statistical minority in the counseling profession and as patients, men continue to possess what McIntosh (1988) has termed privilege; “an invisible knapsack of special provisions, assurances ... emergency gear and blank checks” that function as unearned rights. Men continue to hold a number of these advantages by virtue of their gender, including higher

salaries for the same work (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2016), a higher proportion of leadership positions compared to women in many fields (Warner, 2014), and the implicit perception that men have greater authority and credibility (Isacco, Hammer, & Shen-Miller, 2016).

In 2015, full-time female employees made only 79 cents for every dollar earned by men, a gender wage gap of 21% (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2016). On average, women earn less than men in virtually every single occupation for which there is verifiable data (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2016). Furthermore, although they represent almost 52% of all professional-level jobs, American women lag substantially behind men when it comes to their representation in leadership positions of nearly every stripe and variety, in the financial, medical, legal, financial, and information technology sectors (Warner, 2014).

When discussing advantages of being a male in psychology, 14% of clinical psychology doctoral students polled mentioned historic societal male privilege, indicating that being male automatically confers greater respect, authority, and credibility (Isacco, Hammer, & Shen-Miller, 2016). Within the larger category of men, there are various gradations of male privilege, with those who are White, heterosexual, and Christian in this country possessing and/or being perceived as having the most power.

In contrast, there are a number of subgroups of men who hold less privilege and are dramatically underrepresented in the field of clinical psychology and college counseling. African American, Asian, and Latino men respectively comprise 1.2%, 1.6%, and 2.5% of the population of clinical psychology doctoral students (American Psychological Association, Commission on Accreditation, 2014). Taken together, they make up just over 5% of doctoral students, compared to the 17% of men who are White (American Psychological Association, Commission on Accreditation, 2014). These statistics are strikingly similar with regards to PsyD students, with numbers for African Americans, Asians, and Latino men at 1%, 1.3%, and 2.75% respectively (American Psychological Association, Commission on Accreditation, 2014). The American Psychological Association indicates that 7% of doctoral student report being gay or lesbian, and slightly under 2% responded that they were bisexual (American Psychological Association, Center for Workforce Studies, 2011); however, it is unclear what proportion of these individuals are men.

In college counseling centers, statistics are only partly informative as well, since many are not parceled out amongst interacting identities (i.e., Latino, Asian, vs. African-American straight and gay males). Broadly speaking, African Americans, Latinos & Asians respectively make up 10.2%, 7.4%, and 6.7% of counseling center staff (Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors, 2015). Similarly, only 6% of college counseling directors report being gay or bisexual (Association for University and College

Counseling Center Directors, 2015). Although these data are not clearly differentiated by gender, one can easily infer that the proportion of men in these groups is much smaller, given the low number of males in doctoral programs

Research is beginning to suggest that privilege not only negatively impacts those who do not have it, but that it also has detrimental effects on those who do, leading men with privilege to be less likely to seek counseling and address their emotional concerns and to be negatively affected by psychosocial stress associated with privilege (Farough, 2005; Neale, 2012). More research needs to be conducted to elucidate the kinds of psychological stress this privilege engenders, and ways in which it can be ameliorated as part of larger outreach efforts to men.

During this year's presidential election, there were a number of male groups, both with and without privilege, expressing a lack of belonging, a sense of disenfranchisement, and challenges with connecting to healthy means of pride and empowerment. For males without privilege, this was linked in part to issues of marginalization, discrimination, and oppression, as well as lower rates of college and graduate school attendance, and lower levels of employment. For males with privilege, it was connected in part to a widening discrepancy between their perceived advantages and their actual success academically and in the job market (*The Economist*, 2015; Whitmire, 2009).

This discrepancy may easily become an area of confusion and conflict for men with privilege, and without a self-respecting way to discuss it and find a "place at the table," these issues may be resolved in problematic ways. One pattern that was seen in certain segments of the male population this presidential election year was the conversion of these unexplored issues into maladaptive and unhealthy forms of masculinity imbued with racism, homophobia, misogyny, and xenophobia.

Camosy (2016) links this to the divergent worldviews of college-educated and working class voters and the ways in which this gets played out most dramatically on college campuses. His claim is that colleges have been insular and monolithic in the diversity of worldviews that they tolerate and support and that those who disagree with these views on philosophical or theological grounds have risked "being marginalized as ignorant, bigoted, fanatical, or some other dismissive label" (Camosy, 2016). In particular, he cites differences on a variety of issues such as: religion, personal liberties, and the role of government, marriage, sexuality, and prenatal life.

Noncollege educated men have been a big portion of this group and have reportedly felt their views to be misunderstood and mislabeled as bigoted rather than as merely divergent. Camosy (2016) argues that differing attributions of these issues has led to increased polarization and a lack of clarity with respects to how to understand divergent viewpoints. Males with historic

privilege appear to be a large segment of this group, and more research is warranted on further illuminating how these issues are affected by other factors such as class, religion, ethnicity, and race. Furthermore, it will also be helpful to differentiate between these diverse worldviews and toxic forms of masculinity, and to determine any possible overlaps between these issues.

While more research is warranted on the various sides of these issues expressed by men of all varieties and backgrounds this election year, it seems clear that something is occurring, on multiple fronts, that men are attempting to speak about. It would be of great value for our field, and colleges counseling centers in particular, to take the lead in making sense of the complicated and at times contradictory crosscurrents occurring here within the contemporary psychology of men.

While these complex issues of privilege are beginning to be discussed, unfortunately, issues related to the broader class of men seem to be neglected or avoided (Whitmire, 2009). Furthermore, the perpetuation of a popular mindset regarding men as an entire class (i.e., that they are and *always* will be a privileged majority), fueled by ideological motivations and historical lenses, rather than on the data itself (Kahneman, 2011) may lead to unintended negative consequences on men in the field and those aspiring to become a part of it. For this reason, the place of men in our field and at college counseling centers is worth reflecting on.

Why is this important in college counseling? Put simply, it is because colleges are the place where a whole generation of men comes of age and where many experience counseling for the first time, discovering that it is a space that is hospitable and helpful to them in answering the big questions. At a time when they are determining and charting their identities and career paths, it is also where many men are inspired to go into the field. College counseling is also an important training ground for future male clinicians via our externship and internship programs. Through mentoring experiences, it is an arena for our male trainees to learn firsthand about the value of their contributions to the field.

Data shows that men are underrepresented in number of ways on college campuses. Within higher education, trends show that more females attain baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral degrees in comparison to men (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2010, 2012). With respects to enrollment, the male–female ratio of students has moved in favor of females since the 1970s, and across private and public schools there is now between a 10% and 20% discrepancy between the genders (Borzelleca, 2012). We also know that men are among the least served major group in counseling centers, comprising only 36% of the population at counseling centers across the country (CCMH, Pennsylvania State University, 2016). Of these 36%, men of Color are least represented in college counseling, with numbers for Asian, Latino, and African American

men at 7.2%, 7.1%, and 7.5 % respectively compared to the 71.5 % who are White males (CCMH, Pennsylvania State University, 2016).

On campus, men may feel that they have relatively few spaces that are solely dedicated for their benefit and improvement. Only the University of Massachusetts, Simon Fraser University, and the University of Manitoba have Men's Centers available for men to discuss and explore their common struggles (Reiner, 2016). Similarly, just two colleges in the United States have independent men's studies programs: Hobart and William Smith Colleges and Stony Brook University. All of these programs exist with much pushback and controversy. Reiner (2016) writes:

Talk of empowering men emotionally yields eye rolling at best, furious protest at worst—as when the Simon Fraser center was proposed, in 2012, and men and women alike challenged the need for a “safe space” for members of the dominant culture.

Parallel to the experience of male college students, Isacco and colleagues (2016) found that just over a third (36%) of male psychology doctoral students described feeling outnumbered, as if part of a minority group. Nearly a quarter (23%) reported feeling stigmatized because of being male, feeling misperceived as being less mature, less emotional, and vulnerable to sexual misconduct accusations (Isacco et al., 2016). Doctoral trainees also reported feeling less welcome and included in female-dominated groups and less comfortable around female peers and professors, noting a pressure to conform and adjust their behavior in classroom and other settings. Sixteen percent of the sample felt a lack of social, financial, family, or program support for men in the field (Isacco et al., 2016).

When asked about what strengths they brought to the profession, over half of male doctoral trainees (54%) reported that they brought a unique male perspective, one that added balance, diversity, and vitality to their cohorts and served as a useful counterbalance to misperceptions of men (Isacco et al., 2016). Nearly a third (29%) of male trainees believed it was a strength to be a positive match for clients, that is, serving clients who preferred to speak with a male therapist, and 16% of trainees felt that men provided positive role models of masculine behavior to clients, women, peers, and faculty (Isacco et al., 2016). In particular, these men noted the virtues of modeling appropriate expression of emotion and other qualities that challenged restrictive male socialization (Isacco et al., 2016; Reiner, 2016). For some of these men, the motivation for being a positive male role model arose in response to the negative view of men taken by the media, society, women, and other psychologists (Isacco et al., 2016).

There have been dramatic changes in the way masculinity has been conceptualized over the past 10–20 years, and it continues to evolve with the generational changes that, like our computer and phone technologies, are accelerating rapidly. One of the best examples of this shift comes from a poem by Pulitzer Prize winner Stephen Dunn (2004).



Entitled “Achilles in Love” (Dunn, 2004, p. 66), the poem envisions the brash and stoic mythological warrior, learning to welcome and even love the sides that initially make him uncomfortable: his capacity for emotional availability, generosity, and intimacy. In short, we come to find a man who is able to both embrace his inner and outer strengths, and do so in a related and three-dimensional way.

Initially, however, “there was no getting to his weakness / In public, even in summer, he wore / big boots, specially made for him / a band of steel reinforcing each heel” (Dunn, 2004, p. 66). Armored in the traditional mold of masculinity, Achilles exemplifies here the plight of the 21st-century man, stifled and burdened by the legacy of traditional masculinity, but simultaneously searching a new path.

The woman with whom Achilles falls in love is equally superior in all the same ways—strength, intelligence, and physical attractiveness—such that she is able to convince him to take off his boots and wear sandals. His heel thus exposed, he is in touch with his own vulnerability and a newfound strength which he can now enjoy and celebrate. At the conclusion of the poem, we learn that “Even in victory, he’d / walk away without angering a single god.” He never felt “so open to the world” and now “you could see in his face something resembling terror / but in fact it was love, for which he would die” (Dunn, 2004, p. 66).

A trio of psychologists—William Seymour, an affluent White male from suburban Wisconsin, Ramel Smith, an African American male from urban Milwaukee, and Hector Torres, a gay male from Puerto Rico—have been involved in an outreach project to bring these poetic ideas to life (Clay, 2012). They have spearheaded an awareness campaign and a pilot program that brings middle and high school-aged boys of different ethnicities together in an 8-week program to teach boys about what is positive and virtuous within traditional masculinity, as well as to critically examine the more problematic aspects of that model. In particular, they promote the positives qualities of bravery, strength, and protectiveness and align that with expanding men’s emotional range. They are quick to point out how an overreliance on toughness and stoicism can easily lead to the kinds of aggression that harms not just those around men, but men themselves. Using diverse role models, like Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Jesus, and Che Guevera, the program focuses in on how men can use power appropriately and effectively and how they can expand their definitions of masculinity. Furthermore, the outreach concludes with encouragers for men to form their own “maintenance groups” to support each other in the quest to redefine masculinity.

With respect to graduate programs improving their efforts to support this movement and reach and recruit more men, some suggestions include: developing more course material and research programs related to studying the psychology of men and masculinity; more targeted outreach to facilitate discussions in graduate school classrooms about the changing and evolving conceptions and place of men in society, in particular in reference to the

paradoxical position of being a privileged minority (Sbaratta, Tirpak, & Schlosser, 2015); and increased opportunities for male students to have open and receptive spaces, both inside and outside of classroom, to explore their particular needs as a population. Furthermore, it is important that professors in graduate programs in promoting other values of social justice are careful to make sure that men do not experience backlash for their unique views or tokenism that reduces or invalidates their experiences.

Camosy (2016) highlights the importance of cultivating greater philosophical, theological, and political diversity in programs in concert with what has been the successful improvements in gender, racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in higher education. In a related manner, Lilla (2016) argues that while identity liberalism has added to our colleges both in terms of enhancing and embodying the country's multicultural ideals and with improving civil rights (i.e., Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ rights, etc.), as a foundation for college discourse, it has also ironically created some of the conditions for increasing polarization. More specifically, his claim is that the overemphasis on diversity in schools and in the media has led many groups to be out of touch with and self-segregated from those outside their own identity groups (see also Bruni, 2015). This has also led them to be ill equipped to speak to the common good as well as making groups outside of their circle feel included and valued. In a recent interview with Charlie Rose (2016), Jon Stewart, the father of millennials' satirical news sources, noted the potential hypocrisy of the ways in which both sides of the political spectrum can unfortunately treat each other as monoliths as a result of this.

Speaking to these important and timely issues, it would be helpful for colleges to be reflective about the ways in which they can both harness the best of identity liberalism and yet redefine it in a way that integrates the one and the many. For instance, programs should maintain an ongoing focus on the necessary tension between diversity and multicultural identity factors on the one hand and humanistic and existential universal concerns on the other, and the complicated and at times contradictory ways in which this is negotiated as individuals, groups, and as a society. This postidentity liberalism would be responsive to issues of both the micro and the macro, as has been suggested in this article in relationship to men.

What are some things that we as college counselors can do to be a part of this evolution and to respond to the declining male presence in psychology? First, and foremost, it is important to become more aware of and sensitized to this issue and its impact. The value of males in college counseling and in the field is a topic that has been too easily neglected or avoided, and it stands to have effects on our patients, our trainees, and our male colleagues if it not addressed. As in therapy itself, awareness of the issue will enable new ways of thinking about and discussing the variety and diversity of male experiences in our colleges and in society in general.

Men without privilege, who require support for their representation and empowerment, as well as those with privilege, who are having difficulties finding

balanced and constructive ways of staying in a healthy dialogue about these societal changes, will be well served by a greater presence of men in our field and at colleges, as well as by a greater sensitivity to the complexities and nuances of these issues by all college counselors and administrators, regardless of gender. What better place is there than in a college counseling center to have thoughtful and constructive dialogue and reflection on these pivotal issues related to the future of men's development and evolution? College counseling centers can take the lead here in supporting men in establishing and rediscovering more multi-dimensional and nuanced ways of relating to their masculinity.

It is important to note that the most significant aspects of our therapeutic work are affected by the quality of the relationship, and that this occurs regardless of gender or any other demographic factor. Sullivan and Mullahy (1953) acknowledged this in their oft-quoted aphorism, that above all, we are "all more simply human than otherwise." At the same time, it is vital to have males, and particularly men of Color, on staff in our centers to serve the umbrella group of male clients that are both privileged and underserved, and to provide them with models and mentors for psychological mindedness and to help ease the stigma of counseling for men in our culture.

An important addition to individual therapy would be the introduction of more men's groups at college counseling centers. These would serve as informal men's centers to help male students explore and examine the privilege, benefits, and challenges of being a man on campus today. In a similar vein, it is crucial to have male psychologists on staff to serve as mentors and guides to male trainees just entering the field, providing them with a sense of belonging and identity in the profession into which they are joining. Finally, outreach that targets men's issues and, in particular, those that speak to underrepresented male groups would go a long way in helping to promote counseling center's appeal to male students.

What does this all mean for us as college counselors? My hope is that this reminds us of the significance of a male presence in college counseling and the pivotal and formative role we play in the development of men as clients and clinicians. Helping men to feel more comfortable, more welcome, and more celebrated as a group can serve to support them in tapping into the full range of their humanity (Reiner, 2016) and with making more vital and creative contributions on our college campuses, in our centers, and psychology as a field. That's a good thing for all of us.

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