Masculinities and Men's Emotions in and After Intimate Partner Relationships.

John L. Oliffe[1,2], Alex Broom[3], Damien Ridge[4], Mary T. Kelly[1], Gabriela Gonzalez Montaner[1], Zac E. Seidler[5,6] & Simon M. Rice[5,6]

[1] School of Nursing, University of British Columbia; Vancouver, Canada

[2] Department of Nursing, University of Melbourne; Melbourne, Australia

[3] Sydney Centre for Healthy Societies, School of Social and Political Sciences, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, The University of Sydney, Camperdown, NSW, Australia.

[4] College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Westminster, London, UK.

[5] Orygen; Parkville, Melbourne, Australia

[6] Centre for Youth Mental Health, University of Melbourne; Melbourne, Australia

Keywords: men and emotions, men's relationships, masculinity, men's mental health

Acknowledgements: This research was made possible with funding by Movember (Grant #017801). JLO is supported by a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Men's Health Promotion. SMR is supported by a Career Development Fellowship from the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia (APP1158881), and the Dame Kate Campbell Fellowship from the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences at The University of Melbourne. ZES is supported by an Investigator Grant Fellowship from the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia (2008170). Thanks to Wellam Yu Ko for his early coding and interpretations of the data used in the current article.

John Oliffe, 109 2176 Health Sciences Mall, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6T 1Z3. E-mail:

John.Oliffe@ubc.ca

Masculinities and men's emotions in and after intimate partner relationships.

Abstract

Men's emotions in intimate partner relationships have received little research attention. The current interpretive descriptive study included 30 Canadian-based men to address the research question, what are the connections between masculinities and men's emotions in and after intimate partner relationships? Three inductively derived themes included, *emergent distressing emotions* wherein participant's predominance for holding in abeyance their concerns about the relationship manifested varying levels of emotional stoicism. Within this context most men denied or downplayed, and did not express their emotions. When the relationship broke, men were *overwhelmed by mixed and weighty break-up emotions* comprising diverse and often-times discordant emotions including sadness, shame, anger, regret and guilt, calling into question men's rationality for deciphering and expressing what was concurrently but inexplicably felt. Shame and anger were prominent emotions demanding participant's attention to all that happened in, and at the end of the relationship. In the third theme, *understanding and transitioning after-burn emotions* participant's grief levered their efforts, including soliciting professional help, for deconstructing, reframing, and expressing their emotions in the aftermath of the partnership ending. The findings contextualise, and in some instances counter claims about the utility of men's emotional stoicism by mapping participants' feelings in and after intimate partner relationships.

Abstract word count: 200

Main body word count: 9,441

Introduction

Scholars have theorised and diversely described how normative conceptions of masculinity influence men's intimate partner relationships (Galasiński 2004). Within this work, the gendered dimensions of men's emotions have tended to problematise the paucity of male introspection and empathy (de Boise and Hearn 2017). In addition, men's silences (emotional stoicism) and outbursts (anger and aggression) (McQueen 2017) have been described in distressed and disrupted relationships (i.e., separation, divorce) with consistent linkages to intimate partner violence (IPV) and domestic violence (DV) (Rice et al., 2021). Contrasting such deficit views, others have argued that men can be comfortable having emotional talk with intimate partners, and among men who are less talkative and more tactile, cuddling and shared activities might be understood as affection, and a form of emotional communication (Holmes 2015; Robertson and Monaghan 2012). Herein there are subtle but rarely reported affective interpersonal spaces within the normative scene of restrictive masculinities. The arena of intimate partner relationships, more than any other aspect of life, activates the experience and expression of men's emotions. By sampling Canadian-based males in the current study, we advance understandings about the connections between masculinities and men's emotions in and after intimate partner relationships.

Masculinities, Men's Emotions and Intimate Partner Relationships

Masculinities and men's emotions

Research examining men's emotions reveals complexities, contrasting viewpoints and much debate. For example, sex differences work has differentiated males as less emotionally expressive, and embodying different or fewer affective states than females (Simon and Nath, 2004). Portrayals of male deficits ranging from stoicism through to anger chronicle how men mute or poorly express their emotions with assertions that they fail to effectively process – and therefore manage – their emotions. de Boise and Hearn (2017) challenge such sex differences in arguing against the masculine trope "that men have always been incompetent emotional articulators or had an uneasy relationship with their own feelings" (p. 3). Their opinion is supported by findings drawn from a meta-analysis of studies addressing moral emotions (e.g., guilt, shame, embarrassment and pride), debunking claims that women are more emotional than men, with this erroneous conclusion reflecting gender stereotyping rather than empirical evidence (Else-Quest et al. 2012). Further, Shields (2013) suggests folk psychology's lock on replicating such gender-emotion stereotypes (e.g., men as emotionally inexpressive and women as highly expressive) has perpetuated manly ineptness as normative in popular culture. This has occurred to the extent that it has stained empirical science by contaminating researchers' beliefs about men and emotions.

In response, researchers focused on the gendered dimensions of emotions have diversely approached the study of what men feel and express. Socialization work consistently reports men's alignments to pre-determined masculine norms (i.e., self-reliance and reticence for help-seeking) to explain the predominance of emotional stoicism in males (Mahalik et al. 2003). Early on, Hochschild (1979) coined the term 'feeling rules', i.e., norms that may or may not sway how people try to emote in relation to particular situations. This concept was used to elucidate how men and women's emotion work and management may defy or take up official frames for what

is deemed socially fitting to feel in gendered terms (Hochschild 1979). Butler's (1990) performativity work followed to focus on how gender was achieved through repetitive acts that established a supposedly stable inner "core" of gender, where differences between men and women at times drew brutal policing to maintain. Conceiving emotions as neither intrinsic nor fully socially determined (Butler 1990), Braunmühl, (2012) suggested that emotions were to an extent a mysterious force, subjecting men (and women) "to a radical and irreducible alterity that cannot ever become entirely transparent to us, let alone be fully controlled or even predicted" (p. 222). Social constructionist understandings of masculinities inform the current study, and this framework was subsequently developed as plural, competitive and dynamic, and most importantly – located in – and enacted through the participation of others via the drama of how our gender relations unfold (Connell 2005).

Connell's (2005) work encompasses some tenets of the aforementioned gender theories including gender policing and the performance aspects of social life. This relational approach has been used extensively for interpreting men's health data, showing that masculinities are locally and contextually bound (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005), co-constructed and operating across a continuum from unhealthy to healthy, and from emotionally stoic to expressive (Cleary, 2012). This work has also eased linkages between illness, injury and dominant masculinity to make available strength-based dimensions of gender and well-being. For example, MacArthur and Shields (2015) suggest that while men's restricted emotional toughness and inexpressiveness are hallmarks of dominant masculinity, "passionate controlled" emotion makes some context specific expressions acceptable and even normative. Specifically, men can cry when victory is attained in sporting arenas as an "essential component of performing masculinity, despite popular beliefs to the contrary" (MacArthur and Shields, 2015, p. 44), or if men are grieving the

death of a loved one (sadness), or defending public threats to their partner (anger) (Walton et al. 2004).

Social constructionist research on men's emotions and intimate partner relationships grew during third-wave feminism, in line with efforts to address the increasingly visible problem of men's violence against women. This research has, however, tended to focus on men's estrangement from their emotions (de Boise and Hearn 2017). Galasiński (2004), for example, suggests that men's emotions link to masculine ideals whereby males manage their emotional experience through distancing strategies, narrating their relationships in observer capacities rather than talking about themselves as active agents in the partnership. Further, while many men value the privacy and safety to share emotions with partners, alignments to idealised masculine protector roles can limit what they express (Patrick and Beckenbach, 2009). Men's anger, for which anger management programs abound, have also featured as critically important to addressing IPV and DV (Gottzén 2019). In relationship break-ups, men's emotions have been differentiated by who ended the partnership. Guilt and regret featured when men-initiated break-ups – especially when participants felt that they inflicted emotional pain by leaving (Butcher 2009). In contrast, despair and shame characterized men's experiences of partner-initiated break-ups – emotions that were resistant forces for participants moving on from disrupted relationships (Hartman 2021).

Men's emotions in disrupted intimate partner relationships have also been linked to male suicide. River and Flood (2021) suggest men's perceived social standing as a result of a relationship break-up fuels their anger, acts of violence and self-harm, with the net effect of increasing male suicide risk. Cleary (2012) reported that men (most of whom had experienced relationship break-ups) viewed painful emotions as weakness to the extent that the suicide option

could trump their emotion disclosures. Among men who had attempted suicide, the main precipitating reason offered was distressed intimate partner relationships, which manifested participants' "tainted masculine honor" (Knizek and Hjelmeland 2018; p. 263). Connecting masculinities to men's intimate partner relationships, these works indicate that emotional stoicism in the face of intensive affective states (e.g., anger, failure as a man) - which reflect normative masculinities – heighten the risk of male suicidality.

Shortfalls in research focused on men's emotions include the tendency to decontextualize and obscure nuanced situational variations including non-verbal behaviors. Wester et al. (2016) asserts that emotions and cognition cannot be separated because emotional responses are driven by men's perceptions and beliefs about specific situations. For example, in couples counselling, men's verbal expressions of vulnerability have been interpreted as disingenuous strategies to maintain dominance in intimate relationships (Smoliak et al. 2021). Similarly, men's restrictive emotional expression and anger have been characterized as the pursuit of social status, and strategies for maintaining privilege and relational power over women (Pease 2012). In contrast, there are suggestions that contemporary relationships assume the capacity for, and norming of emotional awareness, and depth of connection (Giddens, 2013). The expectation for increased connectedness in intimate relationships likely reflects the rise of feminist interpretations in which intimate talk was espoused as superior to non-verbal forms. Perel (2007) makes the point that the widespread proponents of talk intimacy expect the non-talker (usually male) to change their behavior, rather than the "talker" becoming more versatile in their expression of intimacy (i.e., physicality, doing activities). Further, Chandler (2021) warns that lobbying men to talk about their emotions is naïve because it ignores the silencing powers of dominant masculinities. In addition, the quality of men's talk is important, and some emotionally expressive behaviours in

men do not predict psychological wellness (Wong and Rochlen 2005). With these complexities in mind, Waling (2019) called for diversity and inclusion to account for, and advance men's agency, and emotional reflexivity in wide ranging gender relations.

The scholarship on emotions in social and cultural theory has also been somewhat separate to work on men and masculinities (Ahmed 2004A), which in turn has contributed to myopic views of men-in-relation (Wetherell 2012). The many accounts of men's withdrawal/repression and their respective relations of control/domination, whilst making vividly apparent the harms of some socially constructed masculinities, have tended to (re)capture subjects, inadvertently valorize individualised states, and underestimate the temporality of life (and emotion). Intimate partner relationships, and men's accounts therein, provide an opportunity to enliven the analysis of such relations. That is, comprehending men within (and without) these relations as emergent from a tussle between social norms and desires for more connection, and less repression amid entanglements of subjects whom have (sometimes progressively) uneasy relationships with the gendered scene (Blackman 2012). As men and emotions are more encounter than state, and moving rather than still, a focus on process and being-in-relation is needed (Blackman and Venn 2010). In the current study we have taken a step back to map complex participant experiences to address the research question, *what are the connections between masculinities and men's emotions in and after intimate partner relationships?*

Methods

Drawing on the traditions of qualitative research, an interpretive descriptive methodology was used to select data collection methods and analyses (Thorne 2016). Specifically, purposive sampling and constant comparative analytics were used to temporally map participants' emotions

in and after an intimate partner relationship. These approaches enabled us to inductively derive and chart men's emotions to garner new insights and shape future research and practice.

Recruitment, sample and data collection

Following University ethics approval (#H20-01868), men who resided in Canada were invited to take part in a study examining their experiences of an intimate partner relationship break-up. Recruited via Redditt threads AskMen; /datingadviceformen; /Divorce_Men; /MensLib and university department Twitter and Facebook ads, participants were offered a $100 CAD e-gift card to acknowledge their time and contribution to the study. Individual, in-depth, semi-structured Zoom interviews lasting between 60 and 80 minutes were completed with 30 participants June 2020 through February 2022 (Oliffe et al. 2021). Participants resided in Canada, ranged in age from 26 to 61-years-old (M=38.40; SD=10.72), mainly self-identified as heterosexual (n=24; 80%) and were separated or divorced (n=15; 50%) at the time of the interview please see Table 1 Participant demographics. Interview questions explored participants' experiences related to their relationship and its dissolution with a focus on men's emotional reactions. Interview questions included *how did you express your emotions during the relationship, and ahead of the break-up?* and *what were your feelings when the relationship ended?* The interviews were conducted by two Masters prepared females and a PhD prepared male. Given that gender is relational and co-constructed (Connell, 2005) and performance-based (Butler, 1990) the diverse participant-interviewer dyads were understood as shaping the conversations and influencing what was shared by the men. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim, checked for accuracy, cleaned to delete potentially identifying information, uploaded to NVivo^{TM}13 and assigned a pseudonym by the researchers. The terms man/men are

used throughout to inclusively refer to cisgender men and the nonbinary participant who consistently denoted himself as a man in the interview but self-identified primarily as a human being.

Table 1. Participant demographics (n=30)

Age (years) (Range 26 – 61; Mean 38.40)	N [%]
20-29	6 [20]
30-39	13 [43.33]
40-49	6 [20]
50-59	3 [10]
60-69	2 [6.67]
Gender	
Male	29 [96.67]
Gender queer/ Gender non-binary	1 [3.33]
Sexuality	
Heterosexual	24 [80]
Gay	6 [20]
Education (highest level completed)	
Diploma or Certificate	5 [16.67]
Some or All Post Secondary	20 [66.67]
Postgraduate Degree	5 [16.67]
Marital Status	
Single, never Married	7 [23.33]
Single, previously Separated or Divorced	10 [33.33]
Partnered or Married [previously divorced]	5 [16.67]
Partnered or Married [previously dated]	8 [26.67]
Current living arrangements	
Lives alone	7 [23.33]
With children +/- family members (e.g., parents)	8 [26.66]
Partner/spouse +/- children	12 [40]
Roommates	3 [10]
Fathers	
Fathers	13 [43.33]
Who do you talk to about your relationship? (Check all that apply)	
Family	8 [26.67]
Friend(s)	11 [36.67]

Partner/spouse/new partner	10 [33.33]
Healthcare professional	15 [50]

Data Analysis

Data collection and analyses were concurrent, and summaries for each interview were written and referred to in reviewing and comparing the participant interviews. Reading the interviews with the research question in mind, memos were written to document initial thoughts and interpretations of the data using a constant comparative approach. Questions were also asked of the data to build the analyses including; *how were emotions experienced and dealt with?* and, *what changes were evident in men's emotions and actions in and after the relationship?* In reading the interview transcripts multiple times the data were initially coded using broad category labels. These included specific emotions – sadness and anger - and men's accounts of concealing and expressing emotions. In reviewing the data assigned, the codes were reorganized to map men's emotions across the relationship, the break-up and in the aftermath of the partnership ending. Social constructionist masculinities framework (Connell 2005) in combination with theories of emotions as being evoked as an integral part of performance (i.e., residing outside individuals and produced through social interactions) (Ahmed 2004B), guided our analyses for inductively deriving the thematic findings; 1) Emergent distressing emotions, 2) Overwhelmed by mixed and weighty break-up emotions, and, 3) Understanding and transitioning after-burn emotions.

Results

1. Emergent distressing emotions

Emergent distressing emotions included changes to men's partnerships, whereby amity and happiness, as the historical and socially valued emotions seeding the relationship, competed with, and gradually gave-way to negative feelings. Many men recognized emergent distressing emotions to do with their partnership, but held them in abeyance, often-times attempting to normalise them. Though men's affective discomfort varied, most participants observed, denied and/or censored what they felt. Steve, a 34-year-old man, explained that though his 11-year relationship had shifted in bothersome ways, early on, he was prepared to monitor rather than add what he perceived would be further pressure to the partnership:

> "I started noticing things, I did go to him, because I didn't know if it was going to be the end or the beginning of something different. I was like hey, 'you're not the same person anymore…we never fought, and now we fight almost every day. You never hang out with our friends anymore. I'm kind of okay with it and let's see where it is going to go, and then we're going to need to assess again.' I wasn't really trying to speed up the end of anything, because I didn't know where it was going to go."

Eroding the connectedness Steve prized as foundational to their relationship was his partner's increasing physical absence and emotional distancing. Earlier in the interview, naming the best thing about their original partnership, he said, "I'm a people person and I love people, so for me I think that's what it is." Steve's unhappiness grew with the ineffectiveness of his "let's move on" strategies for their never-ending arguments, and his uncertainty about the implications for all that had, and continued to shift in the partnership. As de Boise and Hearn (2017) predict, Steve's emotions can not be deciphered as an individual state; instead the affective and affecting intersections of his entangled affections were expressed in ways that initially held out hope of developing a better understanding of what he, and his partner, were experiencing.

Men's emergent distress flowed to and from wide-ranging events, wherein the rationality claimed for acting on what was felt could also be doubted as deeply flawed and regrettable. Chuck, a 33-year-old man, explained, with some lament, how he had punctuated his 10-year relationship with a couple of 1-month breaks, so that he could independently deal with challenges he perceived, and steadfastly defended as residing outside their partnership:

> "I become very introverted and I just need my own space and literally need to be around nobody, reach some creative outlets and then kind of get through that depression, even though now I look back, that's what it was, but at the time I didn't know that. Then eventually it would go away [depression] and we would communicate and we kind of rebuilt the relationship there. But looking back I'm realizing that had a much stronger effect on her [partner] even though she never told me that."

Chuck's actions for independently self-managing his depressed mood were successful in terms of his mental health gains, though he retrospectively recognized the detrimental effects on his partner and their relationship. The avoidance of being seen as weak, the self-reliant problem-solving, the strength to recover and the drive for protecting his partner from his dark moods may have been at play here. However, Chuck did not articulate such masculine ideals as explanatory notes for his actions. Instead, his solitary work was narrated as an inherent approach to self-managing his mood—an unintentional effect of which was to tear the relationship with his partner. Extending Galasinski's (2004) assertion that men story their emotional experiences from a distance, there was some evidence that Chuck eventually read and understood the isolating effects of him closing down to self-settle his dour mood. The relational gendered states for acting on similar distressing emotions permeated Chuck's interview. For example, he talked about his partner's influence on him employing such solitary practices:

> "It was just like at the time a very messed up family and work situation…so many levels of interweaving problems and every day was just like an explosion and I'd come home and I'd be like ready to explode…the only way to kind of get through it was to vent a little bit and then I quickly learned that venting to her [partner] was a bad idea because it kind of started affecting the way she viewed the people in my life, whereas, like I'm just

> venting to get this anger off…I quickly learned that I've got to separate it, which also was a bit difficult, because then she didn't know entirely what was going on with me."

Chuck's goal for releasing his anger backfired wherein his partner's action-orientated loyalty threatened to out him to the friends and family who were implicated in the pain he had transiently felt and privately disclosed. Relationally, Chuck wanted a confidant to hear and fortress what he was feeling about events outside the relationship, as a means for tapering his emotionality. While expressing emotions might be idealized as safe with consoling, compassionate partners, the wider sharing of those emotions risked Chuck being seen as hypersensitive – or worst still, weak for not communicating his grievances directly to the relevant persons. As Chandler (2021) notes, the social and structural restraints on men's self-disclosures are ever-present, and Chuck's wider management of distressing emotions spoke to the explosive character of withdrawal, and the fact that it was not withdrawal but an amplification of relational suffering, without voice or connection/recognition.

For many participants' difficult emotions were explicitly assigned to partners in cause-effect ways. Herein men positioned themselves as fatigued by their partners' emotions and/or the concealment of their own feelings. The modus operandi was to reduce the potential for conflict in the relationship by attempting to avoid additional distressing emotions. Brent, a 35-year-old man, foregrounded that he "accepted and internalized" his partner's feedback because this is "ostensibly somebody I love and therefore I should value her opinion" ahead of discussing the turn in their 6-year relationship:

> "The regular things that I would do, she seemed less and less amused by me all the time. It got harder and harder for me to do anything right, I was always in trouble with her, for the amount of effort that she perceived that I was putting into anything, or the amount of cleaning I was doing…which admittedly I am not the most fastidious dude, so she wasn't entirely wrong in her criticisms of me but it felt like an avalanche; it just never stopped."

Masculinities and men's emotions

Brent explained, "throughout there was definitely a certain amount of like, 'I should be able to make this woman happy'"; but ultimately "with everything being wrong all the time, I would find myself walking on eggshells a lot." Though "it was sad and I was very miserable," Brent's response to feeling hurt, while maintaining affective silence, meant it was not possible to discuss feelings, which might have allowed insights to, and potential remedies for smoothing the tension-filled relationship. This spoke to the relationality of the scene wherein Brent was 'stuck' in, and increasingly estranged by the conditional gendered overlays characterizing the partnership. Portraying himself as a stoic but sensitive man facing a deluge of criticism from his partner, Brent also drew on tropes about 'nagging' women, and men's entitlements to women's labour in the domestic sphere. These narratives also resemble Schwab et al., (2016) cloudy visibility findings, wherein many participants simultaneously emphasised normative masculine strength (resilience to silently stay in a distressed partnership) while detailing emotional vulnerabilities (sad, miserable).

Bradley, a 52-year-old man spoke to the family childhood context in which he had learnt to avoid triggering negative emotions in others:

> "Their [parents] relationship was pretty rocky…at some points, they had such big fights that they wouldn't talk to each other for weeks and months, which was actually really tough to as a kid to try and sort of pussy foot around and walk on eggshells and try and be tactful and diplomatic and not upset anybody."

A carry-forward of these childhood challenges (and strategies) manifested in Bradley's aversion to conflict in his own 14-year relationship. However, as an adult partner, his efforts for going undetected were nixed by his partner's unpredictable mental illness challenges:

> "She [partner] was diagnosed with a generalized anxiety disorder and this made that eggshell walking kind of thing very difficult because she had all sorts of, some of them were predictable anxieties, some were free-floating anxieties, which, were not easy to

> predict. That made it really tough for me to be careful not to trigger those…because anything could trigger them."

Bradley's silent efforts at reducing difficult emotions were linked to his hopes for rekindling the pleasures that had initially forged their relationship. Indeed, while Brent and Bradley both silently craved restorative positive emotions, the focus on their respective partner's negative emotions can be understood as aligning to gendered ideals wherein men hide and women express emotions. Evident also was their affective distance for 'looking in' rather than 'being in' the distressed relationship as protective – a viewpoint that contrasts the simplistic deployment of repression/control for explaining men's emotional stoicism.

In sum, emergent distressing emotions revealed men's varying levels of detachment from, but also resiliencies in the face of considerably difficult affective experiences in partnerships. Prominent were men's uncertainties about, and estrangements from their own, and their partner's emotions. The tilt toward being *overwhelmed by mixed and weighty break-up emotions* in what followed often-times reflected the cumulative load of these distressing emotions. There were however also some instances of participants being blindsided by unexpected partner-initiated break-ups.

2. Overwhelmed by mixed and weighty break-up emotions

Irrespective of who ended the relationship, or the distress levels in the partnership, men consistently detailed that they were overwhelmed by mixed and weighty break-up emotions. Grief characterized men's break-ups, manifesting diverse and discordant emotions including sadness, shame, blame, anger, regret, guilt and remorse. The eruption of these emotions called into question the men's previous sense of rationality and affective reliability for what was often being concurrently but inexplicably felt.

Masculinities and men's emotions

Hugh, a 57-year-old man, spoke of the end of a 9-year relationship after longstanding tensions establishing mutually acceptable boundaries for their non-monogamous relationship. Specifically, multiple partners were permissible in the partnership with the proviso that their primary relationship be maintained safely and honestly in terms of sexual health. The break-up came with the unexpected news that his now ex-primary partner had been HIV positive for some time (but had not disclosed that detail to Hugh) during the relationship:

> "It ended with a lot of emotional upheaval…I understood that the process was never going to be something you shrugged off as being 'oh well that was nine years, big deal, let's move on'; like it doesn't work like that in my experience because it's something that's like grieving. So, you're going through both an upset, the life that you've been leading for a long time is suddenly not there anymore and you miss it, so of course it's a kind of death, just not literal."

Hugh talked to the temporality of his pain, referencing his wonder about the intensity of what he felt when the relationship ended, given how long-standing the distress had been across the partnership. Rationalising and perhaps self-protective he said, "when you have a relationship that dies over a long time, at some level, it's not particularly conscious, but you're processing it as it's dying." Hugh also outlined a kind of entanglement of affect, including anger at himself for not acting on his qualms about the partnership sooner:

> "Resentment and anger, and anger at the other person but also at yourself for being what amounted to a sucker, right. It's like I'm the one who held onto this, I was the pillar that supported this relationship and you basically just shat on it. So that kind of thing is about you feeling resentful for the person treating you badly, but also that you agreed to the conditions. There was no gun to my head ever, and yet there I was accepting it…So that part was about feeling weak that I had the ability to be strong and yet what I did was in a sense kind of cowardly or passive…I agreed to the conditions and I didn't have to, and so what is that if not a sign of weakness?"

Hugh's regrets were linked to how he compromised his values, and tolerated his ex-partner's disregard, and the so called 'wasted' emotion work in, and after the relationship ended. He

understood his own emotional labour as exhausting and exhausted, yet inevitably running it course.

In many instances affectively intensive break-ups linked with participants' reduced capacity for dealing with resulting issues. Brian, a 46-year-old man described his emotional fatigue at the end of his 22-year relationship; here he detailed his diminished capacity for settling the separation agreement and divorce:

> "It was fear…I basically promised her [partner] whatever she wanted, I was bartering, I was grasping at straws, I was just trying to get back to work. I didn't have the strength to deal with that and divorce, and then dealing with custody. I knew I would collapse and fall apart."

Brian's distress within the relationship carried over to the break-up, and within the public work arena, he drew some solace by hiding the turmoil in his private life:

> "We [men] do have an issue around emotions - that we've got it all together and I'll go to work, I looked like I've got it all together, but I don't. To be honest, having the mask that I had was a great way, for me to kind of mask how I was emotionally feeling because I just said all the pain was physical, but it wasn't, it was more emotional."

Brian's emotional stoicism was posited as an asset for passing as unaffected in the work arena. Though Brian claimed some respite through bracketing his break-up emotions, some men, as previously highlighted by Oliffe and Han (2014), leaked their negative emotions at work. Levi, a 31-year-old man, who attempted to lighten his break-up emotions by "drinking 6 or 7 cans of beer a night", conceded, "I was a prick to everyone. I was a dick at work. I was always angry and I still am. Like, I'll be driving and then I'm pissed for no reason."

Shame also featured in men's narratives, whereby many participants internalised what was painfully experienced after the break-up. Mark, a 47-year-old man who "white-knuckled it and didn't talk to anybody" about the breakdown of his 4-year relationship explained, "as an

Asian man growing up in a culture that shames divorce, I felt like a failure inside, but I couldn't articulate that." Mark linked this to his socialization as a boy, "I was told I was the kid who was too sensitive…'you're overemotional' is what I was told." A confluence of normative masculinities, cultural ideals and antecedent parenting styles influenced Mark's isolation, and his sharply felt shame for 'failing', and ending the partnership. As Ahmed (2004A) predicts, Mark's shame flowed from the press of social and structural pressures that bar men's vulnerability disclosures. Peter, a 28-year-old man, listed a series of failed relationships in disclosing his "shame for going through so many break-ups in such a short time." He explained "it's my own fault, I can't really allow myself to be sad about it" in denying himself the right to grieve, feel or express his sadness. Shame, as a moral failure – connected to how men believed the world would view them - was amongst the most challenging emotions. As Peter explained, an underbelly of consequences flowed from his shame, "I fell into a deep state of depression, unmotivated to do anything, unmotivated to go out, unmotivated to talk, I suppressed a lot."

For some men who were not attuned to the affective realities of their relationship, overwhelming emotions could arrive suddenly when a partner initiated the break-up. Lou, a 61-year-old man, had failed to notice his partner's distress and dissatisfaction with their 28-year marriage. He recounted the shock of his wife asking for a divorce shortly after he shared his plans to retire and direct his energy to address his long-standing childhood traumas:

> "Besides telling me she [wife] wanted a divorce, the second thing she said…was 'you'd be better off alone'. That really hurt me a lot. That word, being alone, really scared the hell out of me. In my mind that was a hell of a thing to say to a 57-year-old man...I'm fearful of being alone for the rest of my life."

Lou conceded that he was oblivious to his ex-wife's emotions, her distress and his culpability for that within their partnership:

> "In her view there were quite a few instances where I kind of held her back, I wasn't letting her grow emotionally. She was fearful of me. She didn't want to bring up issues because she was scared of how I was going to respond."

Focussed on his own emotions, Lou was blinded to the effects of his partner's affect, and their relationship dynamics (and distress) more broadly. Detailing his overwhelming emotions in cause-effect ways, Lou explained the link to his self-harm risk:

> "So it was actually three traumas [adverse childhood events, partner initiated break-up and mental illness] now that I'm trying to live with and deal with…I didn't see this coming at all…literally at that moment when she told me that, I lost it, I lost my mind…I went deep into myself, the PTSD took over, and the trauma, the depression grew, and I actually started planning to take my own life…I started giving away things, money and my vehicle and cleaning up my hard drive and all that kind of stuff."

Without diminishing Lou's work for addressing his traumatic past, he narrated a relationship dynamic in which he had been dominant, and his wife passive. Likely also influencing his wife's withdrawal, Lou explained how he had heavily relied on his ex-partner's emotional support. As Knizek and Hjelmemand (2018) predict, Lou's adverse events in childhood, current difficult emotions, sudden loss of emotional support, and the challenges for self-managing those feelings increased his risk for self-harm. Moreover, Roberts et al. (2011) suggest that experiencing childhood trauma increases the likelihood for perpetrating intimate partner abuse, and it might be that Lou's self-labeled strong emotions (i.e., anger, rage, frustration) were adversely experienced by his now ex-partner.

Entwining men's grief, mixed and weighty break-up emotions surged to demand participant's attention to all that happened in, and at the end of the partnership. It was clear that men felt deeply and painfully at the end of the relationship, and there was a tendency to be overwhelmed by what was felt. With some temporal distance from the break-up, many men moved toward

understanding and transitioning after-burn emotions, whereby they worked through their feelings.

3. Understanding and transitioning after-burn emotions

Many participants made efforts for understanding and transitioning after-burn emotions in the wake of the partnership ending. Herein men's grief, influenced by the relationship specificities and break-up contexts, levered them to diversely work at deconstructing, reframing and expressing their emotions.

Prominent were a sub-group of fathers whom feared losing access and connection to their children as a by-product of their partnership ending. Effectively negotiating child custody demanded men's engagement in affective realities and emotion work – and the management of what was negatively felt. Harvey, a 53-year-old father, foregrounded his ex-wife's efforts for securing sole custody of their daughter, detailing 2-years of legal disputes which drained his finances to the point where he was living in his car. Fearful, angry, sad and resentful, Harvey was intent on protecting his daughter from the damaging effects that could (and previously did) flow from him airing uncensored raw emotions:

> "If you're meeting with your daughter, there's no need to start sobbing over how things are bad. Enjoy the moment, try to have fun, try to give her an outlet to try and forget about everything that's going on, try to have a place when she comes to visit that is inviting and a place where she can be herself, and she's even said comments like that to me. So, for many Christmases, she goes and spends it with her mother and I said to her, 'when am I going to get to see you on Christmas?' And she said, 'Dad, I know that you're not going to give me a hard time ever and that I can be myself and if I don't see my mother, she's going to get very upset'. So, we tend to get together on Boxing Day."

Harvey made efforts to manage the fallout from his break-up by focussing on more positive emotions to protect his daughter's (and ex-wife's) emotional state. This censoring was relational,

wherein Harvey's efforts for reading (and responding to) emotions in others, and self-managing his own, responded to the feelings experienced and expressed by significant others. As Ahmed (2004B) suggests, emotions come from without and move in (rather than from within isolated individuals), whereby emotionality is "a responsiveness to and openness towards the worlds of others" (p.28). In essence, Harvey's emotion work was aimed at securing some calm, and reducing the hurt within and across a family challenged by separation.

For many men, understanding and transitioning after-burn emotions demanded the use of professional services. Cody, a 49-year-old, whose partner initiated the end of their 20-year marriage, declared professional therapy as revelatory, forever changing his affective reality, and strategies for working through what he felt:

> "It [therapy] allowed me to really get in touch with emotions, the fact that I even have emotions, that was a new concept for me. I didn't even think that was something I even possessed…I learnt it's okay to have emotions, and then what to do when you have certain emotions, like don't try to push it away, don't let it eat you up, just how to approach these things. That has been my journey and it's probably a journey that's never going to end, it is going to continue on forever."

Traditional masculinities that men don't naturally feel, and that if they do, their tendency is to poorly manage what is negatively felt, underpinned Cody's positioning of professional help as key to unlocking his emotions. Being taught to identify, work with and through emotions was critical to Cody getting it (whatever *it* emerged to be) sorted in his own mind. New, in-progress and lifelong, he detailed what not to do (supress vulnerabilities) in explaining the work necessary for dealing with his emotions.

Anger was the most commonly referenced after-burn emotion, and most participants explained the benefits of professional help for deconstructing that affective state. Manuel, a 44-year-old father, over-ate and relied on alcohol at the end of his 2-year marriage, with the net effect of

expressing his emotional mayhem as anger. Eventually, he accessed employee benefits and was coached to reign in his anger and address his self-destructive behaviours:

> "I met three of them [counsellors] specifically around anger management, because I felt very angry, very resentful, not just towards my ex-wife, but towards the world in general and I just felt defeated and cheated."

Manuel came to understand there was sadness and guilt manifesting his anger, and that he could more effectively deconstruct and express what he felt. Whereas venting anger had estranged Manuel from his child, friends and career goals, working to understand and transition his after-burn emotions garnered a renewed sense of self, and connectedness to others. Itemizing the benefits including equal child custody (7 days on, 7 days off), losing over 100 pounds and reducing his blood pressure, Manuel lauded help-seeking (and his new found affective relational realities) as key:

> "Get help from trained professionals. Don't be shy. Don't be afraid. Don't let your ego get in the way. I was brought up in a culture where asking for help is a sign of weakness and I guess…it was peer pressure, that you do not ask for help. I think that's wrong and now that I have a son, I teach him that, relationships are important and you have to learn how to manage your money, you have to know how to manage your relationships."

Manuel foregrounded normative masculinities (men as emotionally inept) to rationalise transgressions (seeking and promoting the use of professional help) as necessary for men's emotional survival and recovery. Here, he reframed men's emotion work as a wise investment that should be taught to boys to better equip future generations. In line with Wester et al. (2016) assertion that men's emotions are contextual, Manuel also normed men's reciprocity for receiving and giving help to effectively build intimate relationships.

For the men who engaged professional help, the authenticity and skills of their provider were highly prized. Mark, a 47-year-old man whose 3-year partnership ended when his anxiety

spiraled to fuel unending arguments, deeply valued the forthrightness of his therapist in challenging him to identify and work through his emotions:

> "[Counsellor] was great because he didn't give me the 'You're worth it' speech. He would hit straight and say, 'you gotta dig deeper', or he would just call me out sometimes."

Relatedly, Brian, a 46-year-old, drew benefits from being coached to trust the emotions that led him to end his 22-year marriage:

> "I was really feeling lonely. I was really feeling regretful and he [therapist] would get me to go back, 'well, why did you leave?' and, he would help rebalance, going okay, 'well, you're complaining. It's so quiet right now, but it was filled with yelling before'. I definitely needed to have the ability to talk stuff out even though I didn't want to talk, at times it was necessary."

Mark and Brian characterized their emotion work as hard, demanding strong conviction and expert coaching. Herein understanding complex feelings through talk emerged as necessary for transitioning after-burn emotions. As Lou, a 61-year-old man, stressed, "it comes down to a very stark, talk or die, and now I believe that completely – talk or die."

Normalising emotion talk required these men undo some gendered practices – predominately emotional stoicism. Critiqued as antiquated and damaging, Phil, a 35-year-old man, at the end of a 3-year relationship, explained how men's emotion talk was key in refuting such practices as synonymous with emasculating vulnerabilities:

> "You're not supposed to talk about the things that upset you or your past or your traumas because then you look weak and if you look weak, then you're not going to be successful financially, economically, in your career and people are relying on you to be the breadwinner, to be the champion, I mean these are all just outdated constructs and are actually very harmful…and don't accurately reflect modern times nor what's beneficial in a relationship."

Masculinities and men's emotions

As Giddens (2013) suggests, contemporary intimate partner relationships venerate the sharing of emotions, wherein Phil asserted emotional stoicism was an injurious masculine project. Building on this point, 31-year-old Justin spoke out against men's complicity and competitiveness for sustaining emotional stoicism, in declaring his distance from such masculine parodies:

> "I'm not traditionally masculine, right…like I'm open to talking about my feelings and acknowledging where I'm wrong and things of that sort, but there is still quite a pervasive culture of dudes not really wanting to do that for fear of losing face in front of other dudes who are all just playing one big game of basically comparing dicks, right."

Phil and Justin assertions also spoke to the silencing powers of patriarchy experienced by men, as Chandler (2021) previously reported. In line with Waling (2019), countering these pressures were participant's calls for new masculine values, and a plurality of masculinities to legitimise and perhaps norm men who authentically speak about their emotions.

In summary, participants worked at understanding and transitioning after-burn emotions by deconstructing what was felt, and railing against normative masculinities to seek-help and effectively express the affective realities that were hitherto denied. Talk aimed at giving meaning to emotions was an elixir for many men to process and articulate their circumstances. Herein participant's emotion work was reframed as strength-based both in recovering from, and growing through the break-up.

Discussion and Conclusion

The current study extends previous work to contextualize deficits (Galasiński 2004; Patrick and Beckenbach 2009) and diversity for how men do, and don't engage, understand, and express their emotions (Holmes 2015) in and after intimate partner relationships. In some respects, the narration of men and emotions in the scholarly literature has been as normative as the scene

itself. The initial readings of men and their emotional states tended to tackle the problematic domination-repression potential of socialised norms (Mahalik et al. 2003). At the centre of this narration was an enduring paradox. On the one hand, powerful and dominant, but on the other, weak and vulnerable. Dysfunction was front and centre, whether manifest as relationship break-ups, distress, or even suicidality, and the embodied materialisation of affective decay (Cleary 2012). The multiplicity of masculinity (Connell, 2005), of course, became a helpful injunction into such normative scholarly readings, but the legacy of a (still) partial reading of men and emotions continues in the cultural imaginary, and in some scholarly spheres. What is often missing in the field hitherto, and what speaks to the value of the current study, is the *relationality* of the scene, and men's emotions as emergent at the *interstices* of gender and social encounters (Blackman 2012).

Men's *emergent distressing emotions* revealed how affective realities, and processes for recognising feelings were bound to, and bundled with what participants already knew about being a man, as well as intimate relationships and their current partnership (Ahmed, 2004B). Established, and then working with shifting relational dynamics ranged from difficult to highly stressing, wherein participants tried to deny and/or norm emergent distressing emotions (realities). That participants delayed or delinked actions for addressing distress might be labelled emotional stoicism. However, the current study findings reveal entwinements with partner emotions that complicate the deciphering of what men felt and *decided* to express. For example, when men sensed that expressing negative emotions could increase the potential for conflict and affective dramas, there were consistent efforts for taking the emotion out of the situation.

Masculinities and men's emotions

Notwithstanding assertions that men can wield emotional stoicism as power and control (McQueen 2017), the current study findings reveal relational possibilities wherein some participant's engaged protector roles by trying to manage (through internalizing, compartmentalizing, dousing, and/or denying what was felt) distressing emotions. While the reading tends to be that men are ultimately vulnerable in their withdrawal it was clear that participants were doing emotion work within the very encounters which contain (but also are more than) their withdrawal. The work of Giddens (2013) suggests effective communication requires a strong base of positive emotion, and men's emotion censoring and stoicism, though injurious to the partnership, might reflect an uneasiness for addressing relational distress. That said, the denials and delays in addressing their pain were costly both in terms of noxious exposures, and the declining feasibility for mending anguished partnerships.

Overwhelmed by mixed and weighty break-up emotions comprised cumulative unresolved, and often-times normed tensions in men's partnerships as well as some instances where participants were caught unaware by their partner ending the relationship. Drawing from Ahmed (2004B), across these diverse break-ups were participants' perceptions of the circumstances, and how ex-partners 'caused' their emotions, and by extension their emotionally charged responses. Here, men's feelings were shaped by longer histories of contact with their now ex-partner, though their mixed and weighty emotions seemed to lack enough reason or rationality to untangle and effectively express all that was felt. Sad and angry, remorseful and vengeful, cheated and guilty, emotional landslides spanning the partnership and break-up defied many men's logic. Dampening break-up emotions with substances is potentially risky, and reflective of men's alignments to masculinities that norm washing-away and/or the intoxicated spilling of raw, disordered (and often soberly redacted) emotions (Cleary 2012). In this sense, we might think of

the collective assemblage of (men's) subjectivity and emotion in intimate relationships that end, without removing agency, but reclaiming the inherent relationality and assembling of life, love and loss (Ahmed 2004B).

Understanding and transitioning after-burn emotions highlighted men's wide-ranging work rates for reconciling and growing through what was felt across the relationship and the break-up. Some participants' showed mastery of reasoning and negotiating rather than reacting and blaming with negative thinking. Such growth relied on men managing themselves (and the resources they needed) to understand and effectively express what was felt as a means to smooth their emotions and, often-times, the emotions of significant others. Beyond their efforts for emotion regulation the men also employed strategies for connecting with themselves and others. The finding that some men will take up such emotion work supports Rice et al. (2019) finding that increasingly, emotional strength is a normative and contemporary masculine value. Likewise, the framing of help-seeking as asset-building for men to learn to manage emotions was justified because it garnered benefits including improved well-being for self and effective communication with others. Moreover, our findings specific to separated and divorced fathers support recommendations for tailored interventions to bolster emotional management and conflict resolution skills (Braver & Griffin, 2000). The relationality and temporality of these encounters disrupts the illusion of a stable (but dysfunctional) man, and an atomised caricature of masculinities in-relation. Such shifts support Giddens claim (2013) that positive emotions in individual and collective life are essential (and underway) for the formation of mutuality and equality in gender and social relations.

Taken together the current study findings go some way toward capturing the scene in its true complexities, and amplifying relationality and temporality as key to comprehending and

recalibrating men-in-relation. Provided is direction for men, as well as partners, peers and professional service providers to expect diversity and temporally varied patterns in men's emotions in and after intimate partner relationships. Men's range, intensity and efforts for emotion work contextualizes and contrasts longstanding claims that men fail to feel, interpret and/or effectively convey what is felt (McQueen 2017). Evident also was a continuum wherein diverse relational emotions influenced men's experiences, interpretations and expressions for what was felt. Significant social benefits can be garnered by men's non-crises emotion work as a means to better building (sustaining and amicably ending) relationships (Oliffe et al. 2022). Here resides strong potential for coaching boys and men to work with, rather than to deny their emotions, while recognising and engaging with the emotions of partners in building equitable relationships (Rice et al. 2021).

With respect to the study of emotions, feminist and sociological scholarship has highlighted the partial and enduring conceptualizations inherent to prevailing biomedical models of health and illness that continue to make or enact assumptions reproducing various dualisms – the mind-body split being a primary problematic (Bendelow & Williams, 1995; Williams, 2000). Organisational, professional and cultural forms are still very often structured in ways which assume that the lines between 'things' (e.g., emotions/bodies, minds/worlds, flesh/cognition) are clear, established, evidenced, and can ultimately be instructive for the basis of ongoing population intervention (Blackman, 2012). Whilst a source of productive critique, mainstream social science has, at times, reproduced such problematics, reifying the 'social' or 'cultural' spheres without accommodating the connectivities between matter, meaning and affect. In line with such considerations and the generative process of working *across*, and following such scholars as Bendelow & Williams (1995) and Williams (2000), the current study findings help us

continue to contextualize such dualities and distinctions, including between emotion, materiality, biology and reason.

As debated in this journal, reductive splits in Western thought have created considerable harm across many contexts (Bendelow & Williams, 1995). Herein, it is apparent that finding ways to hold the full range of possibilities of unconscious motivations (including the mixing of mind and embodied experiences); emotional suffering and existential angst; and the intensely social nature of our affect and its materiality (Williams, 2000), is critical to advancing understandings about men's emotions (Freund, 1990). To this end, Williams (2000) and de Bosie and Hearn (2017) argue for a model of emotion that clarifies the relationship between cognitive and affective states by deliberately integrating the biological and the social. In this framing, emotion is not the inferior or unruly spoiler to reason; instead emotion becomes crucial information (even the "integral organising principle of our lives") (Bendelow & Williams, 1995, p. 161) to consider as the basis of any effective reasoning, especially important in the passionate worlds of men's biologically sexed and relationally gendered practices. Supporting Bendelow & Williams (1995) insights into emotional health, suffering and pain, cognitive beliefs about emotions and relationship loss shaped the current study participants' narratives. Indeed, emotional distress and the perceptions of one's emotions can become a form of ritualized and/or performative suffering. In sum, it is important to view men's reporting of their emotions as embodied and lived experiences interpreted and explained as states and/or traits mediated by wide-ranging influences.

Study limitations include a cross-sectional design that eases what can be said about the trajectories and sustainability of men's emotion work. Sampling a small number of Canadian-

based men also limits claims of relevance and representativeness for other men living in Canada and elsewhere. Future work might expand on the present methodology to include partner/ex-partner interviews from diverse locales to triangulate the relational insights drawn here.

In conclusion, the focus on men's emotional stoicism and/or anger, has (perhaps inadvertently) essentialized males as universally unemotional, inexpressive, and/or aggressive (McQueen, 2017). Responding to Waling's (2019) call, the current study findings chronicle a plurality of shifting masculinities that contextualize and affirm men's wide-ranging emotions in and after intimate partner relationships.

References

Ahmed, S. (2004A) Affective economies, Social Text, 22(2):117-139. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/55780

Ahmed, S. (2004B) Collective feelings: Or, the impressions left by others, Theory, Culture and Society, 21(2):25-42.

Bendelow, G. A., & Williams, S. J. (1995). Transcending the dualisms: towards a sociology of pain. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, *17*(2), 139-165.

Blackman, L. (2012) Immaterial bodies: Affect, embodiment, mediation. Sage.

Blackman, L. and Venn, C. (2010) Affect, Body and Society, 16(1):7-28.

Braunmühl, C. (2012) Theorizing emotions with Judith Butler: Within and beyond the courtroom. Rethinking History, 16(2), 221–240. https://doi.org/10.1080/13642529.2012.681192

Braver, S. L., & Griffin, W. A. (2000) Engaging fathers in the post-divorce family, Marriage & Family Review, 29(4), 247–267. https://doi.org/10.1300/J002v29n04_02

Butcher, A. (2009) Men's constructions of their experiences of breaking up with women: A qualitative study (Doctoral dissertation, City, University of London). Available from: https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/19757/1/Butcher%2C%20Anna%20%28Redacted%29.pdf

Butler, J. (1990) Gender Trouble. Routledge.

Chandler, A. (2021) Masculinities and suicide: unsettling 'talk' as a response to suicide in men, Critical Public Health, https://doi.org/10.1080/09581596.2021.1908959

Cleary, A. (2012) Suicidal action, emotional expression, and the performance of masculinities, Social Science and Medicine, 74(4):498-505. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.08.002

Connell, R.W. (2005) Masculinities. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Connell, R.W. and Messerschmidt, J.W. (2005) Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept, Gender and Society, 19(6):829-859.

de Boise, S. and Hearn, J. (2017) Are men getting more emotional? Critical sociological perspectives on men, masculinities and emotions, The Sociological Review, 65(4):779-796.

Else-Quest, N. M., Higgins, A., Allison, C. and Morton, L. C. (2012) Gender differences in self-conscious emotional experience: A meta-analysis, Psychological Bulletin, 138(5)947–981. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027930

Freund, P. E. (1990). The expressive body: a common ground for the sociology of emotions and health and illness. Sociology of Health & Illness, 12(4), 452-477.

Galasiński, D. (2004) Men and the Language of Emotions, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Giddens, A. (2013) The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, love and eroticism in modern societies. John Wiley and Sons.

Gottzén, L. (2019) Violent men's paths to batterer intervention programmes: Masculinity, turning points and narrative selves, Nordic Journal of Criminology, 20(1):20-34.

Hartman, T. (2021) Male breakup trauma, Qualitative Psychology, 8(2):255. https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000204

Holmes, M. (2015) Men's emotions: Heteromasculinity, emotional reflexivity, and intimate relationships, Men and Masculinities, 18(2):176-192.

Hochschild, A. R. (1979) Emotion work, feeling rules, and social structure. American Journal of Sociology, 85(3), 551–575.

Knizek, B.L. and Hjelmeland, H. (2018) To die or not to die: A qualitative study of men's suicidality in Norway, BMC Psychiatry, 18(1):1-9. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-018-1843-3

MacArthur, H. J. and Shields, S. A. (2015) There's no crying in baseball, or is there? Male athletes, tears, and masculinity in North America, Emotion Review, 7(1):39-46.

Mahalik, J.R., Locke, B.D., Ludlow, L.H., Diemer, M.A., Scott, R.P., Gottfried, M. and Freitas, G. (2003) Development of the conformity to masculine norms inventory, Psychology of Men and Masculinity, 4(1):3. https://doi.org/10.1037/1524-9220.4.1.3

McQueen, F. (2017) Male emotionality: 'Boys don't cry' versus 'it's good to talk', Norma, 12(3-4): 205-219. https://doi.org/10.1080/18902138.2017.1336877

Patrick, S. and Beckenbach, J. (2009) Male perceptions of intimacy: A qualitative study, The Journal of Men's Studies, 17(1):47-56.

Oliffe, J.L. and Han, C.S. (2014) Beyond workers' compensation: Men's mental health in and out of work, American Journal of Men's Health, 8(1):45-53.

Oliffe, J.L., Kelly, M.T., Gonzalez Montaner, G., Seidler, Z.E., Maher, B. and Rice, S.M. (2022) Men building better relationships: A scoping review, Health Promotion Journal of Australia, 33(1):126-137. https://doi.org/10.1002/hpja.463

Oliffe, J.L., Kelly, M.T., Gonzalez Montaner, G. and Yu Ko, W.F. (2021) Zoom interviews: Benefits and concessions, International Journal of Qualitative Methods. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F16094069211053522

Pease, B. (2012) The politics of gendered emotions: disrupting men's emotional investment in privilege, Australian Journal of Social Issues, 47(1):125-142.

Perel, E. (2007) Mating in captivity: Sex, lies and domestic bliss. London: Hodder

Rice, S., Kealy, D., Oliffe, J.L. and Ogrodniczuk, J. S. (2019) Externalizing depression symptoms among Canadian males with recent suicidal ideation: A focus on young men, Early Intervention in Psychiatry, 3(2), 308-313. https://doi.org/10.1111/eip.12667

Rice, S., Oliffe, J., Seidler, Z., Borschmann, R., Pirkis, J., Reavley, N., and Patton, G. (2021) Gender norms and the mental health of boys and young men, The Lancet Public Health, 6(8), e541-e542. https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(21)00138-9

River, J., and Flood, M. (2021) Masculinities, emotions and men's suicide. Sociology of Health and Illness. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.13257

Roberts, A. L., McLaughlin, K. A., Conron, K. J., & Koenen, K. C. (2011) Adulthood stressors, history of childhood adversity, and risk of perpetration of intimate partner violence. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 40(2), 128–138.

Robertson, S. and Monaghan, L.F. (2012) Embodied heterosexual masculinities, part 2: Foregrounding men's health and emotions, Sociology compass, 6(2):151-165. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2011.00443.x

Shields, S. A. (2013) Gender and emotion: What we think we know, what we need to know, and why it matters, Psychology of Women Quarterly, 37:423–435.

Schwab, J. R., Addis, M. E., Reigeluth, C. S., & Berger, J. L. (2016). Silence and (in)visibility in men's accounts of coping with stressful life events, Gender & Society, 30(2), 289–311.

Simon, R.W. and Nath, L.E. (2004) Gender and emotion in the United States: Do men and women differ in self-reports of feelings and expressive behavior?, American Journal of Sociology, 109(5):1137-1176. https://doi.org/10.1086/382111

Smoliak, O., LaMarre, A., Rice, C., Tseliou, E., LeCouteur, A., Myers, M., Vesely, L., Briscoe, C., Addison, M. and Velikonja, L. (2021) The politics of vulnerable masculinity in couple therapy, Journal of Marital and Family Therapy. https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12530

Thorne, S. (2016) Interpretive description: Qualitative research for applied practice. Routledge.

Waling, A. (2019) Rethinking masculinity studies: Feminism, masculinity, and post structural accounts of agency and emotional reflexivity, The Journal of Men's Studies, 27(1):89-107. https://doi.org/10.1177/1060826518782980

Walton, C., Coyle, A. and Lyons, E. (2004) Death and football: An analysis of men's talk about emotions, British Journal of Social Psychology, 43(3): 401-416. https://doi.org/10.1348/0144666042038024

Wester, S. R., Heesacker, M., and Snowden, S. J. (2016) An elephant in the room: Men's emotion from sex differences to social neuroscience. In Y. J. Wong & S. R. Wester (Eds.), APA handbook of men and masculinities. American Psychological Association, pp. 457–482.https://doi.org/10.1037/14594-021

Wetherell, M. (2012) Affect and emotion: A new social science understanding. Sage Publications.

Williams, S. (2000). Reason, emotion and embodiment: is 'mental' health a contradiction in terms?. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, *22*(5), 559-581.

Wong, Y.J. and Rochlen, A.B. (2005) Demystifying men's emotional behavior: New directions and implications for counseling and research, Psychology of Men and Masculinity, 6(1):62. https://doi.org/10.1037/1524-9220.6.1.62