



[#EngagingMenAndBoys](#)

Through this social media campaign Maitri is starting a dialogue with men in our community to identify and eliminate the root cause of gender based violence and partner violence.

Thank you Akhil for joining us in this meaningful discussion.

1) How do you feel popular media perpetuates and glorifies toxic partner relationship dynamics; can you think of any examples?

Defenders of movies like “Twilight” and “Fifty Shades of Grey” argue that the audience can differentiate between things they see in a movie and things that happen in real life. But the truth is, many of them can’t. On T.V. shows, movies, and books, toxic masculinity is covered with the idea that whatever is going on is “passionate and intense romance”. The audience sees traditionally attractive people with “exciting” or “sexy” lives, and subconsciously want the same for themselves.

2) Define toxic masculinity, and does it impact intimate partner relationships?

Negative effects of toxic masculinity happen when negative masculine ideals are upheld, most specifically, with gender roles. "Gender roles" aim to uphold patriarchal codes, by pressuring men to achieve dominant and aggressive behaviors. Ultimately, traditional masculine traits themselves are not bad; they become negative when they are expected, and consequently, forced upon people. Additionally, toxic masculinity has the potential to violate human rights. It can be harmful to mental health, and lead to intimate partner violence, both of which are public health and human rights issues.

3) How do you think gender power dynamics impact intimate partner violence?

The word "power" at its basic level means one person's control over another person. In a romantic relationship, "power" refers to the abilities that both partners have to affect the dynamics of their relationship. When there is an imbalance of power, it can lead to three different negative types of relationship dynamics: demand-withdrawal, distance-pursuer, and fear-shame. These types of dynamics in romantic relationships are considered unhealthy, or toxic. These have the potential to damage, not only the relationship, but one's mental health as well.

4) What do you think defines a healthy partner/dating relationship?

In a healthy relationship, there is room for individuality. Neither partner would have to compromise who they are as a person / their identity for the sake of pleasing the other person. Each can continue to live their life, do the things they love, and see the people they want to. Each person should be supportive of their partner and whatever they might choose to do.

5) What is men's responsibility in building healthy partner relationships?

I think being a good man first and foremost just means being a good person. So in a relationship, that would mean being loyal, committed, and loving. A good man would know that for relationships to survive and thrive, effort needs to be put in, and so they don't shy away from communicating or compromising. Also, a man's responsibility might be higher often because of higher social and economic power, but the same can be said for some women too, in some relationships. Either way, this responsibility shouldn't be misused.

About the author: Akhil Palanivelu is a freshman at Chabot Community College, planning to transfer to a 4-year university and graduate to pursue a career in Aerospace Engineering. He enjoys playing basketball and music.

