

To be used in conjunction with The CSS Tip Sheet
"10 Research-Based Storytelling Tips to Evolve the Representation of Boys and Men"

"I'm glad we've begun to raise our daughters more like our sons, but it will never work until we raise our sons more like our daughters."

GLORIA STEINEM



More boys than girls report being isolated. Boys with close male friendships are less prone to depression and more likely to live longer lives.



63% of men believe they are encouraged to seize sex whenever they can, yet 84% of young people describe an ideal Friday night as hook-up free.



Of the 40 million family caregivers in America, nearly half of them are men.

MALE CHARACTERS

- Do your "attractive" male characters exhibit a variety of body types?
- Is the male character one of these frequently seen male stock types? 1) smart and active boys, 2) funny losers (dumb jock or hapless dad), and 3) geeks. If so, consider adding some nuance.
- Is there a character who is nonbinary and demonstrates gender fluidity?

MALE TO MALE RELATIONSHIPS

- Are at least two of the leading heterosexual male characters shown caring about one another? This is particularly important if they are portrayed as stereotypical tough guys.
- Do at least two of the leading heterosexual male characters have an emotional conversation that demonstrates vulnerability?
- If the plot features any kind of caregiving (children, nursing, grandparents), is the male character proud of this role? Consider not playing this kind of male role for comedy.

MALE TO FEMALE RELATIONSHIPS

- If the characters are younger and live in a household where they do chores, do the male characters participate equally or at a greater level than the female characters?
- If the characters are children, do the male and female characters play with gender neutral and/ or counter-stereotypical toys?
- If a male and female character are cohabitating, do they perform an equal amount of housework? If the male character does housework, consider not playing it for comedy.
- Is there at least one male/female relationship between heterosexual characters that is not romantic/sexual?
- If the show is a heterosexual romantic comedy, do the leads demonstrate counterstereotypical romantic gestures, such as the woman bringing flowers to the man?
- If the woman rejects the man, does he listen and/ or walk away?

Thank you to the following for putting together the boys' tip sheet (in order of contribution):

Jane Lurie; Yalda T. Uhls, Ph.D.; Dafna Lemish Ph.D.;
Kim Wilson; Jeff Kleeman; Sascha Paladino; Mittika Sarin.

Research Sources:

Chumsky (2015, 2019); Freeman, N. K., (2007); Götz, M. & Lemish, D. (2012); Henrich, C. C., et al., (2000); Jacques-Tiura, A. J. et al., (2015); Lai, C.K. et al., (2014); Lemish, D. (2010); Lowes, (2003); Making Caring Common, (2017); Martin, (2019); Miller et al., (2017); Morman, M. T. et al., (2013); Phillips, (2019); Plan International's State of Gender Equality, (2018); Promundo (2016, 2017); Way, N. et al., (2006); Wilson, (2017).

About The Center for Scholars & Storytellers:

The Center for Scholars & Storytellers, based at UCLA, bridges the gap between researchers and content creators to support positive youth development.

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10 RESEARCH-BASED INSIGHTS TO EVOLVE ON-SCREEN MALE REPRESENTATION

In a survey of over 1,000 boys, ages 10-19:

2%

said that society values honesty and morality in boys

33%

said they are expected to hide or suppress their feelings

44%

said society expects them to be aggressive or violent when they get angry

1 Show boys and girls playing together.

Why? Because boys who have female friendships are building relationships based on respect from an early age.



In a 2015 study of over 400 single men (average age 24), **26%** reported they had committed some form of sexual aggression (verbal and/or physical).

6 Show boys talking about love, girls making the first move both romantically and sexually, and girls buying flowers for boys.

Why? Because the traditional heterosexual script is still the norm, even today.



63% of men believe they are encouraged to seize sex whenever they can, yet 84% of young people describe an ideal Friday night as hook-up free.

2 Show "tough" male characters being kind and vulnerable to other men.

Why? By playing against stereotypes, boys learn that being "masculine" includes having healthy relationships.



Men who feel they must always be tough are **6-7 times** more likely to bully other men.

7 Show male characters who are proud and accepting of having a primary caregiving role and the responsibilities that come with it.

Why? Men in these roles who embrace their "job" provide important nurturing for their children (all genders).



Of the 40 million family caregivers in America, nearly half of them are men

3 Show boys doing more chores.

Why? Because American girls ages 10-17 spend 2 more hours a week on chores than boys.



Sons (under 14 years of age) who see their moms work (for any amount of time) spend more time on housework and childcare as adults.

8 Show more nuanced boy characters and not just stock types.

Why? The majority of male characters in kids' TV are 1) smart and active boys, 2) funny losers (dumb jock or hapless dad), and 3) geeks.



One in five boys consume fashion content weekly.

4 Show boys playing with typical female toys (e.g., dolls) and girls playing with typical male toys (e.g., trucks), preferably in the same narrative.

Why? Because changing stereotypical representation in both directions seems to hold the most power to change unconscious biases.



Infants and toddlers do not show strong gendered toy preferences, but by age 5 their toy choices are strongly gendered.

9 Show a wide variety of body types being appealing, not just "beach bodies".

Why? Because 33-35% of boys age 6-8 indicate their ideal body is thinner than their current body.



The number of men undergoing cosmetic procedures between 1997 and 2015 increased by more than 325 percent.

5 Show boys as being caring and having close friendships.

Why? Because too often, boys are told not to have close friendships. Furthermore often its only gay boys, who are portrayed as vulnerable and caring."



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10 Show the full spectrum of gender identities.

Why? Because representation matters, and Gen Z cares about gender diversity.



Among all teens in California, 27 percent identified with some level of gender non-conformity.

"For 15 years my Institute on Gender in Media has been raising industry awareness on the imbalance of onscreen gender representation in children's entertainment media, and we've made a lot of progress. To get to the finish line, we must broaden and improve the representation of both male and female characters."

GEENA DAVIS, FOUNDER, GEENA DAVIS INSTITUTE ON GENDER IN MEDIA

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Use this QR Code to go directly to the checklist aligned with these tips to help guide your efforts.
#realmasculinity

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