

KU LEUVEN

Connecting with men's hearts: towards a gender-sensitive spiritual care with men

Armin Kummer

17th Consultation European Network of Health Care Chaplaincy
Chania, 13.5. 2022



1

Introduction

Men in hospital as paradox:

- Men in hospital as rare opportunity
- Hospitalization as challenge to social construction of masculinity

2

Armin Kummer, ENHCC Consultation 2022

KU LEUVEN

2

Warning

Ceci n'est pas un paper.

3

Armin Kummer, ENHCC Consultation 2022

KU LEUVEN

3

Discussion

4

Armin Kummer, ENHCC Consultation 2022

KU LEUVEN

4

Questions for discussion in group

- Have you experienced differences in how you connect with men and women?
- What men-specific behaviours have you experienced?
- Which masculinity codes and coping mechanisms are at play?
- What are the implications for the spiritual lives of these men?
- What are the implications for connecting with men? (Example: Praying with men)

5

Armin Kummer, ENHCC Consultation 2022



5

Questions for discussion in group

- Have you experienced differences in how you connect with men and women?
- **What typical, men-specific behaviours have you experienced in your work?**
- Which masculinity codes and coping mechanisms are at play?
- What are the implications for the spiritual lives of these men?
- **How have these behaviours shaped the way you "connect" with men?**

6

Armin Kummer, ENHCC Consultation 2022



6

Masculinity Codes and the Construction of Gender

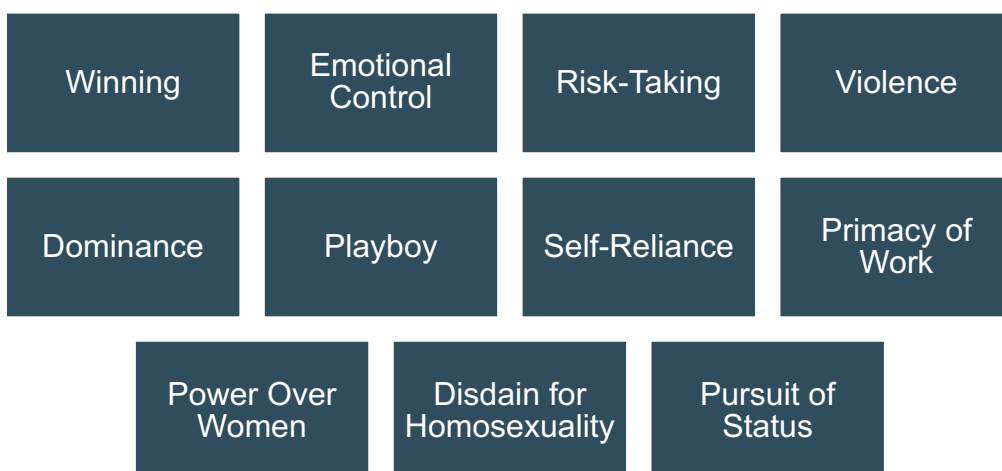
7

Armin Kummer, ENHCC Consultation 2022

KU LEUVEN

7

Mahalik (2003): Masculine Norms Inventory



8

Armin Kummer, ENHCC Consultation 2022

KU LEUVEN

8

Masculinity Codes and Help Seeking

9

Armin Kummer, ENHCC Consultation 2022



9

Masculinity Scripts and Help Seeking

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. Strong and Silent Script | <i>Fear of being coerced into being weak and emotional</i> |
| 2. Tough Guy Script | <i>Fear of weakness</i> |
| 3. "Give-'em-Hell" Script | <i>Fear of weakness</i> |
| 4. Playboy Script | - |
| 5. Homophobic Script | <i>Fear of passivity and of intimacy with men</i> |
| 6. Winner Script | <i>Fear of being a loser</i> |
| 7. Independent Script | <i>Fear of dependence</i> |

(Cf. Good, Mahalik and Englar-Carlson, 2003)

10

Armin Kummer, ENHCC Consultation 2022



10

Masculinity Codes and Spirituality

11

Armin Kummer, ENHCC Consultation 2022

KU LEUVEN

11

“Stumbling blocks to Prayer”

1. Suppression of Emotions
2. Emphasis on Self-Sufficiency
3. Difficulties in Relationships
4. Achievement - Preference for Doing over Being
5. Dominance - Confused Identity when not in Charge
6. Toughness – Ignoring one’s Body
7. Rationality - Fear of Chaos and Spontaneity

(cf. Culbertson 1992)

12

Armin Kummer, ENHCC Consultation 2022

KU LEUVEN

12

Implications for Caregivers

13

Armin Kummer, ENHCC Consultation 2022

KU LEUVEN

13

Some Implications for Caregivers

- Develop awareness of how men are “doing gender”
 - Socialized masculinity codes
 - Construction of gender in social interactions
 - Intersectional construction of identities
- Spot opportunities for “undoing gender”
- Critically rethink own internalized gender codes
- Develop awareness of how own codes effect the concrete care situation

14

Armin Kummer, ENHCC Consultation 2022

KU LEUVEN

14

Thank You!



15

Further reading (internet/open access)

- **Cracks and Care: Pastoral-theological Reflections on the Gender Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic.** Journal of Pastoral Theology; 2022; pp. 1 – 16.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10649867.2021.2015112>
- **Où t'es? Papa, où t'es? The Pandemic's Impact on Fatherhood, Work, and Gender**
Theology Research News.2022
<https://theo.kuleuven.be/apps/press/theologyresearchnews/2022/03/28/ou-tes-papa-ou-tes-about-the-pandemics-impact-on-fatherhood-work-and-gender/>
- **Of Masculinity, Biblical Hermeneutics, and Faith Communities.** Theology Research News. 2019 <https://theo.kuleuven.be/apps/press/theologyresearchnews/2019/07/12/of-masculinity-biblical-hermeneutics-and-faith-communities-an-interview-with-armin-kummer/>
- **Masculinity, Male Pathologies, and Gender-specific Pastoral Care.** International Academy of Practical Theology. Conference Series; 2019. <https://doi.org/10.25785/iapt.cs.v1i0.50>

For a more comprehensive overview of my publications, please see
<https://theo.kuleuven.be/en/research/researchers/00112609/>

16

Armin Kummer, ENHCC Consultation 2022



16