

Peer accountability learning group working curriculum

September—December 2020 sessions

This is not a fixed, static document but rather a working curriculum that will be updated on an ongoing basis where necessary or useful. As such, it is open to criticism, additions, suggestions and reworking. Please get in touch if you have any feedback: peeraccountabilitylearning@protonmail.com

Introduction

The peer accountability learning group is a space for men to talk about harm, masculinity, accountability and transformative justice.

Within our communities, friendships and personal lives, there is work to be done to address harm, support those who have been harmed, support harm-doers in taking accountability and to cultivate shifts in our interpersonal relationships that will prevent harm from occurring.

This work is disproportionately done by women, trans and non-binary people. This needs to change. Women, trans and non-binary people are also the people who experience a disproportionate amount of the harm that occurs. This needs to change. This group is intended to be one step in that direction.

The group is called a *peer* accountability learning group because there is no teacher, trainer or leader. Instead, we will learn together, as peers, in a non-hierarchical manner that is built on open, honest, generous and challenging discussion and sharing of perspectives, questions and ideas.

How the group will run

The group will initially meet online, via Zoom, for 8 sessions of 1.5 hours in length, followed by a 9th cool-down session. The sessions are every 2 weeks and the overall group has been split into two subgroups, with one meeting every other Monday and one meeting every other Tuesday. The sessions run 8pm to 9.30pm UK time.

We will work our way through a curriculum that covers a range of topics related to harm, masculinity, accountability and transformative justice. The session format will be open, with discussion points to guide our conversation but no fixed conclusions or right answers provided.

If you'd like to join the group, or if you have any comments, suggestions or concerns about the group or the curriculum, please email peeraccountabilitylearning@protonmail.com

Please also get in touch if you have any accessibility needs in order to participate.

Please make sure to read and process the [group participant agreement](#) before asking to join the group.

Curriculum

[Note: each reading is intended for discussion and there may be some that some or all participants disagree with in part or completely. A reading being on the curriculum doesn't mean that it is "correct", but that it is a starting point for discussion].

Week 1: What are we doing here?

[Tuesday 8 September / Monday 14 September]

Discussion points

- Introductions
- Agreeing goals and expectations
- Creating the interaction agreement
- What is men's work?
- What's our motivation?
- What do we currently understand community accountability to mean?
- What's our experience of community accountability?

Reading

- [A letter to men](#) by Paul Kivel [2 pages]
- [What is "men's work"?](#) by Paul Kivel, in *Ex Masculus* zine, p.6-15 [9 pages]
- [What's our motivation?](#) by Matt, in *Ex Masculus* zine, p.24-30 [6 pages]

Week 2: What do men do? Patriarchy, male supremacy and violence

[Tuesday 22 September / Monday 28 September]

Discussion points

- What is patriarchy?
- How do we experience patriarchy?
- What are men doing?
- Do we talk openly (enough) with each other about harm?
- Is patriarchy just about gender?
- How can we work against patriarchy?
- How can we work with other men against patriarchy?

Reading

- [Understanding Patriarchy](#) by bell hooks [7 pages]
- [Gender, race, class and justice](#), by Creative Interventions [2 pages]
- [The 7 P's of Men's Violence](#) by Michael Kaufman [5 pages]
- [Going to places that scare me: Personal reflections on challenging male supremacy](#) by Chris Crass [7 pages]
- [Getting to know yourself](#) by Support New York [5 pages]

Week 3: Rape culture

[Tuesday 6 October / Monday 12 October]

Discussion points

- What is rape culture?
- What are the impacts of rape culture?
- What examples can we think of where rape culture has impacted our lives?
- What examples of rape culture persist in our communities today?
- How can we challenge rape culture in our communities?
- Is the “nice guys/assoles” concept useful as found in Julia Serano’s piece? What do we think of her conclusions regarding gendered responsibilities here?

Reading

- [Men can stop rape](#) (introduction to Kansas University anti-rape group) [6 pages]
- [I want a twenty-four-hour truce during which there is no rape](#) by Andrea Dworkin [10 pages]
- [Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color](#) by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw [19 pages]
- [Survivors are so sensitive](#) by Melissa McEwan [2 pages]
- [Why nice guys finish last](#) by Julia Serano [14 pages]

Week 4: Power, entitlement and consent

[Tuesday 20 October / Monday 26 October]

Discussion points

- What is consent?
- When might someone not have the freedom to consent?
- When might someone not be capable of consenting?
- What examples of uneven power dynamics can we think of in our communities?
- Does intention matter? How much? What examples do we have of intention vs effect?

Reading

- [Understanding Consent and Rape Myths](#) Factsheet
- [Power and control wheel](#) [1 page]
- [The lie of entitlement](#) by Terrence Crowley [4 pages]
- [Reclaiming touch](#) by Hazel/Cedar Troost [6 pages]
- [Beyond yes or no: consent as sexual process](#) by Rachel Kramer Bussel [10 pages]
- [The ins and outs of consent](#) by gal-dem

Week 5: Call outs, call ins, community accountability processes

[Tuesday 3 November / Monday 9 November]

Discussion points

- What is community accountability?
- Why do people do call-outs?

- What is the difference between holding someone accountable and someone taking accountability?
- Can you make someone be accountable?
- How do you take accountability?
- How do you support someone in taking accountability?

Reading

- [Taking The First Step: Suggestions To People Called Out For Abusive Behavior](#) by wispy cockles [approx. 2-3 pages]
- [We will not cancel us](#) by Adrienne Maree Brown [approx. 1 page]
- [10 Strategies for Cultivating Community Accountability](#) by Ann Russo [approx. 2 pages]
- [Getting Called Out: Why Acknowledging Oppression Matters More Than Your Hurt Feelings](#) by Erin Tatum [approx. 2-3 pages]
- [9 Ways to be Accountable When You've Been Abusive](#) by Kai Cheng Thom [approx. 2-3 pages]
- [Guilt and shame](#) by Phil Barker [approx. 2 pages]

Week 6: How do we challenge violence in our communities as men?

[Tuesday 17 November / Monday 23 November]

Discussion points

- How can we work with other men against patriarchy? (Return to question asked in week 2)
- What is our role in feminist liberation?
- How can we support survivors as men?
- What is the importance of listening?

Reading

- [Against patriarchy: Tools for Men to Further Feminist Revolution](#) by Chris Crass [approx. 3 pages]
- Working with men
 - [Challenging Men, Changing Communities: Reflections on Male Supremacy and Transformative Justice](#) by Gaurav Jashnani, RJ Maccani, and Alan Greig [12 pages]

- [‘Men: comrades in struggle’](#) in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* by bell hooks, p.67-81 [14 pages]
- Supporting survivors
 - [Your friend has been abused: what do you do?](#) by SL Abuse Help/A.V. Flox [approx. 10 pages]
 - [Learning to listen](#) by Richard S. Orton [14 pages]

Week 7: Transformative justice, repairing harm and abolition

[Tuesday 1 December / Monday 7 December]

Discussion points

- What is transformative justice?
- What is not transformative justice?
- Is transformative justice just about specific processes of accountability? Or is it more than that?
- What's an example of transformative justice from your own life (which may not have been described using those terms before now)?
- How can we support harm doers in taking accountability?
- Is there a difference between harm and abuse? How are they interrelated?

Reading/viewing

- [Transformative Justice: A Brief Description](#) by Mia Mingus [approx. 2 pages]
- [Why is transformative justice necessary for liberation?](#) Generation FIVE handbook, pages 5-25 [20 pages]
- [How to support harm doers in accountability?](#) [15 min video]
- [Committing Harm Is Not The Same As Being Abusive](#) by Da'Shaun Harrison [approx. 2 pages]
- [From “Me Too” to “All of Us”: Organizing to End Sexual Violence, Without Prisons](#) - Interview with Mariame Kaba by Sarah Jaffe [approx. 4 pages]
- [Letter to the anti-rape movement](#) - zine by Mariame Kaba, featuring letter by Robin Mc'duff, Deanne Pernell and Karen Saunders [14 pages]
- [What Would it Take to Actually End Intimate Violence?](#) - interview with Mia Mingus by Miriam Zoila Pérez [approx. 2 pages]
- [A different path for confronting sexual assault](#) by Sujatha Baliga [approx. 3 pages]

Week 8: How do we approach doing something about harm?

[Tuesday 15 December / Monday 21 December (might change, will discuss as group)]

Discussion points

- Short reading might be added but session will act as a recap and consolidation, sharing what we have learned and discussion of next steps
- Return to questions asked in week 1
 - What is men's work?
 - What do we currently understand community accountability to mean?
- What are we going to do next?
- Has anything changed for us?
- What do we still not know?
- Name one thing you are going to do differently from now on

Reading

- Short final piece TBC.

Cool-down session

[Dates TBC, to be arranged within each group]

- No fixed discussion points, open to whatever we want to talk about.

Further reading/viewing

- [Barnard Center for Research on Women YouTube channel](#)
 - Especially videos on accountability/TJ
 - [Building accountable communities playlist](#)
 - [What are obstacles to accountability](#)
- [Ex Masculus zine](#)
- [The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence Within Activist Communities](#) by Ching-In Chen (Editor); Jai Dulani (Editor); Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha (Editor)
- [Beyond Survival: Strategies and Stories from the Transformative Justice Movement](#) by Ejeris Dixon (Editor); Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha (Editor)
- [The will to change: men, masculinity and love](#) by bell hooks

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Bryony B for suggesting many of the resources here as well as support, comments and guidance. Thanks to Rachel for support, comments and guidance. Thanks to Niall M for suggesting *Ex Masculus* as a resource.

The groups [Transform Harm](#), [Support NY](#) and [Challenging Male Supremacy](#) have been invaluable resources for building this curriculum. Thanks to them for clearing a path for us to follow.

A useful quote on how to approach men's work

“...the fact that certain members of the oppressor class join the oppressed in their struggle for liberation, thus moving from one pole of the contradiction to the other... Theirs is a fundamental role, and has been throughout the history of this struggle. It happens, however, that as they cease to be exploiters or indifferent spectators or simply the heirs of exploitation and move to the side of the exploited, they almost always bring with them the marks of their origin: their prejudices and their deformations, which include a lack of confidence in the people's ability to think, to want, and to know. Accordingly, these adherents to the people's cause constantly run the risk of falling into a type of generosity as malefic as that of the oppressors. The generosity of the oppressors is nourished by an unjust order, which must be maintained in order to justify that generosity. Our converts, on the other hand, truly desire to transform the unjust order; but because of their background they believe that they must be the executors of the transformation. They talk about the people, but they do not trust them; and trusting the people is the indispensable precondition for revolutionary change. A real humanist can be identified more by his trust in the people, which engages him in their struggle, than by a thousand actions in their favor without that trust.”

— Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

Re-using this material

You are welcome to re-use/re-work/copy from this document for starting your own group, accountability work or anything else you find it useful for. You don't need to credit anyone when doing this.

If you want to, you can email to say what you are up to with it or just to share ideas and learning about tackling harm, men's work, accountability work and transformative justice:
peeraccountabilitylearning@protonmail.com