



The Problem

- Males, and particularly males of color, live shorter lives, suffer greater morbidity, and inflict greater morbidity and mortality on others compared to females.
- Males utilize health services less than females and seek help later in the course of disease or condition which contributes to worse outcomes.
- The health disparities between males and females are the result of complex and intertwined biological and sociologic factors that are not well understood since a paucity of research has address this issue.





The Problem - continued

- The health disparities of boys and men are among the most significant, rarely recognized, and long-standing public health problems lacking a systematic, scientifically defined, and well coordinated national effort.
- In essence, no other public health problem, affecting so many people, has endured benign neglect as much or as long as has male health disparities.
- Without a better understanding of how to engage males relative to any health issue, efforts to enhance their concern and actions to improve the pregnancy outcomes of their partners will be limited.





Two Inescapable Conclusions

- Dead, sick, addicted, and incarcerated males can't fulfilling their roles as fathers, husbands, providers, role models, and contributors to their communities and are too often a drain on them.
- The health disparities plaguing boys and men have enormous social and economic costs to their families and communities and thus represent a threat to the wellbeing of all, including their pregnant partners.





From Theory to Practice

- Evolutionary Psychology/Adaptive Unconscious*: why males don't ask for help – a reality check
- Social Network Theory applied to supporting males/warriors in their journey to wellness*
- Community level strategies to test for enhancing protective factors in males to improve their health and wellness and their mates

^{*} See Malcom Gladwell's *Blink*, Timothy Wilson's *Strangers to Ourselves, and* Paul Quinnett's *Suicide in Men*



Let's accept reality...

The next warrior's death or illness is not likely to be prevented by passive availability of clinics, counseling services, crisis call numbers, posters, wallet cards, or information on how to ask for help...

It might be prevented by trained communitybased health workers who can credibly /culturally connect with these warriors where they are physically and mentally in <u>offering</u> help and hope!





#1 Problem? Men don't ask for help!

- Few if any published studies show that social marketing strategies substantially increases vulnerable male help-seeking behavior.
- Being male and still carrying warrior instincts may be the greatest "barrier" to seeking help
- To understand what makes a warrior tick, you have to know how he was made.





Evolutionary Psychology/Adaptive Unconscious "Warrior Psychology"

Since men experience most of the dying in wars and much from homicides, suicide, injuries, etc....a brief review of male/warrior psychology is in order....

You can't fix a problem you don't understand





Things Males Do Well

- Throwing
- Navigating
- Hand signals
- > Fighting
- Hunting and Fishing
- Exploring (name a famous woman explorer not named Sacajawea)
- Map reading
- > Architecture
- Non-verbal skills, e.g., bridge building, mechanics, mountain climbing, and Legos...







Because...

For many hundreds of thousands of years natural selection has favored males who were good at HUNTING and FIGHTING!

If you can't "bring home the bacon" and kill the other guy in a fight before he kills you, you don't get the girl. And if don't get the girl you don't get to swim in the gene pool.





It took an estimated 1.5 million years to become today's modern man

Does natural selection favor men who ask for help?

If not, why not?





"Pre-Historical Trauma" 101

- For a huge majority of the past 1.5 million years we've been hunters, gatherers, and warriors.*
- As warriors defending their tribes and territory —with few exceptions — males have been engaged in regular if not constant warfare*.
- Anthropological research on our ancient ancestors bones shows that in close-combat warfare casualties ran up to 60%. In some studies, half of all young men died by violent wounds sustained in combat.*
- * see Steven Pinker's The Better Angels of our Nature





Bottom Line?

- Almost all men were warriors
- Losing a fight usually meant a violent death
- If you died young in a fight, you did not get the girl, father children, or pass your genes down to the next generation

Which means..., your daddy, granddaddy, and great, great granddaddy was the guy who won the fight!





Point?

- We have only been farmers, lawyers, and health care researchers, etc. for a few thousand years and we are not going to change 1.5 million years of evolving male behavior/psychology by telling them, "If you feel sick or suicidal, please ask for help."
- Efforts to support and improve protective factors and the health of males that ignore the essence of their "hard-wiring" or more scientifically, their "adaptive unconscious" are not likely to succeed.
- To move ahead we must accept our nature, our universal history of tribalism and war, and understand that these ancient social networks could also save our lives today if adapted appropriately.





We are all tribal...then and now

According to dozens of sociological and anthropological studies on human communities there are two historical community construction rules to which humans tend to conform:

The rule of 150 - "Dunbar's Number" - and, The Rule of 12

These rules apply to military fighting units, churches, successful work groups, and even online social networks like Facebook™.





You better belong somewhere...

- 150 is average number of humans you know on a first name basis (our "tribal" social network)
- These 150 people are interdependent; they share values, visions, ideas, enemies, kinships, likes, dislikes, unit designations, badges, etc. etc.
- Our biological brain size and memory capacity is adapted to remember the names, faces, and interpersonal histories we've had with these 150 community-bonded, "like us" souls.





The Intimacy and Safety Network

- In civilian and military life, within each group of 150 there are smaller groups of around 50 (think your church or platoon)
- Within this 50 are groups of 8–16 (rule of 12) people who are your "intimate others" or "affinity network."
- Women tend to have more, men fewer, and they include your battle buddies, immediate family, dearest friends, lovers, spouses, and those with whom you routinely break bread.





Who's got your back in the military?

- ➤ 150 warriors is an "average" Army company (80 to 250 soldiers) and are made up of 3 to 6 platoons, with each platoon made up of three rifle squads of 10 to 15 members (Rule of 12).
- Your squad make up your primary battle buddies and they should have your back in all matters from combat to bar fights
- This military fighting unit organizational structure has remained largely unchanged since Rome ruled the world...





Who's got your back in civilian life?

- On average, and if you have 150 friends, relatives, and acquaintances, you will:
 - Talk to all 150 at least once a year, e.g., Thanksgiving, weddings, and funerals
 - Talk to 50 of them once a month
 - Talk to 8-16 (Rule of 12) of them once a week
 - Talk to 3-5 of them everyday

In ancient times, we all lived together on our turf





Not on your turf, need help, need directions?

- Why did Moses wander 40 years in the wilderness? (answer in a moment)
- If you are not on your turf, who's turf on you on, and what does it mean to be "lost"?

What happens if you are lost and ask a perfect stranger, "Say, I'm a little turned around, can you direct me back home?"





Remember...

- When a lost man is feeling puny he is a target for ridicule, shame, piling on, capture, torture and death
- While it may be OK for Oprah and Dr. Phil to share their feelings and ask for directions, it's <u>not</u> for Clint Eastwood, Crazy Horse, or Geronimo!
- Until proven otherwise, every stranger is a potential enemy





Lost where you don't belong?

In the film *Deliverance* several city boys decide to leave their turf and float down a river into the backwoods of Appalachia and into turf belonging to strangers – without permission and some very unpleasant things happen.

Across the back of the best-selling T-shirt in those parts of North Carolina:

"Paddle faster, I hear banjo music!"

Every man who has to ask for help from a stranger hears banjo music, at some level!





Primate Survival Gear 101

Tools/instincts of our <u>adaptive unconscious</u> hardwired into our nervous systems that make asking for help unlikely....

Freeze

Fight (kill)

Flee

Source: Buss, et al., American Psychologist, 2012





Instinctive Fears: Falling







Instinctive Fear: Spiders







Instinctive Fear: Snakes







Instinctive Fears: Strangers







The power of instinctive fear!

Fear is always more powerful than reason and works much faster than logic!

Paul Quinnett Suicide in Men





Adaptive Unconscious at Work

The term "adaptive unconscious" is meant to convey that nonconscious thinking is an evolutionary adaptation. The ability to size up environments, disambiguate them, interpret them, and initiate behavior quickly and nonconsciously confers a survival advantage and thus was selected for.

Timothy Wilson Strangers to Ourselves





Male Warrior Survivor Rules

- Do not get lost;
- If lost, do not ask for help from strangers;

And when instinctive fear sets in, we are ready to freeze, fight, or flee, which is far from a teachable moment!





What can we do for our warriors...?

- Rethink male strengths
- Play to their ancient roles and responsibilities but help them redefine them in today's world
- Understand prime functions and reinforce them
- Serve them where they are using their networks which may include the internet
- Make it safe for men to accept help
- Stop asking them to ask for help....





So where do warriors belong?

- At a fishing or hunting camp
- As a member of military unit
- As a member of group that works, plays, or prays together (e.g., sweat lodge, a retreat)
- As a teacher and positive role model to the young embracing cultural traditions and the role of the warrior in today's world
- > As a defender of women, children, and the weak
- As an active, contributing, and valued member of a family and a community but particularly in the role of <u>father!</u>
- As part of ANYTHING bigger than himself where his efforts contribute to a greater good and affirm his role!





A Contention!

Protective factors can be enhanced and health risks (suicide, substance abuse, domestic violence, chronic diseases, etc.) can be reduced by reconnecting our warriors in culturally appropriate social networks and giving them a job to do...

in fact

Men don't just need to be needed, it's difficult for them to live without being needed...





Uncle Sam Needs You!

Most successful WWII recruitment poster – note "need" not "want"

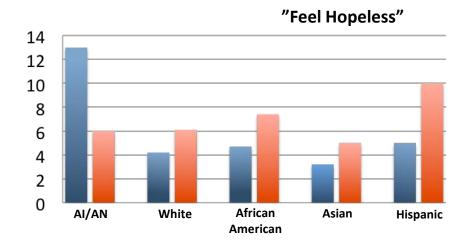


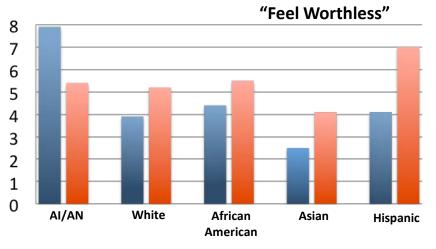




When Native Warriors have little sense of self-worth or hope

National Health
Statistic Reports (No. 20, March, 9, 2010)
Health Characteristics of the American Indian or Alaska
Native Adult
Population: United
States, 2004-2008





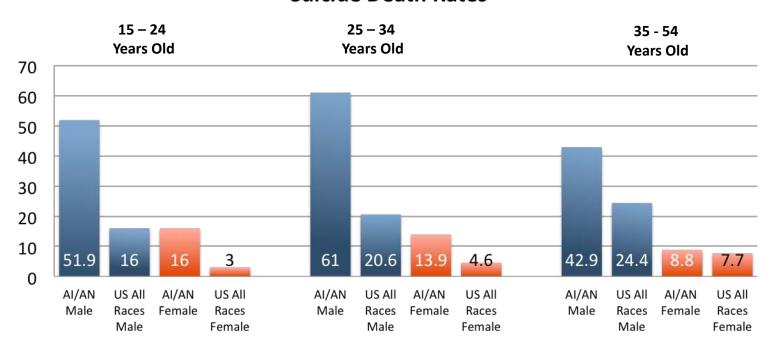






....they end their lives of pain at staggering rates

Suicide Death Rates







Let's Start with Terms

- Asking for help = weak and incompetent
- Accepting help = you are strong, but not quite strong enough to lift a car out of ditch or drag whole elk back to hunting camp...
- Accepting help creates "repayment reciprocity"

 a good thing that stitches together the fabric of everything from military units to entire communities





Help-seeking OK







Help-seeking not OK







Help-accepting OK







Let's Understand Warriors

Warriors most at risk for suicide, substance abuse, domestic violence, and abandoning their pregnant partner, etc. are often the *least likely* to ask for help, particularly from strangers.

Thus, we must find these warriors and help them where they are – and they are usually NOT in our clinics and mental health offices...





Suggestions and Conclusions

- Let's test applications of Warrior Psychology in diverse settings focused on supporting <u>help accepting behavior</u> from peers such as minimally trained health aids remembering the Dunbar Number and the Rule of 12.
- Let's test approaches for helping warriors redefine their roles in today's world with healing, hope, and purpose integrating protective factors that include culture, traditions, spirituality, mentoring, and <u>fathering</u> (Al Pooley, Armin Brott, Aha Kāne).
- Let's immediately establish "offices of male health" at NIMHD and the IHS to help jump start other agencies in following.





Suggestions and Conclusions- continued

- Let's dramatically increase funding and attention to male suicide which is four times greater than females and is now the 2nd leading cause of death for all males 10-44 years and increasing.
- Let's be sure we leverage every opportunity to collaborate and test intervention approaches for the *My Brother's Keeper* initiative.
- Let's apply information-age technologies to help overcome caveman-age irrational fears of getting health care, particularly behavioral health care.
- Let's engage and collaborate with women's health organizations who are increasingly recognizing that the benign neglect of male health research ultimately hurts the entire family.



Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.

Chief Seattle



Thanks for Your Attention!

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