

The NSW Man Box Fact Sheet

Rigid masculine norms are associated with the perpetration of intimate partner violence and other harmful behaviours. The good news is that most men reject rigid masculine norms.

What is the Man Box?

The Man Box describes a set of 'rules' that may place pressure on men to behave in traditionally masculine ways. These are rules such as 'a guy who doesn't fight back when others push him around is weak', or 'men should use violence to get respect if necessary'.

The Man Box research explores the relationship between attitudes to masculine stereotypes and a range of behaviours and outcomes, including intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, consumption

of violent pornography, poor mental health, problem gambling and excessive alcohol use.

The study uses 'quintile analysis', which splits the whole sample into five groups of survey respondents based on how strongly they agree with the Man Box rules. Those with the lowest levels of agreement with the Man Box are in quintile 1 and those who most strongly agree with the Man Box in quintile 5.

Man Box pillars



Self-sufficiency

Men should figure out their own personal problems on their own without asking others for help.



Acting tough

Men should act strong even if they feel scared or nervous inside.



Physical attractiveness

A man who spends a lot of time on his looks isn't very manly.



Rigid gender roles

'...men should really be the ones to bring money home to provide for their families, not women'



Homophobia and transphobia

It's not OK for straight men to be friends with gay men.



Hypersexuality

A "real man" would never say no to sex.



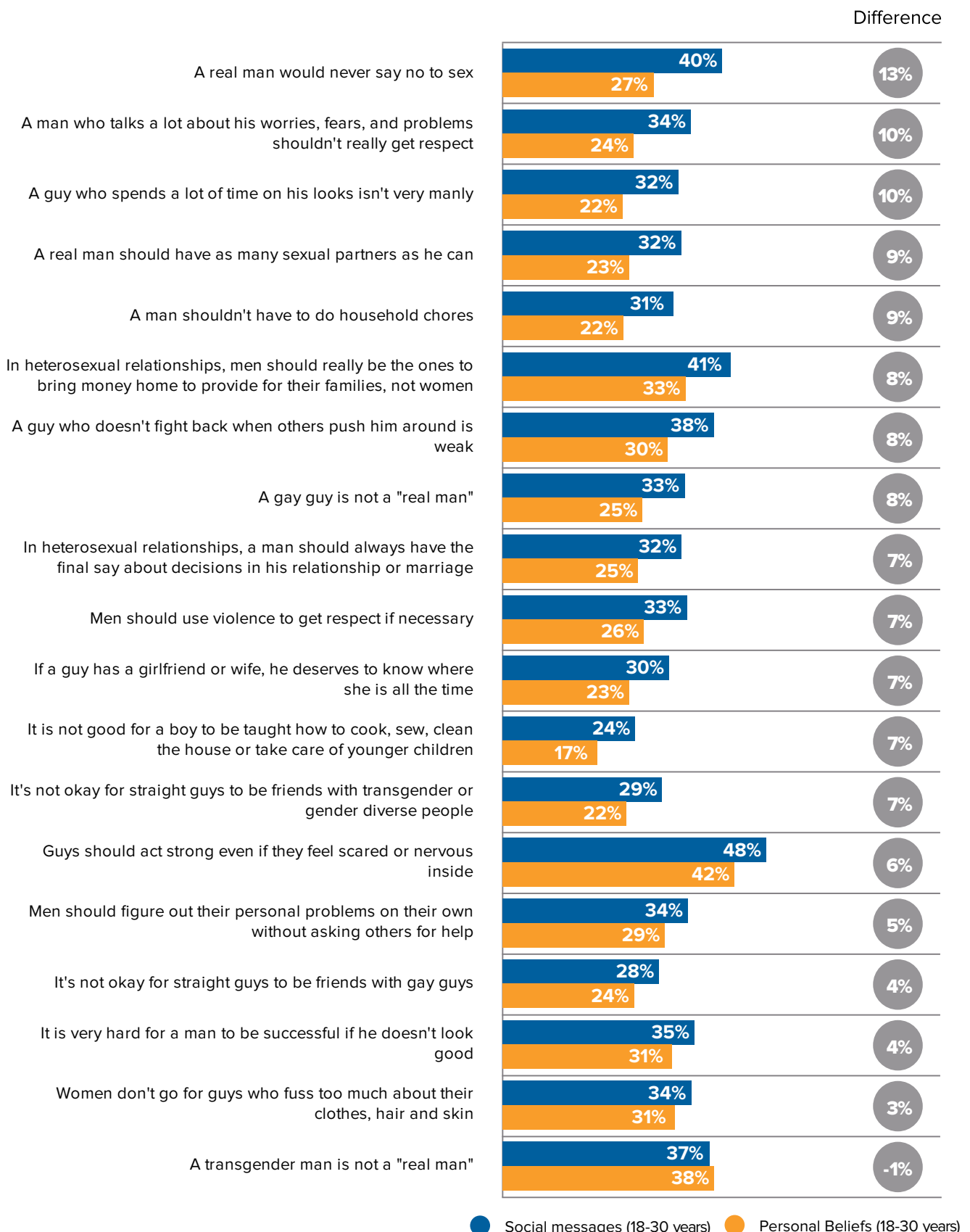
Aggression and control

Men should use violence to get respect if necessary.

Who agrees with the Man Box rules?

Most men in NSW do not feel social pressure to adopt the Man Box rules, and an even smaller proportion of men agree with the Man Box rules. However, a significant minority of men do agree there are rigid rules to live up to in order to be considered a 'real man'.

Difference between social messages and personal agreement, NSW survey respondents, 18-30 y.o. men



There is a relationship between agreeing with the Man Box rules and the perpetration of **intimate partner violence**.

There were higher rates of reported perpetration of intimate partner violence among those men who agreed with the rigid masculine norms of the Man Box.

NSW young men who most strongly agreed with the Man Box are:

7.5x more likely to perpetrate at least one form of **intimate partner violence** compared to those men who are least likely to agree with the Man Box.

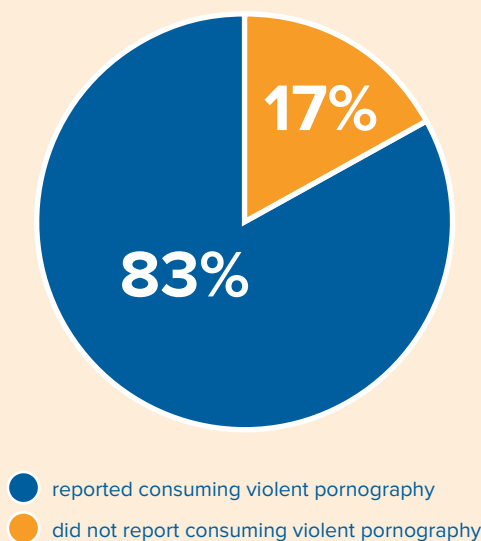
10x more likely to perpetrate **sexual violence** against an intimate partner compared to those men who are least likely to agree with the Man Box.

There is a relationship between agreeing with the Man Box rules and the use of **violent pornography**.

Use of violent pornography is widespread among NSW men surveyed, especially those who agreed with rigid masculine norms.

More than half of NSW survey respondents aged 18-30 consumed violent pornography in the past six months. This percentage rises to 83 per cent for those men who most strongly agree with the rigid masculine norms of the Man Box.

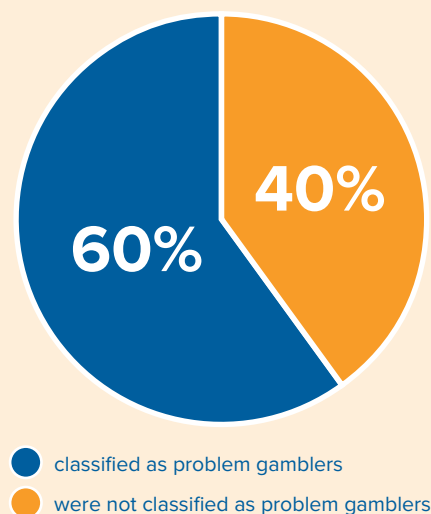
Men aged 18-30 who most strongly agree with the Man Box rules reported consuming violent pornography in the past 6 months



There is a relationship between agreeing with the Man Box rules and problem **gambling and risky drinking**.

More than 60 per cent of young men who most strongly agree with the Man Box rules were classified as problem gamblers, while only 10 per cent of those who are least likely to agree with the Man Box rules met the criteria for problem gambling.

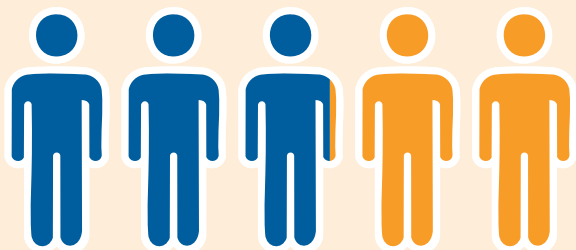
Men aged 18-30 who most strongly agree with the Man Box rules were classified as problem gamblers



NSW men aged 18-30 who most strongly agreed with the Man Box rules were more likely to meet the criteria for risky drinking (41 per cent) than men with lower agreement of the Man Box rules (ranging from 21 per cent to 33 per cent).

There is a relationship between agreeing with the Man Box rules and experiencing **poor mental health**.

Young men aged 18-30 surveyed in NSW have poor mental health, especially those who subscribe to the Man Box beliefs.



Nearly three in five (57%) young men adhering most closely to rigid masculine norms had thoughts of suicide, more than twice the rate of those who least agreed with the Man Box rules (26%).



Implications: it's up to all of us

While men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators of intimate partner violence, men can also be important allies in the prevention of violence against women. One of the ways to demonstrate allyship is to speak up and call out inappropriate behaviour. Another way is to challenge rigid masculine norms. If we can support boys and men to act in line with their personal values - rather than outdated societal pressures to always appear tough and in control - we take an important step toward reducing intimate partner violence and other harmful behaviours.