# Breaking Stereotypes for Men's Health 8-Step PBLP (Grades 7–12)

**Objective:** To explore the barriers, stereotypes, and health disparities that affect men, and to connect physical, mental, and emotional health to community wellness and civic responsibility. Students will reflect on how compassion, inclusion, and awareness can shape a healthier future for men across different communities. Through interdisciplinary inquiry and real-world action, students will design projects that support men's well-being and destigmatize asking for help.

## Round Table

- ❖ **Opening Discussion:**
  - ➢ Why are men often less likely to seek medical or emotional help?
  - ➢ What cultural or societal expectations might influence men's health behaviors?
  - ➢ What does a compassionate approach to men's wellness look like?
- ❖ **Purpose:** Introduce men's health as a public and emotional issue, not just a private one. Encourage students to identify how health affects families, workplaces, and communities. Explore the stigma around vulnerability, especially for men and youth.
- ❖ **Materials:** Articles on men's health statistics, interviews with male health advocates, mental health campaign videos, and personal narratives.

## Reflection Point

- ❖ **Discussion Questions:**
  - ➢ How do gender expectations influence behavior around health?
  - ➢ Can vulnerability be a strength?
- ❖ **Objective:** To reflect deeply on how societal expectations shape men's mental and emotional wellness, and to begin identifying compassionate responses that encourage healing.
- ❖ **Materials:**
  - ➢ Reflection journals

| Knowledge Setting | |
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| **Science (S): Male Health & Biology** | ❖ **Objective:** Understand the biological and physiological issues that predominantly affect men.<br>❖ **Activity:** Study case stress-related and mental health comorbidities like depression and anxiety. |
| **Technology (T): Health Monitoring & Digital Support Tools** | ❖ **Objective:** Understand how technology can help men recognize and manage stress in their everyday routines.<br>❖ **Activity:** Research how stress shows up in men's lives—whether through overwork, lack of sleep, tension in relationships, or burnout in high-risk jobs. |
| **Engineering (E): Designed Health Access Solutions** | ❖ **Objective:** Understand how physical and systemic design can improve access to care.<br>❖ **Activity:** Identify and research designs designated for men's health. |
| **Arts (A): Campaigns of Compassion** | ❖ **Objective:** Understand how creative storytelling regarding men's health challenges stigma and promotes care.<br>❖ **Activity:** Research a digital campaign (video, poster series, or spoken word piece) that promotes men's emotional awareness and strength through vulnerability. |

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| **Mathematics (M): Health Data and Life Expectancy** | ❖ **Objective:** Understand trends in men's health by age, race, region, and other demographic indicators.<br>❖ **Activity:** Research national or local datasets to visualize and identify trends. |
| **Social Studies (SS): Masculinity, Media, and Health Policy** | ❖ **Objective:** Understand how cultural ideals and public policies shape men's health outcomes.<br>❖ **Activity:** Analyze media representations of masculinity, explore health policy timelines, and observe mental health services available to men. |

| Project Examples | |
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| **Progress Map for Project Delivery** | ❖ **Step 1: Project Proposal**<br><br>Students gather foundational knowledge through a collaborative knowledge-setting session to prepare for a project-based learning process. They meet with community partners (if possible) and create a written proposal outlining the project focus and intended community benefit.<br><br>❖ **Step 2: Initial Project Proposal and Community Engagement Plan**<br><br>Students submit proposals and reflect on community input, refining their plans. They outline how the project addresses real-world needs and aligns with learning objectives.<br><br>❖ **Step 3: Research Progress Update**<br><br>Students conduct research and gather data by consulting with community partners to guide their project development and ensure accuracy.<br><br>❖ **Step 4: Draft of Final Project**<br><br>Students compile findings into a working draft of their final project proposal.<br><br>❖ **Step 5: Final Project Refinement and Approval for Implementation**<br><br>Students apply final feedback to strengthen their project and submit it for approval. Approved projects move forward to the community involvement and assessment phases outlined in the SOP. |

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| **Science (S): Barbershop Project** | ❖ **Project Example:** Students collaborate with a local barbershop to launch a temporary, pop-up wellness installation that breaks down how stress, burnout, and emotional strain affect the male body—highlighting changes in brain function, blood pressure, hormones, and sleep. Translate these biological effects into bold, easy-to-understand visuals that spark conversation. |
| **Technology (T): Digital Tools for Daily Wellness** | ❖ **Project Example:** Work with a health-tech startup or wearable tech company to design a prototype for a mental wellness app or digital journal tailored to men's daily routines. The tool may include features such as stress tracking, guided breathing, fitness check-ins, and tracking peer support. |
| **Engineering (E): Designing Access—Wellness Without Barriers** | ❖ **Project Example:** Collaborate with a local health clinic to reimagine how care spaces can be more inclusive for men. Create a proposal to redesign a public health environment—like a barbershop or rec center—to provide wellness education and services. |
| **Arts (A): Reclaiming Strength—Visual Campaigns for Healing** | ❖ **Project Example**: Partner with a local artist to co-create a visual storytelling campaign. Develop poster series, photo essays, or digital installations featuring real or fictional narratives that explore vulnerability, emotional expression, and the broad spectrum of male identity. These are displayed in public spaces |

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| | such as schools, libraries, or barbershops. |
| **Mathematics (M): Mirror Messages, A Traveling Art Series on Masculinity** | ❖ **Project Example**: Partner with local artist to create a bold, reflective art campaign called *"Mirror Messages."* Inspired by the question "What do men carry that they don't say?", students gather short quotes, anonymous confessions, and poetic reflections on masculinity, pressure, and emotional silence.  Temporarily install in places where men go daily but rarely pause to reflect. |
| **Social Justice (SS): Local Peace for International Affairs Day** | ❖ **Project Example**: Students partner with local government offices (such as the city health department or a councilmember's office) and take on the role of youth policy researchers by conducting a focused audit on how public policy shapes men's health outcomes. Explore issues such as access to mental health care, the absence of paid paternity leave, underfunded school therapy programs, or gaps in veteran support services. Create a Men's Health Policy Audit Report that examines key trends, highlights successes, and uncovers critical gaps in care—offering policy recommendations that promote equity, access, and improved outcomes for men across communities. |

## Community Involvement

- ❖ **Objective**: Students complete and implement their final approved projects in collaboration with their community partners, putting their solutions into real-world action.
- ❖ **Activity**: After project approval, students work directly with their community partners—such as local barbershops, mental health nonprofits, city health departments, men's groups, or advocacy organizations—to bring their ideas to life. This might include hosting pop-up art installations, submitting policy audit reports at a public forum, or launching school-wide wellness campaigns. Educators and partners assess project success using rubrics and discussion tools that evaluate creativity, collaboration, communication, and measurable community impact. Insights and responses from the community directly inform the next phase—assessment and reflection—ensuring the work remains accountable, inclusive, and rooted in real change.

## Assessment

- ❖ **Objective**: Evaluate student understanding, empathy, creativity, and execution.
- ❖ **Methods**: Use detailed rubrics that assess project design, research accuracy, clarity of messaging, and the level of community engagement. Include student self-assessments, peer feedback, and formal responses from community partners to create a full picture of student impact and growth.

## Feedback Loop

- ❖ **Activity**: Encourage students to reflect on their personal growth and community engagement after project implementation.
- ❖ **Journal Prompt**:
    - ➢ What challenged or surprised you most about men's health issues in your community?
    - ➢ How did your understanding of masculinity or vulnerability shift during this project?

➢ In what ways did your project promote healing, awareness, or connection for others?

➢ What would you do differently next time?

## Resume Integration

❖ Students reflect on their project experience and learn how to articulate it as professional, purpose-driven work. Through guided journal responses and project reviews, they draft resume bullet points and talking points that highlight leadership, advocacy, communication, and community collaboration.

For more 8-Step Project-Based Lesson Plans check out our website at www.steamsinitiative.org

For all inquiries, please email **info@steamsinitiative.org**