

# SANTA FE BOYS

TRIENNIAL PUBLICATION ABOUT THE SITUATION OF BOYS IN SANTA FE

ISSUE NO. 4

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## Boys And Violence What boys need and what boys find

By Victor LaCerva, MD  
and Paul Golding, PhD

In this issue of Santa Fe Boys we examine aspects of violence in boys' lives. In some ways that boys experience violence in Santa Fe, they are victims; see for example the article on boys and sexual abuse on this page. In other ways boys are perpetrators; this is discussed in the article on Boys, Violence and Running Away. All of these issues reflect the neglect and depression of boys, perhaps most strikingly apparent in the article on suicide in New Mexico. From these articles and from others in past issues on education and the absence of fathers in boys' lives, we have drawn up An Agenda for Boys in Santa Fe presented below. In creating the agenda, two main causes for its need came to our attention:

1. something is wrong with what boys bring and internalize from their homes and from their early socialization, and
2. something is missing from what boys find when they begin to act out their difficulties in terms of poor academic performance, violence, alcohol and substance abuse, or suicide attempts.

In past issues of *Santa Fe Boys* we have talked at length about what boys bring: their socialization in the Boy Code, for example. We have described these unwritten rules of parents, teachers, TV programs, etc., about the appropriate behavior of boys, about the emphasis on traditional masculine values, about the limited range of emotions expected or even allowed from boys.

So now we would like to talk

about what boys find: what is the image and what are the levels and kinds of masculine energy that boys encounter in places like schools, social service agencies, and the juvenile justice system, when they reach the age where these institutions, and the problems addressed by these institutions, come to be important for them.

In general, we think that what boys encounter is an absence of embodied healthy male energy. We observe that:

- Fathers are increasingly absent from boys' home life;
- New Mexico is consistently among the leaders in the nation in the proportion of children born to single mothers, currently 46 percent statewide;
- In elementary schools, among administrators and teachers, men are a small minority, about 15 percent;
- In social service agencies in Santa Fe, men are as rare as in the schools.

Does it matter that boys are not exposed to men and masculine energy at home or in schools or social services? What, if anything, is lost as a result? For one thing, boys lose an affirmation of a large part of who they are. They also lose a model of how to be in the world, how to relate to the feminine of the world, how to be honest to their emotions and to live with integrity. No matter how well intentioned a mother or a female teacher may be, she cannot initiate a son or boy into something she is not. When such energy is not found openly, boys will develop it themselves and often

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## Sexual Abuse of Boys in Santa Fe

By Paul Golding  
SFB Editor

Sexual abuse of a boy is not simply an assault upon his body. It is also a psychological betrayal of trust by an older person—a betrayal that will possibly interfere with the boy's ability to form solid relations in the future, negatively affect his self image, and impair his functioning in the world. Because of the covert way our culture treats male sexual abuse, many boys and men, who were sexually abused, are destined to spend a lifetime of misunderstood suffering. Many will attempt to hide from their trauma with substance abuse, high risk sexual or similar avoidance behaviors or will act out in other ways. Sexual abuse suffered as a boy, as one Santa Fe counselor involved with this issue says, can often leave "a pervasive hole in a man's life."

Careful studies of the incidence of sexual abuse of boys show that about one in six boys suffers overt sexual abuse.<sup>[1]</sup> To put this into a local perspective, this rate of abuse

means that of the approximately 6,500 male students in Santa Fe Public Schools about 1,200 have been or will be sexually abused by an older person, male or female (by a family member, or by someone from outside their family) by the time they leave the Santa Fe school system.

Sexual abuse of a child in New Mexico law is defined as involving contact such as sexual penetration, fellatio, etc. with a child under age 18 by a person in a position of authority over the child, such as a parent, relative, teacher or even a significantly older youth. Another form of child sexual abuse, not included in the above statistics, which though not illegal often causes similar psychological and emotional damage, is referred to as "covert" or non-contact sexual abuse. One definition of covert sexual abuse in the parental context is that it "occurs when a child becomes the object of a parent's affection, love, passion and preoccupation. The boundary

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# Boys, Violence and Running Away

By Paul Golding  
SFB Editor

A consultant looking at Santa Fe's juvenile justice system suggests that youth crime in Santa Fe falls within a predictable pattern. Teresa Lurry recently completed an in-depth analysis, a "social autopsy" of the records of 10 violent juvenile offenders in Santa Fe—nine males and one female. She came to town at the request of the Regional Juvenile Justice Board—a body made up of law enforcement officials, county and city elected officials, the schools and the courts—to advise the board on ways to sharpen its preventative efforts with regard to the alarming increase of violent juvenile crime in Santa Fe. This type of crime has increased over 80 percent in the last three years in the category of aggravated assault/battery and most of these crimes, over 90 percent, are carried out by young males.

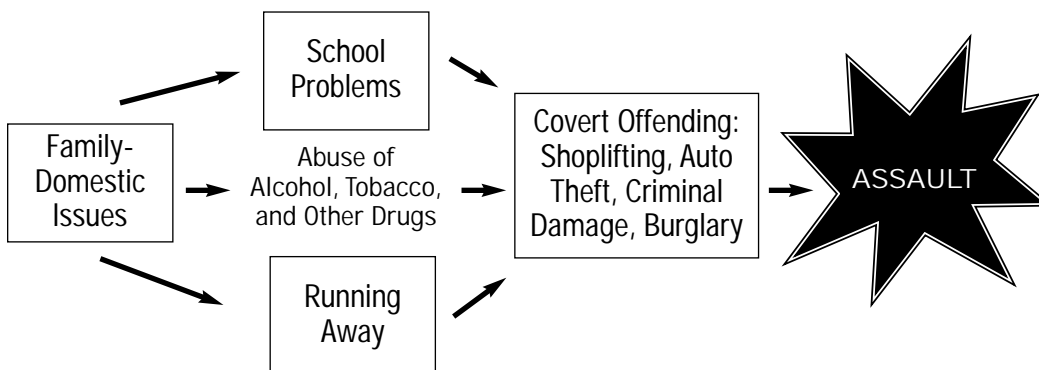
Lurry's analysis showed that each of the 10 violent juvenile offenders for which a "social autopsy" was done followed a similar pathway to crime. This "Santa Fe Pathway" to violent crime is shown below. To illustrate how it fits the real world, take the case of Victor (not his real name) whose 5 years of official reports were summarized as fairly typical of the 10 cases. Problems started at Victor's home with several visits by police because of reports of domestic violence. Then Victor had problems early on in school. The record shows, for example, that he brought alcohol to the school premises and there were also some serious holes in Victor's school attendance. At one point Victor called in a bomb threat to his school and this was followed by a child neglect charge against his caretakers. Then he was picked up for running away from home. This was considered by the consultant to be the turning point. From then on Victor's list of crimes turned more serious: auto theft, a threatening verbal assault and marijuana possession at school, and driving under the influence. Subsequently, Victor did something really serious; he got involved in a robbery and had a gun.

The consultant concluded that running away from home was a major turning point in the criminal histories of most of the 10 violent juveniles. Why would this be the case? According to Dr. Susan Cave, who carries out psychological evaluations of juveniles referred by the courts in Santa Fe and is also a member of the RJJB, these boys are running away from intolerable violent and abusive situations. It might be, "a male figure in the home who has become violent and abusive towards them," or a mother or grandmother, who might be "very emotional, hysterical, or unstable, ranting and raving and yelling at a boy." Whatever it is, the home has become a place to leave.

Reporting to the RJJB in October, Teresa Lurry strongly advised the board to focus more of its preventative efforts on runaway boys who have a previous history of at least two serious property offenses and domestic-family conflict and violence. She noted that currently Santa Fe does not have a systematic response to runaways; when a boy is picked up for running away by local law enforcement officers there are no guidelines for what officers should do. Often runaways are returned to their inadequate home situations or simply left on the street to fend for themselves. Seldom are assessments carried out and seldom are intervention plans proposed. When plans are proposed, treatment can often be delayed three or more months after the incident and frequently when a juvenile does not show up, nobody notices. In conclusion, the consultant reported, Santa Fe's system for dealing with its problem of violent juveniles was at best fragmented and haphazard.

In response, at the following meeting of the RJJB on November 18th, Judge Barbara Vigil of the District Court and a member of the RJJB reported on several initiatives planned to deal with the situation. She said that they would be developing an intervention system for runaways along the lines proposed by the consultant. *Santa Fe Boys* will report on further progress as the system becomes established.

## Selected Target Pathway to Juvenile Violence in Santa Fe



Source: Teresa Lurry, Targeted Community Action Planning, Presentation to the Santa Fe Regional Juvenile Justice Advisory Board, October 21, 2004

## SANTA FE BOYS

A triannual publication for adults about the situation of boys in Santa Fe

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If you would like to receive *Santa Fe Boys* in the future, please contact us at the addresses above.

# Local Schools Fail Boys in Key Area of Language Arts

Below are two sets of test results for male and female students in the key areas of language arts and math, the two subjects required for measuring academic progress under the No Child Left Behind Act. Both sets of tests point to the same conclusions:

1. In Language Arts, male students in Santa Fe perform consistently and significantly worse than female students, and worse than the national average and state proficiency levels.
2. In Math, male and female students perform more or less equally, depending on the year considered.

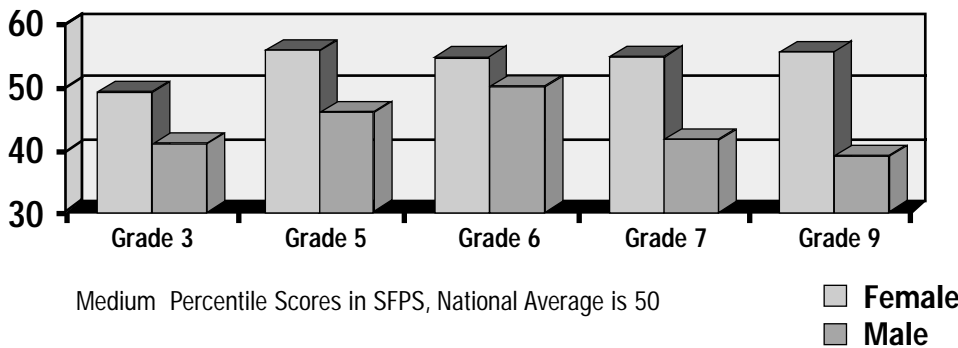
Both of these conclusions are consistent with the New Mexico High School Proficiency tests given to 10th grade students and reported in the Fall 2003 issue of SFB.

In a previous issue of *Santa Fe Boys* (Fall 2004), Dr. Rendon, the SFPS Superintendent, said that the school system would look at performance by gender only after it had improved the performance of Hispanic and low income students. The above results, however, show that a different approach is called for. Because over 70 percent of the male students in SFPS are Hispanic and over 50 percent are low income, an effective attempt to address the issue of why male students in SFPS do so poorly in Language Arts will also go a long way to addressing the issues of poor performance by Hispanic and low income students in the school system generally.

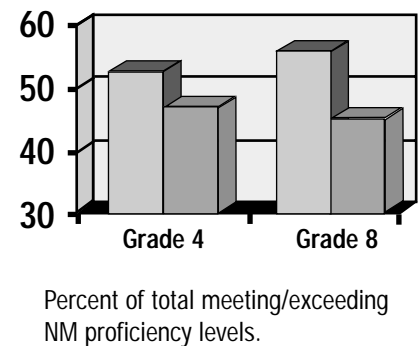
## LANGUAGE ARTS

Males are consistently and significantly behind female students

Terra Nova Test Results in LANGUAGE ARTS, by Gender, in Santa Fe Public Schools, 2003-2004



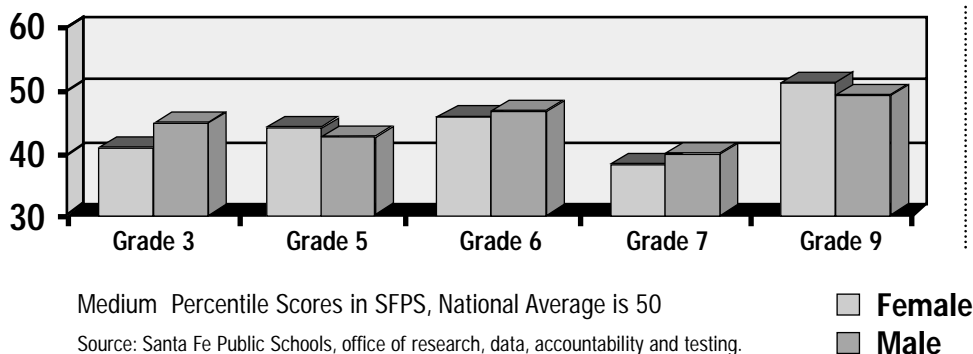
New Mexico Standards Based Assessment Results in Language Arts, by Gender, In Santa Fe Public Schools, 2003-2004



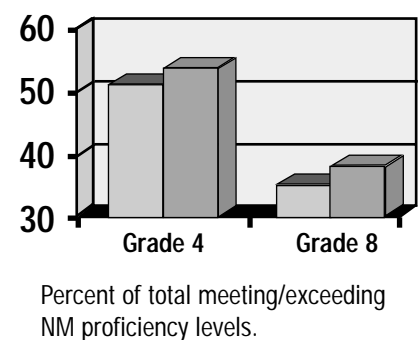
## MATH

There is no significant difference between males and females

Terra Nova Test Results in MATH, by Gender, in Santa Fe Public Schools, 2003-2004



New Mexico Standards Based Assessment Results in Math by Gender, In Santa Fe Public Schools, 2003-2004



this will take an unhealthy or extreme form. They will spend hours in front of a screen observing negative and destructive media messages about being a real man. They will join gangs, made up of young men who have little contact with adult men. They will join groups of male “siblings” without an adult male to direct or temper their considerable anger and violence. In such mostly destructive ways, boys left on their own will seek guidance about being male.

Because of this absence of healthy male energy, boys lose important advocates for who they really are on the inside. We see this in elementary schools where the feminine virtues are prized: neatness, conformity, quietness, politeness, verbal skills, etc. Boys, in contrast, tend to be more active, disorderly, aggressive and less verbal than girls and, not surprisingly, boys have greater failure rates. Even more alarmingly, they are four times more likely to be given medication for their “attention deficits.”

Boys not only lose a voice within schools because of the absence of positive male energy, but the same phenomenon repeats itself within “helping” social services/penal systems. It is well known, for example, that boys predominate in juvenile justice systems two or three times more than girls, similar to their different rates in school detentions and suspensions. Males are ten times more likely than females to be found in adult prison systems. In general, boys and men are more harshly dealt with around issues of anti-social behavior than women, who are more likely to encounter treatment than punishment. In Santa Fe, an example of this is that the only gender specific program which addressed the gender identification needs of children in trouble with the law was that of the Regional Juvenile Justice Board for middle school female students last summer. No such opportunity was offered for boys.

Even when boys are allowed an opportunity for treatment as opposed to punishment, this often happens within the context of models developed for

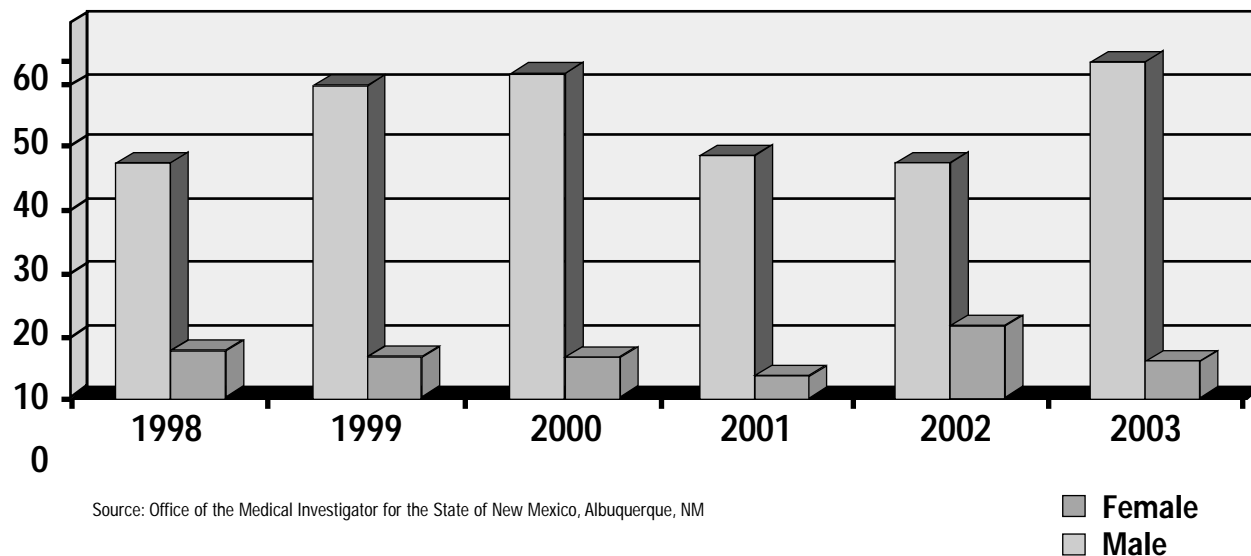
females. These models put a premium on the ease of expressing emotions and do not see emotional weakness as shameful, an approach which disregards the way we socialize boys. The current system of treatment for psychological problems especially discriminates against boys in this regard. Because it is based on solving problems—uncovering issues—quickly, those who can most readily come forth with their symptoms will benefit. For boys, who are shame-phobic and loathe to be seen as victims, the short range nature of therapy is less beneficial.

The idea of the autonomous boy who can exist without much support is fairly widespread in Santa Fe. Its opposite, the young male victim, makes us uncomfortable. His existence runs counter to the way the world is supposed to work; males should be heroic, not victims; they should tough it out and not cry; they should be resilient, without the need for intensive help. In the minds of most parents, teachers and others, boys are not the majority of New Mexico High Schools students who are threatened or injured with a weapon; nor are they thought of as being sexually abused. Yet they are, and they are suffering enormously because of our inattention to their needs. The sobering evidence of the articles in this issue of *Santa Fe Boys* should lead us to wonder why we continue to fail to think of boys as victims, deserving of both our protection and assistance.

Fatherlessness, poverty, destructive societal messages in terms of masculinity, and early exposure to family violence and abuse, alcohol and other drug abuse together with mental illness combine to set up some young boys for a lifetime of difficulty. Their resulting social and mental health needs often go unmet. These early adverse influences and lack of supportive assistance contribute directly to their high rates of poor academic performance, suicide, juvenile justice involvement, early and risky sexual activity and substance abuse, and eventual repetition of the same destructive cycles as they begin to date and become fathers themselves at an early age. We must come together as a community and begin to more effectively address the unique needs of our boys NOW!

AN AGENDA FOR BOYS IN SANTA FE				
AREAS	ISSUES	WHAT BOYS BRING (From home, from the way they are raised)	WHAT BOYS FIND (The absence of embodied masculine energy, models, etc. appropriate for our times)	FIRST STEPS TO CHANGE
<b>Fatherlessness</b>	25 to 50% of boys in New Mexico are raised away from their fathers.	Father Hunger: a longing to connect to males.	Father absence and a lack of healthy masculine modeling.	Establish a New Mexico Commission of Fatherhood.
<b>Elementary Schools</b>	Males are consistently below SFPS' average performance levels in Reading and Language Arts and are over represented in behavioral issues, special education, drop outs, and among those medicated for behavior etc.	The Boy Code: Estrangement from feeling, lack of connection.	Schools are largely feminized, environments where boys' natures are not well accommodated.	Need for teacher training about gender differences in school. Development of same sex classrooms which allow for boy-oriented instruction.
<b>Violent Juveniles</b>	Growth in violent juvenile crime. Aggravated assault and battery—almost entirely committed by young males—has increased 84% over the last three years in Santa Fe.	Abusive situations from home leading to anger, alienation, expectations of not being understood, running away, etc.	Masculine energy found in gangs with the powerful compensating experiences of violence and high risk behaviors.	Develop system to deal with runaway boys. Provide for rapid assessments and alternatives to bad family situations.
<b>Suicide &amp; Depression</b>	85% of youth suicides in NM are committed by males, three in the past year in Santa Fe. Suicide attempts by young males—high risk behavior—are often seen as dangerous to public safety and punished, not treated.	Unclaimed, often unconscious, sadness expressed as anger and acted out in high risk behaviors.	Psychological services lacking in understanding of male depression and how it is manifested.	Develop programs that can identify, understand and address young male depression. Public education.
<b>Sexual Abuse &amp; Domestic Violence</b>	1 in 6 boys suffers sexual abuse and half of all domestic violence victims are boys. Because the male as victim is seldom acknowledged, these cases usually go unacknowledged and untreated.	A fear of not measuring up to the heroic model of masculine invulnerability	Sexual abuse services lacking in understanding of & sympathy for male abuse dynamics, especially the difficulty of admitting victimization.	Develop programs in mental health services to spread awareness of sexual and domestic abuse of young males and better treatment programs for males.

## Suicide in New Mexico by Gender, 24 Years and Younger



## Suicide and Boys in Santa Fe and New Mexico

Among people age 24 and under in the United States the incidence of suicide has tripled over the past 50 years. Eighty-five percent of the young people who commit suicide in this age group are males. In New Mexico, for the years 1998 to 2003, 271 young men and 44 young women twenty-four years and under committed suicide.<sup>[1]</sup> Suicide attempts, as opposed to actual suicides, in NM, according to the 2003 Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey of High School Students, are about equally divided between males and females.<sup>[2]</sup>

Suicide among youth occurs more frequently in New Mexico than in the country as a whole when the size of the population is taken into account.<sup>[3]</sup> In any given year, New Mexico consistently has one of the highest youth suicide rates in the nation.

"The causes of suicide lie, for the most part, in an individual's predisposing temperament and genetic vulnerabilities; in severe psychiatric illness; and in acute psychological stress."<sup>[4]</sup> In addition, in New Mexico these seem to be aggravated by poverty and the paucity of psychological services. Substance abuse, problems at school and work, criminal activity and ruptures in important relationships are often found in the lives of victims of suicide in New Mexico.<sup>[5]</sup> Easy availability of firearms, especially the family gun, is also an important risk factor for completed suicides in young males in our state.

Why are young males more likely to commit suicide? The way boys are brought up teaches many to isolate themselves and their emotions, leaving boys with few emotional coping skills. Perhaps most importantly, many boys do not learn how, nor are they encouraged, to share their feelings, especially feelings of sadness. Indeed, neither boys themselves nor the society in which they live are very sensitive to the signs of distress often displayed by boys. Young males tend to act out their depression through substance abuse, bullying, and risk taking behaviors often related to criminal activity. These are more likely to be dealt with by school punishment and governmental penal systems rather than seen as behaviors in need of being understood and treated. As William Pollack says in *Real Boys*, since "... we do not suspect depression in boys, we often use inappropriate methods of diagnosis. . . and it should not be surprising that we frequently have a hard time realizing when our sons are unhappy, and often fail to detect (or to accept) depression when it occurs in young and adolescent boys."<sup>[6]</sup> In

short, young males often act out depression in ways that society finds difficult to see for what it is.

Recent legislation passed by the US Senate cited the need for early intervention and prevention efforts dealing with identifying youth at risk of suicide through a variety of programs.<sup>[7]</sup> The evidence supporting such intervention and prevention efforts is still somewhat unclear. As Kay Jamison says in *Night Falls Fast*, "Community-based suicide prevention programs . . . have not had a demonstrable effect on suicide rates."<sup>[8]</sup> Nonetheless, these efforts seem to be effective at reducing, at least for the short term, "suicide risk behaviors," if not the actual incidence of suicide itself. These types of programs in Santa Fe and Northern New Mexico are largely run by the NM Suicide Intervention Project, which was started in 1994 and has received several community awards for its fine work. NMSIP is headquartered in Santa Fe and runs three separate initiatives:

- \* The Natural Helpers program which identifies trusted students in the four Santa Fe middle schools and trains them to recognize signs of stress in their peers and to seek help for those peers under certain circumstances.

- \* Services for Kounseling Youth or SKY Center, which operates a free clinic for psychological services to youth and their families. SKY also runs small counseling/support groups of middle and high school students in several Santa Fe and regional schools often organized by gender and focused on particular issues such as anger management or resiliency.

- \* Educational efforts which are offered for groups of adults in schools, communities and other organizations to increase their awareness and response to youth suicide.

The basic premise of these and other intervention and prevention efforts is that they help to educate the public and then treat young people or populations of young people that are more likely to be at risk—usually identified in studies as those with a high potential for dropping out of high school, and demonstrating high levels of depression and anger.<sup>[9]</sup> Such programs generally attempt to throw as wide a net as possible with the hope of preventing suicides and also of finding young people who are in stressful emotional states and can benefit from counseling or other types of psychological help.

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Are these and other efforts suitably boy oriented? In treating boys and young men do they acknowledge and shape their programs to the different socialization many boys undergo? Do they discuss how the public understanding of male depression needs to change? In short, are they effective in addressing the high incidence of young male suicide in our area?

As an example of how such programs might need to treat male adolescents differently, one large scale study concluded that boys at risk for suicide may benefit more from individual connection with a trusted adult than from small group interventions, such as are frequently part of prevention efforts. The study notes that small-group interventions "may be most effective in reducing anxiety and anger in females at risk for suicide." It goes on:

For males, the public nature of the group-based anger-management intervention may contribute to reactive responses, particularly for changing male stereotypic behavior (assertiveness, aggression), thereby dampening the effectiveness of the approach. Alternatively, the individual approach, for males in particular, may facilitate development of trust and initially reduce feelings of vulnerability, opening receptiveness to alternative means of coping and seeking support from the counselor, parents and school personnel.<sup>[10]</sup>

This conclusion seems to recognize the shame-phobic attitudes of many

boys created by the ways that boys are raised, and the observation that boys and young men will go to great lengths to cover up how they really feel. By implication, the conclusion also acknowledges that as a target group for suicide intervention, boys are a harder population to reach because of the toughening up they undergo, and their relative lack of emotional fluency. Therefore there is a need for trying different approaches than have been used for girls. Certainly the magnitude of the tragedy of young males who suffer depression and suicide warrants considered attention as to what may make them different from those girls who pursue a similar course.

[1] Office of the Medical Investigator for the State of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM, communication dated 7-16-2004.

[2] New Mexico Department of Health, et al, *New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey: 2003 Report of State Results*, p. 8.

[3] 2002 *New Mexico Child Fatality Review Report*, Suicide, pp. 12-17.

[4] Kay Redfield Jamison, *Night Falls Fast*, Random House, October 2000, p. 236.

[5] Ibid.

[6] William Pollack, *Real Boys*, 1999, p. 306.

[7] U.S. Senate Bill, S.2634, passed unanimously July 8, 2004

[8] Kay Redfield Jamison, *Night Falls Fast*, Random House, October 2000, p. 276.

[9] Brooke P. Randell, Leona L. Eggert, and Kenneth C. Pike, "Immediate Post Intervention Effects of Two Brief Youth Suicide Prevention Interventions," *Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior*, 31(1), Spring 2001, pp. 41-54.

[10] Edith Adams Thompson, Leona L. Eggert, Brooke P. Randell, and Kenneth C. Pike, "Evaluation of Indicated Suicide Risk Prevention Approaches for Potential High School Dropouts," *American Journal of Public Health*, May 2001, Vol 91, No. 5, pp 749-750.

## Will the Public Schools Get Serious About Educating Boys?

### Two Good Ideas

Probably by the time this newsletter appears, the Santa Fe School Board elections will have come and gone, but the way that the candidates have addressed the issues of the Santa Fe Public Schools around the performance of boys should still leave Santa Feans wondering at their school system's indifference. Some school districts around the country are beginning to view with alarm the poor results of boys on standardized tests and their alienation from school, as manifested in high rates of suspension, drop outs, and medication for ADHD. Meanwhile, here in Santa Fe, school officials continue to plod along, seemingly satisfied with the alarming result that every year its students are in school they fall further behind their peers elsewhere around the country. Here are two suggestions for the new school board to consider:

1. Create same sex classrooms in a magnet school. While the statistical evidence is still coming in, same sex classrooms are gaining in popularity around the country and recent changes in federal regulations make it easier to pursue this alternative. One way for the district to do so would be to establish a magnet school—a public school that provides specialized instructional approaches to attract students from a variety of neighborhoods in a school district. In this case the instructional approach would feature separate gender classrooms, a first grade for girls and one for boys, for example. A magnet school might help to resolve another problem as well: SFPS has several costly to run and under populated elementary schools on the eastside. Why not offer parents a chance to vote with their feet on this issue, especially in view of the recent furor over the question of closing down these schools? One of the three, Carlos Gilbert, Alvord or Acequia Madre could be turned into a magnet elementary school for separate sex classrooms.
2. Train teachers to understand boys better. The school system could do a much better job of educating its teachers to understand the ways that boys learn. And any attempt at increasing teachers' sensitivity to and creativity in response to different learning styles would help all students—boy, girl, Hispanic, low income, Native, etc. William Pollock, the author of *Real Boys* offers one such course called Boyhood Advocacy Training for Teachers. Just as the schools required literacy training for its teachers a few years ago, it could require this sensitivity training now and might

well be able to obtain outside funding since it would be an innovative and attractive new direction for the school system.

Before implementing any new ideas, however, SFPS has to acknowledge that it has a problem with boys and the system has to understand that resolving this problem will help it with other difficult issues.

### Sexual Abuse of Boys in Santa Fe continued from page 1

between caring and incestuous love is crossed when the relation with the child exists to meet the needs of the parent rather than the needs of the child."<sup>[2]</sup> Some examples of non-contact sexual abuse include getting sexual pleasure from spanking a child, a relative exposing his or her genitals to a child, encouraging a child to be sexual with others, and having a child witness the sexual abuse of others. When non-contact sexual abuse is considered, the incidence for sexual abuse of boys rises to 1 in 4.

Sexual abuse of boys is thus a widespread local and national problem and yet it is seldom acknowledged as such. As Richard B. Gartner says in his comprehensive study of the phenomenon, *Betrayed as Boys*, "the sexual victimization of boys . . . is even more universally minimized, underestimated, and ridiculed than the abuse of girls. . ."<sup>[3]</sup> The recent charges of sexual abuse of two brothers against a longtime Santa Fe boxing coach, whether ultimately proven, sound like a case study of the community indifference to sexual abuse in boys. According to a newspaper story, in spite of "some people. . . (thinking) . . . something was going on with the coach and children, . . . some boys were told they had to put up with coach's abuse because he was a good trainer."<sup>[4]</sup> As the lawyer from the DA's office was reported saying, referring to the community response, "I can understand not reporting (the abuse). I can understand looking the other way. But I cannot understand them sending boys back over there."<sup>[5]</sup>

What accounts for such a strong tendency not to acknowledge this problem? Perhaps the most notable reason for this is the cultural belief that

males cannot be sexually abused and the related ideas that males cannot be victims and are always in charge of sex. Another reason that this crime has received relatively little attention is that because of the shame attached to being a victim for a man, few men, who have been sexually abused as boys, are willing to discuss their trauma and seek treatment.

At the base of the idea that men cannot be victims are traditional masculine values about withholding expressions of sadness and emotional pain by covering up true feelings. This is a standard of behavior by which adults, mostly unconsciously, pass along to the younger male generation the need to appear to be invulnerable. Concurrent with this belief is another: that "real men" are in charge of themselves and cannot be victimized. Other related ideas are that masculine men do not express emotions, are independent, and resilient. In previous issues of *Santa Fe Boys* the effects of these notions have been discussed in relation to education and in the areas of social service provision in general. These attitudes are even more strongly present in the culture's silent collusion about sexual abuse of boys. One glaring manifestation of this is the way adult female sex with boys is often portrayed in movies and elsewhere as "sexual initiation" for boys. Seldom are boys portrayed as anything but skilled lovers and never are we shown the negative long term consequences. Indeed, we are always left with the idea that boys are happy to be offered sex with older women. Never are these depicted as sexual betrayals.

Research on sexual abuse of boys also indicates the following:<sup>[6]</sup>

- Boys who suffer sexual abuse are more likely than girls to be victimized by someone outside of their immediate family; nonetheless, about 45 percent of boys are abused by someone in their family.
- Boys at greatest risk for sexual abuse are those living with neither or with one parent, with an alcoholic parent or with a parent involved in criminal activity.
- Boys are much less likely to report sexual abuse than girls.
- Sexually abused boys are more likely than sexually abused girls to act aggressively as they progress through life.
- The majority of adults who abuse boys sexually were themselves abused as boys; however, the vast majority of boys who were abused do not grow up to be sexual abusers.<sup>[7]</sup>
- There is little basis to the widely held belief that boys who are sexually abused will grow up to be gay. Also, most adult men who abuse boys say they are not homosexual. (There is an important distinction to be made between being gay, and being a pedophile. The vast majority of gay men have appropriate sexual boundaries in terms of choosing partners, and not engaging with under age males.)
- In addition, a large study reported that sixty-one percent of young men said that their childhood sexual abuse was perpetrated by a male, 28 percent reported that it was perpetrated by a female, and 11 percent reported that their abusers were both male and female.

In Santa Fe, therapists who work with children in private practice report that many of their young clients have been sexually abused. However, few therapists will say that they have had more than a handful of boys among their clients walk in with this as the main reason for seeking help. As Mark Boschelli, the Clinical Director at the Santa Fe Community Guidance Centers says, "Many of the young men who show up for treatment often come because of depression or substance abuse or for legal reasons related, for example, to a DWI arrest. After a while, however, it becomes clear that in their past there is a history of sexual abuse and victimization. Because, for cultural reasons, it is more acceptable to drive while intoxicated, this deeper cause may not become apparent for some time." As Aaron Kipnis comments in *Angry Young Men*, "Sexual assault of boys is one of the many arenas where cultural expectations for males—to be emotionally tougher than females—can retard or prevent their recovery when victimization occurs."<sup>[8]</sup>

Sandra Oppenheimer, who is the clinical director of Counseling Against

Rape and Abuse (CARA) program at the Santa Fe Rape Crisis Center, says that at CARA, because their program is explicitly publicized for victims of sexual abuse, that type of abuse is usually the problem that patients come in with. Nonetheless, consistent with this general picture of male under identification, only 16% of CARA's clients last year were male and only a handful of these were under 18.

One Santa Fe program where male clients of sexual abuse predominate is the Preventing Abuse ReEnactment Program (PARE) also at the Santa Fe Rape Crisis Center. PARE is a program for children who are "sexually reactive," that is, acting out their sexual or other abuse in school or elsewhere and who have been referred by the courts or schools for treatment. Eighty-four percent of the 56 children treated in the PARE program in 2003 were boys and, according to the estimate of the program supervisor, Mike Wallington, 98 percent of these children, girls and boys, were abused or suffered some other trauma in their young lives. Over half of the children in PARE last year were adolescents, but about a quarter were 10 years old or less.

The main objective of PARE (which in Spanish means "stop") is to help its young clients understand appropriate behavior for their age. It is based on the finding that children who have had their boundaries violated by sexual or other abuse from an older person often have trouble understanding their own limits. This is probably truer for boys—socialized to act out, rather than internalize, their feelings. Treatment involves sympathy from the counselors for the bad things that have happened to their young patients and requires working with the trauma that the client brings to the clinic. But treatment in PARE also includes a strictness and directness about making their clients understand and take responsibility for their behavior. PARE counselors attempt to teach their clients that the things that happened to them trigger certain emotions and feelings and that these lead to some behaviors which are not acceptable. In this treatment, which involves teaching kids basic and appropriate social and coping skills, there is no quick fix and successful treatment often lasts for a year.

While sexual abuse of children can lead to a variety of problems, the effects are not so clear cut. Types and frequency of sexual abuse, other relationships when the abuse takes place and whether sexual abuse might be accompanied by other forms of abuse are factors that determine the severity of the trauma a child may experience. Also, whether a victim, as a child or adult, seeks counseling or psychotherapy is important. In short, as debilitating as sexual abuse of boys can be, its existence in a child's past does not necessarily doom the victim to a life of suffering.

In Santa Fe treatment is available in a number of places. One is the Santa Fe Community Guidance Center, which provides services to adult and children victims of sexual abuse. The center runs the teen health centers at Capital High (467-1081) and at Santa Fe High (986-9633). If a victim is over eighteen years old, he should contact the Guidance Center directly at 986-9633. Another is the Santa Fe Rape Crisis Center's CARA program which can be contacted by calling 988-1951 extension 116.

[1] For a thorough discussion of these studies about the prevalence of sexual abuse of boys, see [www.jimhopper.com](http://www.jimhopper.com). Most of the data here is taken from Lisak, D., Hopper, J., and Song, P. "Factors in the cycle of violence: Gender rigidity and emotional constriction", *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, Vol. 9, 1996, pp. 721-743.

[2] Maloney, B., "When the perpetrator is mom," delivered at a workshop presented at the Sixth World Interdisciplinary Conference on Male Sexual Victimization, sponsored by the National Organization on Male Sexual Victimization, Columbus, OH, October 7, 1995 and quoted in Gartner, Richard B., *Betrayed as Boys*, The Guildford Press, 1999, p. 26.

[3] Gartner, Richard B., *Betrayed as Boys*, The Guildford Press, 1999, p. 3.

[4] "S.F. coach accused of molesting two boys," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, September 4, 2004, p. A1.

[5] "Coach might bail out," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, September 28, 2004, p. B1.

[6] Most of the data here is taken from Lisak, D., Hopper, J., and Song, P. "Factors in the cycle of violence: Gender rigidity and emotional constriction", *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, Vol. 9, 1996, pp. 721-743 as reported in Gartner, Richard B., *Betrayed as Boys*, The Guildford Press, 1999, pp. 23-31.

[7] Gartner, *Ibid*, p. 80.

[8] Aaron Kipnis, *Angry Young Men: How Parents, Teachers, and Counselors Can Help "Bad Boys" Become Good Men*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999, p. 193.

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## Have Boys Become a Second-Class Gender?

By Aaron Kipnis, author of *Angry Young Men*;

*How Parents, Teachers, and Counselors Can Help "Bad Boys" Become Good Men*

The ecology of neglect toward boys at school is evident in many areas, as revealed by various studies. This list is not intended to minimize the inequities that girls face, but rather to highlight some areas where boys are not faring as well.

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| <p><b>a</b> When both girls and boys are equally misbehaving, boys receive more frequent and severe penalties.</p> <p><b>b</b> Boys, particularly low achievers, receive eight to ten times the reprimands of their female classmates. These reproaches are more likely to occur in front of classmates, whereas girls are more frequently taken aside in private.</p> <p><b>c</b> Boys are removed from classrooms and serve more detention than girls. They receive 71 percent of school suspensions and are expelled at even higher rates.</p> <p><b>d</b> Boys are victims of the majority of school violence.</p> <p><b>e</b> Boys are referred to special education four to one over girls. They represent 70 percent of students labeled as learning disabled and 80</p> | <p>percent of those sent to programs for the emotionally disturbed. Minority males are highly overrepresented in these categories.</p> <p><b>f</b> Boys drop out of school four to one over girls.</p> <p><b>g</b> Boys receive more Fs, have lower grade point averages and fail to graduate more often than girls.</p> <p><b>h</b> Girls continue to outperform boys in reading and writing by much greater degrees than boys ever outperformed girls in math and science.</p> <p><b>i</b> Boys are in fewer clubs, student governments, and school newspapers than girls.</p> <p><b>j</b> Boys are the minority of valedictorians, academic scholarship winners, new college students and those going on to graduate school.</p> |
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