

LET'S TALK ABOUT VULNERABILITY

#GLOBALGUYTALK

CONVERSATION GUIDE

A COOPERATION BETWEEN:

MAKE
EQUAL

Si. Swedish
Institute

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide contains several questions on the topic of vulnerability that you can choose from when hosting a **#globalguytalk**. They have been divided into different categories: decide which questions you will answer and in which order. Choose questions based on what is most suitable for the target group and the local context.

INTRODUCTION

“Why is it so hard for me to cry in front of my friends? A while ago, when things were tough with my partner, I needed to talk to someone. I asked a friend if he wanted to meet up. When we did, I still found it uncomfortable to tell him that I felt down and wanted advice. I tried to avoid the topic for as long as I could. When I finally opened up, my tears were met with support and a hug. I think back on all the times that I didn't tell friends that I felt down. To get support or help, I have to open up to others about how I feel. But at the same time, it's difficult to show them

that I'm sad. This probably has something to do with the expectations of being a man. First, it doesn't feel as difficult to open up to my female friends. Second, for as long as I can remember, I have been told to be strong, told not to cry or show vulnerability, and to be a "real man". I think it has had a bigger impact on me than I first realised. It's a shame really. Sometimes I'm angry that I haven't had access to it before."

This story shows you how you can open up and speak from the heart when joining the **#globalguytalk**. The topics in this guide are: **feelings**, **fears**, and how to handle them. You can discuss what it's like to be vulnerable and how to be strong enough to ask for help.

WARM-UP STATEMENTS – ANSWER YES OR NO

- I've heard 'be a man', 'man up', or 'are you a man or a mouse?' when I've shown fear or been upset.
- It's hard to be sad around other men.
- The person I am with my friends is different from who I am with my family.
- I can be vulnerable in front of people I don't know.
- If I watch a sad movie with a guy friend, I can cry without feeling ashamed.

QUESTIONS

LEVEL 1

- **How do you feel when someone close to you hurts your feelings? Give examples.** Possible follow-up questions: Did you make it clear that they hurt your feelings? How?
- **Do you remember the last time that you saw a friend cry? What happened?** Possible follow-up question: Do you treat male friends differently than others when they allow themselves to be vulnerable?
- **Are you comfortable seeking support or talking to other men when you are sad or need help?** Possible follow-up question: What about with someone who isn't a man?
- **Is it easier for you to be sad in front of people you've just met than it is in front of old friends?** Possible follow-up question: If so, why do you think that is?
- **How do you react when others are sad or need support? Do you offer a shoulder to cry on?** Possible follow-up question: How can you make sure that others are comfortable sharing their struggles with you?

QUESTIONS

LEVEL 2

- **How often do you cry?** Possible follow-up questions: Would you like to cry more often? What difference would that make? What can you do to become better at crying?
- **When was the last time you felt dumb or embarrassed?** Possible follow-up question: Are these emotions hard to show to other men?
- **Do you get angry or agitated easily?** Possible follow-up questions: Have you ever regretted getting angry or agitated in a situation? How would you like to have reacted instead?
- **Are there emotions that you rarely or never show anyone?** Give examples. Possible follow-up questions: Why do you think that is? What possible consequences does this have?

QUESTIONS

LEVEL 3

- When was the last time you cried? Describe what happened.
Possible follow-up question: If someone has seen you cry, how did that person react?
- Have you ever sought help for your emotional well-being?
Possible follow-up question: How was that experience?
- Do you often feel fragile/vulnerable/angry when drunk? Why? Possible follow-up question: How can you work towards showing that you are vulnerable when you're not under the influence of alcohol?