Male Victims of Abuse

• Hey, can I vent for a minute?

◦ Yeah, what's up?

• I don't know, I'm jut getting so tired of society's unrealistic cultural standards for men.

◦ Heavy topic!

• I know, and it's a topic that isn't addressed enough. It's as if we consider men to be indestructible. They're taught to hide their tears and emotions. It's such a double standard. Why it is it considered a weakness to express vulnerability and pain?

◦ Yeah, I completely agree with you. Women are viewed as compassionate natural caregivers, sexy, fragile, and sensitive. These beliefs are not only unrealistic, but harmful. This does not mean that men aren't caring, compassionate or emotional, but we as a society don't value these traits in men, and that can lead men to believe these strengths aren't acceptable.

• I know, I just think of how many men in my life I've witnessed hide their emotions because they've been taught to "be a man", like "rub some dirt into it, it's the only way to get through".

Which prevents them from dealing with trauma and heartbreaking moments. And just like any other person, eventually bottling things up results in explosive release, which is often in the form of violence or aggression.

◦ Mm-hm, and sometimes the violence is outwardly expressed through physical dominance or aggression. But what about violence that is inwardly expressed, such as depression, addiction, or suicide? Every behaviour is connected to a need.

• Oh, you're so right. I don't know, I just think maybe we need to start asking ourselves which needs aren't being met for boys and men. We already know that when we push down emotions, ignore feelings, or dismiss ourselves, our mental health suffers.

◦ Mm-hm, and another thing, we need to eliminate the idea that men cannot be victims of violence by female or male partners. I think it's our responsibility to end these stereotypes and put a stop to stigmas around mental illness, and remind men that asking for help, expressing emotions and seeking therapy is OK.

• I don't even know what to say, you're so right, when we treat boy as men and teach them to be emotionless, tough, and secure, we strip them of their innocence, and when we place unrealistic and unhealthy expectations on them, it's just so isolating and harmful, not only to them, but everyone. Things need to change.