

## **Why do some men use violence in their relationships?**

Michael Kaufman, the co-founder of the White Ribbon Campaign and a distinguished public speaker, educator, writer. In an article entitled, "The 7 Ps of Men's Violence," he outlines why some men use violence in their relationships.

Men are not violent in their relationships because it's natural – "boys will be boys" - or acceptable just because they're physically stronger. When boys are raised with the expectation that women will look after them – they can feel entitled to have someone cook for them and look after the house. They may feel entitled to control who their spouse speaks to and how she spends her money. Some men feel entitled to have sex with their partner whenever they want. This sense of entitlement is not just an individual perspective. For centuries, our society has been structured with men as the head of the household. It is still considered by many people to be the natural order of families. At one time women were considered the property of men.

From birth, men are taught to always be strong, in control, fearless, to never back down, to learn to fight, to not ask for help, to ignore their own health and well-being, to never cry or show too many emotions, to be the breadwinner, to be successful, etc. etc. No one can live up to this. They are shamed for being weak. This creates a pressure cooker situation to constantly prove that as a 'real' man, you are in charge and in control.

This is why unemployment and a relationship breakup are risk factors for men's use of violence. They can make a man feel like a failure who is losing control. Violence might seem like the way to get or keep control.

The number one predictor of whether a man will use violence in his relationships is whether he grew up in a home where his father used violence. Of course many boys who grow up with this heroically stop their dads. But sadly, many go on to repeat these experiences, even if they don't want to.