



Fragility



“ Why is it so hard to cry in front of a friend? A while ago, when I was about to destroy the relationship to my partner, I needed to talk to someone. I decided on a friend that I felt I could be open with and asked if they wanted to meet. When we did meet I still found it uncomfortable to say that I felt down and needed help. I tried to avoid the topic as long as I could.

When I finally opened up my tears were met with support and a hug. I think back at all the times that I haven't told friends that I've felt down. There are a lot of things that not even my closest friends know about me. In order 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 others that I'm sad. ”

– anonymous participant

This story shows you how you can open up and speak from the heart in the following conversation. The topic is feelings and fears - and how to handle them. You can discuss what it's like to show that you're weak and how to be strong enough to ask for help.

Warm up statements - answer YES/NO

- I've heard “act like a man,” “man up” or “are you a man or a mouse?” when I've showed fear or been upset
- It's hard to be sad amongst other men
- I'm a different person with my friends than I am with my family
- I can be vulnerable in front of people I don't know
- If I go to the movies with a male friend I can cry to the movie without feeling ashamed

Questions

- **When was the last time you cried? Describe what happened.**
Possible follow-up question: If someone saw you cry - how did that person react?
- **How often do you cry?**
Possible follow-up question: What can you do to become better at crying?
- **How do you feel when someone close hurts your feelings? Give examples.**
Possible follow-up question: 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 show themselves vulnerable?
- **Do you get angry or agitated easily?**
Possible follow-up question: Have you ever regretted getting angry or agitated in a situation? How would you have liked to react instead?
- **Do you often show fragility/vulnerability/anger when drunk? Why?**
Possible follow-up question: How can you work towards showing that you feel fragile when you're not under the influence?
- **Are you comfortable seeking support or talking to other men when you are sad or need help?**
Possible follow-up question: Does it differ to someone who isn't a man?
- **Have you ever sought help for your emotional well-being?**
Possible follow-up question: How was that experience?

Questions for further self-examination

- **Are there emotions/feelings that you rarely or never show anyone? Like what?**
Possible follow-up question: Why do you think that is? What can it lead to?
- **Can you support someone better if you can be vulnerable in front of them?**
Possible follow-up question: How do you think your relationships to friends/family/-co-workers are affected if you're never being vulnerable?
- **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 yes, why do you think that is?
- **How do you react when others are sad or need support? Are you a "shoulder to cry on"?**
Possible follow-up question: What can you do so that others are comfortable sharing their struggles with you?
- **When was the last time you felt dumb or embarrassed?**
Possible follow-up question: Are these emotions hard to show to other men?