Gender Response Care-Introduction

**David Stanley** 00:00

I am Dave Stanley. I'm the Director of Trauma Integration Services for the Institute for Health and Recovery. And what we do at IHR is we provide training and education and crisis response services to organizations that are actively incorporating principles of trauma informed care into their service delivery. So my topic today that I'll be covering is men, gender and trauma, and looking at how we can support men in recovery. So our objectives for today are, I want folks to be able to walk away describing how gender messages and expectations affect male psychosocial development, identify the challenges that these messages and expectations present in the treatment of substance use disorders and in the treatment of trauma, and describe how the use of gender role analysis may benefit men in treatment for substance use disorder. And all of this applies also to working with men who may not have necessarily been diagnosed with a substance use disorder, but may have been diagnosed with PTSD or struggling with symptoms of trauma. So what I'm going to be doing today is looking at the traumas that men experience and how they cope with the trauma that they experienced through a trauma informed lens. So I'll be first looking at the individual, what is the individual going through; what are their life experiences; what are they experiencing now in the present moment? And then we'll look at trauma and resiliency factors. How much trauma have they experienced, what types of trauma have they experienced, what resiliency factors have they've been given or developed through these experiences. And lastly, we'll be framing all of this in the context of gender norms and expectations. So those are the unspoken rules about what a man should be what a man should not be, or what a woman should be, or what a woman should not be, and how people who don't identify as either male or female, it sends messages about their role in society as well. And I'll be digging into this a little bit further as I go along. It's important to note that we are saturated with these messages. Like I said, you may not even be aware that they're out there, the only time you may notice that those expectations and those norms are there are when they have an impact on something and you can see the impact. I think for a lot of us that are reading the news and hearing a lot about gender, non conforming, gender, non binary, transgender, all of these new terms that have come up in the past few years, they already existed, but they've been kind of in the forefront of our consciousness as a nation recently with all of these changes. And it's really that that kind of goes, Oh, yeah, we do have these expectations, we do have these rules and we do all kind of operate under these rules and expectations. Even though we may not be fully aware of how we are engaging with the rules and expectations that society has about men and women and other folks. What society often expects is that folks are going to be cisgender. And cisgender is a term that means that your sex at birth matches your identity or your gender identity.

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So a man is born a man and he identifies as a man from the day he's born to the day that he dies, he's always a man. That's how he identifies. And we do this. And we split into these binary categories of boys and girls. So this is kind of what the expectations of our society, the main messages that our society sends is that you're either a boy or a girl and you should be cisgender. But the reality is, is that gender itself is much more fluid than that. Gender is not something that is either it's not binary, it exists on a spectrum. To give you an example, to prove that gender is fluid. Let's put this on a scale where masculine, so called masculine, is all the way on the left, that's like Uber masculine, macho, the Marlboro Man kinda, and I'm on the other side, you got the femme female, or the feminine, we might think of like Marilyn Monroe, or somebody like that. So we take these sort of arbitrary scale of male on one side, female on the other, what we find is that most of us navigate back and forth along this scale, during our day, and even through our lives. So if I'm working, say a man is working on a construction site, and it's a very masculine kind of dominated environment, you know, you're gonna act a certain way around all of those other construction workers. But when you come home and say, This man needs to take care of his daughter, he's going to ease up some of those stereotypically masculine "behaviors" and he'll begin to take on some more feminine behaviors because that's what's needed. So most of us do this even through just moving about our day. How I might be hanging out with my friends and my buddies going fishing might be completely different than sort of my gender role and expectations and what or how I show my gender, gender expressions while I'm at, say work, and I'm working in the social work field, so this can also happen over a lifetime. So a lot of, especially men notice, that in your teenage years, you got all those hormones raging and you're kind of do all the masculine thing but as you age that you begin to adopt more female things becoming more interested in art, literature, not that these are necessarily female, but they're perceived by society as being more or less female. So again, all of these are just arbitrary categories that society has developed for us. But the important thing is that we notice that our gender expression changes throughout the day and throughout our lifetime.