

EDITOR'S NOTE

This special issue features research findings and experience reports from the ManKind Project (MKP), a specialized quasi-mutual help movement for men. MKP asks men to re-examine their basic assumptions about conventional masculinity and to grow beyond stereotypic gender roles within a mythopoetic intellectual framework. Interestingly, we first have a series of four experience reports by men who have participated in the ManKind Project New Warrior Training Adventure (NWTa), an intensive weekend experience, and subsequent mutual help groups referred to as Integration groups or I-groups thanks to the work of Edward Read Barton, Guest Editor for the experience reports. In introducing the experience reports, Barton describes some of the history of the ManKind Project and the way it functions. All four men have participated in the Project for several years and their personal experiences reveal some of the variety of backgrounds and issues that the men bring to the groups, and how the groups support them in changing attitudes and behaviors. The experience reports will give the reader a sense of the depth of issues dealt with, the way that members participate and that groups function, and the richness of the men's changes in attitude and behavior over time. The second part of the special issue consists of three research articles from community psychologists and some MKP researchers and participants reporting findings from a long-term collaborative relationship between the researchers and the Project. Eric Mankowski, Guest Editor of the research articles, beautifully describes the participatory research approach that the academics use in working with the ManKind Project in his introduction titled "Collaborative research with a mutual help organization for men addressing masculinities: cross-cutting issues and themes." Participatory research in which the respondents of the research are brought more fully into the research process is especially valued and practiced in community psychology. The first article on group formation and disbandment, looks at rates of Integration groups forming and disbanding between 1990 and 1998 and possible factors associated with

surviving or disbanding; rates of individual participation in the same data set are also examined and self-reported reasons for discontinuing participation are explored. The second article hypothesizes that conventional masculinity, defined as adherence to masculine gender role norms and stereotypes, would decrease over time and mediate changes in psychological well-being among ManKind Project participants; they found this to be the case in a sophisticated analysis. The third article looks at longitudinal data among participants surveyed for 2 years to see if the initial effects of participation in the NWTA on gender role conflict, gendered beliefs, psychological well-being, and social support persist.

One reliable blind reviewer of one of the research articles recommended rejection of the article because the New Warrior Training Adventure weekend was so expensive (over \$600) and he saw insufficient indication that the MKP was self-help or mutual aid. Delving deeper, I found that the Project was a not-for-profit organization; it was not a commercial enterprise designed to generate a profit; further, its proprietary nature appears to be largely to protect the professionally-based mythopoetic materials and to maintain their training and protect the organization's survival. Other self-help organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous have a not-for-profit organization in which they protect their copyrighted experientially-based publications from exploitation by outsiders. The large fee for a weekend is to cover the cost of the facility and to pay a stipend to the seasoned MKP participants who are trained in the ideology and philosophy used by the organization but who are not professionals whose career is running MKP sessions as a therapist or counselor. The Integration groups which men participate in after the adventure weekend potentially continue much longer and are more clearly conventional mutual help groups. I have concluded that the MKP is quasi-mutual help in that the ideology and accompanying materials are from professionals such as Carl Jung and John Bly, but the core technology of the Integration groups is mutual aid. Another important point is that the professionally-based materials are taught to lay men who then use them to operate the groups and to train other lay men in them—they are not professional materials always taught by professionals to lay persons or used only by professionals to provide services to lay persons. This situation is reminiscent of Recovery, Inc. that the psychiatrist Dr. Abraham Low started in 1937 for people with mental health problems—he developed materials for the mutual aid groups to use on their own, without further professional involvement.

The final article, not part of the special issue, reports an exciting data set that Matthew Archibald and his team constructed of 589 national-level self-help/mutual aid organizations run by peers who shared the focal problem of interest in the United States for the years 1955-2000 that he is offering to researchers to use. He describes the basis of how the data set was constructed, the types of analyses and publications he has completed with it, and suggests directions for comparative cross-national research that could be done. This invitation to use Archibald's data set is in the spirit of mutual aid (and of

science)—community ventures that collaborate achieve synergistic results— $1 + 1 = 4$, not 2. I also salute the researchers reporting on their collaborative efforts with the MKP in the same spirit in this special issue. And we have the spirit of mutual aid in the experience reports of actual participants in the MkP.

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