

DAN GRIFFIN • JONATHAN DE CARLO

# HEALING MEN'S PAIN CURRICULUM

WORKBOOK

WILEY



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Dan Griffin and  
Jonathan De Carlo

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## ABOUT THE *HEALING* *MEN'S PAIN* PROGRAM

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Congratulations on starting the Healing Men's Pain program. We hope that you find your path to the man you truly want to be and the healing you need to have peace in your life. Our hope is that you will find tools in this program that will allow you to live in what we call conscious masculinity, which is when you truly choose the man you want to be, moment to moment and day by day.

*Healing Men's Pain* is a program unlike any other. It is a trauma-informed curriculum tailored specifically for men and male-identified individuals. This program addresses that reality in a way that you will hopefully find both comforting in the way it speaks to you as a man and challenging in that you will be asked to do a great deal of self-reflection which is not something most men are raised to do. The goal of *Healing Men's Pain* is to help you create a vision of the man you want to be and to provide you with the awareness, tools, and confidence to achieve that vision.

This program is designed to be trauma-informed. That means that the language, activities, and tools throughout the program are meant to be challenging but in a way that is safe. Everything in the program was designed with an assumption that all participants have experienced some level or form of trauma in their lives, and creating an environment of safety for all participating men was a top priority when creating the program. Trust and safety are key to creating lasting changes and becoming the man you want to be. Whether you have experienced trauma in your life or not, the trauma-informed approach is designed to create a safe environment for you to do the work that will help you become the man you want to be.

You are reading this because you have decided to make (or are considering making) fundamental changes in how you show up in your life. In most cases, you will be using this workbook as part of a program in which you meet regularly with a group of other men. As part of this process, you will likely attend fourteen or eighteen meetings with these other men and all of you will have opportunities to develop new skills and new ways of thinking about yourself and those you care about. One of the most powerful aspects of this program is the group setting where you will get to see just how common many of the issues are that men face, but also to explore important differences that make each of you unique and able to offer diverse perspectives.

Again, the organization of the program is designed to make this group setting safe and trusting in a way that you may not have not had the fortune of experiencing.

Topics covered in this program include:

- The impact of male socialization on boys and men (a core theme that guides the whole curriculum).
- Trauma, how it shows up in men, and the importance of addressing any trauma history you might have.
- Skill-building and practical tools you can use.
- Relationship skill development.
- Developing emotional understanding, particularly as relates to anger and shame.
- Enhanced communication skills for healthy conflict resolution.
- The influence of family of origin experiences.
- Exploring the relationships with fathers/father-figure and mothers/mother-figure.
- A candid exploration of sex, sexuality, and intimacy and how to begin having healthy dialogue about these topics with your children.
- The effects of male socialization on a man's ability to create and maintain healthy relationships, offering specific tools to help repair during times of disconnection.
- Finding balance and the importance of self-care.
- Understanding and meeting the changing roles and expectations of men in the 21st century.
- Choosing the man you want to be, which we call conscious masculinity.
- Exploring the roles of grief and loss in trauma recovery.
- Developing resilience and exploring post-traumatic growth.
- Understanding the stories we create about ourselves and that we have the power to rewrite them.

The hope is that your exploration of all these topics and your experiences will help you develop an idea of the man you want to be, whether that be confirming that you are already showing up in ways that align with the man you want to be, or identifying some changes you want to make to help align yourself with that vision of the man you want to be. *That* is conscious masculinity.

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## ABOUT THIS WORKBOOK

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This workbook is meant for you to be able to record your experiences throughout this program. Using this workbook will help you to reflect on and remember what you learn, think, and feel during the group meetings and as you continue to practice the tools you learn on your own between meetings. The workbook contains:

- Summaries of information you will receive in the group meetings.
- Many of the activities and exercises that you will do during the group meetings.
- Activities for you to work on between the group meetings.
- Space for you to reflect on what you learned in each session.
- A section where all of the grounding and relaxation exercises are listed so you have easy access to them whenever you might want to use one or refresh your memory of them.

The activities that are to be completed between the group meetings are designed to help you to reflect on what you have learned and to put some new skills and behaviors into practice. The follow-up exercises are meant to help you put what was discussed in the meeting directly into action in your own life.

Men tend to learn best by doing, and these activities also help you to see the benefits of what you are practicing. The activities are not things you have to do in order to pass a class. Some of them involve writing or drawing exercises, but your skills in these areas are not being tested. You do not need to worry about your handwriting or spelling. What matters is what you put into the activities and, consequently, what you get out of them. There are no right or wrong answers, no “shoulds” or “shouldn’ts,” and your work will not be checked or graded. This workbook is a tool to help you with your growth toward the vision of the man you want to be, and something you can keep and look back on in the future to remind you of your growth and to use as a resource for things like grounding and relaxation exercises you will learn.

There will be opportunities during some of the group meetings for you to share what you have written in your workbook. You can share what you want and keep the

rest private. The group meeting is a safe place, and there will be ground rules regarding confidentiality. If writing is difficult for you that is okay, you can draw pictures or simply make notes however works best for you.

You can use this workbook to highlight what you want to remember from each meeting and to make notes about what you are thinking and feeling as you go through this program.

You may be concerned about keeping your workbook private. If you live with others and are not sure they will respect your privacy, you should hide your workbook or lock it up. Or you can ask the facilitator or another trusted person to help you find a way to keep your workbook safe between group meetings. The facilitator is prepared for such requests. If the facilitator will be holding your workbook between meetings, he or she will respect your privacy and arrange for you to complete the extra activities after each meeting or at some other time.