

PATTHS for Dads

The Journey for Dads

Adapted from Pamela Wilson & Wayne Pawlowski, 1999

Ask participants to get comfortable and close their eyes if they're comfortable. Read the following slowly and with feeling.

Think back... as far as you can remember – when you were a young boy. Try to picture the home that you grew up in – especially your bedroom or wherever it was you slept. Picture the toys you played might have played with – what type of games would you come up with when you were alone, with siblings, or close friends.

Picture your parents or guardians – How do you think they felt about your birth and how did you know...Were they happy about your being a boy? How did you know?

Now picture the other people who may have lived with you – sisters/brothers and any other relatives or close friends. Picture their faces. How did all these family members get along? How much communication was there in your family? How much affection was shown and how was it shown?

Try to remember the first time you realized that the world is divided into males and females and what did that mean to you? Try to remember the first time you realized you were biologically male or female and how did this feel?... If there were girls in your family; were they shown more affection than the boys? – If so, why? And as a young boy how did that make you feel?

When you were very young, what names were you taught for the sexual parts of your body, such as the penis, testicles, scrotum. What names were you taught for sex or intercourse? What feelings or attitudes did you develop about those parts? For example were they good, bad, clean dirty....secret or OK to talk about?

Do you remember touching and exploring your own body when you were young? What is the youngest age you can remember doing so? Did anyone ever find you touching yourself? If so, how did they react and how did you feel?

Did you ever play touch games with other kids? If you did, did you play them openly or secretly and why? In addition, what did these games mean to you... to the kids you played with?

Were your parents/guardians physically affectionate with each other? How did they express their feelings in your presence? Did they ever talk about their relationship in your presence? Did they use sexual words in front of you? Did you sense your parents/guardians were comfortable talking about sex or not? How could you tell?

Who did you turn to most when you had questions about sex? Your mother or your father? And why?

Where did you first learn about intercourse? Who told you? When did it first occur to you that your parents had intercourse together and what did you think? What questions do you remember asking your parents about sex? How did they respond?

As you got older, how did you feel about your body changing? How did you feel about growing taller, your voice deepening, your penis getting larger? Did you ever worry that you were not growing fast enough or that you were growing too quick? Who did you talk to about these changes in your body? Did anyone prepare you for the changes you were going through?

How did you learn about masturbation or wet dreams? Who told you and what were you told? Or were these things you found out about on your own? If you had a wet dream, how did you feel afterwards? Did you tell anyone?

If there were boys and girls in your family, were there any differences in the way your parents raised you? Did they give you different messages about sex and proper sexual behavior? What were those differences?

When was the first time you were overtly and consciously sexually attracted to someone? Can you remember who it was? Picture that person and try to recreate your feelings. What did you do with your feelings? Do you remember how you approached that person or if you approached them at all? Did you keep your feelings to yourself or did you talk them over with a parent or guardian?

When do you remember being aware that people had boyfriends and girlfriends? Did you date growing up? Why did you date? How did you decide who you wanted to date? If you did date, how far sexually did you go with your partner? What went into making your decisions on how far you did go? Did you make the first move? Did your partner make the first move? Did you ever honestly feel pressured in having to have sex because you were male? Did you ever feel that friends would tease you if they found out you were not sexually active. Did you ever feel that people around you pressured you into being sexually active before you were ready?

When did you first hear the words: Heterosexual, Homosexual, Bisexual, and Transgender? Did you ever associate one of those words with yourself and if so how did you decide? Did you ever feel as if you had feelings that would not be accepted by others? Who did you talk to about your feelings or did you keep them to yourself?

What messages were you taught as a young man about relationships, marriage, or commitment? How were your future relationships affected?

Think forward to the present. How comfortable are you today with sexuality? Sweep over all the memories that you have just revisited. What are some of the ways that your race, ethnicity, religion, and culture influenced your sexuality? Now slowly return to this space... and open your eyes.