

Navigating Manhood: Black Male Perspectives on Social Roles at HBCUs

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Abstract

This qualitative study examines how Black male college students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) understand, construct, and navigate socially prescribed masculine roles within their cultural and institutional environments. Prior research highlights the influence of ethnic-racial socialization (Jones et al., 2022) and masculinity performance (Wallace, 2007) on Black male identity, but less attention has been given to the specific impact of the HBCU context. Emerging scholarship shows that Black college men face complex mental health challenges shaped by trauma, racial discrimination, and cultural expectations (Bauer et al., 2022; Kogan et al., 2025), yet often avoid seeking help due to stigma, mistrust, and traditional masculine norms (Turner et al., 2024; Richardson, 2025). Grounded in a phenomenological framework, this study explores how intersections of age, race, and lived experience shape meanings attached to roles such as provider, protector, and emotional anchor. While these roles reflect cultural values like resilience and collective uplift (Johnson & Florestal, 2024), they can also create psychological strain when tied to expectations of emotional suppression (Cloud, 2024; Ware et al., 2024). Using in-depth, semi-structured interviews, this study centers the lived experiences of 5 Black male students to understand how masculinity is reinforced and redefined within HBCU spaces. Through qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews with five participants, three major themes emerged from the data: (1) Self-Defined Masculinity vs Social Expectation, (2) Emotional Regulation and the Performance of Masculinity, and (3) Identity Formation Through Social Environment, Family Legacy, and Social Perception. Together, these themes reveal the complex nature of masculinity among Black male college students at HBCUs, as they navigate both cultural expectations and personal identity development. Findings aim to inform culturally responsive mental health interventions and institutional practices that better support Black men's identity development and well-being.

Keywords: HBCU, masculinity, social roles, Black male identity, gender socialization, mental health

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Navigating Manhood: Black Male Perspectives on Social Roles at HBCUs

This research examines how Black male college students, particularly those within the Atlanta University Center (AUC), understand, experience, and perform masculinity while navigating their social roles and mental health. Where it all begins is not on the college campus, but within the family. The roles Black men take on at HBCUs are shaped long before they arrive, especially through early socialization. McCurdy et al. (2022) show that mothers who practice “Race Embracing” socialization help their sons develop stronger and more confident racial identities. Similarly, Watson (2023) explains that Black parents often teach both “cultural pride” and “preparation for bias.” Charity-Parker and Adams-Bass (2023) indicate that parents remain the primary source of racial socialization messages for Black youth, while non parental agents such as grandparents, teachers, and media also influence youths’ experiences across ecological contexts. Together, these early messages create a foundation where Black male students enter college already carrying beliefs about who they are, how they should act, and what responsibilities they hold. Once on campus, these internalized ideas often intersect with broader societal pressures tied to masculinity. Smalls (2009) discusses the “I’m a Man, Th’ Ang” phenomenon, which highlights how Black male identity is frequently tied to proving manhood in a society that questions it. W.E.B. DuBois’s (Duck & Rawls, 2023) concept of double consciousness is applicable to this dilemma experienced by black males. Double consciousness is a heightened awareness produced by racial exclusion is the conceptual framework that can perhaps help understand the dilemma faced by black males. Nielson et al. (2024) further support this by finding that Black and Latinx young men report higher levels of pressure to meet gender norms compared to their White peers. This research builds on these ideas by exploring the HBCU environments and if the expectations creates limitations or space for more flexible and authentic expressions of manhood.

Literature Review

The mental health of Black/African American male college students is shaped by a complex interaction of sociocultural, structural, and psychological factors. Among these, masculinity norms play a significant role in influencing emotional expression, coping behaviors, and help-seeking patterns (Turner et al., 2024, Gere, 2025, Richardson, 2025). Black men often navigate expectations of strength, emotional control, and self-reliance, which can contribute to the underutilization of mental health services and the internalization of distress. Within the Atlanta University Center (AUC), these dynamics are particularly important to examine, as students exist within historically Black institutions while still being impacted by broader societal pressures. However, to fully understand how these expectations show up on college campuses, it is necessary to look at where they begin. Masculinity, identity, and beliefs about emotional expression are not formed in isolation during college, but are shaped much earlier through family and early socialization. As a result, existing literature points to several interconnected themes, including early messages about manhood, mental health disparities, masculinity norms, help-seeking behaviors, and the role of institutional and cultural support systems.

Where It All Starts: Family and Early Messages About Manhood

Early socialization plays a critical role in shaping how Black men come to understand themselves, their emotions, and their responsibilities. This research is based on the idea that the

roles Black men take on at HBCUs do not suddenly form once they get to college, but are shaped long before that, especially through family influence. McCurdy et al. (2022) show that mothers who practice “Race Embracing” socialization help their sons develop stronger and more confident racial identities. This suggests that many students may arrive at HBCUs already carrying certain beliefs about who they are and what role they are supposed to play. Building on this, Watson (2023) explains that Black parents often teach both “cultural pride” and “preparation for bias.” This balance of pride and protection likely shapes how male students see themselves on campus, possibly as leaders, but also as young men who feel the need to remain aware of stereotypes and external judgment. Taken together, these early messages create a foundation that continues to influence how Black men interpret masculinity and mental health as they transition into college environments.

Mental Health Disparities Among Black Men

As these early identities develop over time, they intersect with broader structural realities that shape mental health outcomes. Research consistently demonstrates that Black men experience significant mental health disparities influenced by systemic and structural factors such as financial resources, limited access to care, insurance, and transportation problems. Cloud (2024) emphasizes that Black men’s mental health is shaped by sociocultural, historical, and economic conditions, including systemic racism, stigma, and limited access to culturally competent care. These overlapping factors contribute to disparities in both mental health outcomes and treatment utilization.

Expanding on this, Bauer et al. (2022) examine trauma exposure among young Black men and find that those who experienced traumatic events emphasized the need for multilevel interventions, including increased access to resources, stronger social support systems, and community-based programming. Their findings highlight that mental health challenges cannot be addressed at only the individual level but require broader structural engagement. Similarly, Kogan et al. (2025) provide longitudinal evidence showing that childhood adversity and racial discrimination significantly predict suicidal and death ideation, with negative relational schemas acting as a mediating factor. The social determinants of health for Black males are pervasive (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2024; Gilbert et al. 2016). Together, these studies demonstrate that mental health outcomes are shaped not only by present circumstances but also by cumulative life experiences, reinforcing the importance of understanding how masculinity norms operate within this broader context.

Masculinity Norms, Emotional Expression, and the Pressure to Prove Manhood

Within this context of structural inequality and lived experience, masculinity norms become a key framework through which Black men interpret and respond to mental health challenges. These norms often emphasize toughness, emotional suppression, and independence, shaping both identity and behavior. Smalls (2009) introduces the “I’m a Man, Th’Ang” phenomenon, explaining how Black male socialization is frequently tied to proving manhood in a society that questions or diminishes it. This highlights how masculinity is not simply an internal identity, but a performance shaped by external pressures. Nielson et al. (2024) further support this by finding that Black and Latinx young men report higher levels of pressure to meet gender norms compared to their White peers. This research builds on these findings by examining whether the HBCU environment reinforces or alleviates these pressures.

In addition, Ware et al. (2024) show that masculinity is multidimensional, with constructs such as respect/toughness and anti-femininity influencing behavioral outcomes, including increased risk behaviors. Morton IV (2026) adds a cultural dimension by analyzing T'Challa from *Black Panther*, identifying themes of emotional suppression, identity fragmentation, and responsibility. Together, these studies suggest that masculinity norms can both support resilience and create barriers, particularly when they discourage emotional expression.

Help-Seeking Behaviors and Barriers

These expectations surrounding masculinity directly influence how Black men respond to mental health challenges, particularly when it comes to seeking help. A major theme across the literature is the underutilization of mental health services among Black men, often shaped by stigma, mistrust, and beliefs about vulnerability. Gere (2025) highlights the role of institutional context, finding that resource availability, faculty accessibility, and a supportive campus environment significantly impact help-seeking behaviors among Black male students at an HBCU. Similarly, Richardson (2025) finds that Black men are more likely to rely on informal support systems, although only religious support was associated with lower depression scores. Turner et al. (2024) further show that expectations about treatment effectiveness are stronger predictors of service use than therapy-related fears. Ball et al. (2024) indicate that Black students underutilize institutional mental health care, and so engage in various alternative community spaces on campus, to support their mental health.

Taken together, these findings suggest that help-seeking is shaped by both internalized masculinity norms and external environmental factors, making it a critical area of focus within HBCU contexts.

Brotherhood, Protection, and Showing Up for the Community

Beyond individual behaviors, masculinity also shapes how Black men understand their roles in relation to others. Within HBCU environments, this often appears through ideas of brotherhood, responsibility, and protection. Adebayo (2024) suggests that many Black men view themselves as “protectors,” particularly in relation to Black women and girls. This research explores how this protective role is interpreted and enacted within a college setting. At the same time, Lim and Cortina (2024) note that while men may feel moral anger in response to injustice, social expectations can discourage intervention. This raises important questions about whether HBCU brotherhood culture encourages accountability or reinforces silence in certain situations.

The Emotional Cost of Masculinity Expectations

While these roles can provide a sense of purpose and identity, they may also come with emotional consequences. The literature highlights that strict adherence to traditional masculinity norms can create internal strain. Mahlangu (2024) argues that values such as dominance and emotional suppression contribute to Gender Role Conflict and negative mental health outcomes. At the same time, Wong (2024) shows that Black men are increasingly adopting more supportive and egalitarian roles within their families, suggesting that masculinity is evolving. This research considers whether similar shifts are occurring among HBCU students and how these changes impact mental health and role expectations.

Institutional and Community-Based Support

Given these complexities, scholars emphasize the need for collective and culturally responsive approaches to supporting Black men's mental health. Johnson and Florestal (2024) propose a collective impact framework that calls for collaboration across institutional systems. Wilton (2024) further stresses the importance of addressing social determinants such as racial trauma and socioeconomic barriers in suicide prevention efforts. These approaches highlight the importance of HBCUs not only as educational institutions, but also as cultural spaces that can either reinforce or reshape masculinity norms and mental health outcomes.

Gaps in the Literature and Contribution of This Research

Taken together, the literature demonstrates that Black male social roles and mental health experiences are shaped by early socialization, structural inequities, masculinity norms, and community expectations. However, much of this research examines these factors in isolation or focuses broadly on Black men without considering how they intersect within specific institutional contexts. Despite growing attention to Black men's mental health, limited research explicitly examines how masculinity norms influence mental health within environments such as the AUC. Additionally, while help-seeking behaviors and disparities are well documented, fewer studies connect these outcomes to lived experiences of masculinity in a localized and culturally specific way. This research addresses this gap by focusing on Black male students at HBCUs within the AUC, exploring how they understand, navigate, and perform masculinity in relation to their mental health, social roles, and lived experiences within this unique cultural environment.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experience of being 'male' and the meaning of 'masculinity' among Black/African American male college students in the Atlanta University Center (AUC). The structural (what was experienced) and textual descriptions (how it was experienced) will be explored in the context of the sociopsychological environment.

Research Question

This study seeks to explore and describe the following research question: What is the lived experience and meaning of male social roles among college-aged men at an HBCU?

Methods

This qualitative research study uses a phenomenological approach to explore how Black/African American male college students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities within the Atlanta University Center understand and experience masculinity in relation to their mental health. A phenomenological approach was selected to capture the lived experiences of participants and gain a deeper understanding of how they interpret social expectations, emotional expression, and help-seeking behaviors. This method allows for an in-depth exploration of how masculinity is defined, performed, and internalized within the context of their daily lives.

Participants were recruited through peer networks within the Atlanta University Center (AUC) community. The AUC is the oldest and largest consortium of historically black colleges

and universities. The AUC consortium, with a predominantly black student population, consists of four private academic institutions: Clark Atlanta University which is an private, coeducational university; Morehouse College a private, liberal arts college dedicated to educating men, and Spelman College a liberal arts college dedicated to the education of women of African descent. Morehouse School of Medicine, is a medical school dedicated to health equity and improving health. Data were collected through one-on-one semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to openly discuss their perspectives on masculinity, mental health, family influence, and campus culture. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, then analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, codes, and themes related to masculinity norms, emotional experiences, coping strategies, and perceptions of support. This approach allows for the identification of shared meanings across participants while also capturing the complexity of their individual lived experiences.

Role of Researcher

As Black women within the Atlanta University Center (AUC), we recognize that our identities and experiences shape how we approach this research. While we do not share the same gender identity as the participants, we are part of the same cultural and institutional environment, which allows us to understand the context in which their experiences take place. This shared background may have helped create a level of comfort and openness during conversations.

At the same time, we remained aware that our perspectives are different from those of the Black male participants. Because of this, we were intentional about not imposing our own beliefs or assumptions onto their experiences. We allowed participants to define masculinity and mental health in their own terms and focused on listening without interpretation during data collection.

To help manage personal bias, we engaged in reflexive journaling throughout the research process, where we documented our thoughts, assumptions, and potential biases. This allowed us to visually identify and acknowledge our perspectives so they would not interfere with how we interpreted participants' responses. Alongside this, we regularly reflected on our entries to ensure we were separating our experiences from those of the participants and staying grounded in their narratives.

Participants

This study included five Black/African American male college students between the ages of 20 and 29 who attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities within the Atlanta University Center. A purposive sampling strategy was used, with participants recruited through snowball sampling, specifically peer networks within the AUC community based on their willingness to discuss experiences related to masculinity, mental health, and social expectations in the college setting.

All participants met the criteria of identifying as Black or African American, being enrolled at an HBCU within the AUC, and falling within the specified age range. Prior to participation, each individual provided informed consent and was briefly reminded of the study's purpose before beginning the interview. Basic demographic information, including age and institutional affiliation, was collected before discussing their lived experiences related to masculinity, mental health, family influence, and campus life. Interview questions are in Appendix A.

Validation Strategies

To strengthen trustworthiness in this study, multiple strategies were used throughout the research process. Credibility was supported by checking interpretations with participants during and after interviews to ensure that their experiences were accurately captured and understood as intended. Transferability was addressed through providing clear and detailed descriptions of participants' experiences within the AUC context, allowing readers to understand the setting and consider how the findings may apply to similar environments. Dependability was ensured by maintaining a consistent approach to coding and organizing data during thematic analysis so that findings were developed in a structured and reliable manner. Confirmability was supported by keeping reflective notes throughout the study to stay aware of how personal perspectives could shape interpretation, ensuring that findings were grounded in participant responses rather than researcher assumptions.

Results

Thematic analysis as proposed by Moustakas (1994) was utilized. Interviews were transcribed, codes identified, and then themes extracted from the codes, to identify the final essence of the phenomenon.

Theme 1: Self-Defined Masculinity vs. Social Expectation

Participants consistently described masculinity as something they personally define while still recognizing strong societal expectations placed on them. Across interviews, men expressed resistance to rigid definitions of manhood while also acknowledging pressure from social norms, family expectations, and cultural messaging. This theme was supported by repeated language such as man, define, pressure, society, conform, own, and act. One participant noted "manhood wasn't really defined for me" (1), while another stated "nobody should tell you how to be a man" (2), alongside expressions like "you can't put me in no pressure" (1), "I don't conform" (3), and "masculinity is socially constructed" (4). Together, these responses show that at HBCUs, masculinity is not passively accepted but actively negotiated, with participants constructing personal definitions of manhood while still operating within strong external expectations that attempt to shape masculine identity.

Theme 2: Early Socialization of Male Roles

Participants described early childhood experiences as foundational in shaping their understanding of masculinity, particularly around emotional expression and gendered expectations that continue into adulthood. This was reflected through repeated words such as boys, girls, cry, job, act, and man. Participants recalled early messages like "don't cry, that's for girls" (1), "that's a boy's job" (1), "you're not supposed to cry, you're a man" (2), and "don't act like that" (2), which illustrate how emotional restriction and gender roles are introduced early and reinforced over time. These early experiences continue to influence how masculinity is performed in college environments, particularly in relation to emotional control and responsibility.

Theme 3: Black Male Stereotypes & Social Perception

Across interviews, participants demonstrated strong awareness of how they are perceived as Black men, particularly through stereotypes connected to aggression, intimidation, and labeling. This theme was reflected in repeated words such as Black, intimidating, aggressive, label, assumptions, and archetypes. Participants described experiences such as being seen as “intimidating” (1, 5), being subject to “archetypes on Black men” (2), and having their behaviors interpreted through assumptions, including “people assign labels based on small things” (2) and “big Black man... aggressive” (5). Even within HBCU environments, participants remain conscious of racialized perception, which shapes how they present themselves and navigate social spaces.

Theme 4: Emotional Regulation vs. Emotional Suppression

A central tension across all interviews was the balance between emotional awareness and the expectation to suppress emotional expression. This theme appeared through repeated words such as cry, emotions, emotional intelligence, feel, control, and vulnerable. While participants demonstrated emotional intelligence and self-awareness, they also described constraints such as “don’t cry” (1, 2), “feel emotions but don’t let them control you” (2), “I can’t be crying in front of these niggas” (5), and “first time I had to be vulnerable like that” (5). This pattern reflects how emotional expression among men at HBCUs is present but regulated, often depending on context, safety, and social expectations, resulting in controlled rather than fully open vulnerability.

Theme 5: Masculinity as Responsibility, Protection, and Legacy

Participants frequently connected masculinity to responsibility, protection, leadership, and generational duty. This theme was reflected in repeated words such as protect, job, word, family, last name, graduate, and responsibility. Participants described masculinity as being responsible for others’ safety, as seen in “my job is to make sure you guys are okay” (5) and “our protection, we are here to protect y’all” (5), as well as being tied to reliability and keeping one’s word, such as “stick to your word, be reliable” (2). This was also deeply connected to family legacy, with statements like “they did way too much for me to let this last name die” (5) and “first to graduate from an HBCU” (5). Overall, masculinity is strongly tied to duty, achievement, and generational responsibility.

Theme 6: Resistance to Social Conformity

Participants consistently rejected rigid social expectations and emphasized individuality and authenticity. This theme included repeated words such as conform, pressure, society, care, and act. Participants expressed ideas such as “you can’t put me in no pressure” (1), “society can only do that if you let it” (3), “I don’t conform” (3), and “I don’t really care how others perceive me” (4). These responses highlight a shared resistance to performative masculinity, with participants prioritizing self-definition and authenticity over external validation or approval.

Theme 7: Identity Formation Through Environment and Exposure

Participants emphasized that identity is shaped through social environment, exposure to different people, and campus experiences. This theme was reflected in repeated words such as people, learn, environment, campus, groups, and experience. Participants described learning from diverse interactions, such as “meeting different people changed my perspective” (1), “I like

learning from people I've never spoken to before" (3), and "there is a hierarchy on campus" (4). Some also noted restrictions within certain environments, such as "certain groups I can't express myself" (5). Overall, the HBCU environment plays a significant role in shaping how masculinity and identity are understood and expressed.

Theme 8: Authenticity vs. Performance in Masculinity

Participants distinguished between authentic self-expression and performative masculinity, particularly in relation to confidence and identity presentation. This theme included repeated words such as performative, confidence, secure, and expression. Participants described differences between genuine and performative confidence, such as "confidence is performative vs real" (4) and "secure people lift others up" (4), while others emphasized self-directed expression like "I express myself how I want" (3). This suggests that masculinity is not only about identity but also about how authentically that identity is performed and perceived in social spaces.

Theme 9: Legacy, Success, and Family Expectation

Masculinity was also strongly tied to achievement, generational progress, and family responsibility. This theme included repeated words such as family, last name, graduate, trajectory, and plan. Participants described being the "first generation college student" (5), "first to graduate from an HBCU" (5), and emphasized planning for future success with statements like "I have to plan everything carefully" (5). Additionally, masculinity was linked to long-term family impact, such as "law school changes the trajectory of your family" (5). This reflects how masculinity is often connected to success, legacy, and upward mobility.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore how male students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) perceive and construct social roles related to masculinity within their lived experiences. Through qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews with five participants, three major themes emerged from the data: (1) Self-Defined Masculinity vs Social Expectation, (2) Emotional Regulation and the Performance of Masculinity, and (3) Identity Formation Through Social Environment, Family Legacy, and Social Perception. Together, these themes illustrate the complex and negotiated nature of masculinity among Black male college students at HBCUs, particularly as they navigate both cultural expectations and personal identity development.

Participants consistently described masculinity as a fluid and self-determined concept rather than a fixed social category. While traditional expectations of manhood were still recognized, they were frequently challenged, reinterpreted, or resisted. Masculinity was often understood as something that should be defined individually rather than dictated externally, reflecting a strong emphasis on personal agency and authenticity. This suggests that within the HBCU context, male students are actively engaged in redefining masculinity in ways that move beyond rigid societal frameworks, instead prioritizing self-definition and lived experience as the foundation of identity.

The second theme, Emotional Regulation and the Performance of Masculinity, captured the ongoing tension between emotional awareness and emotional restriction. Participants demonstrated an understanding of emotional intelligence, particularly in relation to self-control, empathy, and awareness of others. However, emotional expression was often described as

socially constrained, especially in male-dominated peer contexts where vulnerability could be perceived negatively. As a result, emotional experiences were frequently managed privately or selectively expressed depending on environment and trust. This highlights how masculinity is not only an internal identity but also a socially performed role that requires constant navigation between expression and restraint.

The third theme, Identity Formation Through Social Environment, Family Legacy, and Social Perception, emphasizes the external forces that shape masculine identity among HBCU men. Family influence, particularly from fathers and maternal figures, played a significant role in shaping values such as responsibility, discipline, and work ethic. At the same time, the HBCU environment contributed to identity development through exposure to diverse perspectives and social comparison within campus structures. Additionally, participants were consistently aware of how Black men are perceived in broader society, particularly in relation to stereotypes of intimidation and aggression. These intersecting influences suggest that masculinity is formed not only through personal belief systems but also through inherited expectations and ongoing social interpretation.

The essence of the phenomenon revealed in this study is that masculinity among HBCU male students is a continuously evolving construct shaped by the interaction between self-definition and social expectation. Rather than adhering to a singular model of manhood, participants navigate masculinity through resistance, adaptation, and reflection across multiple social contexts. Their experiences demonstrate that masculinity is not static, but instead is actively constructed through emotional regulation, family influence, environmental context, and societal perception.

Conclusion

Overall, male students at HBCUs perceive masculinity as a dynamic and negotiated identity shaped by early socialization, racialized perception, institutional environment, and personal experience. While traditional expectations such as protection, leadership, and responsibility remain influential, participants actively challenge rigid definitions and construct individualized understandings of manhood. These findings have been supported by other researchers Allen (2023) through visual photography products, dissertation by Dei-Sharpe (2025) in Canada, and archival analysis of characters in literature by Ingato et al. (2024). However, tensions remain between emotional expression and suppression, authenticity and performance, and personal identity and social expectation, illustrating the complexity of navigating masculinity within the HBCU context.

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations of this study include the small sample size of five participants, which limits how widely the findings can be applied beyond this group of HBCU male students. While the sample was enough to reach saturation and provided rich insight, a larger and more diverse sample across multiple HBCUs could have shown more variation in how masculinity and social roles are experienced.

Another limitation is the use of self-reported data, which reflects participants' personal interpretations and may be influenced by how they view themselves or want to be perceived. This is especially relevant given the personal nature of masculinity, emotional expression, and identity. There was also natural overlap in the data, particularly between masculinity, emotional

intelligence, emotional regulation, and identity. While these were separated into themes for analysis, participants often described them as interconnected in real life, which may not be fully captured through thematic separation.

Future research should include a broader sample across different HBCUs to better understand how campus environment influences masculinity and identity. It may also be useful to further explore how HBCU men navigate emotional expression and emotional control over time, especially given the tension between emotional awareness and restraint found in this study. Additionally, future studies could look more closely at how family influence and generational expectations shape ideas of responsibility and manhood, since these consistently appeared in participant narratives. Finally, research could further examine how perceptions of Black men, including being seen as intimidating or misunderstood, influence how students navigate identity and social roles.



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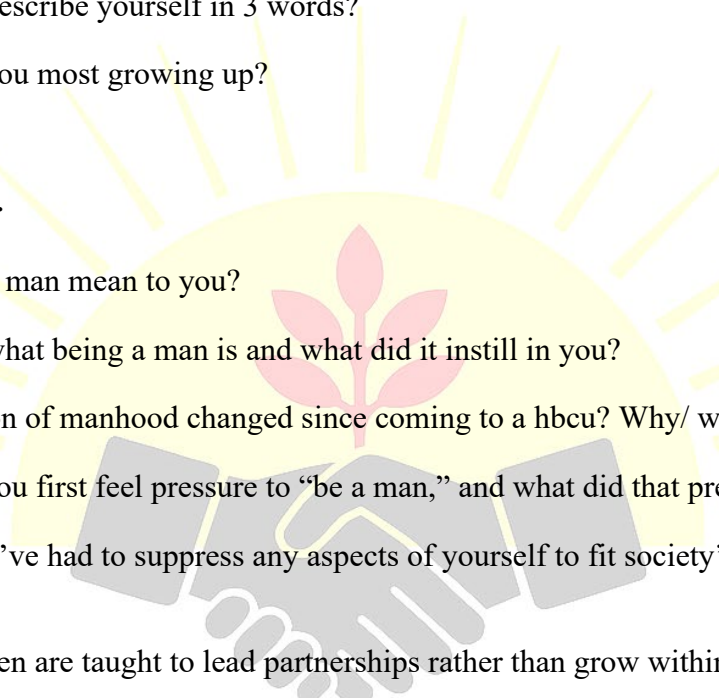
Appendix A

Ice- Breakers:

1. What do you enjoy doing in your alone time?
2. What do you enjoy doing out in public?
3. How would you describe yourself in 3 words?
4. Who influenced you most growing up?

Interview questions:

1. What does being a man mean to you?
2. Who taught you what being a man is and what did it instill in you?
3. Has your definition of manhood changed since coming to a hbcu? Why/ why not?
4. At what age did you first feel pressure to “be a man,” and what did that pressure look like?
5. Have you felt you’ve had to suppress any aspects of yourself to fit society’s definition of a man?
6. Do you believe men are taught to lead partnerships rather than grow within them



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