

# Foundation for Positive Masculinity

## 2023 Conference

# What's working: Ingrid Howren



**How can we get boys and young men  
to willingly, and comfortably, talk about  
their emotions?**



# The challenges boys face

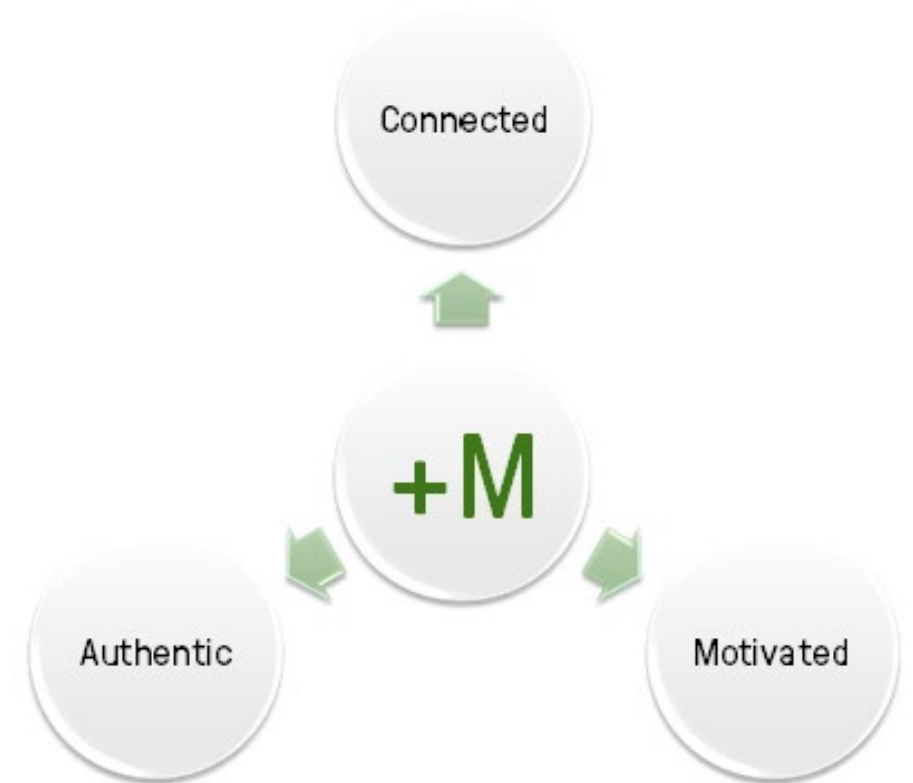
- ▶ Lack of positive role models
- ▶ Feeling comfortable to explore their feelings
- ▶ Having the emotional intelligence to regulate emotions
- ▶ Knowing who they are and what they value



# What can we do?

How do we create acceptability?

Where is the right place to do this?



# Alternate approach

Let's consider sport...

- ▶ Sense of belonging
- ▶ Connection
- ▶ Inspired
- ▶ Leadership
- ▶ The “locker room” feeling



Danny Frawley Centre

- ▶ Young athletes
- ▶ Parents
- ▶ Mental fitness
- ▶ High performance
- ▶ Leadership in sport



Workshops

- ▶ Athlete workshop
- ▶ Parent workshop

# What did we do?

- ▶ Positive Masculinity framework to deliver a 3-tiered leadership model

## Leadership in a team: Mental Fitness



Level Three: Lead with vision



Level Two: Be a great connector



Level One: Be yourself

## Level One: Be yourself

1. Training – lead by example
2. Have some strategies for regulating your emotions (understanding your mindset)
3. Being clear on what your own personal values are



Authentic

► **Tool: Breathing routine**



## Level Two: Connector

Who are the great connectors you have known in your club?



- ▶ **Tool:** Conversational skill - Right way, right place, right time

## Level Three: Lead with vision

What are your team values and goals?

How are they re-enforced (recognised and rewarded)?

How are they measured and monitored?



Motivated

► **Tool:** The half-back flanker theory

# Feedback

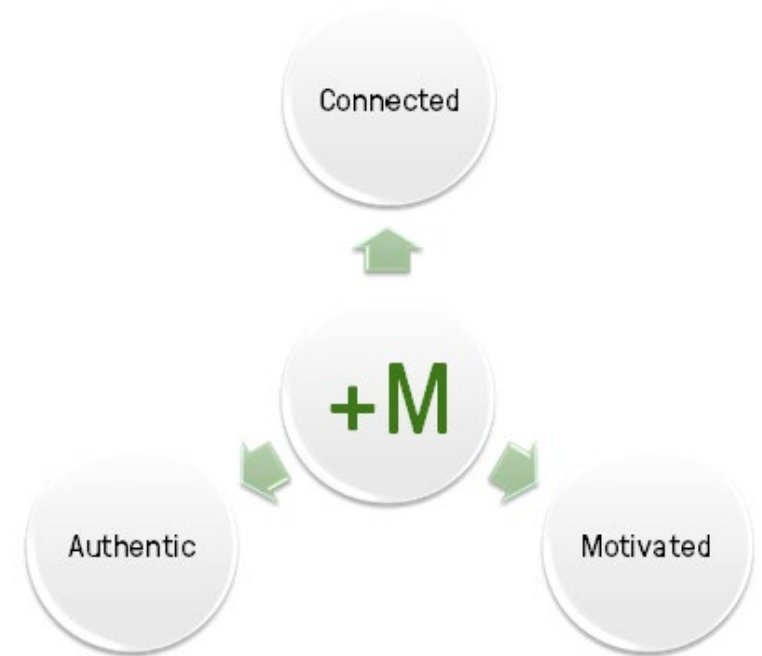
## ▶ Net promoter scores (NPS) 8

### Select comments

- 'I enjoyed learning about the facilities in a professional sports centre and I loved learning about how to be a better leader'
- 'How important mental health is'
- 'I enjoyed the leadership skills that I learnt especially that you need great mental fitness'
- 'It helps [mental fitness] and makes you more independent about footy and more'
- 'Meeting new people'
- 'Just the experience'
- 'Having the AFL player '

# Why it worked

- ▶ AFL player sharing stories
- ▶ Relatable scenarios
- ▶ Relevant to various sports
- ▶ Genuine interest in being better teammates and athletes
- ▶ Provided practical takeaways (tool kit)
- ▶ Safe space for interaction



# What authentic ways can we engage students in discussing and understanding positive masculinities?

We need less of... 'who would like to sit down and have a chat about how they feel?'

But more of... 'who would be interested in learning some tools and strategies to connect with teammates and be a high performing leader to achieve ultimate success?'