

FROM THE DEAN OF BOYS' EDUCATION

BOYS' FEELINGS AND MOVEMENT

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Ian Lillico, in his publication 'Boys and their Schooling', writes about how many boys convert their feelings to movement. Whether it's riding a tricycle, bicycle, skateboard, going for a walk, exercising at the gym, or driving off in their car, he argues that it is very natural for boys and men to need space and use movement when they have an emotion or feeling to deal with.

If 'movement' with boys can rekindle their feelings, it is important to consider the importance of engaging in action-oriented activities with boys when we want them to open up and talk. This could be going for a walk around the block with the dog, kicking a football, or engaging in an activity he enjoys. In the middle of such activities, boys can often reveal the problem that is concerning them.

A boy's need to be silent and then his subsequent readiness to share what he is feeling is termed by William Pollack as the "timed silence syndrome." We must learn to be sensitive to each boy's unique timing. However, we must also be sensitive to the early signs of boys' feelings being masked with the attitude "everything is fine" when factors such as declining grades, rowdy behaviour, being unusually quiet, or social isolation can be just the 'tip of the iceberg'.



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