



The Man Box 2024

Fact Sheet

the
men's
project

A Jesuit Social Services initiative

How have social pressure and personal beliefs about masculinity changed?

The “Man Box” describes a set of beliefs within and across society that place pressure on men to act in a certain way. The Man Box consists of 19 “rules” that represent a rigid, outdated and often harmful template for how a “real man” should think, feel, and behave. As part of our 2018 and 2024 Man Box studies, we asked 18- to 30-year-old men in Australia whether they feel societal pressure to follow these rules, and if they personally agree with these rules.

Social pressure to conform with Man Box rules

There have been some shifts in perceived social messages over the last five years. Among 18- to 30-year-old men, the perception of social pressure to conform to Man Box rules decreased, with an average fall of 12 percentage points (from 49% of survey respondents agreeing they felt social pressure to 37%).

The largest shifts were seen for Man Box rules related to self-sufficiency, stoicism, and acting tough. The proportion of men who said they felt social pressure related to these Man Box rules fell by between 16 and 20 percentage points (noting that despite this decrease, they remain some of the Man Box rules with the highest perceived social pressure). Several rules in the physical attractiveness pillar also saw substantial decreases in perceived social pressure.

Other Man Box rules have seen very little change with regards to social pressure, particularly those related to the use of violence and expectations related to relationships with women. For instance, the Man Box rules “Men should use violence to get respect if necessary” and “In heterosexual relationships, a man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationship or marriage” declined by only one and four percentage points respectively.



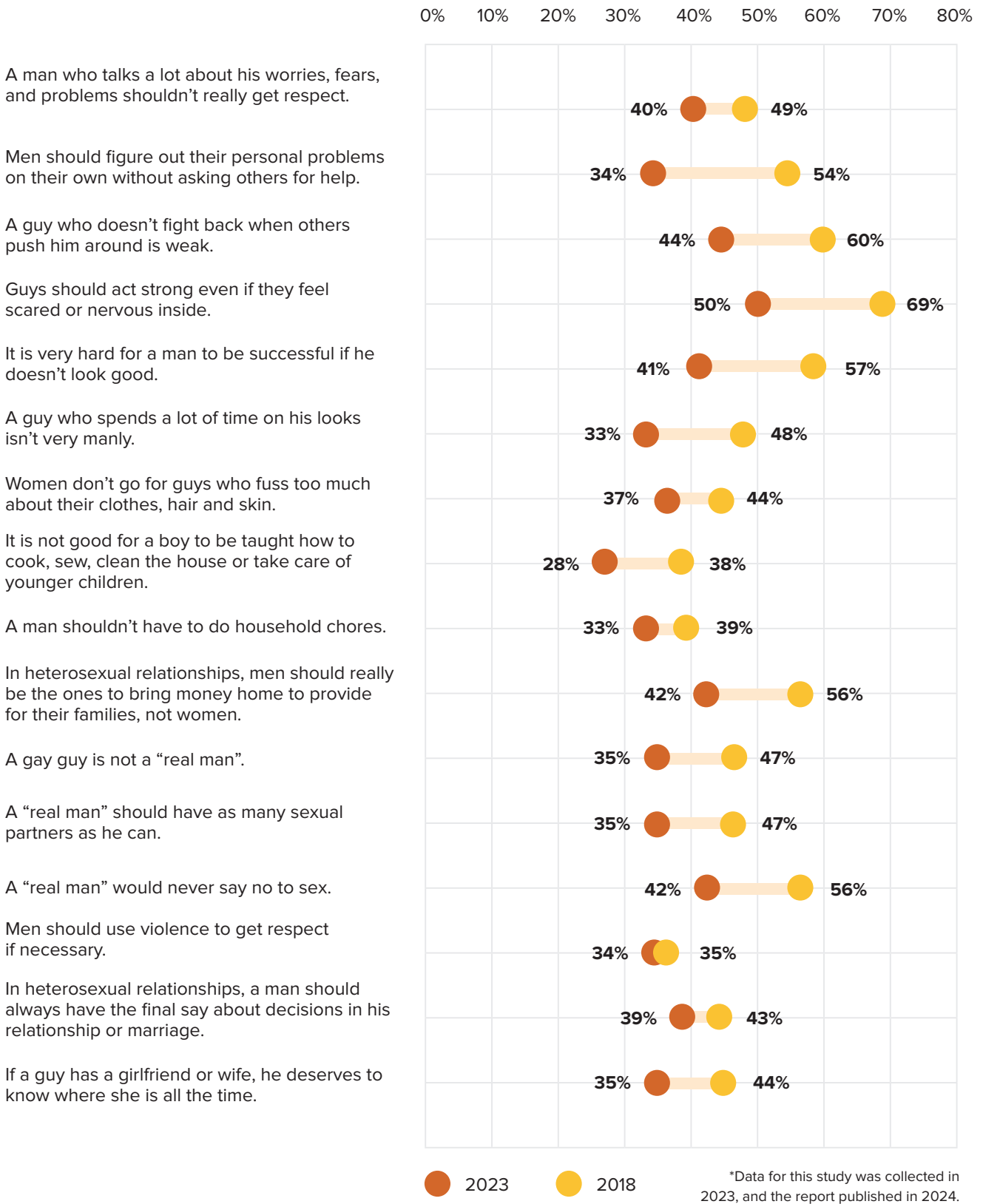
For more information about The Man Box 2024, and to download the full report, visit www.themanbox.com.au.



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Perceived social messages about masculinity, change between 2018 and 2023*, 18- to 30-year-old men

Percentage of survey respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that "Society as a whole tells me that..."



Personal beliefs about masculinity

In general, the fall in personal endorsement of Man Box rules – roughly 4 percentage points on average – was substantially lower than the fall in the perception of social messages.

Some Man Box rules have a significantly looser hold over 18- to 30-year-old men's attitudes today compared to five years ago. For instance, men's personal endorsement of the Man Box rule "If a guy has a girlfriend or wife, he deserves to know where she is all the time" decreased by more than a third, from 36% to 21% (despite perceived social pressure to conform to this rule only decreasing from 44% to 37%).

Personal endorsement of all rules in the "Physical attractiveness" pillar fell between 7 and 9 percentage points, which is less than the decrease in perceived social messages (which decreased between 7 and 16 percentage points). Personal endorsement of the rule that boys shouldn't be taught to cook, sew, clean and

care for children fell by 5 percentage points – also less than the fall in the perceived social pressure to conform to this rule.

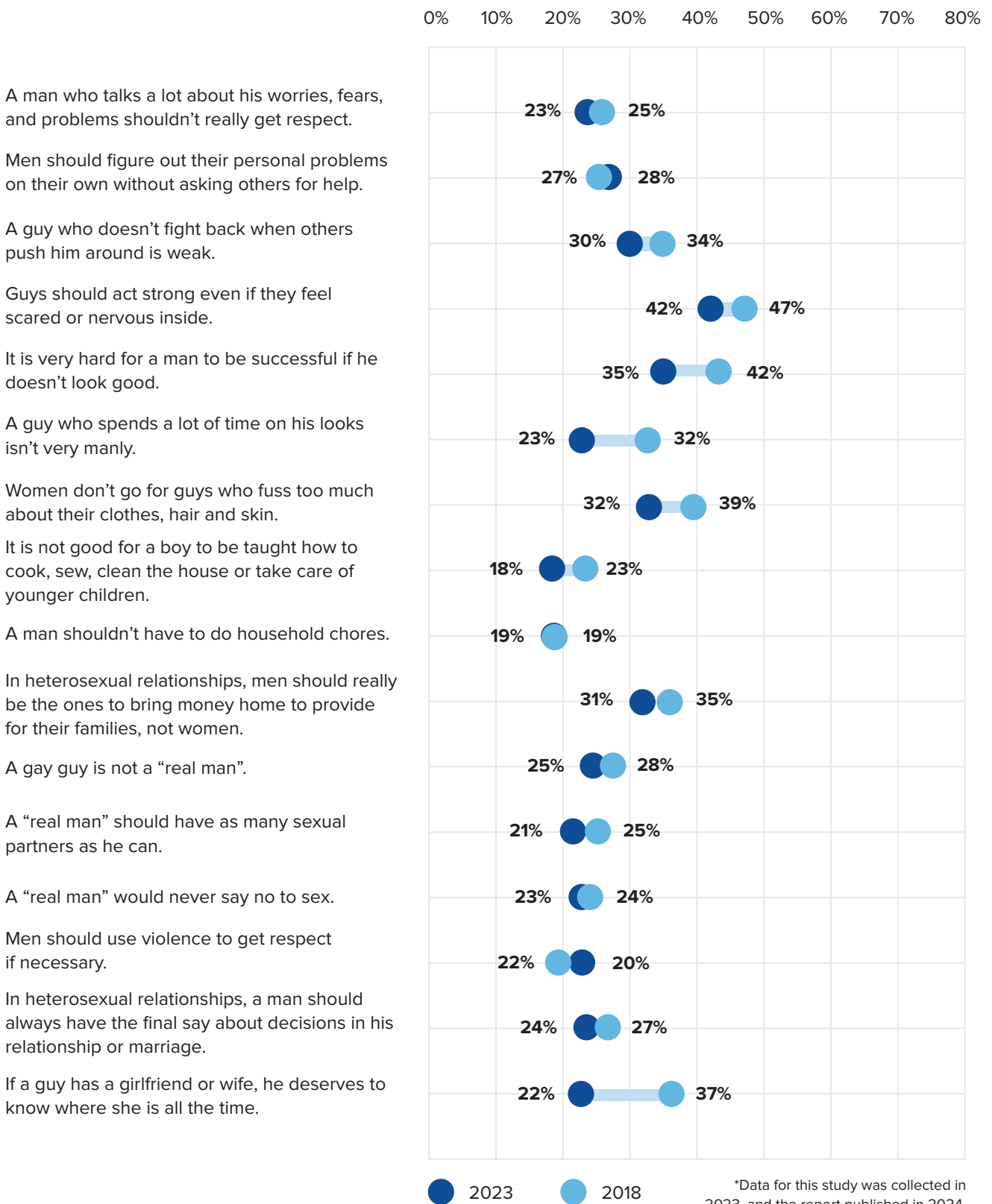
Other Man Box rules seem more resistant to change. The average personal agreement that men should use violence to get respect if necessary increased from 20% to 22%. Rules related to help seeking and stoicism were largely stable despite falls in social pressure. For instance, the proportion of survey respondents who agreed that men should figure out their personal problems without asking for help increased by one percentage point.

There were also only relatively small changes related to men's role in society; personal endorsement for the rule "A man shouldn't have to do household chores" did not change, while "In heterosexual relationships, a man should always have the final say about decisions in his relationship or marriage" declined by only three percentage points.



Personal beliefs about masculinity, change between 2018 and 2023*, 18- to 30-year-old men

Percentage of survey respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that "In my opinion..."



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