OPINION

STAFF COLUMNIST

JOSHUA DANZIGER

Save young men

How are young men doing?

Terribly.

We are unemployed, depressed and sexually inactive. We are struggling in education, job placement and social flourishing. We are the perpetrators of our country's recent mass shootings and political attacks.

After many generations of male dominance in almost every public realm, it can be hard to comprehend that men today are struggling. The collapse of young men's purpose and role in society is a personal crisis and a civilizational one: when male ambition is left to rot, it ferments violence, despair and withdrawal. Society must take steps to avoid paying a large price.

In nationwide Department of Education enrollment statistics, women comprise almost 60 percent of university graduating classes. In grade school, girls earn better grades, hold more leadership positions and speak up in class more than boys. Boys are more likely to engage with drugs and alcohol and get in fights and are significantly more likely to be suspended. Female successes in education are hard fought and well deserved, yet should not prevent us from addressing struggling men.

Beyond education, young men are struggling in almost every aspect of life. According to the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, 28 percent of men younger than 17 experience mental, behavioral or developmental health challenges, compared with only 23 percent of women. In 2023, men made up half of the population, but comprised 80 percent of suicides recorded by the CDC. A 2024 study by the Survey Center for American Life found that 15 percent of men have no close friendships, a fivefold increase since 1990. Meanwhile, male employment rates are steadily declining, with fewer working-age men participating in the labor force each year.

A new term has arisen to describe these unemployed men: NEETs — or, not in education, employment or vocational training. In common terms, NEET men are what one may consider a "loner" or a "lost boy."

Some of these men graduated college in 2024 or 2025 to a difficult job market, and chose to remain jobless after they were unable to place into a job that matched their expectations. Women, experts say, are more likely to be flexible with job offers and accept what positions are available. Broadly, the job market for men and women with advanced degrees has slowed as AI threats loom over white collar hiring and tariffs have compressed the outlook of white shoe corporations. Yale graduates are not shielded from these trends, with the News reporting declining employment rates in some specialities.

Men have the capacity for great evil. More irritable, marginalized and sexually unsatisfied men are not good for society. Look no further than Luigi Mangione.

Jobless for over a year, Mangione isolated himself from the world months prior to shooting United Healthcare CEO Brian Thompson. His mother reported him missing to the San Francisco Police Department after not hearing from him for months. Like many men, Mangione felt the only way out of our imperfect system was violence. So he chose murder.

Mangione is the extreme of a widespread problem. While some disillusioned men choose murder — like Mangione, or the Parkland High School shooter Nicholas Cruz — others turn to the less extreme. Self destruction is a common outlet — suicide and addiction rates are growing more in young men than in almost any other demographic group. Yet, withdrawal may be the most common symptom of the damaged young man. We all know people who have seemingly dropped off the face of Earth to waste away their days watching porn and playing video games in their parents basement. Any version of disenfranchisement sparks the wrong trajectory; for Mangione, it started with withdrawal and ended up deadly.

If you look across history, you'll notice a trend: large groups of unemployed, underemployed or idle young men have been the catalysts for revolutions. It was underemployed apprentices and journeymen who stormed the Bastille. It was unemployed young men who Hitler organized to overthrow the Weimar republic and consolidate power in Germany. It was educated but unemployed young men who spearheaded the overthrow of Mubarak and Ben Ali in Egypt and Tunisia during the Arab Spring.

If we want to save young men, we need to start now. Curb pornography and social media for men under 18. Revive vocational training across the country, especially in cities hollowed out by de-industrialization where addiction runs rampant. Teach boys to read, and expect them to excel. Stop teaching that masculinity itself is bad. Mandate national service, where men learn respect for something greater than themselves. Restore chivalry as an admired virtue, not a punchline. Remind young men that love, sex and marriage are still worth fighting for, and that they have responsibilities to their wives and mothers, to their communities and country, and to God.

These solutions are easy to put into words, but hard in practice. The culture awakening required to save young men may only be possible with a strengthening of male employment opportunities, which seems unlikely as AI takes jobs.

Male idleness does not only threaten the individual flourishing of those becoming "couch potatoes," "lost boys" and NEETs. Historical context shows us that idle men threaten the fabric of our society, and perhaps our republic. For the first time in history, the question is not how to restrain male ambition, but how to reignite it.

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MANU BOSTEELS

Is American individualism compatible with community welfare?

America was built on individualism, or so the story goes. Rugged individualism, pulling yourself up by the bootstraps, the emphasis on entrepreneurship and Horatio-Alger-style independence — the mythology of American citizenship is composed from stories celebrating the ability of the individual to fulfill themselves on their own.

As a matter of political philosophy, we, like many other countries, protect individual rights to protect the people from government overreach and maintain the mixed regime that our exceptionalism presupposes. But our politics and practices go further. They are built on the individual not just as a bearer of rights, but as the sole fundamental unit of society; in this vein, policy ideas are constantly evaluated on the basis of individuality. How does policy X affect an individual's freedom to express their religion? How does policy Y burden an individual taxpayer?

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This individualist mindset, built into the core structure of U.S. governance, is now inseparable from the American identity. I propose that our wholehearted devotion to the individualist perspective goes too far.

Much of the rest of the world, in contrast to the United States, has come to terms with the fact that the common good of the people is best served by some combination of individualism and commitment to community welfare.

For instance, the United States is the only member of the Group of Seven nations not to guarantee universal healthcare to its citizens. I'm led to believe that, in the United States, universal healthcare has never come about primarily because we are incapable of looking beyond the hurdle that taxes might increase. The simple counterargument, an appeal to the communal good, to general welfare, is far outside the perimeter fence of American politics.

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In America, we do exceedingly little to prevent the leading cause of death for children and teens, because 234 years ago we declared the individual right to bear arms. Lacking the ability to prioritize the community over the individual, we have no recourse to take weapons of mass murder out of the hands of the general public. In America, community safety is understood — like everything else — through this same individualistic filter; the community is nothing more than a loose set of individuals. Therefore, community safety is as simple as putting weapons in the hands of each American so they can protect themselves. The American community as an end in itself is an empty concept.

So what about our individual rights? Pitched as the redeeming value of American individualism, I think back to the promises of equality, fairness and prosperity I heard as a kid: the rights to freedom of speech; due process; protections from government searches and seizures, guaranteed to all Americans by the individualist structure of the Constitution.

But the practical commitment to and consistency of those promises is less clear. Every day, I read about and witness the free speech of undocumented immigrants, permanent residents, international students, American citizens and elected officials alike attacked by immigration authorities and the federal administration. A secret police force is patrolling the United States in masks and civilian clothing, abducting people off the street for publishing articles in student newspapers, with complete disregard for due process and even human dignity.

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And then I see the individual right to free speech cited by the Supreme Court to allow massive corporations, dark money groups, and political action committees free rein to dominate our elections, disenfranchising the American citizenry, because SpaceX, Citadel and Palantir deserve the same right to free expression as their employees. The only communities, then, worth giving equal consideration as the individual are ones backed by billions of dollars.

All this to say: we give up a lot in the name of individualism, and it's not clear that we — the American people — are getting nearly as much back.

> IT SEEMS CLEAR TO ME THAT THE COMMUNITY IS SOMETHING GREATER THAN THE PLAIN SUM OF ITS PARTS.

Simply put, it seems clear to me that the community is something greater than the plain sum of its parts. Therefore, the individualist atomization process, where community policy is picked apart into its effects on the individual citizen, has become a tremendous limitation on American public policy.

Individualism, once the supposed guarantor of American exceptionalism, might just be the crutch preventing its true realization.

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Editor's note

The Yale Daily News on Tuesday amended nine articles authored by one staff reporter that were published between October 2024 and May 2025. The articles were found to each contain at least one paragraph that closely matched language published earlier by other sources, without sufficient attribution.

In the course of editing three different articles by that reporter this semester, News editors found language similar or identical to text previously published online. None of the material in question was ultimately published in the News. After the third instance, editors undertook a review of the reporter's previously published articles, identifying the nine articles we are amending today. Editor's notes have been added to each of the articles to reflect changes made. The reporter no longer writes for the News.

Original writing and accurate attribution are essential to the News' independent journalism. As an institution devoted to truth and accountability, we must be upfront about our shortcomings.

Four of the nine amended articles appeared in the News' print edition. An article last November about the Yale-Harvard game ticket lottery contained an unattributed paragraph that matched nearly verbatim a paragraph in a Harvard Crimson article. A January article about a TikTok ban contained three paragraphs that matched, nearly verbatim and without attribution, language from an ABC News article. An article in February about the Grand Strategy program included four paragraphs nearly identical to text in a press release from the Jackson School. An article about the lightweight crew team, published in April, contained several paragraphs with language identical or similar to a Yale Athletics news release.

We regret that those instances were not identified during the editing process. As editors of a student newspaper, it is our duty to train our staff in the high standards, often unfamiliar to newcomers, that earn your confidence. In recent years, the News has not had a plagiarism and attribution policy in place. We apologize for falling short. We are committed to setting clear standards and ensuring that they are met.

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