



*TALKING  
VIOLENCE,  
CONSTRUCTING  
IDENTITY*

*YOUNG MEN IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE*

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- It started with a sugar cube. And it ended with 17 stitches and jail,  
a young man tells me, in a story about the biggest fight he  
was ever in. It started with a joke, a sugar cube thrown at the  
wrong person and escalated into a fight with 40 or 50 people.  
- It was like Braveheart, the movie. A total battle field.

Statistical sources show that young men are the most common  
users of violence and the most common victim. However,  
they say little about what violence means for young men.  
This study investigates how young men, with a documented  
history of violence, talk about their own use of violence, and  
how they construct identities when talking about violence.  
The study is based on a fieldwork at a youth detention home  
in Sweden, where the young men were taking part in the  
treatment programme Aggression Replacement Training  
(ART). When talking about violence, the young men regulate  
social relations to both other men and to women. The stories  
are based on the young men's understanding of how a man  
is supposed to behave, and the own use of violence is talked  
about in terms of self-defence, defending friends, as restrained  
and as justified.



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