



SAFETY:

Rev It Up is about one tiny part of toxic masculinity as I understand it. The Geek Feminism Wiki summarizes toxic masculinity as “the socially-constructed attitudes that describe the masculine gender role as violent, unemotional, sexually aggressive, and so forth.” Here we explore what it’s like to shut down others, and to in turn be shut down ourselves. Rev It Up is a playful game in which we are going to find moments of frustration and sadness, then start playing again.

However...

Sexism: This game is about a particular performance of male gender, we are all equals in that. We are playing manly man outlaw bikers but the sexism usually associated with that is not being played out between the players. For the purposes of the game we are all men, or passing for men, or if someone wants their character to be a woman that’s okay and we will treat them as if they are a man. In short: No sexist attacks between our characters or the players, this game ain’t built for that.

Furthermore, we are not going to describe or suggest acts of sexual violence or menace at any time during the game. We are not going to objectify people, real or imagined.

Aggression: This isn’t about asserting dominance over each other. The Bikers are all friends having a good time.

Descriptions of violence: Keep the violence PG-13. Anyone can yell ‘brake’ to dial back anything that’s being said.

Drug abuse: Let’s not talk about or emulate alcohol or drug abuse. Give the group veto power on the discussion of drugs or alcohol at all. Again, let’s keep this PG-13. Mentions of drugs or alcohol might appear in the song refrains, players can skip those if need be.

Also...

The game might involve touching. As part of a safety introduction, establish if players are comfortable being touched on the hands or arms, slapped on the back good naturedly, being assertively poked in the shoulder, or getting enthusiastically in each other’s faces. If a person is uncomfortable with a kind of touch just remove it from the game, things won’t break.

The game does involve moving around a space. Do this to your comfort level, if you cannot or choose not to move around the space that is completely fine.

The game involves teasing. We will offer up things that we want to be teased about when we share our feelings. You are sharing feelings that you want to get teased about, don’t share something that you don’t want to get teased about.

Don’t tease people about real things about their person meaning their appearance or whatever. Tease them about what they offered with their feelings, or about things that are clearly imaginary Biker things. Facilitator, if you think you need to do a teasing workshop, do a teasing workshop.

Finally...

Introduce and use the safety tools your community prefers. If you are unfamiliar with this concept, look up Brake and Cut, and the Door is Always open. These are useful concepts. Tailor your safety talk to the needs of your group, pay attention to who is playing this game and why.

A game for a bunch of players, taking less than two hours

Rev It Up uses rambunctious, loud play to parody and illustrate some aspects of toxic masculinity, namely the way in which men are shamed for expressing their feelings and for hearing the concerns of others. Players will take on the role of outlaw bikers. The game is played in four short rounds which consist of Introductions, a Ride, a Round Up, and a Biker Party.

Players begin each round by fiercely introducing themselves in-character, and as a group repeat a heavy metal Biker song as if it was epic poetry. During the Ride the players will move in a pack around the play space, pretending to ride motorcycles. They then gather in a Round Up and talk about what happened during their trip. During the Round Up the characters also share a personal feeling for which they will be taunted later. The Biker Party follows, and this is free, foolish role play during which the characters discuss what happened during the ride and what they might do during their next. If at any point a character shares anything personal or in any way breaks their tough man persona, they are drowned out by everyone “revving their engines.”

After four rounds of this, the game ends. Or maybe three rounds, if people feel like ending early.

Play is intended to be loud, boisterous, and boastful. Players should attempt to play against their Biker stereotype every once in a while in order to be shut down by the others. Some people might know what that’s like, others might not, either way be sure to give it a try.

WARM UPS:

Practice swaggering around the space. Practice puffing up, filling space with your man-being, and feeling self-important. Move into tough guy swaggering and break out of it to greet a friend and equal.

Circle up: Practice revving your motorcycles and shouting. Do this by grabbing imaginary motorcycle handgrips and twisting the right one while making loud vrooming and revving noises with your mouth. Take a couple of spins around the space, focusing on staying in a pack. Let different people lead the pack. Make sure everything is safe - no tripping hazards or things to bump into. Define the spaces we can Ride in, maybe we can leave the room and tour around larger spaces. Wave to the people who admire your mighty motorcycle pack.

Circle up again. Everyone at the same time start telling an exciting story using only their hands, bodies, and mouth noises, no words.

GAME PLAY

1. Introductions
2. Ride
3. Round Up
 - 3a. Describe the Ride
 - 3b. Share a feeling
4. Biker Party, then go back to 1

BEFORE PLAY:

Give name tags on which a suitable Biker name can be clearly written.

Distribute the Handout Sheet.

INTRODUCTIONS:

We begin every round with the Introductions.

Make a Biker Circle with your Biker bodies. One at a time, aggressively rev your bike, declare your Biker Name and give a one line Biker Boast. A Biker Boast is a believable lie about something you wish you'd done that will make you seem fierce and special. Other Bikers may shout encouragement during introductions.

As a group, read aloud (don't sing) the lyrics to a song off the Handout. Do Born to be Wild by Steppenwolf first. This is being treated as if it was epic poetry, a definition of your being.

RIDE:

Start moving around the space, riding your bike and revving loudly. Hoot and holler as you are moved to do so. Travel in a pack, following those in the lead. Take the lead for a while, then let someone else take it. Explore the space as you ride, but keep moving—never stop to look twice at something.

When players tire of the Ride they can break out of the pack and start forming a circle. It's okay if some players Ride longer than others, but the Ride doesn't stop until everyone is done.

THE ROUND UP:

First we talk about our Ride...

Each Biker contributes two lines describing the adventure around the Ride the gang just had. Yes, we were just walking around the space making motorcycle sounds but where did we go and what off-screen things did we do when we got there? Who rode the fastest? What was shoplifted? What happened when we met the other gang? How do you mythologize yourself and biker culture? This is an improvisatory exercise in which we build on what was said before to tell a story. A good contribution has one sentence describing something that happened and a following sentence telling how some other biker messed up.

Whoever was first back to the circle goes first.

"And then I told the bank teller 'You better fill that sack up or you're gonna get it!' and that was when Bill there wandered out of the toilet with his mask off!"

"And then I busted that jerk on the head with a bottle! We all ran outside and Samson couldn't get his bike started!"

"And then I got up on the bar and yelled OHHH YEEEEAAHHHHH! and Bobbo's dog barfed on Roy's new boots, har har har!"

Things that might happen during a Ride:

Committing crimes against property, fighting, selling stolen things.

A party, a riot, gambling, drinking.

Fixing bikes, finding parts, stealing bikes, fixing cars.

Wicked jumps, narrow escapes, winding roads, weather.

Then we secretly confess a feeling...

After each Biker has described some aspect of the ride, each will confess a deep and secret concern to the person to their left in one or two sentences. The Bikers are sharing concerns about things that happened during the Ride, or from other events off-screen. This all happens at approximately the same time, we don't go around the group in an orderly fashion.

You start with "I feel..."

"I feel admiration for the way Big Jane jumped her bike over that police car."

"I feel that Hank shouldn't have yelled at me like that, it hurt my

feelings.”

“I feel that we shouldn’t have hurt that guy so bad, it just wasn’t necessary.”

“I feel it was so nice when Jocko helped me get my bike up after that spill.”

“I feel I should be spending more time with my kids.”

“I feel that we should go back and pay that convenience store guy for all the stuff we stole, we have the money.”

Anyone who overhears a feeling can mock the sharer about it during the Biker Party.

Avoid sharing something that you don’t want to be teased about.

BIKER PARTY!:

Bikers now have a Biker Party where they mill about, talk, and boast about the Ride, and loosely plan the next. Bikers mercilessly taunt each other about what they’ve learned from each other during the Confess Your Feelings round. Everyone talks at once, everyone has a good time.

During the Biker Party there are a couple of rules in place:

1. Bikers score points by mocking the person who told them their secrets or showed weakness, and by picking up on and joining in the mocking of others. These points are tracked by the Biker privately and mean nothing.
2. If a Biker starts to share their feelings, or something personal, or important, or moving, or a compliment, or if they get sad or angry, then listeners should rev their bikes. They do this by miming a handle grip twisting motion and loudly saying “Vroom vroom!” or “Revvvv revvvvvv!” until the speaker stops talking. Any Bikers who hear someone revving should also start revving too. This gets you points as well!

Things to do during a Biker Party:

1. Get sad or angry or compliment someone or try to share a self-doubt or secret. Get drowned out by people revving their engines.
2. Rev your engine and cut someone off who is sharing something personal.
3. One-up someone’s story. Belittle someone’s story.
4. Suggest things to do during the next Ride.
5. Mull over how to get more points.
6. Stay hydrated.
7. Leave the game if you like!

Things not to do during a Biker Party:

1. Shove people or roughhouse.
2. Simulate drunkenness or druggedness.
3. Drown out someone who ISN’T confessing a feeling.

The Biker Party ends when it’s time for it to end. Loop back into Introductions.

ENDING THE GAME:

There are four rounds in Rev It Up, built around a different Biker song. After the end of the last Biker Party we form one last circle and tell everyone what will happen to our Biker next. We speak in the third person about our character.

“Angry Sam goes on to become a party clown and finds a lot of joy in making kids happy.”
“

Then break it up. We’re done. Facilitator, do a debrief. Ask players what it felt like to make themselves be vulnerable and be cut off by people revving engines. How did it feel to be teased about the thing you told a friend?

Remind everyone that not all biker-types are like this, that it’s a parody

DESIGN NOTES:

The game comes out of a conversation with Anna Kreider spurred by Seanna Musgrave. It has a nod to XXXtreme Street Luge by Ben Lehman and expands on some of my concerns with my own games You’re a Fucking Butterfly and A Crow Funeral.

My own relationship to motorcycle club culture could be summed up by a poster on a friend’s wall I saw in my early teens: A badly painted biker sits astride his Harley, staring through aviator sunglasses into the far distance. He is coolly ignoring a woman leaving out of a stretch limousine who is holding out a rose for him to take. Past her inside the limousine we can see a scowling stereotypical ‘1980s rich guy’ outraged that she is giving attention to the Biker. The poster was sad, hilarious, and self-aggrandizing and had no sense of irony, yet the vision was strong enough that this kid put it up on his wall.

While it is unfair to satirize an entire subculture and ascribe to them negative traits, outlaw-styled bikers are a reasonable fit for something like this because of their dedication to loud bikes and manliness.

I’m hoping that this game plays with the ideas of tightly knit groups in an interesting way. The fun of the Rides and the togetherness of the song recital will intensify the feeling of belonging to a group, but that’s undercut by the unwillingness of the members to hear each other’s feelings. There’s nothing quite like being cut by a friend in a group that you can trust one way but can’t another.

This game was made by Tim Hutchings. It is version 1.0
hutchingsonian@gmail.com

HANDOUT

Round One

"Born to be Wild"
Steppenwolf

Get your motor runnin'
Head out on the highway
Lookin' for adventure
And whatever comes our way
Yeah Darlin' go make it happen
Take the world in a love embrace
Fire all of your guns at once
And explode into space
I like smoke and lightning
Heavy metal thunder
Racin' with the wind
And the feelin' that I'm under
Yeah Darlin' go make it happen
Take the world in a love embrace
Fire all of your guns at once
And explode into space
Like a true nature's child
We were born, born to be wild
We can climb so high
I never wanna die
Born to be wild
Born to be wild

Round Two

"Highway to Hell"
AC/DC

Living easy, living free
Season ticket on a one-way ride
Asking nothing, leave me be
Taking everything in my stride
Don't need reason, don't need rhyme
Ain't nothing I would rather do
Going down, party time
My friends are gonna be there too
I'm on the highway to hell
On the highway to hell
Highway to hell
I'm on the highway to hell
No stop signs, speed limit
Nobody's gonna slow me down
Like a wheel, gonna spin it
Nobody's gonna mess me around
Hey Satan, paid my dues
Playing in a rocking band
Hey mama, look at me
I'm on my way to the promised land, whoo!
I'm on the highway to hell
Highway to hell



1. Introductions

2. Ride

3. Round Up

3a. Describe the Ride

3b. Share a feeling

4. Biker Party, repeat.



Round Three

"Iron Horse"
Motörhead

He rides a road, that don't have no end,
An open highway, that don't have no bends,
Tramp and his stallion, alone in a dream,
Proud in his colors, as the chromium gleams,
On iron horse he flies, on iron horse he gladly dies
Iron horse his wife, iron horse his life
He lives his life, he's living it fast
Don't try to hide, when the dice have been cast
He rides a whirlwind, that cuts to the bone
Loaded forever, and ferociously stoned
On iron horse he flies, on iron horse he gladly dies
Iron horse his wife, iron horse his life
Yes, slide it to me
One day one day, they'll go for the sun,
Together they'll fly, on the eternal run,
Wasted forever, on speed bikes and booze,
Yeah tramp and the brothers, say they're all born to lose,
On iron horse he flies, on iron horse he gladly dies,
Iron horse his wife, iron horse his life
Iron horse his life, iron horse his wife
Iron horse his wife, iron horse his life

Round Four

"Wanted Dead or Alive"
Bon Jovi

It's all the same, only the names will change
Everyday, it seems we're wastin' away
Another place where the faces are so cold
I drive all night just to get back home
I'm a cowboy, on a steel horse I ride
I'm wanted dead or alive
Wanted dead or alive
Sometimes I sleep, sometimes it's not for days
The people I meet always go their separate ways
Sometimes you tell the day
By the bottle that you drink
And times when you're all alone all you do is think
I'm a cowboy, on a steel horse I ride
I'm wanted (wanted) dead or alive
Wanted (wanted) dead or alive
Oh, and I ride
Oh, and I'm a cowboy, on a steel horse I ride
I'm wanted dead or alive
I walk these streets
A loaded six-string on my back
I play for keeps 'cause I might not make it back
I been everywhere, still, I'm standing tall
I've seen a million faces
And I've rocked them all
I'm a cowboy, on a steel horse I ride