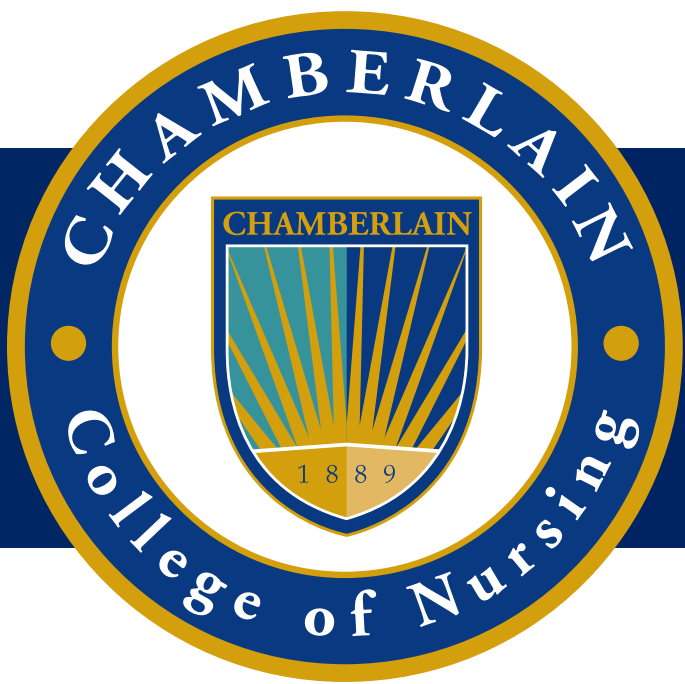


# AN EXPLORATORY MODEL FOR NEGOTIATION OF MEN’S GENDERED CHALLENGES AS NURSING STUDENTS

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## Introduction

The gendered challenges men experience as nursing students are well described in published studies for over 30 years.<sup>1</sup> Challenges include anti-male sentiment, discrimination, issues around caring and touch, feminization of nursing imagery and culture, communication, conflicts with masculinity norms and the lack of role models and support. Minimal theoretical explanation has been offered to understand these challenges and support the development of success strategies to assist male nursing students.

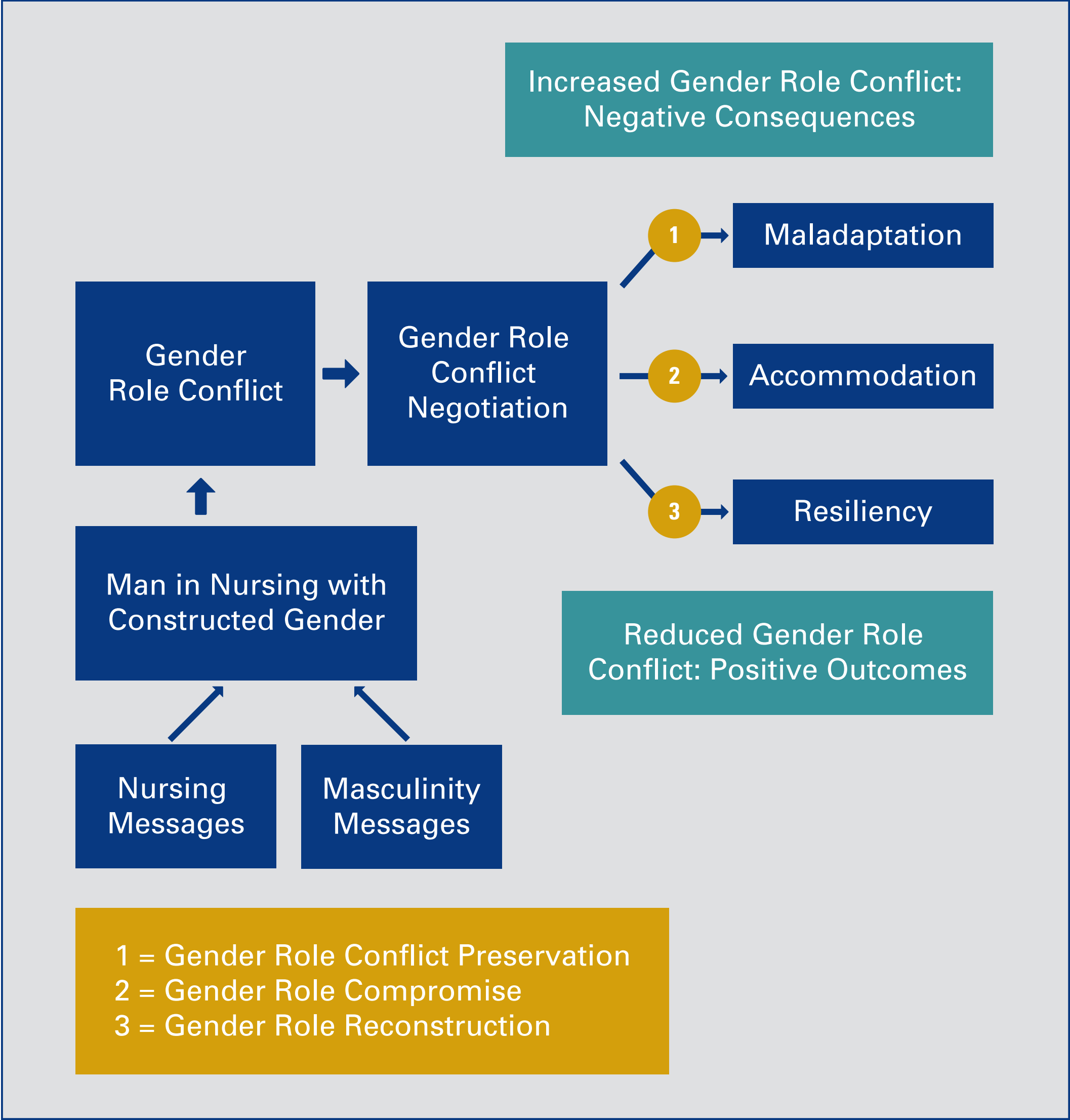
## Gender Role Conflict (GRC) Theory

GRC Theory<sup>2</sup>, developed in the early 1980s and supported by over 35 years of international research, offers promise as an explanatory model for male nursing students’ challenges. GRC asserts that socialized gender roles that are rigid, sexist or restrictive have negative consequences for the person and others. Depression, anxiety, stress, low self-esteem, relationship problems, negativity, substance abuse and even violence are significantly correlated with elevated levels of GRC.<sup>2</sup>

## Adaptation to Nursing

GRC Theory also describes GRC Journey, a process by which men cope with GRC as a means to develop positive masculinity and a respect for self and others.<sup>2</sup> O’Lynn has adapted GRC Journey based on prior work with male caregivers<sup>3</sup> to explain possible paths male nursing students take to negotiate perceived GRC.

## GRC Negotiation Model for Men in Nursing



## GRC Negotiation Pathways

Conflict between nursing and masculinity messages fosters insecurity, anxiousness and confusion that, when elevated, prompts a negotiation response pathway.

- 1. Conflict Preservation** – Stubborn loyalty to conflicting masculinity message(s) even at the expense of ensuing maladaptive academic and nursing actions.
- 2. Role Compromise** – Short-term behavior change “just to get through it.” No sustained growth or change.
- 3. Role Reconstruction** – Reframing and reprioritization. Fosters professional formation, growth and resiliency

## Current Research

- Longitudinal mixed-methods study to:
- Explore relationships between GRC and academic outcomes
  - Collect data on students’ experiences to discern level of fit with the proposed model

## References

<sup>1</sup> O’Lynn, C. E. (2013). A man’s guide to a nursing career. New York: Springer

<sup>2</sup> O’Neil, J. M. (2015). Men’s gender role conflict: Psychological costs, consequences, and an agenda for change. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

<sup>3</sup> O’Lynn, C. E. (2013). Negotiation of constructed gender among rural male caregivers. In C. A. Winters (Ed.) Rural nursing: Concepts, theory, and practice (4th ed., pp. 173-204). New York: Springer.





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