



# Facilitator Training 2024



Males constitute almost half of the population of Northern Ireland. However, there is a growing body of research which shows that these men and boys experience a disproportionate burden of ill-health and die too young e.g. ‘Men’s Health in Numbers’ (see: [www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers1.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers1.pdf)). In terms of mental health ...

- **Suicide is the leading killer of men under the age of 50 in Northern Ireland, with men more than three times more likely to die by suicide than women.**

- **Men in their late teens to mid-50s are the most at risk group in society, and the risks increase further for men who are single, unemployed and living in socio-economic disadvantage.**

- **1 in 3 men experience suicidal thoughts as a result of stress, but are much less likely than women to seek help from a health care professional.**

Indeed, while many of these conditions are preventable, their prevalence amongst men may, in fact, rise in the future. However, this is not a lost cause. Much can be / is being done to improve this situation.

## **Why MANifest: Connecting Men with Mind Fitness was Developed**

The Republic of Ireland was the first country in the world to adopt a National Men’s Health Policy

([www.mhfi.org/menshealthpolicy.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/menshealthpolicy.pdf)).

This policy highlighted the broad range of health and wellbeing issues facing men, and outlined frameworks and strategies to address these needs. In 2017, this Policy was succeeded by the ‘Healthy Ireland - Men’ Action Plan ([www.mhfi.org/Hi-M.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/Hi-M.pdf)) which, itself, is now being updated.

The Policy recognised the important role played by service providers and local practitioners in improving the health of men and boys, and acknowledged that these stakeholders also have training and support needs. To meet this need, the ENGAGE training programme ([www.mhfi.org/training](http://www.mhfi.org/training)) was developed to address the deficit in gender sensitive service provision for men, and to assist people on the ground to effectively build relationships which meet the health and wellbeing needs of males of all ages.

MANifest takes its inspiration from the approach and format of ENGAGE.

However, MANifest focuses specifically on men’s mental health and ‘mind fitness’. It reflects the evidence around gender and suicide / mental distress - particularly that psychological distress is often perceived by men as weakness, and that support is only sought when crisis point is reached (<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/protectlife2>).

The MANifest programme is based on research evidence and the broad experience of the development partners (WHSCT Health Improvement Department, Men’s Action Network and the Men’s Health Forum in Ireland). All materials have been rigorously field-tested and evaluated, and they reflect and incorporate the feedback from participants on the pilot workshops that were held in each Health and Social Care Trust between 2021 and 2023.



## Types of MANifest Training

There are two types of training:

1. Training for Facilitators - an intensive three day course designed to give a small number of key practitioners the knowledge, skills, experience and support to deliver MANifest workshops to others.

2. MANifest Workshops - sessions delivered by MANifest facilitators (i.e. graduates from the Facilitator Training) to front-line service providers and practitioners. These workshops seek to: help participants to increase their understanding of the world of men; enhance their capacity to build relationships with them; explore the key issues that impact men and their mental wellbeing; and distil what models of effective practice might look like in local situations.

## Aim of this Facilitator Training

The aim of this course is to create a knowledgeable, confident and experienced team of people who are willing and able to cascade their learning throughout Northern Ireland via the delivery of one-day workshops.

## What will be Explored?

The workshop, that you will learn how to deliver, primarily focuses on the engagement process i.e. WHY and HOW to build relationships with men and boys in order to explore mental wellbeing. This is because people who have had success in engaging with this target group say that if you get the 'why' and the 'how' right, then almost anything is possible after that.

The Facilitator Training explores themes such as:

- Men's mental health and 'mind fitness'.
- How to create a safe space to work with men.
- How men and boys are viewed by society.
- The major landmark moments and key transition points in the lives of men.
- Key expectations of and pressures on men and boys.
- Factors that might take men 'to the edge'.
- Spotting the signs of mental distress and what to do about them.
- Challenges and barriers to help seeking.
- Opportunities to improve engagement.
- The characteristics of a male-friendly space / service.

Evidence shows that to effectively engage with men in terms of mental health and wellbeing, it is necessary to build rapport and trust and adopt a strengths-based approach focusing on hope, optimism and solutions (PL2, 2014-2024). For these reasons, MANifest concentrates on the engagement process and:

- WHY it is important for service providers to focus on men's mental health.
- HOW they can review their practice through a male gendered lens and, subsequently, make their work more relevant and welcoming to men.

It also seeks to increase the confidence of participants in relation to working with men, and to help them to believe that 'it can be done'.



## Becoming a MANifest Facilitator:

In February 2024, the MANifest partners will be offering Facilitator Training. This will be:

- Delivered by experienced members of the MANifest training team.
- Funded and supported by the Public Health Agency.
- Coordinated by the WHSCT Health Improvement Department, working in partnership with Men's Action Network (MAN) and the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI).
- Supported by the Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Leads across all the Health Trusts in Northern Ireland.

Four places will be available for each HSC Trust area (24 places in total). Participants will be selected on the basis that they represent the broadest possible range of men's work experience, geographic locations, workplace settings and group facilitation skills. On completion of the course, each person will be expected to deliver a minimum of two workshops to front-line practitioners before the end of the year.

Each participant will receive both a hard copy and an electronic version of the MANifest Facilitator's Pack, as well as electronic versions of all supplementary materials (including videos, PowerPoints and handouts) at the end of the training period.

## Date, Time and Place

The MANifest Facilitator Training will take place over three full days using a hybrid delivery approach:

- Wednesday 7th February 2024: Derry / Londonderry
- Thursday 8th February 2024: online
- Thursday 22nd February 2024: regional venue - to be confirmed

The programme will begin at 9.30am each day and run until 4.30pm. On the face-to-face days, refreshments and lunch will be provided.

**Please Note: Applicants for this programme must be able to commit, in full, to all parts of the training and to the follow-on delivery phase.**

## Cost

The MANifest Facilitator Training is free for successful applicants. However, the cost of participation is being underwritten by the WHSCT via funding from the Public Health Agency.



## Eligibility

To be eligible for a place on this training, you must ...

- Work in Northern Ireland in a role where you have regular contact with men (in either a paid or voluntary capacity) and are aware of the mental health needs of men.
- Have the permission and support of your employer / organisation to attend the training and any follow-up commitments.
- Have substantial group facilitation experience.
- Be willing and able to fully participate in all elements of the programme.
- Give a commitment to deliver at least two workshops to other practitioners in your Trust area before the end of 2024.
- Be able to commit to at least one follow-up meeting with the wider Facilitation Team.
- Be prepared to work in partnership with another facilitator during the delivery phase - with support from an experienced support mentor.

Applications are welcomed from both men and women, and from people working in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. It is hoped to recruit applicants from diverse workplace settings.

## Application Process

Anyone who wishes to apply for a place on the MANifest Facilitator Training must fully complete the application form and return it before the closing date. To ensure fairness to all interested parties, applications will only be accepted on this form and within the time limit set.

**All application forms must be returned by no later than 5.00pm on Friday 5th January 2024.**

**Please note that there will be no financial support for anyone who delivers the MANifest workshop. Nor can they seek personal reward by delivering it privately via a consultancy contract.**

## Further Information

For further information on the MANifest Facilitator Training, please contact:

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OR

Find an application form at:

[www.mhfi.org/MANifestApplication2023.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/MANifestApplication2023.pdf)