

# E-Male Matters

Summer 2021

The newsletter of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland

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## News

### Men's Heart Health gets a Reboot with the Irish Heart Foundation

This September, during 'Heart Month', the Irish Heart Foundation will be highlighting men's heart health. One in four men in Ireland die from heart disease and stroke. The good news is that 80% of those deaths could be prevented through healthy lifestyle choices. We can often feel that it's too difficult to make changes to our lifestyle, but there's no need to 'hang up the boots' yet. This campaign will have lots of engaging tips, tools and resources to help men make small, sustainable changes to their lifestyle that can help reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. Keep an eye on <https://irishheart.ie> and on the Irish Heart Foundation's [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#) accounts, and share the men's health message this September!

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## **‘Challenges and Choices’ Man Manual**

There’s no denying that the state of men’s health on the island of Ireland is often poor. However, there are things which can be done to change this situation and men, themselves, can play a key role in doing this. To mark [Men’s Health Week 2021](#), a free, 32 page, Man Manual was distributed by the [Men’s Health Forum in Ireland](#) (MHFI). This posed ten simple and practical health challenges to men and, to meet every challenge, it offered three choices. The hard copies are now long gone, but an electronic version of it can still be downloaded at: <https://www.mhfi.org/challenges2021.pdf>

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## **Men's Health across the Lifespan**

The [International Journal of Men's Social and Community Health](#) is, currently, calling for papers for a special issue on men's health across the lifespan. This will cover a wide range of topics including: the health concerns of younger and teenage males; the interface between age and health literacy issues; mental health and wellbeing; age-related health issues for marginalised men and boys; age and public health concerns for men and boys; sexual and romantic relationships; fatherhood; age and chronic disease experiences; and health issues pertinent to older men. A wide range of empirical (qualitative, quantitative, and structured reviews) and theoretical / conceptual papers on men’s health will be considered for publication in this special issue. Find out more at: <https://tinyurl.com/wwafuxbn>

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## **Green Ribbon Campaign**

Each year, [See Change](#) rolls out a month-long Green Ribbon Campaign - to get as many people as possible talking about mental health and help to end stigma and discrimination. By wearing a Green Ribbon (an international symbol for mental health awareness) you show that you are committed to influencing positive change. You don’t need to be an expert to start talking about mental health or to have all the answers. Sometimes the most helpful thing you can do is to let someone know you are there for them and simply listen. Find out about how to get involved at: <https://seechange.ie/green-ribbon>

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## **Fathers Work Podcasts**

The Dads Direct network and Belfast Men's Health Group recently released a series of podcasts focusing upon fathers' work in Northern Ireland. Four podcasts were produced: Stephen Barr ([Start 360](#)) talked about the Lads 2 Dads programme for young fathers; Keith Cullen ([Splash Sure Start](#)) spoke about his work with fathers in Craigavon; Joan Davis ([Family Mediation NI](#)) focused on the need to support parents who are separating to negotiate practical solutions to resolving family disputes and maintaining meaningful relationships with their children; Cahir Murray ([Dads Project, Parenting NI](#)) talked about the needs of fathers who are separating, separated or involved with the family court service. You can listen to them all at: <https://belfastmenshealthgroup.podbean.com>

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## **LGBTI+ Telefriending Service**

Due to the discrimination and stigma that older LGBTI+ people have faced in their lifetime, many experience considerable social isolation and loneliness as they age. A new Telefriending Service offers a once-a-week telephone call by a friendly volunteer, who is trained and Garda vetted. Telefriending provides friendship, security and support to alleviate loneliness, isolation and improve overall mental health and wellbeing. It is also a great opportunity for members to talk regularly with other people who also identify as members of the LGBTI+ community. Find out more at: <https://lgbt.ie/telefriending>

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## See Change Sessions with Alittlegail

[See Change Sessions](#) is a podcast series hosted by mental health advocate, and [See Change](#) Ambassador, Abigail McDonnell. It focuses upon starting the conversation and breaking the stigma surrounding mental health, and explores a broad range of topics with a wide spectrum of guest interviewees. Check it out at: <https://anchor.fm/seechangesessions>

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## The How of Men's Health

Did you get a chance to see *'The How of Men's Health'* webinar which took place during [Men's Health Week 2021](#)? ... If not, you might want to grab a cup of tea / coffee and watch the recording of it. This was the second in a series of webinars focusing upon *'Engaging Men'*. At this webinar, local projects spoke about: the fears that some men have about joining a health programme; key elements of the engagement process; and practical examples of how to connect effectively with men. The special guest was Mayo GAA legend David Brady who, during COVID, found a unique way to connect with men through a shared interest in Gaelic Football. Check it out at: <https://youtu.be/HoYAJ0ZoAo>

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## FitLine

FitLine is a volunteer-led, telephone-based service offered by [Age and Opportunity](#), designed to help older people who want to feel a bit healthier, but perhaps don't have the motivation, confidence or information on where or how to take that first step. The service is completely free. FitLine mentors are volunteer older people who understand the challenges of getting active. They offer signposting, advice and gentle encouragement to get moving. To find out more visit: <https://ageandopportunity.ie/active/fitline>

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## Engaging Men in Ireland Earlier: A Guide to Service Design

During [Men's Health Week 2021](#), the [Samaritans](#) launched a new handbook titled *'Engaging Men in Ireland Earlier: A Guide to Service Design'*. This is based on insights from a series of workshops that they ran with men, and provides five key principles for anyone designing, running or commissioning wellbeing groups for males. Download a copy at: <https://tinyurl.com/xb9p85tz>

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## HSE YouTube Channel

[Health Service Executive](#) (HSE) Health and Wellbeing has developed a YouTube channel. You can check out the range of videos available at: <https://tinyurl.com/4xdruvmc>

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## Building the Community-Pharmacy Partnership Programme

The Building the Community-Pharmacy Partnership (BCPP) Programme is led by the [Community Development and Health Network](#) and funded by the Health and Social Care Board, with strategic direction provided by a multi-agency Steering Group. BCPP supports communities and community pharmacists to work in partnership to address locally defined needs, so that people make connections, listen to and understand each other better, and work together to address the social determinants of health and health inequalities. Applications are being sought for a new round of funding, and more details can be found at: <https://www.cdhn.org/bcpp>

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## Events

### 'Steps of Hope Cork'

For the month of September, [Shine](#) Cork's exhibit 'Steps of Hope Cork' will be displayed on billboards across the city. This is a collection of creative works by people who have experienced, or are on their journey to, mental health recovery. The pieces of art and writing express messages and images of hope about something that many people think is not possible - living well with, and recovery from, severe mental health experiences. Ireland has one of the highest rates of mental illness in Europe (ranked third out of 36 countries), with an estimated one in four people experiencing a mental health difficulty in their lifetime. Corkonians, and visitors to the city, are encouraged to walk a 6km route (walking route map available) to view the exhibition. For more details, visit: <https://shine.ie/events/steps-of-hope>

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### World Suicide Prevention Day Webinar

You are invited to a World Suicide Prevention Day webinar hosted by the [National Suicide Research Foundation](#). This will take place on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021, from 2.30pm - 4.00pm via Zoom. Find out more and book a place at: <https://tinyurl.com/ps267pbh>

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### Solutions for Parental Alienation

[Alienated Children First](#) invites you to join with other organisations working with children and families in Ireland at a webinar focusing upon parental alienation. During this event, Dr William Bernet, Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine (USA), will address the five factor model for identification and treatment of Parental Alienation. This event will take place on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021, and begins at 3.00pm. Registration is required at: <https://tinyurl.com/3bnc7pyd>

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### Launch of Findings from the 2020/21 Young Life and Times Survey

This webinar marks the public release of findings from the 2020/21 [Young Life and Times](#) (YLT) survey. YLT is an annual survey which records the attitudes of young people aged 16 living in Northern Ireland to key issues affecting their lives. At this event, a panel of speakers will highlight key results from the most recent survey, which included questions on mental health, coercive control, good relations, community safety, shared education and politics. It will take place on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 at 4.00pm. See: <https://tinyurl.com/4bnstwme>

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### 'We Forgot We Were Kings'

Have you seen *'We Forgot We Were Kings - A Weekend Retreat for Men Exploring Masculinity and Healing in the Irish Landscape'*? This will be held from 24<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> September 2021 in the Burren, Co. Clare. Find out more at: <https://www.boghill.com/events/we-forgot-we-were-kings>

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### If Not Now, When?

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly illustrated the need for an urgent and comprehensive men's health policy response. This webinar (organised by [Global Action on Men's Health](#) and the [International Journal of Men's Social and Community Health](#)) will share information about progress on men's health policymaking around the world, and how the case can be made for its further development. It will take place on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 9.00pm, and will last for 90 minutes. To book a place, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/455twayv>

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## The Impact of Child Sexual Abuse on Boys and Young Men

During September 2021, the [Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland's](https://www.safeguardingni.org/) Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Committee is hosting a series of webinars. These will be facilitated by Dr Jacqui Montgomery Devlin, and are based on her research and briefing papers examining the impact of CSE on boys and young men. The webinars will focus upon: potential impediments to the recognition of the sexual exploitation of young males under 18 years of age; the influence of paramilitarism in Northern Ireland on the recognition of child sexual exploitation in young males; the association between youth offending and the recognition of child sexual exploitation in young males. For full details and registration, see: <https://www.safeguardingni.org/events>

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## Training

### Men in the Middle Workshops

Are middle-aged men not interested in looking after their own mental health, or are we simply not offering them the right things in the right way? ... If you work in the Republic of Ireland, are curious about the answer to this question, and would like to explore practical strategies to help your organisation to engage more effectively with middle-aged men, then you might be interested in a free one day workshop on '*Men in the Middle*' - engaging middle-aged men in mental health and wellbeing. This workshop was developed by the [Men's Health Forum in Ireland](https://www.mhfi.org/) (MHFI), and is a Unit within the highly successful and long-running '[Engage](#)' National Men's Health Training Programme. MHFI is currently looking for groups who would like to host this free workshop for their staff / volunteers / networks in the coming months (if, of course, COVID restrictions allow). For more details on how to get involved, see: <https://www.mhfi.org/EngageUnit7Workshop2.pdf>

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### MenPower Programme

[Offaly Local Development Company's](https://www.offalyldc.ie/) 'MenPower' is a free group training programme for adult men that may feel lost, confused, down or lacking direction or focus. The programme also supports men experiencing employment related issues. The programme takes place on two mornings per week in Tullamore, Co. Offaly, and in various locations within the county. It combines a unique mix of mental health, adult guidance and physical activity, and also provides a social space that affords men the opportunity to explore: how to be and stay well; barriers to achieving their goals and desires; and how to plan for their future. On Wednesdays, the focus of the sessions is mental fitness, while the Thursday sessions focus on taking positive action to move forward and develop a life plan. The programme adheres to government guidelines regarding COVID-19 protocols. Graduates of the 12 week programme can become a member of Tearmann na bhFear (Men's Haven). This group has its own committee and is supported by a staff member. They meet on a regular basis and engage in a range of activities such as cookery classes, sports, mindfulness etc. For more information, visit: [www.offalyldc.ie](https://www.offalyldc.ie/) | email: [cbrickland@offalyldc.ie](mailto:cbrickland@offalyldc.ie) | call: 057 9322850 / 087 6028801.

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## Northern Ireland Men's Health Report Card

During [Men's Health Week 2021](#), a new statistical '*Northern Ireland Men's Health Report Card*' (produced by the [Men's Health Forum in Ireland](#)) was launched. Have you seen it yet? ... If not, check it out at: <https://www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers3.pdf>

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## Game of Stones

Are you a man aged 18 or over who wants to lose weight? ... If so, the 'Game of Stones' study may be just what you're looking for! The research team running it (from a broad range of universities) is seeking men living in the Belfast, Glasgow and Bristol areas - who have a BMI of 30+ - to take part in their weight loss study. Recruitment is already underway. You can find out more at: <https://www.gameofstonesresearch.com>

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## Investigating the Dietary Habits of Male Irish Farmers to Prevent Mortality and Morbidity

Excess mortality and morbidity among Irish farmers from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) has been linked to a range of occupational risk factors. Obesity is a key risk factor underpinning this excess burden, and unhealthy eating habits are linked to overweight / obesity and to disease occurrence. This study investigated the dietary habits of a sub-group of Irish male farmers and explored how these might potentially impact on health outcomes. Read more at: <https://www.mdpi.com/2313-576X/7/3/54/htm>

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## Improving Outcomes for Men Impacted by Cancer Award 2021

The [Irish Cancer Society](#) is seeking to develop and pilot a dedicated two-year integrated survivorship research programme, aimed at better engaging with and supporting men in Ireland post-cancer treatment. With approximately 13,000 men diagnosed with invasive cancer every year, men in Ireland are more likely to get cancer compared to women, and are 30% more likely to die from their malignancy. Furthermore, at a recent stakeholder workshop held to examine the unmet needs of men affected by cancer in Ireland, contributors highlighted the glaring issues and disparities facing male cancer survivors, and particularly emphasised the challenge of supporting men to engage with cancer survivorship services to derive an optimal outcome for their illness. Applications are being sought for an '*Improving Outcomes for Men Impacted by Cancer Award 2021*'. This will provide funding of approximately €300,000 towards a project of a minimum of 24 months' duration. Find out more at:

<https://tinyurl.com/wxn667k4>

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## Erasmus+ Fatherhood Project

[An Cosán](#) - in partnership with organisations in Iceland, Spain and Greece - is working on an exciting Erasmus+ Project on Fatherhood. This aims to empower young fathers in their parenting role - through online training, networking and support. To inform the process, they are carrying out online interviews with a range of stakeholders - with the goal of gathering insights into what fathers want in relation to information and training. To participate or find out more, visit: <https://www.ancosan.ie/fatherhood-project>

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## Gender Norms and the Mental Health of Boys and Young Men

Over the last half-century, the women's health movement has been a powerful driver in health policy, linking gender norms to sex differences in health and wellbeing. Even though gender norms also affect males, there has been little emphasis on gender in health policies for males - especially in relation to the mental health of boys and young men. Gender norms around masculinity commonly confer power and status to boys and young men, which might - in part - explain why norms around masculinity are difficult to shift. Paradoxically, these dominant masculinities carry risks for poor mental health. Globally, the rate of male suicide is two to four times that of females, and males fare poorly on indices of substance misuse, risk taking-related injury, conduct problems, violence, aggression, and by extension incarceration ... Read more of this article in 'The Lancet' at: <https://tinyurl.com/2djj43mz>

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## Web Links

### Men's Issues on the Web ...

[Men's Health - encouraging men to check back in to a healthier future](#)

['Sheds for Life' - health and wellbeing in Men's Sheds](#) [video]

[Australian Men's Health Forum Charter for Men's Mental Health](#)

[Living with Parkinsons - Ray D'Arcy chats with Dr Noel Richardson](#) [audio]

[Teagasc study reveals 62% of male farmers are overweight](#)

[Men's Health in Ireland 2021 - Against All Odds!](#)

[Men: the elephant in the \(gender and global health\) room](#) [video]

[Thinking outside the box is great, but getting outside of the box is even better!](#)

[If I were Jack: Relationships and Sexuality Education in Irish-medium Schools](#)

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## Next Edition

Do you know of anything (research, events, resources, news etc.) affecting men and boys which should be included in the next edition of 'E-Male Matters'?

There's a simple format for all articles. Let us know (within one paragraph and no more than 150 words) all the crucial details e.g. title, date, time, venue, short description, contact details for further information (name, telephone and/or email address), and web link (if available) for a fuller explanation. To keep the file size of this newsletter small, we cannot, unfortunately, accept photographs or images.

Please email your information to: [emalematters@mhfi.org](mailto:emalematters@mhfi.org)

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**E-Male Matters is also available online at:  
[www.mhfi.org/newsletters/about-e-male-matters.html](http://www.mhfi.org/newsletters/about-e-male-matters.html)**

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