

# E-Male Matters

Spring 2022

The newsletter of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland

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## News

### The Big Countdown Begins

Research clearly shows that men in Ireland experience a disproportionate burden of ill-health and die too young. They: die younger than women; have higher death rates for almost all of the leading causes of death and at all ages; have poorer lifestyles which are responsible for a high proportion of chronic diseases; present later to health services which can lead to a large number of problems becoming untreatable ... However, this is not a lost cause. Much can be / is being done to improve this situation.

We're now only a few months away from [International Men's Health Week](#) (MHW), which begins on the Monday before Father's Day and end on Father's Day itself. This year, it will take place from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June. This week is celebrated in many European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada (and a number of other places worldwide), and offers a unique and ideal opportunity for everyone to do their bit to improve the health of men and boys by: heightening awareness of preventable health problems; supporting men and boys to engage in healthier lifestyle choices / activities; and encouraging the early detection / treatment of health problems.

The MHW theme for the island of Ireland this year is '**MISSION: isPOSSIBLE**' and the call to men (and those who support the health of men) is: '**The Action Starts with You**'. During

MHW 2022, everyone is asked to set realistic and practical targets for men's health, and to recognise that where there's a will, there's a way. So, now's the time to start planning what you might do to mark this important occasion.

A range of resources will soon be made available. These include posters, postcards, social media content, graphics, Man Manuals, signposting tools etc. Find out more about the week and how to get involved at: <https://www.mhfi.org/mhw/about-mhw.html>

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### **FarInMind**

Farming is not like other jobs. It's physically hard, can be unpredictable, and comes with its own set of factors that can lead to stress. Farmers often put other things first - like looking after stock, land and equipment. But they can overlook the stress that comes with managing all of these things. FarInMind is an initiative to help Northern Irish farmers to look after themselves better. This new website is designed to help farmers to identify the sources and levels of stress in their daily life, and to direct them towards the help and support that they need. Check it out at: <https://www.farminmind.co.uk>

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### **Men and Bereavement Podcast**

This podcast by 'Meath Talks' explores the impact bereavement has on men and how societal messages about masculinity can sometimes hinder a man's journey through the natural cycles of grief and loss. It discusses some of things men can do to help them express their emotions in a healthy and safe way as they adapt to living with a loss. The special guests on this podcast are Angela Farrelly (SICAP Projects Officer with Meath Partnership) and Finian Murray (HSE Senior Health Promotion Officer specialising in men's health). Listen in at: <https://www.podbean.com/media/share/pb-ddusv-11ac7ae>

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### **Alienated Children First Launch Newsletter**

[Alienated Children First](#) has just launched the first edition of a newsletter aimed at anyone who is interested in the issue of Parental Alienation. You can access it online at:

<https://www.paperturn-view.com/?pid=Mjl229344&v=1.1>

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### **West Be Well**

The West Be Well website offers information on voluntary, statutory and community groups involved in wellbeing, mental health promotion and suicide prevention initiatives in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon. Visit the site at: <https://www.westbewell.ie>

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### **World Day of the Boy Child 2022**

Did you know that 'World Day of the Boy Child' will be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2022? ... The theme this year will focus upon boosting the optimism of boys and restoring their self-worth.

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### **Men's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights**

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are often seen as the domain of women's and girls' health and well-being. Men and boys are considered important in SRHR, but mainly as partners, gatekeepers and policymakers. This paper argues that men and boys have their own sexual and reproductive health issues and concerns: [https://share-net.nl/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/SN\\_Mens\\_SRHR\\_Position\\_Paper.pdf](https://share-net.nl/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/SN_Mens_SRHR_Position_Paper.pdf)

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## Steps to Reduce our Cancer Risk

To mark World Cancer Day 2022, the Irish Cancer Prevention Network ran a webinar focusing upon 'Steps to Reduce our Cancer Risk'. Through a series of presentations with a panel of experts, this highlighted how we can all take practical action to reduce cancer risk. Topics included: eating for health; radon; skin protection; breastfeeding; and knowing the signs to find cancer early. You can see a recording of this event at: <https://youtu.be/1JeP15TEeEg>

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## Guide to Engagement Methods

This guide, from [Community Places](#), provides detail on methods which are most appropriate for achieving different levels of engagement. It also assesses the strengths, weaknesses and appropriateness of each method, alongside useful tips on how to apply each one. Download the booklet at: <https://www.communityplaces.info/sites/default/files/Community%20Places%20-%20Guide%20to%20Engagement%20Methods%20%282022%29.pdf>

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## Mental Health Matters Workplace Guide

[See Change](#) has identified the workplace as a key setting for social change around attitudes to mental health problems. Mental Health Matters is a guide aimed at employers and employees who want to create a workplace culture where everyone feels comfortable having open and honest conversations about mental health. Download a copy at: <https://seechange.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Mental-Health-Matters-web.pdf>

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## We All Feel It

Data suggests that mental health is a top concern for the young males who contact Childline, with almost half (46%) of their counselling sessions focused on mental and emotional wellbeing. However, when you look at the gender split for overall contacts to the service, young males are still hugely under-represented (just 14% of sessions were with young males). Check out this video from Childline which targets young males: <https://youtu.be/6loxwWF2oCw>

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# Events

## Masculinities and Men's Health

During 2021, HSE Health and Wellbeing hosted a series of webinars focusing upon '[Engaging Men](#)'. During 2022, they have planned a further series of webinars - this time exploring the impact of masculinity/ies on men's health. The first of these events will be held on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at Noon. It will focus upon farmers. Keep an eye to the HSE social media channels or <https://www.facebook.com/MensHealthForumIreland> for more details (when they become available).

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## Calling Men in Meath, Kildare, Wicklow and Westmeath

Are you interested in a day out in late May - for a short walk in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands plus lunch / talk / banter (with some nice weather hopefully!) - and all paid for? A group working and researching in [TU Dublin](#) is interested in finding out from men (over 65 years of age) about their attitude and approach to physical activity and how it impacts on their mental, physical and social wellbeing. They are also keen to find out how COVID has impacted on

men's approach to physical activity. Information will be collected through a survey, some informal interviews and focus groups. However, it will all be recorded anonymously (you will be assigned a code). If there is a group of you, the TU Dublin team can even transport you there as well. Numbers are limited, so if you or a group of you are interested, please email [catherine.gorman@tudublin.ie](mailto:catherine.gorman@tudublin.ie) or call 01 2205789 by 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

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### **Men and Cancer Roundtable**

The [European Cancer Organisation](https://www.eurocancer.org/) is holding a virtual roundtable on Men and Cancer on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022. This meeting aims to: increase awareness about the excess cancer burden in men in Europe; identify what can be done to improve men's cancer outcomes in terms of practice and policy; explore the current key issues in prostate cancer; and suggest next steps for the European Cancer Organisation. More information about the event, and how to register, is available at: <https://www.eurocancer.org/events/185:community-365-roundtable-meeting-men-and-cancer.html>

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### **We Forgot We Were Kings**

You are invited to apply for a place on a weekend retreat for men which will explore masculinity and healing in the Irish landscape. Join poet / speaker / philosopher / retreat leader Alan Cooke from 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> April 2022, as he takes you on a journey in the heart of the Burren, Co. Clare. The weekend will be filled with talks and discussion on the Celtic masculine. There will be a guided walk with a renowned poet and farmer from the area, poetry and harp concerts, voice work and oratory power, and storytelling. See: <https://www.boghill.com/events/we-forgot-we-were-kings>

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### **Launch of 'Stronger Together: The HSE Mental Health Promotion Plan 2022-2027'**

You are invited to attend the online launch of 'Stronger Together: The HSE Mental Health Promotion Plan 2022-2027'. This will take place at Noon on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2022. Stronger Together is a five-year plan that includes a range of actions focused on promoting positive mental health across the population that are within the remit of the HSE and HSE-funded agencies. The Plan will include a number of inputs on mental health promotion, an overview of the Plan, and panel discussion with experts from across the HSE and their external partners. Register for a place at: [https://ims.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_fqgBcTscRXefKe0\\_ZbiOxA](https://ims.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_fqgBcTscRXefKe0_ZbiOxA)

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## Training

### **Men-Only Weight Management Programme**

Male staff working in the HSE's CHO 8 area, who are overweight, are invited to apply for a place on a 12 week, online, men-only weight management programme. This will begin on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Find out more about it and register for a place at:

<https://register.enthuse.com/ps/event/12WeekStaffWeightManagementProgramme2022>

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## **An Economic Evaluation of ‘Sheds for Life’**

Men’s Sheds attract a diverse cohort of men and, as such, have been identified as spaces with the potential to engage marginalised sub-populations with more structured health promotion. ‘Sheds for Life’ is a 10-week men’s health initiative in Ireland. When operating in an environment where budgets are limited, an economic evaluation is critical to determine cost-effectiveness and sustainability. The findings from this study highlight that Sheds for Life is a cost-effective initiative that effectively engages with, and enhances the well-being of, Shed members. Read all about it at: <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/19/4/2204/htm>

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## **Health Survey Northern Ireland**

The latest results from the 2020/21 Health Survey Northern Ireland are now available. This annual survey by the Department of Health reports on a range of health topics. The interviews took place between June 2020 and March 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, and gives an important insight into pandemic health related behaviours. See the findings at:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/hsni-first-results-20-21.pdf>

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## **Men’s Anxiety, Why it Matters, and What is Needed to Limit its Risk for Male Suicide**

Anxiety disorders are the most prevalent mental health disorder experienced by men. If left untreated, anxiety is predictive of psychiatric disorders including depression and associated suicide risk. Despite the prevalence and impact of men’s anxiety, it remains largely overlooked in the field of men’s mental health. Find out more about this issue at:

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s44202-022-00035-5>

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## **Estimates of Alcohol Use and Attributable Burden in Ireland**

[Alcohol Action Ireland](#) and [University College Cork School of Public Health](#) have published a research paper that provides accurate analysis of the levels of alcohol related death and illnesses in Ireland. This can be accessed at: [https://alcoholireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/filebase/reports/21883\\_AAI\\_ICC\\_GBD\\_Policy\\_Paper\\_v4\\_online.pdf](https://alcoholireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/filebase/reports/21883_AAI_ICC_GBD_Policy_Paper_v4_online.pdf)

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## **What's Masculinity got to do with it? The COVID-19 Pandemic, Men and Care**

Early data from several countries, regarding the gendered implications of COVID-19, suggest that men are more likely to die as an effect of infection. This has been explained by biological factors, and also by behavioural and life-style issues characteristic of men. What has not been widely discussed, however, is the relationships between men's responses to the crisis, their care activities, and certain models of masculinity that persist in many societies. This journal article explores this issue: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/13505068221076322>

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## **Healthy Ireland Survey 2021**

The findings of the annual Healthy Ireland Survey by the Department of Health in the Republic of Ireland are now available. This survey gathers information on the health and health behaviours of people living in the Republic of Ireland. The latest survey took place from October 2020 to March 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, these results give an important insight into pandemic health related behaviours. See:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9ef45-the-healthy-ireland-survey-2021>

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## Web Links

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

[Dudes and Dogs - a great way to help men's mental health](#)

[Meeting The Enemy](#) (TEDx video clip)

[Suicide in rural Ireland is a devastating problem that we can't keep sweeping under the carpet](#)

[Men's Aid Ireland received 8,000 contacts last year](#)

[Mayo man who has written a book about living with bipolar disorder](#)

[Prostate Cancer: here's what you need to know](#)

[Newtownabbey Men's Shed 'a lifesaver' for people suffering with their mental health](#)

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## Next Edition

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

Anyone can propose an article for inclusion in this newsletter - so long as it is of relevance to males, does not promote a commercial enterprise / product, and does not insult anyone.

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)

The views expressed in E-Male Matters are not, necessarily, those of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland

