



EVENT SUMMARY

Reaching Men

Learnings on engaging men
in mental health support

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Men's mental health: more work to be done

Despite efforts to normalize and de-stigmatize conversations about mental health, male participation in support services remains low comparative to women. From recognizing the signs to the discomfort of talking openly, reaching men through support services remains a challenge.

In June 2022, Togetherall's Clinical Director, Ben Locke, Ph.D. spoke with Sarah Sternberg, Social Impact Strategist at leading men's health charity [Movember](#) about their learnings on engaging more men in mental health conversations and support services.

[> Watch the webinar on-demand](#)

x3

Men are now almost three times more likely to see a therapist when worried or low than in 2009*

2 in 5

Two in five men (43%) admit to regularly feeling worried or low, an increase from 37% in 2009*

23%

The number of men who are worried about their appearance has risen from 18% in 2009 to 23%*

3 in 4

In the UK and North America, around 3 in 4 deaths registered as suicide are among men.

*Source: [Mind: Get it off your chest](#)



During the discussion with Movember, some key principles emerged to help direct thinking when designing, promoting and running mental health services for men.

Understand your men

Not all men are the same. We need to understand the lived realities of specific groups of men, uncover what motivates them in that moment, and apply insight to interventions or campaigns in context. Whether this starts with detailed research or simply involves conducting a few interviews, insight will help to identify an approach that is more targeted to the specific group, time and place.

Go to where your men are

Formal mental health service provision is often designed for everyone, rather than with men in mind. We need to incorporate support and education into the ‘places where men are,’ for example through social groups or sports clubs. This approach is a way to reach men proactively but also to deliver messages more effectively, e.g. by using sports as a metaphor (training, resilience, overcoming setbacks).

Use their language

A lot of the language used in mental health support can be a turn off. Rather than talking about ‘seeking help,’ we might talk about the situation (‘when times are tough’). It is also important to tailor language to specific groups. To achieve this, co-production or co-creation of service design is an important tool.

Discussion highlights: addressing masculine norms

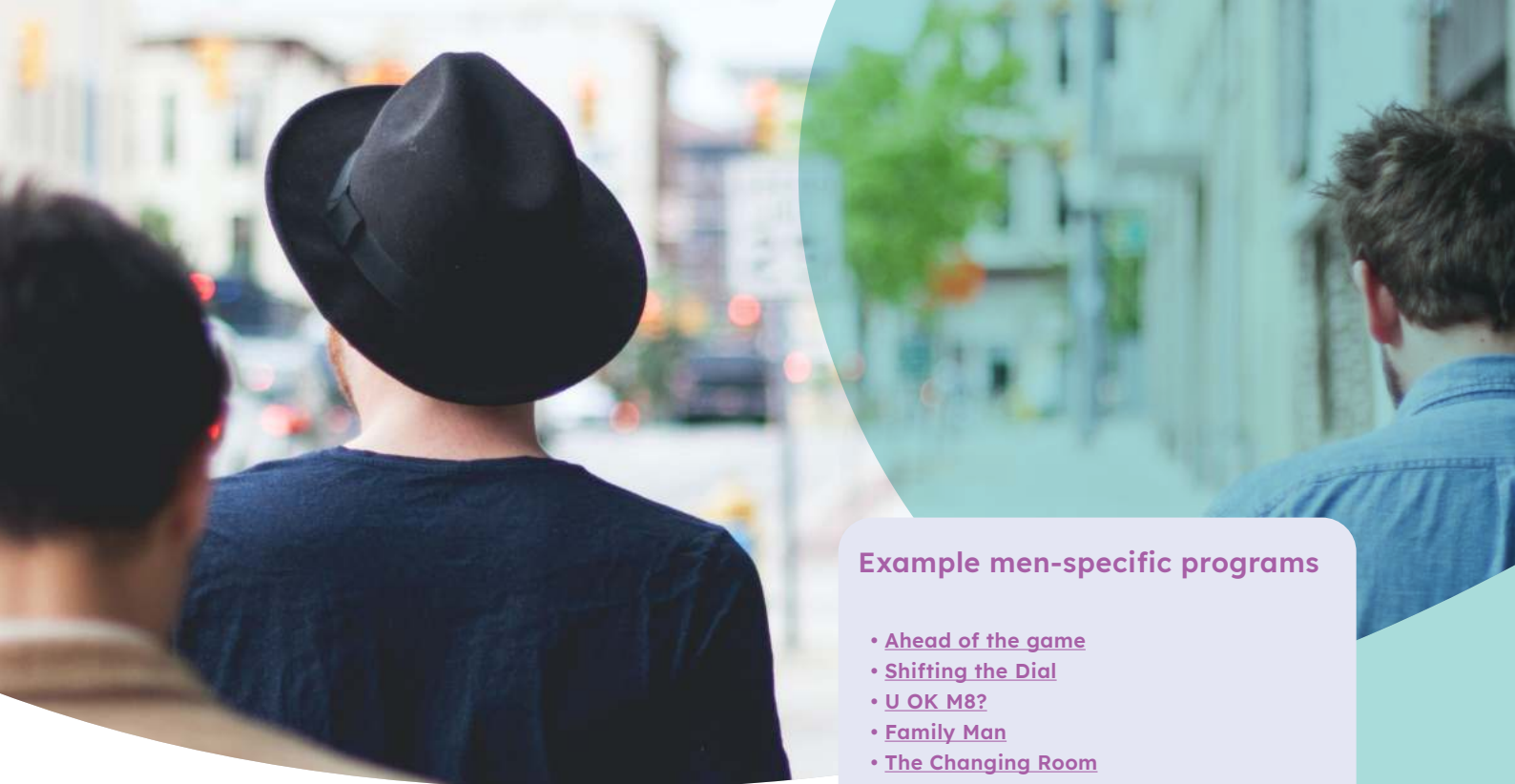
“Lots of men’s health issues stem from traditional masculine norms that stop men from seeking help when they need it.”

“How can we use some of those traditionally masculine ideas in the service of evolving the norms? Think about things like vulnerability, being a strength.”

“Men are often motivated to do things for others; they’re motivated to do things for their families or for their partners ... ‘looking after your mental health is something that will help you be a better father,’ for example.”

“Being a provider is a masculine norm that lots of men really aspire to. We can harness that norm in the service of getting men to take action on their mental health. That’s an approach we’ve taken at Movember that’s been really successful for us.”

Sarah Sternberg, Movember



Example men-specific programs

- [Ahead of the game](#)
- [Shifting the Dial](#)
- [U OK M8?](#)
- [Family Man](#)
- [The Changing Room](#)
- [Men's Sheds](#)
- [Men's Health Active](#)
- [Let's Keep Talking to Prevent Male Suicide](#)
- [ManTherapy](#)

Questions to ask

	SERVICE DESIGN & DELIVERY	SERVICE PROMOTION
Understand your men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What insight can you gain into the specific needs, motivations and aspirations of the men you're trying to reach? • What can you learn about this from peers and professionals who work with them? • Can the support be designed to fulfill needs for the target group? E.g. a willingness to help others, a preference for social activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you use insight gained through your research to frame the messaging around mental well-being and support access differently? • Does your language frame your service in a way that appeals to men's real needs, wants and strengths? • Do you test communications with men regularly and control for variables in your testing?
Go to where your men are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do your men spend time, both online and offline? • How can routes to support be embedded (not just signposted) within informal settings or existing group settings? • How can you use storytelling and metaphors to deliver accessible messages in contexts outside of mental health services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What online platforms or media can you use? • Can you partner with other organizations to reach the intended target group? • Can you involve local leaders, volunteers and peers in communities where your men are to take on peer support roles and deliver messages?
Use their language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the language used in your service relatable, understood and meaningful? • Could the framing of support alienate or 'other' the target group, rather than empower? If you are using specific language, does it feel authentic? Is it language they would use? • Can you get your target group involved in co-creation of messaging and language? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who can you involve or partner with to speak the same 'language' as your target group, e.g. someone with shared lived experience or a role model. > Click here: Movember Case Study • Is your messaging and language consistent across all parts of the program or support service?

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It's our hope that we can connect men with the right support and equip their peers with the confidence and skills to reach out and help when it's most needed.

**Global Director of Mental Health
and Suicide Prevention, Movember**

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Togetherall's partnership with Movember

Movember is the leading charity changing the face of men's health. Their work focuses on mental health, suicide prevention, prostate and testicular cancer.

The foundation raises funds to deliver innovative, breakthrough research and support programs that enable men to live happier, healthier and longer lives. Committed to disrupting the status quo, millions have joined the movement, helping fund over 1,250 projects around the world to-date.

In 2021, Movember and Togetherall announced a strategic partnership to work together to scale up access to safe and confidential peer support. Like many mental health services, Togetherall knows more can be done to get men the support they need. [Read more here.](#)

Resources

- [Movember conversations](#) – ALEC model
- [CALM Guides](#)
- [Men's Health Forum – The Man Manual](#)
- [The Skills Collective – Men's \(Man\)ual for Good Mental Health](#)
- [MANUP! – UK Men's Mental Health Podcast](#)
- [ManTherapy – Resources for men](#)
- [HeadsUpGuys – Provide Support](#)
- [Men's Sheds](#)

Reading

- [Get it off your chest – 10 years on](#)
- [Men's Mental Health: Social Determinants and Implications for Services](#)
- [Masculinity, Social Connectedness, and Mental Health: Men's Diverse Patterns of Practice](#)
- [Men's Mental Health Services: The Case for a Masculinities Model](#)
- [Successful mental health promotion with men: evidence from 'tacit knowledge'](#)