

E-Male Matters

February 2011

The newsletter of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland

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News

Let's Talk about Men's Health

This year, [International Men's Health Week](#) (MHW) will run from Monday 13th until Sunday 19th June 2011. The focus in Ireland will be upon: "Promoting and Supporting the Health and Well-Being of Men and Boys during Challenging Times". The world of men, and the roles that they play in it, have certainly changed dramatically in a very short period of time. All of these changes bring new challenges (both positive and negative). Therefore, the key message for this week will be: "let's talk about it". But what is there to talk about? ...

- The current economic recession has made a huge impact upon men's jobs, status, income, spending, lifestyle, debt, sense of security and health.
- On average, men are living longer, but they are not, necessarily, healthier.
- Men face a range of acute and chronic illnesses, many of which are preventable.
- Father's roles / the expectations of fathers have expanded, but the number of disputed cases relating to access to children is also rising.
- Obesity is on the increase, while healthy eating and exercise are decreasing.
- Depression in men is becoming more prevalent (or at least acknowledged) and the male suicide rate is still extremely high.
- Males are often not aware of where and how to find help and support.
- Young men (particularly) engage in a range of high-risk activities.
- There is increasing recognition that males can be victims of domestic abuse.
- There are a lot of projects that work with men to improve their health, but we are still unsure about what 'effective practice' with men looks like.
- The Republic of Ireland has a Men's Health Policy, but is it making a difference? On the other hand, Northern Ireland does not even have a framework for evaluating if men's health needs are being met ...

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Changes to Fathers' Rights: Additional Paternity Leave and Pay

Northern Irish Parents of babies due (or placed for adoption) on or after the 3rd of April 2011, have the right to avail of Additional Paternity Leave and Pay (APL&P). This is on top of the two weeks Statutory Paternity Leave already due to fathers. Fathers can take between two and twenty-six weeks Additional Paternity Leave (APL) after the 20th week since the baby's birth or adoption, providing the mother has returned to work. The father's APL must be completed by the baby's first birthday, with Additional Paternity Pay in line with the mother's maternity period. Fathers considering APL&P should provide eight weeks notice to their employer, advising them of their intention to take APL. For further information on APL&P, including rules and eligibility, and other childcare and work related issues, call [Employers for Childcare's](#) Freephone Helpline on 0800 028 6538.

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Child Maintenance Choices

[Child Maintenance Choices](#) provides impartial information and support to help separating or separated parents to make informed choices about Child Maintenance in Northern Ireland. They can also offer practical information in areas linked to Child Maintenance, such as housing, employment, and money. Although they're not experts in these other areas, they can put you in touch with specialist organisations that provide help and advice. This service is free and confidential, and is available from Monday to Friday, 9.00am - 5.00pm, by calling Freephone 0800 028 7439. You can also text "Choices" to 66101 and get a call back, or visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/choices for more information.

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New Policy Briefing Papers Available

The [ARK Policy Unit](#) has published two new Policy Briefing papers. These draw upon published research evidence, as well as discussions undertaken at ARK Policy Round Table seminars: (1) [Young People not in Education, Employment or Training](#) (NEET) highlighted British Birth Cohort Study data showing if a young man has been NEET for six months, by the age of 21 he is four times more likely to be out of work, three times more likely to have mental health issues, and five times more likely to have a criminal record. (2) [Social Care in Northern Ireland](#) explores key issues such as long term care, domiciliary care, community care, workforce issues, and policy making and governance. More information is available on the ARK website at www.ark.ac.uk. ARK is a joint resource between Queen's University and the University of Ulster, making social and political data and resources on Northern Ireland accessible to the widest possible audience.

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Training

First Aid for Mental Health

First aid, as we normally think of it, is the help given to an injured person before medical treatment can be obtained. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) differs only in that it is the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or who is in a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until professional treatment is received or until the crisis resolves.

[Aware Defeat Depression](#) is offering places on a MHFA course to those who currently work, or care for others, in the North and West Belfast area. The course is free of charge, and will be delivered over two days on Tuesday 15th and Wednesday 16th February 2011, in Aware's offices, in Philip House, York Street, Belfast. For more details, contact Andrea Kearns at Tel: 02890 321734 or Email: andrea@aware-ni.org

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Sexual Orientation Awareness with a Counselling Focus

[The Rainbow Project](#) will be delivering a series of two day training courses on "Sexual Orientation Awareness with a Counselling Focus" to organisations in the Belfast Trust, Northern Trust and South Eastern Trust areas. The topics covered will include: understanding same-sex attraction and use of appropriate terminology; key health inequalities experienced by people who are same-sex attracted; forms of homophobia and heterosexism, and internalised homophobia; barriers to accessing mainstream statutory service provision; legislative and social policy context; common issues when counselling LGB clients; tips for improvement of practice. This training is specifically aimed at counsellors and counselling managers, and will take place in each Trust area during March 2011. For more information, contact Malachai O'Hara or Aidan Donegan on Tel: 02890 319030 or Email: malachai@rainbow-project.org or admin@rainbow-project.org

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Supporting Work with Fathers

Is your organisation interested in developing work with fathers? Do you ask yourself questions such as: Where do we start? What is possible? Who can help us? What has been tried in other places? Would you like training and ongoing support to achieve your goal? ... If so, then "Kick Start" might help you! Kick Start (coordinated by the [Parenting Forum NI](#) within [Parents Advice Centre](#)), offers a package of training, support, reflection and practical action to organisations that are currently trying to, or wishing to, engage with fathers in Northern Ireland. Applications are now invited for the next programme intake which will begin soon. This is open to both male and female workers. To apply for a place, contact Pauline Martin at Tel: 02890 310891. There are only a couple of places left!

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Volunteers required for CAB Money Active Project

Money Active, developed by Citizens Advice (England and Wales) and funded by Nationwide Building Society, aims to train and support volunteers across both the [Citizens Advice Bureau](#) (CAB) network and a wide range of community organisations, to carry out proactive financial education work in their local community. Money Active volunteers don't need to be financial experts - but do need to be confident enough to present information in simple ways which others will find easy to understand. CAB will support and prepare volunteers for this role by providing basic training, and volunteers will then deliver two hour information sessions on skills around budgeting, banking, credit and saving. CAB is interested in building partnerships with voluntary and community organisations who would like their volunteers to get involved in financial education work for their community. If your organisation would like to get involved, or would like further information, please contact Nichola MacDougall at Tel: 02890 262525 or Email: macdougalln@citizensadvice.co.uk

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ICS Community Health Education Programme in the Republic of Ireland

The [Irish Cancer Society](#) (ICS) is seeking volunteers in the Republic of Ireland to get two important messages out into the community: (1) It is possible to reduce your risk of cancer by as much as 50% by making lifestyle changes. (2) Spotting a change that could be cancer early can save lives. To become a volunteer, you need to be willing to attend a two day training programme on either 4th-5th February, 8th-9th April, or in September 2011 (dates to be confirmed). You don't need to have medical training to become a volunteer. However, a number of qualities are important. These include: being able to deliver a talk / information while sticking to the ICS message; good communication skills; a willingness to learn; reliability; and being able to organise and keep records. For more information, contact: Rosemary Scott at Tel: 01 2310579 or Email: rscott@irishcancer.ie

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Research

Men, have your Say ... Issues that can arise for Men after the Birth of a Baby

If you are a father and would like to share your views and opinions, please keep reading. In modern Ireland, men seem to be more involved from the beginning, to support and encourage their partners through their pregnancy, and to prepare themselves for all and any life changes that may occur throughout fatherhood. But is there any support thereafter for these men? This study aims to highlight any common issues and possible stressors ahead for dads, to enhance knowledge surrounding these issues, and to look at if there is a need to have more support for men. Follow the link to take part in this study. Your opinion really counts: www.kwiksurveys.com/online-survey.php?surveyID=IKHLIL_cf476ede

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Web Links

Men's Issues on the Web ...

[Delivering Male: Launch of men's mental health guidelines](#)

[Smoking linked to earlier male deaths](#)

[Inflexible and stressful work 'harming families'](#)

[Male subfertility helped by antioxidants says research](#)

[Marriage good for men physically and women mentally, both live longer](#)

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Next Edition

The next edition of E-Male Matters will be released in March 2011. Do you know of anything (research, events, resources, news etc.) affecting men and boys which should be included in it? There's a simple template for all articles. Let us know (within 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 The submission deadline for the March edition is Thursday 24th February 2011.

"E-Male Matters" is also available online at: www.mhfi.org/about-e-male-matters.html

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