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# First Meeting of the Engaging Young Men Advisory Group: Minutes

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**Date:** Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014  
**Time:** 12.45pm - 2.20pm  
**Venue:** Institute of Public Health in Ireland, 5th Floor, Bishop's Square, Redmond's Hill, Dublin 2  
**Present:** Lorcan Brennan, Paula Carroll, Nick Clarke, Colin Fowler, Susan Kenny, Owen Metcalfe, Biddy O'Neill and Noel Richardson  
**Apologies:** Maria Lohan and Finian Murray  
**Chairperson:** Owen Metcalfe  
**Minutes:** Colin Fowler

## Agenda Items

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Owen, as Chairperson, welcomed everyone to the meeting, and thanked them for their attendance. He introduced a few people who were not known to all members of the group, gave a short recap on the background to this project, and thanked the National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) and the Health Service Executive (HSE) for supporting this follow-on phase to the Young Men and Suicide project (YMSP).

Owen asked if anyone else would like to act as Chairperson for the Advisory Group, but there were no offers.

### 2. Terms of Reference

Owen thanked Colin for preparing a draft Terms of Reference document for discussion at today's meeting. A number of amendments were proposed:

- Objectives 2 and 3 should be reversed - thus, if funding is not available after Year 1, the Mapping Exercise and Gender Lens work can remain as standalone completed outputs.
- The original Objective 2 should be re-worded from '*as a one day workshop*' to '*in a workshop format*' - as, until we consult with stakeholders, we do not know what length or style of training will be useful and realistic to them.
- The beneficiaries of the mapping exercise (in the Phases of Development section) should be changed to '*Eight Focus Groups - each group comprised of people in a specific area of work*'.
- The final bullet point in the Modus Operandi section should be re-worded to: '*The MHFI Director of Operations will submit a quarterly progress report to NOSP (using the standard NOSP template), and will also circulate it to all Advisory Group members*'.

Colin will make the necessary amendments to the Terms of Reference document and will circulate them for approval. Susan will forward a copy of the NOSP quarterly reporting template to Colin.

### **3. Overview of Project Proposal**

Colin gave a short overview of this initiative which covered:

- Background to the original YMSP and the recommendations arising from it.
- The need to follow-up recommendations from YMSP.
- Proposed focus of the 'Engaging Young Men' project.
- Aims and objectives of this follow-on phase.
- Timescale required.
- Projected outcomes.

All members of the Advisory Group received a copy of Colin's notes prior to today's meeting.

Colin was asked to revise this paper to reflect the changes requested to the Terms of Reference document. Bidy also asked if the Projected Outcomes section could be made more specific and measurable. Susan agreed that these changes could be made at this stage, and Colin will re-work this section.

### **4. Name of Project**

There were no objections to the current working name for this initiative i.e. 'Engaging Young Men Project' (EYMP).

### **5. Funding**

This initiative was originally designed to be a three year project. However, funding has only been secured for one year initially, and this will be reviewed again in the future. Given this situation, it was agreed that it would be beneficial to view each objective as a standalone piece of work, and to try - as far as possible - to make these fit within specific yearly timeframes. This will help to ensure that there are no major unfinished strands of work if funding is not available in the coming years.

### **6. Aims and Objectives**

The aims and objectives proposed by this project were all seen as valid. However, it was agreed that it is important to determine clear boundaries for each objective in order to ensure that they are achievable and that we do not spread the available resources too thinly.

There was discussion about who the stakeholders in the mapping phase should include. During the YMSP, Nick developed a database of both specific mental health service providers as well as a broader range of organisations that work with / have contact with young men. It was felt that this could be a useful starting point for identifying stakeholders in order to solicit feedback from them.

There are many types of organisations who have contact with young men. Some work with them in times of crisis (e.g. the new mental health nurses based in hospitals and the Garda), some offer longer-term mental health support programmes (e.g. counsellors and youth mental health groups), some offer [non-mental health] specific interest programmes (e.g. sports clubs and churches), and some have contact with them because of the age they are (e.g. schools and youth clubs). It was felt that it would be important to:

- Target a diverse range of these types of groups (i.e. a population-wide approach).
- Place a special focus upon practitioners who work with young men at the beginning their mental health journey.
- Seek nationwide representation as far as possible.

The training programme that will be developed as a result of this mapping process will be a cascade model. This needs to be useful to a very wide range of practitioners. It was agreed that the overall goal for this training should be to explore the *'why'* and the *'how'* of engaging young men. As there is no one-size-fits-all in terms of what should be offered to young men, trainees will then be encouraged to apply this insight to developing realistic interventions appropriate to their own circumstances.

At this stage, it can be expected that the training content will (at least) cover:

- The rationale for why young men's mental health needs special attention.
- How masculinity influences the help-seeking behaviour of young men.
- Societal stereotypes and expectations of young men.
- Exploring young men's experience of their world and the support services that are available to them.
- Examples of effective practice.

There was discussion as to what age a 'young man' is for the purposes of this project. The proposed scales ranged from 15 - 35 years. No formal agreement on this was reached. This needs to be determined by the Advisory Group as a matter of urgency.

## **7. Focus Groups**

During the YMSP, it was felt that the most useful information was generated from the Focus Groups rather than through the online questionnaires. It was, therefore, agreed that this mode of data collection should be adopted in the mapping stage of the EYMP.

A total of eight Focus Groups will be convened. These will include representatives from specific areas of interest and, if possible, will involve workers from throughout Ireland:

- Statutory Primary Health Care Staff
- Teachers / Student Union Officers
- Sports Coaches
- Garda
- Youth Workers
- Clergy / Chaplains
- Workplace Occupational Health Officers / Trade Union Reps
- Voluntary and Community Sector Mental Health Workers

## **8. Focus Group Research**

Organising and running eight Focus Groups on a nationwide basis will take a huge amount of time and energy. It was, therefore, agreed that MHFI should sub-contract this work, and that - in the first instance - any member of the Advisory Group from a research background can bid to undertake this research (rather than putting it out to open tender).

Colin will draft a specification for this research which will highlight:

- The background to EYMP.
- Aims and objectives of EYMP.
- Tasks required of researcher (e.g. identify and engage participants for eight specific interest groups, have 10-16 respondents in each group, recruit a membership which reflects a wide geographic base, facilitate and record each session, write a report on each session, collate the key themes from each Focus Group into a composite final report which makes recommendations for future training programmes, document contact details / key areas of work for each participant etc.).
- Timescale for completion.
- Need for ethical approval.
- Requirement for the submission of a clear and realistic workplan.
- The budget available and the need for a breakdown of all expenditure (e.g. time, materials, equipment, travel, venue hire, refreshments, supervision etc.).
- The deadline for submission (i.e. Noon on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2014).

Owen, Susan, Bidy and Colin will meet via video-link on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014 at 10.30am to determine who will be awarded the tender. It is hoped that the successful tendering body will be able to begin this work in March 2014.

The budget for this piece of work is €10,000 - €15,000. This must include all aspects of the Focus Group research and reporting process e.g. preparation, identification and recruitment of participants, hiring of venues, food and refreshments, equipment, facilitation of sessions, collating data generated, and writing a final report which includes recommendations.

Paula would like to act as a support person during this research process and to sit-in on the Focus Groups as part of her men's health work. She will check with Bidy if this is feasible.

## **9. Membership of Advisory Group**

It was felt that it might also be useful to have someone who works directly in young men's mental health as part of the Advisory Group. Inspire Ireland, SpunOut and Headstrong (Jigsaw programme) were proposed. It was felt that Headstrong might be the most appropriate choice. Bidy will forward the name of a contact in this organisation to Colin.

## **10. Action Points**

- ✓ Colin will make the necessary amendments to the Terms of Reference document and will circulate them for approval.
- ✓ Susan will forward a copy of the NOSP quarterly reporting template to Colin.
- ✓ Colin will re-work the 'Overview of Engaging Young Men' paper to reflect the changes made to the Terms of Reference document. He will also re-word the Projected Outcomes section to make these more specific.
- ✓ Members of the Advisory Group need to define what constitutes the age range for a 'young man' in relation to this project.
- ✓ Paula will check with Bidy if she can act in a support role to the research team who will be commissioned to undertake the Focus Groups.
- ✓ Bidy will forward the name of a contact in Headstrong to Colin.
- ✓ Owen, Susan, Bidy and Colin will meet via video-link on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014 at 10.30am to determine who will be awarded the tender for the Focus Groups Research and any other actions needed.