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# Northern Ireland Young Men and Suicide Pilot Intervention: Meeting with Colin Neighbourhood Partnership

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<b>Date:</b>	Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> November 2011
<b>Time:</b>	Noon - 1.20pm
<b>Venue:</b>	Cloona House, Poleglass
<b>Present:</b>	Annie Armstrong, Kieran Drayne and Colin Fowler
<b>Purpose of Meeting:</b>	Provide an update on progress, developments and options
<b>Minutes:</b>	Colin Fowler

## Matters Discussed:

### 1. Key Elements of Intervention

There will be five key elements to the intervention in the Colin area ...

- Development of a Young Men's Advisory / Reference Forum.
- Participation by a range of local stakeholders in a 'Man's World?' package of training, support, mentoring, reflection and practical action in the field of working with young men and understanding their world.
- Training for facilitators to enable them to deliver the 'Mind Yourself' programme in the local High School.
- Identification and acquisition of a number of key resource materials on working with young men.
- Evaluation of the work that has been undertaken.

### 2. Timescale

These initiatives will begin in December 2011 and will last until the end of April / early May 2012. However, the local community will be encouraged to use this experience as a springboard for further action, and to plan local events for Men's Health Week 2012 (Monday 11<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> June). This, therefore, will ensure continued activity after the pilot has ended.

### 3. Responsibilities

During this period, the Men's Health Forum in Ireland will be responsible for ...

- Organising all facilitators / trainers / content.
- Paying for facilitator / trainer input and refreshment costs (this will come from a mixture of funding from the Public Health Agency and Man Matters, as well as from MHFI's own resources and contacts).
- Collating feedback from participants and the overall evaluation.

The partners in the Colin area will be responsible for ...

- Supplying a venue (Cloona House) for the training and meetings to take place in.
- Identifying and recruiting participants for these programmes.
- Arranging the provision of refreshments for participants.

#### **4. Name of Intervention**

The title of this intervention will be *'First Instinct'*. This name reflects the underlying goal - to encourage and foster a 'first instinct' in young men which is to seek help and support at times of difficulty rather taking their own lives.

#### **5. Approach**

The approach adopted will draw upon learning from the "Frameworks / Connect" initiative, and will work alongside community stakeholders to develop a network of informed, empathetic, and actively engaged service providers, parents, and young men themselves.

#### **6. Aim**

The overarching aim of this intervention will be to support the development of a community culture which understands the needs of and issues facing young men. Thus, there will be a specific focus upon the 'gendered dimension' of young men lives.

#### **7. Target Area**

The target area will be all parts of the Colin neighbourhood (i.e. Poleglass, Twinbrook, Lagmore and Kilwee).

#### **8. Young Men's Advisory / Reference Forum**

The Young Men's Advisory / Reference Forum will ...

- Be facilitated by staff from YouthAction NI's Work with Young Men Unit (the lead worker will be Marty McKinley under the supervision of Jonny Ashe).
- Target young men aged 15-17 years.
- Engage 10-14 participants in the process.
- Seek to have a diverse group (all abilities) from across the whole catchment area.
- Recruit young men from existing youth provision in the area (i.e. Saints Youth Club, Colin Youth Development Centre, the Youth Initiative, and Sally Gardens), as well as from sporting bodies, schools, special interest groups, unattached youth etc.
- Involve two local youth leaders as co-workers (they will, therefore, be able to: see how the model of work is rolled-out; develop a relationship with the participants; expand their own skills and experience in this specialist field of work; ensure that a level of competence is retained within the Colin community after the YouthAction team leave - so that the group can be sustained).
- Begin in December 2011 with a recruitment / relationship-building period. The programme will start in January 2012, and will last until April 2012.
- Meet once a week for approximately two hours in Cloona House.

- Engage in a broad range of group work activities which explore the lives, experiences, needs of, and issues facing local young men (with a specific focus upon the things which impact upon their mental health and well-being).
- Work towards creating an 'end product' (e.g. video of young men talking, or a 'First Instinct' flyer for young men, or a poster with a key message, or a photographic display portraying young men's lives, or an event where they inform others of young men's needs etc.). This 'product' will be dependent upon the resources available.
- Be asked to act as a sounding board / voice for young men in relation to future developments in the Colin area (but, particularly, in the field of mental health).

## 9. 'Man's World?'

The 'Man's World?' training will involve ...

- A core inter-agency group, comprised of 10-14 service providers, practitioners, and parents from across the Colin area. If possible, this should reflect the range of interest groups in the area e.g. education, youth work, community work, health, church, sports, probation, family work etc.
- This core group being offered a package of training, support, mentoring, reflection and practical action in the field of working with young men.
- A number of key components:
  - Half day briefing meeting with line managers / senior staff in each organisation (if applicable) - to ensure they fully understand what their organisation is committing to, and to confirm their assent.
  - Internal organisational audit / review of current level of 'male friendliness'.
  - One day (if possible) training session on why we need to target young men, and an exploration of the experiences of local young men.
  - One day (if possible) training session on how to improve the mental health and health-seeking behaviours of young men - showcasing principles and models of effective practice from other places.
  - One day (if possible) training session on what practical actions could be undertaken locally to improve the 'First Instinct' of young men, and which would offer them a supportive environment.
  - An interim support session, plus ongoing telephone / email support from MHFI.
  - Each participating organisation will be asked to plan and deliver a realistic and appropriate 'in-house' practical initiative which will contribute to meeting the needs of young men in their own workplaces / contexts.
- Each participant in this package and their line manager (if applicable) being asked to give the following commitments:

Trainees will be asked to ...

- Attend all the training / support sessions.
- Undertake 'homework' between meetings.
- Keep their own organisation updated.
- Plan, implement and review a practical project with / for young men in their own work setting.

Line managers will be asked to ...

- Attend the briefing session at the outset and (if possible) the interim support day.
- Support and encourage their worker.
- Look at internal organisational issues in relation to working with young men.
- Ensure that their organisation internally shares any learning from the project.

After this package has been offered, all participants - and the Colin area generally - will be asked to consider the possibility of working collaboratively to plan a community-wide programme of activities to coincide with Men's Health Week 2012. In doing so, they will be asked to draw upon their learning from the programme.

The 'Man's World?' programme will begin at the end of January 2012, and will last until the end of April 2012. However, it is hoped that the delivery of practical actions will extend beyond this period.

## **10. 'Mind Yourself'**

The 'Mind Yourself' programme is a brief, school-based, problem solving intervention aimed at adolescents ...

- There are various delivery models (e.g. in schools, with young adults not in education, with low academic achievers ...), but the one proposed for the Colin area is the original - and most widely evaluated - model. This entails two sessions, of approximately 90 minutes each, delivered to young people aged 15-17 years, in groups of 15 or less, in school settings.
- This programme has been subject to a randomised pre and post between subjects group study, with experimental and control groups. Results show that the programme was effective in creating significant positive changes in terms of problem solving and emotional resilience. Other results indicate positive, but non-significant, changes in depressive symptoms (greatest reduction in boys) and self-harm thoughts.
- Staff from the National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF) will deliver a 'Train the Trainer' programme to a group of up to 14 participants. This training will take place over two full days in Cloona House.
- If the Colin neighbourhood cannot nominate enough trainees for the full quota of 14 places, the extra slots will be offered to workers from outside the catchment area.
- The criteria for potential trainees include: they must not be a teacher of the pupils involved in the programme; they should already have good group facilitation skills; they must have reasonable empathy with young adults and their life situation; they need to have some understanding of mental health issues; they must be able to commit to delivering the programme after they complete the training.
- The training will be delivered in late February / early March 2012.
- Participants in the training process will learn how to use the 'Mind Yourself' resources, so that they will be capable of delivering the programme themselves in a school context in the future.
- As an additional benefit, NSRF is willing to allow trainees (if they wish) to see the programme being delivered by the Foundation's staff in schools across the Republic of Ireland. However, due to the impact upon group dynamics, only one person can 'shadow' the NSRF staff in each group. Anyone wishing to do this will have to cover their own travel expenses.

- The Mind Yourself programme in schools is delivered by two facilitators working cooperatively.
- It is hoped that graduates of the training process will be able to deliver the programme to at least one group of Fifth Formers in the local High School (St Colm's) before the Summer. This would need to be negotiated locally by the partners in Colin.
- Ideally, NSRF would be asked to contribute to the evaluation of this initiative. However, this is dependent upon what funding is available.

## **11. Resource Library**

There is a growing body of resources to support practice in the field of working with men and boys. The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) will identify and acquire a small number of key materials which will form the basis of a Resource Library for the Colin area.

## **12. Evaluation of Intervention**

MHFI will work in partnership with the Centre for Men's Health in IT Carlow to evaluate all elements of this intervention. The fieldwork will be conducted by a student studying for their Masters degree. They will work under the supervision of the Centre's Director, Dr Noel Richardson.

## **13. Outputs and Outcomes**

It is anticipated that the following outputs and outcomes will be achieved as a result of this intervention ...

- Young men's voices / concerns will have been heard.
- A Young Men's Advisory / Reference Forum will have been established.
- Local youth workers will have been exposed to methods and models of engaging with young men.
- A core group of 10-14 service providers, practitioners, and parents - from diverse fields of work across the Colin area - will have undertaken training and reflection in the area of working with and supporting young men.
- Each of the core group members will have implemented a realistic action in their own workplace / context.
- A range of local organisations will have analysed their level of 'male friendliness' and identified gaps in provision.
- Local facilitators will have been trained to deliver the 'Mind Yourself' programme in schools and, hopefully, will have piloted this programme in the last semester before the Summer break.
- A few core elements of a working with young men resource library will be sited in the Colin area.
- The Colin Neighbourhood will be primed for future action in this area - especially in relation to Men's Health Week 2012.

## **14. Local Partners**

This initiative will work in partnership with the Colin Suicide Prevention Task Group. The main contact people will be the Joint Chairs of this group ...

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