

E-Male Matters

Spring 2021

The newsletter of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland

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Men's Health Week 2021

The Final Countdown Begins

We're now only weeks away from [International Men's Health Week](#) (MHW), which begins on Monday 14th June and runs until Sunday 20th June 2021 (Father's Day).

2021 has already been an exceptional year in many ways. The island of Ireland continues to wrestle with the global [COVID-19](#) pandemic. Individuals across the country are trying to rebuild their lives, relationships, jobs, finances, physical health, emotional resilience, networks, routines etc. Some people are still living with trauma and bereavement. Others are having to re-focus their priorities. Everyone's mental health has been impacted to some degree.

This is why the theme chosen for Men's Health Week 2021 is **'MAKING THE CONNECTIONS'** and the call to action is:

- **CHECK IN** with yourself to see how you are coping / feeling, and to identify any health worries that you might have.
- **CHECK UP** on your family, friends, neighbours, colleagues to see how they're doing and to offer support.
- If you notice anything worrying or which needs medical attention, **CHECK IT OUT** and seek information / help / support / treatment as soon as possible.

As always, the overarching aims of MHW are to:

- Heighten awareness of preventable health problems for males of all ages.
- Support men and boys to engage in healthier lifestyle choices and activities.
- Encourage the early detection and treatment of health difficulties in males.

However, any and all activities / actions to mark this occasion are very welcome.

To find out more about the week, visit: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2021.html

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'Toolbox for Action'

Not everybody knows about [Men's Health Week](#) (MHW), what it hopes to do, why it needs to happen, or how they can get involved. That's why there is a MHW 2021 *'Toolbox for Action'*. This Q&A style resource can be downloaded at: www.mhfi.org/mhw2021toolbox.pdf

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Men's Health Week 2021 Posters

To promote Men's Health Week (MHW) 2021, a bespoke poster has been designed. The 'faces' of MHW this year are Paul, Dee, Clara and Cristian.

Posters are available as both A3 and A4 hard copies, and as online electronic files (in a range of sizes and formats suitable for a variety of uses). To order hard copies of the poster, use the online form (at www.mhfi.org/contact.html), and tell us:

- How many copies you would like.
- Which size (or sizes) that you'd like.
- The name of the person to send them to.
- The full postal address (including a Postcode / Eircode) for delivery.

Copies of the online electronic resources can be downloaded from: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html#Poster2021

Even people who don't have time to do anything else for MHW 2021 are encouraged to put up a poster - in public view - to let everyone know when it is taking place. Although this costs little to do, it will make a big difference to promoting the week!

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Men's Health Week 2021 Postcards

Every year since 2014, there has been a Men's Health Week (MHW) postcard to publicise the week. Traditionally, these cards can be displayed as small flyers in public spaces, and are often sent by organisations to the men that they have contact with. This has proved to be a very successful means of letting local men know about the week. Some groups have also used them as pledge cards i.e. men can write on the card how they are going to *'make the connections'* and *'check in, check up and check it out'* to improve their health. Later on, they can keep this beside their desk, on their work bench, attached to their dashboard etc. to remind them of what they want and hope to do.

This year, the postcards are available in both hard copy and as online electronic files. To order hard copies of the postcard, use the online form (at www.mhfi.org/contact.html), and tell us:

- How many copies you would like.
- The name of the person to send them to.
- The full postal address (including a Postcode / Eircode) for delivery.

For electronic download, see: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html#Postcard2021

The front of the postcard has a similar design to the MHW poster, and the back has a pre-written message which says:

Hi there,

This has been another really exceptional year.

The island of Ireland continues to wrestle with the global COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals are trying to re-build their lives, relationships, jobs, finances, physical health, emotional resilience, networks, and routines. Some people are living with trauma and bereavement. Others are having to re-focus their priorities. Everyone's mental health has been impacted to some degree.

During this difficult time we have all become disconnected. Therefore, we now need to focus upon re-establishing our relationships with family, friends, neighbours, work colleagues, community groups, clubs, churches, sporting bodies, support systems, health services ... if we are to overcome this.

Men's Health Week 2021 offers an ideal time to think about how this could be done safely and realistically. Throughout the week, everyone is asked to begin this process of 'MAKING THE CONNECTIONS' and to 'CHECK IN. CHECK UP. CHECK IT OUT.'

So, are you up for the challenge? ... If so, find out more at: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2021.html

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Free 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual

There's no denying that the state of men's health on the island of Ireland is often poor. However, there are things which can be done to change this situation and men, themselves, can play a key role in doing this. A free, 32 page, Man Manual is being distributed by the [Men's Health Forum in Ireland](#) (MHFI) to mark [Men's Health Week 2021](#). This poses ten simple and practical health challenges to men and, to meet every challenge, it offers three choices.

During Men's Health Week 2021, this booklet will be available in hard copy (though, when they're gone, they're gone) and in electronic format. To order hard copies, use the online form (at www.mhfi.org/contact.html), and tell us:

- How many copies you would like.
- The name of the person to send them to.
- The full postal address (including a Postcode / Eircode) for delivery.
- A contact phone number (in case there is a problem with the delivery).

A copy of the online version can be downloaded at: www.mhfi.org/challenges2021.pdf

The publication of this booklet has only been possible because of the generous support given by the [Public Health Agency](#) in Northern Ireland, the Health and Wellbeing Division within the [Health Service Executive](#) in the Republic of Ireland, and the author - Dr Ian Banks.

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Tell others about what you are doing during Men's Health Week 2021

Every year there are hundreds (possibly even thousands) of events and activities throughout Ireland to celebrate Men's Health Week (MHW). Some of these are well publicised, but most are only known about by a few people. As in previous years, the [Men's Health Forum in Ireland](#) (MHFI) will promote the details of any activities or events that are being held throughout Ireland during [Men's Health Week 2021](#). This will help everyone to find out what is happening during the week, where it will take place, and how to join in. It will also give some recognition and publicity to all those groups across Ireland that are doing something for and with men.

The ongoing COVID-19 situation will mean that many traditional MHW face-to-face events (e.g. health checks, conferences, launches, games, seminars, competitions, workshops, lunches, training courses, performances, displays, health fairs ...) may not take place this year. However, many groups across Ireland are still being very creative and innovative about how they can engage with / support men.

Whatever it is that your group has planned, MHFI would like to promote it online - so, get in touch. There are two ways to let us know about what is happening during 2021: (i) submit the details using the online form (at: www.mhfi.org/mhw/promote-an-event.html); or (ii) download and save a copy of the MS Word Registration Form (www.mhfi.org/mhw2021project.doc), type in the details, and email it back to us.

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How to Promote Men's Health Week 2021

Absolutely everyone can do something to support and celebrate [Men's Health Week](#) (MHW) 2021. The focus for this year (i.e. *'Making the Connections'*) lends itself to a wide range of ways to mark this occasion. However, you don't have to stick rigidly to this particular topic. Anything which encourages men and boys to lead healthier lifestyles, to be more aware of preventable health problems, and to seek early detection and treatment for health difficulties will be very welcome.

Of course, it would be great if you could organise an event or activity. However, there are also many simple, free and easy ways to get involved / show support. There is a common logo / image pack which can be used by everyone who wishes to raise awareness of MHW. There is also a MHW 2021 poster and postcard. These are important promotional tools - as one of the key aims is to let as many people as possible know about the week. These are available to anyone who wishes to use them at www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html

Promotion of MHW could take the form of:

- a) Putting a [Men's Health Week poster](#) (or two or three) up in your workplace / local shop / waiting room / home ... and/or sending the MHW [postcard](#) to people you know.
- b) Promoting the week on your website - using a copy of the [Men's Health Week logo](#) or [badge](#) or [banner](#).
- c) Linking to the Men's Health Forum in Ireland's web page devoted to Men's Health Week 2021 (www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2021.html) from your own website, Facebook page or other social networking site.

- d) Sending an email to everyone on your mailing list to tell them about Men's Health Week, and asking them to forward the message to all their contacts. Why not also insert the MHW [logo](#) into your outgoing emails for the months of May and June?
- e) Becoming a fan of the Men's Health Week in Ireland's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek) and sending this link to all your online friends.
- f) Including information on [Men's Health Week 2021](#) in your mailouts / newsletters.
- g) Telling others about what is happening in your area during Men's Health Week by posting details on the MHFI website. Use the form at: www.mhfi.org/mhw/promote-an-event.html
- h) Making one of the Men's Health Week 2021 [graphics](#) your computer desktop 'wallpaper' during May and June.
- i) Reminding your colleagues to follow all the latest news on Twitter (www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL).
- j) Posting / Tweeting about the week using the hashtags **#MensHealthWeek** and **#CheckItOut** in your message.
- k) Using the MHW [Facebook Cover Photo](#) or [Twitter Header Image](#) on your social media pages and feeds ...

Doing one or more of these simple (and free) things would contribute hugely to MHW 2021!

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Daily Themes for Men's Health Week 2021

Men's health issues and needs are numerous and complicated. So much so, that we could probably assign a different one to highlight on each day of the year and still have an outstanding pool of ones to explore! However, when preparing for Men's Health Week (MHW) 2021, the all-island Planning Group felt that it would be useful to draw attention to a specific theme on each day during the week, as well as on the Friday leading up to it. These are ...

- Friday 11th June 2021: What you need to know about Men's Health Week 2021
- Monday 14th June 2021: Healthy relationships / staying connected / tackling loneliness
- Tuesday 15th June 2021: Physical health / activity
- Wednesday 16th June 2021: Mental fitness
- Thursday 17th June 2021: Giving to others / volunteering / helping to make a difference
- Friday 18th June 2021: The importance of prevention / early detection / healthy lifestyle
- Saturday 19th June 2021: Pledge to action day
- Sunday 20th June 2021: Fathers, fatherhood and males in caring roles

Social media has become a powerful tool for organisations to spread their message. During Men's Health Week 2021, everyone is encouraged to 'Post' and 'Tweet' about it and, when possible, to use the hashtags: **#MensHealthWeek** and **#CheckItOut**

Even loading a few things to websites / Facebook pages / Twitter feeds / Instagram / TikTok / other social media platforms will make a huge difference to publicising the week. This is, therefore, a really easy and free way to show support for MHW.

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Keep Up-To-Date with MHW 2021

To keep everyone up-to-date with the latest news on [Men's Health Week \(MHW\) 2021](#) - as well as more general developments in the field of men's work - check out Facebook (www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL).

However, as all social networkers know, pages such as these are no use unless they have a lot of Fans / Followers. That's where your help is needed! ... Please visit the pages, click on the 'LIKE' button for Facebook and 'FOLLOW' button for Twitter, and send the link to all your friends. If you're really into it, please Tweet about MHW 2021 yourself, and include the hashtags #MensHealthWeek and #CheckItOut in your messages.

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BowelScreen - Do the Test this Men's Health Week

This Men's Health Week, the HSE is encouraging all men aged 60-69 to register for a free BowelScreen test kit and to do the test. About 2,800 people get bowel cancer every year. It is the second most common cancer in men in Ireland. Bowel screening helps find signs of cancer before symptoms start. If bowel cancer is found early, it's easier to treat and there is a higher chance of recovery ...

- Check In - if you're aged 60-69, check you're on the BowelScreen register.
- Check Up - make sure your family and friends (men and women in the age group) are on the register too.
- Check It Out - always see a GP if you have any symptoms of bowel cancer.
- Make the Connection - for more information, and to check you're on the register, visit <http://hse.ie/bowelscreen> or use Freephone 1800 454555.

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News

Men's Health across the Lifespan

The [International Journal of Men's Social and Community Health](#) is, currently, calling for papers for a special issue on men's health across the lifespan. This will cover a wide range of topics including: the health concerns of younger and teenage males; the interface between age and health literacy issues; mental health and wellbeing; age-related health issues for marginalised men and boys; age and public health concerns for men and boys; sexual and romantic relationships; fatherhood; age and chronic disease experiences; and health issues pertinent to older men. A wide range of empirical (qualitative, quantitative, and structured reviews) and theoretical / conceptual papers on men's health will be considered for publication in this special issue. Find out more at: <https://tinyurl.com/wwafuxbn>

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Green Ribbon Impact Report 2020

Each year, See Change encourages people in Ireland to join the 'Green Ribbon' campaign - which starts conversations to help end mental health stigma. Against the unprecedented backdrop of COVID-19, last year's Green Ribbon campaign was more important than ever to ensure mental health awareness and support during challenging times. However, the campaign had to, primarily, take place online. The Green Ribbon Impact Report for 2020 is now available at: <https://seechange.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/GR-Impact-Report-6.pdf>

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Midlands Health and Wellbeing Podcasts

A series of health and wellbeing podcasts have been produced for counties Offaly, Laois, Westmeath and Longford. These podcasts capture a wide range of diverse and interesting conversations with a range of professional staff working across the statutory, community and voluntary sectors in the Midlands. They give fascinating insights into the experience and knowledge gained by these staff. Topics include Men's Health, Building Resilience, Domestic Violence, Parenting, Positive Ageing, Living with Loss, and Youth Mental Health. Access them at: <https://www.offalyldc.ie/offaly-talks-podcasts> | <https://laoispartnership.ie/laois-connects-podcasts> | <https://www.westcd.ie/index.php/westmeath-talks> | <https://lcrf.ie/longford-talks>

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Domestic and Sexual Abuse Advocacy Service

A new partnership between Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid, Foyle Family Justice Centre and the Men's Advisory Project has been set up. This will deliver a Northern Ireland-wide advocacy service for victims of domestic and sexual violence and abuse. The overall purpose of this initiative is to provide coordinated and tailored support - responsive to individual need - in partnership with established services. This service has been jointly commissioned by the Department of Justice and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Applications are, currently, being sought for 20 new jobs as Advocates. For full details, see:

<https://belfastwomensaid.org.uk/work-with-us/advocates-advocacy-project>

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SunSmart Campaign 2021

Most people living in Ireland have fair skin - the type which burns easily and tans poorly - so are at high risk of UV damage and skin cancer. Exposure to UV radiation during childhood is particularly harmful, so protecting skin in these early years is extremely important. As part of the SunSmart campaign, the HSE's National Cancer Control Programme, in collaboration with Healthy Ireland and cross-sectoral partners, are working to support people to protect their skin from the sun. The aim of the campaign is to increase awareness of the steps everyone can take to protect their skin and reduce the risk of skin cancer in Ireland. Find out more at:

www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/cancer/prevention/skin-cancer-prevention-sunsmart.html

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COVID-19 and Rethinking Loneliness

Loneliness has emerged as a key public health challenge for the population during the COVID-19 pandemic. Evidence shows that loneliness is a significant issue for population health - as people who experience loneliness have a poorer overall quality of life and poorer physical and mental health. If you missed the webinar hosted by the Institute of Public Health, which focused on COVID-19 and rethinking loneliness on the island of Ireland, you can watch it at:

<https://youtu.be/zRr2YtE8qEU>

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Events

Men's Rites of Passage

Nowadays, the question of what it means to be a man can be perplexing. Most men have a longing for the support and guidance of other men in their journey towards masculinity, maturity, and a deeper experience with the divine. Living a shallow unexamined life is an empty experience. Opening the door to this journey can start with Men's Rites of Passage (MROP) - a five-day deeply spiritual experience that builds on the classic patterns of male

initiation through profound rituals and teachings. It is the kind of experience that can help awaken men to the adventure and mystery of their own masculinity, their potential for leadership, and their life's purpose. Join with other men on this journey in Kiltegan, Co. Wicklow, from 18th - 22nd August 2021. For more information, visit: www.malejourney.ie/rites/mrop-2019 or call 087 176 3729.

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Public Understanding of Coercive Control

This webinar, at 11.00am on Thursday 10th June 2021, marks the public release of the findings from the 2020 Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) survey (www.ark.ac.uk/nilt). The survey recorded the views of 1,292 respondents across Northern Ireland to key social policy issues. Coercive control is a form of domestic abuse, also known as: emotional or psychological abuse; indirect abuse; or emotional torture. In order to address the need for evidence-based knowledge to improve public awareness and victim response to coercive control, a module of questions was included in the 2020 NILT survey. Dr Susan Lagdon (Ulster University) and Dr Julie-Ann Jordan (Northern Health and Social Care Trust) will highlight the key findings, and discuss public understanding of coercive control within intimate relationships. An expert panel will give their comments, followed by a general discussion. To register, visit: tinyurl.com/scrk7z9z

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Training

MA in Advanced Facilitation Skills for Promoting Health and Wellbeing

Do you want to become a highly skilled facilitator and advance within your chosen profession or seek new employment opportunities? ... If so, you might consider the Master of Arts in Advanced Facilitation Skills for Promoting Health and Wellbeing. This is an innovative practice-orientated programme; the only one of its kind nationally. It is designed to enhance personal growth and development, and to advance the knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies required for effective facilitation of health and wellbeing programmes with groups, individuals and key populations. This is a full time course, and its delivery reflects the flexibility required for adult learners. The programme is delivered in Dublin on one Friday and Saturday per month per semester, and via three residential weekends - dispersed across the three semesters from September 2021. For further information, check out www.wit.ie/wd591 For all queries, please contact the course leaders by email at: PCarroll@wit.ie | MLBarry@wit.ie

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Life and Business Coaching

Lorraine O'Shea runs a life and business coaching company called Ellovate Coaching. She is a master practitioner in Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Time Line Therapy and Hypnotherapy. The clients she typically coaches are those struggling with stress, anxiety, motivation or career performance issues - especially in this COVID world. Her sessions help clients to rebuild their self-confidence and self-belief, to overcome negative emotions or limitations, to achieve their goals and ambitions, and become the ultimate version of themselves. Lorraine would like to offer some complimentary life coaching sessions (via Skype or Zoom) to people who would benefit from this service. She can be contacted at Email: lorraine@ellovatecoaching.co.uk | Website: www.ellovatecoaching.co.uk

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Sheds for Life

Men's Sheds offer a unique opportunity to reach a captive audience of 'hard-to-reach' men. However, attempts to engage Sheds in structured health promotion programmes must respect the ethos of Sheds as highly variable, autonomous and non-structured spaces. This paper (*Study protocol: evaluation of sheds for life (SFL): a community-based men's health initiative designed 'for shedders by shedders' in Irish Men's sheds using a hybrid effectiveness-implementation design*) captures the key methodologies used in the Irish Sheds for Life programme. Find out more at: <https://tinyurl.com/bwaky8u9>

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Health Inequalities Annual Report 2021

In April, the Department of Health in Northern Ireland published the Health Inequalities Annual Report 2021. This publication presents a comprehensive analysis of regional health inequality gaps between the most and least deprived areas of NI, and sub-regional gaps within Health and Social Care Trust and Local Government District areas across a range of health indicators. The report is accompanied by downloadable data tables which contain all figures, including District Electoral Areas as well as urban and rural breakdowns. Download the findings at: www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/health-inequalities-annual-report-2021

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COVID-19 in Ireland: A National Surveillance Study

To date, over two million people worldwide have died with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection. To describe the experience in Ireland, this study examined associations between underlying conditions and the following outcomes: mortality, admission to hospital, or admission to intensive care units among those infected with COVID-19. This research highlights that the risk of death is significantly higher for men, as is the risk of hospitalisation and ICU admission. Read more about this study in an article in 'The Lancet' at: [www.thelancet.com/journals/lanepi/article/PIIS2666-7762\(21\)00074-0/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanepi/article/PIIS2666-7762(21)00074-0/fulltext)

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Heart Health Information

The Irish Heart Foundation is doing a review of all the printed leaflets and other information that they provide to the public. In order to provide the best information possible, in a way that is easy to understand, they are seeking participants for a short 5-10 minute survey. Find out more at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FMGLKQY>

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The Needs and Experiences of LGBTQIA+ People in Northern Ireland

[The Rainbow Project](#) is undertaking a survey to explore the needs, experiences and views of LGBTQIA+ people living in Northern Ireland. This will look at a range of issues including crime, health and employment. The data gathered will help to inform the development of new services and campaigns which are reflective of the needs of this community. To participate, or find out more, visit: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/86RV7VT>

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Alcohol Consumption, Alcohol-Related Harm and Alcohol Policy in Ireland

A new report from the Health Research Board presents an overview of alcohol consumption and harm in Ireland, analysing trends and assessing the impact of policy changes over time. Download the report at: <https://tinyurl.com/4424wa22>

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NI: In Profile - Key Statistics on Northern Ireland

'NI: In Profile' is a resource pack of key statistics covering a range of areas of life in Northern Ireland. The pack brings together a variety of data into a single place and will be of interest to a broad audience - including policy makers, businesses, community and voluntary sector groups, students and academics, schools and the general public. Statistics have, primarily, been sourced from across the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. However, where official statistics are not available, statistics from other sources have been included. The pack is intended to provide a high-level statistical summary of life in Northern Ireland, but it does not include detailed commentary. If you wish to delve further into the detail of a particular statistic, you are encouraged to follow the links provided. Download this document at: www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/NI%20IN%20PROFILE%20-%203%20March%202021.pdf

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Web Links

Men's Issues on the Web ...

[Masculinity is a major risk factor for COVID-19](#)

[Loneliness among middle-aged men associated with higher cancer risk](#)

[Shared parental leave: scrap 'deeply flawed' policy, say campaigners](#)

[Get it off your chest - men's mental health 10 years on](#)

[Anxiety among men transitioning into parenthood is higher than reported](#)

[Half of men have had unwanted sexual experiences, UK study finds](#)

[Study shows decline in prostate cancer diagnoses during the pandemic](#)

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Next Edition

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

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

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E-Male Matters is also available online at:
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