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# Second Meeting of the MHFI Sub-Group to Plan Men's Health Week 2012

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**Date:** Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2012  
**Time:** 11.30am - 1.10pm  
**Venue:** Teleconference (arranged by Finian)  
**Present:** Lorcan Brennan, Colin Fowler, Michael Lynch and Finian Murray  
**Minutes:** Colin Fowler

## Issues Discussed

### 1. Theme for MHW 2012

At both the last Planning Sub-Group Skype conference and the MHFI Management Committee meeting, it was felt that the theme in Ireland for 2012 should focus upon encouraging and developing a 'first instinct' in males which is to seek help, advice, support, and to act quickly in times of difficulty / crisis / ill health rather than ignoring symptoms, turning to alcohol, 'soldiering on', taking their own life ...

Human beings start out life with a pre-disposition for self-preservation. This 'first instinct' drives them to eat, be fit, keep active, ensure personal safety, look after themselves etc. However, over time - especially in Western societies - it is easy to become complacent, lazy, individualistic, neglectful, isolated ... and, consequently, for health to suffer.

It was felt that this theme is broad enough to engage a range of organisations. Indeed, the concept has already tested well with two of the largest men's health networks in Northern Ireland. At the same time, it will allow MHFI to relate MHW to its Young Men and Suicide project - especially to the online 'WorkOut' campaign which will be launched in June.

However, as in previous years, any initiative to celebrate MHW 2012 (in whatever form) will be encouraged - as the simple aim behind this week is to highlight men's health and well-being needs and issues.

### 2. Key Message / Strapline

As the date of Men's Health Week 2012 will coincide with the European Football Championships, it was felt that an appropriate key message / strapline for this week would be: "Stall the Ball - Health for All". As this is also an 'Olympics Year', sport will be a big feature of the Summer season in 2012.

This strapline will provide an opportunity to highlight the important connection between physical activity and mental fitness, and will give a definite focus. Finian has access to some research in this area, and will forward it to the Sub-Group members.

In terms of rolling out the message, it was suggested at the last MHFI Management Committee meeting that we might think about using football (or sports) related puns / word play such as: 'get onside', 'are you a supporter?', 'bounce back', 'off you go', 'ball control' 'are you offside?' 'can you score?'... It was also suggested that we could release a different key message or pose a health question on each day of MHW 2012. This could, for example, be puns related to player positions on the pitch.

Michael proposed utilising the acronym SCORE ...

**S**top. **C**onsider **O**ptions. **R**eachout. **E**ngage.

### 3. All-Island Planning Group

It was agreed that everyone who was involved in last year's inter-agency MHW Planning Group should be invited to participate in 2012. Colin will draft a letter to these people. To encourage the broadest engagement possible, the letter of invitation will make it clear that we recognise that not everyone will be able to make every meeting, but that we welcome their input to ongoing e-based communications as well as attendance at formal meetings.

In order to maximise participation at the inaugural meeting, it was felt that the first gathering should (if possible) be a video-conference between Dublin and Belfast. The preferred date for this is Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2012, from 10.30am - 12.30pm, followed by lunch. Colin will ask Tara, in the Institute of Public Health, if it might be possible to hire their conference rooms for this purpose.

It is anticipated that there will be at least two further meetings after this date. However, it was felt that it would be better to allow participants to decide the date / time / venue for these at the 8<sup>th</sup> February event.

Other possible members suggested for the group were ...

- Kevin O'Hagan - National Youth Council of Ireland
- Derek Chambers, Vince McCarthy or Nigel O'Callaghan - Inspire Ireland / ReachOut.com
- Ruairi McKieran (ex-SpunOut) - now doing voluntary work, and is involved in the Council of State with Michael D Higgins
- Representatives from the NHSCT and SEHSCT
- Tony Bates - Headstrong

Sinead Duane has now left Safefood, but her colleague, Andrew Castles, is still on the mailing list. If he is not available, we can contact the CEO, Martin Higgins.

Colin will also draft a letter for these 'new people'. Everyone was asked to think about any additional suggestions and to forward these to Colin.

### 4. MHFI's Objectives for MHW 2012

It was agreed that the set of nine objectives which had been previously proposed for MHW 2012 were realistic and would be beneficial. No new targets were proposed. These original objectives were ...

- 1) Recruit for, establish, convene and administer an inter-agency, all-island, MHW **Planning Group** - consisting of health related organisations and other bodies who have contact with men. Where possible, encourage and develop mutually beneficial partnership work with / between these groups.
- 2) Design and produce **promotional materials** to add a common brand to this week.

- 3) Research, collate and disseminate a **briefing paper** which provides the context of MHW, the rationale for the theme selected in Ireland, and an overview of what is planned.
- 4) Collate a document on **what can I do to mark this week** - to encourage individuals and groups to envisage practical ways that they can celebrate MHW.
- 5) **Increase awareness** amongst the general public, service providers, decision-makers and men, themselves, about MHW - especially through the media and by circulating updates / materials to the MHFI mailing database. Like last year, MHFI will seek to herald in MHW 2012 in the media, rather than jostle for news space during the actual week.
- 6) Provide a free, easy to access, **online information hub** for MHW.
- 7) Promote the **details of MHW activity and events** on the MHFI website, publications and social media sites.
- 8) Offer a **signposting service** to other sources of support, information and resources - by telephone, email and online.
- 9) Support (where possible) other **small scale and affordable actions** / projects which promote or add value to MHW - especially through 'Man Matters'.

## 5. MHFI's Practical Contributions to MHW 2012

In relation to the objectives outlined in Section 4, it was felt that MHFI's practical contributions should include ...

- ✓ **Logo** - Colin will ask Peter Robinson to re-work the core MHW logo which was developed last year, and to insert the dates for this year onto it.
- ✓ **Poster** - Colin has already spoken to Man Matters about the possibility of underwriting the design and printing costs for a MHW 2012 poster and, if possible, about enlisting the help of Carrie Davenport (who designed the poster last year). This should be OK. However, MHFI will have to cover part of the printing costs - for the posters which will be distributed in the Republic of Ireland. The posters need to be produced in both hard and electronic copy. It was agreed that 3,000 copies of the poster would be plenty - given the expense associated with their dissemination.
- ✓ **Facebook and Twitter sites** - These social media tools proved to be useful during 2011, but require regular monitoring and updating. Colin will coordinate this, but would welcome input from others.

**Flyer / Brochure / Help Card** - It would be useful to have something that can be given out by MHFI during MHW 2012. This could be a key facts on men's health flyer, or an MHFI leaflet, or a where to find help postcard ... However, such publications go out of date very quickly. Therefore, if it is possible to produce a resource, it should: relate to MHW 2012; give some details about MHFI; offer signposting to sources of help; only have a limited print run.

- ✓ Launch - Colin will draft a letter to the new President of Ireland (Michael D Higgins) and to the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Edwin Poots) asking them to support MHW 2012. We will request that they issue a Press Release which endorses the need for and importance of MHW, and calls men to positive action. This is, therefore, a 'small ask', without any resource implications.
- ✓ Seminar on Young Men and Suicide - As the Young Men and Suicide Project will not have fully ended by the time of MHW, it would mean a lot of extra work for MHFI to organise a seminar (or two) which focuses on the outcomes of this initiative. Lorcan also pointed out that there is likely to be a men's health conference in Denmark on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2012 which will involve Noel and himself - so this would add extra pressure. It was agreed that a seminar on this project would be more useful to the Forum in the autumn period.
- ✓ Online Viral - It was felt that it would be great to produce and upload a humorous men's health video to YouTube / Vimeo (with a key MHW message), and seek to create an online network of viewers. Finian will speak to some of his comedian contacts about each of them scripting and filming a short 'set' on men's health issues which could be part of a MHW 2012 'channel'. Last year, Brian Daly - from the Older Men's Organisation - offered his skills in online video production to the Planning Group. Colin will approach him in relation to this project if it goes ahead.
- ✓ Mobile Phone App - Michael's daughter's boyfriend is an IT student who has designed a Phone App as part of his course work. Michael will speak to him about the possibility of helping MHFI to develop an App as a resource for MHW 2012.
- ✓ Beer Mats - It was felt that, as the whole country will be flooded by drinks companies trying to promote their products during the European Championships, it would be both wasteful (in terms of financial outlay) and confusing (in terms of being associated with this alcohol-focused push) for us to produce beer mats for MHW this year.
- ✓ Stamp - Colin will draft a letter to An Post / Royal Mail asking them to consider putting a Men's Health Week 2012 ink stamp onto all the processed mail in their sorting offices during June. He will also seek to engage the big supermarket and bank chains, by asking them to print this on their till receipts and/or put it onto the screens of their ATM machines. At the same time, he will investigate the possibility of MHFI becoming a supermarket's 'nominated charity of the year' in the future.
- ✓ Promotional Giveaways - Colin will source / price generic MHW and MHFI branded promotional giveaways (e.g. pens, pencils, key-rings etc.). It was agreed that if we do pursue producing these materials, they should not be dated.
- ✓ Penalty Kick Competition - Given the football focus / puns associated with MHW 2012, it might be worth considering running something such as a penalty kick competition (or similar) across the country. These events could offer the chance to both score goals and get your 'health score'.