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## Third Meeting of the Men's Health Week (MHW) 2021 Planning Group

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**Date:** Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
**Time:** 2.30pm - 4.30pm  
**Mode:** 'Zoom' Video Conference  
**Minute Taker:** Colin Fowler

**Present:**

Lorcan Brennan - Men's Development Network (MDN)  
Annie Clarke - Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT)  
Sharon Daly - Irish Rail  
Marese Damery - Irish Heart Foundation (IHF)  
Alison Doake - South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT)  
Anne Farrell - CIE Group  
Ann-Marie Flanagan - Clanrye Group  
Helen Forristal - Marie Keating Foundation  
Colin Fowler - Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI)  
Robert Glusek - Sure Start South Armagh  
Frances Haughey - Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council  
Sian Johnston - Extern  
Jason King - Get Ireland Walking  
Lianne McAree Murphy - Irish Men's Sheds Association (IMSA)  
Lorraine McGowan - HSE Health Promotion and Improvement, CHO 9  
Seamus McKenna - Community Sports Network  
Michael McKeon - Dublin City University (DCU) School of Nursing  
Barry Murphy - Bodywhys  
Finian Murray - Health Service Executive (HSE) Health Promotion and Improvement  
Linda Murray - Technological University Dublin (TUD)  
Michael O'Donnell - Gay Project  
Kevin O'Hagan - Irish Cancer Society (ICS)  
Andy O'Hara - Traveller Health Unit  
Paul O'Kane - Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT)  
Tadhg O'Leary - Sport Ireland  
Padraig O'Neill - Pieta  
Gerry O'Rourke - Toghermore Training Centre  
Tracey Powell - Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT)  
Kerrie Simms - Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council  
Gary Tobin - Union of Students in Ireland [Border, Midlands and Western Region]

**Apologies:**

Julie Aiken - Samaritans Ireland  
Lise Alford - 3Ts  
Paul Anderson - Forever Fathers  
Clare Austick - Union of Students in Ireland [Welfare]  
Kathrina Bentley - Men's Aid Ireland  
Carmen Bryce - Mental Health Ireland  
Anne Corcoran - Samaritans Ireland  
Jim Curran - Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU)  
Carrie Davenport - Shoot Positive

Clare Deasy - HSE Health Promotion and Improvement  
Paula Devine - ARK  
Karen Galway - School of Nursing, QUB  
Paddy Hannigan - Donegal Education and Training Board  
Lisa Harold - National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)  
Marita Hennessy - INFANT Centre, University College Cork  
Peter Jones - Waterford Sports Partnership  
Keith Kelly - Jumpers for Goalposts  
Dermot Lahiff - North West STOP Counselling Service  
Michael Lynch - Men's Action Network  
Michael McKenna - YouthAction NI Work with Young Men Team  
Eunan McKinney - Alcohol Action Ireland  
Shauna O'Connor - See Change / Green Ribbon  
Shane O'Donnell - Marie Curie Early Years Researcher  
Roisin O'Hara - National Screening Service  
Colin Regan - Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)  
Dylan Sloan - School Social Worker  
Pamela Smyth - South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust Carers Support  
Bill Vaughan - Mental Health Ireland (MHI)  
Hannah Williamson - Northern Ireland Chest, Heart and Stroke (NICHS)

## **AGENDA ITEMS ...**

### **1. Welcome and Overview**

Colin welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief overview of the practicalities of the session.

Apologies had been tendered from a broad range of organisations who were unable to make today's date, and these are listed earlier in the minutes.

Colin highlighted that the purpose of today's (busy) meeting was to:

- finalise the image concept;
- determine the social media strategy and agree a hashtag(s);
- talk about resources;
- highlight the need to promote the details of activities / events;
- discuss a media strategy;
- outline the sequence / timetable;
- share our ideas for activities / events / happenings.

### **2. Round of Introductions**

Given the number of 'new faces', Lorcan invited everyone to introduce themselves - by way of helping to get to know each other and to understand the work that each person is involved in. Individuals were asked to:

- Give their name.
- Say which organisation they represent and what it does.
- Briefly outline their interest in men's work.

### 3. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021, were agreed as an accurate reflection of that gathering, and there were no additional matters arising from them.

### 4. Image Concept

Finian reminded the group that, since the last meeting at the end of January, two polls had been held to refine the preferred concept for this year's Men's Health Week (MHW) poster / postcard main image.

In the first poll, there were 12 suggestions on the table ...

- a) Series of opening doors.
- b) Someone knocking on a door.
- c) A man opening his front door and looking out.
- d) Child-like join-the-dots-by-numbers (Puzzle 1).
- e) Pathway to the great outdoors / join-the-dots-by-numbers (Puzzle 2).
- f) 'Trail Map'.
- g) Collage of images - focusing upon ways to reconnect.
- h) Invitation card - similar to a party invitation.
- i) Tree - with branches leading to different sources of help / support / advice / services.
- j) Spider's Web 1 - stylised images of different types of men.
- k) Spider's Web 2 - stylised image of a man with a 'web' of connections above his head.
- l) Jigsaw puzzle with the pieces made up of pictures of a diverse range of men.

... and the three top scorers were: (c) 51 votes; (f) 29 votes; and (h) 28 votes.

These top three choices were then put to a second [single] vote, and there was a clear winner - with option (c) getting 48 votes, (f) getting 21 and (h) getting 2.

Finian invited comments on how to refine the content of this agreed concept of a man going out of his house to connect back into the wider world, and the following suggestions were made:

- As we can't predict what the COVID situation and guidelines will be in late May and June this year, we should be careful to ensure that any characters that feature are socially distanced - just in case!
- Ideally, the photo should be shot from behind the man as he opens his door to the outside world. If he could be looking out towards a beautiful and hopeful vista (such as mountains, lakes, forest, park, sunrise etc.) that would be perfect. However, it was noted that we may not be able to take such a shot within the current COVID restrictions - as this would require the photographer to be inside someone's house and in close proximity to the man opening the door.
- If a 'nature view' is not possible, then the outside focus could be a friend or family member calling to the door to check-in on the occupant, or to invite them to come out to do something (e.g. play a sport).
- Having a number of different people in the photo might be useful. However, it was acknowledged that, as the poster image is very small, it's best to restrict the number of characters to 2-4.

- If it proves impossible to take the image we would like under current COVID restrictions, it was suggested that we could consider doing the image in reverse i.e. have a photo of a man coming out of the house taken from the perspective of the person outside who is calling for him. This change in perspective might help to get around some of the COVID limitations. This could be Plan B.
- Plan C would be to use an illustration / drawing rather than a live image.
- Plan D might be to have an illustration of a man and to also use words to paint the concept e.g. John has missed meeting his friends. John is looking forward to re-connecting with his mates etc. Some people felt, however, that this would not work well on a small poster image.

## 5. Daily Themes

It was proposed at the last meeting that we should adopt a new sequence of daily themes and social media messages. These were circulated in the minutes to everyone, and all members of the Planning Group were asked to confirm if they were happy to adopt these. Most people liked the new 'tone' that they conveyed.

However, while the majority of people were in favour of this new approach, there was also a number of people who expressed very strong concerns about this shift. The objections mostly centred upon the fact that:

- a) By making the themes much broader it will be very difficult to create a coherent focus, deliver consistent key messaging and, subsequently, to gain traction - either online or in traditional media (where 'scattergun' approaches tend to water down impact).
- b) There is strong evidence that COVID has had a major impact upon the increase in alcohol consumption, smoking, over-eating and gambling, and the decrease in physical activity, contact between people and use of support services. It will be difficult to flag these issues, and present the hard facts associated with them, within the broader themes agreed. Thus, they could easily drop off the radar.

Discussion took place as to whether or not all of the daily themes were relevant. It was agreed that we should jettison the messaging on the first Saturday and Sunday (as little effort is usually put into these days) and to merge / re-position some of the topics after this. The proposed way forward is:

### 1. *Setting the Context ...*

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021: What you need to know about Men's Health Week.

### 2. *Men's Health Week ...*

- Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021: Healthy relationships / staying connected / loneliness
- Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021: Physical health / activity
- Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021: Mental health / fitness
- Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021: Giving to others / volunteering your time and experience / helping to make a difference
- Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021: The importance of prevention / early detection / Health MOTs and NCT / healthy lifestyle
- Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2021: Commitment / resolution / pledge for action day
- Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2021: Fathers, fatherhood and males in caring roles

Each of these days will need to have a catchier title - preferably one which links to the MHW theme / call to action - and everyone was asked to send their suggestions to Colin as soon as possible.

Given the more wide-ranging nature of the theme for each day this year, it will be virtually impossible to create a common pool of ready-made Posts and Tweets as in previous years. It was, therefore, suggested that each organisation should consider developing their own social media messages, which reflect their own 'take' on the subject matter. These could also be shared with others to provide inspiration.

The possible hashtags suggested for the week were:

#MensHealthWeek  
#MakingConnections  
#MenMakingConnections  
#CheckItOut

## 6. Resources

A range of resources will be created to support MHW 2021. These will include ...

- **WEB PAGE:** A bespoke web page for MHW 2021 will be created at <https://www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2021.html>. This will act as the central focal point for information on the week.
- **TOOLBOX FOR ACTION:** As in previous years, this document will offer a Q&A style overview of the week - to ensure that everyone has a common understanding.
- **MAN MANUAL:** Due to operational changes within Haynes Publishing, it is unlikely that the 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual can be updated and printed for 2021 - though Colin is still working on this. However, even if this is not possible, MHFI will do simple revision edits to the 2020 version, and make a PDF copy available for free online downloading.
- **POSTERS | POSTCARDS:** When the poster image is finalised, posters and postcards will be created to highlight the week. A decision on the usefulness of printing these can be made closer to the week. However, electronic versions (in a variety of formats) will be available for free online downloading.
- **GRAPHICS:** A broad range of graphics will be created to support the week. These will include a MHW logo, banner, badge, Facebook Cover Photo / Profile Picture, Twitter Header Image, a bespoke graphic for each themed day of MHW to accompany the Posts and Tweets that individual organisations develop ... They will be made available at: <https://www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html>
- **LATEST NEWS:** Everyone can keep up-to-date with developments during MHW at: [www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek](https://www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek) | [www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL](https://www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL). All Planning Group members are invited to send information about their own initiatives to Colin to upload to these platforms.

## 7. Promoting Activities and Events

Lorcan reminded everyone about the importance of recording and publicising the details of MHW events and activities - as each year most activities go unnoticed and unrecognised until after they have taken place.

There are three methods for registering events and activities on the MHW web page - online form, email attachment and snail mail. Everyone is encouraged to submit the details of any events and activities that they / groups they know are running, and to promote this listing process to their networks.

However, this is a perennial issue, and we have never been able to break the back of it. As even some of the most dedicated members of the Planning Group don't get around to submitting the details of their own events, it is difficult to see if there is a way to get 'outsiders' to do this.

Suggestions included:

- All Planning Group partners send a specific request to their network partners.
- Everyone put a message (with links to the online form) at the end of their emails for the month of May and early June.
- Promote the angle of contributors getting extra recognition and appreciation as contributors.
- Produce an online map, which visually shows activities across the country.

## 8. Media Strategy

Since the last meeting, Jason made contact with Nationwide and put Colin in touch with the producers of the show. They have agreed to consider doing a feature on MHW, and Colin is to contact them again at the end of April.

Other people to follow-up as public faces / supporters / ambassadors for the week include ...

- Helen will see if Dr Mark Rowe might consider being a motivational speaker or spokesperson for the week.
- Finian hopes to be able to engage the input of his son (Joseph) again this year, to lead on a TikTok Campaign. This was highly successful last year.
- Linda will explore the possibility of getting buy-in from Brian Pennie - who has done a series of podcasts for Work Well Ireland.
- Marese will contact Prof Luke O'Neill (Trinity College Dublin) and Karl Henry (Operation Transformation) to see if they might add their support to the week.
- Jason will follow-up with comedian, Jason Byrne, to see if he might be willing to input to the week in any practical ways.
- Sharon suggested trying to engage Richard Lynch (ILoveLimerick.com) as a supporter and influencer.

## 9. Timetable

The suggested sequencing / timetable for the lead-in to MHW 2021 is ...

March 2021: Define / capture the main image for the poster.

April 2021:

- Develop MHW poster and other imagery.
- Create MHW 2021 webpage.
- Finalise the 'Toolkit for Action'.
- Individual groups develop their own pool of social media messages, and share these.

Start of May 2021:

- MHFI will send advance notice of MHW to all media outlets in Ireland.
- Start to include the MHW logo or 2021 badge or 2021 banner in outgoing email messages and on websites - to raise awareness of the date and theme.
- Encourage everyone to register their events and activities.

End of May 2021: Put all available information into the 'E-Male Matters' newsletter and circulate widely. Everyone to ask their networks / contacts to re-circulate this information.

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021: Upload the Facebook Cover Photo and Twitter Header Image to our own social media pages / feeds (if possible).

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021: Begin to circulate hard copies of the poster / postcards to our contacts - if they are produced [*also, Man Manuals if it is possible to produce these*].

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021: MHFI will send out a generic Press Release announcing the countdown to MHW 2021.

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021 onwards: Begin to push out daily social media messages on the specific themes, and use the dedicated hashtags.

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021 onwards:

- Send electronic copies of the Man Manual to any contacts who might find it useful.
- Highlight and publicise our own events / activities as widely as possible.
- Release our own press releases.
- Monitor coverage.
- Celebrate the week!

## 10. Own Plans for Events / Activities / Happenings

Lorcan invited everyone to share their ideas and plans for events, activities and happenings to mark MHW 2021. These included: webinars; dissemination of electronic resources; Danderball; staff awareness raising; linking MHW to Carers' Week and Blood Donor Day; fathers' activities; a week long calendar of events; mental health top tips; men's get walking day; talks and presentations; male health champions in the workplace; health checks; men's health focus in magazine for men in prison; promotional materials ...

## 11. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Planning Group will be held via Zoom on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021. It will begin at 2.30pm.