
Fifth Meeting of the Young Men and Suicide Advisory Group: Minutes

Date: Monday 2nd April 2012
Time: 2.00pm - 3.30pm
Venue: Videolink between the Institute of Public Health in Ireland's Dublin and Belfast offices
Present: **Dublin ...** Derek Chambers, Owen Metcalfe, and Noel Richardson
Belfast ... Martin Bell, Colin Fowler, Michael Lynch, Michael Owen (deputising for Madeline Heaney) and Michael McKenna
Apologies: Susan Kenny and Bidy O'Neill
Chairperson: Owen Metcalfe
Minutes: Colin Fowler

Agenda Items

1. Welcome and Introductions

Owen, as Chairperson, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Derek informed the group that he would have to leave before the end of the session. It was, therefore, agreed that the agenda would be re-structured to allow him to make his presentation after Matters Arising.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate reflection of those proceedings. All follow-up actions had been completed, and there were no matters arising that would not be covered in the proposed agenda for this meeting.

3. Republic of Ireland Pilot Intervention

Derek gave a PowerPoint presentation (which Colin will circulate to the Advisory Group) on progress within the Pilot Intervention in the Republic of Ireland. The following points were raised ...

- The rates of both suicide and self-harm are highest among males in their early 20s.
- The ReachOut.com website has experienced a 12% increase in visits.
- An online survey suggests that young adults are reluctant to turn to a helpline or a teacher for support - although as these respondents are already online, this may influence their preferences.
- The Internet is an effective way to target young adults as it is cost-effective, scalable, where young people congregate, and reflects research on help-seeking preferences.
- The Republic of Ireland intervention will have two dimensions: access to an online mental health programme and a campaign which promotes the existence of this resource.

- The 'WorkOut' application was designed to use the Internet to promote help seeking amongst young men by promoting mental health literacy and challenging thoughts that impede help-seeking behaviour.
- The original idea was to work with the Australian developers and to have an Irish version of the site within the existing structure. However, this proved to be extremely expensive and unrealistic.
- Permission was sought from the Inspire Foundation in Australia to replicate the content and format of the site using an Irish web developer. This was agreed.
- An Invitation to Tender document was issued in late March 2012, and a developer (Peter Duggan) was appointed to undertake the design of an Irish version of 'WorkOut'. One of the key elements of the brief was to design and build a site which can be easily self-maintained in the future.
- The cost for developing the Irish site is €7,150. This will include one year's hosting of the website after it has been created.
- During early March 2012, the Australian WorkOut site was tested by young men in Ireland (both North and South). Colin, Noel and Michael (McKenna) all led / recorded Focus Groups, and Inspire Ireland tested the materials with their members.
- The feedback was, overall, very positive. The young men felt that the programme was good, appealing and useful. However, they wanted to know more about who was behind it, and what would happen if the programme told you that you were mentally unfit. They felt that it would need to use 'Irish imagery', and that the videos were off-putting and, sometimes, annoying. No one liked the idea of having to print-off materials to undertake the Missions. It was felt that there's a lot in it, and many people might register but then feel overwhelmed. There was also a sense there's a need to be much clearer about what the programme is, what it seeks to do, how it can help users, and what commitment is required.
- This testing phase (in both Ireland and, more substantively, in Australia) raised a number of practical suggestions with regard to how to improve the site and its functionality. These have been incorporated into the brief for the Irish site developer.
- It is hoped that the site will be ready for launching during Men's Health Week 2012 (i.e. the week beginning Monday 11th June). However, it will always be a work in progress - as it will need to be updated / amended as feedback is received and new materials or resources become available.

A number of issues were raised by the Advisory Group ...

- *Do we have written permission to adapt the Australian resource for an Irish audience?* Derek has been in touch with the Inspire Foundation in Australia (who are linked to Inspire Ireland) to ensure that their approval has been granted. They own the rights to the content, scoring scales, brand etc. but not to the site developer's programming code. As the Irish developer will write their own programme, this latter restriction can easily be overcome. To ensure that we do not breach copyright, Derek was asked to get confirmation, in writing, from the Australian CEO that they are willing to let us use the content of their site.

- *How will users of the site be directed to further sources of support?*
As this is a self-guided computer programme, there is no 'human element' to the process. However, if a user gets a particularly poor score on any of the tests, they will automatically be advised to seek further help, and will be clearly directed to sources of support. The feedback message will not use language which might frighten or panic the user. In Northern Ireland, Lifeline will be the first line of referral. Derek asked what would be the best national referral point in the Republic of Ireland? WorkOut is a practical mental fitness application rather than a counselling or therapeutic service.
- *Does the developer's budget include VAT?*
Derek will check this out with Peter Duggan.

4. Collation of Evidence from the Literature Review / Stakeholder Phases

Before today's meeting, Noel had circulated a draft copy of a report which collates the evidence gathered, to date, from the Literature Review and Stakeholder Engagement phases of the project. This document was prepared by Nick Clarke and himself, and also offers a proposed template for the format and structure of the final report on the overall initiative. Colin will circulate a further copy of this document along with these minutes.

Noel informed the meeting that ...

- This is a first draft of the report, and it requires additional information / re-drafting / editing to fix typos etc.
- The final report will be ready by early September 2012.
- At the minute, there are thirteen sections within this report. However, this is likely to be reduced to seven: Introduction; Statistics and Policy; Effective Practice; Research Methodology; Stakeholder Engagement; Pilot Interventions; Conclusions and Recommendations. This proposal was accepted by the group.
- This is a very substantive document which can be used as a reference point for those who wish to know the minutiae of the project. However, there will also be a clear and concise Executive Summary which will offer a standalone overview of the project.

It was agreed that ...

- It will be great to have everything (in detail) in one place. This could be used to inform policy and service development in the future. It doesn't matter, therefore, how long this full report is.
- An Executive Summary is crucial.
- Four to six pages would be the ideal length of the Summary document.
- The full size report will only be made available electronically (and online). The Executive Summary will be produced and disseminated in both hard copy and electronic copy.

5. Northern Ireland Pilot Intervention

5.1 Young Men's Advisory / Reference Forum

Michael (McKenna) provided an update on recent developments ...

- The purpose of this Forum is to help local young men in the Colin area to gain the confidence, experience and skills to actively provide a voice for issues that affect other young males.
- Recruitment for the group took place in December 2011 and early January 2012.
- The group was formed at the end of January 2012.
- The programme began in February 2012.
- The group is co-facilitated by Marty McKinley (YouthAction) and Umberto Scappaticci (youth worker from the Colin area). It is hoped that 'Scap' will, during this process, gain some new skills in working with young men that can be retained in the community after YouthAction withdraw.
- The group work programme will last until the end of April 2012, and is comprised of weekly sessions (Wednesday evenings) held in Cloona House.
- At the outset, 5-7 young men regularly attended the sessions. However, only two have come to all the sessions. They are now seen as the 'core members', while the others dip in and out.
- In late February 2012, the group addressed a lot of 'heavy stuff' around the issue of mental health and suicide in the Colin area. Marty was able to offer follow-on support to one of the young men who admitted that he had suicidal thoughts.
- The group would like to develop a session on mental health / suicide / masculinity that they could take out and deliver to other young men in the catchment area.
- Marty has helped the two core members to connect with other young men's work in East Belfast. They are planning to go on residential with this group and to learn about what is happening in other young men's work settings.
- The Exit Strategy will entail Scap (who is currently in the 'apprentice role') taking over the running of this Forum and sustaining / expanding it in the future.
- YouthAction is, currently, collating a report on the feedback from sessions.

5.2 Mind Yourself Programme

Colin and Noel have been working closely with the National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF) to plan and deliver a two day 'Mind Yourself' Train the Trainer programme. This took place on Thursday 22nd and Friday 23rd March 2012 in Cloona House in the Colin area. The training was delivered by Ella Arensman and Jacklyn McCarthy from NSRF.

This training attracted 14 participants - although one of them was unable to finish the training programme due to personal circumstances.

As a condition of being part of this training, everyone had to commit to delivering five 'Mind Yourself' programmes within the next year to young people in the Colin area. Negotiations have been taking place with the Principal of St. Colm's High School in the area, and it is hoped to roll-out the first phase of this initiative to approximately 100 pupils, aged 15-16 years old, in late May 2012.

Kevin Bailey (Suicide Prevention Coordinator for the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust) has worked alongside the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) to operationalise both the Train the Trainer programme and the delivery of Mind Yourself within the school setting.

Although not part of the original project plan or budget, MHFI is keen to assess the impact of the Mind Yourself programme upon young people in the Colin area. To this end, a Masters student from IT Carlow (Paula Kinsella) has been brought on board to conduct this research. Paula participated in the Train the Trainer programme to familiarise herself with its ethos, rationale and methods, and to inform her approach to the evaluation process.

It is hoped that it might be possible to tweak the Mind Yourself programme in the future so that it can also be used in non-school settings.

5.3 Man's World?

The key contacts in the Colin area now feel that it would be difficult to recruit a core group for the 'Man's World?' element of the programme as was originally envisaged - as a lot of effort has been put into recruitment for the core Mind Yourself training. Therefore, it has been agreed that MHFI will offer a small number of tailored one-off workshops and/or places on existing MHFI seminars and workshops.

5.4 Group Work Resources

Colin has identified a number of off-the-shelf resources to encourage and stimulate discussion with young men in group work settings. These will be purchased for the Colin area, and given to them at the end of this intervention. Michael (McKenna) informed the group that YouthAction's Work with Young Men's Unit is also collating practice resources which they would be happy to share with Scap and others in Colin.

6. Action Points

- i. Colin will circulate a copy of the PowerPoint presentation which Derek gave to the Advisory Group meeting.
- ii. To ensure that we do not breach copyright, Derek will get written confirmation from the CEO of the Inspire Foundation in Australia that they are willing to let us use the content of their WorkOut site.
- iii. Everyone was asked to consider useful support services for inclusion in the Irish WorkOut website, and to identify the most appropriate national referral point in the Republic of Ireland for young men who need immediate help and support.
- iv. Derek will check if the web developer's budget includes VAT.
- v. Colin will circulate a further copy of the draft report which collates the evidence gathered from the Literature Review and Stakeholder Engagement phases of the project.
- vi. When completed, YouthAction will circulate a copy of their collated practice resources for working with young men.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 8th May 2012, from 2.00pm - 3.30pm. This meeting will be conducted via videolink between the Institute of Public Health's Belfast and Dublin offices.