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# Fourth Meeting of the Young Men and Suicide Advisory Group: Minutes

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**Date:** Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012  
**Time:** 10.30am - 12.30pm (followed by lunch)  
**Venue:** Videolink between the Institute of Public Health in Ireland's Dublin and Belfast offices  
**Present:** **Dublin ...** Derek Chambers, Vincent McCarthy, Owen Metcalfe, Noel Richardson  
**Belfast ...** Martin Bell, Colin Fowler, Michael Lynch, Michael Owen (deputising for Madeline Heaney), Jonny Ashe and Marty McKinley (deputising for 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, and thanked them for their attendance. As some people present were new to the group (and deputising for regular members), Owen invited everyone to introduce themselves and the organisation that they work for.

### 2. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate reflection of those proceedings. A number of matters arising were also noted ...

- Following the last Advisory Group meeting, Susan, Noel and Colin had a teleconference (Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2011) with Ella Arensman from the National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF). They were able to agree a way forward in relation to the provision of the 'Mind Yourself' Train the Trainer programme in the Colin area of greater-Belfast.
- On Page 5, the line which reads: *"If we do choose to go with Mind Yourself, then NSRF should not be directly involved in the evaluation process - as they have a vested interest in its success"*, should be changed to: *"... as a matter of good governance, NSRF should only be involved in an advisory capacity in relation to the evaluation process rather than in collecting or analysing data"*.
- Noel was asked about progress in producing an overview of the findings from the literature review and stakeholder engagement process. Nick and himself have already produced a series of draft standalone progress papers on each element (i.e. 'Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention in Young Men', 'Summary of Findings from the Stakeholder Survey of Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Promotion with Young Men', 'Effective Practice in Suicide Prevention Work with Young Men', and 'Examples of Effective Practice for Suicide Prevention with Young

Men'). These have been circulated to all Advisory Group members. The compilation of these materials into one composite document is a work in progress. However, Noel will try to have a draft version produced by the end of March 2012. This material will form part of the final report on the overall project - alongside a review of outcomes from the pilot interventions. It was also suggested that:

- This material should only be made available to a 'restricted group' within the DHSSPS, PHA, HSE and NOSP until it is fully written-up contextually.
  - The final report will be relevant to a range of audiences e.g. policy makers, service providers, practitioners, academics, voluntary organisations etc.
  - To meet the needs of this diverse spectrum of recipients, the report will, probably, be fairly substantive. However, it was agreed that it should not be too long - as no one might read it.
  - Whatever type of final report is produced, there needs to be a concise Executive Summary which gives a clear insight into the key issues facing young men and recommendations for future action.
  - It might be useful to list recommendations for specific bodies e.g. government, service providers, specialist work interest groups etc.
  - The broad themes / issues which have arose so far might help to inform the thematic planning process within the Public Health Agency.
- As planned, Derek and Noel had a teleconference before Christmas to further develop the Work Out proposal, and an MHFI / Inspire Ireland Planning Group meeting was held on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012 in Dublin. This involved a range of staff from Inspire Ireland and their marketing / publicity associates, as well as Noel and Colin.

### **3. Republic of Ireland Pilot Intervention**

The 'WorkOut' programme was designed by the Inspire Foundation / ReachOut in Australia, and uses the Internet and social media technologies to engage young men in looking after their own mental health. It focuses upon the concept of 'mental fitness'.

The web address for this website is: [www.workoutapp.com.au](http://www.workoutapp.com.au) The programme is, currently, being tested in Beta version in Australia, and went live in late October / early November 2011. It is being tested for technical flaws in the site, and to assess what works best / is of most interest to visitors. After the testing phase, the site will be amended - based upon any feedback that is received.

During Work Out, young men are invited to ...

- Register
- Take a comprehensive test to assess their strengths and weaknesses.
- Undertake a series of practical missions to improve their mental fitness.
- Use the online reports to check (at any time) how they are improving.

There are four areas which are addressed in the programme ...

- Taking Control
- Handling Pressure
- Being Practical
- Building Confidence

The materials utilised in the programme have been developed in partnership with the 'Brain and Mind Research Institute' in Australia. They were chosen because of the strong evidence base which indicated that they can have a positive impact on the mental health of young men.

In Ireland, it is proposed that we should ...

- Test these materials with local young men to gauge their level of satisfaction and to get a sense of the resource's usefulness. It is hoped that this testing will begin in late February and last until the end of the third week in March 2012.
- Re-develop / amend the content, format, imagery and site structure to accommodate local needs and Irish culture.
- Launch an Irish version of the site - hopefully, around the time of Men's Health Week 2012.
- Support a public awareness campaign which focuses upon young men and mental fitness, and highlights this online resource.

In the testing phase, it is hoped to replicate the recruitment and evaluation process which is taking place in Australia. This will also help us to compare data; with a view to ascertaining what needs to be re-designed. However, during this period, we will need to have an IP tracking system (to isolate which registrants are from Ireland), and a signposting / support page for Irish users.

Derek and Vince gave everyone an overview of the outcomes from the Australian testing phase during the period 26<sup>th</sup> October 2011 to 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2012. Colin will email a copy of these results to all members of the Advisory Group ...

- The Australians primarily used Facebook to recruit participants to the testing of their site. It is proposed that this should also be used as a recruitment mechanism in Ireland. However, Facebook advertisements are quite expensive and, in Australia, did not produce a huge number of participants (1,569 viewed the site, but only 161 registered on it).
- 83.9% of registrants were male.
- 188 missions were accepted. However, only 22 were fully completed.
- The most popular Missions were 'Being Practical' and 'Handling Pressure'. Interestingly, these were the ones which are the least focused upon Cognitive Behavioural Therapy principles / models.
- Many of the participants did not like having a delay between activities, and said that they would prefer having immediate online feedback.
- Fifteen face-to-face interviews were also conducted as part of this testing stage.
- Site usage statistics were generated using Google Analytics.
- Of the four recruitment advertisements tested, the ones which got the most positive response were: "Take Control. Get Focused" and "Are You Mentally Fit?"

It was suggested that in the Irish testing phase we should supplement the Facebook recruitment by utilising existing networks and contacts that members of the Advisory Group already have.

Derek reminded the group that ...

- Even after the testing phase, this will continue to be a 'work in progress' - since new materials will be added / less useful aspects removed over the coming years.

- This resource will be relevant to young men throughout the whole of Ireland - and this will be reflected in the images / voice-overs / support contacts etc. on the site.
- Although the intellectual property rights for this initiative lie with Inspire Australia / ReachOut.com, the Irish site will recognise and acknowledge the role of the local partners here.
- Longer-term sustainability is crucial. Therefore, it is important to build a site which can be easily maintained in the future. Inspire Ireland will take on this role.
- There is a hope that this resource might be made available on other social networking platforms in the coming years.
- Ireland is the first country to follow the lead of Australia on this initiative. It is likely that the USA might be the next place to come on-board.

There is, currently, a problem with people from outside Australia registering on the site - as it only accepts Australian postcodes at the minute. Derek will ask the developers for a code to allow members of the Advisory Group to register and try out the features of the site. He will then forward the details to the Advisory Group.

#### **4. Northern Ireland Pilot Intervention**

There are a number of distinct strands to the Northern Ireland pilot intervention:

- Establishment of a Young Men's Advisory / Reference Forum.
- Training for facilitators to enable them to deliver the 'Mind Yourself' programme.
- Participation by a range of local stakeholders in a 'Man's World?' programme - focusing upon working with young men and understanding their world.
- Acquisition of a number of key resource materials on working with young men.

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

Marty and Jonny from YouthAction NI's Work with Young Men Unit provided an update on recent developments ...

- YouthAction has a long-standing programme of work which seeks to increase engagement with young men and to promote their personal development.
- The purpose of this Advisory / Reference 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. This Forum can also be used as a mechanism for any future engagement / interventions with young men from the area.
- The groupwork sessions are being co-facilitated with Umberto Scappaticci (Scap) - a youth worker in 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.
- To date, recruitment meetings with local service providers and stakeholders have been held; a core group has been recruited; a needs assessment has been drafted; recording mechanisms have been put in place.
- Colin, Noel, Marty and Jonny will hold a teleconference in the near future to discuss the evaluation tools.
- The group work programme will last until the end of April 2012, and will be comprised of 12 x 2 hours sessions, held each Wednesday evening.
- It is hoped that at the end of the programme, this body will produce a 'product' such as a video / flyer / photographic display / event etc.

## **Mind Yourself Programme**

'Mind Yourself' is a brief intervention which was originally developed in the Republic of Ireland for use in secondary school settings.

Following the last Advisory Group meeting, the National Suicide Research Foundation (NSRF) has been asked by MHFI to deliver a two day 'Train the Trainer' programme for up to 14 participants in March 2012. Annie Armstrong and Kevin Bailey (from the Colin Suicide Prevention Task Force) feel that they will be able to recruit this full quota of trainees from within the greater-Colin area.

The programme will be delivered by Ella Arensman (Director of Research) and Jacklyn McCarthy (SEYLE Research Officer) within NSRF.

As part of the recruitment process, it has been decided that any potential trainees must agree to deliver a number of programmes to young people in the Colin area if they are to secure a place on the programme. It is hoped that this will ensure a successful roll-out of the knowledge gained, and have the greatest local impact.

Negotiations have been held with the principal of the local Secondary School (St Colm's High School) about the possibility of trainees working in pairs to deliver this package soon after the training period has ended. This has been agreed in principle.

NSRF have offered trainees the possibility of visiting and observing some of the Mind Yourself sessions which are being delivered in schools in the Republic of Ireland at the moment.

## **Man's World?**

Following regular meetings and telephone / email correspondence with key personnel in the Colin Neighbourhood Partnership, it was felt that it might be difficult to recruit a core group for the 'Man's World?' element of the programme as was originally envisaged. Instead, it was suggested we should consider running a small number of standalone, one-off, workshops which might attract a broader range of participants.

## **Group Work Resources**

Colin has been researching and investigating a number of off-the-shelf group work resources to encourage and stimulate discussion with young men in group work settings. These will be presented to Scap at the end of this intervention.

## **5. Miscellaneous Issues**

- It was acknowledged that, as the work has developed organically, many members of the Advisory Group have also become involved in the hands-on practicalities of project delivery. While this is to be expected - as those present represent some of the foremost practitioners in this field - there may be some danger of a conflict of interest. This needs to be monitored. Owen reminded the meeting that this is a complex project, and that we should all try to consider and vocalise (at the earliest opportunity) any potential risks that we might perceive.

- Noel felt that the project has evolved in a very positive way, and that capturing this process would be useful for other initiatives. This dimension should be included in the final report if possible.
- It was felt that the detailed minutes of meetings help to capture the range and scope of developments, as well as the 'feel' of the project. These should be continued as a record of progress.
- Michael (Owen) stated that the Public Health Agency is happy that the project is continuing to maintain ongoing contact / links with both the Colin Neighbourhood Partnership and local PHA staff. This is important if we are to avoid being seen as 'parachuting people into the area'.
- Martin felt that the Advisory Group has moved to having a 'steering group' role, and has built-up a strong level of trust, openness and communication between members.
- Owen informed the meeting that the final tranche of funding for the project was received yesterday.

## **6. Action Points**

- i. Noel will try to have a draft version of a composite document which collates all the evidence from the Literature Review and Stakeholder Engagement stages of the project produced by the end of March 2012.
- ii. Colin will email a copy of the outcomes from the Australian testing phase to all members of the Advisory Group.
- iii. Derek will ask the developers for a code to allow members of the Advisory Group to register for / try out the features of the Work Out site. He will send the details of this code to the Advisory Group.
- iv. Colin, Derek and Noel will progress the testing of the Work Out application with young men in Ireland.
- v. Marty, Jonny, Noel and Colin, will hold a teleconference in the near future to discuss the evaluation tools for the Young Men's Advisory / Reference Group.

## **7. Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2012, from 2.00pm - 3.30pm. This will be conducted via videolink between the Institute of Public Health's Belfast and Dublin offices.