

#itsoktotalk

Male Mental Health

#itsoktotalk

The reality is that men make up three quarters of all successful suicides in the UK. However, did you know that only 24% of men who have experienced high levels of stress have talked about it to friends or family? That means that 76% of men simply **'GET ON WITH IT'** and pretend that things are fine, but holding in problems only makes it worse... (Rowland, 2019)

4623

male suicides in the UK in 2014 (CALM, 2019)

Many men feel that they should be a **'real man'** with many believing that admitting their feelings brings shame upon their gender, but we need to set men free from that out of date view and announce **#itsoktotalk!** (Rowland, 2019)

"it's not weak to talk, you're not going to burden anyone, it's not going to be embarrassing. It's better to talk about things and get it off your chest. There is help out there and the world is a lot more compassionate than people give it credit for" (Ambler, 2016)

In 2016 Luke Ambler, a rugby player, launched a male mental health campaign **#itsoktotalk**, after his brother in law took his own life. This campaign was simple:

(ITV, 2016)

Luke asked for an online gesture: take a selfie whilst doing the **'okay'** sign and post it online with the



hashtag **#itsoktotalk** and it went VIRAL:



(Mental Matters, 2016)
With celebrities embracing the de-stigmatisation of male mental health.

Time to Change Wales

Mental illness can often be brushed off by family, friends or colleagues, because it's not a **physical illness**, this can make life with a mental illness harder, than just having the illness itself (Time to Change Wales, 2019).

'IF MENTAL HEALTH WERE A PHYSICAL ILLNESS, PEOPLE WOULD SEND GET WELL CARDS, THEY WOULD CALL ROUND WITH FLOWERS AND HAVE EMPATHY IN BUCKET LOADS, INSTEAD, WITH MENTAL HEALTH, YOU ARE LUCKY IF SOMEONE ASKS IF YOU'RE OK BEFORE QUICKLY CHANGING THE SUBJECT'
(Time to change Wales, 2019)

Mental health problems are a growing public health concern, however, measuring mental health is proving challenging (Mental Health Foundation, 2016). Not only for lack of resources, but the stigma around the hidden nature of mental health issues (Mental Health Foundation, 2016).

SUICIDE and **SELF-HARM** are not mental health problems themselves, but are outcomes of mental distress (Mental Health Foundation, 2016)

AM I SUICIDAL?

- Feeling pre-occupied by abstract thoughts about committing suicide
- Feeling that the world would be better off without you in it
- Thinking about how you would want to end your life
- Putting the plans in motion, **ENDING YOUR LIFE**

(Mind, 2016)

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

'Suicidal thoughts aren't permanent – things do improve. You can find motivation to live again'

(Mind, 2016)

There are uncertain theories as to why more men than women commit suicide, but let's talk about suicide in a **social Perspective**

EMILE DURKHEIM...

Durkheim argues that suicide is a social phenomenon in terms of the breakdown of the **vital bond of life** and suggests that suicide is not an isolated or personal act, but a social problem rather than a psychological explanation. Durkheim categorises suicide into four paths.

- **EGOISTIC SUICIDE** – becoming socially isolated and feeling like there is not place for you in this world.
- **ALTRUISTIC SUICIDE** – to sacrifice your life to save or benefit others.
- **ANOMIC SUICIDE** – due to a certain breakdown of social equilibrium, for example: suicide after bankruptcy; an event happening suddenly/unexpectedly.
- **FATALISTIC SUICIDE** – overregulation in society; feeling controlled by the values and norms in society, feeling oppressed and unable to escape any other way.

(Moore, 2017)

MENTAL HEALTH, POLICIES AND THE WORLD

The World Health Organisation (WHO)

FACT: 450 million people experience mental or neurological disorders around the world.

Mental health policies define a vision for the **future** and coordinate programs and services related to these objectives (World Health Organisation, no date)

'THE MENTAL HEALTH POLICY PROJECT'

WHO have developed a project, focussed specifically on **mental health policy**, which they emphasise is an urgent National matter and in turn the project will help to bring together national policies and put them into practice, which WHO trust will improve mental health care across the world (World Health Organisation, no date).

The results of which can be found on <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/the-mhgap-community-toolkit-field-test-version>

THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

Together for Mental Health

WHAT IS THAT? A strategy for **mental health** and **wellbeing** in Wales, consisting of themes that are aimed at promoting wellbeing, and the prevention of poor mental health by addressing the **STIGMA** and **DISCRIMINATION** by delivering a fully integrated network of care (Welsh Government, 2018)

A positive step forward for mental health

Mental Health and their **connection** to Suicide

The Mental Health Foundation

MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION = SUICIDE PREVENTION

(Mental Health Foundation, 2019)

Suicidal behaviours are complex, and have a combination of factors, those with poor mental health have been found to have a higher risk of suicidal thoughts (Mental Health Foundation, 2019)

COMMON EXAMPLES OF MENTAL HEALTH ILLNESS:

- **ANXIETY**
- **DEPRESSION**
- **LONELINESS**
- **PANIC ATTACKS**
- **POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)**

(Time to change, 2019)

Time to change (2018) tells us that suicidal feelings indicate that a person has poor mental health – **but remember**, just like having a cold; we get ill, then we get better, our mental health can also heal.

'SOMEONE YOU KNOW RIGHT NOW WILL HAVE A **MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM**; THEY JUST DON'T KNOW HOW TO TELL YOU'

(Time to change, 2019)

SAM PARKER – WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT BRITONS MALE SUICIDE CRISIS? (2017)



(Image 3)

'men in the UK are more likely to die from suicide than any other cause of death' (Parker, 2017).

If suicide were a virus, we may have found a cure by now... (Parker, 2017)

WE LIKE TO THINK THAT WE ARE MADE OF STRONG STUFF, but DID YOU KNOW...

75% Of people who commit suicide have never been diagnosed with a mental health condition. (Parker, 2017)

Is male suicide caused by a change in social evolution?

Parker (2017) considers decades of social progress to be one main factors in male **suicide**, the change of a man's role in life, for example, women making more money; becoming less reliant on men. The concept of being an **'modern man'** being the more ideal **'mate'** – men are preferred to have a more sensitive side, which is now considered to be **more masculine** (Parker, 2017).

So, is #Itsoktotalk too modern for MEN?

ROBIN WILLAMS



(Image 4)

Four-time Oscar nominated actor and KING of comedy

DIED ON: August 11th, 2014.

CAUSE OF DEATH: Suicide

Robin Suffered with 4 major risk factors:

- Relationship problems
- Financial problems
- Drug addiction
- Major depression

All of these factors led to his suicide, but we have to ask, how did the KING of comedy develop these risk factors?

CELEBRITIES ARE NOT SAFE FROM THIS CAUSE OF DEATH

(Tohid, 2016)

If male suicide was talked about in 2014, would Robin still be alive?

In 2019, we know the seriousness of MALE MENTAL HEALTH and SUICIDE, it's time to break the chain #itsoktotalk.

Rationale

Male suicide is a contemporary issue which has become increasingly more recognised through the use of social media, with celebrities getting involved in the #itsoktotalk campaign, which is a heavy focus of the leaflet. Suicide has been recognised to come under the umbrella of mental health, and therefore a second element of focus for the leaflet is mental health, and how the two are linked together. This gives the opportunity for the reader to follow up and do more research on the male suicide and mental health campaigns, in an attempt for the reader to ‘stumble’ across the right help for that individual person. By offering plenty of information, and opportunities of positive policy change on a macro level, it is evident that male suicide is a global problem, whilst bringing it back to the micro level, the welsh government, it can be shown that the reader isn’t on their own with their thoughts and feelings.

This leaflet has been designed with the intention of being read by men who may be experiencing poor mental health and experiencing suicidal thoughts. It has been produced in an academic manner; however, its design is to be eye catching and modern to not be perceived as a traditional ‘boring’ information leaflet. Reading through the leaflet should give the reader a sense of a story, from facts about suicide, what it is, the history and also the legalities, especially focussing on the stigma of mental health whilst also giving gentle encouragement as to who can help when suicidal thoughts may start to ignite. This leaflet also gives the reader the opportunity to address any issues they may have, by gently

offering some reasons as to why they may be feeling suicidal and re-enforcing the message that it is ok to talk.

At the end of the leaflet, male suicide has been humanised by giving a subtle hint to Robin Williams, who, in 2014 died of suicide. Robin Williams often shared his suffering of depression; however, it was never apparent that he was suicidal, which shows that suicide is something that can be hidden well and covered up by personality. By asking the reader questions, this leaflet is designed to stop the reader in their thoughts and to think about their own personal situation and give them the courage to talk to a person that they feel comfortable to talk to, to prevent them becoming a statistic of male suicide in 2019.

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