Masculinity & Mental Health Stigma in the UK

Misbah Khan | BSc (Hons) Health & Social Care | Independent Project

1. Research Aim

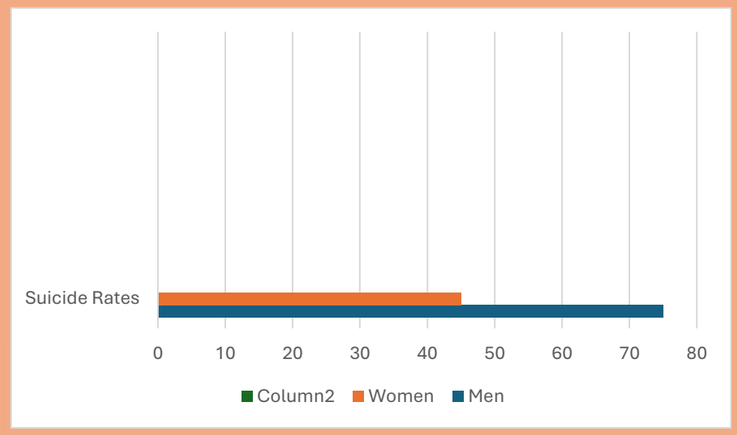
To explore how traditional masculine norms in the UK contribute to mental health stigma and influence men's emotional expression and help-seeking behaviours.

2. Research Design

Secondary qualitative research design

- Analysed existing peer-reviewed studies, UK statistics, and organisational reports
- Appropriate for sensitive topics where direct participation may pose ethical risks
- Enables synthesis of diverse evidence on masculinity, stigma, and help-seeking

Male vs Female Suicide Rates (ONS, 2024)



3. Search Strategy

Keywords & Boolean Operators

- "Masculinity" OR "hegemonic masculinity"
- "Mental health stigma" OR "self-stigma"
- "Men" AND "help-seeking behaviour"
- "UK" OR "United Kingdom"
- "Gender norms" AND "emotional expression"

Databases

Google Scholar | PubMed | PsycINFO | ONS | NHS Digital | Mental Health Foundation | Samaritans

Filters Applied

- English language
- 2015–2025
- UK-based or UK-relevant
- Peer-reviewed or official reports
- Focus on men, masculinity, stigma, or help-seeking

Search Process Overview

1. Identify keywords
2. Database searches
3. Apply filters
4. Screen titles & abstracts
5. Full-text review
6. Thematic coding & analysis

4. Thematic Analysis

Following Braun & Clarke (2006):

1. Familiarisation
2. Coding
3. Theme development
4. Review
5. Define & name themes
6. Report writing

Coding clarification

Codes that appeared consistently across multiple studies were grouped into themes based on frequency and conceptual similarity.

Themes Identified

1. **Masculine norms & emotional suppression**
2. **Stigma & barriers to help-seeking**
3. **Intersectional influences** (ethnicity, class, sexuality)

6. Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion

- Published 2015–2025
- UK-based or UK-relevant
- Peer-reviewed or reputable organisations
- Focus on men, masculinity, stigma, or help-seeking

Exclusion

- Studies on women/children only
- Non-academic sources (blogs, opinion pieces)
- Outside UK (unless comparative)
- Pre-2015 (unless historically essential)

Study	Method	Key Findings	Contribution
Seidler et al. (2016)	Review	Masculinity → emotional suppression	Themes 1 & 2
Evans et al. (2022)	Survey	Anticipated stigma limits help-seeking	Theme 2
Griffiths et al. (2023)	Interviews	Shame shapes disclosure	Theme 1
NHS Digital (2023)	National data	Men underrepresented in therapy	Theme 2
ONS (2024)	Statistics	Male suicide rates	Themes 1 & 3

Results Summary Sheet

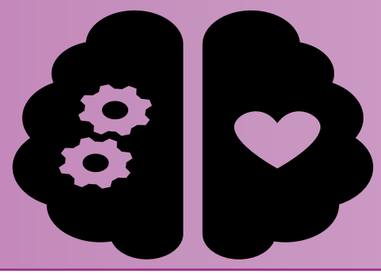
Source Tracking Table

Author	Key Finding	Inclusion
Seidler et al. (2016)	Masculinity → reduced help-seeking	✓
Evans et al. (2022)	Anticipated stigma	✓
ONS (2024)	Men = 75% of suicides	✓

Results Summary Table

Study	Key Insight
Griffiths et al. (2023)	Shame limits emotional disclosure
NHS Digital (2023)	Men underrepresented in therapy
CALM (2024)	Stigma patterns in UK men

Note: ***The first number = total search results; the second = number included after screening***



10. Ethical Considerations

- Secondary research only → no participant risk
- Respectful, non-stigmatising language (Corrigan & Rao, 2020)
- No personal data collected
- Avoided reinforcing stereotypes; masculinity treated as socially constructed (Connell, 1995)
- Sensitivity to male suicide and vulnerability

11. Conclusion

This secondary qualitative methodology enabled a rigorous and transparent synthesis of contemporary evidence on masculinity and mental health stigma in the UK. The structured search strategy, thematic analysis, and validation processes ensured credibility and depth, forming a strong foundation for the findings and discussion

11. Reference List (Poster Version)

Ajzen (1991); Braun & Clarke (2006); Cohen et al. (2018); Connell (1995); Connell & Messerschmidt (2020); Corrigan & Rao (2020); Evans et al. (2022); Griffiths et al. (2023); Jorm (2020); NHS Digital (2023); O'Neil (2015); ONS (2024); Seidler et al. (2016); Vogel et al. (2007); WHO (2022).