

People in Partnership



World Mental Health Day 10th October 2019

(Suicide Prevention)

Young Men's Mental Health



People in Partnership is provided by Southdown and funded by East Sussex County Council.



www.southdown.org

Background

People in Partnership wants everybody with mental health challenges, their families and carers, to have the opportunity to help shape the experience and quality of health support and provision across Hastings, Rother, Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford.

We work alongside the community to involve them in the design and delivery of services (across primary care, secondary care, crisis and acute care)

We also work with mental health providers and organisations, supporting them to engage with their local communities to develop support tailored to the needs of the local area.

In September 2017 we¹ worked alongside **Heath Watch** and Sussex Coast College to help identify what matters to young people in the local area, particularly around mental health provision.

What came from this was that many young people are reluctant to talk about their own mental health due to fear of judgement and stigma.



Additionally, that many were unaware of local services or reluctant to engage in services due to, what they felt were, negative attachments that came from accessing mental health support.

Following on from this in February 2018, Peers in Partnership, Southdown's East Sussex Mental Health Recovery Services, Health Watch, Sussex Coast College and other local partners hosted a '**Time to Talk**' Event at the college's Station Plaza and Ore Valley Campuses.

The aim was to encourage young people to talk about their mental health and to signpost them to relevant services. People in Partnership also gathered feedback on learner's perception of mental health.



Following on from the success of this event, People in Partnership wanted to take this further and in line with the theme of 2018's '**World Mental Health Day**', we

¹ Formerly Peers in Partnership

organised an event which recognised '**Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World**'. Together with community partners and organisations we came together with learners from the college to discuss some of the issues that young people face today

(<https://www.southdown.org/how-we-help/mental-health-recovery/people-partnership-east-sussex>)

Evaluating this event with the college group and partners, we identified that in particular, a demographic that we needed to reach was young men. With suicide being one of the leading causes of death for young men ²and the reluctance to seek support, we worked with the [East Sussex College Group](#) to coordinate events at their Ore Valley Campus and their Eastbourne Campus. These sites in particular have a high ratio of male learners.

For 'Time to Change/Time to Talk Day' February 2019

People in Partnership spoke to over 100 young men about their mental health, collating this information and sharing findings with partners and the community. Findings included:



- **Young men are more likely to speak to a family member or a friend about their mental health, rather than a professional e.g. teacher or GP**
- **Over 50% indicated that they would be reluctant to seek support due to barriers which include, stigma, fear and pride**
- **The main sources of stress for young men were; expectations, money and college**
- **Over 50% of those asked indicated that they care for a family member with mental health challenges.**

World Mental Health Day 2019 (10th October)

² <https://www.theguardian.com/mental-health-research-matters/2017/jan/20/12-statistics-to-get-you-thinking-about-mental-health-in-young-people>

The theme set for this years WMHD was **'Suicide Prevention'**³. People in Partnership recognized that in 2018 men accounted for three-quarters of death by suicide⁴ and that suicide is the most common cause of death for men aged 20-49.



Figure 1 <https://twitter.com/samaritans>

Additionally, East Sussex has a significantly higher suicide rate than the England average⁵. With this in mind, People in Partnership wanted to revisit their work for Time to Talk Day and further explore young men's views on suicide as well as their support networks and coping strategies. We visited the East Sussex College Groups campuses and presented young men with a range of facts (taken from: <https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/key-data-mental-health>) and related questions about suicide and mental health.

People in Partnership also worked with [East Sussex Community Voice](#) on the CCG's **'Declare your Care' campaign**⁶ asking young people if they would share their experience of mental health services and encouraging them to speak up about poor care/treatment.

The feedback and findings below will be shared with our Network and Partners to enable them to provide stronger support for this demographic and to help prevent further suicides for this group.

'Mental health problems affect one in four of us, yet people are still afraid to talk about it. Time to Talk Day encourages everyone to talk about mental health.'

<https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/get-involved/time-talk-day>

³ <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/world-mental-health-day>

⁴ <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/statistics/mental-health-statistics-suicide>

⁵ East Sussex Suicide Prevention Plan April 2018-March 2019

⁶ <https://www.cqc.org.uk/help-advice/your-stories/declare-your-care-children-young-people>

Questionnaire Results

FACT: Just over three out of four suicides (76%) are by men and suicide is the biggest cause of death for men under 35

Question: As a young man, why do you think men are more at risk of suicide than women?

The main reasons young men gave were:

- 'Men wont/can't speak up about/talk about their emotions'
- 'Men find it difficult to talk about what's on their minds'
- 'Stigma'
- 'Stress'
- 'Expectations'
- 'Lack of male support services'
- 'Access to mental health support is more difficult for men'
- 'Loneliness'
- 'Social Media'

Additional comments include:

- ❖ 'Women's mental health issues are lot more accepted'
- ❖ 'Men's mental health has been ignored until now'
- ❖ 'Because of the way we have been brought up'.

The most common answers from learners indicated that men find it difficult to talk about/open up about their feelings and that there is a fear of being judged/stigma.

Additionally, '**expectations**' was a common theme which links back to our 'Time to Talk' findings (February 2019).

"I've been saying this forever. There's a stigma about men talking about feelings. We're born into thinking that a man should be 'tough', and push his feelings aside because it isn't 'manly'."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-45908983>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/m/men-and-mental-health>

FACT: According to the Men's Health Forum, 73% of adults who 'go missing' are men and 87% of those sleeping rough are men.

Question: As a young man, why do you feel men are less likely to seek support for their mental health?

The main reasons young men gave were:

- 'Embarrassment and shame'
- 'Pride'
- 'Stigma'
- 'Men don't want to talk'
- 'Fear'
- 'Low confidence'
- 'Feelings might go away by themselves'
- 'Feelings that problems should be sorted out independently'

Additional comments include:

- ❖ 'A man has to cope on his own due to social status'
- ❖ 'Men take longer to mature'
- ❖ 'Men feel they need to look after their family and not themselves'.

A majority of young men who answered this indicated that barriers were **fear, pride, shame and stigma**. This links in with the previous question and '**expectations**' reflecting how some young men feel that expressing their emotions is a sign of weakness.

"You don't want to be weaker than the man next to you,"

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/48218327>

Young men feel they also need to 'look after their family' which could be linked to poverty and family structure in the area.

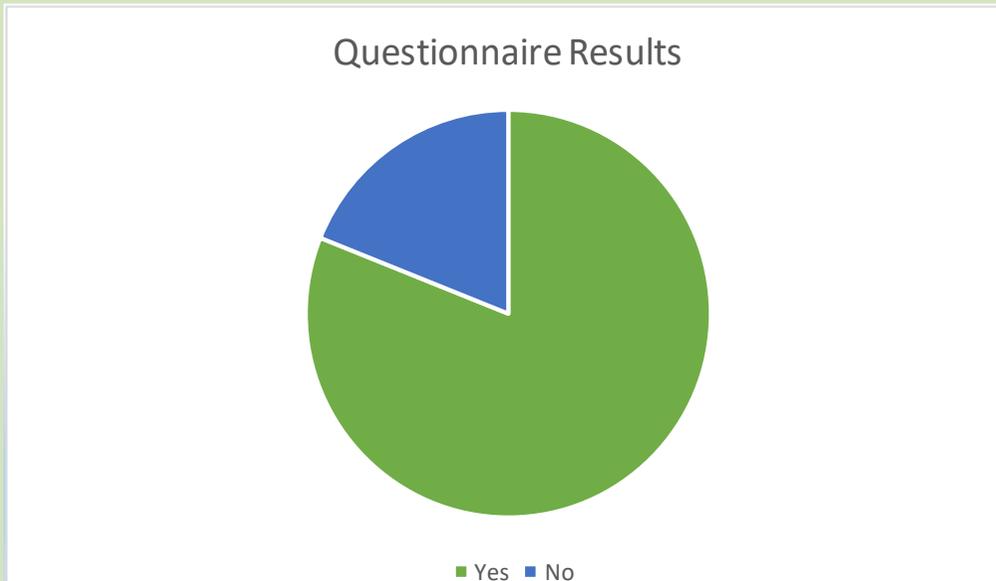
'One in seven East Sussex babies are born to single parents, new data from the Office for National Statistics has revealed.'

Single parent charity Gingerbread said lone parents still face some stigma, but recent reports debunk the idea that having only one parent can negatively impact children.'

<https://www.eastbourneherald.co.uk/news/one-in-seven-babies-in-east-sussex-born-to-single-parents-1-8858954>

FACT: Men have measurably lower access to the social support of friends, relatives and community

Question: Do you feel you have someone you can talk to when you feel worried or anxious?



Of the **138** young men asked, **107** indicated they do have someone to talk to if they are feeling worried or anxious.

65% indicated that they would speak to close family members, partners and friends.

The remaining stated they would approach their teacher, safeguarding officer or GP.

A small % said they didn't know.

Comments include;

'It's hard to talk about how I am feeling'

'People will automatically respond by saying 'man-up!''

'I don't want people to worry about me'.

Whilst it is encouraging that a majority of those asked indicated they would speak to someone, the small % that wouldn't shouldn't be viewed as negligible as these figures could represent the '1 in 4 of us who will suffer with mental health challenges' at some point in our lives.

'Men much less likely to seek mental health help than women'

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/nov/05/men-less-likely-to-get-help--mental-health>

FACT: The Men's Health Forum found that men are almost three times more likely than women to become dependent on alcohol.¹

QUESTION: Think back to a time when you were particularly stressed or worried – how did you manage this?

Answers included;

- Doing something I enjoy e.g. gaming
- Exercise
- Spending time with friends/family
- Speaking to someone
- Listening to music
- Drugs/alcohol
- Smoking
- Disengage
- Getting into fights
- Self-harming

As with our 'Time to Talk' Report, it was encouraging that many of the young men who answered indicated that they had positive/healthy coping strategies. However, **23%** didn't answer which could reflect they did not have strategies to manage their stress/worries.

The most common answers were:

- Engaging in activities they enjoyed e.g. gaming
- Speaking to others
- Exercise
- Smoking/Drinking
- Drugs
- Disengaging

With the majority of these choosing positive coping strategies.

'Men may also be less likely to disclose their mental health issues to family members or friends, and more likely to use potentially harmful coping methods such as drugs or alcohol in response to distress. However, there is research to suggest that men will seek and access help when they feel that the help being offered meets their preferences, and is easily accessed, meaningful, and engaging'

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/m/men-and-mental-health>

Learners were also asked '**what they would have benefitted from at the time?**'. A majority of the young men couldn't identify what may have helped. Those that could indicated that the following may have helped;

- ❖ Support from friends
- ❖ Education on managing mental health
- ❖ Support to speak with others
- ❖ Access to a quiet space
- ❖ Peer Support
- ❖ Talking therapies

FACT: Boys are around three times more likely to receive a permanent or fixed period exclusion than girls

QUESTION: How can we encourage more young men to openly talk about their mental health?

Answers include;

- Mental health campaigns to challenge stigma
- 1:1 support
- Education
- A more direct approach i.e. asking young men about their mental health
- Bespoke support groups
- Male/peer support groups
- Alternative methods e.g. Apps
- Ensuring confidentiality

Comments include:

- ❖ 'Encourage men to have more time to themselves (to process emotions)'
- ❖ 'Promote talking about feelings from a young age'
- ❖ 'More counselling in school/colleges'
- ❖ 'Provide anonymous support'

The most common answer was the suggestion of more mental health campaigns to challenge stigma, followed by encouraging young men to talk about their mental health whilst ensuring confidentiality.

A recent campaign, 'Movember' (<https://uk.movember.com/mens-health/mental-health>) encourages men to 'talk, ask, listen', however, a suggestion would be to adapt this campaign to make it more relatable to younger men and with challenges that appeal to this demographic e.g. <https://youngminds.org.uk/get-involved/join-the-movement/>

"Men talk less about their problems than women do, and instead might watch TV, play sport, or drink as a way of coping."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/34156025/th-is-is-the-uks-first-mental-health-centre-for-men>

FACT: 27% of young people 16-24 have experienced poor care when using mental health services in the last 5 years compared with 7% of adults aged 55+.

QUESTION: If you had a poor experience of using mental health services would you feel confident enough to speak up? YES/NO

- ❖ 70% of those that answered said YES, they would feel confident enough to speak up.

Those that said NO provided some of the following reasons:

- Lack of confidence
- Not wanting to
- Lack of trust (in services)
- Unsure of who to feedback to/correct route
- Would rather share with family/friends

Comments included

- ❖ 'Yes I would speak up, but not to a professional'
- ❖ 'I don't think services would understand me'
- ❖ 'I wouldn't feel listened to or respected'
- ❖ 'You may feel like it's your fault'
- ❖ 'I wouldn't use support services in the first place'

It is encouraging that a large % of young men indicated that they would speak up about their experiences of care.

However the feedback suggested that relevant and appealing platforms need to be available for young people to do this that are promoted within their networks.

There also appears to be a lack of trust in services/professionals which needs to be addressed to enable young people to seek support/provide feedback.

The CCG's 'Declare your Care' campaign encourages young people to 'join the conversation' (<https://www.cqc.org.uk/help-advice/your-stories/declare-your-care-children-young-people>), and with continued promotion, particularly within hard to reach groups, this could encourage more young people to speak up.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/stories-48220807/mental-health-cut-off-why-sling-me-out-of-camhs-at-18>

Moving forward

People in Partnership would like to build on the 'Time to Talk' and World Mental Health Day events, working with partners to build a strong Network for young people, professionals and parents/carers with local communities.



Feedback from the event will be reported back to Commissioners, partners and stakeholders to ensure key themes, information and recommendations are noted. People in Partnership are also organising a community/partnership event on 6th February 2020 (Time to Talk Day) to share key findings/outcomes and start meaningful conversations around how we can strengthen support for young people, in particular young men.

Southdown would like to continue its relationship with the East Sussex College group and work together to provide more support, pathways and links with external agencies so they can continue to support young people's mental health and ensure better outcomes and brighter futures.

We would also like to continue working with all the partners involved, particularly around key events/dates to continue to raise awareness around young people's mental health and to encourage open conversations with young people around their experiences and needs.



People in Partnership/Southdown would like to thank all those involved in the World Mental Health Day event for their time and commitment. Particularly learners and young people from the college who provided us with honest and relevant feedback that will help to create positive change.

People in Partnership

Southdown

Unit A5, Chaucer Business Park

Dittons Road

Polegate

BN26 6FL

PeopleinPartnership@Southdown.org

01323 340151



@PeopleinPartnership