



**Men's
Development
Network**

Better Lives for Men, Better Lives for All

Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Better lives for Men,
Better lives for all





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Foreword

When the Men's Development Network (MDN), produced our strategic plan in 2015, Ireland was a very different place than it is today. Having been through boom and bust, a certain new national confidence was beginning to emerge. People began to see light at the end of the tunnel.

Even so the aftershock of the economic downturn had everybody still reeling. We as a society, our families and friends were still coming to terms with the enormous changes to the quality of our lives. For men especially the loss of employment undermined their perceived roles within society and family structures, diminishing their sense of self-worth.

When MDN board of directors and staff reviewed our strategy in 2019, none of us expected the world of COVID 19. As a response we have re-calibrated our work and plans to address the new reality and it's impacts on service delivery and training.

This review concentrated on refining our objectives and priorities based on the outcomes achieved to date. Over the last five years the MDN has progressed significantly, developing new services, such as the Male Advice Line, the expansion of Engage Training, including the development of the On Feirm Ground Programme, with our key partners.

As we move into 2020/21 we will consolidate our achievements and focus our energies on additional goals including, strengthening Governance, expanding on our communications and building our funding capacity.

Our priorities over the next five years will focus on the following:

- Creating more spaces for new conversations with men
 - Increasing supports to Men, Women and Families
 - Influencing the policy, practice and processes of engaging men
 - Advocating for social change and greater gender equality
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Notwithstanding Covid 19, the next five years will be a period of unprecedented change. Our revised strategy sets out to provide a strong benchmark and framework to adapt and yet remained focused on our core objectives. To achieve all that we have set out here, will require a commitment from all involved. This important work will be underpinned by the continued commitment of our staff, board of management and partners. This approach is grounded in values that places the needs of individuals, families and communities, at the center of our work.

What underpins our Work?

Our Vision:
*That men play an active
part in all aspects
of their lives.*

Mission Statement

Better lives for Men,
better lives for all.

We Do this by;

- Creating more spaces for new conversations with men
- Increasing supports to Men, Women and Families
- Influencing the policy, practice and processes of engaging men
- Advocating for social change and greater gender equality

Our Values

1. Equality

To strive towards a more equal society in which all people are treated equally and without discrimination, will create the conditions for everyone to thrive.

2. Non-judgemental

Coming from this perspective allows for tolerance, respect and dignity to influence the conditions for change.

3. Partnership

Working in collaboration and having a non-adversarial approach to effecting change creates the conditions for true and sustainable change.

4. Professionalism

A professional approach ensures both clients and partners are treated with respect and dignity and all areas of compliance are met.

5. Love

Is the cornerstone of our existence, without it the conditions for personal and societal growth are limited



Why is our work important?

Impact on Men

- Age expectancy
- Suicide rates
- Prison rates
- Addiction
- General & Mental Health

Impact on Families and Children

- Relationship Breakup
- Violence
- Trauma
- Positive Role models

Impact on Society

- Disruption of Families
- Domestic Violence
- Sexual Violence



The Challenges

1. Lack of dedicated resources towards men's development
2. Lack of understanding and awareness of the impact of social and gender conditioning.
3. Creating more opportunities to improve service providers understanding of engaging men.
4. The persistent gender stereotyping in the Media
5. The challenges and opportunities of harnessing the positive aspects and negative influences of digital media.
6. The rise in non-inclusive and divisive narratives among some world leaders currently.

What are the key pillars of our Work

Creating more spaces for new conversations with men

- Our approach to engaging men has been developed over twenty years. A developmental approach, it takes men where they are at and provides a supportive space to reflect, identify their needs and provide actions to move forward. It also acknowledges that the existing societal structures provide huge challenges for men to become their best selves. We will try to expand this work on a local, regional and national level.
- It is also a process that allows organisations to assess their work with men and how to improve it.

Increasing Supports to Men, Women and Families

- We will continue to develop programmes that support and increase the age expectancy of men and women to engage in positive steps to improve their own and their families' lives. We will try our best to expand our clinical services to ensure men and their families have accesses to our services that include counselling services, male advice line and change behavioural programmes.

Advocating for social change and greater gender equality

- There are many factors that influence the creation of an unequal society, from policy formation, social and gender conditioning and social determinants. Through our campaigning work we will continue to support and lead on projects to address these inequalities in partnership with other national agencies.

Influencing the policy, practice and processes of engaging men

- Working within the existing networks we will continue to promote our methodology of engaging men and highlighting the social conditioning contexts that contribute to inequality. As part of this promotion we will develop training and resources that improve practices for service providers
- Promoting our model of intervention



Our Vision & Actions for supporting Positive change

That “Men” play an active part in all aspects of their lives.

Our Vision

Creating more spaces for new conversations with men

Increasing supports to Men, Women and Families

Influencing the policy, practice and processes of engaging men

Advocating for social change and greater gender equality

The Outcomes

We establish partnerships to deliver programmes

We facilitate the provision of partner support to victims of domestic abuse

We deliver change behavior programmes for perpetrators of domestic abuse

We conduct research

We provide a support line for male victims and survivors of domestic abuse 36 hours/week

We provide leadership training to men

We raise awareness among the general public

We design and deliver training on men's health

We provide developmental support to men

We form alliances to support and create change

We co-ordinate Engage the National Men's Health Training Initiative

We train service providers on engaging men around their health

We provide expertise on local, regional, national and international forums

We provide one to one counselling support

We provide people with information and signpost them to other services

The Work

To ensure we achieve our strategic objectives by 2025 we will

Services

Improve quality, innovative and responsiveness of programmes making sure that:

- Increase opportunities to access our programmes
- Provide continuous professional development for staff/facilitators/trainers/volunteers
- Provide greater opportunities for stakeholder engagement
- Ensure our quality standards are reviewed and updated continuously.

Access

Improve access to MDN programmes by:

- Develop online resources for all programmes and training
- Develop Apps for participant engagement
- Open our Advice Line 7 days a week
- All referrals are responded to within 24 hours

Communications

Have a priority focus on communicating with all stakeholders so that:

- We improve our customer relations systems (CRM) capacity
- Develop a Communication Strategic Plan
- Improve our online and traditional media presence and methods of communication
- Produce weekly and monthly updates

Advocacy

We will improve our collection of evidence and research capacity so that;

- We can evaluate the impact of our work
- We can understand the needs of the different groups of men who use our services
- Demonstrate the benefits of a mens developmental approach
- Influence policy formation at local, regional and national level.



To achieve our goals

As part of our interim review we identified we needed new ways of working as an organisation. We have set out challenging goals to be achieved and the focus has been on the people who use these services and the difference we can make. To achieve this we need new ways of working together.



We have identified three areas to concentrate on together to achieve greater success and deliver our strategy.

Expand our staffing base and capacity

- Continuous professional and personal development
- Identify extra staff resources for communications and research.
- Maximise the existing skill set of staff.

Broaden our Governance structures

- Increase the number of Leaders Representatives
- Increase the number of support groups

Maximise our Financial resources

- Identify new income streams
- Work together to reduce costs and achieve greater efficiency

By 2025

Our priorities for 2020-25

- Creating more spaces for new conversations with men
- Increasing Support to Men, Women and Families
- Influencing the policy, practice and processes of engaging men
- Advocating for social change and greater gender equality

What we need to make it happen

- Expand our staffing base and capacity
- Broaden our Governance structures
- Maximise our Financial Resources

Our impact

Society

- We will have influenced Government and state agencies to increase support towards Men's Development

Community

- We will have provided services to those communities most vulnerable
- We will have raised awareness of systemic gender equality

Individual

- We will have increased access to services
- We will have supported men in groups

What we will have achieved

- Develop online resources for all programmes and training
- Develop Apps for participant engagement
- Our Advice Line is open 7 days a week.
- All referrals are responded to within 24 hours
- We improve our customer relations systems (CRM) capacity
- Develop a Communication Strategic Plan
- Improve our online and traditional media presence and methods of communication
- Produce weekly and monthly updates

Funding Partners



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
agus Comhionannais
Department of Justice
and Equality



An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency



Project Funders



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Department of Health



National
ÉoHey



wwetb
An Bord Oiliúnaíochta agus Oiliúnaíochta
Phoirt Láirge agus Loch Garman
Waterford and Wexford
Education and Training Board



Healthy
Waterford





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