



Men's Development Network

Better Lives for Men, Better Lives for All

World Mental Health Day

Saturday October 10th October 2020

Men's Development Network (MDN) Promoting Positive Mental Health Through New Conversations for & with Men

COVID 19: Challenges of recent times

To mark International Mental Health Day on Saturday October 10th October 2020, MDN are adding their voice to many others around the world who work to support positive Mental Health.

- *We are also inviting men everywhere to pause and reflect on how it is we support our own mental health, especially through this pandemic.*

MDN, through our work continually remind men of the importance of proactively caring for mental health. Next Saturday 17th at our virtual gathering; *Supporting Ourselves. Supporting Each Other*, we will be engaging men online providing a safe space to spend time together reflecting on some key questions about our lives and positive mental health, including

- 1) *How have we been supporting ourselves and others recently?*
- 2) *What has worked well for us that might be a support to others?*
- 3) *What other supports might help us or others in the times ahead?*

The last six months has been a challenging time for us globally, nationally, locally and personally, and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. Our world continues to be deeply impacted by COVID 19. These impacts can have serious implications for our mental wellbeing.

The Men's Development Network (MDN) is more than ever aware of the need for us as service providers to promote better mental health and new conversations, in these times.

Positive Mental Health & Wellbeing

For all of the reasons outlined above, more than ever MDN believe it is important that we all proactively support our mental health. We can support positive mental health through hobbies, exercise and pastimes, reaching out to family and friends to nurture us or it may be an internal resourcing of ourselves through Yoga, mindfulness or a commitment to prayer or some form of spirituality.

Challenging events in our lives such as COVID 19, separating from a partner or spouse, bereavement, being made redundant, moving home, physical health challenges, etc may trigger negative emotions or behaviours that move us into varying levels of distress. When this distress outweighs our own resources being experienced and our mental wellbeing feels fragile, we may need to seek out support and services as we would normally do when we are physically unwell.

MDN Promoting Positive Mental Health

For many years now MDN has supported awareness of positive mental health. We have especially focused on supporting new conversations with men in relation to how best we can live more connected and flourishing lives. Building on these engagements and the learning gained from the experience of men we look forward to continuing to support men to connect with their lives and health, speak more openly about their challenges in safe spaces, and access appropriate services when needed toward living more better lives for themselves and their families and communities.

For World Mental Health Day, *we remind men everywhere to take time to reflect on the people, places and connections that have supported and continue to support positive mental health in their lives.*

Reflect on things you might do for support through this pandemic and beyond. From all at MDN to men everywhere on this World Mental Health Day:

- 1) *COVID 19 is not YOUR fault*
- 2) *We will come through this by cooperating with each other, not trying to go it alone, and by following the best advice from those who know best.*
- 3) *It is OK to feel afraid and sad: this is a NORMAL response to challenging circumstances.*
- 4) *Your neighbours, are feeling similar feelings to you, feelings of fear and uncertainty.*
- 5) *This is Your opportunity to do what you can, for yourself and for those you love.*
- 6) *It can be important to sit with feelings of sadness, fear and uncertainty, don't run from them, let them be and express them appropriately to someone YOU trust (friends, partner, service) and be willing to listen to their concerns as well.*
- 7) *Meet with your friends VIRTUALLY for coffee and conversation.*
- 8) *Explore with those you know well, possible small steps to dealing with your concerns and anxieties and access appropriate services for support when needed.*
- 9) *Go gently, practice self-love and kindness, remember this too will pass*
- 10) *Try each day to appreciate yourself and others for those small gestures or acts of kindness that expresses our love and support for each other.*

6 Things to Do to Support Positive Mental Health.

- **Reach out to those around you for support:** Support from family, friends and mental health services can reduce anxiety and loneliness.
- **Keep Active:** Hobbies & exercise are good for our physical and mental health.
- **Pause and be mindful:** Build awareness of your feelings, be selective social media you engage with, be mindful of how much you eat & drink. Practice self-compassion.
- **Look out for those around you who need support:** neighbours and the wider community. Giving has a positive impact on our mental health.
- **Seek out laughter;** Laughter is a tonic. Enjoy TV Comedies, funny books, or funny people.
- **Be open to discovering new things:** Learning prompts growth, openness & excitement.

More information about the 7 Key Questions at
www.MensNetwork.ie



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