

From Stigma to Strength: Men's Mental Health

Why is it that men often feel they have to keep their mental health struggles hidden? This session aims to unpack the pressures men face in staying silent, exploring how traditional ideas of masculinity can get in the way of real conversations about wellbeing. By breaking down these barriers, we'll begin to reshape the narrative around what it means to be strong.

We'll also dive into the realities of mental health for men, which can show up in ways that aren't always obvious. From feeling constantly stressed to bouts of frustration or physical exhaustion, these signals are often missed or misunderstood.

This session isn't just about raising awareness — it's about action. Whether you're navigating your own mental health journey or wanting to support the men around you, we'll provide ideas for creating environments where real conversations can happen. Let's work together to make mental health something we all feel comfortable talking about.

Learning Objectives

- Understanding stigma around men's mental health
- Recognising signs of mental health struggles among men
- Application: strategies to seek help and support men in mental health conversations

Content Outline

Breaking the Silence: Understanding the Stigma Around Men's Mental Health

- Understand the cultural and societal norms that contribute to the stigma (e.g., expectations of strength, resilience, and emotional suppression).
- Highlight statistics or studies that show how this stigma impacts men's mental health outcomes (e.g., higher suicide rates, reluctance to seek help).
- Explore the influence of media, family, and peer expectations on men's reluctance to speak about mental health.
- Introduce the importance of redefining masculinity to include emotional expression and vulnerability.

The Realities of Mental Health for Men: Recognising the Signs

- Provide insight into how depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues can manifest in men (e.g., irritability, aggression, physical symptoms).
- Understand the mental health impact of significant life stressors, such as job pressure, relationship struggles, and financial worries.

Creating Safe Spaces: How to Support Men in Mental Health Conversations

- Learn practical strategies for starting mental health conversations, such as asking open-ended questions, avoiding judgement, and listening actively.
- The role of allies (e.g., friends, family, colleagues) in supporting men in these discussions.
- Practical tips for building a culture of mental wellness, including creating support networks or peer groups for men.
- Highlight the importance of workplace initiatives, community programs, and other resources available to help men navigate mental health challenges.