



#talkaboutit

Conversations for Men

Guidelines

Thank you for participating in HopeWay's community awareness campaign, #talkaboutit. We hope this initiative will inspire open conversations about mental health and wellness, with the assumption that making connections with others in this way will spread hope among friends, families, and colleagues. We encourage small organic groups ranging from two to ten people to gather in person or virtually for these discussions. Some small group examples are supper or book clubs, women's or men's groups, or departments within a corporation. Below are some guidelines for having healthy conversations about what can be sensitive and personal topics.

- **Listen:** Let each person finish their sentences and complete thoughts without interrupting – only one person should be talking at a time.
- **Avoid being judgmental:** This should be a safe place to share experiences and emotions.
- **Take everyone seriously:** Steer away from any language that may minimize or dismiss how a person is feeling, such as, “You were just having a bad month” or “Everyone goes through that.”
- **Confidential:** What is discussed and disclosed during the conversation should stay within the group.
- For this particular kit, a handout with statistics on men's mental health has been included. We recommend all participants read the sheet before moving onto the questions.
- We encourage groups to start with the first question, but if you feel like a different question might be more relatable for participants, then start with that question.
- It is ok if your group does not make it through all the questions or chooses to skip some questions - the goal is to have an open conversation.

At the conclusion of the conversation, we encourage you to print the **#talkaboutit** sign included in the materials. Please initial the sign to acknowledge the important conversation. Then snap a photo!

Post #talkaboutit

We believe that hope is contagious, so help us spread the word by posting about your experience.

- 1) Post your photo to your social media channels within two to three days of your **#talkaboutit** conversation.
- 2) Make sure to include your initialed sign.
- 3) Please include **#talkaboutit**, **#hopetalks** and tag **@hopewayclt** so we can all be connected!
- 4) On World Mental Health Day, Saturday, October 10th, 2020 post the **#talkaboutit** image (with above tags and hashtags) provided by the HopeWay team the week before, as a way to send a strong message about the importance of talking about mental health.



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Men's Mental Health Facts

- Stress increases the risk of heart disease by 40%, a heart attack by 25%, and a stroke by 50%.
- Approximately 1 in 5 men develop alcohol dependency during their lives. Research indicates that many men engage in substance abuse in response to stressful life transitions, including unemployment and divorce.
- Over 6 million men suffer from depression per year. This number may be higher, as male depression often goes undiagnosed. Men are more likely to report fatigue, irritability, or loss of interest in work or hobbies, rather than feelings of sadness or worthlessness.
- Over 3 million men have a panic disorder, agoraphobia, or another type of phobia.
- Only 34% of men receive treatment for their mental illness.
- Men die by suicide 3.5 times more often than women.
- 40% of men won't talk about their own mental health.



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Conversations for Men

1. Have you ever talked to anyone about your mental health? If so, who? If not, why not?
2. What do you consider signs and symptoms of depression? Have you ever considered that anger, irritability and frustration might be signs of depression?
3. How would you define the term “toxic masculinity”?
4. Who makes up your support system? Would you ever consider talking to a therapist? Why or why not?
5. How often do you allow yourself to ask for help (yes, asking for directions counts)? What do you think keeps you from doing so more often?
6. Can asking for help be a sign of strength and not weakness? Why or why not?
7. I’m sure you’ve heard the expression “real men don’t cry”. Have you ever questioned where this came from and why we all buy into it?
8. What do you do for self-care? What keeps you from doing it more often/consistently? Do you think self-care is selfish?
9. What are your reservations about talking about issues that are bothering you?
10. When is it time to ask for help? Who do you ask?

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