



Guernsey Mind's Community of Practice for Bailiwick MHFAiders®

Men's Mental Health – Local Support, Stigma, and Practical Pathways

Wednesday 18th March 2026

Facilitator: Louisa Mace

Guest Speaker: Nick Jenkins (Chairman, Men's Shed Guernsey)

Additional contributor: Lisa Ingrouille (Work Well programme)

Session Type: Interactive training, breakout discussions, and reflective exercises

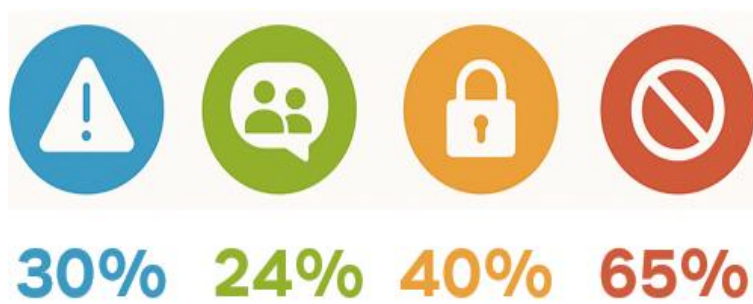
Session Introduction

The session focused on:

- **Understanding men's mental health challenges** – recognising the unique emotional, social, and cultural pressures men often face.
- **Reviewing key statistics and stigma drivers** – identifying the data patterns that shape help-seeking behaviours.
- **Mapping local support options** – highlighting what exists in the Bailiwick and where gaps still remain.
- **Highlighting practical, activity-based interventions** – exploring why hands-on, non-clinical approaches resonate strongly with men.
- **Guest insights from Men's Shed Guernsey** – offering real-world examples of community-based support.
- **Sharing workplace strategies to reduce stigma** – considering what organisations can do to create psychologically safe cultures.

The session also included contributions from attendees via chat and audio, adding lived experience and practical insight.

Key Statistics from Bupa Wellbeing Index (2025)



30% of men don't know where to go for help, demonstrating a lack of visibility and accessibility in mental-health pathways.

24% would talk to a friend, yet

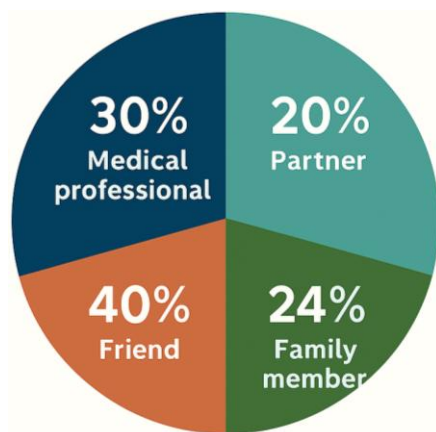
40% want to talk more openly — revealing a clear mismatch between desire for conversation and the opportunities available.

65% believe stigma persists

Notably More women believe stigma exists around men's mental health than men themselves, suggesting differing perceptions of openness.

Where Men Typically Seek Support

When considering where men reach out for support:



Medical professional: often approached when symptoms become physical or unavoidable.

Partner: reflecting reliance on intimate relationships for emotional disclosure.

Family member: indicating moderate comfort within family networks.

Friends: demonstrating that peer support remains valuable when trust is strong.



65%

Increasing use of AI/chatbot-based support — signalling unmet needs in local services and the appeal of non-judgmental, always-available tools.

Would prefer forums over speaking to friends, family or doctors pointing to the importance of anonymity, emotional safety and low pressure environments.

Why Stigma Persists for Men

Personal and Social Factors

- Belief that problems “aren’t serious enough”, often minimising early signs of distress.
- Preference for self-reliance, linked to internalised expectations about strength.
- Negative past experiences (self or observed), reducing trust in support systems.
- Difficulty articulating emotions, sometimes due to limited emotional vocabulary.
- Limited emotionally literate male role models, perpetuating the cycle.

Cultural & Structural Drivers

- “Boys don’t cry” conditioning / emotional socialisation — shaping attitudes from childhood.

- Fear of being seen as weak, impacting help-seeking across adulthood.
- Workplace pressures (breadwinner identity, fear of missed promotion) reinforcing silence.
- Peer-group stigma and banter masking hostile dynamics that discourage vulnerability.
- Physical symptoms mistaken for physical illness rather than emotional stress, delaying appropriate support.

Reducing Stigma – Group Discussion

- Normalising everyday emotional conversations to make openness feel routine, not exceptional.
- Avoiding harmful language like “man up” which reinforces outdated stereotypes.
- Sharing personal experiences to model vulnerability in safe, appropriate ways.
- Ensuring supportive spaces for conversations (e.g., walk-and-talk, cafés) where pressure is reduced.
- Using non-stigmatising language that validates emotional struggle.
- Promoting internal networks like the MenKind Network (Specsavers) to build peer connection.
- Encouraging high-profile male leaders to share mental health experiences, influencing cultural change.
- Supporting early signposting to services to make help-seeking easier and less daunting.

Guernsey Mind Services

Supported Self Help (SSH) [Supported Self-help - Guernsey Mind](#)

- Early intervention model using structured workbooks, chosen pathways, and brief check-ins.
- Practical, action-based support — one key reason men find the approach engaging.
- Helps build self-management tools for stress, anxiety, low mood, and similar concerns.
- Encourages skill-building and independence while still providing gentle professional guidance.

Work Well (Introduced by Lisa Ingrouille) [WorkWell - Guernsey Mind](#)

Workplace-focused early-intervention programme aimed at both employees and managers. Supports individuals at any stage of workplace difficulty, including:

- Early signs of struggle
- Return-to-work planning
- Capability/performance processes
- Includes 13 pathways (e.g., managing workplace stress, resilience, shift work).
- Offers a confidential, neutral space which can reduce fear of workplace repercussions.

Guest Speaker: Nick Jenkins – Men’s Shed Guernsey [The Men's Shed Guernsey](#)

About Men’s Shed

Global movement originating in Australia (1980s). Rooted in the idea that “men don’t talk face-to-face; they talk shoulder-to-shoulder.” The shed was built by members, not for them — reinforcing dignity, ownership, and pride. Offers:

- Woodwork, metalwork, 3D printing
- Repair projects
- Social connection
- Purpose and routine

Nick’s Personal Story

- A powerful account was shared about burnout following loss of workplace identity and support. A recovery period marked by disconnection and uncertainty. Men’s Shed providing renewed purpose, belonging, and usefulness. Example of “John”, a 90-year-old upholsterer who rediscovered purpose through teaching his craft.

Training, Development & Community Contribution

Men's Shed continues to expand its skills, inclusivity, and community impact through structured training, inclusive programming, local partnerships, and practical service projects. Key elements include:

- Training & Future Plans
 - Aim to have a fully qualified counsellor in-house by next year to strengthen support capacity. Volunteers already trained in:
 - MHFA
 - Suicide First Aid
 - CPCAB Level 2 & 3
- Shedding for All Initiative
 - Inclusive sessions for women and couples on Thursday evenings
 - Men-only core sessions maintained to protect psychological safety for male members
- Community Collaboration
 - Based at Sandpiper Vinery, sharing space with Edible Guernsey and Wigwam
 - Environment supports collaboration and cross-community engagement
- Practical Community Contribution
 - Regularly builds and repairs items for local charities and community groups
 - Provides meaningful service, shared purpose, and opportunities for skill-sharing

Key message: For some men, the first step isn't opening up — *it's simply showing up.*

Other Local Community Options for Men

Parenting & Social Groups

- Who Let the Dads Out? (Trinity Church) – activities for dads/male carers of children under 6. [Who Let The Dads Out](#)
- Bright Beginnings – monthly dads' stay & play. [Dad's Stay & Play](#)

Faith-Linked Groups

- St Martins Parish Church – Men's Society: social activities, open to non-churchgoers. [Men's Society](#)
- Men Connect – walks, kayaking, barbecues, quizzes, cricket, and more. [Men Connect](#)

Wellbeing & Activity Groups

- Granite Fit Gym – Walk & Talk (digital-detox style). [Health Connections Directory](#)
- Raising MUG – men's cancer awareness (prostate, bowel, testicular). [Health Connections Directory](#)
- Swim All Seasons – sea-swimming community; potential to form a men's subgroup. [Health Connections Directory](#)
- Hope Singers – mixed community singing group with active male participation. [Hope Singers](#)
- Man Club – written submission pending from JT (audio issues during session). [Man Club](#)

Key Takeaways

- Men face distinct systemic barriers to seeking help.
- Practical, activity-based supports (SSH, Men's Shed, Walk & Talk) are highly effective.
- Safe, pressure-free environments are essential.
- Visibility of local services remains low — signposting is crucial.
- Workplaces play a major role in supporting men (36% would welcome more workplace support).

Reflection Questions

- What barriers do the men you work with most commonly experience?
- How confident are you in signposting to local services?
- What additional male-focused services do you know of?
- What steps could you take in your workplace or home life to reduce stigma?
- How can you support men who are struggling but not yet ready to ask for help?

Actions & Next Steps

- Louisa to circulate notes with service links next week.
- Explore arranging a group visit to Men's Shed Guernsey.
- JT to provide written summary of Man Club.
- Next Community of Practice session scheduled for May (Mental Health Awareness Week focus: Action).