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A New Conversation for Men **7 Key Questions towards Wellbeing & Better Health**

Challenges of recent years

The last number of years in the world has been very challenging. Europe and Ireland were both deeply affected by both social and economic upheaval and though signs and green shoots of economic recovery seemed to be highlighted with each passing day, the truth remains that many, families and communities are still deeply impacted by the biggest recession in our countries history. These impacts can have serious implications for our mental and social 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 that remain challenging for many.

MDN 7 Key Questions can support new conversations towards better mental health

One approach that can be a support for our wellbeing is to use the (MDN's) 7 Key Questions. These questions for reflection, outlined below were developed over many years of engaging men developmentally and conversationally. Recent commentary about male gender conditioning and its effect on men indicates a real need for us to start reflecting on what we need to do to make things better for ourselves and each other. Some of the process of becoming a man can be unhelpful to us and others, and can act as a barrier to accessing services and better self care.

Through engaging with ourselves and men conversationally and developmentally we can connect to our love, empathy and compassion, through our hearts, learning to name, express and understand feelings, both our own and other people's. The outcome of this understanding can be that our minds can develop a greater understanding of the complexities of life. We can then start thinking more clearly about how to deal with our current challenges and focus on improving our lives while strengthening our relationships.

Consistent with the vision of Healthy Ireland, the Men's Development Network's 7 Key Questions can be used as a reflective resource for supporting ourselves towards better health and wellbeing and living to our full potential. These questions can be used in a number of settings as a resource for personal reflection, one to one conversations and for engaging men. The questions can act as a resource to positively address issues impacting our lives as men and can support us towards mapping next steps to a better healthier life.

Strengths of the 7 Key Questions.

A number of things underpin the strengths of these 7 Key Questions....

- *they promote a wellness model of engaging men through beginning by focusing the conversation on what's going well.*
- *they focus on supporting men through reflecting on their personal experience,*
- *they help us identify our needs.*
- *they support us to identify resources to incremental actions for better health and wellbeing.*
- *the questions are strength's based in their approach and direction, clearly focusing on normalising and conversationalising our lives in both our joys and challenges.*

It is MDN's hope that through using these **7 Key Questions** we will continue New Conversations with and for men, and be part of promoting greater autonomy and ownership of our wellbeing and health.

The 7 Key Questions are

1. *How are things?*
2. *What's going well?*
3. *What's not going well?*
4. *Is there anything you need to do?*
5. *Is there any supports you need?*
6. *What's one step you might take?*
7. *What difference might it take?*