

7 QUESTIONS WORTH REFLECTING ON FOR A BETTER LIFE

The Men's Development Network Ltd

(MDN) established itself 1997

The work of the MDN includes: 1. The establishment of men's development health work and training, 2. Developing men's groups, 3. Domestic violence intervention management, 4. Research, 5. Media awareness, 6. Counselling 7. Advocacy and work with men within the community and voluntary sector.

Background to emergence of 7 Questions

These 7 Questions have emerged from the Men's Development Networks years of working with and for men in developmental settings. They provide an approach to engaging and supporting men that is conversational. Beginning from a place of reflection, moving to identifying needs to action for positive change

What can we do to support men?

One method is to use the 7 Questions worth reflecting on for a better life, developed by the Men's Development Network (MDN) towards starting a new conversation for men.

Recent writing about male gender conditioning and its effect on men indicates a real need for men 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. Messages we pick up as boys may turn out to be damaging to us in adult life.

How can the 7 Questions be used?

These 7 Questions can and have been used as a training tool in a range of settings, towards supporting best practice for engaging men while also developing a needs audit and a more male focused service plan.

The 7 Questions can be used for developmental facilitation of men's groups, for self-reflection, for discussion with a friend or with others in an everyday conversation.

In the experience of the MDN, by regularly talking through our concerns and issues supported by reflective questions, a man can move towards creating a better life for himself, his family and those in his community.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID ABOUT THE TRAINING

"Excellent. Really liked most the interaction, learning new ways to engage me in services".

"An enlightening experience".

"Exceptionally well presented by facilitators and the fact that it was supported by in depth research".

"I feel I have a better understanding of men's issues".

"I liked that the presentation was very clear".

"Found it very interesting and comprehensive".

"Helpful in terms of providing tools to engage with men".

WHAT MEN SAY ABOUT THIS WAY OF ENGAGING

"We spoke about some different things in a way you wouldn't normally talk about them".

"Looked at things we never looked at before - boldly went where no man went before".

"Somewhere to come, be relaxed about what was going on in our lives, and actually talk about it rather than ignoring it".

"Level of openness and trust helped us relax and come and talk to people and be yourself, and there was no need to put on an exterior".

"Try to use it everyday - to be myself - it makes me happier".

"Laughing a lot more got in touch with that - that's one feeling I got in touch with".

The 7 Questions

It is MDN's hope that these questions will create a New Conversation for and with Men.

The 7 Questions worth considering 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 support you need?*
6. *What's one step you might take?*
7. *What difference might it make?*

Best Practice Approach

Best Practice for Working with Men Developmentally:

- Be **welcoming and open** to the men.
- Start where the **men are at**.
- Spend **time building trust**, honesty and credibility.
- Insist on **confidentiality**.
- Listen for **evidence of 'need'** of where the men are at in relation to linking with relevant services and supports.
- Encourage **men to take on responsibility** for themselves within the group.
- Give participants a **'helping role'** where and when appropriate.
- Value and **respond to the experiences** of the men.
- **Challenge stereotypes**.
- Be prepared to **give support on a one-to-one** basis.
- Support the men to regularly **review the process** or programme.
- Allow each man to **progress at his own pace**.
- Make men aware of other **relevant services** that can be a support for living better and healthier lives.