

emale

improving men's health & wellbeing
Issue 185 Autumn 2022



Kit Off For A Cause

Kit Off For A Cause

Kane Oldam 24 and Paul Onofaro 32 from Perth launched Kit Off For A Cause to bring greater awareness to men's mental health issues.

One of the most uncomfortable things to do is opening up and talking to your friends and family. We thought if we can do something as uncomfortable as getting our kit off in front of the camera, you can find the courage to start that uncomfortable conversation with your loved ones. We've both been through our own mental health struggles and know the difficulties of facing them.

Growing up playing footy and working on mine sites, we were always told to "toughen up" and be a "man's man". This old school mindset of never talking about your feelings stuck with us both into our early 20s. After failed relationships and personal struggles, we were sick of pretending to be something we weren't.

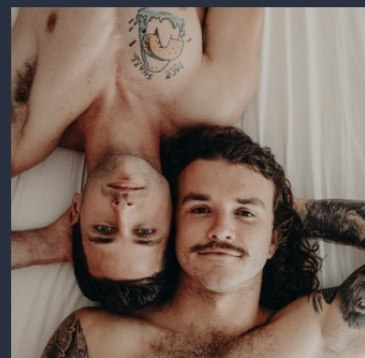
We started talking to our mates about what we thought as "weak" and realised a lot of them shared the same views but had been fearful of saying anything. Our reason behind the calendar is to challenge the old mantra of what men see as masculine and how much it holds you back.

In reality, the toughest thing a man can do is open up about how they're feeling. So we're kicking off the conversation and hoping we can inspire some other blokes to do the same.

Part proceeds of every sale will be going to the team at [Mens Talk](#) in Western Australia who are mainstreaming the conversation around wellness and masculinity.

Mens Talk will raise awareness both live and online, we will spread our vision and mission across the community for all to engage with and drive prevention in mental health issues that includes but are not limited to depression, anxiety and suicide. We will provide collaborative hubs for all existing services and make them accessible for males across all demographics. We will offer a safe place to learn, share and experience in an inclusive environment. We will facilitate programs and events that challenge existing stigmas and encourage/promote the transition to better wellness.

Buy the Calendar and watch their [video](#) at [Kit Off For A Cause | Perth WA – KIT OFF FOR A CAUSE](#)



Men's Eating Disorders

I look forward to the day when I can be just an eating disorder advocate and not have to specify the fact that I'm a male. After all, eating disorders don't give a damn about your gender. They can and do impact anybody! Male, female, non-binary, it doesn't matter. Trust me, I know a guy! Earlier this week I was researching categories for the book on Amazon. I quickly found that several marketplaces have a category for eating disorders under "Women's Health". However, when you go to "Men's Health" the only options were related to sex drive, hair loss, and fitness.

At first, I was mad that they would just assume eating disorders are a feminine issue but then it dawned on me. Why would there be a book category for eating disorders under "Men's Health" when not many guys have openly talked about their battles. I realized that what I'm doing is unique and in some ways pioneer-like. During my recovery, I've stumbled across two other men who wrote books about their eating disorder battles. That's it! And I've done a lot of searching. But that does not mean there are many others out there battling in silence right now.

Thanks to the stigmas and stereotypes, men don't speak up about their emotional or mental health. We must do better as a society to break those stigmas and it starts with the youth. At a young age, it's ingrained in us boys that we must be tough and strong otherwise we are inferior. By the time I was in second grade, I already knew that "boys don't cry." And this didn't come from my parents, it came from my interaction with the media and others. Then throw in the stereotype we hold about eating disorders. What's the first image that comes to your mind when I ask you to picture someone with an eating disorder? More than likely a young, skinny female. Yup, that's who I always pictured. That's part of the reason why the thought of an eating disorder never even crossed my mind, and also why it was tough to realize I actually needed help after my diagnosis.

I see it all the time on social media. Health coaches and nutritionists offer eating disorder recovery services tailored for women. Daily recovery affirmations that feminize eating disorders with the use of she/her pronouns. I've even been turned down from appearing on some podcasts or having my story published on websites because eating disorders are a "women's health issue" and I don't fit the demographic. Yes, I'll acknowledge that eating disorders rates are much higher among women than among men, but last time I checked a life is a life. We need to be inclusive of ALL stories. We must make it clear that eating disorders do not discriminate.

I'm not mad at Amazon for having eating disorders under "Women's Health", rather I am more motivated than ever to change the narrative and confront the stigmas and stereotypes that are preventing men from asking for and getting the help they need. Who's with me?!

Source [Jason Wood](#) [Leave a Comment](#)



Australia fails marginalized people during COVID

Newly released Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data show people living in poverty or disadvantage are three times more likely to die from COVID than the wealthy. This statistic is alarming, but it gets worse when we begin to look more closely at particular communities.

ABS data show the rate of death from COVID for people living in Australia who were born overseas was almost three times more than those born in Australia when standardised for age (6.8 deaths per 100,000 vs 2.3 deaths). The rate of death from COVID for people living in Australia from the Middle East was over 12 times that of people born in Australia (29.3 people per 100,000). These statistics are damning. They tell us you're more likely to survive COVID if you were born here, grew up speaking and reading English, are educated, and earn a good income. They undermine the idea that Australia has good quality universal health care that has been accessible during the pandemic.

Poverty makes you sick

Most health problems, and the care needed to address them, follow what we call “the social gradient”. This term is shorthand for the idea that those with the most resources – be it money or education – have better health and get better treatment than those with fewer resources. In short, poverty makes you sick. It does this by limiting your access to services and supports, through money or other factors such as the type of job you work. People at the “lower end” of the social gradient also tend to receive poorer quality health care. Unfortunately, this social gradient is now clear in the data on Australian COVID deaths.

For example, some people from Middle Eastern countries and other migrant or refugee communities have poorer employment conditions, such as janitorial jobs in hospitals. These jobs expose people to COVID, who then bring the virus home. They have also needed to keep working in these high risk jobs throughout the pandemic so they can afford basic living costs like food and rent. There are also major barriers to medical care for, and information about, COVID for particular communities. During the Delta variant wave in Victoria and New South Wales, we saw this result in people from refugee and migrant backgrounds dying at home before receiving any medical care for COVID.

Authorities attributed this to a reluctance to seek health care. This reluctance can stem from a lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate health care communication and services. Many people also distrust authorities, including the police and army, due to experiences in people's home countries. Being scared of authorities is a legitimate fear when you have come from a country where authorities may kill you. This has been exacerbated by governments in Australia choosing to “police” the pandemic. Large fines were threatened to people who broke COVID public health orders. This fear of fines and authorities likely contributed to a reluctance to seek medical care, and in turn more deaths. And messaging around authoritarian approaches to those who break COVID health orders are likely to have exacerbated this.

Many have also been excluded from government support. Australian governments and health services have been failing parts of our community, from those with low incomes to people from non-English speaking backgrounds.



Australia fails marginalized people during COVID

What can we do right now?

There are a range of actions we can take to rectify the high rates of death amongst refugee and migrant communities. Policy wise, the federal government could extend access to Medicare and social safety net support for people experiencing issues with temporary visas, such as asylum seekers living in the community who are appealing a decision on a visa application, and are not eligible for Medicare. Adding specific Medicare items for refugees and migrants may also encourage more culturally and linguistically inclusive medical care in the health system.

These changes would help provide more affordable, accessible and inclusive health care, particularly for asylum seekers and refugees dealing with visa issues, and help prevent loss of life. Governments should also involve refugee and migrant communities in the development and implementation of actions to reduce COVID deaths. Communities know what they need in a crisis – we need to find new ways of listening. A top-down, middle class response to a pandemic will create services and supports that only work for the middle class. It's vital we look to the evidence of what may best help refugee and migrant communities reduce the risk of infection, involve them meaningfully in this process, and sharpen our focus on making life in Australia fairer, more inclusive and, hopefully, safer for all.

What has to happen next?

Currently, there are major gaps in understanding what may best support refugee and migrant communities to reduce the risk of infection and harm from COVID. More research is needed. However that research needs to be led by peers in communities and be easy to access and participate in. In other words, we cannot repeat the mistake of creating approaches that work for just the middle class.

Best practice tells us multiple forms of research are required, and in culturally and linguistically inclusive ways. Survey-based research must be conducted in hospitals, health centres and other clinical environments to understand how barriers to medical care and information for COVID can be addressed to better meet the needs of people from refugee and migrant communities. The research could identify more culturally inclusive ways of managing vaccinations, testing and recovery from virus symptoms.

This must be backed up by in-depth research to explore the experiences of a diverse range of communities. Just as disadvantaged groups are not all alike, neither are refugee and migrant communities (despite being commonly lumped under the term “culturally and linguistically diverse”).

Communities who are recently arrived or longer settled – all from different countries – have different needs. We need more listening, and less punitive approaches.

Gemma Carey, Professor, UNSW Sydney and Ben O'Mara, Adjunct Fellow, UNSW Sydney



You can find out more information and registration details on our event web at mensshed.org/albury2022

Australian Men's Shed Association
SHOULDER TO SHOULDER



9th National Men's Shed Gathering

29 & 30 March 2022
Commercial Club Albury (NSW)



Australian Men's Shed Association
SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

fair
dinkum
builds

Training Workshops



MEN'S HEALTHY AGEING WORKSHOP

Online March 28, 10.00 am – 1.00 pm

WHO IS THIS WORKSHOP FOR?

People who work in the health, welfare, ageing and community sectors and those who want to know more about older men and healthy ageing. It provides information and strategies for working more effectively with older men. The program is based in a social determinants of health model and is inclusive of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers' health and wellbeing needs.

Link to Workshop Content [here](#)

WORKING WITH MALE SURVIVORS OF DV TRAINING

Online Thursday April 7, 9.00 am – 12.00 pm

WHO IS THIS WORKSHOP FOR?

The training program is for health, welfare, community workers, workers with men and anyone who wants to gain skills in working with male survivors of DV. The course is for men and women. It provides information and strategies for working with men affected by violence and presents a model you can use for this work.

Link to Workshop Content [here](#)

ENGAGING MEN IN MENTAL WELLBEING TRAINING WORKSHOP

Online Thursday May 12, 10.00 am – 1.00 pm

WHO IS THIS WORKSHOP FOR?

For people working with or wanting to work with men around mental health wellbeing. The workshop provides a set of health promotion skills and strategies that are created with men in mind. It combines evidence-based theory and practice with a focus on developing individual awareness and interpersonal and group skills. The program is based in a social determinants of health model and is inclusive of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers' health and wellbeing needs. The training identifies potential barriers in our health and welfare systems and offers solutions to overcome these barriers in a range of settings.

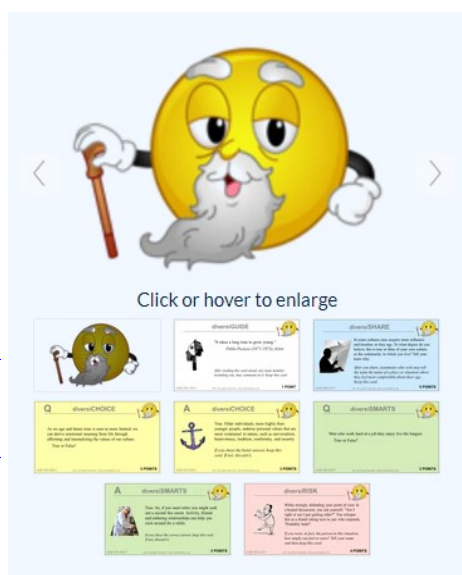
Link to Workshop Content [here](#)

\$130 for each training workshop, which is delivered online. Resources sent to you include a copy of the ***Men's health and wellbeing: an a – z guide***. To register please [email me](#) with the name of the Training Workshop you would like to attend, your name, organisation/service details and contact phone number.

New Resources

Elderwise Guys is a game to set you thinking, talking and sharing stories about the challenges and opportunities of aging as a man. Invite your mates to join you for an enjoyable session, exploring and exchanging your experiences and expectations of ripening years. Following on our successful [Manhood](#) diversophy® games, this mini-game focuses on the male journey into advancing years. In an age of resistance to toxic masculinity, here is a toast to intoxication with our possibilities.

Dr. George Simons, from France is a consultant, interculturalist and trainer, and a octogenarian who feels enriched by the past, at home in the present and curious about the future. Together with his best buddy, Walt Hopkins, he is an author of [Seven Ways to Lighten Your Life Before You Kick the Bucket](#), a guide to kicking out what brings you down and picking up the things that make you happy in the fullness of years. His books of poetry and other digitized writings are available as [free downloads](#). He invites you to be fully who you are and to enjoy your togetherness with those who share your days. **Editors note:** I think this is wonderful, creative and very useful tool for older men to use preferably in a group setting. One of the best I have ever seen. Highly recommended for older men and those working with older men.



All of us face challenges in our daily lives but have you ever noticed how some people seem able to cope with these relatively easily, no matter what the challenge, while others seem to struggle? Most of us just accept this as just the way things are without ever really investigating or challenging it. But if you could find a book that not only made you think about how you and others are managing life's challenges, but also helped you understand yourself far better, would you read it?

Behind The Mask draws on a wide range of knowledge and experience, including scientific studies and deep insight gained from personal experience delivering counselling services and working in the building industry, as well as his own life experiences, the author offer us an easy-to-read, entertaining and optimistic look at who we and others really are, behind the mask. It gives you the tools to encourage you to take a closer look at yourself and others and provides a road-map you can use to take advantage of the abundance of opportunities that are available to you to lead a more satisfying life.

For example, have you ever wondered why some adults seem to remain immature, never taking responsibility for themselves? By exploring concepts such as the adult-child, the adapted-child and the authentic-child Behind The Mask provides us with clarity to help us understand ourselves and others in a way that is easy to digest and apply.

You will find this knowledge useful when relating to others in your life and, most likely, you will not only be more in touch with what drives your own behaviour, but by having a better understanding of yourself, be able to change those things that are holding you back from achieving your full potential.

This book seeks to help you gain a better sense of self-awareness and encourages you to personal growth. But it isn't just about "self". The approach the author has taken anchors self in the society we live in and it is therefore as much about person-environment fit. This makes the book far more practical than most books on personal development. Going beyond what is traditionally considered as a study on behaviour by exploring what lies behind the intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual self.

Behind The Mask will change your way of thinking and may lead you to a more fulfilling life.

Find out more and order [here](#)

Self-Awareness and Setting Intentions

Setting intentions can help us understand our life's bigger picture.

KEY POINTS

- ◆ An intention is a commitment to oneself—something to be, rather than to achieve
- ◆ Intentions can set the tone and focus of one's day, as well as help to navigate through difficult times.
- ◆ Setting an intention can influence the trajectory of one's life & highlight those aspects that give it meaning.

For many people, the start of a new year involves making New Year's resolutions. But for others, setting intentions might be more attainable and something that can be done on a regular basis.

Self-awareness is important when setting intentions. It's the ability to possess the knowledge, understanding, and recognition of who you are. Knowing yourself means being mindful of your disposition, character, motives, strengths, weaknesses, passions, and desires. Self-awareness allows us to identify what makes us unique in terms of our thoughts and actions. Having all this information can be empowering; you are more likely to be introspective and ready to decide on your intentions when you know yourself, which is an important element of healing and transformation. One thing to remember: even before you set an intention, you need to make sure that you believe in it, that your heart is in it, and that you cannot be swayed by those who have other belief systems. Also, your intention should be in line with your life purpose, i.e., the direction you want your life to take. Intentions may be set first thing in the morning. You can think of them as creating a plan or focus for your day. On a broader scale, setting intentions can also be a way to navigate through difficult periods of time. They can help you break down the task of navigating troublesome situations, encounters, or events that might emerge in your life.

Setting intentions

An intention is a commitment to yourself. It's something to be, rather than something to achieve. Intention-setting involves focusing your thoughts in the particular direction of what you want to bring about or manifest. The first step is deciding that you want to accomplish something specific or, more importantly, to make a change. Setting an intention in the morning is also a good way to set the tone for your day. For example, if you wake up in a bad mood, setting an intention can change whatever trajectory may have resulted from staying in that mood. In other words, you can choose to turn a bad mood into a good mood. To set an intention is empowering because it provides you with the choice to make a change where change is needed.

Some years ago, I heard an addiction therapist share a fishing story to illustrate the idea of setting intentions. For example, you decide to take the day off and go fishing. You are completely focused on catching a fish. You make all the preparations to make this happen; you prepare all your equipment, find a place to fish, and prepare your fishing rod. You then cast your line. All of your thought processes are geared toward catching that fish. The task becomes your focus. If you never acted on your intention and made that choice to go fishing, you would not have had the chance to catch a fish. This is what setting an intention is all about. It's about having a clear focus on what you want.



Self-Awareness and Setting Intentions

The second step in setting an intention is the decision to surrender to and manifest it. To continue our earlier example, let's now say that you will continue to focus on going fishing, even if you are distracted by other opportunities pulling at your attention that day.

Goals and intentions

Setting an intention is slightly different from setting a goal. An intention is a theme you have in order to achieve some kind of balance in your life. It's a path that you might follow for the day or another designated period of time. It is important to keep in mind that you can only make intentions for yourself; you can offer hope to other people, but you cannot make intentions for them. Setting a goal means that there is a desired or chosen outcome. In other words, goals are typically made for more long-term needs or desires, such as wanting to get a doctorate in psychology.

Intentions and behavior

There are many different reasons to set an intention. Intentions are useful in changing behavior, as in the case of addictive behaviors. Intentions are easier to accomplish because their lead time is typically shorter. Perhaps a troublesome situation is approaching. For example, you are feeling stressed because you will soon have dinner with a difficult family member and you know you have a pattern of being overly reactive towards this person's bad or inappropriate behavior. Consider tapping into your self-awareness techniques, such as observing yourself, being open-minded, and practicing active listening. On the day of, you might decide to set the intention that you will take a different stance, to instead be a calm observer to the circumstances in which you find yourself.

Our search for meaning

We all have choices in most realms of our lives, and the choices we make today can affect the trajectory of the rest of our lives. The choice can be setting an intention that highlights something that gives our life meaning.

Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl, in his poignant book *Man's Search for Meaning* (1984), discusses his concept of logotherapy—the belief that finding life meaning can help us navigate difficult or challenging times. Knowing he had meaning and life purpose helped him survive. Even prior to the Holocaust, Frankl saw his life purpose as helping to love and care for others, so he carried that with him through the Holocaust experience.

A daily practice

Making time in the morning to set an intention is one way to pause before the day begins, and ask yourself what you want. This will help you be more mindful during the course of the day. A daily practice will not only set the tone but will give you a mindset for the day.

Years ago, while in Maui, I had daily meetings with a shaman who spoke a lot about setting intentions. On this trip, I brought my own intention cards with me and I pulled one for each day. Together, we set the tone for the day.

Whatever choices you have and decisions you make, always remember to follow your bliss and what is in your heart, and be true to your authentic self.

Diana Raab, Ph.D. [Leave a Comment](#) References: Frankl, V. (2017). *Man's Search for Meaning*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.




Men's Health Connected

Presented by 
AMHF
AUSTRALIAN MEN'S HEALTH FORUM

May 16 - 20 2022 [register here](#)

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