Our vision is a society in which men feel empowered and supported to be the best version of themselves.

Menfulness brings men together to socialise, exercise and enjoy themselves whilst sharing their experiences in a supportive, impartial environment that improves mental and physical health.
Menfulness began with three university friends, continually getting messages from society to “man up” and be strong leading to a reluctance and unwillingness in men to ‘open up’. We now know this drives many men of our age to crisis and too often suicide.

Using our shared lived experience, we created Menfulness. A positive, safe and proactive place for men who are struggling to talk freely, openly and without judgement about their feelings.

What if, at your lowest point, you could reach out via your smartphone to a group of guys who are on, or have walked a similar path?

“We want men to know it's ok not to be ok, and that we rise together.”
I discovered Menfulness in the early stages of separating from my wife. I’d known of it for a while but didn’t feel I fitted into their target audience (to be honest I thought it was all single parents and just not for me). Now, with hindsight, I know that there is no target audience; it’s a real mixed bag of people from all sorts of backgrounds. I guess that’s what makes it tick so well?

At the time I was also under the serious threat of having to take redundancy, whilst also dealing with the Covid pandemic and all of the associated issues this brought to me, my children and wider family. Since initially joining Menfulness I have sold my family home, bought my own house and got a new job. It’s been quite a year or so to say the least.

I took advantage of the free counselling offered via Serendipity last year. This helped me immensely and I have recommended to others. I wouldn’t say I ever had real mental health struggles such as depression but just chatting about my situation helped me to break down a huge issue into smaller, manageable chunks. I found it to be hugely beneficial and would not hesitate to use it again should I feel the need. It’s an unbelievable service that I know has benefited many men in some very difficult times.
I am by my own admission a quiet man (always have been) but just being involved with Menfulness in its many forms has given me back my confidence for the future. To turn up at an event and spend time with complete strangers would not have sat well with me a year or two ago, I genuinely feel that I had become almost reclusive, working shifts including nights, not really doing anything with anyone outside of immediate family and almost a shadow of my more youthful self. But I know that there are good people out there and my involvement in Menfulness has allowed me to rebuild my confidence, fitness and social calendar.

I went to a singles quiz night the other week, didn’t know a soul before I walked into the pub on my own but I really enjoyed myself. This would not have happened without Menfulness in its many forms.

They’re a great bunch of guys who not only talk the talk but walk the walk.

David
We facilitate, empower and support men to set up activities that matter to them, which in turn are underpinned by more formal advice, support and services through our partnerships.

Isa works in construction, and is involved in the ‘Builders Talk’ group and Lighthouse - industry peer support groups that focus not on ‘hanging doors’ or ‘tiling floors’ but on real life issues including relationship challenges and loneliness. The construction industry has the highest number of male suicides globally, and Isa has really benefitted from his involvement in Menfulness.

“The building industry is quite feisty but I am used to talking about real men’s lives. The (Menfulness) WhatsApp group is there to bring positive energy”.

“I think Menfulness can expand nationally but we’d need to work out how to support this with each other. Moving from voluntary commitment to a more organised delegated system of support for running activities sustainably with several individuals tasked with oversight will be challenging. The more people that get involved in running events, the more will feel better”.

“On the building site I might talk about my kids, without everyone understanding how I feel. We’ve had 7 miscarriages along the way and I was open about this to help others know they were not the only one”.

“I’m from Turkey and part of my story is fleeing from conflict, being displaced and living as a family of 7 in a tent. My father passed away, but Menfulness gives me clarity on challenges I and others face”.

“I’m involved with Menfulness activities and also volunteer on the committee.”

“Diego

I will never stop thanking Menfulness, and every single person behind this great machine of unconditional love.

Giving even one minute a day of attention to this cause can change the path of each of us for the better. Always!

Diego
The men in our group set up their own sporting events and activities, based on their passion and invite other men to get involved. We don’t dictate or direct people as to what activities should happen - it is 100% user led. Once an idea has been created, we support and fund the activity.

**In Numbers....**

- 50 players per week
- 15 people per week
- 20 men at every Walk & Talk
- 16 guys look after our allotment

“I was welcomed and it felt safe and non-toxic, where many male only activities can somehow be the opposite.”

Dan
Counselling

Early on in Menfulness, we found an increasing number of men needed professional support and were met by either long waiting times, or felt a stigma about asking for help.

Through our partnership with Serendipity Counselling, we’ve been able to offer over 500 hours of free counselling (October 2021) to 50 men between the ages of 19 and 65. All of the men were experiencing low levels of mental wellbeing at the point of accessing the service, and so far 44 of the men have experienced clinically significant positive changes to their mental health.

“I first started with Menfulness football – for me it was a release from everyday life and stress. It has helped me defuse my mind and let go. I’ve now started to use the counselling sessions to help me deal with baggage I have carried for years.”

Des
Menfulness has felt to me like I am in a giant three legged race, where I am connected to everyone. So when I fall, everyone stops and helps me back on my feet again so that we can all move forward. No one gets left behind and we all cross the winning line together.”

Matt

In the midst of a period of anxiety/depression/panic attacks, I was desperately looking for help. As I felt enormously alone and afraid of what was happening to me, in a city and a country where I had no friends, being Italian.

The guys at Menfulness gave me immediate support, allowing me to open up and not feel unique with my problem.

Feeling understood and allowing me to feel part of a big family has wholly opened my vision of my sky with a ray of sunshine, warm and hopeful.

Diego

In Numbers....

2,000+ members

200+ participants

75+ participants

Menfulness
Menfulness

You are not alone!

9,000 Likes and Shares on our Facebook page.

Don’t man up, speak up

500 participants across our 5 WhatsApp groups.

We rise by lifting others

2,000+ men in York benefit from Menfulness, each one accessing our diverse range of support in their own, unique way.

19 - 65
in numbers... *

88% of men accessing our counselling have experienced clinically significant positive changes to their mental health.

500 hours of counselling provided to 100 men by Serendipity Counselling.

YEARS OLD
Menfulness Age Range

4,303 men died from suicide in 2019, compared to 1,388 women*

*Source: ONS

£24,355 raised in grants and donations
Shared Interests

Sport isn’t for everyone, so by deploying our user-led model we can facilitate men to set up activities that provide them with meaning and purpose; a key element of positive well-being. This provides places, events and activities for different demographics and cultures, creating further inclusivity and accessibility.

We’ve been able to lease an allotment for those with Green Fingers, regular walks around the city attended by up to 20 men each time, and are currently embarking on establishing a Men’s School that enables those who underachieved at school to revisit core GCSE subjects.

“Menfulness is increasing men’s abilities to function at home, at work and in a broader sense of community. The value of the group is priceless.”

Aidan
20 Top Tips

1. RELAX: Nice work picking this up and taking a step towards feeling tip top. Now, take a deep breath and let it out slowly. Release your shoulders from your ears, unclench your jaw and uncurl your forehead. We can physically hold on to stress without realising it. Take a minute to relax.

2. DIET: You are what you eat and when you’ve got a lot going on it’s easy to forget to tend to your temples. Eat well and stay-hydrated to get you in the right state for good mental health. Treats are good but plan your shops around what you know you should be consuming. Keep trying new things when you can.

3. SLEEP: Try to get the right amount of sleep for you (usually between 7-8 hours) Persistently losing sleep can affect your mental and physical health. Try to fix a routine and minimise screen time just before bed.

4. EXERCISE: Get your heart rate up a bit each day with whatever you’re able to do. There’s something comforting in the control around exercise. With running for example, it’s your feet, your pace, your tunes. Take some time too (EXTRA TIP: Try Menfulness’ Social Circuits if you need something booked in to keep you accountable.)

5. NATURE: The right walk can embrace nature, give exercise and allow quietness of mind all at once. Try to get outside every day. Allow yourself to focus on what’s going on out there, in order to give your head some peace.

6. SOCIAL MEDIA: Hack your own social media algorithms by spending some time purposefully liking, subscribing and following what genuinely makes you smile. Actively unfollow, hide and scroll past the things that don’t. (EXTRA TIP: Join the Menfulness Facebook Group for extra feel good records)

7. SUPPORT: We all need support but it’s not always easy to find the words, especially with those closest to us. Get yourself a network with who you can share what’s really going on. (EXTRA TIP: Menfulness won’t judge and will respect your rights to share at your own pace)

8. TALKING: Learn to be more honest about your mental health. It takes practice but the results can be game changing. We will all struggle at some point and there’s no shame in it. Being aware and open about your vulnerabilities is a strength we can all work on. Plus, hearing about your journey might be just what someone else needs to get on the right path.

9. GOALS: What should you be working on and planning for? What gives your life purpose? Actively contributing towards your personal growth and future goals, even when you don’t feel like it, can keep you looking forward at those good things to come.

10. ADVICE: Take advice only from those you know and trust. Even better, only when you’ve asked for it. Nobody knows what they really need better than you do. Ask yourself what that is, trust your inner voice. Write it down. Read it often.

11. EXPECTATIONS: You can’t please all of the people, all of the time. Perfectionism will have us trying while we turn out. Depression will have us doing the opposite while we just try and stay afloat. Remember, everyone is on their own path, most of them consumed by their own struggles. Give yourself a break and keep those expectations in check. You’re enough as you are.

12. MEDITATION: Take a moment every day to pause, breathe deeply, and be silent for a few minutes. Don’t fight your inner voice, just sit with it. Guided meditations on YouTube can help keep you in the moment. A few minutes of calm in your mind can give you a little more strength to handle what the world might throw at you. Give it a try.

13. POSITIVITY: “Life can be beautiful, if you know where to look.” It’s not always easy to ignore or rise above the realities of daily life. Your brain is hardwired to notice what you tell it to, like when you’re thinking of a new car and suddenly the model you like is everywhere. Speak out and write down what’s good and what you’d like to build on, rather than what’s getting in your way.

14. MINDSET: When times are hard try to take stock for a moment. You’re here. The odds of you existing are miraculous. You are made from the stuff of stars which has traveled trillion of miles to become you. Think of all you’ve learned, the battles you’ve fought internally and externally and yet; You. Are. Still. Here. ‘Fist bump’

15. KINDNESS: It tends to be easier to be kind to others... Which is fine, and it’s a great way to practice, but the person who needs kindness first and foremost is always you. If you’re going to stay well, be effective and be kind to others, then you need to sort your own life first. Say it with me; ‘I will start being kinder to myself right now’. Sounds good. Now, how will you do that?

16. CONTROL: Many stresses and anxieties boil down to a fear of losing control. But even when you can’t control what’s happening out there, you can challenge yourself to control the way you respond to what’s happening. Start with making that your program, just for today follow it to the best of your ability. And repeat.

17. ENJOY: Regularly take some time out to do something you enjoy that’s just for you, even especially if you’re busy. Getting into that flow state where your mind and body are in sync and you’re able to progress can be a much needed serotonin boost. (Yes, PlayStation counts!)

18. FRIENDS: While our circumstances might be unique, to struggle is a shared human experience. The stigma around mental health means friends might not realise you need, or know how to approach, an honest discussion about it. Be brave, reach out. People you know are silently going through something similar.

19. ASK TWICE: Don’t forget to check on your mates. ‘How are you?’ has become a standard greeting and people tend to answer as such. But if you ask twice and listen carefully then the conversation they really need could make all the difference. It might even help with what you’re going through.

20. CONNECTION: “We rise by lifting others” has become a bit of a Menfulness Mantra. We can vouch that doing something positive for another human will help with your own wellbeing in equal measure. Smiling and passing the time with a stranger works too. You can start by joining us, see contacts on the back!
I've found being part of the Menfulness group a very inclusive and supportive experience during some pretty dark times in recent years.

Ryan

Partners

Our strength in depth lies in our ability to create meaningful partnerships with other organisations, businesses and supporters across the city, enabling us to punch above our weight and support more and more men facing crisis, loneliness, marginalisation and exclusion.
I sit here and weep as I read of another man who has died. What was he thinking when he took his life? Was he lonely inside?

The secret killer we don't like to talk about. Suicide is all too real and of the ripples on the family there is no doubt.

So how do you know if the man might be struggling? The look on his face? The banter? The laugh?

Can you tell if he feels trapped alone in his head? Day after day. No one to talk to, will you show him the way?

But the truth is, that you might never know, sometime mental health effects men who have the biggest glow. The ones who are loud, and the ones that put on a show.

So many men are holding on by the thinnest of threads, bills to pay, kids to feed, more worries in their heads.

Please don't wait to reach out to him or until you are given a clue. Reach out now, one day it could be you.

Suicide is our nations biggest killer, 79% of those are men under 45. Such a waste of good men who should be alive.

Talk about this now and find a way through, as this hidden epidemic is shaming our country too.

Hug and kiss your sons now and teach them that crying is not wrong, talking like this now will help him be strong.

We must have hope and find a solution, I know what it is, it’s the men talking revolution.
We are facing a silent emergency and our fundraising aims to open up this conversation and create a place where men can be heard and understood as we are, and then supported to where we want to be.

Through the efforts of our volunteer treasurer and fundraisers, we’ve been able to attract sponsorships, grants and donations that have allowed us to maintain what works, create new activities to support more men, and innovate with new services. We are financially stable and well managed, and our operational model allows us to adapt and pivot quickly in response to both our users and our funding situation.

**INCOME ’20-’21**

- **Donations:** £833
- **Grants:** £15,600

**OUTGOINGS ’20-’21**

- Operations
- Fitness
- Marketing
- Counselling
- Allotment

£0 £1,000 £2,000 £3,000 £4,000
INCOME ’21-'22

Grants: £2,000

Donations: £5,600

OUTGOINGS ’21-'22

Operations
Fitness
Marketing
Counselling
Allotment
Bowling

£0 £2,500 £5,000 £7,500

Menfulness
Menfulness

Our logo reminds us that, like a cube, there’s a side to us that can’t always be seen.

Men still struggle to open up about their mental health while suicide remains the most common cause of death for men aged 20-49.

Together we can change that.

Funders

Thank you to all the amazing organisations and individuals who support Menfulness....
The Future

Menfulness has demonstrated it’s success in York and we now wish to embed and build on the progress made, seeking sustainable funding to transition from a volunteer based organisation to a charity with employed staff.

This will enable us to enhance opportunities for men to interact; facilitate access to counselling and other support; and mentor and support Menfulness groups in other areas of the UK.

Our group is and will always be pro-women and fully supports those who identify in any other gender category. Our group welcomes trans men and non binary people. All genders have a part to play in helping create the space, to spread the word and to help share the skills required for openness and vulnerability.

Despite the fact that our work is aimed at men we also recognise the importance of women in this conversation. Much of our initial engagement is with women – many men are being directed to us by the women in their lives, for instance.

Historically and traditionally men have not been empowered to learn about and share their more complex emotional struggles. This can lead to repressing painful or uncomfortable feelings which, when shared, can lead to better mental health.

Partners, friends and family members are a huge source of support to combat this stigma.
Menfulness.org
#DontManUpSpeakUp

How to support us

DONATE  JOIN  REFER  PARTNER  PROMOTE

@menfulnessyork  Menfulness  menfulness.org