



Jonathan's Voice

Speaking out for mental health



www.jonathansvoice.org.uk



[@jonathans_voice](https://twitter.com/jonathans_voice)

***Men and mental health;
why does it feel so hard to ask for help?***

Speaker: Penelope Aspinall of Jonathan's Voice

Registered Charity 1180424

Not Just for Movember 11th November 2021

Why we need to talk about men's mental health



- Men in the UK are three times more likely to die by suicide than women, with men of 45-49 showing the highest number of suicides in 2017 ¹.
- However, both in the UK² and worldwide³, women are more likely than men to be diagnosed with a mental health problem.
- Men are less likely to access psychological therapies than women: only 36% of referrals to NHS talking therapies are for men

¹ONS 2018 Suicide in the UK

²Mental Health Foundation

³World Health Organisation

⁴<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/m/men-and-mental-health>

Also ...

- Men are far more likely than women to go missing, sleep rough, become dependent on alcohol and use drugs frequently
- Depression in men more likely to manifest as stealth symptoms that seem more compatible with society's view of masculinity eg men experiencing depression often present as angry or aggressive
- It may manifest in physical pain such as backache, headaches, sleep problems, sexual dysfunction or digestive disorders that don't respond to treatment.

Address difficulties sooner rather than later: the mental health continuum



What I have noticed

- Female clients outnumber men typically 2:1
- However, in my experience once men entered the counselling room they responded really well
- And this accounted for all male clients regardless of the setting, culture, nationality, age



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What might be going on?

- Traditional 'masculinity' is associated with attributes such as confidence, assertiveness and independence, which may be seen as incompatible with admitting you are struggling and need help. ¹
- Adherence to these traditional male gender roles increases the likelihood of psychological difficulties¹. This can be exacerbated by masculine 'scripts' such as 'strong and silent', 'tough guy' and 'winner'². 'man up', 'grow a pair' etc

¹Blazina, C & Watkins, C.E (1996) *Masculine gender role conflict*, Journal of counselling Psychology 43 pp 461-465

²Mahalik, JR et al (2003) *Masculinity Scripts. Presenting concerns and help-seeking implications for practice and training*, Professional Psychology, Research and Practice 34 pp 123-131

Talking about mental health

- Hard for men to talk about their problems and ask for help
- Also sometimes hard for people to hear it as well
- How you respond is really important
- People who are depressed, anxious or stressed behave like people who are anxious, stressed or depressed. This will make it harder to reach out

Why men in the public eye opening up about their mental health is so important

The story of Aaron Lennon



'I'm not really the sort of person who finds it easy to ask for help; at least I wasn't until a couple of years ago,' the 31-year-old former Tottenham and Everton player said. "As a footballer I knew how to look after my physical health but that was all – I didn't know what to do about my mental wellbeing. I didn't really know who to turn to when I started to feel low, and that's why the situation got to where it did.

It was a gradual process' he said. 'I didn't realise I needed help until it was too late. I would tell my friends and family I was OK, but I really wasn't.'

<https://www.theguardian.com/football/2019/mar/12/healthy-aaron-lennon-fears-players-struggle-depression>



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Any thoughts?
Any questions?



Find out more

Free to download from:

<https://charliewaller.org/resources/>

<https://jonathansvoice.org.uk/guide-for-patent-and-trade-mark-professionals>

<https://ipinclusive.org.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing/>

<https://www.citma.org.uk/support.html>





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Introduction to Jonathan's Voice



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Jonathan was a patent attorney in Bristol. On the outside, life appeared to be going well. But a month after his 35th birthday he tragically took his own life on 30th October 2017. An “out of the blue” suicide. Sadly, he had been masking his mental health struggles very, very well.

Shortly after this tragic event his family founded Jonathan's Voice, now a registered charity, to promote better mental health in the workplace.



Check your battery

