

# mhfs national conference

Over the past three years, mhfs has worked hard to raise personal, public and policy makers' awareness of men's health.

The success of our work and the efforts and support of so many other people across the country has made sure that men's health is no longer a neglected area of our nation's health.

The Scottish Executive Health Department (SEHD) has recognised the importance of this work and has committed £4 million to develop men's health clinics across Scotland.

There couldn't be a better time to announce this national conference on men's health in Scotland.

With our Health Department partners, we are running the event on Friday, 12 March 2004 in Glasgow.

It represents a unique and timely opportunity to bring together people working in the field of men's health, or anyone with an interest or involvement in it, including:

- clinical practitioners
- workers in the voluntary sector
- men in the community
- policy makers

The programme will include both social and medical issues that impact on men's health.

#### **Conference aims:**

- sharing current evidence on the state of men's health and well being in Scotland
- highlighting examples of best practice
- developing a vision for the future of men's health in Scotland
- involving and including men in developing appropriate responses to their own health needs

## NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Friday, 12 March 2004

Glasgow Royal Concert Hall  
9.00am to 7.30pm

£50 per delegate for  
workers in the field

Some subsidised places available

**Contact us for details:**  
0141 201 4889  
[conf-reg@mhfs.org.uk](mailto:conf-reg@mhfs.org.uk)

- initiating the process of developing a range of male-friendly health information resources
- examining current models of health service delivery, and considering the ways in which mhfs and other stakeholders can support the development of more appropriate and accessible provision

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The Men's Health Forum Scotland works to improve the health of Scotland's men by bringing together and working with the widest possible range of interested people and organisations. We support the development of local and national networks by organising themed seminars, training and the initiation of demonstration projects throughout Scotland.

# Training in men's health: *Developed by practitioners for practitioners*

With the increasing interest in developing services targeted at men in Scotland there is a growing need to support those working in health care with high quality training that equips them with the knowledge and skills to keep pace with progress in the field.

mhfs is pleased to announce that we have teamed up with the Centre for Men's Health to offer training around the setting up and delivery of targeted health services for men, as outlined on the page opposite. We will be running these courses throughout 2004 across Scotland and are currently working on the pricing and timing of doing so.

If you have been a regular reader of this publication, you will be familiar with the men's health service that has been developing over the past couple of years in Camelon, Falkirk. Alison Dalziel and Jim Leishman have built up a Centre for Men's Health through their enthusiasm to see an improvement in the health of ordinary men in their area.

The Centre has grown from offering a basic MOT in the local health centre to a multi-site service offering a full health assessment including smoking cessation advice, stress counselling, weight management, blood pressure testing and urine and cholesterol checks.

A typical visitor to the Centre is Ian Anderson, who rarely visited his GP, took little care of his diet or lifestyle and as a result was unhealthy and over weight. He signed up for the weight management programme and dropped from just over 20 stone to 16st 13 lbs, losing a massive 12 inches from around his waist. *"I am one of those men who never went to their doctor unless I could not walk or was seriously ill, and that seemed to be the case of lots of the guys on the course,"* says Ian.

He says the changes he has had to start making are improving not only his health, but are also bringing benefits to the rest of his family. *"The kids are loving it too because they get to go swimming when I go to the gym. The wife has also signed up for the gym and the whole family are now eating much more healthily and taking more exercise."*

He was far from the only man to get a nasty shock when he went along for advice: *"A lot of people who went for the MOT discovered that there was something wrong with them that they did not know about,"* he said.

Of well over 700 men that have come for consultations, it was quickly apparent that many of the men had problems with stress, weight problems or blood pressure.

These are the ordinary Scottish men that the NHS is keen to target, so that a start can be made on making basic changes to their lifestyle which will help prevent much more serious ill-health in the future. Early detection and treatment of symptoms greatly improve a patient's prognosis for many diseases.

Looking statistically at Camelon we can see how effective this intervention could be: On average, just under three quarters of the men who attend are overweight or obese, 57% have high blood pressure, 38% mental health problems, 23% present with urinary problems and 11% some form of erectile dysfunction.

It is on the basis of setting up the Centre and dealing with its many clients that this course has been developed. The learning unlocked through these very real experiences is exactly what is needed to equip health care staff in the voluntary and statutory sectors across Scotland with the confidence to change men's lives too.

Watch out for more details in the new year or contact us on [training@mhfs.org.uk](mailto:training@mhfs.org.uk)



# Targeted health services for men

## A one day course for practitioners

Trainers – Alison Dalziel and Jim Leishman facilitate this one-day training event aimed at health professionals with an interest in men's health and/or developing men's health initiatives. It covers the following topics:

### *“All is not well with the testicled half of the population”*

An amusing and down to earth insight into the health and wellbeing (or not!) of the male of the species. Why is male health so poor? If we begin to understand the reasoning behind the male psyche can we improve matters?

### *“The Apple shaped man”*

It is well documented that men in Scotland are carrying a little extra poundage on their person! Male weight distribution (central obesity) is particularly damaging to health. The apple shaped man explores the problem of obesity with relation to how this important and topical issue can be addressed in Primary care.

### *“All in the mind”*

Mild to moderate mental health problems such as stress, anxiety and depression are common but debilitating conditions. All in the mind provides insight into the signs and symptoms of mental health issues and explores how to effectively assess and address this ever growing concern in primary care.

### *“Good ball control”*

A brief but informative overview of the signs and symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases and testicular cancer and the importance of discussing safe sex and testicular awareness with clients in primary care. Emphasis is placed on the health promotional aspect of information giving to allow clients to take control of their own health in an informed way with regards to sexually transmitted infections, reducing unplanned pregnancy and testicular cancer prevention.

### *“Below the belt”*

#### *Erectile dysfunction*

Sex matters, regardless of age or sexuality, increasing confidence, self esteem security and the feeling of belonging. When things go wrong however, self-worth can be diminished, relationships can break down and feelings of loneliness and depression are never far away. Erectile dysfunction is one such problem which cannot be underestimated. Initiating discussion about it can be difficult for both the health professional and the individual, however when dealt with appropriately the benefits far out weigh the social awkwardness! Common causes of erectile dysfunction, treatment modalities and communication skills are explored during this session.

#### *Prostate health*

It has been recently documented that the majority of men are unaware of the location of their prostate gland! This session provides insight into signs and symptoms of common urinary problems and other more serious complaints, such as prostate cancer, the much debated treatment modalities and health promotional issues surrounding the prostate.

### *“Men's health – achieving a sustainable service”*

A lively discussion surrounding the issues of men's health services. What works? How can a sustainable service be achieved? What's happening in other areas? This session also involves examining assessment documentation, which can be used as part of the service.

### *“Know your man – the men's health quiz”*

A light-hearted end to the day. A little competition to see if the audience has been paying attention.

## mhfs national conference (continued from front page)

Given the inclusive aims of the conference, we want to keep the day open to both workers in the field of men's health, and men in the community.

Depending on your interest, you may choose to come for the daytime sessions only, the evening session only, or both. We are providing food and refreshments at lunchtime, and in between the afternoon and evening sessions.

### Daytime sessions between 9.00am and 4.30pm:

Leading players from the field of men's health will present information and lead discussion groups and workshops.

### Evening session, between 5.30 and 7.30:

Devoted to gathering the experiences and views of men in the community.

### Outcomes from the day include:

- a full conference report

- a range of key action points and recommendations
- a design brief for male-friendly resources which will be taken forward into production in the months following the conference

Booking information will be available soon and distributed to all those on our mailing list. To register an interest in attending the conference please contact Graeme Henderson at [conf-reg@mhfs.org.uk](mailto:conf-reg@mhfs.org.uk) or the mailing address below.

## mhfs in the Highlands

In August 2003, mhfs appointed Jean MacLeod as development worker for a project aimed at improving the mental health and well-being of men and boys in Caithness and Sutherland. Here Jean outlines some of thoughts and plans for this seemingly mammoth task:

The Highlands is known as a beautiful part of Scotland, but its vast size and scattered population make it a difficult place to live in many ways. In terms of mental health, there are men who have moved North in the hope that the peace and serenity of the Highlands would improve their mental health and well-being. However, their problems came with them and the isolation and limited resources made it even more difficult for them to address their issues.

In older men, loneliness and isolation very often followed the death of a partner and they found it difficult to socialise on their own. Some social networks are predominantly made up of couples, and single men can feel, or actually be, excluded. As a result, formerly strong friendships can fade.

It is, apparently, socially acceptable for a man to say "I am really stressed". However, if he mentions feeling depressed, nobody wants to know as they see this as a weakness, as a sign of not being able to cope.

Farmers and crofters, many of whom are self-employed, are reliant on income from their produce and subsidies. This income is put in jeopardy because of the general state of the farming industry. There is also the feeling of constant pressure from the large amounts of paperwork involved in securing subsidies.

Young men run into problems too. The restricted transport network limits their access to some key services – the nearest sexual health clinic is in Inverness, for example – and they may struggle to get immediate, confidential advice.

Since starting the job, I have concentrated initially on exploiting networking opportunities to get to know and engage existing groups and agencies, and to promote the concept of proactive men's health. Other work includes:

- finding out what men want in terms of their mental and physical needs – what information or resources would improve their mental health and well being
- working with NHS Highland's Health Promotion Department to develop information resources to help men in their quest for holistic health
- exploring mobile MOT clinics for men – something that is interesting employers, primary care workers, leisure groups and local football clubs
- looking at ways of improving transport networks to encourage older men to meet socially and improve their isolation

The project represents an exciting challenge and there is still much to do, however I am determined to make a positive impact on men's health in Caithness and Sutherland.

**Jean MacLeod, mhfs Development Worker**, can be contacted on **01571 844033**, or at [jean.macleod@btinternet.com](mailto:jean.macleod@btinternet.com)

**mhfs**

**mens health forum** SCOTLAND

mhfs: recognised as a charity in Scotland. Scottish charity no. SC032351  
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