



Redefining “Man Enough”: A Guide to Men’s Mental Health



Created by ARC counsellors to support men of all ages,
and the people who care about them.

Why this matters

Most men are not “bad at feelings”. Many have simply been taught to handle things alone. Growing up, a lot of men hear messages like:

- “Man up.”
- “Stop crying.”
- “Don’t be weak.”
- “Just get on with it.”

That doesn’t make someone stronger. It makes them quieter.

When things get heavy, that silence can turn into:

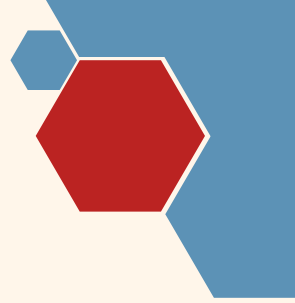
- Stress or constant pressure
- Anger or snapping more easily
- Overworking or staying busy to avoid thinking
- Drinking, scrolling, gaming, or shutting down
- Feeling flat, numb, or disconnected

This guide is here to help you:

- Understand why talking can feel awkward or impossible
- Spot what mental health struggles can look like in men
- Find simple ways to feel better day to day
- Learn how to open up without having to “spill everything”
- Get support without feeling judged

You do not need to do this on your own.





What Struggles Can Look Like

Mental health issues do not always look like crying or falling apart.

Often, they look more like:

- Feeling constantly on edge or irritated
- Wanting to be alone more than usual
- Sleeping badly or waking up exhausted
- Losing interest in things you normally enjoy
- Feeling ashamed or like you should be coping better
- Drinking more, vaping more, or using distractions to “numb out”

Anger is often the surface feeling


Anger is usually what shows on the outside.


Underneath there may be stress, fear, embarrassment, grief, loneliness, or feeling not good enough.

If you only deal with the anger, you miss what is really going on.

“I should be able to handle this”

Many men carry the idea that being strong means being self sufficient. But the strongest people do not do everything alone.

 Boxers have coaches and trainers.

 CEOs have boards and advisors.

 Firefighters never go in alone.

Mental health is no different.

Support is not weakness.





Simple Tools That Can Actually Help

You do not need to talk for hours or explain everything. Try one or two of these.

The 3-Word Check-In (1 minute)

Pick 3 words for how you feel right now.

Examples: “tired, wired, annoyed” or “flat, stressed, distant”.

No judgement. Just data. Do it once a day for a week. You start to spot patterns.

Battery Check (quick and relatable)

Ask yourself: “What’s my battery out of 10 today?”

Then ask: “What’s draining it?” and “What tops it up?”

This works even if you do not have the right emotional words.

Name it to Tame it (30 seconds)

If you can name what’s happening, it usually shrinks. Try:

- “This is stress.”
- “This is embarrassment.”
- “This is loneliness.”
- “This is fear.”

You are not defined by a feeling. You are just *experiencing* the feeling.

Reset for Anger or Overwhelm (2 minutes)

- Cold water on hands or face
- Slow exhale breathing: inhale 4, exhale 6 (x6 times)
- Then ask: “What do I need right now? Food, sleep, space, a chat, a walk?”

This helps your nervous system switch down a gear.

Walk and talk

Many men find it easier to talk side by side rather than face to face. A walk, a drive, the gym, or doing a job together often makes conversations easier.





When to Get Extra Support

Get support if you notice:

- This has been going on for weeks
- You are using alcohol, weed, porn, gambling, or scrolling to numb out
- You feel hopeless, trapped, or like you cannot switch your brain off
- You are pushing people away or constantly on edge
- You are having thoughts of harming yourself

You do not need to be in crisis to talk to someone.

! Why early support matters

A lot of men wait until things feel unbearable before asking for help. By that point, stress, low mood, or anxiety can feel overwhelming and harder to untangle.

Getting support earlier can:

- Stop problems from piling up
- Reduce anger, burnout, and emotional shutdown
- Improve sleep, focus, and relationships
- Help you feel more in control again

If any of this feels familiar, here's what to do next:

- Tell one person: "I'm not doing great."
- Book a GP appointment if sleep, mood, or anxiety is getting worse
- If you're in work, consider speaking to HR, occupational health, or a trusted manager
- Try counselling even if you're not sure what you'd say
- If you feel unsafe or at risk, contact a crisis line or A&E

A final reminder

Asking for help early is not overreacting. It is preventative. Getting support does not mean you will feel like this forever. It means you are taking steps to feel better.



Groups and Helplines

Peer Support & Talking Groups

- **ANDYSMANCLUB:** Free, peer-led support groups across the UK and online, focusing on suicide prevention through conversation.
- **Talk Club:** Uses a "How are you? Out of 10?" framework to build mental fitness in talking groups.
- **Man Down UK:** Non-profit running informal, peer-led groups for men to share struggles and reduce stigma.
- **Mates in Mind:** A leading charity for raising awareness and tackling stigma, especially in the workplace.

Suicide Prevention & Crisis Support

- **Men's Minds Matter:** Specialises in male suicide prevention, intervention, and campaigning.
- **James Place:** Provides free, life-saving treatment for suicidal men.
- **CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably):** Offers a helpline (5pm-midnight) and resources for men facing tough times.

Other Key Resources

- **Samaritans:** A general, non-judgmental listening service available 24/7 for anyone in distress.
- **Hub of Hope:** An online directory to find local mental health services.





Did You Know?

- **3 out of 4 suicides in the UK are men** (Office for National Statistics, 2023)
- Suicide is the **leading cause of death for men under 50** in the UK (Office for National Statistics / London Assembly, 2023–2024)
- **Only 36% of NHS talking therapy referrals are men** (NHS, 2022)
- Many men wait up to **10 years** before seeking support for mental health issues (Mental Health Foundation / Samaritans, UK)
- 1 in 5 men say they've **cried in secret** rather than talk to someone (Mental Health UK / YouGov)
- **Loneliness in men over 60** is strongly linked to depression and low mood (Age UK)
- 1 in 10 young men say they've **never been taught how to talk about emotions** (NSPCC / Childline, UK)
- **Boys aged 10–14 in the UK are less likely than girls to be identified as having a mental health difficulty**, suggesting boys' struggles are more likely to go unnoticed. (NHS Digital, 2023)
- **Young men are significantly less likely than girls to access counselling or mental health support**, even when experiencing similar symptoms. (Mental Health Foundation, 2022)
- **Around 30% of Young men aged 11–16 say they would feel embarrassed to talk about their mental health**, compared with around 20% of girls. (Time to Change / Mind, UK)
- **Young men aged 16–24 are more likely to cope with stress alone** than seek help, often relying on distraction or avoidance instead. (YoungMinds, 2021)
- Men often express distress through **anger, withdrawal, or workaholism**, which can mask deeper struggles (Mental Health Foundation / Mind UK)



Get in touch



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ARC offers one-to-one counselling to Adults and Young People across Wokingham and the surrounding areas. We provide confidential counselling at our main site in Wokingham, Oakwood in Woodley, schools and GP surgeries across the area.

ARC provides an important role within the community, with referrals coming from other agencies as well as self-referrals.

In addition to counselling, we also offer important support for 16 – 25 year olds through our Youth Access program. This program provides information to young people on where and how to access support, from housing, to work and mental health.

Our counselling services are free to young people under the age of 21 years and low cost for adults. We believe that counselling should be accessible for all and that cost should never be a barrier to better mental health.

We are a charity with over 25 years offering support within the Wokingham area.