



## **Mental Health Matters: Men - It's ok to talk ...**



This is surely a familiar idea now ... even if in practice we all find it difficult or very difficult at times. 'It's ok to talk', is also the motto of Andy's Man Club, an informal, confidential and supportive setting in which men are invited, every Monday evening at 7pm, to simply be with one another and talk about what's important to them. And it's proving very popular, such that over the last 4 years it's grown from a few people meeting in a room in Halifax to a national network of nearly 30 groups ... including four in Devon, which continue to be open and meet - at present online.

It arose from a tragedy ... with a hope and ambition to prevent others. In April 2016, 23-year-old friend, husband and father Andy Roberts died by suicide – he had everything to live for and his loss came as a great surprise to all those around him. In the shock and grief that followed his brother in law, Luke Ambler, a former professional rugby player for Halifax, became all the more aware of men struggling with their mental health and feeling unable to talk about their issues. 'Men don't talk, for three reasons,' he said. 'They feel a burden, that it's a weakness, or they're embarrassed. But it takes a stronger person to say how you're feeling. To have the confidence to say 'I have a problem, and I'm struggling in life'. To say that's weak, well it's a load of tosh.' However there remains a problem ... it may be ok to talk ... but who is willing to listen? Luke wanted to do something about this and launched Andy's Man Club in his brother-in-law's memory. They started with very little ... but took the view that, 'Just because there is a lack of resources it doesn't mean we can't be resourceful ... We all need to learn to be kind.' And so it began as one group in the small, northern town of Halifax.

As Luke says, 'That first night 9 men turned up and spoke. There

#ItsOkayToTalk



DAVID BARNETT

Talking group fights male suicide

<https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/itsokaytotalk>

was a magic in that room that everyone knew had to be shared, we knew other guys across the country needed this same experience. ... On average one man every 2 hours takes his life in the UK. It's often said a factor is that men don't talk.

At ANDYSMANCLUB you don't have to be suicidal or have a mental health problem, we just want to get men talking.'

It is specifically for men ... all men, but what it represents is universally applicable. Life is full of storms and as they say, 'We are talking groups for men because... You've either been through a storm, are currently going through a storm or have a storm brewing in your life. If you are struggling with your life or your feelings and would like to have the company of other men, many going through similar issues ... why not give it a go?

And the man on the team, Glenn can say from experience that it offers a warm welcome, you can just pop in, listen and talk - as you wish.

**Contacts** ... you can find out more about it at [andysmanclub.co.uk/contact/](https://andysmanclub.co.uk/contact/) and you can ask any questions or book in to join local groups – currently online - via an email to [info@andysmanclub.co.uk](mailto:info@andysmanclub.co.uk) and their team will be happy to help.

All good wishes

Glenn, Kate and Sophie

For BradTog MHM

Ps. Do let us know if you have suggestions or offers to make for future postings

