



# Men's Mental Health



# Men's Mental Health

Global mental health statistics

Men's mental health differences

Why is mental health so important?

Risk factors – Biological, Psychological & Social

How to address your mental health

Support information, resources and Q&A



# Global mental health statistics

- 13% of the global population is living with mental disorders
- Over the course of your life, your chances of having a mental illness is 1 in 5
- Anxiety and depressive disorders represent approximately 60% of mental health disorders





# Men's mental health quiz

1. Out of 1,000 men what % said they had suffered with mental health issues?

2. What is listed as one of the top causes of men's mental health issues?

3. Which brain chemical is key in supporting our mood?







# Some mental health differences

Women report **higher** levels of life satisfaction.

**Men** are **3x more likely** to become dependent on alcohol

Men are **1.5 times more likely** to be victims of violent crime

**Three in five LGBTQ+** people experience **anxiety**

People of Indian, Pakistani & African-Caribbean origin: **higher levels of mental wellbeing** than other ethnic groups

**Men** are **3x more likely** to report frequent **drug use**

**Men** are **more likely** to be compulsorily detained (or 'sectioned') for treatment than women. BUT black people are more likely to be detained than white people



**Half of all men under 40** said that **poor body image** is affecting their mental health

**Higher level of depression** among workers in **male dominated industries**

**87% of rough sleepers** are men

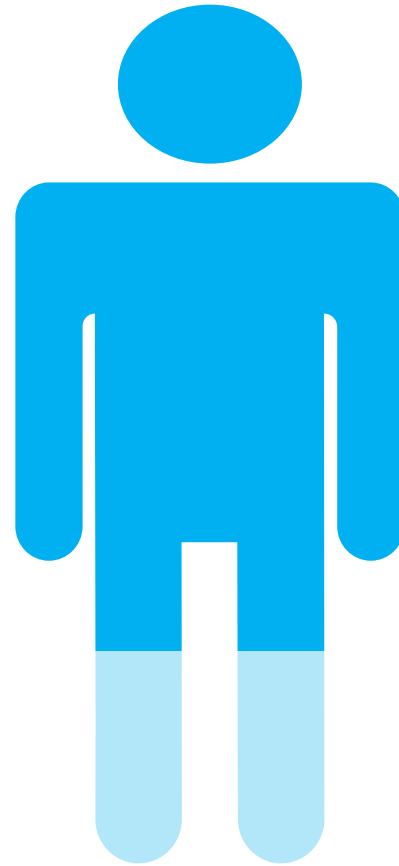
Nearly **three-quarters** of adults who **go missing** are men



# Men's mental health differences

## Suicide

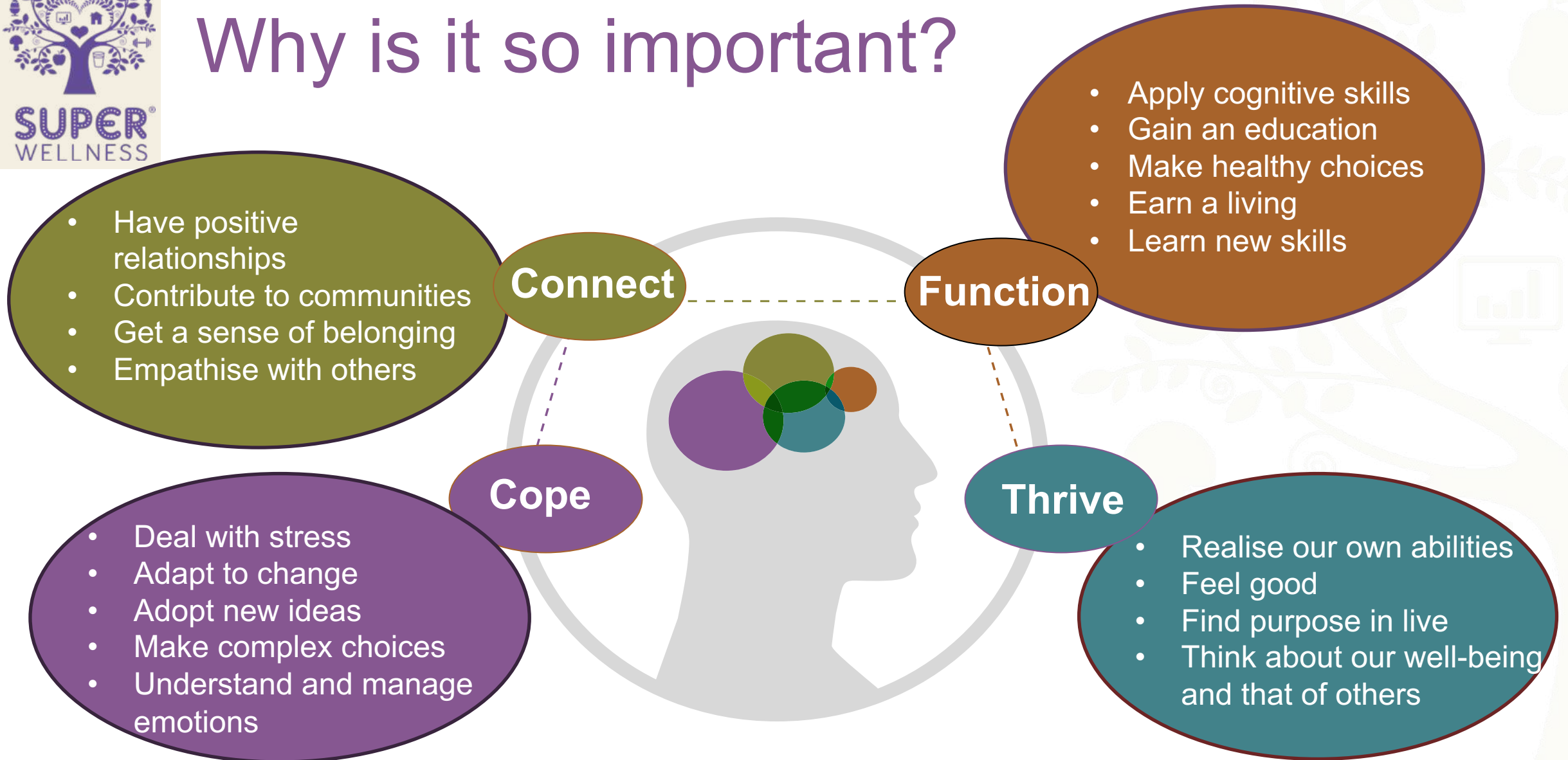
75% of suicides are men  
Greatest cause of death in those  
under 50  
1 man dies by suicide ever minute  
Over 20 attempts for every death



**Half as likely to seek  
out help and support.**

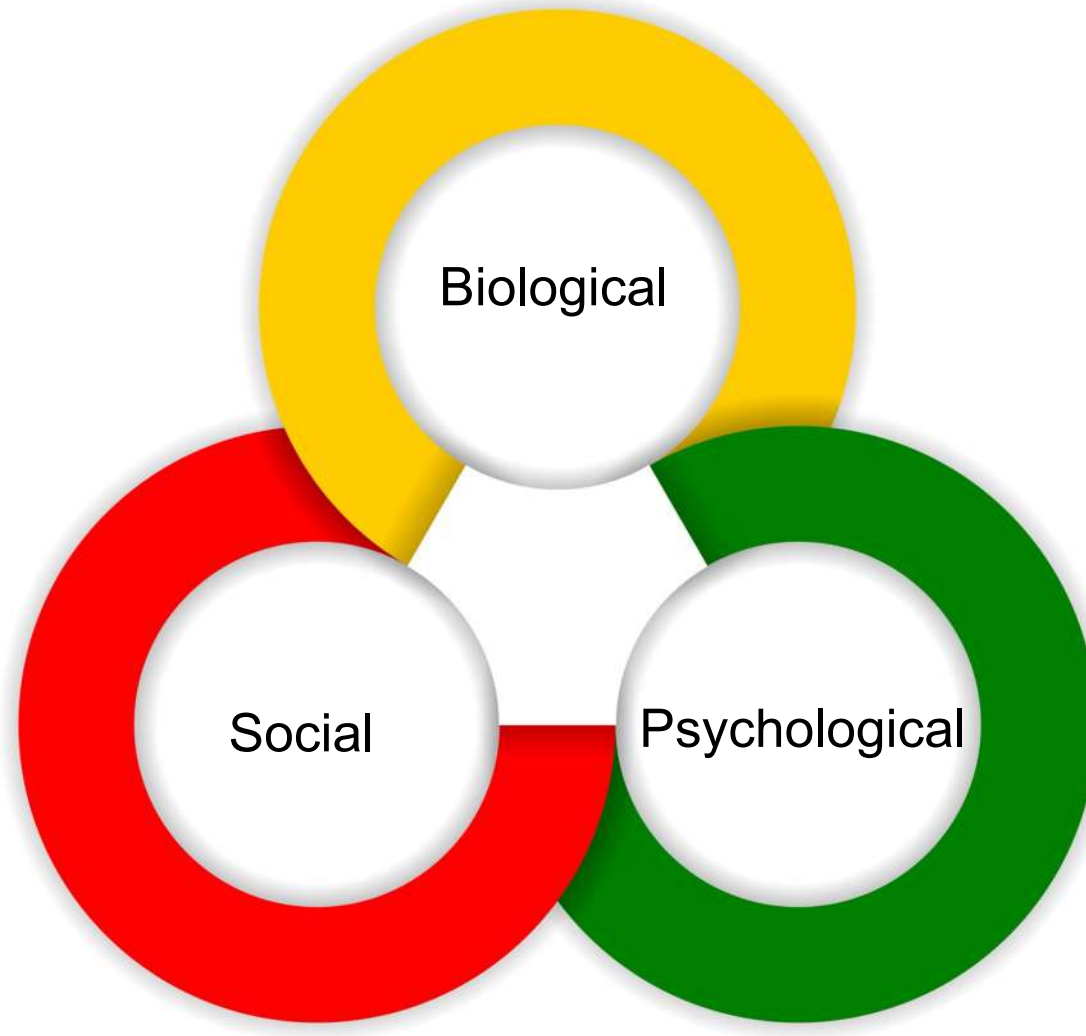
**36% of referrals to  
talking therapies are  
for men.**

# Why is it so important?





# Risk factors





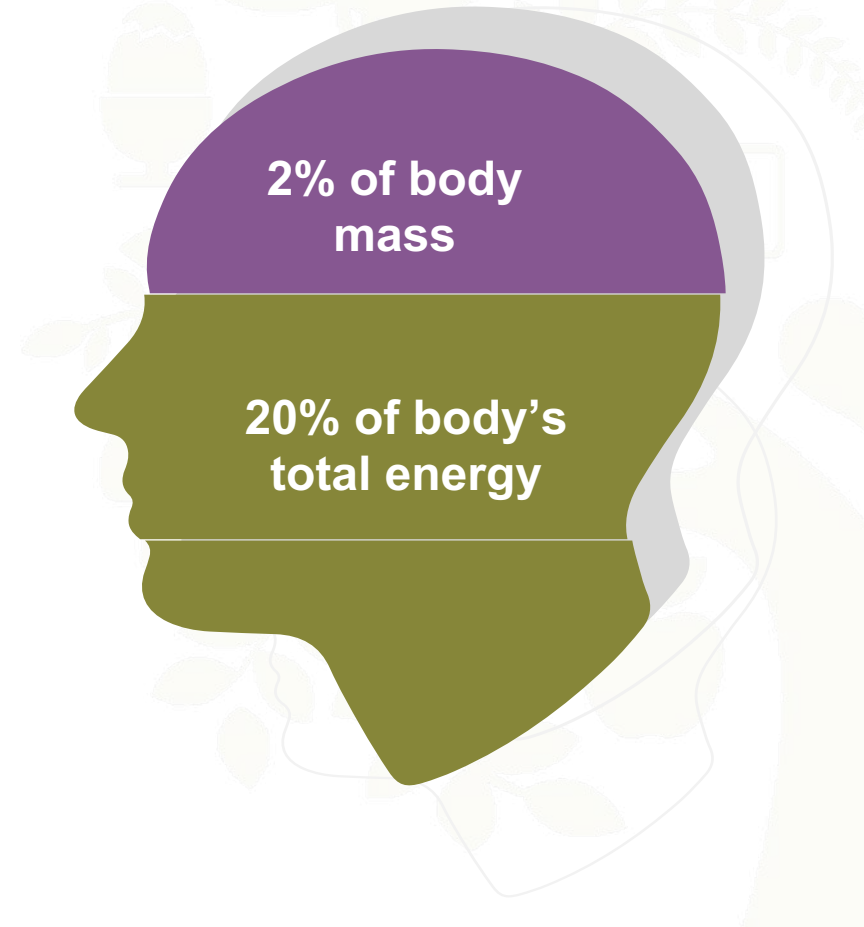


# Brain, energy and metabolic health

**Metabolic health refers to how well our bodies create and utilise energy.**

**New research is showing links between mental health & metabolic health:**

- Diabetes increases likelihood of depression by 2-3x.
- Obesity increases likelihood of depression or anxiety by 25% and bipolar by 50%.
- 20% of those with heart attacks and 33% of those with congestive heart failure experience depression within a year of the event or condition.



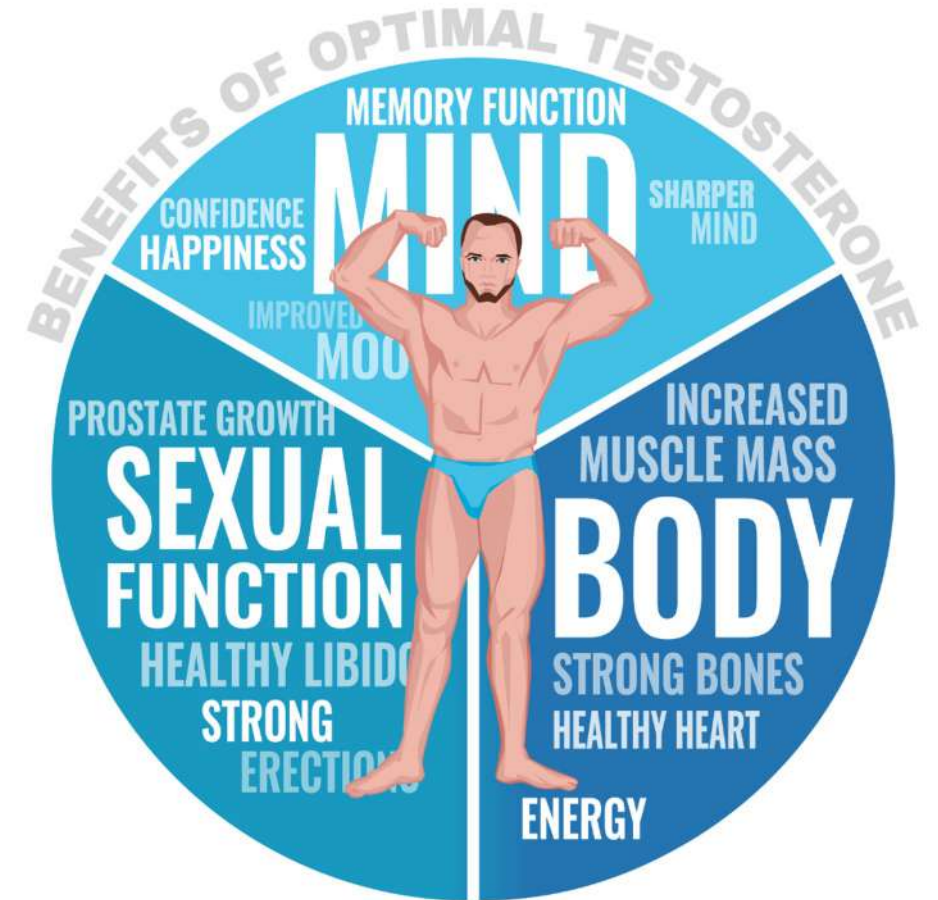


# Testosterone - the 'manly' hormone

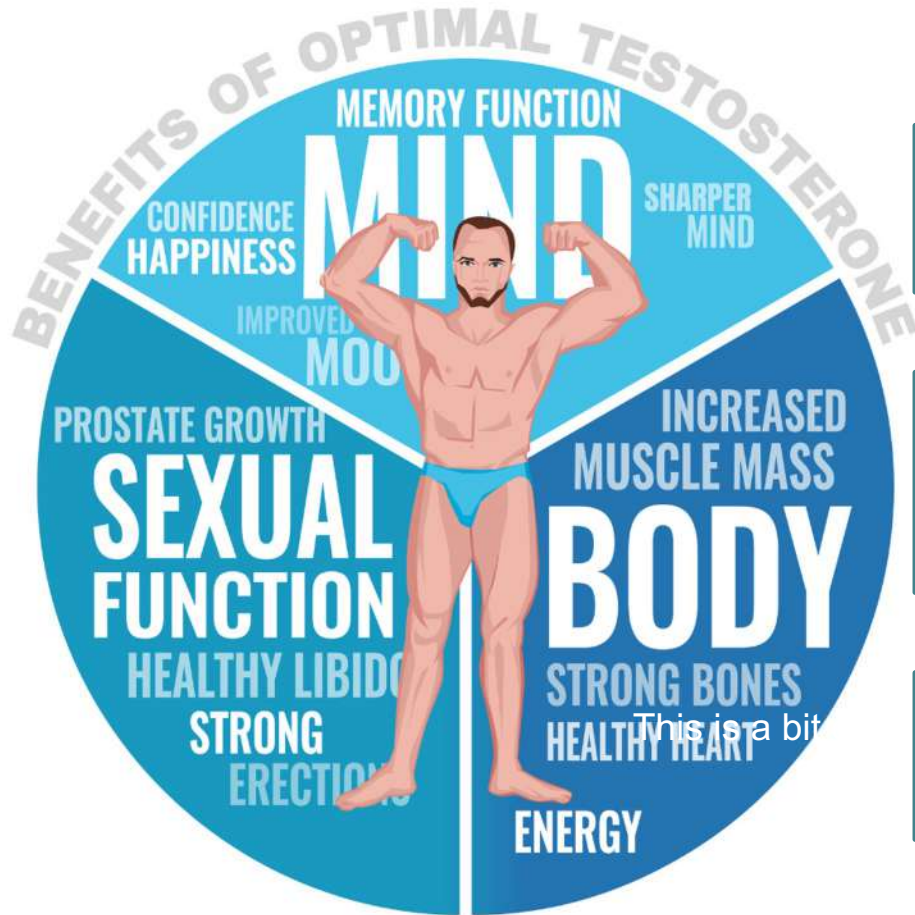
**Not exclusive to men;** women have it too.

## **More than just for muscle growth:**

- Libido
- Achieving and maintaining erection
- Sperm production
- Strong bones / bone mass
- Supporting heart health
- Hair loss
- Low blood count
- Brain health



# Brain, testosterone and mental health



## Testosterone influences acetylcholine

- Impacting your learning and memory

## Testosterone influences your frontal lobe

- Impacting your personality, emotional regulation, handling stress motivation and drive.

## Testosterone influences dopamine activity

- Impacting your motivation, drive, and focus.



# Testosterone - is more always better?







# Male menopause – yes, it's a thing!

## Andropause

- A label given to the steady age-related decline of testosterone – 1% to 2% per year

## Hypogonadism

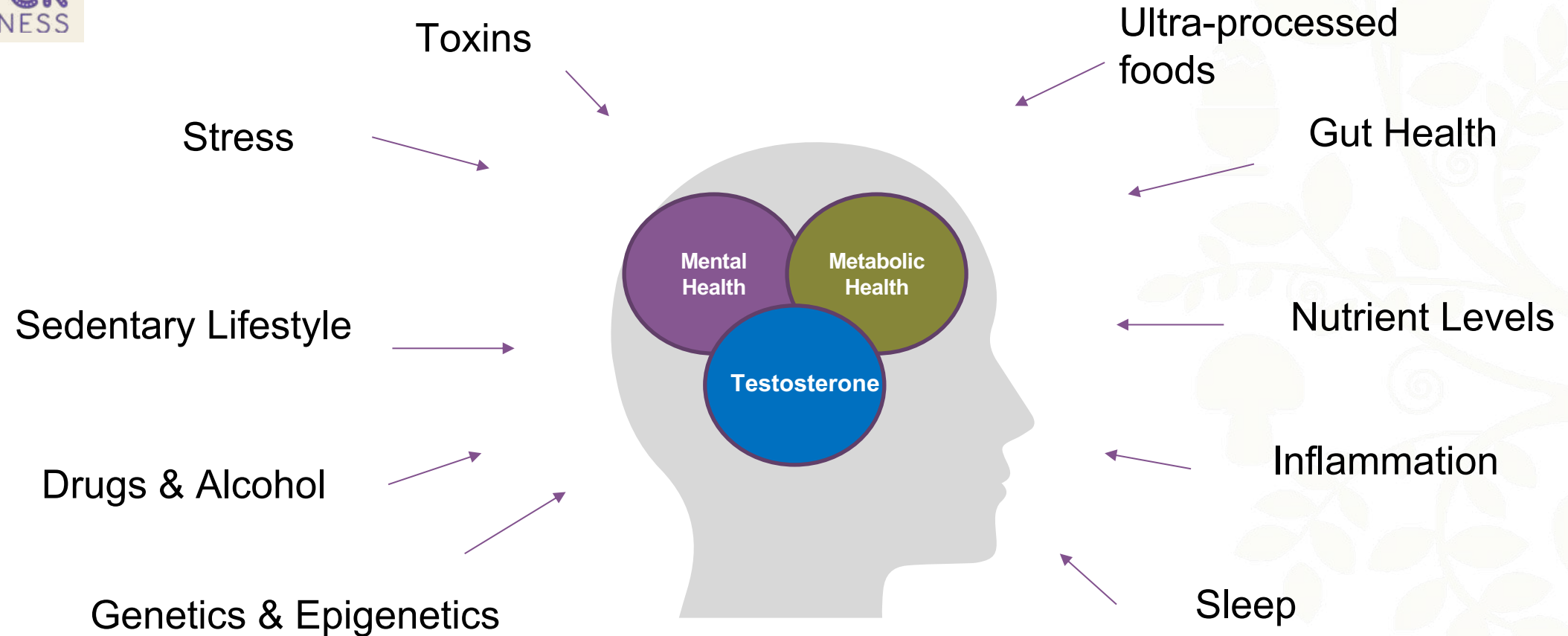
- Medical term given to those with testosterone deficiency
- Global studies showing declining testosterone levels
- Look out for signs from a younger age

### Hypogonadism Symptoms





# Multi factorial biological factors





# Psychological and social factors

- Our evolutionary history dates back 4-7 million years.
- Your genes don't care about your mental health.
- Survivability and reproducibility are their top priorities.
- Our emotions developed to serve a purpose.





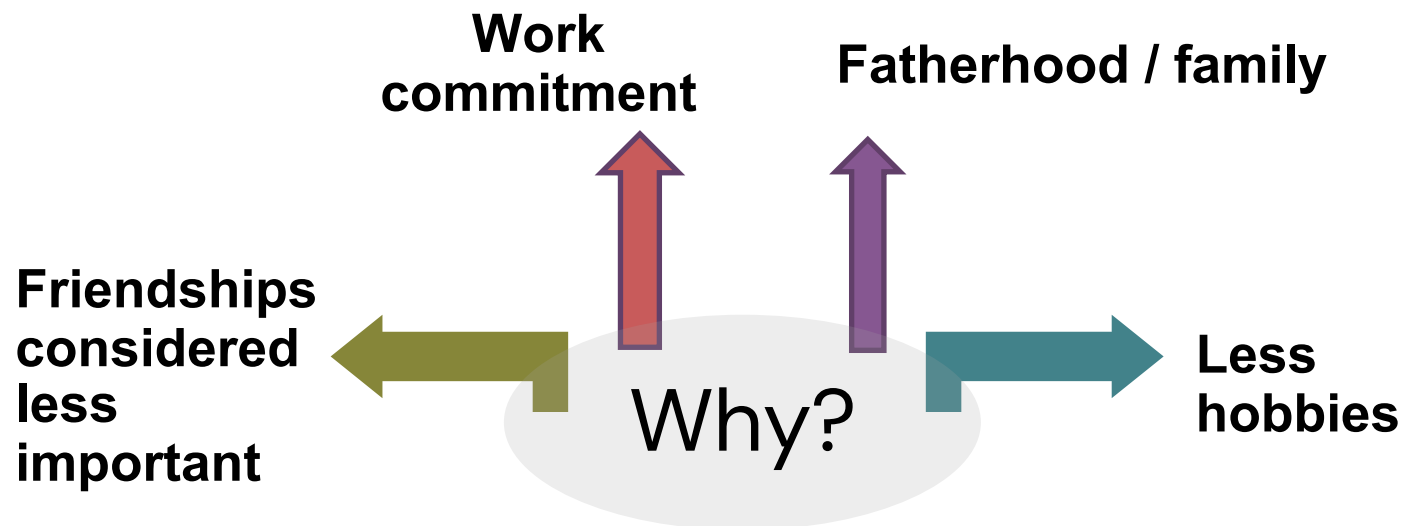
# Loneliness – a silent epidemic

**46% of U.S. adults feel lonely “sometimes” or “always”**

***UK charity survey found that for men:***

- 27% said they do not have any close friends or any friends at all.
- 38% never organise to see their close friends for drinks or food.
- 47% do not talk openly with friends about their problems.

**“LONG-TERM LONELINESS IS AS  
DAMAGING TO YOUR HEALTH  
AS SMOKING 15 CIGARETTES A  
DAY”**







# How men handle stress

## What 1000 men said about their mental health...

- **77%** have suffered with symptoms of mental health issues
- **40%** said they've never spoken to anyone about their mental health
- **22%** said they would not feel comfortable speaking to their GP or any other professional about their mental health.

'I don't want to be a burden to anyone' - 36%.

'I've learnt to deal with it' - 40%.

'I'm too embarrassed' - 29%.



# Meaning and purpose

“He who has a ‘why’ to live for  
can bear almost any how”



## Top 3 causes of men's mental health issues:

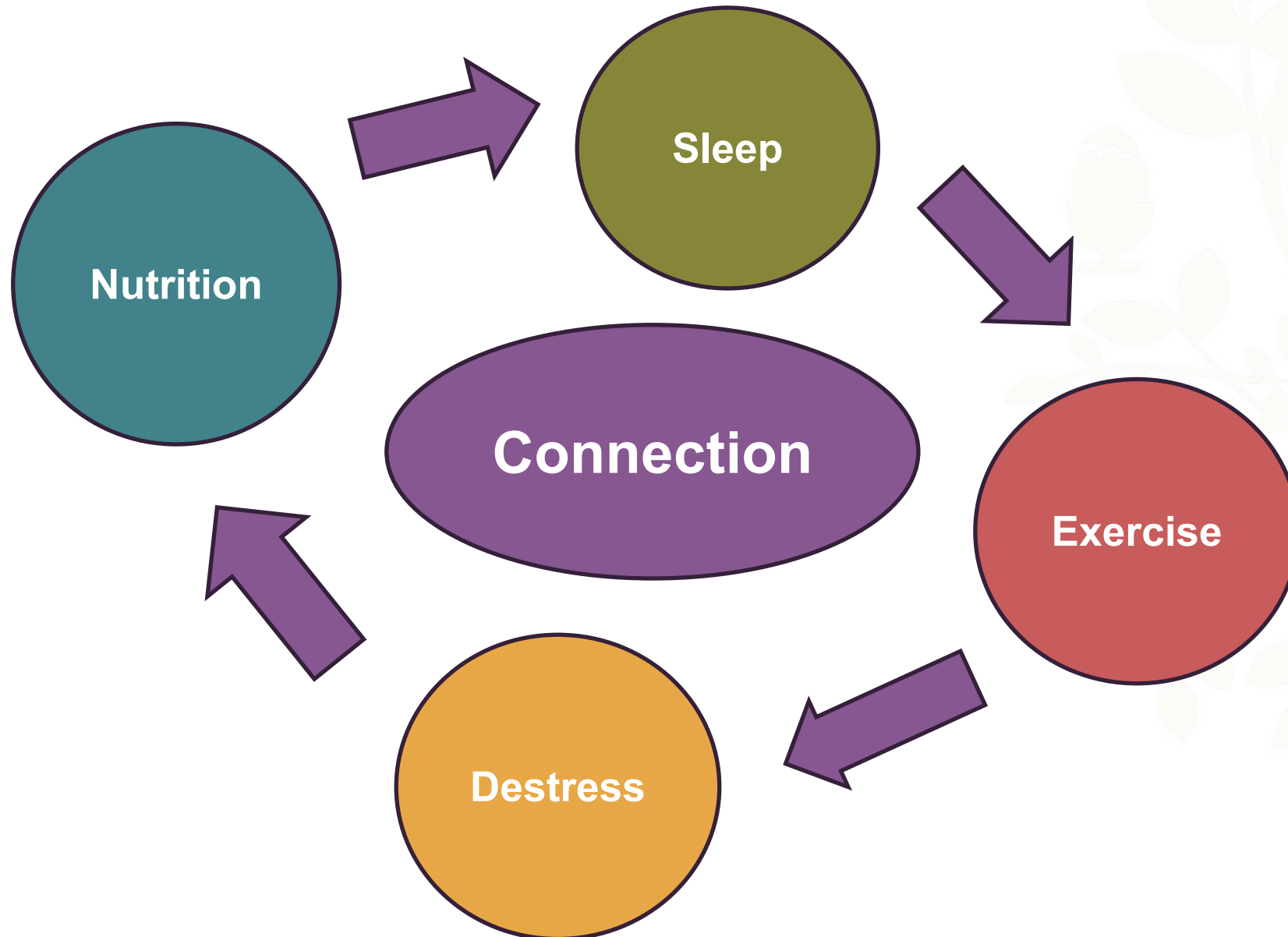
- 32% work pressure
- 31% financial pressure
- 23% health concerns

## Having meaning or purpose is important for men:

- **2X greater impact** from unemployment
- **6.8% increase** of risk of death by age 73 retiring 1 year earlier
- **2X more likely** to have a depressive episode in the 2 years following a divorce



# Supporting your mental health





# Know where you are...

## You might feel:

Confident  
Motivated / focused  
Resilient  
Enthusiastic  
Supportive of others

## Physical symptoms:

- Consistent energy
- Strong sex drive
- Strong work or physical performance

**Optimal**

## You might feel:

Generally  
good/confident  
Periods of good  
focus/motivation

## Physical symptoms:

- Periods of good energy
- Good sleep
- Reasonable sex drive
- Functioning well at work

**Good**

## You might feel:

Less enjoyment in things  
Lack of confidence  
Restless or irritable  
Lack of concentration /  
motivation  
Antisocial

## Physical symptoms:

- Energy dips
- Lack of sex drive
- Sleep problems
- Hindered work performance

**Struggling**

## You might feel:

Hopeless or worthless  
Upset or tearful  
Empty or numb  
Anxious or worried  
Suicidal

## Physical symptoms:

- No energy
- Speaking or moving slowly
- Significant sleep problems
- Unable to function at work

**Unwell**





# Speak to your GP or private practitioner



Provides a space for you to talk about how you're doing

Receive professional and objective feedback

Possibly be referred to a therapist or psychiatrist

Check metabolic health ie. blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose

Check BMI and waist-height ratio



# Consider your testosterone levels



## **Ideally everyone should get tested**

- Identify low levels which may explain symptoms
- If healthy, you can learn your normal baseline levels

## **To raise levels**

- Follow nutrition, sleep and exercise guidance
- Ideas to follow – then re-test

## **In some cases**

- If recommended, testosterone replacement therapy might be suitable



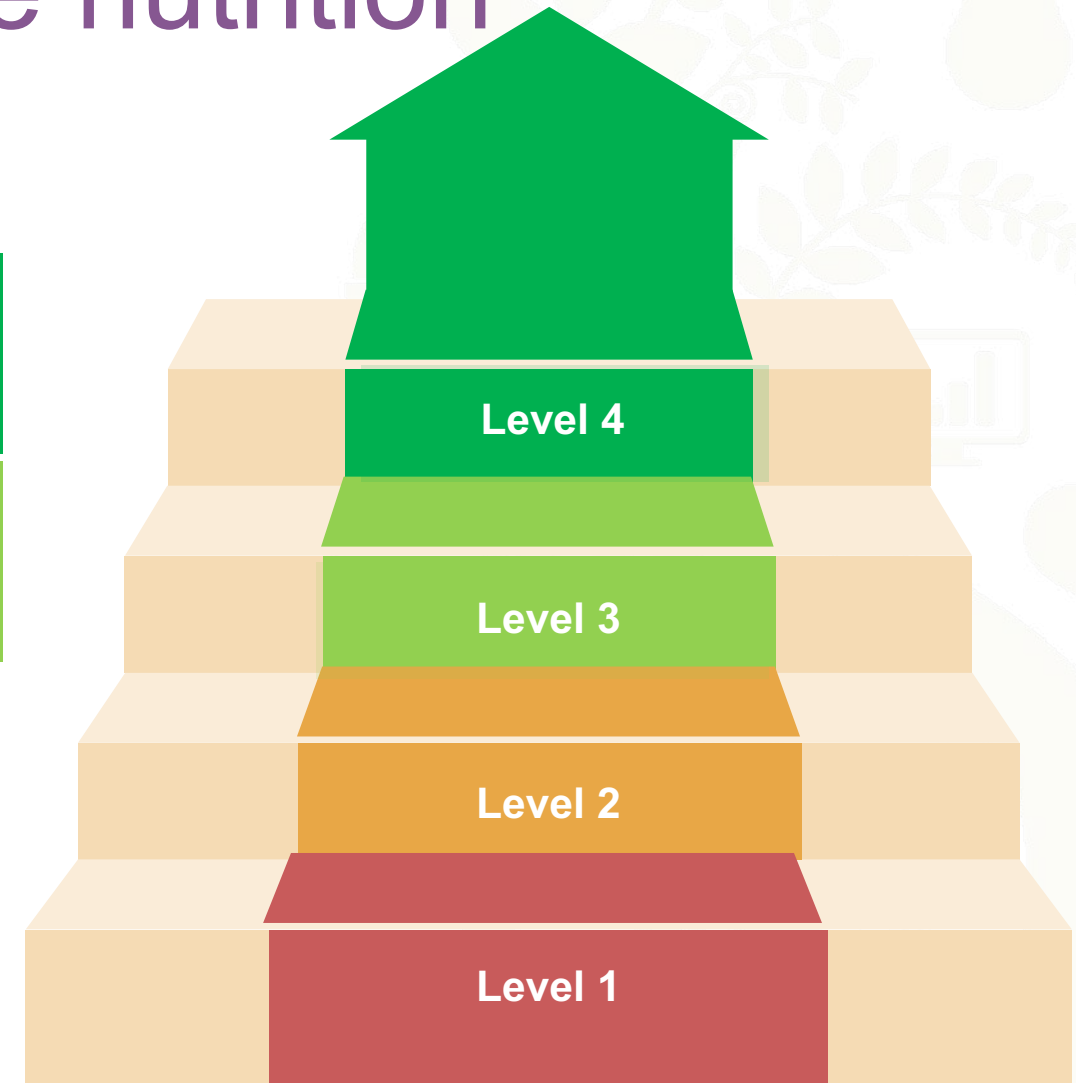
# Take steps to improve nutrition

Maximise variety of food sources, particularly fruit & veg  
Focus on seasonal & organic products  
Include few portions of fermented foods

Aim for 5-10 servings of fruit and vegetables per day  
Aim for 2 servings of oily fish per week  
Limit processed meats: sausages, bacon, deli meats

Limit alcohol, cigarettes, caffeine  
Ditch the junk food / highly processed food  
Limit drinking your calories: sweet and fizzy drinks

Focus on obtaining 1.2-1.5g of protein per kg of body weight  
Focus on eating whole food carbohydrates  
Include healthy sources of fat eg. avocados/olive oil





# Take steps to improve sleep

Track your sleep: Apple watch, oura ring, whoop band...  
Journal before going to sleep / plan the next day.

Limit caffeine past 2pm  
Limit artificial light / screen time in the evening or try blue light blocking glasses  
Focus on a relaxing routine/activities the hour or 2 before bed: reading, bath, chamomile tea

Avoid large meals within 2 hours of going to sleep  
Aim for direct sunlight in the morning  
Ensure bedroom is dark and a cool temperature

Stop any alcohol or caffeine in the evening  
Avoid late night 'binges' of junk foods







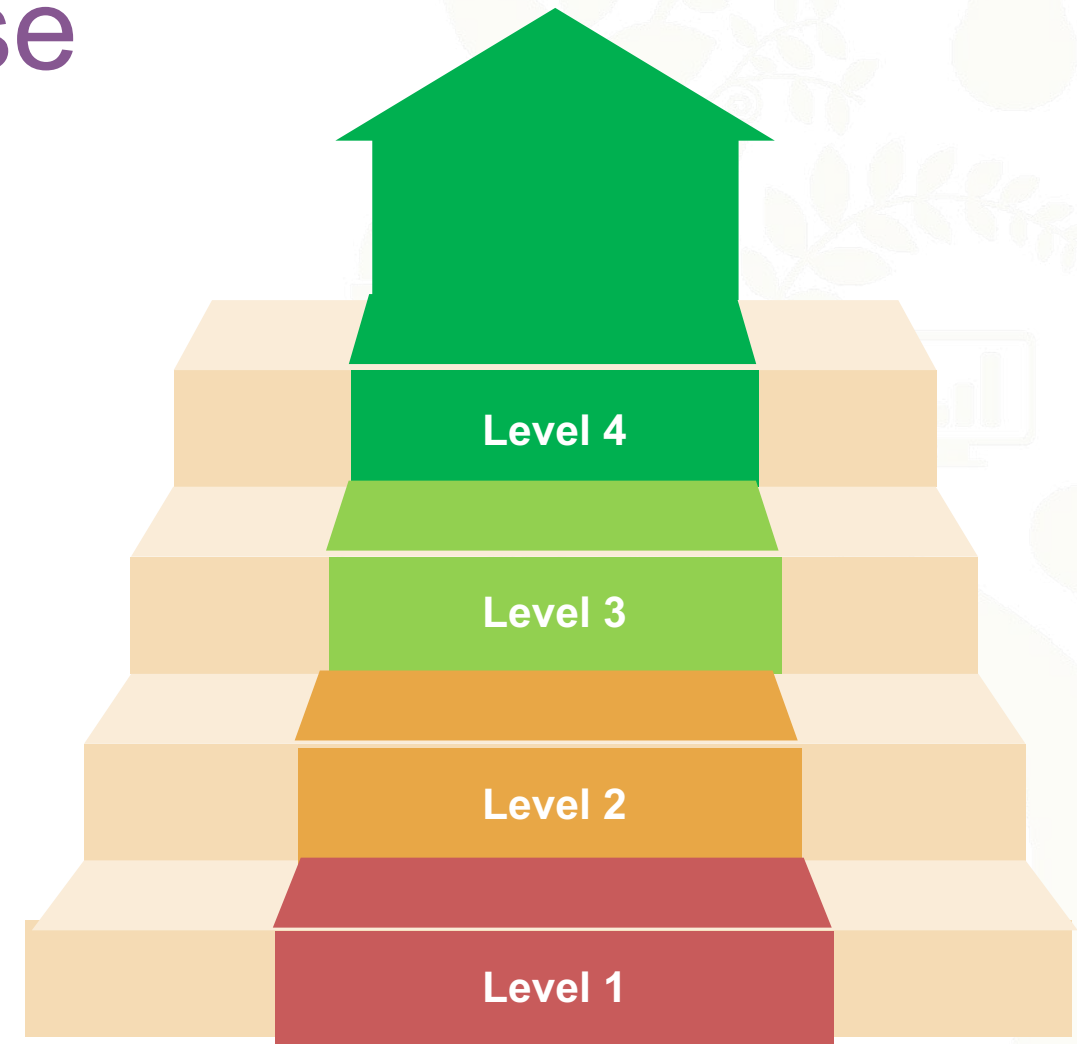
# Take steps to exercise

Incorporating sauna session or cold plunges/shower  
Try a new active group activity/hobby  
Balance, flexibility — yoga, pilates or stretching sessions.

300+ minutes of moderate intensity activity  
150+ minutes of vigorous intensity exercise  
2 sessions of muscle strengthening sessions

150 - 300 minutes of moderate intensity exercise  
75 - 150 minutes of vigorous intensity exercise

8-10,000 steps daily  
Limit time spent sedentary  
Taking stairs instead of elevators/escalators





# Exercise – a frontline treatment?

**Exercise is 1.5 times more effective than antidepressants.**

- **25% reduction** in risk with recommended physical activity.
- **18% reduction** in risk with completing half the recommended physical activity.
- **11.5% of depressive cases** could have been prevented if recommended activity levels were met.





# Be connected, do things you enjoy

## Maintain social connections

### Increases **serotonin**:

- Improves mood
- Counters stress related issues
- Improves immune system
- Boosted further by getting outside

### Blocks **tachykinin**:

- Lowers feelings of irritability, fear and paranoia





# Get connected – what resonates with you?

Try new things

Host more

Virtual groups /  
share your  
interests online

Reconnect to  
old friends

Chat to  
neighbours



Start a hobby /  
join a club

Follow a  
sports team

Online gaming

Volunteer /  
Mentor





# Find value in different domains

## Career / Work

Job promotion  
Start a side hustle

## Health

Diet guidelines  
Limit alcohol  
Strength goals

## Social

Reconnect with X  
Organize 1 social event each week  
Schedule lunch break walks

## Hobbies / Interests

Join x club  
Attend weekly class  
Attend x5 sport matches

## Qualities / Virtues

“Family man”: date nights, family activities  
Courage: Trying new activity  
Generosity: Giving time to others  
Wisdom: Read 1 book per month

## Giving back

Charity or volunteering work.  
Mentoring a more junior work colleague

# What are you aiming for?



**Improve social connections** - volunteer for a local charity or chat to your neighbour

**Moving more** - can you fit in some extra steps or take up a new class

**Boost protein levels** – eggs on granary or nuts/seeds on porridge at breakfast.

**Support sleep** - aim for natural daylight in the morning and darkness at night

**Set a goal** – new hobby or mentoring a colleague



# Take 10 together - Workplace



of UK employees say they have experienced mental health issues at work but less than half of that group felt confident to open up about it.

Choose a setting:

ITEM 01  
**1** Make a hot drink or pop out for a walk.

ITEM 02  
**2** Meet outside the workplace in a neutral space such as a café.

ITEM 03  
**3** Give yourself plenty of time so you don't appear to be in a hurry.

How are you feeling at the moment?

How long have you felt like this – is it an ongoing issues?

Who do you feel you can go to for support?

Are there any work-related factors which are contributing to how you are feeling?

Is there anything we can do to help?

# Looking out for friends / colleagues

## Triggers

### Personal Life Changes

Bereavement	Having children
Relationship Breakdown	Health issues

### Changes at Work

New job	<b>At work</b> Poor relationship with colleagues
Increased work responsibilities	Fear of redundancy

## Signs to Spot

### Physical

Headaches	Run down
Frequent illness	Lack of self care
Poor sleep	Weight loss/ gain

### Emotional / Behavioural

Irritable	Erratic
Withdrawn	Poor memory
Low confidence	Loss of humour

### At Work

Increased errors	Missed deadlines
Negative social changes	Increased absence
Frequent illness	Long hours





# Resources

## Books

- **Mindfulness for Stress Management** *Dr. Robert Schachter*
- **Why We Sleep** - *Matthew Walker*
- **Happy Mind. Happy Life**  
*Dr Rangan Chatterjee*
- **Let it Go** - *Rebecca Dennis*
- **When Strangers Meet** - *Kio Stark*
- **Why has nobody told me this before** - *Dr Julie Smith*
- **Man Down: A guide for men on mental health** – *Charlie Hoare*
- **Reasons to Stay Alive** - *Matt Haig*
- **Billy No-Mates: How I realised men have a friendship problem** – *Max Dickins*

## Men's Mental Health Support Charities

**CALM** - [www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net)

Campaign against living miserably – UK charity aimed at men with emergency helpline.

**MAN HEALTH** - [www.manhealth.org.uk](http://www.manhealth.org.uk)

Information and peer support groups in and around County Durham & North East of England

**MOVEMBER** - <https://uk.movember.com>

Global charity raising awareness of men's health issues. Lots of useful information including how to have conversations about mental health.  
<https://conversations.movember.com/en/>

**MEN'S MINDS MATTER** – <https://mensmindsmatter.org>

Men's Minds Matter focuses on developing psychological interventions for people in suicidal crisis. Useful, downloadable resources e.g. [How to help a friend](#)

## Breathing Techniques

- **Physiological sigh breathing technique** – great in the moment tool to use when anxiety hits or when overwhelm is present  
**Andrew Huberman explaining the technique:**  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBdhqBGqiMc>
- **Box Breathing technique** - relaxation technique  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEmt1Znux58>



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### Chicken stir-fry with courgette



Traditional recipes tend to be high in carbohydrates which can spike blood sugar levels. Using vegetable courgettes (zucchini) instead of courgettes is a great way of reducing the amount of carbohydrates you eat, with the bonus of adding more vegetables to your meal.

Serves 4

#### Ingredients

- 3 free-range chicken breasts, cut into thin strips
- 2 tablespoons Chinese five-spice
- 2 tablespoons sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 4cm piece ginger, grated
- 3 fresh red chili, chopped
- 2 carrots, julienned
- 1 red pepper, finely sliced
- 100g breadcrumb, soaked, sliced
- 300g mixed mushrooms, sliced
- 300g Chinese greens or kale, chopped
- 300g edamame beans
- 2 large courgettes, spirallised
- 2 tablespoons tamari soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons black bean sauce
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds
- Fresh coriander to serve

#### Method

Place the chicken, five-spice and sesame oil in a bowl and set aside.

Place the olive oil in a wok or large frypan over medium-high heat and add the onion, garlic, ginger and chili, then add the chicken and stir fry for 1-2 minutes until golden.

Add the remaining vegetables (except the courgettes) and stir fry for 4-5 minutes until cooked, but still with some crunch. Then add the courgettes and cook for a further 1-2 minutes to heat through. Mix the tamari and black bean sauce together and pour over the mixture and stir well.

Divide onto serving plates and top with sesame seeds, fresh coriander and extra chili to taste.

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### Mushroom and leek breakfast frittata



Makes 6 muffins

#### Ingredients

- 25g butter
- 1 large leek, sliced
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 150g button mushrooms
- 30g frozen peas
- 4 eggs
- 1/4 cup milk of choice (or Whinger Bury)
- 100g fresh ricotta (or any ricotta)
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Shaved parmesan to top

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### Vegetable traybake



Serves 4

#### Ingredients

- 2 sweet potatoes, cut into slices or chunks
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 2 peppers, cut into chunks
- 1 large onion, cut into wedges
- 1 tsp balsamic vinegar
- 300g cherry tomatoes
- 3 tablespoons pesto
- 100g spinach, finely chopped
- 1 cup cooked basmati rice
- 225g halloumi cheese, sliced

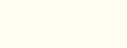
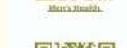
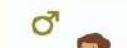
#### Method

1. Pre-heat the oven to 200°C (390°F). Lightly oil a baking dish or sheet and add the sweet potatoes. Brushing with olive oil before putting in the oven for 15-20 minutes or until starting to soften.
2. To the baking dish add the peppers, onion and cherry tomatoes and drizzle with the remaining olive oil and the balsamic vinegar.
3. Return to the oven for a further 25-30 minutes or until the vegetables are lovely and soft and the tomatoes have released their juices. Stir through the pesto and chopped spinach. The stir through the cooked rice and scatter over the halloumi cheese slices. Next place the dish under the grill to gently brown the halloumi.
4. You can serve this as is, or it makes a delicious accompaniment to meals during the week. Add to salad, serve as a side for a protein, add to pasta, with eggs for breakfast or even on toast.

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## Men's Health



### Should I test my testosterone level?

There are a number of reasons why you might want to test your testosterone levels. Testosterone is a hormone that is produced by the testes in men and the ovaries in women. It is responsible for many of the male characteristics, including muscle mass, bone density, and sexual function. Testosterone levels can decline as you age, and this can lead to a number of health problems, including osteoporosis, depression, and sexual dysfunction. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, it may be worth considering a testosterone test.

### Testosterone Replacement Therapy

Testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) is a treatment for men with low testosterone levels. It involves taking testosterone in the form of pills, injections, or a patch. TRT can help to restore testosterone levels to normal, which can improve symptoms of low testosterone, such as fatigue, depression, and sexual dysfunction. However, TRT is not without risks, and it is important to discuss the benefits and risks with your doctor before starting treatment.

### Ways to naturally support testosterone balance

- Eat a balanced diet: A diet that is rich in healthy fats, protein, and complex carbohydrates can help to support testosterone production. Foods that are high in zinc, such as oysters, beef, and pumpkin seeds, are particularly beneficial.
- Exercise regularly: Regular exercise, particularly strength training, can help to increase testosterone levels.
- Get enough sleep: Sleep is essential for testosterone production, and getting less than 7 hours of sleep per night can lead to lower levels.
- Manage stress: Chronic stress can lead to lower testosterone levels, so it is important to find ways to manage stress, such as through meditation or yoga.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs: Excessive alcohol consumption and the use of recreational drugs can both lead to lower testosterone levels.

### Ways to support metabolic health

Metabolic health refers to the body's ability to convert food into energy. It is a complex process that involves many different organs and systems. Metabolic health is important for overall health and well-being, and there are several ways to support it. These include eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep, and managing stress.

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## MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Men's mental health problems can affect everyone in society, but not in equal measure. When we look at different groups we see significant trends emerging, with one of the most startling being that despite lower reported incidence of depression in men, they have a significantly higher chance of taking their own life. The World Health Organisation suggest men account for 75% of all suicide deaths with untreated depression a major risk factor. There is still much misunderstanding about this global disparity, but we have highlighted some possible contributing factors we can all look out for.

### CONCERNING STATS

- Less likely to seek medical advice for concerns or go for health checks.
- Changes to routine e.g. sleeping patterns.
- Less likely to talk to friends and family or go to talking therapy.
- More likely to be sleeping rough as 67% of rough sleepers are men.
- More likely to self-medicate with alcohol or drugs.

### CONTRIBUTING ISSUES

- Gender stereotyping: Traditional gender roles can make it difficult for men to open up. Often expected to be the stronger person, impacting ability to reach out for help.
- Fear of stigma: A lot of men under 40 are impacted.
- Loneliness: Contributes to low mood, depression and impacts physical health.
- High social media use: Comparisons drive insecurities in all areas of life.

### MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

- Reduce processed food: Regular consumption contributes to anxiety and depression.
- Cut back on alcohol: Impacts mood, wellbeing and sleep. Dependency clearly links to depression. Improvements in symptoms seen within first few weeks of no alcohol.
- Step outside regularly: Large study found just 2 hours per week in nature significantly improves health and psychological wellbeing.
- Develop connections: Building both strong and weak ties in all areas of life improves longevity and health.

For every death by suicide, at least 7 to 18 people are directly affected by the loss.

40% of men have never spoken to anyone about their mental health, despite over three quarters suffering from common symptoms like anxiety, stress or depression.

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### Look out for mental health issues:

- Signs and symptoms in mind: Changes to routine e.g. sleeping patterns.
- Lack of self-care: Active lifestyle or diet changes.
- Increased drug or alcohol use: Signs of withdrawal.
- Decreased motivation at work: Take any mention of suicide or self-harm seriously.

### Reach out if concerned:

- Choose a time and place to talk: Choose a time and place to talk.
- Listen carefully and allow space for conversation: Listen carefully and allow space for conversation.
- Check in regularly: Check in regularly.

### How else to help?

- Effective listening: Effective listening.
- Avoid offering solutions: Avoid offering solutions.
- Start help if needed: Start help if needed.

### KEY TRIGGERS

- New father: New father.
- Work changes: Work changes.
- Retirement: Retirement.
- Relationship breakdown: Relationship breakdown.

Internal depression affects 1 in 10 men.

Work changes: Redundancy, retirement or change in job role.

Retirement: After 30 years of working things settled in.

Relationship breakdown: One study found marital separation quadruples the risk of male suicide.

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### CLUES SOMEONE MAY BE STRUGGLING

- Changes in work output, attendance levels & punctuality: Changes in work output, attendance levels & punctuality.
- Changes in eating habits, appetite & increased drinking & drinking: Changes in eating habits, appetite & increased drinking & drinking.
- Changes in behaviour to mood or how they interact with colleagues: Changes in behaviour to mood or how they interact with colleagues.
- Struggling to make decisions, get organised & find solutions to problems: Struggling to make decisions, get organised & find solutions to problems.
- Appearing tired, anxious or withdrawn & losing interest in activities & social previously enjoyed: Appearing tired, anxious or withdrawn & losing interest in activities & social previously enjoyed.
- Remember sometimes there may not be any outward signs of all: Remember sometimes there may not be any outward signs of all.
- Inconsistent attendance: Inconsistent attendance.
- Inconsistent attendance: Inconsistent attendance.

### SELF-CARE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

- Look at what you eat: Look at what you eat.
- Increase cardio & strength exercise: Increase cardio & strength exercise.
- Spend time in nature: Spend time in nature.
- Connect socially: Connect socially.
- Support sleep: Support sleep.
- TRY THIS: The Physiological Sigh - A tool for when you need to de-stress or reduce anxiety. Two rapid in-breaths through the nose, followed by a long, extended exhale through the mouth - Repeat 5-10 times.

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