

Engaging 'hard to reach' groups of men: Translating evidence into effective health promotion practice

Men's health in alternative spaces: Exploring men's sheds in Ireland.

Noel Richardson PhD

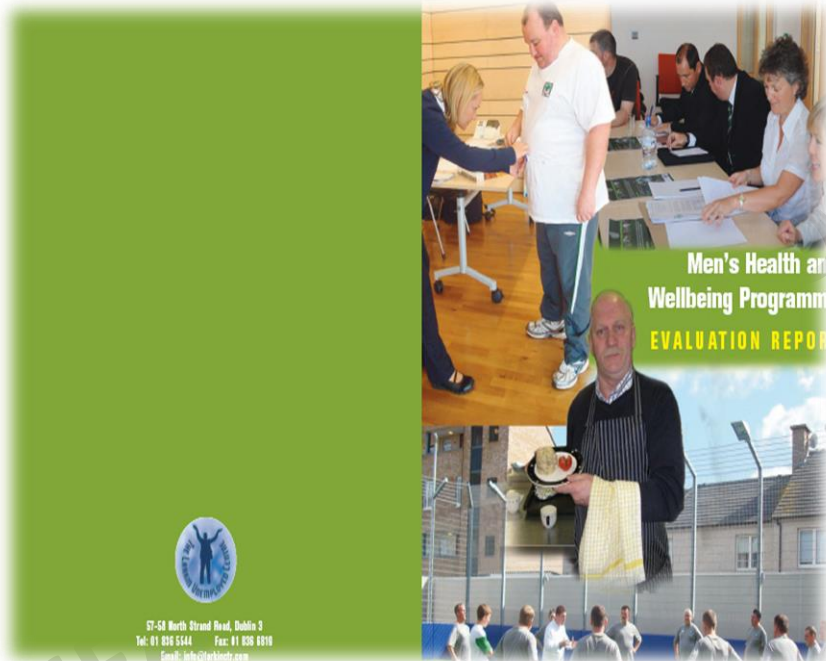
Maya Lefkowich

National Centre for Men's Health

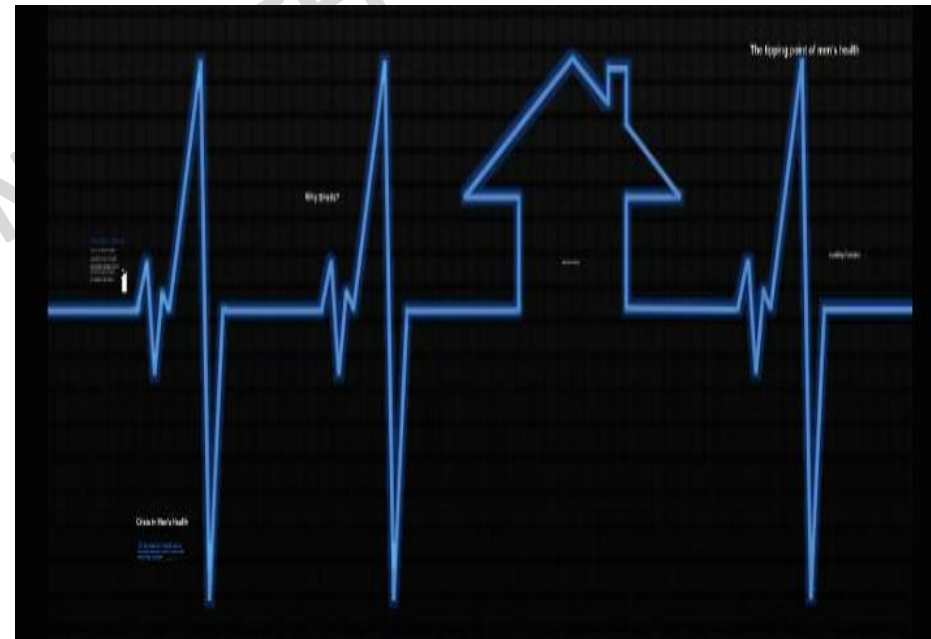
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Gaps between evidence of effectiveness and what occurs in practice



Lefkowich, M., Richardson, N. and Robertson, S. (2015). "If we want to get men in, then we need to ask men what they want": Pathways to Effective Health Programming for Men'. *American Journal of Men's Health*; online pii: 1557988315617825.



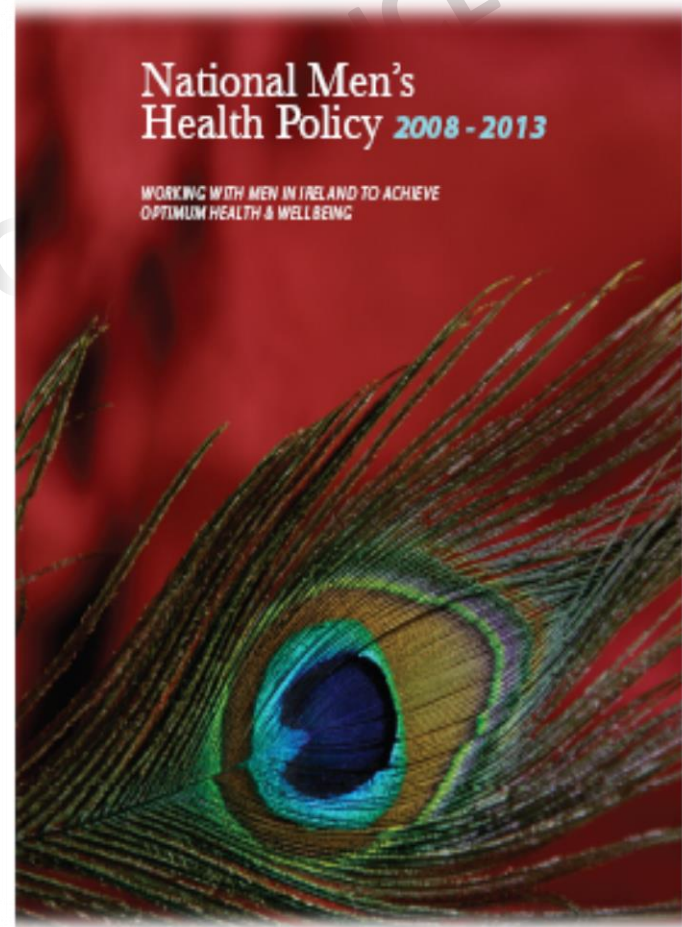
Lefkowich, M., Richardson, N. Negotiating Alternative Health Spaces for Men: An Exploratory Study of Men's Sheds and Wellbeing. *International Health Promotion International*. (In press)

Research/Policy Context

- ‘There is a significant gradient in mortality rates across SEG for both men [higher] and women with the absolute and relative differential between professional and manual occupational groups increasing between the 1980s and 2000s...’ (Layte et al., 2014)

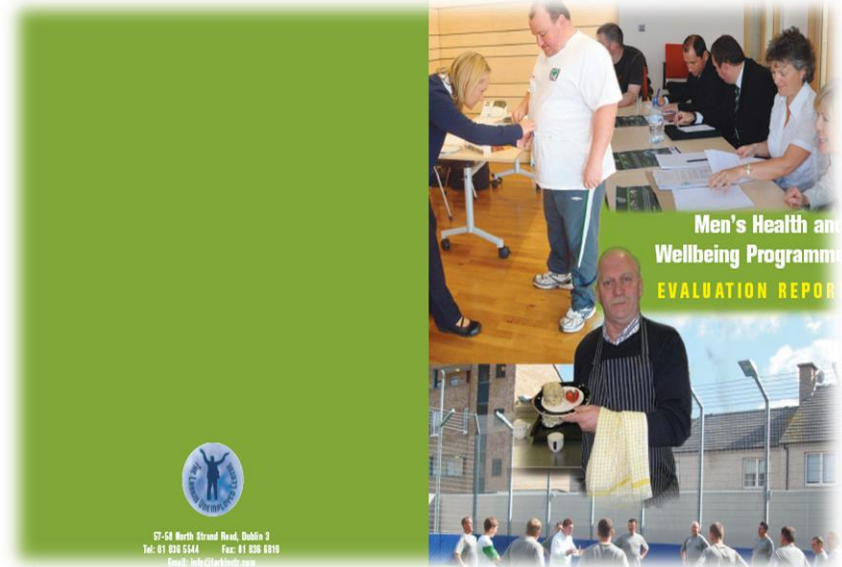
Research/Policy Context

- Men who are at the highest risk of adverse health outcomes; i.e. men who experience isolation, unemployment/low incomes, low levels of education; are less likely to engage with health-services or health-promoting practices.
- There are blatant gaps in service availability for men with the men most in need of services often seen as “hard to reach”



Study 1: MHWP

- Activities run over 10 weeks with 4 hours per week contact covering:
 - Baseline and Post intervention health screening
 - Soccer and fitness training
 - Health awareness workshops
 - Cookery classes



supporting

encouraging

listening

cajoling

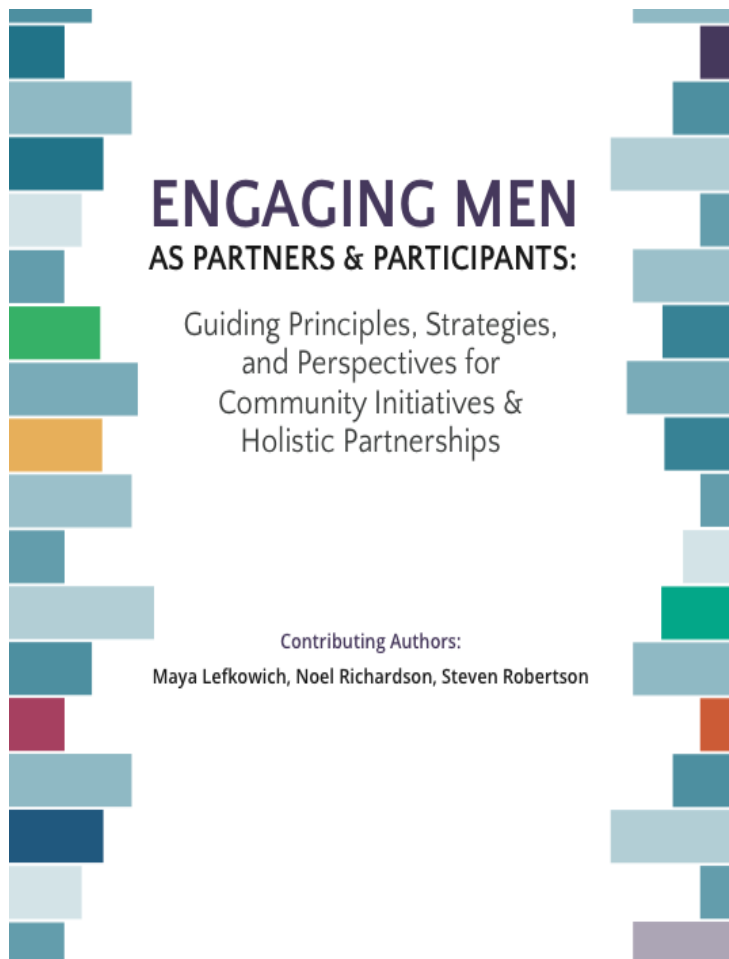
educating

accepting (not judging)

nurturing

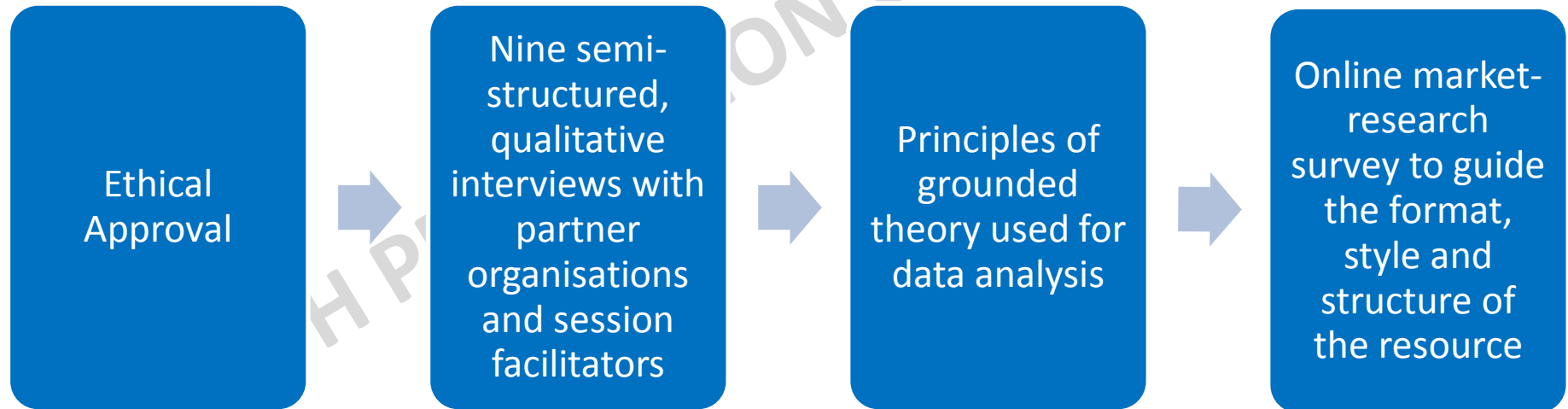
laughing





- **Gap:** Paucity of resources/toolkits for service providers that highlight strategies for engaging men in health promotion.
- **Aim:** What strategies or mechanisms contribute to meaningful programme/service development and delivery for men?
- Focus on the **‘how’** and the **‘why’** rather than the **‘what’**

Methodology



Key Findings

ENGAGING MEN AS PARTNERS & PARTICIPANTS:

Guiding Principles, Strategies,
and Perspectives for
Community Initiatives &
Holistic Partnerships

Contributing Authors:

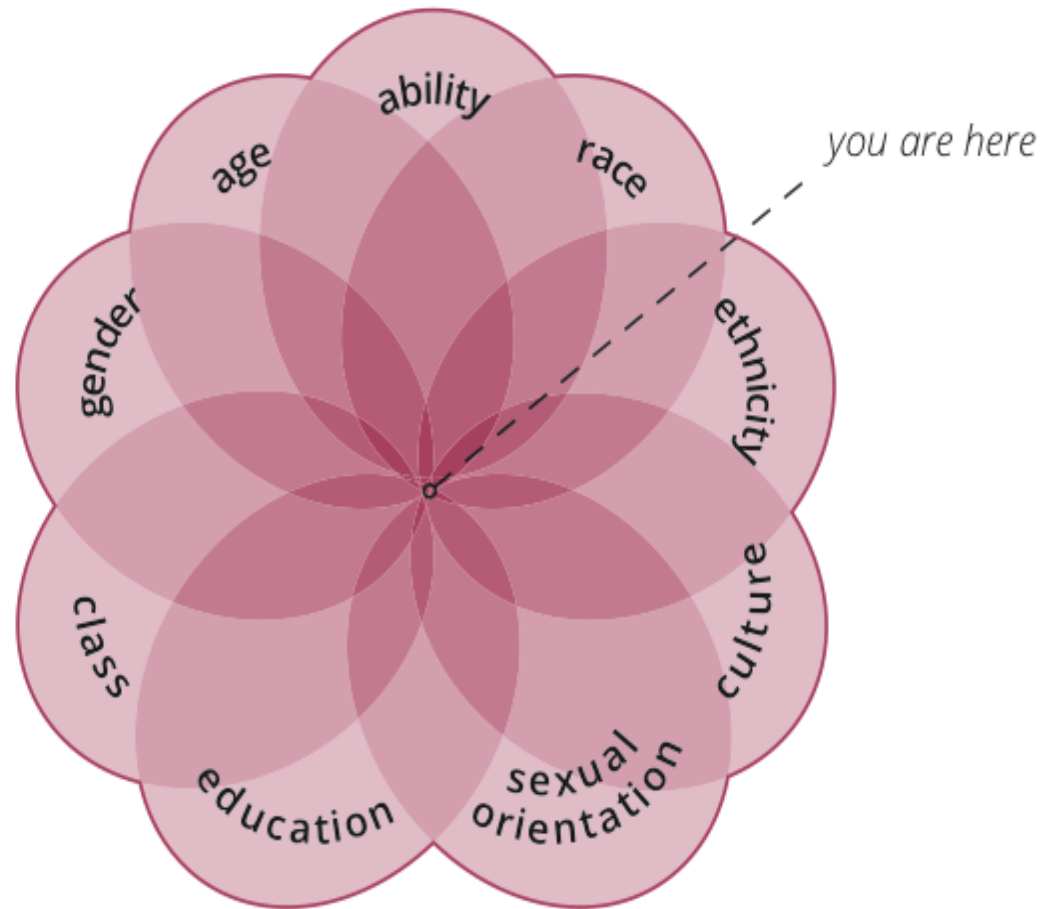
Maya Lefkowich, Noel Richardson, Steven Robertson

HEALTH RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2016

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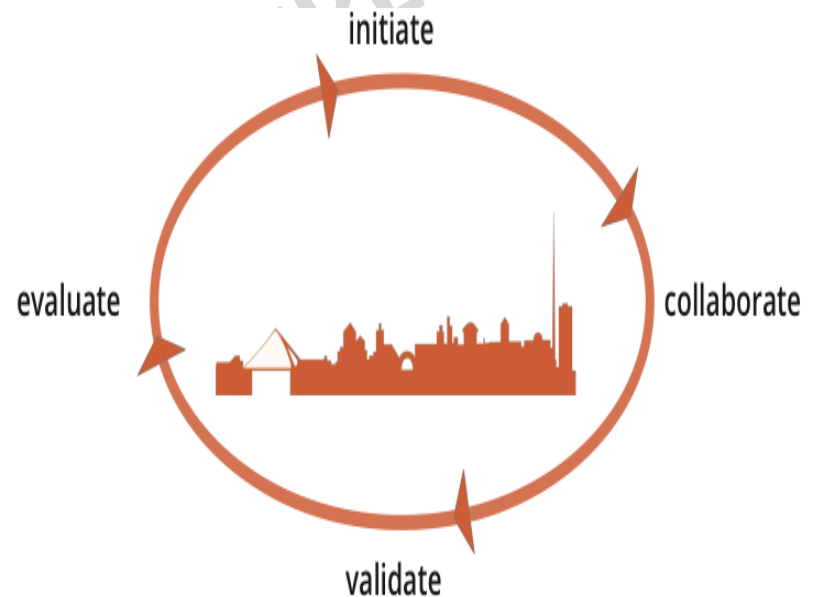
UNDERSTANDING GENDER AS INTERSECTIONAL

- What services are currently effective in reaching men?
- What are some common stereotypes or myths surrounding men, masculinities, and wellbeing in our locality?
- What are some barriers or challenges that may prevent men from accessing services in our community?
- How can we attract men to participate, and sustain their involvement over time?
- How might men perceive our organisation/service/programme?



Community Engagement

- Get to know your community's needs, priorities, strengths and resources
- Become 'in-tune' with the target population
- Don't re-invent the wheel - consider partnering with a community organisation to capitalise on existing relationships that have already developed trust and 'street cred'
- Create multi-directional communication channels to maintain accountability, transparency, and opportunities for reflection



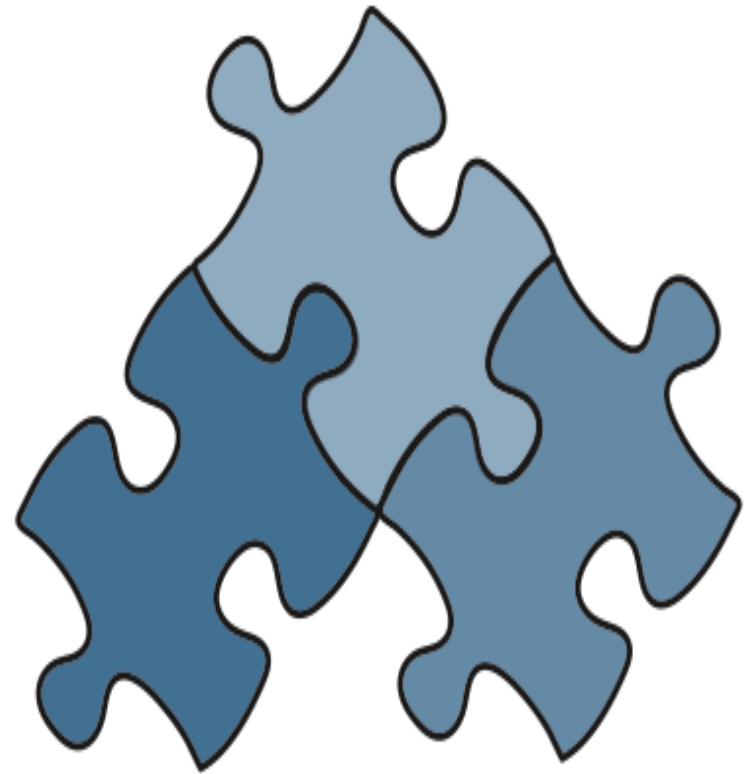
Partnerships

- Build partnerships based on complementary areas of expertise, resources, goals and missions
- Ensure you have, or develop, common values, principles, and expectations
- Make the development of trust between team members and partners a priority
- Establish a clear leadership model
- Think outside the box and be unconventional in selecting partners.
- Communicate!



Programme Development and Delivery

- No 'one-size-fits-all' model
- Find a 'hook'
- Develop a continuous process of outreach and engagement
- Create opportunities for men to take on leadership roles
- Use a variety of facilitation approaches to engage men, and challenge traditional notions of how men participate (e.g. collaborative work, friendship-building, supportive environments)
- Prioritise self-care for facilitators/staff
- Encourage constructive feedback
- Ensure that men feel safe



Conclusion: Bridging the gap between theory and practice



Study 2: Men's Sheds



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Methodology

Ethical Approval

Twenty-seven semi-structured, qualitative interviews in five Sheds

Principles of grounded theory used for data analysis

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Personal
Growth

Life
Transitions
and Voids

Vulnerability,
Isolation and
Exclusion

Community
&
Relationships

**Support,
Intimacy &
Altruism**

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Support, Intimacy & Altruism

- Meaningful relationships [‘shoulder to shoulder’!]; shared experiences; feeling accepted; giving and receiving support; banter; giving back/altruism; burden of responsibility
- *“Sometimes you feel you’re a priest with all the confessions you hear. It’s like a priest, you keep them to yourself.” – Padraig*
- *“I go home every evening and I feel good. I’ve made a difference in somebody’s life.” – Ryan*

Key Reflections

- Shedders' wellbeing linked to a sense of belonging, using or learning new skills, being supported or supportive, having a purpose, feeling useful, being connected to others, and contributing or giving back.
- Feelings of solidarity, camaraderie, and belonging facilitated ease and comfort in sharing experiences, and seeking help from others.
- Concerns among some Shedders about roles, responsibilities and boundaries in terms of offering support to more vulnerable Shedders and the wider ramifications for 'open door' shed membership policies.
- Sheds can become a promising alternative space for men which can change the ways in which men are visible in communities.

Key Reflections

ICE 2016

- If it ain't broken...
- Future work that examines opportunities for **meaningful collaboration** between Sheds and surrounding community/health promotion services could help provide more pathways for men to access support without compromising the **integrity and intentionality of Sheds as peer-run spaces**.
- Working **with** Sheddors, Sheds provide a viable alternative space to engage 'hard to reach' groups of men and an opportunity to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

