

Case study:

Skanska Men's Health Forum

Summary

The Men's Health Forum worked with Joel Frorath, Health and Safety Manager, Skanska LSE in the run up to Men's Health Week to think of an innovative way to engage the workers with the activities that were running on the site at One New Street Square.

Joel has used Men's Health Week over the years to promote health and wellbeing in the workplace and engage men with their health.

The Men's Health Forum has worked with John Ryan regularly but had not used him in a workplace setting. We know from our research on how to make health services work for men that the workplace is a key setting to engage men with their health. We also know that taking a humorous approach to the serious business of health also works with men.

Problem statement

One man in five dies before the age of 65. Men are more likely to die prematurely of circulatory disease and a 37% higher risk of dying from cancer. 67% of men are overweight or obese. Four in five suicides are male. Men are more likely than women to smoke, drink at hazardous levels and eat too much salt, red meat and too few fruit and vegetables.

The Construction industry has a higher rate of suicide than any other professional sector and a construction worker commits suicide every two days.

Solution / what you did

Two x 45-minute comedy workshops covering a range of aspects of Men's Health including:

- Healthy eating, drinking, smoking, beating stress, signs and symptoms and checking yourself
- Copies of the MHF 'Man Manual' were distributed after the session to reinforce the health messages and provide employees with more tailored health information.

Key challenges face

- Scepticism from employees -overcome by using comedy to engage
- Employer buy-in at senior level
- Need to put 'health' back into health and safety

Outcomes and benefits

- Improved engagement on health and wellbeing
- Improved understanding on the link between productivity and health and wellbeing
- Improved employer/employee relations
- Happier, healthier workforce.

Measures of success

- Senior buy-in to a workplace health and wellbeing programme
- The 'comedy contractor' has become an offer from the Men's Health Forum as part of an @work health and wellbeing programme
<https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/at-work>
- Other construction companies have booked
- Clive Johnson of Land Securities is an ambassador for the Men's Health Forum approach to engaging men with their health through comedy!

Lessons learnt

- An evaluation sheet was developed as a result of this pilot to capture enjoyment, impact and learning. This is used at all events.
- There is a need in the Construction Industry to have more focus on health and wellbeing of employees.
- By combining comedy with practical advice, John is living proof that laughter really is the best medicine.



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