Methodology

Engaging men earlier: a guide to service design
Our approach

• We undertook primary research with less well-off men who weren’t at crisis point but who had some risk factors or could potentially be at the beginning of a negative trajectory.

• We carried out workshops with 27 men between the ages of 30 and 59. They were comprised of two age brackets:
  - 15 men aged 30-45
  - 12 men aged 46-59

• Our participants were spread across locations:
  - Rol (5), Scotland (6), England (6), Wales (5), Northern Ireland (5)

• While our interest for this work is primarily driven by persistently high rates of suicide among low-income middle-aged men, we sought insight from this younger group to understand how wellbeing initiatives can appeal as relevant earlier, before a crisis.
Our participants

• A mixture of unemployed and employed people who were earning below the median income and 'just getting by' or 'finding it difficult' financially.

• A mixture of household set-ups: living alone, living with partner, living with children.

• Each had experienced some 'risk factors' in the last 5 years (the majority occurring before Covid-19):
  • Were not working / had experienced job loss
  • Had suffered a downward trajectory in career
  • Had lost touch with friends and family
  • Experienced relationship breakdown
  • Undertook increasing substance misuse
  • Had stopped taking part in activities
  • Suffered worsening of physical health
Our fieldwork

• Our field work was undertaken in the form of a series of workshops over video conferencing, owing to social distancing restrictions.

• Through the first wave of workshops we used persona activities to examine what a 'good life' looked like for our participants.

• In the second wave we shifted to exploring what activities and initiatives resonated with the participants and were likely to support their wellbeing and the ‘good life outlined in the first wave of workshops

• In the second wave we tested the resonance and efficacy of already existing services, developed principles of what a good activity looks like (incl. comms, initial engagement and ongoing engagement) and got input on elements of service design - tone, frequency/time, location, strategy, etc.
Fieldwork flow

Initial briefing call

Session 1
Group video call
(90 mins)

Key topics explored:
- Elements of a ‘good life’
- What needs to happen in order to achieve a ‘good life’
- The types of activities/services that would enable this outcome

Respondents recorded a video and reflected on the first session

Solo activity
(5 mins)

Session 2
Group video call
(90 mins)

Key topics explored:
- The appeal of existing services
- If you were designing an ideal service/activity, what would it look like?
- How might this be achieved?
Example fieldwork materials

Dave is 35
He and his partner have a daughter, but have been living apart for a few months.
He has been in and out of work over the past few years – he’s currently picking up some temp work.
He’s been feeling a bit low – and has stopped doing the things he previously enjoyed.

Sports team / clubs
(e.g. football, darts, cycling)

Gym / fitness group
(e.g. circuitry, bootcamps)

Community volunteering
(e.g. event stewarding, baking, gardening)

Band / music group
(e.g. open mic, choir, jamming sessions, music lessons)

Activity
(e.g. trade union / political group)

Practical / creative
(e.g. life drawing, repair cafes, painting, woodwork)

Nights out
(e.g. cinema, karaoke, pubs, gigs)

Parents group
(e.g. dads get together, play dates)

Work related
(e.g. business networking, upskilling, job clubs, training)

Coaching
(e.g. life coaching, mentoring, group sessions)

Outdoors activities
(e.g. nature group, orienteering, scouts / army reserves)

Special interest group
(e.g. photography, motorbike keeping, birdwatching, gym)

Specialist support
(e.g. mental health support, relationship support, salvation)

Social group
(e.g. men’s group, walking club, quiz team, religious group)

If you were designing an activity / service, how could this be achieved?

PEOPLE
Who’s involved? What are they like?

TIME / DURATION / FREQUENCY
When? How often? How long for?

PROCESS
What happens?

PLACE
Where does it happen? Does it?

PROP
What objects / resources are used?

COMM
How communicated? Language used