

HEALTHY HABITS FOR HEALTHY MEN, HEALTHY MASCULINITIES AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS



Welcome to The Men's Table

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An organisation that brings men together in a welcoming place to facilitate friendship, offer support and combat loneliness.

Caitlin Moran, the British feminist columnist and author whose books 'How To Be A Girl' and 'How To Be A Woman' have been a runaway success, has turned her attention to men, recently publishing the book, 'What About Men?' In a recent media interview, she spoke about her inspiration for the book and was quoted as saying, "I have conversations like that (deeply personal) three or four times a week with my female friends, whereas men only feel able to say, "I need to talk about how bad I feel" when they're at absolute crisis point."

This might be a generalisation, but if statistics are to be believed, one in four Australians (about five million people) experience problematic levels of loneliness at any given time.

It appears to be particularly bad for men, with 43% of 1282 Australian men who participated in Healthy Male's 'What's in the Way?' survey categorised as lonely.

Many organisations have stepped up to address this. In this area, both the Men's Sheds and Rotary offer a fantastic way for men to connect and are particularly active in the community.

Helping to facilitate conversations between men that go beyond 'banter' has been the driving force behind the Men's Table, an organisation that creates some structure

around social gatherings so that men have a place to share conversation about matters that are important to them.

The Men's Table is all about men serving men. The first Men's Table (known as 'MT1') began in 2011 with 12 men who have met once a month for dinner ever since.

Founded by Ben Hughes and David Pointon, the Men's Table creates a unique environment for men to openly share stories and feelings about their lives, their challenges, their highs and lows with a group of men who they come to know, like and trust.

"There's never been a better time to get connected and be part of building community. It's healthy to show emotions and share feelings, and it is time we freed men from outdated masculine norms," says spokesperson Eric Balinghasay.

The Men's Table creates a sense of belonging, community, peer support and camaraderie that is, according to the charity, lacking for many men, even for some who already have a good, solid group of mates.

"Belonging to a Men's Table contributes to mental, emotional and social wellbeing whilst being a powerful support to individual members journeys through life," explains Eric.

IMPACT

On community & belonging

81% of men said there was a positive ripple effect to relationships beyond their Table



76% of men said they feel a sense of community belonging

What are the benefits of being at a Table?

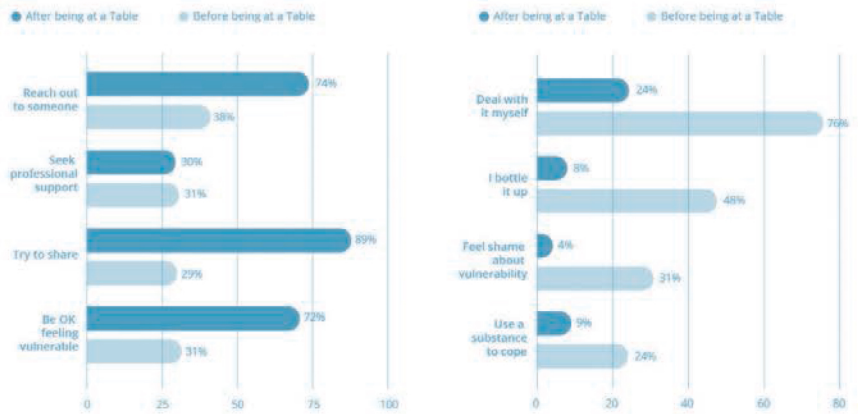
3 Year Average: 2020 - 2022



Profound improvements in Help Seeking approaches

More useful approach **2-3x** increase in more useful approaches

Less useful approach **3x** reduction in less useful approaches



Each Men's Table is a distinct expression of the needs and personalities of its members, established around a simple set of guidelines learned from MT1 and subsequent Tables. To remain healthy functioning and long-lasting groups, all Tables are supported by the 'Kitchen', a central office.

In a Table's first meeting, the gathering takes part in an 'Entrée,' which is an introduction to The Men's Table through open sharing over a relaxed and conversational meal. The cost includes a meal.

The Entree event is a chance to meet other men, learn about how a Table works and helps participants decide if they would like to part of their local Men's Table group.

Typically, it is hosted by a couple of long-standing members of other Men's Tables, sharing their experiences from their Tables, and responding to any questions, concerns and ideas.

What can participants expect from a typical Men's Table evening?

Participants gain a great deal from sharing and hearing other men's experiences of life. Each Men's Table group has its own approach which can change over time. A typical evening often includes:

- Chatting, catching up as people arrive.
- At 7.00pm, a brief check in.
- As men feel ready, a man shares what is happening in his life. This can be anything from moments of joy, happiness, pride, challenges and or obstacles, how things are their relationships, work and friendships, the past, future, sadness, grief. The topics are as wide and varied as men's life experiences. A person's sharing might be around 10 minutes. Organisers stress that confidentiality is

important and it is up to a man if he shares that evening.

- As men share, they are listened to and accepted; questions are generally not asked, unless the man would like input at the end.
- 'Fixing' of other men after they've shared about their lives is actively discouraged, even though most men want to jump in and offer advice.
- Men share from their direct experience, speaking for themselves. Organisers stress that it is best to avoid prophesising and generalisation.

The best way to get an overview of how all this works is by attending an Entree event. The Entree is an opportunity to meet other men who are thinking of joining and to see if the Men's Table is a fit for you.

Men's Tables have sprung up all across the country. At the moment, there are 150 men on a waiting list in Sydney, looking for more people to join their new tables.

"It's a chance to have a different kind of conversation with men from the normal one down at the pub or at work," said Carlos, one Entree attendee.

The Men's Table is a registered charity. There is no membership fee to be part of a Table; it's a grass roots activity driven by men in the local community.

An Entree for Lane Cove has just been set up for September 5 (short notice given our publication date of Sept 1). The venue is the Alcott, 1 Birdwood Lane, Lane Cove.

If you're interested in being a part of The Men's Table but can't make this date and would like to be kept abreast of future gatherings, please contact them at:

Email: hello@themenstable.org

Phone: 1800 636 782

www.themenstable.org/lanecove5sept/

