

Masculinities and Men's Mental Health: Evidence, Engagement, and Clinical Practice

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A Little About Me

- 15 years at Boise State U
- Licensed psychologist in Idaho
- Working on men's mental health since 2002
- Husband and father
- Grew up in West Texas/Texas Panhandle
- My goal(s) today...





Where are we Going Today?

1. Progress on Men's Mental Health
2. Health Disparities and Premature Mortality
3. Suicide in Men: A US Public Health Crisis
4. Barriers to Help-Seeking
5. Men's Online Experiences
6. Men's Social Connections
7. Supporting Men's Mental Health

The new crisis of masculinity

What's the matter with men — and how do we fix it?

by **Sean Illing**
Aug 7, 2023, 4:30 AM MDT



OPINION
DAVID BROOKS

The Crisis of Men and Boys

Sept. 29, 2022



Matt Rich



THE OPINIONS ESSAY

Opinion | Men are lost. Here's a map out of the wilderness.

The Current Conversation?

The Current Conversation

BOOKS

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH MEN?

They're floundering at school and in the workplace. Some conservatives blame a crisis of masculinity, but the problems—and their solutions—are far more complex.

By Idrees Kahloon

January 23, 2023

"Superb. Saxbe shows how men become fathers at the level of biology, exploding stubborn myths about dads not being suited for parenting. Impressive and inspiring."
—RICHARD V. REEVES, author of *Of Boys and Men*

DAD BRAIN



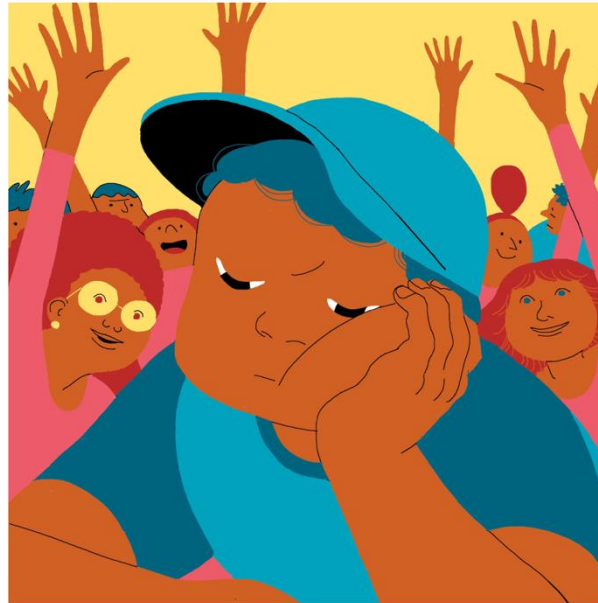
The New Science of Fatherhood and
How It Shapes Men's Lives

DARBY SAXBE, PhD

OPINION
JESSICA GROSE

The 'Boy Crisis' Is Overblown

July 23, 2025



Eleanor Davis

OF BOYS AND MEN

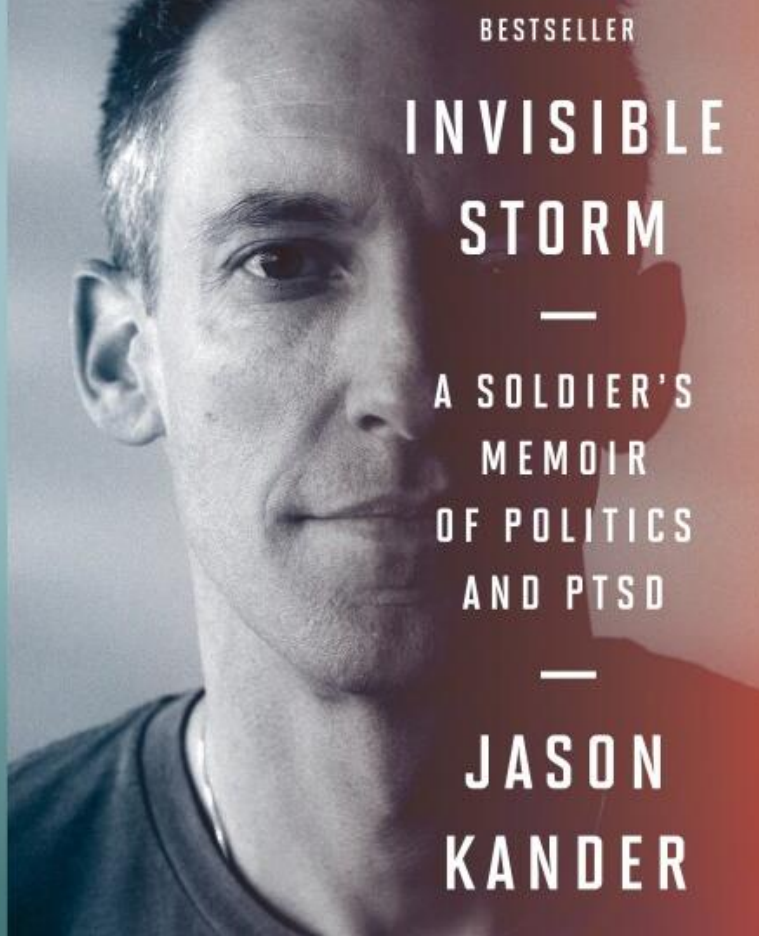
WHY THE MODERN MALE
IS STRUGGLING, WHY IT MATTERS,
AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Richard V. Reeves

AUTHOR OF *DREAM HOARDERS*

Progress on Men's Mental Health





Progress on Men's Mental Health



Progress: Research on Men's Health

RESEARCH — MENTAL HEALTH

Male suicide: Patterns and recent trends

Nov 17, 2023 | by Richard V. Reeves, Will Secker

State of American Men 2025

equimundo



The Real Face of Men's Health

2025 UNITED STATES REPORT



MOVEMBER®INSTITUTE
OF MEN'S HEALTH
MUSTACHES LOVE RESEARCH

RESEARCH — MENTAL HEALTH

Data Spotlight: Suicide deaths among young men

Sep 10, 2025 | by Ravan Hawrami, Richard V. Reeves

The State of Men & Masculinity

What does it mean to
be a man right now?

The State of Masculinity

What does it mean to be a man in 2025/2026?

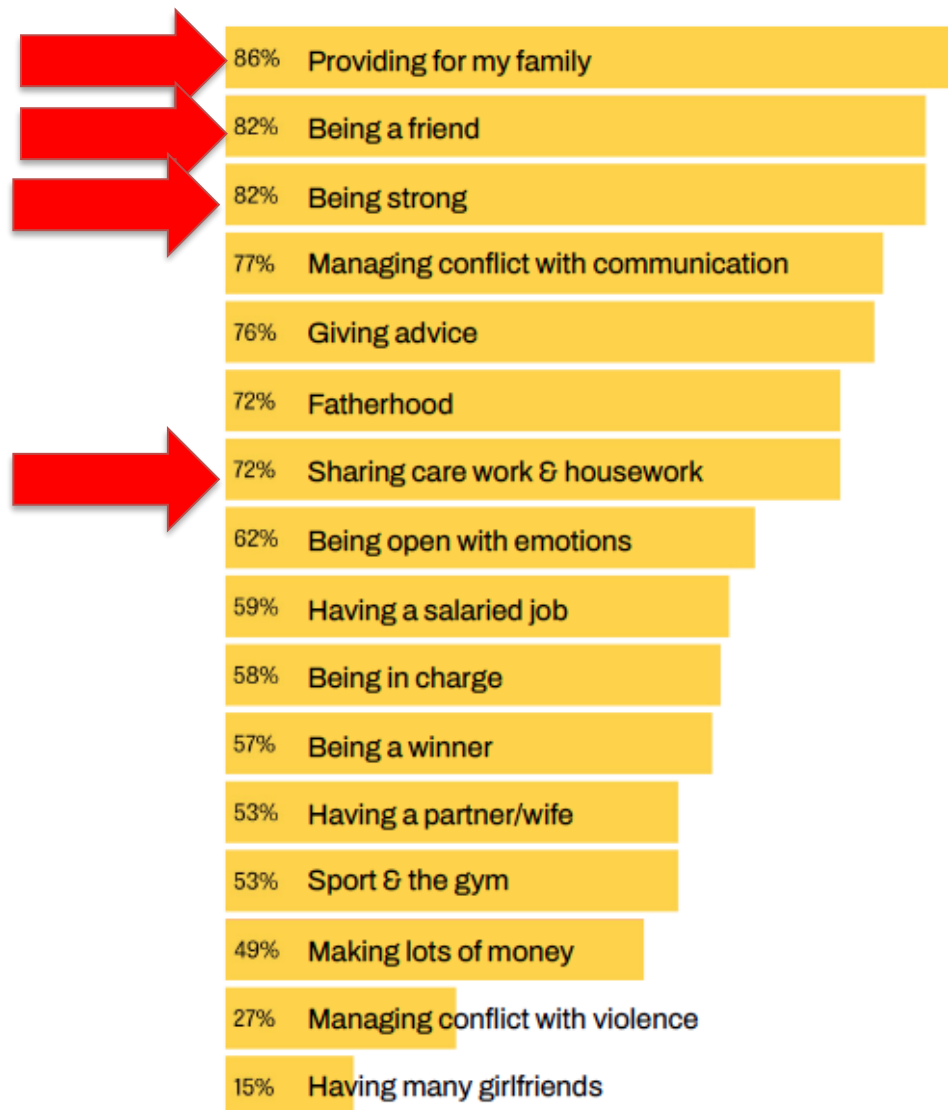
Exercise: (2 minutes)

Write down a few thoughts on your answer to the following question:

What does it mean to be a “good man”?

“In my opinion, being a man is...”²

Responses from men



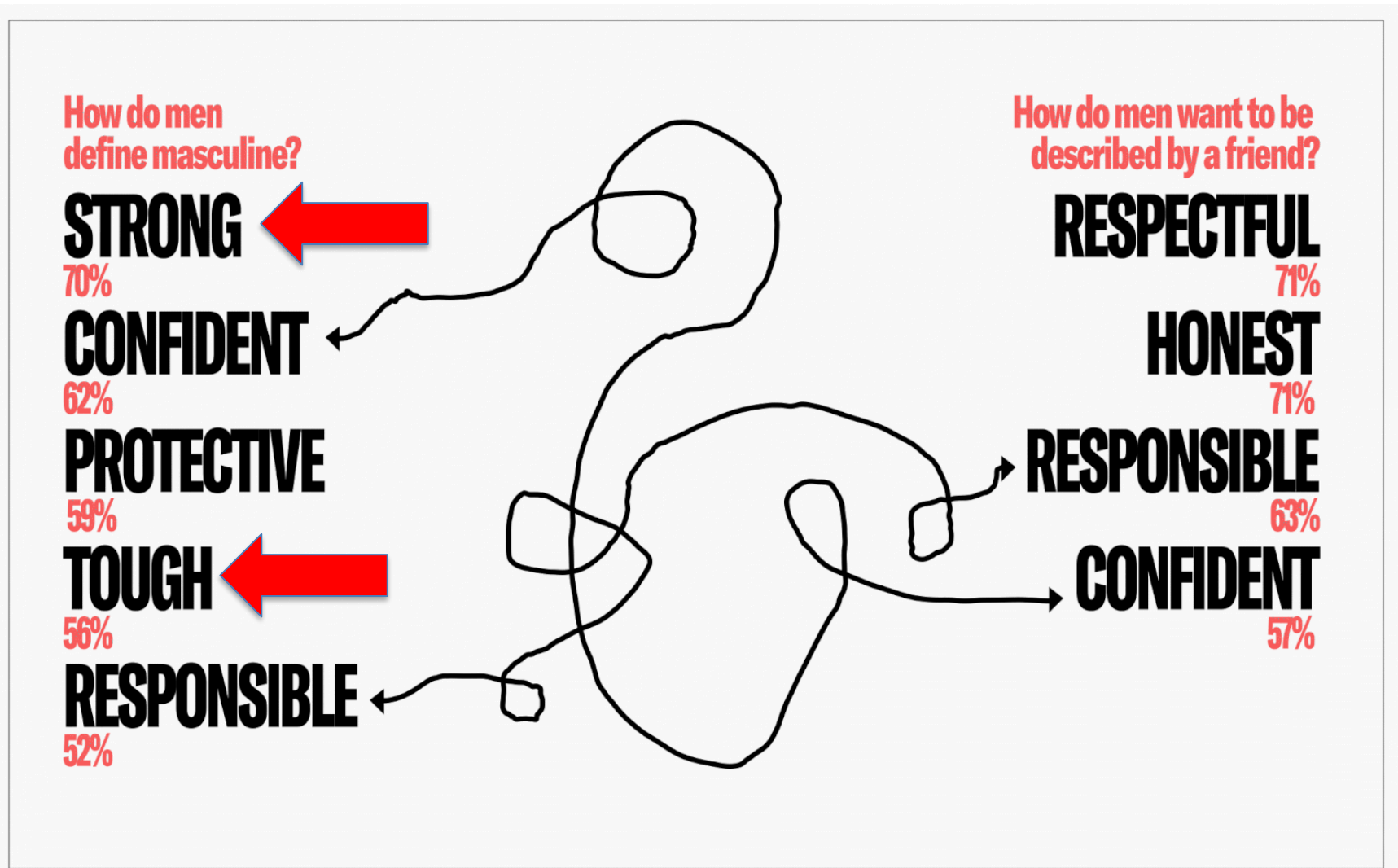
86%

of men chose
“provider” as the top
trait they should have

77%

of women chose
“provider” as the top trait
a man should have

What does it mean to be a man?

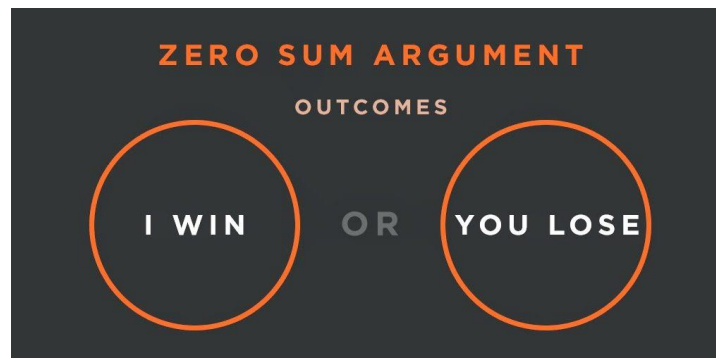


Positive Attributes Expected More of Men

- Physically Strong/tough 
- Being assertive
- Being athletic
- Being direct and straightforward
- Using strength to protect loved ones 
- Being a hero
- Being a leader
- Being confident 
- Being brave
- Daring to take risks
- Having street smarts

Health Disparities

- Largely preventable and measurable difference in health that exists between specific population groups (NIH, 2026)
- Largely preventable health differences that contribute to adverse health outcomes, especially among populations who experience greater challenges to optimal health (NIMH, 2026)
- Not “zero-sum” though (Reeves, 2022)



The Largest Gaps

Men's Mental Health Disparities

- Suicide death
- Drug overdoses
- Other accidental deaths
- Homicides
- Help seeking for mental health care



Masculinity and Men's Mental Health: Mortality, Suicide, Help-Seeking

The Real Face of Men's Health

2025 UNITED STATES REPORT

Men and Early Death

Take a quick moment and write down your guesses for the top 5 leading causes of early death in US men. (1 min)

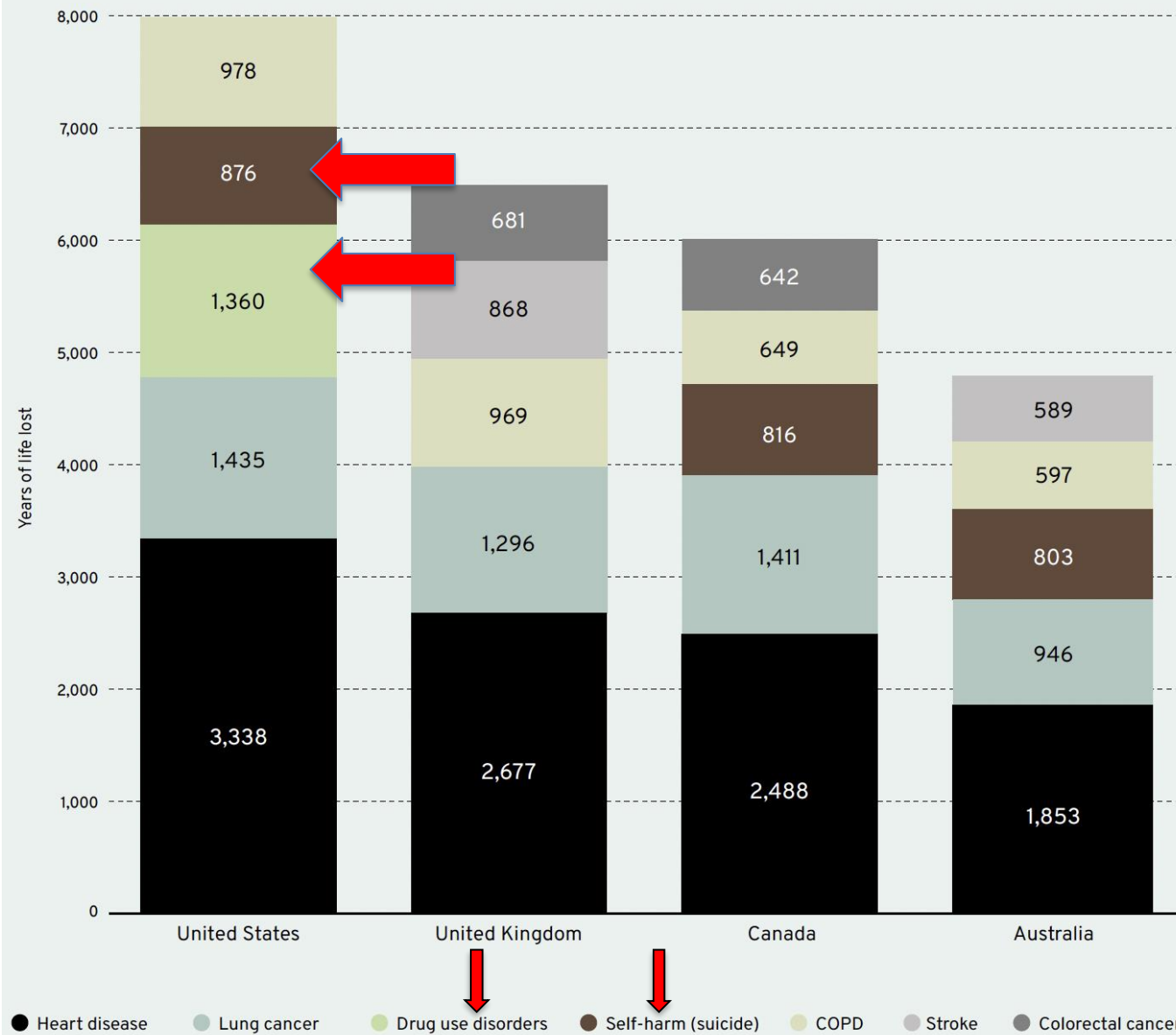
Men's Health: Premature Death

Leading Causes of Premature Mortality:

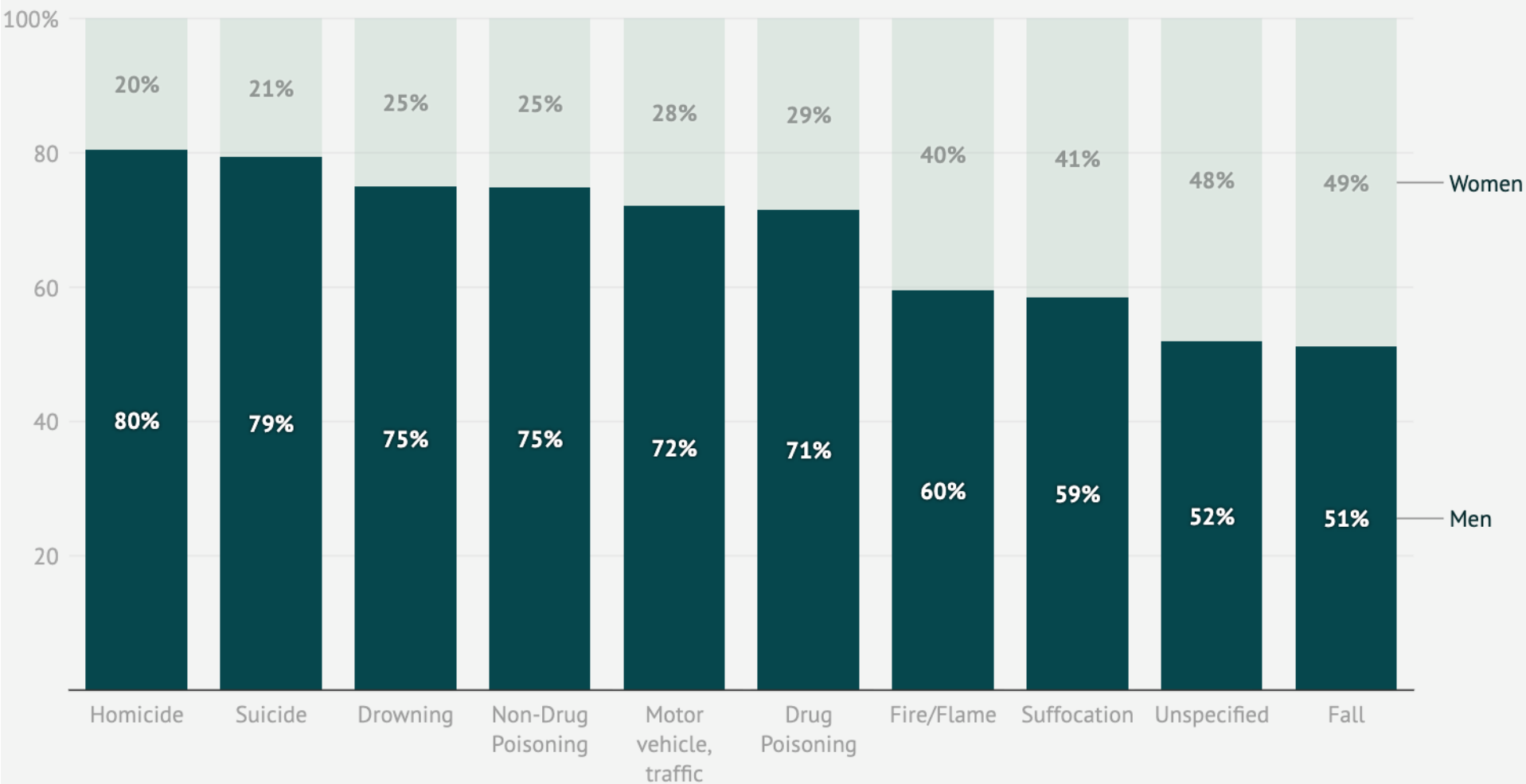
- Heart Disease (85.9/100,000)
- Cancer (84.2/100,000)
- Accidents (unintentional injuries/ODs, 87.1/100,000)
- Cerebrovascular diseases (39.3/100,000)
- Chronic lower respiratory diseases (35.4/100,000)
- Diabetes (28.4/100,000)
- Suicide (22.7/100,000)

Figure 6.

TOP FIVE CAUSES OF YEARS OF LIFE LOST (YLL) AMONG MEN IN FOUR COUNTRIES, 2019



Share of injury deaths by intent/mechanism for men and women (2022)



Men Are Overwhelming Majority Of Injury Deaths

Injury deaths for men and women by injury type and intent (2022)

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FOR BOYS AND MEN

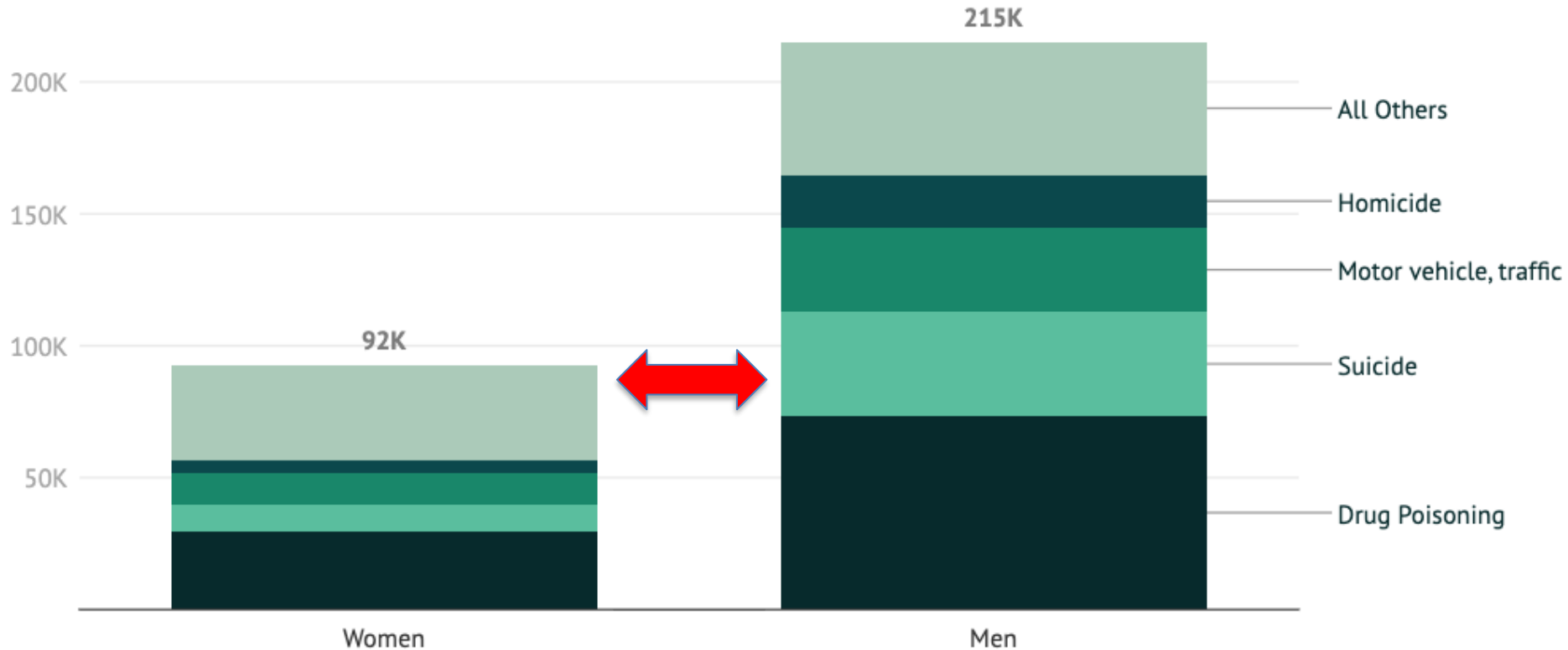


Figure shows the total injury deaths for men and women by injury type and intent. Drug overdoses exclude overdoses with the noted intent of suicide.

Source: CDC WISQARS

Gender & Suicide

Suicide Rates by Age Group (2022)

Data Courtesy of CDC

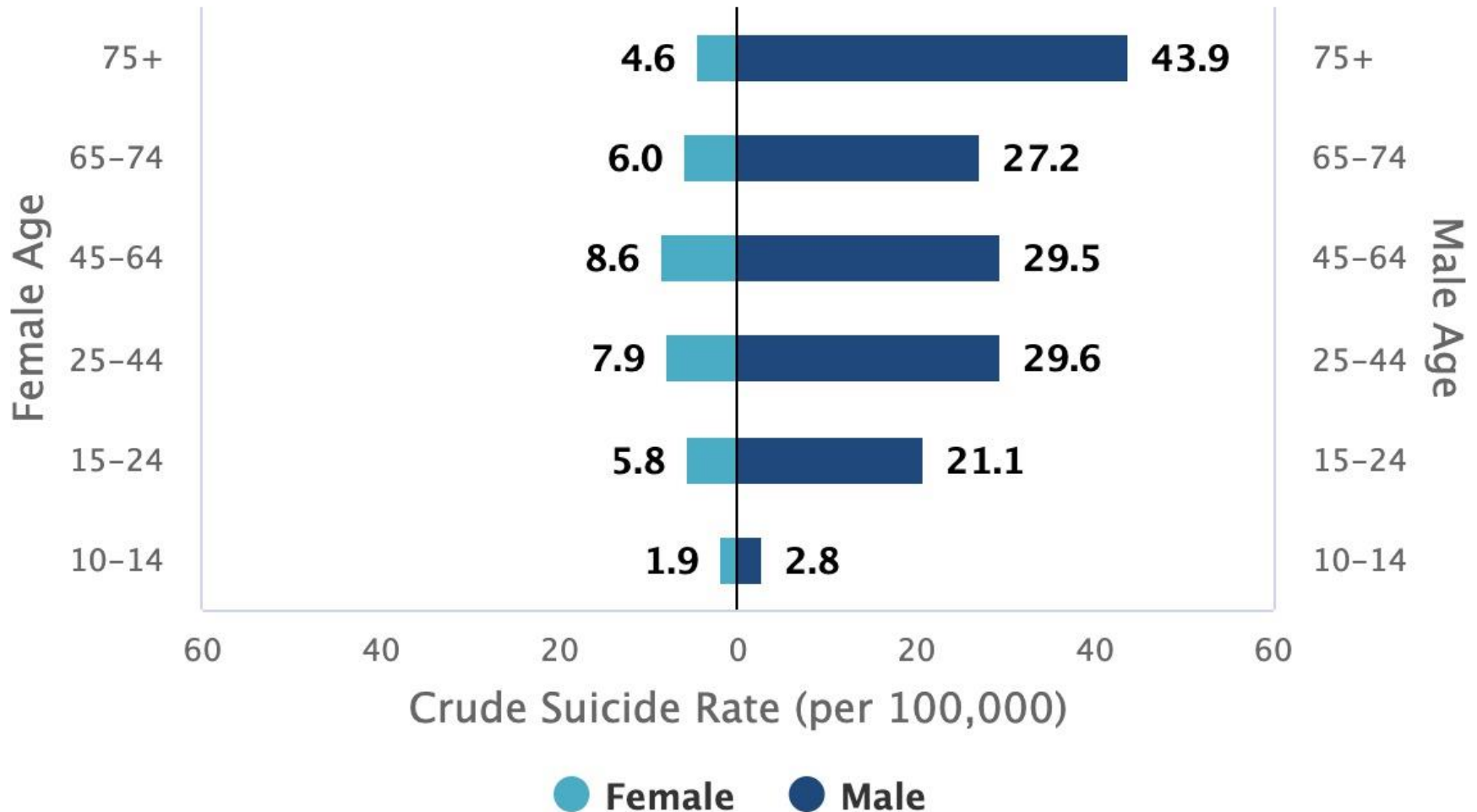
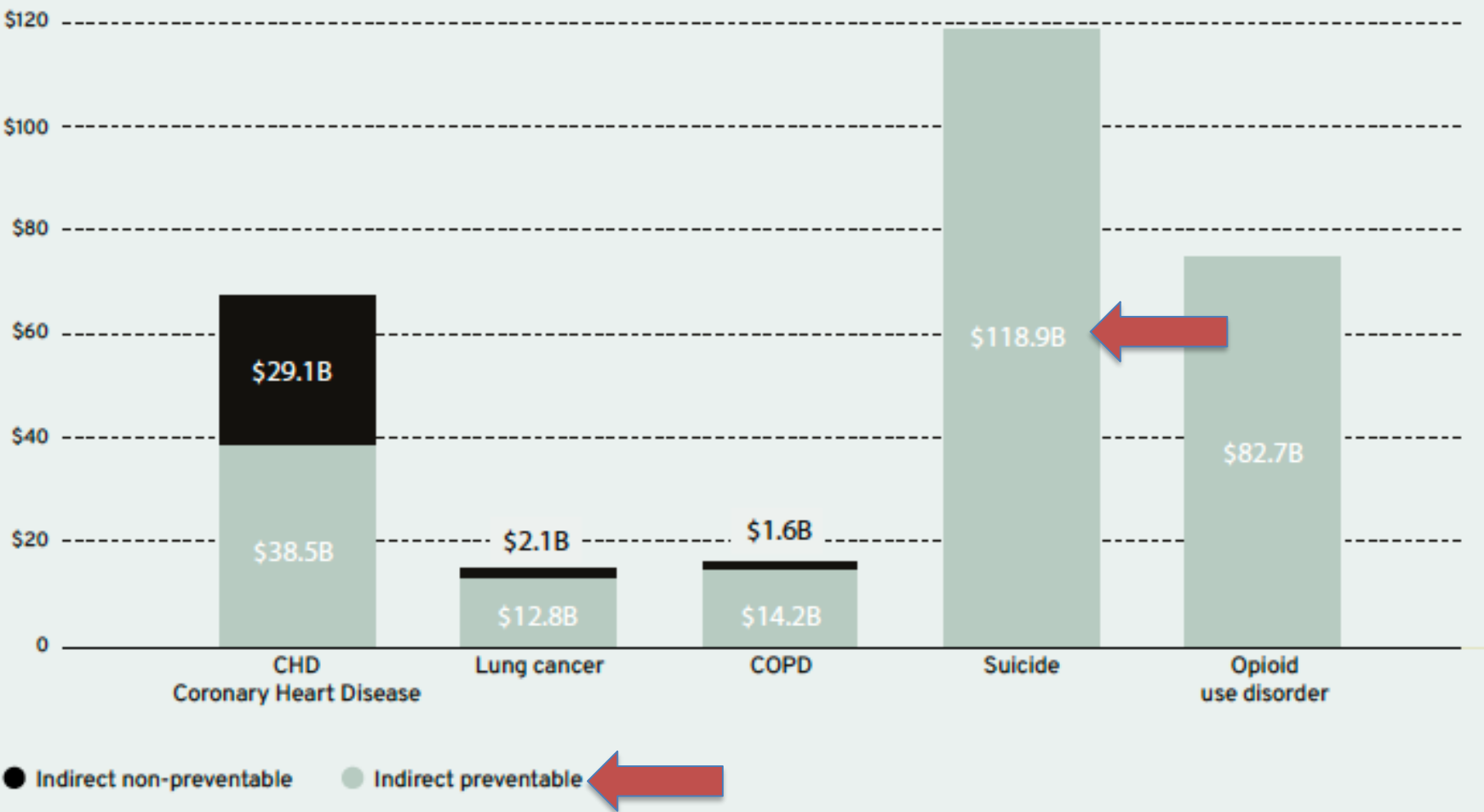


Figure 15. **INDIRECT COSTS (IN BILLIONS USD) OF TOP FIVE CAUSES OF MEN'S AVOIDABLE MORTALITY IN THE US, 2023**



Source: Schieb LJ, Greer SA, Ritchey MD, George MG, Casper ML. Vital signs: avoidable deaths from heart disease, stroke, and hypertensive disease—United States, 2001–2010. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep. 2013;62(35):721–727; Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. Global burden of disease (GBD). Accessed August 22, 2025. <https://www.healthdata.org/research-analysis/gbd>; CCEMG – EPPI-Centre. Cost Converter. Accessed August 22, 2025. <https://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/costconversion/>.

What is “Upstream” of Men’s Suicide?

Substance Use

(Oliffe et al., 2019;
Ridge et al., 2020)

Interpersonal violence
use and exposure
(Krishnamoorthy et al.,
2026)

Romantic relationship breakdowns

(Wilson et al., 2025)

Emotion dysregulation

(Player et al., 2015;
Struscysk et al., 2017)

“Masked” anxiety and depression

(Creighton et al., 2017;
Fisher et al., 2023)

Trauma

(Nicholas et al., 2022;
Oliffe et al., 2017)

Loneliness & Isolation
(Oliffe et al., 2017)

A Men's Mental Health Crisis: Suicide

4x women (Garnet et al., 2022)

4th leading cause of premature mortality (Griffith et al., 2025)

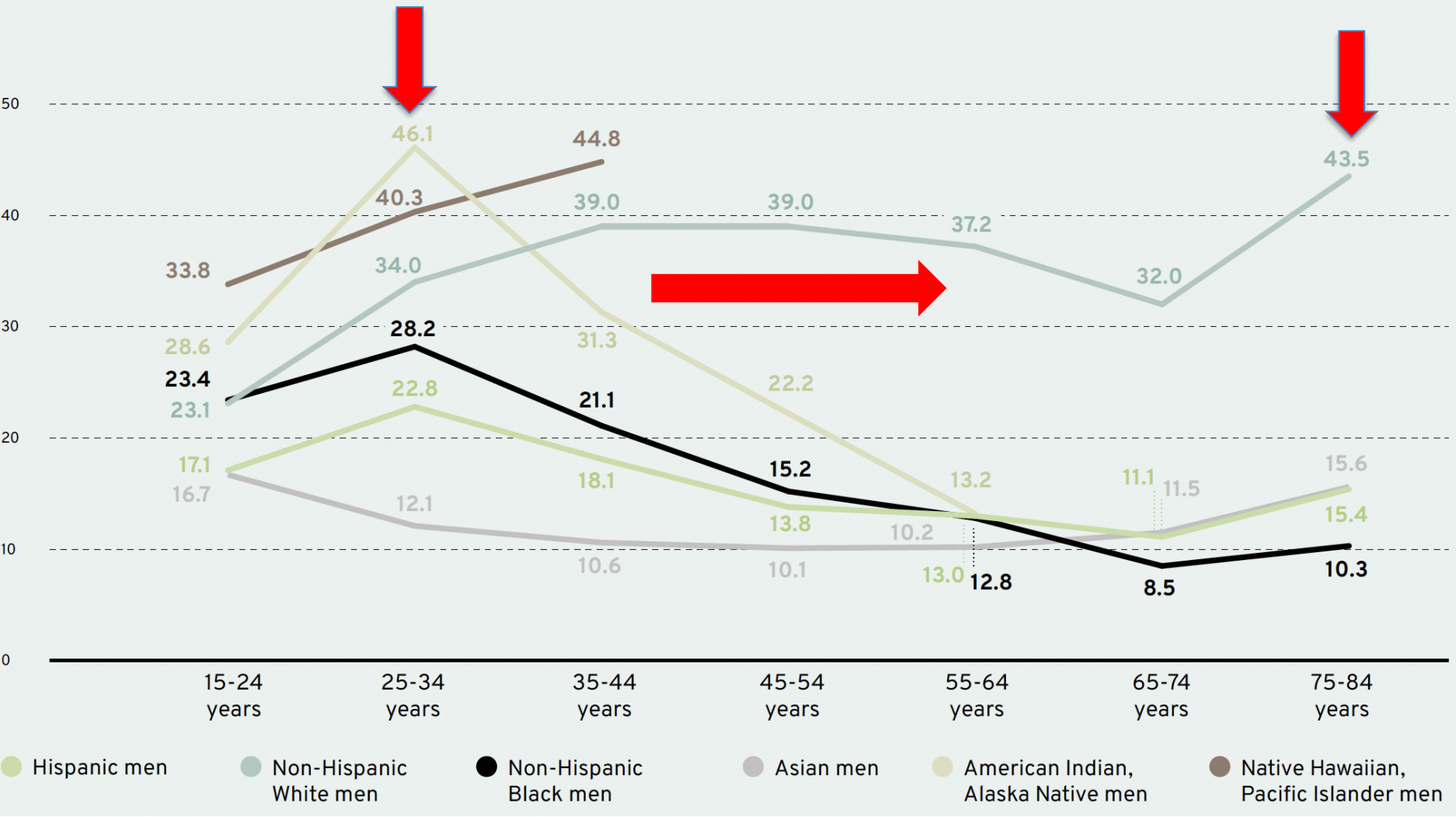
729,898 deaths from 2001-2023 (CDC, 2026)

39,000 men died each year in 2022/2023 (CDC, 2023)

14,714,704 years of premature life lost prior to age 65 (CDC, 2026)

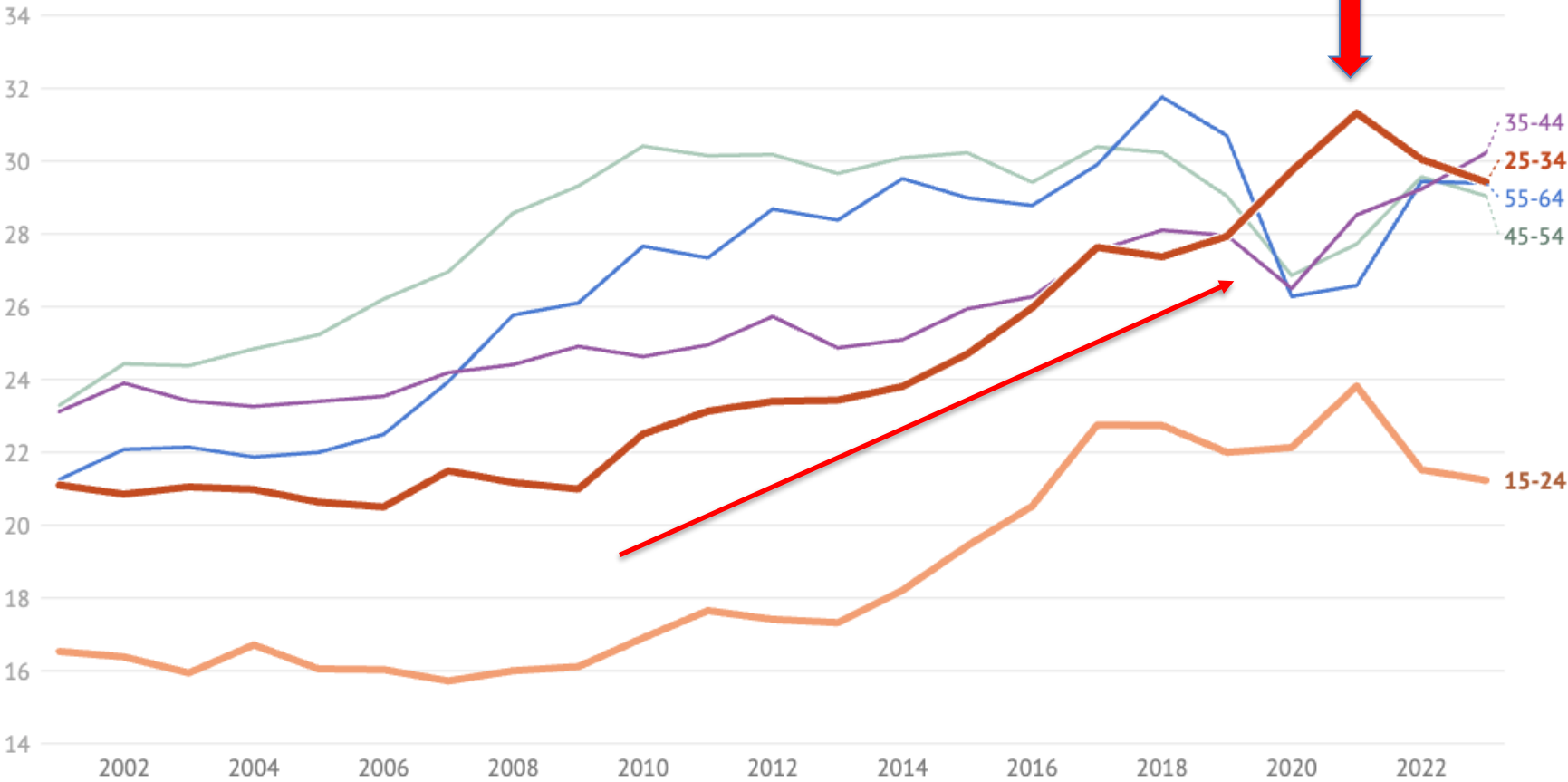
Figure 10.

RATES OF DEATH BY SUICIDE (INTENTIONAL SELF-HARM) PER 100,000 AMONG US MEN BY RACE, HISPANIC ORIGIN, AND 10-YEAR AGE GROUPS, 2023



Rise in suicide risk for young men

Male suicide rate (per 100k) by ten-year age-group (2001-2023)



Suicide rates are calculated per 100,000 population. Men aged 14 years-old or younger and 65 years-old or older are not shown in this analysis.

Source: CDC WISQARS • [Get the data](#) • [Download image](#)

Men's Mental Health

25% of men aged 18-34 & 35-39 reported mental ill-health in last year

Rates of mental ill-health go down with age, 40-64 (12%), 65+(8%)

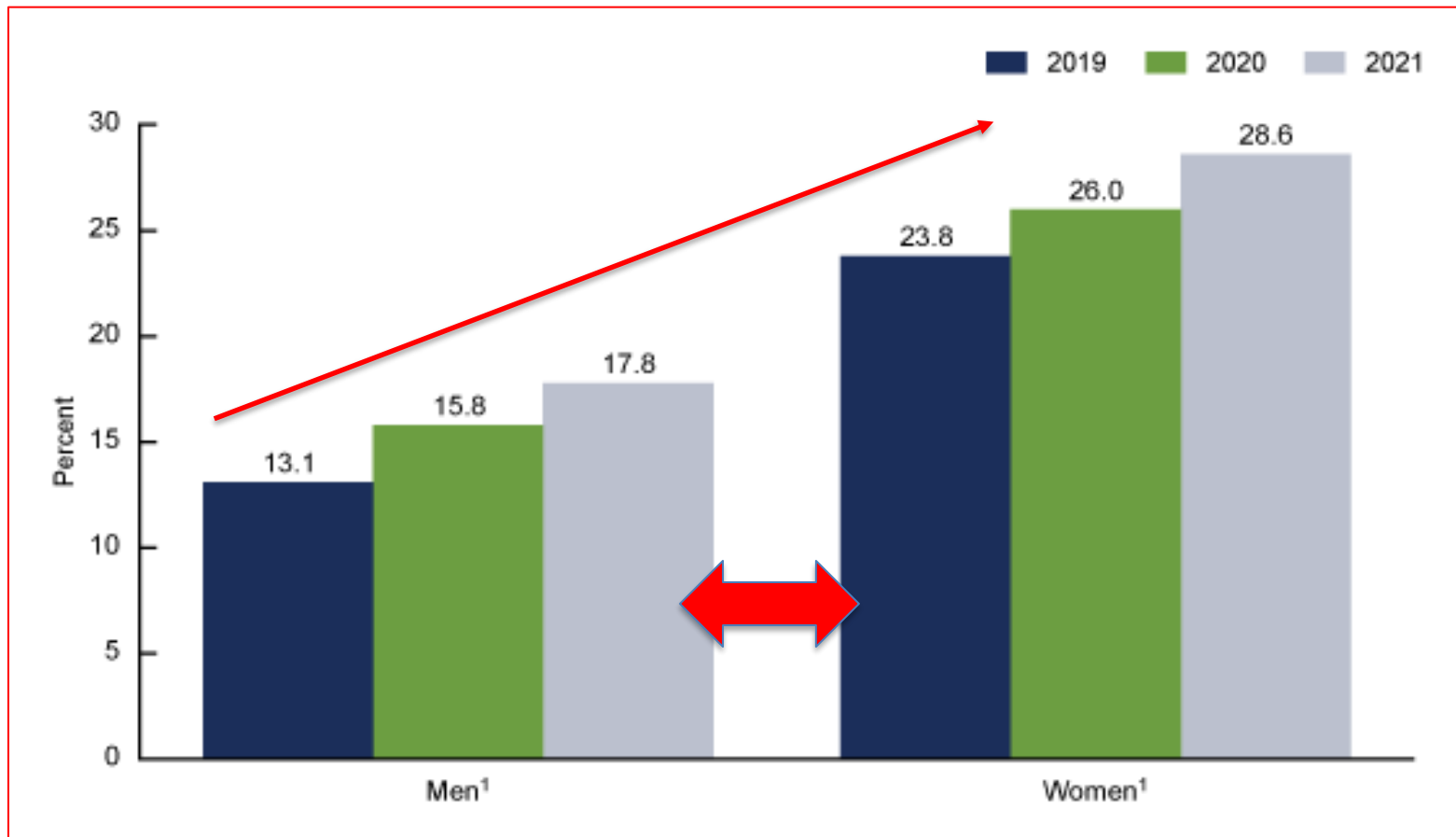
Rates of mental ill-health have *increased* in young men, 18-25 (73%), 30-34 (85%), 18-39 (60%)

Seek out mental health care at lower rates than women, though rates have *increased*



Help Seeking: Landscape and Barriers

Adults 18-44 Who Received Any Mental Health Treatment (2019-2021)



The Gap

- Effective treatments exist
- BUT Men seek out mental health care less than women

Barriers to Help Seeking

Take a quick moment and write in the chat an example or two of barriers that prevent men from seeking out mental health care.

Help Seeking: Barriers

Men report concern: perceived stigma, judgment from others, concerns about mental health literacy (Lynch et al., 2018; Seidler et al., 2016)

A number of men who do seek out help report that care is not designed to meet their needs (Seidler et al; 2022)

Men report feeling misheard, misunderstood, underestimated (Griffith, 2025)

Men's Help-Seeking: Barriers

Concerns: perceived stigma, judgment from others, mental health literacy (Lynch et al., 2018; Seidler et al., 2016)

A number of men who do seek out help report that care is not designed to meet their needs (Seidler et al; 2022)

Men report feeling misheard, misunderstood, underestimated (Griffith, 2025)



Men's Help Seeking Experiences



Healthcare systems don't take their needs seriously (52%)

Feel a sense of stigma in engaging with health education (33%)

Resources are not tailored to their needs (28%)

Health information is overwhelming (45%) and confusing (37%)

Distrust of treatment or dissatisfaction with past treatment (32%)

(Griffith, 2025)

n = 4,125 men 18-69 who saw a provider in the past year

Developing Mental Health Care that Meets the Needs of Men



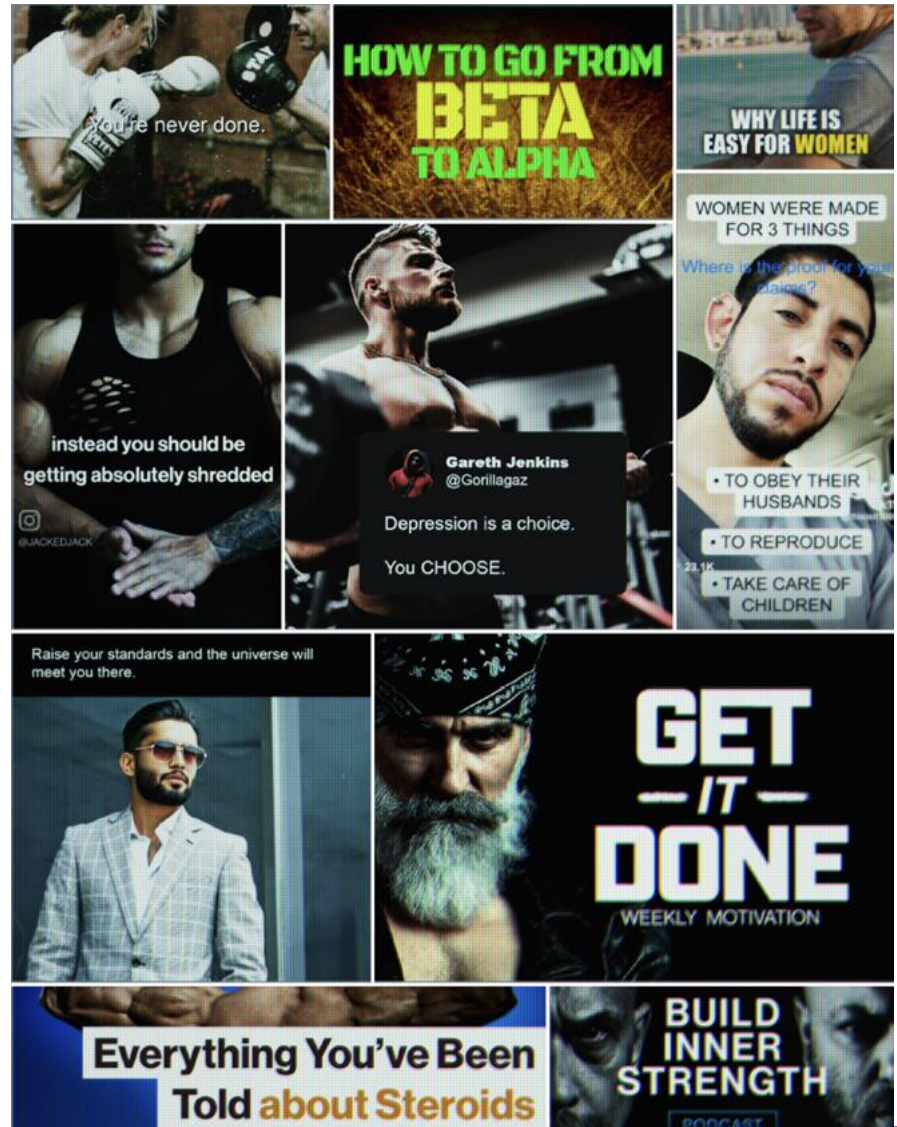
How to Get More Men to Try Therapy

Mental health experts say that many American men are in crisis. One solution is to convince them that asking for help is a strength, not a weakness.



What about the “manosphere”?

- Many young men have turned to social media for guidance on masculinity
- Become mainstream and easily accessible in the age of social media
- Masculinity influencers play a significant role in this space



What kind of content are young men watching?

How might engagement with manosphere content affect certain attitudes and behaviors in young men?

2 Minutes

What kind of content are young men watching?

- 60% watch masculinity influencers (US)
 - Politics
 - Fitness
 - Self-improvement
 - Relationships/dating
 - Money and finance
 - Wealth
 - Gender

Young men's health
in a digital world

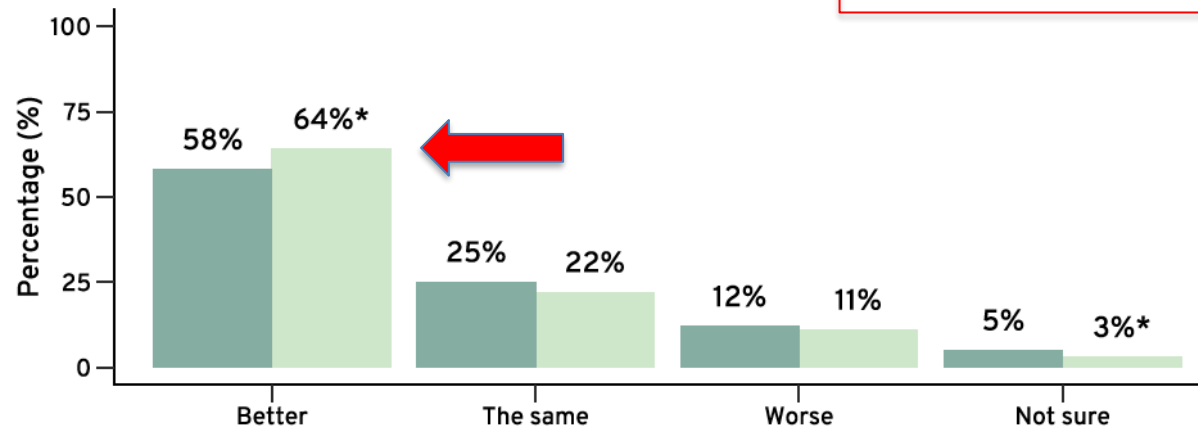
2025 REPORT



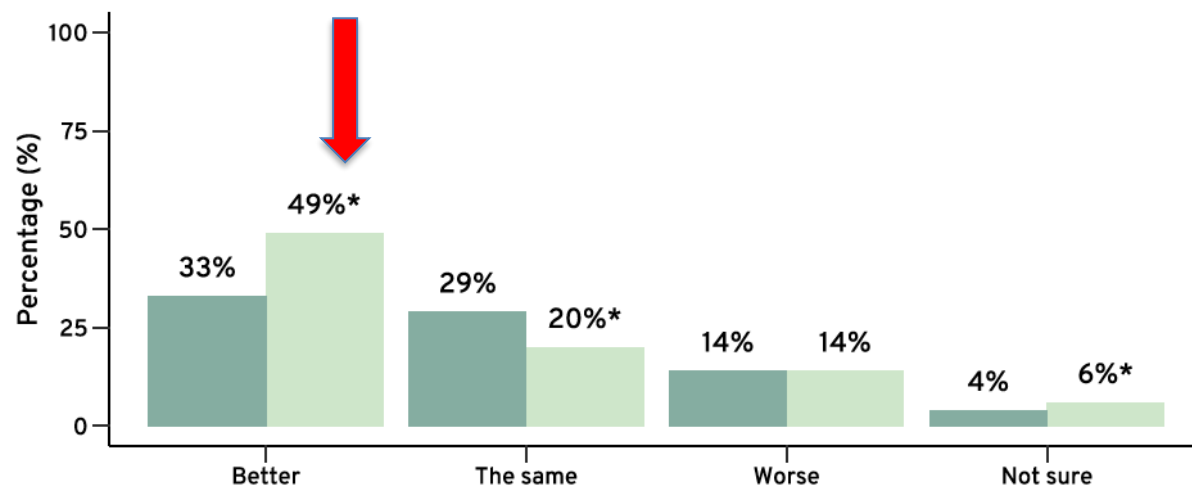
$n = 3,000$ men aged 16-25 from US,
UK, Australia

FIGURE 3 - PERSONAL AND SOCIETAL OUTLOOKS FOR YOUNG MEN

COMPARED TO TODAY, DO YOU THINK YOUR PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES WILL BE WORSE, THE SAME, OR BETTER IN FIVE YEARS TIME?



COMPARED TO TODAY, DO YOU THINK THE SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR YOUNG MEN WILL BE WORSE, THE SAME, OR BETTER IN FIVE YEARS TIME?



Important in Men's Pursuit of Success

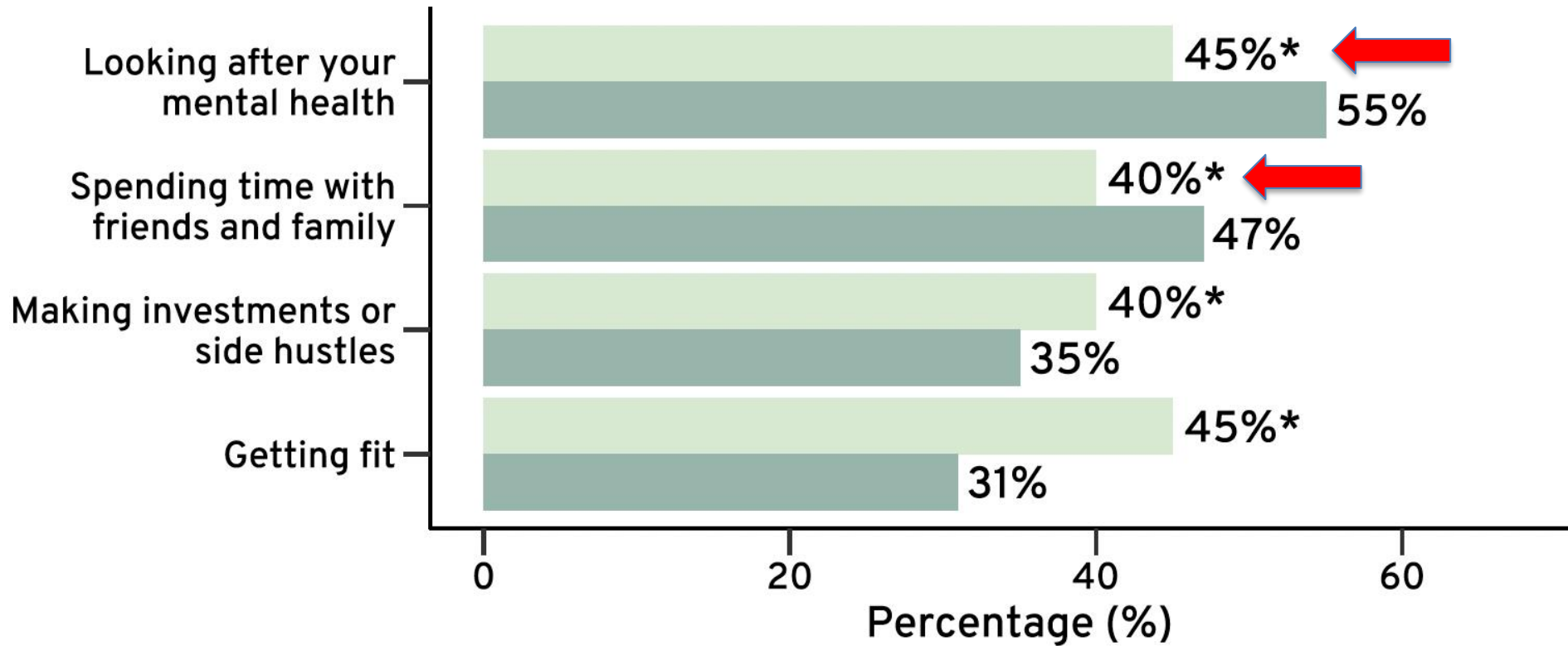


FIGURE 10 - ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN

PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG MEN WHO AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE...

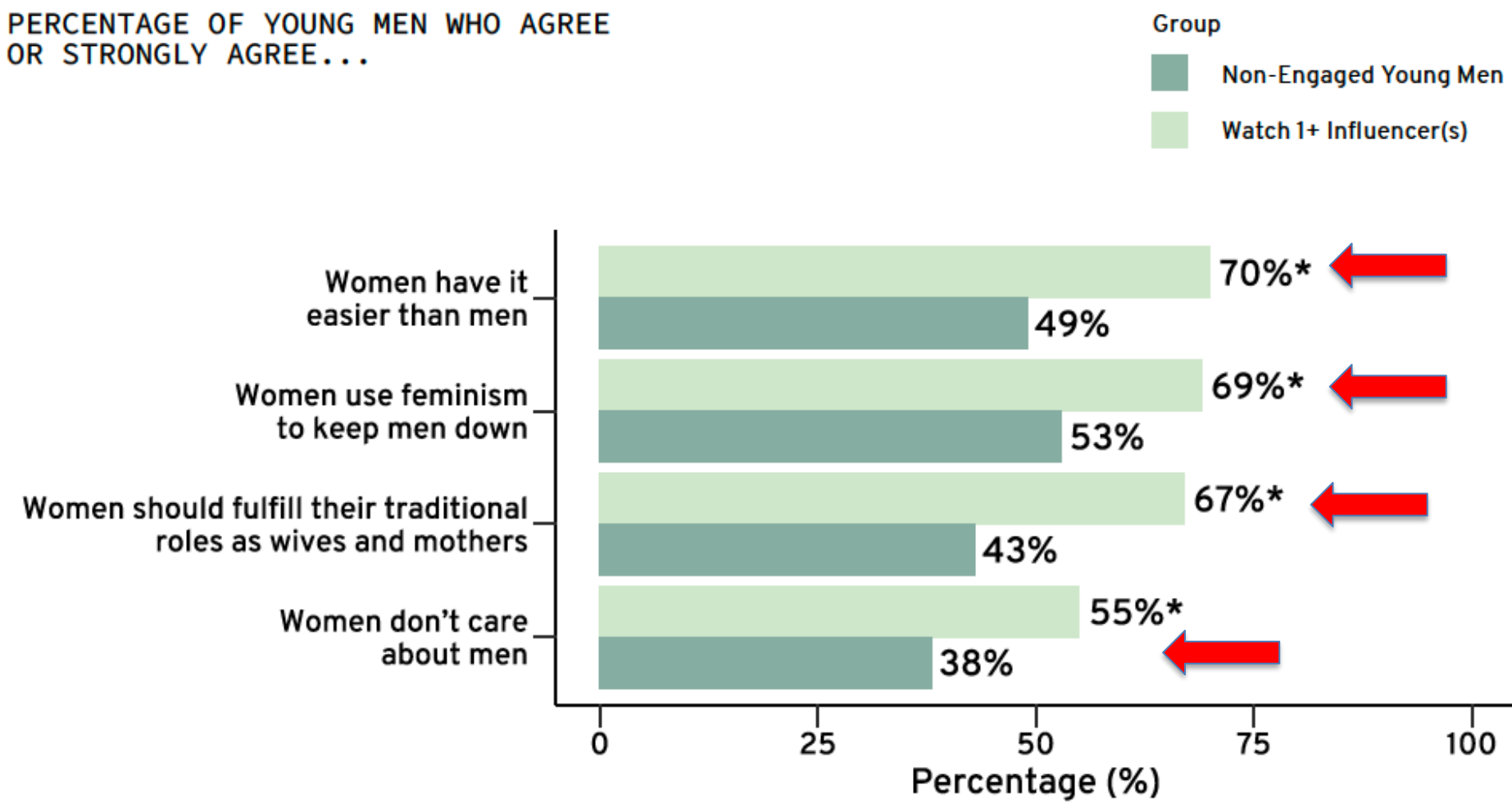
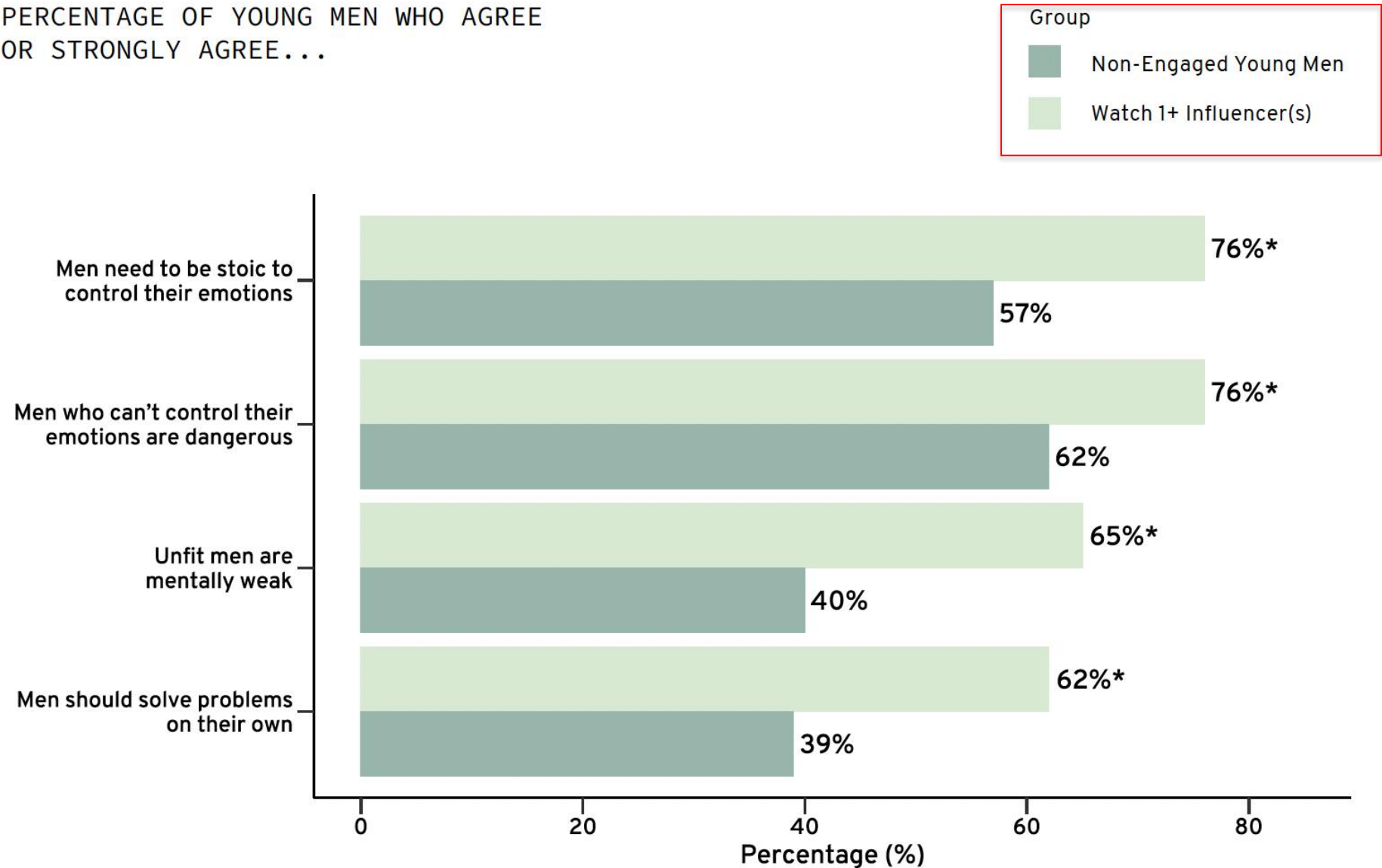
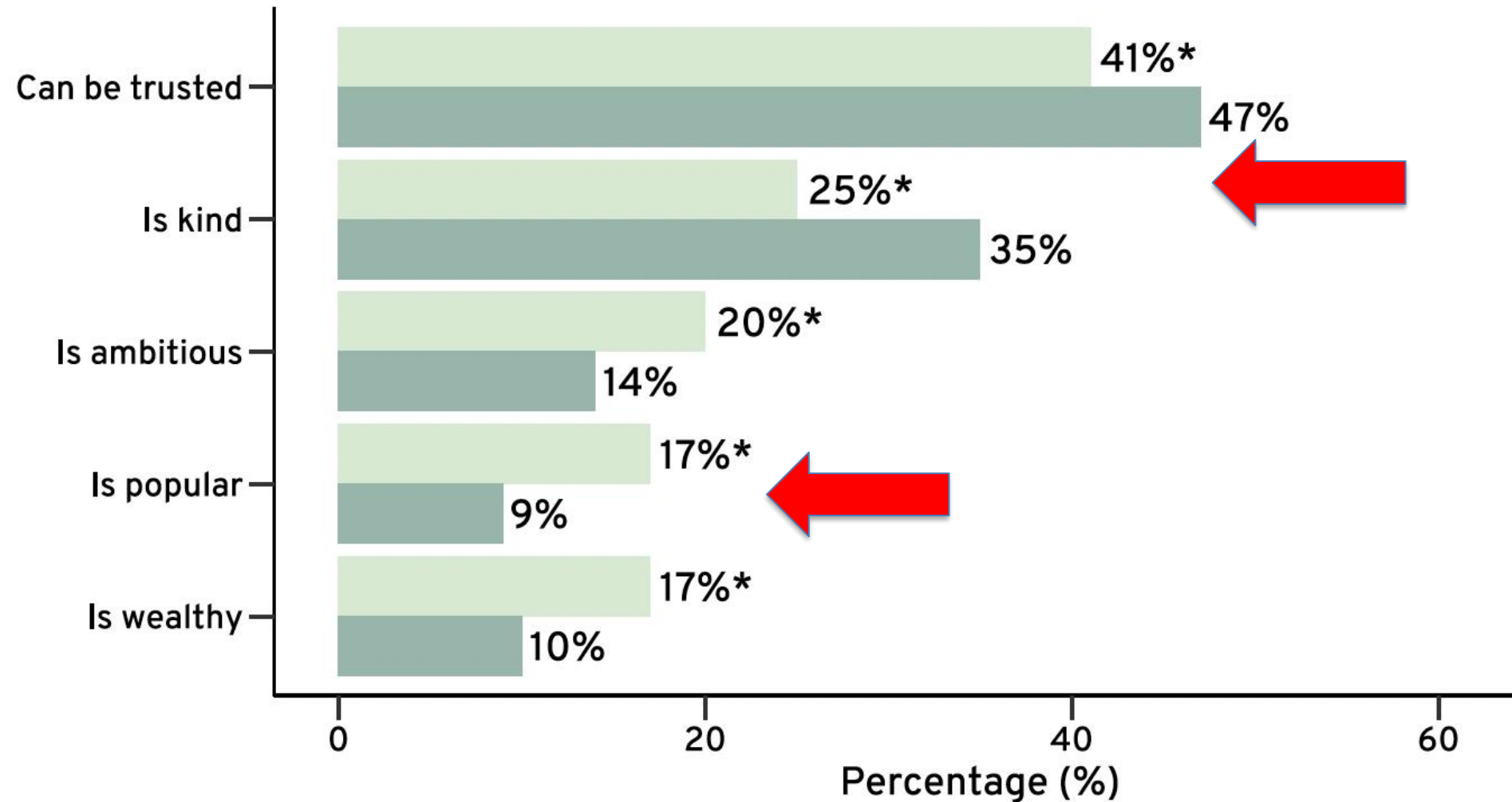


FIGURE 7 – SELF-RELIANCE AND EMOTIONAL CONTROL

PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG MEN WHO AGREE
OR STRONGLY AGREE...



Traits to be Valued in Male Friends



Men's Social Connections

- 25% of men (vs. 18% for women) 15-34 feel lonely “a lot” (Gallup, 2024)
- 38% of men “would lean on a friend” (vs. 54% of women), (Pew, 2025)
- Men reporting “no close friendship” (SAFS, 2021)
 - 3% in 1990
 - 15% in 2021
- Young men report lacking companionship and isolation (Fisher et al., 2025) but also a strong desire to have more close friendships (Griffith et al., 2025)



Men's Social Connections

- “I don’t think anyone can fall in love with me”
 - 18-24 (34%)
 - 25-34 (25%)
 - 35-45% (24%)
- “No one cares if men are OK”
 - 18-24 (69%)
 - 25-34 (67%)
 - 35-45% (60%)
- “No one really knows me” – 2.2 times increased risk for suicidal ideation



Figure 11.

PERCENTAGE OF MEN WHO "OFTEN" OR "ALWAYS" WISH THEY "HAD MORE PEOPLE TO TALK TO ABOUT WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON IN [THEIR] LIFE"



How do we Help Men?

1. *Man Therapy* (suicide prevention/help seeking)
2. *What is Therapy? Video Series* (help seeking)
3. *Men in Mind* (clinician competence)

Suicide Prevention: Man Therapy



MAN THERAPY
THERAPY THE WAY A MAN DOES IT

Man Therapy



ORIGINAL ARTICLE | Open Access |

Effectiveness of man therapy to reduce suicidal ideation and depression among working-age men: A randomized controlled trial



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Help-seeking and Man Therapy: The impact of an online suicide intervention

[Jon N. Gilgoff MSW](#) , [Fernando Wagner ScD](#), [Jodi J. Frey PhD](#), [Philip J. Osteen PhD](#)

First published: 22 November 2022 | <https://doi.org/10.1111/sltb.12929> |

Destigmatizing Mental Health Care: Movember Conversations

- Movember Conversations:
 - Ep. 1: *What is therapy?*
 - Ep. 2: *How to Overcome any barriers?*
 - Ep. 3: *How to get therapy.*
 - Ep. 4: *What happens in a therapy session?*
 - Ep. 5: *First therapy session done and dusted. Now what?*



Gender-Responsive Care: *Men in Mind*

- Men are at increased risk to drop out of mental health services early (Seidler et al, 2021) and report dissatisfaction with services that result in them not returning (Seidler et al, 2018)
- Are men “bad clients”?
- Should we consider “gender-responsive” care that is adapted to the needs of men that are at risk for disengagement with services? (Genuchi, 2017)



Men in Mind

Figure 1
Overview of the Content of Men in Mind

Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4	Module 5
Rebranding masculinity	Your gender, your practice, your rules	The hook: Engagement and motivation	The depressed man	The suicidal man: Saving those thousand lives
Apply a “gender lens” to men’s behavior in psychotherapy.	Conduct a self-directed gender role analysis.	Apply strengths-based strategies to engage and motivate male clients in psychotherapy.	Recognize reasons for differences in rates of depression diagnosis between men and women.	Recognise the role of masculinities in the development of suicidality in men.
Recognize situations where societal expectations of masculinities are enforced.	Identify clinical situations where your gender socialization may interact with your client’s masculinities.	Utilize strategies to assist male clients who cannot or will not describe their emotional experiences.	Apply screening tools to effectively recognize and screen for “male-type” depression.	Identify warning signs for suicide risk in men.
Conceptualize men’s distress in terms of gender role strain theory.	Adapt your practice by leveraging your gender to be a role model to male clients.	Apply metaphors in psychotherapy to assist male clients to engage with their emotional experiences.	Incorporate masculinities into a response toolkit for men’s depression, across internalizing and externalizing symptoms.	Leverage masculinities when engaging men in your intervention for suicidality.



(Seidler et al.)

Men in Mind

- M** manage expectations
- A** agree on a path
- L** leave with a lesson
- E** empower him for change

The basics, but with gender

Our approach to engaging men follows the **MALE** acronym.

We derived this list of skills from talking to men about their experiences in therapy: what worked, what didn't, and what they now look for in a mental health practitioner. We've packaged the list neatly for you into the acronym, so you can make sure to tick off these skills reliably with your male clients.



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ISSN: 0003-066X

American Psychologist

2024, Vol. 79, No. 3, 423–436
<https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0001242>

A Randomized Wait-List Controlled Trial of Men in Mind: Enhancing Mental Health Practitioners' Self-Rated Clinical Competencies to Work With Men

Zac E. Seidler^{1, 2, 3}, Michael J. Wilson^{1, 2}, Ruben Benakovic^{1, 2}, Andrew Mackinnon⁴, John L. Oliffe^{5, 6}, John S. Ogrodniczuk⁷, David Kealy⁷, Jesse Owen⁸, Jane Pirkis⁴, Cathy Mihalopoulos⁹, Long Khanh-Dao Le⁹, and Simon M. Rice^{1, 2}

¹ Orygen, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

² Centre for Youth Mental Health, The University of Melbourne

³ Movember, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

⁴ Centre for Mental Health, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, The University of Melbourne

⁵ School of Nursing, University of British Columbia

⁶ Department of Nursing, The University of Melbourne

⁷ Department of Psychiatry, University of British Columbia

⁸ Department of Counselling Psychology, University of Denver

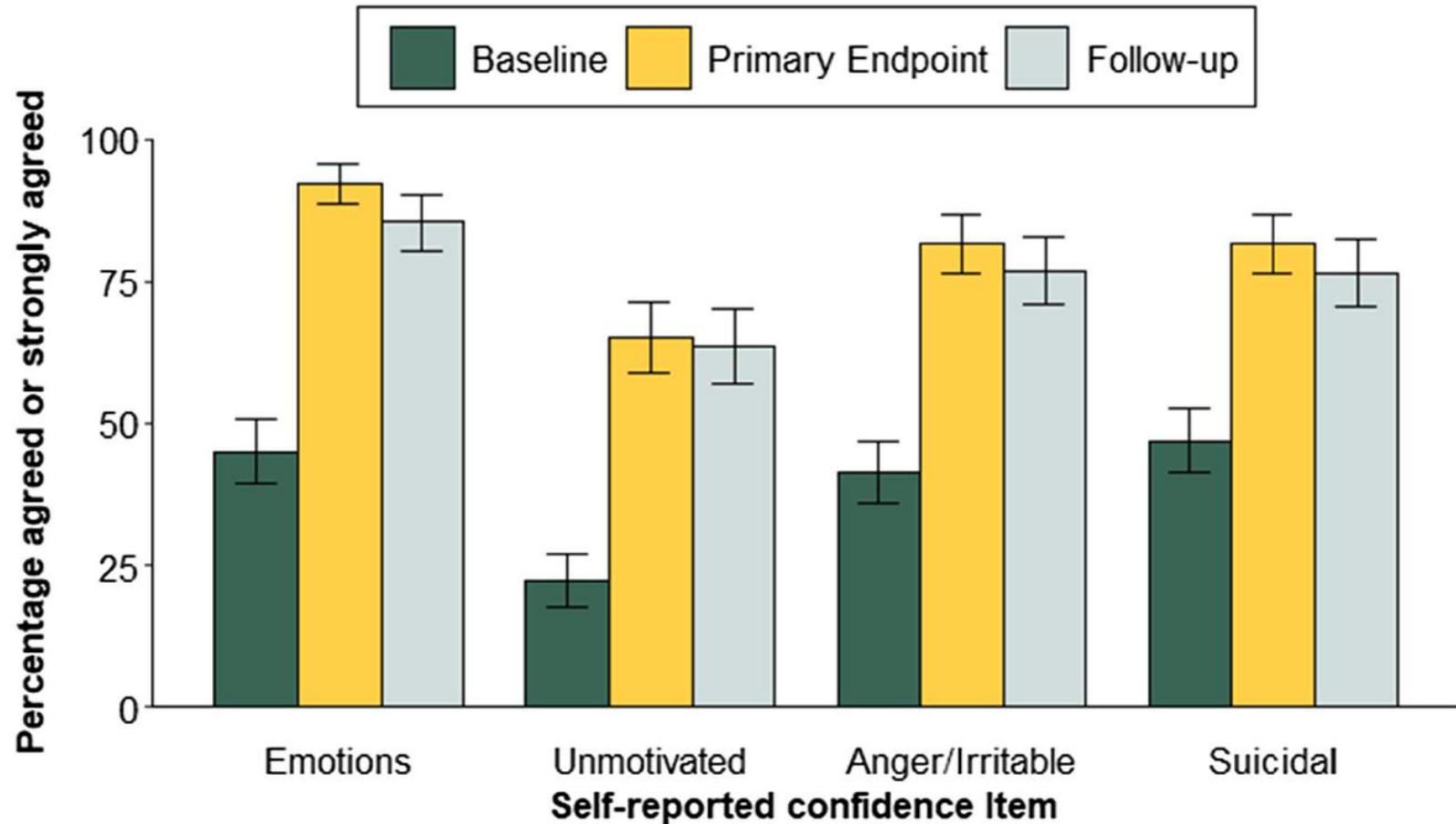
⁹ School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Monash University

(Fisher et al., 2025)

Men in Mind

Figure 3

Model-Predicted Percentages of Practitioners in the Intervention Group Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed That They Feel Confident Working With Male Clients



(Fisher et al., 2025)

Thank You & Questions!

Please reach out with questions!
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Connect with me on *Linked In!*



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