

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

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Initiative
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A Little About Me

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





Where are we Going Today?

1. Progress on men's mental health
2. What does it mean to be a man?
3. Health disparities
4. Suicide in men
5. Barriers to help-seeking
6. Men's experiences online
7. Social connections and relationships
8. 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. 20, 2022



THE OPINIONS ESSAY

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



Mark Roth

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

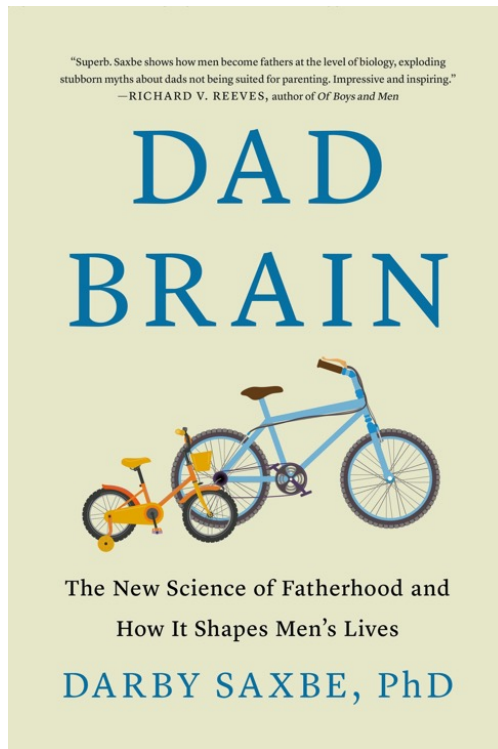
January 23, 2023

OPINION

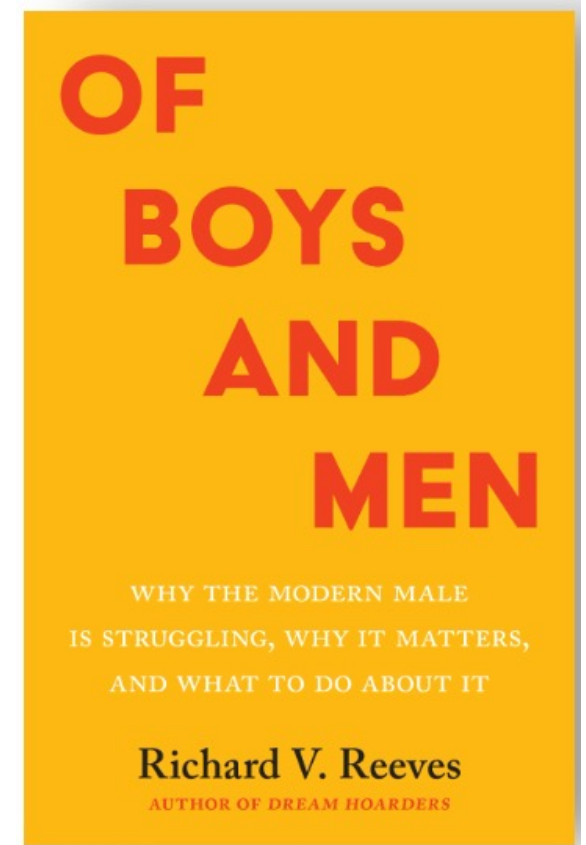
JESSICA GROSE

The 'Boy Crisis' Is Overblown

July 23, 2025

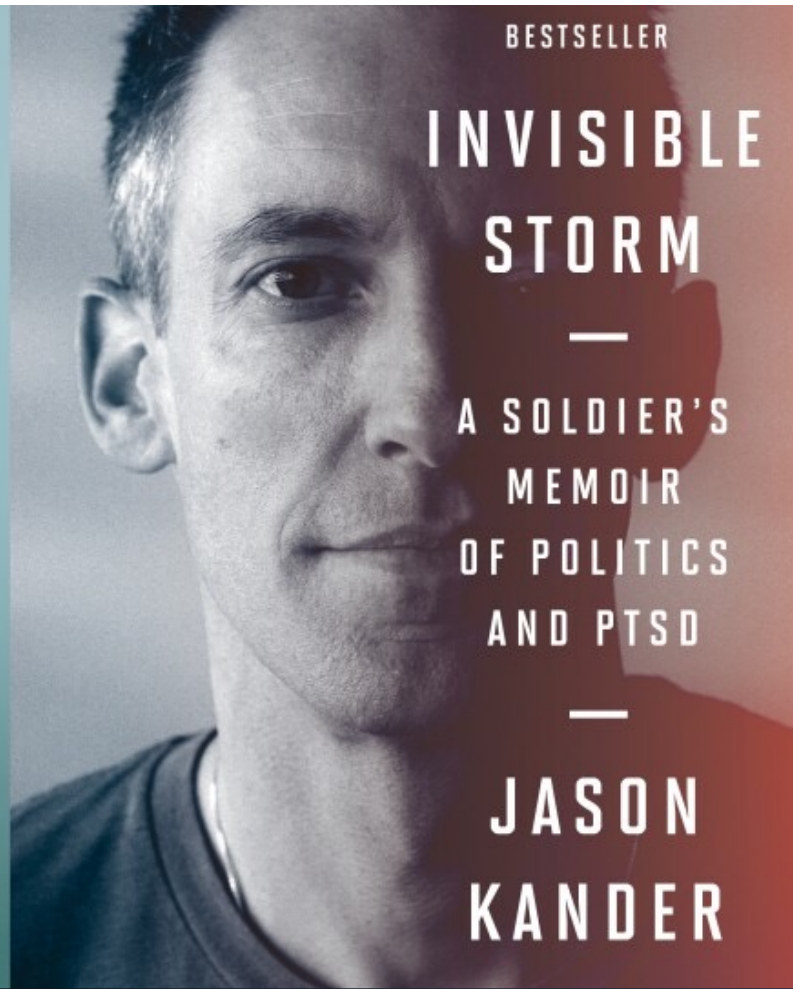


Eleanor Davis



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?

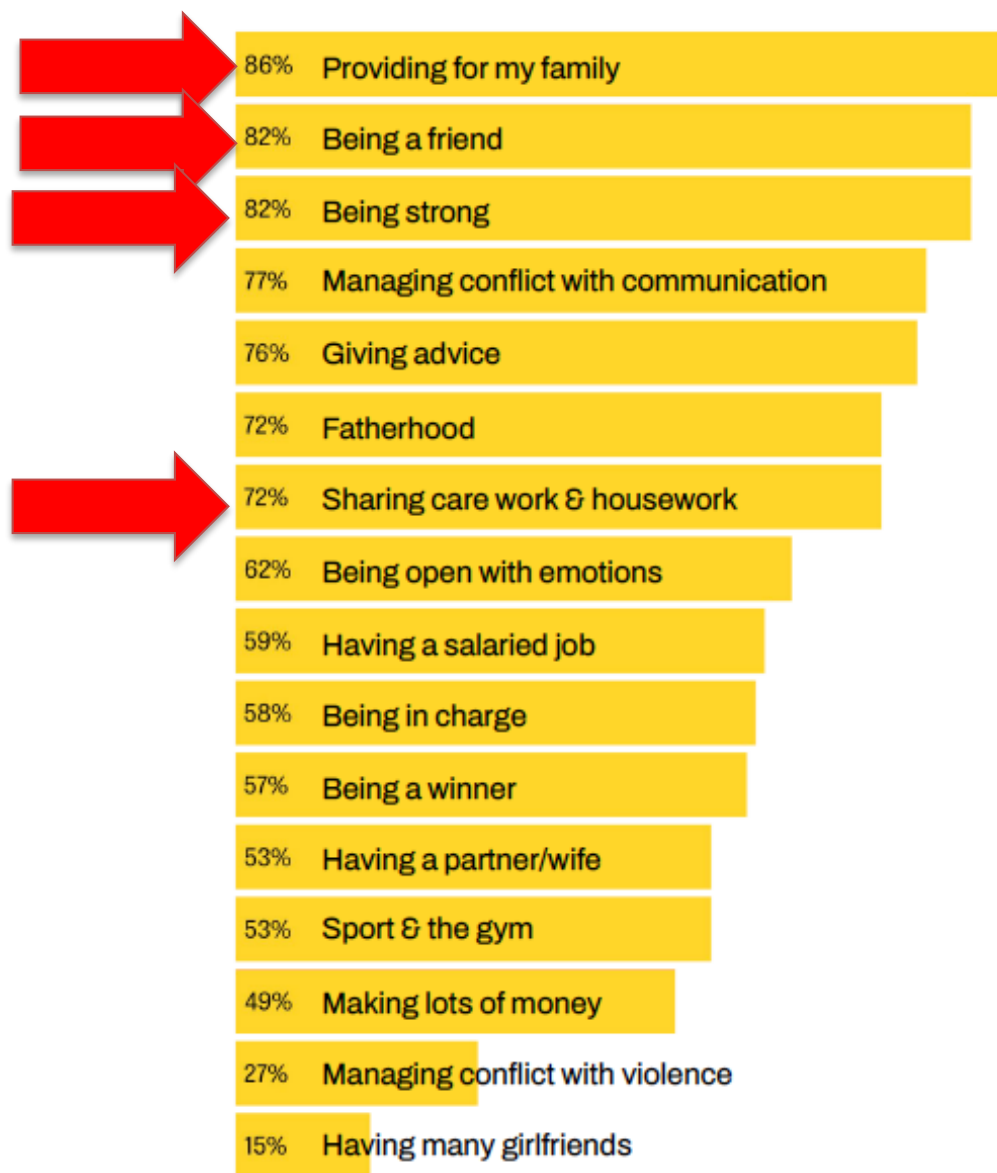
Exercise: (2 minutes)

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

n= 2454, 75% men

(Equimundo, 2025)

What does it mean to be a man?

How do men
define masculine?

STRONG

70%

CONFIDENT

62%

PROTECTIVE

59%

TOUGH

56%

RESPONSIBLE

52%

How do men want to be
described by a friend?

RESPECTFUL

71%

HONEST

71%

RESPONSIBLE

63%

CONFIDENT

57%

$n = 1,929$ men

(Gentlemen Quarterly, Oct 2025)

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 differences 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)



Some of the Largest Gaps

Men's Mental Health Disparities

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



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 for men in the US. (1 min)

Men's Health: Premature Death

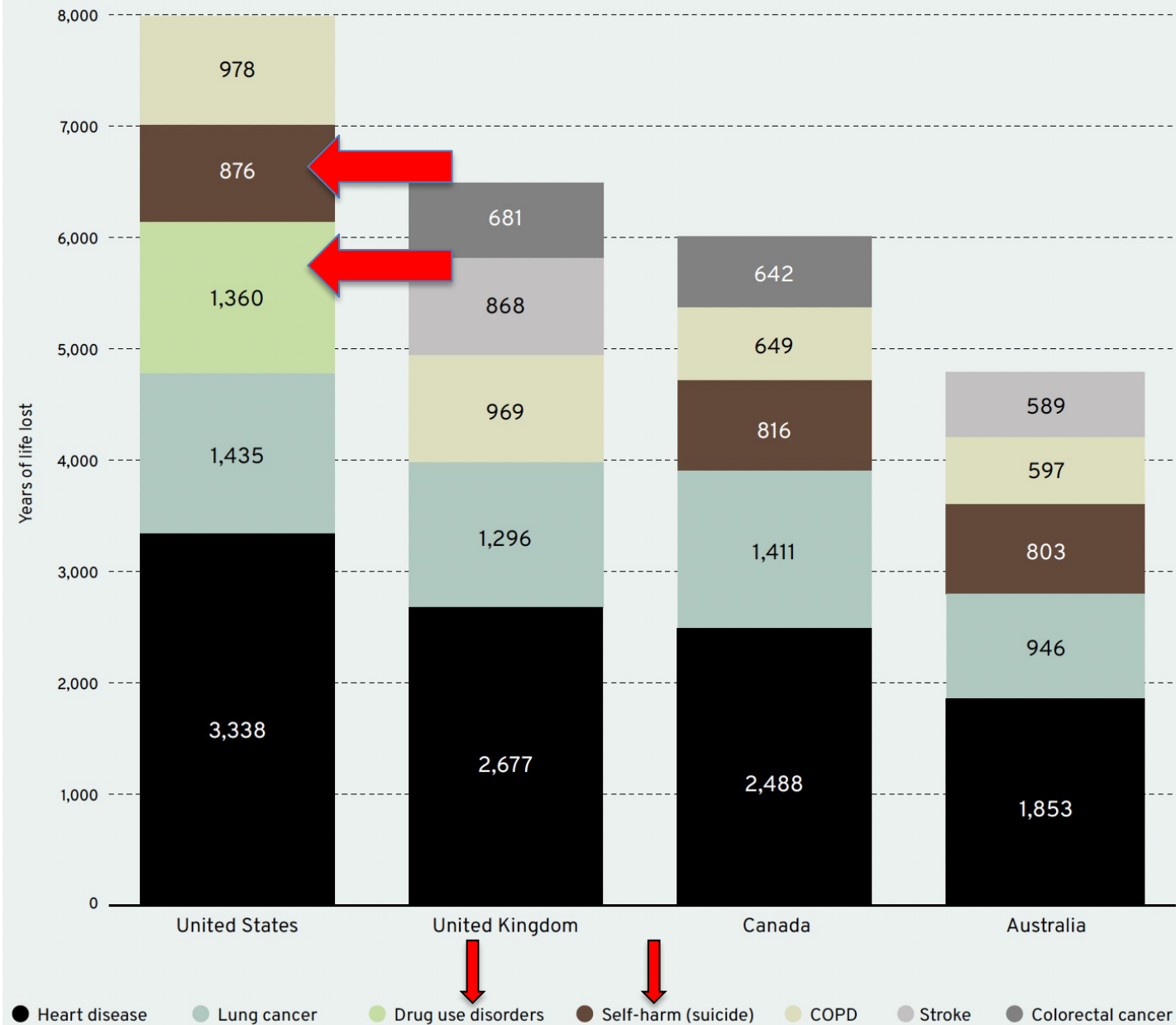
Leading Causes of Premature Mortality:

1. Heart Disease (223.9/100,000)
2. Cancer (193.5/100,000)
3. Accidents (unintentional injuries/ODs, 77.1/100,000)
4. Cerebrovascular diseases (43.5/100,000)
5. Chronic lower respiratory diseases (40.3/100,000)
6. Diabetes (32.1/100,000)
7. Suicide (23.2/100,000)

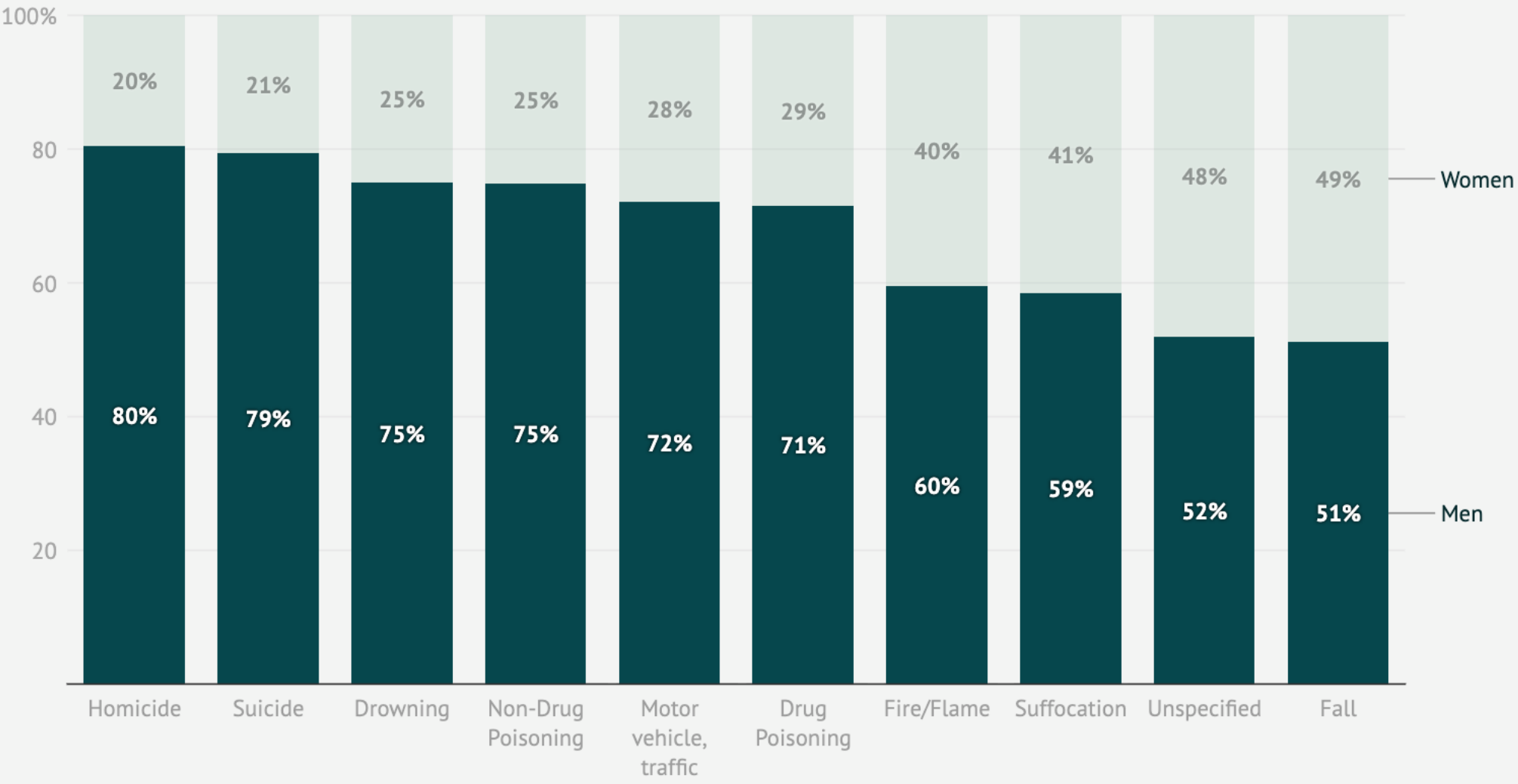
(CDC, 2026)

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)

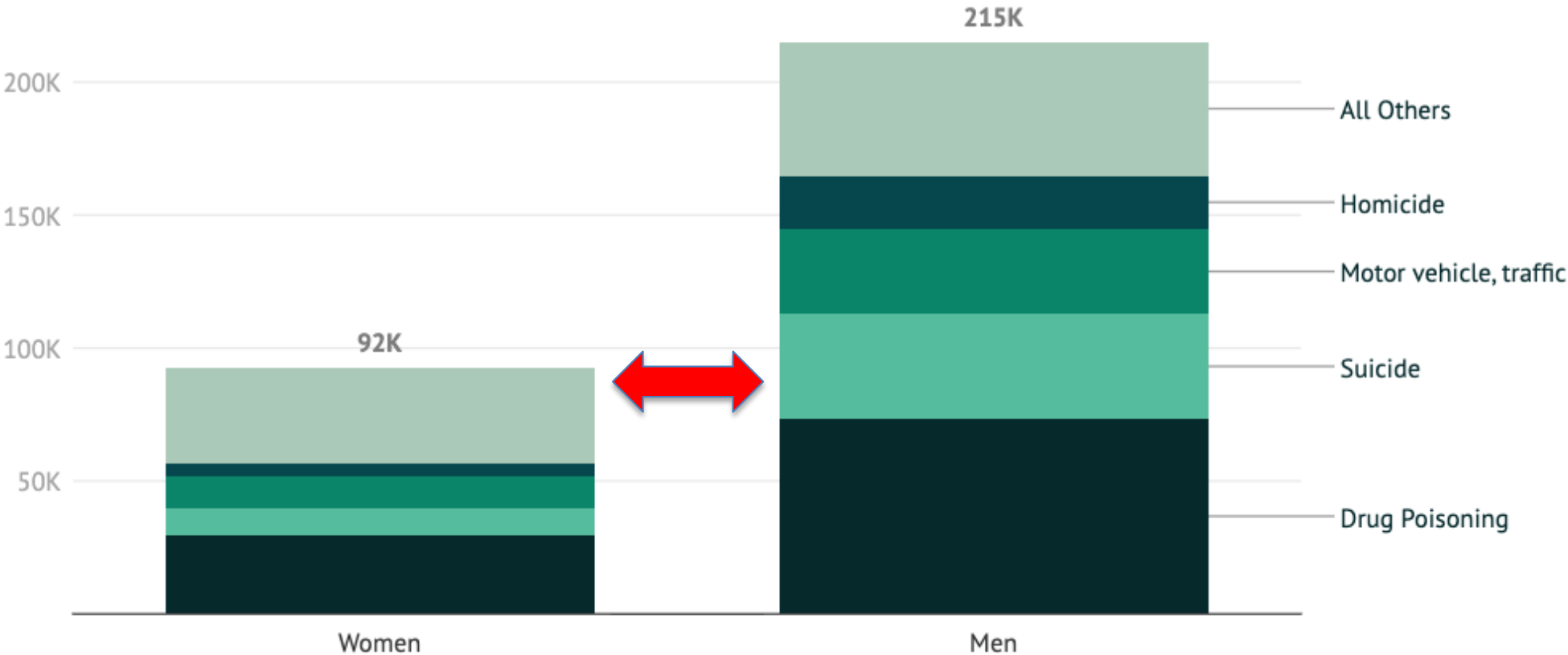


Figure shows the total injury deaths for men and women by injury type and intent. Drug overdoses exclude overdoses with the noted intent of suicide.
Source: CDC WISQARS

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)

17,715,407 (2001-2020) years of premature life lost prior to age 75 (CDC, 2026)

Gender & Suicide

Suicide Rates by Age Group (2022)

Data Courtesy of CDC

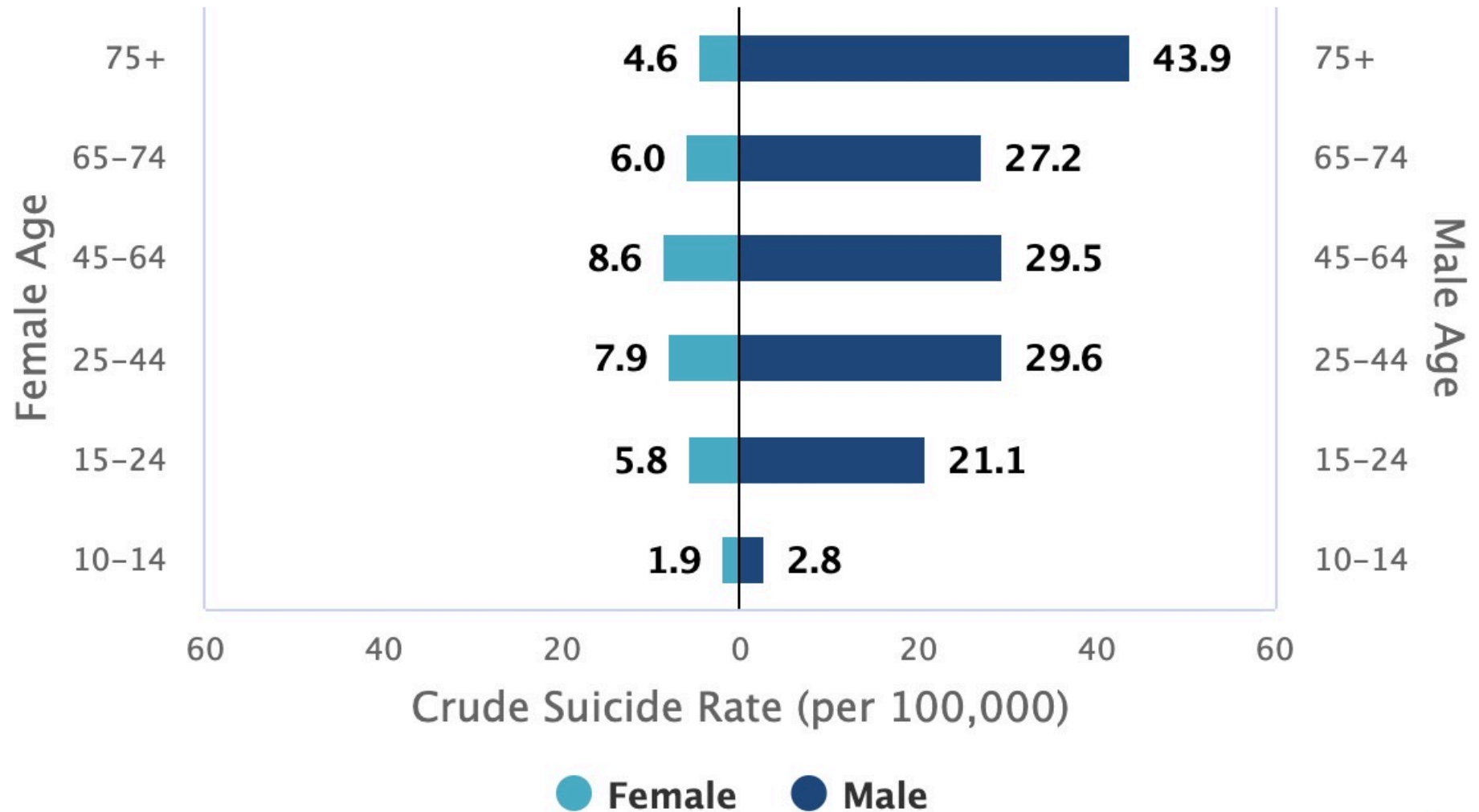
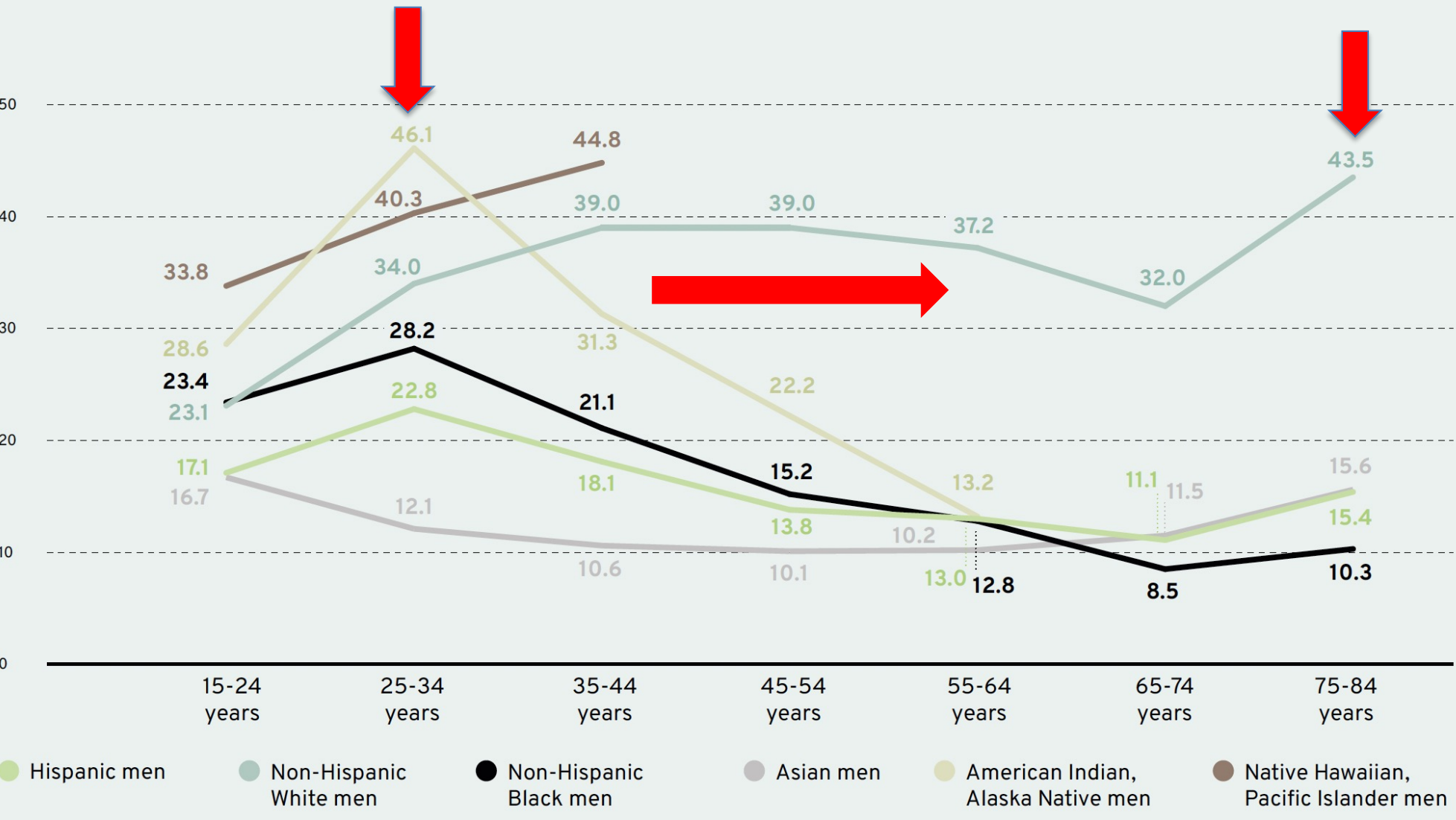


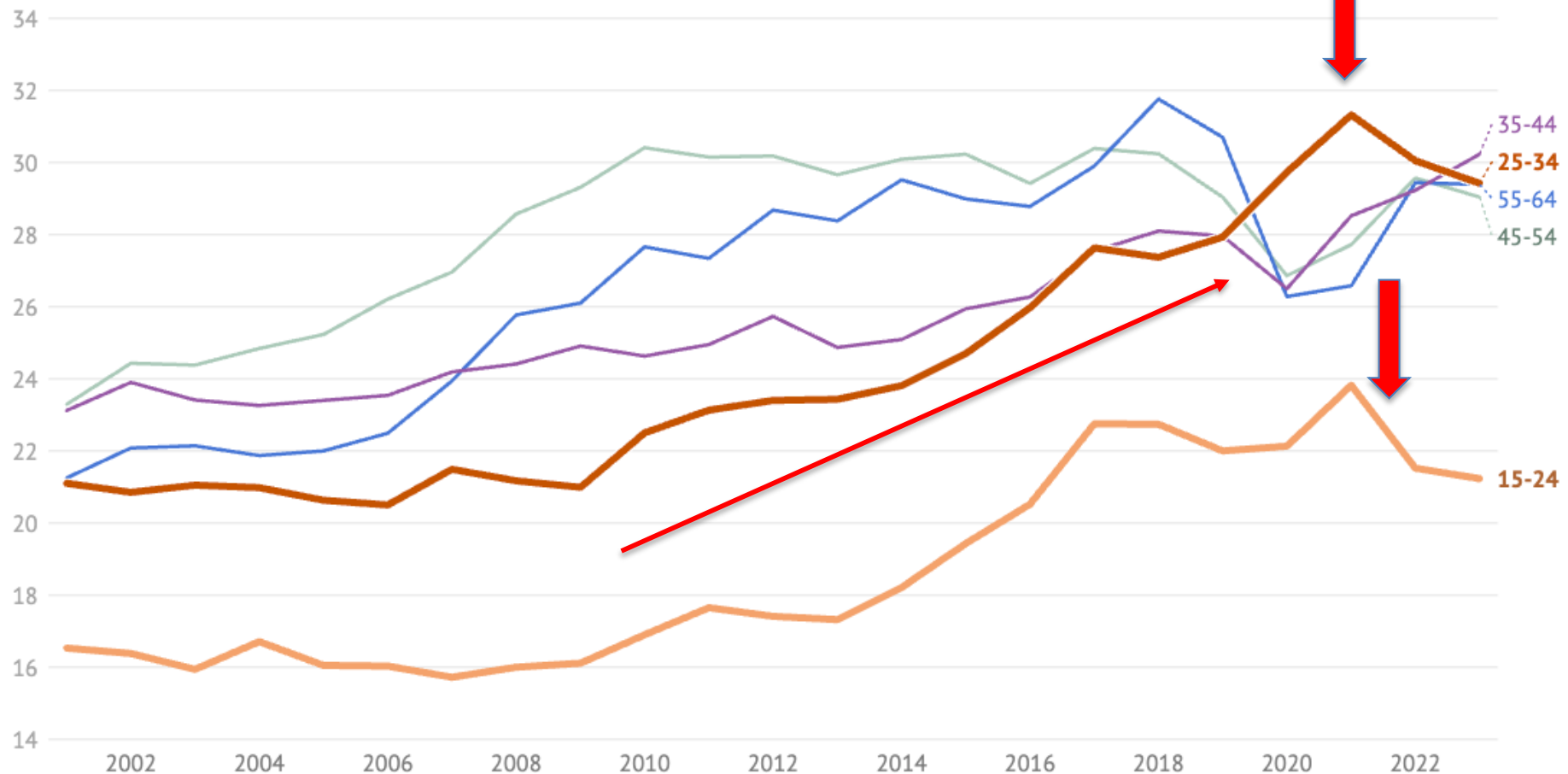
Figure 10.

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)

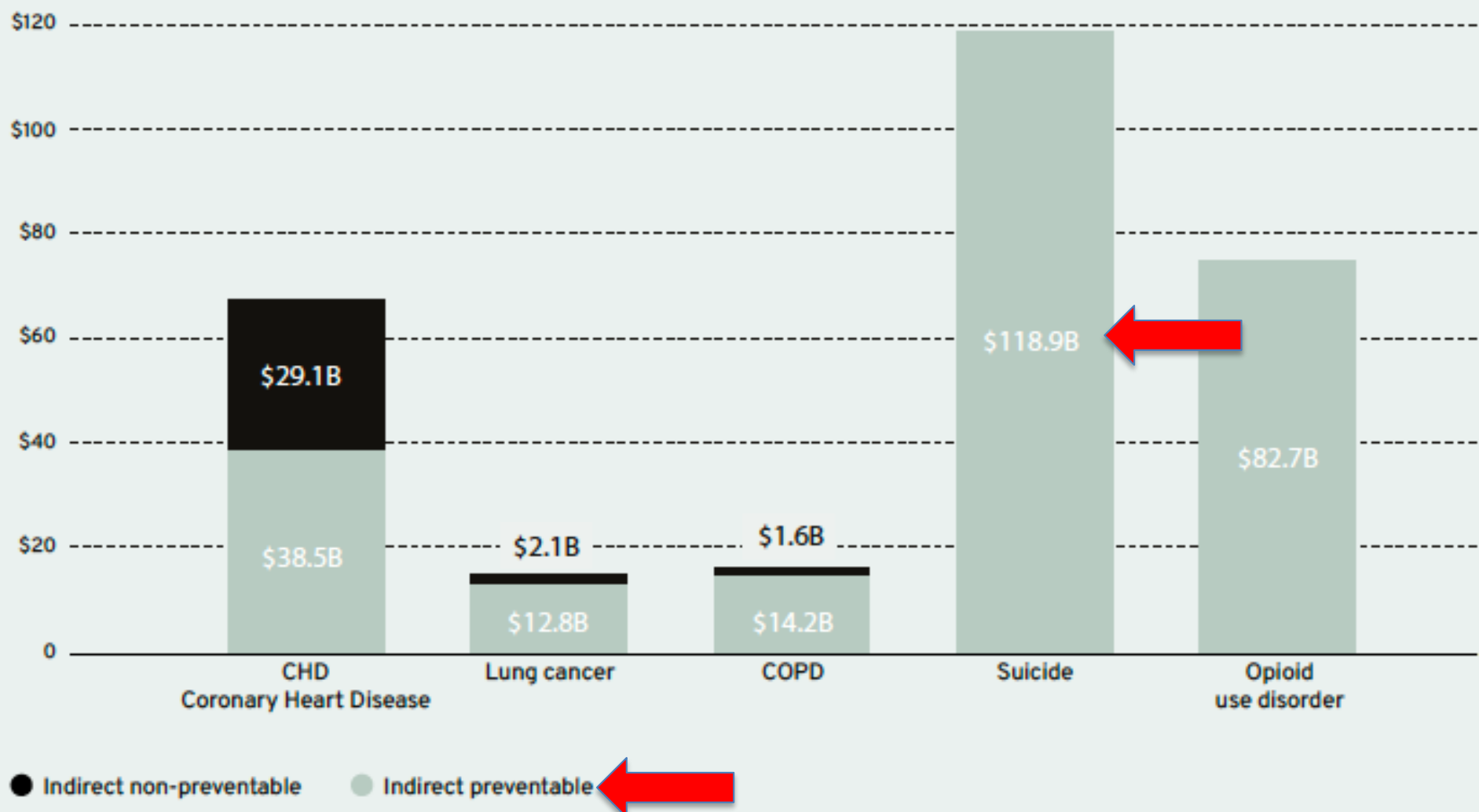


Suicide rates are calculated per 100,000 population. Men aged 14 years-old or younger and 65 years-old or older are not shown in this analysis.

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

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/>.

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%)

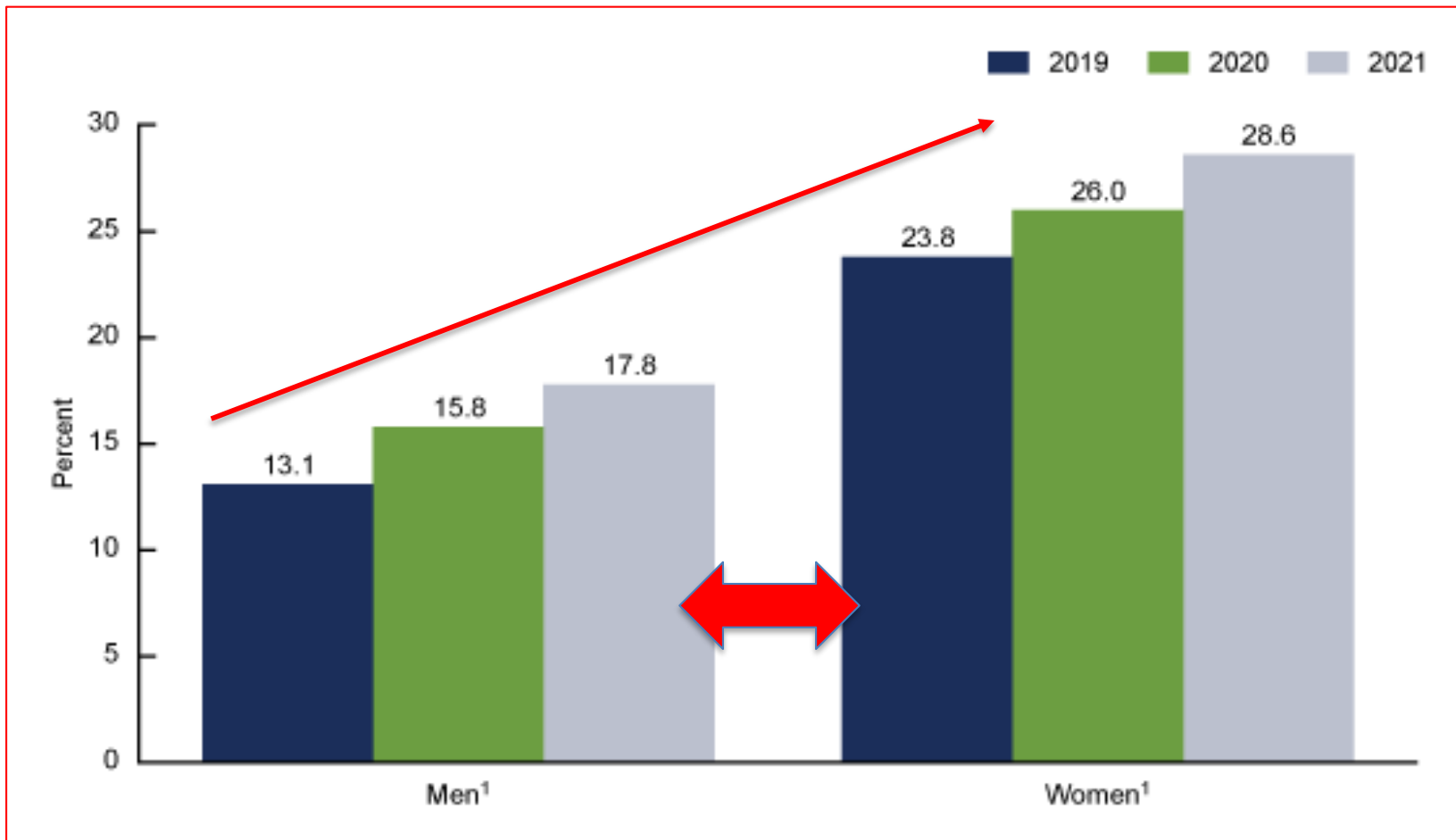
Seek out mental health care at lower rates than women, though rates have *increased*

A hand in a white shirt cuff and dark suit sleeve emerges from the ocean, holding a white sign that says "Help!". The ocean has small waves, and the sky is filled with heavy, grey, stormy clouds. The image has a torn paper effect at the bottom.

Help!

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

Terlizzi & Schiller (2022), National Center for Health Statistics, CDC

Barriers to Help Seeking

Take a quick moment and write down an example or two of possible barriers that prevent some men from seeking out mental health care.

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

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)

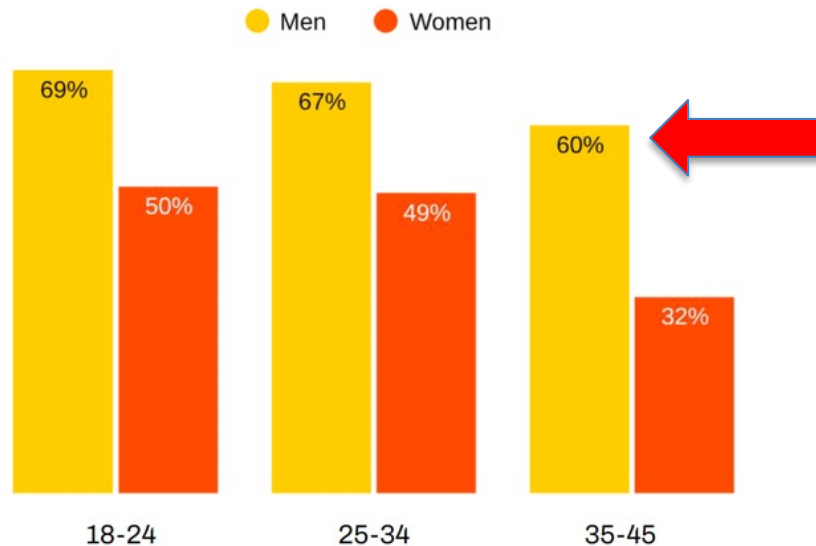


57%

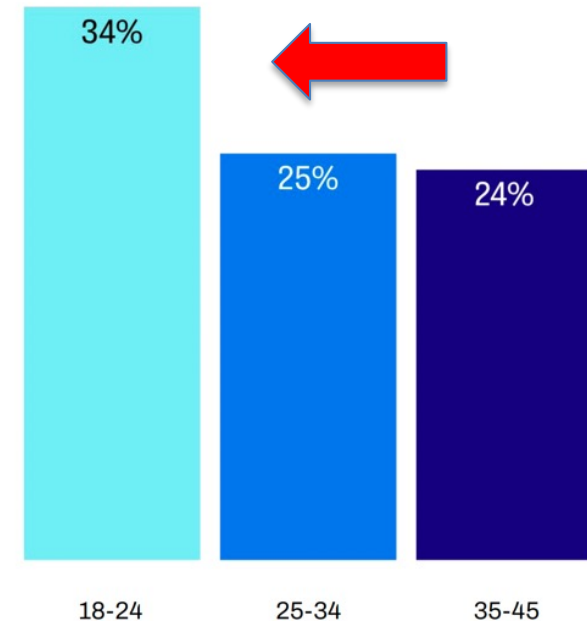
of the full sample reports that
“no one cares if men are okay.”

The youngest men agree with this the most.

Percentage of respondents by age who agree with
the statement **“No one cares if men are okay”**



Percentage of men and women by age who agree
with the statement **“I don’t think anyone can fall
in love with me”**



“No one really knows me.”

53%

of men agree

52%

of women agree

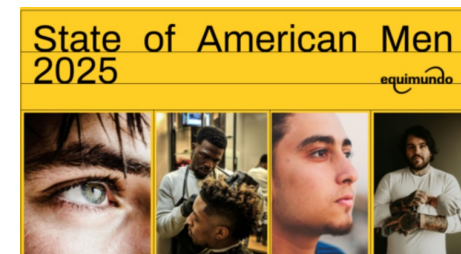


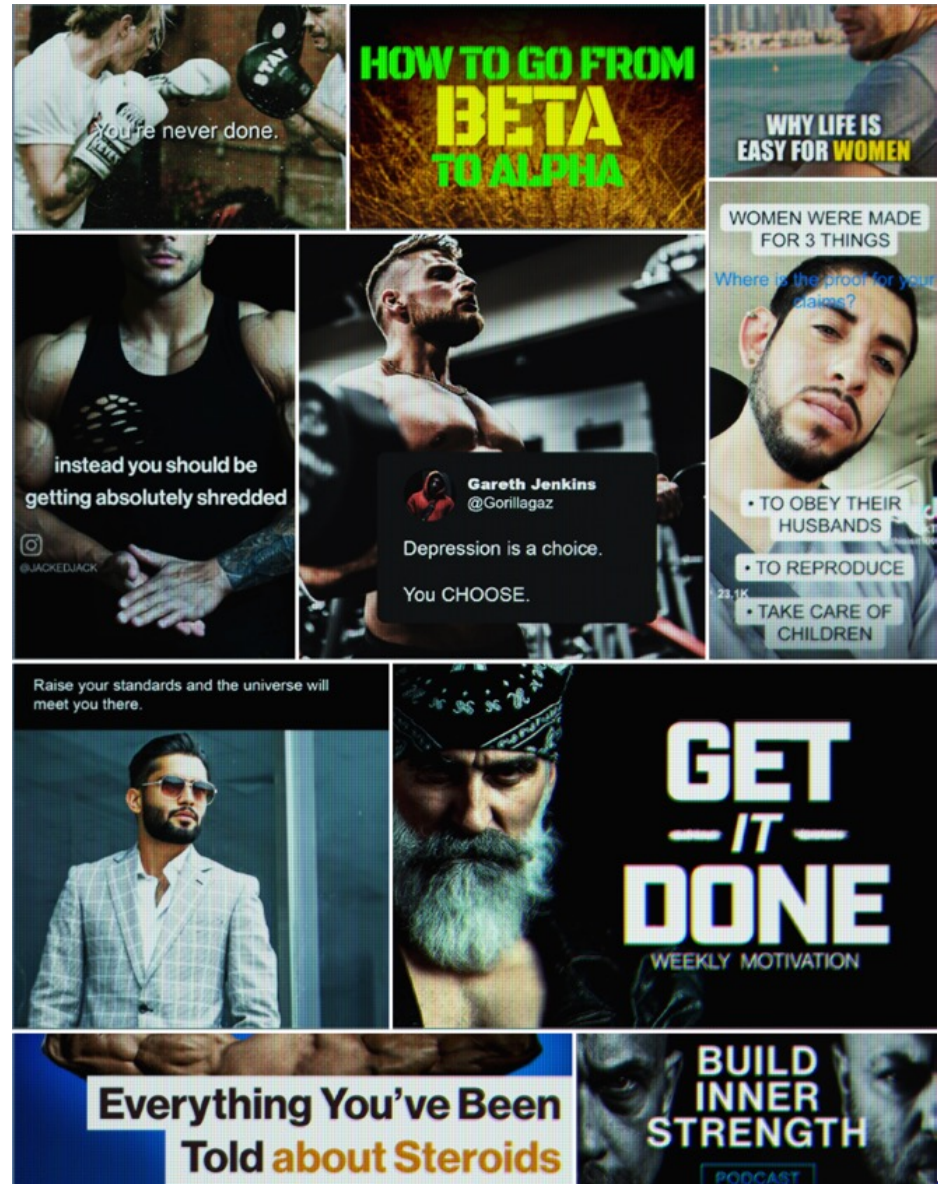
Figure 11.

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



What about the “manosphere”?

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



(Fisher et al., 2025)

What kind of content are young men watching?

Write down 1-2 ideas on how engagement with manosphere content might affect certain attitudes and behaviors in young men?

1 Minute

What kind of content are young men watching?

- Young men (13-19) spend approx. 4.4 hours/day on social media (Rothwell, et al., 2023)
- 60% watch masculinity influencers (US)
 - Politics
 - Sports/Fitness
 - Self-improvement
 - Relationships/dating
 - Money and finance
 - Wealth
 - Gender

Young men's health
in a digital world

2025 REPORT

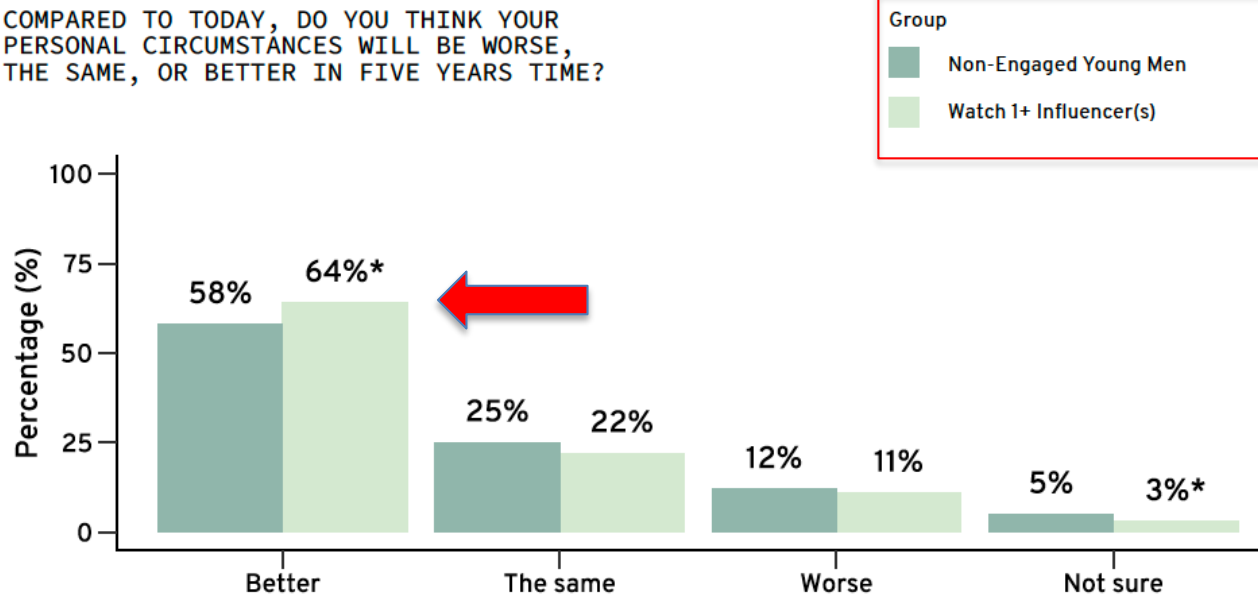


$n = 3,000$ men aged 16-25 from US,
UK, Australia

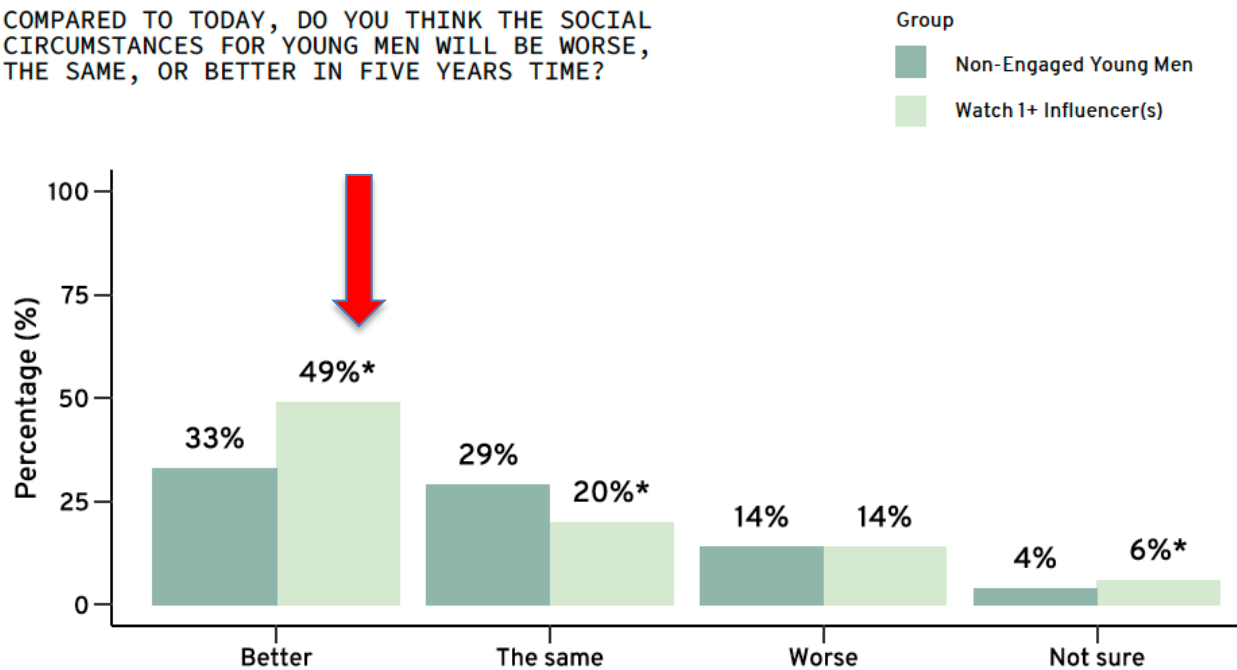
(Fisher et al., 2025)

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

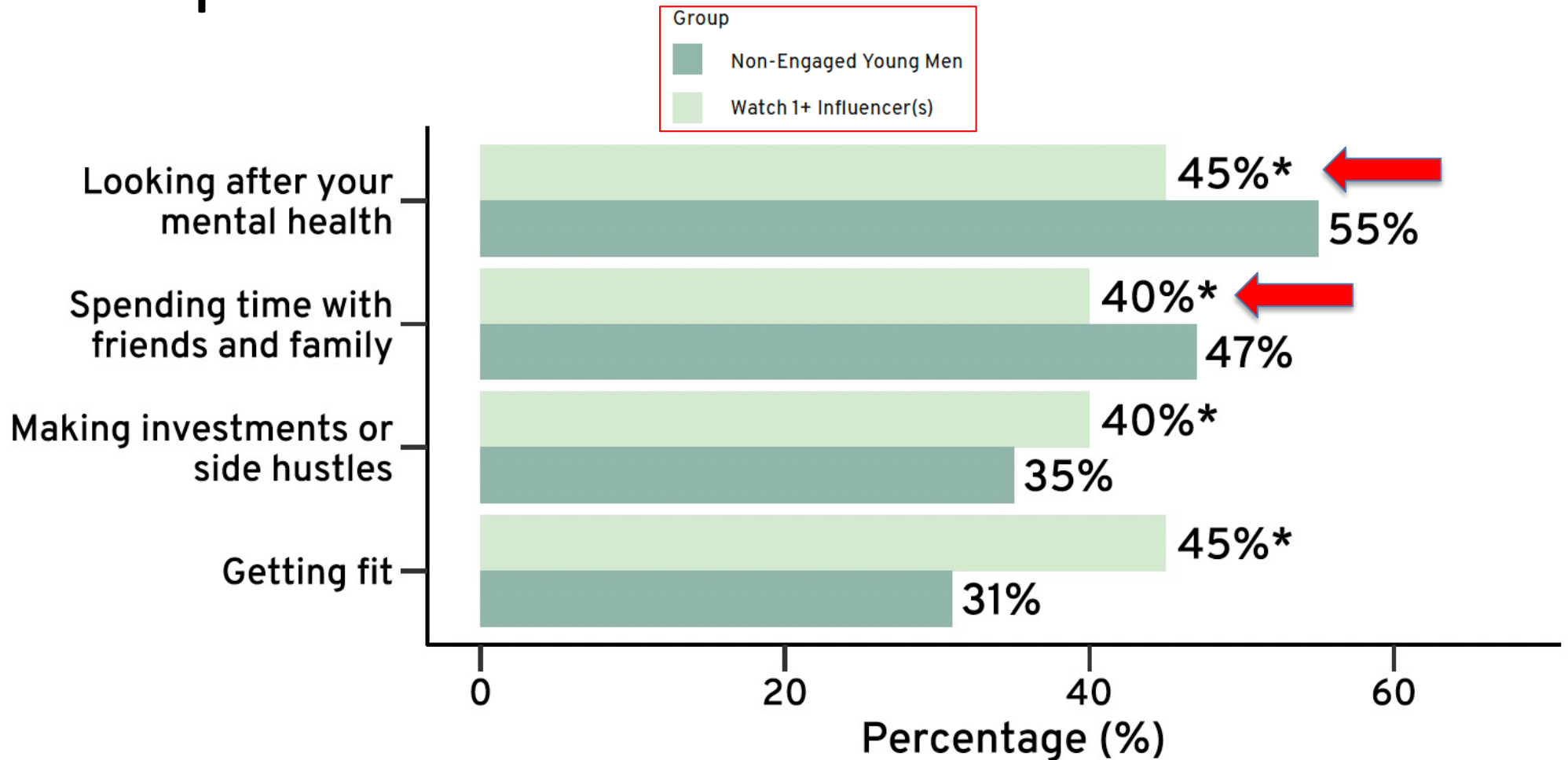


FIGURE 10 - ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN

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

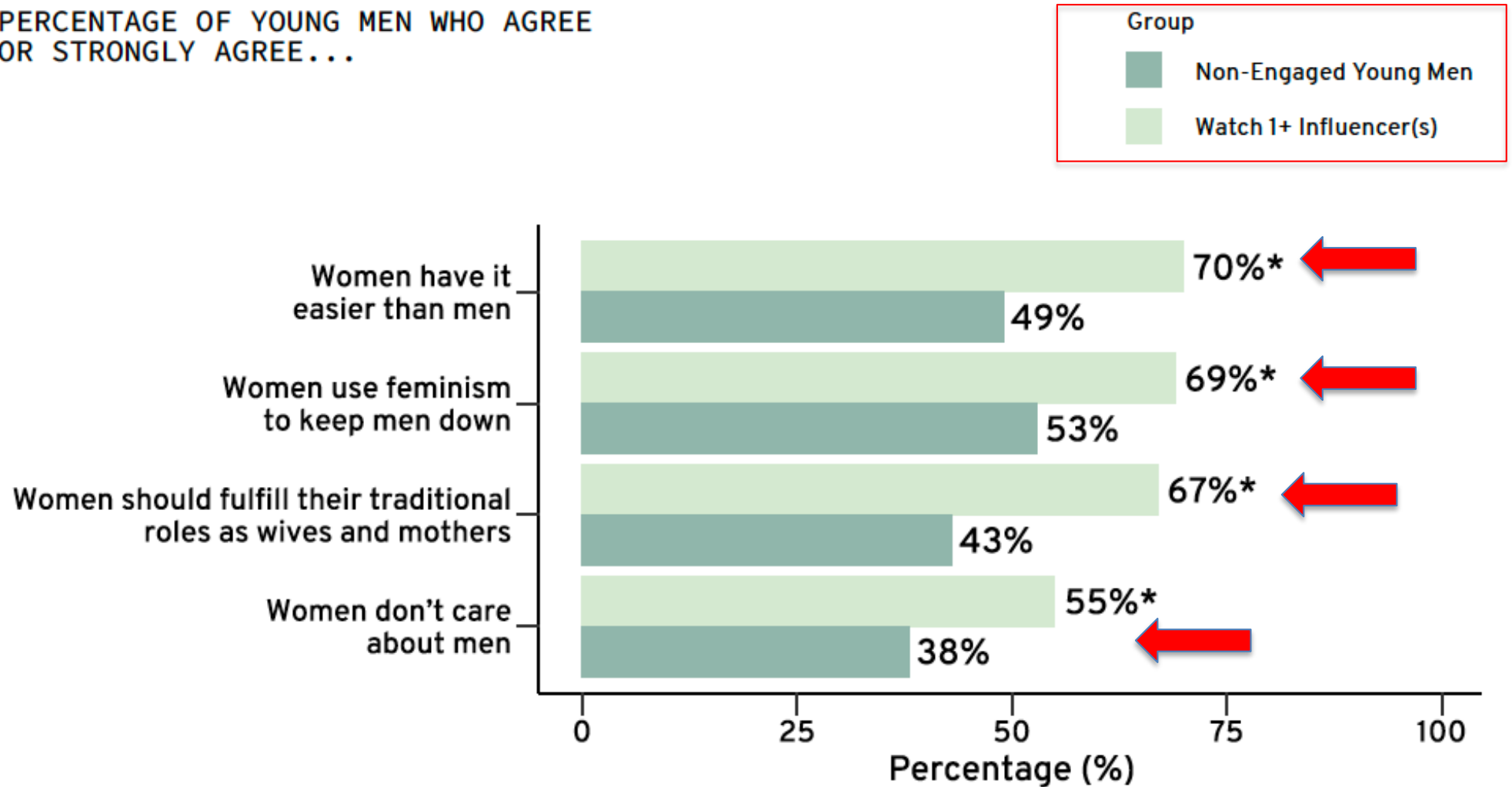
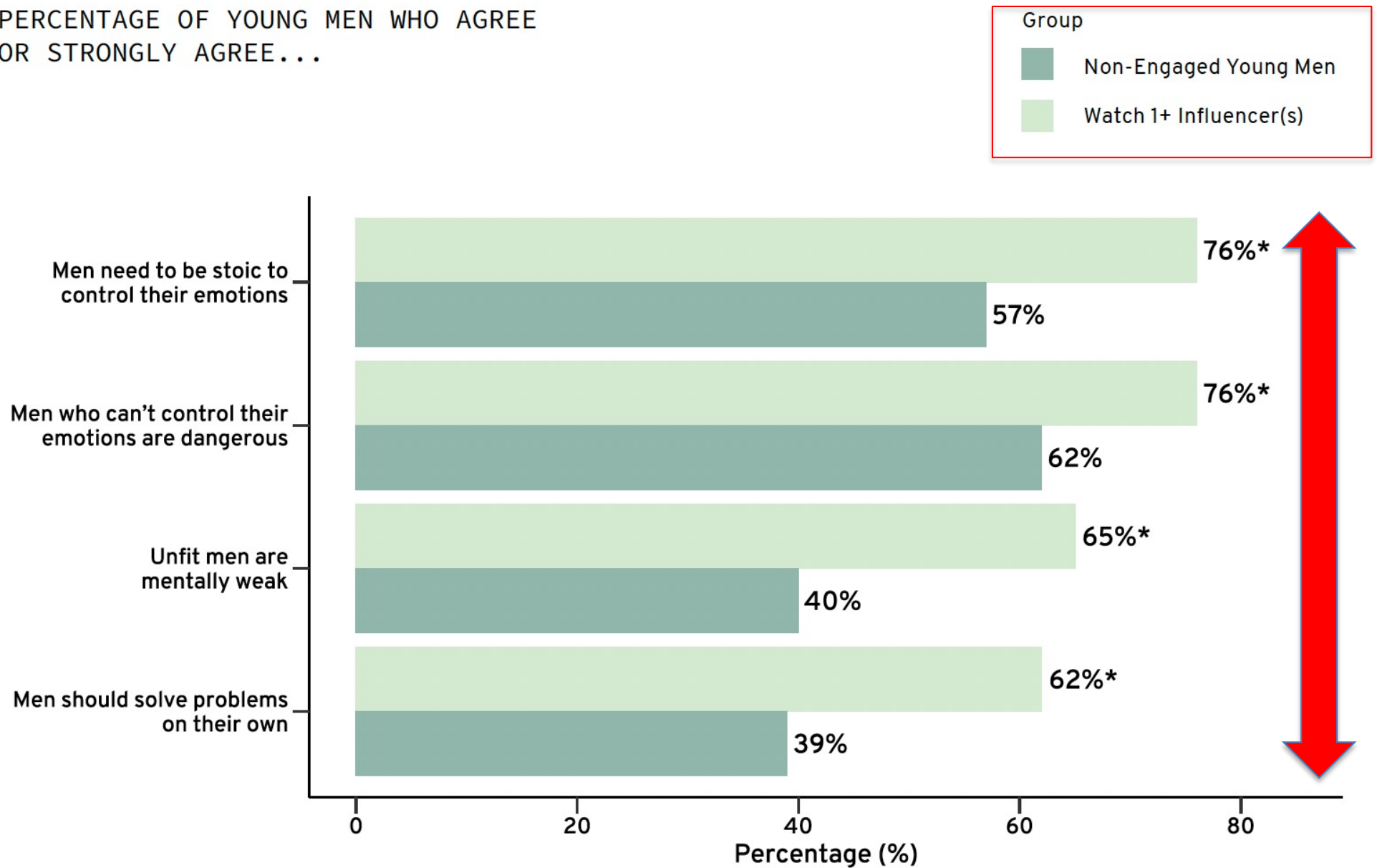
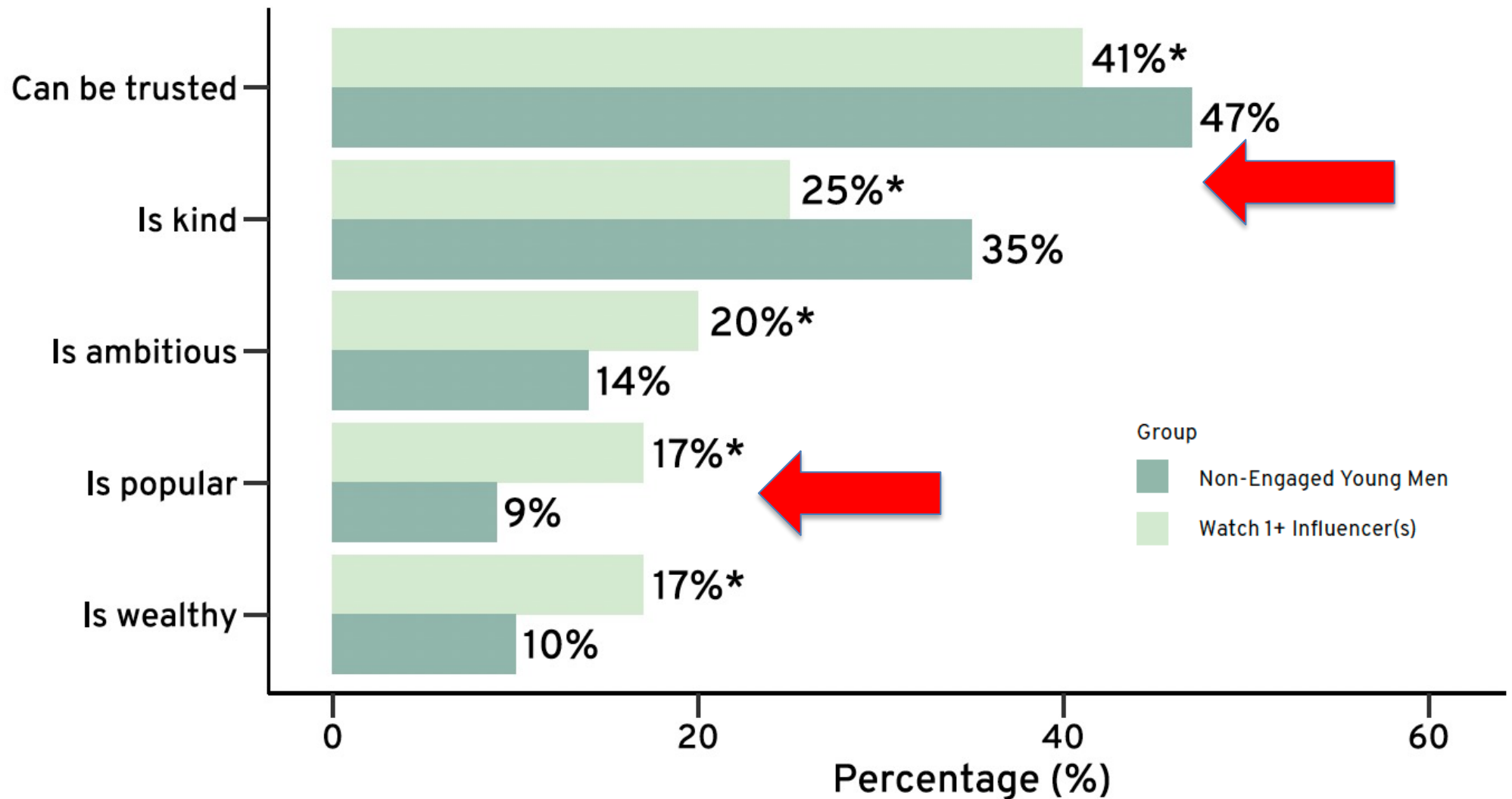


FIGURE 7 – SELF-RELIANCE AND EMOTIONAL CONTROL

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



Traits to be Valued in Male Friends



Developing Mental Health Care that Meet 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.



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



ORIGINAL ARTICLE | Open Access | CC BY-ND-SA

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 “What is Therapy” Series

- Movember “What is Therapy”:
 - 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?*

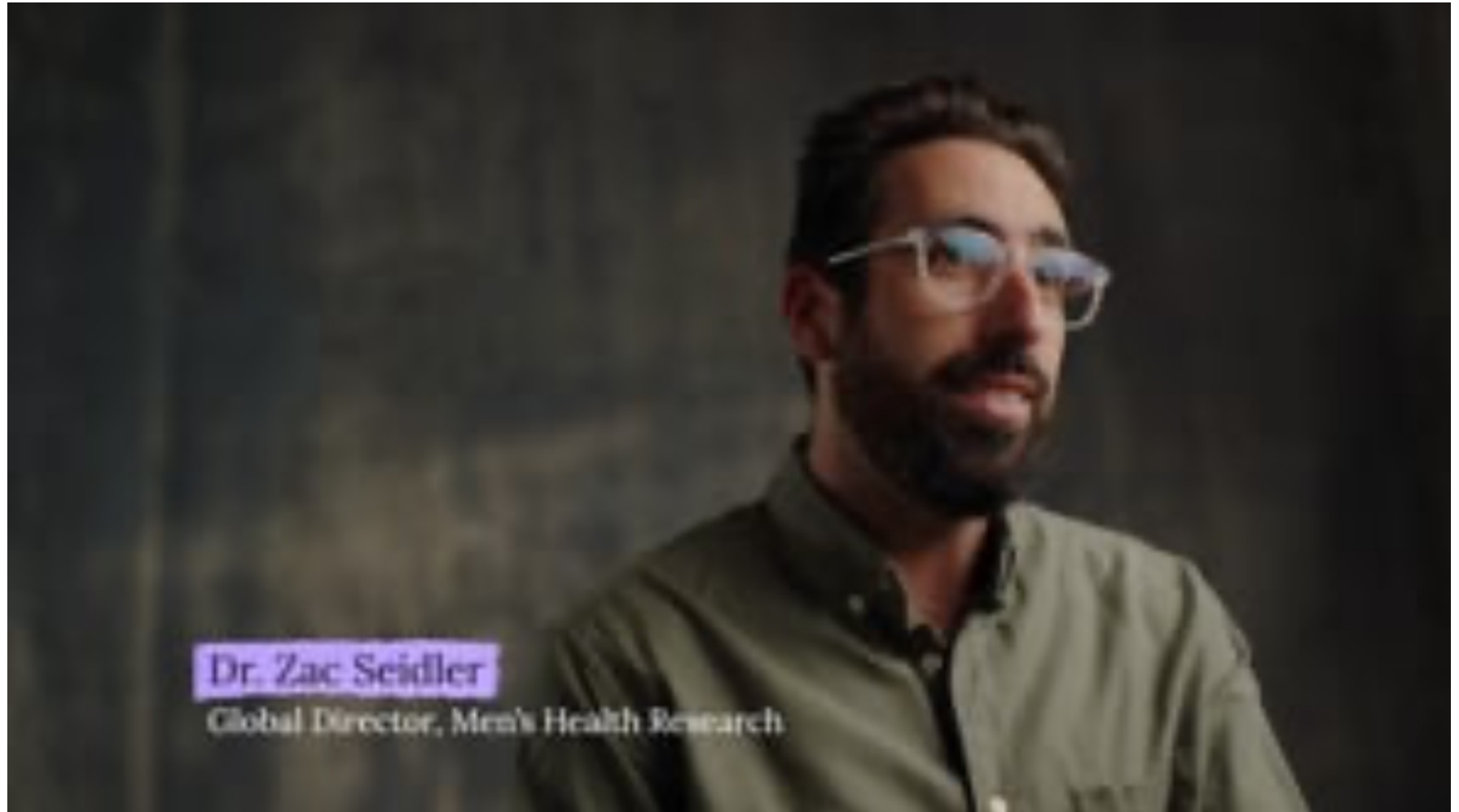


Gender-Responsive Care: *Men in Mind*

- 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 Overview



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., 2022)

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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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}

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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

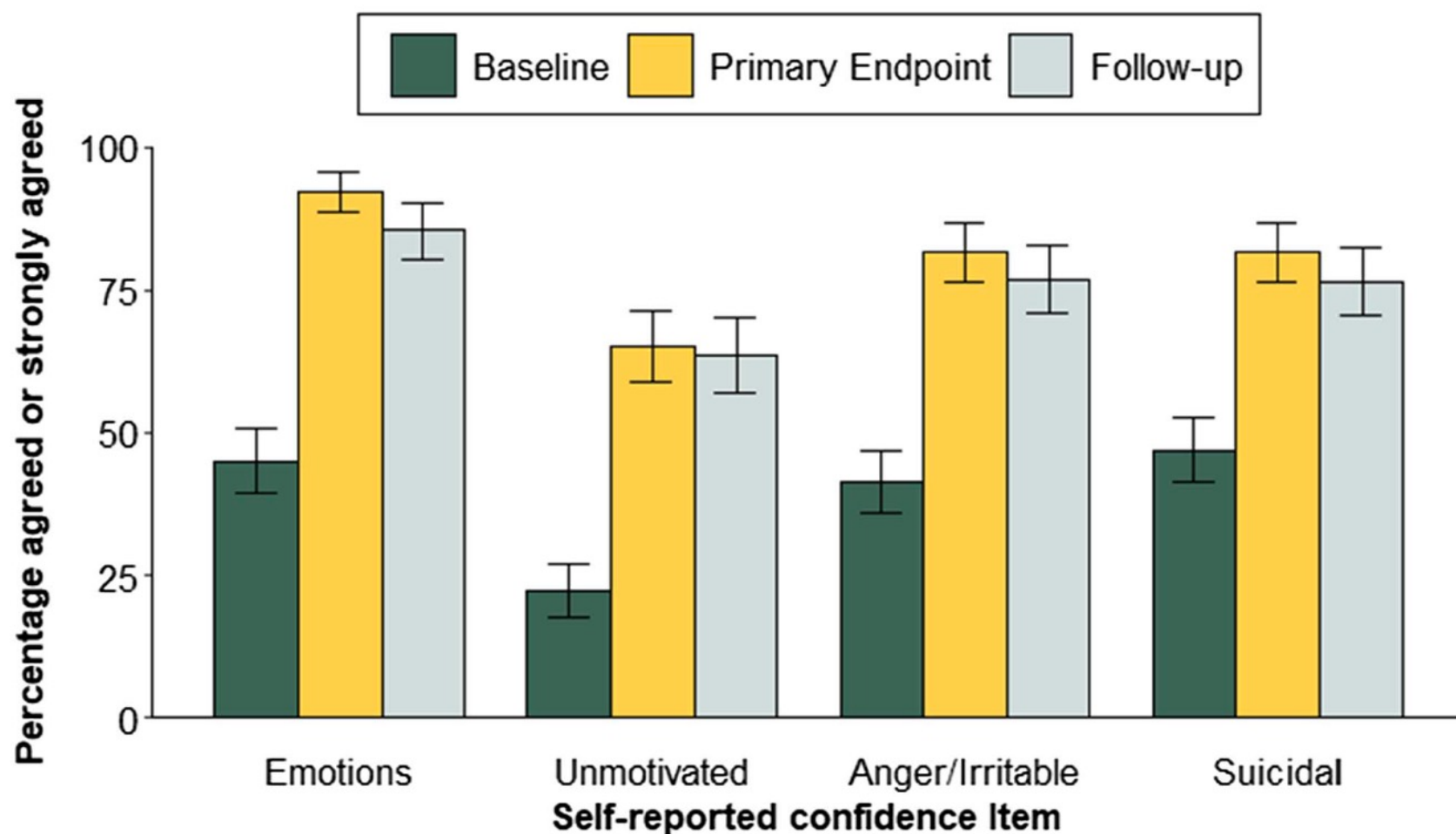
⁹ School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Monash University

(Seidler et al., 2023)

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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