

## **Massachusetts Takes Creative Approach to Men's Mental Health**

By Christine Leccese, Marketing Manager at Screening for Mental Health, Inc.

Typical mental health awareness campaigns are not designed to speak to men and their unique mental health needs. Men account for only one in 10 diagnosed cases of depression. However, in the United States, four out of every five people who die by suicide are men, according to the CDC.

The state of Massachusetts has seen a similar increase. Between 2003 and 2010, the suicide rate among working age men in Massachusetts increased by 45%. In response, [Screening for Mental Health, Inc.](#), a nonprofit organization, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health have partnered to fight this public health crisis by introducing a brand new initiative called Mass Men ([MassMen.org](#)).

### **Mass Men & Man Therapy™**

Mass Men is a comprehensive resource for men in Massachusetts and their loved ones to find information on mental health, take an online, anonymous mental health screening, locate local and statewide mental health resources, and visit [Man Therapy](#). Man Therapy is part of a national campaign created by [Cactus](#), an advertising agency in Denver, the [Carson J. Spencer Foundation](#) and Colorado Office of Suicide Prevention. It is an innovative website with a positive approach to engaging men and helping them look at issues such as anger, depression, anxiety, substance use, relationships, and suicide. Man Therapy helps men solve problems before a situation becomes a crisis.

The two websites together are the focal point of statewide outreach to working-age men, providing them with tools to take care of themselves, and to get the kind of help they need when they need it most. Mass Men and Man Therapy work together by offering tools men need to find information and seek help as well as, engaging them in a conversation about mental health.

### **Man Therapy**

The central figure of the Man Therapy site is a fictional therapist that fulfills humorous stereotypes about a therapist. The [New York Times](#) describes him as "an affable, mustachioed, middle-aged man whose personality might be described as Dr. Phil meets Ron Burgundy, Will Ferrell's fictional anchorman."

### **Some features of Man Therapy include:**

**Gentle Mental Health:** Getting a better understanding of a problem can sometimes bring a man a step closer to dealing with it. *"Gentle Mental Health tells men plainly what it looks like to have serious issues with depression, anxiety, anger, and substance abuse—and what they can do about them."*

**One-on-None Therapy:** Men looking for ways to better take care of themselves can start with an A-to-Z list of suggestions.

*"One-on-None Therapy is a man's do-it-yourself guide to dozens of healthy activities that don't require an appointment or a prescription."*

### **What Employers Can Do**

As employers, you are in a unique position to deliver the message to working age men that seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. You can spread the word about Man Therapy by sharing social media posts on your internal social media account, sending out email about it, or hanging a poster in work common areas. The *WorkplaceResponse* program can provide you with these free of charge.

If you'd like to learn more about Man Therapy or Mass Men, you can visit the websites at [mantherapy.org](#) or [massmen.org](#) or contact the *WorkplaceResponse* team at [Workplace@MentalHealthScreening.org](mailto:Workplace@MentalHealthScreening.org).