

Men 'getting the message' in the wake of #MeToo, says local counselling service

Ottawa's Men & Healing counsels on abuse, trauma recovery and anger management

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 15, 2018 4:00 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 15, 2018 4:00 AM ET



Men & Healing, a counselling and therapy clinic for men in Ottawa, has seen an increase in clients that could be linked to the #MeToo movement. (David McNew/Getty Images)

A counselling resource in Ottawa that provides men with mental health services says it's seeing an increase in clients signing up for their programs in light of the #MeToo movement.

Men & Healing is a mental health clinic in Ottawa that counsels men on a variety of issues including abuse, trauma recovery and anger management.

"Men are getting the message on a variety of accounts that it's time to take account for their behaviour, to be responsible and do something about it," said Rick Goodwin, the clinic's executive director.

Goodwin told CBC News that since the #MeToo movement exploded last year, interest has spiked for the clinic's emotional intelligence and integrity program.

The 10-week group session program, Goodwin said, gives men the skills to take responsibility for their behaviour — but more importantly, it explores how men can foster deeper connections with people and open themselves up to emotional intimacy.

It's become so popular over the last year, Goodwin said, that they've had to launch a second version of the program. About 15 people are currently enrolled in the group sessions, with twice as many taking one-on-one counselling, he said.

The clinic is also considering launching similar programs exclusively for francophones and gay men, he added.



Rick Goodwin is the executive director for Men & Healing, a counselling and therapy program in Ottawa which offers men mental health services. (CBC News)

Deep shame

The #MeToo movement might be "nudging men to attend to their issues more," he said, and making them feel more accountable for their actions.

Goodwin said that men who've taken part in the program have shared stories about being called out in the workplace for their behaviour.

He said fundamentally what the #MeToo movement says to men is that they have to take account of grandiose behaviour and stop being "me-centred."

Some men need support to navigate the deep shame they may feel when reflecting back on their behaviour, Goodwin added.



Robert Kehl is a peer helper for the emotional integrity program at Men & Healing. He said that there's still a lack of resources for mental health services for men. (CBC News)

'You can make better choices'

The program boosts men's confidence, makes them more self-aware and teaches them how to ask for help, said Robert Kehl, a peer helper with the clinic.

"We are learning that if you look after things like trauma or anxiety, you can make better choices," said Kehl, who's taken the program himself four times.

While mental health services can help change men's behaviour both in and out of the workplaces, Kehl says there's also a lack of services — and sometimes men end up waiting years to access programs like the ones at Men & Healing.

"If you're having a crisis, and you say 'Please help me,' and someone says 'Come back in two or three years,' well, that's not good enough," said Kehl.

Kehl said there needs to be more funding for men's mental health services — and that without it, the cultural change the #MeToo movement is pushing for will be difficult to realize.

With files from Omar Dabaghi-Pacheco and Aislinn May