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## **Collective Suicide Prevention Campaign Launches During Mens Mental Health Awareness Week**

**Men's Health needs a slightly different approach. We know that far fewer men are diagnosed with mental illness than women, and yet 75% of suicides are male. Barriers to reaching out include stigma, but also campaigns that men cannot identify with.** This is one of the reasons local organisations, 'The Romford Business Improvement District', 'The Mercury Shopping Centre' and 'All On Board' have teamed together to create a campaign for Romford surrounding 'Chat'.

Did you know that for every suicide that takes place, at least 25 people will be prevented from ending their life? and that for many people who feel suicidal, they do not want to die they just want an 'out' from the mental pain they are experiencing. The subtle difference is crucial, and chatting to someone prior to this desperate action, giving them signposting advice for support, or helping them know that people care about them may be enough to save their life.

***"The Romford Community is one that loves a chat, so we thought this would be an ideal concept for a mental health campaign that is specific in Romford"*** Says Julie, Director of The Romford BID. ***"We know that local businesses really care about the wellbeing of the town, and this is a great way to get them involved in supporting people"***.

The campaign, which has been launched at this week's at 'All On Board's' Mental Health Awareness event has been in development with the organisations over the past year. It includes bespoke training of customer facing teams across Romford town including security officers and town hosts. The campaign is also looking at locations to install 'chat' benches and they have created town-specific directories of information for people to access mental health support locally.

The campaign has already had some notable successes in its development. Sample training provided to The Mercury security team in 2021 improved guards knowledge of mental health to the tune of being able to prevent three suicides in early 2022.

***"When undertaking the training we were not aware of how important it would be for our team a couple of months down the line"***. Says Natalie, Deputy Centre Manager of The Mercury. ***"There were three separate incidents with men attempting suicide in our demise in March – two involving specific mental health crises' and one of desperation. Without the bespoke training given to us by Rachel [Mental Health Nurse from 'All On Board'] which taught guards about specifics of mental illness and when to intervene, the situations may not have had such positive outcomes. I think the training has also***

***helped the (majority male) team talk about their own mental health too, and we have seen a huge culture change in talking about mental health as a norm onsite.”***

The campaign is now ready to be rolled out to as many customer facing businesses as possible, with free ‘Chat’ training and resources available over the coming months.

**“We hope that by using the power of a conversation, we can create a legacy of Romford being a kind town that cares”** Says Rachel, Mental Health Nurse for ‘All On Board’

If you represent a customer-facing business in Romford and would like to receive free ‘Chat Training’ please contact [hello@romfordbid.co.uk](mailto:hello@romfordbid.co.uk) Training will be at Premier Cinemas at The Mercury in Romford on both August 9<sup>th</sup> & August 11<sup>th</sup>.

If you have been affected by reading this article and would like more information on how to get mental health support, please contact Mental Health direct – 0800 995 1000 or The Samaritans on 116- 123.

Just as you would a physical health emergency, if you are experiencing a mental health emergency and are unable to keep yourself safe, call the emergency services on 999.

**-ENDS-**

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**Romford Suicide  
prevention campaign**

