

University of Wollongong Research Online

Australian Health Services Research Institute

Faculty of Business

2013

The Coniston Men's Shed: more than just a place to play with wood!

Dave Fildes
University of Wollongong, dfildes@uow.edu.au

Brian Pember Healthy Cities Illawarra

Leissa Pitts

Multicultural Health Service, leissa.pitts@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au

Zaga Trkulja Multicultural Health Service

Publication Details

D. Fildes, B. Pember, L. Pitts & Z. Trkulja, "The Coniston Men's Shed: more than just a place to play with wood!", National Men's Health Gathering. (2013) 1-30.

 $Research\ Online\ is\ the\ open\ access\ institutional\ repository\ for\ the\ University\ of\ Wollongong.\ For\ further\ information\ contact\ the\ UOW\ Library:\ research-pubs@uow.edu.au$

The Coniston Men's Shed: more than just a place to play with wood!

Abstract

Men's sheds and health outcomes

- They are seen as a positive approach to men's health and social needs
- They are relevant to contemporary health promotion practices as they focus on individual empowerment:
- + + self-esteem -> + + personal control -> + + health outcomes

Keywords

play, wood, place, just, than, more, shed, men, coniston

Publication Details

D. Fildes, B. Pember, L. Pitts & Z. Trkulja, "The Coniston Men's Shed: more than just a place to play with wood!", National Men's Health Gathering. (2013) 1-30.







The Coniston Men's Shed: More Than Just a Place to Play With Wood!

Dave Fildes¹, Brian Pember², Leissa Pitts³ and Zaga Trkulja³

- 1 Australian Health Services Research Institute, University of Wollongong2 Healthy Cities Illawarra
- 3 Multicultural Health Service, Illawarra Shoalhaven local Health District











Men's sheds and health outcomes

- They are seen as a positive approach to men's health and social needs
- They are relevant to contemporary health promotion practices as they focus on individual empowerment:
- + + self-esteem → + + personal control → + + health outcomes











Men's sheds and policy

- National Male Health Policy
- Man Therapy Campaign
- NSW Men's Health Plan Health (2009-2012)
- DVA and FaCSHIA
- State and Territory based peak bodies











The Coniston Men's Shed

Operating a men's shed for three groups of men:

- Multicultural men's group
- Middle eastern men's group
- Homeless men's group











Area covered by the project



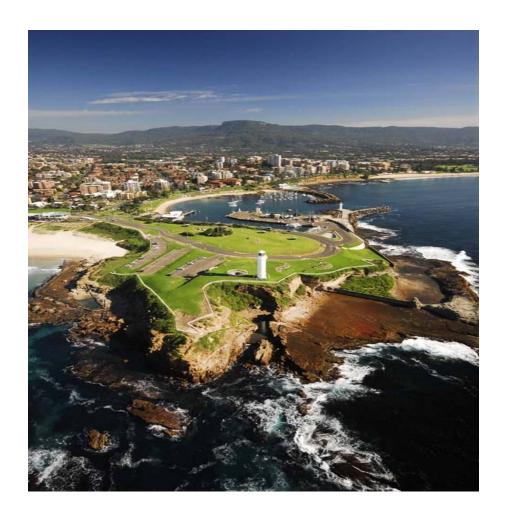




















Goals and aims

- Build up and enhance self-esteem, social support, sense of purpose and community connectedness
- Develop and refine practical skills
- Connect men into community projects and activities in which they can actively participate.













Men's background

Membership overview:

- ◆ 40 men
- ◆ 38 main income from Centrelink or DVA
- ◆ 19 culturally and linguistically diverse
- 17 receive disability pension
- 8 young parents











Shed management

- We employ project facilitators with experience in community cultural development
- Casual trainers are also employed as required (e.g. welding, health education sessions).
- The program is designed in consultation with the men









Referrals

We receive referrals and placements from:

- NSW Health Mental Health and Multi Cultural Services
- Centrelink
- St. Vincent de Paul, Barnardos, Uniting Care
- Wollongong Family Relationships Centre
- Illawarra Retirement Trust Senior Solutions
- Illawarra Transitional Aged Care Service (ITACS)









Activities

We split the men's activities into thirds:

- ◆ 1/3rd of time working on their own projects
- ◆ 1/3rd of time on group activities
- ◆ 1/3rd of time working on community projects











2005 – 2007 Evaluation Results

Evaluation results demonstrated improvements in:

- Self-esteem
- Social connectedness
- Feelings of Health and well-being
- Improvements in health status (incl. mental health)
- Men's community participation and capacity

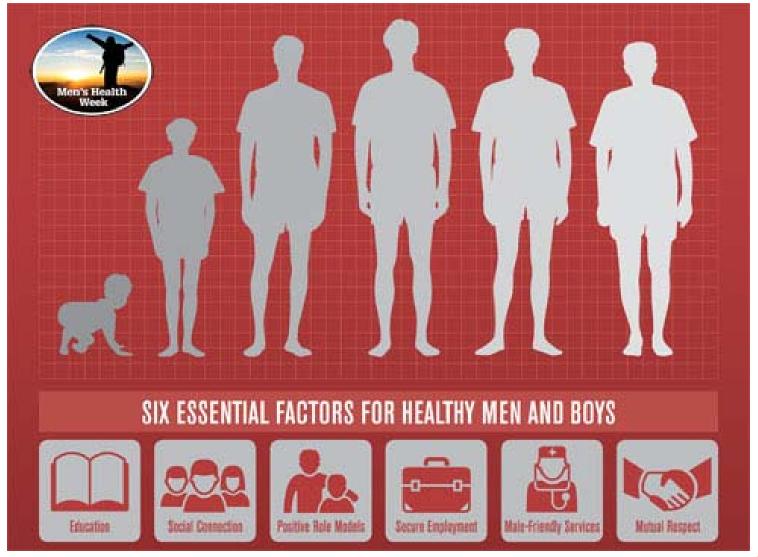
Fildes, D., Y. Cass, et al. (2010) *Shedding light on men: The Building Healthy Men Project*. Journal of Men's Health. Vol. 7(3): pp.233-240.



















Better education paves the way to a healthier, better life. So learn all you can about the life you've been given.









Better education

- Mental Health Session
- Physical Health Session
- Family/Relationships Session
- First Aid Training Session
- Practical skills woodwork, metalwork, welding and paving















Social connection keeps you as part of the world of life. Stay with us, stay connected. We need you here with us.









Social connection

Question	Number of responses	Positive	Negative	Don't know
Improved access/engagement to other community services	24	16	0	8
As a result of the help I have received I am more connected to people	25	17	0	8











Social connection

The men make connections with their local community through:

- Participating in community events
- Through local project activities
- Participating in workshops
- Through the provision of goods









Social Connection and Family life

Question	Number of responses	Positive	Negative	Don't know
As a result of the help I have received my relationships with my family have improved	25	17	0	8
As a result of the help I have received attending this service makes my home life better	25	23	0	2











Positive role models give us someone to look to in a world of change. Find a role model or be one.











Positive role models

"Men don't talk face to face; they talk shoulder to shoulder" Barry Golding











Employment means everything to us, it keeps us going, it gives us purpose, it's why we're here. It's more than a job, it's your purpose in life.









Employment

"Work enables a man to meet the social norms for masculine attitudes and behaviours"

The loss of work can "threaten a man's sense of masculinity and impact negatively on health and well-being" Gradman (1994)





In conclusion

Men's sheds can address many issues relating to the social determinants of health through:

- Promoting healthy lifestyles
- Enhancing their practical skills
- Providing links to the community and supporting social connectedness
- Providing opportunities for employment



