

OPINIONS



GUEST COMMENTARY

Encourage discussions surrounding men's mental health

By Greg Choy
SOUTHWEST FAMILY MEDICINE

As a healthcare professional, I'm happy to see the significant strides our community has made to understand the issues surrounding mental health. However, one area where we are still falling short is men's mental health. Men often encounter unique challenges when it comes to discussing their struggles and their willingness to seek help.

If we want to improve the mental health wellbeing and support for all, then it's critical we include men's mental health in the discussion.

Mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and stress affect men just as much as women, but historically, men are less likely to seek treatment. Many men have been conditioned to "man up" and not show vulnerability and emotional expression. As a result, many men suffer in silence and avoid seeking the help they need.

It's time for this to end.

We need to promote open conversations and encourage the men in our lives and in the community as a whole to talk more about their feelings, concerns, and experiences without fear of judgment or ridicule. Asking for help is a sign of self-awareness and strength, not a sign



Greg Choy

of weakness.

Education can play a vital role in addressing the stigma. Schools and workplaces should provide comprehensive mental health

education that includes discussions about men's mental health, signs to watch for, symptoms of common disorders, and available resources. One such resource is Mental Health First Aid at mentalhealthfirstaid.org, a skills-based training course that teaches participants about mental health and substance use issues. By increasing awareness and knowledge, we can break down misconceptions and provide individuals with the tools to support themselves and others. As Mental Health First Aiders, individuals know the skills they need to reach out and provide initial support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use concern and help



(Unsplash)

connect them to appropriate care.

Creating safe spaces for men to share their mental health struggles is another crucial step.

Southwest Family Medicine and Southwest Behavioral & Health Services offer a variety of programs and services in environments where men can connect with others facing similar challenges. These are safe places where individuals can express themselves openly, find validation, and receive support and advice from peers who understand their experiences.

In addition to receiving support and encouragement from peers, it's important to encourage and discuss the significance of seeking professional help. Mental health professionals can provide guidance, resources and treatment for

mental health issues which can lead to early intervention, better coping strategies, and improved overall well-being.

It is also critical that men recognize and play a leading role in promoting and destigmatizing these important mental health conversations. If they are engaged in the planning and implementation of policies

and programs that address their unique mental health needs, we can ensure that the outcomes will be impactful and effective.

I'm proud to play a part in addressing the stigma surrounding men's mental health but it requires a collective effort. Government agencies, healthcare providers, employers, educators, families, and literal-

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SPEAK UP

Here are some comments about stories happening in your area:

ROHRS: SO WHERE IS THE MONEY?

"Kurt, did you ever think of reviewing the audited fiscal year end financial statement which is public information and probably issued to each Board member when available. Seems you are creating a problem that doesn't exist or you are not very smart." — David Wieland via story comment

QUEEN CREEK PREPARES FOR TRANSFER OF COLORADO RIVER WATER

"Great, a major metropolitan city just robbed a small realivly unpopulated rural county of its water and future. This kind of stuff is the death-nail of rural Arizona. Hey, rural Arizona legislators, how come your are not fighting for our water rights?" — McElroy Chandler via story comment

GILBERT MAYOR FILES ETHICS COMPLAINT AGAINST COUNCIL MEMBER

"Mayor Peterson, The town of Gilbert appreciates you and the council all having integrity and being honorable to your position

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Take the Civility Pledge

Yes, I want to become a Civility Advocate. I will do my part to help my community become a safe place for citizens to engage in civil discourse about public issues.

Visit yourvalley.net/civility-pledge/ to take the pledge.

Your Opinion

Our opinions page is to provide an open forum for our readers. We hope to stimulate debate, not to dominate or control it. We reserve the right to edit our opinions.

Please include your name and phone number so we can contact you for clarification or confirmation. We also welcome your photo.

Speak Up

The Independent supports the use of pen names. Too many people don't speak up because they fear intimidation or even danger to their families and/or careers, and we want to reengage them. We insist on civility when editing, and pen names are an important part of our nation's history.

We don't express our own opinions.

Corrections

Independent strives for accuracy and pledges to bring errors that have appeared in our newspaper to the attention of our readers. We offer a "right of reply" to the people about whom we write.

Readers who disagree with a news story or the way it was handled or edited are welcome to respond with a letter to:

AZOpinions@inusa.org.

Choy

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ly everyone in the community has a role to play in creating an environment that supports men's mental well-being. Join me by encouraging open discussions, providing access to education and resources, and fostering a culture of acceptance.

Together, we can empower men to prioritize their mental health, seek help when needed, and ultimately lead happier and healthier lives.

Greg Choy is Director of Nursing for Southwest Family Medicine, a division of Southwest Behavioral & Health Services (SB&H).

Speak

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and to the citizens of Gilbert. If you are truly being dedicated to your positions and what you're elected to, then there should be no squabbles and pettiness among you. The citizens of Gilbert are counting on you." — Amelia via story comment

QUESTION OF THE DAY

What are you trying to do to beat the heat wave that we are currently experiencing? Send your comments to azopinions@iniusa.org.

Got a comment on a story you've recently seen? Email us at azopinions@iniusa.org with the name of the story and a one or two line comment.

GUEST COMMENTARY

Our ever evolving community

By Kat Fimmel
RECREATION CENTERS OF SUN CITY

As our community continues to evolve, it is reasonable to expect some growing pains. We also need to be mindful that Sun City is not immune to what happens outside our walls. So, it is also reasonable, as changes continue to occur, that members will want and expect more information with greater transparency from management and the board.

The question then becomes, what constitutes transparency? There are those members who say that transparency means sharing every last detail of every aspect of the organization, with little regard to its impact. In actuality, transparency means sharing information in a way that is easy to understand, so that it is both useful and empowering. It is also part of transparency to inform members that information is either not available or is not shareable. Building contracts and employee actions are two that quickly come to mind.

Even though we have been quite transparent, and very clear in the information we provide, some members chose to believe that we are not being transparent, or alternately we are not being "transparent enough." For transparency to work, we have to be transparent with each other. What is the value of transparency if members opt not to listen to what is being said?

Transparency also



Kat Fimmel

means operating in a way that makes it easy for our members to see and understand the actions being taken. Timing is always critical in life, and in this case we are in the midst of our annual budgeting process. It allows us the opportunity to re-evaluate past decisions and re-establish a more member friendly system; one that encourages participation of greater numbers of members.

The interim general manager outlines this new review process as follows.

"As we begin to develop the financial budget for 2024, the Budget and Finance Committee will be much more involved in setting direction for key areas, including assessment levels, key revenue and expense line items, and the capital projects to be included in next year's budget. The committee will also develop a more systematic process for funding capital projects in the future."

"The committee held conducted its first meeting July 5 to

discuss the 2024 budget. This is a marked change from the 2023 budget process, when the committee did not meet until October to review the proposed 2023 budget."

"The committee will be meeting bi-weekly over the summer and fall to develop the 2024 budget. Members are encouraged to attend these meetings, 1 p.m. every other Wednesday in the Lakeview board room."

By implementing this process, the old, more internal process, which was very short and had only a cursory review and sign-off, will evolve into a more external process that will allow for input by all interested parties. This new process will result in a budget document that will be more easily understood and provide an accurate depiction of the corporation's finances and expenditures.

Sun Cities history has taught us that we are most effective when we stand together and represent our community as a whole. Every decision we make today should be to prepare our community for the generations to come so they too will experience self-governance and fiduciary soundness as members of our community.

Kat Fimmel is the Recreation Centers of Sun City board president.

Civility Checklist

How to engage in respectful, honest & civil dialogue about public issues.

Take the high road. Respond to the topic — not the person. Refrain from demonizing others for their opinions. Assume those you disagree with are, like you, genuinely interested in improving the community.

Be respectful. Bullying, public humiliation, insults, name-calling, harassment and threats directed at another person — or that person's race, gender, religion, ethnicity, etc. — have no place in civil discussions. Find ways to respectfully disagree without questioning someone's character or motives.

Be truthful. Base your opinions/arguments on facts. Value honesty. Make only accurate statements when making your point and avoid exaggeration and stereotypes. When appropriate, cite your sources of information that others may question.

Don't misrepresent. Always identify your opinions as opinions (not stating opinions as facts). Never misrepresent the views of others or falsely claim your opinions represent someone else. If quoting the words of others, identify and credit the source.

Listen and learn. It's both polite and respectful to listen to those we disagree with (as well as those we support) and be genuine in our attempts to understand their point of view. Expand your mind by thoughtfully seeking out views that don't agree with your own.

Look for common ground. When disagreeing with others, look for even small areas of agreement — which can be the gateway to working together for the greater good.

Respect privacy. Keep private things private — whether it involves your own information or those with whom you disagree. Revealing private information about someone else is rude, unethical, potentially harmful and, in many cases, illegal.

Set a good example. Practice civil behavior online as well as in public and in your interaction with others. Encourage others to practice these civil behaviors. And it's OK to challenge disrespectful behavior — but be courteous, respectful and helpful in your approach.

Now that you have read this, take our Civility Pledge: yourvalley.net/civility-pledge/


Celebrating & Connecting Our Communities
YourValley.net