



# *Working with Men*

2005 Men's Shed Conference

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## *Outline....*

- Describe for you a typical caller to the Mensline Australia service
- Briefly outline the ‘what, why and facts’ about Mensline Australia
- Overview of the successful Mensline Australia counselling model



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## **Mensline Australia .... What?**

- Only national service of it's kind in the world. Auspiced by Crisis Support Services
- Confidential and anonymous telephone counselling support for men dealing with family and relationship concerns
- Staffed by professional counsellors expert in men's issues
- Available 24/7 from anywhere in the country for the cost of a local call



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## **Mensline Australia .... Why?**

- Enhance community service's response to men's emotional needs
- Encourage more help seeking by men
- Strengthen men's role in the family and relationships
- Support and enhance men's crisis management capacities



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## **Facts and Stats ....**

- In 2004-5 Mensline Australia answered 24,697 calls
- 80% of callers have family breakdown or relationship concerns
- 40% of callers live alone and have children
- Approximately 30% of callers identified social isolation and anxiety/stress as being a significant issue
- We receive 2 suicide related calls per day



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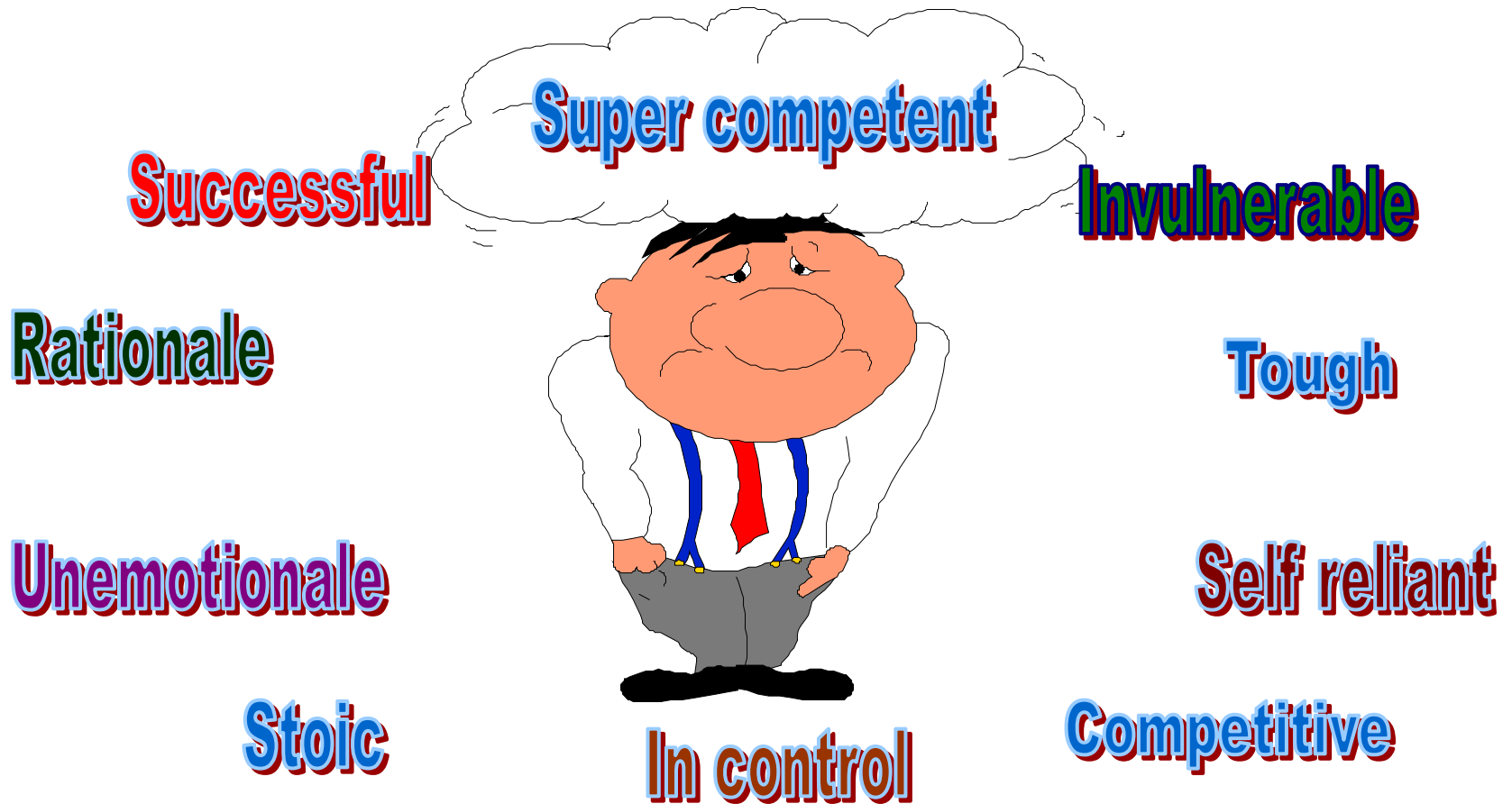
## Mensline Counselling Model: E-Men

- Engage
- Enlist
- Empathize
- Empower
- Educate
- End the call

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## THE BURDEN OF OUR MASCULINITY?

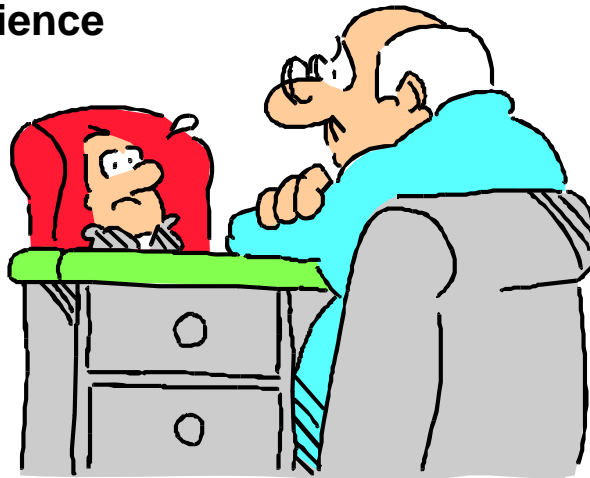


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## **BARRIERS TO HELP SEEKING**

### **Traditional Masculine Identity**

- **Hide Private Experience**
- **Maintain Control**
- **Act Invincibly**
- **Be Self-reliant**
- **Be Stoic**
- **Take Action**
- **Deny Pain**



### **Traditional Counselling Expectations**

- **Disclose Private Experience**
- **Relinquish Control**
- **Express Vulnerability**
- **Seek Help**
- **Express Feelings**
- **Be Introspective**
- **Confront Pain**

Adapted from G. Brooks, "A New Psychotherapy for Traditional Men"

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## **WORKING STRATEGIES**

Understand the man's internal frame of reference

Recognise the male sensitivity to hierarchy and power - Look for ways to equalise

Acknowledge seeking help as positive step

Think about the client's presentation - why now?  
Customer, complainant or visitor?

Avoid jargon & use gender appropriate language



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## **WORKING STRATEGIES**

Have a conversation rather than do “therapy”



Work in a goal directed and solution-focused way

Men are "Problem-solvers" may want information to make an informed decision rather than understanding

Adopt the position of the naïve inquirer - ask permission before challenging

Understand that anger may be a defensive response

Be aware that some men may not be able to identify and express feelings



*Thankyou*

