

An Evaluation of The Blokes Book and Fun for Older Men Book

By Jacqui Westney

December 12th 2016

INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of this evaluation is to establish the effectiveness of the Blokes Book and Fun for Older Men book as resource to clients and social service agencies.

The Canterbury Men's Centre (CMC) is the producer of "The Blokes Book" (BB) and the Fun for Older Men book (FFoM). The CMC is a Trust formed in 2007 with the aim of *Happy Healthy Canterbury Men*. The booklets are intended to support men in making positive choices by informing them about relevant options. It encourages men to engage in pathways relevant to resolving their problems and improving their lives from a holistic perspective.

The book has gone through five print runs of approximately 20,000 each. A Chinese version was done with 3,000 copies being printed. Distribution has been through the CMC networks but the book itself brought other stakeholders forward who saw that the booklet was quickly distributed through motivated promoters.

This review is being completed by the author as part of her placement at the CMC as a third year Bachelor of Social Work at ARA Institute of Canterbury.

SUMMARY:

The Bloke's Book addresses a wide range of health and wellness needs for men including men's support groups, men's sheds, a comprehensive plethora of health issues including smoking cessation, mental health, parenting skills for men etc. Agencies feel good about giving the book to men and that the men are generally very receptive to the information in the book.

The Blokes Book has become a link to many social service providers that deliver essential support services for men throughout Canterbury. Many of these services are community based and run by volunteers as well as professional Counselling and Social Work Support Services, NGO's, and Government organisations.

The Blokes Books themes, narrative and pictures enable men to think more positively about seeking help for their health needs. It is a male orientated publication designed to engage men in holistic approaches to their health and wellbeing. Within the contextual environment of a positive male community with a humorous element uniquely woven into the dialogue. Another key output of the evaluation is to establish how well the social and health needs of Canterbury men have been met.

CONCLUSION:

The utilisation of literary resources to encourage men to seek help earlier from social services agencies and intervene before problems reach crises levels will contribute to improve outcomes for men and their family's / whanau in the community. Many clients obtain a copy of The Blokes Book when they first contact the service or have received a copy from their referrer. The Canterbury Men's centre has multiple links with community based social services providers and is actively involved with the development of resources and support services for men. The Bloke's Book brings all these services together within one resource and describes how the Canterbury Men's Centre has become a hub with its own multiple linkages to community based social services throughout Canterbury.

Men are often framed as resistant to accepting support but this denies the lack of services that are offered to them as a gender at critical moments of their lives and the structural barriers many experience with one example of this being men are more likely the person in employment in families.

Regardless of the cause men as a gender are generally using services less than women and generally later in the process. The recognition of this issue is referred to informally by many working in the social and community sector and is one reason for the significant support given to it by donors and the large range of distribution partners.

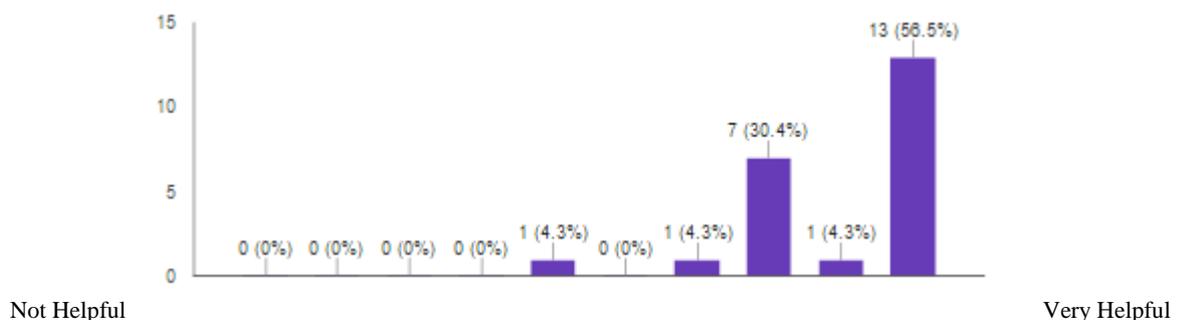
The Blokes Book is unique in targeting men as a group and this helps to inspire men's curiosity and set their expectation to be one where the contents are relevant to them as an individual.

This bringing together of multiple resources within one book has been an essential theme of The Bloke's Book and was cited by a number of respondents as being effective at enabling men to resolve many health and social wellbeing questions by accessing one comprehensive resource.

RESPONDENT FEEDBACK

Below are three graphs that have been collated from feedback given to the Canterbury Men's Centre by clients and social service agencies in Canterbury.

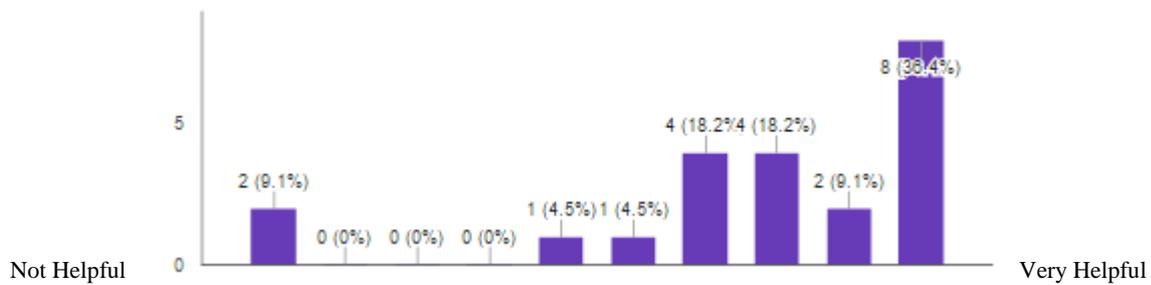
Is the Blokes Book a needed resource?



The above graph composed of health/community worker feedback indicates that the Blokes Book is a much needed resource. 56.5% of people surveyed rated the book 10 out of 10. It

was stated that it had a great variety of useful information that explains Christchurch services well and it is helpful to have all the information in one book rather than lots of individual pamphlets.

Does the design work for the men you know?

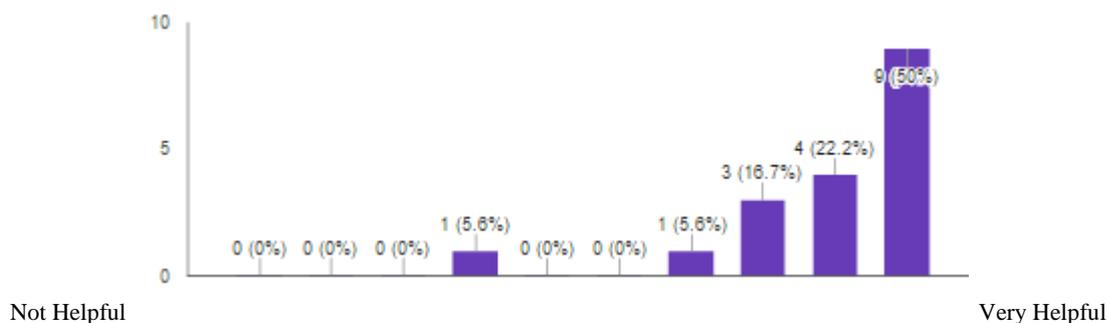


Once again the graph shows the support was fairly high for the assertion that the design worked overall for men. One of the two “not helpful” measures came with a statement indicating the respondent had graphic design experience, that the booklet was poorly laid out and that they would approach the CMC to suggest ways to improve it. No contact has yet been made but the CMC has said they want to know more about this.

The narrative feedback showed that people would like the book to be available as a pdf file on the internet to improve access (it is but the two respondents were unaware of this). There were suggestions that the BB could be unpacked further into quality of content, design and ability for the resource to connect men with the support they require.

One comment from a marketing professional described the BB as “sticky”. By this they meant that people picked it up and they took it away, and they likely held onto it. The CMC staff say that it is common for a person to come in with much earlier versions of the book which they had been given by a friend or had kept at home for some time.

How useful is it to health/community workers?



The above graph indicates the Blokes Book is very useful for health and community workers/agencies. It was stated that it is a very good book to hand out as a reference, it covers a wide

range of topics that men are not always keen to talk about but they can find all the information they require as it offers practical advice with an easy to follow format.

Staff at the CMC recount numerous practitioners commenting about not being willing to give their last booklet away to a client as they find it so useful.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The respondent comments stated the BB is this is a very valuable resource for men to be able to access in the Canterbury area and is worthy of support in production and distribution on balance with other community initiatives.

That the awareness of the on line PDF be a more conscious effort made by the CMC. This could be based on the front page of their website instead of buried further in, placed in a more prominent place on their Facebook page and included as a link in staff signatures. Other efforts should be considered as well.

Fun for Older Men Book

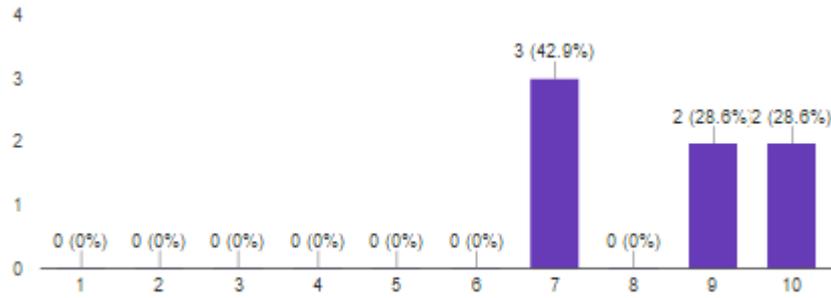
The Fun for Older Men booklet is a resource aimed at improving men's engagement in the community with the aim of improving their mental health, life satisfaction, and also opening up the volunteer output that participation in the community often creates.

FFoM is in its first print run and released in February 2016. 22,000 copies were produced and of those 80% have been distributed. There is a PDF available on the CMC website. There is also a google map showing the items in the booklet which can be used to identify nearby activities.

The booklet contents include in the opening pages several maps of Canterbury with numbered markers linking to activities in the booklet. The bulk of the booklet is information related to the activities based on the map. Those activities were suggested by a range of parties with an interest in older men's wellbeing with the recognition that the judgement of what to include is very subjective.

Less feedback was received for the FFoM booklet as the respondents were at times less familiar with it or did not find it relevant to their area of work (the target being older men's health).

Was the booklet helpful to your clients?



Not Helpful

Very Helpful

It was stated on the feedback forms that men found they could engage with the books because “The maps are helpful to navigate what different activities are available in the client’s community and makes it easier to link up with different services or other clients” and “it was a great book full of ideas”. Some people found that it lacked some useful information for people that cannot access the internet (opening hours etc).

APPENDIX:

The following document was created by Karl Ruddenklau, a social worker who volunteered to do this process in September 2015. This document formed the skeleton for the evaluation but the scope was reduced due to available resourcing and so describes a much larger project than was completed above..

Evaluation / The Blokes Book

The Bloke's Book addresses a wide range of health and wellness needs for men including men's support groups, men's sheds, a comprehensive plethora of health issues including smoking cessation, mental health, parenting skills for men etc. The Blokes Book has become a link to many social service providers that deliver essential support services for men throughout Canterbury. Many of these services are community based and run by volunteers as well as professional Counselling and Social Work Support Services, NGO's, and Government organisations.

Purpose and Vision of the authors who created The Bloke's Book:

The Canterbury Men's Centre (CMC) is the producer of "The Blokes Book" (BB). The CMC is a Trust formed in 2007 with the aim of *Happy Healthy Canterbury Men*.

The initial three years of the agency was about scoping regional need and developing relationships with providers of health and social services to improve men's outcomes in the region. The networks formed in the initial period through health and other related events meant that the CMC had made significant inroads with service providers in the region that were willing to support and promote projects that related to men's health.

One outcome of the initial year three period was a resource flyer listing relevant support services for men (funded by the Christchurch City Council). The aim at that time was to inform men and health and social agencies about pathways of support for men. The existing partnerships made the promotion and distribution of the flyer very easy.

When the first major earthquake hit Canterbury in September 2010 the CMC saw the need to do more extensive work toward ensuring men and referrers knew about their support options.

The CMC also believed that basic advice about self-care was an important gap that should be filled where possible. The literature around health literacy points to men as a group with significant deficits though it rarely seems to focus on this group.

The CMC sought and found a resource offered by Tasmanian Health authorities who offered their artwork to the CMC free of charge. With this in hand the CMC approached the MSD to provide development support and printing costs for 20,000 copies which they agreed to.

The CMC reviewed the existing health and community needs for men ensuring the various general groupings would have some representation. We only included information that would make a difference for men in the grouping with the belief that including too much information would be harmful as it would dilute the focus of a man reading the booklet.

We received partnership support for each of the grouping pages from key agencies. We stood with the idea that the advice in the booklet would be what we would tell a loved one. Text in the BB is more focused on the need of the man than the service provided by the available services.

The booklet has gone through five print runs of approximately 20,000 each. A Chinese version with 3,000 copies was also created as well as a smart phone app. Funding has come from a range of groups with interest in the publication of the booklet including the Christchurch City Council, Rata Foundation (was Canterbury Community Trust), pub charities, local primary health organisations and advertisers with a health interest.

Distribution has been through the CMC networks but the booklet itself brought other stakeholders forward who saw that the booklet was quickly distributed through motivated promoters. Each print run has run out from the CMC in two months or less with little active input by the CMC. The network contacts came and got the booklets by the box full and came back for more soon after. All print runs were gone within three months of printing through this approach.

Canterbury has an adult male population of approximately 200,000 males meaning that 100,000 copies has provided significant cover. The motivated networks mean that men are given the booklet directly by those network contacts.

Feedback from the stakeholders has been that they feel good about giving the booklet to men and that the men are generally very receptive to the information in the booklet. The stakeholders also say that they use the booklet themselves for referring men and they keep a dog eared copy at their desk to support their decision making process. Many of the workers take copies home for their families as well and have told the CMC Manager that they are surprised to see how receptive their male partners and children have been to the BB.

One stakeholder told the CMC that the BB is a "sticky" resource in marketing language. It is picked up and not put back from the resource stand at various agencies and it is kept around home as a resource by the recipients.

Some of the men who utilise The Blokes Books have been involved in incidents of domestic violence either as a protagonist or victim. The Blokes book is intended to support men in making positive choices in how they seek new ways to address their relationship problems. The Blokes Book encourages men to view the pathway to resolving their problems and behaviours from a holistic perspective ie; **individual, group (family, whanau / aiga, extended family) and community.**

The Esperanza programme run within South American cities also seeks to address the issues of relationships, health / wellbeing and violence with men they write;

“What the holistic approach means in practice is that the Esperanza addresses the problem on the same three levels that the problem exists: **individual, group and community.**”

(Esperanza Social Venture Club .n.d.)

There are few places where men can seek health care support that are not dominated by female social work or counselling staff. This need for men to seek health care support from social service agencies where a greater level of male staff were present was partly met by the production of The Blokes Book.

Greg Millan writes in “**Men’s Health and Wellbeing an a-z guide**” “that many men are keen to talk about their health and wellbeing with men on male specific health programmes or where men feel comfortable to talk with other men about health issues”. (Millan, G. 2010 pg 7).

Presently suicide rates for men in New Zealand are 3 – 1. Men are more at risk from suicide at a tragic level in comparison to women (Coroners Services of New Zealand, 2015) This is also reflected in men’s health statistics in the U.K. (Davidson & Lloyd 2001). Encouraging men to access health services earlier rather than later is the overall intention of The Blokes Book. This publication in partnership with Canterbury men’s Centre enables this process to happen more successfully than other less successful approaches to delivering men’s health services. According to Davidson et al. 2001 pg 284) write; “The general barriers that exist for adult men in relation to accessing health services tend to be amplified for younger men. Service providers are not only unsure of what young men want but are frightened of them too.”

The Blokes Books themes, narrative and pictures enable men to think more positively about seeking help for their health needs. It is a male orientated publication designed to engage men in holistic approaches to their health and wellbeing within the contextual environment of a positive male community with a humorous element woven into the dialogue.

The purpose of this evaluation is to establish if The Blokes Book resource distributed and produced by the Canterbury Men's Centre since 2010 could be distributed to a national audience throughout Aotearoa / New Zealand.

Another key output of the evaluation is to establish how well the social and health needs of Canterbury men have been met by the resource and if a similar resource distributed throughout Aotearoa New Zealand would also help men to find the right assistance they require for their health and social needs within their own communities.

There has been no previous evaluation completed to date with the resource. Therefore feedback from men / women who have utilised the resource plus social service providers within Canterbury is being sought via the evaluation contained in this document.

The purpose of collecting this feedback is to establish the efficacy and capacity of the resource to support men in finding the help they require when trying to address the impact of health and social issues in their daily lives'. It is also hoped that the feedback will improve The Bloke's Book.

Key Information required from evaluation;

1, Is the Blokes Book a needed resource?

(Purpose to address need for the initiative and if it addresses the true cause of problems for men also to establish that the resource is still needed even though it is believed to have been successfully delivered to the right target audience for five years)

2, How well designed is the Blokes Book resource?

Could be unpacked further into quality of content, design and ability for the resource to connect men with the support they require. Looking at outputs such as men successfully healing themselves through the utilisation of this resource and if men felt the outputs from the book were enough to empower them to overcome the problems they needed help with.

3, How valuable were the outcomes for men utilising The Blokes Book.

An outcome evaluation question which asks how substantially something has changed for people and whether the change is large enough and fast enough to address their identified needs, aspirations and opportunities. Could be broken into different groups re; other social service providers having The Blokes Book as a resource available to men / families in their foyer or counselling / group room etc.

4, Which parts of The Blokes Book generated the most valuable outcomes for men?

This question relates to ongoing strategic investment in this resource.

5, Does the The Blokes Book have long term health benefits for men?

This question is looking at whether the impact of the resource is sustained or whether men slip back after a period of time.

6, Could The Bloke's Book be used as a national resource for men?

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
Not Helpful			Helpful				Extremely Helpful		

From all the staff' board members and volunteers at the Canterbury men's centre. We greatly appreciate your help with completing this short evaluation on the iconic Canterbury men's health publication "The Blokes Book"

Evaluation Questions for Network

1,

Has The Blokes Book helped you "personally" or as a "Health Care professional"? (Please circle one or both that applies to your role in the community.)

Circle your answer please:

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
Not Helpful			Helpful				Extremely Helpful		

We would appreciate hearing about any success stories have about The Blokes Book and people you know.

2

Do you think the pictures and written content of The Blokes Book are helpful to people?

Circle your answer please:

--

5,

Do you think The Blokes Book helped men to make long term changes in their health and relationships?

Circle your answer please:

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
Not Helpful			Helpful				Extremely Helpful		

6,

Would The Blokes Book be helpful to men in other parts of New Zealand?

Circle your answer please:

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
Not Helpful			Helpful				Extremely Helpful		

From all the staff, board members and volunteers at the Canterbury men's centre we greatly appreciate your help with completing this short evaluation on the iconic Canterbury men's health publication "The Blokes Book".

The Blokes Book and The Canterbury Men's centre:

The BB resource has had an impact on the Canterbury Men's Centre where currently over one hundred plus men a week attend this social service in Christchurch. Many obtain a copy of The Blokes Book when they first contact the service or have received a copy from their

referrer. The Canterbury Men's centre has multiple links with community based social services providers and is actively involved with the development of resources and support services for men. The Bloke's Book brings all these services together within one resource and describes how the Canterbury Men's Centre has become a hub with its own multiple linkages to community based social services throughout Canterbury.

This bringing together of multiple resources within one book has been an essential theme of The Bloke's Book and has enabled men to resolve many health and social wellbeing questions by accessing one comprehensive resource. How well would "The Blokes Book" work for men, Govt and NGO social service agencies and community. If it was not embedded within a richly supportive men's social service such as the Canterbury Men's Centre? Is a questions that needs to be asked in relation to the community context in which men's social and health services are delivered.

Manager Donald Pettit and Clinical Manager Mike Bancroft state there is a noticeable increase in referred clients and self-referrals to Canterbury Men's counselling / Support Centre after each release of newly printed copies of The Blokes Books to Canterbury organisations and individuals. This can be verified and measured through the increase in Needs Assessments completed by CMC social workers after each new book release. This clearly indicates there is an increase in men seeking help from community social services dedicated to supporting men after each new print of The Blokes Book.

The utilisation of literary resources to encourage men to seek help earlier from social services and intervene before problems reach crises levels will contribute to improved outcomes for men and their family's / whanau in the community. The Blokes Book is another community based resource helping to change the resistance males often have to seeking help earlier rather than later for relationship and health problems.

Esperanza Social Venture Club. (n.d.) Retrieved from. <http://www.esperanzasvc.org/the-program/>

Millan, G. (2010) *Men's health & wellbeing an a-z guide*, Australia: Longueville Books.

Davidson, N., Lloyd, T and Banks, I. (2001) *Promoting men's health a guide for practitioners*, London: Harcourt Publishers Ltd.

Coroners Services of New Zealand. (2015). Provisional Suicide Statistics 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.justice.govt.nz/courts/coroners-court/suicide-in-new-zealand/provisional-suicide-statistics>