

Research Q2: What do you get out of the men's group?

Concept 1: The 'Circle'

Sub-concepts	Data
<p><i>The Circle</i></p>	<p>Well, there seems to be something very special about the circle (SC, FG, p.8); I see the circle as kind of being sacred and em..maybe there's a lot in the fact that you can see the people your talkin te and..it's very different to the other forms that ye come together in like..say you're used to in school or work or anything else, the circle isn't part of that so, it means the circle has something to do with the safety aspect of it (SC, FG, p.8); I remember sittin in a huge circle..there was man Tom Ferguson..leading it..and he described..he kept talkin about the container..that was created (MA, FG, p.10); we step into that place of sanctuary where..however we are..is ok..wherever we are is safe. I don't have to sit with the back..me back to the wall and I've got people beside me, I feel their strength, I hear their breathing (MA, FG, p.10); the man's part of men's group is..our masculine manhood strength..the power of that is really significant (MA, FG, p.10); each side of ye..you're supporting one an you're..maybe leaning on the other and..something like that yeknow..there's a lot to it (SC, FG, p.10); oh yeah, [the circle is] hugely [important]..yeah..it's..creates eh..a bond with the group, yeknow..ye go to other meetins..you're kinda..your sittin in rows..yeah..so it's more open..there's a lot more openness in a circle, yeknow (Dessie, p.18); I feel the circle gets rid of all kinds [of] roles and..eh everyone is equal..so it's not like sittin in a line or you're sittin in a square where there's people in the corner and there's people that ye can't see..so for me the circle is powerful (Noel, p.17); it does make a difference when you're with the lads when you're talkin..it makes a bigger difference than..[because]..it's close knit..you're in a circle..that is great..there's no one fuckin behind ye..no one standin over here..everyone is there..and like you says, there's no leader..there was one night there and someone turned around..I don't know if you were there or not..and someone says, 'Freddy is the leader', and I thought it was great..he said, 'no', he says, 'we're all equal, there's no leaders here', I thought that was great..there's no airs or graces..yeknow (Jimmy, p.30); the circle is very important..I mean it's the..the democratic nature and the fact that you can see everybody's face in a circle..and there's no..it's not hierarchical..there's no leader, plus, yeknow..a hierarchy of followers..it's..it's..it's in a circle..everybody is equal within the circle and that's..that's very important..em an that's..yeknow..I've..I've used the phrase yeknow..we're a..we're a..a peer..peer to peer group, yeknow..there's no..I'm not a trained leader..Tommy's not a trained leader..whatever ..yeknow we're..we're just..we're just here doing our..doing our thing (Séan, p.15); I look upon the circle of men like..yeknow in any group..what I like about the circle..it's like..what..what it means te me, is that we're all equal..it doesn't matter what ye do..like we're equal..we're able te see each other..that's the idea of it..like that if you're sittin in a circle, ye can see everybody else in the circle..so we're all at..it doesn't matter if you're.. 'cause we have in our group solicitors and..fuckin bank workers an..project workers an building workers..an it doesn't give a fuck..it's..the whole thing about it is..the common denominator is that we're a..we're men..that's the only thing that's important..we have men with feelins that we suppressed for years an we..we didn't feel comfortable showin it..so here's..here's a place where we can feel comf..more comfortable..te show our feelins..let down the barriers..let down the mask an maybe even cry..deyeknowhaimean..because that wouda been a big thing for me growin up like, deyeknowhaimean..like men don't..men don't cry like (Jimmy, p.8); the circle is powerful because it's unending..there's no beginning and no end te it..so for a long time what I think part of the power of our men's group..I'm..not havin been in any other ones..is..for a long time I didn't know what people did for a livin..didn't know their surnames..didn't know what they're personal circumstances were..so te me the circle kinda sums that up because there's men sittin..as you said in one of the things..shoulder to shoulder..right..and it's kind of..there's..there's no end and no beginning to it..the other thing I know about circle is..the circle is based on pi right..which is..is that the radius of a circle..and pi is is an irrational number..so sittin in a circle is actually an irrational thing te do (Noel, p.15); dining room tables are mostly square not round..there are some round ones..but anyway..te me what I..what I get from the circle is the feelin of being one of many..and not being less or more than..so te me that is great because of what we just spoke about..about feelin like a fuckin fraud a lot of time..at least if you're sittin in that circle, there's a potential not te feel a fraud..because ye we feel..I'm one..I'm Noel..you're Darach..you're John..you're whatever..so that's it..right..an..ye don't really care..what I do..what I've done..what I'm gonna do..an that's a real luxury for me..because when you're in the circle and you're sharing in the circle..I don't have te be a dutiful husband or a carin father..or a responsible son or a good worker or comin up on time..I have the luxury..if I'm able te take it..of just fuckin being there..sittin there..as Noel..ye don't get te do that..I don't get te..feel as though I get te do that very often..yeknowhaimean (Noel, p.15);</p>
<p><i>Depth</i></p>	<p>its USP..is that there is a depth of sharing, a depth of trust..on an emotional side, which I find very healing..an I haven't found that..as safe..elsewhere (Neil, p.6); I haven't felt as safe sharing <i>at depth</i>...emotional depth..men listening to men, me sharing whatever is goin on emotionally. I think the level of sharing is very deep, eh, very honest em.....I'd nearly say sacred.....and...I think that happens because it's safe..it's a safe place...em...I don't know that's why it's all... it's just..is that because it's all men..I don't know..or is it because we've got, two professional people who..keep it safe...ye know..but...other groups I've been to...eh you wouldn't get that level of safe..safeness and depth.. an I think they go together..if you feel very safe...you will, you will truly open up.....some groups I go to I feel - this is a safeish place- ...so there's certain things I would say..but there is certain things I <i>would not</i> say..whereas in our men's group I think..I think I can almost say anything..genuinely..because I've heard almost anything...so that's..that is a difference (Neil, p.6); our primary focus..from what I can see and hear..is what's goin on inside us..em..an our issues in the world as men and in yeknow..emotions..as mens, because really, ultimately that's what I find the difference between the other men's groups I go to..and this</p>

men's group, or the other group that men are present at.....em whether they be mental health groups or addiction groups or whatever eh...the level of..eh eh..th..the depth th..of in this men's group th that we're talkin about today, the depth that we go *emotionally* is what makes it sacred for me (Neil, p.5); *but full on real*..and really that's the word that I've always been lookin for in these groups is that, ye know, to the best of everyone's ability, everyone is being real.....because you can be full on..on an not real (laughs)...you can..you can..yeknow you can..act..you can be playing a role, you can be all kinds of things an I see that other groups, where where I don't know when I hear someone..I just..something in my gut says..ye know 'is that really what's goin on there' an, whereas in Georges Street, very often you'd say yeknow, wow 'that *is* what's goin on there'..that person has has *shown* themselves to us, *as they are*..not as they'd like to be or or..as..kindofa kindofa..supercool macho.. 'I have it all under control' way, ye know..I just think there's a realism which is very hard to define and very hard to put words on..that exists..but you know it when you hear it, and you know it when you hear it not..(laughs)..sometimes..ye know...ye just know, hey man..yeah they're all the words, yeah, they're the words but yeknow, are you really talking or is this something ye learnt..or is it in a book..did someone tell you that..(laughs)..ye know and..that's...that's something that's ha..very rare..to.. to hear that real..eh voice, yeknow, that authentic voice (Neil, p.8); I certainly....as a..as a man...who struggles with life and who..who..who finds life difficult...need..need places where I can bring my pain and, leave it there...ye know (laughs) over a period of time....and let it not destroy me or anyone else...em...an and not run away from it like I probably did for years inte..inte..te drink and drugs...em...so it's very important..function.. for me..an I'm not sayin everybody in the group has the same motivation but I..I..I knew I needed somewhere to go with this pain..I knew an I knew that all other ways had sortef failed whether it be yeknow eatin it, drinkin it, working it, relatship..relation-shiping it....yeknow, eventually I had to find somewhere I could just release it...talk about it..whether it's tears or anger or shoutin or...whatever...and em..I think that's probably all in all, now that I think about it, probably its greatest function...it is a place where I can bring pain..emotional pain to...and em...and express it...and leave it..and ye know..and I got the courage to do that by watching other men do it..first..ye know..I saw people..in pain..I saw them express it an..and..eh..eh..I remember one night actually seeing the pain..eh..from one of the guys literally leave him, literally his face was different..yeknow..he was in wretched state at eh 7 o'clock (laughs) but by half past 9, yeknow, he just looked calmer and and more tranquil an it was almost like somebody had taken a weight from him yeknow..em...and that's sacred to me, that's really important and that's really hard to find....anyone can drink their pain...anyone can hi..yeknow..hit their pain off a wall..I did all those things, but it didn't, it didn't eh, it didn't get rid of it yeknow..an I do genuinely believe I'm carrying less as a result of of of of..em, one-on-one and men's group yeknow that's a very good combination ..for me (Neil, p.9); where do you bring your pain..ye know..in 2013..as a man...an ye know..I don't bring it to the pub anymore em..I don't bring it te..I don't wanna spew it out on others who don't deserve it..em..an I don't wanta bottle it up inside.....ye know like I think a lot of men do.....em...so when ye think about it..like..in probably..well I use words like *support*...an I use words like *help* but..ye know that's...really what I mean is, ye know 'it's a place I can bring my pain...safely..an I think I need, I certainly....as a..as a man...who struggles with life and who..who..who finds life difficult...need..need places where I can bring my pain and, leave it there...ye know (laughs) over a period of time....and let it not destroy me or anyone else...em..an and not run away from it like I probably did for years inte..inte..te drink and drugs...em...so it's very important..function.. for me..an I'm not sayin everybody in the group has the same motivation but I..I..I knew I needed somewhere to go with this pain..I knew an I knew that all other ways had sortef failed whether it be yeknow eatin it, drinkin it, working it, relatship..relation-shiping it....yeknow, eventually I had to find somewhere I could just release it...talk about it..whether it's tears or anger or shoutin or...whatever...and em..I think that's probably all in all, now that I think about it, probably its greatest function...it is a place where I can bring pain..emotional pain to...and em...and express it...and leave it..and ye know..and I got the courage to do that by watching other men do it..first..ye know..I saw people..in pain..I saw them express it an..and..eh..eh..I remember one night actually seeing the pain..eh..from one of the guys literally leave him, literally his face was different..yeknow..he was in wretched state at eh 7 o'clock (laughs) but by half past 9, yeknow, he just looked calmer and and more tranquil an it was almost like somebody had taken a weight from him yeknow..em...and that's sacred to me, that's really important and that's really hard to find....anyone can drink their pain...anyone can hi..yeknow..hit their pain off a wall..I did all those things, but it didn't, it didn't eh, it didn't get rid of it yeknow..an I do genuinely believe I'm carrying less as a result of of of of..em, one-on-one and men's group yeknow that's a very good combination ..for me

Darach: 'cause ye done the two together didn't ye

Neil: Yes..I do..I choose to do the two of them em..because sometimes em..something would come up at group and there'd nearly be a residue..it would..it would take a couple of days for it to filter through or I would feel very..still effected by it..an eh I sometimes wou..would talk to someone on a one-on-one..but em I think the combination of the two has really worked well for me...em..it's not everyone's cup of tea but listen we're all different yeknow and eh.. but they're very different but I think they compliment..they compliment each other for me, yeknow...so eh...somewhere ta bring your pain...healthily, yeknow, healthily..ye know..because I think for for years..I as a man probably unhealthily..eh.....expressed or didn't express, even worse..I didn't express pain...and after 10, 20 years of tha, you've got troubles (laughs) a lot bottled up and you you eventually explode (laughs) ..that was my experience..bottle it up over a decade or two an woo...watch the tur..watch the volcano pop..so em...no that just..that just came into my mind as you were talkin there..yeknow ..a safe place to bring..bring your distress, bring your pain, bring your overwhelm..whatever you want ta call it...yeknow.....because I don't wanta carry that stuff anymore yeknow..and and an and em, I think men's group is a safe..is a safe place to to leave tha em..an..or if you can't leave it eh...just express it and know that others carry it too, an tha feels even a little bit better...if it won't go as some of it don't - some wounds are very deep - eh..but just to know you're not the only one carrying that would ye know..an it's ok to be a man an carry these things...just because I'm a man doesn't mean that I'm immune to certain feelings or experiences ye know...so I've learned a lot Darach yeknow..yeknow I've learned a lot..but em an I'm not finished yet..ye know (Neil, p.11); another function...that I suppose was invaluable would be the belongin and the 'part of' and the camaraderie that you would feel in a group of men...em...which I think has helped me, yeknow.....em.....every week I would look forward to sitting with this group and over the months I've felt part of this group..I didn't feel like a sort of a..separate in a group... I felt part of the group..and I think it's very healing to feel part of a group of men..em because I don't think I ever felt part of a group of men. The only other time I sat with men was in school. I was in a boy's school. I didn't feel part of the class, I can tell ye. I didn't feel eh.. 'family feeling' or a yeknow, unity or a 'part of' em..an I think it was really important for me to sit with a group of men, an feel, not only safe but 'part of'..that this is..this is..this is group I truly belong to..I fit in here..I think that gives someone who maybe has had, like myself suicidal thoughts over the whole of my life, to feel part of anything particularly when you are very very low where everything in depression would tell you you're on your own..you're useless..you're own your own..you're nobody....eh...having a group...yeknow...a tight group..like that in a group of the same people who show up every week, sharing at a very deep level..pain...definitely helped...because *I wasn't alone*..even when I wasn't in the group you know..well next Monday I'll be sittin in the circle..they'll be there..I'll be able to talk or will be able to listen..em and that belonging, I think, fe fills a need, in me..ye know..eh..I've always wanted te belong, to something...youknowwhatI mean...so, that was another part of the healing...oh very subtle way..ye know..ye'd have to think..I..I..yeknow..wouldn't be immediate..I wouldn't have

thought that day one..but over time I I could see..yeknow..I like the routine of every Monday meeting..the same faces..with a few exceptions, few changes... and knowing it's goin to the there..ye know..knowing there's somewhere to go..with this stuff that normally I hadn't got somewhere to go..em...I..I..like belonging Darach, yeknow, and that's something that's really important to me.....and ye'll say 'well did ye not belong in other places'.....I did.....but...not to the sam..but 'cause the sharing wasn't at the same depth..I suppose the eh eh I was like, I belonged bu bu I felt I belonged deeper in the in the men's group..if that makes sense or em...it was the next place to belong...I know ye can belong in loads of places but it was the place..it rooted me, it grounded me...it gave me..it gave me what I need..which is to belong..ye know, and to be able to be open and to be safe...an I think they're a very rare things in 2013...really do..ye know ye don't find those things every day..ye know...so they're they're they're a few..em..positives (Neil, p.11); the words I hate my wife te ask me is, 'we have to talk'..'what'll we talk about'.. I go blank..now I have found out..by goin to these groups..gives me things to talk about..yeah..so..gives..puts ideas into me head..I can..I can talk about..emotions..now..that I've come across..like last week, when we went te..the group and the chat was about men's..feminine side and there was a guy in our group who said..I work..two men, twenty seven women.. an he was told to go to a men's group. Going to the men's group he discovered, that that is what actually comes out is..men's femininity..th..the feminine part of men, the, the, the, the, the..emotional side..yeknow..the, the, the..the male side, the macho end..football an all that..that's all left outside the door..an people talk about the..the..the feminine side of men, the emotional side..the..the gut..and that's, that's nearly impossible to find anywhere else out there..is the..the emotional side of men, the, the shit that's stuck in the..in my case, in the gut. I mean, I suffered from overactive thyroid, totally stress related..I suffered from em, eh, what's this the..ye hear, the, the em, the colon, colon problems, also stress, high blood pressure, stress related, yeknow, everything, stress related (Eddie, p.3); it is connecting with the deep stuff, yeknow..whatever you want to call it soul..or spirit...em higher power, all that kinda sort a stuff, yeknow (Padraig, p.5); it's difficult..it's challenging, em..I kind of, yeknow, I kinda think of it nearly like..em..if fellas have been in a war together ..yeknow..soldiers on the battlefield yeknow..em, nearly like the ps..ptsd yeah..that I'm most comfortable back in the war situation..I'm..I always want te get back there, yeknow..em, that's where I feel most alive ye know, so goin back into the men's group in lots of ways it exposes myself to the terror but it's in a safe place..an I know it's safe, yeknow, em..an..and just, yeknow..things come up, yeknow, ye often listen to people..eknow, ye can't..there's no formula with it ye know, an actually the group is great like that..takes on a life of its own every week..it's different, yeknow, so I can't say what ye actually do, ye don't something consistently, ye know..but, either way, I'm back in the war..I'm back into tha connecting with meself....and when I go away then..I feel like I've left something behind..yeknow..'cause even..like I said te ye, even though I live me life in terror, ye know, there's also an awful lot of times when I feel like I can fuckin, yeknow, walk through walls, I can do fuckin anything, yeknow, it's like..there's no balance with me, yeknow.. I can fuckin change the world and then I'm fuckin right down here like like I feel like I've been rolled over by a steam roller, ye knowwhatmean..(breaths) so..em, the group helps me te..I donno.. I think, in the long term, it's helped me to find a balance..but I..but I..coming away I always feel..like I've achieved something, I've let something go, I've connected (breaths deeply) I've connected with meself, I've shook out somethin..in some way.....yeknow (Padraig, P.6); I kinda nearly run out of them groups, yeknow...but it's like a kinda deeper feeling than (inaudible) I have changed, yeknow.. I've let something go (Padraig, p.6); I've had huge changes in the last five years, ye know, em..(coughs)em.....I feel like my feet are fir..firmer on the ground, yeknow, I feel like I, yeknow..that's how I would kinda describe it as..how I've kinda said it..a few times to people, yeknow..em.....I think I was always hiding..yeknow..it makes me more present..em..more present to the people around me..me kids, me wife..to meself though..to meself.. 'cause, I mean..that was my way of operating in the world was..to deny..ye know..to ignore everything from the head down (Padraig, p.9); it does come down to this thing of..yeknow I think it's important that you have a place, at least once a week..at least..at the very min..minimum..it should more ye know..like people in different cultures do their ritual, yeknow, very regularly yeknow..say..you look at the Muslims they do it fuckin five or six times a day, ye know..em, but..but that's what it is for me, yeknow..it's that thing of, ye know, I..I've never connected with mass, even though I know there's something in there that I can tap into now and again..but em, need to connect with something deeper, ye know, that's..that's it (Padraig, p.16); it's the first time I was ever in a kinda..solely a male environment like that..like a..a male group..so that was very different..and I guess the..the depth and the levels of things that were talked about..was very different to other groups as well (Eoin, p.2); I love the an..anonymity that the group gives me because I can actually..have the conversation you've heard be understood but, yeknow..there isn't any connection to my real life (Larry, p.4); I'm missing [honest communication & guidance]..that wasn't there..like, these things that would've kept me away from (laughs) men's groups, were deprived of me or I just wasn't lucky enough to find them (Larry, p.7);

I get..I get out of it..am..the op..the opportunity te say how I am..what..how I really am in the moment..and how I..say it without any fear of..of..well, I won't say without *any* fear but certainly with a minimum amount of fear that I will be judged negatively..because of it..em..and I get a lot out of hearing, yeknow..other people talk about their problems because it makes me feel like I'm not the only one who has problems..an it's ok te share problems..so, it's quite unlike normal male to male conversation (inaudible) 'grand, grand'..'how are you?'..grand, grand..or 'I eh, split up with the missus'..'ah, sure [claps hands] plenty of fish in the sea'..yeknow..ye can..that..that's the way they go (Larry, p.13); if I can express something honestly to myself..not to myself..but if I can express something and there's people around..it makes it real..it brings it from an idea floating around in my head or maybe not even a very coherent idea floatin around..I just..maybe something..something in here [slaps chest], an then how do I feel..and then you're kinda physically just putting words on it there..an it almost..very, very quickly brings..into some sort of a..kindofa blob..this thing that was kinda..carryin around..an when you've said it, it almost makes it..kinda..more..ye can almost deal with it a little bit more or ye can at least, see it a little bit more clearly..so, a lot of the time we do that real stuff in the dark, so ye don't really see the reactions an I kinda like that about it aswell but..like when ye s..when I..when I say it, I em..it's almost..it..it has te be true..like there'd be no point in..in me bullshittin myself or bullshittin the other people there, yeknow..an sometimes I can..I can feel it, like..I can feel that maybe I'm overegging this a little bit..actually I made that sound a little bit bigger than it actually is..or..it's not *really* like that Paul, is it, yeknow, so even..even as I say it, ye might..it mightn't be true..I might feel I've shifted my head..eh, so [if you are not being honest, you get exposed] no, that's it..that's exactly it..yeah..yeah..it doesn't..it doesn't feel true..or it doesn't s..it isn't true..so it's a great way of findin..it's a great way of short circuiting what is goin on in..in..in a..in a moment (Larry, p.14); that's the main..the main piece that yeknow, that it's..em..that it's honest..an it's..it's a resource..like it's basically..ye have, yeknow..a ready made, ye know..a group of people who are open to sharing..open to helping..presumably te..it has te work in a..yeknow, it should be, I think, if somebody's got a problem now but next week somebody else's got a problem, they're helping them solve the problem or..or listening to them..just listening is just as much a help as anything..so it gives..it..it gives you that resource, yeknow..it's hard te find men that are..open te this kinda stuff..it's like..it's not..it's not..it wouldn't work with women..women do this stuff naturally (Larry, p.14); I do think that eh..yeknow, if it works..it works because of that..for me, at least, that's a big part of it..em, it's not that I necessarily have an awful lot to get off my chest a lot of the time but I do really value just that (inaudible) communication..that rich communication (Larry, p.15); it's become a kindofa..em, it's

Communication

become a stable part, I suppose, of..of my life..as a place where I can go and say things that I mightn't say anywhere else..[and] to a certain extent the group became a safe place te..that I could let down the mask and be myself (Seán, p.10); I still get something..I mean, I get something out of it and I get..I often turn up on a..on the meeting, yeknow..thinking, 'what the fuck am I doing here, I'm not really in the humour for this, I don't really feel like talking and then I walk out sorta two hours later (exhales audibly) and I just feel lighter..so. I said..whatever is going on in that two hours..is good for me..I feel lighter..otherwise I would still just be carrying, yeknow..whatever that tension is..so, that's why I guess I..I keep turning up..I do, I do kinda question as time goes on, I'm..I'm kinda not..sometimes I kinda thinking..well, where am I really going with all of this, where do I really want..yeknow..where is it leading me or am I actually now, stuck in a rut again..an do I need to look beyond it..so..but I think that kinda question goes on a lot (Seán, p.10); sometimes that results in..in so much personal repression that yeknow, I can..a man goes to a men's circle to..to just actually see is there..is there another way of relating to men that isn't so disconnected that all ye can do is talk about football and women..yeknow, in the pub over a couple a pints..if that's..well..if you've ended up there, yeknow..you're trapped..so, I mean, ye go to a men's circle te..te..if..if you're on a journey and you're looking te see, well, is there another way of being..is there another way of relating..em, yeknow..that would drive..yeknow, that's part of what would've driven me into the..into the men's group, aswell..not knowing even that I was looking for it..just, it happened..it..I was already on a journey, I suppose..my marriage difficulties had probably propelled me out of my comfort..comfort zone and forced me to start looking for alternatives..and that's, I suppose, part of what would've driven me in (Seán, p.13); I suppose..as you say, like there's sortef..levels of..levels of depth em..an I would, yeknow..like, we come in an we meet an we hear and then..sortof..the first few rounds get us te there [refers to model 2]..and then maybe, yeknow..if we get into more serious stuff, we're down here..occasionally we dip into about that level..and comes back up there again..and we very, very..really because we don't have a sufficiently experienced facilitator at the groups, we rarely dip as deep as we might do and often..I've..I've seen this within our group anyway, sometimes, yeknow..you get..you actually get close to maybe going really deep on something and then people..there's a sortefa, yeknow..people get afraid, yeknow..ooh this..this..this..this is too deep for us..this is too deep shit..don't want to go there..and people kinda pull back a bit..yeknow..em, an like..sometimes that's a fear of yeknow, something..something getting out of control or..yeknow people..people opening up and yeknow, dissolving into floods of tears..and not knowing how to deal with it..so yeknow..it's interesting..in terms of where our group kinda goes, em..an..and then sometimes it's..I think there's possibly..if..if the purpose of the group is always te be digging deep, always te be looking for the dark stuff down below..that that becomes a negative thing in itself, yeknow..sometimes that's not..sometimes men come together not because they want te do a big, deep piece of work they just want..they just want connection..they just want a sense of what..what it feels te..te..te..te support and be supported in a circle..and it..nothing big going on for them..but they still want that sense of connection because, yeknow..maybe elsewhere in their lives..they're not..they're not feeling that..yeknow and it's the..it's the..it's such a simple thing..a sense of a..an emotional connection to a group of men that you trust..it's..it's eh..that's..it's rare te..te..te have that sense that isn't either, yeknow..on the GAA field as part of a team or..something like that..which is all very well and works well up to a point but it doesn't..it doesn't..it doesn't actually have a space for men who have other problems to bring them to it, yeknow..it's..it's competitive..ultimately, it's competitive..and it's hierarchical because you're..you're in a league and you're fighting to get to the final and you've got a captain and you've got structure and all that..so it..it lets you down but something..but a circle of..a circle of equals allows maybe for that, so..I suppose it's..it's part..partly, it's connect..I would go partly for connection..for a start..I mean that's what keeps me going I suppose..is I like..I like the connections I get..I like..I love the going of going to a circle..eh, meeting a man for the first time..and then maybe he comes a couple of other times and it's like peeling back the layers of an onion..yeknow..everytime we do the rounds or we do a process about, yeknow, maybe about fathers or something like that..and somebody peels back a layer and tells ye..yeknow..something of the extraordinary depths of their life or things they've experienced and it's that gradual sense of..of peeling back layers..em..I find, for me, I warm to people who let down their guard..because that encourages me to let down my guard..aswell..and..and the circle and the way we do things in Mankind..encourages people to gradually let the guard down and reveal a bit more an..and as that happens..you know..you warm to the person because..especially if somebody tells something really deep about themselves or their life or something like that..yeknow, I feel extraordinary empathy for that person at that moment..that they have A), trusted the group enough te open up about themselves and B), the fact that they've revealed something in them that they wouldn't ordinarily reveal elsewhere and that..the fact that they trust me and the other people in the group..I repay that..if ye like, in..in honouring that trust and providing the safe space for them te..te talk about that thing..so that whole..the way that works..the way that magic works within..within a group..yeknow..structured as..as our one is..is em..I think that's just extraordinarily life affirming te people who are involved in a group like that..they feel of value, they feel heard, they feel..they can talk about stuff that they maybe don't talk about anywhere else about..and..and if that helps them get through their life at a slightly happier level than they did then they were previously, then that's..that's all it has te be..that's all it has te do (Seán, p.16); looking beyond the superficial..differences that separate you..to the human being behind that framework..so I mean..yeknow, if I was te say, 'well, yeknow..if I'm gay, I can't get on with another..with a straight men because that difference is impossible to bridge..and that's bollox..it's not..yeknow, it's an aspect of who I am, it's an aspect of who he is..all the rest of us is just two human beings..yeknow, we're capable of getting on..so it's..it's..it's te maybe to use the men's circle as a way of getting beyond the excuses in your own mind as to why ye can't form connections with other men..so you're using the circle and..and its various tools te..te break down those..the..the..the things that disconnect you from the collective of other men..and I mean, I ce..know that beyond the circle of men, you could have another circle that had men and women and there'd be whole other dynamic..yeknow, there's a whole other dyna.. 'cause an awfult lot of men, yeknow..they may be less or more comfortable with standing in a circle of men..but being, yeknow..if you put them in a circle that was mixed, that would give rise to a whole host of other stuff that (Seán, p.24); actually, the listenin te other people talkin..actually believe it or not, I feel very lucky..ye feel lucky listenin te other men..yeah, listenin te some of the lads talkin, yeah..because I have te tell ye, some of it is very hard..and..I have..yeah, very, very lucky..now..I know I'm a lucky cunt..I'm a jammy cunt..but when I hear some of the fellas talkin..jaysus Christ..because like when we were growin up it was hard..and we never got any of that and I could say for nine out of every ten families, ye never got that..yeknow..and..no matter what..like..there's ten of us, not countin the ma and da..an ye always..ye could always turn te anyone of them..an I could say the same about me mates..they could all turn te their own..or even into ours (Gerry, p.25); just as I say..the listenin..and the talkin and it actually..I felt it brought me outa myself a bit..it brought me back te the way I wa..I used te be..back..back te the way I used te be..because em..well, I think I was sorta fuckin moping..some people call it depressed..I think it was moping..before I went..feelin sorry for meself..and I have te be honest, I'm a lucky cunt..if the truth be known..like I feel I'm lucky..yeknow..because I know if shit really hit the fan, I know there is people I could go to..yeknow..so it's not bad..and then..ye do think you're the only one with the bleedin problem..when you're sittin in bleedin here..that telly is on an you're lookin up at the bleedin light..yeknow..ye see nothing, ye hear nothing..an I done that for a few months..and em..when I went in there and ye hear some of the problems an all..it does open up your eyes..and..some of the times..there's a great sense of humour in it..yeknowhaimean..and I..I feel ye do need te have a laugh at times..te bring ye out of yourself..yeah.. 'cause we are

	<p>inclined te..more so than the women..we step back in, we stay in..ye do need somethin te bring ye out..and it doesn't matter..it's different when you're with fellas and your talkin and all..because we are different te the women..a completely different fuckin thing altogether, it is..yeknow..it does make a difference when you're with the lads when you're talkin..it makes a bigger difference that..as you said..it's close knit..you're in a circle..that is great..there's no one fuckin behind ye..no one standin over here..everyone is there..I don't know, I'd probably be chasing me hole..'cause (laughs) I can't say anythin else te ye on that one..I have te be honest with ye..I think if there's women there, you'll be conscious of what you're sayin..and like, I curse a lot but ye won't be sayin, 'ask me bollox' or 'this is a load of cunt' or something..and like a little thing comin out like that, can help ye a lot..just expressin somethin can help ye a lot..and ye can do it there..and like you says, there's no leader..there was one night there and someone turned around..I don't know if you were there or not..and someone says, 'Terry is the leader', and I thought it was great..he said, 'no', he says, 'we're all equal, there's no leaders here', I thought that was great..an it was actually..there was em..Ray was there..I think Ray was only there about two or three weeks..an ye could sorta see him perkin, yeknowhaimean, when Terry said that..'cause someone actually said Terry is the leader..like a fuckin light..ye know when ye..he says, 'now, deye mind if I come in here', he said..he said, 'no, come on', he said, 'there's no leaders here..I am not a leader', he says, 'I am one of the group', he says, 'I'm one of the men'..I thought it was fuckin brilliant..'cause there's no airs or graces..yeknow..now, I have te tell ye, when I did go first..I was only goin for one or two nights..'cause I said, 'this'll be all me bollox',..I says..I won't fuckin..it'll be nothing te do with me..and like I didn't..I said it, 'I'm only here te listen', I said, 'I won't be talkin'..an there was a couple..then you fuckin started..and if I'd a closeed me eyes, it would've been like me talkin..some of the stuff you were goin on about..I think I actually said it to ye that night..an I thought it was fuckin great..yeknow..and the first night, now, done a lot for me..when I went..but..as ye say out too..when Paul or Terry says, 'Liam, you take it'..I'll step back..I'm not..I won't jump in and take it..yeknow.. 'cause I'm just inclined te..I'll join in..I'll do what has te be done..or whatever..help out or anythin, but..yeknow..and as ye did say, when I do start talkin I don't fuckin stop..it was actually you talkin..I just closed me bleedin eyes and said, 'jaysus, that fuckin talkin', I says, 'is like meself talkin'..everythin ye were sayin that night, I could relate to an all..an I actually went in..as I said..one or two weeks, that's all..see how it goes..yeah..before I went in now..yeknow, I'll go for one or two weeks an see how it goes (Gerry, p.28);</p>
<p>Safety</p>	<p>[men's group is] <i>one of</i> the supports, an I use that word in its its full meaning ..like is a support ..it <i>supports</i> me, em.....an probably one of the safest..supports that I've found on my journey so far (Neil, p.1);</p>
<p>Trust</p>	<p>it would be, yeknow..listening looking..eh, in one sense..what I kinda found was that..when people participate..they..ye kinda give each other permission..to let go..te let go a little and then I think as well..yeknow..where part of it is..I do think that a group..could do an awful lot for ye..but..ye have to make your own journey..ye have to take responsibility..the group can't do it for ye (Richard, p.3); it was if somebody had kicked me out of the bed..it had that big impact on me (Richard, p.5); then in some sense..that [the men's group]..between what I was doing myself..[the men's group] gave me the forum..it enriched me with other peoples experience..and ye see..what I was attracted to in [the men's group] was..eh..there was no auld bull..and there was the thing..it didn't matter who you were or what you were..in fact I..you probably know that, in fact..I never advertised what I was..some people knew..but I never did..eh..and part of the thing too was..with me was..I wanted to..be listened to eh..and appreciated for being me, for being a man..the other didn't matter..in fact without the feelings you were a man with other men, the other was actually..something that annoyed me..ah..an you'd be measuring..people'd be getting..their expectations and stuff..so, if you like, for me it was..eh..if you like, to find myself among other men..learning how to be a man..learning from them..I can throw my bit in..and discovering that, in fact..I wasn't the (laughs) only one in the world that (laughs) thought a lot of these things..yeknow..and so there are a lot of the stuff too was..so it kinda gave me "Jesus, you're not as bad as ye think ye are" (laughs) plus, I suppose the thing about it is..yeknow..and I knew this from working with alcoholics was..I did a lot of fifth step work, where they tell their life story and what I found was that em..when people are vulnerable and tell their life story..your heart goes out to them..you just see them as wonderful people..but..it's another thing when you're tellin yours..because if you like they were coming to see me..they regarded me then as their professional..and when I didn't know enough about boundaries in those days..when I tried to get something from them..it was inappropriate, yeknow, I can see that now..but eh..I was meeting, ye know..this..so in one sense, it was very important to go, for me, to go into a group where nobody was functioning out of a role (Richard, p.7); but the actual thing about it was, that it eh..kindef.. they were all people..nobody was doing a professional task and I think that's the big richness of the thing is..they're coming together as men (Richard, p.7); to some degree is..those guys that are comin to those meetings, in some way or another, have known suffering..eh, and therefore..they've known suffering and somehow or other there's kinda thing like..em, that makes them searching..they're looking for..and eh, it's kindef like looking around..maybe frightened, yeknow, they're like rabbits sometimes hittin the headlights and your lookin around to see is anybody else ever felt this way..so in one sense it's the kinda thing is..it's because we imagine that yeknow, other men don't feel the way I felt..or..or..or even the thing too was..I suppose..was..I wasn't brought in an emotionally expressive family..so..but a lot of this stuff too is..that when you're in a men's group where people can express their feelings and how their feeling an everythin..an there's just a respect..there's nobody getting at anybody..and I think that's a big thing because it's like..em..maybe it's a bit like..em..having a big brother..em..and a big brother somethin or other (Richard, p.10); when you go into a meetin..what strikes me..there's a huge variety of different personalities..there's a huge variety of different backgrounds..em, and yet there's a kindef thing is..that if a guy is sharin somethin about himself..you know it's real..there will be guys could be sharing something, you could see they're locked in their head..an ye say, 'Well, Jesus, I've been there'..yeknow particularly if you're a wee bit older, and ye've been around the block a wee bit longer, or even just at different times I..I will say things..see some things an I'll say, "well, he's got te find that out for himself", whereas maybe years ago I'd be tryin te fix him' yeknow (Richard, p.11); when we gathered, we create a sacred space and it can only hold..when we come out of it, there's a certain sense of getting back into our normality, so..in fact community is something that we create but it is there..it sustains us but it..it kindef gives us somethin to go back and integrate into our normal living..because ye can't live the way we do at the meetings, all the time..because..in other words, it's something that every man creates with the other man..an..an community happens when people have the courage and the honesty te say it..as it is for them and it's just, yeknow..somebody could turn around and say..somethin that maybe..just an anger, that something makes them furious..and you just..you see the fellas' anger..it's..it doesn't..it's not really important what the anger's about..but that, in fact that somebody's angry and because..when you're..even that letting go of your anger..somethin or other..it's a kindef like..it's like a..it's a..it's a delicate thing because at the end of it..you're kindef wonderin how this is goin..you're not wondering how it's goin..because you're kindef nervy but when the acceptance comes in an ye see..we've been there..other people have been there that's..what strikes me is, to be honest and I've always had this..prejudice..I prefer to go out into groups where there aren't too many professional people..because professional people find it more difficult to get out of their heads..whereas a lot of ordinary folk who are grounded in the practical, the ordinary, the concrete..and I found out when I worked in Armagh..when eh..the troubles were on..an the Brits..the soldiers..a lot of the stuff was..eh, they'd listen to me talkin..an a few other people talkin to them..then this wee woman would talk about what it's like pushin the pram and the soldiers lifts the baby..and..te see is there a gun</p>

	<p>underneath the pillow..what that's like..and this wee woman tellin that story..she has everybody in that room listenin to her..whereas the rest it's just like waves of words</p> <p>A: yeah</p> <p>B: so in..so in that sense..it's that..people being specific and concrete an stuff..there's nobody there te give a lecture..or te tell about their thesis or tell about eh..some big deep meaning and stuff..it's grounded..it's real..it's saying that it's human and there's a wide range of emotions..so like..so in that sense there's a kindef thing..eh, like..when I look at it now, I could kinda say if I used that kinda word..that in one sense..men bless each other when they are vulnerable and share..because they enable the other</p> <p>A: men bless each other</p> <p>B: yeah, they enable the other fella to do it too</p> <p>A: is that what bless means?</p> <p>B: well, I'd say for me, blessing would be in the case there, you're blessing or other..you're kinda saying is..I recognise your humanity..I recognise you as a man..I recognise you as a human being..I recognise there's more to you than meets the eye..em..I recognise there's a depth there..now, I don't think that's always clear..ye say, looking back now an describing your..there was a process..lookin back now, ye can see it..yeah, that guy blessed me..and in a sense, he blessed me..in one sense he blessed me to own me and to say, "well, this is what I'm strugglin with"..and..and..or even that there's no..in one sense there's no point of arrival..there's nobody ever goin te have..there's nobody..and what happens..a guy shares somethin and he wakens up some memory, some experience..eh..maybe..particularly, what I like, actually, is..em..I like the drums..eh, once ye get over the initial thing when you go there..eh..eh..I like the drums..I like the silence..eh, I like the rituals..eh, I like the way they're done (Richard, p.12); it kinda wakens ye up..te who ye are (Richard, p.13); I think, in some ways, the group is a bit like..other men are the windows that let ye see into your own soul..and you're the window that help them..and there's a..em..an a thing where..where..where..I think that the big thing too is that people can..express whoever way they wish, whatever kinda strength of feeling and..there's no big deal about it..it's a bit..yer man's wink..an then at the end of it all they say, "de ye want..are ye goin down for soup?"</p> <p>A: (laughs) yeah..yeah</p> <p>B: there's no body fit..has te feel..there's nobody like your mother sayin, "are you all right now, ah you're not" (Richard, p.19); the first meetin, I didn't know what te say..really hadn't a clue what te say (Dessie, p.6); I go to men's groups..just more te get comfortable in meself..te do me own work(Dessie, p.14); oh yeah, [the circle is] hugely important ..yeah..it's..creates eh..a bond with the group, yeknowthere's a lot more openness in a circle, yeknow..that's it..ye go to other meetins..you're kinda..your sittin in rows..so it's more open..what I get out of going..em..ye wouldn't just put one thing on it..cause..every meetin can be different..ye get one thing from it..sometimes ye just go te..get something off yer chest..te say it 'cause ye wouldn't..ye wouldn't say it te people at home because of family dynamics or..friends..ye don't wanta..ye've known them that long, ye don't want te seem that vulnerable in front of them..the..then the dynamics between groups of friends aswell..ye'd kinda..ye go there te be open..an ye say about the circle..I remember the first time..I get growth oute..the men's groups.. 'cause I remember the first time I sat in circle when..the stick..or whatever was goin around..or..an when it was your turn te say a few words..ye'd feel the tension comin up inside ye..an..and ye just want te blurt somethin out quick te move the stick on, te be over..ye wouldn't even think about what ye were sayin..but now when it comes te me..I still feel that bit of uncomfortableness but it's kinda..that awkwardness where..you're on the edge of your comfort zone..ye know te sit there, you're gonna get somethin good out of it so you..ye will stick with it so..I'm gettin personal growth out of it..other times ye get..it might sound a bit selfish..sometimes when ye hear other people's problems ye say..jezz, my..maybe my life's not too bad atall..so ye get relief that way..em..ye get supports..[I'm] just curious to hear what other men say because I've done other personal development..[but]when ye do go to other personal developments or different support groups, they're 80 or 90% women..and I do get a lot out of them..but em..always bothered..why the men don't feel conf..aren't drawn to it.. I think it's that bit safer when it's all men..ye feel..it comes back to fam..dynamics..relationships..when it's all men they feel they don't have te protect the women..maybe it's that..it's..they can be more real..they can be more who they are without..em..without havin te be the male of the relationship..they can be more..they can be more real without having to be macho..or havin te know everythin..they can be vulnerable (Dessie, p.16); I remember the first few times goin into [the men's group]..being fuckin petrified about what te say..how te say it..the sharing freaked me out right..and then some of the rituals (Noel, p.7); ye can sit..nobody asks ye anything here.. ye can say what ye want here an..but..ye can say what ye want..an nobody comes up te ye afterwards an says, 'actually, deye know what ye should do'..an this conversation that we had..in that little small group recently..about should ye intervene..if anyone had of said that to me I would've fuckin left the place fuckin cryin..eh..but..it was..an it became really important te me..really quickly .I just..felt like a..an escape..valve..just when I needed it (Noel, p.8);</p>
<i>Wisdom</i>	if there's a container then there's a container of knowledge in here..of elder wisdom (RC, FG, p13);
<i>Realness</i>	I would've found at different times..eh, fellas comin to the group..were..yeknow..even for a few times..and what they shared and the way they shared it..you just knew in your gut..they're talking reality..in other words they were making connections with me..and in one sense, those kinda connections for me were much more real than any group I would have with people who would share my profession..because there was a kindef a..there was a naked honesty..nobody was there there..there was nobody there out to impress anybody and it's really..in one sense it's kindef almost like eh..the very fact that guys would've taken that step..to go there..they're recognisin..they haven't got it together..and when you meet other men the same way..ye just know the way they speak..ye know the way they talk..you can see even when they gather for a cup coffee..there can be nervousness an all tha kind the stuff..but once it starts, there's a kindef..em..there's..there's an atmosphere..there's a normality..there's a kindef a..and it's not a feminine word..but there is a kindofa warmth there and a kindof..kindof no-nonsense kindef (Richard, p.8);
<i>Creates a group consciousness/ group experience</i>	if you form a circle and say, 'we're here to do that', and as you say..someone sets the tone..or the level and you kinda tend to..perhaps ke..stick around that..em, like not every time would I feel the need to kinda go deep and..but occasionally for whatever reason..it would just..something would come out..an I..I can see that it kinda rocks things a little bit..em because someone would probably come up to me and say, yeknow, 'fair play to you', or whatever for..saying something a little bit em..difficult..em, because you don't always need to go there..if..if it's something from way back, you possibly only need to go to it because it's been referenced..in what someone else's said..em, you're not necessarily dealing with your stuff, you're bringing it out to help somebody else or te..te kinda relate to somebody else's eh..shit that they..that they're dealing with right away, right now

Healing

its become a stable part, I suppose, of my life..as a place where I can go and say things that I mightn't say anywhere else

ye get hope..and that feelin, that you're not on yer own (Franny, p.18); first of all I've said what it feels like..second of all, I haven't died and third of all, there's three or four men who have exactly the same experience..I mean..yepknow..it's the one we all want God, I'm not alone (Liam, p.4); goin te a..a men's group..yepknow, not me regular one but a yepknow..a day..wit other men..yepknow..it's not what other men will bring, it's wha other men will rise up in me (Liam, P.5); it is by..people reflectin things back te me that I learned that sense of..of knowing meself, [which] is really powerful (Liam, p.5); I still go to the group because I get a great sense of peace. An actually Michael described it very well..I went te the thing with Fergus there..em..in Glenpatrick, fe..few weeks back, right..an I just come away with a great sense of..peace (breaths strongly) from being around men in a grounded, sp..sp..spiritual or even a...a non-threatening way..an I won't get slagged or I won't get...eh...I have res..I'm respected..I'm seen an I'm respected..so I get a huge amount of energy for that..from that and that's why I keep goin back to the men's group..I get..I get..I ge respect..I get seen..I get listened te..em...but I suppose respect maybe is..the word that..that would encompass the whole lot..respect and seen..and ca..I feel cared for..yepknow....I feel it's qu..somewhat unconditional..yepknow..it's not..I don't have ta do anything really....of course I still don't take tha..I still think I always have te prove something or achieve..yepknow...say something intelligent..but..I..I feel seen there (John, p.9); .goin to these things, gives me ammuniton to go home and talk..it gives..well it gives me the words, the concepts, the..the..the theories (laughs),ye know (Eddie, p.4); where the men's group's come in..is they give ye...stuff to talk about at home..they give ye outlets of information...they give ye people ta talk ta..yepknow, I could talk ta you and you'd say, ye..y'know..go to youtube and have a look at x, y or z..that gives me (inaudible)...all of that stuff gives ya...information that ye can talk ta your wife about..so that..once stress starts being relieved in one area, I believe that it..it sort of knocks on into the other area (Eddie, p.6); things take as long as they take, yepknow..ye have ta work on them..yepknow...it's the work ye do on them..an that's what I find with [the men's group], the sharing..the sharing your stuff..is a great release (Tony, p.3); when ye get inta him an say, 'I don't want te know about the weather', like..yepknow..he..he opens up..yepknow..an he's loads..he's loads (Tony, p.3); it (the men's group) keeps me on me toes..yepknow..te..k..keep..keep workin on meself..that I don't..fall back into them old patterns, yepknow (Tony, p.6); I get that in the men's group..I leave the group..more often than not I leave and I'll be feeling like 10 feet tall..like I could take on the world..nothin..I really feel that way..sometimes..more often than not actually..and I feel that way after the meetin..an by the time it comes around to the next meeting me stomach's sick again..I really love goin te the group still..but I still get that sick feelin in me stomach, goin in..an it's kinda like what's gonna happen..and this goin into a group environment..and even though I'm very comfortable in that group now an I know everybody in it an..I still get that feeling (Eoin, p.4); after a while it's not about drinkin anymore..it's about the underlying shit then..an that's why I'm in the group then aswell..because there was underlying stuff (Eoin, p.7); the idea of the all-male group really appealed to me.. I have to say..when Fergus put it to me..and jus.. I'd loads of issues around men..I guess yepknow..I suppose I..suppose te get an insight into other men were feeling and te see if people felt the same way and..te be able to share stuff with men and see how that would be..te how that would go down..I mean you, we..I think we both have..I'll speak for meself but..I shared stuff in the group that I never thought I'd share with anyone never let a group of m..let alone a group of men..and then te be..te have it sort of eh..very warmly received and sortef understood and then have that fed back..it's a wild..it's a very liberating thing kinda..frees ye from a lot of shite (Eoin, p.11); I've definitely got issues around women as well but..I think..I needed to address..the issues..kinda male issues and get some feedback around..I guess..yepknow..like I talked about my father in the group a lot..and me mum..and like eh..one was very gentle growing up and the other was kinda violent and aggressive and that was my mum..but as I've gone through the whole process of the men's group..I've realised that my major issues are with my father and not my mother and still are..and I still love him to bits..an he's very gentle, an lovely man..an, me and me mom have started te have a really good relationship now but..eh all me shit..I mean shits..there's a lot of shit there around me mother too (laughs) but it's the really..stuff that really gets me is around me father and I think it's..the..the group has helped me realise that..an I think I need the group te kinda sort through that shite aswell (Eoin, p.12); since bein in the men's group what I've realised too is..about my dad..he was never about and he never showed me anything..he didn't really teach me how to be a man, as such..I was kinda left to me own devices..so I was very confused about..just very simple shit..about..how a man should behave in certain situations..and I've kinda..I've thought the men's group might be a sorta nurturing environment to sortof pick up on some of those things and find out what I'm doing right and what I'm doing wrong..yepknow..at a very basic level..just yepknow..(inaudible) being a man about a thing or..what..what the fuck does it mean to be a man anymore or yepknow..eh even just basically am I a good man or yepknow..what kinda man am I..so very basic stuff like that but..I suppose really important stuff

A: fundamental stuff, isn't it

B: yeah..it's kinda..so the group's been fundamental in that kinda, yepknow..reasoning aswell..it's definitely helped me with a lot of stuff..sure of that

A: ye know what it's just amazing how yepknow all the men that I've interviewed so far..yepknow just eh..commonality about what people are saying..so there's no point going over old ground just for the sake of it yepknow

B: an I suppose fundamentally..yepknow..just that a very basic level..I wasn't sure how to behave or how to be a man, yepknow..what that meant..or how to..how te stand into that and..I thought the group would be a good place how te kinda learn how to do that properly and to found, just what is right and wrong..yepknow, get a bit of guidance..in how I am..are the things that I think are wrong with me..are they really that wrong..and the things that I think are right..are they right..yepknow..try and work it out because..em (Eoin, p.13); I'd agree with that too about the listening in the group..Jimmy always says that..if you're not speaking it doesn't mean to say you're not working..it's the truest thing in the group

A: yeah

B: I mean..'cause you know I wouldn't be the biggest talker in the group but I am always listening and soaking it up..I find it really..I think it's fantastic..listening..I'm doing that when listing..like, 'that's it' that..that really hits a bell' or that fuckin..sometimes somebody says something that just pins ye to your seat..yepknow, it's like, fucking hell, he thinks that as well or he feels that as well, it's kinda like..shite, so I'm not a fucking freak for thinking that or feeling that yepknow..it's kinda..it's great that way (Eoin, p.14); somebody says something that you think is sacrosanct..or something like eh..sometimes, you know yourself, like some man will share something in the group and you think..fuck I think that or feel that but I never say it out loud and the fact that they've said it allows you to kinda feed back into it like and go..gives you the courage to say it aswell..'cause I was walking about for years thinking that I was freak for this and a fucking 'head-the-ball' yepknow..I'm mad for thinkin this or feeling this an..then suddenly other men in the group were sharing..I feel the same way, it's lik..fuck..yepknow I'm not..I'm not as bad as I thought I was..I'm not..I'm not a bad person..I'm not..a freak..yepknow..it's fuckin..it's wild liberatin..feelin that (Eoin, p.15); I didn't really know what I was looking for when I went te the [men's group], I was just lookin te put the things back together..te put me life back together because..it was kinda fucked (laughs) up..just..but that's like..eh..the way I looked at it, it was just natural..it's the way I..just developed or grew up because of a lot of different factors but at the time, probably that year

2012..an in 2013, I was just startin te make shape of things and consciously kinda doin things..choosing what I kinda wanted and..I suppose looking for help with that an then I ended up g..ge..finding a men's group (Andrew, p.6); it brings a lot of shit up..like that's what..what I thought..for me, in..yeknow..the interaction in it brings shit up, but I think that (laughs) that's important, yeknow that..that that comes up or that ye..it's triggered..so, I don't know, I was feeling that it was kinda..wasn't for me, for a while there..I was doing a public speaking class that's why I missed the last couple of [men's group meetings]..well, now I think that eh..I'm thinkin it probably is important te do somethin like that regularly, yeknow..at least once a month (clears throat) some kinda group like that..that..that brings stuff up because otherwise..I'd probably end up in 10 years time goin back (laughs) into the same rut..yeknow..the..I mean like, the football ended up taking over..I think a men's group can bring balance, it ca..by gettin triggered by different things, or just turnin up for that kinda space..probably brings a bit of balance that it's hard te get without a group like that (Andrew, p.8);

Masculinity

I didn't necessarily feel I fitted in everywhere and yeknow..fitted in in the world of men..possibly something with growing up in a very female household, yeknow..four older sisters and the mother and all the rest (Séan); men can take that..that burden...ye know...ye..ye don't ever here of a man..sayin, ye know, 'ye told me too much, I can't deal with it'..never..never happens..ye don't go to any of these meetings an people say, 'oh that's..this is too much for me...you're..you're..you're..you're..you're burdenin me too much with..I don't want ta hear about..about your stress'.. never happens..I mean, at home, "oh, this is an awful lot of pressure you're putting onto me" is what ye hear.. yeah.. "I don't want to hear about you're childhood. That's something you should've dealt with years ago"...that's the.. yeknow...these women who talk about..your feelings an the whole lot..they really don't want..the..the burden of all the..the..the..the..the stress that I..that I carry..they want..they want the easy bits of it.....but they don't want the whole lot (Eddie, p.9); I needed connection..an I needed a (coughs) a safe space in which te connect..especially wit wit men eh yeknow with eh...yeknow.....yeknow....re..rewinding back right te the start, I mean the relationship wit me Da would been, yeknow, non-existent...so..yeknow..one sister, five brothers..a lot of men but..well a lot of males..but like, not a lot of positive role models..yeknow..they fulfilled a lot of what society..claimed was..was a good role model but I didn't buy it meself, yeknow..there was somethin missing..we just talked..surface talk, yeknow..'fuck off', 'how ye doin', 'grand' that was the extent of it..yeknow, they couldn't go where I needed te go (Michael, p.1); Willie & Donal ALSO TALK ABOUT GOING TO MEN'S GROUPS TO HEAL THAT FATHER WOUND; when I go there..a lotta the shit that I'd rather not come out in the presence of men, comes out (Michael, p.2); it's still men goin there an revealing their wounds yeknow in a kinda..in a place that..that isn't muddied with all that other shit, an all that other judgements that, yeknow, usually ye meet..ye know, like, tryin te talk tha shit te me..te me family..te me Da, or te me bothers..just can't happen, yeknow, whereas in that space it can, yeknow..it's..and again I think the..the person who investigates that is crucial in terms of settin up..the proper structure within which that will happen yeknow...so (Michael, p.2); there's somethin else goin on like transpersonal..aspect to what ever story you're goin through..yeknow..for me that's crucial..all the other groups seem te have a very surface an material yeknow so ok ye have a problem..let's solve it..it's your problem yeknow...whereas [the group] kinda take..it zooms out a lot more an ye can actually see where your story fits in te the bigger story, an for me tha that that's essential te give me a context an a sense of like, shit this, this is, kinda archetypical shit, yeknow an I can kinda process it a lot more an kinda engage wit it a lot more rather than like I was sayin..those fears of like sittin in a room with people..being sad about their stories, yeknow..there's a..there's a lot more space for ye te actually understand where that sadness arises...like and realise that maybe it's a reflection of your sensitivity te society..it's not purely just your weakness..yeknow..it's actually shit may..maybe we've got things wrong an this is your your reflection or your sadness is a reflection of that, yeknow (Michael, p.3); there was a..growing..'backa de mind' kinda (coughs) I knew I needed that...I knew the masculine was..was being totally..'cause like I was sayin, my perception of the masculine based on..my upbringing, yeknow, was quite skewed (Michael, p.3); it's like what hap..like, it..it arises pretty much every month we're there..it's hard te te to define..it's really hard te locate like, I just know that I feel better afterwards..there's a..like I was sayin..that desire for connection..an..somebody te share your..your story, or your journey wit...that I never got from..from those male role models that..were in my family, even my mates, yeknow, they don't go there..they've..they kinda don't know what ta do with tha information, yeknow

A: yeah

B: so, every time ye try te..an for me..that's the core of a relationship..if ye can't kinda...if ye can't..share..your journey wi..wi..wit somebody who claims te be close te ye..it's..it's a bit..I don't know..it's a bitofa..there's a falsity anyway, yeknow

A: yeah

B: and I understand peoples reservations and the difficulty with it..but that's..that's wha [the group] offers me..like a space where I..fuck I can, I can break down, an these lads are just gonna..cup a tea..cool..ye know..an it's not..Jesus, wha..what do we do now, like yeknow..will we..will we call the psychologist or the..yeknow

A: yeah..yeah

B: it's like, no, these lads get it, like..they don't..they don't have te tell me..like...I'll fix yer problem, yeknow..but they just allow ye te express it..that for me, is the bottom line, ye know..just havin a space, an a safe space, within which te do tha..and em...yeah, I..I didn't know what I wanted goin there, like in..in terms of the first question..like..wha..yeknow..I wasn't..I didn't have a clear idea..that this is what I need..yeknow..but as..as it kindef unfolded..an there was a lot of resistance for the first few months..goin there..each [time] comin up..I'd be like, oh na, na I'm not gonna do it..can't do it, can't do it, yeknow or like for me the whole..communicating, speaking in a group..I find it very difficult, yeknow..but as time has gone on it's like..this is a space where I..I'm allowed be that way, yeknow, even if it's, yeknow, uncomfortable..it's still permitted..yeknow

A: yeah..yeah

B: it's..I find it precious yeknow (Michael, p.8); I went there lookin te..te get..a better understanding of myself through other men (Martin, P.2); I felt that..psychologically I needed te get input from like-minded guys, particularly guys, I suppose that had been through the 'recovery process' (Martin, p.2); [compared to a mixed group] it's more..a discipline for me to attend a men's group..yeknow (Martin, p.3); the dynamic of, yeknow, men..yeknow and..and what men can achieve and their..their innate power and their place in the world would've been something [I experienced in a men's group] (Martin, p.4); that to me was another (coughs)..another kinda positive aspect

to the idea of men's group, is that, yeknow..what does it take to be a man..what..yeknow..what is a man today..yeknow..and..I think the absence of understanding of...or a healthy understanding of what a man is, I suppose..would be something that I woulda been seeking in men's groups, whether it was the Baptist group or whether it was in the men's group here in Dublin or whatever the case may be..but it was just te...I suppose te..te really ask..stop and ask myself that question, yeknow..and particularly where my son is concerned..once he came into the world it was like, ok, well, yeknow..how can I be a better father..and to be a better father it would start..it would help to know what a real man does..and how a real man thinks and yeknow..an I picked up some interesting tips along the way (Martin, p.5); I joined, I think..after he was born..so I would have been keen to make sure that I give him the best start in life possible as a man because, yeknow in my own mind the role of man has changed..the role of man is being downgraded and diminished by society..em..yeknow, men aren't even needed now to recreate..procreate..yeknow, so I..I think the world is changing and men are losing their role and responsibility in that and I don't intend to be one of them..if I can avoid it at all (Martin, p.5); in a men's group you can get feedback from men an ye..an ye can deal wit men's issues and..I didn't really think about this but..I suppose for me em..like I don't know much about, yeknow, being a man or like..I don't know, they talk about 'rights of passage' yeknow, when you were a child, like I think..I can get triggered into very childish ways or losin me power, yeknow..revert back to kind of..yeknow childish kinda ways (Andrew, p.9); that's one of the things that kept me goin back to the [men's group] was..I seen that my fa..father went through some tough times and I realised I was getting to hear stories from men who were in..that similar age..I kinda consciously said it'd be a smart thing to do groups because I can learn from these men that, yeknow are going through that kinda same thing..yeknow to kinda form me own way or..yeknow, how I go forward (Andrew, p.24); I did want to experience being in a group, a healing group with men and men only..to..to explore that depths of my manhood. But I've never gone into the..the whole thing of, what it is to be a man. I'm..I'm probably more interested in the fact that I need to be..for my journey..I'd have to be..I need to be in..in a group of men with, maybe that raw aggression that we have that women don't have (Phil, 15); **I am a man** and that..the influence of women on men is hugely important but also the influence of women on men can possibly have a..it does have its negative sides as well and I wanted to experience..healing..inner healing..from, purely from a male perspective te..te..te keep a balance on it (Phil, P.16); but even down to simple things like masturbation, down to things like men's stuff like your balls and..fuckin..yeknow the whole thing of feeling them (inaudible) testicular cancer..em..eh, how we feel about women..te be able to talk with..just to men and to hear other men's stories on it, because, again in the company of women..I've got an

A: would ye..were able to talk about that kind of stuff in a group with women

B: well now..well, actually now your question is coming back te..te some stuff that I have thought about with them..well, actually to answer your original question of why a men's group..and actually I do have a clear answer..it's funny this conversation has brought about a clear answer for me

A: yeah, that's the way it sometimes works

B: a clear answer for me and when we get outa the..your jeep..when I got out of your jeep, I noticed a woman, I made a comment on her, you made a comment about me and women and that is part of that..I'm highly influenced by women because I'm so attracted to them..and a little bit..I'm not as obsessed as I used to be..I haven't watched porn in five years..that was a big deal for me..I had a huge pornography problem. But in the company of women..and here's the fucking answer...so clear to me now..it's strange..in the company of women, I change..as a human being..maybe ever so slightly, subtle..maybe it doesn't even matter but I know I change (Phil, p.16); I can say whatever the fuck [in men's groups] I like..even, I curse a lot (Phil, p.18); when Jimmy suggested doing the group and..I'd no eh..hesitation in doing it 'cause I kind of..be interested to hear other people's stories (Colin, p.9);

the first night started off with em..they explained em..wha they were doin..loosely explained wha they were tryin to do..em..and we had this thing called a 'check in'..which terrified me (laughs)..an all it really was was..when ye've done 'check in's' yourself..ye..yeknow..they're just basically to bring ye into the room..but you must remember now, I'm..I'm brand new te..all of this, at that time, yeknow, so..I found tha a little strange..but em..yeah, so that was my very, very first involvement in anythin that would be, like, considered in a men's group (Derek, p.3); when ye say *allowed*..ye see tha's the key..ye..ye..ye can put a bunch of men in..in a room..and they may even claim that this is what we're goin to do..but unless it's..there's a commitment to that..right, that's the word..unless there's a commitment to that..it will not happen..it will not happen..it'll just be a talk shop..ye may as well be sittin at the bar, havin a pint..because we went in, night after..week after week and..although we might start off with this check in..in other words the check in is just, how ye feelin at this moment in time..it's actually to make ye present and..yeknow..em..and so it's..it's a good way of startin off..because it leaves the football outside the door an it leaves..yeknow..the workplace..an any other bullshit tha ye talk about when ye..ye meet first mainly..yeknowhaimean

A: yeah

B: an then, ye might wanna talk about what ye really wanna talk about (Derek, p.9); .he might read a poem or somethin, which maybe sounds strange for a bunch of guys to listen to

A: Paul loves the poetry..yeah

B: but, i..yeknow..it'd be well chosen poetry an it..it would just..create the atmosphere..ok, so you had to do that, yeknow..it's..it's very delicate like..ye might just say, 'just throw a bunch of guys in a room', but it doesn't just work tha way..it has to be created..that field, as I call it..that energy field..now that I call it that..didn't call it then

A: yeah

B: but there is an energy..I mean, you've witnessed it yerself down in the group..this energy field has to be created..an atmosphere..so the guys can get into and feel (inaudible) feel..feel safe..feel a trust..feel that *they can do tha*..ye can't just put people in a room and say, yeknow.. 'righ, go'..yeknowhaimean..'cause men (inaudible) they'll talk about football and they'll talk about *anything*..except themselves (Derek, p.9); after the first day

A: yeah

B: that first day down..that day (inaudible)

A: did it have a big effect on you

A: I knew that this was where..the direction I wanted to go in, yeknowhaimean..still journeying something that..I'd no idea..but I knew, at least..maybe..em..yeknow..this was goin to bring me somewhere towards it yeknowhaimean..it's very strange wit me..I..it was almost like I was chasing something elusive that I didn't know where I was..but I..maybe it was my age..maybe that's what happens with men when they get to a bit..a certain age an..they look for something more..or different or..it's a basic instinct maybe, that's in us..em, but I was fuckin searchin..there's..that I'm very sure of..but what was I searchin for..what was I searchin for..I have no idea..I had no idea..it was almost this urge to find something..very powerful..it was in me anyway..extremely powerful

Practice

A: deep stuff init?

B: yeah..it was, yeah..and I..I have no idea where it came from..an it feels so familiar now..that I..it feels like it's always been there, yeknowhaimean (Derek, p.16); there's no point in goin te these places if we're not going te say something..lot of..an I found that too..a lot of men go te these places te listen..they listen and they hear and they relate te it..they can relate te what they're hearin..and they can't actually physically say it..they talk around it but they can't physically say it (Derek, P.20); I think a lot of men go te groups for that..the..I mean..the hidden..hidden things that they..they don't recognise in their own lives, even if it wasn't an abusive father

A: yeah

B: this anger..this un..yeknow..underlining thing, that they can't recognise..that wh..they come home from work and whatever..and their wives ask them, 'what's wrong wit ye?', ..nothin..and the reason why..and the wives get very frustrated..because the men can't tell them..and the men can't tell them..it's not because they don't want te talk te their wives..it's because they can't put their finger on it (bangs table)..it's just anger..it's there..it's in them and they can't voice it because they can't recognise it..not..not everything now, I'm talking in general..I'm generalising here yeknow

A: umm..uumm..no..I think ye hit the nail on the head there

B: I was the same..I used te come home and she'd say what's wrong..I..I can't tell ye (Derek, p.21); it's the frustration of it, like when ye don't know wha's happenin yeknowhaimean..that can lead te a lot of dama...a..and I think..yeknow..te..te try and sortef..wrap this up for ye a little bit for ye..is tha..I think that's why men need men's groups..because they don't..they go in te it, wit this gut feeling of something and they don't really know what it is..and it's the nearest thing their gonna get, te try and get it outa them..that..it's the nearest thing they're gonna..th..yeknow, te get into this group yeknow..it's as the nearest thing they're gonna get into te, te find what really is goin on here, with them..wit themselves, yeknowhaimean..te even put a word on it..and even listen te other men..say, 'well, yeknow, I'm so and so', an then it goes te the next thing..an he says something else..and you're relating te it..see, yeah..that..fuckin hell..that's..he's right there..deknowhaimean..an then ye go on, ye hear someone else talking..and it..almost like..you're learning about yourself withou even speakin..an I think, for me, that's the value of a men's group..cause, I think I even maybe said it before 'round there..tha, I've learned more about myself from listening te other men than anything I've ever said..and that's not because I'm sittin back an I don't wanna say anything..it's just that, I finally..it's finally..I'm finally affirmed..wit..te me tha..yes, *I know what you're talkin about*..and it's not coming up from my head..it's coming from another human beings voice..and now I know I'm not the only one that feels that way..and that's huge..for me, yeknowhaimean (Derek, p.21); it's te be your..it's te be yourself

A: but *through* other men

B: but through other men..an it's almost like..ye don't trust yer own feelings..but when ye hear another man sayin something that you totally relate te..it almost becomes ok..and now ye say, 'yeah', yeknow, 'I understand'..so the feeling I have now is not false..it's real, because you feel it too

A: yeah

B: but when you're sittin on yer..when you're isolated an you're own your own and yer havin all these thoughts..you've nothing te..eh..confirm it, yeknowhaimean ye..ye so yer

A: it's tha confirming as you say

B: confirming

A: tha bouncing ideas or

B: yeah, tha bouncing tha ideas or even

A: *identification* is another word that people have used or

B: yeah, or ev..even..yeknow, confirming that, yeknow..tha..tha..they were my thoughts too..so this *is* real..it's not just me, thinking this

A: yeah..yeah

B: he thinks

A: but isn't it funny because

B: he thinks it too, yeknow

A: yeknow..yeknow..we don't..as you say, we don't trust..it's not enough te have our own feelings..when we hear someone else say them, then it..it make them more real..it validates them

B: yeah..exactly

A: but that..tha guy could be as much a chancer as us, deknowhaimean..like ye don't trust ourselves but we're prepared te trust him, deyeknowhaimean

B: well..it's not so much trusting *him*..it's trusting..well, that's not the way I see it..it's not so much trusting him, it's trusting myself..wit my own thoughts

A: yeah..yeah

B: it's..it's..yeknow..it's trusting myself..that these thoughts are real..and they're not fantasies in my head or..of some, yeknow..notion of..of what a..of what a man is or wh..yeknow..what way I should be feeling

A: yeah....no I'm just playing devils advocate there, 'cause I'm kinda thinkin what people..other people would say..yeknow, this..this whole idea of, yeknow..needing somebody else te validate your feelings because like I say this fella

B: yeah..I

A: could be as much a chancer as us..but it's not because it's a group situation

B: yeah..it's a group, yeah

A: you're not just hearing it once..you're hearing it again and again an next week and all tha

B: but, I think..ye wouldn't..you wouldn't take it on board 'word for word' now, but there's just little bits..ye..like..ye hear little bits of yerself

A: yeah

B: in other men..and there *are* little bits..they are little bits..like I don't believe every thing *he* says

A: it's not swallowing

B: I don't have te swallow everything *he* says..I'm pickin up what *I'm* feeling and yeknow..ye have that feeling an..an..in..an ye have it..an ye say, 'yeah..yeah..yeah, I understand what he's saying',..deknowhaimean and yer trusting..I mean that's what..what our group is about down there..you're..you're..you're trust..I'm trusting what you've saying..an I'm..you're trusting what I'm saying

A: yeah

B: and..and eh..an that's..about a men's group..that's where ye really get down te the core of it..it's tha trust, that you were *really* speaking from the heart and you're not just telling me some sort of waffle I can hear down in the pub on a Friday night, like

A: yeah

	<p>B: deknowhaimean A: yeah B: and that's the difference between men's groups in a pub and men's groups..in what we do..knowhaimean A: yeah B: is this trust..and this safety..and ye do..ye..ye..I..I have..an if..if..if you sat there tonight and said, 'what is the one thing that you've got from being in men's groups..and it would be that..that I've really..yeknow..I've..I've learned more about myself from listening to other men..than anything I've ever said meself..simply because..when they say it, ye say, 'yes'..in your head somewhere.. 'yes, I relate te that and that's how I feel..and now I..I can believe myself..I can believe my feelings are true and they're real because other men feel them'</p>
	<p>What men get out of men's groups is inextricably linked to what they need. And men need different things. Here's what Donal gets out of South County Men's Group, which is inextricably linked with his personal experience of being betrayed by a man in powerful position: it's delightful then to sit in a company of good men..ye know..em..that would be me judging them..yeknow..it's delightful to sit in the company of men who..who I feel comfortable te talk about anythin with..as they seem to be a little bit above..just your normal talkin about football stuff..and it would be accepted..wouldn't be spurned or laughed atyeknow A: yeah.....eh..well you've probably answered the kinda second question..(coughs) about like wha..what ye get out of it..so just..what I'm hearing..what I'm interpreting ..what yer sayin is..that maybe after that..kinda..bad experience with that..Christian Brother..yeknow that there's kindefa relief in in findin..good men...yeknow..solid men B: well..again that would be me judging them as good and solid..they look good and solid, but what I get outa them is words of wisdom ..a little fuckin just (inaudible) ...I mean like..just thinking about the two or three different men who have said different things to me..in just one liners..throwaway comments..that have eh.....that..that has really helped me...ye know....em..and it put me in the right direction..em.....again I would be very cautious about who I would listen te and who I'd pay any attention te what they're sayin A: even in the men's group B: even in the men's group..but the two or three things that have stayed with me about..have led to me learning stuff that has given me..eh..a lot of peace in me mind..ye know..eh..like the day Jimmy Fogarty just walked by me at Dunway.em..we weren't even talking to each other..yeknow we weren't actually in discussion..but he just walked by an he say's, 'you should read Eckhart Tolle: The Power of Now' .. and I looked at him and say's 'ok' .. an I did..an I just thought.. fuckin hell, that's brilliant..ye know..eh..and really helped me deal with that..eh..deye remember I was talkin about that realisation of me past ..that it all showed up in front of me A: yeah B: it helped me deal with that that by..yeknow..that was then Donal, now is now..just live in the now..yeknow..I seen that as a great psychological..trick to learn..ye know..and I suppose having those two years..of nearly solitary confinement..eh..well I had nothin else ta practice but fuckin livin in the now..eh..so while I seen those two years as fucklin terrible black dark years, I got a lot out of them..y'know A: was part of the journey B: yeah, yeah..an now I understand about goin into the dark places..now I understand the shadow self..now I understand.....the fuck..it's horrible to look at it..fuckin rocked me.....yeknow.....as ye say part of the journey (Ciarán, p.4&5);</p>
<p><i>Giving Back, helping others</i></p>	<p>I actually felt that it would've been..I was now potentially one of the wiser people and that there was something that I could actually give (Willie, p.9); one of the reasons I could sit in the group..em..and be relaxed is that I..I felt that I could..there was as much positive that I could bring as..that I could take from it, yeknow..that em..I'd learnt an awful lot along the way..so I could kindof see other peoples stuff and em..yeknow..not be shocked and all that stuff (Willie, P.11);</p>
	<p>that's where the potential is..I'm not sayin I can do it all the time..I'm not sayin that I'm able te inhabit it..just me in that space all the time but at least when..I know that when I turn up te [the men's groups]..what..whatever the situation is at home or whatever..or leadin the group or not leadin the group..I know that I can go in..an there's an acceptance there..right..now whether we get on with some people better than other people..that isn't the thing..ye just know for the next three hours, whatever's goin on outside is fuckin stayin outside..so it's a little oasis of potential acceptance..of..of me by the other men and of me by myself..how it can help them is because if you're able te have those three..or whatever it is..three hours ..at the group, where ye don't have te be a prisoner te those stresses..te me it then says, 'ah ok, I can pick these three hours on a Saturday where I don't have te be anxious or be X or be Y..whatever it is..so there are other times where I can choose not te be that either..so it..it..why is it I go to [the men's group] an I can leave those things outside the door..what is it..it's me doin it..it's me enterin in te..it's frame of mind or..a state..or a willingness or I'm allowin myself..so te me..if I can do it there..it means there is a potential..that ye can do it other places..go for a walk..go for a pint..play guitar with Eamonn and Frank..deyeknowhaimean A: hmmm B: go to have a game of pool with John..so te me it's..it's like one of those things where I can be really fuckin..like most fellas, I guess..I can get somethin..an just go wit it..oh, true in your head..true in your head..it's gonna be brutal..it's gona end up shit..an ye just become fuckin obsessed by shit..right..by fuckin shit..so, when ye go in there, ye don't have te be..an te me, the beauty is..well, if..I don't have te do it there..there's potential where I can actually have other periods of time off from that stressing if I just allow te do..if I just put everything on [the men's group], it means I can only relax fuckin three hours a month..so that's what..it gives ye the potential of..I can do it other places</p> <p>[The men's group is] a potential antidote for my stresses [represented by model 1] an it's funny because ye know what ye have te do..te have a potential antidote te that [model 1]..ye've te turn it on it's head..ye see what your doin..what your doin..for the potential antidote is turnin tha thing on it's head..so for me, the reason why a lot of men go into these kinda groups..it isn't to a large extent because they're on a spiritual journey..and they're proactively searching for the meaning of life..normally ye end up there because ye've been..life has forced ye te do something..it's like..when the student is ready, the master appears or somethin..right..an so, I think what it is..it's life..normally it's though..fuckin grief..or relationship or ye lo..ye lose a job or whatever..ye end up kindef being forced te do somethin and ye might end up in a good place or ye might up..in not a good place, right..so, it can go either way and it's..is it luck..is it grace..whatever the fuck it is, it doesn't really matter.. 'cause ye end up where ye end up..so, te me..turnin the thing on it's head..obviously has the potential for an antedote..is what you've said..because here..I'm at the pinnacle of it, right..or wherever that man is..at the pinnacle of it, but when you're in the circle, you're not..it's not just about you anymore..so, one of the things a circle, I think, offers ye..is..if you actually, deye know wha..I don't feel so fuckin weird now..havin left here today..or I don't feel as though I..I'm..I'm..complete lunatic..on my own..like your fuckin stressed out..fuckin anxiety freak..now that..it's not necessarily a positive thing</p>

	<p>because basically you're sayin there's other miserable fuckers aswell (laughs) right..but I think what I kindef..there's nothin worse that feelin fuckin really panicked and stressed and feelin as that I'm the only one in the word knows this..right..even if ye don't have te talk about.. ye say, 'Darach, yeknow..'cause we don't talk about it that..yeknow..so my mates..none of that talkin goin on..none of that discussion..an then when ye go into the men's group it's ok te discuss it..so te me..that potential there..ultimately, where I see it leading is..ult..te me where ye end up is..ye end up with yourself..by yourself..on your own..and that's who ye can change and that's the journey that you're here te do..whatever your beliefs are..be they religious or atheist or agnostic..you're here te try an complete your own journey as consciously as ye can..so, ye turn this on it's head and ye open up parameters te have a more broad view and ul..ultimately ye hope that it'll end up..funneling down..so that your own journey actually becomes a little bit more aware..deyeknowhaimean..so, by startin off here, thinkin..like the scream by Arvart Monk..ye know that when..you're just fuckin..completely alone..ye then say, "actually, there's other people here screamin aswell"..and hopefully over a period of years, ye can then absorb some of tha in..an get te sit there..you're not perfect or cured ..but..you're like kinda Tommy, sittin there thinkin..that's all right..I feel fucked..but that's ok..or I feel miserable..but that's ok..or I have this health issue but that's all right..that te me is..it's not like your sitting on a fuckin hill with a white beard, knowing all the answers te life..it's that ye can accept your own life..an I don't feel that..but I feel is the potential is there..yeah..you've just identified it as somethin..so I think you're right..I think..for me it's the stomach..it's the gut..an that..that's because that's where I feel my anxiety..right..ad so it's like your body's sayin, "listen te this, listen te this..don't fuckin be mindin about this..your head..listen te this", right..so te me, what we said earlier..so like really important thing that I sho..that I need te say aswell is about..it isn't always necessarily what you're sayin..that gives you or gives the..me the..the power or gives me the..the feeling of release..it's sometimes what you said there is..ye could be sitin in a group of twenty men and there'd be one thing said by one man, that'll hit ye like a fuckin punch in the face..an ye'll go, 'fuck, I..I've known that for fuckin ever'..an I've..I just never heard it before I've never said it before..an that's happened te me, I'd say, about twice or three times in different forums now, right..but always sittin in a circle..right..be it in a small group where we were..I was in..be it in the big group..be it on the Iron John weekend..somebody'd say something and ye go..'holy fuck'..read all the books ye want..an te me that's the..potential that exists..eh, but one..we need te turn up..first of all..te be there..two..ye need te listen..and that can be very difficult..both of them can be difficult..one, turnin up an then two listenin when ye turn up..so, what I would be hopeful for is that..if, however long I'm involved in South County Men's Group..that, I'm able te turn up listenin but also te try an absorb some of the wisdom in that group..for whatever that means for me..so that as my..as I journey down te the end point that there's a kinda acceptance of..who I am..eh..to some degree..that I..I feel like a learner..I feel really like a learner..in there..eh..in terms of..just in terms of actually being comfortable with myself..yeknow..rebook the warrior energy an fuckin king energy..an these needs and that needs and your shadow side..an there's..oh..fuck..an it comes down..can ye sit with yourself on your own and not want te fuckin leave yourself..deknowtha kinda way..can ye sit down, on yer own and not feel, actually, de ye know what..ah, you're a fuckin cunt..I'm gonna go out and leave you here..that te me would be a nice feelin..because it's about acceptance..not just findin out who ye are..findin out an then actually sayin, well..but fuckin..just accepting it and then if ye can like it, great..and te me, I feel like really..this part of..the fraud thing..feeling a fraud..I still..that's my overridin thing ..so, when I done..do in the rituals at..at eh..at eh..the venue..it's like, 'why am I doin this..why the fuck am I doin this..what have I possibly to fuckin offer here'..right and it's constant fuckin tension eh..so..te me, I'm sayin, 'well listen, this happened for some reason..this..I joined it for some reason..I was finagled inte doin this for some reason..I need te be open with that an not just run away from it..because if I run away from it, I'm leavin South County Men's Group..deye know what I mean..an that..feels..as though it's runnin away from somethin..an I feel safe there..so, I feel it's safe te be there and not know what the fuck I'm doin.. an that is the beauty of the circle that they (inaudible) (Noel, p)</p>
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<p>Communication & Language</p>	<p>you actually get to a point where yeknow..you kinda say nothing, if you've had an ok childhood..ye kinda think say, 'well, I'll say nothing 'cause ye always feel awful te say, 'oh, I had a great time' (laughs)..everybody goes, 'we hate you' (Séan); I like that openness..li..like..what we were talkin about earlier on..eh..gettin the stuff out..eh, I like te be able te..express meself..an..somethin I..I'd a bottled up years ago an all tha, yeknow..stuff like tha (Tony, p.1);</p>

