



NEWS RELEASE

Why 3,000 middle-aged men die by suicide each year

- A new report released today shows that middle-aged men from poorer communities are at a higher risk of suicide.
- Each year, about 3,000 men in their thirties to fifties take their own lives.
- Those from deprived areas are ten times more likely to die by suicide than those from affluent areas.

New research by the charity Samaritans has revealed a link between health and social inequalities and increased suicides in middle-aged men. The findings for the first time in its report released today - **Men and Suicide: Why it's a Social Issue**.

Samaritans is urging the government and national health agencies to respond.

Key Research Insights

The research reveals that:

- Men measure themselves against a 'gold standard' that values power, control, and invincibility. When they fall short, they feel shame, which can lead to suicidal thoughts.
- Middle-aged men are now the 'buffer' generation. They struggle to emulate their strong, silent fathers and their progressive, individualistic sons.
- The changing labour market over the last 60 years has affected working-class men. With the decline of traditional male industries, they lost their jobs — a source of masculine pride and identity.
- Men in mid-life remain dependent on a female partner for emotional support. Today, men are less likely to have a lifelong partner and more likely to live alone. They often lack social and emotional skills.

Campaign Launch

The report is being launched as part of Samaritans' **'We're in Your Corner'** campaign. This includes a five-year partnership with Network Rail to reduce railway suicides.

The campaign will use posters and other initiatives on the rail network. It aims to target middle-aged men and encourage them to seek support.



Expert Opinion

Stephen Platt, Samaritans' Trustee and Professor of Health Policy Research at the University of Edinburgh, said:

"It has been recently recognised that men in mid-life can no longer be ignored as a group at high risk of suicide. However, this report shows that it is men from low socio-economic backgrounds who desperately need help.

"Men are often criticised for being reluctant to talk about their problems and for not seeking help. With this in mind, we need to acknowledge that men are different from women and design services to meet their needs, so they can be more effective.

He also noted:

"The role of mental health problems in suicide is well-established and must not be ignored. But we also need to look at the economic and social inequalities that contribute to people wanting to take their own lives. Policy-makers and practitioners need to take forward our recommendations from the report as a matter of urgency."

Recommendations from Samaritans

Samaritans has made **six recommendations**:

1. Tackle the challenge of gender and socio-economic inequalities in suicide risk.
2. Suicide prevention policies must consider men's beliefs and concerns, particularly their views on what it means to "be a man."
3. Loneliness in mid-life men is a strong reason for their higher suicide risk. Help them strengthen their social ties.
4. Link alcohol reduction and suicide prevention services. Both must address the ties between alcohol, masculinity, deprivation, and suicide.
5. Help GPs spot distress signs in men. Ensure that disadvantaged men can access a range of support services.
6. Provide local leadership and accountability to prevent suicide.

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