

Campaign uses humor to help men tackle depression, divorce and suicidal thoughts

Man Therapy, a groundbreaking new approach to suicide prevention and other men's mental health issues, has been launched in Colorado. Man Therapy reshapes the conversation, using humor to cut through stigma and tackle issues like depression, divorce and even suicidal thoughts head on, the way a man would do it.

The campaign is the result of a unique partnership between Cactus, a Denver-based advertising agency, the Office of Suicide Prevention at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Carson J. Spencer Foundation, a Colorado suicide prevention nonprofit organization.

Local efforts to expand the campaign are being led by Rural Solutions through their suicide prevention initiative, The LifeSource Project.

"Colorado currently has the eighth highest suicide rate in the nation," notes Maranda Miller, suicide prevention coordinator for Rural Solutions.

"Men between the ages of 25 and 54 represent a significant portion of suicide deaths in the state including Northeast Colorado. The numbers are on the rise. It is clear that we have to do something to target this difficult-to-reach audience."

The purpose of the Man Therapy campaign is to provide men approaching crisis, and their loved ones, a place to go and learn more about men's mental health, examine their own and consider a wide array of actions that will put them on the path to treatment and recovery. The message is that all men should be aware of their mental health, treat it like they would a broken leg and strive to get better.

"Man Therapy features our hero, the good Dr. Rich Mahogany. He's a man's man who is dedicated to cutting through the denial with a fresh approach using his rapier wit, odd sense of

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humor, no bull approach and practical advice for men,” said Joe Conrad, Cactus founder.

“There exists an age-old stigma that says mental health disorders are unmanly signs of weakness. And our main character and hero, Dr. Rich Mahogany, is dedicated to smashing that.”

The centerpiece of the campaign is the mantherapy.org website, where men and their loved ones will find they have a virtual appointment with Mahogany.

He greets visitors, makes them feel at ease and then provides an overview of what they will find and explore during the visit.

From there, visitors can navigate through Mahogany's office where they can find useful information about men's mental health including a guy's guide to Gentlemental Health. Men can choose to take an 18-point quiz to evaluate their own mental health status.

They can also access resources and explore a wide range of choices from do-it-yourself tips to professional therapist referrals. Additional resources include links to support resources as well as a national suicide crisis line that is ever present on the site.

For more information about the Man Therapy campaign, contact Miller at Rural Solutions at 970-526-3616 or maranda.miller@rural-solutions.org.

Rural Solutions, located in Sterling, works to coordinate health and human services “needs assessment” and program development in 10 counties in Northeast Colorado.

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