

Life First Then Work

Lived-Experience Talk Outline



Real stories. Real struggle. Real change.

Format

- 60–90 minutes including Q&A
- Delivered onsite or virtually
- Can be adapted for leadership audiences or whole-team sessions

Talk Description

Most people don't break suddenly.

They fade quietly while still turning up, still delivering and still pretending everything is fine.

This talk lifts the lid on what it's actually like to be:

- A man in crisis
- A dad holding it together for his family
- A leader expected to stay strong
- An employee who's drowning but still performing

It explores the reality many men face: struggling in silence, hiding pain, resisting support until breaking point – and the cultural habits that make it worse.

This isn't theory. This is lived experience, told honestly.

It shines a light on the pressures men carry:

- Financial responsibility
- Fatherhood and relationships
- Stigma around weakness
- The belief that “you just crack on”
- Fear of career damage
- Shame
- Identity tied to work and providing

It shows why workplaces matter:

Because many men don't talk at home, but they *do* show up for work and that's where the warning signs are missed or misunderstood.

Core themes

- Silent struggle & the cost of “I'm fine”
- Burnout & the invisible load
- Suicide ideation – what crisis looks and sounds like
- Leading and caring while falling apart
- Masculinity, identity & pressure to perform
- The human cost vs business cost
- How culture can harm – and how it can protect

Audience impact

After this session, delegates will:

- Recognise hidden signs of struggle
- Understand why men often don't speak up
- Feel safer and more confident to ask for help
- Know what to do — and what not to say
- Gain empathy without pity
- See how work culture can amplify or reduce pressure

Workplaces gain:

- Reduced stigma and silence
- Greater awareness of hidden struggle
- More informed and open conversations
- Leaders more aware of warning signs
- A foundation for improving support and culture

Why this talk matters

Especially powerful for male-dominated industries

- Construction, agriculture and skilled trades consistently record some of the highest suicide rates in the UK (source: ONS)
- Other male-dominated sectors — such as engineering, manufacturing, transport and emergency services face elevated mental health risk due to culture, pressure and long-hours expectations, even if their suicide rates are not the highest overall
- Not because men are weak but because workplace culture has taught them to hide struggle
- This talk challenges that. It opens up conversations men rarely have at work or at home

It also resonates deeply with:

- Women who want greater awareness of the signs men often hide - partners, friends, colleagues
- People who grew up around silence
- Managers who don't know what to look for
- Employees who have never heard someone say out loud what they feel inside

It gives language to what men often can't say:

- "I thought I was the only one."
- "I don't feel safe speaking up at work."
- "I didn't want to burden anyone."
- "I didn't want to fail as a dad."
- "I couldn't afford to break."

It makes it clear:



Talking isn't weakness.
Support isn't soft.
Culture can either save lives or cost them.

Suitable for

Leadership teams
Site teams and operational environments
Office staff
Mixed or all-male audiences
Organisations ready to move beyond awareness into honesty and action

Optional add-ons

- Leadership debrief to turn insight into action
- Support Circle integration to build safe peer pathways

“Behind ‘I’m fine’ lies a reality men hide. Understanding it protects people and performance.”