

# 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.”**