



'NO ONE TO TURN TO': 1 IN 5 YOUNG MEN FEEL SOCIALLY ISOLATED

PRESS RELEASE: WEDNESDAY MAY 8, 2019 – One in five 18-24 year-old men wouldn't have anyone to turn to if they were going through a tough time, according to new research from leading men's health charity, the Movember Foundation.

The study, which coincides with the launch of the Movember Foundation's fourth annual MAYEIGHT!! campaign, also revealed around half of the 500 men surveyed wanted to spend more time with their current mates, while one third said they hadn't made any new close mates in the past two years.

Brendan Maher, Global Director of Mental Health & Suicide Prevention at the Movember Foundation said: "It's not just older men who are at risk of becoming socially isolated or lonely. Even young men – who on the surface may appear to be more connected – can struggle to maintain relationships with their mates."

By encouraging blokes to take part in an official day of mateship on Wednesday May 8, Movember's MAYEIGHT!! campaign aims to tackle social isolation and improve mental health among Aussie men.

"There's a high chance you have a mate who is feeling lonely or isolated, but isn't letting on that he's struggling," Mr Maher said. "This May 8, we're urging men to step up, put some solid plans in the diary and set themselves the challenge of talking about the stuff that really matters with a mate.

"It's a great excuse to reconnect with an old mate and can work wonders to strengthen your friendship with a potential new mate."

The study also highlighted that men most needed the support of their mates while going through a mental or physical health issue (27%). This was followed by major life changes like the breakdown of a relationship (21%), losing a loved one (9%), losing their job (8%) or becoming a dad (6%). Men aged 25-44 were most likely to need support from their mates during a breakup.

"Pressure points in men's lives can have a flow-on effect to their social lives. This can include big changes like going through a breakup or becoming a dad, where you shoulder more family responsibilities and have less time for your mates," Mr Maher said.

"Going through these changes can be tough for guys, particularly as they tend to bond and connect over shared experiences and activities such as watching a sports match or going to a gig.

"Making time for these 'shoulder to shoulder' activities is crucial, not just on May 8 but year-round. Taking part in an activity with a mate, rather than a 'face to face' catch up allows guys to feel more comfortable, meaning they're more likely to open up and have a meaningful conversation."

In addition, the research found 37% of men would turn to their partner if they were going through a tough time, while around 26% would rely on a mate and 15% would turn to a family member. Men were also more likely to rely on a partner as they got older, with 50% of men aged 35-44 nominating their partner as their main support.

Mr Maher said that while partners were often a reliable source of support, it was vital that men establish support networks outside of their relationship – particularly when life events like divorce, relationship breakdown or the loss of a loved one had the potential to leave them socially isolated.

Take your mateship to the next level on MAYEIGHT!! with these three simple steps from Movember:

- 1. Step up** - Reach out to your mates. There's probably one who needs you
- 2. Catch up** - Get together. There's no time like the most Aussie day of the year
- 3. Speak up** - Sense something's up? Now's your chance to let them know you're there

For more information on starting important conversations with your mates, visit movember.com.



Men & keeping in touch: the stats

- Less than a third of men (28%) prefer to pick up the phone, compared to 70% of guys who choose to keep in touch via social media or text
- More than half of men aged 65+ prefer to pick up the phone to keep in touch with their mates – compared to 17% of those aged 18-24
- More than half of men aged 18-24 preferred to keep in touch via Facebook Messenger or text
- Men aged 25-34 were most likely to keep in touch via text (33%), with a phone call (22%) and WhatsApp messaging (18%) following closely behind

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About the Movember Foundation

The Movember Foundation has one goal: to stop men dying too young. As the only global charity tackling men's health issues year-round, the Foundation supports the following causes: prostate cancer, testicular cancer, mental health and suicide prevention. Since 2003, the support of more than 5 million men and women has funded over 1,200 innovative projects across more than 20 countries. To donate or learn more, please visit movember.com.

What is Movember doing to tackle social isolation and loneliness in men?

The Movember Foundation has invested \$5.6 million in the Social Innovators Challenge, a series of projects aimed to strengthen the social connections of those men at risk of becoming isolated. Waves of Wellness Sand 'N Surf is one of six projects launched in Australia. As well as teaching men to become physically and mentally fit, the six week learn-to-surf wellness program teaches young men the skills they need to cope with everyday challenge.

In addition, Movember are supporting Dads' Group Inc. (DGI), who have identified the transition to fatherhood can be significantly isolating amongst men. Together with local government, DGI are implementing dads' groups across various regions of Australia, with the goal of connecting new fathers and reducing isolation. This will ensure dads have a space to share their experiences, make new friends and enjoy happier, healthier family lives as they transition into parenthood.