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# Zero Male Suicide and the Impact of a Relationship Breakdown

As we approach International Men's Day we reflect on 01 May 2021, in a tragic case highlighting the critical issues of men's mental health. Steven Walker-Roberts, 30 took his own life and cited fearing losing custody of all three of his children and sadly told his estranged wife he had 'traded my life for yours.'

Steven and his partner had agreed to separate some weeks prior, a decision that Steven was said to have been struggling with. It must be made clear that Rochdale Coroners Court heard how Steven had 'longstanding' issues with his mental health, heightened by the loss of his sister in 2018 and brother in 2019.

The court heard that Steven had made a previous attempt to take his own life in April 2020, in which he was admitted to hospital after taking a drug overdose. Following a visit to A&E, Steven had been referred to a Treatment Team where he was assessed by a mental health nurse. The inquest heard that Steven's mental state was noted to be improving, and he was referred to counselling and psychological therapy.

But on May 01 2021, Steven's wife received a series of alarming Facebook messages from Steven, with one stating that she would be receiving an email from him in an hour's time. Steven then proceeded to send his wife a tragic email titled 'goodbye' before taking his own life at his home in Rochdale.

As a family lawyer, this case really struck a cord with me at the time. It was made public due to the circumstances. Breakdown of a relationship and/or marriage is very tough on both parties particularly when children are involved. Of course, the impact it has on the children is the most important factor but I also know that when it comes to this area there is rhetoric/ stereotype that cascades around males

1. "Males struggle to talk about their feelings if they are struggling with a breakup of their relationship"
2. "The Mother is always favoured by the Family court"
3. "The Wife is always favoured by the Family court"
4. "I know a dad who never sees his kids"

There are many more and even if these are not true, males will hear or read all of this and if someone is in a vulnerable place this could be made much worse by absorbing all of the above and more.

Steven sadly had other factors in addition to his separation from his wife and the combination of all of those factors plus perhaps reading or hearing the points above must have led him to a very dark place. This is a tragedy but sadly Steven's case is not a one off.

On 19 November 2023, it is International Men's Day and it will be observed under the theme: Zero Male Suicide. Organisations and individuals are encouraged to identify the causes for male suicide and try to find solutions to create a protective environment for men in all nations.

This engagement also means ensuring there is intervention, counselling and mediation where necessary. A safe environment is essential for nurturing, growth and development of men who are stable, healthy and caring.

International Men's Day celebrates and honours the contributions and sacrifices of men -- "everyday men".

This year International Men's Day will be observed in 93 nations, and will – as in previous years – resonate with people from different ethnicities, religions, classes and geographical locations. Observance of International Men's Day places a focus on uniting humanity by providing individuals, organizations, and institutions throughout our global village with an opportunity to help work towards our shared objectives which we apply equally to men and boys irrespective of their age, ability, social background, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, religious belief, and relationship status.

Those 6 objectives are:

- To promote positive male role models; not just movie stars and sportsmen but every day, working class men who are living decent, honest lives.
- To celebrate men's positive contributions to society, community, family, marriage, child care, and to the environment
- To focus on men's health and well-being; social, emotional, physical, and spiritual
- To highlight discrimination against males in areas of social services, social attitudes, and expectations, and law
- To improve gender relations and promote gender equality
- To create a safer, better world, where all people can grow and reach their full potential.
- Let us work together to create world peace. feel free to share this article with interested persons and

groups.

- Let us create a world without suicides!

Let's all come together and embrace this theme this year and most of all let's get men talking so a support network never feels far away for them. The aim is to reduce male suicide to zero and that is regardless of a male being a father, a partner or a husband.

On this International Men's Day: If you need support regarding men's mental health Contact our experienced [legal team](#) for guidance on [01202786105](tel:01202786105) or email [online.enquiries@la-law.com](mailto:online.enquiries@la-law.com)