

# No Hard Feelings: Navigating Masculinity, Vulnerability, and Intimacy in Therapy

**Date: Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

**Time: 9.30-4.15pm**

**Venue: Online via Zoom**

**For: Counsellors**

**Presenters: Dr Michael Beattie**

**Cost: RS Members £60/  
Non-Members £120**

**CPD Category A Points: 6**



The ways in which masculinity is experienced and understood are not fixed and they continue to be challenged and changed over time. Traditional, orthodox ways of being masculine in Western cultures are actively being challenged and questioned and the phrase 'Toxic Masculinity' has entered everyday discourse. As more inclusive, emotionally sensitive ways of being masculine are emerging, we are also seeing resistance to change exemplified in the rise of social frameworks that valorise traditional masculine norms of self-reliance, winners-and-losers and homogeneity over diversity.

Against this backdrop, this interactive workshop focuses on two areas of interest for those working therapeutically with male clients:

**Masculinity and the Challenge of Vulnerability:** will explore how men and boys perceive manhood and the psychological conflicts arising from traditional masculine expectations and their impact on mental health. The session offers practical tools for therapists to help men express emotions safely, including creating non-judgmental spaces, psychological education, overcoming emotional barriers, enhancing communication skills, and self-care and stress management techniques tailored for men.

**Masculine Embodiment, Intimacy and Sexuality:** delves into how men engage with the norm of 'physical toughness,' discussing its impact on body image, including issues like eating disorders and body dysmorphia. The session further investigates the interplay between intimacy, vulnerability, and traditional masculine sexual roles, considering how pornography influences male sexual self-perception and the effects of sexual dysfunction on self-identity. Throughout, we focus on addressing the core challenges men face in love, sex, and relationships, emphasising the need to work affirmatively with masculine vulnerability and shame whilst offering strategies to assist men in breaking free from unhelpful ways of relating and patterns of intimacy.

**Learning Outcomes: By the end of the session participants will be able to:**

- Recognise masculine norms: insights into how masculine gender role socialisation shapes men's experiences of vulnerability, and impacts their emotional expressivity and mental health.
- Apply skills in emotional accessibility: how to create safe, non-judgmental spaces, encouraging men to explore and express their feelings, overcoming barriers to the therapeutic alliance.
- Explain how masculine embodiment, influenced by norms of 'physical toughness,' affects men's body image, self-esteem, and overall health.
- Identify masculine ways of relating, friendships, and attachment, including the impact of cultural norms on male bonding and loneliness.
- Describe how to work affirmatively with issues of male sexuality and relational dysfunction, helping men navigate harmful patterns in intimate relationships.

**Presenter:** Dr Michael Beattie is an HCPC Registered Chartered Counselling Psychologist with a research interest in the psychology of men and masculinities. He has worked in the field of sexuality, sexual identity and sexual health as well as with issues of gender identity and gender dysphoria. His book *Counselling Skills for Working with Gender Identity & Gender Dysphoria* was published with colleagues by Jessica Kingsley in 2018 and a second book *Gender Affirming Therapy: A Guide to What Transgender and Non-Binary Clients Can Teach Us* was published with colleagues by Open University Press in May 2023. He currently works as a Counselling Psychologist in private practice as well as devising and delivering training and CPD for mental health professionals in the field of gender both individually and in collaboration with colleagues.

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## HOW TO BOOK

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Relationships Scotland CPD events are for practitioners who are currently working for a Service that is a Member of Relationships Scotland. Booking early is encouraged as spaces may be limited. Spaces may be open to practitioners from external organisations where appropriate and available. We use an online booking process, the link to the online booking form for each event can be found in the relevant section of this programme and in the flier for the event. The online booking form can be used by:

- Member Services to book on behalf of practitioners.
- Practitioners from Member Services who wish to self-fund.
- Practitioners from external organisations (when spaces are available).

The link to the online booking form for this event can be found here: <https://forms.office.com/e/cc48agCqAu>

If you have any questions about the booking process please contact Liz Thackwray:  
[liz.thackwray@relationships-scotland.org.uk](mailto:liz.thackwray@relationships-scotland.org.uk)

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## BOOKING TERMS

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Booking for CPD events will be confirmed by email within 10 days of submission. Please check your inbox and/or junk mail, if you have any issues receiving this email please contact us immediately. Member Services or Self-funded practitioners will be sent an invoice for the course fee before the event, please do not make a payment until you have received this invoice as it will have a unique invoice number for the payment reference.

Cancellations within 14 days of the event and non-attendance will be charged in full. Member Services/practitioners must notify us of any cancellations by email. Where appropriate, Member Services may transfer a place to another attendee if the original person cannot attend, we must be informed of this ahead of the event taking place. If a CPD event is cancelled by Relationships Scotland (because of insufficient numbers or unforeseen circumstances) then all fees will be fully refunded. We are unable to reimburse out-of-pocket expenses, such as travel and accommodation.

In exceptional circumstances, Member Services/practitioners may request a refund of the cost of the training event or a free place at a future event. Examples of exceptional circumstances include admission to hospital at short notice, or a family bereavement. We are unable to reimburse out of pocket expenses, such as travel and accommodation. Requests for refunds or credits for future events will be considered by the Office Bearers Group (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer of the National Office). All request for refunds/free places at future events should be made in writing or by email to the CPD Manager, [sonia.bruce@relationships-scotland.org.uk](mailto:sonia.bruce@relationships-scotland.org.uk)

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## SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

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The session will be delivered using the Zoom platform. You can attend this CPD event from a private space anywhere using a compatible computer or tablet connected to the internet. You will need to download Zoom to access the session: <https://zoom.us/> Please make sure you have the most recent version of Zoom. Please note, some organisations have additional security settings that may prevent you from accessing the CPD event on an organisational device.

Please also ensure that you have the required bandwidth and internet speed. You can test whether you are able to join a Zoom meeting here: <https://zoom.us/test> Relationships Scotland are unable to provide refunds when there are issues with a participant's IT which prevent them from accessing the CPD event. Please contact the CPD Manager if you are unsure about the use of the technology [sonia.bruce@relationships-scotland.org.uk](mailto:sonia.bruce@relationships-scotland.org.uk)

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## ACCESSING THE EVENT ONLINE

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A link to the session will be sent out a few days before the event. Please ensure that the email address to which the link should be sent is clear in the Booking Form. It is also important that the Zoom account uses the same name that you used to register for the event. The Relationships Scotland CPD Host will use this information to admit participants into the event and to confirm attendance certificates. The username for your Zoom account can be amended by signing into Zoom and going to the profile section of your account.

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