“Tackling the Challenge” is a collection of real stories from local men who have overcome many of life’s tough challenges by speaking out and seeking help.
Andy was struggling after a tough relationship break up, losing a best mate to cancer and long commutes for work. Andy started to work more, stayed home at night with alcohol and takeaway for company and avoided friends and family. Andy was lost in a fog of anxiety and depression.

**What did help look like?**
Andy’s neighbours noticed a change in his wellbeing and encouraged him to speak to someone who could help. He called Lifeline and made an appointment with his local GP.

Speaking with a counsellor gave Andy practical tools and advice to take control of his mental health.

Andy made small lifestyle changes to help his recovery. He ate healthier foods, exercised more, spent time outside and listened to men’s mental health podcasts.

**Andy’s advice...**
Ask for help and don’t be too proud to let people know you are struggling

“It took me to be vulnerable enough to say - hey I’m struggling. I’ve never really been that person to actually put my hand up to say - can you help me?”
Meet Jarrad

“At 20 years of age, Jarrad’s life changed forever. Driving 60km/h over the speed limit, his car collided with a tree. He had extensive injuries from the accident and suffered a cardiac arrest.

Jarrad was in an induced coma in hospital. He spent two weeks in the High Dependency Ward. His parents were told that if he survived, he would need 24/7 care for the rest of his life. However, Jarrad beat the odds and survived the riskiest days. He was moved to the Brain Injury Unit to begin recovery.

What did help look like?
Jarrad’s slow recovery was tough both physically and emotionally. He credits his family for getting him through endless hours of physiotherapy to re-wire his brain to perform everyday tasks.

Jarrad now regularly visits his local gym to continue his recovery and for the social connections exercise brings.

Jarrad’s advice...
No matter what you are going through, reach out and seek help. There is nothing to be ashamed of, it just means you may need some extra help to get back to strength.

“Life is like a maze with hard turns and road blocks. You have to accept it and roll with it. I might have limitations, but that won’t stop me”
Meet John

Over 10 years ago, John suffered a workplace injury and began living with chronic pain. He became increasingly isolated in his community and had a growing sense of feeling unsafe and paranoid.

Over many years, this pressure kept building. John became overwhelmed and no longer felt comfortable to leave the house. He felt trapped and his mental health was at an all-time low. A hospital visit revealed that John was living with schizophrenia.

**What did help look like?**
John received help and support during a short stay at a mental health facility. Out of hospital, he received ongoing assistance in the community to help manage his mental health needs.

John was able meet new people by getting involved in the local men’s shed and community gardens. He has learnt new skills and teaches other men woodworking techniques.

**John’s advice…**
Seek support early. There is plenty of help out there.

“Joining local groups has helped me develop as a person”

The *Tackling the Challenge: Talking Men’s Health* project gives a voice to men’s health in South Western Sydney.

To tell your story or for more information, contact: (02) 4621 8701 or SWSLHD-WellbeingCollaboration@health.nsw.gov.au