

# Just Ask.

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Creative interventions to address male suicide in Torbay and open up dialogue with men around emotional wellbeing.

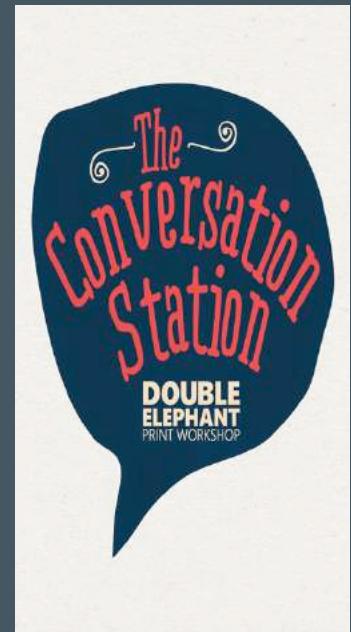
# Just Ask: About the project

- Using the arts to improve emotional health for men in Torbay.
- A collaboration between Torbay Culture Board and Public Health Torbay.  
Funded by Arts Council England and Public Health Torbay.
- Duration: January - September 2016. Main project delivery period April - July,  
with launch of work and outcomes August 2016.
- Printmaker Simon Ripley and film maker Josh Gaunt will work with groups of  
men creatively to develop their own stories about their lives. As well as providing  
an artistic focus for the men taking part, the workshops aim to create an  
environment in which men find it easier to talk about emotional and health issues.

# Double Elephant Print Workshop

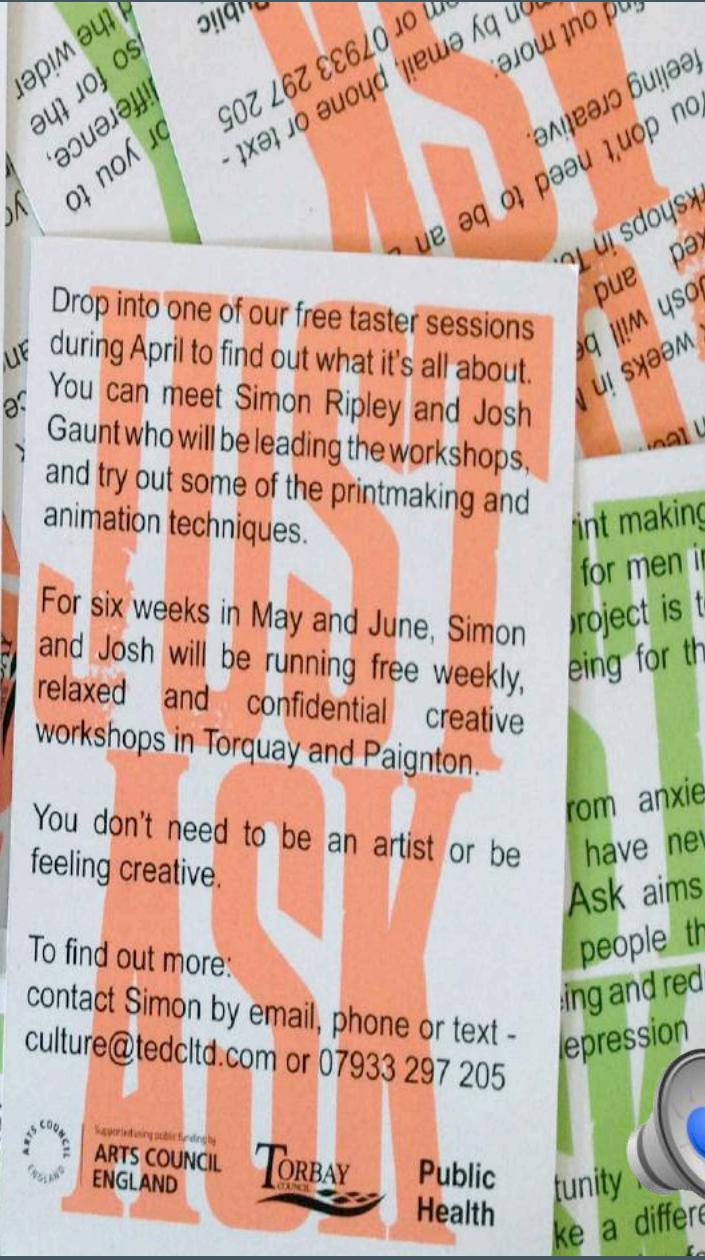
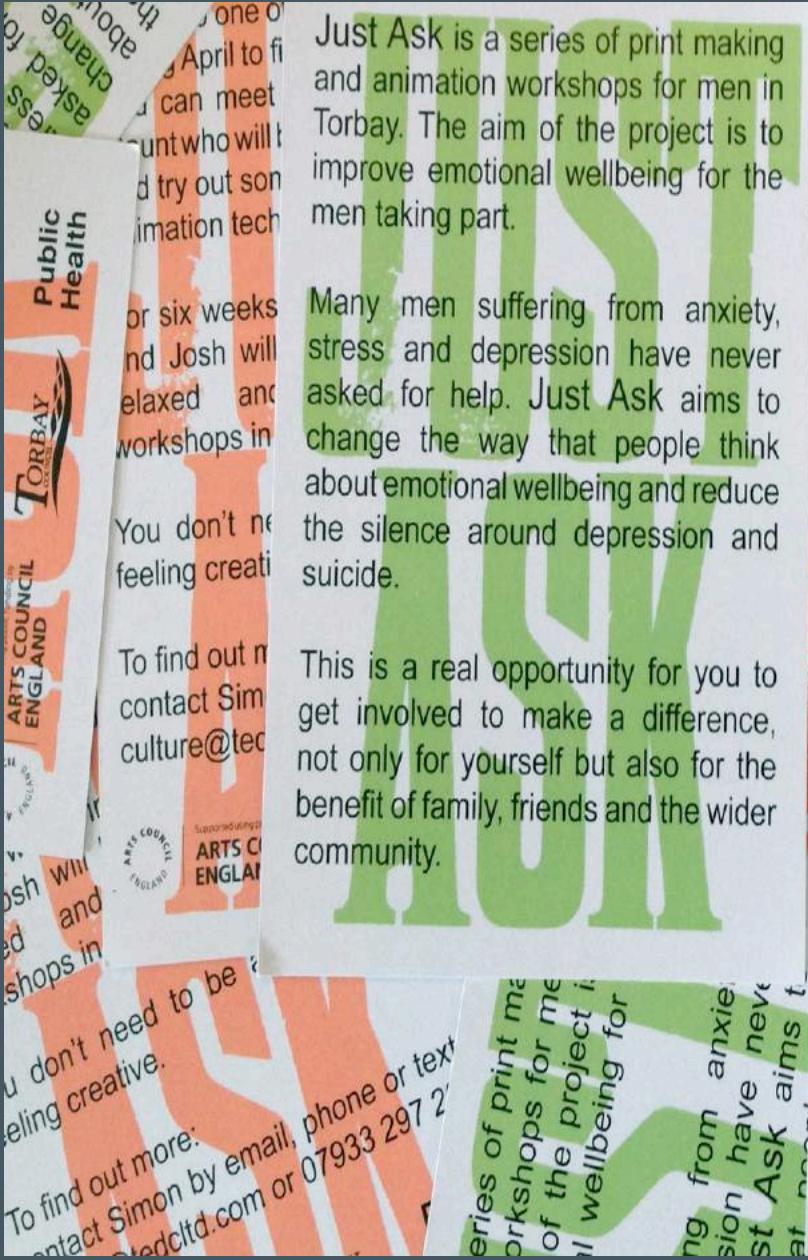
Simon Ripley, printmaker and Director of Double Elephant.

Josh Gaunt, working in stop-motion animation and documentary film-making.



# The Conversation Station





# Impetus

Torbay's male suicide rate is higher than the national average. This project aims to raise awareness of the stigma around talking about emotional health issues and suicide, while providing a creative outlet to develop emotionally healthy choices.

“Despite the best efforts of GPs, mental health and other services, we haven’t been able to reduce the suicide rate in Torbay. The majority of people, particularly men, who take their own life have never used mental health services and may not have talked to their GP – or to anyone else – about their problems. We have to look at alternative methods, and this project is an innovative and creative way of tackling the problem. As well as benefiting those men taking part, the outcomes will also have a positive impact on families, friends and communities, and ultimately, Torbay.”

*Public Health Torbay Principal Gerry Cadogan*

# Strong local networks emerging

- Clipper Inn, Dave Brazier
- Lions Collective, Tom Chapman
- Young Farmers, James Hoskins
- Heart of Devon, Dave Watt
- Network Rail representative
- Individual GPs with greater experience of identifying people at risk / suicide ideation
- ASIST training increasing number of people who feel able to respond, support, act.



# Reaching our participants

- Intention to target men most at risk, based on age, circumstances and location.
- Difficulty in reaching men who don't self-identify as being at risk.
- Suicide is still a very challenging word.
- More realistic to access groups already formed for joint interest, sport, common ground.
- Specific locations have a strong sense of group identity/ownership to build on.
- Those who have experience of support services feel more able to share their stories.



# Evaluation

- Just Ask is a pilot project. To achieve best outcomes, we need to accept its limitations. Quantitative evidence will be limited.
- Qualitative, ethnographic approach, providing narrative on process, interventions, interactions, group and individual dynamics.
- Project has involvement of Dr. Christabel Owens, Exeter University - expertise in field of research/evaluation work on self-harm and perceptions of suicide.
- Developing logic model/theory of change for this pilot, with a view to longer-term evaluation project specific to creative interventions for suicide prevention.
- Initial constructs agreed: Safe space. Creative and practical activities allow distraction from self and own issues. Male participant-documentors in room. No constant filming for evaluation purposes.

# Where next? More questions, more opportunities ...

- As the project develops, new opportunities are presenting themselves. What key partners, themes and programmes can we link with? How can this help provide support and structure for grassroots work through Lions Collective, Clipper Inn and other local activists?
- We need to listen, not assume - wait and see what the project produces/learns - what will the artists and participants create, provoke, demand?
- How can we be ready with new opportunities and ways forward so that we can harness energy and interest from key participants at the end of this project?



Such as ...

