

# LET'S TALK ABOUT AVOIDANCE

# #GLOBALGUYTALK

CONVERSATION GUIDE

A COOPERATION BETWEEN:

MAKE  
EQUAL

Si. Swedish  
Institute

# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide contains several questions on the topic of avoidance that you can choose from when hosting a #globalguytalk. They have been divided into different categories. Decide which questions you will answer and in which order. Choose questions based on what is most suitable for the target group and the local context.

## INTRODUCTION

*'#globalguytalk made me realise how much I've been avoiding my problems by running away from them. Recently, I've been working out a lot. I guess I thought keeping busy would help me feel less sad. It didn't work, and when I got back from the gym, the original thing that I was sad about was still there. So, I worked out even more, it became like an addiction. Now, I have more tools to deal with my emotions.'*

*'I'm a bit worried about my friend. His sister recently passed away, and I can tell*

*he's grieving. But he won't talk about it, and I don't know how to ask him how he's doing. During #globalguytalk I got a lot of ideas from other men that have been in a similar situation.'*

*'I recently got divorced, and since then, I've been working way too much. I started working overtime, evenings, weekends – I took every chance I got to work, work, work. My mum says I should relax and take care of myself, but honestly, I don't know if I know how to. It's funny that I had to attend a #globalguytalk to realise that this might be a problem.'*

These stories show you how you can open up and speak from the heart when joining the **#globalguytalk**. The topics in this guide are: avoiding problems, escapism, what this does to your emotional well-being, and tools to change this for the better.

# WARM-UP STATEMENTS – ANSWER YES OR NO

- I blame myself when I run from problems.
- I find it difficult to get help with my problems.
- I can avoid difficult situations in a healthy way.

# QUESTIONS, LEVEL 1

- Have you ever fled from problems by acting like they didn't exist?
- Sometimes we don't act logically when we're feeling down. Instead of confronting our problems, we avoid them. Do you relate to this kind of behaviour? How? Possible follow-up questions: What kind of avoidance can you relate to? Watching porn, working, drinking alcohol, doing drugs, working out, gaming?
- When you avoid your problems, how do you think it affects the people around you? Give examples. Possible follow-up question: Do you often think about how it affects others when you're feeling down?
- What are the consequences of avoiding problems instead of solving them? Possible follow-up question: Have you ever felt that your problems grew, or that new problems arose because you ignored the main problem?

# QUESTIONS, LEVEL 2

- If you noticed a male friend feeling down – maybe because he was drinking alcohol, working, or exercising too much – what would you do? Would you talk to him? Possible follow-up question: What would you do if that friend refused to talk about it?
- Have you ever avoided difficult emotions by trying to overachieve in certain areas, like your job, studies, sports, or hobbies? Feel free to give examples. Possible follow-up question: What could you have done instead?
- Where do you get support from when you feel stressed or sad? And how do you support others when they're feeling down? Possible follow-up question: If you don't have a person like that in your life, how can you build such a relationship?
- Are there certain problems, such as relationships, pressure to perform, stress, and grief, that are more difficult to handle than

others?

# QUESTIONS, LEVEL 3

- Do you watch a lot of porn to get your mind off other problems? Why and when? How do you feel before/after? Possible follow-up questions: Do you use a lot of alcohol/drugs? Why and when?
- Is there a problem in your life right now that you feel like running from? Possible follow-up question: How can you deal with that problem in a healthy way?
- How can you work on your avoidance behaviour?