



## **"SHED YOUR ARMOUR, SHOW THE SCARS!"**

### **– DIGITAL MEDIA TOOLKIT**

"Shed your armour, show the scars!" is a new campaign by Feniks, that addresses the crucial issue of discrimination against mental health problems. It urges men living in the Polish community of Scotland to come forward and ask for support in difficult situations.

We appreciate your support in spreading the campaign's message among the Polish community in Scotland and among interested organisations.

The toolkit offers information about the campaign. It includes:

- 1) Newsletter blurb
- 2) Suggested content for social media posts
- 3) Multimedia
- 4) Press release

The suggested content can be adapted as needed to reflect the style and nature of your organisation.

The campaign will be published on the Feniks website on September 26, 2022.

If you have any questions, please contact the project coordinator:

Marlena Grzegorek

Polish Social Movement Coordinator, Feniks

Email: [marlena.grzegorek@feniks.org.uk](mailto:marlena.grzegorek@feniks.org.uk)

Thank you!

## **About the campaign**

### Key messages:

- "Shed your armour, show the scars!" is a campaign created by the Polish Community Ambassadors in Scotland, coordinated by [Feniks](#) and [See Me Scotland](#).
- The main target group are Polish men living in Scotland, in the age group 25-54.
- The campaign challenges discrimination against mental health problems. The armour symbolises the emotional protection that shields men against different aspects of the social judgement, while the scars depict painful experiences.
- Henceforth, the call to action asks Polish men to remove the masks and speak up and express their true feelings freely. It encourages them and their relatives to talk and seek help and support.
- Anyone wishing to become part of the campaign can submit their mental health story anonymously via the form at [www.feniks.org.uk](http://www.feniks.org.uk).

### Statistical Evidence:

- A [study](#) conducted by Feniks explored the mental health of the Polish population in Scotland. It has revealed that over **65%** of men admitted having suicidal thoughts, whereas nearly 37% of the participants attempted to take their own life.
- Statistical data obtained by Feniks, in partnership with the [NHS](#), shows that the level of suicides among Polish men in Scotland is nearly twice as high as among Scots (96% higher).

Find the full report here: <https://www.seemescotland.org/media/9868/feniks-polish-men-in-scotland-report-2020.pdf>

## Suggested Content

### Newsletter:

Shed your armour, show the scars! Feniks and See Me encourage Polish men to share their problems.

"Shed your armour, show the scars!" is a new campaign created by Polish Community Ambassadors, coordinated by Feniks and See Me Scotland. The project challenges stigma and discrimination against mental health problems. The amour symbolises the emotional protection that shields men against different aspects of social judgement, while the scars depict painful experiences. Thus, the call to action asks Polish men to remove the mask and speak up. It encourages them and their relatives to talk and seek help and support. Conversations around these issues and how they can impact mental health, can save not just one, but many lives.

More information about the campaign can be found at [www.feniks.org.uk](http://www.feniks.org.uk)

### Social media posts

<b>Facebook</b>	<p>"Shed your armour, show the scars!"</p> <p>We are calling out to the Polish men living in Scotland to come forward and share their stories of struggles and inspire others to follow them in the path of courageously unmasking your fears!</p> <p>This campaign created by Polish Community Ambassadors, coordinated by Feniks and See Me Scotland, challenges stigma and discrimination against mental health problems. The amour symbolises the emotional protection that shields men against different aspects of the social judgement, while the scars depict painful experiences.</p> <p>Anyone wishing to become part of the campaign can submit their mental health story anonymously via the form at <a href="http://www.feniks.org.uk">www.feniks.org.uk</a> or you can write to our Campaign Coordinator, Marlena Grzegorek at <a href="mailto:marlena.grzegorek@feniks.org.uk">marlena.grzegorek@feniks.org.uk</a></p>
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Instagram	<p>We are calling out to the Polish men of Scotland – come forward and share your stories of strength and save lives.</p> <p>Our campaign “Shed your armour, show the scars!” sets a challenge to deeply ingrained stereotypes. It encourages men to share their experiences regarding ill psychological health and how they overcame the challenges.</p> <p>The campaign, created by mental health ambassadors under the leadership of See Me Scotland and Feniks, is a gauntlet thrown at the widespread phenomenon of mental health discrimination.</p> <p>We are looking for stories of courage and overcoming mental health challenges that can save many lives of other men who may need a role model and if you think you are one, reach out to our Campaign Project Coordinator, Marlena Grzegorek at <a href="mailto:marlena.grzegorek@feniks.org.uk">marlena.grzegorek@feniks.org.uk</a></p> <p>Find out more about the campaign <a href="https://feniks.org.uk/projects/shed-your-armour-show-the-scars/">https://feniks.org.uk/projects/shed-your-armour-show-the-scars/</a></p> <p>#ShedYourArmour #UnmaskCourage #MentalHealth #PolishCommunityinScotland</p>
Twitter	<p><b>Part 1:</b> Do you believe in sharing strength through stories of courage?</p> <p>@FeniksCentre in collaboration with @seemescotland has launched a campaign “Shed Your Armour, Show The Scars!”, that sets a challenge to deeply ingrained stereotypes.</p> <p>Find out more <a href="https://bit.ly/3LF37db">https://bit.ly/3LF37db</a></p> <p>#ShedYourArmour (1/3)</p> <p><b>Part 2:</b> The campaign, created by mental health ambassadors, is a crucial step towards paving the path of mental &amp; emotional wellbeing for Polish men.</p> <p>It encourages them to share experiences regarding ill psychological health &amp; how they overcame the challenges.</p> <p><a href="https://bit.ly/3fiKcsC">https://bit.ly/3fiKcsC</a> (2/3)</p> <p><b>Part 3:</b> Calling out to #Polish men to uncover your scars &amp; talk about #MentalHealth challenges they have overcome.</p>

	<p>We're looking for stories of courage that can save many lives of other men.</p> <p>Reach out to our Campaign Project Coordinator, Marlena Grzegorek at <a href="mailto:marlena.grzegorek@feniks.org.uk">marlena.grzegorek@feniks.org.uk</a></p> <p>(3/3)</p>
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## Multimedia

All multimedia content can be found on the page of the campaign, at <https://feniks.org.uk/projects/shed-your-armour-show-the-scars/>

## Press Release

Shed your armour, show the scars!

Social campaign for men's mental health.

The charity organisation Feniks encourages Polish men to share their problems.

"Shed your armour, show the scars!" is a campaign created by Polish Community Ambassadors coordinated by Feniks and See Me Scotland. The campaign challenges discrimination against mental health problems. The armour symbolises the emotional protection that shields men against different aspects of the social judgement, while the scars depict painful experiences. Henceforth, the call to action asks Polish men to remove the mask and speak up. It encourages them and their relatives to talk and seek help and support. Conversations around these issues and how they can impact mental health, can save not just one, but many lives.

A study conducted by Feniks explored the mental health of the Polish population in Scotland. It has revealed that over 65% of men admitted having suicidal thoughts, whereas nearly 37% of the participants attempted to take their own life. Statistical data obtained by Feniks, in partnership with [NHS](#), shows that the level of suicides among Polish men in Scotland is nearly twice as high as among Scots (96% higher). One of the factors contributing to these results derives from individual

reluctance towards seeking help. It is a direct consequence of shame, fear, or discomfort around the acknowledgment of mental health problems.

Our campaign, "Shed your armour, show the scars!" sets a challenge to deeply ingrained stereotypes. It encourages men to share their experiences regarding ill psychological health and how they overcame those challenges.

The campaign, created by mental health ambassadors under the leadership of See Me Scotland and Feniks, is a gauntlet thrown at the widespread phenomenon of mental health discrimination.

*"Until recently, I had problems that overwhelmed me. I felt very lonely. But I found the willingness, strength, and courage to speak up. Choosing to see a professional was one of the best decisions I made in my life. Finally, I had someone to ask: "What is going on with me, and how do I fix this?". From that moment on, my life changed dramatically. I see things in brighter colours. Life tastes better, and everything seems more straightforward. "*

*"I have participated in the Polish Community Ambassadors project because I want to inspire men in a similar situation. I don't wish for others to experience what I have gone through. I want to be a living proof that you can come out of any pit. Talking about our feelings is nothing to be ashamed of.*

*Thus, together with a group of Polish Community Ambassadors, we ask you to seek help in difficult moments. It can change your life, and above all, it will help you recover."* Said Paweł Paprocki, Ambassador for mental health.

Famous Polish actors, Tomasz Ciachorowski and Artur Paczesny, as well as musicians from Edinburgh's Paraletic Universe Records are actively supporting the campaign. Additionally the project has been backed up by the local representatives of professions often performed by Polish men in Scotland. We believe that such a wide response among men from various social groups indicates that the problem, although often unseen, affects many of them.

*"The campaign is the culmination of several years of work on the problem of suicides among Polish men in Scotland. Subsequent studies have shown that men are afraid to talk openly about their issues due to high expectations and widespread stereotypes. Consequently, we can observe a high rate of suicide among Poles. I admire the campaign prepared by the Polish Community Ambassadors and the Campaign Coordinator. At the same time, I would like to thank all the men who agreed to give their voice to this important project."* said Magda Czarnecka, Feniks' Chief Executive Officer.

Wendy Halliday, Director, See Me, Scotland's programme to end mental health stigma and discrimination, said: "This campaign is vital in helping to address some of the stigma and discrimination which impacts Polish people in Scotland who struggle with their mental health.

*"We know that Polish people – men in particular – face additional barriers when it comes to talking about their mental health and accessing support. Stigma is a key reason for this, with people*

*concerned they will be judged if they reach out, or they will judge themselves for the way they feel. Additionally they face issues around the social isolation that comes from being far away from family and friends, difficulties with employability, a language barrier and misunderstanding of the country's health care system.*

*"Nobody should have to struggle with their mental health alone, or be made to feel different or undeserving of support. This new campaign will help to open up those important conversations."*

The campaign will run from the 26<sup>th</sup> of September, until 17<sup>th</sup> of October.

If you, or anyone you know, experiences mental health issues – do not hesitate!

Find professional help here:

- [GP](#) – book an appointment, you can bring along your significant other and ask for a confidential interpreter.
- NHS 24 [helpline](#) – call 111. The service provides language assistance.
- Breathing Space – call 0800 83 85 87. Helpline service, run by the NHS, for people who suffer from depression and anxiety.
- Feniks – call 0131 629 1881. If you want to speak to a Polish therapist – limited availability due to restricted funds.
- Edinburgh Local Crisis Centre – call 0808 801 0414. The service provides language assistance.
- Samaritans – call 116 123. The Scottish helpline provides confidential and emotional support to anyone who experiences mental health issues.

Visit [www.feniks.org.uk](http://www.feniks.org.uk) for more information or contact the campaign coordinator,

Marlena Grzegorek, Polish Social Movement Coordinator, [marlena.grzegorek@feniks.org.uk](mailto:marlena.grzegorek@feniks.org.uk)

Useful information for the editors:

1. Feniks

Feniks is a grass-roots charitable organisation set up in 2007 to support the Central Eastern European community in Edinburgh and Scotland.

Our aim is to address health inequalities, promote integration and support the well-being and human rights of CEE communities. We provide culturally sensitive psychological support; community groups; advice and advocacy; immigration advice limited to the EU Settlement Scheme.

Know more about our work here: [Website](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

2. The project is carried out in cooperation with the [See Me Scotland](#) organisation

See Me is Scotland's Programme to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination. They are funded by the [Scottish Government](#) and managed by the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) and the [Mental Health Foundation](#).

They are working towards achievement of The Scottish Government's commitment to create:

A Scotland where people can get the right help at the right time, expect recovery, and fully enjoy their rights, free from stigma and discrimination.

See Me Scotland believes that tackling stigma and discrimination and addressing the barriers they create must be central to any action to improve mental health. Doing so creates the best conditions for mental wellbeing, preventative action and early intervention, for personalised support, care and treatment and for recovery.