



## Depression in Men

Clinical depression is a biologically-based brain disorder that affects one's thoughts, feelings, behavior and physical health. It is an "affective disorder," which means that changes in mood occur in the depressed person. Clinical depression does not discriminate—it can develop in anyone at any age.

Depression is a serious but treatable medical condition that can strike anyone, including men. Men tend to deny having a problem because they are supposed to "be strong." Men who are depressed are more likely to talk about the physical symptoms of their depression, such as feeling tired, rather than those related to emotions. Men are less likely to exhibit typical signs of depression.

Understanding how men in our society are brought up to behave is particularly important in identifying and treating their depression. Depression in men often can be traced to cultural expectations. Physical symptoms may often mask some of the true symptoms of depression, forcing men to express aggression and anger instead.

## Symptoms

- Constant feelings of sadness and anxiety
- Feeling hopelessness, helplessness, pessimism and guilt
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy or feeling fatigued
- Difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or remembering
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Abusing alcohol or other drugs
- Thoughts of suicide or death

## Statistics

- Eighty percent of all people who commit suicide in the U.S. are men.
- At least six million men in the U.S. suffer from a depressive disorder every year.
- In contrast to women, men may be unexpectedly eager to communicate that they are feeling tired, irritable, have a loss of interest in work or hobbies, and are having

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issues with sleep. Studies have shown that they rely on the physical symptoms of depression rather than grief, hopelessness and extreme guilt.

- Men may be more willing to acknowledge fatigue, irritability, loss of interest in work or hobbies, and sleep disturbances rather than feelings of sadness, worthlessness, and excessive guilt that women will admit.
- Men are less likely to seek treatment for depression. Many men with depression do not obtain adequate diagnosis and treatment that may be life saving.
- More than 80 percent of people with depressive disorders improve when they receive appropriate treatment.
- Depression is not the fault of someone or a weakness. Certain factors such as family history, excess stress, a serious illness or the loss of a loved one can onset depression.

### Tips

- Men often feel inadequate and become depressed due to societal demands about obligations to provide for their families. It is important to help them deal with these pressures and help them realize they are not alone.
- Depressive disorders can make one feel exhausted, worthless, helpless, and hopeless. Men are often expected to not have these feelings. It is essential to realize that these negative views are part of the depression and do not accurately reflect the actual circumstances.
- Try to talk to him about depression. Help him understand that depression is a common illness among men and is nothing to be ashamed about.
- Surround him with loved ones and tell him to share his feelings as much as possible with family and friends.
- Encourage him to think positively. This will help eliminate negative thoughts and improve treatment.
- Healing takes time; don't expect to get well overnight. Feelings should improve gradually and not immediately.

**ADAMH is your community safety net. If you or someone you love needs help call 276-CARE, the front door to the ADAMH system of care.**