

Men and Depression

One in eight men experience depression at some stage of their lives. Mental health issues in men too regularly go undetected or untreated. There are many complex reasons for this, and they can often be attributed to a lack of awareness of both the issue and the symptoms.

MAN VS MENTAL HEALTH

Across all areas of health and wellbeing men tend to delay accessing diagnosis and assistance. Some men refrain from recognising emotional pain which can contribute to the reasons they can suffer from serious health issues. Earlier insight into emotional distress can support earlier intervention, preventing the development of some serious mental health conditions for men.

PAY ATTENTION

Depression can be a serious condition that won't just get better on its own. As you would see a doctor for a broken arm, treat your mental health in the same way. Depression can present in numerous ways, including feelings of irritability or anger. It's normal to occasionally feel 'down' or upset, but if you find yourself continuously feeling angry, sad, or moody, or you're having trouble sleeping or concentrating, it could be something more serious. You might also find yourself beginning to lose interest in the things you once enjoyed.

KNOW THE SIGNS

According to the Victorian Bar Association, the three most common signs of depression in men are:

- **Physical pain:** such as backache, frequent headaches, sleep problems, sexual dysfunction, or digestive disorders.
- **Anger:** this could range from irritability, sensitivity to criticism, a loss of sense of humour, road rage, short temper, or violence.
- **Reckless behaviour:** this could involve pursuing dangerous sports, driving recklessly, abusing drugs, or gambling compulsively.

WHY AM I DEPRESSED?

The exact causes of depression are unclear as they differ for

each person. However, there are some known high risk factors for men. Social isolation and loneliness are now widely accepted as risk factors for both depression and anxiety. Research suggests men aged 30-65 experience more loneliness and have smaller social networks than women in the same age bracket. Studies also show that 1 in 4 men in their middle years experience low levels of social support, and an alarming 25% of men say they have no one outside of their immediate family they can rely on, according to the Victorian Bar Association. Good interpersonal relationships and social connectedness have a positive impact on both mental and general health and wellbeing. If you can, seek out a trusted friend and/or family member. Share what you're going through with the people you love and trust. The people you talk to don't have to be able to fix you; they just need to be good listeners. Ask for the help and support you need.

TRY TO REACH OUT

Below are some tips for reaching out and building relationships:

- **Join a support group:** Being with others who are facing the same problems can help reduce your sense of isolation and remove the feelings of stigma.
- **Volunteer:** Helping others while expanding your social network.
- **Invite someone to a sports game or movie:** There are plenty of other people who feel as awkward reaching out and making new friends. Try being the one to break the ice.
- **Call or email a buddy:** Even if you've retreated from some relationships, make the effort to reconnect.
- **Professional support:** Talking therapy works! There's no shame in reaching out for help.

Need a professional to talk to? Call 1300 687 327 and we'll connect you with a Converge consultant

Emergency services - Ambulance: 000

Lifeline crisis support and suicide prevention: 13 11 14 or www.lifeline.org.au.



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