

More About Men's Depression

Researchers are only beginning to discover that men can experience depression in ways that are different from women. Men often cope with their symptoms in different ways too. These findings might help explain why even trained mental health professionals frequently overlook or misdiagnose men's depression.

Classic Symptoms of Depression

1. Depressed, sad mood
2. Loss of interest or pleasure
3. Significant weight loss or gain
4. Trouble sleeping or over-sleeping
5. Restless feelings and inability to sit still or slow down
6. Fatigue, loss of energy, or tired all the time
7. Worthless or guilty feelings
8. Impaired concentration and difficulty making decisions
9. Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide

To be diagnosed with depression, a person must be experiencing five or more of these symptoms, including either depressed mood or loss of interest, over a two-week period. These symptoms must also be causing significant distress and interfering with the person's social, work or academic functioning.

One of the problems with this classic diagnosis of depression is that researchers are beginning to recognize that men often don't acknowledge feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or guilt. Researchers – and clinicians specializing in helping men – are also beginning to recognize symptoms of depression that seem to be unique to men.

Symptoms of Men's Depression

- Increased anger and conflict with others
- Increased use of alcohol or other drugs
- Violent behavior
- Losing weight without trying
- Isolation from family and friends
- Being easily stressed
- Impulsiveness and taking risks, like reckless driving and extramarital sex
- Feeling discouraged
- Increases in complaints about physical problems
- Ongoing physical symptoms, like headaches, digestion problems or pain
- Problems with concentration and motivation
- Loss of interest in work, hobbies and sex
- Working constantly
- Frustration or irritability
- Misuse of prescription medication
- Increased concerns about productivity and functioning at school or work
- Fatigue
- Thoughts of suicide

A man who's depressed won't experience all these symptoms. Some men experience only a few of them, while others experience many. And how bad these symptoms get also varies among men – and over time.

The important thing to know about these symptoms, and about men's depression, is that they're treatable. Men don't have to continue suffering from them. And although it's a very serious – and sometimes life-threatening condition – men can recover from depression. According to Dr. Will Courtenay, the key to recovery is getting professional help.

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