

Services Provided:

- Individual therapy
- Group therapy
- Pre-surgical evaluations
- Psychological evaluations

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COLORADO HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

www.coloradohealthpsychology.com

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Male Depression www.mayoclinic.com

Depression affects about 6 million men and 12 million women in America each year (NIMH). While it may seem as if men are less affected by depression, that assumption may not be entirely true. The differences between male and female depression include the possibilities that: male depression may often go undiagnosed; men and women may experience different depression symptoms; men with depression are more likely to die by suicide than are women with depression; and men may need an emphasis on learning healthy coping skills.

Male depression may go undiagnosed. These reasons may include:

- **Reluctance to discuss depression symptoms.** Men may not be open to talking about their symptoms, especially emotions and feelings,

with family or friends, let alone a health care professional. This may lead to not being properly diagnosed or treated

- **Seeing mental illness as a threat to one's masculinity.**

Some men have learned to place an emphasis on independence, competitiveness, emotional stoicism, and self-control. They may think it's "unmanly" to express feelings and emotions associated with depression and instead try to suppress them.

- **Masking depression symptoms.** Men may mask depression symptoms by alcohol or substance abuse. They may focus on the physical symptoms of depression, rather than emotional or behavioral problems.

The symptoms may not match typical depression symptoms. All of these can make it more difficult to detect male depression and may lead to a misdiagnosis.

- **Resisting mental health treatment.** Even if men are diagnosed with male depression, they may refuse treatment. They may worry about stigma damaging their career or about losing the respect of family and friends.

Current and previous issues of the CHP newsletter can be found on our website. Please feel free to email us with topic requests, questions, etc. for future issues.

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Male Depression: Symptoms and Suicide www.mayoclinic.com

Whether it's because of hormones, brain chemicals, or coping methods, some evidence suggests that men may experience depression differently than from how a woman does. Signs and symptoms more likely to occur with male depression include:

- violent or abusive behavior;
- inappropriate rage
- escapist behavior, such as overin-

volvement in work or sports

- risky behavior, such as reckless driving
- sexual liaisons
- alcohol or substance abuse
- more frequent thoughts of suicide.

Having these kinds of symptoms

can make it more difficult to link them to depression, making diag-

nosis and treatment harder.

Although women attempt suicide more often than men do, men are more likely to complete suicide. Older white men are at the greatest risk of suicide. Men may be more likely to complete suicide because:

- They use methods that are more likely to be lethal, such as guns
- They act faster on suicidal thoughts
- They show fewer warning signs, such as talk of suicide.



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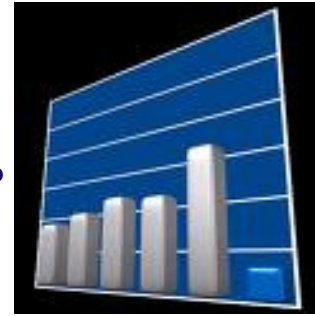
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Male Depression Statistics

- In America alone, more than 6 million men (nearly 7%) have depression each year (www.nimh.nih.gov)
- In one study (NCHS, 2008), 35% of men reported that their depressive symptoms made it very or extremely difficult for them to work, get things done at home, or get along with other people.
- Men may be more willing to acknowledge fatigue, irritability, loss in interest in work or hobbies, and sleep disturbance rather than feelings of sadness, worthlessness, or excessive guilt (Pollack, 1998; Cochran & Rabinowitz, 2000)
- More than four times as many men as women die by suicide in the United States, even though women make more suicide attempts during their lives (Kochanek, et al., 2004; Moscicki, 1999)
- In 2002, suicide was the third leading cause of death among young males, age 15-24 (Kochanek, et al., 2004).
- Over 70% of older suicide victims visit their primary care physician within the month of their death; many have a depressive illness that goes undetected during these visits (Conwell, 2001)
- Approximately 80% of older adults with depression improve when they receive treatment with antidepressant medication, psychotherapy, or a combination of both (Little, et al., 1998)



Male Depression and Coping Skills www.mayoclinic.com

Many men may feel that their depression symptoms aren't severe. They may believe that they should be able to just get over them or tough them out. They may try to deny depression symptoms, ignore them, or blunt them by drinking too much alcohol, taking illicit drugs, or working longer hours.

These kinds of attempts at coping with male depression will likely just result in chronic unhappiness and misery, and possibly at risk of losing one's life.



It takes effort to practice healthy coping skills rather than automatically turning to alcohol, speeding, or frequent sex. Treatment with a doctor or mental health care provider can help someone learn healthy coping skills. These may include:

- **Goals.** Set realistic goals and prioritize tasks.
- **Support.** Seek out emotional support from a partner or family or friend. In general, men tend to disregard the

value of emotional support in coping with male depression.

- **Activities.** Encourage men to engage in activities they enjoy, such as exercise, movies, ball games, or fishing.
- **Decisions.** Delay making important decisions, such as changing jobs, until depression symptoms improve.

Many effective treatments are available for depression. It is important that men not be encouraged to "tough out" male depression on their own. The consequences may be devastating.