

## Men's Mental Health

Mental health is of paramount importance for us all, especially in the past year when we have all been affected one way or another by the pandemic. Being aware of mental health for all people is a vital part of knowing where to offer additional support and infrastructure in society.

This article is focussing on Men's mental health, the facts and figures, the why and how to support them.

### The facts and figures for the UK

- Three times as many men die from suicide when compared with women
- Men aged between 40 and 49 have the highest suicide rate
- Men report lower levels of life satisfaction than women
- Men are less likely to access psychological support than women
- Nearly 75% of adults who go missing are men
- Around 87% of rough sleepers are men
- Men are three times as likely to become dependent on alcohol or drugs
- Men are more likely to be sectioned for treatment than women
- Men are more likely to be victims of violent crime
- The vast majority of the prison population are men

### Do men talk about mental health?

Due to societal expectations of men being strong, dominant and in control it means that not many men reach out for support when they might need it. Gender stereotypes impact both men and women and their mental health.

There is some research to say that men who can't speak openly about their emotions are also less likely to recognise any symptoms of mental health problems they may be dealing with. This can result in the use of drugs or alcohol as a coping method as men are much likelier to do this when compared to women.

### Is depression different for men and women?

Although depression isn't different for men and women, men are more likely to display symptoms such as irritability, loss of control, risk taking and aggression. As previously mentioned, they are

also more likely to turn to drugs and/or alcohol or exhibit escapist behaviour such as throwing themselves into work or another focus.

## Men's suicide

In 2017 almost 600 suicides were recorded with around 75% of them being men making suicide the largest cause of death for men under 50.

Higher rates of suicide in men are also seen in minority communities including war veterans, men from BAME backgrounds and those with low incomes. These could all be contributed by experiencing well known risk factors such as economic hardship, unemployment and a lack of social support.

## How can I help someone who I think is suffering from mental health issues?

If you have a friend or relative who you're worried about then there are number of things you can do to help them:

- Ensure they feel they can reach out to you by keeping in regular contact with them. People will often find it hard to reach out if not
- Let them know you're there for them to listen without judging them
- Find out whether there are any local support groups might be a good support mechanism
- Help them to find help and reassure them that it's okay to ask for help and support is out there
- Maintain your own mental health whilst supporting someone else. It can put a strain on your own mental health so make sure you look after yourself so you can continue to better look after others

## What can I do about my own mental health?

If you're struggling with your own mental health and want to get some tips on how you might be able to help yourself you can visit the Care first lifestyle site which has a huge range of articles and recorded webinars which may be of help.

If you feel you may need some support, you can contact Care first. Care first is a leading provider of confidential, professional counselling, information and advice services. All employees are eligible to use Care first, our services include; telephone counselling, information services and online support. Call Care first on the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.