

The Importance of Men's Mental Health



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June is a month often filled with vacations, hot dogs, baseball, and family reunions! However, it is also a month that marks the beginning of LGBTQ+ Pride, Alzheimer's Awareness month, National PTSD Awareness month and Men's Mental Health Awareness Month. This summer special edition will focus on struggles with mental health experienced by men.

Statistics have shown that men are less likely to seek out resources. In the web article "Why Aren't More Men in Therapy?" by Hayes Peebles, it is noted that that only 50% of American men engage in routine medical care. Also, in the same article it was noted that only 8% U.S Adult males received therapy during the year 2020. In the same year, 12% of U.S. adult females received therapy. In the mental health world, there are also fewer male therapists. The American Psychological Association noted that about 68% of therapists are female.

So why is it that men use less resources, such as mental health counseling? A great deal is an old-fashioned belief that men are expected to be tough. And a man who attends counseling is not seen as tough. Look at the way men are perceived by the media.

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Famous Men who Battle Mental Health

by Jamie Leslie

To help decrease the stigma against men attending counseling and using other health resources, I investigated famous men who battle mental health issues. My hope is to normalize the use of mental health resources for men.

1. Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson –

On screen, he tends to play into the gender stereotype of a man who should be strong, independent and push through obstacles that get in his way. But in real life, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson has experienced battles with depression. In an ABC News web article "Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson Struggles with Depression", he opens about his struggle with mental health. He notes "I've worked hard over the years to gain the emotional tools to work through any mental pain that may come to test me. As men, we didn't talk about it. We just kept our head down and worked through it. Not healthy, but it's all we knew." He now advocates for other men to seek out support and find a support system to talk to.

2. Ryan Reynolds –

His is well know as the merc with the mouth (Deadpool). And takes on the role of an action star with comedic elements in other movies as well. In an interview with the New York times, he notes "I have anxiety, I've always had anxiety. Both in the lighthearted I'm anxious about this kind of thing, and I've been to the depths of the darker end of the spectrum, which is not fun." He notes it was after the birth of his daughters that he decided to go public with it. He wanted to model to them the importance of destigmatizing the conversation around mental health.

3. Brandon Marshall –

On the field he is top notch wide receiver. Best known for his ability to dodge tackles. But things changed for Brandon in 2011, when he was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. Since then, he has been a strong advocate for mental health. He launched "HOA+" which he notes as a holistic training program. He wants people to prioritize making space for holistic care to lessen mental health suffering. That was his goal when he started the "HOA+".

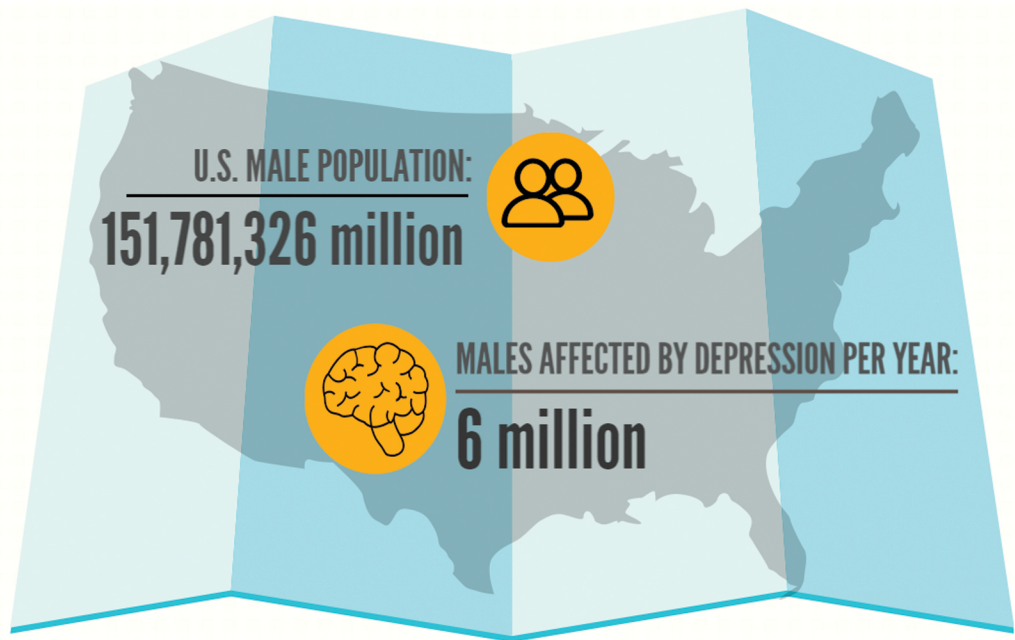
4. Chris Evans –

Even Captain America has down days! From the article "15 Male Celebrities Who Have Struggled with Depression" found in the Men's Health webpage, Chris Evans discussed his struggles with anxiety. Evan's notes that he has a strong fear of failure that has held him back. This even led to him turning down the iconic role of Captain America. After speaking to his family, he moved forward with accepting the role and then seeking out therapy. He notes "I'll talk to a therapist and see what they have to say. I do struggle with anxiety about certain things." His work with his own therapy helped him shift his mindset.

5. Prince Harry of Wales –

Prince Harry is no stranger to the stress and pressure that go along with the British Monarchy. He has been very open with his struggles with mental health in a recent docuseries called "The Me You Can't See". Through the docuseries he shares stories of dealing with emotional trauma. One such trauma was of course the loss of his mother. He talks about experiencing sever anxiety and panic attacks. Prince Harry used EMDR to help him move through his past traumas and continues to advocate for mental health resources for others.



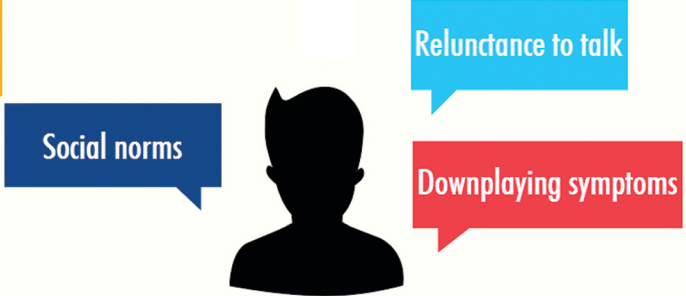


 1 in 5 adults experience a mental health problem each year

Serious mental illness costs America \$193.2 billion in lost earnings per year 

SEEKING TREATMENT

 MEN ARE LESS LIKELY THAN WOMEN TO SEEK HELP FOR DEPRESSION, SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND STRESSFUL LIFE EVENTS DUE TO:
www.mentalhealthamerica.net



Goodbye and Hello!

Three Trails is saying goodbye to one of our amazing counselors! **Liz Kornkven** is retiring from Three Trails on June 29th. Liz has worked at Three Trails since 2017. She started off as a part-time counselor and then moved into a full-time counseling position in 2019 until 2022. At that time, she went back to a part-time position. Liz is a certified EMDR therapist with training in using the FLASH technique with clients as well. Her experience, compassion, and genuine empathy will be missed by all her clients and staff. We hope that her retirement provides her with lots of trips around our blue planet, time with family, and countless cat naps!

We have hired two new part-time counselors here at Three Trails! We are excited to welcome **Jennifer Bays** and **Gage Williams** to the counseling staff at Three Trails. Be on the lookout for their bios on our website! Jennifer is working on completing her Doctorate and graduated with her master's in science at the University of Wyoming (2019). Gage Williams graduated with his master's in social work from Boston University (2021). We are excited to have them on board!



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John Wayne was not a softy! His characters punched out anyone who doubted his masculinity. The Marlboro Man was a solitude figure that never talked about feelings. Rambo didn't sit by the water with tears in his eyes. Nope he rose out of the water with gun in hand. In the media, gender stereotyping runs unhinged.

Men are more likely to experience substance abuse compared to women. According to the Addiction Center's Article "The Differences in Addiction Between men and Women", this can stem from increased peer pressure to be a part of a group. Also there tends to be more expectations for men to be risk takers and to engage in dangerous behaviors compared to women.

Another mental health concern that is high amongst men is depression. According to the Newport Institutes Web article "The 5 Most Common Male Mental Disorders", depression is high amongst men but often goes untreated. From the same source, "49% of men feel more depressed than they are willing to admit to the people around them and about 45% believe mental health issues can be solved on their own." Because of the lack of care for depression, more men follow through with death by suicide. National Institutes of Health (NIMH) has found that suicide rate among males is 4 times higher than females. And men are more likely to use violent methods to complete suicide and less likely to survive an attempt than females.

What can be done? To start, we need to normalize using counseling and other resources for men. We need to start with our young boys and validate all emotions and stop shaming them when they cry. And it can all start with you dear reader! You can work to hold space for the men in your life. You could teach your sons the importance of recognizing all feelings and using healthy coping strategies to manage their feelings.

You could be the change!

Mental Health Tips for Men

by Jamie Leslie

Now that we have focused a light on the mental health concerns for men, lets look at tips to improve on mental health for men.

1. **Build social connections** – I once had therapist note that we need battle buddies. You need to have someone that will carry you over the hill during battle. Everyone needs someone that has their six. We are social beings so finding a group of battle buddies (or even just one) helps us decrease the experience of both depression and anxiety.
2. **Exercise** – Exercise of any type will increase the release of endorphins. Endorphins are chemicals released by the brain and nervous system to relieve pain and improve mood. Exercise also reduces cortisol (a steroid hormone that is released into your bloodstream when stressed). Too much cortisol increases the symptoms of anxiety,
3. **Hobbies** – Engaging in hobbies keeps us active. We also feel more connected and confident when we make time for activities we enjoy. Consider the benefits of shooting sports. Shooting sports often builds on confidence and lots of breath work is used which increases focus and concentration. Hobbies provide us outlets to let off pent-up energy!
4. **Watch what you eat** – Food is mood! Sodas, White Bread, coffee, energy drinks and alcohol can increase anxiety symptoms. Whole foods can boost your mental health (fruits, vegetables, and complex carbs). Lean proteins can help decrease symptoms of depression (skinless chicken, fish, eggs, Greek yogurt, and nuts). Foods high in omega-3s helps feed your brain (fish, nuts, leafy greens, olive oil).
5. **Seek out Counseling** – No one should do it on their own! Counselors can provide coping skills to manage anxiety, depression, and many other mental health concerns. They can provide an unbiased view and strong empathy to help normalize the battles that we face in our daily lives.

