

# Men and Mental Health



## Mental Health Matters

*A Monthly Newsletter from Atlantic Behavioral Health*

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS | June 2024

Guys are built in their own way.

Of course, we are all human, and there are more things that are similar between men and women than are different, but men do have their own unique issues. These differences can impact men's mental health and deserve respect and attention.

So, let's talk about guys and mental health.

If you are a man, you might have specific risk factors that impact your mental health. One area of risk for men can be societal expectations and traditional gender roles. These differences can place unique challenges and pressures on men.



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Some of these expectations might be a belief that:

- “I must be the primary breadwinner in the family.”
- “I shouldn’t talk about how I am feeling. This will make me look weak.”
- “I have to do it all on my own.”
- “I have to be in control at all times.”

When these beliefs become ridged and inflexible, they can lead to what is called “Cognitive Distortions” and that can contribute to feeling stuck, trapped, and basically, awful. Remember, sure you are a guy, but you are human, too. And people are allowed to feel all kinds of things, make mistakes, ask for help, and sometimes really mess up.

The “go it alone” thinking can lead to a belief that if a guy can’t figure it all out on his own, he might as well end it all. Sadly, this happens all too often. In fact, while women attempt suicide more often than men, it is men who are more likely to die by suicide. That is something that we need to talk about. [Men's mental health: Common challenges \(medicalnewstoday.com\)](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/)”

There are times when you need to dig deep for strength. Taking care of your mental health and recovering from a period of depression or other mental health challenge will require new ways of being strong:

- **Competition** - Can be great when you are trying to achieve a goal. If you notice that you are always comparing yourself to others, this could set you back when you are recovering from a mental health hit like a job loss, depression or severe anxiety. Maybe you are even comparing yourself to who you were in the past. You might have to use some tough love and learn to let that go.
- **Be a good friend** - To yourself. Think about how you would support a good friend going through a tough time. You probably wouldn’t tell him he is a “loser” or a “failure” if he was working his way out of a depression. So don’t do that to yourself. Be your own good friend.
- **Let it heal** - If you got a broken leg while skydiving or making a touchdown that won the game, you wouldn’t like it, but you would probably be smart enough to let it heal. Same rules apply if you are recovering from a bad case of job burnout, heartbreak or loss that triggered a depression. Ya got to let it heal, man!
- **Take some credit** - We know you are not looking for a bunch of empty pats on the back, but everyone needs some acknowledgement and credit when they are slogging through a tough time. And recovering from a depression or a mental health issue is a good time to give yourself some credit. Did you make and keep that doctor appointment and are taking the medication prescribed? Good for you! Did you get off social media and put good sleep hygiene in place? That is a win! Did you decide that some counseling is a good next step to help you through this tough time? Way to go!

Being a man is not always easy in this ever-changing world. Keeping yourself healthy, both physically and mentally, will help you be the best man you can be, for yourself, your family and community.

## Unique Challenges for Gay Men and Mental Health

Gay men face unique challenges that can significantly impact their mental health. Even with increased awareness and acceptance, stigma, discrimination, and societal prejudice remain pervasive issues that contribute to a higher prevalence of mental health problems in this community. There is a challenge of internalized homophobia that some gay men experience, which can lead to feelings of shame and guilt. This internal conflict often exacerbates anxiety and depression.

The fear of rejection or negative judgment can result in social isolation. Some gay men might conceal their sexual orientation for a long time, which can be mentally exhausting and emotionally draining. For some men, this concealment may hinder the formation of meaningful relationships and support networks, further isolating individuals.

Additionally, gay men are at a higher risk of experiencing bullying and violence, both in their youth and adulthood. The trauma from such experiences can have long-lasting effects, contributing to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health issues. The pressure to conform to heteronormative standards and the lack of representation and acceptance in many communities can compound feelings of inadequacy and loneliness.

Substance abuse is another significant concern. Some gay men may turn to drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism to deal with the stress and discrimination they face. This can lead to a cycle of dependency and further deteriorate mental health.

Access to appropriate mental health care is also a challenge. There can be a lack of culturally competent providers who understand the specific needs and experiences of gay men, leading to inadequate or ineffective treatment. Stigma around seeking mental health care can also prevent many from reaching out for the support they need.

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including societal acceptance, supportive policies, and accessible, culturally competent mental health care services.

**CIS and gay men deserve to have good mental health care that addresses their unique issues. Start with a good honest discussion with your primary health provider.**

- ⇒ **Avoid using substances to manage stress**
- ⇒ **Practice opening up to a safe and trusted person**
- ⇒ **Explore the full range of feelings and check to see what else you might be feeling if you're getting angry more often**
- ⇒ **If you are having thoughts of suicide, talk to someone or go to your nearest emergency room**

**988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: 988**

## CRISIS RESOURCES

**If you feel you or someone you know may harm themselves or someone else:**

**988** Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: **988**

The Trevor Lifeline for LGBTQIA + Youth : **1-866-488-7386**

Veterans Crisis Line: **Dial 988 and Press 1**

**Dial 211:** 211 provides callers with information about and referrals to social services for every day needs and in times of crisis

National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-SAFE**

National Sexual Assault Hotline at **1-800-656-HOPE**

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)  
24/7 Hotline **1-800-656-4673**

## ADDICTION RESOURCES

**SAMHSA's National Helpline** is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and [Spanish](#))

[Also visit the online treatment locator. Call: 1-800-662-HELP \(4357\)](#)

**Alcoholics Anonymous** - [Northern New Jersey AA - Meeting Finder \(nnjaa.org\)](#)

**Narcotics Anonymous** - [NA Meetings in NJ \(narcoticsanonymousnj.org\)](#)

**NJ Self Help Clearinghouse** 800-367-6274 - [FIND A GROUP | NJSHGCH \(njgroups.org\)](#)

## Atlantic Behavioral Health

**ACCESS Center:**

**888-247-1400**

Atlantic Behavioral Health Crisis Intervention

Services **24/7 Hotlines:**

**Chilton Medical Center: 973-831-5078**

**Hackettstown Medical Center 908-454 -5141**

**Morristown Medical Center: 973-540-0100**

**Overlook Medical Center: 908-522-3586**

**Newton Medical Center: 973-383-0973**

Email: [Nomorewhispers@atlantichealth.org](mailto:Nomorewhispers@atlantichealth.org)

Website: [Atlantichealth.org](http://Atlantichealth.org)



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