

Men and Depression: Breaking The Code Of Silence

(NAPSA)—Research and clinical evidence show that while both women and men can develop the symptoms of depression, they often experience depression differently and may cope differently with the symptoms. Men may be more willing to acknowledge fatigue, irritability, loss of interest in work or hobbies, and sleep disturbances rather than feelings of sadness, worthlessness and excessive guilt.

For these reasons, mental health experts believe that the incidence of depression in men is underestimated.

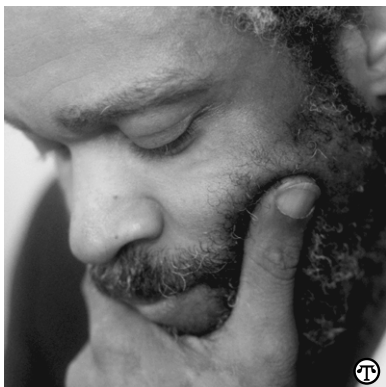
According to Therapy In America, a 2004 survey conducted jointly by PacifiCare Behavioral Health and Psychology Today, men are less likely than women to have received mental health treatment. Yet a large majority of those who had therapy or took medication said that their treatment was effective.

“Our research finds that one of the top barriers to getting help or treatment is a belief that it wouldn’t help,” says Jerry Vaccaro, president of PacifiCare Behavioral Health. “But our data also show that patients seeking therapy show dramatic improvement after a course of just a few sessions.”

To bridge the gap between the public distrust of therapy and the actual promise it holds, PacifiCare Behavioral Health has implemented a breakthrough system of outcomes-driven care, wherein the answers patients give to questions about their level of distress are measured throughout their treatment and used to gauge their improvement.

Depression Symptoms Often Missed By Men

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depression. In focus groups, men described their own symptoms without realizing that they were depressed. For instance, many men were unaware that “physical” symptoms such as headaches, digestive disorders and chronic pain can be associated with depression.

In addition, they expressed reluctance about seeing a mental health professional or going to a mental health clinic, thinking that people would “find out.” They believed their search for help might have a negative impact on their job security, promotion potential, or health insurance benefits.

Men with depression commit suicide at much higher rates than women, although more women attempt it. Medical experts have also linked depression to heart problems—men with depression are more than twice as likely to develop coronary heart disease than those who are not depressed.

Further information on PacifiCare Behavioral Health and its approach to depression treatment can be found on the company’s Web site, www.pbhi.com.