



## **Psychological Wellness for Men**

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With National Men's Health Week coming up in June, this is a great time for men to consider their psychological wellbeing. Unfortunately, many men don't pay attention to their psychological needs, and this comes at a significant cost to them and those who care about them. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that in 2022, the suicide rate among males (22.9 per 100,000) was four times higher than among females (5.9 per 100,000). The first step in changing this is to help men understand that psychological wellness is both important and achievable.

### **What is psychological wellness, and why is it so hard to talk about?**

Psychological wellness is more than the absence of a disorder. It's about learning how to develop a happy and healthy way of living your life and relating to others.

For several reasons, men often find themselves left out of the conversation about psychological wellness. Why does this happen? Here are some contributing factors:

- Men are taught to ignore pain of any kind, physical or emotional. To admit to having pain is seen as a weakness.
- We don't make it OK for men to talk about their feelings, so they don't learn to identify what's bothering them.
- Men are taught to see themselves as problem-solvers. So when they have problems in their own lives, they feel they have failed and are ashamed to ask for help or support.

### **What are the warning signs of problems with psychological wellness?**

Here are some signs that you or a man you know might be struggling with psychological issues:

- Persistent feelings of irritability, anger, sadness, or fear
- Physical symptoms such as headaches, muscle tension, GI problems, or sleep issues
- Trouble getting along with family, friends, bosses, or co-workers

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- Overuse of alcohol or other mood-altering substances
- Impulsive, risky, or violent behavior
- Sudden or dramatic shifts in mood
- Hearing or seeing things that aren't there, when not using substances

## How can I improve my psychological wellness?

There are many ways to improve your psychological wellness. Here are some ideas you can try:

- **Take care of your physical health.** Make sure you are eating a healthy diet, sleeping enough, and getting some regular exercise.
- **Spend time with people who are important to you, like family and friends.** Being around trusted others helps remind you that you are valued and cared about. It can also provide much-needed perspective on whatever might be bothering you.
- **Make time for relaxation and fun.** People often feel guilty about being “non-productive” when they take time to relax, but refreshing yourself and reconnecting with activities you enjoy are some of the most productive things you can do for your psychological wellness.
- **Let yourself experience the full range of your feelings.** Everyone feels sad, scared, and hurt sometimes. Recognizing these feelings in yourself doesn't make you weak; it's actually a sign of strength. When you are aware of your feelings, you can decide how to handle them instead of letting them control you.
- **Consider seeking psychotherapy.** This is “talk therapy” that can help you learn new skills so that you can live your life in a healthier and happier way. Several different kinds of professionals offer psychotherapy services, including psychologists, social workers, licensed professional counselors, and others. It's important to ensure that your provider is licensed in their area of practice, and that you feel comfortable talking with them.
- **Medication** can be helpful for some conditions. Your family doctor may be willing to prescribe medication for you, or they may suggest that you consult with a psychiatrist. This isn't necessarily because they think your problem is more serious; it may just be that your provider is overloaded and wants to focus on treating primarily physical ailments.

Like physical wellness, psychological wellness helps you enjoy your life as a happier, healthier person. If you'd like some guidance in improving your own psychological wellness, you can use PPA's Psychologist Locator Service (linked below) to find a qualified psychologist near you.

Contact PPA: [ppa@papsy.org](mailto:ppa@papsy.org)

Mental Health FAQs: <https://www.papsy.org/page/Publicfaq>

PPA Psychologist Locator Service: <https://www.papsy.org/search/custom.asp?id=1939>