

MINDFUL MOMENTS

JUNE: MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Introduction

The Mental Health Foundation reports that around 1 in 8 men in England has a mental health problem such as depression or anxiety. Though it is difficult to know if these figures truly represent the reality. These figures only really tell us about what has been reported, unfortunately many cases go undiagnosed. This is thought to be especially true when it comes to men's mental health. This is due to the social stigma men face around keeping in their emotions, which unfortunately so often discourages men from seeking support.



Why don't men talk about mental health?

Societal expectations and traditional gender roles likely play a significant part in why men are less likely to talk about their feelings or seek help for mental health problems.

From a young age, men are often encouraged to keep in their emotions, with messages such as 'boys don't cry' seeming perfectly normal to so many of us. Worryingly, no doubt many of us will also have grown men in our lives that can't recall the last time they cried or asked for help.

Men are often expected to be strong and to be in control at all times, this can make it more difficult for men to open-up and reach out for help.

These social pressures can also mean that many men go through their lives never really paying attention to or talking about their feelings. Research suggests that this lack of emotional literacy may mean that men are less able to recognise symptoms of mental health problems within themselves.

Why we need to start talking

- In the UK, men account for around 75% of suicide deaths
- Men aged 40-49 have the highest suicide rates
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for men under 45
- Suicide kills 3x more people than road traffic accidents

Support Available

- Head to the [Samaritans](#) for mental health support via call, text & email
- Join an online community for peer support such as [Clic](#) or [Side by Side](#)
- [Employee Assistance Programme](#) Qualified consultants provide impartial support on all matters including financial wellbeing
- For more on Men's mental health, check out the [Mental Health Foundation](#)

Tips to support men struggling with their mental health

- Try texting, emailing or calling an anonymous helpline as a first step to opening up
- When men share their feelings or cry, try your best not to make a big deal out of it or make jokes which could prevent them opening up again
- Take time to text, call or chat with the men in your life and ask, 'how are you, really?'
- Let the men in your life know you are here for them if they need to talk but also give them space without pressure to decide when they are ready to talk
- Try to find other men who have experienced similar struggles. This could be: male celebrities (e.g. autobiographies, TV shows), joining a peer support community online and talking to likeminded people, or reading about men's mental health stories [HERE](#)