

SENIOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Monthly Newsletter

we're so glad you're here!

MEN'S HEALTH MONTH: ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES IN MEN

June is Men's Health Month, a critical time to spotlight the unique mental health challenges faced by men and encourage open discussions about these issues. While men are statistically less likely to be diagnosed with mental health disorders compared to women, they nonetheless experience a range of significant mental health issues. Understanding these challenges is essential for both men and their healthcare providers.

COMMON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN MEN

Anxiety Disorders: Men often suffer from various forms of anxiety, including panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), social anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and specific phobias. These disorders can be triggered by factors such as poor body image, relationship troubles, and performance pressures, yet men may be less likely to acknowledge their anxiety or seek help.

Depression: Over 6 million men in the United States experience depression annually. However, depression in men often goes undiagnosed, as they may be reluctant to discuss their feelings or may manifest symptoms differently than women, such as exhibiting anger or irritability instead of sadness.



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): With approximately 60% of men experiencing at least one traumatic event in their lives, PTSD is a significant concern. Men might struggle with symptoms like flashbacks, severe anxiety, and uncontrollable thoughts about the trauma.

Bipolar Disorder: This disorder, characterized by extreme mood swings and changes in activity levels, affects men and women equally. Typically emerging between ages 16 and 25, bipolar disorder can severely impact a man's ability to function in daily life if not properly managed.



Schizophrenia: A severe mental health condition that distorts reality, schizophrenia is one of the leading causes of disability in the United States. Early intervention and continuous treatment are crucial for managing symptoms and improving quality of life.

Eating Disorders: While less common in men, eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia are serious conditions that affect about 10% of male patients. Men with eating disorders are often less likely to seek professional help, making awareness and supportive interventions vital.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP:

Men should seek professional help if they experience persistent symptoms that interfere with their daily life, such as:

- Ongoing feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or irritability
- Excessive anxiety or fear
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Significant changes in sleep or appetite
- Thoughts of self-harm or suicide



WHAT PROVIDERS SHOULD LOOK FOR:

For Healthcare providers should be vigilant in recognizing the signs of mental health issues in male patients. Key indicators include:

- Changes in behavior or mood
- Increased substance use
- Withdrawal from social activities or relationships
- Complaints of physical symptoms with no clear cause
- Expressions of hopelessness or excessive worry

Providers should approach discussions about mental health with sensitivity and openness, creating a safe space for men to share their concerns without judgment. It is vital for the provider to initiate the conversation when these signs occur.

Our program recommends this **Wellness Checklist** that can be used to help initiate mental health conversations with your patient's and make the process a little less intimidating.



A minute with Mike

MIKE WILLIS, OUTREACH COORDINATOR, THERAPIST

Men's Health Month is a crucial time to emphasize the significance of mental health care for men. It's an opportunity to raise awareness, advocate for early intervention, and ensure supportive care, ultimately leading to healthier and happier lives for men. Mental health is just as vital as physical health, and seeking help is a courageous step towards well-being. Healthcare providers play a key role in recognizing symptoms of mental health disorders and initiating conversations with patients. Don't hesitate to use your resources and ask questions to enhance patient care. At Girard Medical Center Senior Behavioral Health Program, we are here to support you in caring for your patients aged 55 and older.