

What makes depression different from the blues?

Depression is a serious complication that involves the body, mood and thoughts. It affects how you eat and sleep. It alters your self-perception. It changes the way you think and feel. Men with depression can't just 'snap out of it' or 'pull themselves together', because depression isn't the same as a passing mood. When ignored, depression may last for weeks, months, or years at a time.

Depression can make routine tasks unbearably difficult. Pleasures that make life worth living—watching a hockey game, hanging out with friends, even sex—can be drained of joy. Depression brings pain and disruption not only to the man who has it, but also to his family and others who care about him.

If you are experiencing several of the following symptoms, you may have depression:

- Depressed mood nearly every day.
- Diminished interest in regular activities, sex.
- Significant weight loss or gain.
- Sleeping difficulties.
- A feeling of being "slowed down".
- Fatigue and energy loss nearly every day.
- Feeling worthless or excessive guilt.
- Difficulty in staying on task or making decisions.
- Frequent thoughts of death, including but not limited to suicidal thoughts.

* Having a few of these symptoms does not necessarily mean that you have depression. You need to have at least five symptoms consistently over a two week period of time or longer.

If several of these symptoms are familiar, it's time to talk with your physician. People think depression occurs when someone is weak-willed, but it's actually a chemical imbalance that shows up in brain scans. It can be successfully treated, most often with medication, psychotherapy, or both. Support from family and friends plays an important role as well.

Real Men. Real Depression.



"My daily routine was shot. I didn't have the energy to do anything. I got up because the dog had to be walked and my wife needed to go to work. The day would go by and I didn't know where it went. I wanted to get back to normal. I just wanted to be myself."

— Jimmy Brown, Firefighter



"It affects the way you think. It affects the way you feel. It affects the way you love....It's just a blanket that covers everything...and it's one that's just so suffocating. And at times you just say it's enough already. It just feel like enough."

— Steve Lappen, Writer



"I lost interest with the kids and doing things that we use to do...they'd ask their mother, 'Why is Daddy not getting up and not wanting to do anything with us?' 'Did we do anything' They didn't do anything to me. I just didn't want to do anything."

— Rene Ruballo, Police Officer



"It starts slowly and the only person you are talking to is yourself. You're lost. It's dark, the pain is twenty-four-seven...you just want it to end...I'd drink and...I tried to numb my head...but you have to deal with it. It doesn't just go away."

— Patrick McCathern, First Sergeant, U.S. Air Force, Retired

The facts about men and depression.

In his life, one Canadian out of ten will have a form of depression—major depression, dysthymia (chronic, less severe depression), or bipolar (manic-depression)—every year. Although depression is highly treatable, many men do not recognize, acknowledge, or team up with a health professional to address their depression.

While both men and women may develop the standard symptoms of depression, men often experience depression differently and may have different ways of dealing with it:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs.
- Working excessively long hours.
- Getting angry and irritated with, or disconnected from others.
- Getting angry at things that may typically make one sad (e. g. losing a loved one)
- Sexual Promiscuity.
- Experiencing bodily pain or headaches that cannot be accounted for by medical reasons.
- Experiencing increased work-related problems and conflicts.
- Increased gambling.

The truth is, depression is real and treatable. It can strike at any age, from childhood into late life. In the vast majority of cases, when properly identify and attacked, depression is no match for research-proven measures.

Where to get more information.

Revivre
Anxiety • Depression • Bipolar Disorder

Toll-Free Information and Referral Line
Available across Canada,
Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
(514) REVIVRE (738-4873) • 1 866 REVIVRE
5140, Saint-Hubert, Montréal (Qc), H2J 2Y3
Courriel - revivre@revivre.org
Site web - <http://www.revivre.org/>

Frequently Asked Questions

Q : I think I'm depressed, but I don't feel like doing anything about it.

A : Just like in sports, if you try to play through the pain, and end up really screwing yourself up, you can jeopardize your whole season, or in this case, you're whole life. You might end up losing the ability to support your family, as well.

Q : What's the procedure when working with a mental health professional.

A : There is a lot of misunderstanding about what happens in therapy. First, the client tells the psychotherapist what he wants to address. Then, they work as a team to create a plan of attack, which they will execute until the problem is resolved. The client is not pushed to do, say, or think anything. He is there to utilize the expertise of the consultant. The client-psychotherapist partnership is informal, noncompetitive, trustworthy, and dedicated to finding the best solutions. In addition, many psychotherapists are trained to work specifically with men and depression.

Q : Isn't consulting with a psychotherapists just a waste of money?

A : Many research studies show that counseling can reduce future medical expenses. When medical costs are measured over a period of three to five years after treatment, psychotherapy lowers overall health care costs so much that it would more than pay for the cost of the consultation, and may reduce the length of the sick leave. Some professionals charge on a sliding scale, based on your level of income, so you can always find cost-effective solutions. A free mental health consultation is also available via Quebec's public health care service. Ask for information at your local CLSC.

It takes courage to ask for help.

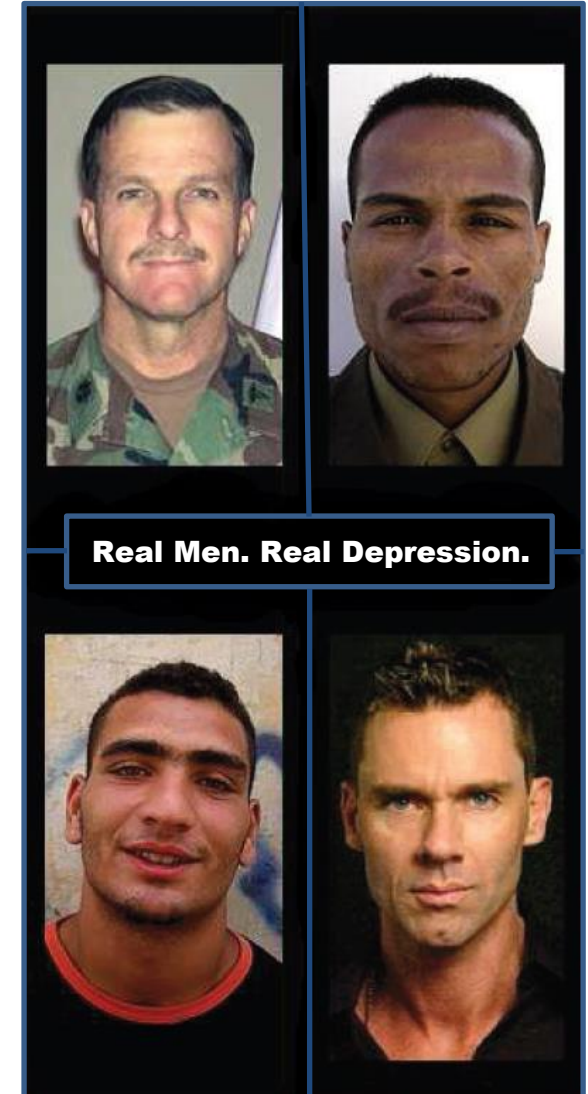
Symptoms and behaviors that are part of depression can mess with a man's ability to seek help. Popular American culture tends to tell men that depression is a sign of weakness, rather than telling them the scientific truth: that depression is a chemical imbalance.

Thanks to years of research, a variety of effective solutions have been constructed, including medication and practical cognitive consultation. The client determines the best strategy for attacking the problem, based on the strength of the depression, and preferences. For severe depression, a combination of approaches will be a man's best bet.

If you think you have several of the symptoms of depression described in this brochure, tell someone. Speak with a mental health consultant (e.g. psychologist, social worker), physician, or employee assistance professional. Recruiting allies takes courage, but it's the best way to defeat depression and get on with living life.



This brochure was adapted from the brochure *Real Men. Real Depression.* produced by the National Institute of Mental Health



Real Men. Real Depression.

It takes courage to ask for help.

These men did.