



# Is He Angry or Depressed?

What if you were to learn that there is a place where one in four men suffer from a disease, and most never receive any treatment for it. This disease affects men of all ages, ethnicities and income levels. No, this isn't taking place in an under-developed country in some far off corner of the world. It is happening right here in the United States, the disease is depression, and more than six million men suffer from it.

It isn't clear why so many people suffer from depression, although there is evidence that it is linked to genetics, as well as environmental factors. There are many "triggers" for depression, with most being universal for both men and women. Some common causes are:

- Stress, be it at work, home or school
- Money/job problems
- Verbal, physical or sexual abuse
- A serious illness
- The loss of a loved-one
- Employment changes
- Day-to-day family responsibilities.

Although the triggers for depression may be the same, the way that men and women behave when they are depressed is very different. There are distinct behaviors to look for when trying to determine if a man you care for may be depressed. They are:

- Anger or irritability
- Fatigue
- Chronic pain, such as headaches and stomach aches
- Sleep disturbances
- Loss of interest in work, hobbies and sex
- Increase use of alcohol and/or other controlled substances
- Reckless behavior.

Men experience depression differently, specifically in the ability to acknowledge their feelings, asking for help and seeking appropriate treatment. Because of this, much of what they are experiencing becomes internalized and is then exhibited in the ways listed above. Many men may become angry over things that they considered inconsequential in the past, may retreat into work, or take unnecessary risks with their safety – but they will rarely admit to what they are feeling.

## Treatment

The biggest hurdle in receiving help with depression is admitting to yourself that you need it. Many men think that asking for, let alone receiving, help is a sign of weakness. For the good of your family, friends, coworkers and you, don't wait. Talk to your doctor today!

The good news about depression is that with the right treatment, which may consist of medication and/or talk therapy, depression can be controlled. Only your doctor can determine the best form of treatment, but rest assured, there is hope.

You are not helpless, either. Along with being under a physician's care, there are many ways that you can help yourself when suffering from depression. For example:

**Exercise** – the release of endorphins after exercise will help to boost your mood and will help alleviate the negative impacts of stress.

Break large projects down into small, realistic tasks – Make a list and cross each task off as it is completed. The sense of accomplishment will be with you every step of the way.

**Socialize** – be around people, even if only in small groups. Isolation tends to hamper recovery.

**Find your higher power** – participating in some form of religious or spiritual activity may help you better cope with the catalysts that triggered your depression.

**Let your family and friends help you** – the understanding, love and support provided can work wonders.

**Expect your mood to improve gradually, over time** – you didn't get here overnight, and the symptoms of depression won't magically disappear. However, with a solid treatment plan and a good support system in place, you will find that little by little, you begin to feel better.

*Depression doesn't cause people to commit suicide, but it does increase the risk of it. If you are thinking of taking your life – or fear that a loved one is thinking of taking theirs – call 1-800-784-2433 (National Hopeline Network) immediately. You may also call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.*



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