



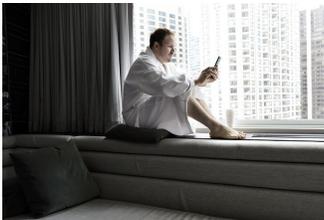
# HELPING HANDS



## Men's Mental Health

(excerpts from BringChange2mind.org)

There are some common, yet false beliefs that men hold about mental health, particularly the beliefs that might prevent them from getting the help they need.



**Common Belief:** "I don't need help. I got this."

Research shows that, often, the men who need mental health services most – stressed out, successful, athletic, family men – are also the least interested in getting help. The traditional male role encourages a preoccupation with success, power and competition. And yet these types of men are at higher risk of negative psychological consequences, such as depression, anxiety, and relationship problems.

**Common Belief:** "Talking about my problems is not going to change anything."

The term "normative male alexithymia" has been used to describe men's problems with expressing their emotions, a possible contributor to depression and barrier to treatment. Men are geared towards problem solving, but sometimes holding in how you feel is part of the problem. When you start talking about things that bother you or are causing stress, the problem solving can begin. Athletes will "huddle up" on the court or field to make a plan or a game strategy and make adjustments as they go along. This is similar to what happens in counseling or therapy.

**Common Belief:** "It's not that bad, it's the way I've always been."

Most likely, you don't like to go to the doctor when you have a fever, sore throat, and cough. You probably want to ride it out and see if you can just get better on your own. But then you realize the cough has now turned into bronchitis and you aren't able to work. Mental health issues can be similar. It can be hard to know when it's time. Sometimes, you just need to talk. And, other times, it's pretty bad. You can't get out of bed or function. Untreated depression and other psychiatric problems can result in personal, family, and financial problems, even suicide. According to National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), four times as many men as women die by suicide in the United States, which may result from a higher prevalence of untreated depression. Yet 8 out of 10 cases of depression respond to treatment.

**Common Belief:** "People will think I am crazy if I see a psychologist."

Our brains are sensitive organs that respond to our genetics, traumatic life events, and stress. Many of these factors are not in our direct control. Men may express their depression in terms of increases in fatigue, irritability and anger, loss of interest in work, and sleep disturbances. It has also been shown that men use more drugs and alcohol, perhaps to self-medicate. This can mask the signs of depression, making it harder to detect and treat effectively. A diagnosis is not a life sentence. A diagnosis can be a name of a condition that provides a road-map for proper treatment and improvement in your mood, relationships, and life.



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**Start the conversation. With someone you trust. With someone who is trained. With someone who cares. Ask questions. Start the conversation.**

**Men’s Mental Health Tips** (excerpts from healthdirect.gov.au)

1. **Build relationships**; Good relationships is the most important factor contributing to a sense of wellbeing. Family, friends, co-workers are good places to begin. Investing time and energy in your relationships can lead to great benefits for all involved.

2. **Exercise and stay healthy**; Exercise has been shown to increase wellbeing as well as reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. Good physical health is related to better mental health. A healthy diet, avoiding excess alcohol or drugs, getting a good night’s sleep, and regular checkups with the doctor can all help.

3. **Develop gratitude**; Count your blessings. Try keeping a gratitude journal and write down 3 positive things each day. This can lead to increased wellbeing.

4. **Identify and use your strengths**; We all have different strengths and weaknesses but finding out what you are really good at and using those talents can increase wellbeing. Using your strengths to help others or contribute to the community creates a sense of meaning and purpose.

5. **Give to others**; Making a contribution to the community, however small, increases social wellbeing. Many people feel a sense of contributing through meaningful work, but this could also mean volunteering, helping a neighbor or performing small acts of kindness. Take some time to do the things you really enjoy. Pleasant events can lead to positive emotions that can cancel out negative feelings.

6. **Seek help**; If you are struggling to feel happy, cope with everyday life, find meaning or feel connected to others, see your mental health professional.

Your EAP representative (listed below) can help find the best resources for you

**IAM**  
Peer Employee  
Assistance  
Program



The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peer coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experiencing.

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**William  
Winpisinger**

Education and Training Center

EAP Courses

**EAP I**

July 28-August 2 (double Class)

**EAP II**

April 7-13

**EAP III**

June 16-21

**EAP IV**

October 27-31

Please contact your Local Lodge Secretary/Treasurer or Local Lodge President for information about enrolling in any EAP course