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The Achieve and Learn Trust believes that nothing is more important than safeguarding the young people in our schools.

Did you know that research has found that women cry on average around 5.3 times a month, while men cry an average of around 1.3 times per month (Frey et al., 1983; Blysm et al., 2019)?

In this issue, we continue the conversation around mental health and focus on the stigma and support available for boys and young men.

Boys don't cry? Rethinking masculinity and mental health

As a boy growing up in England, it's all too common to be encouraged not to show any emotion or vulnerability. We hear things like 'man up', 'crybaby' or 'boys don't cry'. The reality is that these phrases are harmful and have created a longstanding societal expectation: that masculinity must be synonymous with emotional repression.

MEN NEED TO KNOW IT'S OKAY

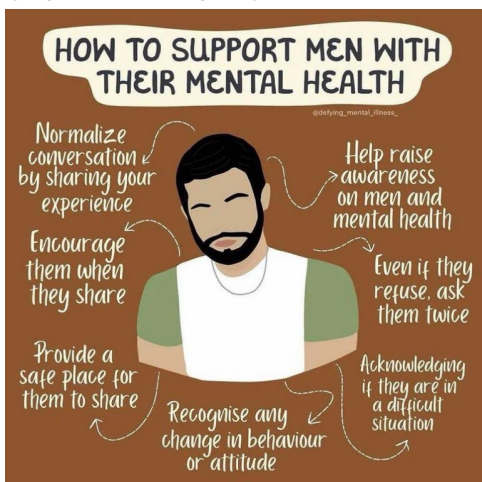


On TV, male characters often go through upsetting or frightening events without shedding a tear — they just carry on as if nothing happened. On social media, some male influencers promote the idea that masculinity means being emotionally stoic, and that repressing feelings is somehow the path to success. Even in conversations with male family, friends, or colleagues, there can be a hesitation to lower our guard and ask, 'How are you really doing, mate?'

Unfortunately, because of the stigma surrounding emotional expression, men are less likely to access psychological therapies than women — with only 36% of referrals to NHS Talking Therapies identifying as male. Tragically, three times as many men die by suicide compared to women (Mental Health Foundation, 2021).

It is important that we reinforce the following messages in our families, particularly if there are boys or men who find emotional expression difficult.

- Being vulnerable and open about your emotions is a sign of strength, not weakness.
- Be open with other men, so we can feel safe discussing what's really going on and how we're feeling.
- Crying is a healthy way to express and release the emotions you're carrying.



IT'S NOT WEAK TO SPEAK

Men are three times more likely to die from suicide in the UK.

Remember, there's always someone to listen



0300 123 3393
Helpline
mind.org.uk



Text SHOUT to 85258
24/7 text service
giveusashout.org



116 123
24/7 helpline
samaritans.org



Text YM to 85258
24/7 text service
youngminds.org.uk



0800 58 58 58
Helpline for men
thecalmzone.net



0800 068 4141
Under 35s Helpline
papyrus-uk.org

Talking to someone about how you're feeling is an act of bravery and can help you process difficult emotions.

If you need professional help, support is available.

HELPING MEN TO OPEN UP ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

- ☰ MEN, ESPECIALLY THOSE WORKING IN A 'MACHO' OR COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT CAN OFTEN STRUGGLE TO OPEN UP AND SAY THEY NEED HELP AND SUPPORT.
- ☰ MORE THAN HALF OF MEN (66%) SUFFER FROM WORK-RELATED STRESS; WITH 13% OF THEM CITING THEIR STRESS AS UNMANAGEABLE, YET ONLY 12% HAVE SPOKEN TO A PROFESSIONAL ABOUT IT.
- ☰ ACCORDING TO STATISTICS MEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO WORK IN AN ALWAYS-ON CULTURE (53% MEN VERSUS 44% WOMEN) AND ARE LESS LIKELY TO HAVE A REASONABLE WORKLOAD AND WORKING HOURS THAN FEMALES (68% MEN VERSUS 73% WOMEN).
- ☰ SIMPLY HAVING A CONVERSATION ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN PEOPLE'S LIVES CAN EASE THE BURDEN OF STRESS AND IS OFTEN THE BEST AND EASIEST WAY TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM.
- ☰ A GOOD PLACE FOR EMPLOYERS TO START IS TO IMPLEMENT AN EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMME CONSIDERING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS IS AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH IN THE UK.
- ☰ ALARMINGLY, ONLY A QUARTER (28%) OF UK EMPLOYERS HAVE A FORMAL WELLNESS PROGRAMME IN PLACE TO SUPPORT THEIR STAFF AND FOR THE ONES THAT DO, ENGAGEMENT IN THESE PROGRAMMES IS WORRYINGLY LOW.
- ☰ MEN ARE JUST AS VULNERABLE AS WOMEN TO STRESS, ANXIETY AND OTHER FORMS OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH. THE FIRST STEP TO FIGHTING THIS BATTLE, IS BY ENCOURAGING MEN TO SHARE THEIR PROBLEMS, SPECIFICALLY IN THE WORKPLACE,



What is CAMHS and how can they help?

CAMHS are the NHS services that assess and treat young people if they are struggling with poor mental health.

CAMHS is made up of lots of local services across the UK and can support with lots of different mental health difficulties and conditions, like:

- [depression](#) or low mood
- [problems with food and eating](#)
- [self-harm](#) or [suicidal thoughts](#)
- difficult feelings from [abuse](#), , which may have led to [trauma](#)
- [sleep problems](#)
- managing violence or [anger](#)
- [bipolar disorder](#), [psychosis](#), [borderline personality disorder](#) and [schizophrenia](#)
- feelings of worry or [anxiety](#)
- coping with [grief and loss](#)
- neurodivergence like [autism](#) or [ADHD](#)

Home & Away
24/7 access to self-help materials and daily online counselling available over the summer holiday

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Chat to friendly counsellors 365 days a year



Read self-help articles written by other young people



Join peer-to-peer support forums