



National Alliance on Mental Illness

**nami**

**Mercer**

Serving the New Jersey Capital Area

# SPEAKING UP ABOUT EMOTIONS

Toolkit included!

# MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

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Hello everyone! My name is Jenna and I am an undergraduate student studying Public Health at The College of New Jersey. My passion to help the mental health crisis in America as well as my personal experience with mental health both drove me to dedicate my time interning at NAMI Mercer.

Coming from a large family mainly comprised of men, I personally have a predisposition to protecting those who face the mental health stigma behind identifying as a man. I hope to raise awareness for those who have been taught by society from a young age that it isn't "masculine" to talk about emotions or ask for help. I want for men to build better lives, free of stigma and with the tools to take better care of their mental health.

-Jenna Bechtel  
Author & NAMI Mercer Intern

# INTRODUCTION

# HELPLINES & HOTLINES

24/7 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline  
**Call 988**

Available in English and Spanish

24/7 Crisis Counselors  
**Text "NAMI" to 741741**

Connection to a Crisis Counselor

National Alliance on Mental Illness  
(NAMI) HelpLine

**Call 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)**

Mon.-Fri. live from 10am-10pm E.T.

NAMI Mercer (New Jersey) HelpLine

**Call 1-609-799-8994 Ext. 17**

Mon.-Fri. live from 9:30am-4:30pm E.T.

24/7 SAMHSA National Helpline

**Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357)**

Available in English and Spanish

# TOOLKIT, HUH?



## LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THE FACTS...

- You may initially think of screwdrivers and wrenches, but this is a different type of toolkit.
- This is a mental health toolkit intended to help those who identify as male or feel the stigma associated with men's mental health.
- What's in the kit?
  - Information on the importance of talking about men's mental health
  - Suggestions to improve mental health
  - Resources for more assistance

# WHY TALK ABOUT IT?

Men consistently make up around 75% of annual suicide deaths.

The stigma needs to be talked about. This empowers men to address treatable issues.

**Mental healthcare is healthcare!**

The stigma against men's mental health discourages men from seeking help that they may need.

Men who deviate from the masculine stereotype often feel shameful for showing their emotions, leading to things like depression and anxiety.

Men are held to a ridiculous standard that they are supposed to be unwaveringly strong and not cry or show emotions. Emphasis on the "ridiculous" part.

# *Out with the old, in with the new.*

## **SOCIETY TEACHES MEN THAT...**

- They aren't allowed to show emotion or weakness.
- They shouldn't struggle with their mental health.
- They are a failure if they do not meet the standards of being considered masculine.

## **...WHEN IN REALITY...**

- Men should be encouraged to show emotion.
- It is no longer "unmanly" to seek mental healthcare, go to therapy, or talk about your emotions.
- Gender roles are changing, making it acceptable for men to embrace the emotions they were taught to hide in the past.



"My dad was my biggest hero. Seeing the strongest man I knew struggle with depression left me feeling helpless as a man. I thought we were always strong..."

*You are not alone!*

# LEARNING THE SIGNS

- Excessive worry
- Drinking alcohol and/or doing drugs more frequently
- Sudden change in behavior
  - Are they taking unusual risks?
  - Would they usually look/act like this?
- Expressing negativity about life or anger
- Change in social habits
  - Not wanting to hang out/go to events that they would usually enjoy





# HOW TO ASK FOR HELP

"I think I just need a friend right now. Want to hang out?"

"I've been feeling pretty down lately. Can I talk to you about something?"

"I need to work on enjoying life again. Let's go on a walk together."

"I have been super stressed lately. Do you have any tips to help me cope with stress?"



You should never feel like a burden for needing a little extra help. Men, you can't take care of others if you aren't taking care of yourself first.

# HOW TO SUPPORT OTHERS



You would be surprised how many people have gone through something similar or just want to support you...

...here are some conversation starters!

"I am here to support you, no matter what you are going through right now."

"You haven't been acting like yourself lately. How are you **really** doing?"

"I haven't seen you in a while, how is everything? I would never judge you for how you're feeling."

"Let's hang out and catch up. I want to support you however I can."

# STAYING HEALTHY

**Sometimes the facts are scary. Keep your own & other men's mental health in check by remembering these quick facts...**

There have been years where men made up 75% of suicide deaths...

- This tells us that more men could be hiding symptoms of depression or signs that they are struggling
- "Classic" signs of anxiety & depression may differ in men. Instead of feeling super sad they may...
  - Have anger outbursts, poor impulse control, increased use of drugs or alcohol, "act out," hide emotions, etc.

Men are more likely to hide their true feelings due to the stigma they may have faced. So remember...

- "Masked depression" is what professionals are now calling signs & symptoms of mental struggling in those who identify as male
- Letting your loved ones know you're there for them & support them goes a long way

***Protect yourself and other men. Take the leap & don't be afraid to have hard conversations. It gets easier with time!***



# THANK YOU!



Visit [namimercer.org](http://namimercer.org) for more  
Mental Health Resources  
(609)-799-8994  
[home@namimercer.org](mailto:home@namimercer.org)

