

## Tip sheet

# Depression and men

One in eight men experience depression at some stage of their lives. Mental health issues in men may go undetected or untreated. There are many complex reasons for this that can often be attributed to a lack of awareness of both the issue and the symptoms.



## Pay attention

Depression can be a serious condition that won't just get better on its own. As you would see a doctor for a broken arm, treat your mental health in the same way. Depression can present in numerous ways, including feelings of irritability or anger.

It's normal to occasionally feel 'down' or upset, but if you find yourself continuously feeling angry, sad, or moody, or you're having trouble sleeping or concentrating, it could be something more serious. You might also find yourself beginning to lose interest in the things you once enjoyed.

## Know the signs

The three most common signs of depression in men are:

- **Physical pain:** such as backache, frequent headaches, sleep problems, sexual dysfunction, or digestive disorders.
- **Anger:** this could range from irritability, sensitivity to criticism, a loss of sense of humour, road rage, short temper, or violence.
- **Reckless behaviour:** this could involve pursuing dangerous sports, driving recklessly, abusing drugs, or gambling compulsively.

## Why am I depressed?

The exact causes of depression are unclear as they differ for each person. Social isolation and loneliness are now widely accepted as major risk factors for both depression and anxiety. Research suggests men aged 30-65 experience more loneliness and have smaller social networks than women in the same age bracket.

Studies also show that 1 in 4 men in their middle years experience low levels of social support, and an alarming 25% of men say they have no one outside of their immediate family they can rely on.

## Finding connections

Good interpersonal relationships and social connectedness have a positive impact on both mental and general health and wellbeing; if you can, seek out a trusted friend and/or family member - share what you're going through with the people you love and trust. The people you talk to don't have to be able to fix you; they just need to be good listeners. Ask for the help and support you need.



## Developing stronger bonds

- Contribute equally to the relationship
- Enjoy shared activities
- Listen actively and communicate openly
- Check in regularly
- Always be yourself.

### Join a support group

Being with others who are facing the same problems can help reduce your sense of isolation and remove the feelings of stigma.

### Volunteer

Helping others while expanding your social network. Inviting someone to a sports game or movie: There are plenty of other people who feel as awkward reaching out and making new friends. Try being the one to break the ice.

### Call or email a friend

Even if you've retreated from some relationships, make the effort to reconnect.

### Access help and support through your workplace

Your workplace provides you with access to support from Vitae's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). If your need is urgent, you can speak to a qualified EAP counsellor at any time or make a scheduled appointment by calling [0508 664 981](tel:0508664981)

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### Contact

0508 664 981  
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