

NHSA BRIEF

Mental health is a state of well-being which allows for the development of healthy relationships, management of emotions, and maintenance of a positive view of oneself and their environment.

It also reflects how well a person can handle daily stressors and life's challenges. As fatherhood practitioners, it is important to understand and support fathers through the many shifts and transitions that come with fatherhood. Offering tools, guidance, and education are just a few ways fatherhood practitioners can support fathers in navigating these changes. This brief will highlight one of the key health concerns that is essential to the overall health of fathers/men for the best outcome of families – mental health.

NHSA has also developed a Mental Health Toolkit that supports Fatherhood Practitioners in navigating complex mental health topics and provides practical tools and strategies to raise awareness of mental health issues among fathers and father figures, while also helping to reduce the stigma associated with various mental health topics. Stay tuned for details about how to gain access to this toolkit.

Did you know that mental health has become a top public health concern? Below is a list of common terms for mental health:

Depression – Depression is a loss of interest in activities, little to no energy, changes in eating patterns, and thoughts of hopelessness. Depression can impact how one may think, feel, or act in everyday life. Men have a higher chance of being undiagnosed with depression and left without treatment due to unrecognized symptoms.

Anxiety – Anxiety is a continuous, ongoing emotion marked by feelings of worry, stress, and irritability. Approximately 1 out of every 10 men experiences anxiety or depression.[7] However, men are less likely to seek professional help.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – PTSD is a mental health condition that causes the mind to recall or replay a traumatic event. Men experience different types of traumatic incidents compared to women. For men, PTSD events may include combat, accidents, and physical assault.

Substance Use Disorders – A substance use disorder is a mental illness that impacts a person's intellect and conduct, inhibiting their ability to manage their use of substances. Examples of substances include alcohol, medications, and drugs taken in a legal or illegal format.

Suicide – As a major public health concern, suicide deaths, plans, and attempts have sounded the alarm on men's mental well-being. Within the U.S, men are four times more likely to commit suicide in comparison to women. [8] There are many ways to identify warning signs of suicide. Find out more here or receive free confidential support by dialing 988, the Suicide and Crisis line.

Did you know that a sudden change in everyday life experiences can trigger mental health struggles? It may be time to seek help if you have struggled consistently for two weeks or longer, felt an overwhelming sense of worry after an event has transpired, experienced triggering experiences and nightmares, or are coping through self-medicating behaviors.

Have you heard that:

- Within the United States, an average of 6 million men are likely to experience some form of symptoms associated with depression.[4]
- Approximately 4 out of every 100 men will likely experience a post-traumatic stress event in their lives. [5]
- Men consist of 50% of the population but account for 80% of the suicide rate.[6]

There are numerous ways to protect and care for your mental health:

- Exercise regularly.
- Eat balanced, nutritious meals.
- Get seven or more hours of sleep.
- Focus on setting positive outcomes.
- Develop and maintain healthy relationships.
- Practice positive self-talk.
- Create safe environments to speak openly.
- Seek help from a friend, mentor, or trusted partner.

Paternal Corner on Father's Mental Health

Within the United States, approximately 8% to 13% of fathers may experience depression during their child's early childhood development years.[9] Paternal depression can start before or after the baby is born, triggering a diagnosis of postpartum depression. An average of 10% of fathers experience postpartum depression, with the greatest risk of occurrence happening three to six months post birth. [10]



[4] Men's Mental Health. (n.d.). Anxiety and Depression Association of America. <https://adaa.org/find-help/by-demographics/mens-mental-health>

[5] How Common Is PTSD in Adults? (n.d.). U.S Department of Veteran Affairs PTSD: National Center for PTSD. https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/common/common_adults.asp

[6] Suicide data and statistics. (2025, March 26). CDC Suicide Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/data.html>

[7] Men's Mental Health. (n.d.). Anxiety and Depression Association of America. <https://adaa.org/find-help/by-demographics/mens-mental-health>

[8] Suicide data and statistics. (2025, March 26). CDC Suicide Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/data.html>

[9] Greg Bruno. (2025, April 15). Father's mental health can impact children for years. Rutgers University. <https://www.rutgers.edu/news/fathers-mental-health-can-impact-children-years>