

MEN AND MENTAL HEALTH: BREAKING THE SILENCE

Some men have learned to cope with emotional pain by staying silent, pushing through, distracting themselves with work, or avoiding vulnerability. Distress may also show up as anger, irritability, risk-taking, increased substance use, isolation, or physical complaints rather than sadness.

What to notice or do:

- Check in beyond “How’s it going?” Ask specific, grounded questions about sleep, stress, relationships, work, or how they have been coping.
- Normalize support without making it a lecture: “You don’t have to handle all of this alone.”
- Make space for practical and emotional concerns. Financial pressure, job changes, relationship loss, parenting stress, health concerns, and loneliness can overlap.
- If behavior has changed sharply or hopelessness is present, ask directly about suicide.
- Offer concrete next steps, such as sitting together while they call a counselor, contacting a trusted friend, or scheduling an appointment.



Keep in mind: Strength does not require silence. Speaking up early can protect relationships, health, work, and well-being. For friends and family, steady presence is often more useful than a perfect speech.

If someone brushes off your concern, you can still leave the door open: “You don’t have to talk right now. I care about you, and I’m going to keep checking in.”