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## Overcoming Stigma: Men's Mental Health Awareness

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Real men don't cry – or at least that is what society has made us believe. Hypermasculinisation refers to a gender role that makes men feel crying is weak or feminine. Unfortunately, the trend has produced men who cannot express themselves, and bottling up these emotions leads to depression and harms mental health.



Everyone has their own way of dealing with problems. Some people watch movies or play video games, while others enjoy playing at online casinos and getting a [\\$300 free chip with no deposit on slotzilla.com](#). Modern gambling websites understand how important mental health is, so they offer tools like self-exclusion, deposit limits, and reality checks to help with any issues. Let's talk about the stigma around talking about mental health and how men can overcome it.

### Why Men Don't Seek Help

Hypermasculinity starts when a boy is born. Rigid gender roles and social norms condition them and communicate expectations even before they discover what they like. They are told emotions are for women or the vulnerable, and they become unable to share their feelings with others. Unknown to most people, suppressing emotions leads to depression, anxiety, and a host of other problems.

Depression and suicide are big problems for men. In Canada, out of the 4,000 suicides every year, about 75% are men. Also, around one million men in Canada have major depression. But many of them don't get help for their mental health issues. Only about 30% of people who use mental health services are men.

### Mental Health Stigma

Stigma is an umbrella term that covers self-stigma, public stigma, cultural and professional stigma. It refers to a discrediting mark that reduces a person's status in different forms. Social stigma is the disapproval of a person experiencing a mental health crisis based on the stereotype that having these symptoms signifies weakness. As a result, it often leads to discrimination or rejection of the person.

Social stigma is common, and it can make people feel bad about themselves – this is called self-stigma. In Canada, a survey found that men who haven't experienced depression or suicide tend to have more negative views about men who do. They might agree with statements like calling men who die by suicide "pathetic" or thinking that depression shows weakness in men. Stigma can have these effects:

- Reluctance to seek help;
- Pessimistic belief against treatment;
- Bullying, physical violence, and harassment;
- Insufficient understanding from those around.

## Breaking Mental Health Stigma

We already established that the last thing most men will do is seek help. While certain activities, like gaming, have online gambling rules and regulations in place to ensure safety, in other situations, men must open up to someone to navigate through crises. Negative stereotypes and discrimination often hinder them from taking action. Therefore, the only solution is to dismantle the stigma of seeking help. Here are some strategies to reduce the shame men feel about their issues:

### Education and Awareness

To overcome stereotypes about men's mental health, we need to educate everyone, including those affected. Many men don't recognise mental health symptoms because of [societal norms](#). So, raising awareness is crucial to help people recognize when they need support. This education should challenge masculine stereotypes and promote open discussions about men expressing emotions and seeking help. Here are some ways to do it:

1. Suggest activities men can use to replace the feeling of loneliness and isolation. Examples may include eating nutritious diets, exploring fun activities like playing slot machines with bonus rounds, getting enough quality sleep, and exercising.
2. Highlight stories of men who discussed their struggles, such as celebrities and public figures. Use accurate media representation to encourage more conversations and portray men's health issues in a positive light.
3. Involving communities, schools, workplaces, and worship centres in the awareness efforts. Since these are the pillars of society, engaging them will encourage men to discuss their struggles openly.

### Encourage Men to Seek Help

The discussions around mental health won't mean anything if we don't encourage men to seek help. One way to do this is to create safe spaces where they feel comfortable sharing their problems without fear of judgment. Support groups, online forums, and workplace initiatives promoting mental health are good examples. Additionally, therapy, mental health applications, and support hotlines will further simplify the hurdles of speaking up.

### Eliminate Barriers to Care

Professional stigma involves reinforcing negative stereotypes, often by people supposed to help. So, one way to eliminate stigma is to train doctors and therapists to recognize mental health issues and address them efficiently. On a broader scale, we must identify and remove barriers that prevent accessing health services, such as confidentiality concerns, availability, and affordability.

## Conclusion

Mental health stigma is a big deal in our world today, especially since most people are so engrossed in their business that they don't care about what another person is going through. If you're suffering silently, get treatment. Don't fear being labelled, as treatment will provide more relief. Also, don't let the stigma create self-doubt and shame.

Although you'll be tempted to isolate yourself, don't do it. Reach out to friends and family who understand your needs and have enough compassion to support you. If you can, join a support group and speak up against the stigma at every opportunity. Together, we can make a better world for men and women alike.

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