Male Depression

Male depression can look very different than what women may experience. A man experiencing depression may or may not feel sad or tearful. He may know something is wrong but not recognize it as depression. Depression is a medical condition that interferes with one’s ability to do normal activities and enjoy life (NIH, 2013). Depression has nothing to do with one’s character, strength, or honor. Causes can vary from one person to the next but may be some combination of genetics, body chemistry/hormones, prolonged or intense stress, and/or life events. Life events can include such things as death of a loved one, divorce, unemployment, retirement, financial difficulty, or other health conditions. When symptoms are severe or last for weeks at a time, it is important to get help. For men experiencing clinical depression, the condition does not just go away on its own. He cannot just “snap out of it.”

What are some signs of depression in men? Men can experience depression differently but here are some common signs:

- Fatigue
- Trouble sleeping
- Headaches/body aches
- Irritability
- Difficulty concentrating
- Anger
- Stress
- Increased use of alcohol
- Loss of interest in sex
- Suicidal thoughts

What to do about male depression: There is medical treatment for depression. It does require working with a doctor or behavioral health professional to find the right medication and/or therapy that works best for the individual. Some men may not feel comfortable with talking to a counselor about how he is feeling. Some men may not even feel comfortable going to a doctor. It is OK to feel uncomfortable. No one likes feeling sick. No one likes going to the doctor but we do it to get well. Untreated depression can take a toll on one’s physical health. It can increase the chance of risky behaviors such as drug or alcohol addiction. It can increase the risk of suicide. It is very important to get help.

Depression is treatable and suicide is very much preventable. For more information, go to HelpHimStay.org.