How to Talk to the Doctor

Men can experience depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, alcohol/drug addiction, and suicidal thoughts. It can be difficult to talk about but it is very important to let the family doctor know what is happening. It may be uncomfortable to talk about. It is OK to feel uncomfortable. The doctor is not there to judge you. The doctor is there to diagnosis and treat the illness you are experiencing.

Be open and honest with the doctor. They cannot help you if they don’t know what you are experiencing. Be direct. Don’t worry about saying the wrong words or right words. Just get the words out. You need to let the doctor know if any of these apply to your situation:

- Are you taking any prescription medications differently than prescribed by the doctor? Higher dose? More frequently?
- How much alcohol have you been drinking?
- Are you taking any drugs that the doctor does not know about?
- Have you been thinking about killing yourself?
- Have you made plans to kill yourself?
- Do you have difficulty getting certain thoughts out of your head? Are you preoccupied by something that has happened?
- Do you have any unexplained aches and pains? Headaches? Stomach problems?
- Have you been able to sleep? Has your sleeping pattern changed?
- Are you having trouble doing everyday activities?
- Do you have difficulty concentrating? Remembering things?
- Are you experiencing mood swings? Quick to anger? Restless?
- Do you feel physically drained? Does your whole body feel heavy?
- Are you wanting people to leave you alone? Spending more time alone?

Be prepared to work with the doctor to find the right treatment for you. Let the doctor know if your symptoms do not improve or if you are experiencing side effects from your medications. Be open to seeing a behavioral health professional. It doesn’t mean you are weak. A combination of medication and counseling can be effective. Don’t give up.

Suicide is very much preventable. For more information, go to HelpHimStay.org.