

Men actually recommend getting help for depression

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History supports Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson's [recent tweet](#) saying that men have a hard time asking for help for their depression.

But new research brings [good news](#): Men really do think it's important to seek help.

Participants in a [national survey](#) read a scenario describing someone who had depressed symptoms. Among other things, this hypothetical person has difficulty sleeping, can't concentrate and doesn't feel happy even when good things happen.

The survey then asked participants to rate the importance of getting help from friends, family members or religious leaders. Men overall rank this as a 7.7 on an importance scale of 1-10, which is surprising because that ranking is just as high as what women said to the survey.

"Maybe the [mental health](#) profession has been overestimating how big the stigma is," said Douglas Wendt, a grad student at BYU and lead author of the study.

One important gender difference emerged, however, when the scenario asked about getting professional help. Women recommend the counseling profession more highly (8.5 on the same scale) than talking to friends or family. But men rate professional consultations equally with just talking to someone who cares.

"The fact that men sort of distrust the people that know how to best help them is a barrier that we need to overcome," said Kevin Shafer, a social work professor at BYU and study co-author.

To overcome that barrier, Dwayne Johnson has taken it upon himself to bust the myth that struggling with depression is a sign of weakness. The muscle-bound movie star recently shared his own battle with depression in Oprah's Master Class.

Separately, the state of Colorado also recently launched an initiative called 'Man Therapy,' an online campaign featuring a comically macho "Dr. Rich Mahogany."

The hyper-masculine marketing may get attention, but Wendt thinks that Man Therapy misrepresents why men don't trust the mental health profession.

"What I think men want to know is that it is good therapy," Wendt said. "That it is effective. That you are going to be welcome. That you can be yourself and don't have to feel feminized or hyper-masculine."

To that point, Shafer notes that 60 percent of both men and women see their depression symptoms alleviated through short-term counseling.

It's also helpful to know where to go for help. BYU and other universities provide students with no-cost counseling. The licensed therapists at BYU have also pioneered methods for measuring progress.

And while people might not think to ask their medical doctor about mental health, Shafer says doctors are in a great position to make recommendations for a counselor.

Provided by Brigham Young University

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