

Study finds men with depression often their own toughest critics

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Society views men struggling with depression with compassion and understanding, while men view their problems in a very negative light, according to a new study from UBC, funded by the Movember Foundation.

Study lead author John Oliffe says the men tend to think of themselves as a burden to other people and a disappointment.

The study surveyed 901 men and women across the country—360 had direct experience with depression or suicide and 541 didn't.

"While it was reassuring to find that Canadians in general don't stigmatize male depression or suicide, it was concerning that the men with depression or suicidal thoughts felt a strong stigma around their condition, and many were afraid of being discovered," said Oliffe, a UBC nursing professor who focuses on men's health.

That fear and anxiety about speaking out can prevent men with depression from seeking help and deepen their feelings of isolation.

"Social isolation is one of the biggest risk factors for male suicide," said John Ogrodniczuk, co-lead

author and UBC psychiatry professor. "By reaching out, even with a simple question like 'how are you doing?' or offering to do something together, such as taking in a game, we can help reduce the risk of self-harm."

Resources like www.headsupguys.ca could also help to break down some of the stigma around depression. Ogrodniczuk also recommends gender-specific health programs such as anti-stigma workshops focusing on male [depression](#) and [suicide](#), and programs for school-aged children to challenge long-held stereotypes.

"We're looking at the issue of mental health through the male lens to ensure that the programs we fund and support are tailored towards men," said Jesse Hayman, Director of Community Engagement, Movember Canada. "Our goal is to help men live happier, healthier, longer lives, and this study supports the importance of helping [men](#) stay socially connected, so that they feel they have the support they need."

"Stigma in Male Depression and Suicide: A Canadian Sex Comparison Study" was published in December 2015 in the Community Mental Health Journal. To download a copy, click [here](#).

Provided by University of British Columbia

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