



The College of Psychiatry of Ireland  
Coláiste Siciatrachta na bÉireann

## Press Release

### College of Psychiatry of Ireland urges men to watch out for the signs of depression as Men's Health Week begins.

The focus of this year's Men's Health Week: *"Promoting and Supporting the Health and Well-Being in Men and Boys during Challenging Times"* is particularly relevant to men's mental as well as physical health say the College of Psychiatry.

Depression is common, it can be successfully treated, once recognised.

In order to help people recognise depression the College outlines a number of symptoms that can indicate the presence of clinical depression.

- Feeling unhappy, miserable, down, depressed. The feeling just won't go away and can be worse at a particular time of day, often first thing in the morning
- Unable to enjoy anything
- Lose interest in seeing people and lose touch with friends
- Unable to concentrate properly
- Feel guilty about things that have nothing to do with you
- Become pessimistic
- Start to feel hopeless, and perhaps even suicidal

Along with these symptoms many people with depression also experience **difficulty sleeping, either trouble getting to sleep, or waking early in the morning; loss of interest in sex; poor appetite with weight loss, or comfort eating. Most depressed people find they have very little energy, and tend to notice more aches and pains. Sometimes people who are depressed can be convinced they have a serious physical illness.**

Other people may notice the person is making mistakes at work, or seems unusually quiet or withdrawn. They may seem more irritable than usual, and stop looking after themselves or their home as well as before.

*Anxiety*, such as feeling on edge all the time, loss of confidence and finding it difficult to go out and face people can also be part of depression. Anxiety can often cause distressing physical symptoms such as **dry mouth, sweating, shakiness, heart racing, breathlessness and stomach churning.**

Men need to pay attention to signs of depression. It is recognised that in the current recession men are more likely than women to lose their jobs and it has long been recognised that, for men, work and relationships are the key factors in maintaining good mental health.

Depression can be very unpleasant and many, who experience it, do not recognise that what they are going through is a condition, which responds very well to support, exercise, reducing stress and for a proportion of people to medication. Some men who take their own lives have been depressed,

so it can even be fatal, particularly when compounded by drug or alcohol misuse. However, the College stresses that depression can be treated successfully.

The College emphasises that everyone has times in their lives when they feel low in mood, however for most people this feeling does not last and does not dominate their life. If it does, it is possible they have clinical depression, a recognised illness. This is not a sign of weakness, it can affect anyone, and many well known and successful men have experienced episodes of depression.

While many women when they are depressed are obviously sad, men are often more irritable, have angry outbursts and are likely to take greater risks. Men are also more likely to abuse alcohol when depressed and are more likely to commit suicide.

If men or their family notice these symptoms, it is important to act. The College suggests the following actions. :

- > Talk to someone - let your family, friends know how you are feeling. Get support online, through [www.aware.ie](http://www.aware.ie) or for younger men [www.headstrong.ie](http://www.headstrong.ie)
- > Keep active - it has been shown exercise can treat depression
- > Avoid alcohol and street drugs. Alcohol will make you feel better for a few hours, but it in itself is a strong depressant, and will make the depression much worse.
- > If you have money problems contact the Money Advice and Budgeting service, at [www.mabs.ie](http://www.mabs.ie) This is a free, confidential and non-judgemental advisory service.
- > Inform yourself about depression through organisations such as AWARE [www.aware.ie](http://www.aware.ie)
- > If the symptoms are severe, or you have any suicidal ideas contact your Family doctor/a GP and the depression can be successfully treated.

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