



A Support Group for Survivors of Suicide Loss  
8310 Ewing Halsell Dr. San Antonio, TX 78229

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### Memory Quilt

This spring we will begin the process of creating a memory quilt, for those we have lost to suicide. The quilt will include a picture of each of our loved ones and any special message, you would like to include. The cost is \$15 per picture and we need twenty people to sign up for this, in order to have a completed quilt. You may call me or email me.

Diana Martinez (210) 797-5292  
or dianam1977@gmail.com

*S.O.L.O.S Support Meetings*  
Date: The 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Wednesday of every month  
Time: 7:00 to 8:30pm  
Location: Ecumenical Center  
8310 Ewing Halsell  
San Antonio, TX

*Reaching out ...*  
*Please email any comments,*  
*questions, corrections, or ideas.*  
*Feedback is greatly appreciated!*

*Thank you,*  
*Diana Martinez*

### Help Lines

**National Suicide Hotline: 800-SUICIDE**  
**Teen Line: 800-TLC-TEEN**  
**Trevor Helpline: 800-850-8078**  
Hotline for gays, lesbian, bisexual,  
transgender, or questioning youth

*Title Unknown*  
*By Rosalyn Fryatt, JCF*  
*Borger, TX*

*I won't ask why I'm still here*  
*Without my son so dear,*  
*But what is my life's mission?*  
*On this I must make a decision.*

*Instead of bemoaning my fate,*  
*Which would fill my heart with hate,*  
*I could help others*  
*Who have lost sons, daughters, sisters,*  
*and brothers.*

*This, I have a feeling, will help with*  
*my healing. My heart would be*  
*mended, because to others a hand I*  
*extended.*

*Brent would want me happy again, So*  
*helping others is where I'll begin.*  
*In your memory, My Son.*

*Reprinted from JF newsletter, Orange Coast Chapter*  
*February 1996*

# Why Men Suffer in Silence

by Marianne J. Legato, M.D.

Depressed to death.... A growing body of research links depression to a host of illnesses including CAD, hypertension, diabetes and stroke, as well as making people more susceptible to infection. Although experts maintain that only half as many men suffer from depression as women do, I am convinced that it is much more common in men than that. And the consequences of all this undiagnosed depression are huge. Depression itself can be lethal; men commit suicide four times more often than women. Perhaps the most significant connection is to coronary artery disease.

Being depressed can more than double a man's risk of developing CAD and can also make him more vulnerable to its deadly consequences. In fact, men diagnosed as suffering from major depression have three times the incidence of CAD, according to a study in the *British Medical Journal*. Interestingly, no research has proved that women with depression are at risk for heart disease.

Some explanations for this remarkably strong association: Depressed men smoke more, exercise less and use more alcohol to alleviate emotional pain, all of which enhance their risk of heart disease.... And depressed people are also less likely to follow medical recommendations.

**Hidden in plain sight....** Why does such dangerous depression so frequently go undiagnosed in men? Because it's so easy to miss the symptoms. Women typically express their feelings to others and reach out for help. Depressed men often do neither. "I know what's wrong," male patients have sometimes said to me. "Talking about it won't help." Instead, these men may isolate themselves, withdrawing into TV watching or electronic games. They may self-medicate with alcohol or drugs. They can become irritable, aggressive or uncharacteristically violent.

These are problems that can strain or break families. What's more, they can sneak up on men who were previously healthy and have had successful careers. Depression becomes more common as men age, in some cases possibly due to a decline in testosterone. Research shows that 12 percent of adults 65 years of age or over who are seen in primary-care settings have clinically significant depression.

The good news is that when I have been able to convince male patients to be treated for depression, their mood and productivity improved. I also believe their risk of coronary artery disease diminished. It's worth the fight to make these changes happen.

**8 Ways To Tell He's Depressed.....** Depressed men rarely complain about feeling of sadness or hopelessness; They think it's a sign of weakness. So we're left with having to decode men's messages. Here are some signs of trouble. 1. withdrawing from other people... pursuing solitary activities. 2. Increased drinking or use of mood – altering medications. 3. Change in sexual behavior: A depressed man can lose interest in sex- or become more sexually aggressive. 4. Change in eating habits. 5. Disturbed sleep patterns. 6. Irritability and fits of bad temper. 7. Having difficulty making decisions. 8. Taking increased risks, such as sudden interest in gambling or skydiving; starting an affair.

**How to Help the Man you Love** Since men are less likely than women to want to talk about their problems, treatment for men should focus less on exploring their feelings and more on constructing solutions, according to international suicide expert Keith Hawton, D.Sc., F.R.C. Psyc., professor of psychiatry at the University of Oxford, in England and director of the University's center for Suicide Research.

First of course, you have to get a man to recognize that there is a problem. If you notice an accumulation of changes that suggest that he might be falling into depression (see "Eight ways To Tell He's Depressed"), approach him and tell him you love him and think he might be suffering. Pick a time when your partner is not doing something else. Bedtime is a good option since you're under the cover of darkness and there are no distractions. Ask him to talk to his doctor. Listen to his answer. If he denies that anything is wrong, ask him specifically about the behavior you notice that is worrying you. Say something like: "I notice you're drinking more beer than in the past. Does it relax you? Does it improve your mood?" This is far better way to approach him than with an accusatory, "You've been drunk every weekend this month! What's going on?"

Keep your questions brief and emphasize how much he means to you and your children. If he refuses to take action, talk to his doctor yourself and ask what can be done to help him. If he absolutely refuses help and you're frantic, ask the doctor about an intervention, which can include having a counseling and treatment team come to your home, meet with you and your husband and determine which services might be needed. This may work when nothing else does.

The right treatment for depression depends on the individual, of course. But here are some treatments that have worked particularly well with men, research and mental health experts have discovered:

- A combination of medication and psychotherapy, with care to reassure the patient that he won't become dependent on psychotropic medications.
- A form of psychotherapy called cognitive behavioral therapy, which avoids a prolonged exploration of the past and concentrates on current problems, emphasizing ways to address and solve them.
- Short term (12 weeks) exercise programs; many patients who do something as simple as a walking program report significant improvement.

Doctors also caution that medication doesn't work well for everyone. Another option that has made a comeback in recent years is electro-convulsive therapy, which now has fewer side effects than it once did.

Most of all don't expect quick changes. Treating depression may help improve resistance to infection and reduce cancer and heart-disease risk. But recovery from depression can take a long time and requires a great deal of support from you and your family. There will be bad days when it seems that there is no progress as well as the possibility that he will suffer regression or relapses. But eventually the better days will increase in frequency and his mood will finally lift