TREATMENT OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

What about the Guys?
“This year thousands of men will die from stubbornness” (Billboard by the Department of Human Services)

It is estimated that more than half of men with diagnosable psychiatric disorders will receive no formal assistance (i.e., mental health counseling) or even informal assistance (i.e., friends and family) for their respective problems (Addis & Mahalik, 2003).
One Man Fighting
(Brian Kershisnik)
Why Don’t Men Seek Help?

• Men are often socialized into certain “masculine” views that discourage seeking help.
• Many men report feeling that helping professionals are ill equipped to improve their mental health.
• Depressed men lack the hope or motivation towards healing.
• Believe “I am the only one” rather than recognizing it is human condition.
• Men see poor mental health “just the way it is” and it can’t be improved. “It’s natural to be depressed so what’s the point?”
• “I knew something was wrong but getting help is just not what men do”
• “It isn’t acceptable to have these kinds of problems so why would I expose myself?”
Gender Differences For Anxiety and Depression

- Lifetime incidence rates of depression in men are roughly half that of women (Parker & Brotchie, 2010).
- More than 1 in 10 men will experience a major depressive episode in their lifetime (Parker & Brotchie, 2010).
- No gender difference is found for bipolar disorders (Piccinelli & Wilkinson, 2000).
- Women are more likely than men to experience nearly all anxiety disorders (McLean, et al., 2011).
- No gender difference with social anxiety disorder.
- The rates of undiagnosed depression and anxiety in men far surpass those of women—suggesting that the estimated prevalence of mood and anxiety disorders in men is conservative.
- Factors such as divorce/death/job loss bring men into treatment but the underlying issue is often anxiety or depression (Williams, 2014).
Treatment Considerations

- Men are four times as likely as women to be successful at suicide, despite the fact that women are more likely to experience suicidal ideation and attempts (Addis, 2008).

- Many mental health issues in men are coupled with an increased risk of alcohol or drug abuse, anger, physically or emotionally abusive behavior, and successful suicide attempts (NIH, 2005).

- Estimated less than 50% of male abuse survivors have ever disclosed their abuse, compared to more than 70% of females (Ullman & Filipas, 2005).

- The impact of abuse can have longer lasting mental health effects for men than for women (Ullman & Filipas, 2005).

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So What Finally Brings Men into Treatment

• Come for a reason that feels more acceptable like - divorce, loss/grief, or losing a job.
• A nudge (or threat) from a significant person in their life.
• Fear of losing family/marriage/job.
• Involvement with the judicial system.
• Feelings of desperation – no other alternatives.
What Has Been Most Helpful in Treatment?

Leaning that Anxiety and Depression Are About Thoughts and Time
The Voice In Your Head - The foundation of anxiety comes from the compulsive thinking known as mind chatter

Depression (Past)
• I am inherently flawed.
• I should have/could have.
• Good never won’t last.
• Bad things always happen to me.
• Others are smarter than I am.
• I need to hide who I really am.
• I can’t handle it anymore.

Anxiety (Future)
• I’m not good enough.
• What if I embarrass myself.
• What if bad things happen.
• I can’t be vulnerable.
• I have to prove my worth and value.
• What if other people think I am stupid or don’t know what I am doing.
• What if others won’t listen to me.
• Everyone is looking at me.
• Life is bigger than I can handle.
Our whole body responds to our mind chatter as if it is reality. No wonder anxiety and depression feel so overwhelming.

Just because you think something does not make it real. As you become aware of your thoughts you will be able to begin to discern the difference between thoughts and reality thus minimizing anxious/depressed feelings.
“Nothing is good or bad. but thinking makes it so.” ~William Shakespeare

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
  - Event
  - Thought
  - Feeling
Observing Self – Take a step back

- Observe the Though as Separate from You
- Just because you think it doesn’t make it true but because you think it – it feels real to you.
- Bring the thought to the conscious awareness where you can make a choice.
- My Mind Chatter is Like a Computer.
MY THOUGHTS AND ANXIETY/DEPRESSION ARE LINKED — NOW WHAT?

1. Learn to recognize your thoughts.
   – Observing the thought.
   • Cognitive distortions

2. Thought Reconstruction – Look at the thought as separate from you.

3. Realize that you have a choice. You can choose whether to embrace the thought as real or let it go.
   • CHOICE is an empowering concept for men.
I HAVE A CHOICE!

FAITH

Doubt

FEAR

EMBARRASSED

NAVIGATED

SECURE

KNOWLEDGE

WORTH

EXCITEMENT

STRONG

HAPPY

CONFIDENT

LEFT

CHOICE

RIGHT

ANXIETY

DEPRESSION
I Can Ride My Bike With No Handle Bars
FLOATING LEAF
Empowered Life Solutions
Empoweredlifesolutions.com
Childhood scripts carry forward.

- Scripts we form in childhood carry into our adult life with little or no conscious awareness of it.

- Unconscious childhood scripts can be an underlying factor why men do not seek treatment. i.e. “that’s just the way it is.” or “I can’t be vulnerable.” or “I am inherently flawed.”
Living in the Present

- Because Anxiety/Depression are about thoughts that are past and future oriented. Mind chatter can not thrive in the present moment.

- Mindfulness
- Suspend Judgment
- Wait to have the experience
- Ground to the Present Moment
Football Player and a Country Singer
“I have been through some awful things, terrible things, and some of them actually happened.”
~ Mark Twain

- The Past and the Future only Exist in our minds.
- Painful experiences only account for about 5-8 percent of the sum total of your life.
Living in the Present – Self-Assessment

• Are you easily distracted when involved with a task?
• Do you follow repeated automatic behaviors in many areas of your life such as brushing your teeth or how you drive to work?
• Do you defer to an authority figure over your own good judgment?
• Is your life highly scheduled with little time for any creative endeavors?
• Do you struggle with procrastination thus putting off important tasks for another day?
• Do you gobble your food with little awareness of the texture or taste of your food?
• Do you feel like your mind races and you can’t slow it down?
• Do you review past conversations over and over in your mind thinking you could have said it differently?
• Do you breath short shallow breaths?
• Do you feel sluggish with a low level of energy?
• Do you want to do projects that you never get around to doing?
• Do you think about how you look, what to wear, or your weight most of the day?
• Do you spend high levels of energy trying to convince others of your way of thinking?
• Do you say in your mind “what if” this happens or “what if” that happens?
• Do you spend high levels of mental energy worrying about what others think of you?
• Are you afraid to feel your feelings of anger, sadness, pain, or loss?
References


