

Men's Mental Health Month – June

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Abstract-

June is Men's mental health month, a topic that is so underrated that millions of people doesn't even know about it. There are various stereotypes and stigma's regarding men being strong and too tough to have emotions or cry. Through a survey of more than 30 people, we discuss various perspectives of different views regarding men's mental health. We get a better view on why this topic isn't talked enough. It is necessary to understand that men too face many challenges and pressure which affect their mental health, hence this is a topic that deserves significant discussion. Ignoring a person's issues may lead too various negative outcomes in the future. After reading this research paper you will have a better grasp on various things about men's mental health.

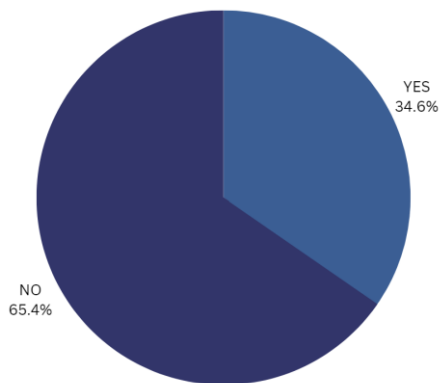
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Introduction –

Mental health is just as important as physical health, maybe even more. June, is dedicated as pride month and men's mental health month. However, people are not aware regarding June being men's mental health month. Why is this topic not discussed much? what are some of the stigmas about men's mental health that lead to several issues if ignored, we are going to discuss these things in this people. We surveyed over 30 people, asking them various questions and noting their views. There exist many stereotypes due to which men do not get support system to deal with their issues. Men's mental health is something that needs to be addressed more and more so people around feel comfortable to ask for help. Let's discuss and try to make society a safe space for men to open up.

Statistics-

Here is a pie chart representing the percentage of people who do and do not know that June is men's mental health month.



Question - Did you know men's mental health month was June

Answer – Yes: 34.6% No: 65.4%

Discussion –

Source of knowledge about mental health month

While word of mouth is most famous for passing information, nowadays social media is taking over. Social media is the source of info for millions of people. From our survey we concluded that most people who knew about June being men's mental health month came to know about it from different social media platforms, some of them being: Instagram, Reddit, Tik Tok etc. Some other answers to this question was: workplace, family members, friends etc.

Different views on men's mental health

Men's mental health might be studied, but is rarely discussed among the general public. Even less so in the past or when and where a discussion about it is deemed inappropriate e.g., within certain cultural parameters. Mental health discussions appear to be more acceptable in contemporary settings in general. This might have increased during covid-related social isolation during which many people were indirectly forced to become aware of or confronted with it. mental health is a relevant topic to think about regardless on your gender or biological sex, it is an essential part of our humanity and understanding it helps us grow beyond our personal problems. It's a great way to shed light on men's mental health due to men "crying or expressing emotions" has become a taboo topic, so bringing these issues into the limelight of the mental state rather than only being subjective to physical is pretty cool and progressive. Many people think it is often disregarded by society, even though it is just as important as any other gender's mental health.

One of the most thought-provoking answers during our survey was that "I think it's complicated. Masculinity makes it much harder for men (cis or trans) to openly express vulnerability, which leads to suppressing the emotions only to come back out in anger, or leads to more depression and shame for

feeling emasculated, because sadness and vulnerability are considered feminine, especially crying. Even happiness, I've noticed, is expected to be expressed differently. A man is not to get too excited or else he seems girlish." Many people agree that this month needs to be appreciated more, some said that it is overlooked by pride month and doesn't get much recognition. But is it so? or is it because we have created stereotypes that are so hard to break that men would rather commit suicide than opening up and asking help. What we need to do is make society a safe place for every gender.

Some stigmas about men and their mental health

"Stop crying like a girl", "Real men don't have these delusional problems", "Just do workouts, depression is for the weak", "men feel they should not have fragile emotion", "Boys shouldn't cry" these are just some of the many stigmas that exist out there. These are what makes it difficult for people to open up, they are scared that they might be judged by society and considered weak. men learn that expressing their emotions is a weakness. Most of the men have that belief rooted in them, including myself. We learn to express certain emotions only, like anger, while others not at all. Men have trouble opening up to other people about their emotions as a result. When a guy is being vulnerable to other people, he can be considered emasculated.

The biggest stigma is that all men need a sense of belonging, or that we give "women therapy" to men who just want to "belong." If someone lacks in sense of belonging that has nothing to do with their gender. A man and woman should find their purpose whoever they choose with mental health, and let them decide what therapy is best for them. There are gender specific therapies, yes, and there are biological differences when it comes to how the limbic system runs, but it's not so big that women don't need a sense of belonging either or that they need it less than men. What that promotes is subtle "machoism" and provides a false sense of just being human. A man is entitled to work out as much as a woman, both are a form of therapy for both. What I want men to know is that if working out is therapy, great. If drawing is, great. If you're an empath, great. If you're considered more "feminine," great, you're still a man. Just be you, and find what makes you spark and be confident.

What is the challenge here?

Lack of awareness and understanding, due to a lack of openness for discussion and educational initiatives. Convincing men it's ok to express their emotions and find out what they are truly feeling. Men want to believe they are "strong" and often refuse to meet their emotional needs much less talk about it and mitigate issues. Eradicating the bias of only females being subjective to emotion and men to physicality.

We need to foster care for both aspects for all genders, whether you like it or not. But more importantly, Not enough safe spaces and overcoming the stigma. The stigma comes from both men and women. It's deeply rooted.

Men are the largest number in prison, that commit suicide, and that are the most reported to have suicidal tendencies and social isolation. Why aren't we talking about that? Why are we instead just blaming everyone else so freely, but we can't stand up and say maybe it's not just external either. Why don't we engage with men and say whatever you are right now, no matter what society is telling you, that you are a man if you identify and want to be one, then that's you? Why are we quick to judge what's not a man but not focus on what is?

Why self-care is important

if you can't love yourself, how can love one another? The self-esteem and confidence with who you are is much more significant than always going around proving you're an "alpha male". Self-care allows self-reflection and peace of mind. Self-care is the most important when it comes to mental health. Be working out, drawing, math, music, animating, game creation, gaming, woodwork, interior design, meditating, yoga, and martial arts are a few and also good hygiene, and that is gender specific. Take care of your beard, your hair, your muscles, your body, because if you don't, you can't take care of anyone else. Sure, you can do it, but you're not doing it well unless you truly understand the effort it takes to do it yourself. Don't do it for other people, do it to be able to have the clarity that when you wake up, even if you say in bed all day, you did something. Self-care teaches us self-love and empathy, and allows us to then extend it to the world to better understand what it means to be human.

What affects men's mental health

Societal pressure of providing for your family, nowadays always proving your masculinity, being severely bullied for not having muscles and abs, pressure, social stigmas, hyper-masculine figures in movies and TV, father/grandfather figures, and romantic or family relationships, Lack of social support, or social opportunities in general after schooling, Being a new parent, job loss, parental loss, neurological disorders such as ADHD. These are just few of the many thousands of reasons that might affect mental health.

Conclusion

This whole month is a celebration of history of love and kindness. It's a celebration of fathers who truly establish love in their house, and not control. it's a great initiative to bring the suppressed aspects of 'masculinity' and that men can emote their feelings too. Not crying because it displays you as weak is a very derogatory statement, because crying is the reason you were strong for too long. The spotlight when it comes to mental health is on marginalized groups, with the assumption that if you are male, then your struggle is insignificant in comparison. We should definitely encourage men to find out about their emotions and learn to express them more. Seek therapy and don't overlook their mental health. We need to make society a safe place for every gender. We have to turn a blind eye to the stereotypes and get the help we want.