Men and Mental Health: What to Know About This Link

Mental health conditions can be experienced by both men and women, but you might have some varying degrees of issues or different symptoms than a woman your same age with the same mental health disorder. Here are some things you should know about your mental health, how to spot it, and ways to manage it.

**Mental Health Warning Signs**

While each different mental health disorder can have different signs and symptoms, there are some that tend to be similar across the board. As a man, you probably experience more irritability, anger, and extreme mood changes than a woman with the same mental health illness. You are also more susceptible to substance abuse. Other warning signs that you are struggling with a mental health issue include mood or energy level changes, changes in your appetite, sleeping problems, hopelessness, suicidal thoughts, and feeling you have difficulty expressing positive emotions.

**You Have a Higher Risk of Substance Abuse**

With mental health, anything can be prevalent with both men and women. With that being said, men do tend to have a higher risk for turning to substances like alcohol or drugs. Substance abuse is only going to make your depression worse, even though it seems like it is making it better. Remember alcohol specifically is a depressant, so you get short-term relief followed by much worse depression when you sober up. This can cause you to crave more alcohol to get rid of these emotions, which then starts a very dangerous cycle of substance abuse.

**There is a Heightened Risk of Suicide**

Unfortunately, men are also at a higher risk of suicide when they struggle with severe mental illness. Like women, you should speak to a doctor immediately if you have thoughts of suicide or have attempted suicide in the past. There is always someone to talk to, whether it is your family physician, therapist, or other mental health professional. If you have counseling at work or school, speak to them free of charge. Speak to a friend or loved one if you are not sure who else to turn to. There are also hotlines over the phone and online that can help you.

Mental illnesses can feel debilitating, but they are all treatable through a number of different resources. Getting help is the first step to starting to feel better and gaining control of your life back.