



Men's Mental Health

June is Men's Health Month, which offers an opportunity to consider the unique barriers to optimal mental health faced by men. There is overwhelming evidence that mental health concerns of boys and men are associated with complex and diverse economic, biological, developmental, psychological, and sociocultural factors. Studies show poor mental health in men, and the stigma attached to asking for and receiving help, undermines their ability to lead healthy lives. With those factors in mind, the American Psychological Association released their APA [Guidelines](#) for Psychological Practice with Boys and Men in 2018 to serve as a best practice framework for behavioral health providers.

In a recent [presentation](#) to public health professionals, Jason Vitello, president of the Colorado Public Health Association (CPHA), discussed how male mental health is becoming a silent crisis in public health. Some of the most serious mental health disparities for males include:

- Nearly **one in 10** men suffer from depression or anxiety, but are less likely to report or seek help. Men of color are even less likely to seek treatment (CDC).
- Men are more than **twice** as likely to die from a drug overdose than women (CDC).
- **Seventy-five percent** of the chronically homeless are male (The US Interagency Council on Homelessness).
- **Sixty-one percent** of men have experienced trauma in their lifetime (SAMSHA-HRSA).
- **Forty percent** of individuals with serious mental illnesses have been in jail or prison at some time in their lives (Mental Health America).
- **Ninety-three percent** of prisoners are men (Federal Bureau of Prisons).
- **Suicide** is the leading cause of death in jail (U.S. Department of Justice).

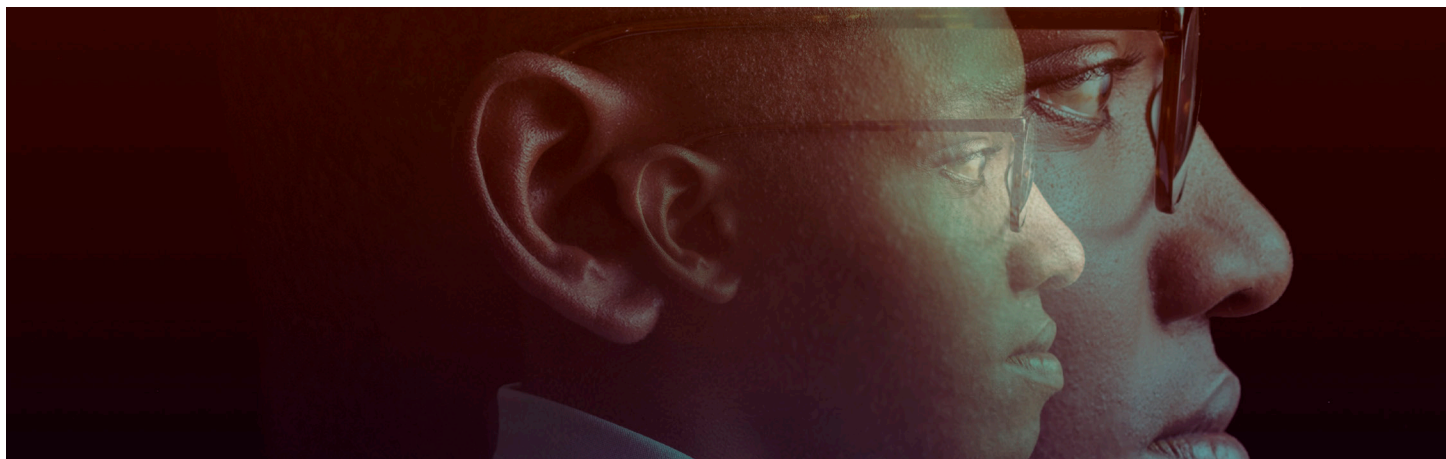
Under Vitello's leadership, CPHA has made raising awareness about male mental health a priority. He noted that: "The data is startling. As a former behavioral health provider, I have seen the struggles. Much of the data demonstrates that most men are not getting into behavioral health through primary care, but through [the] Department of Corrections."

This Colorado Access series will illuminate social factors that lead to health inequalities and disparities, or help to decrease them. We hope this monthly series will support your existing efforts by providing resources and educational opportunities while exploring current trends and best practices.

We know there are timely and progressive efforts in place to address the health disparities experienced by so many, sometimes by providers or community partners within our own network. We will share information about these efforts in the hope that it might lead you to consider what might be realized in your own practice or organization.

Each month we will introduce a topic and offer some brief highlights. If you want to dive a bit deeper, we will also include links to articles or websites that provide more comprehensive information.

[Men 25 to 54 years old account for the largest number of suicide deaths](#) in the U.S. These men are also the least likely to receive any kind of support. They don't talk to their friends or family about their thoughts or feelings. They are the victims of problematic thinking that says mental health disorders are unmanly signs of weakness.



The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) has received national recognition for their work to decrease the high rate of [suicide](#) among men in Colorado. In 2012, CDPHE's Office of Suicide Prevention launched [Man Therapy](#), an innovative strategy to address male mental health. Based on a similar effort in Australia, [Man Therapy](#) braids a masterful marketing and outreach campaign with access to resources through a male-friendly online platform.

Man Therapy's goal is to show males that talking about their problems, getting help, and fixing themselves is masculine. The campaign incorporates a humorous approach through Dr. Rich Mahogany, a fictional therapist and no-nonsense "man's man," who states that honest talk about life's problems is how men can begin to solve their own challenges. Men can interact with Dr. Mahogany through a portal on Man Therapy's website, where they can also do a "head inspection" (self-assessment), and get "manly mental health tips" through questions and videos. When men indicate their level of distress is high, Dr. Mahogany refers them to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline or "the Pros" (a vetted list of professional mental health service providers). The website offers suggestions on how to give back through volunteering or getting involved in suicide prevention efforts, and also has a "worried about someone" section with general guidance. A testimonial library shows men who have overcome significant life challenges through many types of journeys. Man Therapy provides a bridge for men at risk for suicide to connect with interventions that can save their lives.

We are dedicated to working with our network of providers to explore strategies to improve health outcomes for men.



If you know of creative approaches or partnerships that are addressing health disparities, either by your organization or another entity, please contact us at practice_support@coaccess.com.

We would love to share this information!