

THE MASK OF MASCULINITY- Understanding Men's Mental Health

Traditional notions of masculinity and patriarchy can be a heavy luggage for men. How will men air out their pain if men are taught not to cry right from when they are boys? How will they seek help if they are brought up to be self-sufficient and efficient? We cannot have it all, no one is enough; do they forget? Masculinity bids men to be strong, unemotional and stoic. A man has no chance or time to grieve.

It is the societal expectations and gender roles that cultivate feelings of shame and isolation within men because at the end of the day, they consider opening up about their daily struggles and pains as being weak and self-insufficient as a man. They would be a shame to manhood if they sought therapeutic counselling and guidance, not to talk of advice and help when they are at their lowest moments.

We can agree that there is always an alternative in life; if A doesn't fit the criteria, B or C or any other will suit the taste. It is no surprise that most men resort to social media, drug and substance abuse, gambling and violence when overwhelmed by the winds of their struggles. In our midst, men are suffering with depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, addiction and substance abuse while the rest of us only see that image of a provider and protector.

Instead of questioning the manhood of those who speak up, why not pick them up in the middle of the storm when they are sinking in the mud of the city and darkness of the night? To the rest of us, it is important to know that men's mental health matters as much as women's does. To the men, how about you prioritize your own mental well-being and break that block of silence? We can create a more inclusive and supportive environment where men are empowered to express themselves authentically. We can foster a culture of support and understanding for

our dear men to feel more comfortable seeking help and discussing their emotions without the fear of judgment.

Remember, every human being needs their mental health and well-being if they are to be productive and complete.

By: Annampaire