

NEWS RELEASE

AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

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Fatherhood Influences Men in Mental Health Decisions

ARLINGTON, Va. (June 18, 2009) — Being a father is an important factor in a man's decision to seek help for mental health issues, according to a survey released today by the American Psychiatric Association.

More than 6 million men suffer from depression each year, and though many try to deal with it on their own, the survey indicates that fathers are more likely to take their mental health seriously for the sake of their children. Over 90 percent of men surveyed said their role as a father or legal guardian would have an impact on their decision to seek help if they were feeling depressed.

"It is encouraging to see that fathers are open to getting help and that some of the stigma surrounding men and depression is waning," stated Jeffrey Borenstein, M.D., Chair of the Council on Communications at the American Psychiatric Association. "A father who takes care of himself is taking care of his whole family."

Survey respondents were more likely to say they would encourage their fathers to seek help for depression if they are parents themselves. More than 90 percent of parents or guardians who still have contact with their fathers said they would be likely to encourage their own fathers to seek help for depression if they felt it was interfering with his work or relationships, while only 85 percent of the non-parents would encourage their father to get help.

While stigma surrounding mental health issues has declined, many men indicated that they are more comfortable discussing other health issues. Half of the men surveyed said it would be easier or equally easy to talk to their fathers about depression, while a third said it would be easier to talk to them about screening for cancer than seeking help for depression.

The national online survey was conducted within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of The American Psychiatric Association between June 12-16, 2009 among 2,274 adults age 18+, 1040 of whom were male; 235 of those males were fathers or legal guardians. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

About the American Psychiatric Association:

The American Psychiatric Association is a national medical specialty society whose more than 38,000 physician members specialize in diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at www.psych.org and www.HealthyMinds.org.

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