



# Women and Mental Health

Mental disorders can affect women and men differently. Some disorders are more common in women such as depression and anxiety. There are also certain types of disorders that are unique to women. For example, some women may experience symptoms of mental disorders at times of hormone change, such as perinatal depression, premenstrual dysphoric disorder, and perimenopause-related depression. When it comes to other mental disorders such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, research has not found differences in the rates at which men and women experience these illnesses. But women may experience these illnesses differently – certain symptoms may be more common in women than in men, and the course of the illness can be affected by the sex of the individual. Researchers are only now beginning to tease apart the various biological and psychosocial factors that may impact the mental health of both women and men.

## Warning Signs

Women and men can develop most of the same mental disorders and conditions, but may experience different symptoms. Some symptoms include:

- Persistent sadness or feelings of hopelessness
- Misuse of alcohol and/or drugs
- Dramatic changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Excessive fear or worry
- Seeing or hearing things that are not there
- Extremely high and low moods
- Aches, headaches, or digestive problems without a clear cause
- Irritability
- Social withdrawal
- Suicidal thoughts

**Mental disorders can be treated:** If you are unsure where to go for help, ask your family doctor or contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Communicating well with your health care provider can improve your care and help you both make good choices about your health.

**If you or someone you know is in a crisis, get help immediately.** You can call 911 or call or text the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) at 988.

Source: National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Women and Mental Health. Retrieved March 1, 2023 from NIMH.NIH.gov.

This information is not intended to replace professional care. Please call your EAP if professional care is needed. The EAP offers assessment, counseling and referral to appropriate resources.