

COSMOPOLITAN

LOVE AND LUST



Owen Wilson and Kate Hudson in seemingly happier times.

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When Guys Get the Blues

Much as they'd like you to believe otherwise, men are not immune to depression. Experts tell you how to deal.

■ When Owen Wilson was hospitalised for apparently attempting suicide, the public seemed to let out a collective “WTF?!” Though he had recently split from Kate Hudson, a much more serious trigger seemed to send him to such a dark place. The actor was reportedly taking antidepressants, as unlikely as that seems based on his fun-loving public persona. And Owen is hardly the only famous guy to struggle with depression. Rocker Pete Wentz recently disclosed that he has been taking medication for the past 10 years to help keep the forecast in his head “sunny and 65”.

That said, most men aren't living Hollywood-style, open-book lives. On top of that, they're still socialised to believe that depression—and worse, admitting to having it—is emasculating, which is why most of them decide to suck it up as opposed to seeking help from friends, family, or professionals. Complicating matters even more, when a guy is down, he'll try to hold it together for the closest person in his life, which often tends to be his girlfriend. “He may be fearful that he'll lose her if she sees his weakness,” says Aaron Rochlen, Ph.D., an associate professor of counselling psychology at the University of Texas, US.

So how the hell are you to know if your guy is bottoming out? Pay attention to these subtle clues: Men tend to complain of the physical side effects of depression, such as loss of appetite and insomnia. He also will possibly claim to be “totally stressed out or say that he has way too much on his plate”, says Los Angeles psychologist Yvonne Thomas, Ph.D.

As he's dodging the subject, don't just look for a dude to display classic symptoms of depression, such as crying, apathy, low sex drive, or head-under-the-covers despair. Instead, try and give him that space to open up and try not to pick fights with him when he's hit a low point, says Dr Samir Parikh, Chief of Department of Mental Health, Max HealthCare, New Delhi.

“If he continues to withdraw and from the relationship, take it as his cry for help. But proceed with caution, and you may want to steer clear of the D word. Just mention that you've noticed that he seems stressed and you want to help him,” says Rochlen.

And try not to despair yourself. Experts say that the majority of men benefit from either therapy, with added help through medication, or a combination of the two treatments. ■



Ashlee's beau, Pete Wentz, has been frank about his lows.

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—THERESA O'ROURKE WITH INPUTS BY PRATISHTHA DOBHAL