

# Men's Mental Health

**WAYNE BRADY**

**The actor and comedian  
talks about dismantling  
mental health stigma within  
the Black community**

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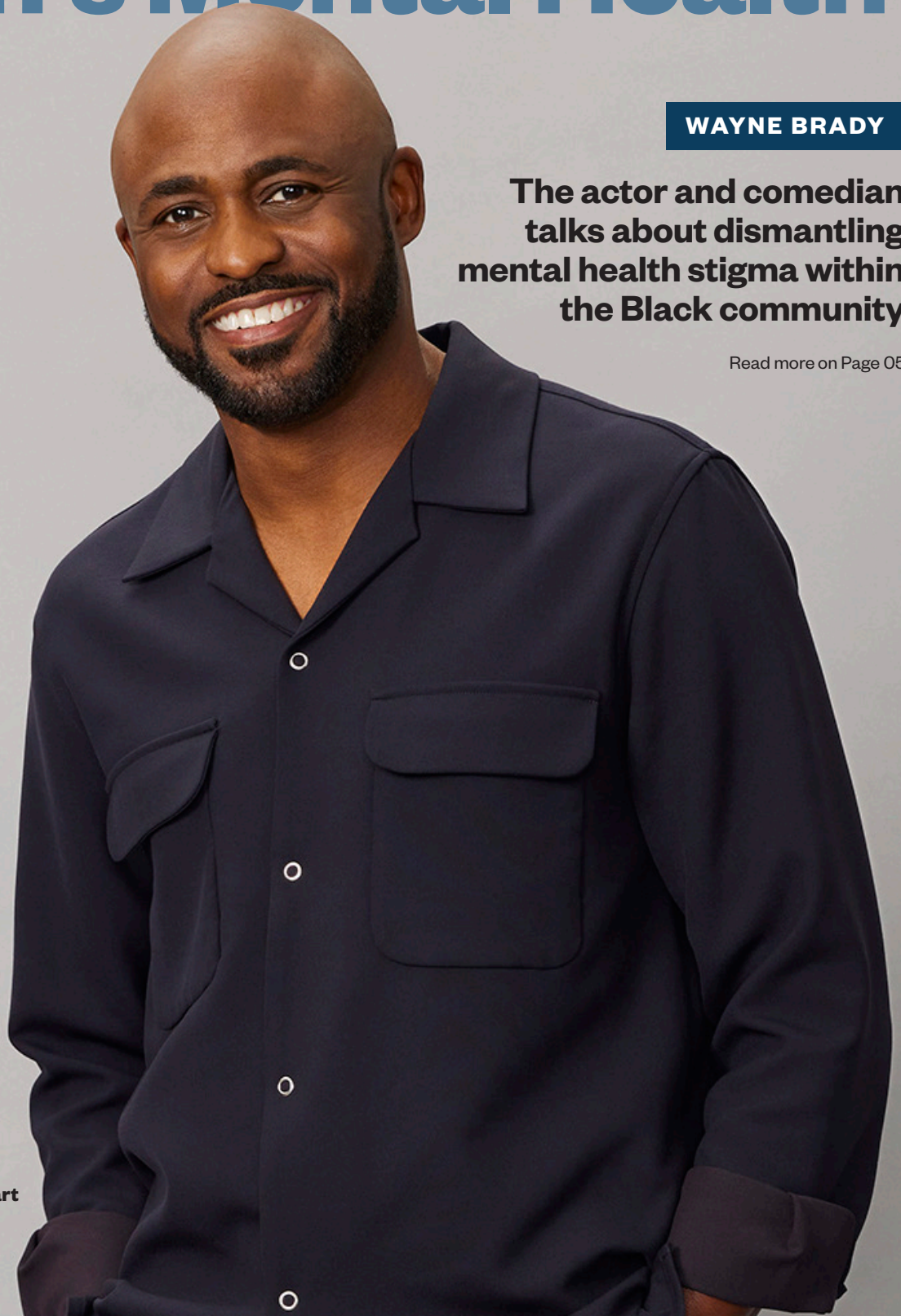
**"Early intervention not only reduces suffering but also helps prevent mental health crises from escalating into emergencies."**

**Pierluigi Mancini, Ph.D.**, Chair of the Board, Mental Health America

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**"The more we speak up, the more we give others permission to do the same. That's how we start changing the culture."**

**Kevin Love**, 17-Year NBA Veteran





Dr. Justin Puder

## How Dr. Justin Puder Is Inspiring Authenticity and Healing in Men

After personal tragedy, Dr. Justin Puder is helping men find strength in vulnerability.

### What inspired you to become a therapist?

My dad dying from cancer and my brother from a drug overdose are the main reasons. My brother had undiagnosed bipolar disorder and was constantly getting in trouble when he had bouts of mania. He didn't receive a diagnosis until he was much older and had spent most of his life being treated as the "bad kid." I know there are so many who are misunderstood and, with the right help, could have a different path forward.

### What are the most common emotional struggles you see?

Men often struggle with recognizing their emotional truth. We are taught to treat emotions as a weakness. We hide parts of ourselves and show only the ones that fit society's definition of masculine. This can create depression and isolation. The liberation and growth I see from men when they can be authentic with all their emotions is one of the most rewarding experiences as a therapist.

# Breaking the Silence: Men's Mental Health Deserves Attention and Action

Although public awareness about mental health is growing, many men still struggle to access help due to lingering stigma and deeply rooted societal expectations. Tackling these issues and promoting early support can go a long way in creating an environment where men feel seen, heard, and supported.

Cultural definitions of masculinity often place value on emotional toughness, independence, and quiet endurance. While these qualities can be strengths, they also discourage emotional openness and create an atmosphere where vulnerability is viewed as a flaw. This can prevent men from speaking up about mental health challenges, leading to symptoms being overlooked or left untreated. Research shows that millions of men in the United States experience depression each year, yet many never receive a formal diagnosis or care.

The impact of these social pressures is significant. Men often turn to anger, withdrawal, or substance use to cope with emotional distress — responses that may mask deeper mental health concerns. Unfortunately, these coping mechanisms are often misunderstood or ignored until a crisis arises. The toll is reflected in stark suicide statistics: Men represent nearly 80% of suicide deaths in the United States.

Recognizing and addressing mental health symptoms early can be life-changing. When warning signs — like mood changes, sleep disruptions, persistent sadness, or increased reliance on alcohol or drugs — are spotted early, people are more likely to access the right support. Early intervention not only reduces suffering but also helps prevent mental health crises from escalating into emergencies.

### Supporting early intervention

To support early action, Mental Health America provides a series of free, anonymous online screening tools that help people better understand what they're experiencing. These self-assessments cover a wide range of conditions and offer immediate feedback and educational resources. For men who may feel hesitant to talk about their emotions, these tools offer a safe, pressure-free first step toward gaining clarity and confidence about seeking help.

Taking a screening can help men better understand their mental health and identify when it might be time to speak with a professional. The results are private and can guide users toward appropriate next steps, such as exploring therapy options or reading about others' experiences. Importantly, this model empowers men to take charge of their mental health on their own terms.

This Men's Mental Health Month, let's work together to normalize mental healthcare for men, emphasize early intervention, and share tools that make support more accessible. When we shift the narrative, we not only help men live healthier lives — we help our entire society thrive.

Written by **Pierluigi Mancini, Ph.D., President and CEO, Multicultural Development Institute; Chair of the Board, Mental Health America**



# As the World's Healthiest Sport, Tennis Is Unmatched in Promoting Mental Health

Mental health and physical health are intrinsically connected. The two cannot be separated; they are, in fact, flip sides of the same coin. Countless studies have proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that exercise and physical activity are vitally important ingredients in enhancing mental health. What's good for the body is good for the mind — and vice versa.

In short, mental health really is health. Period. It's the fuel that allows you to do everything else in your life; to show up for your family, to show up at work, to show up in your sport, to show up for your community. To be there for yourself. When your mental health suffers, all those other dimensions suffer as well. It's like cutting off a vital fuel.

And while all physical activity is beneficial to mental health, participation in tennis, known for increasing longevity more than any other sport or physical activity, delivers particularly extraordinary mental health benefits. Tennis is the world's healthiest sport and offers an unbeatable blend of ingredients that optimize its impact on those who participate.

## A social sport

Tennis is easily accessible, can be played by people of all ages and abilities, and is unmatched in its singular social advantages.

"Even when you're playing singles, tennis is very social," noted Dr. Brian Hainline, the U.S. Tennis Association's immediate past president and a clinical professor of neurology at NYU's Grossman School of Medicine. "Tennis connects individuals in a unique and wonderful way, and we know that those social interactions are critically important for mental health wellness, because social activity decreases the likelihood of loneliness, which is a major factor in depression and anxiety."

Not only does tennis afford a great way to connect with others, it's also unmatched in its ability to connect its participants with themselves.

"Tennis is particularly beneficial for mental health because it encourages self-reliance and mental toughness," said Dr. Alexis Colvin, the U.S. Open's chief medical officer. "It can help improve your self-confidence by offering measurable progress — whether that's improved physical fitness, mastery of skills, or competitive results."

"Tennis is a sport that requires you to be in the present," Hainline added. "And being in



Photo by kali9 (iStock) | Courtesy of U.S. Tennis Association

the present means that you're really focused on the here and now, so you're not stressing out about what may or may not happen in five minutes or an hour or in 10 years. It's almost this sense of mindful presence — very Zen-like — which is really important for a sense of well-being and wellness."

## Taking life one point at a time

That "one point at a time" aspect of the sport is a big reason why tennis has proven such a powerful tool in programs that assist those struggling with mental health issues, including veterans.

"I think tennis really translates into life, because life is going to constantly throw stuff at you," said Kol Wanningman, an Air Force veteran who served in Iraq and now participates in the Wounded Warriors Tennis Program in San Diego.

Wanningman admits that he's had some "dark times" since leaving the service, but says tennis has helped to shine a light on some of life's more positive aspects. "You can be playing

great one minute and then you're playing like crap," he said. "You can let it get to you or you can just slow things down, refocus, and take it one point at a time, and think 'What can I do right now to make this point matter?'"

"In tennis and in life, you're basically playing one point at a time. You're not always going to be prepared for everything, and maybe you're never going to have the ideal circumstances — so what can you do with the circumstances you have?"

The lifetime sport of tennis has helped to make countless lives better, happier, and healthier through its unparalleled combination of life-enhancing benefits. In a time when so much seems unplugged, tennis connects.

Written by **U.S. Tennis Association**



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# Peer Support Is a **Critical Solution** to the Mental Health Crisis

At the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance, we believe in the power of peers — people with firsthand experience living with a mood disorder — to offer hope, practical support, and a path forward.

**N**early 1 in 5 U.S. adults experiences a mental health condition each year. However, our healthcare system simply isn't built to meet that level of need. More than 75% of U.S. counties face a shortage of mental health professionals, leaving thousands of Americans facing long waitlists and unaffordable costs that keep mental health support out of reach. That's where peer support comes in.

Peer supporters aren't therapists, but they are trained professionals. They use their personal experience with mental health conditions to help others navigate their own journeys. The connection is immediate and human. It's one thing to talk to someone with credentials — it's another to talk to someone who's been there.

Peer support works. Research shows that peer support reduces hospitalizations, boosts engagement in

outpatient care, improves quality of life, and increases a sense of belonging. Studies have also demonstrated significant cost savings from peer support.

However, despite its proven benefits, peer support remains under-recognized and underfunded. That needs to change. We need to invest in peer support infrastructure — training, certification, fair pay, and access. We need to take it seriously as a legitimate, professional pathway in mental healthcare.

For men, in particular, peer support can offer a unique opportunity. When stigma stands in the way of seeking help, connecting with someone who says, "I get it," can break down barriers and open the door to healing. Peer support fosters trust, builds community, and reminds people that they're not alone.

Written by **Michael Pollock, CEO, Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)**

## Men Don't Talk About Trauma. It's Killing Us.

Too often, we equate silence with resilience. We believe powering through is what makes us dependable. However, the truth is, silence has a cost, and for too many men, that cost is life itself.

**R**esearch shows that men are far less likely to seek mental health support than women. We've been taught to tough it out rather than open up. We bury the hard things deeper, assuming that if we ignore them long enough, they'll go away. At The Headstrong Project, we know that's not how healing works.

Headstrong provides confidential, cost-free, trauma-focused mental healthcare to service members, veterans, and their families. We eliminate barriers like long wait times, complicated paperwork, and stigma. We offer evidence-based treatments like cognitive processing therapy, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing, and prolonged exposure matched to each client's needs.

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If you are struggling, know this: **You are not alone. Healing is possible.** It's never too late to take the first step.

The need for mental healthcare has never been greater. Suicide remains a leading cause of death among male veterans. In the broader population, men account for nearly 80% of suicides in the United States, according to

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

This is not just a veteran issue. It's a men's health crisis.

We have to change what it means to be strong. Real strength isn't about hiding pain or carrying it alone. It's about having the courage to confront it and to seek the help you deserve.

If you are struggling, know this: You are not alone. Healing is possible. It's never too late to take the first step. At The Headstrong Project, we stand ready to serve those who have served, and to walk alongside any man ready to fight for his own life and future.

Written by **Lt. Col. Dan Kaepernik, USMC (Ret.), Chief Executive Officer, The Headstrong Project**





Wayne Brady  
Photo courtesy of Disney

# Redefining Strength: Wayne Brady on Mental Wellness as a Black Man

Multi-talented entertainer Wayne Brady, host of the podcast “Wayne Brady’s What If?! with Jonathan Magnum,” discusses dismantling toxic masculinity, prioritizing self-care, and the importance of sharing his mental health journey.

**Many men feel pressure to “man up” and suppress their emotions. What advice would you give to men who feel trapped by this mindset?**

Do away with the toxic masculinity in your life. It’s toxic because it’s poison. It’s poison to ourselves, how we see each other, the way we feel that we have to act, and the swagger we feel that we have to put on display. We need to let ourselves cry, especially in the Black community. All of the things that we’ve been told we are or aren’t supposed to do because we’re men, throw those out the window. To me, it’s about: Who do you want to be as a person? What’s your gold standard for being a partner, a friend, a father, a lover? If we can start filling in those boxes, then for me, it takes care of itself. I end up being the man I want to be, just by trying to be a good person.

**What were some moments in your mental health journey that changed your perspective on self-care?**

I knew that I needed to truly engage with my mental health journey when my daughter felt she couldn’t share what she was doing with my ex-wife and her partner because she didn’t want to make me mad or hurt my feelings. I was putting my sense of inadequacy first, and scaring this poor child so that she couldn’t even share her day with me. That’s when I knew that I needed to get myself together. I also knew I needed to get myself together when I broke down after I dropped my daughter off at school because of the crushing loneliness that I felt. I was surrounded by all these people every single day, and I was incredibly lonely. I knew that I needed to address that.

**You’ve been incredibly open about your struggles with mental health. What inspired you to share your story?**

I really needed to be open with my journey, because I have a platform. I have visibility, and as a Black man with other Black people, and now other queer people, looking at me, I wanted to use that platform for good. So, I had to start to get myself right before I could speak to anyone else.

**What message do you hope to leave for future generations of men struggling with mental health?**

Be strong for you. Be strong so that you can be the person you want to be. Show up for yourself, so you can show up for others. And laugh. Laughing makes us happy.

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Be strong for you. **Be strong so that you can be the person you want to be.** Show up for yourself, so you can show up for others. And laugh. Laughing makes us happy.

# From Small Talk to Big Connections: Tackling Men's Mental Health Together

Healthy relationships are essential, but across the United States, millions of men are experiencing increasing levels of social isolation.

**R**ecent research by Movember revealed that 14% of young men have no close male friends, and 76% reported not being in a committed relationship. Of those who are single, 19% often lack companionship, 24% often feel left out, and 25% often feel isolated.

There are actions men can take to support their mental health through connection, including:

- **Themselves:** Men should take a moment to genuinely check in with themselves. It may be time to send a text to a friend or family member and ask them to hang out.
- **Buddies:** A lot of men want to connect with their friends or make new ones, but don't know how. Try chatting online with a friend who shares your gaming interests, volunteering at your local community event, or asking a colleague how their weekend was.
- **Support:** It's okay to not be okay. If that's the case, connect with a supporter, such as a loved one or a therapist.

Let's keep the conversation going. The path to better mental health for men starts with connection — to self, to others, and to support systems that can truly help.

Written by **Bonnie Rowe, Global Director of Men's Health (Community & Online), Movember**



Kevin Love | Photo courtesy of Kevin Love Fund

## Kevin Love on the Power of Vulnerability and Mental Fitness

NBA champion Kevin Love, founder of the mental health nonprofit the Kevin Love Fund, shares lessons from his mental health journey and how openness inspires change on and off the court.

### How do you balance the pressures of performance and personal well-being?

It's something I've had to learn the hard way over time. For a long stretch of my career, I didn't balance it well. I was focused solely on performance. Eventually, that pressure built up in a way that became too much to carry. I had a panic attack during a game, and that was a turning point for me. It forced me to step back and re-evaluate how I was taking care of myself, not just as an athlete, but as a person. Now, balance comes from being intentional. I work on my mental health through therapy, mindfulness, routines, and staying connected with people who support me off the court.

### What advice would you give to men who feel pressured to "man up" and hide their emotions?

You don't have to carry it all alone, and you shouldn't have to. My advice is to start small. Talk to one person you trust. Be honest about how you're really doing. It doesn't have to be dramatic, just real. The more we speak up, the more we give others permission to do the same. That's how we start changing the culture.

### What are some mental health practices that help you stay grounded today?

First, therapy has been a game-changer.

Having a space where I can talk honestly, without judgment, helps me process everything — the pressure, the highs and lows, the personal stuff. It gives me perspective and tools to manage stress in real time.

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**You don't have to carry it all alone, and you shouldn't have to.**

Second, I rely a lot on routines. I start my mornings with some form of mindfulness, whether that's breathwork, journaling, or just five minutes of stillness. That sets the tone for my day and helps me stay centered no matter what's going on around me.

I also prioritize sleep, nutrition, and movement, not just for physical health, but because they directly impact my mood and mental clarity. Also, staying connected with the people in my life — friends, family, teammates. They keep me emotionally grounded.



# Redefining Strength: How Modern Yoga Helps Men Move, Feel, and Live Better

Strength today goes beyond building muscle. Mobility, balance, flexibility, and mental strength are redefining what it means to be strong from the inside out, and from head to toe.

**F**or generations, strength was a defining trait of “being a man.” But in today’s world, strength means more than physical power — it’s about mobility, resilience, balance, and mental fortitude. For men aiming to stay strong and healthy for life, the old grind-it-out mentality is giving way to a smarter, more sustainable approach to strength.

Mental health is a key part of today’s definition of strength.

## Mobility

More men are recognizing that staying fit isn’t just about lifting heavier or running faster — it’s about managing stress, protecting emotional well-being, supporting others, and building resilience from the inside out.

True strength begins with the strong foundation that a high-quality yoga practice can help foster with a focus on mobility.

Mobility work isn’t optional anymore — it’s the key to longevity. Without healthy joints and flexibility, even the strongest and most athletic bodies are vulnerable to injury.

NBA legends like LeBron James have long credited mobility, flexibility, and recovery practices, including yoga, as essential to their decades-long careers. His NBA champion teammate Kevin Love has spoken openly about how incorporating yoga helped him not only physically, but also mentally, providing a way to manage stress and sustain peak performance over time.

Mobility is not just for professional athletes. Research backs this up: Improving joint mobility in key areas like the hips, shoulders, and ankles can reduce the risk of sports-related injuries by up to 40%, according to studies published in the *Journal of Sports Rehabilitation*.

Yoga’s emphasis on joint health, dynamic flexibility, and range of motion makes it an ideal training tool — not just for elite athletes, but for anyone looking to move better and feel stronger.

## Balance

Once mobility is established, the next key is balance — both physically and mentally.

Physically, balance is crucial for performance, longevity, and injury prevention. Whether you’re on the court, lifting weights, or simply navigating the ups and downs of everyday life, stability and coordination are what keep you agile and safe. Research from Harvard Health shows that balance training can cut fall risk in half among older adults, highlighting its lifelong importance.

Mentally, balance is just as vital. The same practices that improve physical balance — controlled movement, focus, and adaptability — also build emotional resilience. A balanced mind is better equipped to handle stress, setbacks, anxiety, and the pressures of modern life.

Yoga strengthens both types of balance. Through mindful movement and breath control, yoga teaches men to stay present, adjust to challenges, and move through stress with greater ease.

## Community

Another often overlooked pillar of strength created inside yoga studios is real and meaningful community. For too long, men have been conditioned to push through physical and mental challenges alone. But sustained strength grows in connection.

Group movement experiences, like yoga classes, provide a powerful way for men to build camaraderie, accountability, and support — without having to say a word. Shared challenges — like pushing through a tough pose or trying your first hot yoga class — foster resilience, self-confidence, and a deeper sense of belonging.

Modern yoga studios are helping redefine what strength looks like for men today. Brands like YogaSix offer a modern, energizing approach that focuses on strength, mobility, balance, and recovery — without the intimidating language or traditions sometimes associated with “traditional yoga.” YogaSix classes



Photo courtesy of YogaSix

welcome all experience levels, from men who have never touched a yoga mat alongside seasoned athletes and longtime yoga practitioners.

At YogaSix, yoga is a powerful tool in your strength arsenal: a practical, powerful way to move better, feel better, and stay mentally and physically strong for life.

Physical strength isn’t just what you lift. Mental health isn’t just what you talk about — they are both how you live, move, and connect.

Written by **Jeff Miller, Chief Marketing Officer, YogaSix**



Start building your strength from the inside out. Visit **YogaSix.com** to find a studio and book your first YogaSix class.





To learn more about Men's Mental Health,  
visit **[futureofpersonalhealth.com](https://futureofpersonalhealth.com)**

