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# No-Shave November Brings Awareness to Men's Mental and Physical Health

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**NATIONAL INTEREST**

# No-Shave November Brings Awareness to Men's Mental and Physical Health

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON NOVEMBER 5, 2021



- ▲ From left, Travis Kiser, assistant swim coach; Dr. James Morgan, professor and chair, Department of Psychological Science; and students, Skyler Mosteller and Blake Elizalde are four of 30 men on the GWU campus participating in No-Shave November.

## Gardner-Webb has 30 Men Participating in National Movement

*By Dr. James P. Morgan, Professor and Chair, Department of Psychological Science*

Thanks to Jessika Raduly and Jared Roess with the Office of Student Engagement, Gardner-Webb University is joining the No-Shave November movement this year to shine a light on men's health and mental health, including suicide.

One mental health problem in men that may go undetected is depression. While women appear to suffer from depression more often than men (ratio of 2:1), men may be less likely to talk about what they are feeling and to suffer in silence. Some men may think that admitting they are going through a difficult time or asking for help is a sign of weakness. Because depression may affect men differently than women, both men and their loved ones may not recognize that depression is present. For example, men may be more likely to become angry or even aggressive when depressed, and they may turn to alcohol and other drugs. Untreated, depression can lead to significant distress and impairment in different areas of a man's life, including relationships, school (for college men), and work.

Many things can contribute to depression. Some men may have a genetic predisposition for depression which may make them more vulnerable during times of stress. Various stressors can contribute to depression, including relationship difficulties, significant life changes, financial pressures, losses, and

health problems. Some men may have a pessimistic way of looking at life and may be more likely to blame themselves for life's disappointments.

A major concern for depressed men is suicide. While women are more likely to attempt suicide, men are more likely to succeed at killing themselves because they tend to use more lethal methods. It can be difficult to pick up on signs of suicide (e.g., talk of dying, giving away possessions, mood changes, making out a will) because suicidal men (as well as women) may try to hide their despair from others. One of the most important things we can do if we are concerned about a loved one's safety is to ask them about it. There is a myth that, by asking, we may give them the idea to harm themselves. But, the opposite is more likely: By asking, we open the door for discussion and getting help. If a man is suicidal, we need to do everything possible to help keep him safe and to get professional help. The scary thing about suicide is that it is a permanent solution to a temporary state of mind. But when someone is suicidal, they are not able to appreciate this fact. They see suicide as their only solution.

When we talk about suicide in my classes at GWU, I give my students the number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Now you have the number too, and I hope you will save it in your phone.



### **About No Shave November**

During No Shave November, men all across the country will donate their faces to start conversations about men's health and suicide prevention in the male community. Small acts like not shaving and having conversations can have a serious impact on someone's life. Several men on campus shaved their faces on Nov. 1 and will let the hair grow all month. Whether it be a goatee, a mustache, a full beard, or a patchy mess "Whatever You Can Grow Can Save A Bro." Before pictures are displayed on the side of the climbing wall in the Tucker Student Center. After pictures will be taken on Nov. 29 and 30. The winner of the best facial hair will receive the inaugural Facial Hair Trophy and be crowned the Stache King. For more information, stop by the Student Engagement Office.