

Why Psychology Is Failing Men



John Mac Ghlionn writes in [RealClearWire](#):

Daniel de Visé, a writer for The Hill, [recently discussed](#) the United States' crisis of masculinity. "More than 60 percent of young men are single," he noted, "nearly twice the rate of unattached young women." This gap, he warned, signals "a larger breakdown in the social, romantic and sexual life of the American male." He's right. It does.

Males make up 49 percent of the population but [80 percent of suicides](#), according to the CDC. In the United States, every 13.7 minutes, a man [takes his own life](#). Young men are [four times more likely](#) than young women to commit suicide.

What can be done? Maybe more men should seek psychological help?

Sadly, however, psychology is ill-equipped to address the country's masculinity crisis. That's because, in recent times,

it has become increasingly popular to ignore evolutionary psychology, shun masculinity, and reject sex differences entirely. If in doubt, let me point you in the direction of the American Psychological Association (APA). The APA Commission on Accreditation (APA-CoA) is the [primary programmatic accreditor](#) for professional education and training in psychology. In other words, when it comes to psychological theories and treatments, the APA calls the shots. That's bad news. You see, the APA now [insists](#) that no major psychological differences between men and women exist. But they do.

Sex differences in brain anatomy exist. The male brain is [10 percent larger](#). On average, males and females show greater volume in different areas of the brain. These anatomical differences are largely explained by effects of sex hormones on cortex development. Neuroimaging studies clearly demonstrate that men and women experience certain emotions—like [happiness](#) and [sadness](#), for example—very differently. Females are [more likely](#) to suffer from depression, a mental health condition, than males, while males are more likely to struggle with autism spectrum disorder, a neurodevelopmental condition, than females. And when it comes to the dark side of human behavior, a female psychopath looks [very different](#) to a male psychopath. Profound sex differences in mate preferences and aggression also [exist](#). To reject evolved psychological sex differences is to [reject reality](#).

[Jerome Barkow](#), a Canadian anthropologist who has dedicated years of his professional life to the study of evolution and human nature, believes evolutionary psychology is under attack “for a number of reasons.” One of these, he said, involves timing. The rise of evolutionary psychology “coincided with the growth of an articulate and generally respected feminism which mistook evolutionist’s talk of a human nature as meaning that they were claiming that sexist behaviors in men and

maternal behavior in women were hard-wired and immutable.” Because of this, a backlash was inevitable.

[William C. Sanderson](#), a psychology professor at Hofstra University, believes that “evolutionary psychology provides the strongest explanation for the ultimate causes of increases in mental (e.g., depression) and physical health (e.g., obesity, diabetes) problems in the U.S.” Why? “It is something referred to as ‘Mismatch Theory.’ The basic idea is that our modern environment deviates from the environment our brain (and body) evolved in.” As a result, added Sanderson, who regularly [writes about evolutionary psychology](#) for Psychology Today, “it causes all types of problems.”

For example, we evolved in a food scarce environment, and “as a result, we are programmed to overeat—the mismatch occurs in the modern environment—we have a food scarce programmed brain yet an abundance of food.”

Today, we appear to have a mismatch in psychology: a mismatch between the problems being experienced by males and the solutions being offered by the APA. Although the APA has refrained from using the word “toxic” to describe masculinity, the association [now considers](#) traditionally masculine characteristics to be “psychologically harmful.” Stoicism and competitiveness, two qualities that were, up until very recently, championed by both men and women are now considered dangerous.

Last year, Christopher J. Ferguson, one of the country’s leading psychologists, [accused the APA](#) of “waging war” on men and boys. The APA may or may not be “waging war,” but it’s certainly not helping the men and boys of America.

Thanks to the APA, psychology finds itself in the business of rejecting evidence. How can such willful ignorance help the country’s men?

Psychology isn’t just struggling with [a replication crisis](#);

it's struggling with a crisis of reputation. To make matters many times worse, the current batch of therapists being educated are being fed APA-approved narratives that will do little, if anything, to help address the current crisis of masculinity—or any psychological problem for that matter.