“Depression Looks Like Me” Launches to Help LGBTQ People With Depression

Janssen Pharmaceuticals creates a safe space to talk about depression within the LGBTQ community and beyond.

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“You are seen. You are heard. You are not alone.”

This is the message Janssen Pharmaceuticals would like to communicate to LGBTQ people living with depression. With a new campaign and website titled “Depression Looks Like Me,” the company hopes to improve communication about the mental illness.

Janssen’s manifesto notes that anyone can be affected by depression and that “it cuts deep, across every intersection, sparing no one.” DepressionLooksLikeMe.com site offers insight for those who do not understand depression and resources for those who do.

Blog posts by people struggling with their mental health are a growing part of the site, which encourages anyone affected by depression to help diversify its content by submitting a story of their own.

A featured blog by Imade-Nibokun explores the pressures of recovering from depression and demonstrates why conversations about the stigmatized mental illness and how to treat it—like the one Janssen is initiating—can be important.

“I felt that not being healed was a sign of personal failure,” Nibokun writes. “Shame washed over me that I couldn’t fix myself.”

The LGBTQ community, the site states, is disproportionately affected by depression. For LGBTQ people, symptoms can be more severe, and daily life can be more difficult. The risk for suicide is also much higher.

People living with HIV may also be more likely to develop depression. As the POZ Basics on HIV and Depression points out, contributing factors include “fear of illness and death, loss of loved ones, survivor’s guilt, decreased self-esteem related to body changes, chronic pain, difficulty performing daily activities and struggles with stigma.”

Additionally, transgender teens are at a higher risk for suicide and HIV as well as substance misuse, as POZ Science News reports.

However, Janssen wants to show that there is help out there for anyone struggling with depression and recommends treatment plans including medication, various forms of therapy and even magnetic brain stimulation.DepressionLooksLikeMe.com notes, however, that finding the right plan can be tricky and should involve a health care professional.

The campaign emphasizes diversity, with resources specifically targeting LGBTQ people of color. Janssen also promotes the mental health blog Inclusive Therapists, which helps readers find the practice that works best for them.

Interested in learning more or getting involved? Janssen recommends you check out advocacy groups such as The Trevor Project, the TransLatin@ Coalition and Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality.

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