

News Release

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New Janssen Campaign Developed by and for the LGBTQ+ Community Inspires Action and Empathy for People Living with Depression

Depression Looks Like Me Provides a Safe Space to Elevate the Experiences of the Community and Provide Resources for Adults Living with Hard-to-Treat Forms of Depression

TITUSVILLE, N.J. – (May 18, 2022) – The Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson today announced the launch of *Depression Looks Like Me*, a campaign aimed at normalizing the conversation about depression in the LGBTQ+ community and empowering people to seek the mental health care they may need. Janssen has partnered with prominent LGBTQ+ voices and leading mental health and LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations to amplify lived experiences across the community and underscore that those living with hard-to-treat depression are not alone.

Depression is a serious and chronic health condition that disproportionately affects members of the LGBTQ+ community, likely due to significant stigma and discrimination often faced.¹ LGBTQ+ adults are three times as likely to have mental health conditions compared to heterosexual adults² and are 2.5 times more likely to use mental health services than cisgender heterosexual adults.³

The campaign and its [corresponding website](#) offer a safe space in which the community can see themselves represented in stories, gain access to culturally appropriate resources and providers across intersections of the community, and learn about the different facets of depression so they can make informed decisions with their healthcare teams about their treatment plans.

Depression Looks Like Me provides clear and easy access to carefully curated information, including directories for LGBTQ+-friendly healthcare professionals and confidential, trained counselors. Specific resources for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and transgender people are also available, as are general mental health resources.

“Living with depression can make it hard to find a safe space or someone with whom you feel you can confide in. If you do not feel yourself represented, it can be even more challenging to see how you yourself fit in or figure out what you can do to take action,” said campaign partner Ren Fernandez-Kim, who lives with depression. “As a nonbinary, mixed race person, I often felt stuck and overlooked, despite my desire to heal. Through communities like *Depression Looks Like Me*, we can come together to lift one another up. I find beauty in knowing I am not alone.”

[CLICK TO TWEET](#): #DYK the LGBTQ+ community is 3x more likely to live with mental illness than the general population? Find support, resources and more to help manage #depression through the new *Depression Looks Like Me* campaign: <https://bit.ly/30kCzin>

At the heart of the campaign are impactful personal stories to help individuals connect through their experiences with depression in ways that offer perspective and create a sense of community. These stories—which showcase the intersection of identity and mental health—are designed to inspire patients, caregivers, and allies to [add their own voices](#) to the campaign.

“Seeing ourselves reflected in the experiences of others is a fundamental step in recognizing and seeking care, especially within the LGBTQ+ community. That’s one of the reasons we’re happy to be part of *Depression Looks Like Me*. Through representation, the campaign aims to create equity, help eliminate health disparities, enhance quality of life and improve health outcomes, which are core values of our Coalition,” said Scott D. Bertani, Director of Advocacy, the National Coalition for LGBTQ Health. “Together, we can help make mental and behavioral health services more accessible and pave the way to improve the health and wellness of the LGBTQ+ community in ways that aren’t diagnosis-limiting or identity-defining.”

To ensure the broad spectrum of the community's needs are represented in this campaign, Janssen, along with the [National Coalition for LGBTQ Health](#), is also working with [Mental Health America \(MHA\)](#), [SAGE](#), [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#), [The TransLatin@ Coalition](#) and [Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective \(BEAM\)](#) to share and extend the reach of resources that address the diverse needs of the community.

Resources and information are critical for the community to have informed conversations with their healthcare teams, especially about mental health and depression, which have many dimensions. Major depressive disorder (MDD), also known as clinical depression, is so much more than simply feeling sad. It is a serious mental illness with variable symptoms that may include persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness or tension; changes in sleep or appetite; difficulty concentrating or performing activities of daily living; lack of interest; and or thoughts of self-harm or suicide.⁴

For some people, symptoms of depression persist even after treatment. When people do not respond to two or more antidepressants (of adequate dose and duration), they may have treatment-resistant depression (TRD).⁵ Some patients also have a more severe form of MDD, where a person experiences a sudden worsening of depressive symptoms, which can cause them to start actively considering suicide and require urgent intervention to treat their symptoms.⁶

"Depression is a serious, life-altering medical condition that's further complicated for the LGBTQ+ community by stigma and lack of culturally competent care that means many go undiagnosed, untreated and suffer in silence," said Courtney Billington, President, Neuroscience, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. "That's why we partnered with members and leaders of the mental health and LGBTQ+ communities to create *Depression Looks Like Me*—to work together and show the community they are seen, heard and worthy of receiving care to meet their specific needs."

Depression Looks Like Me is part of Johnson & Johnson's broader initiative, [Our Race to Health Equity](#) – a \$100 million commitment to help eradicate racial and social injustice as a public health threat. This campaign supports the company's commitment to eliminate health disparities in the diagnosis and treatment of serious mental illness, educate and empower people of color around mental health, and improve access to mental health care for people and communities who have been historically excluded.

About the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson

At Janssen, we're creating a future where disease is a thing of the past. We're the Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson, working tirelessly to make that future a reality for patients everywhere by fighting sickness with science, improving access with ingenuity, and healing hopelessness with heart. We focus on areas of medicine where we can make the biggest difference: Cardiovascular, Metabolism & Retina, Immunology, Infectious Diseases & Vaccines, Neuroscience, Oncology, and Pulmonary Hypertension.

Learn more at www.janssen.com. Follow us at www.twitter.com/JanssenUS and www.twitter.com/JanssenGlobal. Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. is one of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson.

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