

## Study finds men are more emotionally hurt than women over bad relationships

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McMahon/GettyA lack of support system among their friends may account for why men struggle more during breakups, some experts believe.

Maybe guys have a sensitivity gene after all. Men are more stressed out than women by a rocky relationship, according to research from [Wake Forest University](#).

While girls have a tougher time coming to terms with a breakup, guys take it harder when the couple is having problems, the study shows. And when the relationship is going well, men get more of a psychological boost.

“Common wisdom says that women are more hurt by problems in a relationship,” lead researcher [Robin Simon](#), a Wake Forest University sociologist, [told ABC News](#). “But we found that the benefits of support [in a relationship] and the disadvantages of strain are exaggerated for the men.”

For the study, published in the June edition of the Journal of Health and Social Behavior, Simon and co-author [Anne Barrett](#), a [Florida State University](#) associate professor of sociology, examined data on relationships and mental health from more than 1,000 college-age young people in [Florida](#). They learned that men hurt emotionally more than women when a romance floundered, but they showed it differently.

When hurt, women are likely to become depressed while men tend to engage in substance use or abuse, according to Simon. And the more problems a guy faces

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in a relationship, the higher he tended to score on a substance abuse scale.

“Men can feel lost when a relationship is in trouble because they do not have the support system women do,” says [Debbie Mandel](#), author of “Addicted to Stress.” “Men turn the sword inward to substance abuse to replace that relationship high.”

The guys involved in the Wake Forest study were more likely than past generations to have moms who worked, dads who were either absent or relied on the mother’s income, or divorced parents, Simon said.

“These boys are more likely to have experienced a divorce in their family,” Simon told [ABC News](#). “And this might make them more sensitive to the ups and downs of a relationship. They are more aware of the frailties of relationships than past generations.”

Some relationship experts weren’t surprised by the study results.

“Women are more naturally expressive,” [Audrey Nelson](#), author of “Code Switching: How to Talk so Men Will Listen,” told ABC News. “We’ll cry, show our feelings – when a woman is having a hard time, she has

two or three friends she can talk to, to ease the pain. Men have the same feelings and emotions, but they have no outlet.”

Psychologist and author Frances Cohen Praver believes the emotional gender difference could be due to the fact that women are actually less sensitive to the issues.

“Women are more autonomous and independent,” she told ABC News. “They need to love and be loved, but they can get love from their friends and family.”

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