

The Signs of *Silent* Suffering: "I'm Fine"

Before we can recognize the Five Signs of Emotional Suffering, we must first learn how to open up to ourselves and learn how to speak about our feelings to others. When our defense or coping mechanisms are activated, it can be a challenge to recognize how we are feeling.



I'm Fine

MAY MASK FEELINGS TO AVOID EMOTIONS AND WORRYING OTHERS

You may notice that you or someone else says they are fine when everything is far from fine. Sometimes people who are struggling, feeling sad, depressed, anxious, or hopeless, will say "I'm fine" because they do not want to acknowledge their feelings and burden or worry others with their emotions. Additionally, they may be afraid of being stigmatized by talking about their emotions and so it is easier to say nothing.

The more that we are able to acknowledge our emotional suffering to ourselves and our loved ones, the more likely our feelings of suffering will diminish. And it makes sense. The more stifled a feeling, the greater its intensity. Ask yourself:

- How am I feeling?
- What is the most prominent feeling? Push past answers like "I'm fine".
- Consider what may be activating or triggering the prominent feeling.

These questions will lead to others and can help you to "decode" your emotions.