



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Talking to Your Parents About Mental Health

YOUNG people in the Highlands have helped create a new pack to make it easier to speak about mental health at home.

The project, led by Birchwood Highland, wanted to find out the views of young people on the ways they would like adults at home to approach the subject of mental health in daily conversations and how to offer support.

Adults can find it difficult to openly chat about mental health and mental health problems with their children. This in turn can make it difficult for young people to open up about mental health.

A survey of 885 young people aged 15-25 by national anti stigma programme See Me, who funded this project, found that only 37% said they would tell someone if they were finding it difficult to cope with their mental health, compared to 78% who would tell someone if they were physically ill.

The Talking to Adults About Mental Health project spoke to children around the age of 13 from Grantown Grammar, finding out what might stop them from talking about mental health.

From this they developed a leaflet which can be used to encourage open conversation. The leaflet contains the views of young people about mental health stigma in society and why can be difficult to talk about mental health issues, especially at home.

Some young people said that it can be difficult to talk about mental health because they might not be believed, they didn't want their family to worry about them or even that they may be disowned.

They said it would be easier to talk at home if someone else could be able to speak to a parent or guardian, or if adults had a better understanding of mental health.

Paulina Duncan, from Birchwood Highland, said: "Some of the views reveal heart rending fears about what might happen if other people knew about their mental health problems and the potential reaction of adults within the home.

"We believe that use of this leaflet will help both young people and adults in the home to keep an open dialogue about the issues of mental health problems and mental health stigma and discrimination. This, in turn, could lead to adults being able to support young people better when they experience difficult times, more timely seeking of professional help, and much greater chance of full recovery."

Eleanor Ogilvie, See Me communities manager, said: "Young people don't feel that adults take them seriously when it comes to mental health. But they should be able to speak openly about what they are going through, without feeling guilty. It is okay not to be okay.

"Everyone involved in young people's lives needs to have the confidence to open up conversations about mental health and be supportive about what to do next.

"We all need someone we can talk to and trust. We want young people to know that there will be a person that will have the ability to listen and be there for you. "

ENDS...

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. See Me is Scotland's National programme to end mental health stigma and discrimination, enabling people who experience mental health problems to live fulfilled lives.

We do this by:

- Mobilising people to work together and lead a movement to end mental health stigma and discrimination
- Working with people to change negative behaviour towards those with mental health problems
- Ensuring that the human rights of people with mental health problems are respected and upheld

2. Follow See Me on Twitter @seemescotland or find us on Facebook: Facebook/seemescotland, <http://seemescotland.tumblr.com/>, <https://medium.com/@seemescotland>, or at www.seemescotland.org
3. See Me is managed by SAMH and the Mental Health Foundation and funded by Scottish Government and Comic Relief
4. We work in partnerships with VOX, the Scottish Mental Health Cooperative and the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival to bring about a meaningful change in behaviours.

