



End mental health
discrimination

PRESS RELEASE

NEW RESEARCH REVEALS SCOTS ARE MORE COMFORTABLE THAN REST OF UK SPEAKING ABOUT THEIR MENTAL HEALTH, AS GAME OF THRONES STAR SPEAKS ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCES

NEW RESEARCH has revealed that Scots are more comfortable speaking to their friends and family about their mental health than those in the rest of the UK.

The survey of over 5000 UK adults was released for Time to Talk day (FEB 7) along with a call from Scottish actor Daniel Portman for people to reach out and support each other.

Despite Scots being more comfortable speaking to their friends and family about their mental health than the rest of the UK, still less than half (42 per cent) would actually be willing to do this, compared to 36% across the UK.

The survey also looked at social media, finding an average Scottish person has 878 friends on social media, but over a quarter of us wouldn't be able to call upon any more than one of those if we were struggling with our mental health.

Time to Talk day, which is being led in Scotland by See Me, the programme to end mental health discrimination, aims to get people all over the UK starting meaningful conversations on mental health.

Portman, 26 year, who plays Pod in Game of Thrones, revealed that he has experienced depression, anxiety and forms of OCD since he was a teenager, and said more still needs to be done to tackle mental health stigma.

The Glaswegian said he felt like he had a "different brain" inside his head when he first struggled, which made it hard to talk about what he was going through.

He said: "In my experience it makes you want to hide away from people because it does have this stigma. On top of all the suffering you're already going through having judgement about something that you can't really help is the worst possible thing.

"What's key is having those around you willing to talk as well. I have a very supportive family who have always been very sensitive to this stuff and a great network of friends who are open to talking.

“Even with that there have been times when I have felt that I can’t talk to anybody about these things. But it is absolutely necessary that if you need to talk to your friends and family, they need to be there.

“I started experiencing this stuff about ten years ago when I was about 16. At that point it was totally alien to me. It was like I had a totally different brain inside my head. That is such a scary thing. I didn’t think that anyone would understand and I felt a bit ashamed.

“Ten years on I still have days, weeks, months where I feel awful, but I understand it better now. It’s a process, this is something I’m going to be fighting for a long time. But if I can understand it and control it then I can stop it. I wouldn’t be able to take part in the process without people to help me out and talk to.

“I’d say whoever the right person is, talk to them however you can. Whether that is face to face, via Skype, or anonymously, whatever, talk to somebody. For me with some of the OCD stuff I found some solace on the internet. I had something to latch on to, by seeing someone else was going through the same thing as me.”

See Me volunteer Angela McCrimmon has been speaking about her mental health through poetry and wants to see health care staff getting involved in Time to Talk day.

Angela, 41, from Livingston, said: “I had a consultant who didn’t listen or take me seriously, they got the care completely wrong and I ended up being sectioned.

“I can remember begging her one day to come and see me. She just walked away, and six weeks later I needed operations because I’d self harmed in distress, and this could have been prevented.

“One of the biggest changes for me through this time was that I discovered writing. The consultant made me feel like I was playing the victim, so I wrote a poem called ‘I’m not a victim’. That was the first poem I wrote. It was a huge turning point for me because I realised I was able to get my thoughts and feelings out of my head.

“I’m really lucky with the psychiatrist I have now. She recently gave me 45 minutes in a lecture to talk to professionals and read them my poetry. It was amazing.”

To kick the day off See Me are joining Scotrail to host a gig in Glasgow Central Station, while volunteers are taking over trains on major routes to get commuters talking about mental health.

In the build-up See Me champions Karen Lally and Suzanne Baines went on a 700 mile tour around Scotland to get people talking about mental health, which included meeting Youtube Yoga Star Finlay Wilson in Dundee.

Calum Irving, See Me director, said: “Less than half of us feel comfortable speaking about our mental health, especially when we’re struggling. The fear of being judged, or even discriminated against in work, at school, or when asking for help, stops people reaching out.

“But conversations have the power to change lives, however they take place, whether face to face, over the phone, or on social media using #TimeToTalk.”

Time to Talk Day is UK-wide, with Time to Change in England partnering with See Me in Scotland, Change Your Mind Northern Ireland and Time to Change Wales.

ENDS...

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Nick Jedrzejewski [Communications Manager]

0141 530 1049/ 07710 387 517 Nick.jedrzejewski@seemescotland.org

NOTES TO EDITORS

Full Stats:

- 1. Average Scottish person has 878 friends on social media. But over a quarter wouldn't be able to call upon any more than one of those if they were struggling with their mental health. (16% have no one and 12% have one person)**
- 2. 39% of respondents in Scotland feel they could talk about mental health in group chats on platforms like Whatsapp and Facebook Messenger.**
- 3. 42% feel comfortable speaking to their friends about their mental health or how they're feeling. However Scotland is higher than the rest of the UK (36%), and Edinburgh (43%) and Glasgow (41%) are top 2 cities.**
- 4. Polling methodology** The research was conducted by Censuswide, with 5,376 respondents aged 16+ in GB with **1431 in Scotland**, between 07.12.2018 - 14.12.2018. Censuswide abide by and employ members of the Market Research Society which is based on the ESOMAR principles.
5. Volunteers will be on trains between Glasgow and Edinburgh, Ayrshire and on the Borders Railway line.
6. Release for use in Scotland, for England please contact Time to Change, Wales- Time to Change Wales, or Northern Ireland- Change Your Mind.



7. www.samh.org.uk for Scotland's mental health



