



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Edinburgh GP Practice Leading the Way in Showing It's Okay to Talk About Mental Health

AN EDINBURGH GP practice is taking the lead in tackling mental health stigma by showing people that it's okay to talk.

Conversation Cafes are being set up in the Niddrie Medical Practice, by a local mental health activist, who wants to show that "experiencing problems with your mental health is nothing to be ashamed of".

Chloe Burton, from Edinburgh, is a Community Champion for the national programme to end mental health discrimination, See Me. According to the programme, health and social care is one of the main areas where people experience mental health stigma and discrimination, despite being a place where many go for help and support.

Chloe, 31, also experienced times when her mental health problems weren't taken seriously by health care professionals. She wants to use her experiences to make people feel less "alone and isolated" and to show that health care practices should be a place where people can have open and honest conversations.

The conversation cafes will take place at 12:30pm on the last Wednesday of each month in May, June and July.

Chloe said: "The conversation cafes are a safe and informal space for people to come together to chat about mental health. Anyone is welcome to come along, you don't have to be a patient at the practice or to have experienced difficulties with your own mental health.

"One aim of the conversation cafes is to spread the message that we all have mental health, and that experiencing problems with your mental health is nothing to be ashamed of.

“There was a time where I thought that talking to other people about my mental health problems would be the worst thing in the world. I felt like I was completely alone, I started to isolate myself and went to extreme lengths to try to hide my problems from others.

“However once I began to open up to a few trusted friends, I discovered that there were other people out there who could understand what I was going through.

“Tackling stigma in health care is crucial. If people encounter stigmatising attitudes from health care professionals, this can prevent them from seeking further help and support for their problems, and can exacerbate self-stigma. I’ve certainly had times in the past where I’ve felt belittled or patronised by mental health professionals, for instance being told that I’d feel better if I got my nails done and put some make up on.

“However, many doctors and health care workers are very supportive of patients experiencing mental health challenges, and it’s really heartening that there are places like Niddrie Medical Practice that provide opportunities for people to talk about mental health.

“They really are paving the way to help to end mental health stigma and discrimination, one conversation at a time.”

Calum Irving, See Me director, said: “We hear too many stories of people being judged or dismissed when they are trying to get professional help for their mental health.

“So new ideas like this are vital to help tackle mental health stigma in health and social care.”

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 or Instagram @seemescotland or find us on Facebook: Facebook/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

