

Men's mental health awareness month Counselling Blog #17

Boys don't cry?

Men's mental health awareness month, celebrated during November in the UK is dedicated to raising awareness of mental health challenges faced by and affecting men.

Why the silence?

Men are much less likely to access help with their mental health. This could be because of men's traditional cultural role and men's portrayal in modern media – films, TV and social media as strong, silent, resilient, physically perfect and powerful – completely immune to the human emotions caused by issues such as grief, loss, separation and stress – to name a few.

The impact of these depictions could have caused untold damage over the years to men's ability to express, let alone process difficult potentially catastrophic issues in their lives. Men's mental health awareness month aims to break this trend – to let men realise there really is strength in talking.

Make it known – Overcome mental health problems rather than suffer with them alone.

Emotional openness or asking for help is seen more as a weakness or a lack of responsibility. In fact, opening up and sharing the burden helps to change issues from something only you can or should figure out into something that is not only **known** but is shared – there's strength in numbers.

Getting problems out there with someone else, a friend, a counsellor, anyone really, gets issues processed in a much less separate way allowing for different perspectives and the potential to discover different directions through what can seem like a maze of problems. Mental health problems tend to make people believe that they are – sometimes that they deserve to be – alone – this is not the case.

Where's the harm in asking?

Noticing worrying changes in a friend's behaviour and bringing it up or asking about it can be important too. Noticing an unusual quietness or that they are not eating any more could be signs that they are struggling. Talking can be difficult, but things could get easier for both of you if you do.

Where's the evidence?

Men are more likely to use damaging management methods to control emotions rather than talk them out, methods like:

Alcohol:

Men are three times more likely than women to become dependent

(www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

Drugs:

Men are more likely to use and die from using Drugs – 72% of deaths related to drug poisoning and misuse were men.

(www.ukat.co.uk)

Suicide:

Men account for 76% of suicides in the UK.

(<https://www.nhsprofessionals.nhs.uk/health-and-wellbeing/helpful-links/mens-health-week>)

Get help for yourself or share one of these with a friend:

Scan the QR code for a referral form and send it to: counsellorreferral@nptcgroup.ac.uk

Counselling support – Free support 24/7- student.kooth.com

Bereavement Support – Tel: 0808 808 1677 – cruse.org.uk

Samaritans free 24-hour support line – Tel: 116 123 – Samaritans.org

Domestic Violence against women Tel: 0808 801 0800 calandvs.org.uk

Domestic Violence against Men – Tel 0808801 0321 – dynwales.org.uk

Homelessness Mental Health Support – Tel: 0800 049 5495 sheltercymru.org.uk

MIND: 24-hour support –TEXT: YM to 58258 – youngminds.org.uk

SHOUT: free 24-hour text service –TEXT: SHOUT to 85258 – giveusashout.org

CALL: free 24-hour service – TEXT HELP to 81066 – callhelpline.org.uk

Support with Debt – Tel: 0800 138 1111 – stepchange.org

Rape and Sexual Abuse – Tel: 01685 379 310 – newpathways.org.uk

Drug and Alcohol – Tel 0808 808 2234 – dan247.org.uk

NHS urgent mental health support call 111 option 2