

IACP Press Release June 2014

With the Leaving Certificate getting under way tomorrow, the representative body for counsellors and psychotherapists has advised students who are suffering from stress to reach out for help.

The Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) has said that despite the fact that almost one-third of students suffer from stress during exam time, very few of them will seek any kind of help.

The IACP said that according to independent research carried out for the organisation that only one in seventeen (6%) of Irish people aged under-24 would seek professional help from a doctor or counsellor when experiencing personal problems or difficulties in their lives. Furthermore, only one in 14 (7%) of under-24s responded that they would tell no one about their problems.

“These findings show that there is a clear need for students who are under pressure to talk about their problems, especially in the run up to exams. As the survey shows, there appears to be reluctance among young people to talk about or discuss their problems or anxieties.

“Unfortunately, young people who have a tendency to be anxious are most affected around exam times and these pressures can bring underlying mental health issues to the surface,” said Shane Kelly, Professional Services Manager with the IACP.

The IACP has advised students not to suffer in silence and urged parents to talk to students about their fears or uncertainty about the future, especially in light of the fact that so many young people are leaving the country to find work elsewhere.

Apart from parental support, the IACP advised students to reach out to friends, family members – like an older sibling or a cousin who has been through the exam cycle – as well as teachers, doctors or counsellors.

“It’s important for students who are facing into exams to stay calm and to think positively, but if they feel that they cannot cope or do not have the necessary support, they should seek professional advice,” Mr Kelly added.

The IACP also advised students to be realistic and set goals that are attainable as opposed to chasing impossible tasks that will put students under further pressure.

The organisation also recommended that students should have a well-balanced diet as healthy eating improves memory and concentration; to do some exercise, which will help to relieve stress and help students to think more clearly and to try to get eight hours’ sleep every night, with an hour of relaxation each night.

“Despite being under pressure, it is also important to enjoy this period of your life. Exam time is stressful, but compared to the world of work, it’s still a relatively carefree existence,” Mr Kelly added.

To find out more about the IACP or to find a list of accredited counsellors or psychotherapists, visit www.iacp.ie.