

Press Release

Attitudes towards Mental Health Improving but Christmas can be Tough for Many

Thursday, 19th December: People suffer from anxiety or depression all year round, but at Christmas time feelings of despair can be sharpened for many people, especially those on their own. While recent research has shown that people find it much more acceptable to talk about mental health than ever before, the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) is urging people to talk to a friend, family member, GP or counsellor this Christmas.

The Christmas period can be a difficult time for many reasons and people around the country go through the entire festive season without seeing family or friends, sharing a Christmas dinner, or going to a party. The IACP also encourages everyone to be on the lookout in their area for neighbours or the elderly who may be struggling with loneliness, anxiety, or social exclusion.

“Christmas is a time of happiness, reunions, family time, and these celebrations can heighten feelings of loneliness and despair. Don’t bottle up these feelings, but go and talk to someone – a friend, a family member, your GP or a trained counsellor or psychotherapist. Talking and sharing these feelings is the first step to better mental health,” said Shane Kelly, Professional Services Manager, IACP.

Recent research commissioned by the IACP and carried out by Behaviour and Attitudes shows that people’s attitudes towards mental health are changing.

Highlights from the research include:

- 1 in 5 people said they would be most likely to seek professional help for drugs, alcohol, or gambling;
- Half of all adults would like their employer to offer confidential counselling and psychotherapy services;
- 84% of the over 65 age group would consult their GP about mental health issues;
- 47% of Under 24s would favour talking to friends or a family member about mental health concerns;
- More than 4 out of 5 (92%) women think it’s more acceptable to talk about emotional problems than it was in the past.

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About IACP:

Established in 1981, the IACP identifies, develops and maintains professional standards of excellence in counselling and psychotherapy through education, training and accreditation. In promoting best practice and the professional development of its members, IACP holds at its core the protection of the public.

Representing both the interests of clients and practitioners (over 3,500 nationwide), IACP provides a telephone referral helpline, an information service; and an online counsellor / psychotherapist / supervisor directory. IACP is a registered Charity (CHY 6615).

More information is available from the IACP's website www.iacp.ie.

References:

The IACP research survey was carried out in 2013 by Behaviour and Attitudes Marketing Research Ltd