



Minding your head

Public information campaign news

March/April 2007

At least one in five people in Northern Ireland will experience problems that affect their mental health and suicide is on the increase with around 150 recorded deaths each year.^{1,2} Yet very few people are willing to talk about mental health openly.

Mental health is important for everyone but many people have a limited understanding of what mental health is. People's attitudes to mental health are often based on fear or embarrassment. Stigma around mental health issues can lead to people being labelled, devalued or set apart from others, preventing them from seeking help and inhibiting their recovery.

A high priority in promoting good mental health and working towards reducing the number of deaths by suicide in Northern Ireland is the need

to raise awareness of mental health issues and reduce the level of stigma around them.

In response to actions outlined in the suicide prevention strategy, *Protect life a shared vision* and the strategy *Promoting mental health* the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland (HPA) has been commissioned by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to develop a mass media mental health campaign for Northern Ireland.^{2,3}



Campaign aims and objectives

The main objectives of the campaign are to promote, protect and enhance mental health and wellbeing and contribute to the prevention of suicide and self-harm in Northern Ireland. To do this, the campaign aims to raise awareness of the issue of mental and emotional health and encourage a more positive, open attitude to mental health. It will focus on raising awareness and understanding that it is possible to influence and control mental and emotional health. It also aims to increase the public's knowledge of ways to protect and promote mental health.

The main campaign targets all adults in Northern Ireland. In addition there will be a more focused campaign targeting young men aged 16 to 24 years of age.



Looking after your mental health

Campaign leaflets

'Minding your head' – campaign website

A dedicated website:

www.mindingyourhead.info for those who are worried about poor mental health, as well as those interested in maintaining good mental health, will go live from 12 March. 'Minding your head' will have detailed sections for young people, adults, older people and professionals. It will provide a central source of information and advice including contact information for support groups and organisations across Northern Ireland.

The campaign advertisements can be viewed on the website and campaign literature downloaded.



Public attitudes research

Research used to inform the development of the campaign has been published in a research report, *Public attitudes, perceptions and understanding of mental health in Northern Ireland*.⁴ This research report is available to download from the HPA website: www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

The findings from the report indicate that attitudes to mental health are very complex and suggest that many people are either failing to recognise that they have a mental health problem or are unwilling to disclose it. Knowledge of mental health problems is limited with more than three fifths (63%) of those surveyed underestimating the prevalence of mental health problems in Northern Ireland. While 98% agreed that anyone can experience mental health problems, over half (55%) said that if they were experiencing mental health problems they wouldn't want people knowing about it.

Furthermore almost half (46%) of those surveyed said they would be afraid of experiencing mental health problems themselves in the future and that people with a mental health problem should not be allowed to do important jobs, for example medicine or nursing.

Public attitudes, perceptions and understanding of mental health in Northern Ireland

March 2006



HPA Health
Promotion
Agency

References

- 1 Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. Northern Ireland Health and Social Wellbeing Survey 2005/06. Belfast: NISRA, 2007.
- 2 Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Protect life – a shared vision, the Northern Ireland suicide prevention strategy and action plan 2006–2011. Belfast: DHSSPS, 2006.
- 3 Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Promoting mental health strategy and action plan 2003–2008. DHSSPS, 2003.
- 4 Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland. Public attitudes, perceptions and understanding of mental health in Northern Ireland. Belfast: HPA, March 2007. Northern Ireland. Belfast: HPA, March 2007.

'It's me' campaign for all adults

The main campaign, 'It's me', highlights that mental health problems are more common than people think and that anyone can experience a mental health problem. It also focuses on the positive steps that can be taken to protect and improve mental health and encourages people to bring discussion of mental health issues into the open.

The 'It's me' campaign uses television, radio, press advertising and print materials. The television advertisement will be broadcast on UTV and the radio advertisements on DTR/Cool FM and Belfast Citybeat from 12 March to 12 April. Advertisements will also be published in the *Belfast Telegraph*, *Irish News*, *Newsletter*, *Daily Mirror*, *Sunday Life*, *Sunday People* and *Sunday World*.

The television advertisement shows people who have experienced mental health problems, in everyday situations getting on with their lives. Lynda Bryans, the television presenter and journalist, is one of these people.

The 'It's me' television advertisement was pre-tested along with alternative television advertisements. Feedback from pre-testing indicated that 'It's me' was the strongest advertisement among those tested because people were able to easily identify with the people featured. It was felt that Lynda Bryans was a particular strength in the advertisement because her involvement showed mental health problems can affect anyone.

In developing the campaign the HPA worked with colleagues in the National Office for Suicide Prevention and the Health Service Executive in the Republic of Ireland. The 'It's me' television advertisement will also be shown on RTE TV3 from 19 April.



'It's me' TV ad

Young males campaign

Talking about how you feel is the focus of the campaign targeting young males in the 16–24 age group. While having many of the same objectives as the adult campaign, this campaign is primarily focused on breaking down the current male culture of keeping problems hidden.



Young males TV ad

The campaign will run from 12 March to 19 April and will use cinema and television advertising as well as poster advertising and leaflet distribution. The television advertisement will be broadcast on Channel 4 during programmes popular with this age group such as the *Simpsons*, *Hollyoaks*, *Shameless* and *T4*.

Poster advertisements will be displayed in locations across Northern Ireland and 200 poster panels will go up in washrooms in pubs and clubs. Leaflets will also be distributed outside clothes and music shops popular with young men.

Black taxis operating in North and West Belfast will have A5 size posters from the campaign displayed in the back of their cabs.

Life can be tough but no one said you had to be

Sharing problems that weigh you down can make them easier to handle.
Talk to a friend, a family member or your doctor, and you'll lighten the load you're carrying.

Look after your mental health
www.mindingyourhead.info

Health Promotion Agency
Health, Social Services and Public Safety
MINDING YOUR HEAD

Poster for young males campaign

Supplies of campaign leaflets and posters

Copies of the campaign posters and leaflets are available from your area central health promotion resource service (listed below):



Leaflet



Poster



Poster



Leaflet

Eastern Health and Social Services Board area
 Eastern Area Health Promotion
 Communication, Resource and Information
 Service (CRIS)
 Champion House
 12-22 Linenhall Street
 Belfast, BT2 8BS
 Tel: 028 9032 1313
 Fax: 028 9055 3707
 Email: info@eahealthpro.org
 Web: www.eahealthpro.org

Northern Health and Social Services Board area
 Health Promotion Service
 Homefirst Community Trust
 Spruce House
 Cushendall Road
 Ballymena, BT43 6HL
 Tel: 028 2563 5575 or 028 2563 5375
 Fax: 028 2563 5377
 Email: health.promotion@homefirst.n-i.nhs.uk

Southern Health and Social Services Board area
 Southern Area Health Promotion
 Department
 Healthcare Directorate Department,
 Admin Building, St. Luke's Hospital,
 Loughgall Road
 Armagh, BT61 7NQ
 Tel: 028 3741 2424
 Fax: 028 3741 2425
 Email: hpromotion@adhsst.n-i.nhs.uk
 Web: www.goodhealthinfo.org.uk

Western Health and Social Services Board area
 Health Promotion Department
 Westcare Business Services
 Resources and Graphic Centre
 The Hub
 12c Gransha Park
 Londonderry, BT47 6WJ
 Tel: 028 7186 5221
 Fax: 028 7186 5128
 Email: pconcannon@westcare.n-i.nhs.uk

