

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT TRAVELLER MENTAL HEALTH

#TravellersTorieMentalHealth

#NoStigmaNoShame

#NoDiscrimination



Galway Traveller Movement



THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY IS CALLING FOR THE RIGHT TO POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH.

THIS MEANS A RIGHT TO:

Hope and
purpose


Women's
equality

Be nomadic
and travel

Respect, dignity,
equality and
recognition

Joy and
happiness

Good
education,
health services,
accommodation and
employment



Expression of
cultural knowledge
and skills (horses, music,
language, trading,
recycling)

Long and
healthy lives

Freedom
to socialise

Have
our voices
heard

Freedom from
racism and
discrimination

Freedom to
be different
even within our
own community
(e.g. LGBTQI,
disability)

Follow our dreams
and reach our full
potential

A sense of
belonging

Freedom from all
forms of physical
and emotional
violence and abuse





ANYONE
CAN EXPERIENCE
MENTAL HEALTH
DIFFICULTIES

Anyone can experience stress, anxiety, worry and times of feeling low. Around one quarter of people in Ireland will experience a mental health difficulty each year.


KNOW
THE
CAUSES

Mental health difficulties in the Traveller community can be caused, in the main, by discrimination, racism, poor accommodation, unemployment and lack of education. Other things can lead to poor mental health too including experiences such as bereavement, abuse or trauma.

6 out of every 10 Travellers¹ feel that their mental health is not as good as it should be. This means it is likely that someone close to you may be experiencing mental health difficulties and may need your help minding their mental health and getting the support they need.

Sometimes people may need medication or to go to their GP or hospital for certain illnesses, such as Bi-Polar Disorder, Schizophrenia, psychosis, etc.


¹ AITHS, 2010




TIMES WHEN OUR MENTAL HEALTH CAN SUFFER

Our mental health can also suffer as a result of things like post-natal depression and pre-menstrual tension (PMT). Sometimes when the seasons change, usually in Autumn and Winter, we can feel fed up and have low energy. This is called Seasonal Affective Disorder.

Lots of people have a hard time talking about when they are going through difficult times. Stigma (being made to feel shame) can make it harder for people to open up and talk about their mental health. This also makes it harder for people to ask family and friends or others for help.



HAVING A MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTY IS NOT SOMETHING TO BE ASHAMED OF



It is very important that anyone experiencing mental health difficulties has support to get better.

CAN I DO
ANYTHING
TO SUPPORT
SOMEONE
WHO IS GOING
THROUGH
DIFFICULT
TIMES?
YES YOU CAN!



CHECK IN

Create the space and time for a chat, have a cup of tea with the person and ask how they are doing. It could be that your relative, friend or the person you work with needs to talk to somebody. Asking how they are doing will help them to open up about how they are feeling, they will also know that you care about them.

LISTEN AND TRY NOT TO JUDGE

People want to feel heard. Offering a listening ear can often help more than you realise. Try not to judge what the person is saying. They are trusting you with their story.



ASK TWICE

Don't be afraid to ask twice. Maybe the first time you asked the person if they were OK they didn't feel able or ready to talk. They might feel able to talk now.

OTHER SUPPORTS

Know that there is other support available to the person and to you if needed.

TELL THEM ABOUT THE GALWAY TRAVELLER COUNSELLING SERVICE (087 637 9074)

The Galway Traveller Counselling Service

is a confidential service for Travellers. When you phone the number, you will hear the friendly voice of someone who understands your culture. If you want, they will arrange for a counsellor to get in touch with you.

The counsellor will have an understanding and respect for Traveller culture.




#TravellersTorieMentalHealth

#NoStigmaNoShame

HELP BREAK THE STIGMA


We need to
work together to
break down stigma and
shame. We need to work
together to ensure that
people are treated with
dignity, respect and
equality.





ARE THERE
SOLUTIONS FOR
SOMEONE GOING
THROUGH DIFFICULT
TIMES?

Yes. Lots of people
feel down at
different times in
their life. There are
supports out there
and people can get
better.



ARE PEOPLE
WITH MENTAL
HEALTH DIFFICULTIES
JUST FEELING SORRY
FOR THEMSELVES?

No.
Mental health
difficulties can be
extremely serious
and people may need
different types of
support and treatment
and the understanding
of the people around
them.



Join your local
Traveller Action Group
to challenge racism
and discrimination.



CAN
CHILDREN
SUFFER FROM
FEELING
LOW?


Yes. 1 in 3 children aged between 11 and 13 years of age in Ireland experience mental health difficulties. Some of the things experienced by children that affect their mental health include bullying and isolation.



ARE PEOPLE
STRUGGLING WITH
MENTAL HEALTH
DIFFICULTIES WEAK?

No.

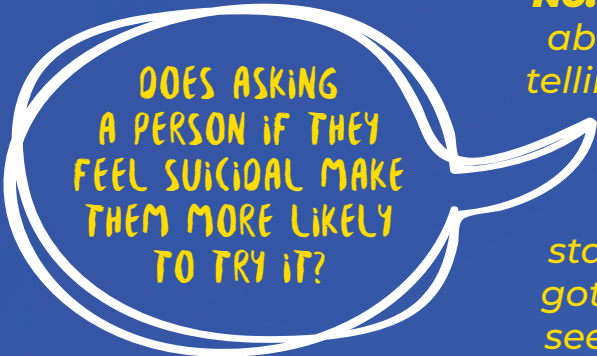
It is a normal response to feel low when something negative happens in your life. Taking care of yourself and asking for help if you need it is a sign of strength, not weakness.



IF SOMEONE'S
MENTAL HEALTH
GETS BAD SHOULD
THEY GO TO
HOSPITAL IF THEY
ARE ADVISED TO?

Yes.

Just as with a physical illness, sometimes people with mental health difficulties need to get treated. If a friend or family member needs to go to hospital, it is very important that there is no stigma/shame attached. They should get the support they need from family and community members to go to hospital and get better.



DOES ASKING
A PERSON IF THEY
FEEL SUICIDAL MAKE
THEM MORE LIKELY
TO TRY IT?

No. By asking a person about suicide you are telling them that it is ok for them to talk to you.

When someone starts talking, they've got a better chance of seeing that they have other choices.



IS POOR
PHYSICAL HEALTH
WORSE THAN POOR
MENTAL HEALTH?

No. Mental health difficulties can feel just as bad and do as much damage as a physical illness. Your mental health needs as much attention as your physical health.





Galway Traveller Movement

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**National
Social
Inclusion
Office**



Youth Work Ireland
Galway

*This project is funded through the Dormant Accounts Fund
with support from the HSE National Social Inclusion Office*

The following have been used to inform this boklet

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www.ms-uk.org/blog-7-mental-health-myths-busted

[www.seechange.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/See-Change-
What-is-Stigma-A5-brochure-HR.pdf](http://www.seechange.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/See-Change-What-is-Stigma-A5-brochure-HR.pdf)

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www.mymind.org/mental-health_myths/

[www.paveepoint.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/
Suicide-Facts-Figures-A0.pdf](http://www.paveepoint.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Suicide-Facts-Figures-A0.pdf)

