



Mental Health, It's good to talk – by Stu Parker

I imagine you have all heard this saying many times. Well from my experience of dealing with my mental health issues it really is true.

In 2018 after battling with my inner self I realised that being a typical stubborn man was actually not going to help me in the future. I went to work one day and couldn't even speak to a witness. I'd just lost the plot. My wife had already tried to discuss the subject with me as she could clearly see from an outside perspective that something was wrong with me. I was having none of it and continued to struggle until that day.

You may well ask why I got in this situation. In my case it was several personal issues that pushed me to the limit. Work was also getting me down. It would have happened over a period of time. In hindsight if I had sought help earlier I may have been able to nip it in the bud.

There really is help out there. Although at the time I was embarrassed and thought it would never happen to me it did. I've now realised that it's not a problem and the best way to help the situation is to confide in experts and equally importantly people who are close to you.

A good friend of mine who just happens to be an inspector in another force told me to look into going to Flint House as he had recommended it for one of his sergeants. Believe it or not you're not on your own. I went on a two week course with fellow sufferers of all ranks from all over the country.

I didn't want to go and right up until the day I nearly didn't. After pushing myself I have to admit it was a brilliant decision. It doesn't magically solve your issues but it certainly teaches you the mechanics behind depression and how to deal with it better.

So I am kind of writing this to try and persuade anyone but particularly men that its ok to suffer with depression and I've proved that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Yes it's not gone away completely and I regularly have bad days. But I've learnt how to deal with it which is a massive bonus.

I strongly encourage anyone suffering to indulge in regular exercise. I took up running and its really helped with my depression and stress. I've even run a marathon at the ripe old age of 48 years.

I'm always a shoulder to cry on should anyone wish to speak to a person who will never judge you, I genuinely mean this.