

# News story: Time to Talk about mental health

Approximately 1 in 4 people in the UK will experience a mental health problem at some point in life.

For an organisation as large as Sellafield Ltd, that means that around 4000 employees will encounter issues with their mental health.

To mark 'Time to Talk' Day, Euan Hutton from Sellafield Ltd talked to employees about his experiences.

The culture of silence associated with discussing mental health makes these issues worse and opening up to a colleague or friend is often the first step to recovery.

From now on, I am encouraging everyone to open up to talking about mental health. To managers and team leaders: create the environment for open conversation on this topic and reassure your team that they will not be judged for reaching out. To everyone in the organisation: look out for your team mates; step in if they don't seem themselves or if they are behaving differently and let them know you're there for them.

I'd never ask anyone to do something I wouldn't do myself...so here goes nothing.

In the past I've had issues with one of my kidneys which I've had treatment for. It comes up in conversation sometimes, and I've always been happy to talk about. I've got a bit of arthritis in my ankle which I've openly talked about, it's painful. It is as a result of breaking my ankle playing rugby when I was younger.

These are health issues which aren't exactly public as such, but which I'm certainly comfortable talking about openly.

What I have struggled to talk about openly is that in 2012, not long before I came back to work at Sellafield, I had counselling to help me deal with stress and anxiety.

I had the counselling because I was ill. It was medical treatment for an illness. Just like my kidney and my ankle.

On the face of it I didn't have anything to be anxious about. I was doing okay at work, I'm happily married and have three great kids and a loving family. I'm not unique or special. But I was ill. I needed help and treatment, and I got it, and I got better.

Mental health is the same as physical health. Any one of us can be affected at any time. We don't choose it, it chooses us.

That's why we're encouraging people to talk in the workplace, and directing people to where more help is available.