

Stressed Out Britain

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Feeling stressed? You are not alone, as new research from Mintel finds as many as 40 million of us admit to suffering from stress and anxiety.

In fact, today just 17% of Brits claim they are not experiencing some kind of worry.

And while the majority of people tend only to be troubled with one or two worries, around a third of British adults have the weight of the world on their shoulders... with three or more concerns.

Regardless of the number of worries that an adult has, money is the nation's™ outstanding concern. In addition, it seems that today, selfless Brits are putting the problems of others first, with as many as a quarter of us worried about the problems of others.

Britain's top five concerns are:

1. Money (40%)
2. Problems of friends and family members (25%)
3. Health concerns (24%)
4. Stress at work (22%) and
5. Job security or employment (21%)

Alexandra Richmond, Senior Health and Beauty Analyst at Mintel said:

"Even though the recession may be over, people have become more aware of the fragility of their jobs or indeed the price of their home, which is why employment and finance top our list of worries."

And when it comes to dealing with stress, as many as sixteen million of us feel most comfortable talking to family and friends, making socialising with friends the top way of coping with stress.

The top five "stress busters" are:

1. Socialising with friends and family (54%),
2. Listening to music/reading a book (40%),
3. Exercising or playing a sport, (33%),
4. Talking to people about how they feel (32%) and
5. Spending one on one time with a partner or significant other (22%).

"The fact that over half of us turns to our family and friends in times of trouble, compared to just 6% who go to a professional, highlights the extent of the stigma attached to seeking professional help to deal with stress. For many seeking professional help may be regarded as a sign of defeat or inability to cope on their own. It is here that the British 'stiff upper lip' syndrome really affects people's ability to get help when things overwhelm them." Alexandra adds.

With money the top source of concern, it is no surprise that people are also finding cheaper ways of managing their stress than going on holiday. For affordable escapism, an estimated 20 million adults listen to music or read a book to unwind.

Used by 2 million adults, complementary medicines may also be seen as an over-the-counter alternative to antidepressants.

Meanwhile, over one in five of us (21%) admit to turning to drink when stressed, while over one in ten (13%) light up a cigarette, and it is here where there are stark contrasts in the behaviour of men and women. Indeed, almost a quarter (24%) of men turn to drink, while less than one in five (17%) women drown their sorrows in alcohol.

By contrast almost 20% of women turn to comfort foods indulging in snacks and treats, compared to just 9% of men.

Finally, it is Britain's women who are the nation's worriers, with men (55%) far more likely than women (45%) to say that they are not troubled by anything.

What is more, over one in ten (11%) women has five or more worries, compared to just one in 14 (7%) of men.

"Much of the lack of stress in men's lives may be owing to male bravado where admitting to being stressed might be perceived as a sign of weakness. Juggling so many aspects of their life could be responsible for the fact that women

typically mention a greater number of stresses or worries compared to men. Many women take responsibility for the home, raising the children as well as going out to work and looking after ageing parents." Alexandra concludes.

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