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## Talking about Mental Health in Madrid

*Madrid, March 24, 2008*

Mental health is talked about more often than ever before. However, when being asked what people can do themselves to preserve or improve their mental health the responses normally take a little while ... Some of the most frequent answers are: "Going to the gym regularly", "sleeping 8 hrs a night", "Eating healthy food and drink alcohol with moderation" and "Not taking everything too seriously". Although the above mentioned ideas or, even better, habits have a positive effect on our well-being, mental health still seems to be more of a valued idea than something that can actually be obtained or improved. Counselling allows clients to gain more insight in

what makes them behave the way they behave. To be the centre of attention for 60 minutes often proves to be a new and alleviating experience for



**Joseph Maussen: "Safety and confidentiality, two pillars supporting therapeutic progress."**

clients allowing them to explore personal issues that prevented

meaningful relationships and activities to develop with success and satisfaction. Although Mental Health is difficult to measure it often proves even more difficult to discuss, especially when live events demand someone to be strong and independent. Social support networks might be spread thin when living in a new city far from home. At Counselling Madrid we know from clients how difficult it can be to get access to the right support when living as an expatriate, spouse or student in a foreign country. Our aim is to make our clients stay abroad more rewarding.

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## Expats, Spouses & Foreign Students

*Madrid, March 24, 2008*

Day to day activities and responsibilities can vary significantly between expats, spouses and students. Where expats tend to have a demanding job with people reporting to them, spouses often face the building

of a social network with interesting local people and meaningful activities besides the daily tasks at home. Students face other challenges altogether trying to find a balance between taking care of their professional future and making the most of every day. At Counselling Ma-

drid clients are offered therapy to deal with issues such as anxiety, depression, addiction and low self esteem. The service tends to be short term focused aimed at making clients more resourceful in understanding and helping themselves to increase their Quality of Life.

# Mental Health in the Workplace



After Musculoskeletal disorders such as back problems, mental health is the biggest occupational health problem in the UK. Stress is a necessary part of every day life

**In a CBI survey, 98% of respondents said they thought that Mental Health of employees should be a company concern.**

and indeed some degree of stress is considered healthy. What then makes healthy stress turn into unhealthy stress? The major factors giving rise to unhealthy stress are related to issues such as a lack of control over work, impossible deadlines, poorly defined roles leading to uncer-

tainty, poor working conditions and low interpersonal support. Problems in domestic relationships, difficulties traveling to work and money worries may build up over time contributing to a persons reduced ability to manage stress at work. Creating a healthy workplace can prevent and reduce the onset of stress related illness at work. It is important to develop a supportive work ethos in which employees feel free to speak about the stress they are experiencing, knowing that they will be helped to deal with their issues.

**“Early recognition of the signs of stress and anxiety is the crucial first step preventing them from becoming more serious.”**

## Promoting Student Mental Health

There is growing interest in Student Mental Health across European universities. The university as an organization in which to promote health is emphasized more often. Universities form an important setting for the protection, promotion and maintenance of well being. Students themselves see their mental health influenced by factors such as accommodation, fitting in, making new friends,

and finances. Knowing from research that students identified friends and family as their major sources for support, it will be no surprise that international students who just arrived in Madrid are more at risk than their local peers. Students indicate that universities still need to improve university support systems in solving practical problems and reluctance to consult mental health



professionals. Counseling Madrid aims to contribute in this area.

## Understanding the relationship between alcohol and mental health

The reasons we drink and the consequences of excessive drinking are intimately linked with our mental health. Alcohol is tied up with many areas of our lives and we use it in many ways: to help us relax, feel brave, introduce ourselves, seal business deals, celebrate life events, drown our sorrows, remember, forget, welcome people, say goodbye to people, get to know people, manipulate peo-



ple, because we feel like, because we need it, to numb ourselves, to feel grown up, to feel young, to belong, to distinguish ourselves,

and sometimes because we have forgotten to do anything without alcohol. Although we may identify with several of the above mentioned occasions or reasons to drink, many GP's believe that alcohol is a cause of mental health problems. CBT Counselling can provide the support clients need to gain more control over their alcohol consumption.

**Stressed mood leads to increased alcohol consumption while 88% says it helps them relax. 63% says “it makes me feel happy.”**