

“THERE ARE OTHERS LIKE YOU. YOU'RE NOT ALONE”

Carl Barât knows what it feels like to be overwhelmed by depression – and how talking to friends and family can help

For the last decade, Carl Barât has been one of the UK's most famous and best-loved rock stars, revered for his work with The Libertines, Dirty Pretty Things and his solo career. But as someone who has experienced depression, he knows more than anyone there's no point struggling and trying to deal with it on your own. While listening to the music you love can be a great comfort, it's no substitute to talking through things with someone. Because Carl's friends and family made the small step of starting a conversation with him, they were able to support him and help him confront his problems. So if you know someone who is going through a rough patch, reach out to them, keep in touch, and carry on doing the things you've always done. It all helps, as Carl will tell you...

“I was deeply depressive and unhappy for years. I feel it's something you've got to live with, but it's really important to realise that there are other people like you. You're actually not alone, and that helps you confront it, tackle it and fight it.

“My sister was probably the first person that helped me, about 10 years ago. She suffered from it for a bit as well: all of our past issues and traumas started coming out in the wash when she hit her mid-20s. We were able to unravel it and talk about it together, thrashing it out. A lot of it was drunken and extreme, and a lot of it was sombre and calm, but it managed to expel the demons. Talking definitely helps.

“By helping her out, I saw the similarities between the two of us. It was only recently that I realised it was depression – I'd spent years just being tortured

With his long-time Libertines bandmate and friend Pete Doherty in 2010



and brooding. Mood-swinging, almost. Just talking to someone about it is the first step – for the encouragement and the support. And don't be offended by someone shrugging you off, because often, that can be a cry for help. Just seeing another person or having a distraction can be helpful. You should definitely be open-minded

to people you think might be depressed, and definitely don't be scared to talk to them directly. That's the main thing: to not be scared of confronting it, and reaching out to people who know about this shit.

“The first time I went to therapy, I was told to go and sort myself out as I was just out of it. I was drinking and taking drugs at a sort of suicidal level, and it was my best and wisest friends who could really spot that. They'd say, ‘Fuck man, you've got to get some help. You've got a choice of living life like this or not’. That's one of the most important things

– knowing that there are choices, and you don't have to suffer like that.

“My managers have been good, too. They've all set me up with somebody different, and someone talking to you is really helpful – otherwise, I would have met a sticky end a long time ago, for sure. So many people do skirt over it and just say ‘Uh-huh, OK’, and don't understand – that isn't helpful.

“Now, my girlfriend is the first person I go to – she understands it. It helps to be honest with yourself and those around you, and to say how you're feeling and where you're at. And obviously it really helps to have someone who is understanding and appreciative of that. And when you're having a shit day, ideally you just need to calm down and remember it's not as bad as you think it's going to be. It will pass, and there



The guitarist has found people he can turn to



Carl goes it alone onstage

“Just talking to someone is the first step”

CARL BARAT

are certain processes you've learnt from other people with depression or therapy to help guide you through it. That's what you need to

remember – the sun does come up again...

So there you have it: proof that nothing beats the support of friends or family members. And if you think

someone close to you is bottling it all up, don't wait around. Ask them how they're feeling. Get out to a gig together. Start the conversation. If they know you're willing to listen, it'll make all the difference to them. Find out how to start your conversation today at time-to-change.org.uk or tweet with the hashtag #timetotalk.

it's time to talk. it's time to change

Let's end mental health discrimination