

## HEALTH MATTERS



One in four people in the UK experience a mental health problem in any one year. The Telegraph has teamed up with Mind, the mental health charity, to publish a number of articles to mark World Mental Health Day on Tuesday, October 10

**S**UICIDE kills more adults in Coventry and Warwickshire than road traffic accidents. This is one of the reasons why mental health charity Coventry and Warwickshire Mind wants to get people talking about mental health.

Some 50 per cent of all mental health problems are established by the age of 14, and ten per cent of children and young people have a diagnosable mental health problem.

This week sees the launch of a ground-breaking project led by the charity to target young people.

As part of the project, secondary schools across Coventry and Warwickshire will screen a film called S-Word to raise awareness among young people of suicide.

It aims to break down the stigma ahead of World Mental Health Day, which takes place tomorrow.

The central message is that it is important to talk.

Written by teacher Billie Jay Short following the death of a relative who took their own life, S-Word features extracts taken from the real accounts of suicide survivors – and the children and parents of those who have taken their life.

With support from Coventry and Warwickshire Mind, S-Word was performed and filmed by production company Small Fry Productions.

Billie was a teacher in



Stills from the trailer for S-Word, a powerful film being shown in schools across the region to encourage conversations about mental health

# Suicide

## ...breaking the silence



Jonny Pert, artistic director of Small Fry Productions, said: "I, like so many others, have been affected by suicide, having tragically lost a family member only a few years ago.

"In researching the piece, I asked a huge range of people whether they too had lost someone to suicide and, more often than not, they had.

"Working with Coventry and Warwickshire Mind has been amazing. It is so great to find a group as passionate about understanding and tackling mental health as we are about making films."

Coventry and Warwickshire Mind is affiliated to Mind, the leading mental health charity for England and Wales, and forms part of the Local Mind network.

The charity offers free support to people across Coventry and Warwickshire and its mission is to provide quality services, reduce stigma and promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

For more information about Coventry and Warwickshire Mind and S-Word, visit [cwmind.org.uk](http://cwmind.org.uk)

Leamington when she wrote the script for S-Word. She said: "I decided to write the play after the loss of my cousin to suicide in 2014.

"I experienced first-hand the stigma and overwhelming silence that is attached to suicide and decided I wanted to make a difference.

"By targeting young people, we are directly addressing the stigma in the future generation and inspiring change.

"I have taken this devastating event in my family and I am using it to raise awareness about an issue that is far more

common than people initially think."

Coventry and Warwickshire Mind has been supporting schools showing the film by providing resources and information for staff.

Parents and carers also have the opportunity to watch the film before their young people see it in school, giving families the chance to talk about suicide prevention and mental health and wellbeing.

Members of Coventry and Warwickshire Mind's Children and Young People's

team will also be attending the screenings to support school staff and answer questions if needed.

Alethea Balbuena, Coventry and Warwickshire Mind's director of operations, said: "We would like to thank every school that is involved in this project.

"Coventry and Warwickshire Mind is passionate about raising awareness of mental health and emotional well-being and this is our first public event to tackle views on suicide held by young people, their parents or carers

and professionals. Through this film, we hope to raise awareness of suicide and the impact it has on family, friends and on survivors.

"We also hope to encourage people to start talking about their mental health and to discourage suffering in silence.

"It is also our aim to provide viewers with the opportunity to hear real-life accounts, to have answers to questions they never dare ask and, most importantly, know how to help themselves or where to get help."