

 ADAPTED VERSION

Prince Harry opens up about ‘chaos’ of grief

Almost 20 years ago, Prince Harry was 12 when his mother Diana died in a car crash. Her death shocked the world. But the prince dealt with it by “sticking his head in the sand” – until now.



Hot off the press: *The Telegraph* devoted five pages of coverage to Prince Harry's interview.

Britain's bank holiday Monday saw some alarming newspaper front pages: “World holds its breath,” declared the *Daily Mail*, linking three **volatile** news stories in North Korea, Turkey and Russia.

But *The Telegraph* went with a far more intimate story. Its front page was dominated by a close-up of **Prince Harry**, with a personal quote about his mental health struggles.

He had been interviewed by the paper's columnist Bryony Gordon, as the first guest on her new podcast, *Mad World*. She wrote that she expected him to talk “obliquely” about his charity **Heads Together**. Instead, he gave one of the most revealing interviews of his life.

He described his struggles with grief after the death of his mother, **Princess Diana**: “My way of dealing with it was sticking my head in the sand, refusing to ever think about my mum, because why would that help? ... It's not going to bring her back.”

He described how ignoring his emotions eventually led to “two years ... of total chaos” in

his twenties. He had been “very close to a complete breakdown on numerous occasions” and sometimes felt “on the verge of punching someone”.

He described how his brother William told him that it was “not normal” to avoid his emotions, and advised him to seek help. And how, when he finally spoke to a “shrink”, it felt “great” to “let rip”. Now, he said, he was in a “good place” and able to take his private and professional life more seriously.

The interview was “special”, said Gordon, because “in Britain, we don't talk about our feelings”. The royal family has always been an “embodiment” of the stiff upper lip. “But Prince Harry just redefined strength and dignity for a new generation,” she concluded.

The royals have always been a source of huge **interest** to the press, and yesterday's candid interview was no different. But did it deserve such extensive coverage?

Mad world

A: What is causing the rising number of mental health problems in Britain — or the best way to treat them. This is partly because the problems are extremely diverse, and what works for one person may not work for another.

Q: What do people believe?

A: Many believe that talking is the most important first step towards recovering from

No, say some. It is not exactly surprising that Harry struggled after his traumatic public loss — surely there are far more important stories which should occupy the press right now? Besides, many newspapers simply used the story as an excuse to rake over the details of Diana's death, complete with mawkish pictures of her car crash and funeral. When will we get over this morbid obsession and leave her sons in peace?

For others, the story deserves national attention. Mental health, as Harry himself said, touches every area of society. It should be something that is spoken about openly, without shame — and if you happen to be one of the most high-profile people in the world, then all the better. “In just 25 minutes he has achieved more good than I have in 25 years,” argued Simon Wesseley, head of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

mental health problems, as it encourages people to seek further help. A report last year found that one fifth of people believe that “one of the main causes of mental illness is a lack of self-discipline and willpower” — something most doctors disagree with.

Q & A

Q: What do we know?

A: One in four people will experience a problem with mental health in the UK each year. Suicide is the biggest killer of men under 45, and of all people in the early 20s in the UK.

Q: What do we not know?

YOU DECIDE

1. Do you feel comfortable talking about mental health?
2. How much coverage should Prince Harry's interview get in the press?

ACTIVITIES

1. Create your own newspaper front page, covering what you believe to be the most important story in the world right now.
2. Read the two articles on yesterday's interview in *The Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* (to be found under Become An Expert). Write a paragraph comparing how they treated the story.

SOME PEOPLE SAY...

"Everyone should see a therapist at least once a year."

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

WORD WATCH

Volatile – Tensions were rising between the USA and North Korea all weekend, as Kim Jong-un conducted a missile test (which failed). Meanwhile, Turkey voted to give more powers to its authoritarian leader, President Erdogan, and Russia warned that relations with the UK were at an "all-time low".

Prince Harry –

Now 32 and fifth in line for the British throne, he served as a soldier in Afghanistan, and then worked helping soldiers recover from trauma. He left the army in 2015.

Heads Together – Harry, his brother William and sister-in-law Catherine (the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge) spearhead the charity. It aims to end the stigma of mental health and encourage people to talk about its problems.

Princess Diana –

The princess was killed in a car crash in Paris on August 31st 1997. She had divorced Harry's father, Prince Charles. Her boyfriend and their driver were also killed.

Interest – Most infamously, Diana's driver was trying to outrun paparazzi on the night of her death. More recently, Harry himself complained of the tabloid speculation surrounding his girlfriend, actress Meghan Markle.

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