



## OVER HALF OF ACNE SUFFERERS EXPERIENCE VERBAL ABUSE FROM FRIENDS & FAMILY DUE TO THEIR CONDITION

From our recent acne survey, the **British Skin Foundation** has found that **more than half of acne sufferers (56.78%) have experienced verbal abuse from friends, family and other people they know due to their skin condition.**

The survey was the biggest in our history, with over 2,000\* responses. The aim was to get an insight into what acne sufferers go through during their everyday lives. Like many skin diseases, acne can sometime be overlooked, and we're here to help change that.

Acne is a common skin condition that is a combination of comedones (blackheads and whiteheads) and pus-filled spots (pustules). It usually starts around the time of puberty and varies in severity from a few spots on the face, neck, back and chest to a more significant problem that may cause scarring and impact on self-confidence. Whilst most people 'grow out' of acne by the time they hit their twenties, it's perfectly normal for it to occur for longer.

Aside from the visual symptoms of acne, it's important not to trivialise the emotional impact of the disease. Being a very visual condition, acne can have a huge impact on a person's self-esteem and confidence, bringing with it potential long-term effects on the sufferers life. This can be anything from relationships, work or state of mind.

Shockingly, from our survey we found that **just over 10% of people have been unfairly dismissed at work due to their acne.** This demonstrates a degree of discrimination against a small – but still unacceptable – number of acne sufferers.

Sadly **nearly 20% of our respondents have had a relationship end due to their acne,** showing the effect that acne can have on personal life.

More worryingly, **over 20% of those with acne in our survey have thought about or attempted suicide,** demonstrating the consequences of acne on mental health, confidence and self-worth.

**Consultant Dermatologist & British Skin Foundation Spokesperson, Dr Anjali Mahto** says, *"I'm not surprised to hear that acne can have such a profound effect on every aspect of someone's life. What is really sad about it, is that acne, for the majority of people is a treatable skin disorder, and having suffered with it myself, I really do feel that no one should just have to live with it. A good dermatologist can offer a large number of potential treatments that can be tailored to the individual. Unfortunately, the skin is such a visible organ, that it's only natural that self-esteem is so closely tied to it.*

*People do underestimate acne and the impact it has on those suffering with it. I think these results highlight that acne should be taken far more seriously. It is important to seek help and advice early before scarring (be that mental or physical) develops and request referral to a dermatologist if treatments aren't working. We also need to investigate the psychological burden of this further."*

## More findings from British Skin Foundation Acne Survey

- 95% of acne sufferers said acne had an impact on their daily lives.
- 63% reported a fall in self-confidence due to acne.
- Almost a third of acne sufferers have received unfair treatment at work.
- Almost a third of acne sufferers have received unfair treatment by staff whilst in education.
- Over 10% of those with acne have been physically abused by another member of the public.
- Nearly 40% of acne sufferers have been verbally abused by another member of the public.
- Over 40% of those with acne have been bullied due to their condition.
- Almost a third of acne sufferers were not offered satisfactory treatment by a member of the medical profession.
- Just over a third of people have self-harmed or considered it.
- Just under two-thirds of people turn to family or friends for emotional support when dealing with their acne.

## Vox Pops (from the survey)

- *“Acne is common today, but for many people who have this, they will experience this type of discrimination hatred in public, education, workplace etc. Awareness is a very big problem at the moment.”*
- *“Acne has plagued my life for the last 14 years, in fact at 29 years old I have no quality of life!”*
- *“I am over 60 and I do not think that it will ever go away! I have had it since I was about 10.”*
- *“I suffer from acne, it's an awful thing to go through. I think we need more awareness. It's not just a spot on someone's body, it affects everything about them – well for me it does. I'm trying to get control of mine now, it's still all over my face, scars, spots but day by day, I'm getting there.”*

*\*British Skin Foundation Acne Survey 2014-15 – 2,299 respondents*

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