

Mother of missing Martin calls for distress help group

THE mother of missing Co Down man Martin Kelly has called for a help group to be set up to support Ulster families experiencing the same nightmare as her.

Karen Kelly, from Holywood, who has been searching tirelessly for her Marty since he was last seen leaving a dockside bar in Belfast on New Year's day, said there's a real need for a counselling service for those whose loved ones have disappeared.

Karen has refused to give up hope her son is still alive, despite fears the 22-year-old plumber and part-time barman may have fallen into Belfast Lough and drowned.

"I'm not dead or alive, I'm just existing at the moment," said Karen, who believes Martin could've experienced a mental breakdown and headed across to the UK mainland.

"I had a new grandson born five weeks ago, but he doesn't have a granny yet, all my time is spent trying to find Martin.

"As mum I have to be the rock of the family through this, I feel I can't let myself down in front of the kids. But there are times I just go into the bedroom and collapse in there on my own. Friends have been brilliant, but again, you don't want to be a burden on them.

"There's no support group out there in Northern Ireland, no-one to talk to who may have been

BY DAVID YOUNG

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in the same position to you, who can say 'I know what you are going through, but there's light at the end of the tunnel'."

"No-one who can call round and sit down and talk through what you are going through – you have to go through those things by yourself to be honest."

Karen is now hoping to get a missing persons help group set up in Ulster similar to those in Scotland and England.

That, however, is a long-term objective; at the moment, her main priority is to find her son.

Later this month, she will travel to Scotland and then down through England trying to raise awareness about Martin's case.

Supported by over £11,000 raised at a recent benefit concert in Holywood, the Kelly family are attempting to get Martin's image spread right across the UK.

As part of their campaign, Karen will appear on both the Richard and Judy show and This Morning with the hope of sparking someone's memory.

"There just might be someone out there who knows what happened to him or where he is.

"We have to try and reach those people," she said.

For more information log onto www.ourmartykelly.com



NO SUPPORT: Karen Kelly and inset, Martin Kelly