

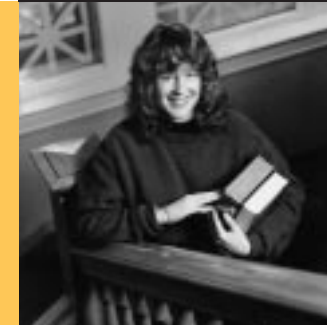


Open the doors of opportunity for  
those people living with schizophrenia

Why Canadian business should change  
its thinking about schizophrenia



- 9 Schizophrenia is a treatable brain illness.
- 8 One out of every five homeless Canadians suffers from chronic mental illness.
- 7 New treatments are available for those suffering from schizophrenia.
- 6 Schizophrenia costs Canadians \$4.3 billion per year.
- 5 Most people living with schizophrenia are employable.
- 4 One of every hundred Canadians will suffer from schizophrenia symptoms sometime in their life.
- 3 Schizophrenia is NOT “split” personality.
- 2 You can make a difference.



**Elizabeth MacDonell**

Bachelor's degree  
in English literature

Plays viola with  
a local orchestra

Has lived with  
schizophrenia for  
18 years

People with schizophrenia are PEOPLE  
(with schizophrenia)

To find out more about how you can help directly with employment, mentoring or financial support call:  
**223-8584** (within the 403 area code)  
**1-888-685-4004** (outside Calgary)

To learn more information on the illness, treatment strategies or on-going programs ask for the "Handbook for Families."



**One in 100 people will develop schizophrenia sometime in their life.**

In Canada, that's 280,000 people — more than a quarter of a million. And 27,000 in Alberta alone.

Chances are good that someone you know will develop schizophrenia in their lifetime. Chances are even better that someone you know has someone in their family or knows someone with schizophrenia.

But because of the current prejudice against people with mental illness, many of us never know how other lives have been touched. Or how deeply they are injured when the media use the term "schizophrenic" to describe a split personality or depict them as more violent than the rest of the population.

People with schizophrenia are PEOPLE with a treatable illness.

**The Good News: Schizophrenia is a TREATABLE brain illness.**

Like the lungs or pancreas, the brain is an organ in the body. Dysfunction in cells of the pancreas can result in diabetes. In a similar way, scientists have learned that schizophrenia is an illness that affects the chemistry, structure and function of the brain. *Early treatment is important in controlling schizophrenia.* Unfortunately, many people go for years without seeing a doctor — often because they are afraid of the discrimination that comes with mental illness.

The good news is that there are new medications today that are effective in treating schizophrenia. But medication is not the whole answer. A supportive, knowledgeable community is an important component for recovery. In addition to medication, there are also national and local support groups, clubhouses, and other social programs that will aid recovery. But often those living with schizophrenia need the support to find these resources.

**The Cost of Schizophrenia to Canadians: 4.3 billion dollars.**

According to a report prepared for Health Canada and the Schizophrenia Society of Canada by Michael Cassidy and Andreas Klymasz, we spend roughly 2.2 billion dollars annually for hospital care, residential care and other direct costs. Another 2.1 billion dollars is estimated in indirect costs such as lost productivity and impact on family income.

Unfortunately, because of the stigma and prejudice surrounding schizophrenia, many people are afraid of those with mental illness, so the illness is often left untreated for far too long. Hopelessness can lead to homelessness. In fact, 1 in 5 homeless people in Alberta may suffer from schizophrenia.

By treating schizophrenia early and properly, we could:

- reduce homelessness.
- reduce long term health care and hospitalization costs.
- reduce the number of those with schizophrenia unfairly held in prisons.
- reduce the drug abuse that can occur when these people have no one and no treatment program they can turn to to ease their pain.

**Schizophrenia does NOT equal violence.**

Contrary to popular television shows, most people with schizophrenia are not aggressive, dangerous or homicidal. Studies indicate, that with proper treatment, these individuals are no more likely to be violent than anyone else.

Journalists and the media have come a long way in according respect to those with physical disabilities. The time has come to give people living with a mental illness the respect every person deserves.

**Dean Kernohan**

Holds a degree in music from University of Calgary

Violinist, member of a local band & orchestra  
29 years old



"Most people don't understand it is an illness. They say: 'Can't you just discipline your thinking?' But you can't discipline a virus, cancer cells or a broken leg."

**Understanding schizophrenia is the first step in living with it.**

Schizophrenia generally first strikes young people in their late teens or early twenties. What is life like for those living with schizophrenia?

In the early stages, people with schizophrenia may find themselves losing the ability to relax, concentrate or sleep. They may start to shut long-time friends out of their lives. Work or school begins to suffer. They may stop bathing. During this time, there may be one or more episodes where they talk in ways that may be difficult to understand or describe unusual perceptions.

Because it affects men and women at such a young age, and because these people are often highly intelligent and creative individuals, they often miss the opportunity to prove themselves in their first job — and miss out on the confidence, self-esteem and financial reward that comes with employment.

Work helps the person with schizophrenia in a number of ways:

- It enhances self-esteem.
- It contributes to household income and elevates the sick person's standing in the family.
- It provides a focus of attention that can decrease the person's preoccupation with hallucinations and delusions, when they are present.
- It provides a daily structure and order to life and reduces boredom.
- It provides a new set of relationships and social interactions with co-workers and generates a sense of community.
- It brings the sick person into the society of healthy people.

**Work helps people recover from schizophrenia**

- Engaging in productive and meaningful activity is basic to an individual's sense of social and personal identity and to his or her sense of self worth. Unfortunately, in many industrialized countries fewer than 20% of people with serious mental illness are in full-time or part-time work.
- Research has shown that with proper encouragement, training, treatment and support most people with schizophrenia can work inside or outside the home.



**Simon Adamson**

Writer

Defensive Back with  
the Calgary Colts

Presenter and  
spokesperson for the  
Schizophrenia Society

“When I started taking a new medication, I regained the will to live. I began working out again. I lost 90 lbs and now I’m playing as defensive back with the Calgary Colts.... All the while my family and friends were there for me.”

**What your business can do.**

- Understand that many people with schizophrenia are qualified job applicants with many skills to offer.
- Provide greater support for an employee who may have a family member living with the illness.
- Provide financial support to a work program or Clubhouse program in your community.
- Provide job mentoring and counselling to someone living with schizophrenia.

In several European countries, where economic disincentives to work are less severe, model vocational programs have demonstrated that a much larger proportion of people with serious mental illness can gain employment. European social enterprises successfully employ a mixed workforce of mentally ill and healthy workers in manufacturing and service enterprises.

Here are some guidelines for hiring and job creation for those with schizophrenia:

- The most suitable types of employment are generally well-structured and not too stressful.
- Part-time work may be a useful option for some individuals.
- People with schizophrenia are affected in differing ways; repetitive work may be within the capacity of some but boring for those with a higher level of competence; work projects or workforces with differing levels of responsibility involve a variety of tasks and thereby help avoid boredom.
- Recent research suggests that programs that use on-the-job training approaches produce better results than the more traditional “train then place” approach.

**Michele Miserelli**

Mother

Diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1988

Public speaker and volunteer for the Schizophrenia Society

“It’s a Catch-22. You tell the employer you have schizophrenia, you don’t get the job. You don’t tell them and you get sick on the job, you get fired. I’ve experienced that many times.”