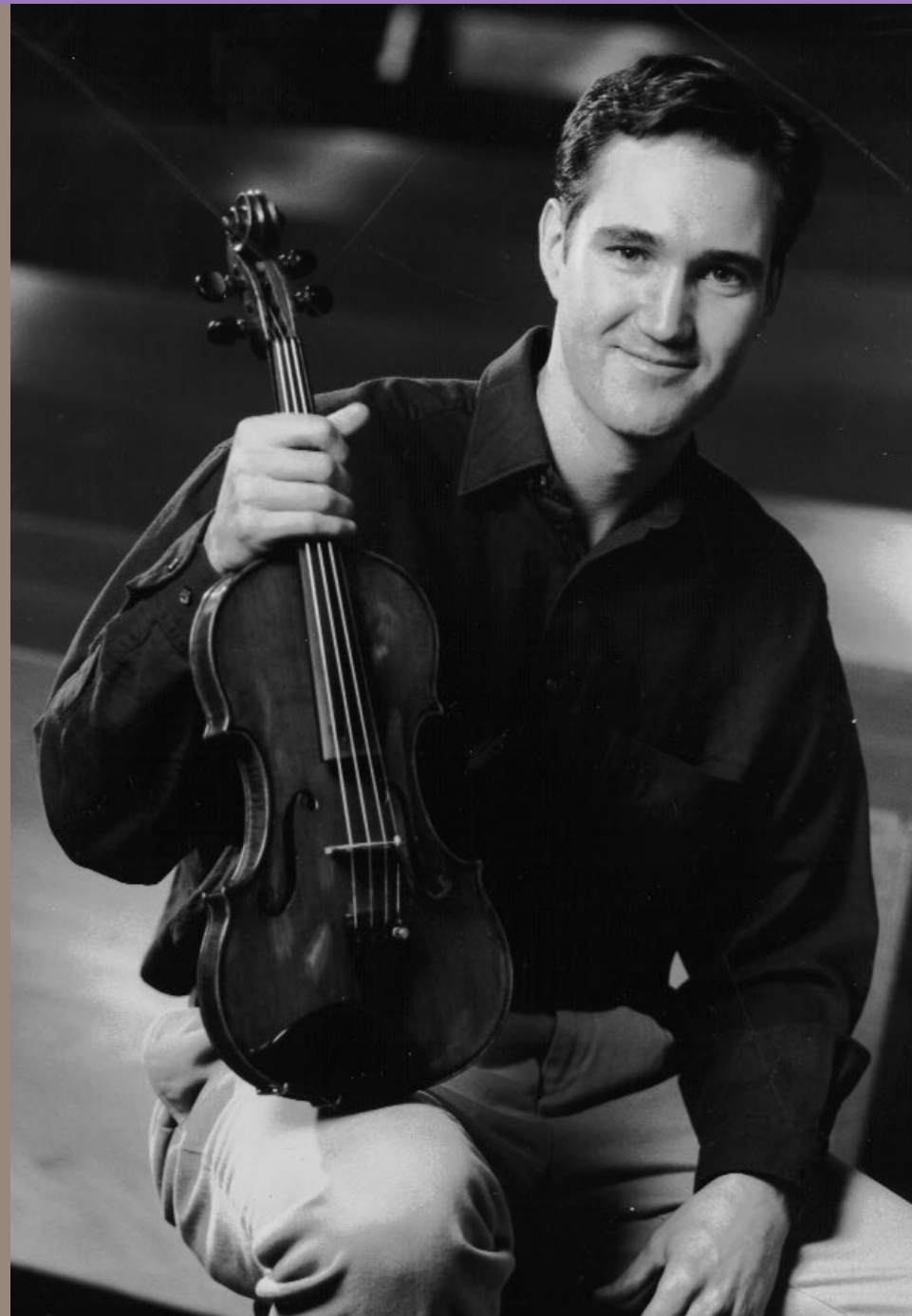




Open the doors of opportunity for  
those people living with schizophrenia

Why you should change your 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.

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."

If you believe you or someone you know has schizophrenia, call **1-403-670-4836** and ask about the Treatment and Prevention Program run by Doctor Jean Addington



Funded by an unrestricted educational grant from Eli Lilly and Company and by a grant from the Alberta Provincial Mental Health Advisory Board

## People with schizophrenia are PEOPLE (with schizophrenia)

REASON NUMBER

1



### Dean Kernohan

Holds a degree in music from University of Calgary

Violinist, member of a local band & orchestra

29 years old

**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 people use cruel labels such as “crazy” or “schizophrenic.”

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.

**Schizophrenia affects everyone.**

Because many people do not understand schizophrenia or are afraid of those with mental illness, discrimination is very much a problem in our society. Hopelessness can lead to homelessness. In fact, 1 in 5 homeless people in Alberta may suffer from schizophrenia.

By treating schizophrenia early, properly, and compassionately, 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 person or treatment program to whom they can turn to ease their pain.

**Schizophrenia does NOT equal violence.**

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

The time has come to give people living with mental illness the respect every person deserves.

**Alvin Vieira**

Painter

Sculptor

Has lived with schizophrenia for 16 years



Schizophrenia is NOT multiple personality disorder.  
 “Most people think it’s some Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde thing.  
 Every serial killer and axe murder on TV is said to have schizophrenia.  
 That kind of ignorance just makes it worse for people who live it.”

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

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

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.

People with schizophrenia may experience one or all of these conditions:

- a marked change in personality.
- a constant feeling of being watched.
- difficulty in controlling one's thoughts.
- hearing voices or nonexistent sounds.
- increasing withdrawal from social contacts.
- seeing persons or things that aren't there.
- use of words that make no sense.
- sudden excesses, such as extreme religiosity.
- irrational, angry or fearful responses to loved ones.
- sleeplessness or agitation.

**Things you should know about schizophrenia**

- Schizophrenia is NOT the result of bad parenting. Families can help in the recovery process by working with healthcare professionals. A detailed family history can help a doctor make a correct diagnosis.
- Schizophrenia tends to go in cycles — with periods of remission and relapse. Unfortunately, during periods of remission some may stop taking their medication.

**Elizabeth MacDonell**

Bachelor's degree  
in English literature

Plays viola with a  
local orchestra

Has lived with  
schizophrenia for  
18 years



"I had just received my college degree in English when I was diagnosed with schizophrenia 18 years ago. For a long time, I couldn't concentrate enough to read. But with my new medication, I can read again. I play the viola and love the Bach cello suites."

**What YOU can do: End the silent neglect of schizophrenia.**

Because so many people have been unwilling to speak out to support those with schizophrenia for so long, it has become one of the most costly health problems in Canada. Now that we have seen what the problem is...

- Who will support group homes in our communities?
- Who will hire those with schizophrenia?
- Who will advocate for greater funding to treat and house those with mental illness?
- Who will take the first step in ending the homelessness and social problems that accompany schizophrenia?

You can take the first step in alleviating one of the biggest health problems in Canada today: the silent neglect of schizophrenia.

**What friends and family can do if someone you know is having a mental crisis.**

Most families report that a crisis or psychotic episode — that is, a severe break with reality — occurred a few months to a year after they began to notice unusual behavior. Some said, however, that the crisis occurred with little or no warning.

It is important to understand that your friend or family member may be as terrified as you are by what is happening: a “voice” may be giving life-threatening commands; snakes may be crawling on the window; poisonous fumes may be filling the room. You must get medical help as quickly as possible and this could mean hospitalization.

If your friend or relative has been receiving medical help, phone the doctor or psychiatrist immediately. Ask which hospital you should go to and for advice about what to do.

**Guidelines that may help in a crisis:**

- Remain calm. Your fear or anxiety may upset that person further.
- Reduce distractions. Turn off the television or radio.
- Try saying: “Let’s sit down to talk” or “Let’s sit down and be quiet.”
- Avoid patronizing or authoritative statements such as “you’re acting like a child” or “do as I say, young lady.”

**Long term treatment strategies**

Today a number of options exist for helping those who suffer from schizophrenia to recover:

- Education programs are very important in helping those with schizophrenia and their families understand: early recognition of relapse, relapse prevention and adherence to treatment.
- Various forms of psychotherapies can be effective in combination with psychopharmacological therapies.
- Family support groups are an important means for families to reintegrate into the community and to provide support to help patients improve their compliance.
- Community support and outreach programs, including community clubhouses.

For more information on these and other treatment strategies, call one of the numbers listed on the last page of this brochure.



Simon Adamson

Writer

Defensive Back with  
the Calgary Colts

Presenter and  
spokesperson for the  
Schizophrenia Society

“The friends I had in high school were great. They never treated me differently even though I was certainly acting differently. They knew I needed help and were there to help me.”