



ANTI-STIGMA / ANTI-DISCRIMINATION INITIATIVE

May 2009

*Out of the shadows
Forever*

Victoria Maxwell

*When diagnosed with
bi-polar disorder, her
biggest obstacle to
overcome was her own
attitude and fear*





Short History of Anti-stigma / Anti-discrimination Initiative

- Mental Health Commission of Canada tasked to undertake 4 key initiatives
- Create a 10 year Anti-stigma / Anti-discrimination Campaign
- Stigma is seen as one of the key barriers preventing people living with a mental illness from seeking help and leading a full and productive life
- Some people say that it is more difficult living with the stigma and discrimination they face than the disease itself



Anti-Stigma / Anti-discrimination Initiative

- Largest systematic campaign ever developed in Canada
- It will not only focus on stigma, but also discrimination
- Research has shown that the campaign must be targeted and have measurable objectives



Proposed Program Goals

The Anti-stigma and Anti-discrimination Strategy wants to achieve three outcomes to benefit people living with mental illness:

1. Change view of Canadians so they treat people with mental illness as full citizens
2. Encourage organizations to eliminate discrimination
3. Ensure individuals living with mental illness experience equal opportunities in society and life



Operational Plan

Targeted Approach: Year One

- Two target groups have been identified:
 - Children and Youth
 - Health Care Providers



Why Youth?

- Unanimously identified as an important early target for intervention
- More than 70% of adults living with mental illness say onset developed before age 18
- Young people lack knowledge about mental illness
- 40% of Canadian parents say they would be too embarrassed to talk about their children's mental health problems



Why Health Care Workers?

- People who seek help for mental health problems feel disrespected and discriminated against by front line health care workers, either intentionally or unintentionally
- Pushed to back of queue in ER's
- Family physicians under pressure to see patients quickly, and have little training in area
- Commission has received high degree of interest from national professional organizations



What's Been Done

- Research and preliminary literature review were conducted
- A report was prepared: A Time for Action
- Last June an Operational Plan was developed based on the research
- In August a social marketing firm was hired to help us develop a strategy to reach our first two target groups



Consensus Meeting

- In September, stakeholders from across Canada including consumers, health care associations and not-for-profits were invited to attend a consensus meeting in Toronto, to agree on the vision and principles for the campaign
- Objective of the meeting was to collaboratively develop a high level set of principles and goals for the campaign
- If we are to work together it is important we share a common vision



Consensus Meeting Outcomes

- Consensus was reached with stakeholder groups on:
 - Vision
 - Principles
 - Resolution Statement drafted
 - Participants asked to become signatories
 - Posted on MHCC website
 - Report prepared



Summary of Recommended Principles for Campaign

- Reducing stigma is a shared responsibility – every Canadian can make a difference
- Recovery is the priority focus – it builds a sense of promise and hope
- Changing attitudes about stigma is not enough – we need to focus on reducing behaviors associated with discrimination



Consultations: Two Strategies

- Planning meetings were held in Ottawa on Dec. 1st and 2nd with stakeholders representing Children and Youth and Health Care Providers.
- Purpose of the meetings was to build consensus on strategic directions to reach these two groups and to explore key issues related to the roll-out of the campaign.
- Social marketing firm completed its report on recommendations for the campaigns. These strategies were presented to the Commission's Board of Directors in January.



New Identity

- Create new identity or brand for the Anti-stigma / Anti-discrimination Initiative; similar to international programs like “See Me”, “Like Minds Like Mine”, “Beyond Blue”, “Time to Change”
- Develop key messaging and media launch
- Tentative launch: May



Pilot Projects for Two Targets

- In April, the Commission will also put out a Request For Interest (RFI) to seek expressions of interest from anti-stigma programs and organizations across the country which reach out to youth and health care providers.
- Commission seeking projects to be future demonstration sites.
- These projects must be scalable across Canada.
- Selected pilot projects for both target groups will be evaluated for their effectiveness.
- Over 200 submissions by closing date May 15



Examples of Possible Pilot Projects

- Projects aimed at youth could include school-based programs, internet programs, arts and youth groups
- Projects aimed at health care providers could include establishing emergency department protocols, developing stigma free environments in hospitals, and educational courses for medical students etc.



Strike Steering Council

- Create an impartial steering council for the Anti-stigma / Anti-discrimination Initiative that will review submissions June 1
- Council will be comprised of international experts, stakeholders, people living with mental illness and research experts
- Dr. Heather Stuart of Queen's University has signed on as a Senior Consultant. She is an internationally recognized expert with extensive experience in the field
- Council will help select pilot projects for the Commission's Anti-stigma / Anti-discrimination Initiative



Ongoing Pilot Project Work

- Develop criteria for the pilot projects
- Selection of successful sites
- Develop baseline evaluation measures
- Collection of baseline data
- Program implementation
- Develop awareness campaigns about the anti-stigma initiative which will put spotlight on projects



Outreach

- Pilot symposium at Mount Royal College March 19th
- Aimed at journalism and community services students (nursing, social work and criminology)
- Two media experts presented from different perspectives on how mental illness and stigma come to play in news media and pop culture
- Three speakers had personal stories: One from family perspective, two speaking as consumers
- Presentation included student participation
- Pre and post evaluation to help plan future sessions



Ongoing work

- Maintain contact with Health Professional Table
- Consumer Table for Anti-stigma / Anti-discrimination Initiative formed to consult with direction of initiative
- Ongoing contact with Advisory Committees – ongoing contact with Youth Council (which met for the first time in early May)
- Direct participation with AC projects related to Anti-stigma program
- Recruit two project co-ordinators who will assist with roll out of Initiative



Looking towards Year Two

- Workforce will be added to the target groups for Campaign
- Strategy for workforce will be created
- Pilot projects from year one will be evaluated, and successful ones offered across Canada
- Continued outreach to journalism and other professional schools, based on results symposium at Mt. Royal College



Thank you

- Thanks for providing this opportunity to share where we are at with the Anti-stigma / Anti-discrimination Initiative
- Questions???