



CANADIAN COUNSELLING AND
PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE
COUNSELING ET DE PSYCHOTHÉRAPIE

Canada's Counsellors and Psychotherapists Acknowledge National Schizophrenia and Psychosis Awareness Day

OTTAWA (May 23, 2014) The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) is proud to acknowledge National Schizophrenia & Psychosis Awareness Day (NSPAD). Taking place on May 24th, schizophrenia societies and other mental health groups across the country collaborate to mark this special day and encourage communities to raise awareness and help reduce stigma.

This year's theme, *"This Is Why"*, serves to highlight the courageous and diverse stories of those who are affected by schizophrenia and psychosis.

One percent of Canada's population lives with schizophrenia and approximately three percent of the population will experience a psychotic episode during their lifetime. With proper treatment and support, individuals and their family and friends can and do live happy, fulfilling lives.

"We are very proud to acknowledge and support National Schizophrenia and Psychosis Awareness Day," said CCPA President, Blythe Shepard. "As counsellors and psychotherapists, we collaborate with other mental health professionals and associations to advocate for appropriateness of care - access to the right care, provided by the right provider(s), to the right person, at the right time."

Qualified counsellors and psychotherapists are part of the continuum of care in primary health care and make vital contributions to the mental health and well-being of all Canadians. CCPA believes that the most critical factor in providing effective counselling is to ensure that all Canadians have access to timely, qualified, and effective support.

"The opportunity to have confidential dialogue on matters related to mental health issues – including, for example, schizophrenia and psychosis - is healing," added Shepard. "Overcoming fear and misunderstanding of mental illness occurs when individuals recognize and talk about emotional distress. Given that many of us will experience mental health problems during our lifetime, the message that mental health issues, including schizophrenia and psychosis, are treatable needs to be communicated to the public."

CCPA hosts a public website "Talking Helps" (www.talkingcanhelp.ca), which supports open dialogue and where members of the public can find authoritative information about the benefits of counselling in ameliorating a variety of life experiences that negatively impact health and wellbeing. In addition, if you are looking for therapeutic support, visit www.ccpa-accp.ca, where you can search for a Canadian Certified Counsellor in your region.

"On behalf of CCPA and its members, I encourage all Canadians to join the conversation to help raise awareness and reduce the stigma associated with schizophrenia and psychosis. Many people do not recognize the signs of schizophrenia or psychosis nor do they understand that this is a group of serious mental illnesses caused by a chemical disturbance. Fortunately, schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders are treatable and family, friends and care providers play a key role in supporting individuals with these illnesses," concluded Shepard. "Through ongoing communication, dialogue and better public education, together we can make a positive difference."

The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) is a national bilingual association providing professional counsellors and psychotherapists with access to exclusive educational programs, certification, professional development and direct contact with professional peers and specialty groups. CCPA promotes the profession and its contribution to the mental health and well-being of all Canadians. For more information on the counselling and psychotherapy profession, please visit www.ccpa-accp.ca or www.talkingcanhelp.ca.

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