



Mind your language

Media guidelines for mental health issues

see me...
○●○○

LET'S STOP THE STIGMA OF MENTAL ILL HEALTH

www.seemescotland.org

KEY CONTACTS

Below are some of the organisations which can provide you with any information you need on mental health issues. They may also be able to put you in touch with people who have experienced mental health problems. Further links can also be found on the 'see me' website.

SEE ME

9-13 Maritime Street
Edinburgh
EH6 6SB
Tel: 0131 624 8945
Fax: 0131 624 8901
Email: info@seemescotland.org
Website: www.seemescotland.org

PENUMBRA

Norton Park
57 Albion Road
Edinburgh
EH7 5QY
Tel: 0131 475 2380
Fax: 0131 475 2391
E-mail: enquiries@penumbra.org.uk
Website: www.penumbra.org.uk

THE SCOTTISH ASSOCIATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Cumrae House
15 Carlton Court
Glasgow
G5 9JP
Tel: 0141 568 7000
Fax: 0141 568 7001
Email: enquire@samh.org.uk
Website: www.samh.org.uk

HIGHLAND USERS GROUP

Highland Community Care Forum
Highland House
20 Longman Road
INVERNESS
IV1 1RY
Tel: (01463) 718817
Email: hug@hccf.org.uk
Website: www.hug.uk.net

NATIONAL SCHIZOPHRENIA FELLOWSHIP SCOTLAND

Claremont House
130 East Claremont Street
Edinburgh
EH7 4LB
Tel: 0131 557 8969
Fax: 0131 557 8968
Email: info@nsfscot.org.uk
Website: www.nsfscot.org.uk

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS (SCOTLAND)

9 Queen Street
Edinburgh
EH2 1JQ
Tel: 0131 220 2910
Fax: 0131 220 2915
Website: www.rcpsych.ac.uk

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Central switchboard: 0131 556 8400
Website: www.scotland.gov.uk

USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES

Health Education Board for Scotland
www.hebs.com

BBC
www.bbc.co.uk/health/mental

Channel 4
www.channel4.com/health

Mindout for Mental Health
www.mindout.net

Disability Rights Commission
www.drc-gb.org

National Programme to improve the mental well-being of the Scottish population
www.show.scot.nhs.uk/sehd/mentalwellbeing

Foreword

'see me' is Scotland's first national campaign to combat the stigma of mental ill health. Funded by the Scottish Executive, the 'see me' alliance comprises five mental health organisations; the Highland Users Group; National Schizophrenia Fellowship (Scotland); Penumbra; the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and the Scottish Association for Mental Health.

'see me' believes that the media has a crucial role in helping promote greater public understanding of mental ill health. These guidelines form part of Stigma Stop Watch, our drive to end discrimination. We are asking everyone in the media to report on mental health issues with accuracy and respect.

As part of Stigma Stop Watch, we are also asking the public to tell us when the media gets it right or wrong. By taking these steps, we can encourage balanced and fair coverage of mental health. Stigma Stop Watch's findings will be published monthly on our website at www.seemescotland.org

We realise we have a considerable challenge ahead, and that attitudes - both public and within the media - won't change overnight. But by taking some time to read these guidelines, and by minding your language, you can help stop the stigma of mental ill health.

Linda Dunion
'see me' Campaign Director

see me...

Mental health: what, who, why?

Few subjects today are as taboo as mental ill health. Ironic, given that 1 in 4 of us will experience a mental health problem in any one year. Rather than shying away from the topic, 'see me' think it's healthy to learn the facts.

FACT: Mental health problems can range from mild to severe. Many of us will experience a period of depression or anxiety at some point. While far fewer of us will experience a psychotic illness.

FACT: Of those experiencing mental ill health, 70-80% will go on to make a full recovery.

FACT: Anyone can experience mental health problems, whatever their class, sex or occupation.

FACT: Mental health problems can occur for a host of different reasons. For some hereditary factors can play a part, for others stress at work or home can tip the balance.

FACT: The risk of violence from a person experiencing mental distress is only marginally greater than from other people, and even then, only if that person has acute, untreated symptoms.

see me...

Responsible reporting

The Press Complaints Commission's code of practice on presenting mental health issues states that:

'The press should avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to a person's race, colour, religion, sex or sexual orientation, or to any physical or mental illness or disability.'

Stigma Stop Watch is here to encourage adherence to this code. This is as much about praising good reporting, as it is about highlighting poor media practice.

As the public becomes increasingly aware of the complexities and extent of mental health problems, media access to accurate, up to date information is essential. This can be found at our Press Centre at www.seemescotland.org This resource includes details of specific health problems and links to key mental health organisations.

The 'see me' campaign has had a sympathetic response from the media to date, a fact which is re-inforcing the anti-stigma message. With your help this can continue.

LET'S STOP THE STIGMA OF MENTAL ILL HEALTH

Facts at your fingertips

1 in 4 Scots will experience a mental health problem this year.

Recovery rates for mental health problems are between 70 and 80%.

Depression and anxiety are the most common mental health problems - most people recover fully from both.

Stress-related absence accounts for half of all sickness from work, at an estimated cost to UK industry of £4 billion.

117,000 people in Scotland with mental health problems want to work, but are currently unemployed.

There is a high level of stigma associated with mental health problems.

In a recent Scottish Executive survey, half of all respondents said that they would not want anybody to know if they developed a mental health problem. Nearly half also thought media portrayal of people with mental health problems was more negative than positive.

Get on good terms

No Offence

Mental ill health/mental health problems	Preferred to mental illness, which can imply a severe, diagnosed and enduring condition
Person with a mental health problem	Generally used to refer to a person with a diagnosed condition, or for whom problems with their mental health have a significant impact on their lives. Preferred to 'patient', 'sufferer', 'victim' etc.
Person with/experiencing schizophrenia, depression, etc.	Preferred to a 'schizophrenic', 'depressive', 'anorexic' etc. See the person, and not a label, by using more positive and sensitive terms when referring to them

No Go

Demented/loony madman/maniac nutter/schizo	Harmful, outdated and offensive terms. Not to be used in any context as they perpetuate ignorance and lead to stigma
Psychotic	Should never be used as a general description of someone with mental health problems. Its only correct use is as a specific description of the symptoms of psychosis
Split personality	A common myth associated with the symptoms of schizophrenia that people swing between being 'normal' and dangerous. This is rarely the case, although they may be experiencing very unpleasant or frightening thoughts



Support and action for people of disability worldwide

