

Introducing “Facing Facts”



One of the priority areas identified by the University of Alberta is reducing the stigma surrounding mental illness. Mental illness touches all segments of our campus community, and a wide range of programs and services are available to both staff and students to assist those in need of professional help. However, stigma remains a significant barrier to individuals actually accessing services.

To address this issue, Human Resource Services launched **Facing Facts** an initiative designed to de-stigmatize mental illness. Facing Facts is an on-going anti-stigma campaign to raise awareness, dispel myths and encourage a healthy dialogue about mental illness. The initiative is intended to connect the campus community with accurate information, practical tools and numerous resources so we all will have a better understanding of mental illness and are aware of areas where we can get support. Various forms of communication are used to promote the benefits of creating a culture where it perceived to be and actually is “safe” to ask for help, encourage individuals to review the resources available, and ultimately to reduce the stigma often associated with mental illness.

A few quick facts:

- one in five Albertans will develop a mental illness
- mental illness impacts the individual, their families and friends, the workplace and the broader community
- mental illness is a medical condition few people feel comfortable talking about
- while mental illness is treatable, more than half of those affected do not seek treatment due to shame, stigma or lack of information.
- early intervention is essential

You can help make a difference by being aware of mental illness and being open to discussion. The more mental health is discussed, the greater the chance we have to reduce the stigma.

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