



-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

End The Stigma Associated with Mental Illness: CAMIMH Announces the *Faces of Mental Illness* for 2015

(Ottawa, Ontario) July 2nd - Today, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) announced the five Canadians selected for the 13th annual *Faces of Mental Illness* campaign. CAMIMH received dozens of nominations from across the country of people living in recovery from mental illness.

"Each year I am thrilled to see how much work is being done in reducing the stigma associated with mental illness," stated Florence Budden, CAMIMH Campaign Chair 2015. "It takes a lot of courage and strength to speak openly about mental illness and those individuals willing to do so are incredibly inspiring."

Over the next year, the *Faces* will take part in events to educate Canadians about the realities of living with mental illness, and the effects that mental health has in the lives of all Canadians. The *Faces of Mental Illness* campaign is sponsored by Bell as part of the Bell Let's Talk mental health initiative. The stories of the *Faces of Mental Illness* will be featured on posters and postcards distributed to Canadians across the country. Also, they will participate in a national media outreach campaign as well as mini-documentaries which will be shared with policymakers at a marquee event during Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) 2015.

The 2015 *Faces of Mental Illness* are:

Peter Neily

As a police officer in the RCMP, Peter is now publicly sharing his story to break down the barriers and prejudices about mental illness within law enforcement. Peter talks about his struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder in the hopes that it will encourage other folks in uniform seek help when necessary.

Kendra Fisher

As a former member of Team Canada's National Hockey Program, and now mental health advocate, Kendra has realized that by sharing her story, she could help others. At the age of 19, she was diagnosed with generalized anxiety, severe panic attacks, agoraphobia, obsessive compulsive disorder and clinical depression. The positive support and feedback she received about opening up about her mental health issues has motivated her to continue working with mental health organizations and young people in hopes what she says can help them.

Wali Shah

A student and youth mentor for Nexus Youth Services from Mississauga, Ontario, Wali is dedicated in raising awareness about mental health. As he struggled with anxiety and depression, poetry and music have helped him in his recovery. Last year he was named one of Canada's Top 20 Under 20 by the Order of Canada, and this year he was given the Bell Youth Hero Award as a speaker/musician using the arts to raise awareness about social issues and mental health.

Patricia Lemoine

As a communications and marketing manager, Patricia struggled with bulimia during her teenage years, up until her mid-twenties. Today, as part of her ongoing healing and recovery process, Patricia shares her personal experience with mental illness because she believes breaking silence is critical to promote dialogue and end stigma. In 2014, Patricia was invited to testify about her lived experience with an eating disorder at the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO). She

also volunteers on the Board of TRACOM a Montreal crisis center offering psychosocial intervention services for adults as well as their loved ones. Patricia believes there is no health without mental health.

Julie Tansey

Julie was diagnosed with agoraphobia and panic disorder at age 14. Although she has faced many obstacles in her life, Julie never gave up which is why she is proud to be a mental health activist. She is a member of several organizations, does volunteer work, and is a member of the Longueuil mental health consultative committee. Her goal is to be a leader in creating new ways to increase dialogue among people living with mental health issues and transform our society's approach and views in regards to mental illness. She gives conferences to help spread awareness.

Canadians can now order free posters, postcards, stickers and silicone bracelets featuring the stories of the *Faces of Mental Illness* for 2015 and promoting ACTION in the mental health community, while engaging Canadians in a public conversation about mental health.

“As the *Faces* share their actions in support of Canadian mental health across the country, they truly help Canadians by making it a priority. By sharing their personal stories and paths to recovery they inspire many of us in seeking help, supporting loved ones with a mental illness and to encourage more action on the part of policymakers,” continued Budden.

To learn more about the campaign, or to order campaign materials, please visit <http://www.camimh.ca>. CAMIMH would like to thank their generous sponsors who make this campaign possible: Bell Let's Talk, Lundbeck Canada Inc., The Mental Health Commission of Canada and Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (Rx&D).

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Established in 1998, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) is an alliance of mental health organizations comprised of health care providers and organizations representing persons with mental illness and their families and caregivers. CAMIMH's mandate is to ensure that mental health is placed on the national agenda so that persons with a lived experience of mental illness and their families receive appropriate access to care and support.

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact:

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