



Schizophrenia Society of Alberta, Calgary Chapter

#700, 2310 - 2nd Street SW Calgary AB T2S 3C4

Phone: (403) 264-5161 Fax: (403) 269-1727

Website: www.schizophrenia.ab.ca

Charitable # 13048-5816 RR0001

Partnership Education Program

Public Education to remove stigma connected to schizophrenia

Consistent messages are delivered concerning the impact of schizophrenia through educational presentations and theatre performances of the play, *Starry, Starry Night*, written by Partnership Education Program members.

Presentations are given by people who experience schizophrenia and family members who have a relative with the disorder; clinical expertise is provided by medical professionals.

TRAINING PROGRAM

Training is designed to assist individuals to recognize and use their unique knowledge and skills. Participants develop individual presentations that articulate the impact the disorder has on their lives. Play rehearsals are held to prepare team members for performances.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

We believe:

- all human beings have intrinsic value and worth.
- all people have the right to be treated with respect and dignity.
- all contributions to the success of the team are valued and accepted.
- team spirit, cooperation and encouragement are key ingredients for the success of Partnership.

BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM

Members Who Experience Schizophrenia:

- realize an increase in their self-esteem and gain a sense of purpose.
- have an opportunity to develop friendships.
- discover 'team spirit'.
- improve communication, organization and leadership skills.
- are employed within a supportive environment.
- find hope.

Family Members:

- increase their knowledge about the disorder.
- increase their ability to advocate and care for their ill loved one.
- receive support.
- experience the cathartic effects of discussing the family impact of schizophrenia.
- reduce the stigma of schizophrenia.

The Community:

- acquires increased knowledge and improved attitudes towards people who have schizophrenia.
- is able to assist in early intervention and treatment.
- benefits from people with schizophrenia returning to full community participation.
- experiences a decrease in stress on mental health services

TEAM MEETINGS

Members determine the direction of the program through the decisions they make at monthly meetings.

PRESENTATIONS:

- are done by teams consisting of a person who has the disorder, a family member, and a medical professional (when available).
- focus on personal experiences with schizophrenia and the resulting impact.
- are offered to groups including: police officers, mental health professionals, community service agencies and students from junior high schools through to post secondary institutions.

PERFORMANCES:

- are performed by twelve program members who have schizophrenia.
- include a question period at the end of the play.
- are an excellent method of teaching about the impact of schizophrenia.

“The Partnership Program allows me to feel accepted without question. You are not expected to do any more than you are capable of at the time. The opportunity to be involved, in getting used to and learning how to speak in public is very valuable. In our case it is the chance to turn a very negative problem, namely schizophrenia, into a topic we can talk about as educators and thereby engage in a highly productive experience, both for the speaker and for the audience.”

Program member who has schizophrenia