



Fact Sheet

Bell's Mental Health Initiative

On September 21, 2010 Bell announced that it would be contributing \$50 million to mental health related initiatives over the next five years. This initiative will support an extensive range of programs to enhance mental health in every aspect of Canadian life.

The four pillars of this initiative are:

1. workplace mental health
2. research
3. community care and access
4. anti-stigma

Bell Let's Talk Campaign

One of the key pillars of Bell's Mental Health initiative is anti-stigma. As part of Bell's first efforts to reduce the stigma of mental illness, the Let's Talk awareness campaign will begin in January 2011 and culminate with Bell Let's Talk Day on February 9.

Throughout the campaign, five-time Olympian Clara Hughes will be featured in national print and electronic media as the Bell Let's Talk spokesperson.

Recognising that simply talking makes a significant impact in breaking down the barriers to mental health, the campaign will encourage people to "start the conversation" about mental health and engage in dialogue with friends, family and co-workers.

On Bell Let's Talk Day, Bell will contribute five cents for every text message and long distance call sent by Bell and Bell Aliant customers to mental health related initiatives in Canada. In addition to phone and text, people will be encouraged to engage in dialogue about mental health through social media and access information about the mental health community via the Bell Let's Talk portal at www.bell.ca/letstalk.

What does stigma mean in the context of mental illness?

Many people living with a mental illness report that stigma and discrimination causes them more suffering than the illness itself.

Mental illness affects people of all ages and from all walks of life. It can take many forms, including depression, anxiety and schizophrenia. Most individuals find ways to live with their illnesses but how they are treated by others often proves to be more of a challenge than the illness itself. Stigma and discrimination are key barriers that stop people from seeking help.

What can a reduction in the stigma associated with mental illness achieve?

Stigma surrounded many diseases in the past, but concerted efforts to confront these attitudes has resulted in change for the better, including better treatment, more funding for research, greater understanding from family, friends and colleagues leading to a positive contribution to the lives of many. The goal is to achieve the same level of acceptance and understanding regarding mental illness.



How does Bell plan to “open the national conversation” surrounding mental health?

- “Opening the national conversation” means working with Canadians to help get the message out and break down the stigma surrounding mental health.
- Reducing stigma is the first pillar of our Mental Health program and our ongoing Let’s Talk national campaign – as well as our first Let’s Talk Day on February 9, 2011 – and it will help start and sustain the conversation about mental health issues.
- By taking an active role in the conversation, Bell hopes to lead by example and encourage others to participate.
- By focussing on mental health and dedicating resources, we’re confident that we can positively contribute to the goals of de-stigmatizing mental illness, improving community care and access, supporting research and enhancing workplace health.

What is the call to action for people to participate?

In addition to phone and text, on February 9 Bell will invite people to participate in dialogue about mental health on facebook and twitter via the Bell Let’s Talk Day portal www.bell.ca/letstalk.

Is Let’s Talk Campaign and Day about raising additional funds for mental health?

- Let’s Talk Campaign and Day is about increasing awareness, reducing stigma and helping to change behaviours and attitudes about mental health issues.

CLARA HUGHES, O.C.

Six-time Canadian Olympic Medalist and national spokesperson for Bell Let’s Talk

Six-time Olympic Medalist Clara Hughes is the only athlete in the world to have won multiple Olympic medals in both Winter and Summer Games. Most recently Clara won the Bronze Medal at the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games for Long Track Speed Skating and was chosen to lead the Canadian team as the flag-bearer during the Opening Ceremony. In addition to her Olympic triumphs, she is also a World Champion speed skater, and a Commonwealth Games and Pan American Games Champion cyclist.

Clara is an Officer of the Order of Canada and a member of the Order of Manitoba, and has received Honorary Doctorates from the University of Manitoba and the University of British Columbia. On November 10, 2010 Clara was inducted into the Canadian Walk of Fame. She has also been honoured with the ‘Sport and Community’ award by The International Olympic Committee and is a two-time recipient of the ‘Spirit of Sport’ award at the Canadian Sport Awards. After announcing her retirement from speed skating, in December of 2010 Clara announced that she would be training to represent Canada in cycling at the 2012 Olympic Games in London.

What many people don’t realise about this highly accomplished individual is that early on in her competitive career she joined the countless Canadians who come face-to-face depression in their lifetime. Her struggle with depression began in 1996 after her first Olympics. By relying on what she often refers to as her “circle of trust” (friends, family, coaches etc) and focusing on diet and exercise she battled depression for two years and went on to achieve her goals of athletic and personal excellence.

As the national spokesperson for Bell Let’s Talk Day Clara has made a commitment to encouraging people to talk and help to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness.