

Mental health **BEGINS WITH *Me!***

MEDIA RELEASE

MENTAL HEALTH STILL TABOO IN THE WORKPLACE

25 September 2013

More than one in five Australians have experienced discrimination in the workplace due to mental illness, according to new research by the Mental Health Council of Australia (MHCA).

The research has been conducted as part of this year's World Mental Health Day campaign.

"When 22% of people surveyed tell us that they have witnessed discrimination in the workplace, relating to mental illness, it shows that we have a serious problem with stigma in this country," MHCA CEO Frank Quinlan said today.

The research asked people if they had witnessed discrimination at their place of employment, due to either their own mental illness or a mental illness affecting a co-worker. In addition, the study found 69% of people were uncomfortable disclosing a mental illness to their employer. While a third of people said they would disclose a mental illness, more than a third never would.

"It is concerning that 35% of respondents completely ruled out the possibility of talking about mental health, even if it was appropriate to do so. That's a big problem, especially if it means people not seeking help they need, when they need it," Mr Quinlan said.

"These results demonstrate that some people have a real fear about potentially negative consequences should they tell their employers and their colleagues that they are mentally unwell.

"The reality is that for the vast majority of people with a mental illness, openness and conversations do help employees, employers and workmates to contribute through meaningful and successful employment. We need to have a goal for our society to make it acceptable for individuals to talk about mental health in the workplace and to make it ok to seek help when they need it, without fear or stigma.

"To assist in this goal, ahead of World Mental Health Day on 10 October, we want people to recognise that we all have an important role to play in our own mental health. We want employers and employees to visit 1010.org.au, make a personal mental health promise and then share it.

"Small steps like this can really help to break down stigma and help change a negative culture in Australian workplaces. In addition, there is a great deal that employers are already doing to create mentally healthy workplaces including: demonstrating open dialogue about good mental health, raising awareness using online resources, training managers and staff in mental health first aid, and instigating mental health policies and practices."

Make your mental health promise this World Mental Health Day - visit 1010.org.au.

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(Key findings over the page)



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OCTOBER 10 | **WORLD MENTAL
HEALTH DAY**

What's your mental health promise? **1010.ORG.AU**

Key findings

- 33% of people with a current or past mental illness have disclosed it to their current employer. This includes 49% of those who believe they still have a mental illness.
- When hypothetically asked if they were to have a mental illness in the future, would they tell a future employer, 35% said they would not tell, 29% said they would.
- Three-quarters of people surveyed would feel uncomfortable telling their employer they were experiencing a mental illness relevant to their work, including 61% of those who say they still have a mental illness and 71% of people who claim to never have had one.
- A large majority of Australians – more than 8 in 10 – believe schizophrenia, depression, bipolar and anxiety all diminish a person’s ability to undertake paid work. A high 42% believe schizophrenia reduces this ability “a lot.”
 - Breakdown
 - Schizophrenia: 42% a lot, 32% a fair bit, 12% only a little
 - Depression: 25% a lot, 39% a fair bit, 25% only a little
 - Bipolar: 26% a lot, 38% a fair bit, 20% only a little
 - Anxiety: 18% a lot, 38% a fair bit, 32% only a little
- 22% report having experienced or observed discrimination against someone with a mental illness in a place where they have worked. This includes 41% who believe they currently have a mental illness, 38% of those who have been diagnosed with one but only 17% of people who say they’ve never had one.
- People on lower incomes or unemployed are more likely to have been diagnosed with a mental illness.
- People on lower incomes are more likely to disclose a mental illness to their employer. Younger people are more likely to disclose a mental illness to their employer.