



“Unlocking the Door to Health and Wellbeing: Where do we find the key?”

An interactive panel discussion with audience participation from across Australia.

Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia Schizophrenia Awareness Week 2011 Saturday 21st May

MIFA will present a ‘webinar’ event for the first time during Schizophrenia Awareness Week (SAW) in 2011. At a central event on Saturday 21 May 2011 in Sydney at the Masonic Centre a panel of experts from academia, MIFA member service providers, consumers and carers and our MC Julie McCrossin, journalist and broadcaster will gather and await the rest of Australia to join them.

Our guest speaker tours in recent years have been limited to three or four locations around Australia during SAW. To give more people an opportunity to participate during SAW we are trying a new concept, where we use the internet for video live streaming, and phone in on a 1800 number for audio in real time.

The aims of this new event are to get all of Australia talking and thinking about the physical health of people affected by mental illness by:

- Discussing the latest evidence about the health of people living with a mental illness and what we need to do about it.
- Hearing personal stories from consumers, carers and service providers about the challenges of building good physical health and how to overcome these challenges.
- Building hope for a better future by identifying practical things we can all do to improve the physical health of people with a mental illness.
- Enjoying a lively discussion with audience participation from around Australia and from people at home.

MIFA member organisations around Australia are holding simultaneous group events for their members and friends to participate in the national event as a group. Each location will have interactivity with the

host event in Sydney and people in attendance can ask questions of the panel through a facilitator and see and hear the response in real time.

People unable to join a group can log on and phone in from home at no cost and participate by using the web portal to pose questions to the panel.

The MC, Julie McCrossin will have assistance from MIFA staff to ask as many questions posed by groups or individuals as possible while keeping the discussion on track.

Following the event, the panel discussion will be available for viewing via the MIFA website for people to review at their leisure.

MIFA hopes that this event will not only draw Australia's attention to the issue of the physical health of people affected by mental illness but will also focus our efforts on actions that will assist individuals to take the necessary steps to build hope for a better future with improved physical health.

SOME KEY FACTS ABOUT THE PHYSICAL HEALTH OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY MENTAL ILLNESS

In May 2011 the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia will be releasing a new research paper reviewing the current literature and programs for people with mental illness that address physical health concerns

Here are the facts to date:

People with Schizophrenia or bipolar disorder are more than twice as likely to have diabetes than other patients and also more likely to experience heart disease and stroke

People with mental illness have a life expectancy approximately 20 years less than that of the general population

People with a mental illness have a death rate approximately 2.5 times the rate of the general population

People with mental illness require 23 per cent more dental treatment and are 36 per cent more likely to require a tooth to be removed than other members of the same socio-economic community

People with mental illness who are hospitalized are 30 – 40 % more likely to suffer from iron deficiencies than those who don't have mental illness

Mental illness has the third highest burden of disease in Australia, followed closely by cancer and cardiovascular disease. Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, this figure is higher again, second only to cardiovascular disease