

## Facing Facts – Reducing the Stigma of Mental Illness

---



In 2008, the University identified reducing the stigma of mental illness as one of its key priorities. Mental illness touches all segments of our campus community, and a wide range of programs and services are available to both staff and students to assist those in need of professional help. However, stigma remains a significant barrier to individuals actually accessing services.

To address this issue, the University launched **Facing Facts** an initiative designed to de-stigmatize mental illness. Facing Facts is an on-going anti-stigma campaign to raise awareness, dispel myths and encourage a healthy dialogue about mental illness. The initiative is intended to connect the campus community with accurate information, practical tools and numerous resources so we all will have a better understanding of mental illness and are aware of areas where we can get support. Various forms of communication are used to promote the benefits of creating a culture where it perceived to be and actually is “safe” to ask for help, encourage individuals to review the resources available, and ultimately to reduce the stigma often associated with mental illness.

### Quick facts:

- one in five Albertans will develop a mental illness at some point in their lives
- mental illness impacts the individual, their families and friends, the workplace and the broader community
- mental illness is a medical condition few people feel comfortable talking about
- Mental illness affects thinking, mood or behaviour and can be associated with distress and/or impairment of functioning, with symptoms that vary from mild to severe.
- 80% of individuals with a severe mental illness want to work
- while mental illness is treatable, more than half of those affected do not seek treatment due to shame, stigma or lack of information.
- early intervention is essential
- despite 43% of Albertans who believe otherwise, depression is NOT caused by weakness of character
- 1 in 30 Canadians meet the criteria for substance dependence (alcohol or drug use)
- Individuals 65 years of age or older have the highest rate of hospitalizations for anxiety disorders
- 1 in 20 Canadian workers are considered to be depressed at any one time

Please visit our website regularly at [www.virtualwellness.ualberta.ca](http://www.virtualwellness.ualberta.ca) for updated information, programs, services and additional resources.

You can help make a difference by being aware of mental illness and being open to discussion. The more mental health is discussed, the greater the chance we have to reduce the stigma.

### Talk about it.

#### Contact Information:

Organizational Health  
& Effectiveness  
Phone: 780.492.7124  
[www.hrs.ualberta.ca](http://www.hrs.ualberta.ca)

Employee and Family  
Assistance Program (EFAP)  
Homewood Health  
Phone: 780.428.7587  
[www.hrs.ualberta.ca/efap](http://www.hrs.ualberta.ca/efap)

Postdoctoral Fellows  
Assistance Program (PDAP)  
Homewood Health  
Phone: 780.428.7587  
[www.hrs.ualberta.ca/pdap](http://www.hrs.ualberta.ca/pdap)

Graduate Student  
Assistance Program (GSAP)  
Homewood Health  
Phone: 780.428.7587  
[www.hrs.ualberta.ca/gsap](http://www.hrs.ualberta.ca/gsap)

University Wellness Services  
Clinical & Counselling. Serv.  
Phone: 780.492.5205  
[www.uwell.ualberta.ca](http://www.uwell.ualberta.ca)