

# STIGMA

See also: **DIVERSITY AND WORK ADJUSTMENT**

## **Drugs in Black and White** (Video 1022) 1991; 40 min

Audience: general

Synopsis: This video is a tale of two cities, affluent Cobb County, a predominantly-white suburb of Atlanta, and one of Atlanta's roughest inner-city neighbourhoods. Local media reports on "the drug problem" tend to show inner city "crack-house busts, the black youths being arrested at gunpoint. Yet surveys show that drug use is far higher among the white youth who use more alcohol, cannabis and cocaine. The video discusses some of these issues and then interviews youth and parents from both communities about their drug use and possible solutions.

## **East Side Showdown** (Video 1537) 1998; 46 min

Audience: general adult

Synopsis: This documentary examines conflicts that developed in a community centred on the intersection of Sherbourne and Dundas Streets in Toronto. Generally populated by lower income residents the area had also become a haven for drug deals and prostitution. Similar to the Toronto Parkdale area (see **Zero Tolerance** below), low real-estate costs attracted homebuyers looking for a larger residence which only needed renovation - so called gentrification. Bringing different values, difficulties quickly arose between the new owners, sex trade workers, drug users, and the homeless and local agencies that provide for their assistance. Energetic political lobbying by the residents increased police presence, set limits on emergency housing, reduced the activism of local agencies and essentially drove the prostitutes and drug dealers out. Liquor licences were also denied to nearby restaurants. Though these actions satisfied the new homeowners, but the social problems of the area were simply pushed to other parts of the city. Many participants are interviewed, including agency workers, a prostitute and her boy friend, the minister of All Saints Anglican Church and city politicians, thus providing needed perspective.

## **Face First** (Video 2270) 1998; 29 min

Audience: general adult; health care workers; senior students

Synopsis: The question of stigma leads everywhere. Mike Grundman, the producer of this program was born with a facial deformity that continued to impact his life long after corrective surgery. Suffering verbal and physical abuse from peers, he comments, "as my outer deformity faded, an inner one took hold." Mike involved three others with facial deformities who have had to deal with abuse and discrimination, but come through the experience with strength and humour that is confident and admirable.

## **Fat Chance: The Big Prejudice** (Video 2189) 1994; 73 min

Audience: general adult

Synopsis: Rick Zalkowich is big. He weighs 400 pounds and he knows he should lose weight for the sake of his health. He is also well aware of what society thinks of him. This video was conceived initially to show the story of how he would lose 200 pounds, but in the process of trying to conform to what is expected of him he had to confront his own self-concept. We see him attend a workshop with other overweight people and here he begins to come to terms with how he wants to be, but most importantly to find self-acceptance.

## **Depression: Fighting the Dragon:** (Video 1545) 2002; 45 min

Audience: adults and families

Synopsis: This program features personal stories, interspersed with comments on the disorder and new research in brain mapping from a number of professionals, including Dr. Anthony Levitt of the Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto, Dr. Gary Hasey of McMaster University, Dr. Vivek Kusamakar of Dalhousie University and Dr. Helen Mayberg, a neuroscientist with the Rotman Research Institute in Toronto. It is argued that the stigma surrounding mental illness often contributes to people attempting to hide their depression from others. Education aimed at enhancing social awareness is crucial to effectively addressing this potentially fatal illness, states

Michael Wilson. Canada's former Finance Minister breaks the silence by sharing his own experience with his son who suffered with depression that eventually led to suicide.

**Introducing TJ** (Video 1400) 2000; 27 min

Audience: adult

Synopsis: Therapeutic Jurisprudence represents an approach to meeting the needs of mentally ill people confronting a judicial system which frequently sends them to jail for minor offences when they would be better served by referrals to mental health programs. Featuring Judge Ginger Lerner-Wren of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, this video examines the first Mental Health Court in the U.S. This video focuses on "TJ" as an example of how the system has worked for this man. Under the judge's direction, people suffering from severe mental disorders are separated out from the general criminal population and given referrals to therapy, rehabilitation, and housing.

**The Journey Back** (Video 2183) 1990; 22 min

Audience: adult

Synopsis: This program outlines the struggle that people with brain damage face in their efforts to regain control of their lives. Most of the stories outlined here are of the victims of impaired driving accidents. Some will be dependent on others for the rest of their lives, while some have regained the use of language or are employed and working to rebuild their lives.

**Means of Grace: A Woman's Tale of the 1950's** (Video 1502) 1990; 57 min

Audience: adult

Synopsis: This documentary film takes an inside look at a woman writer's struggle with mental illness. Told through the diary writing of Ann Clements Conger, a chronicle of hallucinations, tranquilizers and institutionalization is presented. Her daughter, J. Conger, the filmmaker, struggles with questions of doubt, shame, understanding and resolution. The film presents the context of her childhood and the lack of freedom women of her generation faced. "...I am in the psychiatric ward of a hospital. It was the most immediate way I could take off my wedding ring."

**Myths about Madness: Challenging Stigma and Changing Attitudes**

(Video and DVD 1479) 1999; 22 min

Audience: senior students; health professionals; general adult

Synopsis: This video opens with the view of a crowded urban street and the ominous warning "there is a group of people among us...." Blondes it turns out are the case, to challenge the stigma, prejudice and presumption that many individuals and popular media apply to those with mental illness. Many of the common misconceptions are challenged and dispelled with the facts. For example, the association of the terms 'psycho' and 'mad' with violence gives the impression that all people in psychiatric treatment are dangerous. The fact is people with severe mental illness are more likely to hurt themselves than someone else. The news media are prone to concentrate on exceptional incidents for the sake of a good story and thus reinforce stereotypes. Former patients point out that even professionals may fail to see the whole person before them. Others found that after a diagnosis all behaviour was attributed to the illness. In the segment on 'challenging attitudes' we see educational sessions with a group of youth and another with media representatives to raise attention to the problem of misrepresentation. People with mental illness also need to take some responsibility to educate others. The video segments are placed to allow discussion breaks on specific issues.

**No More Shame**

Audience: Adult

This series was designed to open discussion and eliminate stigma around illnesses that have a biological basis.

• **Understanding Addiction** (Video 1329.1) 1994; 24 min

Synopsis: Currently, there are large numbers of people with alcohol or other drug dependence, with consequences not only for their families, but also for the society as a whole. This program,

starting from the position that addiction is a medical disorder, explains current research into why people become dependent or addicted, who may be at risk, and what treatments are available. The program profiles two individuals who were considered alcoholic and have gone through the process of recovery.

• **Understanding Schizophrenia** (Video No.1329.2) 1994; 24 min

Synopsis: More common than diseases such as cystic fibrosis, diabetes, or Alzheimer's disease, schizophrenia is the most severe of the serious mental illnesses. This program explains research on the disease, interviewing medical researchers to explore what we do and do not know about the illness. The program profiles an individual with schizophrenia and explains how the disease has affected his life and his family and how they find ways of coping.

**The Sterilization of Leilani Muir** (Video 2173) 1996; 47 min

Audience: general adult; senior secondary students

Synopsis: Leilani Muir was admitted to Alberta's Training School for Mental Defectives in 1955. She was ten years old. She was taken to the school, unwanted and suffering abuse and neglect from her parents. She had no real idea what was happening, thinking it was an orphanage. Diagnosed as a "moron" because of a single I. Q. test Leilani was sterilized without her knowledge or consent. Eugenics, the theory behind this kind of action originated in nineteenth century Britain with Sir Francis Galton, it was later taken up in psychiatry. The idea was used in Canada, particularly in Alberta where groups like the United Farm Women's Association saw it as a way of stopping what seemed like a looming social catastrophe. "Defective people," they said, mainly immigrants, but also "criminals, half-breeds and mental defectives" were reproducing freely. They reported that 75% of those in provincial mental institutions were of foreign stock. "Insane people are not entitled to progeny," they stated. The Sexual Sterilization Act was passed in 1928. After its repeal in 1972 over 2800 people had been sterilized. This documentary is the story of her quest for justice, which was achieved, at least for Leilani, in 1996.

**Stigma** (Video 2006) 1958; 20 min

Audience: adults; health professionals

Synopsis: Now of a so-called classic status with the gender roles and accoutrements of its time, the film remains instructive. The National Film Board of Canada produced this public health information film for the Department of National Health and Welfare. Designed for educational purposes it was intended to give a tolerant and humane face to those who suffered from mental illness. Viewers will find that little has changed in the years since its release.

**Talking About Mental Illness: A Guide for Developing an Awareness Program for Youth**

(Video and Workbook 2399) 2001; 20 min

Audience: teachers; community program developers

Synopsis: This is a CAMH school based awareness program that educates youth about the stigma that is often associated with mental illness. This video, used in conjunction with the teacher's and community resource guide, *Talking About Mental Illness*, gives an overview of the elements, goal and benefits of the program.

**Unlearn** (DVD 1635) 2006; 12 min

Audience: adult; families; senior students

Synopsis: This short program by Jeffrey Prosserman argues that stigma towards those with mental illness reduces access to resources and deprives people of their dignity and rights. The participants here talk about challenging the stereotypes, negative attitudes and misconceptions associated with mental illness. Darlene Byrom, Bob Rae, and Michelle Prosserman provide their views and experiences. Dr. David Goldbloom, Senior Medical Advisor at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health synthesizes these contributions in the message that anyone can suffer mental illness and that we must work together to change attitudes.

**West 47<sup>th</sup> Street (4 people you've tried not to notice)** (Video 1591) 2001; 83 min

Audience: general adult

Synopsis: Created, in part, to reduce stigma of mental illness, this feature documentary filmed over three years follows the daily lives of Frances, Fitzroy, Zeinab and Tex. These people are all members of Fountain House, a psychosocial rehabilitation center in New York City. The film follows their daily lives as they progress off the streets and out of homeless shelters, encounters with the hospital system, at home and at work.

**Within these Walls** (Video 2237) 1996; 30 min

Audience: general adult; psychiatric survivors

Synopsis: This video presents the perspectives, thoughts and experiences of a diverse group of people hospitalised for mental illnesses. Their combined experience reflects the changes of the mental health system and also some of the abuses of the hospitals and of the social misuses of the hospital system. Anita was admitted to hospital at 12, Bill at 14, both misdiagnosed and over-medicated for years; Jeanne and Jill on the other hand benefited from treatment. Some of the others who report their experiences seem to have had no mental health problem or were treated in a hospital that could not support their needs.

**Words that Bite** (Video 1696) 2002; 25 min

Audience:

Synopsis: Produced by Angèle Gagnon with the Family Service Centre of Ottawa-Carleton to present the experiences of Elizabeth Dahle and Kathleen Gorman as they discuss the impact of diagnostic labels and the social stigma that results. Living in recovery from a mental illness can affect all aspects of life, relationships, acceptance, grief and loss, health issues, medication and its side effects, risk of poverty, and ability to work. Commentaries from street interviews provide additional general public perspectives.

**Zero Tolerance** (Video 1107) 1992; 47 min

Audience: general; adult

Synopsis: This documentary program reports on the predicament of the Parkdale neighbourhood in Toronto. This is an area of the city exemplified by uneven urban planning, social policy and increasing population density. Low property values have attracted homebuyers looking for a substantial house at a lower price. However, a conflict has arisen between these ratepayers, who have taken a "not in my backyard" approach to treatment services, and the drug users and prostitutes who also live in the area. The video attempts to chart a sympathetic middle ground between the ratepayer's concerns and the needs of the other residents. It challenges the viewer to discuss solutions, including ways to bring the neighbourhood together.