



May 20, 2008

News Release

Sink the Stigma at this weekend's Lilac Festival Calgary Counselling Centre intends to make a splash at the annual event

Calgary, AB – May 20, 2008 –. Whoosh, smack, clunk, splash – that is the sound of Calgary Counselling Centre inviting Calgarians to sink the stigmas surrounding mental health, with our Sink the Stigma dunk tank at this weekend's Lilac Festival.

“Our clients sometimes think they are the only one dealing with an issue,” says Robbie Babins-Wagner, CEO of Calgary Counselling Centre, “they are scared their family or their work will find out. This is just a fun way for us to bring some of these issues out into the open, to let everyone know there are other people going through the same thing. The earlier people seek help, the easier the problem is to treat.”

Odds are that 25,000 out of the 125,000 people who visited the booths at last years Lilac Festival will suffer from some form of mental health problem at one point or another. One in five Canadians experience mental illness, but only 11 per cent of people who have a diagnosable problem will seek the help of a counsellor.

“It's sort of a light hearted approach to something that is actually a really serious problem,” says Wagner. “On top of the social stigmas about seeking counselling, there is also a lot of self stigma. People think it's OK for other people to go seek counselling, but they don't need it themselves.”

The Centre offers many programs, including marriage counselling, programs for managing depression and victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse; all problems people are reluctant to talk about.

“We really want to raise awareness about these issues,” says Babins-Wagner “to help people eliminate the stigma so they can ask for help to deal with them early on, before the problem gets worse.”

Calgary Counselling Centre will participate in the Lilac Festival parade on Sunday May 25, at 10 a.m., and at the Lilac Festival, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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For more information, or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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Calgary Counselling Centre is a registered charitable organization, and the leading research and knowledge-based counselling facility in Canada. Since 1962, the Centre has been committed to providing compassionate, professional and affordable counselling services that help build better lives for Calgarians through positive outcomes. Offering service in over 15 languages, the Centre is also a recognized leader in the treatment of family violence, depression, self esteem and eating disorders. Through its ongoing research and education programs, Calgary Counselling Centre strives to meet the changing needs of our community. The Centre's fee structure is based on income - no one is turned away for an inability to pay.

