MEDIA RELEASE

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Schizophrenia Awareness Week 15 to 21 May

Despite the fact that schizophrenia affects around one in one-hundred people, there are still many common misconceptions around the illness.

Danielle Peres, Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service mental health promotion officer, said Schizophrenia Awareness Week, 15 to 21 May, provided a great opportunity to dispel the myths and promote increased understanding.

“Schizophrenia is a relatively common mental illnesses affecting one person in one hundred, which equates to approximately 1500 in the Toowoomba Region,” Ms Peres said.

“One of the most common misconceptions is that everyone who has schizophrenia has a serious form of the illness, when actually around one-third of people with schizophrenia only ever experience one or a few brief episodes in their life. Many people with schizophrenia have fulfilling careers and contribute greatly to the community and workforce.”

“Another myth is that schizophrenia causes people to commit violent offences, but research shows that those with schizophrenia are less likely to commit offences than the general public, and are more likely to be victims themselves.

Ms Peres said the resources and assistance available today meant having a serious mental illness did not have to be a barrier to the pursuit of an individual’s goals and aspirations.

“It is very important to remember that there are effective treatments available and many people who experience an episode of serious mental illness can, and do, recover, going on to lead fulfilling lives,” she said.

“If you have concerns about your mental health you should contact your general practitioner or the Darling downs Mental health Service on 1300 MH CALL (1300 64 22 55).

Further information and resources are available on the Sane website (www.sane.org.au)

Ends

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