

MEDIA RELEASE MAY 7, 2001
Re: MENTAL HEALTH WEEK MAY 7-13, 2001

An astounding 91% of Canadians say maintaining mental health is very important, yet fewer Canadians willing to disclose receiving treatment.

A recent national survey, conducted by Compas Research for the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) has determined that an overwhelming majority of Canadians say that maintaining their mental health is "very important." This is one of the highest "intense opinion" scores that Compas has ever recorded.

Women are especially apt to feel that maintaining mental health is very important, 95% versus 88% for men, while Canadians 18-24 years were the least likely to feel that this is important (77% versus 91% of Canadians as a whole).

Surprisingly, Canadians are feeling less comfortable about letting others know when they are receiving treatment or counseling for depression. Only 54% indicated that they might want a friend to know, compared to 69% four years ago. According to CMHA National President, Bill Gaudette, "Changing attitudes to mental illness continues to be our biggest challenge. Discrimination, ignorance and fear remain the enemies that we have to conquer."

The survey results also indicated that women are more willing than men to let friends know if they or one of their family members were getting counseling for depression. 60% of women would definitely or probably want their friends to know compared to only 40% of men.

Although employers received higher marks for dealing with employee stress in the workplace issues, (60% effectiveness rating compared to 44% four years ago), working Canadians are now less inclined to let either their bosses or friends know if they are receiving treatment or counseling for depression. Only 42% of those surveyed would tell their boss and only 50% would tell a friend.

The national survey was commissioned by the Canadian Mental Health Association to mark the 50th Anniversary of Mental Health Week in Canada and as part of an ongoing study of changing attitudes towards mental health.

To help reduce the sense of isolation that people with mental illnesses often experience and to encourage people to speak freely about mental health issues, CMHA is promoting the use of the new "Emerging into Light" symbol endorsed by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Health. Described as a symbol of recovery and resilience, the image was created by Jennifer Osborn, a talented young Canadian artist and consumer of mental health services. Rather than being a logo of any particular organization, the new symbol is being shared freely among individual Canadians who care about mental illness and health issues.

Mental Health week is being observed in Canada from May 7th -13th.

For more information contact:

Rick Kennedy CMHA National Office (416) 484-7750 ext. 234
Tracy Ryan CMHA New Brunswick Division (506) 455-5231
Sophie Lacasse CMHA Quebec Division (514) 849-3291
Bob Campbell CMHA Alberta Division (403) 317-7104.
Bev Gutray B.C. CMHA British Columbia (604) 688-3234

* The findings were based on a national survey conducted by COMPAS on behalf of the Canadian Mental Health Association. A representative sample of N= 500 were interviewed using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) during the period of April 7 -April 11, 2001. Surveys of this size are deemed accurate to within 4.5 percentage points.

Reference Emerging into Light symbol graphic files at [www.cmha.ca/emerging _ logo](http://www.cmha.ca/emerging_ logo)
Reference Emerging into Light media release April 16, 2001 at www.cmha.ca/english/info_centre/media_relelase