



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Mental health for all

NEWS RELEASE

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More people are talking about their mental health, but they're still a minority according to Ipsos survey

CMHA's Ride Don't Hide event is helping more people step out of the shadows

Vancouver, B.C. – The movement to overcome the stigma surrounding mental illness in Canada is making progress, but it is slow going.

According to the recently-released second annual Ipsos Canadian Mental Health Check-Up, more Canadians are talking about their mental health than last year – 35 per cent, compared with 31 per cent – but they remain the minority.

At the same time, more people were classified as “high risk” this year – 35 per cent over 33 per cent in 2015. And they cite “social context”: social norms, peer pressure, and culture, as the main barrier to managing their mental health.

The recently released survey is a reminder that we have a long way to go before people experiencing a mental illness are as accepted in society as those with a physical illness.

Five years ago, CMHA began hosting Ride Don't Hide cycling events to help empower people to overcome the stigma of mental illness. The Ride Don't Hide movement follows the lead of Vancouver school teacher Michael Schratte, who cycled solo around the world in 2011 to, as he said, banish stigma “one pedal at a time.”

“We're seeing a difference in attitudes as more people join the Ride Don't Hide movement to end stigma in their community each year,” says Bev Gutray, CEO of Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), BC Division. “What started with one person five years ago has grown to thousands across Canada riding their bikes for mental health. Thousands sharing their stories and saying it's OK to talk about it.”

This year, people on bicycles will take up Michael Schratte's example in 30 events across the country on June 26, raising money for mental health programs, and creating a different kind of social context.

“It's an amazing feeling to be at a Ride Don't Hide event, surrounded by hundreds of your neighbours coming out to show their support for mental health. As you look around you realize, quite simply, stigma can't exist here,” says Michael Schratte, Ride Don't Hide founder. “My dream is that one day my children be able to say ‘Stigma? What stigma?’ But we still have a ways to go.”

CMHA hopes to attract more than 8,000 riders, who will raise more than \$1.5 million for mental health programs.

To learn more about Ride Don't Hide on June 26, visit www.ridedonthide.com.

For interviews, please contact:

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About the Canadian Mental Health Association:

Founded in 1918, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is a national charity that helps maintain and improve mental health for all Canadians. As the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health, CMHA helps people access the community resources they need to build resilience and support recovery from mental illness. Visit the CMHA website at www.cmha.ca today.