

Background

When we consider significant populations that have been marginalized and discriminated against, those who have had lived experience with mental illness have required advocacy for human rights on both personal and systemic levels. The reality is that 6.5 million Canadians - or 1 in 5 people - experience mental illness in a given year (CMHA, 2018).

Our Visit

When we visited the Canadian Human Rights Museum in Winnipeg we noticed many things done in a manner responsible to those who have been discriminated against!

- Incorporating mental illness in the disabilities section entitled "Inclusion for all"
- Showing a willingness to evolve and grow as indicated by the new disabilities mention in the Holocaust exhibit on floor Four and the expansion of the Holodomor exhibit.
- Developing a firm understanding in visitors of the living history and changing nature of Human Rights over time.

"Despite the fact that 6.5 million Canadians - or 1 in 5 people - experience mental illness in a given year, mental health services are not available for most Canadians"

*-CMHA,
2018*

Recommendations

We at the Canadian Mental Health Association, Saskatchewan Division Inc. would like to congratulate the Canadian Human Rights Museum on a job well done. We also have some suggestions that would reflect the plight of persons with lived experience with mental illness, a large portion of the Canadian population, with more accuracy and inclusivity.

Inclusion for All exhibit

- In the "Inclusion for All" exhibit, mental illness is mentioned in the pages but not on the board defining disabilities. We would like "Psychiatric Disability (eg. Mental Illness, Addictions)" to be a separate category like "Physical Disability" or "Intellectual Disability" on the description board.
- Differentiate Mental Illness from Intellectual Disability. In the pages of this exhibit, there is confusion between the two. While both are "invisible disabilities" the lived experience of each of these barriers are very different, keeping in mind that the causes, aetiologies, and treatments of each of these disability categories are all very different.

Histories Wall

- 1407: The first facility specifically for mental health is established in Spain.
- 1808: Britain passes the County Asylums Act ushering the modern era of institutionalization of the mentally ill
- 1869: Francis Galton writes *Hereditary Genius* starting the Eugenics movement
- 1955: Deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill began with the introduction of antipsychotic medications
- 1972: Routine sterilization by the state of the Disabled and Mentally Ill abolished in Canada

Breaking the Silence (suggested area)

- Eugenics was enforced on those with disabilities and mental illness in Canada and around the world based on Francis Galton's *Hereditary Genius* book
- Supporters included politicians such as Tommy Douglas until he saw the results of this policy in Nazi Germany.
- Alberta was the last province to abolish this practice in 1972, in 1973 British Columbia appealed the abolishment
- Article II of the United Nations Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defines genocide as any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group as such:
 - a) Killing members of the group;
 - b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
 - c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
 - d) Imposing measures to prevent births within the group;
 - e) Forcibly transferring children from one group to another.



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Saskatchewan
Mental health for all



years of
community