

**FAO News, Health,
Medical Reporters**

MEDIA RELEASE

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SCHIZOPHRENIA AWARENESS WEEK 2004

25 YEARS OF FACTS AND UNDERSTANDING

May 17 is the beginning of the 25th Schizophrenia Awareness Week. No organization knows this better than the Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria – after all MI Fellowship established the week a quarter of a century ago.

Some things have changed – our name was the Schizophrenia Fellowship back then - but other issues have remained the same: widespread ignorance and stigma still surrounds schizophrenia which affects about 1 per cent of the population.

We welcome opportunities to address issues related to mental health - depression, bi-polar, anxiety, schizophrenia and other conditions. We can also talk about accommodation, employment and other factors connecting people with a mental illness back into communities. Journalists are invited to gain full access to MI Fellowship's website (www.mifellowship.org) via the contact listed below to get the most up-to-date, easy to read, practical and information rich on mental health issues currently available.

One of the highlights of Schizophrenia Awareness Week 2004 will be the 6th Bruce Woodcock Memorial Lecture at the BMW Edge at Federation Square on Monday 17th May.

Speaking will be Dr Xavier Amador. Dr Amador is Professor of Psychology at Columbia University, New York and author of several books including 'I am Not Sick, I Don't Need Help! Helping Persons with Serious Mental Illness Accept Treatment.' His media appearances include [CNN](#), [Dateline](#) and [60 Minutes](#); He was a [Today Show](#) regular. He served as a mental health expert in the Theodore Kaczynski case (a.k.a. the "Unabomber") and other death penalty cases. He has a brother with schizophrenia.

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Dr Amador will be introduced by AFL legend David Parkin well known for his work helping football players and everyday people reach their potential.

The Mental Illness Fellowship is Victoria's leading membership-based not-for-profit organisation working with people with a mental illness, their family and friends. The Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria is 25 years old, with an income budget of \$7 million and has over 500 volunteers regularly working with our 170 staff.

In 2003 the Mental Illness Fellowship provided services to 1200 people with a mental illness through 35 programs across Victoria in areas such as rehabilitation, respite, employment and accommodation. We responded to 11,000 calls through our voluntary MI Helpline and other services, had over 10,600 participants in support-counselling sessions, education for families who are coping with mental illness and carer support groups. The Mental Illness Fellowship delivers education and training to over 3,000 community and business people each year.

For full web access, interview opportunities and information contact MI Fellowship's media advisor Brett de Hoedt on 03 9510 0848 or hootville@hootville.com.