

Health Awareness

Living With Schizophrenia: A Story Of Inspiration



(NAPSA)—Imagine going from what would be considered a normal life to being trapped in a world of hallucinations and delusions as the result of the onset of schizophrenia, a chronic and disabling brain disorder that affects approximately 0.5 to 1.5 percent of the world's adult population.

At the age of 24, Bill MacPhee began to have severe psychiatric symptoms and soon found himself pacing a psychiatric ward. Just five years earlier, he was living in Singapore, working as a commercial scuba diver on oil rigs in the South China Sea. He was doing what he loved, living his dream.

Bill MacPhee was diagnosed with schizophrenia, a complex condition with symptoms including delusions, hallucinations, disorganized speech, catatonic behavior, which is characterized by immobility or excessive motor activity and lack of response to the environment, and an inability to initiate and persist in goal-directed activities. For the next five years following his diagnosis, MacPhee lived reclusively in his parents' home and contemplated suicide. He was hospitalized six times during this period. When he began to become stabilized through acute psychiatric treatment, he lived in three different group homes. After these experiences, MacPhee made a decision to regain control of his life.

"I knew something had to change," said MacPhee. "I couldn't live like that anymore because I wasn't really living—I was barely going through the motions."

MacPhee began working closely with his psychiatrist to find a medication that was right for him. In addition to medication, MacPhee began regular therapy sessions. Currently, Bill receives a long-acting medication given by injection to help him manage his symptoms. Long-acting medicines by injection are released slowly and steadily in the body, allowing the medicine to work for weeks at a time. As a result, Bill does not need to take this medicine every day. With the help of medication and therapy, as well as the support of his family and friends, MacPhee is better able to manage his symptoms.

"Schizophrenia is a lifelong disease with no cure, so it is imperative that patients and caregivers are informed about the medication options available and are active participants with their psychiatrist in determining the right treatment options for them or their loved ones," said Dr. Rebecca Roma. "For some patients, a long-acting antipsychotic medication given by injection could be an option."

About Bill MacPhee

Bill MacPhee has embraced new opportunities by volunteering and getting involved with community projects. He has taken an interest in local politics and has sat in on regular town council meetings held at the local public library. It was at one of these meetings that MacPhee noticed a book that would change his life: "101 Ways to Start a Business with Little or No Capital."

Within a year, MacPhee launched his business, Magpie Media, Inc., and published his first issue of SZ Magazine, a quarterly magazine designed to bring hope and information to people, like him, living with schizophrenia. MacPhee travels throughout North America to give inspirational talks about how he has dealt with schizophrenia through the years and how he has become a businessman, husband and father.

Bill MacPhee's experience is unique, and not all people with schizophrenia experience the same symptoms or have the same treatment experiences. MacPhee and Dr. Roma serve as paid consultants by Janssen®, Division of Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

About Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a chronic and disabling brain disorder that affects approximately 0.5 to 1.5 percent of the world's adult population. Symptoms of schizophrenia may include delusions, hallucinations, disorganized speech, catatonic behavior and an inability to initiate and persist in goal-directed activities. In addition to the symptoms, schizophrenia involves dysfunction in one or more major areas of functioning, such as interpersonal relationships, work, education, day-to-day functioning or personal life goals. When someone is diagnosed with schizophrenia, it is critical for him or her to work closely with his or her healthcare professional to create an individualized treatment plan.