

Book review

Families & Mental Illness: Speaking from experience

Personal Stories of living with illness

Category: DVD Reviews / Self-help

Author: SANE Australia

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ISBN: 9781601245106

Audience: Supporting Others



Summary: A guide to help family, friends and other carers of people who have been seriously affected by mental illness

The *Families & Mental Illness – Speaking From Experience* DVD tells the story of people living with mental illness and their carers. They openly talk about their lives, coming to terms with illness, finding a balance, self acceptance and awareness, preparation, finding support and looking ahead.

The DVD shows how mental illness not only affects the individual but also those around them. It draws on real-life experiences that would be helpful for people who care for those who live with mental illness.

Although this DVD reports on those affected by bipolar and schizophrenia, it would be useful for anyone who is caring for someone with any mental health condition. Parents, siblings, partners or friends find that they take on a huge amount of responsibility when caring for someone experiencing a mental illness. Often they put so much time into looking after someone else that they forget to care for themselves.

Carers take time out

One of the core messages of the DVD is that it is essential that carers are able to take time for themselves and constructively express their emotions, through, for example, drawing, playing the guitar, writing, cooking, or any other activity that can help the individual rediscover or strengthen a positive mindset. Practicality and real-life experience is what makes this programme credible.

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The accompanying booklet goes into more detail. Advice, stories and services* with a specific focus on different types of carers are presented throughout the booklet, with reference to what is introduced in the DVD. It is a well-thought out and informative package for carers.

*Please note the services listed are for Australian residents. For New Zealand services, please refer to the Get Help section of the Mental Health Foundation website.

Reviewed by Ellie David, communications intern at the Mental Health Foundation

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