

Speaking from Experience Bipolar Disorder

Transcript for chapter 5 of 9: Stigma

David & Donné (2 years since Donné's diagnosis): I think there's a number of people out there who have this attitude, or this feeling, that they are stigmatised, whether they are or not. If you admit to having a mental illness, or you admit to taking a psychiatric medication, that it's a weakness. If you've got a physical illness, like cancer or diabetes or high blood pressure – I mean, I take medication for high blood pressure and I don't think twice about it.

Carole (21 years since diagnosis): I think there is still a lot of stigma around about, you know, mentally ill. I mean, there's a lot of negative language used, like you're a nut, or you're crazy or you're a maniac because you're a manic-depressive. Originally, people used to think you were some sort of maniac. I think it's usually the uneducated people who, you know, sort of go on about all this, you know, "watch out, it's a full moon tonight, what's Carole going to do?" or whatever. I'm at the stage now, I mean, I'm 22 years down the track, I completely ignore that.

Richard (18 years since diagnosis): I've even heard some footy coaches talking about some of their players with mental health difficulties. So, it's starting to come out a lot more. Just all this old, 'pull your socks up' stuff isn't quite as... you know, isn't quite the only way of solving the problem as it used to be. I think we're very quickly becoming a sort of a thing where the stigma does go almost completely. I don't think it's going to be a very gradual thing, I think it's becoming exponential. You know, from a very slow beginning, where people were locked away.

David & Donné: I think, in society, being diagnosed with a mental illness is more difficult to come to terms with. Given the stigma, whether it be self imposed, or imposed by society.

Margaret (Eva's mother): Whilst I think there is a problem, and I think people often do say things behind your back, 'oh, well she's a bit loony', or whatever, that sort of expression. I'm optimistic about the way people will respond, once they have the proper information. Once people are actually educated about the condition. I'm reasonably optimistic about the way people would respond.

David & Donné: It's an open subject and questions are answered, and one of Kished's questions was, is it going to happen to me? That's scary for her and it's scary for me. I mean, she knows her grandmother killed herself and her nanna, well, she knows what nanna's like and she knows what happened with me. She knows the circumstances surrounding her birth. Which I had actually kept secret for a long time.

David & Donné: And she is a very volatile, emotional, sort of personality. But, having said that, I mean, there's no law that states she will have it. There is a possibility.

Richard: I felt weak and I felt pretty ashamed that I did have this problem that I had to deal with. But it was also good to know that maybe, with some therapy and some medication, that I might be able to do something about it.