

media release

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For immediate release

sane
A U S T R A L I A

www.sane.org

SANE SIGNPOSTS TO MENTAL ILLNESS

SANE Australia takes a fresh approach to helping people affected by mental illness, with the launch of an innovative national advertising campaign, 'Signs'.

The three-year campaign, which began earlier this month, spans radio, television, print and the Internet – to help people understand the early signs of mental illness and highlight the importance of taking action so those affected can get the help they need.

The national campaign features everyday street signs and billboards replaced with titles such as 'depression', 'anxiety' and 'mood swings' to represent how mental illness is a part of everyday life for many people – and the importance of identifying possible signs.

SANE Australia Executive Director Barbara Hocking says people can visit SANE's website or call the SANE freecall Helpline to get more information about the signs of mental illness as well as advice from trained advisors about getting treatment and support.

'Friends and family are often the first people to notice changes in behaviour or thinking that can be early signs of mental illness. SANE encourages people to act on their concerns as soon as possible and seek clear information and advice,' Ms Hocking said.

'We know that the earlier people receive help the better the outcomes and the fewer disruptions there will be to study, work and family. About 20 per cent of Australians will experience a mental illness at some stage of their lives and most will develop it between the ages of 15 and 24, so it's vital to respond quickly to early signs.'

Family carer Jo Buchanan has seen many changes in the mental health sector and says SANE Australia's campaign gives much needed support.

'When my sister first showed signs of schizophrenia, I was frightened and confused. I had no idea what was happening as I had to deal with it alone. When it happened again with my nephew, I was able to recognise the symptoms, which enabled me to seek help from the right people immediately,' Jo said.

'Campaigns like this are very important; they encourage you to follow up concerns and help you to realise there is hope and assistance out there, for both you and your family.'

The campaign was developed for SANE Australia by advertising agency Commotion, with the commercial directed by David Jagoda, renowned for his work on high-profile campaigns for Nokia, Ikea and MTV among others.

SANE Australia
The national mental health charity

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SANE Helpline
Information and referral
on mental illness
1800 18 SANE (7263)
www.sane.org



How it looks: Two images from the TV commercial



Facts about mental illness

- Mental illness is real and treatable
- Anxiety disorders and depression are the most common mental illnesses, affecting 18% of Australians
- About 3% of people will be affected by bipolar disorder or schizophrenia at some stage in their lives
- Early signs of mental illness include changes in the way someone feels, thinks or behaves that are out of character for that person for example, insomnia, mood swings, withdrawal from people or situations, strange thoughts and constant worry
- SANE Australia has a range of resources to help recognize the signs of mental illness, including the 'When sadness won't go away' and 'Something is not quite right' pamphlets
- SANE Guides offer useful information and advice on a range of issues, such as depression, anxiety and schizophrenia.

For more information, visit www.sane.org or phone the Helpline on 1800 18 SANE (7263).

Contact Cathy Heycock on (03) 9682 5933 or 0414 427 291 to organise an interview with Barbara Hocking or Jo Buchanan.