

A SURVEY OF CATHOLIC PRIESTS IN ALBERTA CONCERNING ATTITUDES AND INTERACTIONS WITH PERSONS WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA.

A survey was faxed out to every Catholic priest in Alberta. In the Archdiocese of Edmonton some media awareness and lectures have been directed towards the Catholic clergy. The purpose of the survey is to see whether clergy especially through counselling and confession can positively reinforce and encourage medication compliance by the schizophrenic. Many schizophrenics might listen to clergy when they do not listen to their psychiatrists especially for some during decompensation. Religion can come from a different paradigm than modern medicine but they both wish for the person to live a good life.

The questions that were asked were as follows:

1. Do you feel you know enough about schizophrenia and mental illness in general to minister to the sufferers and their families?
2. If you are a priest or spiritual counselor, and someone that you know has schizophrenia is in confession or counseling with you, do you feel capable of giving appropriate and meaningful spiritual counseling, including suggesting that they seek and follow medical advice? Specifically taking medications .
3. Do you feel capable of identifying your own natural biases towards mental illness, and being able to not let them influence how you deal with the mentally ill when making pastoral decisions?
4. Are you afraid of the mentally ill, and specifically persons with schizophrenia?
5. How can the Archdiocese support you in ministering to the mentally ill?
6. Are any members of your family or friends mentally ill or have schizophrenia, and if so, do you make that well known, or are you afraid for people to know?