



For immediate release

Bell Let's Talk Day 2017 is January 25!

- On Bell Let's Talk Day, everyone can talk, text and join in on social media to help end the stigma around mental illness and drive action in Canadian mental health
- Send a Bell Let's Talk message of support on January 25 and Bell donates 5 cents more to mental health programs; let's beat 2016's record 126M messages and \$6.3M Bell donation
- Social media engagement expands to Instagram and Snapchat in addition to Twitter and Facebook; #BellLetsTalk was Canada's #1 Twitter hashtag in 2016
- This year's campaign highlights the impact of mental illness on everyone; Clara Hughes, and the Bell Let's Talk team talk in depth about their personal experiences
- Learn 5 simple ways to help end stigma; download the Bell Let's Talk toolkit at Bell.ca/LetsTalk

MONTREAL, December 21, 2016 – Bell Let's Talk Day 2017 is Wednesday, January 25 and Canada's groundbreaking mental health initiative will offer new ways for Canadians everywhere to get engaged and drive Bell's funding of mental health care, research, anti-stigma and workplace initiatives across Canada.

"Not only did we celebrate another record Bell Let's Talk Day in January 2016, together we kept the conversation about mental health going all year long. It's clear we're making a difference, so let's keep on talking in 2017 Canada as we work to build a nation free from the stigma around mental illness," said Clara Hughes, Canada's 6-time Olympic medalist and national Bell Let's Talk spokesperson since the launch of the initiative in 2010.

"No matter whether you call, text or show your support on social media with Twitter or Facebook, and now Instagram and Snapchat, you're making a positive difference – adding your voice to the growing national discussion while also directly activating new Bell funding for mental health programs at no cost to you. I look forward to engaging in the mental health cause in the biggest way ever with you and Canadians everywhere 5 weeks from today!"

The Bell Let's Talk Day 2017 awareness campaign begins Boxing Day on multiple TV networks, online and out of home, and starting January 2 in Cineplex and Guzzo theatres and at Hot Docs. New advertising spots in English and French convey messages of hope while upending stereotypes by highlighting the reality that mental illness affects all of us, not just the person who is sick.

TV and online videos feature Clara and Bell Let's Talk spokespeople Howie Mandel, Marie-Soleil Dion, Serena Ryder, Michael Landsberg, Michel Mpambara, Stefie Shock, Mary Walsh and Étienne Boulay speaking candidly about their own personal experiences with mental illness and recovery, and how their struggle directly affected those around them. Bell Let's Talk ambassadors like Toronto Maple Leafs Head Coach Mike Babcock, pro golfer Andrew Jensen, comedian Kevin Breel, retired CFL player Shea Emry, musician Robb Nash and singer-songwriter Séan McCann will also work to encourage Canadians to join the conversation at events and media appearances.



The team welcomes a new Bell Let's Talk ambassador this year: Bruno Guévremont, a Royal Canadian Navy veteran of 2 tours in Afghanistan and Team Canada captain at the 2016 Invictus Games. Bell Media is exclusive Canadian broadcast partner of [Invictus Games Toronto 2017](#), the international sporting event established by Prince Harry for wounded active duty and veteran service members from around the world, including those struggling with mental illnesses such as PTSD.

"We thank our incredible team of Bell Let's Talk Day spokespeople and ambassadors for sharing their lived experience and encouraging everyone to join the campaign to move Canada's mental health forward," said George Cope, President and CEO of BCE and Bell Canada. "Bell Let's Talk Day fights the pervasive stigma around mental illness by inviting everyone to get engaged, and to keep on talking about this critical national health concern every day. By joining the conversation on Bell Let's Talk Day, you directly drive Bell's funding for Canadian mental health, expanding proven frontline programs and launching innovative new approaches in care, research and workplace leadership."

Instagram and Snapchat: New ways to join the conversation

Bell Let's Talk Day donations are fully funded by Bell directly based on engagement by Canadians in the cause. Bell donates 5 cents to Canadian mental health programs for each of these interactions on Bell Let's Talk Day at no extra charge to participants:

- Every text message, mobile and long distance call made by Bell Canada and Bell Aliant customers.
- Twitter: Every tweet using #BellLetsTalk
- Facebook: Every view of the Bell Let's Talk Day video at [Facebook.com/BellLetsTalk](https://www.facebook.com/BellLetsTalk)
- Instagram: Every post using #BellLetsTalk
- Snapchat: Every use of the Bell Let's Talk Snapchat geofilter

"Mental health is everyone's concern and it's incredible to see how many people are talking about the issue, spreading understanding and support for all those who live with mental illness in their lives," said Mary Deacon, Chair of Bell Let's Talk. "Social media has been a critical part of the ongoing growth in Bell Let's Talk engagement here in Canada but also worldwide, underlining the strong desire everywhere for action in mental health. With the incredible success of the campaign on Twitter and Facebook, we're very pleased to add Instagram and Snapchat to the many ways you can engage in 2017."

In Twitter's annual Top 10 list, #BellLetsTalk was the most used Twitter hashtag in Canada in all of 2016 (#MentalHealth was #7), and the most used in the world on Bell Let's Talk Day 2016.

Bell Let's Talk Day 2016 set new records for participation with 125.9 million messages of support, growing Bell's funding for Canadian mental health by \$6,295,764.75. With approximately 598,383,571 million such interactions by Canadians over the last 6 Bell Let's Talk Days, Bell's total commitment to mental health, including an original \$50-million anchor donation, has climbed to \$79,919,178.55 – well on the way to Bell's target of at least \$100 million by the end of 2020.



Bell Let's Talk is helping to make a difference

With a strategy built on 4 key action pillars – anti-stigma, care and access, research and workplace leadership – Bell Let's Talk has partnered with more than 700 organizations all around Canada to deliver new care initiatives in every region of the country, including through donations to major institutions; the annual Bell Let's Talk Community Fund; the Bell True Patriot Love Fund for military members, veterans and their families; and a dedicated fund for Canada's 3 Territories.

Bell Let's Talk is driving new research at universities and health care facilities – including the Douglas-Bell Brain Bank, the Brain Canada Research Training Fund, and the world's first anti-stigma research chair at Queen's University – and advancing the development of innovative new technologies supporting mental health.

Bell helped fund the world's first national workplace mental health and safety standard, and was one of the first to adopt it, with some 10,000 Bell managers having completed compulsory mental health training to date. Bell also partnered with Morneau Shepell and Queen's University to develop the world's first university-certified workplace mental health training program, now in use at more than 250 companies.

5 simple ways to help end the stigma

You can help end the stigma with 5 simple ways developed by Dr. Heather Stuart, the Bell Mental Health and Anti-Stigma Research Chair at Queen's University:

- Language matters – pay attention to the words you use about mental illness
- Educate yourself – learn, know and talk more, understand the signs
- Be kind – small acts of kindness speak a lot
- Listen and ask – sometimes it's best to just listen
- Talk about it – start a dialogue, break the silence

To learn more, please visit Bell.ca/LetsTalk.

About Bell

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