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The Mental Health Stigma: MacEwan University Psychiatric Nursing Students to Challenge and Educate

Edmonton--Why are those who suffer with mental health treated differently than any other person with health related illnesses? A group of first year students of MacEwan University’s Psychiatric Nursing diploma are using the stressful exam period to discuss good mental health with the student body, and to challenge the stigma around mental health and the psychiatric nursing profession.

On April 4 and 5, from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., in the main entrance of the 106 street building at MacEwan University's City Centre Campus, the students will present and lead activities regarding topics such addictions, stress management, vital signs, hand hygiene, homelessness and resources for students suffering from mental illness.

The stigma against mental health affects not only the patients, but the nurses who dedicate themselves to helping. Psychiatric nurses are trained not only to help with mental illness, but also to assess and treat issues relating to overall health.

“There is stigma about everything we do,” explains Leah Warawa, one of the student-presenters. “What we’re doing on Thursday and Friday is teaching people that our nursing program is worthwhile, and to learn to treat people with mental illness as individuals.”

Activities such as blood pressure readings and stress reduction exercises will demonstrate the student’s proficiency as burgeoning health care providers. A “speed-dating” booth will be set up for students to ask questions about the exciting psychiatric nursing field.

Founded in 1971, MacEwan University is a comprehensive university offering more than 65 programs including undergraduate degrees, applied degrees, diplomas, certificates, continuing education and corporate training. Its philosophy of inspiring minds, academic excellence, and providing career opportunities continues to be its guide as it serves the educational needs of students across Alberta, Canada and the world.

MacEwan University supports and fosters student-engaged research that is actively connected to faculty and the community.

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