



For immediate release

Bell Let's Talk 2012: Join the conversation to support Canadian mental health!

- *National spokesperson Clara Hughes, and new additions to the Bell Let's Talk team Michel Mpambara and Stefie Shock, invite you to talk about mental illness to help fight the stigma*
- *Bell Let's Talk Day is February 8 – Bell will donate 5¢ to mental health for every text and long distance call made by Bell customers on February 8 – 2011 total to beat is \$3,303,961.80*
- *Bell Community Fund 2012 applications open today – \$1 million in grants for community and grassroots mental health programs across Canada*
- *To learn more please visit Bell.ca/LetsTalk*

MONTREAL, January 16, 2012 – Bell today launched the second annual Bell Let's Talk campaign in support of Canadian mental health. Led by national spokesperson Clara Hughes and highlighted by Bell Let's Talk Day on February 8, the campaign invites all Canadians to talk about mental illness in order to fight the lingering stigma that keeps too many people from seeking the help they need.

"Canadians really stepped up to talk about mental health on last year's very successful Bell Let's Talk Day, and the conversation has only continued to grow since then," said Ms. Hughes, Canada's six-time Olympic medalist and the smile at the forefront of Bell Let's Talk. "Open and honest discussion of how mental illness impacts each of us is crucial to driving the awareness, acceptance and action needed to make a real difference in mental health. So let's talk Canada!"

The Bell Let's Talk mental health initiative is a five-year, \$50-million charitable program based on four action pillars: anti-stigma, care and access, research, and workplace best practices. With Bell Let's Talk Day as its anti-stigma centrepiece, Bell's initiative is providing significant funding for leading mental health hospitals and grassroots organizations, driving new workplace initiatives across corporate Canada, and supporting new research – including a world-first research announcement planned for February.

Bell Let's Talk Day is February 8

"At least 1 in 5 Canadians will suffer from mental illness in their lifetimes, but the unfortunate reality is that most won't seek treatment because of the continuing stigma around the disease. Bell Let's Talk Day sends the message to those who struggle with mental illness that Canadians want to listen and we want to help," said George Cope, President and CEO of Bell Canada and BCE.

Starting today, Bell Let's Talk 2012 will be supported by a major national promotional campaign. TV, print, radio and outdoor advertising, social media, special events, and the generous support of a vast range of media, sports, business and community organizations will bring the anti-stigma message to Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Joining Clara in the Bell Let's Talk campaign this year are Québec spokespersons, author, composer and performer Stefie Shock, and actor-comedian Michel Mpambara, who like Clara will share their own stories about the challenges of mental illness and the opportunities for help.



The campaign culminates on Bell Let's Talk Day on February 8. For every text message sent and every long distance call made by Bell and Bell Aliant customers that day, Bell will donate 5 cents to programs dedicated to mental health (regular long distance and text charges apply). In 2011, Canadians answered Clara's call with a total of 66,079,236 text messages and long distance calls on Bell Let's Talk Day – meaning Bell added another \$3,303,961.80 to the \$50 million it has already committed to Canadian mental health.

Bell is also encouraging Canadians to follow the campaign on Twitter at [@Bell_LetsTalk](https://twitter.com/Bell_LetsTalk) and join in retweeting the Bell Let's Talk Day message on February 8. For each such retweet, Bell will donate an additional 5 cents.

Bell Let's Talk Community Fund 2012

"Mental illness is clearly one of the most pervasive yet underfunded health challenges facing Canadians today, touching each of us directly in some way and costing our economy at least \$51 billion each year in lost productivity and opportunity," said Mary Deacon, Chair of the Bell Let's Talk mental health initiative. "We're excited to build on all that Bell Let's Talk has accomplished in its first year with further intensive investment in the people and programs that are making a real difference in moving Canadian mental health forward."

That includes the 2nd annual Bell Let's Talk Community Fund launched today, which will distribute \$1 million more in 2012 to local organizations across Canada that are fighting stigma and increasing access to mental health care. In 2011, the Community Fund supported 49 groups all across Canada with grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000. To learn more about the fund and to apply, please visit Bell.ca/LetsTalk.

With \$15 million committed in its first year alone, Bell Let's Talk has been partnering with mental health organizations large and small. Bell has made significant contributions to care, access and research initiatives at the Royal Ottawa Hospital, Hôpital Louis-H. Lafontaine, Hôpital Charles-LeMoine, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and the University of British Columbia, with more announcements to come.

Bell is honoured to be named the recipient of the 2012 Freeman Philanthropic Services Award for Outstanding Corporation for the Bell Let's Talk mental health initiative. The prestigious international award by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) will be presented in March in Vancouver.

About Bell

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