

Wednesday 30 June 2021

## **It's time to reduce diabetes stigma this National Diabetes Week**

Diabetes is a serious and complex condition which is often misunderstood. Negative community attitudes and stereotypes affect most people who live with diabetes – having a very real impact on their self-care, physical health, mental health and quality of life.

Diabetes Victoria is launching a new awareness campaign with the theme: ***Think again. Let's reduce diabetes stigma.*** to celebrate National Diabetes Week 2021 (Sunday 11-Saturday 17 July). National Diabetes Week is celebrated each year to raise awareness about all types of diabetes.

According to the Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes, more than 4 in 5 people with diabetes have experienced diabetes stigma at some point in their lives.\*\* This means that many people with diabetes feel they have been judged or treated differently than others because of their diabetes.

“We need to reduce the blame and shame around diabetes and replace it with respect and compassion, so that people living with diabetes are supported to live healthier and happier lives,” says Diabetes Victoria CEO Craig Bennett.

“There are many forms of stigma, and many ways to experience stigma. Some people have been blamed or shamed for having diabetes or diabetes-related complications,” says Mr Bennett.

“Others have been judged when they eat certain foods, check their glucose levels or inject insulin in a public setting. We believe that most diabetes-related stigma is based on a lack of understanding.”

Diabetes Victoria's campaign focuses on people living with diabetes and how diabetes stigma affects their life. The awareness raising campaign features the stories of BJ, Carol, Justin, Jade, Shannon, Jane, Jacqueline, Simon and Gabby – who've all been impacted by negative attitudes about diabetes in very different ways.

“Our campaign is aimed at encouraging the public to change the way we talk about diabetes by showing compassion and respect,” says Mr Bennett.

### **Think again. Let's reduce diabetes stigma.**

This digital awareness campaign focuses on diabetes stigma and how people living with type 1 or type 2 diabetes often feel judged, blamed and shamed. Campaign materials are available on the campaign page: [diabetesvic.org.au/NDW2021](https://diabetesvic.org.au/NDW2021) from Thursday 1 July. On this page, you can listen to a special National Diabetes Week podcast with Professor Jane Speight, Foundation Director at the Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes, and Michael Taylor, who lives with type 1 diabetes.

**Diabetes Victoria special National Diabetes Week webinar**

Don't miss Diabetes Victoria's National Diabetes Week webinar on Wednesday 7 July in which we'll shine a light on diabetes stigma. Our advocacy officer: Julie Davie will kick off the evening by providing a short overview of how diabetes stigma can affect people living with diabetes – and where they can find help.

Then it's time to share real life stories. Diabetes Victoria's Kim Henshaw, who lives with type 1 diabetes, will be joined by BJ, Shannon and Simon, talking about their personal lived experiences of the blame and shame surrounding diabetes – and how to address this. Attendees have the chance to ask the panel questions during the webinar via the Q&A function.

Register to join the webinar [here](#).

**About diabetes in Victoria**

Diabetes is a serious, complex and lifelong health condition which requires careful management and constant attention. In Victoria, there are currently almost 367,000 people living with diabetes who are registered with the National Diabetes Services Scheme. Furthermore, Diabetes Victoria estimates that another 150,000 Victorians live with undiagnosed type 2 diabetes. A further 750,000 Victorians are estimated to have elevated blood glucose levels, which puts them at risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

If diabetes isn't managed carefully, it can lead to an array of serious health complications; including kidney disease, heart disease, stroke, vision loss and even amputations.

We **support, empower and campaign for** all Victorians affected by, or at risk of, diabetes.

**For more information:**

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\*\* 93% of adults with type 1 diabetes and 84% of adults with type 2 diabetes have experienced diabetes stigma (Source Browne et al, BMJ Open 2013; 2014).