

Good-news story

It was refreshing to read a good news story about mental illness (The Sunday Age, 7/9/03). This story provided hope that young people diagnosed with a mental illness can experience happy and productive lives.

When people are first diagnosed with a mental illness, a positive approach from health professionals, families, friends, colleagues and the community is needed. With insight, education and support, people with a mental illness are able to stay well and get on with life.

We are currently exploring ways in which people with manic depression stay well. Our preliminary data show that people with manic depression use a range of holistic strategies. Staying well is rarely just about seeing a psychiatrist and taking prescribed medication. It is often about so much more.

While the mental health system is predominantly focused on crisis management, it is important to hear stories about people who are able to stay well. Such stories provide hope for people who suffer from a mental illness, their families and friends. Such stories also help to dismantle the stigma that is so often associated with mental illness.

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