Unlocking Potential:

Ending the Exclusion of People Living with Schizophrenia

This infographic is designed for a broad audience and conveys information in a general manner, with technical details simplified for clarity and accessibility.



Luca's Story: A Mirror to Millions

Imagine Luca*, a 40-year-old man in Spain, living with schizophrenia. His daily life is a quiet battle - against symptoms, societal stigma, and systemic neglect. He wants to contribute, to connect, to thrive - but instead, he is excluded. His story is not unique. It is the story of millions across Europe and beyond - people full of potential, but dismissed by a world too quick to judge.
This is not just a personal tragedy. It is a societal failure - one with measurable costs in lost productivity, increased healthcare utilisation, and, most importantly, in wasted human potential and lost opportunities.

*Luca is a fictional character in this story. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

The Human and Societal Toll of Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia affects roughly **1** in every **100** people[1,2,3] in the global population. Yet unlike more familiar mental health conditions, it remains one of the most misunderstood and heavily stigmatised. The result is a cycle of social isolation, worsened health outcomes, and diminished opportunity.



affects roughly **1%** of global population[1]

Life expectancy is reduced by **15-20 years**[4]

48% of people living with severe schizophrenia worry about running out of food **vs 15% of general population**[5]

85% say their physical/emotional health interferes with social life **vs 31% in the general population**[5]

3x more likely to be hospitalised[5]
10x more likely to die by suicide[6]

45% of people living with severe schizophrenia are employed **vs 59% of general population**[5]

Presenteeism **62%** **(vs 22% in the general population)**[5,7] with nearly **40%** lower productivity[5,7]

42% say they often have no one to turn to for advice on personal problems[5]

Half describe themselves as single and never married, double that of the general population.[5] Nearly half report having no one who makes them feel loved.[5]

Carers need support

Due to the difficulty in forming and maintaining relationships the carers for people living with schizophrenia are often their family members. They spend time with their dear ones and struggle to care for their own health.

41% of those with schizophrenia live with their parents
12% are cared for by siblings, and only **7%** by a spouse or partner[8]

41% of carers provide care for over **10 years**[9]

19% of carers provide care for more than **40 hours** a week[9]

90% of carers worry about what will happen to their loved ones when they die[9]

63% have difficulty finding time for themselves[9] and **55%** struggle to care for their own health[9]



Carers experience significant emotional strain and often lack support.
They need more resources and support, including respite care and counseling services.
Education on schizophrenia and its management is crucial for carers to better support their loved ones.

The Vicious Cycle of Stigma and Healthcare Impact

Stigma is not a side issue - it is central to the condition's burden.

Nearly **9** in **10** people living with severe schizophrenia feel judged by others[5]

71% are embarrassed by their diagnosis[5]



Stigma is a significant barrier to treatment adherence, leading to higher rates of rehospitalisation and increased health care cost.[10,11]

People living with schizophrenia also face:

- Higher rates of **depression and generalised anxiety disorder**[5]
- Higher risks of **cardiovascular disease**[12,13,14], **diabetes**[12,13,14], **asthma**[13,14,15], **chronic obstructive pulmonary disease**[13,14,15], **and cancer**[13,14,15]
- **24%** of those living with severe schizophrenia experience transportation issues, affecting their access to healthcare[5]



The Call to Action: Reclaiming Lost Potential

We cannot afford to leave people like Luca behind. The moral case is clear. So is the economic one. Here's how we could change life stories of Luca and other people living with schizophrenia:

1. Public Education & Awareness
- Campaigns to humanise schizophrenia, combat media myths, and share stories of resilience.

2. Anti-Stigma Programmes
- Invest in research and community-based programmes to reduce discrimination.

3. Integrated Care Models
- Systems that treat both physical and mental health needs together.
- Promote early intervention and individualised care programmes and individualised approach.
- Educational and motivational strategies, including the use of digital tools.

4. Support for Carers
- Recognise family caregivers who shoulder long-term care.
- Invest in resources, support, and education for carers to better manage schizophrenia and improve the lives of those affected.

5. Policy Advocacy
- Protect rights, improve healthcare access, and promote social integration.

Rewriting Luca's Story

If Luca were met with understanding instead of fear, support instead of judgment, integration instead of isolation - he could thrive. So could millions like him. It's time to stop seeing schizophrenia as a burden to hide and start seeing the people behind the diagnosis. **Their health matters. Their voice matters. Their future matters.**
Let's invest in connection - not exclusion.

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