

Stigma haunts victims

Individuals and families dealing with mental health issues have found a new champion in world karate titlist Clint Cora.

Mississauga resident Cora, whose mother battled mental illness during his youth, hopes to knock out the stigma that surrounds the affliction, particularly within cultures where *mental illness is still considered a taboo topic.*

Few families escape the far-reaching impact of mental illness. In fact, the Canadian Mental Health Association estimates a full 20 per cent of Canadians will suffer from mental health-related issues at some point during their lifetime.

Suicide, most often related to depression, is one of the leading *causes of death across all age categories,* while for those aged 15-24, it accounts for almost a quarter of all deaths.

Almost half of all people afflicted by mental illness will never visit a doctor, preferring to suffer in silence rather than face the social disapproval that often accompanies a diagnosis.

Workers with mental illness also face huge hurdles in the work force and usually find it difficult to access and retain employment. Work history gaps, frequent absences, social stigma and workplace discrimination often stand between them and a successful work life.

For most individuals suffering *from mental illness, resilience and recovery can only be achieved with the support of social and professional circles, support that's often in very limited supply.*

You can help by making a donation to the Canadian Mental Health Association and by establishing an environment of acceptance and support at home and in the workplace.