

Featuring schizophrenia on stage and screen

Among the many types of mental illness, schizophrenia receives extensive coverage when it comes to film. Sometimes, portrayals can be negative and perpetuate stereotypes such as ‘mad genius’, ‘two-faced’, ‘split-personality’ and ‘violent’. Schizophrenia often has a special place in people’s fears. Yet, through accurate portrayals, scriptwriter’s are in a prime position to open up the channels for community discussion and help address stigma.

Entertainment plays a significant role in shaping and reinforcing community attitudes. Accurate information and research can assist scriptwriters to develop authentic portrayals of schizophrenia that do not perpetuate stigma.

During [Schizophrenia Awareness Week](#) (18 – 24 May) the *Mindframe* team at the [Hunter Institute of Mental Health](#) encourage scriptwriters portraying characters living with schizophrenia to draw on research, interviews with people who have lived experience and [Mindframe for stage and screen](#) resources (available online and in hard copy).

Kim McNaughton from the *Mindframe* team said: “It’s important to get information from reliable organisations and experts. Different organisations and experts specialise in different areas related to mental illness.”

People with Lived Experience

Kim said: “Spending time with a person living with the specific mental illness being researched can enable insight through first-hand encounters and accounts of what it is like for a person to live with a particular mental illness or disorder.

“The *Mindframe* team can arrange for scriptwriters to have access to talk with a person living with a specific mental illness,” said Kim.

Mindframe for stage and screen

Mindframe manager Marc Bryant said: “*Mindframe for stage and screen* resources were developed with the assistance of screenwriters, the Australian Writers’ Guild and the Department of Health.

“The free resources assist scriptwriters, playwrights and television story departments with truthful and authentic portrayals of mental illness,” added Marc.

For more information on *Mindframe for stage and screen* and free downloadable resources, go to: <http://www.mindframe-media.info/for-stage-and-screen> or contact *Mindframe* at 4924 6900.

Mindframe workshops are conducted through the Australian Writers’ Guild and provide scriptwriters, playwrights and television story departments with accurate information based on research. *Mindframe* workshops can also provide scriptwriters, playwrights and television story departments with access to spokespeople with lived experience .

For more information on Schizophrenia visit Schizophrenia Fellowship NSW - <http://www.sfnsw.org.au/About-Mental-Illness/Schizophrenia>.

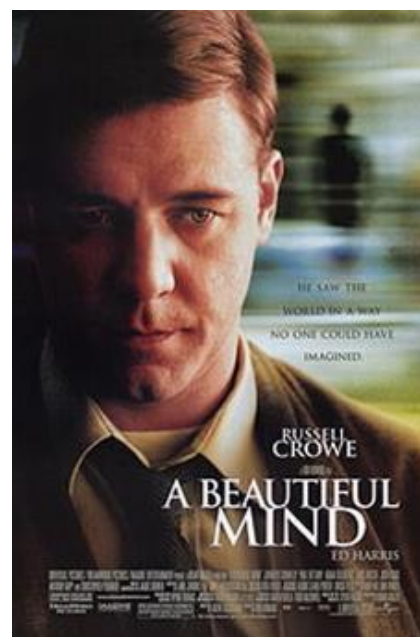


Image caption: Featuring schizophrenia in the 2001 film *A Beautiful Mind*. Screenwriter: Akiva Goldsman.