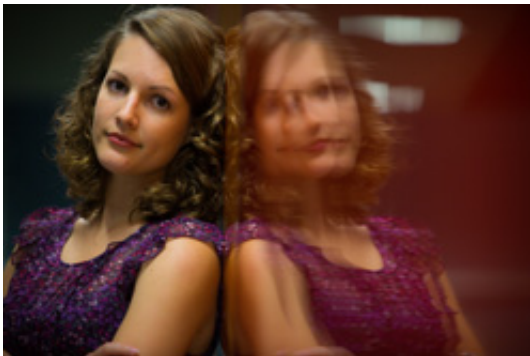


# Families 'benefit' from living with schizophrenia

May 3 2013

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Rachel Morton is studying the impact schizophrenia has on family members.

(Medical Xpress)—Living with someone with schizophrenia can have a positive impact on their family, according to a preliminary study by QUT.

As part of her doctorate in clinical psychology, Rachel Morton from QUT's School of Psychology and Counselling, has interviewed relatives of people with [schizophrenia](#) to better understand the impact schizophrenia has on the family.

"Family members frequently reported that the nature of schizophrenia meant their relative required a range of support, including financial, social, and assistance in getting treatment, all of which were reported to take a large [emotional toll](#) on the family members themselves," Ms

Morton said.

"It was common for people to report frustration with some [mental health professionals](#) and systems.

"However, a unique finding of this study was the reporting of some unexpected positive [personal growth](#) experienced as a result of the challenges of living with someone with schizophrenia.

"Most relatives identified that having a relative with schizophrenia contributed to their own personal development, such as having greater [compassion](#) for those with [mental health issues](#) and having a greater appreciation for what is important in their life."

Ms Morton said for example, one participant said living with someone with schizophrenia had influenced their own career choice to become a health professional.

In another example, a family member credited living with someone with schizophrenia as giving their life meaning.

"So even if it's been a disadvantage that my son has this [mental illness](#), it's also been enriching in that my life is not just empty, meaningless. I've got purpose," the participant said.

As a result of the findings, Ms Morton is now embarking on a worldwide survey to look at whether or not the phenomenon of experiencing benefits and personal growth, is common across a wider cross-section of families living with people with schizophrenia.

Ms Morton is seeking people over the age of 16, who have a first degree family member with schizophrenia and who have lived with that person

at some point during their diagnosis, to take part in a new online survey.

"I want to investigate this issue more widely and further explore the stress they feel and how family members cope with this stress," she said.

"This survey is important because [family members](#) often get forgotten when health professionals are dealing with people with schizophrenia.

"This research will help clinicians and health care professionals better treat people with schizophrenia and effectively support their families."

**More information:** To take part in the survey click [here](#).

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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