

Fact Sheet on Stigma Related to Mental Illness

What is stigma?

Stigma is a mark of disgrace that distracts from a person's character.

What is mental illness?

A mental illness is a medical condition that is disruptive to aspects of a person's life including thinking, mood, feelings, daily functioning, and ability to relate to others.

What are the components of stigma?

The components of stigma are...

- Labeling
- Stereotyping
- Devaluing
- Discriminating
- Ignorance
- Prejudice

What are the effects of stigma?

The effects of stigma are...

- Cause feelings of isolation, hopelessness, and low self-esteem.
- Create problems with employment.
- Negatively impact housing.
- Cause Harassment.
- Cause physical violence.
- Negatively impact community participation.
- Reduce resource & opportunity access.
- Cause a person to deny the illness.

- Cause a person to refuse treatment.
- Cause there to be inadequate coverage of mental health treatment by health insurance companies.

What are the ways to cope with stigma?

Although there is no reason that these should exist, there are ways to cope with stigma related to mental illness. They are...

- “Surround yourself with supportive people.”
- Remember you - *are **NOT** your illness.*
- Remember - *treatment works.*
- Remember - *you are not alone.*
- Be hopeful
- Be active
- Remember you or your loved ones have choices.
- Make sure people know your expectations.

What are the steps to reducing stigma?

The steps to reducing stigma are...

- Be Supportive
- Monitor the Media
- Be an advocate – individually or as part of a group- and share your experiences.
- Give praise when someone including yourself seeks help.

Statistical Information on Stigma Related to Mental Illness:

56% of people surveyed by the Mental Health Foundation reported that they faced discrimination from their family members.

51% faced discrimination from friends.

44% felt discriminated against by general practitioners.

35% faced discrimination from health professional who were not general practitioners.

37% faced discrimination when job seeking.

25% of young American adults believe that recovery is possible for someone with mental illness.

42% of Americans believe that someone with a mental illness can be as successful as someone without mental illness at work.

54% of Americans 18 to 24 believe that treatment is helpful for those with mental illness.

References:

The Mayo Clinic

Mental Health Foundation

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Rethink

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration

WebMD

(information was reviewed by doctors at Cleveland Clinic's Department of Psychiatry and Psychology)

Webster's New World Dictionary 3rd College Edition

www.mentalhealthcare.org.uk