

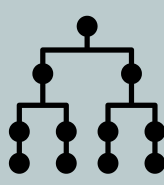
MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

Generally, stigma is a **negative connotation** associated with a **circumstance** or **quality**. Stigma is not only an issue due to its effects on the mental health of individuals living with a mental illness, but is also considered to be one of the greatest **barriers** to the development of mental health programs and help-seeking worldwide. Stigma is one of the major barriers to accessing mental health treatment. It can impede social interaction, lower quality of life, interfere with social roles, and prevent timely access to treatment. This creates a cycle of disadvantage.

Types of Stigma



The views of the public towards mental health issues or a specific condition.



Refers to the rules, policies, and practices of social institutions that arbitrarily restrict the rights of, and opportunities for, people with mental illnesses.



Occurs when an individual internalizes the negative stereotypes associated with their illness.



Involves stigma towards an individual based on their associations with stigmatized persons (i.e., someone experiencing a mental illness).

TYPICALLY, THE MORE SEVERE THE ILLNESS, THE STRONGER THESE FEELINGS ARE. ADDITIONALLY, FEELINGS OF EMBARRASSMENT AND SHAME ARE OFTEN ACCENTUATED IN CASES WHERE THE MENTAL ILLNESS IN QUESTION IS ADDICTION OR SUBSTANCE USE.

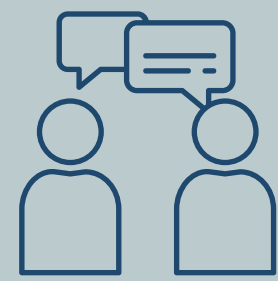
Mental healthcare providers are said to contribute largely to public stigma through their behaviours towards patients seeking help. Among reports include being patronized, excluded from decisions on treatment, assumed to lack the capacity to be responsible for their lives, told their hope for recovery is limited.

Individuals with lived experience of mental illness report friends and family members views towards their loved one appeared to change upon the discovery of their mental illness. The majority of this change is often the result of social stigma.

Consequences of Stigma



The stigma surrounding mental illness is one reason that people may find it extremely difficult to reach out and seek treatment. During treatment, patients may experience the stigma from mental health providers through their behaviour toward them. Due to both external and self-stigma, individuals may hide that they are receiving treatment and reduce themselves from social interactions to avoid additional rejection.



Issues related to stigmatization are multiplied for people who are additionally stigmatized for other reasons, including race, gender, sexuality, and more. For more information on mental health and the stigma surrounding marginalized groups, you can visit our module on Mental Health and Intersectionality.



The stigma of mental illness causing unemployment results in detrimental consequences. Employment provides not only income and financial stability but also daily routine and structure, social interactions, a sense of achievement and purpose, and a sense of identity.

Sometimes individuals unknowingly contribute to the stigmatization of mental illness in subtle ways. Such ways may include using derogatory terms and/or phrases in conversation. There are many stigmatizing phrases and terms used that are often used without the realization that they are contributing to the stigma around mental illness.

Stereotypes are incredibly harmful to both the person dealing with mental health issues as well as the people who are supporting them. Stereotypes often stem from misunderstanding and fear, but can generate a large number of issues for others.

Educational approaches to ending stigma present facts about the condition with the aim to correct any misinformation or contradicting negative attitudes or beliefs. There are a mass number of stereotypes and misconceptions regarding mental illness/disorder and can vary in content and severity based on the specific type of mental illness/disorder.

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