Reducing Stigma Around Behavioral Health

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About Me

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Objectives

• Understand what stigma is and how it impacts those struggling with mental health
• Articulate contributing factors to stigma
• Discuss strategies for overcoming stigma with individuals and providers
Why Are We Here?

According to SAMHSA (2020):

50% of White Americans do not choose to access or do not have access to behavioral health services

69.4% of Black and Brown Americans do not choose to access or have access to behavioral health services

Stigma associated with mental health problems is common in Asian and Pacific Islander communities. Shaming related to mental health problems is a cultural norm in some Asian communities, leading many who have mental health problems to avoid seeking help despite the need

Lack of anonymity and fear of others finding out about mental health is an issue in seeking care in rural communities
Video: How Changing our Language Can Break Stigma

https://youtu.be/eVv21d8Z4e8
What words do you associate with Mental Health?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MYTHS</strong></th>
<th><strong>FACTS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental illness is uncommon.</td>
<td>Mental illness is uncommon 1 in 5 American adults have experienced a mental health issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with mental health problems are violent.</td>
<td>People with severe mental illnesses are over 10 times more likely to be victims of violent crime than the general population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental illness isn’t real – it’s a character flaw.</td>
<td>Mental illness is very much real. Factors such as genes, physical illness, injury, and brain chemistry can contribute to mental health problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapy doesn’t work.</td>
<td>Therapy alone may not be sufficient for every person – sometimes a combination of therapy and medication is necessary. It depends on the person!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with mental illness will never recover.</td>
<td>Recovery is always possible, no matter the circumstance. Studies show that people with mental health problems get better and many recover completely. Recovery refers to the process in which people are able to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities. There are more treatments, services, and community support systems than ever before, and they work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is Stigma?

Mental Health Stigma is defined as:
Negative, judgmental, and/or discriminatory attitudes toward mental health challenges and those who live with them.

And why?
Stigma has arisen out of fear and a lack of understanding about mental health. It has persisted even with greater knowledge about the biochemical and genetic natures of different conditions. The representation of mental illness in mass media can add to the stigma.
How Common is Stigma?

• Stigma associated with mental illness - 63% of African Americans believe that a mental health condition is a personal sign of weakness.

• Stigma varies depending on the population, condition, and individual factors. For example, the prevalence of perceived stigma among people with schizophrenia is around 62.6%.

• Self-stigma, which involves internalized negative attitudes, affects 54.4% of people with psychiatric conditions.

(SAMHSA, 2017)
Families prefer informal support but “mental health” is not accepted in the community.

Stigma is prevalent in the community

“In the Black community you don’t talk about what is going on”

(AA Family 17)
Families prefer informal support but “mental health” is not accepted in the community.

When folks choose not to access either formal or informal services they turn to drugs and alcohol.

“We blame ourselves for not being well, so we don’t ask for help”

(AA Family 15)
How is Stigma Perpetuated?

- Media depicts the villain as a character with a mental illness
- Harmful stereotypes of people with mental illness
- Treating mental health issues as if people can overcome them if they just "try harder" or "snap out of it"
- Using phrases like "she's crazy" or "he's nuts" to describe people
- Halloween costumes depict people with mental illness as violent and dangerous
Trenton Psychiatric Hospital Experienced a fire...
ROASTED NUTS
General-alarm fire at Trenton Psychiatric Hospital

By TOM BALDWIN & JEAN LEVINE
Staff Writers

A worker's burn sparked a general-alarm blaze that gutted offices and a chapel at Trenton Psychiatric Hospital yesterday as it burned out of control for more than two hours.

Authorities said no TPH employees or patients were hurt in the evening blaze. But several of the 200 employees who responded to the scene collapsed from heat exhaustion.

Lieutenant Chief Graham South of the Trenton Fire Division said the blaze broke out in the Haines Building shortly after 3 p.m. and spread to the structure's other two buildings. The temperature at the time was about 90 degrees.

Several firemen working for more help. From Trenton's fire force as well as the volunteer firemen of Westampton, Hamilton and Lawrence.

The fire was declared under control at 2:39 p.m. as the blaze went to three alarm.

Firemen later dug into the building in the effort to fight down the blaze. Firefighters later pulled out of a rooftop area which had been cooled by the heat of the fire.
A trip to Psycho Donuts is a sensory experience, designed to bring out the crazy in all of us. Psycho nurses are on hand to provide bubblewrap therapy to minimize your selection anxiety. Psycho Donuts doubles as a quirky, offbeat art gallery, offering inexpensive original artwork from local artists. Take a picture in The Psycho Padded Cell; and 'donut' miss our collection of eclectic merchandise.
# Types of Mental Illness Stigma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Self-Stigma</th>
<th>Label Avoidance</th>
<th>Public Stigma</th>
<th>Structural Stigma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Individual internalizes public stereotypes and self-discrimination results</td>
<td>• Individuals refuse/decline to engage in services for fear of being labeled or stereotyped</td>
<td>• General public holds negative feelings towards certain groups of individuals</td>
<td>• Private and public institutional rules, regulations and norms that discriminate against a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief System: Prejudice and Fear</td>
<td>• “I can’t trust myself”</td>
<td>• “If I go for help and I get diagnosed with a mental illness that means I’m crazy or weak”</td>
<td>• “That person is unpredictable and dangerous”</td>
<td>• “I don’t want this person for a neighbor or a colleague or a teacher”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral: Discrimination</td>
<td>• Person with mental illness keeps themselves small and suffers alone</td>
<td>• Person with mental illness refrains from going to the clinic to seek help</td>
<td>• Parent tells child not to date person with mental illness</td>
<td>• Person with mental illness is not hired or promoted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Common Stereotypes

- Dangerousness
  - Unpredictable
  - Violent
- Responsibility
  - Blame and Shame
  - Onset Responsibility
  - Offset Responsibility
- Incompetence

Corresponding Prejudice

- Fear
- Anger
- Pity
Consequences of Stigma are Discrimination

- Stigma is one of the greatest barriers individuals with mental illness face in achieving life goals

- Employment

- Refusal to hire

- Lower-level jobs with fewer opportunities for advancement

- Participation in Postsecondary Education

- Social Isolation

Kristin Kosyluk PhD, University of South Florida
Check Your Stigma

Eddie is a 22-year-old with a history of hospitalization for Bi-Polar. He is stabilized on medication and is looking for housing and employment. How would you feel about Eddie?

- Moving next door to you?

- Would you give him the keys to your house and ask him to feed the cat while you are away for the weekend?

- Watch your children while you run to the store?
Desired Social Distance and Schizophrenia

(Angermeyer, Matschinger, & Schomerus, 2013)
Desired Social Distance and Depression

(Angermeyer, Matschinger, & Schomerus, 2013)
Impact of Stigma on Treatment

- Mental health treatment participation/service utilization
- Barrier to health care
- May prolong course of illness because it is less likely that people will seek treatment
- Some conditions may worsen over time without treatment, so failing to seek treatment ultimately worsens outcomes
The Consequences of Stigma

- Reluctance to seek treatment
- Delayed treatment which increases morbidity and mortality
- Social rejection, avoidance, and isolation
- Worse psychological well-being
- Poor understanding among friends and family
- Harassment, violence, or bullying
- Poor quality of life, disability, and increased socioeconomic burden
- Increased feelings of shame and self-doubt that often makes it more difficult to secure jobs or housing
Stigma in Systems

- People with mental illness over-represented in systems
- System involved people typically experience mental health symptoms as well as poverty, unemployment, lack of education, poor living conditions, inequitable access to wealth, and resources
- Structural stigma that materializes in other domains (i.e. employment, housing) puts people at risk for system involvement
- System professionals often hold beliefs about mental illness which can affect policy and practice
- People with mental illness are subjected to more intensive supervision in systems
- Presence of mental illness impacts the way professionals treat clients
“People with mental illnesses and their families routinely report that the attitudes and behaviors of health and mental health professionals exacerbate their experiences with stigma.”

(Livingston, 2013)
How Discrimination Shows Up in Treatment

- Physical ailments ignored or rejected
- Failure to educate people on their illness and/or medication side effects
- Using legal leverage and coercion to gain treatment compliance
- Tolerating routine application of dehumanizing practices
- Excluding people with mental illness from the treatment process/adopting paternalistic stance

Kristin Kosyluk PhD, University of South Florida
Video: Breaking the Stigma

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dEcMsz6Bas
Activity: Addressing Stigma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>UNSURE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Anyone can experience a mental health problem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. All cultures view mental health the same way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Stigma against people with mental health conditions is uncommon in the U.S.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Knowing someone that died by suicide makes people feel uncomfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. People with mental health problems don’t get better</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Young people who self-harm are attention seeking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. A delusion is defined as seeing something that is not real and should not be discussed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. When someone you care about is experiencing mental health issues it is best not to ask them how they are feeling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The only way to address psychosis is through medication management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. The best way to address trauma is through therapy</td>
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</table>
If a mental health professional were available at no cost to you, how likely would you be (on a scale of 1-5) to have a conversation with them about how the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic has impacted your emotions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>1 – Not likely at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 – Extremely likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Generations</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Z</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation X</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent Generation</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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What Can Individuals Do?

- Remember that 1 in 5 individuals experience mental illness
- Identify mental health resources and support groups
- Advocate for treatment
- Promote therapy to help people identify and change negative thoughts that often play a role in self-stigma
- Educate people about realities of mental illness
- Debunk myths about mental illness
- Educate family members and friends about mental illness and strongly discourage stereotypes or disparaging remarks
- Use Recovery Oriented System of Care Principles
• Promotes community integration and mobilizes community as a resource
• Facilitates family inclusion
• Facilitates a culture of peer support and leadership
• Values partnership and transparency
• Provides holistic, individualized, person directed treatment
• Creates mechanisms for sustained support
• Informed by data and the experiences of persons served and families
• Promotes hope
• Provides services in a strengths-based manner
How to Address Stigma

- Invest in contact-based strategies and seek out credible people to deliver the message
  - Examples: NAMI Peer-to-Peer, This Is My Brave

- Invest in evidence-based education strategies
  - Examples: Crisis Intervention Team Training for Law Enforcement, Mental Health First Aid

- Use person first language
  - Person with schizophrenia NOT “schizophrenic”

- Examine everything through the lens of a person with a behavioral health condition or loved ones
Resources To Address Stigma

Bring Change to Mind www.bringchange2mind.org

Healthy Place www.healthyplace.com

National Alliance for Mental Illness www.nami.org

Mental Health First Aid www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org

Stigma – RHIIhub Mental Health Toolkit (ruralhealthinfo.org)

WISE Initiative for Stigma Elimination – Building Resilience, Inclusion, and Hope for Mental Health in All Communities (eliminatestigma.org)
Stay Connected!

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https://www.facebook.com/Collectively_Us-107672031839895
https://www.instagram.com/collectively_us/

"Let's re-write the narrative on mental wellbeing."
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