



Mental Health and Overcoming the Stigma

Being diagnosed with a mental illness can be a difficult situation to navigate. Unfortunately, many people have negative attitudes or misleading beliefs about people who have a mental illness or those seeking treatment. These beliefs may be subtle or even hurtful. You may even judge yourself. Judgments by other people often stem from not understanding mental health conditions.

There are ways stigma can hurt:

- Prevent people from seeking help or treatment.
- Lessen one's self-esteem
- Make it difficult for family, friends, co-workers, or others to understand the condition.
- Make it harder for those in professional or social situations
- Can lead to harassment

The Mayo Clinic offers some helpful information **to overcome the stigma:**

- **Make sure you get treatment.** Don't let fear prevent you from getting help. Treatment can help you identify what's causing your symptoms and lessen those that are leading to difficulties in your life.
- **Don't let stigma create self-doubt and shame.** You might think that your condition is a sign of personal weakness, but it's not. Get counseling and educate yourself about your condition. Connect with others who have a mental health condition like yours. This can help you build self-esteem.
- **Be open.** Tell trusted family, friends, clergy or members of your community about your mental health condition. They can offer you support and understanding.
- **Don't think of yourself as your condition.** You are more than your condition.
- **Join a support group,** program, or access resources.
- **Get help.** If a mental health condition is affecting you, find out what programs might help.
- **Speak out against stigma.** Share your opinions which can help others understand mental health conditions.

All of this can make a big difference in your quality of life.

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Edited