

# BREAKING THE STIGMA OF MENTAL HEALTH

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Did you know that May is National Mental Health Awareness Month? This month is to bring awareness and continue our work towards breaking the stigma of mental health while supporting ourselves and our students.

## What is Stigma?

Stigma happens when someone or ourselves view a person in a negative way due to their mental health condition. Feelings of shame or judgement can come with stigma. People avoid or delay seeking treatment due to concerns about being treated differently, facing rejection, bullying and discrimination. Stigma may come from a lack of understanding of mental illness or fear. There are three types of stigma:

1. **Public Stigma:** Negative or discriminatory attitudes others have about mental illness
2. **Self-Stigma:** Negative attitudes, internalized shame people with mental illness have about their own condition.
3. **Institutional Stigma:** Is systemic that involves government or private organizational policies that intentionally or unintentionally limit opportunities for people with mental illness.

Stigma also affects individual's loved ones who support them. Stigma can contribute to an individual's worsening symptoms, reduced hope, lower self-esteem, difficulties with social relationships, and difficulties at school and/or work.

## Steps you can take Towards being Stigma Free

- **Talk openly** about mental health
- **Educate yourself and others** by responding to misperceptions or negative comments by sharing facts and experiences
- **Be conscious of language** used to address someone with a mental health condition.
- **Encourage equality** between physical illness and mental illness.
- **Show compassion** for those with mental illness.
- **Be honest and normalize** mental health treatment just like other health care treatment
- **Let media know** when they are using stigmatizing language or present stories in a stigmatizing way.
- **Choose empowerment** over shame.

## If you or a love one need support, you are not alone.

- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Helpline: 1-800-950-NAMI(6264) available M-F 10a.m.-8 p.m. ET
  - Free, nationwide peer-support service providing information, resources, and support for people living with a mental health condition, family members, caregivers, mental health providers and public.

## What to do in an Emergency

- If you or a loved one are in immediate danger, call 911 and notify the operator that it is a psychiatric emergency.
- Stanislaus County Community Emergency Service Response Team(CERT)- 209-558-4600
  - Available 24/7 Call to request psychiatric evaluation or services
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline-800-273-TALK(8255)
  - If you or someone you know is in crisis-whether they are considering suicide or not-a trained crisis counselor is available 24/7
  - Spanish lifeline-1-888-628-9454
- Crisis Text Line- Text NAMI to 741-741
  - Connect with a crisis counselor via text message available 24/7
- National Domestic Violence Hotline-800-799-SAFE(7233)
  - Confidential support for anyone experiencing domestic violence or seeking resources and information. Trained advocates are available 24/7. Help is available in Spanish and other languages
- National Sexual Assault Hotline-800-656-HOPE(4673)
  - Crisis support 24/7 connect with a trained staff member from a sexual assault service provider in your area. Offering access to various free services.

## Mental Health Facts:

- May 7 is National Children's Mental Health Awareness day.
- In 2016, 16.5% of U.S youth aged 6-17(7.7 million people) experienced a mental health disorder, only 50.6% received treatment.
- 1 in 6 U.S youth experience a mental health condition each year, only half get treatment
- In 2019, 20.6% of U.S Adults(51.5 million people) experienced mental illness, only 43.8% received treatment
- 1 in 5 U.S adults experience mental illness each year, less than half receive treatment
- 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14 & 75% by age 24
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-34 and is the 10th leading cause of death overall in the U.S
- Overall suicide rate in the U.S has increased by 35% since 1999

Sources:

<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/stigma-and-discrimination>  
<https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Pledge-to-Be-StigmaFree>  
<https://www.nami.org/getattachment/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Partners-and-Events/YANA2021-Partner-Guide.pdf>