

How To
Combat Stigma

Within the Mental Health System

Human Resources

Psychiatrists

✓ Administrators

Finance Directors

Quality Improvement

Customer Service

Program Supervisors

Front Line Workers

Peer Support Specialists

Created by the
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Steering Committee

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Combating Stigma

IN THE MENTAL
HEALTH SYSTEM

ADMINISTRATORS

**LOOK
CLOSER**

...

See me for
who I am



When we come into our workplace, we bring our diverse life experiences with us— experiences that can affect our attitudes and behaviors whether we are aware of it or not. If we're not careful, we may find ourselves behaving in ways that could be considered stigmatizing by the people we serve. We all want to be the very best we can in our interactions with those who have come to us for help. The following are a few statements that can be used to identify stigmatizing attitudes and behaviors:

You Know You're Stigmatizing If You...

- treat individuals with mental illness differently than providers.
- your speech and body language reflect lack of acceptance or disrespect.
- are not making information on all health benefits available and easily accessible to individuals with mental illness and staff.

What Every Administrator Should Know About Stigma

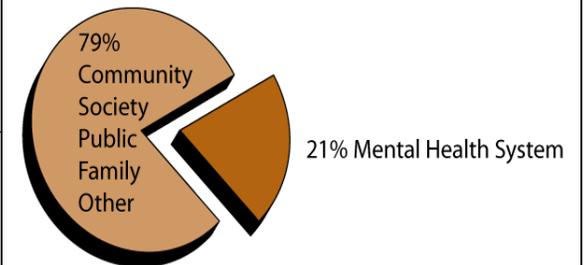
Remember...

- Stigma is a major deterrent for people who are in need of treatment.
- It requires courage to seek help.
- Investing in a mentally healthy workforce is good business.
- A mentally healthy workforce is linked to less absenteeism and greater productivity.
- ◇ It is important that administrative staff to prevent individuals from delaying treatment and help them seek appropriate services because:
 - ◇ Supporting prevention and early intervention services is less costly, both in the short term and over a person's lifetime.
 - ◇ Prevention and early intervention are proven to be critical in lessening the needs for more intensive and more costly treatments.
 - ◇ Less stigma translates to less stress and chaos in a person's life. This in turn means easier treatment, with fewer dollars required.

What You Can Do

- Stress the need and advocate for staff to provide consumers with skills training in financial management and budgeting.
- Support the integration of peers into your agency's workforce and the availability of consumer-run programming.
- Calculate the cost of depression and alcoholism in your workplace. Offer an employee assistance program.
- Evaluate current agency mental health benefits and health services.
- Encourage colleagues to see that a person's financial status and healthcare coverage are material to their treatment and support.
- Look for teachable moments with your staff and co-workers when you hear stigmatizing comments.
- Look for opportunities to educate colleagues, staff, and vendors about persons served to reduce stigma.
- Implement a "no wrong door" approach to customer service that encourages consumers and families to reach out for help. Be open and welcoming to consumers who have questions about their finances and benefits.
- Create procedures so employees and consumers can easily access services.
- Include questions about stigma and recovery in your interviews with new hires in your department and agency.

Who discriminated against you?



SAMSHA's ADS Center (2007) Improving Provider Attitudes and Practices toward People with Mental Illness