

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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**Combating  
Stigma**

IN THE MENTAL  
HEALTH SYSTEM

FINANCE  
DIRECTORS

**LOOK  
CLOSER**

...  
See me for  
who I am

When we come into our workplace, we bring our diverse life experiences with us. These experiences 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...

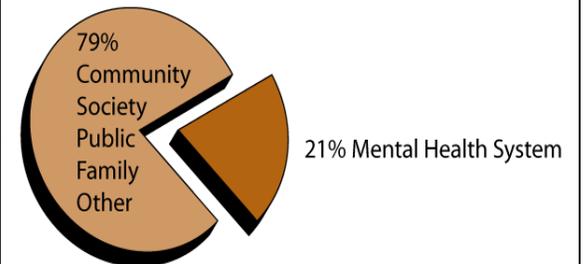
- treat individuals with mental illness differently than providers.
- are not making information on community health resources and health benefits available and easily accessible to individuals with mental illness.
- do not promote prevention, early intervention and wellness programs at your agency.

## What Every Finance Director Should Know About Stigma

### Did you know?

- Stigma is one of the number one deterrents for people who are in need of treatment.
- Preventing individuals from delaying or avoiding seeking treatment is important to business office staff 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.

### Who discriminated against you?



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

### What You Can Do

- Stress the need and advocate for individuals with mental illness to receive skills training in financial management and budgeting.
- Support the integration of peers into your agency's work force and the availability of consumer-run programming.
- Encourage co-workers to see that a person's financial status is material to their treatment and support.
- Look for teachable moments with your co-workers when you hear stigmatizing comments.
- Look for opportunities to educate vendors about persons served to reduce stigma.
- Implement a "no wrong door" approach to customer service and support that encourages individuals with mental illness and families to reach out for help. Be open and welcoming to individuals with mental illness who have questions about their finances.
- Include questions about stigma and recovery in your interviews with new hires in your department.