

What is Stigma? Why is it a Problem?

Stigma is when someone, or even you yourself, views a person in a negative way just because they have a mental health condition. Some people describe stigma as a feeling of shame or judgement from someone else. Stigma can even come from an internal place, confusing *feeling* bad with *being* bad.

Navigating life with a mental health condition can be tough, and the isolation, blame and secrecy that is often encouraged by stigma can create huge challenges to reaching out, getting needed support and living well. Learning how to avoid and address stigma are important for all of us, especially when you realize stigma's effects:

- People experiencing mental health conditions often face rejection, bullying and discrimination. This can make their journey to recovery longer and more difficult.
- Mental health conditions are the leading cause of disability across the United States.
- Even though most people can be successfully treated, less than half of the adults in the U.S. who need services and treatment get the help they need.
- The average delay between the onset of symptoms and intervention is 8-10 years.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death of youth ages 15-24 and the tenth leading cause of death for all Americans.

Step 1 - Educate Yourself and Others

Step 2 - See the Person, Not the Condition

Step 3 - Take Action

Our mental health care system has been in crisis for far too long; often keeping treatment and recovery out of the hands of many who need it. We can take action now as we push for better legislation and policies to improve lives for everyone. By lending your support, you can show that this cause is important to you.

<https://www.nami.org/stigmafree>



**Let others know that there is hope and understanding.
You can change the way the world sees mental health.**

Mental Illness

- [ADHD](#)
- [Anxiety Disorders](#)
- [Autism](#)
- [Bipolar Disorder](#)
- [Borderline Personality Disorder](#)
- [Depression](#)
- [Dissociative Disorders](#)
- [Eating Disorders](#)
- [Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder](#)
- [Posttraumatic Stress Disorder](#)
- [Schizoaffective Disorder](#)
- [Schizophrenia](#)

Related Conditions

- [Anosognosia](#)
- [Dual Diagnosis](#)
- [Psychosis](#)
- [Self-harm](#)
- [Sleep Disorders](#)

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