

How to Help Overcome Stigma About Mental Health Conditions and Addiction

Mental Health Conditions

One in 4 adults and 1 in 5 children will experience a mental health condition at some point in life.

Anyone can get a mental health condition at any time. It can start as the result of a traumatic event or from a lot of stress.

Addiction

One in 10 Americans age 12 and older experience some form of alcohol or drug addiction at some point in life. That's about the same as the population of Texas.

Addiction usually develops over time and much like a mental health condition, interferes with a person's life.

What is Stigma?

Stigma is a set of negative beliefs about a group of people that can lead to negative attitudes and actions against them. It's based on things such as the media, a lack of education and understanding, personal experiences.

Stigma about mental health conditions and addiction is common.

Why Don't People Seek Help?

Stigma can lead people to label, stereotype and look down on someone with a mental health condition or addiction. This can cause the person to feel ashamed or embarrassed, and prevent him or her from getting proper care.

Many wait an average of 10 years before seeking help, if they seek treatment at all.

What Can You Do?

- **Be compassionate.**
Treat people with mental health conditions and addiction as you would want your family member or loved one to be treated.
- **Choose language carefully.**
Don't use words like "crazy," "nuts," "psycho" or "junkie." Phrases like "feeling bipolar" or "being paranoid" can also add to stigma.
- **Learn more.**
When you know more about mental health conditions and addiction, you can educate others and behave differently yourself.

For More Information

For more information about mental health conditions and addiction, visit:

- allinahealth.org/mentalhealth
- nami.org
- nimh.nih.gov
- samhsa.gov
- facesandvoicesofrecovery.org.

**Information adapted from the
National Institute of Mental Health,
the National Alliance on Mental Health
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Abuse.**