

WORDS CAN HEAL

Here are six steps you can follow to help end the stigma of mental illness:

1. **Learn More.** Many organizations sponsor nationwide programs about mental health and mental illness. Call the Knowledge Exchange Network at (800) 789-CMHS(2647).
2. **Insist on accountable media.** Sometimes the media portray people who have mental illnesses inaccurately, and this makes stereotypes harder to change.
3. **Obey the laws in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).** The ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in all areas of public life, including housing, employment, and public transportation. Mental illnesses are considered a disability covered under the ADA.
4. **Recognize and appreciate the contributions to society made by people who have mental illnesses.** People who have mental illnesses are major contributors to American life- from the arts to the sciences, from medicine to entertainment to professional sports.
5. **Treat people with the dignity and respect we all deserve.** People who have mental illnesses may include your friends, your neighbors, and your family.
6. **Think about the person-the contents behind the label.** Avoid labeling people by their diagnosis. Instead of saying, "She's a schizophrenic," say, "She has a mental illness." Never use the term "mentally ill."

Persons who are interested in obtaining further information may contact South Dakota Advocacy Services. All offices can be reached by e-mail at www.sdadvocacy.com or by calling:

1-800-658-4782

SD Advocacy Services
1719 Broadway, Ste. B-2
Yankton, SD 57078
(605) 665-5616

SD Advocacy Services
1575 LaCrosse, Ste. K
Rapid City, SD 57701
(605) 342-3808

SD Advocacy Services
2121 W. 63rd Pl., Ste. 30
Sioux Falls, SD 57108
(605) 361-7438

SD Advocacy Services
221 South Central Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
(605) 224-8294 or
1-800-658-4782 (voice or TDD)

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Assisting South Dakotans with Disabilities

KNOW THE FACTS

STIGMA OF MENTAL ILLNESS

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ANTI-STIGMA

Stigma is not just the use of the wrong word or action. Stigma is about disrespect. It is the use of negative labels to identify a person living with mental illness. Stigma is a barrier and discourages individuals and their families from getting the help they need due to the fear of being discriminated against. An estimated 50 million Americans experience a mental disorder in any given year and only one-fourth of them actually receive mental health and other services.

STIGMA WEBSITES

www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/stigma
www.nmha.org/newsroom/stigma/index.cfm
www.mentalhealthstigma.org
www.adscenter.org
www.nami.org

DID YOU KNOW THAT

- ◆ An estimated 50 million Americans experience a mental disorder in any given year?
- ◆ Stigma is not just the use of the wrong word or action?
- ◆ Stigma is about disrespect, and that stigma is about the use of negative labels to identify a person living with mental illness?
- ◆ Stigma is a barrier and discourages individuals and their families from getting the help they need due to the fear of being discriminated against?
- ◆ Many people would rather tell employers they have committed a petty crime and were in jail, than admit to being in a psychiatric hospital?
- ◆ Stigma results in inadequate insurance coverage for mental health services?
- ◆ Stigma results in fear, mistrust, and violence against people living with mental illness?
- ◆ Stigma results in families and friends turning their backs on people with mental illness?
- ◆ Stigma keeps people from getting needed mental health services?

DO'S

Do use respectful language such as:

Person who has schizophrenia

Person with a psychiatric disability

Person with bipolar disorder

DON'T'S

Don't portray successful persons

with disabilities as super human.

Don't use generic labels such as

retarded or the mentally ill.

Don't use terms like crazy, lunatic,

manic-depressive, slow

functioning, or normal.