



Healthy BlueSM

BlueChoice[®] HealthPlan of SC

Healthy Connections



Tackling Mental Health Stigma



What is Stigma?

Stigma is an attitude or perception towards a person, circumstance or illness that is manifested by bias, stereotyping, fear, embarrassment, anger and avoidance.

Harms Associated with Stigma

- Obstacle to quality care
- Low self-esteem
- Isolation
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Discrimination or abuse

Causes of Stigma Towards People

- Historical separation of mind and body
 - 19th century America divided “mainstream health” from mental health
- Fear of violence
 - People with psychotic disorders believed to be more dangerous
- Inaccurate media coverage in news, television and movies
 - Reinforce public view of people with mental illness being violent
- Misunderstanding of mental disorders

Fact vs. Myth

- **Facts**

- People with severe mental illness are more likely to be a victim of hate crime
- Effective treatments for most mental health disorders are readily available

- **Myths**

- People with severe mental illness are dangerous and should be locked up
- People with mental health disorders cannot get better

Mental Health in South Carolina*

- **General**

- Over two million South Carolinians live in a community that does not have enough mental health professionals.
- South Carolinians are over five times more likely to get mental health care out-of-network.

- **Adults**

- Approximately 183,000 adults in South Carolina have serious mental illness and 189,000 had thoughts of suicide in the past year.
- Roughly 38 percent of adults in reported symptoms of anxiety or depression.

- **Children**

- Close to 60 percent of 12–17-year-olds with depression did not receive care in the last year.
- High school students with depression are twice as likely to drop out of school.

**Data as of Feb. 2021.*

Ways to Reduce Stigma in Health Care

- Participate in skills-based training
 - Improves provider confidence and comfort
 - Improves understanding of mental illness and how to treat it
 - Improves patient-provider interactions
- Self reflect on unconscious bias and correct false beliefs
- Participate in inter-professional education that focuses on first-voice testimonials

Make the Pledge

The National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) is trying to end stigma. The StigmaFree campaign looks to shift systemic barriers and encourage acceptance and understanding.

You can make a pledge to be StigmaFree on with website at www.NAMI.org.


References


- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. **Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General**. Rockville, MD 1999.
- <https://www.nami.org/home>. Assessed Aug. 8, 2023


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