



United

Against Stigma

One of the biggest barriers to mental health is the stigma associated with mental health disorders.

The stigma attached to mental health disorders is universal, pervading across cultures and contexts across the globe.



1 in 8 people

live with a mental health disorder globally¹

4.6% of health research

globally focuses on mental health²

2% of health budgets

on average go to mental health³

Despite the prevalence of mental health disorders, there are many misconceptions and much misinformation, which results in widespread stigma.

People with mental health disorders can experience stigma from families, neighbors, and even healthcare professionals themselves. In some cases, they can internalize negative messages and stereotypes and apply them to themselves, known as self-stigma.⁴



Stigma leads to social isolation and discrimination, which impacts a person's ability to earn an income, gain access to quality care, be part of their community, and recover from their mental health disorder.⁵



In a study by the Lancet, 80% of respondents strongly agreed that stigma and discrimination can be worse than the impact of the mental health disorder itself.⁶

Rather than risk potential discrimination, many people with mental health disorders choose to go through it alone.

Ultimately, stigma and discriminatory attitudes and behaviors can negatively impact people with mental health disorders and hinder their recovery. Understanding public stigma is the first step to developing stigma reduction efforts.

UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC STIGMA

Public stigma is defined here as “the way in which people in a given community or society views and acts towards people with mental health disorders.”⁷ A common way of understanding public stigma is to identify three related components: knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

The knowledge component usually refers to a lack of detailed knowledge in society about mental health disorders, but can also arise due to misinformation.⁸

Stigmatizing attitudes refers to negative emotional reactions towards people with mental health disorders.⁹

Behavior refers to the rejection and social exclusion of people with mental health disorders by discrimination, which can cause harm by being anticipated as well as being experienced.¹⁰

These negative attitudes and discriminatory behaviors can create and reinforce misconceptions about the prevalence, process, and causes of mental health disorders. Such misconceptions can include beliefs about the dangerousness or incompetence of people with mental health disorders, or the belief that these disorders cannot be treated.¹¹



THE IMPACT OF STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

Stigma related to mental health disorders is multifaceted with a multitude of consequences that are often underestimated.

The Lancet Commission on Ending Stigma and Discrimination in Mental Health divides the impact of stigma into four domains: personal impacts, structural impacts, impact on health and social care, and social and economic impacts. Globally, people with mental health disorders commonly experience at least some of the following restrictions¹²:

PERSONAL IMPACTS

- Social isolation and loneliness
- Self-stigma
- Reduced quality of life

HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL CARE EFFECTS

- Limited access to healthcare
- Delayed recovery

STRUCTURAL IMPACTS

- Legal provisions
- Human rights
- Implementation of psychosocial interventions

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Employment
- Voting rights
- Property ownership

ADDRESSING STIGMA

Stigma related to mental health disorders can be alleviated through disease awareness campaigns.

- 1 Research shows that knowing or having contact with someone with a mental health disorder is one of the best ways to reduce stigma.¹³ A 2016 review of research on addressing stigma concluded that efforts to reduce stigma and discrimination can work at the personal and society levels.¹⁴
- 2 Actively listening to people with lived experience of mental health disorders is imperative to understanding the impact of the disorders and their associated stigma. Anti-stigma interventions – particularly social contact strategies through which people with lived experience help to shift attitudes and actions – can also reduce stigma and discrimination in the community.¹⁵



At least on the theoretical level, we understand what it means to live with a mental health disorder. However, there still is a considerable amount of stigma, and it is still difficult to talk about it for many people. I don't want to force people to talk about it, but still, some are simply afraid of admitting it to themselves, or their peers, and because of that they can't get the help and support they need.

TOMASZ URBANEK
LIVING WITH OCD AND DEPRESSION

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Stigma can also be reduced by improving public mental health literacy. Global awareness-raising campaigns, such as World Mental Health Day and Brain Awareness Week, are opportunities to normalize conversations about mental health disorders and overturn misconceptions and prejudices.

THE IMPORTANCE OF USING NON-STIGMATIZING LANGUAGE

Stigmatizing language is a barrier to treatment for people living with mental health disorders.

Stigmatizing language reflects and reinforces negative attitudes and behavior towards people living with mental health disorders. Having open and respectful conversations with people living with mental health disorders is the first step to overturning harmful discourse.

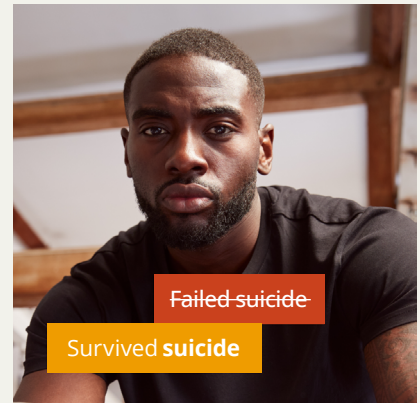
The Lancet Commission on Ending Stigma and Discrimination in Mental Health recommends using person-first language when speaking to or about an individual with a mental health disorder. Using person-first language puts the individual at the center, not their disorder.¹⁶



Describing symptoms or experiences with stigmatizing language can prevent people from seeking help.



A person is not defined by their mental health disorder.



Be mindful about how you speak about mental health disorders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To continue to raise awareness about mental health disorders and fight stigma, we ask:

Involve people with lived experience in stigma reduction efforts

No one understands the impact of brain disorders better than the people affected by them. People with lived experience should be empowered and supported to play active roles in disease awareness campaigns and stigma reduction efforts.

Lead the conversation on mental health with non-stigmatizing language

Fighting stigma surrounding mental health disorders starts with open and honest discussions. When speaking to or about someone living with a mental health disorder, lead with a person-first language.

LUNDBECK'S COMMITMENT

As a leader in brain health, Lundbeck will continue to support mental health awareness and education efforts to eradicate stigma and enable policy and societal change.



At Lundbeck, we work to mobilize efforts to eliminate stigma and normalize discussions about brain health and its associated disorders. These include global awareness-raising campaigns on brain health promotion and stigma reduction, such as Brain Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day, as well as in-depth educational campaigns targeted at policymakers, healthcare professionals, and the public in general.



At Lundbeck, we are wholly committed to restoring brain health and supporting people impacted by brain disorders, including mental health disorders. Our business activities, advocacy community engagement, and interactions with policymakers and non-governmental organizations are guided by clarity of purpose: we are tirelessly dedicated to restoring brain health, so every person can be their best.



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