



7 ways to reduce the stigma of mental illness

Millions of people are affected by mental illness each year. Unfortunately, more than half of them either delay seeking treatment or do not get help at all due to the stigma associated with mental illness. Stigma causes people to feel ashamed, concerned about being treated differently, or to fear the loss of their livelihood due to something that is out of their control.

With compassion and support, people can recover and lead happier, healthier lives. Treatment is available and recovery is possible, but overcoming stigma is a critical first step in the process.

What you can do

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) offers some suggestions about what we can do as individuals to help reduce the stigma of mental illness:

- 1 Talk openly about mental health—and discuss it no differently than physical health.
- 2 Show compassion for those with mental illness.
- 3 Be conscious of language—remind people that words matter.
- 4 Educate yourself and others—respond to misperceptions or negative comments by sharing facts and experiences.
- 5 Encourage equality between physical and mental illness—draw comparisons to how they would treat someone with cancer or diabetes.
- 6 Be honest about treatment—normalize mental health treatment, just like other healthcare treatment.
- 7 Let the media know when they are presenting stories of mental illness in a stigmatizing way.

Help is available. If you or someone in your household is struggling, please contact your program for free, confidential resources. Visit MagellanAscend.com or call 1-866-580-9046 (TTY 711).

