



Mental Illness & Stigma Fact Sheet

The Facts

Most people who live with mental illness have, at some point, been blamed for their conditions. They have been called names. Their symptoms have been referred to as “a phase” or something they are able to manage, “if they only tried.” They have been illegally discriminated against, with no justice. This is the overwhelming power that stigma holds.

Some Harmful Effects of Stigma can include:

- Reluctant to seek help or treatment
- Lack of understanding by family, friends, co-workers, and others
- Bullying, physical violence or harassment
- The belief that you will never succeed at certain challenges or that you cannot improve your situation
- Fewer opportunities for work, school or social activities or trouble finding housing
- Health insurance that does not adequately cover your mental illness treatment

Support & Treatment

Judgment of those who are experiencing mental illness almost always stem from a lack of understanding rather than information based on facts. Learning to accept your condition and recognize what you need to do to treat it, seeking support, and helping educate others can make a huge difference.

Steps to Cope with Stigma:

- Get Treatment. Do not let the fear of being labeled with a mental illness prevent you from seeking help. Treatment can provide relief by identifying what is wrong and reducing symptoms that interfere with your work and personal life.
- Educate yourself and others.
- Talk openly about mental health
- Do not equate yourself with your illness.
- Encourage equality between physical and mental illness.
- Speak out against stigma
- Join a support group.

1. <https://www.nami.org/blogs/nami-blog/october-2017/9-ways-to-fight-mental-health-stigma>
2. [www.mayoclinic.org › mental-health › art-20046477](http://www.mayoclinic.org/mental-health/art-20046477)