



Activity 4

Exploring Stigma

Objective:

- The participant will examine their own and their culture's view of mental health.

Materials:

- *Breaking the Stigma* Document
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Sticky notes
- Pens

Steps:

1. Pass out a copy of the *Breaking the Stigma* document to each participant.
2. Explain that stigma is present in all cultures and how it can hurt.
3. Ask participants, "What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear 'mental health'?"
4. Have participants look at the *Breaking the Stigma* document individually.
5. Have participants discuss in groups:
 - Why is it important to fight stigma?
 - How is mental health seen in your culture and the culture of the families/students with whom we work?
 - What can we do locally and statewide to promote awareness?
6. Participants will write their answers on chart paper.
7. Facilitator can have a brief discussion by tables or have the participants do a gallery walk and add their thoughts on sticky notes.



Mental Health in the Student Population: Breaking the Stigma

Stigma is difficult to define, easy to recognize. It comes from lack of knowledge and it can be deadly.

What Does Stigma Look Like?

- discrimination
- singular embarrassment
- rejection
- bullying
- negative joking
- gossiping
- dismissiveness

How Do Those Stigmatized Feel?

- ashamed
- socially rejected
- excluded
- unworthy
- weak
- abused
- embarrassed



The stigma surrounding mental health - and its treatment - is so strong in certain cultures that it keeps people from getting the help they need.

What can we do?

Educate yourself and others to understand the topic.

- Mental health is a medical condition.
- One in four American adults experience mental health issues.
- The rate among adult Latinos is similar, but only one in 11 will contact a mental health professional and fewer than one in five will visit a general health care provider.
- Suicide is at epidemic rates, but it is proven that talking about suicide reduces risk.
- Latina high school girls have the highest suicide attempt rate in the country.
 - Almost 25% have contemplated suicide and almost 15% have attempted it.
- Realize that certain communities need more good information about the truth behind mental illnesses, the cultural views of mental health, and the wisdom of seeking medical help.

Talk about it with compassion.

- Remember that talking reduces risks. Encourage people not to keep secrets.
- If you see someone struggling or they mention anything, ask them about it and listen.
- Learn ways to overcome language barriers so that you can easily help someone recognize symptoms and discover where to go for help.

Collect good resources.

- Gather (or create) appropriate resources to be available when needed.
- Create bulletin boards, tables, packets, etc. so that people can pick up information and read it at their own convenience.

