



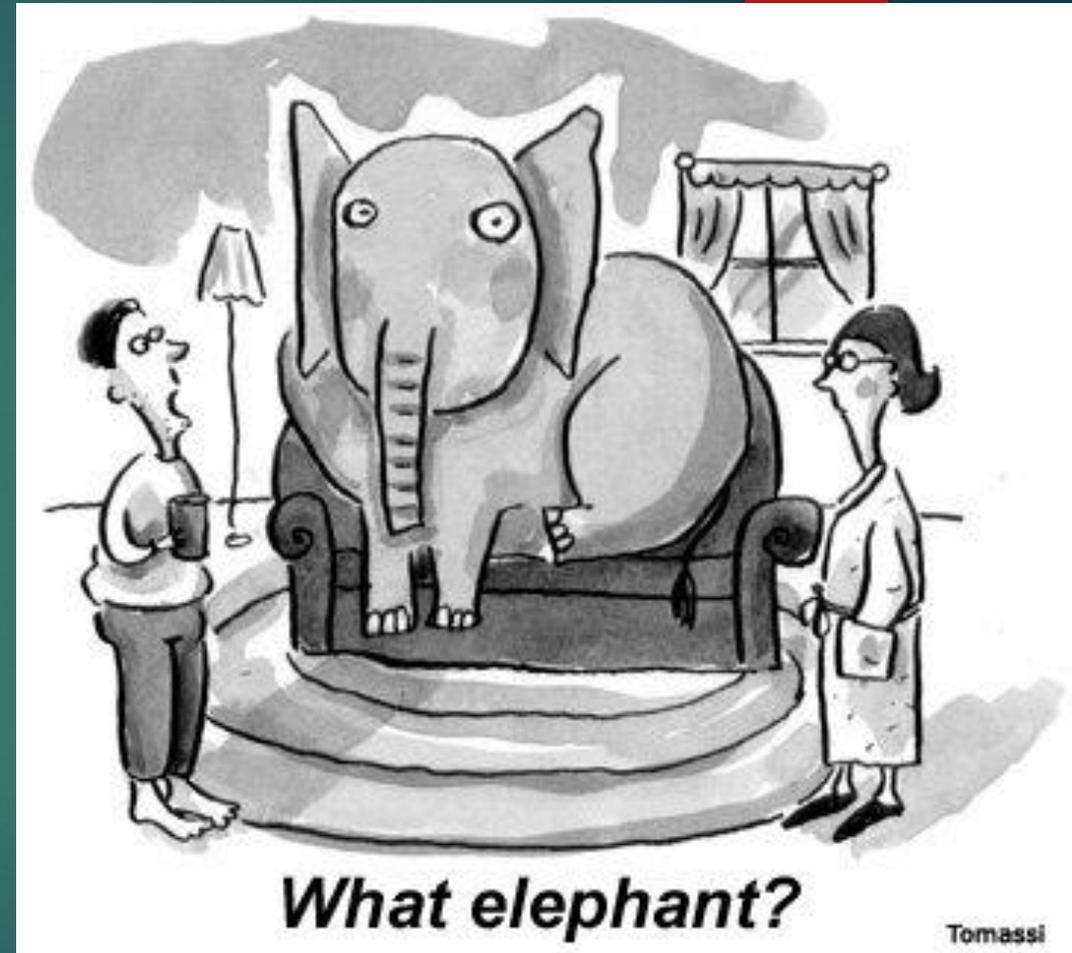
Challenging and Addressing Behavioral Health Stigma in Healthcare Settings

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The Elephant in the Room

What are your elephants?



What is Behavioral Health?

- ▶ It's a way of being inclusive. Behavioral health includes not only ways of promoting well-being by preventing or intervening in mental illness such as [depression](#) or [anxiety](#), but also has as an aim preventing or intervening in substance use or other addictions.
- ▶ When distinguishing between behavioral health and mental health, it is important to remember that behavioral health is a blanket term that includes mental health. Behavioral health looks at how behaviors impact someone's health — physical and mental.
- ▶ Perhaps the term "behavioral health" is less stigmatized than "mental health," and is a discipline.

What is Mental Health?

- ▶ A person's condition with regard to their psychological and emotional well-being.
- ▶ Wikipedia defines Mental Health (MH) as: level of psychological wellbeing or an absence of mental illness.
- ▶ 1 in 5 Americans experiences a mental illness or substance use disorder each year, and the majority also has a comorbid physical health condition.

What is substance use?

- ▶ Substance use (SU) disorders occur when the recurrent use of alcohol and/or drugs causes clinically and functionally significant impairment, such as health problems, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school, or home.

What is the connection MH & SU?

- ▶ There's a definite connection between mental illness and substance use
- ▶ Self-medicating- escaping the mental illness feelings to assist with coping
- ▶ Dual Diagnosis= Co-Occurring Disorders
- ▶ Addiction to drugs and alcohol is a mental illness

What is Stigma?

A mark of shame, disgrace or disapproval that results in discrimination

Stigma in the Mentally Ill

An attempt to label mentally ill people as less worthy of respect than others

What is mental health stigma

- ▶ Stigma occurs as a result of stereotypes and negative perceptions and is often associated with mental health conditions.
- ▶ Stigma can occur both externally (socially) and internally (self-stigma), and is a major barrier that may prevent an individual from seeking help for what is often a very treatable condition.
- ▶ There are two types of stigma associated to mental health stigma
 - ▶ External (social) stigma
 - ▶ Self-stigma

External (social) stigma

- ▶ External stigma may be obvious and direct, for example, when someone makes a negative remark about another person's issue or treatment, or it may be subtle, such as when someone assumes that a person is unstable, violent, or dangerous because of his or her mental health condition.

Social stigma

People with mental illnesses are:

- Dangerous
- Unpredictable
- Attention-seeking
- Have self-inflicted problems
- Can think their way out of it

Self-stigma

- ▶ Self-stigma exists when people with mental illness internalize the negative stereotypes and opinions towards themselves. These negative perceptions can lead to self blame and low self-esteem. Individuals with a mental health issue often say that stigma is far **worse** than the illness itself.

Self-Stigma, Continued

- 69% of people with psychological distress would hide it from co-workers, classmates
- Barrier to seeking help (suffer in silence)
- Decreased self-esteem
- Decreased self-efficacy
- Less likely to reach vocational goals
- Decreased subjective quality of life

Self-Stigma, Final

Fear/Shame → Silence →

- Isolation
- Untreated Disease
- Deteriorating Physical Health
- Worsening or Co-occurring Diseases



Social vs. Self-stigma

Social Stigma- the public's negative perceptions of, and discrimination against, the mentally ill

Self Stigma- the acceptance (by those with mental illness) of prejudiced perceptions held by others

What we know now

- ▶ Studies have shown that one of the central obstacles is the negative stigma attached to mental illness by society at large, which is much more powerful than the labels attached to people with other disabilities.
- ▶ This stigma may lead to social exclusion.

CRAZY STRANGE CUCKOO
FRUITCAKE
NUTTER
FLAKY LUNATIC
RETARD DISTURBED
WACKO UNBALANCED
DEMENTED LOONY
LOCO BASKETCASE
SCREENBALL SIMPLE
DANGEROUS THICK
BONKERS
CRACKERS

Sticks and stones
may break my bones
**but words will
also hurt me.**

Make the pledge and
STAMP OUT
STIGMA.co.uk
against people with mental ill-health
and learning disabilities

Repercussions feared by mentally ill

- Limited Career Advancement Opportunities
- **Employment Discrimination**
- Exclusion from Social Circles
- Loss of Spouse/Partner
- Judgment from Religious Community
- Health and Life Insurance Limitations

Mental illness and stigma

- 78% of adults with mental illness and 89 percent without -- believed that treatment is an effective method to help patients lead healthy and normal lives
- 57% of all adults surveyed felt that individuals are compassionate and sympathetic to those with mental illness
- 25% of adults with mental illness believed that to be true

Stigma



Stigma embraces both **prejudicial attitudes** and **discriminating behavior** towards individuals with mental health problems

Who holds stigmatizing beliefs of the mentally ill?

- Family members
- Friends
- Teachers
- **Healthcare workers**
- Co-workers
- Government (Medicare and Medicaid laws)
- Health insurance companies

(The discrimination is indiscriminate)

Effects of Stigma

On average, mentally ill people wait 10 years to seek treatment after symptoms first appear due to:

- Self-stigma/shame/unwillingness to share
- Inability to find help (access)
- Nearly 2/3 of all people with mental illness do not seek treatment

Effects of Untreated Mental Illness

Societal Burden due to:

- Disability
- Homelessness (26%MI, 36% SA)
- Substance Use
- Crime
- Death

Economic Impact of Depression

- MDD is the leading cause of disability in the U.S. for ages 15-44.
- MDD is the leading cause of disability worldwide
- Ranks among the top three workplace issues (after family crisis and stress)

Economic Impact of Depression, Continued

- Annual toll on U.S. businesses- **\$70 billion** (medical expenditures, lost productivity)
- **\$12 billion** in lost workdays each year.
- **\$11 billion** in other costs accrue from decreased productivity due to symptoms that sap energy, affect work habits, cause problems with concentration, memory, and decision-making.

Substance use and mental illness

Compared to controls, people with severe mental illness:

- 4 times more likely to be heavy alcohol users
- 3.5 times more likely to use marijuana regularly
- 4.6 times more likely to use other drugs
- 5.1 times more likely to be daily smokers (smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States)

Suicide

- 30,000 reported suicides in the U.S. each year
- 4th leading cause of death in the US (18- 65y)
- 3rd leading cause of death in 15- 24 y
- 4th leading cause of death in 10- 14 y

- 2/3 of suicides in U.S. are due to depression

What does stigma look and/or sound like in the workplace?

- ▶ Behavioral health issues are not discussed
- ▶ When behavioral health issues are brought up they're dismissed
- ▶ Behavioral Health issues can be viewed as “not our problem”
- ▶ The unspoken belief is that we don't discuss those types of issues while at work
- ▶ Commonly used quotes:
 - ▶ “I don't think they're that bad to get Behavioral Health involved. “
 - ▶ “They're just an addict.”
 - ▶ “He's crazy.”
 - ▶ “We don't have any place for these people to go.”

Questions that you can begin to explore:

- ▶ Do you have a referral process?
- ▶ Do you know how to introduce services?
- ▶ Are you comfortable making a BH referral?
- ▶ Do you have adequate BH services?
- ▶ If in a mental health emergency, do you know what help is available to you?
- ▶ If a colleague appeared to be struggling emotionally, do you know what to do?
- ▶ When we have a patient that's suicidal, do you feel equipped to care for the patient?

What are signs of stigma in healthcare setting?

- ▶ It's never talked about
- ▶ Patients aren't screened or referred for behavioral health services
- ▶ Proper attention and programming hasn't caught up with the patient care demands
- ▶ Lack of staffing for behavioral healthcare needs
- ▶ Access to care is limited in comparison to other specialties
- ▶ Behavioral Health isn't recognized within the organization such as other illnesses

What causes Behavioral health stigma in healthcare settings?

- ▶ Ignoring that it exist
- ▶ No discussion/lack of acknowledgement
- ▶ Lack of leadership support
- ▶ Mental health may be given a low priority in relation to other medical fields
- ▶ Stigma related to insurance/billing/reimbursement rates
- ▶ Stigma associated to “labeling a person”

How does stigma impact patient care?

- ▶ Barrier to care
- ▶ Our issue becomes the patient's issue when it shouldn't
- ▶ Proper care can be delayed and/or missed
- ▶ Can cause misdiagnosis or over diagnosis
- ▶ Reinforces a culture of mistrust
- ▶ Impacts the quality of care provided
 - ▶ Why should patients choose to come to your hospital where care is split vs go to a cutting edge hospital that offers integrated care
- ▶ Reinforces ignorance associated to mental health being equally as important as physical health
- ▶ Not treating the whole person

YOU'D
NEVER SAY,
"IT'S JUST
CANCER,
GET OVER IT."

So why do some say that about depression?

It's all in the head, it's just a bad mood, it's a personal weakness. They're just a few of the common misperceptions about depression. The truth? Depression is a real medical illness that can be as debilitating as other major illnesses. Like cancer, it can be fatal. And like diabetes, it's biologically based. But like other life-threatening illnesses, it can be treated. Which means there's real hope for everyone who has it.

Learn more at DepressionIsReal.org

Depression: The Hidden Epidemic | Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance | Depression is Real
National Alliance on Mental Illness | National Depression Awareness

How does stigma impact the team/department?

- ▶ It can impact cohesiveness
- ▶ Can cause colleagues to feel uncomfortable speaking up or sharing their experiences with such illnesses
- ▶ It keeps the stigma going
- ▶ Can be viewed as being discriminatory/prejudice towards mentally ill
- ▶ What if an employee goes home to a mentally ill family member
 - ▶ Could impact retention
 - ▶ Could impact connectivity amongst the team
 - ▶ Could impact safety in workplace

What is my responsibility in this?

How can we eliminate stigma?

- ▶ Create a space where behavioral health concerns are discussed equally such as any other healthcare issue
- ▶ Incorporate it into daily practice
- ▶ Bring in specialists to educate staff
- ▶ Support those that require additional support
- ▶ Words matter

What can you do to help? Low hanging fruit...

- ▶ Celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month in May
- ▶ Start a campaign to assist with increasing awareness and shift culture
- ▶ Make it fun- designate behavioral health stars to take the lead
 - ▶ Build on their interest
 - ▶ Create a behavioral health interdisciplinary committee
- ▶ Host events to help raise awareness of mental health stigma and the detrimental affect this has on mental health sufferers

What are some things that have worked?

- ▶ Creating Committees, subcommittees and BH Taskforces w/ specialty departments
- ▶ Streamline and mandate behavioral health related screenings
 - ▶ Distress Screenings
 - ▶ Depression Screenings
 - ▶ Suicide Screenings
- ▶ Survey the staff on an ongoing basis to ensure patient and staff safety
- ▶ Gap analysis regarding behavioral health care
 - ▶ Use feedback to assist with QI/PI
- ▶ 1013/2013 Committee- Interdisciplinary approach to treating suicidal and homicidal patients
- ▶ Work with community partners such as police departments, state funded behavioral health programs, mobile crisis teams, spiritual leaders etc.

More things that have worked...

- ▶ Physician to Physician education
- ▶ BH Champion Programs
- ▶ Offer Mental Health Symposiums
- ▶ Nursing Education Series to assist with screenings- verbiage & approaches
- ▶ System-wide competencies on BH high risk population
- ▶ Provide Bedside Trainings to assist with behavioral health care
- ▶ Seamless outpatient BH referral process
- ▶ Seamless Involuntary Commitment Process
- ▶ Work with Quality Department to assist with quality metrics
- ▶ Attend Psychiatric/Psychological Association conferences

What can I work on doing in the future? Breaking the cycle

- ▶ Check yourself- are you perpetuating stigma?
- ▶ Do a survey amongst your team regarding behavioral health to assess your team's needs
- ▶ Guard your words- language matters
 - ▶ Are you using sensational or fear-based language

I love

I laugh.

I have hopes and dreams.

I bleed just like you. I am talented. *I'm kind and caring.*

**I suffer
in silence.**

I am beautiful.

I have a mental illness,
but you'd never know it.

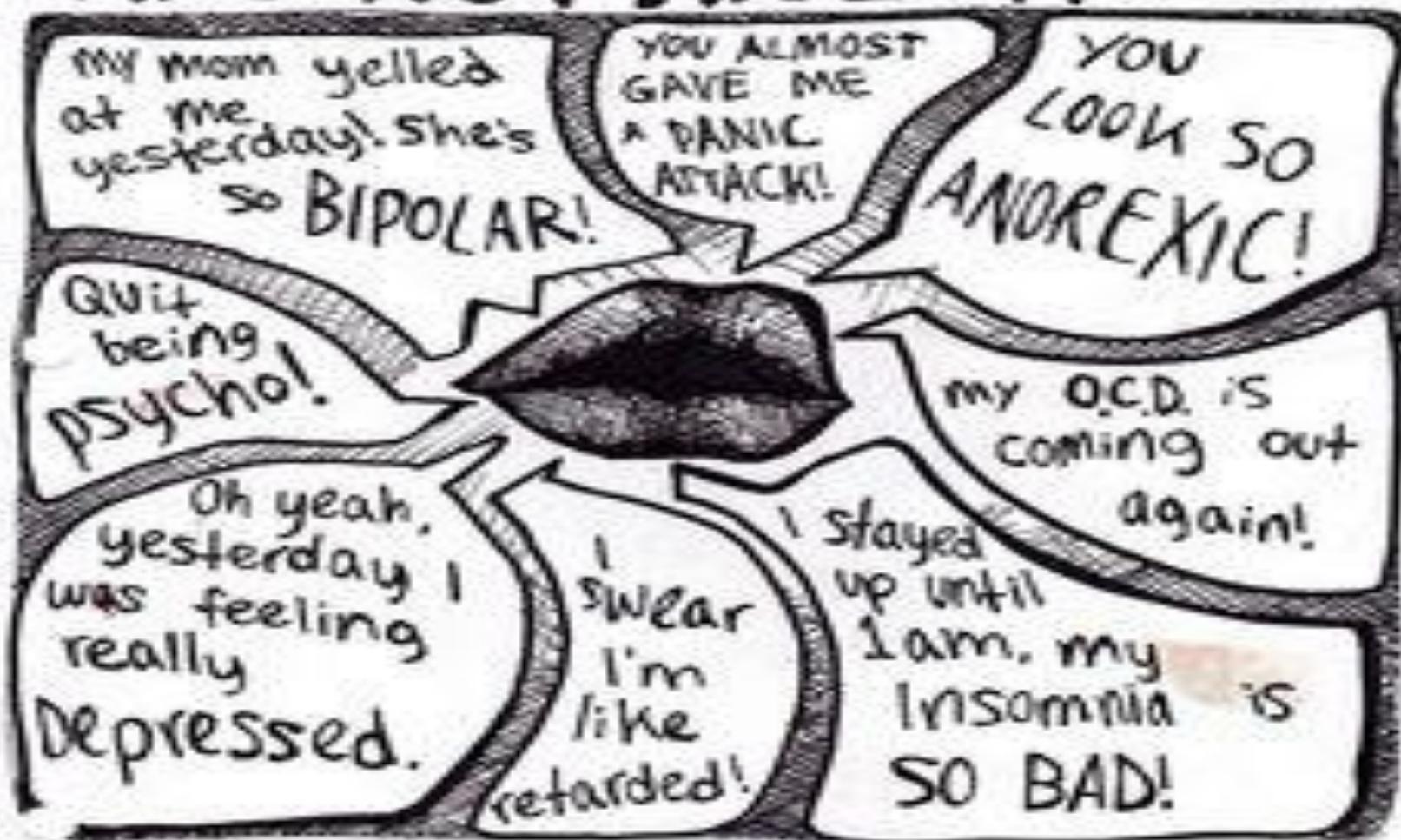
END THE STIGMA



Tips for Avoiding Stigmatizing language

- ▶ Perform a “language audit” of existing materials for language that may be stigmatizing, then replace with more inclusive language.
- ▶ Critically reflect on the types of information you choose to disseminate (for example, an email alert) to ensure that you are doing so responsibly.
- ▶ Every time you develop a prevention message, consider it as an opportunity to dispel myths and convey respect.

MENTAL DISORDERS ARE NOT ADJECTIVES.



What can I do as an employer?

- ▶ Educate and inform. Communicate about mental illness across the whole organization to reduce fear, stigma, and discrimination in the workplace.
- ▶ Foster a healthy workplace environment. Establish a culture that is conducive to supporting employees' mental health by raising awareness of workplace programs and policies that promote mental and physical health and wellness.
- ▶ Strengthen people leader skills. Train managers how to identify the signs and symptoms of mental distress, and on available employee tools and supports.
- ▶ Start at the top. Encourage senior executives to demonstrate leadership around mental health.
- ▶ Promote accessibility. Provide access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or other appropriate referral resources to assist employees.

How to Challenge Stigma

Dispel Ignorance and Empower by:

- ▶ TALKING/SHARING
- ▶ EDUCATING/COLLABORATING

Things to remember when dispelling stigma

- Learn and share the facts about mental health and illness
- Get to know people with personal experiences of mental illness
- Speak up in protest when friends, family, colleagues or the media display false beliefs and negative stereotypes
- Create a culture that's one of nonjudgement

Dispelling stigma

- Offer the same support to people when they are physically or mentally unwell
- Don't label or judge people with a mental illness, treat them with respect and dignity as you would anyone else
- Don't discriminate when it comes to participation, housing and employment

Recap

- ▶ Know the facts
- ▶ Watch your words
- ▶ Challenge misconceptions
- ▶ Don't be afraid
- ▶ Report stigma
- ▶ Bring in speakers to dispel myths
- ▶ Educate, educate, educate
- ▶ Have a seamless process for behavioral health referrals
- ▶ Become aware of your behavioral health resources & share them!

Guess what...

- ▶ Can't have physical health without mental health
- ▶ Breaking the silence helps everyone
- ▶ We all have a moral responsibility
- ▶ Get started!

People like

YOU

speak up and speak out