



Suicide Prevention – Reducing the Stigma

Fundamentally, the problem with suicide is the stigma associated with mental health. Stigma is negative attitudes and beliefs about a person due to a specific characteristic, such as mental illness. It often comes from a place of fear and misunderstanding.

Stigma can cause someone's condition to worsen due to:

- Avoidance – delaying or refusing treatment due to shame or hopelessness
- Exclusion – social rejection or strained relationships due to lack of understanding
- Discrimination – fewer opportunities at work or school

Mental illness is common, not shameful More than 50% of Americans will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lives. There are many reasons why a person develops mental illness and all impact one's mental health:

- Genetics
- Trauma
- Life experience
- Violence

How to Reduce Stigma

- Talk openly about mental health
- Know the facts - educate yourself and others to be a part of the solution
- Think before you speak – your words matter and can have lasting effects
- Show compassion for those with mental illness
- Don't hide your experiences - you'd be surprised who else you know who has also struggled
- Don't harbor self-stigma – choose courage over shame

Workplace bullying is when someone repeatedly and intentionally acts in an aggressive, hostile, and disrespectful manner to another person. It can happen between a supervisor and worker or between co-workers and can dramatically impact the feelings of depression or suicidal ideation.

Victims of bullying often stay silent for fear of losing their job, missing out on a promotion, or receiving a bad performance review. Be part of the solution:

- Call them out – if you see someone behaving inappropriately, bring attention to it and stand up for the co-worker being mistreated; let your foreman know what is going on



- Don't participate in any worksite hazing, aggressive or belittling behavior, or spread hurtful rumors •
- Don't exclude workers from work-related events – let everyone participate
- Don't set unreasonable work expectations – be realistic about what can be accomplished

SAFETY REMINDER

More than 50% of Americans will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lives. Stigma prevents 40% of people with anxiety or depression from seeking help.