

## Steps to stop stigma

Stigma happens when someone is perceived differently or negatively because of a particular characteristic, such as having a mental illness. Stigma can prevent those who are struggling from seeking help when they need it most, out of fear of being judged or losing opportunities. Reducing stigma is important in helping those with mental illness feel supported and confident to seek help.

To help stop stigma and empower those with mental illness you can:

### Know the facts and pass them on

The first step to reducing stigma is understanding mental illness. The more you understand, the more confident you will be in noticing stigma and stereotyping and then acting on it. You will also be able to educate others and pass this knowledge on.

Speaking to or treating someone differently because of a mental illness can reinforce stigma and make them feel worse. For example, leaving someone out of a decision, or telling them they can't handle something. Use correct and factual language when speaking about mental illness rather than slang.

### Choose words and actions carefully

### Speak up and challenge stereotypes

If you hear someone using stigmatising language, or spreading myths or stereotypes politely challenge it and/or correct them. In the workplace, you can share flyers and other information to help improve others' knowledge and understanding of mental illness.

Be supportive of anyone having a bad day, whether they have a mental illness or not. Showing support for anyone who is struggling helps normalise mental ill-health. Show the person who is having a bad day that you are interested in how they are feeling and offer support if you can.

### Be supportive