

What does stigma feel like?



10 minutes

Key message:

Nearly nine out of ten people with mental health problems say that stigma and discrimination have a negative effect on their lives. Stigma can be a major barrier preventing individuals from asking for support.

Activity:

This activity is designed to help an audience you are speaking to learn what it feels like to experience stigma.

Ask everyone to stand up.

Read out the different scenarios below and ask the audience to consider how open they'd feel about talking about a mental health problem.

1. You are at a family wedding.

The speeches have just finished and you are chatting with extended family (Grandparents, Uncles, Aunties, Cousins) that you have not seen for a while. The conversation moves onto your current health and one of your family members asks how you have been?

Remain standing if you feel you are able to be open about your mental health problem and talk to them about some of the difficulties you have recently had.

Sit down if you decide to brush it off and just say I'm fine.

2. You have just applied for a new job at a new organisation.

It's your dream job and you were very excited to hear you have been shortlisted for interview. In the interview the discussion moves on to ask about the gap in your CV where you had to take time out from work due to your mental health problem.

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time to change

let's end mental health discrimination

Remain standing if you feel you are able to be open about your mental health problem and explain to the panel your gap in employment.

Sit down if you decide to make up another reason.

3. You are on a first date.

Everything is going well, you have just finished your starters and waiting for main course to be served. You've decided that you would quite like to see your date again as things seem to be going so well. The conversation moves onto mental health and you discuss a TV programme that has recently been on about this.

Remain standing if you feel you are able to be open about your mental health problem and let the other person know about your experience and connection to the programme.

Sit down if you say nothing at all.

How many people are left standing?



Discussion questions:

- What does each scenario make you think about?
- Why are some things harder to talk about than others?
- What do you think would happen if you did talk about your mental health?

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