

It's OK to Talk about Mental Health: Tips for Tough Conversations

Handout 1



Is it difficult to talk about mental health? Why?

Some of the barriers may include:

- Fear of judgment
- Lack of understanding
- Past experiences
- Family norms
- Community norms
- Cultural influence

Stigma

All of these barriers are the result of stigma surrounding mental illness.

Stigma is a negative attitude associated with a specific issue. The negative attitude may lead to discomfort or even negative behavior toward someone who is experiencing, or is perceived to experience, that issue.

Instead of stigmatizing language (seen as only their disease, disorder, or challenge)	Use Non-Stigmatizing, Person-First Language (shifts focus to the WHOLE person rather than their disease, disorder, or challenge)
"He's an addict."	"He's struggling with substance abuse."
"She's bipolar."	"She was diagnosed with bipolar disorder."
"They're crazy."	"I wonder what they're struggling with?"

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